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Figures of sympathy in eighteenth-century Opéra comique

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FIGURES OF SYMPATHY IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY *OPÉRA COMIQUE*

by

Janet Kristen Leavens

An Abstract

Of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Doctor of
Philosophy degree in French
in the Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

December 2010

Thesis Supervisor: Professor Downing A. Thomas

ABSTRACT

Eighteenth-century *opéras comiques* often turn around moments of sympathy—moral and affective bonds through which the Enlightenment imagined a natural basis for the social order as well as the pleasures and transformative potential of art. Through musico-literary analysis informed by models of moral and aesthetic relationality that I derive from Dubos, Marivaux, Rousseau and Diderot, I argue that *opéras comiques* written and performed between 1762 and the Revolution feature three distinct forms of sympathy: 1) a worldly-sensuous sympathy most typically found in the common subgenre of the sentimental pastorale 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 an other experienced as a site of subjective freedom; and finally 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.

Although there is much that distinguishes these forms of sympathy, they are all shaped by eighteenth-century empiricist assumptions as to the existence of a basic relationality between the self and his or her social environment and thus resist a standard critical model that sees such emotional ties as merely the effect of some more fundamental separation between self and other.

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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PH.D. THESIS

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This is to certify that the Ph.D. thesis of

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has been approved by the Examining Committee
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INTRODUCTION

When literary historians consider French eighteenth-century theater, they typically confine their discussion to spoken plays—to Marivaux's and Beaumarchais's comedies, Crébillon's and Voltaire's tragedies, to works representative of the *comédie larmoyante* or the *drame*—before moving on to present Diderot's dramatic theory or insisting on the importance of theater as social practice. Rarely, however, do they discuss *opéras comiques*—at least in any detail.[1] These partly sung, partly spoken dramatic works, however, were by many measures at least as popular and culturally resonant as the comedies, tragedies and dramas performed at the *Comédie Française*.[2] André-Ernest-Modeste Grétry's and Jean-François Marmontel's *Zémire et Azor* far outshined its competition at the *Comédie Française* (N. T. Barthe's *La Mère Jalouse*),[3] while Grétry's and Michel-Jean Sedaine's *Richard Coeur-de-Lion* held its own against the smash-hit of the century, *Le Mariage de Figaro.* Unlike spoken theater and *tragédie lyrique, opéras comiques* were a key cultural export, performed in capitals throughout Europe as well as

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[1] Old school literary histories, such as those of Désiré Nisard or Gustave Lanson, either omit *opéra comique* entirely, or treat it in a clearly subordinate fashion, reproducing nineteenth-century aesthetic hierarchies. See Gustave Lanson, *Histoire de la Littérature Française* (Paris: Hachette, 1908), 655-657; and Désiré Nisard, *Histoire de la Littérature Française* (Paris: Libraire de Firmin-Didot, 1889). One finds a similar approach in Félix Gaiffe's monumental history of the *drame.* While Gaiffe points to continuities between *opéra comique* and *drame,* he clearly sees the former as a lesser genre, and, as such, not worthy of his attention. See Félix Gaiffe, *Le Drame en France au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1910), 177-182. The collection of essays that make up the now standard literary history—*A New History of French Literature*—might self-consciously expand the notion of the "literary" to include a range of artistic forms. Yet *opéra comique* is afforded only a one-sentence mention. See Herbert Joseph, "A War at the Opera," in *A New History of French Literature,* ed. Denis Hollier (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 536.

[2] And, in the case of Marivaux, at the *Comédie-Italienne.*

[3] Grimm, Diderot, Raynal, Meister, *et al.*, *Correspondance littéraire, philosophique et critique,* vol. 9 (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1879), 415.

in the American colonies.[4] Many *opéras comiques* held the stage well into the nineteenth and even the early twentieth century, and quite a few have been revived in recordings and on the stage today.[5]

Opéra comique's relative critical neglect has more to do with twenty-first century disciplinary boundaries than eighteenth-century realities. Eighteenth-century spectators generally considered *opéra comique* a form of theater—even, on occasion, a form a literature—rather than a specifically musical genre. Today, however, the situation is reversed: the very presence of music seems to set lyric theater apart. It seemingly designates it as an object of study for musicologists, who, fluent in a highly sophisticated and formal language of analysis can productively approach what to the uninitiated might appear an esoteric code and produce knowledge about a phenomenon associated with intensely moving, elusive personal experience.[6]

In this dissertation, I offer readings of individual *opéras comiques* which aim to bridge these disciplinary boundaries. I will understand meaning as the product not merely of dramatic, literary and cultural, but also of musical codes. In so doing, I will take particular care to make the discussion of these works' musical elements both historically sensitive and accessible to non-musicologists.

These readings will take as their thematic focus the notion and experience of sympathy—intense, transformational emotional bonding—as it is modeled within *opéra*

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[4] Karin Pendle, "Opéra comique as Literature: The Spread of French Styles in Europe, ca. 1760 to the Revolution," in *Grétry et l'Europe de l'opéra comique,* ed. Philippe Vendrix (Liège: Mardaga, 1992), 229.

[5] These include Grétry's and Marmontel's *Zémire et Azor,* Grétry's and Sedaine's *Richard Coeur-de-Lion,* Monsigny's and Sedaine's *Le Déserteur,* and Dalayrac's and Marsollier's *Nina.*

[6] As Stephen Benson explains: "Musical sound undoubtedly is difficult to describe, but the feeling of a shortfall between musical experience and its conscious verbalization is in part a result of the belief in a proper language of music, via which the sound can be characterized correctly" (Stephen Benson, *Literary Music: Writing Music in Contemporary Fiction* [Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006], 2).

comique's fictional worlds. Sympathy in *opéra comique* may take the form of a delicate sensibility closely related to the practice and literature of worldliness or it may involve the more turbulent, unvarnished emotionality that the Encyclopedists invested with moral seriousness.[7]   In most cases, however, to feel was to feel for or with another, to experience the affective connectedness that aesthetic theorists and moral philosophers posited as the primary social bond, the sensuous foundation of the social order.[8]

The Standard Model of Sympathy

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[7] In my choice of the term "sympathy," I am following scholars who have used the term to refer to moments of affective connectedness and have reserved the term "sensibility" for the description of the *capacity* for such relatedness. See David Marshall, *The Surprising Effects of Sympathy: Marivaux, Diderot, Rousseau, and Mary Shelley* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 2-3; Anne C. Vila, *Enlightenment and Pathology: Sensibility in the Literature and Medicine of Eighteenth-Century France* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1998), 119-127; and Downing Thomas, *Aesthetics of Opera in the Ancien Régime, 1647-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 201-264. I also favor the term "sympathy" over the closely related "pity" due to this former's broader semantic scope. While pity was only felt for one who was suffering, one could sympathetically share a range of affective experience, sorrow and suffering, certainly, but also joy and desire.

[8] The term "sympathy" comes to us not from the French, but the Scottish Enlightenment. As part of a collective attempt to counter the Hobbesian view of man as inherently selfish (and hence in need of authoritarian government), Francis Hutcheson, David Hume and Adam Smith developed and refined the notion of humankind's natural propensity to share others' feelings and to derive their moral intuitions from this basic affective experience. While Hutcheson understood humanity's moral sense as an innate, spontaneous phenomenon, and Hume constructed psychological and physiological underpinnings for similarly spontaneous affective connections, Adam Smith saw sympathy as a more necessarily mediated affair—as a product of a social "spectator's" imagination. Although any in-depth discussion of Adam Smith lies far beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is still important to note that, by invoking the imagination, Adam Smith was hardly implying that sympathetic connections were somehow fictive, *imaginary* or otherwise unreal—as he makes clear from the beginning of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*: "How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it. Of this kind is pity or compassion, the emotion which we feel for the misery of others, when we either see it, or are made to conceive it in a very lively manner. That we often derive sorrow from the sorrow of others, is a matter of fact too obvious to require any instances to prove it..." (Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* [1759; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002], 11). See also Alexander Broadie, "Scottish Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* ed. Edward N. Zalta, accessed 29 June 2010, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/scottish-18th/#SmiMorSen>; and David Hume, *A Treatise on Human Nature: being an attempt to introduce the experimental method of reasoning into moral subjects,* vol. 2 (1739-1740; London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1882), 110-116. I discuss the notion of sympathy as it appears in the work of eighteenth-century French *philosophes* below.

In taking salient moments of sympathy as my primary focus, I both follow and critique a group of scholars who have already used sympathy as a point of departure for analyses of the sentimental text. In his *Surprising Effects of Sympathy,* David Marshall sets out to explore the functions of and meanings given to sympathy in works by Marivaux, Dubos, Rousseau, and Diderot. He finds that, while these writers do privilege moments of emotional sharing between characters, their texts, when carefully examined, reveal sympathy's "theatrical" nature. Or, as he explains:

> Although Marivaux, Diderot [and] Rousseau ... each display at times an investment in the concept of sympathy as a transport that would transcend the distance and difference between people, allowing an exchange between parts, characters, and persons, each recognizes sympathy as a problem: a problem that is both caused and responded to by the theatrical conditions in which people face each other as spectators and spectacles.[9]

Marshall presents his project as an at least partially empirical one: "I will attempt to articulate and interpret each author's particular understanding of the structure and dynamics of sympathy as it emerges in specific texts ...."[10] This project, however, soon reveals itself to be distinctly ideological. While one can, indeed must, expect that Marshall (like all writers) bring a certain critical frame to bear on the texts he reads, it is, on the other hand, surprising that, instead of opening himself to the potential messiness of the textual particular, he often merely assumes that which he hopes to demonstrate.

Marshall puts a range of rhetorical strategies to work in his arguments, but he relies particularly heavily on what Joseph Carroll has termed "reductive exclusion," a process that involves "subsuming the properties of one distinct element into another

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[9] David Marshall, *The Surprising Effects of Sympathy: Marivaux, Diderot, Rousseau, and Mary Shelley*: (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press), 5.

[10] *Ibid.,* 4.

distinct element."[11] Marshall repeatedly uses reductive exclusion to make what appears to

be an argument as to the blurred boundaries between fictional and real-life sympathy. The

process typically involves employing, in an unmotivated fashion, theatrical terms to

describe real-life sympathy,[12] then proceeding to suggest, after pages of intricate

argumentative arabesque, that sympathy in the theater and in real life are one and the

same. In other words, instead of exploring the nature of sympathy or the relationship

between sympathy within and without the theater, Marshall merely winds up asserting

that sympathy is a fiction.[13]

Reductive exclusion (along with other strategies) helps Marshall hide what appear

to be the basic assumptions driving his analyses—that sympathy does not exist, that

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[11] Joseph Carroll, *Evolution and Literary Theory* (Columbia: The University of Missouri Press, 1995), 54-55.

[12] Quite early in his discussion of Dubos, for instance, Marshall describes the mere act of seeing someone suffering in real life as "spectacle" (Marshall, *Surprising Effects,* 18). I will return to Marshall's discussion of Dubos in my first chapter.

[13] One can find one (of many examples) of this procedure towards the end of Marshall's chapter on Diderot's *Le Paradoxe sur le Comédien.* Marshall is attempting to argue that "the boundaries of theater and fiction are difficult to delineate" (*Ibid.,* 131). In order to support this claim, he draws our attention to a historical anecdote told by one of Diderot's two conversing characters—"le Second." According to "le Second," a Greek actor playing the part of Sophocles's Electra once carried an urn containing the ashes of his own dead son. (In the Greek theater, men played women's roles.) Le Second imagines that the Greek actor's genuinely heart-felt lament would constitute a moment of dramatic truth, "*un spectacle réel*" (132). Marshall, however, notes that, at this moment in the play, the fictional character, Electra, is mistaken in believing that the ashes are those of someone dear to her. (They are not really Orestes's ashes). Marshall concludes: "As he plays the character of someone who is moved by a representation, he replaces that representation with something real and thereby alters the character of his own representation" (132). Marshall, here, is using the word "representation" in at least two different ways. The first is somewhat odd. Electra is mistaken as to whose ashes are in the urn. She thinks that they are Orestes's, but they are not. Does this mean that these ashes somehow "represent" Orestes's ashes? They certainly stand in for Orestes's ashes *for the spectating public*. But it is hard to see how Electra herself is "moved by a representation." Again, she is merely confused. Marshall's last use of the word "representation" refers, on the other hand, to actual theater—to the Greek actor's moving performance, which, whether or not it is real for the actor, is, indeed a representation of Electra for the public.

In sum, Electra is experiencing real sorrow in her world; the actor is using a prop that is real for him in order to enhance his performance (one might assume); and the public is enjoying a play they know full well to be a fiction, while also being pleased (one might assume) with the particular moving representation of Electra. There might indeed be an interesting blurring of boundaries between real feeling in the fictional world and the experience of suffering in the theater, but Marshall has not elucidated what they might be. He has merely decided to call different phenomena by the same name.

feeling is nothing but text, or, at the very least, that emotional identification, like desire and language, depend for its effects on the constitutive absence of any real object.[14]

What was implicit in Marshall, becomes explicit in Jay Caplan's *Framed Narratives*.[15] Drawing incoherently (as he himself admits) on both Bakhtin and Lacan,[16] Caplan suggests that if Diderot moves his reader, if his narrative fiction addresses this latter and asks him to shed tears at another's suffering, the resulting "'sacrificial' dialogic relationship" must remain at the level of the imaginary.[17] He also holds that the moving effects of Diderot's sentimental scenes—his sentimental tableaux—are the paradoxical result of a form of stasis: "...I would like ... to emphasize that the tableau in Diderot is a sort of fetishistic snapshot in which the transitoriness of the real world is magically transformed into an ideal fixity."[18] His argument is a complicated reworking of Michael Fried's seminal *Absorption and Theatricality* but the gist is simple: Where this latter sees

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[14] Marshall's argument also appears to function, first, because he applies the above-mentioned rhetorical strategy consistently and regularly throughout his book and, second, because he is implicitly addressing a critical audience already suspicious of sympathy—perhaps an audience of critics similar to those whom Glenn Hendler addresses in his recent review of Marianne Noble's essay "The Ecstasies of Sentimental Wounding in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*." See Glenn Hendler, "The Structure of Sentimental Experience," *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 12.1 (1999), 145-153.

Hendler notes that critics have tended towards an out-of-hand rejection of nineteenth-century American sentimentalism's claims to sympathetic efficacy. Why, he asks, do critics such as Marianne Noble dismiss claims as to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*'s ability to make "'the crack of the slave driver's whip, and the cries of the tortured black ring in every household ...'" with a curt "'Of course, it didn't,'" and with the "argu[ment] that such an affective and effective rhetorical act is 'fundamentally impossible'?" Hendler goes on to astutely observe that "we seem to be lacking an adequate vocabulary for describing sentimental experience ..." (149).

[15] Jay Caplan, *Framed Narratives: Diderot's Genealogy of the Beholder* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985).

[16] "The reader of this essay may detect a certain methodological inconsistency because the book appears to combine the perspective of "post-structuralist" formalism with that of literary sociology—all under the banner of Bakhtin." Caplan takes partial responsibility for this inconsistency—it is a matter of his own "personal limitations as a critic," but he also sees it partially as a legitimate response to the complexity of Diderot's texts, to "the paradoxical nature of Diderot's writing" (*Ibid.*, 14).

[17] *Ibid.*, 19.

[18] *Ibid.*, 18.

later eighteenth-century painting as capturing the beholder's attention by implicitly denying his presence before the artwork,[19] Caplan sees the spectator's emotional identification with figures within the fiction as driven by the paradoxical inclusion of his absence (in the form of various fetishizable objects).[20] Whatever the specific dynamic of this "dialogic" relationship between text and reader (and Caplan does sketch out a number of variations), one thing is clear: the "wholeness" that the reader wishes to provide—by taking up the cause of the sufferer and making the world right—must remain on an ideal level. In fact, the reader's very identification with suffering depends on his real exclusion from Diderot's moving narrative tableaux:

> To be whole, each part of the subject requires precisely what it lacks, namely, the other; each requires the very absence that has cause it to be. Just as the tableau exists by virtue of the family member who has been excluded from its frame (who is absent), so the sympathetic beholder owes his existence *as beholder* to that exclusion.[21]

One should note the oddly tautologizing nature of this passage. Somehow it hovers between description and definition. One could say, for example, that the assertion that "the tableau exists by virtue of the family member who has been excluded from its frame" is merely an arbitrary definition of the tableau that Caplan describes here as if he has had no hand in its construction.[22] Similarly, in his assertion that "the sympathetic

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[19] Michael Fried describes two separate but logically connected mechanisms. The first, which he associates with history painting, involves "de-theatricalizing" the relationship with the beholder through the representation of absorption within the painting. The second, more characteristic of landscape painting, involves creating the fiction of the spectator's presence within the painting itself. In each case, the spectator's presence before the work is effectively denied. Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979), 131-132.

[20] Caplan, 15-20.

[21] *Ibid.,* 23.

[22] Others, while reproducing Caplan's interpretation of the tableau, have, at the same time, drawn on the same Diderotian text (*Les Entretiens sur le Fils Naturel*) to describe the tableau in other, more complex terms. After reading Pierre Franz's chapter "Le Tableau, un concept de Poétique dramatique," one might be tempted to say the tableau exists "by virtue of" the mute scene it portrays, or the scene of intense emotion it

beholder owes his existence *as beholder* to that exclusion" Caplan seems to forget that beholder is defined, in part, by his exclusion from that at which he gazes.

Since the notion of the tableau is so closely related to the representation of sympathy in the sentimental text as well as a key element of Caplan's argument, it would be best to take a closer look at this device.

<p style="text-align:center">The Sentimental Tableau</p>

In its most basic form, the tableau consists of a moving, emotionally heightened scene frequently presented in a naturalistic style. Often the tableau is accompanied by the presence of an intradiagetic spectator who is shown to be moved, thus indirectly testifying to the tableau's affective efficacy. The tableau was first theorized by Diderot in his *Entretiens sur le Fils Naturel.* Although Diderot describes the device in a variety of ways—Dorval, echoing Diderot's characteristic resistance to theoretical closure, insists on giving examples rather than definitions—he most frequently associates the term with scenes of pathos, scenes where sighs, sobs, and inarticulate cries along with *pantomime* (expressive postures, gestures and movements) both represent a suffering heroine's (or hero's) emotional turmoil and produce a similarly violent emotional response in the spectator. Diderot emphasizes the intense mobility of the tableau by contrasting it to the ridiculous stiffness of the *comédiens français*'s style of acting:

> Moi: Le beau tableau, car c'en est un, ce me semble, que le malheureux Clairville, renversé sur le sein de son ami ...
>
> Dorval: Convenez que ce tableau n'aurait point eu lieu sur la scène ; que les deux amis n'auraient osé se regarder en face, tourner le dos au spectateur, se grouper, *se séparer, se rejoindre* ; et que toute leur action aurait été bien compassée, bien empesée, bien maniérée, et bien froide.... *Est-il possible qu'on ne sentira point que*

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privileges, as much as the "family member ... [it] exclude[s]" (Pierre Franz, *L'Esthétique du Tableau dans le théâtre du XVIIIe siècle* [Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1998], 153-195); and Caplan, *Framed Narratives,* 23).

l'effet du malheur est de rapprocher les hommes, et *qu'il est ridicule*, surtout dans les moments de tumulte, lorsque les passions sont portées à l'excès, et que l'action est la plus agitée, *de se tenir en rond, séparés, à une certaine distance les uns des autres* et ans un ordre symétrique?[23]

One must note that Diderot's discussion of the tableau, unlike Caplan's interpretation of the same, emphasizes not only constant, even violent movement, instead of stasis, but also proximity, rather than absence, distance and exclusion (the actors would dare to "separate *and come together*;" "how can one not feel that the effect of suffering is to *draw men together* and that it is ridiculous in these moments ... *to stand separated from one another*"). If Caplan overlooks these crucial aspects of sympathy in Diderot, it is—as he himself admits—because he has another agenda.

Finally, one can argue that Caplan's entire discussion is as tautologizing as his description-definition of the tableau. If emotional connections in Diderot's oeuvre remain ineluctably imaginary, it has arguably less to do with Diderot than the examples on which Caplan has chosen to focus as well as the interpretive frame and critical discourse he brings to his project. Again, as was the case with Marshall, sympathy winds up being unreal because contemporary critical theory (whether explicitly invoked or not) does not provide the discourse and patterns of argument necessary to describe sympathy as anything but imaginary.[24]

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[23] Diderot, *Oeuvres,* 1137. My emphasis.

[24] I have merely mentioned Marshall and Caplan because their work, together with Fried's has informed most all recent discussions of sympathy and the related device of the tableau. Among those who have drawn (entirely or mostly uncritically) on their work include: Tili Boon Cuillé, *Narrative Interludes*: *Musical Tableaux in Eighteenth-Century French texts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006); David Denby, *Sentimental Narrative and the Social Order in France 1760-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Pierre Franz, *L'Esthétique du Tableau dans le théâtre du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Presses Universitaire de France, 1998); and Downing Thomas, *Aesthetics of opera in the Ancien Régime, 1647-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

Sympathy in the Eighteenth Century

If recent critical approaches to sympathy thus appear to start from the premise that emotional connections between people are either unimportant (Caplan repeatedly emphasizes the text-reader relationship when discussing emotional identification), or non-existent (Marshall textualizes suffering away), eighteenth-century writers approached sympathy with the diametrically opposed assumption that there existed a basic relationality between sentient beings and their natural and social environments and that contact with this external reality was a primary good. [25] These assumptions govern not merely the content of eighteenth-century thought on sympathy, but the general approach to the question, as well. Eschewing—at least in theory—the *a priori* approach that D'Alembert famously dismissed as the *esprit de système,*[26] thought on the matter was shaped—at least in part—by a method that tended to work from the ground up—from the sensuous particular to the elucidating abstraction—with the result that models of sympathy tended to be considerably more complex than the implicit reductiveness one

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[25] This assumption also subtended the century's broadly naturalistic intellectual paradigm, articulated in the related forms of empiricism, sensationism and materialism. See John O'Neal, *Authority of Experience.* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 1-3. In moving from empiricism (Locke) to sensationism (Condillac) and on to materialism (Diderot and Helvétius), one moves progressively away from a more dualistic towards a more monistic conception of the self and its relationship with its environment. (On the difference between sensationism and materialism, see *Ibid.,* 3). If, for Locke, it was only our ideas that were derived from sensual experience, for Condillac, it was our very cognitive faculties that developed through an interaction with the external world. Diderot and Helvétius moved farther in this direction, each in his own way. While Diderot imagined that there was no ultimate opposition between the apparently most insensate material object (a marble statue, for instance) and sentient beings, that *sensibilité* as an original vital principle was to be found throughout nature, Helvétius worked to reduce higher order moral experience to the physical sensation of pain and pleasure. See Denis Diderot, *Le Rêve de d'Alembert, Oeuvres Philosophiques,* ed. P. Vernière (1784; Paris: Garnier, 1961); and Claude Adrien Helvétius, *De l'esprit* (Paris: Durand, 1758).

[26] Although, as Julie Candler Hayes argues, the complexity of D'Alembert's *Discours préliminaire* shows that "good" abstraction and metaphysical systematizing, valued *esprit systématique* and disdained *esprit de système* can never be entirely disentangled. See Julie Candler Hayes, *Reading the French Enlightenment*: *System and Subversion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 39-45.

finds in Marshall and Caplan.

One sees both an insistence on relationality and a characteristically complex model of sympathy even in Condillac, a thinker whose bent for logical analysis sometimes threatened to overwhelm his empiricizing project.[27] Through his famous conceit of a statue awakening to the world in his *Traité des Sensations*, Condillac imagines human cognitive faculties developing through a response to feelings of relative pleasure and pain produced in turn by an almost instinctive comparison between inner memory and sensory contact with the outer world.[28] In his earlier *Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines,* he constructs a similarly complex originary moment of sympathy. Towards the beginning of the second part of this genealogical account of the imbricated development of human language and knowledge, Condillac offers a philosophical vignette. Two hypothetical post-diluvian children (one male, one female) have found each and are beginning to learn to communicate their needs. There is first an expression of suffering. One child is deprived of something needful (perhaps a delectable fruit hangs just out of reach). He cries out and gesticulates. The other is immediately moved by these natural signs of the first child's emotion, and attends to the situation at hand. Then, in a flash of intuitive understanding, he feels what the other is feeling, before finally, in a founding act of altruism, does his utmost to come to the other's aide.[29]

In his writings on the origins of language and society, Rousseau theorizes

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[27] Isabel F. Knight, *The Geometric Spirit: The Abbé de Condillac and the French Enlightenment* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968), 26.

[28] Etienne Bonnot de Condillac, *Traité des Sensations, Oeuvres complètes de Condillac,* vol. 3 (Paris: Ch. Houel, 1798), 58-65.

[29] Etienne Bonnot de Condillac, *Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines* (Paris: Chez les Libraires Associés, 1777), 185-186.

sympathy (in the form of pity) as a similarly complex relational phenomenon. While in the asocial state of nature, pity is but a simple, spontaneous experience,[30] Rousseau develops the notion in his later discussion of early pastoral society. Explicitly linking sympathy to amorous relations, he suggests—as I will argue in my second chapter—that the experience involves both an attraction based on an awareness of the other's difference *and* an imagined, yet experiential connection based on similarity.[31]

Semiotic Mediation of Sympathy

If sympathy thus involves experiential connections between sensitive and expressive beings, it was also—even in its simplest forms —always conceived as a mediated phenomenon—as an experience relayed or produced by signs that were themselves often conceived as enjoying a privileged connection to sensual experience. In his famous passage on sympathy,[32] Hume notes that we first come to know another's experience through "signs in the countenance and conversation."[33] Condillac, as we have seen, imagines sympathy mediated by similar expressive bodily and vocal signs in his account of the origin of language and society. Soon, according to his narrative, early humans' attempts to convey their emotional experience in intentional acts of communication shape (and are shaped by) the growth of a first conventionalized, yet still highly energetic language—the *langage d'action.*[34]

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[30] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* (Paris: Éditions Nathan, 1998), 73.

[31] Rousseau, *Discours* and *Essai sur l'origine des langues.*

[32] Hume, *Treatise on Human Nature*, 110-118.

[33] *Ibid.,* 111.

[34] Condillac, *Essai,* 187. Condillac reworks a common narrative of philosophical linguistics that associated various forms of poetic language with early societies and more developed, rational languages with similarly

We can see Condillac's *langage d'action,* in turn, as the inspiration for Diderot's notion of theatrical pantomime, a similar combination of expressive gesture and vocal inflection which, when joined with discursive language, would allow the actor to move back through time, as it were, and conjure up what Diderot believed to be a highly moving original semiotic unity.[35]

Rousseau offers a twist on this well-worked notion of an original passionate language. Where Condillac, and Diderot, in particular, tend to oppose the semiotic simultaneity of original passionate discourse—the superposition of gesture, vocal inflection and discursive sign—to the linearity of more developed, analytic language, Rousseau stands apart by linking early language's affective energy precisely to its temporality,[36] by privileging a form of language that clearly resembles simple, unaccompanied song.[37]

It is not only in Rousseau that one finds a form of music conceived as a vehicle for the transmission of affect. In his *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture,* l'abbé Dubos adds music to painting as a privileged conduit of emotion. For Dubos, it is musical signs' status as indexical links to the passions that make them so effective and moving :

more developed societies. See Michel Delon, *L'idée d'énergie au tournant des Lumières (1770-1820)* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1988), 58-104; Liselotte Dieckmann, *Hieroglyphics: The History of a Literary symbol* (St. Louis: Washington University Press,1970), 120-128; Julia Kristeva, *Language, The Unknown: An Initiation into Linguistics,* trans. Anne M. Menke (1981; New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 172-183; and Downing Thomas, *Music and the Origin of Language*.

[35] We have already seen an implicit description of this pantomime in the above discussion of the *tableau.* Denis Diderot, *Les Entretiens sur le Fils naturel, Oeuvres: Esthétique-Théâtre,* vol.4, ed. Laurent Versini (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1996), 1142-1145.

[36] Michel Delon contrasts Diderot's synchronic and Rousseau's diachronic notion of original language in his chapter "l'énergie de la langue" (Michel Delon, *L'idée d'énergie,* 77-89).

[37] Rousseau, *Essai,* 375-376; 384-393; 397-398.

> Ainsi que le peintre imite les traits et les couleurs de la nature, de même le musicien imite les tons, les accens, les soupirs, les infléxions de voix, enfin tous ces sons, à l'aide desquels la nature même exprime ses sentimens et ses passions. Tous ces sons, comme nous l'avons déja exposé, ont une force merveilleuse pour nous émouvoir, parce qu'ils sont les signes des passions, instituez par la nature dont ils ont reçû leur énergie, au lieu que les mots articulez ne sont que des signes arbitraires des passions.[38]

If Diderot's theory of the pantomine functions similarly within a regime of mimetic directness, his closely related theory of the aesthetic "hieroglyph" instead hints at the possibility that music might be moving for precisely the opposite reason—because of its mimetic obscurity, rather than its clarity.[39] As we will see in my second and third chapters, the representational ambiguities of Diderot's musical "hieroglyph" as well as those implicit in Rousseau's original speech-song do not so much block affective communication as they do transform sympathy from a lesser to a more intersubjective experience.

Given the close connections between feeling and music, it makes sense that *opéra comique* should provide fertile terrain for the representation of sympathy. And it is precisely this argument that Downing Thomas has recently made in a chapter of his *Aesthetics of Opera in the Ancien Régime*.[40]

According to Thomas, the long-standing notion that music possessed the power to create moral bonds "took root in the newly reinvented genre of the *opéra comique,* a genre which, in the eyes of contemporaries, was particularly well-suited to sympathy."[41]

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[38] Dubos, *Réflexions critiques,* 444.

[39] I will discuss Diderot's musical hieroglyph in Chapter 3. On this topic, see Kevin Barry, *Language, music and the sign: A study in aesthetics, poetics and poetic practice from Collins to Coleridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987)*,* 8-9; and Downing Thomas, *Music and the Origins of Language: Theories from the French Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 170.

[40] Thomas, *Aesthetics of Opéra,* 201-264.

[41] *Ibid.,* 203.

What I find puzzling about this particular chapter, however, is that, while Thomas describes music's status in the eighteenth century as a vehicle for a relatively direct propagation of sentiment in early sections of the chapter, as well as in a previous chapter partially devoted to medical philosophy's naturalization music's healing effects,[42] sympathy thus conceived veritably disappears from the pages of the succeeding analyses. Instead, Thomas locates the effects of (musical) sympathy precisely in the dynamic of paradoxical exclusion/inclusion we saw in Jay Caplan (whom he discusses, along with Marshall and others).[43] In fact, this framework shapes his reading to such an extent that he has difficulty accounting for those moments when sympathy is very much *not* produced by distance. While Thomas asserts, for example, that "sympathy requires the exclusion inherent in spectatorship and the difference of situation it implies,"[44] he notes, in his discussion of *Zémire et Azor*—an *opéra comique* to which I will devote part of my second chapter—that "vocal expressions of feeling and calls for sympathy most often occur in ... another's presence."[45] Without venturing any explanation as to how sympathy might be understood to function in a situation so different from those featured in Marshall and Caplan's analyses, he instead imports the lexicon of the theater and terms the subject of sympathy a "spectator."[46] This is, I believe, merely a verbal solution to a larger,

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[42] *Ibid.,* 223-225.

[43] *Ibid.,* 208-211. If Thomas follows what I see as problematically anachronistic approaches to musical sympathy in his chapter on *opéra comique,* the same can hardly be said of his book as a whole. In general, he takes care to situate his discussion of the continuities in thought on musical and operatic effects within a pre-modern perspective. See *Ibid.,* 321-324.

[44] *Ibid.,* 235.

[45] *Ibid.,* 252.

[46] *Ibid.,* 254.

unacknowledged problem—a problem of dissonance between an anti-sentimental standard critical frame and an eighteenth-century confidence that sympathy—whether relatively immediate or more mediated—could, and did, work positive effects, effects that, in turn, could be explored and celebrated in the happy fictional worlds of *opéra comique*.

Methodology

My concern in the following chapters is to explore the structure and dynamics of sympathy in sentimental *opéra comique* while taking seriously the notion of relationality—whether this be a matter of affective connections between self and other (my primary concern in all the chapters), of connections between various levels of intrapsychic experience (which I investigate in part of the first chapter), or of connections between inner and outer worlds, between imagined evocations of the other and the sometimes sacrificial projects these imaginings produce (which I explore in part of the third chapter). In so doing, I have adopted a methodology akin to that advocated by Diderot in his *Pensées sur l'Interprétation de la Nature*—a back-and-forth between empirical exploration and systematization, between abstraction and observation.[47] I have read many *opéras comiques* written and performed between 1762 (the year in which the genre was absorbed from the fairgrounds into its new home at the *Comédie-Italienne*) and the Revolution with an eye (and an ear) for the emergence of sympathetic bonds. In the process, I have combined this information with eighteenth-century aesthetic theory and moral philosophy to construct models of sympathy which have reciprocally guided the

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[47] In his *Pensées sur l'Interprétation de la Nature,* Diderot not only presents the ideal natural philosopher as using a combined inductive and deductive approach, but also suggests that this approach constitutes a form of sympathetic attunement to both nature's and his own text's fluid complexities. See Wilda Anderson, *Diderot's Dream* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1990), 15-18.

reading and writing process.

Before laying out my project in more detail, it will be helpful to take a step back and look at *opéra comique* as a genre within its historical and institutional context.

<div align="center">

Form and History of *Opéra Comique*

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Although there is no entirely inclusive definition of this most protean genre, most frequently the term *opéra comique* refers to either a play with music or an opera with spoken dialogue (depending on the historical moment), but, in either case, to a work of lyrical theater which includes both spoken dialogue and a sometimes wide variety of musical elements.[48] In its earliest form, *opéra comique* consisted of short, semi-improvised plays inspired both by the tradition of the *commedia dell'arte* and that of the *tragédie lyrique* (which it frequently parodied).[49] These plays were interspersed with

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[48] Even the use of term *opéra comique* has its own complexities. In the fairgrounds of the early eighteenth-century, the plays that mixed sung *vaudevilles* with dialogue were typically designated as *opéras comiques*. As the genre evolved, however, and particularly after the practice of composing new music for these plays had become established, the term *comédie mêlée d'ariettes* was often used to distinguish the plays featuring original music from those that parodied popular tunes. I say "often" because, there was, in fact, a vast array of labels used, a terminological breadth and fluidity discussed in detail by Manuel Couvreur and Philippe Vendrix, "Les Enjeux théoriques de l'Opéra-Comique," in *L'Opéra-Comique en France au XVIIIe siècle,* ed. Philippe Vendrix (Liège: Mardaga, 1992), 256-261. However, the nineteenth-century descendants of this genre, works by François Adrien Boïeldieu and Daniel François Auber, were, like the earlier fairground theater, called *opéras comiques*. It is common practice to label the later eighteenth-century works with which this dissertation will be concerned "*opéras comiques*" as this term both avoids confusion and emphasizes historical continuities. See Martin Cooper, *Opéra Comique* (London: Max Parrish and Co Limited, 1949).

At times, I refer to the works I discuss as "operas," in part because they sometimes do approach what we consider to be opera today (in the place they accord music and in their general dramatic ambitions) but also, at times, merely so as to avoid repeating the more unwieldy term "*opéra comique*." When I do mention other forms of lyric theater, I make the distinction clear.

[49] The discussion of the origins of the genre has typically been shaped by the cultural perspective and critical agenda of the *opéra comique* historian. In the eighteenth-century, when commentators were intent on legitimizing the genre, they tended to construct a rather noble ancestry. Nougaret, for example, does not rule out the possibility that the genre may be traced back to antiquity (Pierre Jean Baptiste Nougaret, *De l'art du théâtre,* vol.1 [Paris: Chez Cailleau, 1769], 49). Today, thanks to the interest in subversive cultural forms, there tends to be more interest in emphasizing popular, fairground origins. The detailed and insightful overview offered by Maurice Barthélemy suggests this tendency. His chapter also draws interesting connections between early fairground *opéra comique* and Molière and Lully's experimentation with *comédies ballets*. See Maurice Barthélemy, "L'*opéra comique* des origines à la Querelle des

vaudevilles—popular songs to which new words were composed.[50] This procedure proved to be a fertile comic vehicle since the juxtaposition of the original words (and their cultural associations) to the newly composed text, allowed for all manner of ironic commentary.

The history of early *opéra comique* is highly complex, with up to four different troupes competing against official theaters (as well as against each other) and includes a bewildering array of events: appearances of new troupes; bankruptcies of the same; interdictions; fines; changes of management, as well as the hiring of famous actors and well-known writers.[51] The year 1743, however, brought the first of two major developments in the history of genre*,* as Jean Monnet, theatrical entrepreneur *par excellence*, opened his theater, the *Opéra Comique,* at the *Foire* Saint-Germain. Thanks to his organizational talents, he managed to gather together a talented group of artists, musicians, and writers including Rameau (either Jean-Philippe, or his infamous nephew), Boucher, Servandoni, Noverre, and Charles-Simon Favart who acted both as lead writer and as the *Opéra Comique*'s artistic director. Under Monnet's direction, this group worked together to refine *opéra comique,* to turn the genre into a more serious and ambitious lyrico-theatrical form.[52] To this enterprise, Favart contributed *opéras comiques*

Bouffons," in *L'Opéra comique en France au XVIIIe siècle,* ed. Philippe Vendrix (Liège: Mardaga, 1992), 9-78.

[50] *Opéra comique'*s hybrid form grew out of a series of aesthetic survival tactics, as it were. The fairground troupes which performed these pieces were not only excluded from the world of official French theater, they also had to contend with multiple restrictions imposed by the official theaters on their repertoire and performance practice. In what is itself a heroic and moving drama, various fairground troupes managed to remain viable as they negotiated their way through a complex maze of institutional enmities and alliances, *interdictions* and *autorisations.*

[51] Lesage and Fuzelier, for instance (Barthélemy, "L'*opéra comique*," 33-37).

[52] It is the fashion nowadays to either see *opéra comique's* development as either an unfortunate "embourgeoisement" as Robert Isherwood calls it, or to see its ambitions and progressive refinement as

celebrating pastoral innocence and featuring a sophisticated sensuousness that echoed the *galant* style of Boucher's stage settings.[53] The characters and themes of most of all of his *opéras comiques* rework pastoral tradition and feature an opposition between happy bucolic innocence and the seductions of luxury, of aristocratic *amour-propre* and material wealth—a structuring device that, as we will see, will recur in many later sentimental *opéras comiques.*

This first step towards sentimentalism went hand-in-hand with Favart's reworking of *opéra comique*'s musical means. Drawing on his vast experience and knowledge of popular song,[54] Favart was one of the first librettists to specifically choose tunes, not merely for their comic effect, but for their dramatic potential and, particularly for their ability to "exprimer la force des sentiments."[55] Most of these new sentimental *vaudevilles* were also more modern and musically complex than the older popular tunes with which they, from about the 1730s on, began to share the stage.

A second, more important institutional transition for *opéra comique* came in 1762, when the *Comédie-Italienne,* Paris's third official theater, had Monnet's all-to-

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themselves subversive. See Robert M. Isherwood, *Farce and Fantasy: Popular Entertainment in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 101; and Mark Ledbury, *Sedaine, Greuze and the Boundaries of Genre,* Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century, 380 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2000). Both of these accounts, however, tend to neglect the widespread desire for just this form of elevation. One gets the impression that far from being wishing to be subversive, many of the *forains* themselves longed for recognition and legitimacy. If the economic history of *opéra comique* were to be written, it would undoubtedly be Veblenian rather than Marxist.

[53] Ledbury, *Sedaine, Greuze,* 67-69.

[54] In his *Mémoires,* Favart recounts his father's form of education by music: "Mon père avoit un esprit vif et une gaieté franche; il faisoit des chansons avec facilité; il ajustoit sur des airs de vaudevilles les principes de morale et les autres préceptes qu'il vouloit m'inculquer : je les retenois aisément en chantant avec lui" (Charles-Simon Favart, *Mémoires et Correspondances Littéraires dramatiques et anecdotiques,* vol. 1 [Paris: Léopold Collin, 1808], iii).

[55] Auguste Font, *Favart: l'Opéra comique et la Comédie-Vaudeville aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1970), 25.

successful *Opéra-Comique* shut down, then absorbed its repertoire and personnel. The move from popular to the official stage hastened the genre's sentimentalization and within a few years, the *Comédie-Italienne* was offering works based on realist and sentimental English novels and drama as well as Marmontel's *Contes Moraux.* Although this shift toward sentimentalism proper can be attributed in part to the influx of playwrights that had been rebuffed by the ever haughty *comédiens français,*[56] it also went hand-in-hand with another transformation of *opéra comique'*s musical material—one that had begun back at the *Opéra-Comique* in the mid-1750s.

The year 1752 saw the arrival in Paris of an Italian troupe (*les Bouffons*) whose performances of *intermezzi* (short comic operas with recitative) at the *Académie Royale de Musique* sparked a veritable craze for Italian music.[57] Ever ready to capitalize on the latest fashion, Monnet arranged to bring this new Italian melody (and its crowds of admirers) to the *Opéra-Comique.* Upon his suggestion, Antoine Dauvergne and Jean-Joseph Vadé together produced *Les Troqueurs,* the first *opéra comique* to include freshly composed Italian-style arias, which were soon to be called *ariettes.*[58] *Opéras comiques*

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[56] Gregory S. Brown, *A Field of Honor: writers, court culture and public theater in French literary life from Racine to the Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); and James B. Kopp, "Theatrical Politics and the *Drame lyrique,*" *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 13 (1984), 133-141.

[57] The arrival of the *Bouffons* also set off the *Querelle des Bouffons,* a musico-political debate that saw the publication of Rousseau's *Lettre sur la Musique Française.* Rousseau lavished praise on melodic and moving Italian music, while maintaining that, due to the French language's essential lack of prosody, there would never be any French music: "Hence I conclude that the French have no music .... Or , if they ever have one, so much the worse for them" (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Letter on French Music, Collected Works of J. J. Rousseau,* vol. 11, ed. V. D. Musset-Pathay [Paris: P. Dupont, 1824], 203). Given that *opéra comique* embodied the successful fusion of expressive, Italianate music and the French language, many saw the genre as a source of national pride and an effective response to Rousseau's infuriating remarks. See, for example, Jean-François Marmontel, *Essai sur les Révolutions de la Musique en France, Oeuvres complètes de Marmontel,* vol. 7 (Paris: Chez A. Belin, 1819), 106-107.

[58] When it was first introduced, the term "ariette" thus served to distinguish freshly composed musical numbers in the Italian style from the traditional French *vaudeville.* The term was also used on occasion to distinguish between newly composed music in the Italian style from similarly newly composed music in the simpler, more syllabic, less ornamented French style. Soon, however, "ariette" was frequently used to

including both *ariettes* and *vaudevilles* were common into the 1760s when the *ariettes*

began to dominate, eventually edging out the *vaudevilles* entirely.[59]

The adoption of the Italian-style *ariette* shifted the text-music balance in *opéra*

comique towards this latter. And this formal transformation, in turn, elicited new critical

responses to the genre. For some commentators, the increased presence of music made an

already problematically hybrid genre even more so. Voltaire, Rousseau and Grimm all

objected to a music-text oscillation that they saw as disrupting illusion.[60] For the

commentators Barnabé Farmian de Rozoi and Laurent Garcin however, the addition of

the *ariettes* transformed *opéra comique* into a highly suitable vehicle for sentimental

expression.

Describing a moving lyric tableau (unashamedly drawn from his own oeuvre)

denote any solo number, no matter what the style or length. In spite of its diminutive ending, "ariette" could refer to solo musical numbers that were almost as ambitious and elaborate as full-scale opera arias. As Manuel Couvreur and Philippe Vendrix remark: "rien, au niveau structurel, n'autorise à distinguer un air de tragédie en musique de l'ariette de l'opéra-comique" (Couvreur and Vendrix, "Les Enjeux théoriques de l'Opéra-Comique," 264). In the following pages, I will occasionally use the term "aria" instead of "*ariette*" for variety's sake.

[59] In addition to the *ariette, opéras comiques* featured a wide range of other musical material, including orchestral overtures (which occasionally included choral singing and/or pantomime), musical interludes between the acts (*entr'actes*), dances, as well as choruses and a variety of ensembles, ranging from duos, trios and quartets all the way up to septets. One also finds what Elizabeth Cook calls "'mixed' ensemble[s] ... [which] either contrast combinations of individual characters with a larger choral body (as, for example, in the duet-chorus) or call upon several soloists to form a small chorus" (Elisabeth Cook, *Duet and Ensemble in the Early Opéra-Comique* [New York : Garland Publishing, 1995], xi). Although there are many exceptions to this rule, in general earlier *opéras comiques* (those composed in the 1750s and 1760s) tended to feature solo *ariettes* while later works afforded ensembles an ever larger place. One can, for example, compare Favart's and Duni's *Les Moissonneurs* (1768) to Sedaine and Grétry's *Richard Coeur de Lion* (1784) in this regard. While the former features fourteen solos, two duets, and four choral numbers, the latter is mostly made up of ensembles, and often rather complex ones. David Charlton notes, at the conclusion to his book on A-E-M Grétry, the most successful and prolific *opéra-comique* composer of the late 1760s to the 1780s: "Grétry's career embraced the transformation from aria-based comedy to finale-based comedy, from solo-based drama to chorus-based, and from formally traditional music to completely nonconformist designs" (David Charlton, *Grétry and the growth of opéra-comique* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986], 325).

[60] On Voltaire and Rousseau's objections, see David Charlton, "'L'art dramatico-musical': an essay," in *Music and Theatre: Essays in Honour of Winton Dean,* ed. Nigel Fortune (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 232. On Grimm's objections, see Thomas, *Aesthetics of Opera,* 219.

Rozoi evokes the dramatic modulations associated with the Italian style and goes on to insist upon their sentiment effect:

> *Henri IV* combat à *Ivry* : une mere, une amante sensibles, savent qu'en ce moment un époux, un fils, un amant qui leur est cher, peut leur être ravi pour jamais .... elles se promenent à grands pas, parlent de leurs craintes mutuelles, et confondent leurs larmes ; voilà une situation vraiment digne de tout coeur tendre. *Mais unissez à ce tableau le pouvoir de l'harmonie; que le Musicien exprime par des modulations vraiment énergiques les cris de l'amour et de la nature, ce qui n'étoit qu'un plaisir devient une ivresse: l'intérêt est doublé.*[61]

Garcin, for his part, praises *ariettes* for their power to evoke an emotional dynamism. Favorably comparing *le chant composé* (typically found in the *opéra comique*) to *le chant simple* (which he associates with the *da capo* arias of *opera seria*), he writes: "le chant composé s'étend à un bien plus grand nombre de sujets, il peindra différens tableaux de la Nature, il rendra différentes situations de l'ame, il en fera sentir la marche et les changements ... "[62]

As we will see in the following chapters, music suggests emotional meaning in a variety of ways. On occasion, we will see musical signs function as relatively direct, unambiguous indicators of some emotional state, while at other times, musical material will seem to evoke a more ambiguous, less penetrable interiority. We will even seen intradiagetic music—songs and melodies performed within *opéra comique'*s fictional worlds—invested with the power to evoke highly personal, yet also shared meanings.

Above I noted that music was seen as a vehicle for emotional expression in both eighteenth-century aesthetic theory (Dubos) and moral philosophy (Rousseau). One can also see shifting conceptions of music as closely linked to the sentimentalization of lyric

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[61] Barnabé Farmian de Rozoi, *Dissertation sur le drame lyrique* (The Hague and Paris: Veuve Duchesne, 1775), 11-12.

[62] Laurent Garcin, *Traité du Mélodrame, ou Réflexions sur la musique dramatique* (Paris: Vallat-la-Chapelle, 1772), 4.

theater. In the seventeenth century, the production of tragic emotion was closely linked to forms of theatrical reason. In order to experience intense identificatory emotion, the spectator needed fictional worlds whose regulation by the unities, decorum and forms of verisimilitude would promote, or at least not shatter belief.[63] Music, however, was instead associated with the realm of the irrational, and, thus seen to function not as the vehicle of moral emotion, but instead as "mere" sensual pleasure. [64] If music did find a key role to play, it was in the construction *tragédie lyrique* as spoken tragedy's theatrical other. If *tragédie lyrique* featured gods, sorcerers and other mythological beings whose comportment defied spoken tragedy's standards of moral and aesthetic verisimilitude, this irrationality of content could be linked with a similar irrationality of form and thus rationalized, as it were. [65]

As music became naturalized in the eighteenth century—as it became understood as a more intense, more emotional form of speech—lyric theater began to evolve not in opposition to but in parallel with spoken theater.[66] In fact, one can see in *opéra comique*'s own trajectory—its move from the more refined and conventional forms of feeling featured in Favart's early pastorals (1730s and 1740s), through the incipient

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[63] This is not to imply that each of these theoretical categories was not itself unstable and highly contested, as John D. Lyons has argued in *Kingdom of Disorder: The Theory of Tragedy in Classical France* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1999).

[64] If music had any relation to meaning, it was only to the extent that it could enhance the meaning of the text. For opera's detractors, however, (who also tended to be detractors of theater *tout court*) music, as meaningless but seductive sensuality, made *tragédie en musique* "une sorte d'hyper-théâtre; elle [la musique] voile et dilue dangereusement le péché d'idolâtrie auquel se livre tout spectateur, accentue l'effet de dé-réalisation qui se transforme en dé-culpabilisation" (Catherine Kintzler, *Poétique de l'Opéra Français de Corneille à Rousseau* [Paris: Minerve, 1991], 249). For the two dominant views of the role of music in *tragédie en musique* in the seventeenth century, see Thomas, *Aesthetics of Opera,* 30-31.

[65] See Kintzler, *Poétique de l'Opéra Français,* 244-297.

[66] Couvreur and Vendrix, *"Les Enjeux théoriques,"* 217.

sentimentalization that flowed into the genre with the *ariettes* (in the 1750s and 1760s)
towards a more intimate or violent emotionality in the two decades before the Revolution
as paralleling and interwoven with the sentimentalization of Parisian theater *tout court*—
with the broader move from the *comédies larmoyantes* of La Chaussée in the 1730s and
1740s through the plays inspired by Diderot's theory of the *genre sérieux* and performed
at the *Comédie Française* in the 1760s, [67] (and on the Boulevard stages, in the 1770s),[68]
through the arrival of Gluckean reform opera in 1774, to the proto-melodramatic
pantomimes héroïques performed on the Boulevard stage in the late 1770s and 1780s.[69]

At the same time, we can also see *opéra comique*'s evolution as less linear, than
wedge-shaped. That is, the genre included an increasing variety of forms and subgenres
as the century progressed. Thus, by the 1770s and 1780s, one sees *opéras comiques* that
were almost melodramatic[70] in their emotional "excess" and "moral manichaeism"[71]
sharing the stage with gentle sentimental pastorales.[72] In fact, *opéra comique* has been
seen as offering a subgeneric diversity so great that it would stymie all efforts at
categorization. If a contemporary commentator marvels that "ce genre qui n'en est point

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[67] Among which one may count Charles Collé's *La Partie de Chasse d'Henri Quatre* (1774), Denis
Diderot's *Le Père de Famille* (1758; 1761) and *Le Fils Naturel* (1757; 1771); Michel-Jean Sedaine's *Le
Philosophe sans le Savoir* (1765); and Pierre Beaumarchais's *Eugénie* (1761).

[68] Louis-Sébastien Mercier's *drames, La Brouette de Vinaigrier* (1776) and *Jenneval* (1776), were first
performed on the lowly, unofficial stage of the *Théâtre des Associés* (Gaiffe, *Le Drame,* 200).

[69] See Martine de Rougemont, *La vie théâtrale en France au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris and Genève: Champion
Slatkine, 1988), 46-51; and Eise Carel Van Bellen, *Les Origines du Mélodrame* (Utrecht: Kemink and
Zoon, 1927), 64-78.

[70] Grétry's and Sedaine's *Raoul Barbe Bleu* (1789) or Monsigny's and Sedaine's *Félix ou l'Enfant trouvé*
(1777), for instance.

[71] Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of
Excess* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 5.

[72] Such as Dalayrac's and Monvel's *Sargines Ou L'élève de l'amour* (1788) or Dezède's and Monvel's *Les
Trois Fermiers* (1777).

un, réunit tous les genres, Parade, Bergerie, Féerie, Pastorale, Comédie, Tragédie,"[73]

more recently Manuel Couvreur and Philippe Vendrix have concluded that :

> Par son extraordinaire variété, par la vigueur de son succès durant tout le siècle, l'opéra comique a suscité des oeuvres si nombreuses et si diverses qu'il était devenu impossible aux critiques de la définir. Les traités du XVIIIe siècle se révèlent incapables de nous aider à classer les genres, à en définir des règles essentielles ni même à en cerner les sujets de prédilection. Aujourd'hui comme hier, cette démarche réductrice ôte au genre ce qui fait son originalité : son absence même de règles et de cadre théorique.[74]

Genre in *Opéra Comique*

In my readings of *opéra comique,* I will, however, be drawing (and drawing on) certain subgeneric distinctions, most notably between sentimental pastorale and sentimental comedy. I want to emphasize that, while I invoke the notion of (sub)genre, I will not for all that be engaging in any kind of literary "border patrol,"[75] nor I am interested in an exercise of musico-literary taxonomy, any sterile (and ultimately futile) attempt to neatly arrange each work under its appropriate rubric. Instead, I follow other recent scholars in understanding genre as fuzzy and fluid, as a matter of Wittgensteinian "family resemblance,"[76] rather than as a fixed list of elements to be sought out and checked off. Therefore, not every sentimental-pastoral *opéra comique* I discuss in the first chapter is necessarily characterized by an idyllic country setting, a central father-

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[73] Contant d'Orville, *Histoire de l'opéra buffon,* vol.2 (Geneva: Slatkine, 1970), 108.

[74] Couvreur and Vendrix, "Les enjeux théoriques," 240.

[75] Responding to Derrida and Croce, Wai Chee Dimock similarly positions her use of genre against the normalization with which the concept has long been linked. Eschewing the "border policing" Derrida takes as a form of "madness," Dimock "invoke[s] genre less as a law, a rigid taxonomic landscape and more as a self-obsoleting system, a provisional set that will always be bent and pulled and stretched by its many subsets" (Wai Chee Dimock, "Genre as World System: Epic and Novel on Four Continents," *Narrative* 14.1 [2006], 85).

[76] The notion of "family resemblance" helped Ludwig Wittgenstein explain what he saw as a key feature of everyday language use: that abstractions such as "game"—to take his famous example—do not have to be precisely defined, or even definable, in order to be meaningful. See Mark Jago, *Wittgenstein* (Penrith: Humanities-Ebooks, 2007), 55-58; Anat Biletzki, "Ludwig Wittgenstein," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* ed. Edward N. Zalta, accessed 4 July 2010, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/wittgenstein/#Lan>; and Wai Chee Dimock, "Genre as World System," 85.

daughter dyad, a thematic alignment of desire and duty, musical interludes that proleptically resolve conflict, etc. But there are enough *opéras comiques* that share some of these features to allow the extraction of a sentimental-pastoral "logic" that can, in turn, be closely associated with a sensuously blended form of sympathy common in these *opéras comiques'* fictional worlds, assimilated to worldly sensibility, and, finally, used as an analytical tool in later chapters. Recognizing several intersecting features of the sentimental pastorale helps us understand the subgenre as a convention not only against which to read other *opéras comiques,* but also as a convention against which other *opéras comiques* define themselves. I will see at least two different *opéras comiques*—Grétry's and Marmontel's *Zémire et Azor* and Grétry's and Sedaine's *Le Comte d'Albert*—as thus gesturing away from the sentimental pastorale and its particularly blended, sensuous form of sympathy towards more morally challenging modes of affective relatedness.

<p align="center">*Opéra Comique* and Diderot's theory of the *drame*</p>

It is somewhat of a critical convention to read sentimental *opéra comique* within the framework of an Encyclopedist aesthetics of moving virtue and illusionistic naturalism. Thomas, citing Marmontel and Diderot, discusses *opéra comique*'s concern with "simple nature," with the family, and with the elements of the everyday with which the average theatergoer could identify.[77] David Charlton, for his part, focuses on *opéra comique*'s increasing concern with musico-dramatic continuity and unity, and particularly on what he sees as Michel-Jean Sedaine's attempt to "synthesize word, melody, musical 'gesture' and, not least, action."[78] In focusing on the pastoral and on worldliness, I am

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[77] Thomas, *Aesthetics of Opera,* 222, 226-227.

[78] Charlton, "L'art dramatico-musical," 241.

making somewhat of a contrary claim as to what *opéra comique* is all about. Although I

concur that the genre *is* very much concerned with feeling and with sympathy, it is, as a

whole, much less concerned with the "natural" and the "everyday" than has hitherto been

suggested. On the other hand, I do see Michel-Jean Sedaine (to whom I devote my third

chapter) as moving *opéra comique* not necessarily in the direction of Diderot's ideal of

the *genre sérieux*[79] (although Sedaine's best known play, *Le Philosophe sans le savoir,*

has often been read as a realization of a Diderotian theoretical model)[80] but instead

towards a theater that was more "realistic" (in a broad sense), and in many ways less

idealizing than Diderot's serious genre (as well as the vast majority of *opéras comiques*).

Where Diderot, as Scott Bryson explains, imagined the *drame* as simultaneously

mirroring everyday reality and, at the same time, forming a utopian space in which the

spectator could identify with models of virtue,[81] Sedaine is less interested in conforming

to the tonal uniformity and rigorous unity of action upon which Diderot predicated the

creation of this utopian space, than he is in evoking possible worlds in their individuality

and particularity. Even if Sedaine might have, as Charlton has argued, sought forms of

aesthetic unity, the result of his efforts, as I will show, is a kind of atomization and

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[79] Diderot develops the theory of the *genre sérieux* in the third of his *Entretiens sur le Fils Naturel.* He (or rather his fictional playwright, Dorval) presents this new form of theater as a way to expand the existing dramatic system, a way of representing the vast swathe of everyday life excluded by the narrow focus of comedy on the frankly humorous and tragedy on the affairs and sufferings of a tiny political elite. Diderot returns to the conception of a middling sort of theater in his later, more conservative *De la poésie Dramatique.* Here, he couples the *genre sérieux,* with *la comédie sérieuse,* thus reinscribing the dualistic opposition of the classical system (Ledbury, *Sedaine, Greuze,* 42). In *De la poésie Dramatique,* Diderot is also considerably more moralizing, imagining the theater as a sanctuary of moving virtue in a fallen world: "C'est en allant au théâtre qu'ils se sauveront de la compagnie des méchants dont ils sont entourés; c'est là qu'ils trouveront ceux avec lesquels ils aimeraient à vivre ; c'est là qu'ils verront l'espèce humaine comme elle est, et qu'ils se réconcilieront avec elle" (Denis Diderot, *De la Poésie Dramatique, Esthétique-Théâtre,* vol.4, ed. Laurent Versini [Paris: Robert Laffont, 1996], 1280-1281).

[80] Ledbury, *Sedaine, Greuze,* 102.

[81] Scott S. Bryson, *The Chastised Stage: Bourgeois Drama and the Exercise of Power* (Saratoga: Anma Libri, 1991), 40-73.

fragmentation that, while not metaphorical *per se,* winds up functioning much like the proto-Romantic poetic discourse Diderot imagines elsewhere—in his theory of the hieroglyph—to stimulate the spectator's interpretive imagination.

Not that Sedaine is any less concerned with feeling, virtue, or sympathy.

Thesis Statement

In fact—and this is my primary concern in this dissertation—I argue not only that sympathy in *opéra comique* is, unlike the standard model described above, a primarily relational, even intersubjective phenomenon, but also that sympathy appears in at least three different forms, the quality and structure of which are conditioned by subgeneric convention and authorial project.

Description of Project

I devote one chapter to each form of sympathy. I begin my first chapter by describing how what I call a worldly-sensuous sympathy functions in Duni's and Favart's sentimental pastorale—*Les Moissonneurs.* I argue that worldly-sensuous sympathy's combination of psychological and aesthetic features, its coupling of a non-repressive blend of moral connection and sensuous pleasure with both a representational self-consciousness and an insistence on referential directness remains unexplained by the standard model of sympathy. I then show how worldly-sensuous sympathy's peculiar constellation of features correspond to Marivaux's and Dubos's empiricizing understanding of sympathy in life and in aesthetic experience. In the second part of the chapter, I show how worldly-sensuous sympathy can, when its empiricizing logic is taken seriously, serve as an explanatory model of sentimental-pastoral *opéra comique'*s broader patterning, of its characteristic connections between thematic, formal, structural, and

performative features.

In the second chapter, I discover and construct a model of sympathy as intersubjective exchange by combining the notion of intersubjectivity developed in contemporary relational psychoanalysis with the melodically-mediated amorous sympathy Rousseau imagined in his idyllic early societies. Where the pleasure of worldly-sensuous sympathy derives from a non-repressive turning away from difference and conflict, intersubjective sympathy, I argue, draws its seductive energy from the very encounter with another's subjective difference. If we may understand the subject of sympathy as seeking empowering recognition from the other, this recognition is meaningful only to the extent that the other is recognized and experienced as a subject in his or her own right. I conclude the chapter by reading two sentimental comedies by Grétry and Marmontel—*Le Huron* and *Zémire et Azor*—as each turning around a form of amorous intersubjective exchange. In the process, I show how amorous intersubjectivity in these works is bound up with an articulation of conflict that separates the comedic from the pastoral and—particularly in the case of *Zémire et Azor*—with an intradiagetic celebration of a worldly aesthetic of refined self- and other-affirming sensibility.

In the third chapter, I move from a discussion of sympathy within broadly accepted *opéra comique* convention—whether pastoral or comedic—to focus on sympathy as it is represented within the work of Michel-Jean Sedaine, a self-consciously innovative librettist. I first use Diderot's notion of the musical hieroglyph as a lens through which to make sense of Sedaine's form of realism. I argue that, while Sedaine has been understood as attempting to create a more naturalistic form of theater, his move away from the conventions of *opéra comique* actually resulted in an open-endedness,

complexity and ambiguity that, much like the hieroglyph, function less to promote absorptive passivity than it did to draw the spectator into a mode of active interpretation. I then argue that this productive representational opacity is echoed within Sedaine's fictional worlds in obstacles that trigger a leap into the sympathetic imagination. These obstacles might take the form of physical distance or isolation from others, a separation concretized in prison walls. They might involve some form of communicational blockage, or even the encounter with someone of strikingly different rank and personal experience. In most cases, however, these obstacles prompt attempts to imagine the world from the other's perspective, an effort that sometimes opens onto sacrificial, heroic action. I conclude this chapter with an analysis of a work which draws these aesthetic and moral elements together —Grétry's and Sedaine's most successful *opéra comique, Richard Coeur-de-Lion.*

CHAPTER I
SYMPATHY IN
SENTIMENTAL-PASTORAL *OPÉRA COMIQUE*

Writing after the trauma that was the Revolution, the literary critic Jean-François La Harpe took an alternately nostalgic and suspicious look at Charles-Simon Favart's early *opéras comiques*. Favart's *Les Amours de Bastien et Bastienne* (1753), might have approached the combined elegance and naturalness of Virgil's eclogues,[82] but *Annette et Lubin* (1762) already bears the tell-tales signs of an immoral and, above all, tasteless *philosophie.* The poor Lubin has been made both morally and aesthetically *invraisemblable*—licentious, stupid, and incoherent as a character—just so that the author can make an allusion to natural law.[83] A few pages later, we see La Harpe weighing the even more sentimentalizing *Les Moissonneurs* (1768) in his critical balance. This pastoral might be a bit too serious; Favart's *bon seigneur,* Candor, might insist a bit too self-consciously on his virtue. And yet, for the most part, *Les Moissonneurs*'s moralism is pleasing and appropriately light-hearted.[84] La Harpe gives it a pass.

The very fact that the conservative La Harpe saw fit to devote almost three hundred pages of his *Lycée ou Cours de littérature* to *opéra comique,* a genre considered far less worthy of critical attention than tragedy, spoken comedy or even *tragédie lyrique,* suggests that he saw the genre as a whole as being safely free of any pernicious

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[82] Jean-François La Harpe, *Lycée ou Cours de littérature Ancienne et Moderne,* vol. 12 (Paris: Chez Deterville, 1828), 292-293.

[83] *Ibid.,* 309-310.

[84] *Ibid.,* 319.

philosophie.[85] And, indeed, most *opéras comiques* offered their public not so much clarion calls for social equality or sober explorations of moral conflict, but instead the gentle rosiness of the sentimental pastorale—celebrations of happy love and familial harmony all in an idealized natural setting.

Lack of overt philosophical ambition aside, sentimental-pastoral *opéras comiques* still echo the themes and dynamic of a broader Enlightenment discourse of sensibility. Just as thinkers as diverse as Dubos, Gamaches, Hutcheson, Hume, and Rousseau saw the social order as ultimately produced by humans' innate aptitude for fellow feeling, so too the sentimental pastorale works its inclusive familial reconciliations through moments of sympathy.

These moments of sympathy will be central to this chapter as well. I begin with a close reading of a paradigmatically sentimental-pastoral *opéra comique*—Duni's and Favart's *Les Moissonneurs*—focusing on two moments in which sympathy is foregrounded—an initial and a culminating tableau. I then use insights from this exercise to make broader claims about the subgenre of sentimental-pastoral *opéra comique*.

In the first part of the chapter, I isolate two features of sympathy—its dependence on the relative proximity of sympathetic subject and object as well as these latter's awareness of style and representational form within their fictional worlds. When I turn to the question of sympathy's linguistic and musical mediation, I find these two features metonymically mirrored in utterances that call attention to their form while simultaneously functioning as unproblematically direct connections between shared outer worlds and characters' inner moral and affective experience. I then show how these two features fit uncomfortably within a now standard critical framework and argue that the

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[85] *Ibid.,* 236-515.

surface differences between sympathy in the sentiment pastorale and that of the standard model can be explained by a difference in underlying "logic." While according to the standard model, sympathy is driven by a dynamic of lack, defensive repression and return of the repressed, sympathetic relations in *Les Moissonneurs* instead evince empiricizing non-repressive continuities between and coexistence of the "natural" world of sensual experience and the socio-cultural world of language, custom and aesthetic convention.

In the second part of the chapter, I turn back to *opéra comique* and argue that understanding sympathy from such an empiricist perspective is critically productive— that such an approach helps reveal and make sense of this subgenre's broader thematic, formal, and structural patterning while offering new models of the genre's extra-diagetic cultural and aesthetic relationships.

Duni's and Favart's *Les Moissonneurs*

An adaptation of the Biblical book of Ruth, Duni's and Favart's *Les Moissonneurs* turns around the relationship between Rosine (Ruth) and Candor (Boaz). Ruth and Gennevote, her adoptive mother, live in undeserved poverty, but eke out a living by gleaning the land of Candor, the generous local *seigneur*. Although they recognize this latter as a distant relative, they are too noble-hearted and considerate to even think of directly soliciting his aid. The action begins when Candor finds Rosine suffering at the hands of his overseer. He takes pity on her (and Gennevote) and resolves to discreetly learn more about them. This rather simple plot is complicated by the appearance of Dolival, Candor's self-seeking Parisian nephew. His continually foiled attempts to seduce Rosine work to Candor's advantage, as they wind up drawing Candor and Rosine closer together. Finally, after a culminating scene in which Rosine and

Candor's mutual feelings are all but expressed, Dolival's most daring tactic yet—hiding in Rosine's and Gennevote's house—allows Candor to play the part of rescuer, and offers the pretext for Rosine (and Gennevote) to finally reveal their situation to Candor. This latter welcomes the two women back into the family, Gennevote as a long-lost relative and the former as wife.

In its bucolic setting and moral geography—its opposition of wholesome country values to urban corruption, *Les Moissonneurs* is representative of the common subgenre of sentimental-pastoral *opéra comique.* Duni and Favart go beyond the limited aesthetic ambitions of many sentimental pastorales, however, by using scenery, lighting and music to anticipate and materially represent the opera's thematic linking of human community to natural spaces and rhythms. The stage directions of most sentimental pastorales merely mention peasants' or villagers' dwellings, sometimes gently shaded by an elm, and, depending on the plot's social structure, the possible presence of a *château*.[86] Favart's descriptive directions, however, suggest a full-fledged agrarian idyll: besides the obligatory peasant abode with its elm, one finds a key element of the classical *locus amoenus* in the presence of flowing water ("à gauche est un petit tertre couronné par un orme; il sort de cet endroit une source d'eau vive qui forme un bassin"),[87] as well as a

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[86] M. Elizabeth Bartlet notes that: "most *comédies mêlées d'ariettes* had village settings. These can be divided into two groups: ones in which the characters are all common people such as Monsigny's *Rose et Colas* (libretto by Michel-Jean Sedaine, and Duni's *Les deux chasseurs et la laitière* (libretto by Anseaume ...), and others in which some upper-class characters appear as well, as in Martini's *L'amoureux de quinze ans, ou la double fête* and Duni's *Les Moissonneurs* ..." (M. Elizabeth Bartlet, "Grétry, Marie-Antoinette and *La rosière de Salency*," *Royal Music Association* 111 [1984-1985], 100-101). Although I cannot offer any exact figures, I would argue that this latter kind of pastorale, that which includes some kind of vertical relation between characters of different ranks or estates, is considerably more common than the former.

[87] Charles-Simon Favart, *Les Moissonneurs, Théâtre choisi de Favart,* vol. 2 (Paris: Léopold Collin, 1809), 131; Renato Poggioli, *The Oaten Flute: Essays on Pastoral Poetry and the Pastoral Ideal* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 136; R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), 197-198.

visual reminder of Clarens, that most famous of mid-eighteenth century agrarian idylls, in the backdrop of towering mountains ("derrière est une chaîne de hautes montagnes, qui se perd dans l'éloignement")[88] and finally, the element that most pragmatically anchors the characters to the country-side—a field of wheat. Detailed instructions as to lighting effects complement this scenic realism. The sun is to rise at the beginning of the first act, reach its zenith at the end of the second (in time for the reapers' mid-day meal), then slowly descend throughout the final act. Spectators, however, are not treated to the full scenic embodiment of the work's pastoral economy until the opera begins and Gennevote, who sits spinning thread, begins to sing. Her *ariette*'s 6/8 time, horn drone (on the tonic) and simple melody recall the conventional *musette*, and thus "the rustic scene [of which] it is most directly suggestive,"[89] while its gently repeated arpeggios, larger scale cyclical structure (rondo form), and text explicitly thematizing both the passing of time and the possibility that virtuous activity might transcend its flow,[90] all echo of the rhythms of Gennevote's own domestic activity, and, by extension, the circular exchange between humankind and an ever abundant nature that sustains the opera's idyll.

In *Les Moissonneurs,* Duni and Favart also offer a philosophical *pièce à thèse,* which not only dramatizes, but also sententiously describes what, given the scenic introduction, might at first seem to be a very Rousseauian idyll.[91] Like Wolmar, Candor

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[88] Favart, *Les Moissonneurs,* 131.

[89] Wye Jamison Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart: Le Nozze Di Figaro and Don Giovanni* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press 1983), 52.

[90] "Le temps passe, passe, passe, // Comme ce fil entre mes doigts; // Il faut en remplir l'espace, // Il est à nous autant qu'aux rois .... Notre course passagère // Prescrit assez l'emploi des jours; // C'est le seul bien qu'on peut faire // Qui les rend trop longs ou trop courts" (Favart, *Les Moissonneurs*, 131-132).

[91] The possibility that *Les Moissonneurs* was directly or indirectly modeled on Rousseau's novel *Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse* is all the more likely given that this latter, published in 1761, was a contemporary

manages an estate according to the ideals of enlightened self-interest. Unlike Dolival, his

Parisian nephew, who leads a life of extravagant waste and violent pleasure, Candor

gives—generously, effortlessly and productively.[92] Moreover, as is Wolmar's and Julie's

generosity, this beneficence is a key process in an ordered, self-sustaining system. We

find similarly Rousseauian echoes in the portrayal of a form of intensely felt, yet

ultimately imagined social equality, as a chorus of reapers makes clear during the

community's mid-day meal—"Ah! queu régal ! // Notre bon maître // Veut bien paraître

notre égal."[93] Finally, like Wolmar, Candor is represented as mirroring in his person the

self-sufficiency of the estate he governs.[94]

Rousseau's idyll, however, ultimately articulates a proto-Kantian skepticism

about the possible alignment of desire and duty, as Julie's death hints at the unavowed

repressive force of Wolmar's rationalizing utopia,[95] while one finds no such unsettling

return of the repressed in *Les Moissonneurs.* Within the idyllic world of the *opéra*

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best-seller (Michel Launay, Préface, *Julie ou La Nouvelle Héloïse,* by Jean-Jacques Rousseau [Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1967], xiii).

[92] It is important to note that it is not a matter here of a simple opposition between aristocratic and bourgeois manners, even if one were to admit such a distinction as critically germane. If Candor refuses aristocratic excess, he is hardly the image of the rational bourgeois, judiciously attempting to increase his capital, whether material or personal and affective. He is much more the embodiment and the mirror of the pastoral economy that Renato Poggioli describes as an economy of abundance: "The shepherd is the opposite of the *homo oeconomicus* on both ethical and practical grounds. Yet even the pastoral presupposes an economy of its own .... Pastoral economy seems to realize the contained self-sufficiency that is the ideal of the ... family. The pastoral community produces all it needs, but nothing more, except for a small margin of security. It equates its desires with its needs ..." (Poggioli, *The Oaten Flute*, 4-5).

[93] Favart, *Moissonneurs*, 175.

[94] Julie: "Seul entre tous les mortels, il [Wolmar] est maître de sa propre félicité, parce qu'il est heureux comme Dieu même, sans rien désirer de plus que ce dont il jouit" (Rousseau, *Julie,* 349).
"Candor: Heureux qui, sans soins, sans affaires, // Peut cultiver ses champs en paix // Le plus simple toit de ses pères // Vaut mieux que l'éclat des palais" (Favart, Moissonneurs, 140).
"Candor [à Dolival]: Mon cher neveu ... j'ai pitié de tes plaisirs. // Plus délicat que toi, je jouis de moi-même. // Le calme de mes jours vaut mieux que tes désirs" (Favart, *Les Moissonneurs,* 144).

[95] See Christine Roulston, *Virtue, Gender, and the Authentic Self in Eighteenth-Century Fiction: Richardson, Rousseau, and Laclos* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998), 129-141.

comique, there is instead every indication that personal happiness (correctly understood) does ultimately inspire the very feelings and actions that virtue dictates, that pleasure does open onto duty and that, duty, in turn, can only transform itself into pleasure. Simply put, within this economy of abundance there is no sign of violently excluded difference or submerged desire.

This moral-aesthetic patterning first comes to the fore in the tableau-like scene that follows directly upon the opera's exposition. Here Candor happens upon a tearful Rosine who has just been the object of Rustaut, his overseer's, scorn. He is immediately moved ("Sa douceur me touche et m'émeut... // Elle est vraiment intéressante"),[96] and, by the end of the act, he has decided to make her and Gennevote the objects of his benevolent attention.[97]

In many ways, this scene recalls the sentimental tableau as it has been recently theorized. First, we find a pathetic figure who functions as the object of another's sympathetic concern. This scene is, moreover, not merely one of pathos, but more specifically one of moving virtue. Rosine's appeal is based in part on a series of refusals—her refusal to ask Candor for help, to defend herself against Rustaut—refusals that one might see as the sacrifice with which Diderot equated virtue, or the innocence that David Denby has closely linked to passivity and suffering in the sentimental text.[98]

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[96] Favart, *Les Moissonneurs,* 141.

[97] "Candor [à Rustaut]: Gennevote et Rosine // Avec grand soin cachent ce qu'elles sont. // L'estime générale est le bien qu'elles ont; // Mais c'est le seul. Leur état me chagrine. // Tâche de démêler leur secret."
"Rustaut: J'imagine // Que vous voulez devenir leur soutien" (Favart, *Les Moissonneurs,* 150).

[98] "Qu'est-ce que la vertu? C'est, sous quelque face qu'on la considère, un sacrifice de soi-même" (Denis Diderot, "L'éloge de Richardson," in *Oeuvres: Esthétique-Théâtre,* vol. 4 [Paris: Robert Laffont, 1996], 156); David Denby sees "misfortune" as the key category of the sentimental narrative. Misfortune, in turn, is associated with "innocence" and "powerlessness:" "Constantly overcome but constantly renewed in a

Candor too, is not merely moved, but more specifically moved to exercise what he has already presented as his characteristic generosity.

This scene is not structured, however, by the dynamic of repression and return of the repressed which governs recent models of the sentimental tableau. For Jay Caplan, even latent erotic elements of the ostensibly moral sentimental tableau are produced, for example, by the same logic of exclusion/paradoxical inclusion that drives the spectator's absorption into the sentimental scene. Or, as he explains: "The more pathetically a figure is represented, the more it has been subject to prohibition and hence becomes desirable."[99] In this scene, however, Rosine's erotic appeal is in no way latent or repressed but appears clearly alongside her virtue. If Candor is moved by her distress, he also finds her "jolie" as well as "intéressante,"[100] the latter term being, as a contemporary dictionary reminds us, a "happy neologism" for a person who pleases and attracts another's affection.[101]

The blendedness of Candor's experience of sympathy, the ambiguous connection between the sensual and the moral can also be seen at work diachronically in the triangle that develops between Candor, Dolival and Rosine, as the action unfolds.

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multiplicity of forms ... misfortune is the founding event of the sentimental narrative, conferring on the person whom it befalls the crucial status of victim. It is that status, closely associated with notions of powerlessness and innocence, which is the basis of the process of sentimentalization" (David Denby, *Sentimental Narrative and the Social Order in France 1760-1820* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994], 71-72).

[99] Jay Caplan, *Framed Narratives: Diderot's Genealogy of the Beholder* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 22.

[100] Favart, *Les Moissonneurs,* 141.

[101] "Dans le discours familier, il se dit des persones: qui plait, qui s'atire l'afection. "C'est un homme *intéressant*. En ce sens, c'est un néologisme heureux" (Jean-François Féraud, "intéressant, " in *Dictionnaire critique de la langue françoise*, [1787-88], accessed 20 December 2009, < http://artflx.uchicago.edu.proxy.lib.uiowa.edu/cgi-bin/dicos/pubdico1look.pl?strippedhw=int%C3%A9ressant>).

At first glance, Dolival might seem to function merely as Candor's opposite and foil. If Candor participates in a system of balanced and productive exchange, Dolival is presented as a violent and disruptive force. His desires invariably lead him to disturb the regular, smooth flow of objects and activities that structure this idyll. Dolival's first seduction attempt is, for example, represented as a waste of time, one that prevents Rosine from gleaning, pulling her away from her function in the smoothly interconnected flow of activity which defines Candor's community. Its disruptive effects are, moreover, underlined in a duet in which his whining pleas—sinuous chromatic lines set to a restless and unpredictable harmony with frequent hiccupping anacruses—upset the rhythmic regularity of Rosine's vocal line.[102]

Moreover, if Candor's very name bespeaks what one can only assume to be his utmost integrity, Dolival displays a decidedly unsentimental readiness to use moral disguise and trickery to further his amorous projects. After he sees that attempts at overt flattery are to no avail, he decides to present himself as a younger version of the man Rosine so admires: "Je suis neveu de bon monsieur Candor.... // Et je suis un autre lui-même. // Oui, j'aurai soin de votre sort...."[103] He then attempts (as Valmont will later do in *Les Liaisons Dangéreuses*) to turn the rhetoric of virtue to the ends of seduction: "Dolival: Il faut qu'apparemment vous ayez un coeur dur. // Vous craignez le plaisir d'être reconnoissante,"[104] before going so far as to feign sympathetic interest in Gennevote: "Dolival (à Gennevote): Je fais le plus grand cas de votre connoissance, // Ma

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[102] Egidio Duni and Charles-Simon Favart, *Les Moissonneurs* (Paris: Chez l'Auteur, 1768), 52-57.

[103] Favart, *Les Moissonneurs,* 155.

[104] *Ibid.,* 155.

bonne, je vous vois avec un vrai plaisir."[105]

When Candor's budding relationship with Rosine is read in parallel with Dolival's repeatedly rebuffed attempts at seduction, it becomes evident there is less a clear-cut opposition between the two projects than a taking-up of the latter's energy into the former. This process of non-repressive integration becomes clear by the end of the first act. Here, we find Dolival once again harassing Rosine as he attempts to literally drag her to the reapers' joyful dinner. Instead of merely protecting Rosine and separating her from Dolival, Candor responds to the situation by acting like a more kind and generous suitor. Where Dolival attempted to force Rosine to the dinner*,* Candor invites her gently, then asks her to sit beside him. As if to bring out the ambiguity of Candor's feelings toward Rosine, Favart has "commères babillardes," allude to what they suggest is Candor's unacknowledged amorous project. Marote nudges her friends, asking knowingly what they think of "[sa] préférence."[106] And they continue in a similar vein: "La Trinquart: Regarde, Monseigneur verse à boire à Rosine. // Marote: Elle est bienheureuse."[107] And, in case the actresses chose not to make these remarks so many innuendos, Marote makes the meaning of this relationship clear in the drinking song which follows (song in which Candor sings the refrain and Dolival the last verse): "Marote : O le bon temps que la moisson! // On est ensemble sans façon. // Auprès de nos jeunes fillettes, // On voit toujours queuques garçons..."[108]

If, during the dinner, Dolival's project might be understood as serving Candor's

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[105] *Ibid.*, 157.

[106] *Ibid.*, 175.

[107] *Ibid.*, 177.

[108] *Ibid.*, 179.

unspoken amorous designs, soon thereafter, Candor's attempt to turn Dolival's third strategy of seduction to moral ends produces a similarly ambiguous result.

Before the dinner at the end of the second act, Dolival again plays the role of charitable *seigneur,* this time asking Rustaut to deliver a purse of gold to the needy Rosine and Gennevote. However, he cannot help but bribe the overseer to act as a spy-cum-*entremetteur*. This act of overreaching once again upsets his plans, as Rustaut, having decided to remain faithful to Candor, presents this latter with the purse (and news about Dolival) instead. Candor then sends the purse back to Rosine, transforming an act of seduction into an act of beneficence. When the purse is finally delivered to Rosine, she asks an old man (le Vieillard) to bring it back to Candor, thus transforming an act of generosity into proof of her own virtue. Even if one were not aware of the traditional libidinal connotations of gold, it becomes eminently clear that the circuit through which the purse passes overlays a moral meaning on a still powerful symbol of desire. If the discovery of the purse allows Rosine to demonstrate her virtue, it also gives her the opportunity to allude to her feelings for Candor: "Non, je ne puis soutenir sa présence; // Mon embarras, mon trouble, ma rougeur...."[109] When Candor receives the purse, he receives the information he was looking for (he is assured of the women's virtue). At the same time, he is given the opportunity to indirectly express his desire and secretly enjoy its pleasures. Immediately after sending Le Vieillard on his way with the gold for the last time, he suddenly feels the "besoin d'un moment de repos."[110]

If, in these scenes, it is the purse that both accumulates meaning and triggers a

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[109] *Ibid.*, 190.

[110] *Ibid.,* 194.

flood of sensual associations in both Rosine and Candor, it is music itself that functions similarly in the next segment, when in a culminating tableau, Candor and Rosine's ambiguous relationship reaches its point of greatest intensity.

Giving in to his sudden fatigue, Candor stretches out on an inviting grassy spot near the fountain, giving himself over to the refreshing pleasures of a good nap. Rosine passes by and, fascinated by Candor's calm, self-sufficient goodness, stops for a moment, before she is moved to song.

<u>Tableau: "O toi que le hameau révère"</u>

In her *ariette,* "O toi que le hameau révère" (figures A1-A4), Rosine progresses from prayerful appreciation of a fatherly protector, through the commenting of her equivocal gestures and ends with an allusion to her more than tender feelings: "Ah! comme mon coeur bat!"[111] While the text of the *ariette* articulates this slide from tender affection to timid expression of desire, it is the music itself that occasions the passage from the moral to the erotic, that serves as a bridge between more and less sublimated attachment. The *ariette* begins as a reverent prayer (mm. 1-50), its sustained slowness, muted strings, complex harmony, and opening melodic line, both smooth and expansive, making it distinctly more lyrical than any previous *ariette*. More than simply sweet and lyrical, however, the first part of the *ariette* conveys the intensity of Rosine's devotion. Its stately opening phrases move into a middle section where the text—"Ton sommeil facile // Sous un ciel d'azur"—evocative of Candor's moral tranquility, is set to a smooth, almost dreamlike, hovering melody (mm. 20-32).[112] The etherealness of the passage is

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[111] *Ibid.,* 197.

[112] Duni and Favart, *Les Moissonneurs,* 125.

created by a suppression of cadential punctuation linking otherwise regular two-measure phrases into one expansive, seamless phrase (figure A1). The intensity of this first prayer-like section appears to exert an influence on Rosine, for she is swept from contemplation into action, as lyricism gives way to a more rapidly moving section (mm. 43ff.) where repeated short staccato triplets and forte-pianos anticipate her furtive movements—her protecting Candor from the sun first with branches, then with her veil (figure A2). When she sings about her actions ("Je vais prêter l'oreille // ... doucement il sommeil // je crains qu'il ne s'éveille // le jour a trop d'éclat // paix plaçons cette branche // et vers lui qu'elle panche"),[113] the rests that interrupt her vocal line (e.g. mm. 61-66) suggest a Rosine so stealthy that she is holding her breath (figure A3). But this fluttering motif might also be understood as the musical representation of a heartbeat, particularly since by the end of the aria, Rosine has turned from commenting her stealthy acts of charity to singing—in a florid passage (mm. 86-92) —about her beating heart (figure A4). In other words, it is as if the music not only acts as a form of corporeal unconscious but also as if the aria represents and enacts the coming to consciousness of her desire.[114]

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[113] *Ibid.,*127-128.

[114] I have been analyzing this passage as if Rosine could actually hear the music that she is singing as well as the orchestral accompaniment. This leads one to ask, following Peter Kivy, "What is the nature of operatic utterance? *How* are operatic characters 'saying?'" (Peter Kivy, "Opera talk: A philosophical 'phantasie,'" *Cambridge Opera Journal* 3.1 [March 1991], 63). In "Opera talk," Kivy responds to Edward T. Cone's suggestion that at times the opposition between "realistic" song (song actually heard as such and sometimes composed by the fictional characters) and "conventional" song (song that only the public can hear) breaks down in opera (Edward T. Cone, "The World of Opera and Its Inhabitants," in *Music: A View from Delft: Selected Essays,* ed. Robert P. Morgan [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989], 125-157). Instead of directly refuting or concurring with Cone, Kivy suggests instead that one approach the problem in a slightly different fashion. Where Cone had begun by assuming an unbridgeable gap between opera and real life, Kivy suggests that the former could be understood as an exaggeration and extension of the latter. He argues that, to a certain degree, every utterance makes creative use of language. Hence, when we express-discover our emotions, we are also "composers" of a kind of musicalized language. Kivy then suggests that operatic characters might be understood in the same light—as "composers" of their own music, accompaniment included. The accompaniment, he explains, can be seen as an extension of their expressive utterance, a form of "expressive gesture and bodily movement..."(75). He concludes that there is no general rule as to the status of the operatic utterance—that this latter might be "realistic,"

If the music thus serves as a relay between different levels of Rosine's experience, it also acts as a bridge between her and Candor—or a channel that works its way through Candor's unconscious as well. After Rosine finishes her aria, Candor stirs, then describes his own liminal experience: "Je rêvois, je sentais mon âme suspendue // Entre les restes du sommeil, // Et l'instant qui touche au réveil; // Rosine s'offroit à ma vue. // Je distinguois les sons de sa voix ingénue."[115]

In this final tableau, then, we find the blending of the moral and the sensuous implicit in the sympathetic connections of the first tableau (as well as the complementary rather than oppositional relationship between Candor and Dolival's projects) not only in each character's response to the other but also in the form of supple "vertical" connections between Rosine's internal physiological perception, emotional response and cognitive reflection upon that response.

<u>The empiricizing "logic" of *Les Moissonneurs*</u>

We can use this culminating tableau as a first window onto what I will be describing as the specifically empiricist logic not only of *Les Moissonneurs,* but of the

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"conventional," or something in between, depending on the particular opera and the particular circumstances of the song. In this case, it does seem clear that Rosine hears not only the music she sings, but the accompaniment as well (as does Candor, as we will see), that, in an exaggerated form of real life, her emotional expression tells her something about her emotion as she expresses it.

Towards the beginning of "Opera Talk," Kivy theorizes emotional expression as "a process in which one comes to be aware of what the emotion is one has felt the need to express and has, in the event, expressed" (68). For a similar, but more elaborate theorization of emotional expression, See William M. Reddy, "Against Constructionism: The Historical Ethnography of Emotions," *Current Anthropology* 38.3 (June 1997), 327-351. Reddy defines "emotives" as forms of utterance that are neither performative, nor referential, but instead exist as part of a feedback loop between the subject and her environment: "An emotive statement seems at first glance to have a real external referent, to be descriptive or constative. On closer inspection, however, one recognizes that the 'external referent' that an emotive appears to point at is not passive in the formulation of the emotive, and it emerges from the act of uttering in a changed state. Emotives are influenced directly by and alter what they 'refer' to" (30). The point I am attempting to make is that Rosine's *ariette* might be seen to function as such an "emotive"— both expressing what she feels, shaping the world around her, while also looping back and changing her own emotional state and her awareness of it.

[115] Favart, *Les Moissonneurs,* 198.

sentimental-pastoral *opéra comique* in general.

One can get a sense of the specificity of this empiricizing tableau by comparing it to a more recent take on the musical heartbeat—Roland Barthes's "Rasch." For Barthes, music's "coups" are the beatings of the body and most notably of the heart:

> What is required is that *it beat* inside the body, against the temple, in the sex, in the belly, against the skin from inside, at the level of that whole sensuous emotivity which we call, both by metonymy and by antiphrasis, the 'heart.' 'To beat' is the very action of the heart (there is no 'beating' except the heart's).[116]

For Barthes, however, these sensuous musical heartbeats do not unfold into other meanings. They are not to be understood within any larger structure of musical codes, nor are they to be interpreted emotionally. In fact, they are not to be understood at all: "The beat—corporal and musical—must never be *the sign of a sign*: the accent is not expressive."[117] Moreover, the *coups*—bodily movement—may be recognized in music, may be repeated in the listener's own body, may even become "a site of the musical text where every distinction between composer, interpreter and auditor is abolished,"[118] but they are never the medium of a relationship—of a connection between and mutual transformation of different selves. While Barthes' musical heartbeat articulates a shunting between the extremes of unbridgeable distance (between corporeal and cognitive experience, between music's *coups* and language) and total fusion (between composer, interpreter and auditor), sympathetic response in *Les Moissonneurs* is always presented as being one element of a relationship, as located within a variety of continuities—within the self as well as between characters.

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[116] Roland Barthes, "Rasch," in *The Responsibility of Forms,* trans. Richard Howard (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1985), 302.

[117] *Ibid.*, 303.

[118] *Ibid.*, 303.

There are additional clues that sympathy—as it is modeled in *Les Moissonneurs*—both asks to be understood within an empiricist frame and resists the more typical critical approach to sentimentalism. But in order to read them, we will need to back up and look once again at recent critical approaches to sympathy in the tableau, this time in more detail.

As we have seen in the introduction, the critical approach that associates sympathy with the sentimental tableau relates the experience to two representational features—a distance between the subject and the object of sympathy and what one might call a form of emotional realism. We may now see these two features as logically connected in both eighteenth century and more recent theoretical accounts. In his theory of the theater, Diderot tends to emphasize emotional realism over distance. Reproducing a belief widely held among the anti-Rococo *philosophes*,[119] Diderot argues that spectators, intra- and extra-diagetic alike, will be drawn into the fiction to the extent that the expressive and representation medium efface itself and become a transparent window onto the fictional world and the subjective experience portrayed within.[120] Diderot, however, locates theatricality—distracting conspicuousness of form—in the figure of the actor, whose overly stylized practice serves to draw attention to himself at the expense of dramatic illusion. By turning away from the public, dropping the pretentious diction and gestures, by feeling and living instead of acting, the actor will strip away all that

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[119] Marion Hobson discusses the broad shift from a conception of illusion that includes awareness ("soft illusion") to one that excludes awareness ("hard illusion") that took place midway through the eighteenth century. Diderot, as well as other proponents of hard illusion, saw the contrasts, fragmentation, and arabesques of rococo art and theater as disrupting the spectator's experience of absorption by calling attention to aesthetic form (Marion Hobson, *The Object of Art: The Theory of Illusion in Eighteenth-Century France* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1982], 3-17; 45-61; 141-179). See also Elena Russo, *Styles of Enlightenment* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 16-44.

[120] Denis Diderot, *Les Entretiens sur le Fils Naturel, Oeuvres: Esthétique et Théâtre,* vol. 4 (Paris: Éditions Robert Laffont, 1996), 1136-1138.

distances the spectator from the fiction. Emotional proximity is thus produced by the distance—the *quatrième mur*—that now separates the actor from the spectators.[121]

More recent discussions of sympathy work these two representational features (implicitly, at least) through psychoanalytical theory and tend to privilege one of two separate logics. First, there is the logic of the fetish that we have already seen at work in Caplan's theory of imaginary spectatorship in Diderot.[122] Here, it is the distance between self and other—the constitution of self and other as spectator and spectacle—that allows the other to become the site onto which lack—loss, suffering, or conflict—can be projected and hence simultaneously recognized and denied. In this interpretation of sympathy, emotional realism is seen not as the happy opposite of the disruptive foregrounding of the signifier, but instead as so much detail that replicates the paradoxical dynamic of the fetish on a microcosmic level (every emotional nuance both pointing to the inaccessible reality of the other's emotional world and covering over and compensating for this inevitable lack of presence).

One also finds a second logic, that of plenitude. According to this closely related understanding of sympathy, affectively charged signs function analogously to other forms of realist representation—offering the comforting illusion not so much of a stable, naturalized "reality" but of an "authentic" connection with another's interior life.[123] Much

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[121] Although in this section I am aligning Diderot's theory of the *drame* and the tableau with the standard model of sympathy, one must recognize that in Diderot, the distance of the fourth wall does not preclude, but instead coexists with the direct communication of the emotions upon which I insisted in the introduction (pp. 8-9). Denis Diderot, *De la poésie dramatique, Oeuvres: Esthétique et Théâtre,* vol. 4 (Paris: Éditions Robert Laffont, 1996), 1309-1310.

[122] See Caplan, *Framed Narratives,* 15-29.

[123] Laura Hinton offers this second kind of reading in her chapter "A Masochistic Spectator's Sentimental Education: The 'Illusion of Reality' in Flaubert's *L'Education sentimentale,*" specifically linking sentimentalism and realism (via a hefty dose of psychocriticism). See Laura Hinton, *The Perverse Gaze of*

as in Diderot's theory of (anti-)theatrical effect, the potency of these signs depend on the denial of their conventional status, and, thus on the resultant distance between house and stage. If this second interpretation of sympathy, then, is structurally equivalent to that found in Diderot, it is subjected to a radical revaluation. Whereas Diderot values emotional bonding between spectator and spectacle while seeing illusion as imbricated with lived experience, in this interpretation, illusion is denigrated as being either a technology for the constitution of the autonomous subject,[124] or as being a form of psychic escapism, a zone of fantasy into which the spectator can flee any number of threats ranging from an increasingly instrumentalized life-world,[125] increased social mobility and the dissolution of traditional hierarchies[126] to a menacing (feminine) other.[127]

Sympathy in the sentimental pastorale "resists" the standard model

Turning back to *Les Moissonneurs*, we can see not only a lack of evidence of the aforementioned psychical-representational paradigm, but also a veritable insistence on both a non-paradoxical proximity combined with an awareness of the representational medium. As we have just seen, recent criticism tends to understand sympathy as produced by a form of distancing between its subject and object. This separation between

Sympathy: Sadomasochistic Sentiments from Clarissa *to* Rescue 911 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 75-119.

[124] Scott S. Bryson, *The Chastised Stage: Bourgeois Drama and the Exercise of Power* (Saratoga: Anma Libri, 1991).

[125] Jochen Schulte-Sasse, afterword, *Framed Narratives,* by Jay Caplan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 97-115.

[126] Sarah Maza, *The Myth of the French Bourgeoisie: An Essay on the Social Imaginary 1750-1850* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 53-68.

[127] Laura Hinton, *Perverse Gaze.*

spectator and spectacle is thought variously as physical, psychological, ontological, or some combination of these. In a paradigmatic example of the paradox of tragic pleasure—the spectator on shore watching a far-off shipwreck—one finds both a physical distance and a personal disengagement.[128] Undoubtedly the most famous tableau in eighteenth-century *opéra comique—Zémire et Azor*'s magic picture scene (although, as we shall see, entirely *unrepresentative* of sympathy in this genre) features instead a form of ontological distance.[129] Unlike the on-shore spectator, Zémire is very much concerned about her father and sisters, but cannot move into the magical space in which their visual and aural presence has been conjured up.

In the first tableau-like scene of *Les Moissonneurs,* however, we find a relative lack of distancing. On the one hand, one might note both a certain political (in the broad sense) distance between a powerful, active Candor and the suffering Rosine, as well as a certain dialogic distance—they never directly speak with one another—each one addressing Rustaut instead. And yet, we are far from the above-mentioned voyeuristic structures. One can infer from the stage-directions and action that all three must be standing relatively close together. And, of course, it is hardly a question of a *mise-en-abîme* or of any other ontological distancing.

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[128] David Marshall mentions this example, quoting Dubos who in turn cites the Roman Epicurean philosopher Lucretius (David Marshall, *The Surprising Effects: Marivaux, Diderot, Rousseau, and Mary Shelley* [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988], 22).

[129] Having gone to live with Azor (who plays the Beast to Zémire's Beauty), Zémire longs to see her father and sisters. Before finally agreeing to let her go back and visit them, Azor conjures up their presence in a "magic picture" in which Zémire can first see them, then (after begging Azor), hear their voices. The tableau is a musical one, a backstage wind ensemble playing undulating figures contributing, as David Charlton has noted, to the creation of a sense of spatio-temporal distance (David Charlton, *Grétry and the Growth of Opéra comique* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986], 103). The scene has been the subject of at least two extended critical commentaries. See Stefano Castelvecchi, "From *Nina* to *Nina* Psychodrama, Absorption and Sentiment in the 1780s," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 8.2 (1996), 98-99; and Downing Thomas, *Aesthetics of Opera in the Ancien Régime 1647-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 254-261.

What is more striking, however, is that the opera works the development of affection between Rosine and Candor through a dynamic of *rapprochement* that can be traced through various levels of the plot. After the initial tableau in the first act, each of the next two acts features an intensification of mutual interest between Candor and Rosine, an affection that parallels and draws energy from their increasing proximity. In the first scenes of the second act, there is no contact whatsoever (whether real or imagined) between the gleaner and her *seigneur*. It is only half-way through that Candor's interception of Dolival's purse inspires him to seek out information about his two gleaners, a benevolent project that culminates in a festive meal-finale where the link between intensity of feeling and proximity is both demonstrated (Candor shoos Dolival away and invites Rosine beside him) and is light-heartedly but not so subtly thematized in a drinking song led by Candor: "Que nos coeurs, comme chaque tasse, // Sans cesse se rapprochent tous."[130] One finds a similar dynamic in the third act, one, moreover, which is repeated microcosmically and emblematized in the final tableau where Rosine moves from a relative distance as she hymns Candor's virtues, then inches closer, finally laying her veil over his eyes as her heart begins to beat and her feelings intensify.

Far from representing an anomaly, the dependence of sympathy on interpersonal presence rather than distance or absence in *Les Moissonneurs* is to be found in many sentimental-pastoral *opéras comiques* and is entirely representative of how sympathy is treated in this subgenre. Without engaging in a thoroughgoing empirical review of this subgenre, one can cite as evidence the absence of voyeuristic tableaux as well as several works that emphatically foreground the kind of coming-together that we have seen at work in *Les Moissonneurs.* Monvel and Dezède's *Les Trois Fermiers* offers a

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[130] Favart, *Les Moissonneurs,* 177.

particularly striking example of this sentimental *rapprochement*.

After a first act almost entirely devoted to an extended tableau of familial happiness, the second opens with the family of peasants enjoying a communal meal. This rustic revelry is interrupted by Jacques (a young peasant, Mathurin Desvignes's son) who has just learned that M. de Belval is soon to become their beloved *former* landlord, forced as he soon will be to sell off his land. Jacques proceeds to relate a scene of mute and intensifying exchange of sentimental gesture. As he describes his misfortune, M. de Belval begins to weep, taking Jacques's hand in his. M. de Belval is reacting to an imagined future loss. Yet his real and very present emotional distress calls forth answering tears from Jacques. Jacques's tears in turn work to intensify their emotional and physical connection as they move M. de Belval to give the former a heartfelt embrace: "Enfin, j'ons pû pleurer, c'digne homme a vu mes larmes, les siennes ont redoublées, i'm'a jetté ses bras autour d'mon cou ...."[131] After this description, the opera will also move formally from the relative distance of the *récit,* to the presence of dramatic enactment, as M. de Belval arrives on the scene and he and the entire family of peasants engage in the most extravagant dialogue of tears.

In Jacques' preliminary *récit*, as well as in the subsequent scenes of pathos, the characters are not merely present to each other, but they become more present, more physically engaged as the pathos grows. We find a similar dynamic worked out in Grétry's and Marmontel's *Lucile*.[132] After Blaise breaks the news of Lucile's true birth,

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[131] Jacques-Marie Boutet de Monvel and Nicolas Dezède, *Les Trois Fermiers* (Paris: Vente, 1777), 41.

[132] The opera opens on Lucile's and Dorval's wedding day. After an extended celebration of amorous and familial happiness, Blaise—a simple villager and the husband of Lucile's former, and now deceased, nurse—arrives and, finding himself alone, gives himself over to sorrowful reflections on the bad news he is about to break: Lucile was not born to the wealthy Timante, but is instead his own daughter. Upon hearing

Lucile breaks into a sentimental solo. Her *ariette* recalls the isolation of the heroine that Mary Hunter has noted in sentimental *opera buffa*.[133] Here, however, this solo winds up drawing other characters into Lucile's emotional orbit. And, once again, as others approach, emotion intensifies.

At first, Lucile sings alone. In a g minor largo lament, she voices her regrets and apostrophizes her lover Dorval. The *ariette* has a simple A-BA' structure,[134] moving to the relative major (B flat), then sighingly back to g minor, with very similar musical material.[135] Julie, Lucile's confident happens upon this sad scene and is immediately concerned. Without any transition to speech, the music, still in g minor, now shifts into an allegro (as horns are added to the flutes, bassoons and strings of Lucile's opening *ariette*). Julie sings: "Ma belle maîtresse! Quelle douleur vous presse? Qui fait couler vos pleurs?"[136] This duet continues for about 100 measures.[137] Then, again, without any transition to speech, the duet becomes a trio as Dorval enters and adds his perplexed, concerned voice to Lucile's. Just as the scene literally offers more human energy now— as there are not one, but two concerned others hovering around Lucile—so too this trio

the news, Lucile alternates between happiness at having discovered her true father and distress that her marriage to Dorval is now in jeopardy. In the end, her now adoptive father Timante saves the day by persuasively representing Lucile's sensibility and goodness of heart to Dorval *père* (A-E-M Grétry and Jean-François Marmontel, *Lucile, Collection complète des Oeuvres de Grétry* [1769; Leipzig et Bruxelles: Brietkopf and Haertel, 1883-1911]).

[133] Mary Hunter, *The Culture of Opera Buffa in Mozart's Vienna: A Poetics of Entertainment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 146-155.

[134] For a brief discussion of this terminology, see note 324, below.

[135] Grétry and Marmontel, *Lucile,* 94-95.

[136] *Ibid.,* 96-97.

[137] *Ibid.,* 96-102.

offers a musical intensification of the scene.[138] It is even longer than the duet (about 180

measures), more texturally complex (the vocal lines of the three characters intertwine

contrapuntally, whereas the two voices in the duet had either alternated or sounded

together homophonically in thirds and sixths), and more harmonically intense (more

chromatic). And, as if all these musical elements were not enough to suggest a marked

increase in the circulation of sentimental energy, one cannot help but notice the last

section's oft-repeated signs of dynamic intensity—strings of *forte-pianos*.

This is a very different dynamic than that mapped out by Jay Caplan in his

Framed Narratives. These examples of sympathy, in fact, if one were to take Caplan at

his word, should not be *able* to function in this manner, or even exist. According to

Caplan: "It is on paper, not on the stage, that Diderot's tableaux have the power to move

the beholder."[139] If the fiction indeed associates sympathy with proximity and even

physical contact, this kind of sympathy cannot be effective, cannot draw the spectator in,

because this latter is not symbolically excluded. And yet, these moments of sympathy

function quite well within *opéra comique*'s fictional worlds. Moreover, there is no reason

why these moments of sympathetic presence should not themselves be promoted to the

status of metonymic representations of the spectator's experience—particularly since

they were in historic reality found to be among the most moving and salient moments of

the genre. *Lucile'*s "Quatuor du déjeuner"[140]—to take but one example—presents a

family bound together by intense affection, an affection most assuredly based on their

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[138] *Ibid.,* 102-111.

[139] Caplan, *Framed Narratives,* 19. Given that "Diderot's tableaux" as Caplan sees them are primarily defined by the representation of suffering and loss, I think we can apply Caplan's comments—or contest them, rather—in this context.

[140] Grétry and Marmontel, *Lucile,* 37-75.

intimate presence to each other (they are gathered around a pre-nuptial lunch table). Yet, far from falling flat, or failing to create any effect, this ensemble was the most popular of not only of *Lucile,* but of any *opéra comique* of this period.[141]

Given that distance in the standard theory of the tableau is logically linked to forms of representational realism, one would expect that a lack of emphasis on distance would correspond to an awareness of representation, to an awareness of style. And that is indeed what one does find. In the initial tableau of *Les Moissonneurs,* Candor, as I have already mentioned, is moved not merely by Rosine's suffering but also by her charms. Candor finds her not only "sage" but also "jolie." He is moved as much by her "douceur" as by her suffering. As well as suggesting an erotic sensibility, these terms also suggest Candor's conscious aesthetic appreciation of Rosine's self-presentation, a reading made more compelling by the opposition of Candor's response to Rustaut's not merely harsh, but specifically aesthetically insensitive harassment of the heroine: "Rustaut: Mais cela babille. // Je m'embarrasse peu de votre air chiffonné. // Vous perdez avec moi vos mines gracieuses."[142] One notes the same foregrounding of the aesthetic in the culminating tableau. The somnolent Candor is moved as much by the sensuous form of Rosine's song as he is by its semantic content. "Candor: Je ne sais pas quel bruit // M'est venu tirer de mon somme : ... Rosine s'offroit à ma vue. // Je distinguois les sons de sa voix ingénue. // Je n'éprouvai jamais un sentiment pareil."[143] In *Lucile,* one finds a somewhat more implicit but nonetheless detectable link between awareness of style and pathos. Towards

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[141] Charlton, *Grétry,* 45.

[142] Favart and Duni, *Les Moissonneurs,* 140.

[143] *Ibid.,* 198.

the end of the opera, Timante attempts to win over Dorval *père,* the recalcitrant potential

father-in-law of his daughter Lucile. In a duet, he gently insists on his daughter's social

virtues: "N'est-il pas vrai qu'elle est charmante; // Caressante ... [Qu']elle a certaine

grâce // si naturelle, si touchante ..."[144] allowing an undulating, insinuating melody to

gently underline the aesthetic component of his daughter's goodness of heart. In *Silvain,*

finally, Hélène's lofty expressive style is made an explicit element of her pathetic

appeal.[145] In a lyric tableau, Hélène moves from an obbligato recitative where she

imagines the imminent and dreaded encounter with Dolmon, her husband Silvain's angry

father, to an *ariette* of striking formality and seriousness. The noble style of her song is

echoed in the very next scene as Dolmon arrives and she begins to plead her husband's

case with the eloquent diction of a tragic heroine:

> Il [Silvain] est criminel à vos yeux;
> Mais pour vous apaiser, il n'est rien qu'il ne fasse;
> Aux pleurs de ses enfants, laissez-vous émouvoir,
> C'est un père, un époux, c'est notre unique espoir.
> . . . .
> Accablé de votre colère,
> Son malheur est de vous déplaire,
> Son crime est de vous affliger.
> Mais daignez nous entendre avant de nous juger."[146]

And like Candor (albeit in a more noble, less suggestive, erotic mode), Dolmon père is

moved by Hélène's expressive style: "Ma bonne, en vous tout me confond, // Cet air, ce

maintien, ce langage."[147]

    Before continuing, it is important to underline the significance of this double

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[144] Marmontel and Grétry, *Lucile,* 115-116.

[145] For a plot summary, see below, note 239.

[146] A-E-M Grétry and Jean-François Marmontel, *Silvain, Collection complète des Oeuvres de Grétry* (Leipzig et Bruxelles: Brietkopf and Haertel, 1883-1911), 127.

[147] *Ibid.,* 128.

representational remove from the standard understanding of sympathy. As we have seen, this model sees sympathy as crucially dependent on two forms of exclusionary and illusion-producing distance. First, one finds (the illusion of) emotional connection produced by the distance between the spectator and the suffering object of his concern. This first distance is then relayed by a similar distancing from the reality of language or other sign systems—the reality of the signifier. By finding sympathy produced instead by a pointed physical *rapprochement* and awareness of the signifier, I am not suggesting that sympathy in the sentimental pastorale somehow functions in a manner opposite to that of the standard model, but instead suggesting that it cannot be adequately explained within the standard interpretative framework at all.

Interestingly, this is equally the case for the way in which language itself functions in these worlds. If the standard model operates, in part, on the assumption that language (as well as the various semiotic systems of theater) cannot simultaneously function representationally *and* call attention to their signifying status,[148] in sentimental-pastoral *opéra comique,* awareness of style instead goes hand-in-hand with an emphasis on mimesis. Dolmon *père* and Candor might be highly attentive to Hélène's and Rosine's manner of speaking, but this awareness of the signifier does not in any way suggest semantic indeterminacy. In fact, it suggests the opposite. Style itself functions representationally, as the sonorous beauty and elegant diction of Hélène's speech as well as Rosine's gracious bearing function as infallible signs of their inner beauty.

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[148] Again, each side of this equation would be closely link to one mode of spectator response—either emotional absorption into the fiction, or an illusion-destroying awareness of the same. This is a very common interpretative schema of which one can find but one example in Russo's *Styles of Enlightenment.* Elena Russo links feeling with the *philosophes*'s anti-rococo drive towards an illusionistic aesthetic, on the one hand, and ironic distance with the rococo "goût moderne," on the other. See Elena Russo, *Styles,* 113-140. Marion Hobson sees Bertolt Brecht, Julie Kristeva, and Jean Ricardou using a similar interpretative narrative in their critique of realism. See Marion Hobson, *Object of Art,* 3-17.

Without having lingered over it, we have already seen this combination of awareness of style and mimetic literalism in the final tableau of *Les Moissonneurs*. While Candor is aware of how Rosine expresses herself, the beauty of her song, the relationship between the text and musical figures suggest a direct and productive link between musical figures and the experience of the passions.

Other musical moments in *Les Moissonneurs* might not be given the same aesthetic salience in the text. Yet, from the opening *ariette*'s imitation of this agricultural idyll's cyclical rhythms, to the hiccoughing melody that underscores Dolival's importuning of Rosine, to the descending roulade painting the word "ronde" in Rustaut's *ariette* "L'argent maître du monde,"[149] these moments evince a similar aesthetic approach, a similar investment in a paradigm of mimetic directness. Although already somewhat old-fashioned,[150] these attempts to make music signify clearly and directly, were neither limited to Duni, nor did they go unappreciated by *opéra comique*'s public. One particularly enthusiastic spectator-listener, Laurent Garcin, devoted an entire tome— *Le Traité du mélodrame*—to appreciating and describing similar examples of musical mimesis in *opéras comiques* of this period.

In his *Traité,* Garcin positions himself against Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Jean-

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[149] Kent Smith also notes "the pompous melisma on the word 'regne.'(*sic*)" in the same *ariette* (Kent Maynard Smith, "Egidio Duni and the Development of the *opéra comique* from 1753-1770" [Ph.D. diss, Cornell University, 1980], 292).

[150] Music throughout the eighteenth century was theorized within a representational paradigm. Debates centered on how and what music should imitate, but the question of the artistic mode's mimetic vocation was itself rarely called into question. Within this broad paradigm, conceptions of music did shift however, from an emphasis on the direct imitation of external reality (bird song, frogs, wind, thunder, etc.), to the less direct, more metaphorical imitation of the passions. See Belinda Cannone, *Philosophies de la musique: 1752-1789* (Paris: Aux Amateurs de Livres, 1990), 77-113; Downing Thomas, *Music and the Origins of Language: Theories from the French Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); and David Charlton's chapter "Envoicing the Orchestra" in David Charlton, *French Opera 1730-1830: Media and Meaning* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000).

François de Chastellux. Whereas Rousseau had, in his *Lettre sur la Musique Française,* notoriously and infuriatingly insisted on utter unsuitability of the French language for music (while praising melodious Italian language and opera), and Chastellux had followed suit by using Italian music in his more general argument for the primacy of music over text,[151] Garcin insists both that French makes a splendid vehicle for music (precisely because it lacks "prosodic" accent), and that instead of declaring its independence, music should do its best to illustrate textual meaning.[152] Garcin begins his sixth chapter, a chapter devoted to the "Examen de trois Opéras Comiques François, selon les régles du mélodrame" with a close musico-dramatic reading of *La Fée Urgèle,* one of Duni's and Favart's previous collaborative efforts.[153] He proceeds *ariette* by *ariette,* examining just how well the musical "expression" responds to textual meaning. In a previous chapter, he has already described this "expression" in a way that is entirely representative of an early empiricist aesthetic. Music's vocation is to move and represent: "Tous ses devoirs se réduisent à deux, *émouvoir et peindre.*"[154] Yet, "émouvoir," although it might evoke the later eighteenth-century's conception of music as a language of the passions in its own right—a conception that encouraged a more metaphorical, complex notion of mimesis, is instead put to work in an aesthetic of mimetic directness. This is suggested by Garcin's very next sentence, in which, by way of Cicero, he

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[151] Jean-François de Chastellux, *Essai sur l'Union de la Poésie et de la Musique* (Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1970).

[152] Laurent Garcin, *Traité du Mélodrame, ou Réflexions sur la musique dramatique* (Paris: Vallat-la-Chapelle, 1772). Belinda Cannone offers a nice summary of this long and ambitious treatise. See Cannone, *Philosophies,* 230-234.

[153] Garcin, *Traité,* 192-205.

[154] *Ibid.,* 63.

describes music's duty to move in pictorial terms: " La Poësie se borne à ce que la Musique est capable d'effectuer; or *la musique,* dit Cicéron, *n'a d'autre objet que de* peindre *les passions du coeur humain, & les mouvements qui ont lieu dans le monde physique.*"[155] He goes farther and insists that compositional success lies in the degree of music's imitative "perfection." "Plus l'imitation est parfaite, plus l'Art aussi approche de la perfection: plus elle s'écarte de son original, plus l'Art lui même est défectueux ...."[156] Finally, if he thinks music itself according to a model of direct representation, he goes some way towards placing its emotional power under the sign of the same classicizing representational regime: " ... on ne peut émouvoir les passions qu'en peignant les passions, parce qu'enfin l'expression imitative est, comme nous l'avons vu, le principe unique auquel toutes les régles se rapportent."[157] If this is not entirely clear, Downing Thomas has shown that, as early as the seventeenth century, the mimetic paradigm extended to thinking about music's effects. He describes Marin Mersenne as "argu[ing] that there is a process of reflection, a form of mimesis, connecting the audience members and their passion to the musical patterns they hear."[158]

Sympathy as worldly *sentiment*

If sympathy as it occurs in *Les Moissonneurs* and other sentimental pastorales (as well as its musico-linguistic mediation) thus resists the categories of critical discourse on

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[155] *Ibid.,* 63. The italics are Garcin's. The de-italization of the word "peindre" is my own.

[156] *Ibid.,* 60.

[157] *Ibid.,* 64.

[158] Thomas, *Aesthetics of Opera,* 184. Belinda Cannone also offers an interesting discussion of the way in which eighteenth-century sensationalist thinkers conceived music's effects as directly (i.e. physically) related to the listener's emotional experience. See the section "La Mécanique des passions," in Cannone, *Philosophies,* 80-83.

sentimentalism, one can instead assimilate it much more readily to "sentiment," to the form of intuitive judgment, or sensuous cognition that formed a key element of the aesthetics of worldliness (and that also went by the names of *sensibilité, esprit de finesse,* and *goût*).[159] This conception of emotion emerged in the latter part of the seventeenth-century as a form of refined feeling that could either refer to compassionate response (in contemporary clerical writing)[160], to amorous sensibility (in the writings of Mlle de Scudéry)[161], or to an experience that could easily be confused with or slide from the one to the other (in both discourses). If, at first, *sentiment* referred to personal and social experience, by the early eighteenth century, its semantic scope had enlarged—in part through the writings of Dubos—to include aesthetic experience as well.[162]

As both a moral and an aesthetic category, *sentiment* was also closely related to the new empiricist mode of thinking. If Scudéry didn't explicitly ground *sentiment* or *tendresse* in any physiological capacity, nor understand it in terms of a specifically perceptual relationship to a world of empirical detail, Dubos did, as his assimilation of *sentiment* to a sixth sense suggests.[163] Above all, *sentiment* was, like empiricism in general, intertwined with the notion of relationality. This might take the form of affective

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[159] Russo, *Styles of Enlightenment,* 141-144.

[160] Frank Baasner, "The Changing Meaning of 'Sensibilité:' 1654-1704," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 15 (1986), 77-96.

[161] Joan DeJean, *Ancients against Moderns: Culture Wars and the Making of a Fin de Siècle* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 78-94.

[162] Or, rather, thinking about art shifted its focus of concern from the work itself to the experience of beholding, reading, or listening to the work, as an emerging discourse of aesthetics became psychologized. See John O'Neal, *The Authority of Experience: Sensationist Theory in the French Enlightenment* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996),104-108; and Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), 302-303.

[163] Barbara Warnick, *The Sixth Canon: Belletristic Rhetorical Theory and Its French Antecedents* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press*,* 1993), 45.

bonds joining lover to lover, friend to friend, parent to child, or an aesthetic relation between reader and novel, beholder and painting, spectator and play. But this relationality might also be conceived more abstractly as a blending of categories that have traditionally been seen as antagonistic: feeling and reason, pleasure and morality, unconsciousness and awareness, as well as sympathy and *amour-propre* (self-love)*.*

Sentiment is particularly prominent in Marivaux's novels and plays, in characters who, gifted with this form of sensuous intuition, know how to interpret another's appearance and behavior, and spontaneously respond in a pleasing and appropriate manner. For these characters, *sentiment* is an "inner compass",[164] allowing them to attune themselves to their surroundings. It is *sentiment* that allows Marivaux's famous Marianne to move easily towards the pleasing, good, and beautiful, away from the coarse and morally suspect and ultimately into the social position that matches her inner sense of self-worth.[165]

In Marivaux, *sentiment* often appears as a kind of unconscious and yet, unlike the Freudian unconscious, it is not set in opposition to reason (personal or social) or to other forms of consciousness. In an interesting article in which he situates Marivaux's representation of *sentiment* in relation to the then competing currents of Cartesian (Malebranchian) and empiricist (Gassendian, or Lockean) thought, J. S. Spink notes that Madame de Miran (a character in *La Vie de Marianne*) is guided not by *réflexion* which

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[164] Anne Vila, *Enlightenment and Pathology: Sensibility in the Literature and Medicine of Eighteenth-Century France* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1998)*,* 128.

[165] My understanding of Marianne has been shaped in part by Anne Vila's reading of Marivaux's novel. Vila sees Marivaux as attaching the positive moral and social connotations of sentimental feeling to his heroine's innate sensibility, without for all that writing a sentimental novel. Where the sentimental novel is democratizing, Marianne's *sensibility* functions as a sign of innate or acquired aristocratic distinction (Vila, *Enlightenment,* 128-129).

"implied a clear self-awareness," but instead by a "'pensée confuse,'" by "an awareness that is less clear, but is nevertheless a sort of awareness," that she "is spontaneously kind" without for all that being "unaware of the situation that calls for kindness."[166]

Like the sympathy at work in *Les Moissonneurs* and the other *opéras comiques* I have discussed, *sentiment* is both pleasurable and moral, sometimes even erotic and moral. Explaining the sympathetic appeal that first won her the attention, then the friendship of Mme de Miran, Marianne underlines both her pathetic and her aesthetic appeal:

> A peine y fut-elle, que mes tons gémissants la frappèrent; elle y entendit tout ce que je disais, et m'y vit dans la posture de la personne du monde la plus désolée.... Vous savez que j'étais bien mise.... Mon affliction, qui lui parut extrême, la toucha; ma jeunesse, ma bonne façon peut-être aussi ma parure, l'attendrirent pour moi; quand je parle de parure, c'est que cela n'y nuit pas.[167]

Mme de Miran's sympathetic response is entirely analogous to Valville's earlier and clearly erotically motivated compassionate interest in a wounded Marianne: "Je ne vous dis point avec quel air d'inquiétude il s'y prit, ni combien il parut touché de mon accident. A travers le chagrin qu'il en marqua, je démêlai pourtant que le sort ne l'avait pas tant désobligé en m'arrêtant."[168]

If *sentiment* in Marivaux's *Marianne* might thus evoke the unrepressive blendedness of sympathy in *Les Moissonneurs,* there is still the question of the distinctive structure I noted above —the linking of feeling with both an awareness of the aesthetic (manifested in beauty and stylistic elegance) and an emphasis on direct

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[166] J. S. Spink, "The 'Mechanism of the Passions' and the 'Metaphysics of Sentiment,'" *The Modern Language Review* 73.2 (Apr., 1978), 282.

[167] Pierre de Marivaux, *La Vie de Marianne: ou les Aventures de Madame la comtesse De ***,* ed. Michel Gilot (1731; Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1978)*,* 154.

[168] *Ibid.,* 93.

representationality. We will soon see how we can infer a similar structure in Marivaux's worlds, but it will help to approach the issue through a discussion of Dubos.

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Dubos's *Réflexions sur la poésie et sur la peinture*

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Dubos presents his *Réflexions sur la poésie et sur la peinture* in part as a response to the paradox of tragic pleasure—why we enjoy art and drama that represents another's suffering. Dubos begins his discussion outside the salon or the theater, in a consideration of human psychology.

Human beings seek above all to occupy themselves; *ennui* is our greatest enemy.[169] Even passionate attachments that are painful in and of themselves (complicated and vexing worldly affairs), or are associated with activities known to be hazardous (gaming) are often preferred to the passivity and isolation of a country retreat.[170] There is, moreover, one emotion that holds a particular attraction for us—sympathy: "Cette émotion naturelle qui s'excite en nous machinalement, quand nous voïons nos semblables dans le danger ou dans le malheur."[171] But this passion, like all the others, often has vexing consequences in real life. We might not be able to stop ourselves from rushing off to an execution because we love feeling pity for others, but we forget about the unfortunate consequences:

> On va voir en foule un spectacle des plus affreux que les hommes puissent regarder, je veux dire le supplice d'un autre homme qui subit la rigueur des loix sur un échaffaut, et qu'on conduit à la mort par des tourmens effroïables: on devroit prévoir néanmoins ... que les circonstances du supplice, que les gemissemens de son semblable feront sur lui, malgré lui-même, une impression durable qui le tourmentera long-tems avant que d'être pleinement effacée ; mais l'attrait de l'émotion est plus fort pour bien des gens que les

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[169] Dubos, here, is reworking and neutralizing the Pascalian notion of *divertissement.*

[170] Jean-Baptiste Dubos, *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture* (Paris: P-J Mariette, 1733), 10-11.

[171] *Ibid.,* 12.

reflexions et que les conseils de l'experience.[172]

We love feeling pity for others to such an extent that we forget the troubling consequences of such an act—the train of unpleasant ideas that follow. The same is true of gambling. Gamblers love excitement so much that they ignore reason and risk doing serious injury to their finances just in order to feel intensely.[173]

Dubos then explains how he understands art's purpose. By presenting us with all the impressions of suffering but separating these impressions from their often problematic consequences in real life, art offers us vicarious experience. We can, thus, enjoy the pleasure of sympathy, without its attendant pain.[174] Dubos's explanation of the paradox of tragic pleasure is so close to that of the standard model of the sympathy, it is hardly surprising that the two models are often confused. David Marshall, for instance, interprets Dubos along these lines:

> The real effects produced by these imitations and reproductions provide us with what Du Bos calls 'un plaisir pur;' since our sympathy takes place at several removes, we are able to '[jouir] de notre emotion' ... without losing our reason.... Our sympathy, like the work of art that moves us, takes place within the realm of fiction, mimesis, representation and reproduction. If the success of a novel, play, or painting depends on acts of sympathy, our experience of sympathy depends on an aesthetic experience.[175]

What I find interesting in the above passage is that Marshall, after having carefully described what Dubos is indeed saying (theater presents us with "'un plaisir pur;'" this distance allows us to "'[jouir] de notre emotion' ... without losing our reason;" sympathy "... takes place within the realm of fiction"), he then proceeds to draw the unwarranted

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[172] *Ibid.*, 12-13.

[173] *Ibid.,* 22.

[174] *Ibid.,* 25.

[175] David Marshall, *The Surprising Effects of Sympathy: Marivaux, Diderot, Rousseau, and Mary Shelley* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 20-21.

conclusion that: "our experience of sympathy depends on an aesthetic experience." It is as if Marshall were "massaging" Dubosian theory into the standard model of sympathy, where emotional connection is indeed "depend[ent] on an aesthetic experience."

However, this is not exactly what Dubos is saying. He is not saying that sympathy depends on (aesthetic) distance. Nor is he saying that the *pleasure* of sympathy depends on (aesthetic) distance. He is saying that (aesthetic) distance *eliminates the pain that typically accompanies the pleasure* of sympathy. It is only in the aesthetic realm that we can experience sympathy as *pure* pleasure (exactly what Marshall notes in the beginning of his paragraph). In other words, sympathy in the theater is not of an entirely different nature than sympathy outside of the theater (and sympathy outside the theater is as real as anything else and very much *not* dependent on aesthetic experience).[176] Instead, sympathy within the theater stands in metonymic relationship to real sympathy experienced in real life. As Dubos explains, the "impressions" that we receive from a painting or a play are the same—of the same quality—as those in real life. Similarly, the passions that we feel in the theater are, again, of the same quality, as those we experience in real life. The difference here is a matter of *degree*. As Dubos explains:

> Comme l'impression que ces imitations font sur nous est du même genre que l'impression que l'objet imité par le peintre ou par le poëte feroit sur nous: comme l'impression que l'imitation fait *n'est differente de l'impression que l'objet imité feroit, qu'en ce qu'elle est moins forte*, elle doit exciter dans notre ame une passion qui ressemble à celle que l'objet imité y auroit pu exciter.[177]

Dubos, however *also* sees the theatrical experience as being *qualitatively* different from real life experience. The "impressions" which vary in degrees of intensity only affect

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[176] As we will see, it is not exactly the same, either.

[177] Dubos, *Réflexions,* 26. My emphasis.

what he calls "l'ame sensitive."[178] The spectator's "ame,"—what we would refer to as his understanding or reason—is not deceived and, since it knows that the passions are not real, allows the "ame sensitive" to enjoy them, in peace, as it were.

But now, once the spectator is protected by this aesthetic distance, it is up to the painter or the poet to render his creation as life-like as possible—to do all he can to efface the distance between art and reality. It is this desideratum that leads Dubos to privilege painting over poetry and within each art, attention to subject matter over form. What counts above all is that art efface itself as art—all the while remaining entirely recognizable as art. This might, from a contemporary critical perspective, seem hard to grasp. And indeed, Thomas Kavanagh—another recent interpreter of Dubos—does not make such fine distinctions, preferring to speak of "paradox[es]" instead:

> Du Bos reaffirms the traditional doctrine of art as mimesis. He does so, however, by insisting on a second paradox. The value of a mimetic work depends not so much on the similarity of the copy to what it imitates, not on any illusory erasing of a boundary between sign and signified, but on a clear awareness of the differences between copy and original.[179]

Dubos's model only seems paradoxical to Kavanagh, because this latter is, apparently, still caught up in a two-dimensional critical world (along with Marshall and others), where there is either awareness of the signifier, on the one hand, or illusion on the other, but not both. He apparently eliminates one key element of Dubos's model of spectatorship because it does not fit into the standard equation.

Once we shift back into an empiricist mode of thinking, we can simply allow ourselves to see both sympathy and representation as rather more complex experiences.

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[178] *Ibid.,* 27.

[179] Thomas M. Kavanagh, *Esthetics of the Moment: Literature and Art in the French Enlightenment* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 150.

More importantly, spectatorial sympathy as Dubos models it, corresponds nicely to what we have seen in *Les Moissonneurs* and thus helps assure us of the "validity" of this first model of sympathy. Just as Dubos's spectator is both aware of the aesthetic nature of his experience *and* given over to the enjoyment of a pleasurable sympathy, so too Candor, for example, loses himself momentarily in pity for Rosine, while also remaining aware of her beauty. In fact, one might see the awareness of the aesthetic in *Les Moissonneurs* as working as a form of protective distance that allows sympathy to become (purely) pleasurable, just as art does for sympathy in Dubos. There is, moreover, another parallel. The intensification of sympathy through increasing physical proximity as well as the insistence on musical mimesis recalls Dubos's own insistence on a regime of representational directness.

But, at this point, the parallels with Dubos's aesthetic theory break down. Either they break down, or we must admit that sympathy, in *Les Moissonneurs,* does not involve any true relationality, since, as we have seen, emotional effect of art was predicated precisely on art's lack of seriousness. If we turn back to Marivaux, however, we will see a variation on the Dubosian model—a variation that does allow us to understand sympathy in *Les Moissonneurs* as involving a real, or a non-trivial moral connection with the other.[180]

For Marivaux, as we have seen, awareness of style does not preclude awareness of feeling. Instead, one finds both combined in what might be described as a sublimated emotion. In what way might this be analogous to what we find in Dubos (and in *opéra comique*)?

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[180] Of course, here, I mean *imagined* real relationality—relationality as one imagines it to takes shape within the fictional world.

First, one might see worldly refinement as a form of collective aesthetic distancing. In other words, just as Dubos's spectator is protected from the painful consequences of real-life sympathy through theater, so too the eighteenth-century denizens of *le monde* both enjoy and offer protection from importunate demands through mutual adoption of a sociable comportment and values.[181] There is no reason we cannot see this dynamic operating within the fictional world as well. In fact, Rosine explicitly present herself as holding back so as to spare Candor any possible embarrassment, any possibly painful impingement on his psychological and emotional space.[182] At the same time, however, the transition from rough-hewn self to polished socialite was structured (for Marivaux at least) less like the repressive relationship between language and the real assumed by contemporary theory, and more like the non-repressive metonymical relationship between sympathy within and without the theater in Dubos's thought. As Marivaux explains in his *Spectateur Français,* in order to write and live naturally, it is not so much a matter of denying the traits and desires that we have, but instead of selecting the best, or even just the acceptable from ourselves:

> ...écrire naturellement ... être naturel ... n'est pas se mouler sur personne quand à la forme de ses idées, mais au contraire, se ressembler fidèlement à soi-même, et ne point se départir ni du tour ni du caractère d'idées pour qui la nature nous a donné vocation ; qu'en un mot, penser naturellement, c'est rester dans la singularité d'esprit qui nous est échue, et qu'ainsi que chaque visage a sa physionomie, chaque esprit aussi porte une différence qui lui est propre ; que la correction qu'il faut apporter à l'esprit n'est pas de l'arracher à cette différence, mais seulement de purger cette même différence du vice qui

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[181] Although he does not mention Marivaux, *per se,* Daniel Gordon draws on George Simmel to describe worldly sociability as involving just such an implicit pact: "'Sociability ... creates an ideal sociological world in which the pleasure of the individual is closely tied up with the pleasure of the others. In principle, nobody can find satisfaction here if it has to be at the cost of dramatically opposed feelings, which the other may have.' The participants must adhere to a transactional ethos..." (Daniel Gordon, *Citizens without Sovereignty: Equality and Sociability in French Thought, 1670-1789* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994], 34).

[182] "Monsieur Candor a l'ame bienfaisante, // Tout le village aime à la publier ; // Mais si nous lui disions que je suis sa parente // Il pourrait s'en humilier" (Favart, *Moissonneurs,* 136).

peut en gâter les grâces, de lui ôter ce qu'elle peut avoir de trop cru ... [183]

And, again, there is no reason why this model should not be extended to *opéra comique* as well, particularly since, as we will see below, *Les Moissonneurs* (as well as other sentimental pastorales) go out of their way to banish the notion of repression from their fictional worlds.

If we have thus "explained" sympathy as it appears in *Les Moissonneurs* by setting aside "tableau theory" and assimilating these moments of sensuous connection to feeling in Marivaux and Dubos, this move does not, for all that, bring us much closer to recent critical argument, for much of this latter—even when it focuses explicitly on worldly sensibility—appears to be generated by the same matrix of assumptions that produced tableau theory. Not that all of this criticism is equally blind to the "otherness," if you will, of early eighteenth-century structures of feeling. While some critics (David Marshall) do seem to pursue their own ideological agenda with rigor, others (Joan DeJean and Elena Russo) seem to be considerably more concerned with describing the specificity of early enlightenment sympathy. At the same time, however, the work of these latter sometimes strains and buckles in an apparent attempt to also force this early Enlightenment sympathy into the categories of a more modern critical framework.

In his discussion of Dubos's (and Marivaux's) notions of sympathy, David Marshall sets out to show how sympathy in the theater and sympathy in real life are very similar, perhaps even indistinguishable from each other, that: "sympathy itself finally must be seen as a theatrical relation formed between a spectacle and a spectator, enacted

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[183] Pierre de Marivaux, *Le Spectateur François,* vol. 1 (Paris: Chez Prault jeune, 1752), 87.

in the realm of mimesis and representation."[184] He arrives at this conclusion after pages

of complex argumentation hardly devoid of rhetorical legerdemain and strained logic. I

have already mentioned how Marshall begins to describe real life relations using

theatrical terms, suggesting that the mere act of seeing someone is enough to constitute

them as a "spectacle."[185] If Marshall makes marked progress towards his interpretive goal

by thus theatricalizing real life relations, only two pages later he makes a giant leap

forward by reading Dubos in such a way that one is very tempted to call the result

"misinterpretation."

Dubos argues that if real life objects produce passions in the ones who see them,

then imitations of real life objects produce imitations of passions in the ones who see

them. From this simple analogy, Marshall directly draws the surprising conclusion that

sympathy *in real life* is an imitation of another person's feelings.[186] Not only does this

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[184] Marshall, *Surprising Effects,* 27.

[185] *Ibid.,* 18.

[186] Here is the passage from Marshall in full: "The imitation of an object produces imitations of the effects that the object itself would have produced; reading a text or beholding a painting, we find reproduced inside us 'passions artificielles' or 'phantômes de passions' ('artificial passions ... phantoms of passions' [*RC,* I:26]). Du Bos continues: 'Comme l'impression que ces imitations font sur nous est du même genre que l'impression que l'objet imité ... feroit sur nous: comme l'impression que l'imitation fait n'est différente de l'impression que l'objet feroit, qu'en ce qu'elle est moins forte, elle doit exciter dans notre ame une passion qui ressemble à celle que l'objet imité y auroit pû exciter. La copie de l'objet doit, pour ainsi dire, exciter en nous une copie de la passion que l'objet y auroit excitée. (*RC,* I :26) ... [Marshall includes the translation of the above passage, then continues:]' We are faced with a chain of mimetic acts: *the sympathetic feeling we are supposed to feel when faced with a spectacle of suffering is already in some sense a copy of the feeling of the person we witness*" (Marshall, *Surprising Effects,* 20). My emphasis.
 There are, in fact, multiple problems with the conclusion Marshall draws. First, there are many indications that Marshall is referring to an encounter with real life suffering here, but let us, for a moment, assume that when he says "spectacle of suffering," he means suffering as it is represented in the theater. It would then seem that he is merely summing up what Dubos is saying. However, even in this case, we still find two problems. Firstly, Dubos merely discusses "objet[s]" that make impressions upon us. Even if "objet" refers not to a complex moving scene, but to merely one person suffering, it still would not refer to that person's feelings themselves, only the external signs of those feelings. Marshall, however, refers to the person's actual feelings, only to insist that we only experience a "copy" of them. Secondly, when Dubos uses the term "imitation" in this passage he is comparing *the spectator's feelings* in *different situations,* not the relationship of the spectator's feelings to someone else's.
 However, it seems hard to interpret "spectacle of suffering" in Marshall's conclusion as referring

hardly follow from Dubos's simple argument, it also directly anticipates Marshall's ultimate conclusion about the blurred boundaries between theater and real life.

Marshall continues for many more pages with a similar style of argument. However, apparently still not satisfied with the material that Dubos has offered him and sensing perhaps that his arguments are not entirely convincing, he gently accuses Dubos (and Marivaux) of "repress[ing]" the truth about sympathy: "In the context of their general aesthetic reflections, both Dubos and Marivaux seem to repress the possibility that the power and effects of sympathy might be limited in what we call real life ...."[187] I suggest that Dubos and Marivaux are not "repressing" this possibility. They merely think sympathy differently.

If, more recently, critics have moved away from this style of argument, there is still a tendency to attempt to coax seventeenth- and eighteenth-century sympathy into the categories of a more modern critical frame. In her chapter "A history of the Heart"—a discussion of historically shifting notions of the emotions and their descriptive

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to an encounter with suffering in the theater for numerous reasons: Marshall has not discussed feeling in an actual theater at all up until this point in the chapter, nor will he for the rest of the chapter; as mentioned above, Marshall has already called real life suffering, a "spectacle;" in the very next sentence, he will draw on Adam Smith to argue that "in an act of sympathy we must represent to ourselves in our imagination the sentiments of the other person (whose feelings we cannot really know or share) [20];" and, finally, the term "faced with" suggests the seriousness of real life suffering, and the phrases "*supposed to* feel" and "*already in some sense* a copy" suggest some kind of surprising, unusual conclusion, something that goes far beyond a simple summary of what Dubos is saying. Since Marshall very much seems to be making an assertion about our encounter with suffering in real life, one could represent the relationship of his conclusion to Dubos's analogy in the following way. Where Dubos argues that:

if (A) *produces* (B),
then (Imitation of A) *produces* (Imitation of B),

Marshall draws the direct conclusion that:

B *equals* (Imitation of A)

which is more or less what he concludes at the end of his chapter.

In sum, Marshall neither accurately summarizes what Dubos is saying, nor draws a valid conclusion, but instead merely makes a highly ambiguous assertion that appears to serve his argumentative ends.

[187] *Ibid.,* 26.

terminology[188]—Joan DeJean, like Marshall, invests much critical energy in bringing empiricizing notions of *sentiment* in line with contemporary critical doctrine. Her strategy, however, is slightly different. Whereas Marshall works to deny the relationality that was at the core of eighteenth-century understandings of sympathy by attempting to textualize (or theatricalize) the notion, DeJean insists on the importance of relationality only to work poststructuralist anti-relational assumptions into her very description of affective connectedness.

After an introductory section in which she discusses the semantic history of a cluster of terms used to describe emotion, DeJean settles in to discuss the meanings which were given to the term "sentiment." She begins with a rather straightforward, commonsense description of a process of reciprocal and dynamic relationality in which there is a clear connection between the inner reality of feelings and the outer reality of the world of objects: "Objects make impressions on the soul; these are the origin of feelings or sentiments, which are the perspectives from which the soul in turn considers the things that had initially attracted its attention; and for which, by the end of the process, the soul has new feelings."[189]

However, DeJean immediately adds that one needs a "theory of desire" in order to have "a succinct summary of the revised view of the emotional process that was already in place."[190] While desire can certainly apply to objects, it suggests a way of expanding the notion of relationality beyond things, to include people, with whom we might have a

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[188] DeJean, *Ancients,* 78-123.

[189] *Ibid.,* 88.

[190] *Ibid.,* 88.

more complex psychological relationship, a relationship that might feature projection, repression or other psychical mechanisms. But, the term "desire" also conjures up more recent critical premises, particularly the Lacanian notion of "lack" as well as the concomitant assumption of an unbridgeable gap between language and the real world, between an imbricated "symbolic" and "imaginary," on the one hand, and an irrecuperable "real" on the other.

Upon reading that the above-mentioned description is missing a "theory of desire," then, one might wonder whether or not DeJean is going to make an effort to bring recalcitrant seventeenth-century writings in line with twenty-first century assumptions. And, sure enough, she describes the first work she turns to, Guillaume Lamy's treatise—*Explication mécanique et physique des forces de l'âme sensitive, des sens, des passions et du mouvement volontaire*—as particularly concerned with "the question of whether desire and other emotions should be situated in the domain of the real or in that of each individual's perception of the real."[191] What follows is a series of non sequiturs, as DeJean repeatedly attempts to affirm the importance of a supposedly unbridgeable gap between the perceived and the real world while drawing on evidence that does not appear to support her claims. She describes Lamy as insisting on the relationality produced by sensibility, then, in the very next breath, interprets him as saying that emotions have no connection whatsoever to reality:

> Finally, as Lamy soon makes clear, this 'qualité sensible' is a two-way street: we are moved and therefore formed in a certain way by the object of our emotions, and the object, in turn, 'is shaped' so as to move us (11-13). Lamy's position is thus clear: the emotions have nothing to do with the real world; they fall squarely in the domain of the perceived world.[192]

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[191] *Ibid.,* 89.

[192] *Ibid.,* 89.

How is having a two-way, dynamic connection between subject and object evidence that there is no connection between perceptions and the real world? The opposite in fact would seem to be the more appropriate conclusion.

The same pattern of assertion disguised as argument continues in the following paragraph. We soon find another non sequitur:

> Gamaches' 'system of the heart' is in effect an extended demonstration of how we transform the objects of our desire by our desire for them, and of how we are likewise transformed by the objects and by the displacement of our desire. The emotionality of *sensibilité* exists solely in the world of perceptions ...[193]

Again, the conclusion does not follow from the evidence presented. What DeJean does do is combine notions and passages from very different sections of Gamaches's text. Throughout his *Système du Coeur,* Gamaches opposes love to friendship. He sees this former as driven by desire and involving the flight into the imaginary to which DeJean alludes when she insists on the opposition between perception and reality.[194] Gamaches clearly devalorizes love in favor of friendship and its gentler emotions, however. Friendship, unlike love, would depend on an objective emotional bond with another, as well as on a recognition of the other's true virtues,[195] chief among which one may count *sensibilité*: "Il faut être sensible pour être

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[193] *Ibid.,* 90.

[194] Gamaches also reductively defines love as imaginary. If a love relationship involves any objective appreciation of another's virtues, then that aspect of their relationship doesn't fall under the heading of "love." If Gamaches were to see *Les Moissonneurs,* he would undoubtedly classify most, if not all, of Candor's and Rosine's relationship as "amitié," which involves not merely pleasure, but both pleasure and virtue. See the third part of Gamaches's treatise, "De l'amour en général" (Etienne-Simon de Gamaches, *Système du coeur, ou conjectures sur la manière dont naissent les différentes affections de l'âme, principalement par rapport aux objets sensibles* [Paris: Michel Brunet, 1708], 173-217).

[195] *Ibid.,* 24-68.

veritablement genereux, complaisant, doux ...”[196]

After having amalgamated different parts of Gamaches's argument and thus

sealed off not merely love, but emotion *tout court* entirely in the world of perception,

DeJean attempts to write relationality back in—through a dialogue of perception:

> It is a logical result of the attraction theory that subjectivity would be implicitly defined
> as a process of mutual attraction: we become ourselves in the eye of the other and
> through the other's perception, and that perception 'originates' in our perception of the
> other.[197]

But this conclusion leaves us with a vexing philosophical question. How, one might ask,

can we be defined through another's perceptions, when our own perceptions (and

emotions) have already been safely cordoned off from the real world?

A third, and even more interesting example of this critical importation of twenty-

first century categories into the eighteenth-century text can be found in Elena Russo's

recent *Styles of Enlightenment.* Unlike Marshall, and to a greater extent than DeJean,

Russo does strive to take the empiricist logic of *sentiment* seriously. However, she does

not go so far as to let it penetrate, shape and inform her analyses.

Russo devotes an entire chapter to "Grace and Confused Perception" and,

although she does not use any of the cluster of terms used above, she makes reference to

Marivaux's interest in just this kind of blended experience in her preceding chapter

primarily devoted to Marivaux's *oeuvre*:

> In the wake of the discoveries of empiricist and sensationalist philosophy,
> Marivaux maintained, throughout his *oeuvre,* a reflection on the phenomenology
> of the passions that is, on various states of consciousness and on their
> relationship to linguistic expression. In particular, he believed that there existed
> several degrees of consciousness and that the awareness of the emotions had many
> shades of clarity and definition.... Marivaux was always looking for better ways to

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[196] *Ibid.,* 55-56.

[197] DeJean, *Ancients against Moderns,* 90.

describe the murkiness of consciousness.[198]

Here, she directs our attention to the empiricist logic upon which I have been insisting—on gradation, on continuities, on ambiguity. This paragraph, however, is inconspicuously tucked away in the middle of a chapter that is instead structured around sharp oppositions and implicitly shored up twenty-first century assumptions about subjectivity and language.

The chapter, entitled "Capturing Fireside Conversation," is primarily concerned with an opposition already familiar from our study of the tableau—that between absorption into the fictional world, on the one hand, and awareness of the materiality of the signifier, on the other. Or as, Russo puts it in her introductory paragraph, then summarizes a few pages later: "... the core of Marivaux's *oeuvre* and of the seduction of his poetics lies in the disjunction between the surrender to the lure of the fictional world and an attitude of distrust toward all manifestations of inauthenticity;"[199] "All of Marivaux's work demonstrates [a] tension between the irresistible seduction of discourse and critical resistance to it ...."[200]

If this incongruity weren't enough, one only need look at the paragraph that directly precedes the one cited above. Although, as we have seen, Russo will very soon be insisting on Marivaux's interest in various levels of consciousness and various relationships between emotions and language, here she maintains that:

> Marivaux draws characters who, while they yearn to surrender to the lure of the
> moment, are torn between their subconscious emotions and their formalization,

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[198] Russo, *Styles of Enlightenment,* 120.

[199] *Ibid.,* 113.

[200] *Ibid.,* 117.

> between the immediacy of the moment and the frozen commonplaces of language. Language often forces them to express those elusive states of mind through concepts and signs that are not flexible enough or are informed by rigid and stereotypical thinking. Marivaux's pursuit of *esprit* is ... an attempt to push language to the limits of its expressive powers so as to compel it to account for the infinitely small, continuously evolving metamorphosis of the emotions.[201]

In this paragraph, Russo attempts to integrate Marivaux's empiricism into a post-Kantian framework. The entire paragraph is structured around a crude, even violent opposition between emotion and language, although it also gradually tilts in the direction of Marivaudian blendedness. Characters are "torn" between their emotional experience and their attempts to express this experience. Language, suddenly endowed with transcendent power, "forces" them to represent their experience in crude, inflexible terms. Marivaux, however, comes to the rescue by "*pushing* language to the *limits* of its expressive powers so as to *compel* it to account for ...." And finally, we see empiricizing notions of the emotions as closely linked to the nuances of feeling and the sensual body nestled at the bottom of the paragraph—just as the next paragraph is hidden inconspicuously in the middle of the chapter.

In sum, one gets the impression that Russo, although quite interested in the sensualist specificity of Marivaux's thought, cannot resist the temptation of attempting to also accommodate the current tendency to see such major categories as "feeling" and "language" as existing primarily in opposition to each other.

Putting worldly-sensuous sympathy to work

In the remainder of the chapter, I hope to demonstrate how locating sympathy with an empiricist framework—approaching it with the assumption that it is all about relatively unproblematic linkages between various levels of cognitive experience, inner

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[201] *Ibid.,* 120.

and outer worlds, self and other—is critically productive. In particular, I will show how such an approach helps one to both interpret the sentimental pastorale's moral-aesthetic patterning and to recognize the many connections between the thematic, formal, structural, and performative features that organize this subgenre's fictional and (ephemeral) real-life idylls.

The affirmation and denial of suffering
in the sentimental pastorale

One such pervasive pattern is the curious tendency of the sentimental text, in general, and sentimental *opéra comique* in particular, to both affirm and deny suffering. This pattern is, of course, at the broadest level, implicit in most all comedy to the extent that the dramatization of personal, social, moral, and, sometimes, political conflict is underpinned by a general affirmation of the social order.[202] Even those plays which side with dissenters, play up personal desire and figure reform rather than acceptance of the initially reigning social order—such as more openly farcical *opéras comiques* or Shakespeare's romantic comedies—still wind up celebrating "new" societies whose harmonious simplicity feels comfortably conservative.[203]

In sentimental texts, this pattern takes the form of a tension between a progressive

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[202] Mary Hunter reads *opera buffa* conventions as performing this function: "One of the most important features of opera buffa's representation of social hierarchy is that it appears to be immutable. This is true partly because strong, persistent, and pervasive generic conventions ... create a world that remains very much the same from opera to opera" (Mary Hunter, *The Culture of Opera Buffa in Mozart's Vienna: A Poetics of Entertainment* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999], 67-70). Robert Heilman suggests that most modern comedy is basically conservative in that it affirms "the idea of the workable society, the principles that make for durable order, the urbanity by which people live with each other" (Robert Bechtold Heilman, *The Ways of the world: comedy and society* [Seattle: The University of Washington Press, 1978], 24).

[203] Millett and Bentley might compare Shakespeare's free-spirited pastoral romance *As you like It* to the conservatism of Molière's social comedies, but even this former play respects the conventions of romantic comedy by pairing up no less than four sets of lovers and restoring the rightful Duke to his throne in the end. See Fred B. Millett and Gerald Eased Bentley*, The Art of the Drama* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1935), 99.

interest in alleviating the suffering caused by social inequality and an implicitly

conservative investment in the status quo. Both David Denby and R. F. Brissenden note

this tension of which they see a series of paradigmatic examples in François Vernes's

Voyageur Sentimental (1786). As Vernes's ever compassionate narrator happens upon

one pathetic scene after another, we learn that the feeling that binds him to the poor, the

sorrowful, and the oppressed transcends and even draws energy from inequalities that are

ultimately left unchanged. Tears might be "at once a compliment to the person whose

misfortune has called them forth and evidence of the true worth of the one who

weeps,"[204] but they often take the place of money or practical and political engagement in

this economy of suffering.[205]

In *opéra comique,* one finds a similar pattern on the level of the entire repertoire

(most notably, but not exclusively in the sentimental pastorale), in the recurrent double

convention of the generous father/seigneur and the ever present unfortunate on which he

can lavish his help and attention.[206] In the most programmatically sentimental *opéras*

comiques, a very similar tension—the alternative posing and denial of misfortune (to

borrow David Denby's preferred term) is underlined thematically and enacted at the more

local levels of dialogue and characterization.

L'Aveugle de Palmyre[207] offers a paradigmatic example of such patterning.

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[204] R. F. Brissenden, *Virtue in Distress: Studies in the Novel of Sentiment from Richardson to Sade* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974)*,* 4.

[205] Denby, *Sentimental Narrative,* 43-51.

[206] Besides *Les Moissonneurs,* one can cite the following works as a few among many that share this basic pattern: Rodolphe's and Desfontaines's *L'Aveugle de Palmyre* (1767); Grétry's and Marmontel's *Lucile* (1769) and *Silvain* (1770); Grétry's and Pezay's *La Rosière de Salency* (1774); Monvel's and Dezède's, *Blaise et Babet* (1783) and *Alexis et Justine* (1785).

[207] Jean-Joseph Rodolphe and Desfontaines, *L'Aveugle de Palmyre* (Bruxelles: Boucherie, 1767).

Misfortune here takes the form of the hero Zulmis's blindness—particularly troubling,

one might imagine, given that he lives in a pastoral community of sun-worshippers.

Besides giving Zulmis some practical difficulties—he becomes easy prey for Thelamis,

the rival of his sweet and virtuous lover Nadine—blindness is at once condemned as lack,

conjured away as a non-problem and promoted as a positive value. If he remains blind,

Zulmis will never know the fullness of love. As he confesses to Nadine:

> De te voir j'ai souvent des envies;
> Et je juge, aux transports que je sens près de toi,
> Que tu dois posséder cent beautés réunies
> . . . .
> Je ne connais point ma Nadine
> Les plaisirs de l'amant heureux.
> Mais mon amour qui les devine
> Sent bien qu'ils manquent à nos feux.[208]

However, as he has already insisted in an opening duet with Nadine, this latter's love

perfectly compensates for his disability: "Le tien [ton amour] me fait oublier // Que du

soleil qui t'éclaire, // Jamais, jamais la lumière // Pour moi ne daigna briller // Mais quand

on a su te plaire // Quels biens peut-on envier?"[209] And, once his sight has been restored

and he finds himself forced to choose among all the beauties of the temple, it is his heart,

not his sight that leads him to Nadine, his true love. [210]

Not infrequently this tension arises from the blending of two distinct dramatic

modes—the pastoral and the sentimental. The former—whose genealogy can be traced

from D'Urfé's *L'Astrée* through the beginnings of lyric theater in France a few decades

later to Marivaux's early plays, Watteau's painted *fêtes* and Favart's earlier *opéras*

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[208] *Ibid.,*12.

[209] *Ibid.,*10.

[210] *Ibid.,* 28-30.

comiques—originally offered amorous idylls.[211] But Rousseau's mid-century

philosophical investment in country-life inspired a gradually moralization of the tradition,

as virtuous peasants gradually displaced naïve lovers.[212] And with moralization came

full-fledged sentimentalization with peasants now held up as both happily devoted to

family and community and as objects of pity. The most programmatically sentimental

opéras comiques—in what might be seen as an attempt to dramatize an inherently

conflictual message—offer extended dialogues in which the simple life is alternately

praised and deplored. *Le Jardinier de Sidon* (1768),[213] opens with Cliton, a powerful and

genealogy-obsessed citizen of Sidon, informing Abdolonime that he is of royal lineage

and has been chosen as the country's new leader. This latter emphatically refuses the

honor; he cherishes his simple life as a flower and vegetable gardener, its rural peace

where "chacun n'a de valeur qu'en soi."[214] Cliton is then relayed by Barzine,

Abdolonime's daughter, who, drawing on the resources of sentimental discourse insists

on rather incongruously pitying her poor, but deeply content father:

> Barzine: Cliton vient me promettre que notre sort alloit changer.
> Abdolonime: Et pourquoi cela, Barzine? Personne n'est plus à son aise que moi. Je suis en paix
> avec moi-même. [Chantant :]
>
> > Il ne faut pour nous rendre heureux
> > Que savoir mesurer nos voeux
> > . . . .
>
> Barzine: Mon pere, ce que j'en dis, n'est que pour vous montrer combien vos peines

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[211] See Amy S. Wyngaard, *From Savage to Citizen: The Invention of the Peasant in the French Enlightenment* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004), 35-70; and Louis E. Auld, "'Dealing in Shepherds:' The Pastoral Ploy in Nascent French Opera," in *French Musical Thought, 1600-1800*, ed. Georgia Cowart (Ann Arbor and London: University of Michigan Research Press, 1989), 53-79.

[212] Wyngaard, *Savage to Citizen,* 71-110.

[213] Roger Timothée Régnard de Pleinchesne and François Danican Philidor, *Le Jardinier de Sidon* (Paris: Claude Herissant, 1770).

[214] *Ibid.,* 4.

m'affligent."[215]

The oscillatory, idealizing form of *opéra comique*

If this pattern is pervasive in sentimental *opéra comique*, one might also note a special affinity between this feature and the formal and structural elements of *opéra comique* itself. One prominent concern in the emerging poetics of *opéra comique* was the way in which the *ariette* should be integrated into the scene.[216] From the beginning of the history of opera, music had been associated with the representation of the affects.[217] Libretti tended to reflect this association in their avoidance of complicated plots, argumentation, satire and their concomitant emphasis on emotional states.[218] In the Italian tradition—the tradition that, through the intermediary of the *intermezzi,* had shaped *opéra comique*—this association between music and emotional states helped configure the standard *opera seria* libretto into the now well-known opposition between recitative and aria. In their writings on *opéra comique,* theorists, ever concerned about *vraisemblance,* insisted that the move into music coincide with just such an upwelling of emotion, or

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[215] *Ibid.,* 7-8.

[216] See David Charlton, "Continuing Polarities: Opera Theory and Opéra-comique," in *French Opera 1730-1830.*

[217] That music had close connections with affective states was rarely disputed. What was matter for debate, however, was the nature and value of this link, as well as the nature and value of musical sensibility. Until the mid-point of the eighteenth century, musical expression was generally understood as closely associated with spoken, declaimed language. Certain forms of early opera (Florentine and Lullian) tended to value musical affect only when it was subordinated to dramatic text, only when music was set to work heightening the prosodic musicality of declamation. See Thomas, *Aesthetics of Opera,* 29-52; and Donald Jay Grout, *A History of Western Music* (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1980), 306-312. However, even Raguenet saw Italian commercial opera's superior expressivity as, in part, linked to the superiority of the Italian language, a view that Rousseau would take up again mid-century. At the same time however, Raguenet also points to musical features—Italian composers' juxtaposition of different styles, their bolder use of dissonance, their talent for thematic invention and development—all evocative of the (pre-)classical style that made *opéra comique's ariettes* such a fine expressive vehicle to the ears of contemporaries. See François Raguenet, "A Comparison between the French and Italian Music," trans. J. E. Galliard, *The Musical Quarterly* 32.3 (Jul., 1946), 416-418.

[218] See Patrick J. Smith, *The Tenth Muse: A Historical Study of the Opera Libretto* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1970).

intensification of dramatic interest, in order to distract the spectator from what would

otherwise be (in theory, at least) a disturbing hybridity.[219] The gap between theory and

practice was large, however. Not all librettists were sensitive to *opéra comique*'s formal

potential or limitations. (Sedaine, and to a lesser degree Marmontel and Favart, seem to

have been the few librettists who were.) Moreover, even a careful matching of formal

means to moments of emotional and dramatic intensity, while it might rationalize this

alternation (and thus make it less irksome for the handful of listeners at the *Comédie-*

Italienne who actually cared about such serious theoretical issues), certainly would not go

far in erasing the genre's undeniable oscillatory effect.

But of just what does this effect consist? In a chapter and an article devoted to

opéra comique, Downing Thomas links this alternation to a variety of functions, but

primarily to the foregrounding of musically-rendered emotional states and their

identificatory effects.[220] As compelling as these analyses are, however, one must note that

music in *opéra comique* comes in a wide range of varieties. In addition to *ariettes* in

which heroines lamented their fate or confessed their love and ensembles in which

families rejoiced together—that is—in addition to *ariettes* and ensembles that specifically

foreground moments of emotional expression, one finds: frankly comedic *ariettes,*

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[219] This is David Charlton's theory at least. In his chapter, "Continuing Polarities," he makes the plausible point that (some) *opéra comique* composers and spectators wanted to fit Italian music to French tradition, and, for Charlton (and the commentators he cites) tradition means the musico-dramatic coherence of the *tragédie lyrique.* So intent is he on proving *opéra comique*'s realist ambitions, however, that he winds up associating the genre with Bakhtinian novelistic heteroglossia. Given the subversive connotations of this latter, it is hard to associate it with *opéra comique* which—in spite of Jean-Michel Sedaine's republican aesthetic values and close association with Diderot (which I will explore at the end of my third chapter)—remained a conservative, aristocratic art form. Evoking Bakhtin also seems a little odd within the context of Chalton's own article (as well as his other work), given his insistence on musico-dramatic unity (Charlton, "Continuing Polarities," in *French Opera*).

[220] Thomas, *Aesthetics of Opera,* 201-264; and "'Je vous répondrez au troisième couplet:' Eighteenth-Century *opéra comique* and the Demands of Speech," in *Operatic Migrations: Transformation Works and Crossing Boundaries* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 21-39.

cousins of the Italian buffo aria, used to characterize the many foolish *baillis* and bumbling servants that people even overtly sentimental works;[221] *ariettes* which are more narrative and descriptive than expressive (particularly, but far from exclusively to be found in Philidor's *oeuvre*);[222] choral numbers (increasingly present in the 1770s and 1780s) used to create local color[223] or, particularly when inserted into broader *divertissements* to amplify the spectators' sensuous and aesthetic pleasures;[224] and, finally, ensembles which, although they could function like sentimental *tableaux* drawing the spectator's attention to the conflicting emotions of a variety of characters, could also function dramatically, like *opera buffa's* action ensembles, developing a conflict that had begun in dialogue.[225]

If *opéra comique*'s inherent formal hybridity cannot thus be directly mapped onto an opposition between more and less emotionally-charged (or even dramatically intense) moments, it can instead be much more consistently seen as a move from a less to more idealizing space. In other words, musical movements can in general be seen to have an effect of aesthetic distancing no matter what their emotional content or dramatic function. This claim might at first seem startling. For one, it does not fit in with the neat and

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[221] See Ali's *"Plus de voyage qui me tente,"* in André-Ernest-Modeste Grétry and Jean-François Marmontel, *Zémire et Azor, Oeuvres complètes de Grétry* (Bruxelles: Brietkopf and Haertel, 1883-1911), 92-96.

[222] See Western's " D'un cerf dix cors," in François-André Philidor, Antoine Alexandre Henri Poinsinet and Michel-Jean Sedaine, *Tom Jones* (1765; London: Boosey and Hawkes, 1978), 28-42.

[223] See the chorus of peasants, "Chantons, chantons ...," in "Ouverture et Introduction," A-E-M Grétry and Michel-Jean Sedaine, *Richard Coeur de Lion, Oeuvres complètes de Grétry* (Bruxelles: Brietkopf and Haertel, 1883-1911), 9-23.

[224] See "Choeur avec Danse, " in A-E-M Grétry and Jean-Michel Sedaine *Le Comte d'Albert, Oeuvres complètes de Grétry* (Bruxelles: Brietkopf and Haertel, 1883-1911), 148-154.

[225] See the quartet, "Quoi! de la part du gouverneur?" in Grétry and Sedaine, *Richard,* 51-78.

compelling theoretical framework that been constructed around *opéra comique.* In their
"Les enjeux théoriques de l'opéra comique," Philippe Vendrix and Manuel Couvreur
explain that, while an earlier classical theory had conceived of music as irredeemably
invraisemblable and had opposed lyric to spoken theater, the Enlightenment conceived
music as existing on a continuum with the spoken word, as being exaggerated, energized,
emotionally-charged speech, rather than a medium apart and thus saw *opéra comique*
instead as an intensification of spoken theater.[226] Moreover, as suggested above, *ariettes*
did at times function in precisely this fashion—not as the speech of gods and other
mythical creatures, but instead merely as the intensely impassioned speech of ordinary
and even lowly humans. How can one then maintain that music also had an idealizing
effect? How can this not seem at one and the same time contradictory as well as slightly
anachronistic (given the above-mentioned shift in the understanding and to some degree
functioning of music)? How can music both pretend to a privileged connection to the
body and the feelings and at the same move us away from the directness of emotional (or
other forms of) realism?

If eighteenth-century discourse on music and lyric theater tended to be divided
between the rear-guard idealizing classicists and the more dominant Enlightenment
realists, more recently Claude Lévi-Strauss has made an compelling case for music's
simultaneous grounding in the sensuality of bodily experience and idealization of the
same (within a broader discussion of music's temporality):

> myth and music share of both being languages which, in their different ways
> transcend articulated expression, while at the same time—like articulate speech ...
> requiring a temporal dimension in which to unfold. But this relation to time is of a
> rather special nature: it is as if music and mythology needed time in order to deny

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[226] Manuel Couvreur and Philippe Vendrix, "Les enjeux théorique de l'Opéra Comique," in *L'Opéra comique en France au XVIIIe siècle* (Liège: Mardaga, 1992), 211-281.

> it. Both, indeed are instruments for the obliteration of time. *Below the level of sounds and rhythms, music acts upon a primitive terrain, which is the physiological time of the listener; this time is irreversible and therefore irredeemably diachronic, yet music transmutes the segment devoted to listening to it into a synchronic totality, enclosed within itself.* Because of the internal organization of the musical work, the act of listening to it immobilizes passing time .... It follows that by listening to music and while we are listening to it, we enter into a kind of immortality. [227]

Carl Dahlhaus makes an argument to similar effect in his poetics of Italian opera. He notes first that, in addition to the representation of affect, opera has always been associated with the marvelous—in the broad sense—not merely the *merveilleux* of baroque theater, but also the supernatural element of many romantic operas and well as the mythology of Wagnerian music-drama.[228] Then, in a discussion of the *lieto fine* (happy end) tradition in *opera seria,* he links what he sees as the incompatibility between opera and tragedy with opera's antirealist bias:

> The association between musical performance and a tragic ending has always been an awkward one, at every period in operatic history.... The criterion of naturalness is inappropriate for opera. If a god halts the infernal machinery of tragedy (Cocteau's *Machine Infernale*), it is as fantastic, from the standpoint of a realist aesthetics, as the dramaturgical idea of letting people who have been condemned to death and entombed alive express their feelings in a *cantabile*.[229]

In *opéra comique,* then, one can imagine that, even if the *ariette* is not always explicitly used as a means of intensifying and foregrounding emotional states, it can instead be ascribed a certain idealizing function. Even if one does not feel inclined to follow Lévi-Strauss or Dahlhaus, or apply their more abstract reflections on music to the particular case of *opéra comique,* one can find textual and dramatological clues to this

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[227] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked,* trans. John and Doreen Weightman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 15-16. (My emphasis.)

[228] Carl Dahlhaus, "The Dramaturgy of Italian Opera," in *Opera in Theory and Practice, Image and Myth,* ed. Lorenzo Bianconi and Georges Pestelli (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 85.

[229] *Ibid.,* 140.

effect within *opéra comique* itself. Indeed, in the search for such clues, one need look no farther than the opening *ariettes* of *Les Moissonneurs.* In the first act, Rosine, Candor, and Dolival each have what amount to a presentation aria. And, in each case, the transition from speech to song is marked by both an increasing regularity of versification and an abstraction away from the concrete present of the dialogue in which each character is engaged towards self-contained soliloquy (or pompous sermonizing). To take but one example: The dialogue between Gennevote and Rosine which precedes this latter's first *ariette* is characterized by a regular rhyme scheme, coupled with metrical irregularity, as six, seven and eleven syllable lines are mixed with more traditional *octosyllabes* and *alexandrins*. Rosine's *ariette* sees a continuation of the previous rhyme scheme, coupled with now entirely regular, homogenous *octosyllabes.* At the same time, the text of the *ariette* is highly idealizing, even more precious and lacquered than the surrounding dialogue: "Dès que l'aurore vermeille, // Répand l'air frais du matin, // J'entends bourdonner l'abeille // Caressant la fleur du thym..."[230]

If each move into music functions as a move into an idealizing realm, a space in which conflict is denied, loss is conjured away and pleasure is, at least, implicitly paramount, this same pattern may be seen at work in *opéra comique* on a broader level as well, in musical inflection of dramatic structure and content. In his discussion of the sentimental narrative, Denby notes that misfortune is a key category—not merely because it structures the spectator's relationship to the tableau, but also because it function as an the impetus which propels the plot forward.[231] To a certain extent the same analysis can

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[230] Favart, *Les Moissonneurs,* 133.

[231] Denby, *Sentimental Narrative,* 72.

be applied to sentimental drama, or, at least to its close cousin the *drame bourgeois*. Even

a cursory glance at the key *drames* of this period, whether Diderot's *Le Fils Naturel,*

Sedaine's *Le Philosophe Sans le Savoir,* or Beaumarchais's *Eugénie*, shows that, in spite

of innovative work in pantomime, increasing realism of décor, and use of dramatic

tableaux, they are all very much problem-centered—each is concerned with helping its

characters find a way of negotiating their conflicting emotions, attachments, fears and

confusions until finally a resolution is reached. In *opéra comique,* on the other hand, one

does not get a sense that misfortune drives the action—at least not nearly to the same

extent as it does in spoken theater. This has been recognized to some extent by critics

both recently and in the eighteenth-century—at least in an impressionistic sort of way.

Karin Pendle, for example, notes that *opéras comiques* tend to be lighter and not as

serious as contemporary *drames bourgeois*.[232] Similarly, Contant d'Orville saw *opéra*

comique as too light-hearted a genre for subjects as serious as a son's attempt to rob his

father (*L'Ecole de Jeunesse*),[233] while two decades later the *Mercure de France* chastised

Sedaine for bringing a particularly dark version of Raoul Barbe-Bleue to a stage on which

tragedy was "forbidden."[234]

If one takes a more analytical approach, one can see that this lightness is closely

associated with the presence of music and the way in which it serves to down-play

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[232] Karin Pendle, "L'opéra-comique à Paris de 1762 à 1789," in *L'Opéra-comique en France au XVIIIe siècle* (Liège: Mardaga, 1992), 80.

[233] Louis Anseaume and Egidio Duni, *L'Ecole de Jeunesse ou le Barnevelt françois* (Paris: Chez l'Auteur, 1765). This *opéra comique* was an adaptation of George Lillo's bourgeois tragedy, *The London Merchant.* According to Contant d'Orville, the tone of the play was inappropriate for *opéra comique:* "On voit par ce précis combien le ton de cette Pièce est éloigné du genre de l'Opéra bouffon. La musique coupe continuellement l'intérêt ... " (Contant d'Orville, *Histoire de l'opéra buffon,* vol. 2 [Geneva: Slatkine, 1970], 120).

[234] Charlton, *Grétry*, 291.

conflict. This can be seen most obviously perhaps on the level of the act. In spoken

theater, each act moves towards the heightening of conflict and of suspense—which is

only resolved at the end of the play. Each of the first three acts of even such a discursive,

slow-paced drama as Diderot's *Le Fils Naturel* moves towards a moment of great

emotional conflict (Dorval's agitated soliloquies at the end of the first and third acts), or

accelerating plot complication (the second act ends in a double *coup de théâtre*). In

opéra comique, however, every act, almost without exception, ends in song (and often in

dance as well). This is true of even the most serious of *opéras comiques—*of *L'Ecole de

Jeunesse* as well as Grétry's and Sedaine's *Raoul Barbe-Bleue*. Sometimes this act-

ending musical movement is a simple solo *ariette.* Most often, however, it is either a

chorus, or a concerted movement, or some more complex combination of musical

elements, particularly in later works.

Adopting the theoretical frame of both eighteenth-century writers and more recent

musicology, Elisabeth Cook tends to understand these movements as functioning

mimetically, as contributing to the musico-dramatic interest, as evinced by her

description of "tableaux ensembles:"

> Ensembles reinforcing events previously communicated in dialogue or solo *ariettes*
> served the useful dramatic function of underlining and intensifying given emotions and
> situations.... They provided the means for a vivid, yet concise, musical reinforcement of
> dramatic events....[235]

Cook certainly makes a good point, particularly if these ensembles are contrasted

with the more static use of music in neighboring traditions, such as that of *opera seria,* or

even with the typically more conventionally structured *ariettes* with which these pieces

shared the stage. From this perspective, they can certainly be seen as more musico-

[235] Elisabeth Cook, *Duet and Ensemble in the early opéra comique* (New York: Garner Publishing, 1995),
131.

dramatically realistic, as well as more adequate to the new sensualist conception of emotion as fluid, dynamic, open-ended experience. At the same time, however, the very fact that these act endings are set to music and not merely spoken, suggests that the spectator's attention is, at least at the ends of the acts, shifted away from the tensions disturbing the lives of the fictional characters toward non-mimetic aesthetic pleasures.[236] Relative to spoken dialogue, text in musical numbers is almost always simplified, if not fragmented into bits which are then repeated, superimposed and even jumbled together as they frequently are in choruses and complex ensembles. As the signifying function of the text fades, the seductive power of the music comes to the fore—not merely music's expressive and hence dramatic power, but also its power as sheer sensual pleasure, as Mary Hunter would say.[237] Moreover, in these moments, text cedes the spotlight of the spectator's attention, not merely to music, but to a host of aesthetic elements as well, to alluring dancers and singers, as well as innovative, picturesque scenery.[238]

    Opéra comique convention thus dictates the frequent, momentary softening, tempering, or aesthetization of comedy's already idealizing presentation of moral dilemma or social conflict. Certain *opéras comiques* take the further step of using series of musical movements to create extended idylls, extended moments of plenitude which work to further reduce dramatic tension, or even to proleptically resolve organizing

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[236] One might want to see some parallel between this movement away from narrative towards a foregrounded performative moment and the tension that Carolyn Abbate has located between operatic narrative and the performative seductions of unaccompanied coloratura (although sentimental pastorales rarely often anything quite so intense and fetishizable). See Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 3-10.

[237] Hunter, *Opera Buffa,* 19.

[238] If the *Comédie-Italienne* did not have the famous *machines* that descended from the rafters of the *Académie Royale de musique,* it still relied on visual effect to draw crowds away from competing theaters, with the result that, as Charlton notes: "the tendency towards more costly, specially-designed scenery was inexorable ..." (Charlton, *Grétry,* 13).

tensions almost as soon as they have been affirmed. Grétry's and Sedaine's *Silvain* is exemplary in this regard, as an early scenic sequence celebrating familial relations combines musical regularity and pattern with textual meaning to such tension-reducing effect.[239]

After an expository scene sketching out the looming conflict between Silvain and his father and a subsequent soliloquy in which Silvain restates this conflict as an internal psychical drama, the mood suddenly brightens as first Hélène and her two daughters, Lucette and Pauline, discuss this latter's relationship with her fiancé Basile, then Basile himself joins them. These two scenes stretch out, embracing five *ariettes* as well as interspersed spoken banter. They offer so little connection with the main plot and so little in the way of conflict, it would be most accurate to describe them as merely an idyllic interlude rather than part of a subplot or even a sequence. This lack of dramatic tension stems in part from the representation of Pauline and Basile's love as involving an almost perfect collapsing of desire and duty. Pauline adores Basile because this latter is wholly bent on pleasing her parents. As she confides to her mother: "Il fait son bonheur de vous plaire // ... C'est en me parlant de mon père ... // Que Basile a su m'attendrir."[240] However, if these harmonious familial relationships are played out in dialogue, they are underlined and amplified in the musical settings of the *ariettes*.

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[239] *Silvain* opens with a worried Silvain and a perplexed Hélène. She believes there must be something amiss in their relationship. Perhaps Silvain regrets having married down without his father's consent. No, Silvain is as happy as could be living the simple life as a hunter. He is deeply troubled, however, because he has learned that his own father has recently bought the land on which he hunts. Worse yet, it is his evil brother, Dolmon *fils,* who will be the active administrator of the land. Silvain goes out. After an extended idyllic interlude (discussed below), guards burst onto the scene with Silvain whom they have arrested for poaching. An angry Dolmon *fils* appears. Silvain defends his rights. Dolmon *fils* leaves, threatening to bring back his father. At this point Silvain asks Hélène to intervene. Hélène agrees and begs the father to have mercy on his son so movingly that he suddenly awakens to the joys of simple, pastoral life. Grétry and Marmontel, *Silvain, Oeuvres complètes de Grétry* (Bruxelles: Brietkopf and Haertel, 1883-1911).

[240] Grétry and Marmontel, *Silvain,* 54-55.

Although the *ariettes* of these scenes present a variety of different forms, they are for the most part closed, regular and symmetrical.[241] Moreover, frequent musical rhyme, regular phrase structure, and multiple transformations of a few basic musical ideas give each piece a highly integrated feel.[242]

More than simply creating a calm parenthesis, this musical material also transcends generational and social difference suggesting an easy commonality. As we have seen, it had become widely accepted in the second half of the eighteenth-century that music could make meaning, that, more than simply imitative of the natural world or human emotion, it constituted a language in its own right. In this musical language, combinations of musical elements—rhythms, harmonies, melodic gestures—functioned almost like words, carrying meanings created by past usage—in socially embedded music, for example, or, simply within a piece itself. Recently, musicologists and theorists have explored this conception of music as rhetoric, using it to underpin insightful analyses of eighteenth-century music.[243] With the tools they have developed, one can become sensitive to the social connotations of the *ariettes* in this section. The lively 6/8

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[241] Hélène's and Pauline's arias are A-B-A' and ABA', respectively, while Lucette and Basile's are both rondo-shaped (A-B-A'-CA" and A-B-A'-C-A' respectively).The only through-composed *ariette* is Pauline and Basile's final duet.

[242] One can get a sense of this difference by comparing the opening section of Hélène's *ariette* to that of the *ariette* she sings in the very first scene, "Nos coeurs cessent de s'entendre!" The first section of "Nos coeurs cessent" is composed of three phrases, the first moving to the dominant, the second affirming the dominant as the new key, and the third, a cadential phrase. Each phrase is composed of two two-measure subphrases. But this is where the regularity of this section ends. Each subphrase is melodically, harmonically or texturally different from the others as the A section moves from a sweeping, arpeggiated tonic chord, ornamented with lombardic rhythms through appogiatura-laden descending scales to outlined chords - the cadential motif. In contrast, Hélène's *ariette* of motherly advice, "Ne crois pas qu'un bon ménage," could not be more domestic and regular. Her melody, contained within an octave, describes a simple ABAC movement where the turns on B and C section cadences neatly rhyme with similar turns at the end of A sections.

[243] See Wye Jamison Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart: Le Nozze di Figaro and Don Giovanni* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1983); and Leonard G Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1980).

and the drone accompanying Basile's aria do not let us forget that he is just a villager, while the more *mezzo caractere* nature of Pauline and Hélène's *ariettes*, their moderate tempos, lilting rhythms, and more elaborate melodies, recall their higher social status. At the same time, however, musical figures are shared between these characters in such a way as to suggest the unproblematic effacement of social difference.

Not only does each *ariette* present itself as a coherent whole, but musical elements of each echo and prefigure similar elements in the other pieces, linking them together through a network of musical association and further suggesting a family bound together by mutual affection. Pauline's lighthearted defense of her love for Basile does not repeat any theme of her mother's *ariette* exactly, and yet, there is a family resemblance, as it were, between the two. The end of Pauline's very first sub-phrase ("Hé! Comment ne pas le chérir?") where (in mm. 9-10) dotted eighth- and sixteenth-notes gently rise and fall around the tonic (figure A5) seems to recall an analogous moment in Hélène's *ariette* where (in mm. 6-7) similarly meandering dotted eighth-and sixteenth-notes precede the cadence (figure A6). Similarly, Pauline soon interrupts her opening dotted eighth- and sixteenth-note rhythmic pattern to recall the triplets (mm. 16, 18 in figure A7) that pervade Hélène's *ariette* as well as this latter's cadential flourishes (m. 19 in figure A7; see also figure A8). After this musical deference to her mother however, she gestures towards Basile, as the very last phrase moves into an animated, flowing, drone-accompanied 6/8 (mm. 21-26 in figure A9; see also figure A10).

This idyllic interlude certainly functions on one level simply to alter the opera's mood and pace, to add variety, which was, for many, a key element of a successful *opéra*

comique.[244] One might also want to see these scenes as holding up a picture of familial harmony precisely in order to heighten dramatic tension, to emphasize all that is potentially at stake in the impending confrontation with Dolmon *père.* Yet, the opera itself seems blithely unaware of this possible loss. There is no flicker of anticipatory doubt or hesitation in these scenes, nothing in fact to distract the spectator from their sensuous musical presence.

But one can also go further and situate them in relationship to what we have already shown to be an entirely conventional alternation between affirmation and denial of suffering, an alternation that structures the opera's opening dialogue. In this expository scene, Hélène first reminds Silvain of what he has been (or might have been) forced to give up for her: "Tu te rappelles, je le vois, // Ta naissance, et les biens dont jouit ta famille. // Je t'ai coûté bien cher!"[245] However, this possibility is immediately erased by Silvain: "Tu me tiens lieu de tout, et je n'ai rien perdu."[246] Dolmon *père* and above all, Silvain's evil brother might threaten their tranquility: "Mon frère en sera possesseur... // par son arrogance il est, dans le village, // Annoncé comme un oppresseur. // Il arrive avec faste, il commande, il menace."[247] But then, Silvain reminds Hélène that their love and work can easily make up for whatever ill befalls them: "Nous nous aimons toujours.

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[244] Lacépède, for example, asks that the composer of "Comédie lyrique," like the composer of "Tragédie lyrique" offer both unity and variety in his works: "...il faut également que l'ensemble de son ouvrage soit digne d'un grand théâtre, que les différentes parties y présentent ces couleurs uniformes et ces couleurs diversifiées que nous avons vues être la source de la liaison et de la variété; qu'il sache offrir l'image de toutes les passions et de toutes leurs nuances...." Bernard Germain Etienne Médard de la Ville-sur-Illon, comte de Lacépède, *La Poétique de la Musique,* vol. 2 (Paris: L'Imprimerie de Monsieur, 1785), 279.

[245] Grétry and Marmontel, *Silvain,* 19.

[246] *Ibid.,* 19.

[247] *Ibid.,* 25.

// Quelque soit notre asile, ... // Nous aurons encor de beaux jours..."[248] If, in this opening dialogue, each reminder of an unassailable underlying happiness serves to soften or even erase any future conflict or present dissatisfaction, these idyllic scenes can be seen to have a similar effect, but on the level of the plot as a whole, as they direct the spectator's attention away from the intergenerational conflict that has just been introduced, while structurally anticipating its resolution still a number of scenes away.

Sentimental pastorale's thematic alignment of desire and duty

I have presented these scenes as moments of plenitude in which conflict is veiled or even conjured away. For anyone who has internalized the assumptions of poststructuralist psychocriticism, these scenes present a problem however. In their denial of conflict they seemingly ask to be understood as a form of imaginary and yet, there is no sense of repression, no sense of the duality essential to this Lacanian register. They do not embody the "manque du manque" (or "lack of lack") that Michel Poizat ascribes to one idealizing tradition in his dialectical history of opera.[249] Instead, one might say that they are merely not interested in lack, or conflict.[250] One might instead understand them as both representing and offering their public a very real, positive experience of pleasure, an experience, which, like their musical support blends sensual and ideal realms.

What I believe is compelling about this interpretation is that, in addition to

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[248] *Ibid.,* 25.

[249] Michel Poizat, *L'Opéra ou le Cri de l'Ange: Essai sur la jouissance de l'amateur d'Opéra* (Paris: A. M. Métailié, 1986), 207.

[250] Catherine Cusset makes a similar claim about libertine novels in her study of these latters' "ethics of pleasure;" "For modernity, literature and art are indissociable from lack and suffering, which did not interest the libertines.... Modernity begins with Rousseau, with Goethe. With *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse* ... love is henceforth placed under the sign of sacrifice, of the surpassing of the self, of sublimation" (Catherine Cusset, *No Tomorrow: The Ethics of Pleasure in the French Enlightenment* [Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1999], 2-3).

harmonizing with the empiricist logic we have already seen at work in sympathy, it accounts for *opéra comique'*s thematic habits as well. If the prominence of pleasure, music and above all musicalized pleasure distinguishes sentimental *opéra comique* from its theatrical and ideological cousin, the *drame bourgeois*, so too does its predilection for organizing its plots around father-daughter rather than father-son dyads. In addition to the Rosine-Candor pairing to which I have already devoted critical attention, one might also note the close ties between Hélène and Dolmon *père* (in *Silvain*) as well as between Lucile and not one, but two fathers, as, in defending her, her father Timante also metaphorically plays her part, vicariously seducing a Dorval *père* (in *Lucile*).[251]

This is not to say that one does not find father-daughter relationships in spoken *drames* or father-son relationships in *opéra comique.* It does, however, suggest that when one finds the reverse pairings, one also finds a certain generic blending. One finds evidence of this kind of blending in *L'Ecole de Jeunesse,* which both features the father-son dyad of its parent play, Lillo's *The London Merchant* and was considered, as we have seen, as more serious than most *opéras comiques* and thus out of its generic and institutional element on the stage of the *Comédie-Italienne.*

Why, one might ask, does *opéra comique* insist as it does on these father-daughter relationships? In his chapter devoted to sympathy in *opéra comique,* Downing Thomas draws on Diana Fuss's and Judith Butler's critical reworking of Freud to make a case for the similar psychic structuring and hence the practical equivalence of desire and

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[251] For father-son relationships in the *bourgeois drama,* see Scott Bryson's interpretation of Diderot's *Le Fils Natural* as being "about" the relationship between Dorval and an absent father (Scott Bryson, *The Chastised Stage: Bourgeois Drama and the Exercise of Power* [Saratoga: Anma Libri, 1991], 12-36). One can interpret Michel-Jean Sedaine's *Le Philosophe Sans le Savoir* similarly.

identification.[252] While Thomas goes on to use this insight as implicit justification for a broad construal of sympathy, one might also note that on the level of the entire repertoire, sentimental *opéra comique,* or at least the subgenre of sentimental pastorale, makes a similar claim. It repeatedly celebrates the equation of desire and (moral) identification, of personal longing, and compassionate attachment. As Lucile sings: "Nous aurons pour loix nos désirs // Pour nous l'himen est l'amour même."[253] The father-daughter pairing is used, I argue, to represent and embody this morality of pleasure in a doubly reciprocal relationship. As much as the father pities her, he also both desires and emulates the daughter, who, in a tradition that one may trace from courtly love, through the *Précieuses* and the eighteenth-century salonnière to Rousseau's *Julie* functions as a moral model and civilizing force.[254] Similarly, the daughter both desires and emulates the father. This pairing, in turn, leads back—via Freud—to the theoretic premise of this chapter—that both sympathy and the broader logic of these sentimental pastorales is one that takes all manners of blending and continuity seriously (without for all that attributing to them any subversive, destabilizing force).

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[252] Thomas, *Aesthetics of Opera,* 210-212.

[253] Grétry and Marmontel, *Lucile,* xi.

[254] It is Candor who serves as a model of virtue throughout most of *Les Moissonneurs.* However, after the culminating sleep scene tableau (discussed above), it is Rosine herself who is held up as a model of behavior to Dolival. Perhaps love will elevate and transform Dolival, just as it did for Candor when *he* was young and ridiculous: "Candor (à Dolival): Si tu peux être corrigé, // Mon ami, ce sera par un penchant honnête. // Il formera ton coeur, il mûrira ta tête. // Je le sais. J'en ai fait l'expérience, moi. // A peu de chose près, jétois, dans ma jeunesse // Aussi ridicule que toi. // Un amour délicat me tint lieu de sagesse. // Me fit de mes erreurs reconnoître le faux, // Et j'eus honte de mes défauts, // En n'en trouvant aucun dans ma maîtresse" (Favart, *Les Moissonneurs,* 212). *Lucile* and *Silvain,* among others, also feature heroines who serve as moral models.

For a discussion of woman as the site of civilizing influence and the embodiment of this *topos* in the *salonnière,* see Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 6-10. For a discussion of Julie as a sentimental model of virtue, see Christine Roulston, *Virtue, Gender, and the Authentic Self in Eighteenth-Century Fiction: Richardson, Rousseau, and Laclos* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998), 85-88. I will discuss this *topos* in more detail in Chapter 2.

As Fuss explains, Freud keeps desire and identification distinct in order to maintain the gender opposition and protect himself from the notion of homosexuality.[255] While Fuss uses the interpenetration, even equivalence of desire and identification in order to make an argument for the lack of distinction between homosociality and homosexuality (even in Freud!),[256] one might very well ask oneself what this insight might mean for other Freudian constructs, such as the Oedipus complex. Given that the story of the son's detachment from the mother (and concomitant repression of the natural impulses she represents) and identification with the father (and with his power and cultural privileges) relies on the same opposition between desire and identification, one might imagine that it breaks down as well. Interestingly, this is precisely what Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen argues in his "The Oedipus Problem in Freud and Lacan."[257]

To summarize a complex argument: Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen notes that Freud had difficult separating desire and identification. One of the consequences of such a confusion is that the identificatory relationship with the father that is supposed to be normalizing in fact takes on the ambivalence that characterizes the male child's relationship with the mother. Where Freud wants to separate a regressive desire for the mother and a normalizing identification with the father, he winds up theorizing both

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[255] Diana Fuss weaves her argument through a reading of Freud's *Group Psychology and the Ego*. Freud asks himself: "What bonds a group together: what is the precise link that constitutes a social tie?"(43) The answer he offers (in his discussion of two homosocial groups – the Church and the army) is a "non-libidinous libido—a libido without love"(43). Freud then suggests that love and eros draw their energy from the same place, and are in fact identical (44). But, then suddenly, apparently in order to protect himself against the notion of homosexuality, suggests that there might be another kind of emotional bond. And it is here where he comes up with the notion of identification (45). See Diana Fuss, *Identification Papers* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), 40-45.

[256] *Ibid.,* 45.

[257] Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, "The Oedipus Problem in Freud and Lacan," *Critical Inquiry* 20 (1994), 267-282.

relationships as existing on the plane of what Lacan will later call the imaginary. More specifically, Freud has the male child identify with a father who functions at one and the same time as the "ego-ideal" and the threatening, castrative "super-ego." According to Borch-Jacobsen, Lacan helps clarify this picture by making a distinction between the imaginary phallus (the super-ego) and the symbolic phallus (the ego-ideal). But now there is another problem: "the solution runs the risk of being purely verbal, for with whom is one supposed to identify to arrive at sexual normality if not that 'biologically inadequate [homosexual] object' with whom, precisely, one must not identify?"[258] Lacan finds the answer in "primitive societies,"[259] where (supposedly) these two functions were actually embodied in separate people. Lacan's conclusion is that neurosis in modern society is the direct result of this collapse of two paternal functions into one.

To say the least (and here is my interpretation) this is an extremely reductive (and unverifiable) account of neurosis in modern society. Instead, applying Ockham's razor, I suggest that if Freud's model of the Oedipus keeps on breaking down, in spite of the best psychoanalytic minds' attempts to patch it together, it is because it is fundamentally a fiction. If desire and identification are confused and if the confusion leads Borch-Jacobsen to marvel that "indeed, it is rather astonishing that in such circumstances the child ever reaches heterosexuality or peaceful relations with others,"[260] it is because we do not need the Oedipal separation of desire and identification to reach "peaceful relations with others." To this one might add that the entire notion of repression—a

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[258] *Ibid.,* 276.

[259] *Ibid.,* 277.

[260] *Ibid.,* 274.

notion that depends on this separation of desire and identification is itself a fiction and that it is easier to understand human kind as naturally sociable, as naturally inclined to live in peace with others—at least to a certain extent. [261]

To return to the rosy world of sentimental pastorale, then, what I believe these *opéras comiques* are doing in figuratively aligning desire and identification through the father-daughter dyad is telling us (a little anachronistically perhaps) that repression is a myth, that our desires do indeed align with our duties. Not everywhere. Not all the time. But at least sometimes at the *Comédie-Italienne* and, perhaps at moments, in that semi-idealized social space of the *le monde* as well.

Back to worldly-sensuous sympathy

In the preceding pages I have described an oscillatory pattern that structures sentimental *opéra comique* at a number of levels—dialogic, thematic, formal and more broadly structural. From there, I have slipped into a discussion of one moment—the more

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[261] Although this question threatens to take us far beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is interesting to note that recent models of the self and human relatedness offered by neurobiology and evolutionary psychology tend to corroborate this intuition. Neurobiology offers a model of the self that is considerably more complex than the Freud's early opposition between unconscious and conscious, later tri-partite model of id, ego and superego, or the Lacanian opposition between the imaginary and the symbolic (or real, imaginary, and symbolic). Neurobiology instead describes the self as a set of many different but communicating subsystems, some of which are more primitive and other more advanced on an evolutionary scale. In a passage reminiscent of Diderot's on the *homme clavecin* (in *Le Rêve de d'Alembert*), Antonio Damasio uses musical analogy to describe mind and behavior: "It may be helpful to think of the behavior of an organism as the performance of an orchestral piece whose score is being invented as it goes along. Just as the music you hear is the result of many groups of instruments playing together in time, the behavior of an organism is the result of several biological systems performing concurrently. The different groups of instruments produce different kinds of sound and execute different melodies. They may play continuously throughout a piece or be absent at times, sometimes for a number of measures. Likewise for the behavior of an organism" (Antonio Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* [San Diego: Harcourt, 1999], 87). The self is certainly far from conscious of the entirety of its psychic world. Yet what is unconscious is not necessarily "repressed," in the Freudian sense. It could merely cease to sound for a while, as it were. This is not to say that the self doesn't experience conflict with its social and natural environment, but conflict is not considered *the essential truth* of the human condition, as, for example, it tends to be in Freud and most certainly is in Hegel (whom we shall discuss in the next chapter.) In fact, evolutionary psychologists and ethologists are suggesting that the penchant to feel sympathy—particularly for those close to us—is indeed natural and hard-wired. See Franz de Waal, *Our Inner Ape* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2005).

idealizing moment of this pattern which I saw echoed in recurrent father-daughter

pairings. Let us now return to the pattern itself. What is its significance? What meanings

can the critic read in this generic predilection? David Denby notes this pattern in his

discussion of Baculard's *Les Epoux malheureux*:

> But the role of misfortune in *Les Epoux malheureux* is an ambiguous one: at a
> primary level, it is treated with all the hyperbole of melodrama, generating ...
> sentence upon sentence of inflated evocation of their *états d'âme*. Misfortune,
> then, is the prime moving force of the narrative, the obstacle to happiness, and as
> such is to be deplored. But at this point, other discourses intervene: one of these
> insists that the misfortune which has just been evoked so hyperbolically is
> nothing, an existential bagatelle when compared with the love which the unhappy
> couple feel for each other, and which is the only firm reality.[262]

However, instead of leaning into this opposition between the insistence on and denial of

suffering, Denby glides over it, moving on to a point more germane to his own critical

agenda.

If one does explore this tension, however, within the interpretative matrix that has

grown up around sentimentalism and worldliness, two opposite and equally awkward

possibilities arise. First, one has the option of fitting *Les Moissonneurs* within a

sentimentalist frame and implicating sympathy in the shoring up or promoting of paternal

authority.[263] Typically, however, this interpretive paradigm is closely associated with a

representational realism that relays and reproduces the male spectator's oppressive

relationship with a feminine suffering other.[264]

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[262] Denby, *Sentimental Narrative,* 13.

[263] One could follow Gail Hart, for example, in seeing fathers' empathy and kindness as the very sign of
their increased authority. See Gail K. Hart, *Tragedy in Paradise: Family and Gender Politics in German
Bourgeois Tragedy 1750-1850* (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1996), 1-23.

[264] Laura Hinton offers perhaps the most paradigmatic example of this interpretation (Hinton, *Perverse
Gaze*). Tom McCall also links paternal authority to the bourgeois tragedy's search for emotional
authenticity and representational truth (Tom McCall, "Liquid Politics: Towards a Theorization of
'Bourgeois' Tragic Drama," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 98.3 [Summer, 1999], 593-622).

If, on the other hand, one takes as one's starting point sentimental pastorale's oscillatory structure, one might be inclined to see the genre as manifesting the rococo *papillotage* typically understood as disrupting the spectator's absorption into sentiment, freeing her, like the light-hearted libertines, to take pleasure in the moment.[265] However, this reading fits uncomfortably with the subgenre's sentimental thematics—with its pointed lack of rococo masquerade and its sentimental insistence on authenticity and at least a certain degree of social equality.

If we instead make a detour back through the previously discussed moments of sympathy, we will find a path leading out of this critical dilemma. As we have already seen, sympathy in *Les Moissonneurs* and in other *opéras comiques* can be understood as characterized, like worldly sensibility, by a non-repressive distance that allows its co-existence of moral and erotic connections. I have also suggested that Rosine might be understood as emulating Marianne in her polite, yet seductive self-restraint. Now we can extend this reading and not only see Abdolonime's, Zulmis's and other character's denial of suffering in a similar light, but link this oscillation on the personal level, to the form and structure of sentimental-pastoral *opéra comique* as a whole—on the level of individual works, or the genre itself. Finally, we can turn outward and see worldly-sensuous sympathy as a model for the relationship between audiences, authors and *opéra comique,* particularly sentimental-pastoral *opéra comique.*

Favart was far from the only writer of sentimental pastorales. But it is interesting

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[265] It is Marion Hobson who uses the term *papillotage* to refer to the oscillatory patterning of rococo art and literature (Hobson, *Object of Art,* 52-56). While Hobson takes care to associate this patterning with merely another form of illusion, there has been a critical tendency to treat it as having a necessarily distancing effect. Elena Russo, for instance, consistently opposes the feeling and absorption she associates with the *philosophes'*s espousal of a Republican sublime, to the distancing effects of an early *goût moderne* (Russo, *Styles of Enlightenment,* 16-25, 113-140). While Kavanagh does emphasis absorption, he shies away from mentioning feeling. Curiously, even in the pages he devotes to Dubos, he tends to avoid affective terms, preferring to speak of "pleasure" instead (Kavanagh, *Esthetics of the Moment,* 148-150).

to note that he conceives his own artistic project (as well as *opéra comique*'s in general) in much the same terms as Marianne conceives hers, as one of sensibility-driven social—or, in the case of Favart and the *opéra comique*—socio-artistic elevation. Just as Marianne's displays of goodness and polite sensibility conquer the hearts of respectable society, so too Favart proves the once unrecognized worthiness of a genre through the refined, virtuous sentiments of the sentimental pastorale.

In 1760, when he was still primarily associated with the unofficial stage of the *Opéra-Comique,* Favart wrote what would be the first of many letters to the Count of Durazzo.[266] Favart first presents himself with an entirely sentimental politeness:

> Le titre de votre agent littéraire m'est si précieux, que je le regarde comme le plus grand de tous les avantages. Mon ame n'a jamais été sensible à l'intérêt; sans fortune, mais avec des sentiments au-dessus de mon état, qu'il me soit permis de le dire, j'ai toujours préféré ce qui pouvoit m'honorer à ce qui pouvoit m'enrichir ... [267]

A page later, he positions *opéra comique* similarly. From its fairground origins, authors have striven to ennoble the genre. If it was sullied with "grossières obscénités"[268] the blame was not to be laid not at the feet of the genre itself or the authors, but instead upon a public who was at first unwilling to recognize that of which *opéra comique* was capable. We have struggled and are still working, he assures the Count, to find *opéra comique* its rightful place in the aesthetic hierarchy: "Ce n'est que par degrés imperceptibles que l'on est parvenu à rendre ce spectacle plus digne des honnêtes gens.

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[266] This latter was in the process of bringing *opéra comique* to Vienna and wanted Favart to keep him abreast of the latest developments in Paris (Charles-Simon Favart, *Mémoires et correspondance littéraires, dramatiques et anecdotiques,* vol. 1 [Paris: Léopold Collin, 1808], 1-6).

[267] *Ibid.,* 7.

[268] *Ibid.,* 8.

J'ai fait moi-même ce que j'ai pu pour y contribuer ..."[269]

Only two years later, *opéra comique* was to cross the threshold separating the fairground from the world of official theater and see a concomitant intensification of its earlier turn toward the sentimental. With *Les Moissonneurs*—the most sentimentalizing work of his career—Favart contributed to *opéra comique*'s own sentimental success story, pleasing, edifying and moving the well-heeled public of *Comédie-Italienne.*[270]

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[269] *Ibid.,* 8.

[270] Amy Wyngaard describes *Les Moissonneurs*'s success as well as its sentimental appeal to reform-minded aristocrats in her chapter, "The Sentimental Peasant" (Wyngaard, *Savage to Citizen,* 84-88).

CHAPTER II
SYMPATHY AS AMOROUS INTERSUBJECTIVITY IN
SENTIMENTAL-COMEDIC *OPÉRA COMIQUE*

In the last chapter, we saw how reclaiming an eighteenth-century perspective helped provide an explanatory framework for sympathy in the sentimental pastorale. While the contemporary critical model of sympathy understands the spectator's emotional connection as an illusory result of a real, and implicitly defensive, distance from the suffering other (doubled in what would be a stark opposition between theatrical illusion and the everyday world of lived experience),[271] the production of worldly-sensuous sympathy does not depend on such radical oppositions. Instead, much like sympathy of Dubosian theory, and even more like worldly *sentiment,* real feeling becomes pleasurable through a process of non-repressive aesthetic distancing, a shared turning away from thorny difference and setting aside of selfish concern. As a result, within the charmed domain of the sentimental pastorale, compassion can coexist with sensuality while sensitive awareness can gently emerge out of unconscious feeling. Finally, we saw how the non-repressive "logic" of worldly-sensuous sympathy found itself echoed on every level of the sentimental pastorale, from repeated idealizing movement—the polite denial of suffering, echoed formally in *opéra comique*'s signature speech-song alternation—to conflict-softening musical idylls, and the alignment of desire and duty figured in privileged father-daughter dyads.

In this chapter, I will be reading two *opéras comiques* by A-E-M Grétry and Jean-François Marmontel, which, like the sentimental pastorale, signal their connection to an

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[271] Or, as we saw with David Marshall, a collapsing of the same, a theatricalization of lived experience.

aesthetics of worldliness. While *Le Huron* offers a representation of woman as a civilizing influence, a trope common to both worldly society's self-conception and the *opéra comique's* source—Voltaire's philosophical tale, *L'Ingénue, Zémire et Azor,* for its part, showcases a lyric mode of worldly sensibility, constructing it as the site of social virtue.

However, *Le Huron* and *Zémire et Azor* do not for all that belong to the subgenre of the sentimental pastorale. Instead, *Le Huron* reconfigures the standard structure of Italian comedy, shifting the focus from the opposition between generations, to the amorous relationship itself, while in *Zémire et Azor,* the birth and maturation of love depend on the destruction of the pastoral mode and a concomitant leap into the comedic. In each case, the element of conflict that distinguishes the comic from the pastoral mode also plays a key role in the representation of sympathy as a form of balanced mutuality, an intersubjectivity defined by an energizing contact with another experienced as *an other*—a surprisingly different, wonderfully alive subject in their own right.[272]

In the following pages, I first offer a theoretical discussion of intersubjectivity that relates twentieth-century psychological and psychocritical argument to Rousseauian thought on sympathy and *amour-propre.* I then use the resulting model of intersubjective sympathy as a critical lens through which to read *Le Huron* and *Zémire et Azor.*

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[272] As I did in the first chapter, I will be defining this form of sympathy in part against another standard interpretive approach to feeling. However, one could also understand intersubjective sympathy as a development of a mutuality that remains latent within the sentimental pastorale. As we have seen, given the foregrounding of style in *Les Moissonneurs* (as well as in other *opéras comiques*), one can see Rosine as more than a completely passive source of moving speech and gesture. One can see her, not merely in *Les Moissonneurs'* final tableau—but from the beginning of the opera—as something more than the picture of an entirely artless innocence, as one who speaks, instead of one who is merely spoken by her body and her heart. Moreover, one can see Candor's attraction to Rosine's (moral and aesthetic) beauty as being in part a response to Rosine's presence as a subject in her own right. For the most part, however, sympathy in the sentimental-pastorale depends on a non-repressive omission of difference or conflict whereas amorous intersubjectivity positively draws its energy from difference and develops through conflict.

Intersubjectivity and the intersubjective approach

Adopting an intersubjective approach to the self (whether this be a person in the real world or a literary character) means understanding this latter as necessarily existing in psychical relationship to his or her social environment, as responding to and drawing energy from contact with others. As far as approach goes, this might, at first glance, seem a bit banal. Yet, as Jessica Benjamin explains in her *Bonds of Love,* psychoanalysis has typically been defined by an *intrasubjective* approach—a tendency to focus on the self's (often complex and fascinating) relationships to internalized objects at the expense of real world interactions.[273] This intrasubjective approach can be clearly seen in the Freudian narrative of child development. Freud imagines the infant as an autonomous unit, locked in a fantasy of omnipotence. His only relation is not to another person—the mother, but to an object—the breast.[274] Similarly, Freud defines emotional identification, not as a connection with another, but specifically as a response to a *loss* of contact with another. Or, as Diana Fuss explains: "Identification is ... a routine, habitual compensation for the everyday loss of our love-objects."[275]

Fuss might go on to present Freud as offering a theory of social and psychological relationality,[276] but the anti-relational, asocial bias of Freudian theory manifests itself in the violent metaphors used to model emotional identification. Following Freud, Fuss

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[273] Jessica Benjamin, *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988), 20.

[274] *Ibid.,*16.

[275] Diana Fuss, *Identification Papers* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), 1.

[276] "This study of individual psychology assumes, from the outset a theory of group relations, a theory of subjectivity in which every subject is constituted relationally" (*Ibid.,* 40).

describes identification as either a form of consumption or infection.[277] Either the subject

asserts his control over others by psychically ingesting them, or the subject finds himself

prey to others' control through a mechanism of psychical contagion (of which hypnosis is

a prime example):

> Unlike the ingestion model of identification, which stresses the subject's annihilation of
> the Other through oral incorporation, this other kind of identification works more like a
> case of contagious infection in which it is the subject who is vulnerable to invasions from
> without.[278]

If the subject is thus thought in relationship to an exterior world, this world is

always conceived as *secondary* to an autonomous self, either something to be defended

against, or a source of violence to which one succumbs.

Hegelian theory offers another example of a paradoxically asocial sociability. To

be human, for Hegel, is not merely to desire, but more specifically to desire the desire of

another "self-consciousness."[279] Before receiving this recognition, each "self-

consciousness" has a nebulous awareness of its existence, but has no objective experience

of its own truth. To exist (as a human) means existing in and through the eyes of another.

For Hegel, this first meeting between selves—a meeting that becomes a tragic model of

the entire human condition—is intensely and inherently conflictual. Each self-

consciousness simultaneously craves the recognition of the other. The resulting

struggle—the famous "fight to the death for pure prestige"[280]—introduces a fundamental

asymmetry into the relationship, as the one who has succeeded in wresting recognition

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[277] *Ibid.,* 32-45.

[278] *Ibid.,* 41.

[279] Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel* (New York: Basic Books, 1969), 5.

[280] *Ibid.,* 6.

from the other winds up in the position of the master, and the giver of recognition in the position of the slave.

In his "Living Alone Together," Tzvetan Todorov notes that this eminently conflictual model of relationality is constructed only at the price of a set of reductions. First, Hegel operates an idealizing and wholly unfounded opposition between physical need and pure Desire—as if our messy world of attachments could be so neatly divvied up.[281] At the same time, Hegel imagines these demands for desire as simultaneous, reciprocal and necessarily mutually contradictory. To desire the other's desire is to seek the other's submission, even his destruction. In fact, Hegel theorizes the search for recognition (much as Freud will later for the notion of "identification") as the psychic equivalent of consumption: "human Desire is analogous to animal Desire. Human Desire, too, tends to satisfy itself by a negating—or better, a transformation and assimilating—action. Man "feeds" on Desire as an animal feeds on real things."[282] In this brutal world, "relationality" means eat or be eaten.

Todorov goes on to argue that, although Hegel's master-slave dialectic is an origins myth, we do have access to one real original human relationship—that between mother and child. This relationship, to say the very least, is typically not characterized by a struggle to the death for anything: "Man is not born because of a struggle but because of love. And the result of that birth is not the couple master/slave but more prosaically that of parent/child."[283]

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[281] Tzvetan Todorov, "Living Alone Together," *New Literary History* 27.1 (Winter, 1996), 10.

[282] Kojève, *Hegel,* 6.

[283] Todorov, "Living Alone Together," 12.

In her construction of intersubjectivity, Benjamin also challenges and reworks the Hegelian model of relationality as necessarily a matter of domination through an appeal to the mutuality of the mother-child dyad. Where Hegel assumes a scenario in which each self strives to assert its absolute independence (paradoxically, but necessarily through a completely submissive recognition by the other), Benjamin imagines mother and child enclosed in a pleasurable embrace of mutuality. After a moment of feeding, when this latter's needs have temporarily been met: "as she cradles her newborn child and looks into its eyes, the first-time mother says, 'I believe she knows me. You do know me, don't you? Yes, you do.' As she croons to her baby ... she attributes to her infant a knowledge beyond ordinary knowing."[284] In this moment of incipient recognition, the mother takes pleasure in the baby's first response to her as a person, while her very attentiveness also works to affirm baby in her nascent separateness.

Benjamin goes on to explain that this budding relationship can be understood as more than merely a projection on the mother's part. Recent empirical research on the early mother-child relationship has shown that from her very first days of life, the child enters into an active relationship with her caretaker.[285] This relationship, moreover, goes beyond the mere satisfaction of physical need to include a range of emotional bonds and interpersonal activities in which the child does indeed "know" and prefer her caretaker over others. These recent studies have, moreover, been anticipated by John Bowlby's pioneering work in the 1950s.[286] Contesting Freudian orthodoxy, Bowlby argued that

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[284] Jessica Benjamin, *The Bonds of Love,* 13.

[285] *Ibid.,* 17.

[286] *Ibid.,* 17.

interpersonal exchange and caring—not merely physical sustenance—are essential to the child's normal development, with the result that, together with the work of "object relations theor[ists]...[he] offered psychoanalysis a new foundation: the assumption that we are fundamentally social beings."[287]

Since recognition is a phenomenon so "central to human existence as to often escape notice,"[288] Benjamin helps the reader out by offering a list of "near-synonyms ...: ... to recognize is to affirm, validate, acknowledge, know, accept, understand, empathize, take in, tolerate, appreciate, see, identify with, find familiar ... love"[289] From this list, we can see that what we have been calling sympathy might certainly finds its place somewhere between "empathize" and "identify with" and might even extend all the way to "love."

Yet this still leaves us with a (small) matter of concern. Intersubjectivity, as it has been constructed thus far, is clearly a modern concept, built up from a reworking of Hegel combined with the empirical research of relational psychoanalysis. But how does it relate to eighteenth-century thought on sympathy?

Amorous intersubjectivity in Rousseau

In the previously cited article, Todorov claims that it was less Hegel than Rousseau who first conceptualized man as essentially sociable, "as a being who *needs* others."[290] Todorov develops his claim by attempting to separate what he calls Rousseau's "'idea of consideration'" from the notion of *amour-propre.* I will argue that it is less in the notion

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[287] *Ibid.,* 17.

[288] *Ibid.,* 15.

[289] *Ibid.,* 16.

[290] Todorov, "Living Alone Together," 2.

of "consideration," than in that of reflexive sympathy that one may find the locus of

Rousseau's thought on positive sociability, a sociability that in its working of

identification through difference echoes the balanced tensions between assertion of the

self and recognition of the other characteristic of the intersubjective relationship.

For Todorov, the "'idea of consideration'" articulates a form of recognition that

depends not on similarity and rivalry, as does *amour-propre,* but instead on difference

and complementarity: "the other no longer occupies a place comparable to mine, but a

contiguous and complementary place; he is needed for my completeness."[291] The passage

Todorov quotes in the elaboration of this argument—"'Each one began to look at the

others and to want to be looked at himself'"[292]—is drawn from the moment in the

Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité at which Rousseau describes the

development of amorous relationships in early pastoral society—a simple social existence

which Rousseau holds up as an ideal moment of balance between the asocial animality of

the state of nature and the violent decadence of modern urban life. The passage from

which this quote is taken deserves to be cited in full because it actually suggests less the

opposition between "consideration" and *amour-propre* than the close connections

between the two:

> À mesure que les idées et les sentiments se succèdent, que l'esprit et le coeur s'exercent,
> le genre humain continue à s'apprivoiser, les liaisons s'étendent et les liens se resserrent.
> On s'accoutuma à s'assembler devant les cabanes ou autour d'un grand arbre: le chant et
> la danse, vrais enfants de l'amour et du loisir, devinrent l'amusement ou plutôt
> l'occupation des hommes et des femmes oisifs et attroupés. Chacun commença à regarder
> les autres et à vouloir être regardé soi-même, et l'estime publique eut un prix. *Celui qui
> chantait ou dansait le mieux; le plus beau, le plus fort, le plus adroit ou le plus éloquent
> devint le plus considérée et ce fut là le premier pas vers l'inégalité, et vers le vice en
> même temps : de ces premières préférences naquirent d'un côté la vanité et le mépris, de*

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[291] *Ibid.,* 4.

[292] *Ibid.,* 4.

l'autre la honte et l'envie ....[293]

In these pastoral song and dance contests, [294] each participant strives to capture the prize of "l'estime publique." Each participant wants to be, as Todorov remarks, "considéré." And yet the above text gives us no particular reason to see this craving for public fame as a desire for the gaze of a specifically complementary other—of an other whose *difference* holds an attraction for us. Instead, if anything, the desire for recognition *in this particular instance* clearly develops within a context of mimetic rivalry suggestive of the violence inherent in fully developed *amour-propre.* In fact, Rousseau himself suggests this connection between consideration and *amour-propre,* describing these early longings for public attention as the source of "vanity and pride."

If, when examined more carefully, this nascent search for consideration does not seem to involve a necessary connection with the other as a site of difference, one does see precisely this form of relationality in Rousseau's description of the birth and development of pastoral love.

First, one must note that the birth of amorous sentiment is, like "consideration," linked to nascent *amour-propre.* "L'estime publique,"[295] the desire for which has apparently inspired the above-mentioned song and dance contests, is valued, one can only assume, because it will win the shepherd the favors of shepherdess he has already singled

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[293] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* (Paris: Éditions Nathan, 1998), 87. (My emphasis).

[294] If this scene seems eminently operatic, it is because, as Downing Thomas has noted, this and other originary moments imagined in eighteenth-century philosophical anthropology did often take contemporary lyric theater as a point of reference (Downing Thomas, *Music and the Origins of Language: Theories from the French Enlightenment* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995], 70-71). Given that Rousseau's reflection on sympathy and its mediation here is considerably more complex than the models of sympathy offered by the typical sentimental-pastoral *opéra-comique,* it is hardly surprising that it find a corresponding working-out in the similarly more complex sentimental comedy.

[295] Rousseau, *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité,* 87.

out (perhaps because she has won her singing contest). From this form of mediated love, there is but a short, slippery slope to a relationship characterized by the instrumentality of *amour-propre* (from using public esteem to win love, to using the lover to win public esteem), or to the triangular, mediated relationship that René Girard has more recently described.[296] However, where Girard sees "mimetic desire" as the basic truth of all (literary) love relationships,[297] relations in Rousseau's philosophical *locus amoenus* also at times appear to be reflexive—that is, involving an element of self and other awareness—without for all that being unmediated by the gaze of a third person.

This possibility comes to the fore in Rousseau's description of a very similar pastoral love idyll in his *Essai sur l'origine des Langues*.[298] Here our shepherd is

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[296] René Girard, *Mensonge Romantique et Vérité Romanesque* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1961).

[297] Girard champions realist novelists (Cervantes, Flaubert, Stendhal, etc.) who depict desire as socially mediated—as a matter of simultaneously imitative and rivalrous relations with a third-party, a mediator of what would otherwise appear to be spontaneous desire. At times, Girard appears to oppose this mediated, inauthentic desire to a truly authentic desire, a desire *selon soi*. However, what he gives with one hand, he takes away with the other, for he repeatedly expands mimetic desire to cover what he implies is the totality of human experience. In the introduction to *Mensonge Romantique,* he notes: "Don Quichotte a renoncé, en faveur d'Amadis (the literary model of chivalry he attempts to emulate), à la prérogative fondamentale de l'individu: il ne choisit plus les objets de son désir, c'est Amadis qui doit choisir pour lui" (12), implying that spontaneous desire is possible. Yet, a few pages later, he implicitly expands the notion of mimetic desire to cover not only most all of literature, but all of human desire as well: "Désirer à partir de l'objet équivaut à désirer à partir de soi-même: ce n'est jamais, en effet, désire à partir de *l'Autre.* Le préjugé objectif rejoint le préjugé subjectif et ce double préjugé *s'enracine dans l'image que nous nous faisons tous de nos propres désirs*. Subjectivismes et objectivismes, romantismes et réalismes, individualismes et scientismes, idéalismes et positivismes s'opposent en apparence mais s'accordent secrètement, pour dissimuler la présence du médiateur" (24). My emphasis.

This pattern recurs throughout *Mensonge Romantique.* What Girard does is *construct* human relations as essentially conflictual à la Hegel. (In fact, he includes a chapter entitled "Le maître et l'esclave.") What Todorov and Benjamin do instead is start from the (empirically-grounded) assumption that intensely emotional relationships with the other (which one may choose to call "desiring," to the extent that "desire" is not defined-described as impossible and conflictual), that the unmediated desire for the other's gaze, is an expression of the essential sociability of human nature.

[298] Traditionally, Rousseau's *Essai sur l'origine des langues* has been seen as closely related to his *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité.* And Rousseau himself explains that this text was originally a part of an earlier, more extensive version of the *Second Discours.* As Thomas has noted, however, concrete textual evidence links the *Essai* instead to a version of his *Examen de deux principes avancés par M. Rameau* (Thomas, *Music and the Origines of Language,* 84-85). Thomas goes on to read Rousseau as positioning himself against Rameau in his championing of melody over harmony, not to mention his association of melody with moral and cultural meaningfulness as well as political liberty and harmony with all that

presented as desiring his shepherdess's gaze in a dyadic, not triangular relationship. Moreover, the shepherd's desire for shepherdess's gaze is, as Todorov's consideration was supposed to be, directly linked to his awareness of her difference.

Published only posthumously, but likely written during the five years after the appearance of his *Second Discours,* the *Essai sur l'Origine des Langues* broaches many of the same topics of this earlier text, but with a different focus and perspective. Whereas the *Second Discours* thinks the origins and transformation of society through the imbricated development of language, the *Essai* takes the opposite approach, working the history of language through that of human society. At the same time, it stands apart from this earlier text in affording a much larger space to the question of music and its separate evolution (or, rather, degeneration).[299] It is also characterized by a particularly unfinished, fragmentary feel and offers what appears to be a considerably less coherent argument than the *Discours.*

In the *Essai,* Rousseau takes a first opposition—that between gesture and vocalized sounds—associates the former with a more pragmatic and political efficacy and the latter with the expression of the passions, then offers at least two variations on this theme. This opposition is first projected onto a geographical divide between southern and northern societies, then revisited in later chapters on music. In these chapters, harmony is theorized as affecting its listener merely on the level of sensation, while melody (whose temporality echoes that of a primordial *accent*-laden language) is thought instead to communicate emotional meaning in the form of *sentiment.*

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melody was not (*Ibid.,* 82-142). Below I will look at Rousseau's treatment of music in the *Essai* in the context of intersubjectivity.

[299] See Thomas, *Music and the Origins,* 57-142.

Dwelling at length on the delightful situation in southern pastoral communities, Rousseau describes the nascent love that develops in tandem with a primordial spoken-sung language. In these perfectly hospitable climes, society develops slowly as there is no pressing need to drive contented beings together. But in warm, arid climates, the pressing need for water means that the well becomes central point around which family ties, then amorous relations develop:

> Là se formèrent les premiers liens des familles; là furent les premiers rendez-vous des deux sexes. Les jeunes filles venoient chercher de l'eau pour le ménage, les jeunes hommes venoient abreuver leurs troupeaux. Là des yeux accoutumés aux mêmes objets dès l'enfance commencèrent d'en voir de plus doux. Le coeur s'émut à ces nouveaux objets, un attrait inconnu le rendit moins sauvage, il sentit le plaisir de n'être pas seul. [300]

In this description, awakening to love coincides with a nascent sociability. This is the moment at which our shepherd becomes simultaneously aware of the pleasures of relatedness and the possibility of his separateness. Desire, moreover, is here driven not by the presence of a rival desire, but instead by awareness of the "object"'s difference, her attractive novelty. Finally, one may imagine some form of mutual recognition in the pleasurable exchange of glances: "Là des yeux accoutumés aux mêmes objets dès l'enfance commencèrent d'en voir de plus doux."

These delicious moments of nascent love, then, involve the non-rivalrous search for recognition from a different, complementary other that Todorov had associated with "consideration." But how can one be sure that these relations are dyadic—or at least unmediated by a third party? After all, the passage does mention a group of young lovers gathering at the well—"jeunes filles" as well as "jeunes hommes." This possibility is suggested, I believe, in Rousseau's emphasis on the fully participatory and distinctly less theatrical nature of the entertainments that accompany these amorous awakenings, songs

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[300] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Oeuvres Complètes,* vol.1 (Paris: Hachette, 1884), 392.

and dances that are more communicative and distinctly less distanced than those described in the homologous moment in the *Second Discours* (quoted above on page 112):

> Sous de vieux chênes, vainqueurs des ans, une ardente jeunesse oublioit par degrés sa férocité : on s'apprivoisoit peu à peu les uns avec les autres; en s'efforçant de se faire entendre, on apprit à s'expliquer. Là se firent les premières fêtes : les pieds bondissoient de joie, le geste empressé ne suffisoit plus, la voix l'accompagnoit d'accens passionnés ; le plaisir et le désir confondus ensemble, se faisoient sentir à la fois ... [301]

Moreover, in Book IV of *L'Émile,* Rousseau clearly describes the possibility a similarly dyadic relationship evolving between the infant and his nurse (mother). After describing "l'amour de soi-même" as the most basic passion (and an entirely good one at that), Rousseau explains how a primary relationality evolves out of this basic passion:

> L'amour de soi-même est toujours bon, et toujours conforme à l'ordre.... Il faut ... que nous nous aimions pour nous conserver, il faut que nous nous aimions plus que toute chose; et, par une suite immédiate du même sentiment, nous aimons ce qui nous conserve. Tout enfant s'attache à sa nourrice .... D'abord cet attachement est purement machinal. Ce qui favorise le bien-être d'un individu l'attire; ce qui lui nuit le repousse .... *Ce qui transforme cet instinct en sentiment, l'attachement en amour, l'aversion en haine, c'est l'intention manifestée de nous nuire ou de nous être utile. On ne se passionne pas pour les êtres insensibles qui ne suivent que l'impulsion qu'on leur donne; mais ceux dont on attend du bien ou du mal par leur disposition intérieure, par leur volonté, ceux que nous voyons agir librement ....*[302]

Here, we have attachment developing into love through recognition of an independent other in a way which recalls Benjamin and Todorov's descriptions of infant-mother intersubjectivity—that is—without third party mediation.

Rousseau's love relationships then, do indeed seem to include recognition, yet at the same time remain structurally distinct from *amour-propre,* a notion to which rivalrous mediation is crucial. But what about sympathy? How does sympathy as Rousseau understands it relate to amorous intersubjectivity?

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[301] Ibid., 392.

[302] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile ou De l'Education* (1762; Paris, Garnier-Flammarion, 1966)*,* 276. (My emphasis.)

<u>Amorous intersubjectivity as reflexive sympathy</u>

Rousseau discusses sympathy in detail just a few pages earlier, at the beginning of this same chapter.[303] In the first part of *Second Discours,* Rousseau presents pity as entirely spontaneous and immediate.[304] Here, however, he discusses pity in society and describes it as necessarily mediated through the imagination. We must use our imagination (and have already shared experiences that are at least somewhat similar) if we are to have any idea what another suffers.[305]

If the sympathetic imagination is thus used to bridge the gap between self and other, the awakening and development of reflection—a faculty necessary for the imagination—is itself directly dependent on an encounter with seductive difference, and the more difference the better: "La réflexion naît des idées comparées, et c'est la pluralité des idées qui porte à les comparer. Celui qui ne voit qu'un seul objet n'a point de comparison à faire."[306]

One might assume that the objects in question might be the various features that make up primitive man's natural environment—say, different trees, animals, geographical features. But this is not what Rousseau means by "objet," as becomes clear in the remainder of the paragraph:

> Celui qui n'en voit qu'un petit nombre (d'objets), et toujours les mêmes dès son enfance,

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[303] Chapter IX: "Formation des langues méridionales" (Rousseau, *Oeuvres complètes,* vol. 1, 384-393).

[304] Rousseau, *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité,* 72-73.

[305] "Comment nous laissons-nous émouvoir à la pitié? en nous transportant hors de nous-mêmes; en nous identifiant avec l'être souffrant. Nous ne souffrons qu'autant que nous jugeons qu'il souffre; ce n'est pas dans nous, c'est dans lui que nous souffrons. Qu'on songe combien ce transport suppose de connoissances acquises. Comment imaginerois-je des maux dont je n'ai nulle idée? Comment souffrirois-je en voyant souffrir un autre, si je ne sais pas même qu'il souffre, si j'ignore ce qu'il y a de commun entre lui et moi ?" (Rousseau, *Oeuvres Complètes,* vol. 1, 384-385).

[306] *Ibid.,* 385.

ne les compare point encore, parce que l'habitude de les voir lui ôte l'attention nécessaire pour les examiner: mais à mesure qu'un objet nouveau nous frappe nous voulons le connoître ...[307]

It is becoming clear, and will be even more so in a few pages when he discusses the emergence of love in almost precisely the same terms, that these "objets"—are other people in general, and interesting members other of the opposite sex, in particular.

Here, then, is the logic: we are attracted by difference (in others). This develops our capacity for reflection and hence our capacity for mature sympathetic identification. Clearly the notions of sympathy, amorous desire and recognition are imbricated—without for all that involving *amour-propre,* or its modern descendent, "mimetic desire," playing any necessary role.

Melodically-mediated amorous intersubjectivity

The shepherds' amorous sympathy is mediated, as I have already suggested, by a peculiar form of language, a mellifluous primordial speech brimming with tonal and rhythmic inflections—the *accents* of melody. If we now turn to Rousseau's discussion of melody itself in his later chapters on music, one can see how these melodious *accents* provide a fitting vehicle for intersubjective communication.

Rousseau begins his discussion on music by insisting on an opposition between music as pure sensation and music as an emotional language of which sound itself is the mere support.[308] Music considered as sound might be pleasing, but it is only when it offers signs of the passions that it becomes truly moving. To clarify the point, Rousseau draws on an analogy from painting. While color, like sound, may be attractive, it is only design that makes that makes color meaningful. Similarly, it is only melody that "marque

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[307] *Ibid.,* 385.

[308] See the chapter "De la mélodie," in *Ibid.,* 397-398.

les traits et les figures, dont les accords et les sons ne sont que les couleurs."[309] At this point, it may seem as if Rousseau predicates melody's moving power merely on a direct transmission of emotional meaning. In a subsequent chapter ("La fausse analogie entre les couleurs et les sons"),[310] however, Rousseau refines his understanding of musical affect by shifting perspective slightly and developing an opposition between musical sound (paradigmatically represented by vocal melody) and color.

Rousseau first insists on temporality as the primary difference between sound and color: "c'[est]... mal connaître les opérations de la nature, de ne pas voir que l'effet des couleurs est dans leur permanence, et celui des sons dans leur succession."[311] He next cites the temporality of sound, and specifically of melody, as a sign of subjectivity: "Les couleurs sont la parure des êtres inanimés...mais les sons annoncent le mouvement; la voix annonce un être sensible."[312] Finally, he imagines the temporality of song as producing a moment of identification, a recognition of a shared humanity:

> sitôt que des signs vocaux frappent votre oreille, ils vous annoncent un être semblable à vous; ils sont pour ainsi dire les organes de l'âme; et, s'ils vous peignent aussi la solitude, ils vous disent que vous n'y êtes pas seul...et l'on ne peut entendre ni chant, ni symphonie sans se dire à l'instant: 'un autre être sensible est ici.'[313]

Thus, if music is moving, it is not merely because it transmits the movements of the passions, but also because its temporality functions as the sign of another's subjectivity. If we think back to our earlier discussion of amorous intersubjective, and, extrapolate from these remarks, we can say that in hearing a cry of distress or a tender

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[309] *Ibid.,* 397.

[310] *Ibid.,* 401-403.

[311] *Ibid.,* 402.

[312] *Ibid.,* 402.

[313] *Ibid.,* 403.

complaint, it is not simple suffering I encounter, but a suffering other who addresses himself to me. Similarly, it is not simply pleasurably enchanting sound I hear, but the desire of another who addresses and seeks a response from me. These relationships might seem to be imaginary, as the response "un autre être sensible est ici" suggests a sonorous mirror stage as the listener joyfully sees himself in another's power to affirm his presence with successive sound—by making meaning out of disparate signs. If, however, in the narcissistic identification associated with the mirror stage, the other is misrecognized in a reassuring, frozen perfection from which difference is eliminated, here, difference is inscribed within identity as the listener recognizes and identifies with the other as an "être sensible," one who is both moved by mobile, never wholly knowable emotion and capable of creatively transforming these energies into meaning. The power of the lover's song derives therefore not from the intensity of a projected perfection, but from the fact that it both (implicitly) constitutes a recognition of the listener (one is singing to him) and proceeds from another whose subjectivity exceeds the listener's knowledge.

In the previous chapter, we saw how the representation of sensuous-worldly sympathy in the sentimental pastorale was worked through relatively direct forms of musical mimesis—staccato notes that suggested Rosine's heartbeats or the musicality of language that suggested Hélène's and Lucile's social refinement. In both *Le Huron* and *Zémire et Azor,* we will see amorous intersubjectivity developed through a musical language whose temporal fluidity asks (like Rousseauian melody, or melodious original speech) less to be mapped onto any particular meanings than to be heard as a seductive sign of the potential for meaning-making itself. [314]

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[314] While I am reading Rousseauian melody as suggestive of subjective freedom, others have approached Rousseau from a more linguistic perspective and interpreted similar passages in his *Essai* as evidence that

Grétry's and Marmontel's *Le Huron*

Le Huron (1768) was the first of what was to be a series of six collaborative

efforts by André-Ernest-Modeste Grétry and Jean-François Marmontel.[315] Grétry had

arrived in Paris early the previous year from Rome (via Geneva) specifically intending

make his fortune as a composer of *opéras comiques*.[316] After months of fruitless

searching for an adequate libretto, and one failed, privately performed *opéra comique*

followed by a particularly nasty anonymous letter, Grétry was ready to give up—until

Marmontel, an already well-known writer, having heard of his plight through a mutual

friend, came to his rescue with an adaptation of Voltaire's recently published

philosophical tale, *L'Ingénu.*[317]

Although taking care to respect his literary source—even, as Grimm would

cuttingly note, going so far as to occasionally repeat Voltaire's original dialogues

verbatim[318]—Marmontel also followed standard practice in shaping *L'Ingénu* for its new

life on the stage, preserving unity of time and place by eliminating the Ingénu's and Mlle

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he was one of the first to think musical language less as directly mimetic, than as indirect and metaphorical. See Paul de Man, "The Rhetoric of Blindness: Jacques Derrida's Reading of Rousseau," in *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 102-141, and particularly 123-136.

[315] Other *opéras comiques* by Grétry and Marmontel include *Lucile* (1769), *Le Tableau Parlant* (1769), *Silvain* (1770), *La Fausse Magie* (1775), as well as *Zémire et Azor* (1771).

[316] David Charlton, *Grétry and the Growth of Opéra-comique* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 26-27.

[317] André-Erneste-Modeste Grétry, *Mémoires, ou Essais sur la Musique*, vol. 1 (New York: Da Capo Press, 1971), 147-159; Jean-François Marmontel, *Mémoires,* vol. 1 (Clermont-Ferrand: G. de Bussac, 1972), 260-261. Marmontel, in particular, represents the "rescue" in a particularly sentimental light, writing himself into the role of benevolent *seigneur* and Grétry into that of the sentimental beneficiary of his goodness: "Un jour il [le comte de Creutz] vint me conjurer, au nom de notre amitié, de tendre la main à un jeune homme qui étoit, disoit-il, au désespoir et sur le point de se noyer, si je ne le sauvois, 'C'est un musicien ... plein de talent ... Ce malheureux jeune homme est sans ressource; je lui ai avancé quelques louis ...'" (260).

[318] Grimm, Diderot, Raynal, Meister, *et al*., *Correspondance Littéraire,* vol. 8 (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1879), 164.

de St. Yves' journeys to Paris, while avoiding the pointed social and religious satire that would have been out of place in a genre known for its lightness of tone. Similarly, Marmontel took care to bring out the characters, relationships, and plot dynamic that the public had come to expect in comedy. A pair of young lovers (the Huron and Mlle de St. Yves), aided by kindly relatives (M. and Mlle de Kerkabon) are pitted against and eventually win out over the abusive agents of tyrannical authority (the Bailli, his son, and, until the end, M. de St. Yves).

At the same time, Marmontel softens and sentimentalizes this traditional plot by deflecting ridicule away from the father and on to a secondary character (Gilotin, the bailli's son) by lessening the adjuvant's importance—M. and Mlle de Kerkabon are unobtrusively helpful and show none of the traditional servant's spectacular cleverness— and, most importantly, by focusing on the love relationship itself.

Given that Voltaire had developed the relationship between Mlle de St. Yves and the Ingénu (the Huron) primarily in the latter half of his tale, the half Marmontel saw fit to eliminate, one would expect the love relations in *Le Huron* to be relatively simplistic. One scholar even goes so far as to dismiss the title character as little more than "un nouvel Arlequin poli par l'amour."[319] A cursory glance at the libretto would only seem to confirm these rather low aesthetic expectations.

Le Huron opens with Mlle de St. Yves and Mlle de Kerkabon talking excitedly about their newcomer's admirable and curious ways. Mlle de St. Yves makes it clear that if she were to marry, it would to be to someone of her choice, and certainly not the silly Gilotin. Soon the Huron himself appears and makes it clear that he has fallen for Mlle de

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[319] Marie-Emmanuelle Plagnol-Dieval, "Marmontel: Adaptateur de 'L'Ingénu,'" *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France* 92.1 (1992), 81-92.

St. Yves. It is discovered that he is a relative of the Kerkabons and soon finds himself the object of a collective acculturation project. The Huron is of French blood, therefore he must learn to act, feel and think as Frenchmen do. At first, he rebels. However, Mlle de St. Yves, putting her considerable charms to the test, seduces the Huron into trading his exotic garb for more fitting French fashion. After this first act of cultural-amorous submission, the Huron appears to catch on quickly, eagerly self-identifying as French. Then, playing the part of the chivalrous suitor pursuing his service of love, he leaps at the opportunity to join local forces in their battle against the English—an occasion to prove himself worthy of Mlle de St. Yves (while Gilotin ridiculously cowers in fear). After his return, the Huron is awarded Mlle de St. Yves's hand. His native energies and love of freedom almost immediately get the better of him, however. Tragi-comically misinterpreting the import of M de St. Yves's approval, he naïvely oversteps the bounds of decorum, and, after having rushed off to offer Mlle de St. Yves a carnal embrace, is left to wonder in bewilderment at M. de St. Yves's fury. Melancholy turns to rage, however, as having learned of M de St. Yves's decision to imprison Mlle de St. Yves in a convent, the Huron rushes off to free her. He is arrested by the Bailli. Finally, Mlle de St. Yves and a local officer together sway the father, reminding him of the Huron's past exploits and pointing to the goodness of his heart as a sign of future conformity.

Given the plot's relentless and mostly cheerful insistence on the superiority of (French) civilization, it would certainly be tempting to write off the relationship between the Huron and Mlle de St. Yves as nothing but a device for this civilizing process. In this case, one could see their relationship as taking the form of an asymmetric exchange: if the Huron "buys" Mlle de St. Yves's love and recognition through good behavior, as it

were, Mlle de St. Yves would gain recognition by the Huron's very act of submission, without any equally costly attempt to please.

Yet, I only offer this interpretation in the conditional: *if* one's reading of *Le Huron were* solely based on the libretto, one *could* see the work as merely turning around the civilizing force of love. My intention, however, is to return to *Le Huron,* pairing a more careful reading of the libretto with an interpretation of the score, a shift in perspective that will lead beyond this implicitly repressive story of acculturation by love. After drawing out complexities in what might otherwise be seem to be one-dimensional characters, I will show how both central characters' sensibility and sympathy draw them into a richly elaborated, evolving, mutually empowering love relationship.

<div align="center">

The Huron shown to be much more than
a simple *bon sauvage*

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First, from the beginning of the opera, the Huron is presented less as a simplistic, primitive being and more as one offering a seductively balanced blend of traits that suggest his aptitude for intersubjective love—a willingness to please coupled with an energetic independence. Mlle de Kerkabon marvels first at the Huron's prodigious energy, then, at his gallant grace: "...dès le point du jour il [le Huron] étoit dans les champs //...les Hurons sont diligents; // ils ne tiennent jamais en place."[320] After this opening description of the Huron's early morning hunt, she continues: "Il est charmant! Comme il est fait! // Comme il est gai! Comme il est leste // Il cherche à plaire: il est galant à son façon."[321] And, in fact, we soon hear the Huron expertly deploying allusive

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[320] A-E-M Grétry and Jean-François Marmontel, *Le Huron, Oeuvres complètes de Grétry* (Bruxelles: Brietkopf and Haertel, 1883-1911), 17.

[321] *Ibid.,* 17.

flattery in an extended flirtation with Mlle de St. Yves. In response to her question as to whether he still travels, the Huron answers "Non, je courois le monde, // Pour voire un peu comme il est fait. // Mais ce qu'il a de plus parfait, // Je l'ai vu; j'ai fini ma ronde."[322]

It is in the Huron's second aria, his love declaration, that both these qualities come to the fore (figure A11). Using a typically eighteenth-century linguistic metaphor, one might say that his aria forms a coherent, connected discourse, without offering the tight logic that (as we shall soon see) characterizes Mlle de St. Yves' first *ariettes*.[323] Instead, the Huron's phrases are shaped in such a way that intense emotion seems to inflect and shape what would be otherwise more symmetric musical periods, so that an untamed energy seems to rework straight "European" musical language from within.

Globally, the aria is in a simple A-BA' form (with a relative minor B section recycling thematic material from the outer sections), but the A section can be further broken down into two sections, the first containing two parallel introductory phrases (mm. 3-8; 9-16) and the second, three phrases—a contrasting introductory phrase in the dominant (mm. 17-23), a moment of obbligato recitative (mm. 24-27), and finally a phrase of cadential material (mm. 27-33).[324] Each of the introductory phrases in the A section begins slowly, and then builds momentum, pressing onward to the cadence. In the

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[322] *Ibid.,* 41.

[323] Mark Evan Bonds has described the various ways in which the eighteenth century used linguistic and rhetorical (as opposed to organicist) metaphors to describe the form and effects of musical movements (Mark Evan Bonds, *Wordless Rhetoric: Musical Form and the Metaphor of the Oration* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991]).

[324] By " A-BA' " form, I mean that the aria is in what Douglass M. Green (and others) call a "sectional ternary form." The letters A, B, and A' refer to thematic material—melodic and rhythmic patterns—or what Green calls "design." A and B sections have noticeably contrasting material, whereas the A' section is a variation on A. The hyphen between A and B refers to the harmonic closure that sets off the A from the B section. In other words, the harmonic movement of A has already come back to the tonic, the harmonic home base from whence it began (Douglass M. Green, *Form in Tonal Music: An Introduction to Analysis* [New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1965], 73-87 and particularly 83).

first two phrases, this intensification is almost entirely melodic as the phrases are extended with concatenations of rhythmically accelerated variations of an introductory "surging" motif—a short, ascending scalar figure. The first phrase (mm. 3-8) is comprised of two short, antecedent phrase members (a,a'), the second phrase member, a shorter, transposed version of the first, followed by a mainly triadic consequent phrase member (b). The second phrase (mm. 9-16) is an intensification of the first phrase, just as the second antecedent phrase member was of the first, as the second antecedent phrase, originally one measure long, now becomes a three measure sequence. In the third phrase of the A section, the contrasting introductory phrase in the dominant, this intensification is worked differently. The first, calmer part of the phrase is made up of variations of both antecedent and consequent motifs, then, in the second part of the phrase both motives return in compressed form with the first appearance of the relative minor.

If the Huron's musical phrases bespeak the integration of affective energy into formal structure, this integration is also echoed on a higher level, as both A sections dramatize the passage from inarticulate, inchoate, libidinal energy to articulated sentiment. After the Huron's three expansive phrases, a moment of recitative breaks the aria's surging, yet steady rhythm (mm. 24-27) as the Huron pauses to introspect and to linger over delicious and hitherto unrecognized feelings: "D'où naît ce plaisir? // Quel est ce désir?"[325] This digression might interrupt the aria's flexible regularity, yet this regularity is soon restored with even greater intensity—as the Huron answers his own introspective musings, succeeds in integrating his previously unarticulated desire into a shared social code.

If at the very beginning of the opera, the Huron is presented as more than a life-

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[325] *Ibid.,* 47.

less dramatic stereotype, a harmless, happy *bon sauvage,* it is also the case that his absorption into French culture cannot be understood as a mere domestication of these energies. First, once the *opéra comique*'s project of acculturation is underway, signs of the Huron's defining sensibility persist, suggesting that, far from being alienated, reduced, and enslaved to another desire, the Huron is, at least in part, simply transformed—his libidinal energy temporarily channeled to other ends. If the Huron has let himself be seduced into dressing *à la française,* he almost immediately begins to actively claim his new French identity with great pleasure. He chooses to prove his Frenchness, and thus his love for Mlle de St. Yves, by enlisting and marching off to fight the English. In spite of its apparent success, the assimilation project—now a self-assimilation project—hasn't done anything to tame the hero's distinctive primal energy. In fact, one can see the Huron's eagerness to enlist (besides being, of course, a borrowing from Voltaire and an opportunity to include a descriptive *ariette*) as a kind of psychological bargain-basement deal: he will be able to deploy his distinctive Huron energy and prove himself French enough to be worthy Mlle de St. Yves's love. Moreover, his own musical report of the battle suggests that this first gesture of cultural and personal submission has been accomplished without any dulling of his personal vitality, as his intense evocation of chaotic events doubles as a narration of his own energetic engagement.[326]

If "assimilation" has thus far done nothing to repress the Huron's distinctive energy, the tragi-comic breakdown of the acculturation project to which the final part of the opera is devoted—the moment at which the Huron is the most openly condemned—is precisely the moment that his voice paradoxically comes to the fore. After his return from

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[326] *Ibid.,* 139-146.

battle, he learns that he has indeed been granted Mlle de St. Yves's hand. He almost

immediately loses it again, however, when he decides to go marry her anyway (as

Voltaire puts it with euphemistic irony).[327] It is precisely this moment of condemnation

and maximal seriousness (in this otherwise rather light-hearted sentimental comedy) that

the spectator is treated to two extended *ariettes* by the Huron, a first in which he

expresses dismay and confusion at M. de St. Yves's rage and a second in which he

expresses his own anger at the news that Mlle de St. Yves has been imprisoned in a

convent.[328]

    After this closer look at not merely the libretto, but the score as well, one would

be hard put to affirm that the Huron is simply domesticated. As we have seen, much of

the second half of the work is about the failure of this project of acculturation, a failure

that Grétry and Marmontel underline by giving these problematic moments musical

prominence. More importantly, however, in the moments that the Huron does gain

recognition by "becoming" French, this transformation does not involve any psychic

crippling. Instead, the Huron loses neither his "Huronness," nor his agentic power.

    But what does the preservation of the Huron's voice mean for the amorous

relationship at the heart of this opera? One might assume that the equilibrium between

assimilating forces and the Huron's psychical independence would encourage, govern,

produce, or be mirrored in an equally balanced love relationship. And, indeed, there is

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[327] "Mlle de Saint-Yves, se réveillant en sursaut, s'était écriée: 'Quoi! c'est vous! ah! c'est vous! arrêtez-vous, que faites-vous?' Il avait répondu: 'Je vous épouse ;' et en effet il l'épousait, si elle ne s'était pas débattue avec toute l'honnêteté d'une personne qui a de l'éducation" (Voltaire, *L'Ingénu* [1767; Paris: Larousse, 2000], 77).

[328] In each aria, he passionately rejects the strictures of arbitrary authority. Intense emotions sometimes burst forth in musical disorganization but are more frequently channeled into passionate eloquence—expressed in passages where, as in his love declaration, musical logic is not so much denied as it is animated with a vibrant energy.

good reason to suspect that this indomitable otherness "explains" Mlle de St. Yves's choice of the Huron over Gilotin. I place "explains" in quotations because Mlle de St. Yves's choice is, in some sense, prescribed by generic and institutional tradition: How can the *jeune première* not fall in love with the *jeune premier* and reject *le fils du bailli?* At the same time, one might note that the leading man (male love interest) and the inappropriate rival may be attractive and inappropriate respectively for any number of reasons.

Here, the Huron's attractiveness is linked specifically to his energy, which Mlle de Kerkabon and Mlle de St. Yves immediately associate with his amorous potential. In so doing they—or rather Marmontel-Voltaire—are drawing on the by-then already conventional associations between exoticism and eroticism. Like Rousseau's early (and thus temporally exotic) shepherds, the Huron can feel more energetically and passionately than the sorry bas-breton Gilotin. At the same time, again like Rousseau's *bergers,* this energetic otherness functions as the site of a creative subjectivity, making itself heard through temporally fluid melody. Gilotin, on the other hand, is musically characterized as precisely lacking this compelling subjectivity—as being less the annoying, disruptive pest that was Dolival in *Les Moissonneurs*, than a ridiculous automaton. His short second act *ariette* "Me prend-on pour un sot ..." (figure A12) epitomizes this pointed lack of subjective interest, this mechanical flatness of character, in its stringing together of a series of eight, short (2-bar) phrases, all characterized by almost exactly the same repetitive rhythmic contour (his vocal line is composed of a series of syllabic eighth-notes, bouncing around in a limited melodic range).[329] Similarly,

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[329] Grétry and Marmontel, *Le Huron,* 147-149.

while Gilotin's *ariettes* are greeted with complete indifference—summary dismissals on the part of Mlle de St. Yves and her friend Mlle de Kerkabon, it is precisely upon becoming aware of—hearing and experiencing the effects of Huron's expression of his sensual and subjective freedom in song, that, after several scenes of playful banter, Mlle de St. Yves shows herself to be openly moved for the first time. Immediately after the declaration, Mlle de St. Yves suddenly realizes that she has been left alone with the Huron: "Mais...voyez donc ma bonne amie // Qui me laisse avec vous ... je ne sais pas pourquoi," her intense emotion betrayed by halting speech.[330]

We can, moreover, see this contact with the Huron's energy as gradually pulling Mlle de St. Yves into his emotional orbit—freeing her from her culturally prescribed role as the site of cultural law, even as the Huron is seeking to please her.

<u>Mlle de St. Yves transformed through her
contact with the Huron</u>

Unlike those of the Huron, Mlle de St. Yves's first arias are characterized by a marked regularity and symmetry. This regularity has none of the domestic, contained, almost trite nature of the arias in Silvain's tranquil interlude, but instead, is strikingly harmonious, as these arias are typically characterized by a balance between similarity and contrast at a variety of levels. Mlle de St. Yves's opening aria, "Si jamais je prends un époux," is made up almost entirely of sections composed of four four-measure phrases.[331] Yet these sections are arranged in a rondo (A-B-A-CA') form that is anticipated locally in the A section's own a-b-a'-c-c' structure (figure A13). The aria with which she opens the

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[330] *Ibid.,* 50.

[331] *Ibid.,* 17-23.

second act, "Toi, que j'aime" is similarly, although not so tightly, structured.[332] The A

and C sections of its A-BA-C Coda form are, again, clearly four square as would be the B

section were it not for a slightly compressed third phrase. Her melodies are also complex

and dignified. The melodies of "Si jamais..." and "Toi, que j'aime...," span a range of a

ninth and thirteenth (respectively) within their first eight measures while also offering

frequent changes of direction and motif. This musical material suggests not so much an

oppression or containment by cultural law, but rather Mlle de St Yves' ability to create

her own space, make her voice heard within the customs that inform her life. Her

musical language also not only prefigures only her future attachment to the Huron, but

also hints at her willingness to open herself to his intense energy.

If these two musical characterizations are juxtaposed during the first act, during

most of the second, the tight, symmetrical organization of Mlle de St Yves's arias gives

way to an energetic fluidity as she responds to the Huron. The psychological

transformation suggested by this shift in musical language comes to the fore in "Ah! Quel

tourment!" an obbligato recitative and aria in which Mlle de St. Yves reacts to what she

hears, in her imagination, as the Huron's cry of distress (figure A14).[333] Mlle de St Yves

moves in quick succession from worrying about the Huron, to responding to his voice

(represented by an isolated B in the horns; mm. 14, 16), to fearing her father's reaction to

her love. However, although all of these thoughts are expressed in the section marked

"Récitatif obligé," they are not all set to true recitative.[334] Her worries about the Huron's

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[332] *Ibid.,* 113-120.

[333] *Ibid.,* 121-130.

[334] In the eighteenth-century Italian opera tradition, *recitativo* referred to moments characterized by rhythmic freedom and a backgrounding of musical interest in favor of the text. Recitative typically came in two varieties. First, *recitativo secco* referred to pared-down sections in which the singer imparted

fate as well as her father's response are set in the recitative's characteristic rhythmic

fluidity. When she actively imagines the Huron's voice, however (mm. 10-17; 38-50), her

musical material suddenly becomes more organized, taking the form of a resolute melody

(characterized by simple tonic and dominant harmony, and enlivened with dotted notes)

that reoccurs, varied, extended, and developed when she again imagines hearing his voice

moments later.

What this alternation of musical material suggests is the breaking down, then

reorganization of Mlle de St Yves's personality around the Huron. That Mlle de St. Yves

now seeks recognition from the Huron, rather than her father, is confirmed by the

following emphatic, presto aria in which (while expressing her own suffering) she

decides to go to the Huron's aid in spite of her father's potential disapproval: "Oui, je

dois à ce que j'aime, // Je dois plus qu'à moi-même, //...mais, mon père...mon père lui-

même // aura pitié de moi."[335]

The following love duet ("Ah! que tu m'attendris!") reaffirms Mlle de St. Yves's

psychical transformation as the musical material given to both her and the Huron echo the

fluidity of this latter's love declaration. Like "Vous me charmez," the duo's opening

phrase, sung by the Huron, is composed of a shorter, antecedent phrase member that

expands (surgingly) into a longer consequent.[336] When Mlle de St. Yves enters, she sings

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information necessary for understanding the dramatic situation accompanied only by continuo (solo keyboard). *Recitativo obligato* or *accompagnato,* on the other hand, referred to considerably more dramatic moments, during which a still speech-like vocal line was heightened by colorful orchestral accompaniment. See Dale E. Monson and Jack Westrup, "Recitative: Up to 1800," in *Oxford Music Online* ed. Deane Root, (accessed 25 June 2010), <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.uiowa.edu>.

[335] *Ibid.,* 130.

[336] This could be contrasted with the more four-square phrase structure of other *ariettes* in *Le Huron*. It is also interesting to note that the opening of this duo gestures back toward the Huron's love declaration in offering a very similar harmonic sequence. Where the first phrase of the love declaration may be

a very similarly structured, similarly expansive phrase. At the same time, one might say

that she echoes the fluidity of the Huron's phrase in a fluid manner. Instead of repeating

his musical material exactly, she offers slight melodic variations and more striking

harmonic development, leading their number through a series of secondary dominants

from the "a" minor in which the *ariette* began to the relative major (C).[337] One can also

see a now shared psychical fluidity in the relative open-endedness of the duet as a whole.

While most other *ariettes* in *Le Huron* offer variations on a ternary ABA structure, with

the return of A material marking a formal closure, "Ah! que tu m'attendris!" is

characterized instead by similar thematic material posited in an opening section, then

developed in more harmonically, then (after a return to the home key) melodically intense

sections.[338]

<div style="text-align:center">

Le Huron's and Mlle de St. Yves's
intersubjective love in context

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Thus far I have focused my analysis (as promised) on the amorous

intersubjectivity that unfolds between the Huron and Mlle de St. Yves, using the

Rousseauian frame elaborated above. At this point, it will be useful to step back and

place this amorous intersubjectivity within a more global view of the opera.

First, one must note that *Le Huron*'s overt emphasis on woman as a civilizing

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diagrammed as I-V$_6$-vi——iii$_6$-IV-V-I-V-I, here we find i-V^7-VI—i$_6$-iv-V-i-V. Each begins with a phrase member that ends in a deceptive cadence (V-VI) and at least continues with a similar i$_6$ (or iii$_6$)-IV-V-I-V before diverging at the end.

[337] Mlle de St. Yves's supple response to the Huron could be contrasted with her exact imitation of Gilotin's lines in a duet sung with this former near the opening of the opera. One can imagine, however, that the exact repetition in this former duet (not discussed here), is less a matter of Mlle de St. Yves's lack of independence than a mimetic mockery of Gilotin.

[338] In other words, one might describe its form as A-A'A″, each section beginning with almost identical thematic material and harmonic positioning, but then developing differently.

force, besides forming a topos common to idealizing representations of contemporary salon society,[339] also articulates a particularly Voltairian conception of human sociability. Like Rousseau, Voltaire saw sympathy (in the form of pity) as most active in earlier, simpler communities and *amour-propre* as the driving force of more complex civilizations. However, while Rousseau invested pity with immense positive moral value (in the *Second Discours,* it becomes the source of *all* virtues) regardless of its limited supply in contemporary society, Voltaire saw pity as limited in its effects and instead gave *amour-propre* itself a particularly positive charge. But what about love? After all, that is what is explicitly at stake here. While Rousseau, as we have seen, leaves open the possibility that love may exist as a form of reflexive sympathy free from the violent triangulation of *amour-propre,* Voltaire places love and desire wholly under the sign of this latter. Like the *amour-propre* of which it is an implicit source (and unlike pity), amorous desire would be the very foundation of the vast edifice of modern civilization. As Voltaire writes: "For the universe to be what it is today, all it needed was for one man to be in love with one women." [340]

Given the explicit thematization of Mlle de St. Yves as the embodiment of love's civilizing power, then, one would be remiss not to see the libretto (like the philosophical tale on which it was based) as a kind of thought experiment, as a demonstration of Voltaire's particularly optimistic reworking of *amour-propre.* Besides, one can clearly read the mediated structure of desire in the libretto's double triangle: on the one hand, Mlle de St. Yves, the Huron, and Mlle de Kerkabon, and on the other, the Huron, Mlle de

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[339] Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994) 6-10.

[340] Voltaire, *Treatise on Metaphysics, Voltaire: Selections,* ed. and trans. Paul Edwards (New York: Macmillan, 1989), 91.

St. Yves, and Gilotin. In fact, if one were so inclined, one could read the libretto in a Girardian fashion and see nothing but mediated desire, nothing but a veiled craving for domination and alienation in the gaze of an always shifting other. One could see the Huron not so much as loving Mlle de St. Yves, but rather as engaged in unconscious competition with Gilotin and, perhaps with M. de St. Yves, as well. Similarly, one could see Mlle de St. Yves as engaged in her own unconscious rivalry with Mlle de Kerkabon. The Huron's submission to her demands would then just be one more feather in his gallantly feathered cap. To put it in perhaps crude economic terms, the Huron and Mlle de St. Yves would regard each other only in terms of socially-defined exchange value, rather than a more natural use value.

If these amorous relationships are, at the very least, tinged by mimetic desire, the Huron's melodic expression of passion and Mlle de St. Yves's spontaneous response form a moment of dyadic sympathy that can be seen instead be seen as cutting through third-party mediation. In fact, where Girardian analysis would see protestations of spontaneous, authentic passions as concealing the truth of mimetic desire, here we can see the opposite—as Mlle de St Yves's conscious mention of her rival (more specifically of her rival's absence) functions as an attempt to disavow a more direct, intimate emotionality, expressed indirectly through disrupted speech.[341]

Moreover, if these textual clues, as well as the backdrop of Rousseauian thought on music, love and sympathy, were not enough to make a claim for isolated moments of musically-mediated dyadic intersubjectivity, one can go further and point to Grétry's own self-consciously Rousseauian musical practice and thought.

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[341] "Mais ... voyez donc ma bonne amie // Qui me laisse avec vous ... je ne sais pas pourquoi" (Grétry and Marmontel, *Le Huron,* 50). I discuss this above on p. 131.

First, to associate Grétry with a Rousseauian aesthetic is not to say that he (like Marmontel, to whom I will return below) was not also wholly fluent in the codes of worldly sociability. It fact, it was to his particular aptitude for polite sociability that Grétry owed his career, as it was through his extensive network of friends and soon-to-be colleagues that he eventually came into productive contact with Marmontel.[342] Grétry's musical style has also been seen as the perfect analogue of worldly conversation—that sociable practice *par excellence*.[343] At the same time, however, Grétry's writings on music are permeated with Rousseauian oppositions, notions, and values. We see Italian music praised and Rameau denigrated.[344] We see music associated with the spontaneous and heartfelt sentiment of simple beings and represented as alien, even threatening to the overly rational, self-contented philosopher.[345] We find the same linking of melody with feeling—with a form of music that speaks to the heart and the relegation of everything else to the accompanying harmony: "... le sentiment doit être dans le chant; l'esprit, les gestes, les mines doivent être répandus dans les accompagnements."[346] Finally, we can note that if Grétry valued Rousseauian melody, Grétry is still typically recognized by

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[342] As we have seen above.

[343] According to Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, Grétry's music had "le piquant, le saillant, la grâce de la conversation d'un homme d'esprit, qui attacherait toujours sans fatiguer jamais, qui ne mettrait que le degré de chaleur et de force qui conviendrait au sujet qu'il traite, et qui paraîtrait d'autant plus riche, qu'il ne sortirait jamais de la mesure que lui prescrirait le goût" (Julie de Lespinasse, "Apologie d'une pauvre personne," quoted in Benedetta Craveri, *L'âge de la conversation,* trans. Éliane Deschamps-Pria [Paris: Gallimard, 2002], 364).

[344] "Je fus deux fois à l'Opéra, craignant de m'être trompé la première; mais je n'en compris pas davantage la musique française. On donnoit *Dardanus* de *Rameau* ; j'étois à côté d'un homme qui se mouroit de plaisir, et je fus obligé de sortir, parce que je me mourais d'ennui ..." (Grétry, *Mémoires,* vol. 1, 145).

[345] "La musique n'ayant besoin, pour être bien sentie, que de cet heureux instinct que donne la nature, il sembleroit que l'esprit nuit à l'instinct ... " (*Ibid.,* 153-154).

[346] *Ibid.,* 171.

musicologists today as being primarily a melodist.[347]

In addition to setting amorous, intersubjective sympathy in opposition to love as *amour-propre,* we can also ask how the structure of intersubjective sympathy finds expression in *Le Huron*'s larger-scale patterning. In the last chapter, we saw how the sentimental pastorale's pleasurable alignment of desire and duty was articulated through and echoed in structural moments of plenitude as well as privileged father-daughter pairings. In this chapter, we have, from the beginning associated intersubjective sympathy with amorous relations. Now, in light of the above analyses, we can see how the intersubjective love that develops between the Huron and Mlle de St. Yves intersects with a key element of the comic mode—the pointed presence of some (resolvable) difficulty.

This difficulty appears in the overarching conflict between the Huron—or rather the Huron's independent streak, that part of him which is not subdued and totally taken up into Bas-Breton culture—and the most rigid embodiment of Bas-Breton cultural law—M. de St. Yves. We can see this conflict, in turn, as echoed in the physical and psychological distance that opens up between the Huron and Mlle de St. Yves about half-way through the opera—when this former goes off to battle the English and this latter remains behind longing for him in her *ariette* "Ah! Quel tourment!" Of course, heading off to battle must be understood, in part, as an element of the Huron's "love service," and, hence, not an opposition to, but instead a form of submission to the father (through Mlle

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[347] See Daniel Heartz, *Music in European Capitals: The Galant Style, 1720-1780* (New York, W. W. Norton, 2003), 798. David Charlton attempts to complicate this traditional view by paying attention to Grétry's orchestration. However, he concedes in his conclusion that Grétry's style is best characterized as one of "expressive nuance," rather than "architectural symmetry" or harmonic innovation (David Charlton, *Grétry and the Grétry and the growth of opéra-comique* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986], 325-327).

de St. Yves). On the other hand, the choice to fight is also very much the Huron's own (apparently, going off to battle is one of the things Hurons do best), while Mlle de St. Yves' separation from the Huron is (if we are to believe what she says) due to her fear of completely stepping out of her culturally prescribed gender role and running to his side in battle.

If, on the one hand, the centrality and relative seriousness of these tensions generically mark *Le Huron* as a comedy (rather than as a pastoral), it is, at the same time, this distance between the Huron and Mlle de St. Yves that is crucial to their intersubjective love. In fact, one can see the psychological structure of this scene as repeating and amplifying the productive pattern of balanced proximity and distance already manifest in the Huron's love declaration.

In this earlier scene, as we have already noted, it was in part the Huron's energetic difference, the unpredictable surging of his passion that transformed his ostensible avowal of enslavement to Mlle de St. Yves into a seductive utterance in its own right. By the end of the first act, it is this same energy that has opened up a subjective space for the Huron within Mlle de St. Yves's acculturation project, that drives him (physically and psychologically) away from her (into battle) even as he (psychologically) moves towards her. One might also say that the element of emotional independence evinced in the love declaration has now been concretized in his (temporary) physical absence. Finally, this now thematically amplified tension between proximity and distance also produces an amplified effect. In the scene* in which she imaginatively connects with the absent Huron, she is not merely intensely moved (as she was after the love declaration) but instead goes farther, as we have seen, beginning to reorganize her personality around his.

Up until this point, I have at least implicitly been contrasting the amorous intersubjectivity of the sentimental comedy to the worldly-sensuous sympathy of sentimental pastorale. There are, however, at least two ways in which these two aesthetic patternings are asymmetrical, neither easily contrastable nor comparable.

First, while father-daughter relationships are clearly central to the sentimental pastorale, the amorous relations in *Le Huron,* are subsumed, as I have already suggested, within a broadly conflict between the Huron and M. de St. Yves. In other words, the Huron's and Mlle de St. Yves's love does not so much supplant familial relations as mediate them.

One finds a second asymmetry between, on the one hand, worldly-sensuous sympathy in the sentimental pastorale and on the other, amorous intersubjectivity in sentimental comedy in the relationship of these aesthetic patternings to the repertoire as a whole. The sentimental pastorale is arguably the dominant subgenre of *opéra comique* in this period and most certainly the dominant form of sentimental *opéra comique.* Worldly-sensuous sympathy, moreover, is itself extremely common in within the subgenre of sentimental pastorale. While the sentimental pastorale constitutes the norm of repertory, sentimental comedy and particularly sentimental comedies that turn around amorous intersubjectivity are more unusual. That is—what we have seen in *Le Huron* and what we will see below in *Zémire et Azor* are exceptional—an example of what a composer and a librettist can produce given the aesthetic means of *opéra comique,* rather than what was typically produced. That said, in *Zémire et Azor* we will see situations and structures which clearly recall those of *Le Huron,* while the opera as a whole also moves beyond this latter to focus more emphatically on the amorous relationship itself.

Grétry's and Marmontel's *Zémire et Azor*

While in *Le Huron,* we saw an amorous intersubjectivity worked through a balance of "primitive" energy and French refinement, in *Zémire et Azor*, we will see a similar sympathetic reciprocity worked through a slightly more complicated thematics, for much as did *Les Moissonneurs, Zémire et Azor* opposes emotional authenticity to a form of superficiality[348] while, at the same time, working this sentimental topos through a more general celebration of socio-aesthetic refinement. If *Zémire et Azor,* an adaptation of Marie-Jeanne LePrince de Beaumont's *La Belle et la Bête,* celebrates authentic, inward feeling as the site of a common humanity in Zémire's (the Beauty's) capacity to see beyond the mere outward appearance of Azor (the Beast), it only peals away masks to reveal a much more classicizing connection between stylistic beauty and moral goodness, between inner and outer truth.

LePrince de Beaumont's original tale is more straightforward.[349] The Beast is just that—a beast, and a terrifying one at that. He is both hideous and dull—totally lacking the refinement and willingness to please that, as we will see, are embodied in Azor. His only redeeming feature is his inexhaustible goodness, his abundant kindness and generosity. And in his attempts to win Beauty over, it is only this goodness on which he can rely.

As Marmontel's description of *Zémire et Azor's* premiere underscores, his Beast had other concerns. The night before the opening at Fontainebleau (the work was to be

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[348] As we saw in the opposition between the lowly, but honest Rosine and the aristocratic trickster, Dolival.

[349] Marie-Jeanne LePrince de Beaumont, *La Belle et la Bête, La Belle et la Bête: quatre métamorphoses (1742-1779),* ed. Sophie Allera et Denis Reynaud (1756; Lyons: Publications de l'Université de Saint-Étienne, 2002), 82-102.

part of the court's autumn festivities), Marmontel suddenly found himself faced with a grave problem. The court's tailor, ignoring the libretto's careful description of Azor's costume[350]—a careful blending of a stylized animality and exoticism—tiger-striped arms and legs partially covered with an elegant coat and doliman—had relied on his own knowledge of the fairy tale and constructed a full-fledged animal suit. As if the actor Clairval was going to go about the stage on all fours! While LePrince de Beaumont's Beast struggles not to frighten, Azor-Clairval-Marmontel must at all costs conform to the standards of courtly politeness so as to "imposer," or, at the very least, avoid ridicule.

One can almost sense Marmontel's mortification as he pulls every string he can to work an eleventh-hour costume change. But succeed he does (he describes constructing Azor's fearsome, yet noble mask himself at the last minute). Then, one can almost feel his vicarious pleasure when he realizes that he has—through Azor—succeeded in pleasing certain noble ladies, who now, apparently identifying with Zémire, have been won over by Azor's declaration:

> J'étois dans un coin de l'orchestre, et j'avois, derrière moi, un banc de dames de la cour. Lorsqu'Azor, à genoux aux pieds de Zémire, lui chanta :
>> Du Moment qu'on aime,
>> L'on devient si doux !
>> Et je suis moi-même
>> Plus tremblant que vous
>
> j'entendis ces dames qui disoient entre elles : *Il n'est déjà plus laid* ; et, l'instant d'après, *il est beau.*[351]

It is with the analogous moment within the fiction, the moment at which Azor declares his love for Zémire that I will begin my analysis. But first, it will be helpful to take a

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[350] "Azor, *jeune prince Persan, sous une forme effrayante, mais non pas hideuse: de noirs sourcils, une barbe touffue, une épaisse crinière, les bras et les jambes nus et couverts d'une peau tigrée, mais le reste du corps vêtu d'une veste et d'un doliman avec une riche ceinture : dans l'attitude et dans l'action toute la noblesse possible*" (Jean-François Marmontel, *Zémire et Azor, Oeuvres Complètes,* vol. 5 [Belin: Paris, 1819], 552). The emphasis in Marmontel's.

[351] Jean-François Marmontel, *Mémoires,* vol.1 (Clermont-Ferrand: G. de Bussac, 1972), 269.

brief look at the *opéra comique*'s plot.

Zémire et Azor opens with Sander, a shipwrecked merchant, and his servant Ali in an enchanted palace where they are richly, but mysteriously entertained. As they are about to leave, Sander, remembering the wish of Zémire, his favorite daughter, plucks a rose. Suddenly Azor appears in a terrifying form. As a punishment for Sander's "theft" of the rose, he demands either Sander's death or one of his daughters as a replacement. Sander returns home with Ali to say goodbye to his family. However, through persistent questioning, emotional blackmail and a comic slip-up on Ali's part, Zémire learns the truth. She then persuades Ali to lead her to Azor, whom she initially fears but gradually grows to accept and finally love. This emotional conversion not only heals Azor but draws him into a reunited family.

The third act opens with a soliloquizing Azor. Cursed with an unlovely form as a punishment for excessive self-love, he can only break the spell by inspiring love in another. Azor's amorous project begins with the gift of books, a harpsichord, a richly decorated room enticingly inscribed with Zémire's name, and expands to include live entertainment—the three dances that make up a ballet section. Every gesture has its desired effect, eliciting Zémire's delight and amazement—until Azor himself appears. After Zémire revives from her faint, Azor takes another approach, asking her not to look, but instead to listen. He then sings of his tender devotion. Finally Zémire recognizes Azor's "true self" behind the mask: "Non, cette voix-là sûrement // N'annonce pas un coeur sauvage."[352]

Like the Huron's, Azor's love declaration is characterized by a pointed melodic

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[352] A-E-M Grétry and Jean-François Marmontel, *Zémire et Azor, Oeuvres complètes de Grétry* (Bruxelles: Brietkopf and Haertel, 1883-1911), 159.

suppleness set within a much more regular global structure (figure A15). Charlton

mentions both the *ariette*'s "bel canto" ornamentation and its "static ABA form."[353] One

might also point to the relative harmonic complexity and relatively frequent modulation

out of which the *ariette*'s gently meandering melody grows.

If this musical similarity encourages one to see in Azor's melody a Rousseauian

sign of the other's subjective presence, one might also argue that the worldly

connotations of the *ariette*'s galant style[354]—connotations that have already been made

all but explicit in the setting of the word "sensibility" to a thirty-second note turn in

Azor's act opening musical soliloquy—suggest a similarly seductive creativity.

<u>Intersubjectivity in worldly sociability</u>

In the last chapter, I discussed the worldly sensibility that allows Marivaudian

characters to negotiate their way through delicate social situations and suggested that

sentimental objects of sympathy might well be understood in a similar light, thereby at

least hinting at a latent intersubjectivity in the sentimental pastorale. I would now like to

(briefly) explore the place of intersubjectivity in worldly sensibility to while setting this

latter in its historic context.

The term "worldliness" refers to a partially realized social, aesthetic and ethical

ideal.[355] To be worldly was not only to embody an array of social virtues: to be sensitive,

attentive, and generous, but also to do so in style, specifically in the refined style that had

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[353] Charlton, *Grétry*, 106.

[354] For the connections between the "galant" style in music and worldly sociability, see Leonard G. Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1980), 23; and Daniel Heartz, *Music in European Capitals: The Galant Style, 1720-1780* (New York, W. W. Norton, 2003), 16-23.

[355] Peter Brooks, *The Novel of Worldliness: Crébillon, Marivaux, Laclos, Stendhal* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969)*,* 5.

from the early seventeenth-century been associated with this elite practice. The worldly

Parisian could be found at the theater, in *tête-à-têtes*, or strolling along fashionable

promenades, but his favored setting was the salon, whether literary or intellectual.[356]

Each salon had a different reputation and tone, featured different regular guests, and was

presided over by a different salonnière, but they all shared the broader practice of refined

reciprocity embodied in the celebrated Parisian art of conversation. The salon was a

private, yet relatively open space. The conversation might have been aristocratic in tone,

but men and women of letters, scientists, painters, writers, and foreign visitors of every

social origin were invited—and reinvited if they were interesting conversationalists or, at

the very least, had not been too disruptive.

Worldliness as a socio-aesthetic ideal was represented as the embodiment of

pleasurable reciprocity, refined discourse, and balanced, egalitarian interaction[357] and the

ideal interlocutor, as one possessed of the sensibility that would allow him to intuitively

grasp and conform to this complex and never wholly definable practice.[358]

Some scholars have written about the worldliness as if it were almost entirely a

matter of social conformity. In her *Exclusive Conversations,* thanks in part to the

anthropologists' and sociologists' work on which she draws, Elizabeth Goldsmith tends

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[356] On salon life, see Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994); Craveri, *Conversations*; and Marguerite Glotz and Madeleine Maire, *Salons du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Nouvelles Éditions Latines, 1949). Marmontel's own *Mémoires* (along with those of Morellet and Thomas, as well as the writings of the *salonnières* themselves) have provided key primary source material for twenty-first century interpretations of eighteenth-century salon life.

[357] This ideal was articulated in conversation guides and courtesy literature such as the chevalier de Méré's or Scudéry's *Conversations,* or Guez de Balzac's *De la conversation des Romains.* For more on the worldly ideal, see Goldsmith, Elizabeth C. *Exclusive Conversations: The Art of Interaction in Seventeenth-Century France* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), 41-75; and Craveri, *Conversation,* 351-365.

[358] Craveri, *Conversation,* 355.

to see worldly society as being above all about the conformity of the individual to the group. As she explains: "In this system the self exists primarily because of the place it occupies and the role it plays within the group. Because the presentation of the self is so carefully orchestrated, there is little concern with individuals as isolated or lonely beings; individual selves seem to come into existence as they enter the group."[359] Peter Brooks similarly sees worldliness as a form of radical sociability in which the individual is veritably effaced : 'By 'worldliness,' I mean an ethos and personal manner which indicate that one attaches primary or even exclusive importance to ordered social existence."[360]

Marmontel's descriptions of mid-eighteenth century salon life suggest that, in practice, at least, worldliness involved a certain intersubjective recognition of individual difference instead of merely collective submission to a refined code of language and comportment. Marmontel devotes pages of his *Mémoires* to the description of Mme de Geoffrin and her salon. Instead of discussing any shared code of behavior, he instead demonstrates his own worldly sensibility by offering detailed, individualized descriptions of all the regular members—portraits in which he goes out of his way to emphasis each one's singularities—the special talents, knowledge, background and character traits that each one contributed to their society as well as how the society as a whole treated each one individually.[361]

But one can also go farther and see awareness of the other's peculiarities and

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[359] Goldsmith, *Exclusive Conversations*, 10.

[360] Brooks, *Novel of Worldliness: Crébillon, Marivaux, Laclos, Stendhal* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 4.

[361] Marmontel, *Mémoires,* vol.1, 160-167.

individual needs as integral to the salon's code of sociability. As Benedetta Craveri

explains, the ideal salon participant exercised an "indispensable intuition de la

personnalité de son interlocuteur ... [, la] compétence psychologique [nécessaire] pour se

mettre au diapason de l'autre, l'encourager à prendre à son tour la parole et lui permettre

de se valoriser." [362]   At the same time, the salon participant's discourse also pointed to his

own creative, improvisational abilities. Defining himself against the *pédant,* the *mondain*

"préférai[]t...à la 'lourdeur de la mémoire'...'le feu de l'imagination' et misai[]t sur un

effet de surprise par des rapprochements originaux et imprévues, 'qui sait saisir

l'occasion, le temps et le lieu avec rapidité et certitude.'" [363]

Intersubjective exchange between Zémire and Azor

To return to Azor and his gallant plea, one can thus see in his supple melismas a

similar worldly, sensitive subjective presence. If, through his song, Azor offers the

gracious gift of his devotion, at the same time its beautiful, elegant wrapping implicitly

points back to Azor's subjectivity—to an aesthetic sensibility much like that which

allowed the successful salon participant to creatively, even virtuosically conform to social

convention. This double movement—towards the other and back to the self—is

confirmed by Zémire's response. In some sense, Azor places himself in a position not

unlike that of the typical sentimental heroine as he pathetically expresses his pain and

solicits another's beneficent regard. Yet Zémire is moved not merely because of Azor's

suffering which, as is typical in sentimental discourse, points to virtue, but because of his

power—not merely how good he is, but how good he is *to her*. It is only after hearing a

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[362] Craveri, *L'âge de la conversation,* 355.

[363] Quoted in Craveri, *L'âge de la conversation,* 357.

long list of what Azor will offer her (his heart, the palace, and everything in it as well as wealth for her entire family) that Zémire admits: "vous m'attendrissez on ne peut davantage."[364]

If Azor's aria, then, creates a nascent interdependence between himself and Zémire, Zémire's following aria responds to Azor's gesture, continuing this intersubjective dialogue. Encouraged perhaps by Zémire's promising reaction—by her bemused amazement at her *attendrissement,* Azor now asks Zémire to sing, to reciprocate, to move him with her voice: "Vous chantez, je le sais, vous chantez à merveille; // En parlant, votre voix touche, émeut tous mes sens; //Ah! Quel charme pour mon oreille // D'entendre éclater vos accents!"[365] Zémire answers this request with her "Air de la Fauvette," an aria that, much like Azor's, constitutes both a recognition of the other and affirmation of the self.

The "Air de la Fauvette" (figure A16) is a showpiece aria, an aria of brilliant virtuosity.[366] It is also the most formal, self-consciously elevated aria of the entire opera.

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[364] Grétry and Marmontel, *Zémire,* 159.

[365] *Ibid.,* 159.

[366] Does the very fact that "Air de la Fauvette" constitutes a showpiece aria mean that this is above all a "performative" moment within the opera—that is—a moment at which the spectator is encourage to focus less on the fiction than on the seductive beauties of the lyric voice itself (and hence disrupt my reading of its functioning intradiagetically as part of an intersubjective exchange)? I would say that, although the *ariette* most certainly does function performatively, (on such performative moments in opera, see Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991], 3-10), it is also motivated within the fiction, and thus may be thought of as part of an intradiagetic exchange. Zémire in LePrince de Beaumont's original tale entertained herself at home by playing the clavecin and singing (LePrince de Beaumont, *Belle et la Bête*, 88). There is no mention that she was a particularly accomplished musician, but the family was wealthy before her father Sander's sudden reversal of fortune (more on this below), so one might imagine that in the family's former opulence, she had learned particularly opulent music as well. But even if she had only begun to sing after her family's descent into poverty, there is no reason to believe she couldn't have learn this kind of florid song. After all, one need look no farther than Denis Diderot's Suzanne Simonin to find a disadvantaged women who excels in the vocal arts (Denis Diderot, *La Religieuse* [1784; Paris: Colin, 1961], 120). In any case, whether or not one wants to imagine the fictional Zémire as possessed of such vocal talent, it is certainly true that the words of the aria are not-so-subtly addressed to Azor, so there is no reason not to see the style as

Laid out in a compressed *da capo* form, its ritornello-like use of the orchestra, clear break between A and B sections, exalted style as well as metaphoric text all evoke the traditional *da capo* aria and convey its aristocratic connotations.[367] Stylistically, the aria harmonizes with the other musical numbers directly related to Azor and his enchanted palace. Azor's "Du moment qu'on aime" is more intimate in scale and less dramatic in structure than Zémire's aria, yet its elegant ornamentation, languidly expressive phrases and harmonious form clearly point not merely to a sensitive subjectivity but also to an aristocratic delicacy of character. Similar observations could be made for the three elegant dances with which Zémire is entertained.[368]

That Zémire's aria is thus stylistically aligned with Azor's music might merely point to Grétry's desire to create a world apart—a space of enchantment, as David Charlton has suggested.[369] However, one might also understand the style of this aria as itself part of Zémire's response. By adopting such a refined mode of expression, she seemingly attunes herself to her surroundings and, more importantly, implicitly recognizes Azor by adopting his language, as it were—by creating a "we" where there was simply an "I" expressing his desire. In this same aria, however, she also finds a way

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"addressed" to him as well.

[367] For a discussion of aria form see, James Webster, "The Analysis of Mozart's Arias," in *Mozart Studies,* ed. Cliff Eisen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 114-122; and Julian Budden, "Aria: 18th Century," in *Grove Music Online,* ed. L. Macy (accessed 7 September 2004), <http://www.grovemusic.com.proxy.lib.uiowa.edu>.

[368] The same could also be said for Azor's first two arias—"Ne va pas me tromper," a vengeance aria that, although slightly less formal than Zémire's aria, also looks back to the older *da capo* form and "Ah! Quel tourment d'être sensible," an aria just as intimate and delicately ornamented as Azor's declaration. Since they are not arias that Zémire can possibly hear (in the first, Azor threatens and encourages Sander while the second is a soliloquy), and hence, have little direct bearing on the relationship, I have chosen to omit them.

[369] David Charlton describes the striking E major in which all the dances of the ballet as well as Azor's declaration are written, the "artificial[ity]" of Zémire's aria as well as the hypnotic repetitions of the magic picture scene's trio as creating this distinctly other space (Charlton, *Grétry,* 103).

of voicing her own concerns in a language that seems closer to her own, or at least to that of the domestic space with which she is all but identified in the opera's second act. After evoking the warbling bird's elated singing in an expansive A section, Zémire uses a lighter, distinctly less formal, almost domestic, B section in 6/8 meter, with short, relatively restrained phrases and syllabic melodic line to express the mother bird's sorrow at the death of her chicks—that is—to obliquely communicate the concerns she has about her family.

It would be tempting simply to understand Zémire's response as a psychical echo of Azor's, but Zémire and Azor's projects are not identical. If Azor explicitly seeks to inspire love, Zémire at first seeks merely to avoid a wretched fate (being "eaten" by Azor). Even after she begins to emotionally align herself with Azor, she does not actively seek recognition. In fact, in evoking her family, she is more explicitly longing for her father's desire rather than Azor's. This difference can be most clearly seen in the complementary obstacles they must overcome. Simply put, while Azor realizes his dependence on Zémire and must learn to let her be truly other—to let her go, Zémire, who is all too aware of Azor's difference, must awaken to the promise held out by a relationship with such an other.

In the previously discussed scenes, both Azor and Zémire have taken their first steps along these distinct, but convergent paths. If, as we have already seen, Azor is acutely aware of his dependence on Zémire, he also knows that her desire for him remains beyond his direct control: "J'aimerai, mais puis-je à mon tour // Me faire aimer par la contrainte? // La haine obéit à la crainte; // L'amour n'obéit qu'à l'amour."[370] Zémire's response involves the acceptance of another kind of uncertainty. I have already

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[370] Grétry and Marmontel, *Zémire,* 141.

described Zémire's recognition of Azor's sensitive subjectivity—his personhood as it were—as constituting a recognition of difference within commonality. If we turn to her response, we can also see it as involving an opening to a less reassuring difference.

If we take a step back, for a moment, and take these scenes at face value, they explicitly present a Zémire who is surprised, almost seduced by the sensitivity in the voice she hears. But, as Zémire finds herself drawn in by Azor's recognition of her, she also reasons her way (with some prompting) from a spontaneous, almost involuntary reaction to his voice, to a more reflective, purposeful acceptance of Azor himself (appearance included):

> Azor.
>   Vous me haïssez?
> Zémire.
>   Non;
> Quand on n'est pas méchant, on n'est pas haïssable.
> Azor.
> Et si j'ai sous ces traits un coeur sensible et bon?
> Zémire.
> Je vous plaindrai.
> . . . .
> Azor.
> Ah! Zémire!
> Zémire.
> A vous voire j'accoutume mes yeux.[371]

In other words, she actively chooses to relate to one who is still uncomfortably other.

As their relationship unfolds, Zémire and Azor, both in their own ways, repeatedly risk an uncertain openness to the other, an uncertainty that Benjamin cites as a key to the intersubjective relationship: "To experience recognition in the fullest, most joyful way, entails the paradox that 'you' who are 'mine' are also different, new, outside of me. It thus includes the sense of loss that you are...no longer simply my fantasy of

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[371] *Ibid.,* 159.

you, that we are no longer...psychically one...."[372]

For Azor, the challenge of accepting another's difference comes in the form of Zémire's request to see her father (embedded, as we have seen, within the *Air de la Fauvette*). On the face of it, this request might appear to be so much innocuous filial devotion. But it actually poses a serious threat to Azor's psychic well-being. Azor's first response is not to let her leave, but instead to use his powers to conjure up her family in a "magic picture." In a trio the heartbroken father is ineffectively consoled by the sisters as all three are accompanied by an off-stage wind sextet.[373] This magical evocation of her family constitutes a literal fulfilling of her wish that is in all reality a masked refusal. Zémire might not only see her family, but also hear their intensely affecting voices, but she cannot communicate with them—she cannot overcome an impossible distance that mirrors Azor's refusal to accept the possibility of loss.

Soon, however, Azor does give in to Zémire's insistent requests. Moreover, he does so in a way that recognizes her subjective freedom by renouncing his own power and sealing the pact with a ring whose symbolism is precisely the opposite of the traditional wedding ring. After explaining that he will die if she fails to return, Azor

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[372] Benjamin, *The Bonds of Love*, 15.

[373] This scene is one of the most famous all of later eighteenth-century *opéra comique.* It elicited much positive, even effusive commentary in its day and more recently has become a focus of critical attention. See Charlton, *Grétry,* 103; Stefano Castelvecchi, "From *Nina* to *Nina* Psychodrama, absorption and sentiment in the 1780s," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 8.2 (1996), 91-112; and Downing Thomas, *Aesthetics of Opera in the Ancien Régime 1647-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 254-261. According to Stefano Castelvecchi: "the scene displays the link between spectatorial exclusion and emotional involvement: the magic picture (a 'television' in the root sense) has such a painful effect on Zémire because she cannot reach the figures, be perceived by them, console them ... the scene works as a pedagogy of the theatre: the ideal stage-spectator relationship is encapsulated within the play" (Castelvecchi, "From *Nina* to *Nina*," 98). One can easily follow Castelvecchi in his analysis of the scene itself and his suggestion that this scene points to the anti-theatricality of Diderot's proposed theatrical reforms. However, given that the "magic picture" is presented within the fiction not at all as an ideal model, but instead as an example of how not to treat one's lover—how not to relate to an other, one may wonder to what degree one can read it as representing an "ideal stage-spectator relationship."

continues: "Allez. Si vous êtes parjure, // Je ne punirai point votre infidélité. // Cet anneau vous rend libre. En le portant, Zémire, // Vous n'êtes plus en mon pouvoir."[374]

In Zémire's request to return to her family, we can again, as we did in the case of the Huron's going off to war, see the opening up of distance within the intersubjective relationship. Zémire's departure, however, makes even greater demands on the nascent love relationship. In going to fight the English, the Huron might be seen as having found a clever way to put his Huron energy to culturally appropriate use and thus to align his with Mlle de St. Yves's desire and maintain the delicate balance of intersubjectivity. Here, Zémire's request is experienced by Azor as merely a potential loss—and a great one at that: he will die without her. And yet, this distance too winds up producing a leap into the sympathetic imagination which functions to draw the two lovers back together.

Upon her return home, Zémire is faced once again with a challenge complementary to Azor's. If, at first, she is warmly greeted by her father (and sisters), she soon finds herself vainly arguing against her father's fears, describing her intense pity for and duty towards Azor: "Il se prive de moi; c'est un pénible effort, // Et je sens tous les maux qu'il éprouve à m'attendre... // Si je différais, je causerais sa mort... // J'ai promis; il m'attend et je dois m'acquitter... // Non, il n'est pas méchant, il n'est que malheureux."[375] Unlike Azor who releases that whom he desires, Zémire asserts—against the resistance of her father, no less—the importance of a still relatively unknown other, a relatively untested attachment.

The dialogue between Zémire and her father builds up to a quartet that textually,

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[374] Grétry and Marmontel, *Zémire,* 178.

[375] *Ibid.,* 195.

at least, is rather strange. For no immediately apparent reason, Zémire presents herself to her father as a potential victim of Azor's wrath and suggests that merely slavish obedience could assuage him: "Ah! Je tremble! Quelles armes // Opposer à son pouvoir? //...Ma craintive obéissance // Peut désarmer sa rigueur."[376]

That Zémire expresses pity, at this point, rather than love for Azor as well as this curious quartet calls for more critical attention. Certainly, they raise the question as to just how much interpretive weight elements of libretto or score can bear. Unlike Sedaine, whom I will study in the following chapter, and in spite of his repeated theoretical insistence on the unity of action,[377] Marmontel was not particularly renowned for the coherence of his plots.[378] Zémire's self-presentation in the following quartet must be understood at least in part as mere opportunism—as simply a chance to offer the public much appreciated sentimental tidbits. Yet they also take on meaning within the fiction. Zémire's otherwise strange insistence on her imminent destruction at Azor's hands can easily be explained as a strategy to soften up her father. More importantly, for our purposes at least, is the sense that Zémire's pitying of Azor[379] functions as a strategy that allows her to keep a certain psychological distance in her relationship. However much

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[376] *Ibid.,* 197, 205.

[377] For a discussion of Marmontel's views on the theatre, see Michael Cardy, *The Literary Doctrines of Jean-François Marmontel,* Studies in Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century, 210 (Oxford: The Voltaire Foundation, 1982), 88-126.

[378] At least Grimm routinely criticized what he saw as Marmontel's lack of dexterity in handling plot. His discussion of *Lucile* is exemplary in this regard: "La difficulté qu'il [Marmontel] a de mener son sujet jusqu'au dénoûment me fait suer à grosses gouttes quand j'y pense. Les scènes se suivent avec une peine extrême, et s'enchaînent avec une difficulté qui harasse le spectateur" (Grimm, *Correspondance Littéraire,* vol.8, 246). Of course, one must also realize that Grimm has his biases as a critic among which one must count a particularly anti-marmontelian one.

[379] Pity plays a role in her earlier response to Azor's love declaration ("Azor. Et si j'ai sous ces traits un coeur sensible et bon? // Zémire. Je vous plaindrai"), but remains relatively unthematized until she rejoins her family (Grétry and Marmontel, *Zémire,* 159).

she might take pleasure in the recognition she receives from Azor, by positioning herself as the benefactor of a thoroughly good, sensitive, innocent, but still problematically alien Azor, she can still, to some extent, deny any more intimate connection, any emotional dependence on him.

The opera's fourth (and final act) extends, foregrounds, and finally brings together Zémire and Azor's convergent psychical trajectories. We find Azor mourning the loss of Zémire in "un endroit sauvage, où est une grotte."[380] He first notices Zémire's absence in an introductory recitative, then apostrophizes her in a sighing andante, before breaking into presto "vengeance" music. However, no sooner does he imagine a reassertion of his mastery than he checks himself: "Qui moi! Punir ce que j'aime! // C'est un crime d'y songer," remembering yet again the need to affirm Zémire's freedom.[381] Zémire, for her part, takes the final step that moves her from a position still tinged with a pity that, as we have seen, protects her from full engagement in the love relationship, to an awareness of her need for Azor and an explicit affirmation of her love.

After having removed the ring, Zémire too finds herself in this garden. Immediately, she calls out to Azor, proclaiming her current faithfulness and promising future devotion: "Revois Zémire; elle est fidèle; // Elle consent à vivre sous tes lois."[382] This gesture is not sufficient, however, to reconnect with Azor. Instead of receiving a response, she only becomes aware of her solitude: "en vain ma voix t'appelle."[383] Zémire's solitude is skillfully underlined both by staging and musical design. She is first

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[380] *Ibid.,* 212.

[381] *Ibid.,* 218-219.

[382] *Ibid.,* 232.

[383] *Ibid.,* 230.

heard in the wings, isolated from the spectator as well as Azor and as she calls out both she and the audience are reminded of Azor's absence by the use of a sophisticated musical echo effect.[384] Horns and flutes on stage are echoed by a horn and a flute off stage and another horn and flute placed even farther away. In spite of what are presented as sympathetic, dutiful appeals, Zémire only reaches Azor when she finally positions herself not just as benefactor, nor as one who gives (even if this gift is only her obedience), but also as lover, as one who needs the other as well. After repeatedly insisting on her fidelity, she finally admits that: "dans ce moment même, // Plus que jamais, // Azor! Azor! je t'aime" and instantly, magically, Azor responds, and the curse is broken.[385]

Musical elements of these arias give further evidence of Zémire and Azor's psychical transformation (for Azor's aria, see figures A17 and A18; for Zémire's see figure A19). The relative fluidity of their form, the rare (for Grétry) complexity of harmonic language and richness of their orchestral accompaniment all suggest a greater psychical openness. The long, slow, sad, descending sequence (figure A17, mm. 14-20) with which the strings introduce Azor's short recitative, the ambiguous harmony of the triplet swells (I-III-I) that accompany it (mm. 34-36), the descending turns with which the bassoons and violas comment his following andante (mm. 50, 52) all point to an undefensive acceptance of suffering. Zémire's aria is entirely through-composed and given regularity not by any thematic return, but only by its broad harmonic structure (I-V-I) and (relatively unpredictable) motivic variations, a freedom that suggests a psychical

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[384] Downing Thomas draws the reader's attention to these effects of simultaneous presence and absence, proximity and distance in his reading of the opera (Thomas, *Aesthetics of Opera,* 251-522).

[385] Grétry and Marmontel, *Zémire,* 237.

movement away from a tentative intersubjectivity to a space in which Zémire can freely

express her desire.[386]

Yet this psychical liberation goes hand-in-hand with an opening to the other, an

openness suggested by an adoption of the other's language, as it were. When Azor,

remembering the sacrifices required by love, forswears vengeance, he sings, for the first

time, in a style that the opera has previously associated with sentimental, domestic

affection. The phrase "...moi! Punir ce que j'aime" (figure A18, mm. 68-70) is set to a

melodic fragment of tenderly ascending and descending conjunct intervals, embellished

with appoggiaturas, harmonized in thirds, while "C'est un crime d'y songer" (mm. 72-73)

is expressed in a sinuously weaving melody strikingly similar to earlier passages in which

Sander had earlier expressed sympathy for Zémire, or Zémire affection for her father.[387]

Zémire's aria (figure A19) both musically and textually recalls her "Air de la

Fauvette" with the same, serious meter and expansive, ornamented phrasing. But more

than simply recalling this elevated musical idiom, one can almost feel her aria moving in

this direction. If Azor's final transformation involves a musical and psychical softening,

Zémire undergoes a complementary transformation becoming bolder, more noble in her

increasing emotional attunement to Azor. This is effected largely through the

development of a key melodic motif—the call—composed of two chordal notes. Each

time Zémire calls out to Azor (mm. 4-7; 41-44; 77-80) she moves up, first a perfect

fourth (or fifth), then, more expansively to a sixth (both of these variations of a tonic

chord). When she finally declares her love, her "je t'aime" moves up an entire octave

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[386] According to David Charlton, "her music moves completely outside usual formal bounds: through
music, she becomes pure will-power and pure desire" (Charlton, *Grétry,* 106).

[387] Grétry and Marmontel, *Zémire,* 219.

(mm. 126-129), as if finally attaining the goal for which she had been reaching, before moving back down to the tonic for the final time.

Zémire and Azor's intersubjective love in context

I began my analysis of *Zémire et Azor* with the third act in order to focus attention immediately on the intersubjective love which stands at the heart of this work. Now, it is time to pull back and look at the relationships which precede and frame it, relationships developed over the course of the first two acts.

First, it is important to note that the initial relationship between Sander and Zémire evokes the narcissism that, we are told, characterized Azor before his unfortunate transformation in the Beast. On one level, their love is clearly presented as an idyllically sentimental one—both Sander and his special daughter Zémire care for each other above all else—and particularly above the glittery tokens of wealth.[388] In fact, the way in which Sander and Zémire relate recalls the patterning of the sentimental pastorale. Again, we find a father-daughter pairing. Again, this pairing articulates an idyllic collapsing of desire and duty, the moral and the erotic. Sander and Zémire care above all about each other's well-being and yet the relationship is also an eroticized one (as Thomas reminds us, the plucking of the rose is "a highly sexualized symbolic act").[389] Again, we find a simultaneous presence and absence of loss. The rose "establish[es] ... the transcendent

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[388]Thomas cites this as a key sentimental trope and interprets it as suggesting that "emotional wealth is made equivalent to monetary capital" as well as "a symbol ... of a commodity that is beyond wealth" (Thomas, *Aesthetics of Opera,* 251). Drawing on Thomas, I take up the question of the rose and its meaning below.

[389] *Ibid.,* 250.

value of ... family feeling,"[390] that is—it both points to Sander's loss—*all* he can give is this rose—and at the same time negates it. If these connections to the sentimental pastorale were not clear enough in and of themselves, Zémire's response to Sander's loss can leave no doubt. Not only does she point to this loss only to deny it ("Sander: Dans la misère // Nous voilà retombés! Zémire: Mon père, // Vous n'en seriez que plus chéri,")[391] but she evokes a particularly pastoral solution to their problem: they will all go and become happy peasants:

> J'ai vu souvent, dans la campagne,
> Le pauvre et joyeux moissonneur
> Folâtrer avec sa compagne,
> Et chanter gaiement son bonheur.
> Allons, mon père, allons, courage!
> Leur exemple est pour nous une belle leçon.
> Ali peut bien lui seul vaquer au labourage;
> Et vous, mes soeurs, et moi, nous ferons la moisson. [392]

But this idyll, unlike those of the sentimental pastorale, is also implicitly marked as impossible—or at least as illicit and quasi-incestuous. Plucking the rose, the act meant to be a celebration of this special father-daughter connection is also described as a "theft" by Azor. By keeping his daughter all to himself, locking her in an economy of the same, Sander is preventing her from circulating, from maturing, from discovering difference in the more difficult task of loving an other. Or, from another point of view, Azor attacks Sander for refusing the exchange that the remainder of the opera will work to establish— the exchange of wealth and a daughter that do eventually unite the two characters. Of course, before this exchange can be established, familial affection must be reworked, Sander must agree to "lose" a daughter and Zémire to love another but her father—a

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[390] *Ibid.,* 251.

[391] Grétry and Marmontel, *Zémire,* 88.

[392] *Ibid.,* 88.

transformation suggested by Azor's redefinition of the rose as "le garant mutuel de la foi" that will tie him and Sander together. [393]

If here, we thus, once again, see the way in which amorous bonds wind up mediating broader famial relationships in sentimental comedy, we can also see the intersubjective love relationship as the moral pattern upon which the intradiagetic social order of *Le Huron* and *Zémire et Azor* is modeled. It may at first seem odd to talk about moral relationality at all in operas that are openly about love and much less overtly moralizing than many sentimental pastorales. And yet, it is not hard to see in the moments of tension and pain involved in the recognition of the amorous other's specific desires and the suffering of their absence a temporary divergence of the duty and desire the sentimental pastorale so happily aligns. Just as the intersubjective love relationship, then, works its self-other balance through a moment of sacrificial opening to otherness, so too the inclusive families that amorous sentiment mediates are structured by a relative egalitarianism in which the father, instead of merely representing an unproblematic authority ends up recognizing the subject difference of the hero and (to a lesser extent) the heroine.

In *Le Huron,* an amorous intersubjectivity that offers an almost ideal balancing of self and other finds itself reflected in the relationship between the Huron and the community in Bas-Bretagne. Just as Mlle de St. Yves is attracted to the Huron because of his aliveness, his subjective power, so too the community also benefits from his energy— not merely in the practical form of defense—but also in a collective pride (we have such a great hero among us). This balance is also echoed in the Huron's relationship to M de St. Yves.

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[393] *Ibid.,* 67.

As we have seen, the Huron's attempts to please Mlle de St. Yves also function indirectly as attempts to please her father. At least, it is not merely Mlle de St Yves, but also her father who is quite taken with the Huron's energetic adoption of the French cause. A warm conversational exchange after the Huron's return from battle parallels the reciprocal affection of intersubjective love (without fully leveling the father/future son-in-law hierarchy). M. de St.Yves opens the scene by expressing his frank admiration of the Huron (without, one must note, addressing him directly): "Monsieur de Kerkabon, que je vous félicite. // Vous avez un neveu dont je suis enchanté."[394] Soon thereafter, when the father expresses a solicitous respect for the Huron (during the battle "[il a] tremblé pour sa vie,") the Huron deferentially (and gallantly) accepts his authority: "Ah! Monsieur! Il dépend de vous // De la rendre digne d'envie."[395] There is a certain ambiguity in this exchange however. Is the father pleased with the Huron because he has aligned himself so effectively with their interests, or because he recognizes elements of his "Huronness"—his defining strength and energy?

Throughout the rest of the opera, the Huron's relationship with the father hesitates between these two possibilities. After the Huron's misunderstanding of the word "marriage" arouses the father's hostility, two main arguments are used in the Huron's defense. First, M de Kerkabon underlines the Huron's particular virtues: "Il est valliant, honnête; il pense avec noblesse // L'ombre du mensonge le blesse."[396] When the father remains unmoved, Mlle de Kerkabon continues with the opposite line of reasoning.

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[394] Grétry and Marmontel, *Le Huron,* 138.

[395] *Ibid.,* 146.

[396] *Ibid.,* 173.

Instead of emphasizing how much the Huron has to offer, she vouches for his future good behavior and conformity: "...il est bien corrigé // Des imprudences de son age! // Ah! Si vous le voyez! comme il est affligé! // Et comme il promet d'être sage!" [397] What finally does persuade the father, reunite the family and bring the plot to a satisfying conclusion is an argument much like M. de Kerkabon's, offered by the Huron's commanding officer (who just so happens be walking by at the opportune moment): the Huron deserves respect because he has, it seems, almost single-handedly preserved the village from the English. The father's last word shows that he has been definitively swayed by the Huron's virtues, rather than his obedience: "L'ennemi vous dira pourquoi je le préfère."[398] However, just as one wants to see in the father and the Huron's relationship the second implicit example of intersubjectivity, Mlle de St. Yves steps up to reassert the father's authority over the Huron: "Mon père, son coeur est honnête, // Et tout le reste peut changer."[399]

If, in *Le Huron,* we see a final reaffirmation of paternal authority, in *Zémire et Azor,* on the other hand, we find that amorous intersubjectivity functions to an even greater extent as an intradiagetic model for the relationship between the outsider and the larger community. As we have seen, the rose was explicitly presented as the bond that will tie Azor and the father together. It is thus not surprising that in the final scenes we see less an affirmation of paternal power, than the suggestion of a more egalitarian relationship not only between Zémire and Azor, but among Zémire, Azor and Sander. If,

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[397] *Ibid.,* 173.

[398] *Ibid.,* 174.

[399] *Ibid.,*174.

on the one hand, Azor promises to submit to Sander's "laws," ("Tu me vois, // comme elle, soumis à tes lois"),[400] it is the father who is magically transported before a now brilliant Azor on his throne and accorded merely a few semi-grudging words of acceptance ("Ah! faites son bonheur; et quoi qu'il m'ait coûté, Croyez-vous que je m'en souvienne?")[401] before the opera closes with a final paean to Zémire's and Azor's (intersubjective) love.

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[400] Grétry and Marmontel, *Zémire,* 138.

[401] *Ibid.,* 138.

CHAPTER III
SACRIFICIAL SYMPATHY IN
MICHEL-JEAN SEDAINE'S *OPÉRAS COMIQUES*

As we have seen, worldly-sensuous sympathy—the form of sympathy to which I devoted the first chapter, and which one may take as the norm in the idyllic world of *opéra comique*—closely links desire and duty, sensuality and feelings of commiseration. In certain ways, the amorous intersubjectivity that we explored in the second chapter (and particularly that which unfolds between Zémire and Azor) moves beyond this "morality of the senses"[402] through a sacrificial recognition of difference: at times the encounter with the other as a powerful subject in his or her own right makes claims on the amorous subject—posing the challenge of self-restraint and asking the lover to accept the possibility of loss. At the same time, to the extent that the encounter with difference is figured as pleasurable and seductive in and of itself, we may read both *Zémire et Azor* and *Le Huron* as articulating a variation of the sentimental pastorale's moral naturalism.

In the *opéras comiques* to which I devote this final chapter, works by Michel-Jean Sedaine, sympathy is, for the most part, more clearly aligned with a difficult virtue and consistently dissociated from pleasure. On occasion, we will see this more difficult, sacrificial sympathy take shape in an explicit thematic move away from the sentimental pastorale. But sacrificial sympathy is much more reliably, in fact, almost always, associated with forms of distance that can be seen as an implicit extension of amorous intersubjectivity's more challenging moments and an implicit move away from the more pointed emphasis on presence and proximity through which worldly-sensuous sympathy

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[402] I am borrowing the term from Timothy O'Hagan's *Rousseau* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 11.

works its happy alignment of desire and duty. Just as in the first chapter we saw the blendedness of worldly-sensuous sympathy echoed in the form and structure of the sentimental pastorale, in this chapter we will be able to see the structure of sacrificial sympathy echoed in larger-scale aesthetic features of Sedaine's practice.

I will begin by exploring these larger-scale aesthetic features. I will show how Sedaine's attempt to move beyond the idealizing norms that *opéra comique* shared with worldly culture and his concomitant attention to the sensuous particular create a style that, if it does not in fact privilege metaphor over mimesis, winds up functioning analogously to the stimulating poetic ambiguities of Diderot's proto-Romantic theory of the hieroglyph, offering representational gaps and obscurities which call on the spectator to make use of his or her interpretative imagination. I then see this dynamic of creative overcoming echoed within Sedaine's fictional worlds in characters' similarly obstacle-triggered leaps into the sympathetic imagination as well as in the ethos of heroic sacrifice with which this moral dynamic is intertwined. Finally, I will read this (relatively gentle) form of aesthetic and moral sublime as coming together in Sedaine's best-known *opéra comique—Richard Coeur-de-Lion.*

One can choose almost any of Sedaine's *opéras comiques* and soon see the distance he takes from the moral and aesthetic conventionality which defines the world of the sentimental pastorale. I begin, however, with a brief look at *Le Roi et le Fermier,* as it was one of Sedaine's first self-consciously innovative works.[403]

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[403] In his preface to the printed score, Sedaine emphasizes the new role he sought to give music as well as the problems these artistic ambitions raised: "Jamais bon ou mauvais Ouvrage n'a eu tant de peine que celui-ci à paroître au Théâtre: il avoit en lui-même sa première difficulté; il falloit que je trouvasse un grand Artiste, un Musicien habile qui voulût bien avoir un peu de confiance en moi, enfin un ami qui voulût bien risquer un genre nouveau en musique" (Jean-Michel Sedaine, "Avertissement," *Le Roi et le Fermier,* reproduced in David Charlton, "Sedaine's Prefaces: Pretexts for a New Music Drama," in *Michel-Jean Sedaine (1719-1797): Theatre, Opera and Art,* ed. Mark Ledbury and David Charlton [1762; Aldershot:

Le Roi et le Fermier's plot is slight, without for all that being straightforward. The opera opens with Richard—the eponymous farmer, featured in his second vocation as royal gamekeeper—alone in a wild place in the king's forest ("arbres plantés çà et là sur le théâtre et sans ordre").[404] He is distraught. After a while, three of his subordinate guards arrive and attempt to make sense of their leader's uncharacteristic surliness—to no avail. Richard, instead, questions them about the king's whereabouts. This latter is undoubtedly still hunting, but now the wind is rising and a storm is brewing. Betsy, Richard's younger sister, arrives and Richard growls at her too. Finally, alone with his trusted Rustaut, Richard explains what has been troubling him. He is imagining the revenge he wants to take on Lurewel, the villainous aristocrat whom he believes to have seduced his fiancée, Jenny. He is also feeling betrayed by this latter, whom he believes to have been all too eager to be seduced. Jenny herself then appears. She explains that she has escaped unscathed from her encounter with Lurewel and convinces Richard of her innocence. Nevertheless, they still have a problem: Lurewel has taken her entire flock, which was to serve as her dowry. How can they now marry? She will go find the king and throw herself at his feet.

The next act opens with the king lost in the storm. He comes upon Richard from whom he conceals his identity. This latter invites him home for a meal. The third act

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Ashgate, 2000] 243). On the text-music relationship in *Le Roi et le Fermier,* see Raphaëlle Legrand, "'Risquer un genre nouveau en musique:' l'opéra-comique de Sedaine et Monsigny," in *Ibid.,*119-145. We will return to the question of the importance of music in Sedaine's *opéras comiques* below. Legrand also describes *Le Roi et le Fermier* as one of the first of Sedaine's works in which "l'esprit, le goût, la finesse des réparties, l'habilité de la construction (qualités d'un Favart ou d'un Marmontel) sont délaissées au profit du naturel du dialogue, [et] de situations touchantes sommairement préparées mais longuement développées" (119). *Le Roi et le Fermier* has also been seen as innovative in its introduction of a king not merely as a *deus ex machina,* but as an active character in a lowly setting. See Michel Noiray, "Quatre rois à la chasse: Dodsley, Collé, Sedaine, Goldoni," in *Ibid.,* 97-118.

[404] Pierre-Alexandre Monsigny and Michel-Jean Sedaine, *Le Roi et le Fermier* (Paris: Claude Herissant, 1762), 10.

features an enlightening conversation between the king and Richard, the revelation of the king's identity and, finally, the king's generous knighting of Richard and bestowal of a dowry on Jenny.

In this plot summary, we find both hints of the sentimental pastorale in the theme of the poor, virtuous shepherdess, who, by the end of the opera, has become the object of a sympathetic father figure's attentions, and an indication—in the conversation between the king and Richard—of Sedaine's move beyond these conventions.

But we also see a move away from *opéra comique* stereotype in *Le Roi et le Fermier*'s very first scene. In most every *opéra comique* discussed thus far, opening scenes feature a series of *ariettes* in which each important character presents themselves implicitly, if not directly, to the public by singing about their character or their concerns. The self-presentation of sentimental fathers is perhaps the most conventional in this regard (and excruciatingly so for modern ears). Not only do these fathers embody sentimental morality by taking pleasure in virtue, but they make their goodness explicitly known.

Almost immediately upon his first appearance (he is given just enough time to gently chastise his overseer for his impatience and pedagogically appeal to what he describes as his inner humanity), Candor offers up a glowing self-portrait: "Heureux qui sans soins, sans affaires // Peut cultiver ses champs en paix. // Le plus simple toit de ses pères, // Vaut mieux que l'éclat des palais ...."[405] Lucile's father Timante behaves similarly. After affably waving away Dorval's (his future son-in-law's) apology (gently preoccupied with Lucile, Dorval has neglected even to bid Timante a good morning),

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[405] Charles-Simon Favart, *Les Moissonneurs, Théâtre choisi de Favart,* vol.2 (1768; Paris: Léopold Collin, 1809), 140.

Timante insists that he only lives to make not merely his children but everyone in his entourage happy: "Autour de moi j'entends, je veux // Que tout le monde soit heureux, // On perd tout l'or que l'on entasse. // C'est pour répandre que j'amasse."[406]

Le Roi et le Fermier opens, on the other hand, not with Richard calmly presenting himself to the public (or other characters), but instead so overcome with violent emotion, that he talks (sings) to himself:

> Je ne sais à quoi me résoudre,
> Je ne sais où porter mes pas;
> Ce malheur est un coup de foudre
> Pour moi pire que le trépas.
> ... Si j'allais .... non ... doute cruel !
> Quoi douter ....? Je n'ai plus de doute,
> Je sens trop ce qu'il m'en coûte.
> Oui, je veux à l'instant .... Oh, ciel![407]

The use of fragmented speech to indicate intense emotion had since at least the mid-seventeenth century been a convention in its own right.[408] And, even within the prettified world of sentimental comedy, we have seen Mlle de St. Yves's discourse similarly disrupted by emotion. What we find in *Le Roi et le Fermier,* however, is a relative de-aesthetization of this convention. Where Mlle de St. Yves's emotion was softened by a thematic emphasis on pleasure (the elation of love), here there is only a turbulent evocation of suffering.

If this scene moves pointedly away from *opéra comique* convention, it does, on the other hand, evoke the newer sentimental aesthetics laid out by Diderot in his theory of the drama. Richard might be alone in a forest, rather than surrounded by friends and

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[406] A-E-M Grétry and Jean-François Marmontel, *Lucile, Oeuvres Complètes de Grétry* (1769; Bruxelles: Brietkopf and Haertel, 1883-1911), 27-28.

[407] Michel-Jean Sedaine, *Le Roi et le Fermier, Théâtre de Sedaine,* ed. M. Louis Moland (1762; Paris: Garnier Frères, 1878), 65.

[408] See John D. Lyons, *Kingdom of Disorder: The Theory of Tragedy in Classical France* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1999), 76-82.

family in Dorval's drawing room, but the spectator is similarly invited to peer into a private drama.[409] Moreover, given the fact that we find the elements that Jay Caplan has seen as at work in Diderotian sentimentalism—the foregrounding of suffering and, perhaps, a dynamic of spectatorial exclusion and paradoxical inclusion, one might be tempted to bring his theory of the sentimental tableau to bear on this moment.

Since I have already outlined Caplan's argument in my introduction, and again in my first chapter, I will only recall its broad outlines here. Where Michael Fried had seen eighteenth century tableaux (both real and metaphorical) as ensuring the spectator's emotional absorption into a scene by constructing the fiction of his exclusion, Caplan sees the narrative tableaux sketched out in Diderot's theory of the *drame* as structurally "including" the spectator in various figures of loss and absence.[410] In the example with which Caplan begins the chapter—the scene of a woman's mourning of her dead husband which Dorval claims to have personally witnessed and is now recounting to "Moi" (the textual stand-in for Diderot)—this loss is represented in a series of fetishizable objects— the woman's tears and hair, her dead husband's feet, as well as all manner of narrative and textual detail.[411] *Richard*'s opening scene does not offer tears (which Caplan sees as provoking a mirroring, tearful response from the spectator), but it most certainly offers a similar thematics of loss as well as fetishizable fragmentation at the level of utterance— in Richard's disconnected mutterings and exclamations.

Although we have no particular reason at the moment to rule out this kind of

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[409] Denis Diderot, *De la Poésie dramatique, Oeuvres Complètes: Esthétique-Théâtre,* vol.4, ed. Laurent Versini (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1996), 231.

[410] Jay Caplan, *Framed Narratives: Diderot's Genealogy of the Beholder* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 15-29.

[411] *Ibid.,* 15-17.

reading, I will argue that when Sedaine's *opéras comiques* are framed by a broader

reading of Diderotian aesthetics, we can see the possibility of another spectatorial

dynamic come to the fore—one where the spectator relates to various forms of loss less

defensively than actively, even heroically—where he is understood as creatively

interacting with forms of resistant otherness rather than merely enjoying an imaginary

plenitude produced by an unbridgeable distance between life and art.

For those who have approached Diderot by way of his theory of the drama, this

emphasis on otherness might seem surprising. Certainly, Diderot's discussions of

sympathy in his *De la Poésie Dramatique* as well as his earlier and more daring

Entretiens sur le Fils Naturel, turn—sometimes emphatically—on various forms of ideal

proximity and resemblance. First, the stuff of the fictional world should, Dorval

(Diderot's fictive playwright and his interlocutor in the theoretical dialogue that is *Les*

Entretiens) claims, approach that of the spectator's. In fact, this form of proximity is

explicitly presented as the condition for sympathy.

After having listened to what Dorval has presented as a particularly moving

scene—a son caring for his dying father and this latter tenderly thanking him—"Moi"

asks Dorval if he really thinks this kind of tragedy would be all that moving:

> MOI . — Mais cette tragédie nous intéressera-t-elle?
> DORVAL. —Je vous le demande. Elle est plus voisine de nous. C'est le tableau des malheurs qui nous environnent. Quoi ! vous ne concevez pas l'effet que produiraient sur vous une scène réelle, des habits vrais ... [412]

At the same time, the various signs that make up the theatrical fiction, the dress,

movements, gestures, speech, and discourse of the various characters should, as much as

poetic reason allows, approach the reality that they represent. Theatrical "pantomime"

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[412] Diderot, *Oeuvres,* vol.4, 1174.

falls into this latter category of theoretical desiderata.

In typical Diderotian fashion, we find the concept demonstrated before being explicitly introduced. As the *Second Entretien* opens, we see Dorval momentarily absorbed in a partly natural, partly human scene. Shaded by oaks, within earshot of an underground spring, he looks out over a plain decorated by villages and backgrounded by a jagged mountain chain. "Moi," who has snuck up by his side, notes his physical response, his quickened breath, his eyes glancing over a multitude of objects, then begins to share his passion, before almost involuntarily crying out and breaking the spell. Then, Dorval turns and gives himself over to a passionate eulogy of nature and its effects.[413] Dorval has unwittingly offered himself as a living demonstration of the pantomime—a form of dramatic representation that a few moments later he describes for the benefit of an intrigue Moi. Just as the non-verbal signs of Dorval's absorption work their effect on Moi, so too, as Dorval explains moments later, it is the actor's passionate gestures and speech "des cris, des mots inarticulés, des voix rompus ..."[414] (and not the sorry, stilted declamation of the *comédiens français*) that truly move the spectator.

Diderot does not fully explain his thinking on pantomime here. But we find a somewhat more elaborated, or at least theoretically suggestive account, in his earlier *Lettre sur les Sourds et Muets.* However, it is also in this same text that we will see Diderot imagine an aesthetics that locates art's moving effects not in its mimetic fidelity, but instead in its distance from that which it might seem to represent—even in its very lack of representational clarity.

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[413] *Ibid.,* 1142.

[414] *Ibid.,* 1144.

Diderot's *Lettre sur les Sourds et Muets,*
the pantomime and the hieroglyph

Addressing himself to l'abbé Batteux, the classicizing author of *Les Beaux Arts réduits à un même principe,* Diderot begins the *Lettre sur les Sourds et Muets* by setting out to tackle the thorny technical question of linguistic inversion.[415] He starts in a particularly sensationalist fashion by insisting that the question really lies in the relationship between thought and language and that this relationship in turn can only be discovered by somehow getting at the origins of language.[416] He then suggests that one might be able to get at this natural order by observing the gestures of a deaf-mute, first "de convention"—someone who could simply act the part—then, to get beyond the problem of instituted language's potential interference with the natural order of thought, an actual deaf-mute. At this point however, we find Diderot, as was his wont, beginning to wander down the byways of associative thought.

From the original problem of the relationship between the natural order of thought and that of language, Diderot branches out into a whole series of inversion-related questions and reflections, before coming up against a possibility that threatens to moot the question entirely—the possibility that language, and particularly such a rational, analytic language as French, will never be able to capture and convey the energetic simultaneity and unity of experience.[417] If we experience a confusion of sensations and ideas at once, discursive language necessarily lags behind, clearly but doggedly laying

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[415] H. J. Hunt's article on Diderot as a linguist was a helpful guide to both the *Lettre* itself and the eighteenth-century linguistic debates in which it participated. H. J. Hunt, "Logic and Linguistics: Diderot as "Grammarien-Philosophe," *The Modern Language Review* 33.2 (1938), 215-233.

[416] Diderot, *Oeuvres,* vol.4, 13.

[417] *Ibid.*, 26.

out each separate idea and struggling to translate feeling and sensation:

> Autre chose est l'état de notre âme, autre chose le compte que nous en rendons soit à nous-mêmes, soit aux autres; autre chose la sensation totale et instantanée de cet état, autre chose l'attention successive et détaillée que nous sommes forcés d'y donner pour l'analyser, la manifester et nous faire entendre. Notre âme est un tableau mouvant d'après lequel nous peignons sans cesse : nous employons bien du temps à le rendre avec fidélité. [418]

Yet language does offer certain words through which one can approach the meaningful density of experience, "termes qui équivalent à un long discours," that can be "employés et compris sur-le-champ."[419] One finds these terms not so much in French (although they do exist), but rather in earlier languages like Greek, Latin[420] ... and the pantomime. The very idea of pantomime was so compelling, in fact, that it has already inspired a digression a few pages back.

After having dismissed the idea of a deaf-mute "de convention" and hit instead upon setting a real deaf-mute to work on the problem, Diderot stumbles across another problem. How can one render the gestures of these deaf-mutes in conventional language? Gestural language is possessed of an entirely untranslatable condensed and energetic meaning. Thinking through this problem, Diderot offers a series of examples that move from simple gesture, to the more complex configuration of gesture, vocal inflection and speech one finds on the stage:

> Dans la sublime scène qui termine la tragédie de *Rodogune,* le moment le plus théâtral est, sans contredit, celui où Antiochus porte la coupe à ses lèvres, et où Timagène entre sur la scène en criant: "Ah! Seigneur !" : quelle foule d'idée et de sentiments ce geste et ce mot ne font-ils pas éprouver à la fois ![421]

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[418] *Ibid.*, 29-30.

[419] *Ibid.*, 28.

[420] *Ibid.*, 28.

[421] *Ibid.*, 18.

If Diderot is anticipating the moving, corporeal dramatic language he will advocate in his *Entretiens sur le Fils Naturel,* it is here that one can see how a regime of mimetic directness may be implicitly at work. Diderot might oppose simultaneity, unity, experiential energy and moving language, on the one hand to the analytical successiveness of discourse on the other. But it is not at all hard to see that pantomimic language is so moving, firstly, because it resembles the structure of experience—one simultaneity mirroring and rendering the other—and, secondly, because, by approximating this experience it is also more suited to convey it instantly—terms are "employés et compris sur-le-champ."[422]

Diderot continues, however, by introducing a closely related concept—that of the poetic hieroglyph. It is at this point that we begin to see a sensationalist aesthetic of representation gradually transform itself into an aesthetic of suggestive effect.

After having momentarily ended his discussion of inversions by importing a fairly standard (in eighteenth-century terms) philosophical genealogy of languages, there is a turn in the argument. Now it is a question of how to explain a certain "harmonie du style,"[423] which, although pleasurable to the ear often seems to get in the way of the communicational clarity of highly developed languages such as French. Now Diderot offers another temporal hierarchy of languages. Whereas earlier he had attributed expressive powers to more primitive languages and analytic powers to more developed ones, we now find a comparison between 1) "la langue naissante" in which one finds a rudimentary syntax; 2) "la langue formée" with a fully developed syntax and lexicon in

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[422] *Ibid.*, 28.

[423] *Ibid.*, 32.

which one can "tout exprimer;"and 3) "la langue perfectionnée" in which musical

elements have been added to "flatter l'oreille en parlant à l'esprit" even if these former do

sometimes wind up getting in the way of communicational clarity.[424] From here, Diderot

pushes on, using no small number of analogies between the "music" of verse and music

tout court until he comes to the notion of the hieroglyph:

> Il faut distinguer dans tout discours en général la pensée et l'expression; si la pensée est rendue avec clarté, pureté et précision, c'en est assez pour la conversation familière: joignez à ces qualités le choix des termes, avec le nombre et l'harmonie de la période, et vous aurez le style qui convient à la chaire; mais vous serez encore loin de la poésie, surtout de la poésie que l'ode et le poème épique déploient dans leurs descriptions. Il passe alors dans le discours du poète un esprit qui en meut et vivifie toutes les syllabes. Qu'est-ce que cet esprit ? j'en ai quelquefois senti la présence ; mais tout ce que j'en sais, c'est que c'est lui qui fait que les choses sont dites et représentées tout à la fois ; que dans le même temps que l'entendement les saisit, l'âme en est émue, l'imagination les voit, et l'oreille les entend ; et que le discours n'est plus seulement un enchaînement de termes énergiques qui exposent la pensée avec force et noblesse, mais que c'est encore un tissu d'hiéroglyphes entassés les uns sur les autres qui la peignent. Je pourrais dire en ce sens que toute poésie est emblématique. [425]

In some ways, the description of the poetic hieroglyph recalls the structure and

dynamics of the pantomime. Just as the pantomime combines expressive gesture and

energetic word, for instance, the hieroglyph paints and represents simultaneously. At the

same time, however, Diderot has shifted his emphasis has from representation to

interpretation, from proximity and exactitude of reference to semantic obscurity and the

power of the imagination. Where the "expressions énergiques" that one finds in the more

primitive languages of Greek and Latin succeed in capturing and transmitting "une foule

de perceptions, sinon à la fois, du moins avec une rapidité si tumultueuse qu'il n'est

guère possible d'en découvrir la loi,"[426] Diderot's discussion of hieroglyphic signs tends

to focus on obscurities that only the most sensitive intelligence is capable of divining:

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[424] *Ibid*., 32-33.

[425] *Ibid*., 34.

[426] *Ibid*., 28.

"celui à qui l'intelligence des propriétés hiéroglyphiques des mots n'a pas été donnée ... n'apercevra pas le lien subtil qui resserre [les idées, les sons, et les images d'un poème]."[427] Moreover, as he demonstrates what he takes to be the ideal response to the poetic text, Diderot suggests that, more than merely reading perceptively and sensitively, he is actively imagining ideas that are perhaps not actually there:

> Sur l'analyse du passage de Virgile, on croirait aisément qu'il ne me laisse rien à désirer, et qu'après y avoir remarqué plus de beautés, peut-être, qu'il n'en a, mais plus, à coup sûr, que le poète n'y en a voulu mettre, mon imagination et mon goût doivent être pleinement satisfaits...[428]

If, at the beginning of the *Lettre sur les Sourds et Muets,* we are clearly on sensationalist ground, by the end of the discussion of the hieroglyph, the aesthetic landscape has perceptibly shifted. Where in the first part, the energy of the pantomimic language of the deaf and then of the hieroglyph was attributed to its representational proximity to the complexity of actual experience, by the end, it is precisely the representational opacity of the hieroglyph which appears to be the source of its energy. In other words, we have seen a shift from an aesthetic of representation to one of interpretation.

As we have seen, this shift went hand-in-hand with a similar shift in aesthetic object. In the first part of the *Lettre,* Diderot privileged forms of discourse that resembled that which they wanted to convey—gestural language that, like Condillac's *langage d'action,*[429] mimicked the passionate signs naturally produced by the body as well as

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[427] *Ibid.,* 41.

[428] *Ibid.,* 37.

[429] In the thought experiment Condillac conducts in his *Essai sur l'Origine des Connaissances,* language grows through association and experience out of spontaneous, natural cries and gestures. The *langage d'action,* humankind's first language, is made up of these cries and gestures now used consciously to mimetically reproduce original, natural utterances (Etienne Bonnot de Condillac, *Essai sur l'origine des connaissances, Oeuvres complètes,* vol. 1 [1748; Paris: Lecointe et Durey, 1822], 193-204).

developed languages (such as French) whose syntactic clarity paralleled the logically

linked ideas of rational analysis. In the second part, however, we deal with the exception

of poetry, and find that its very lack of mimetic clarity calls for an imaginative effort on

the part of the reader.

The musical hieroglyph

Finally, one can link this aesthetic shift to the challenge of describing the

specifically musical hieroglyph. As we have seen, Diderot uses music as a metaphor

when he begins his discussion of the poetic hieroglyph, but the association between the

two becomes even clearer in his response to a certain Mlle de la Chaux in additions to the

Lettre published later that year (1751). As Diderot summarizes, this latter had asked

about music's (apparent lack of) representationality: "*Il y a*, ajoutez-vous enfin, *des*

morceaux de musique auxquels on n'attache point d'images, qui ne forment ni pour vous

ni pour personne aucune peinture hiéroglyphique, et qui font cependant un grand plaisir

à tout le monde."[430]

Diderot's reponse is curious in that through it one can trace a short history of

seventeenth- and eighteenth-century aesthetic thought on music. The first answer he

offers Mlle de la Chaux is entirely classicizing. It might very well be true that some non-

representational music is pleasing, but this music is merely empty pleasure—as is seeing

a rainbow—and certainly inferior to music that is also imitative.[431] He then continues

with an explanation that anticipates the vibratory model of sympathetic contagion he will

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[430] *Ibid.*, 59. (The emphasis is Diderot's.)

[431] *Ibid.*, 59. Charles Batteux makes a similar claim about music, classically tying its *raison d'être* to meaning: "Je conclus ... que si le Ton de la voix et les Gestes avoient une signification avant que d'être mesurés, ils doivent la conserver dans la Musique ... et par conséquent, que toute Musique ...doit avoir un sens" (Charles Batteux, *Les Beaux Arts Réduits à un Même Principe* [Paris: Durand, 1747], 268).

later elaborate in his *Rêve de d'Alembert*. The enjoyment of non-representational music is

a matter of physical attunement:

> S'il y a des têtes sonnantes, il y a aussi des corps que j'appellerais volontiers
> harmoniques ; des hommes en qui toutes les fibres oscillent avec tant de promptitude et
> de vivacité, qui sur l'expérience des mouvements violents que l'harmonie leur cause, ils
> sentent la possibilité de mouvements plus violents encore. [432]

Finally, Diderot recognizes that music's own hieroglyph is indeed imprecise, hard to pin

down, and that it is this very opacity that makes music so moving:

> Son hiéroglyphe [celui de la musique] et si léger est si fugitif, il est si facile de le perdre
> ou de le mésinterpréter .... La peinture montre l'objet même, la poésie le décrit, la
> musique en excite à peine une idée. Elle n'a de ressource que dans les intervalles et la
> durée des sons ; et quelle analogie y a-t-il entre cette espèce de crayons, et le printemps,
> les ténèbres, la solitude, etc., et la plupart d'objets ?[433]

Diderot has thus noted the distance between music and what musical signs would

imitate. However, whereas proximity had been the criterion for aesthetic (and

intellectual) efficacity. Now, we finally see the very opposite being asserted.

> Comment se fait-il donc que des trois arts imitateurs de la nature, celui dont l'expression
> est la plus arbitraire et la moins précise, parle le plus fortement à l'âme? Serait-ce que
> montrant moins les objets, il laisse plus de carrière à notre imagination ...?[434]

It is here, in this conception of the musical hieroglyph that we find a move away

from the classical notion of art as mimesis towards a proto-Romantic theory of art as anti-

mimetic, as a form of sublime negativity that confronts the reader or listener with an

interpretive challenge.[435]

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[432] Diderot, *Oeuvres,* vol.4, 60.

[433] *Ibid.,* 60.

[434] *Ibid.*, 60.

[435] Kevin Barry (following Liselotte Dieckmann) notes that when Diderot turns to the question of music,
"the principle of representation becomes ... destabilized." Barry then concludes: "Within any principle of
picturing or representing ideas and feelings music proposes a risk of indeterminacy, of loss, of
misinterpretation. The epistemological status of signs in music can only be radically unstable within a
general theory of signs which attributes meaning to reference" (Kevin Barry, *Language, music and the
sign: A study in aesthetics, poetics and poetic practice from Collins to Coleridge* [Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 1987]*,* 8-9); Downing Thomas has made a similar argument in a discussion of Diderot's

Sedaine's structurally open, fragmentary style

Turning back to *Le Roi et le Fermier*'s opening scene with this model of spectator response at hand, we can now offer a more effective challenge to an interpretation à la Caplan. This latter, as we have seen, might be tempted to read the fragments of Richard's perplexed (and perplexing) lament as so many enticing partial evocations of a loss that remains to some extent inaccessible, and which offer the spectator the both/and psychical bonus of the fetish. Now, however, we can see these fragments as offering ambiguities, or semantic gaps, which function as a form of emotional and cognitive stimulus for the spectator's imagination.

This second interpretation seems all the more plausible as the scene itself (and others like it) asks to be understood less as a self-contained, stand-alone moment (which seems to be how Caplan understands Diderot's narrative tableaux), than as existing in metonymic relationship to a similar, but larger scale aesthetic patterning. In *Le Roi et le Fermier,* the ambiguities of the opening *ariette* compose but one moment of an extended, anti-classical exposition during which spectators are implicitly asked to piece together the dispersed, but necessary information. A similar pattern appears in an even more salient form at the beginning of *Le Déserteur.*

Like *Le Roi et le Fermier, Le Déserteur* opens with a main character lost in passionate reflection, offering the spectator but slight clues as to what might lie ahead.[436]

Leçons de Clavecin:"Diderot insists that the imprecision of music, its shifting hieroglyph, is precisely what empowers the spectator's imagination" (Downing Thomas, *Music and the Origins of Language: Theories from the French Enlightenment* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995], 170).

[436] In *Le Déserteur,* Alexis, a soldier arriving home on leave is tricked (as part of a practical joke orchestrated by his adoptive mother, the Duchesse) into believing that his fiancée Louise has just married someone else. He falls into the trap. Distraught, he flees, intending to leave France "pour toujours!" He is then arrested for desertion, imprisoned and sentenced to death. The second act sees him in prison forlornly

Louise sings: "Peut-on affliger ce qu'on aime? // C'est bien en vouloir à soi-même. // Je l'aime, et pour la vie, // Et vous voulez que cette perfidie ... // Ah ! mon père, je ne saurais ! ... A sa place, moi, j'en mourrais."[437] But who is this person? What is this "perfidie?" The spectator will have to piece together information in the following scene in order to figure it out, and even then, he will not have all the necessary clues in hand until close to the end of the scene, after forty-four different responses—forty-four different questions, explanations, teasings, exclamations and the repeatedly interrupted reading of one relatively long letter that most pointedly does not provide the answer to the question at hand.

One finds a similar (apparent) disorder on the higher level of scenic organization as well. The first seven scenes of *Le Comte d'Albert,* to take but one example, offer the open, lacunary structure layed out in Table 1 (p. 180). Eventually, these strands do come together to form a reworking of the La Fontaine fable "Le Lion et le Rat." (I will discuss *Le Comte* in more detail below.)

Finally, one can see this tendency towards (apparent) disorder at the most local textual level as well—in elliptical dialogue. Where characters in other *opéras comiques* tend to lay out arguments neatly, *Le Roi et le Fermier's* Richard and Jenny, like many of Sedaine's characters, are too caught up in the press of their own affairs to spell everything out for the spectator's benefit. At this point in the opera, the king (incognito) is being entertained in another room by Richard's mother and Richard goes to the wine

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singing about his love—when the Prison guard isn't singing drinking songs. The final act sees Louise running to the king in order to plead for Alexis's pardon, granted predictably enough before the final chorus (Michel-Jean Sedaine and Pierre-Alexandre Monsigny, *Le Déserteur* [Paris: Choudens, n. d.]).

[437] Sedaine and Monsigny, *Le Déserteur,* 10-11.

cellar. He meets Jenny on the way:

> Richard: Ma foi, c'est un honnête homme; sans moi il se serait tué à cette fondrière, je l'ai retenu par son habit; j'en ai encore mal aux bras.
> Jenny : Crois-tu qu'il ait assez de crédit ... ?
> Richard : Ma foi, oui, oui.
> Jenny : Mais si le milord ... (Ici Richard fait un mouvement comme pour s'en aller.) On n'a pas le temps de se dire un mot.
> Richard : C'est vrai.
> Jenny : Veux-tu que j'aille à la cave ?
> Richard : Avec moi ?
> Jenny : Oh ! non.[438]

Jenny asks about the "crédit" of the man they believe to be a courtier, because she is

wondering if he might be able to help free her flock now trapped in the local castle. This

Table 1. *Le Comte d'Albert*: the opening scenes

Scene 1: Two spies discuss the arrest of the eponymous hero (for dueling) and their plan to surround his family's *hôtel particulier*.

Scene 2: Townspeople who will help out in the arrest arrive. They sing a chorus.

Scene 3: Spies comment on the goings-on at the d'Albert residence.

Scene 4: The d'Albert children and the maid sneak out of the house (and sing a trio);

Scene 5: Then, they flee.

Scene 6: The Countesse d'Albert appears, gives some instructions to her servant (he is to let a man in a gray coat and large hat over his eyes into the house, but no one else!) and leaves for the country.

Scene 7: Antoine, a laborer, staggers onto the scene overburdened by a huge, heavy basket; he approaches the Countess without greeting her, puts down his load to rest, while the Countess leaves. Antoine begins to complain about his day.

Source: A-E-M Grétry and Michel-Jean Sedaine, *Le Comte d'Albert*, *Oeuvres complètes de Grétry* (1787; Bruxelles: Brietkopf & Haertel, 1883-1911), 9-26.

scene is already the seventh in the act and this key area of concern for the couple has not

been mentioned since the last act. The end of the exchange is nothing but a passing

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[438] Michel-Jean Sedaine, *Le Roi et le Fermier, Théâtre de Sedaine,* ed. M. Louis Moland (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1878), 104-105.

flirtation.[439]

Sedaine's *opéras comiques* as musical hieroglyphs

If the open structures and disjointed, elliptical dialogue of Sedaine's works did

not already suggest the metaphorical musicality of the hieroglyph, it is also important to

note that his *opéras comiques* were also literally more musical than those of his

contemporaries.

Unlike many librettists of the period, Sedaine went out of his way to have his text

set to music. In fact, he openly recognized that his writing benefited from the process.

According to Elisabeth Cook:

> Sedaine's greatest talent as a librettist was his ability to construct a text from the point of
> view of the composer. He readily conceded that music was necessary for the success of
> such works, the result being that "although many of his plays act extremely well, few
> make very satisfactory reading." [440]

In the "Avertissement" to his *Le Jardinier et son Seigneur,* Sedaine justifies his

stylistic choices—his avoidance of a literary style, in general, and alexandrine verse, in

particular—in terms of collaborative necessity.[441] After having "translated" some text

from *Le Jardinier* into *alexandrins,* he continues:

> ....ces Vers plairoient peut-être; et peut-être quelques-uns diroient: L'Auteur est un grand
> homme, car il fait de grands vers. Mais cette tirade emphatique auroit-elle remplie mon

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[439] Mark Ledbury sees Sedaine's dialogue as characteristically and appealingly rhythmic. While I agree, I believe there is more going on here than musical appeal. See Mark Ledbury, *Sedaine, Greuze and the Boundaries of Genre,* Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century, 380 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2000), 110-111.

[440] Elisabeth Cook, *Duet and Ensemble in the Early Opéra-Comique* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995), 115. Cook cites R. A. Rayner's "The Social and Literary Aspects of Sedaine's Dramatic Work" (diss., U of London, 1960). Cook goes on to remark in a note that "contemporary critics were aware of this" as well, and continues by citing Grimm (145).

[441] The *alexandrin* forms something of straw man in Sedaine's argument, however, as few *opéra comique* librettists used the twelve syllable verse. They mainly preferred the *octosyllabe* (Marmontel especially) in part because it was considered more appropriate for a less elite theater *and precisely* because it was thought to be more appropriate for musical setting.

> objet ? La Musique, pour laquelle j'ai courbé les Scènes de cet Opera Comique, a des sentimens, a des branches trop étalées, trop ambitieuses, auroit-elle trouvé le moyen d'entrelacer ses fleurs ? La Marche constamment pesante de notre grand Vers Alexandrin auroit-elle fourni au Musicien la mesure vive d'une femme animée de différens mouvemens qui se succedent en elle avec rapidité ?[442]

Moreover, it appears that, from the start, it was precisely the genre's musical possibilities that persuaded Sedaine to write *opéras comiques*. As Sedaine describes in a short autobiographical piece, M. Corbie, the temporary owner of the *Opéra-Comique*, (the theater where the eponymous genre was performed before its fusion with the *Comédie-Italienne* in 1762) had been attempting to enlist his artistic services. To this sollication, he (supposedly) responded: "Cependant, si quelque chose m'excitait, ce serait le plaisir d'essayer de mettre toute une scène en musique, scène qui serait composée de plusieurs interlocuteurs mis en actions."[443]

If Sedaine thus sought out the opportunity to have his drama set to music, the result of such a project can be clearly seen in the relative dominance of musical material in his *opéras comiques* relative to those of his contemporaries. It is in Sedaine's *opéras comiques* that one begins to find, in particular, successive scenes all set to music while the *opéras comiques* of his contemporaries are still frequently characterized by the occasional *ariette* inserted into extensive dialogue. *Le Magnifique* (1773), written in collaboration with Grétry, marks a significant step in this direction. Sedaine had chosen the source, the identically entitled La Fontaine fable, precisely because of the opportunities for music he saw the plot furnishing.

In this sentimental reworking of the traditional farce plot, the young Clémentine is

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[442] Sedaine, "Avertissement," *Le Jardinier et son Seigneur,* 1761, reproduced in Charlton, "Sedaine's Prefaces," 239.

[443] Michel-Jean Sedaine, "Quelques réflexions," in *Théâtre choisi de G. de Pixérécourt*, vol.4, (Paris: Tresse, 1843), 504.

jealously guarded by her scheming tutor, Aldobrandin. Clémentine loves the generous

Florentine seigneur, Il Magnifico, however. If this latter has found a way to literally buy

fifteen minutes of conversation with Clémentine, Aldobrandin believes to have outwitted

him in forbidding Clémentine to reply. The Magnifique finds a way out of the dilemma

by asking Clémentine to drop the rose she holds as a sign of her feelings.[444] This is the

scene where Sedaine saw an opportunity for an extended musical sequence and

pantomime. As Louise Parkinson Arnoldson describes it: "A Sedaine ... revient l'honneur

d'avoir conçu ces suites ininterrompues de musique sans retour au parlé, celle de la rose

étant la plus ambitieuse tentée jusqu'alors....En effet, cette scène, qui en forme en réalité

deux ... est ainsi construite :

> Longue ariette de Clémentine.
> Ritournelle.
> Duo.
> Ritournelle.
> Longue ariette du Magnifique.
> Trio.
> Reprise de l'ariette du Magnifique.
> Trio.
> Reprise de l'ariette du Magnifique.
> Trio.
> Reprise de l'ariette du Magnifique.
> Trio.
> Ritournelle.[445]

Of course, the mere presence of music does not necessarily make for a

challengingly ambiguous aesthetic experience. Music can be made to signify rather

precisely, and certainly *opéra comique* composers, among them Duni and Philidor, did

work hard to make their *ariettes* as imitative as possible.[446] Moreover, David Charlton

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[444] A-E-M Grétry and Michel-Jean Sedaine, *Le Magnifique* (Paris: Claude Herissant, 1773).

[445] Louise Parkinson Arnoldson, *Sedaine et les Musiciens de son Temps* (Paris: A. Nizet and M. Bastard 1934), 145. (The term "Ritournelle" refers to a repeated orchestral interlude.)

[446] François-André Danican Philidor was particularly well-known for his descriptive *ariettes.*

has argued that Sedaine was concerned to create musico-dramatic unity, that "his idea was ... to synthesize word, melody, musical 'gesture' and, not least, actions."[447] Does this not suggest that Sedaine, in his use of music, might not have sought to create a theater of semantic plenitude, a theatre in which various sign systems would coincide and reinforce each other? The fact that Sedaine was intrigued by the simultaneity afforded by all manner of vocal ensemble—quartets, quintets, sextets, even a septet, does seem to support this possibility, suggesting that he might have aspired above all to the classicizing mimetic directness of the pantomime. Sedaine certainly does discuss the ensemble in terms evocative of the Diderot's pantomime: the ensemble can represent many "passions" and "affections" "dans le même temps," unlike spoken theater that, being forced to present theses passions successively and nobly weakens them ("affoiblir la situation"). Describing a septet in the last act of *Le Roi et le Fermier,* he explains:

> C'est l'instant où, dans *Le Roi et le Fermier,* le Roi est reconnu. Les complimens affectueux des Courtisans, les interrogations du Roi, la crainte de Richard d'avoir manqué de respect, la surprise mêlée de joie dans Jenny, respectueuse dans la mère, naïve dans la petite fille, étonnement simple dans les Gardes ; tout ce concours de passions et d'affections n'eût été qu'un dans la nature, et rendu dans le même instant. La Tragédie ou la Comédie eût été forcée de le prolonger, de faire parler les Acteurs l'un après l'autre, et d'affoiblir la situation pour la rendre nettement avec noblesse ou décence : et la musique, en les faisant parler ensemble, a le droit de fixer le tableau, et de le tenir plus long-temps sous les yeux.[448]

And yet, we can also see that Sedaine's concern for what Charlton has called musico-dramatic unity asks to be understood more as hieroglyphic than the pantomime that Diderot sees as an instrument of direct emotional communication in the theater. First, as Mark Ledbury has argued, Sedaine's ensembles—his musical tableaux—are

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[447] David Charlton, "'L'Art dramatico-musical': an essay," in *Music and Theatre: Essays in Honour of Winton Dean,* ed. Nigel Fortune (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 241.

[448] Sedaine, "L'Auteur au Lecteur," *Rose et Colas,* 1769, reproduced in Charlton, "Sedaine's Prefaces," 246.

characterized by a certain diversity in unity, while Diderot's theatrical or narrative tableaux are primarily concerned with visual semantic coherence. In Sedaine's ensembles (as in the one described by Sedaine himself above), each character is represented differently, as caught up in their own individual reaction to the same event, while Diderot's tableaux feature "vast *enchaînements* of characters around a single figure."[449]

In the first chapter, I argued, citing Lévi-Strauss, that music can be understood as closely associated with both prediscursive bodily rhythms *and* with an idealizing, time-transcending formal structure—that is—as both engaging the sensuous particular *and* abstracting away from the messy sonorous detail of the everyday. As David Lidov similarly points out, music can be understood as composed of, on the one hand, "articulatory structures" which bear meaning and, on the other, inflections, aspects of continuous change that point instead to personal emotion and expression—the "feeling tones and gestures of speech" or the subtle nuances of pitch, rhythm, and intensity in musical performance.[450] In other words, one can speak of the language of music and the "music" of music, as it were—music's own hieroglyph. Or, one can project a similar opposition onto different pieces of music themselves, distinguishing between *ariettes* (or sections thereof) that offer a neat rhetoric of clearly articulated and connected musical phrases, sentences and paragraphs and those that are instead more irregular, more open-ended and less clearly meaningful.

Not only did Sedaine actively encourage the inclusion of more than the usual complement of music in his *opéras comiques,* he also encouraged the composers with

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[449] Ledbury, *Sedaine, Greuze,* 113.

[450] David Lidov, *Is Language a Music? Writings on Musical Form and Signification* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 4, 3.

whom he worked (primarily Monsigny and Grétry) to create less regularly structured, more hieroglyphic *ariettes*. This he accomplished by furnishing the composers not so much with texts of varied meters and verse lengths, as one might expect, but, instead with texts characterized by unconventional word choice and unusually intense dramatic situations. Grétry, in particular, noted:

> Si Sedaine n'est pas le poète qui soigne le plus les vers destinés au chant, les situations qu'il amène ... sont si impérieuses, qu'elles forcent le musicien à s'y attacher pour les rendre. Il dit presque toujours le mot propre, et il se croit dispensé de l'embellir par des tours poétiques. Il force donc le musicien à prendre des formes neuves pour rendre ses caractères originaux.[451]

One sees evidence of this more suggestive, "hieroglyphic" music in the *ariettes* of Sedaine and Monsigny's *Le Déserteur*. First, we find not only an obbligato recitative interrupted by moments of measured song indistinguishable from *ariette,* but also at least two *ariettes* repeatedly interrupted by recitative. In every case, the unexpected shift from recitative-like material to *ariette* and back again is used to suggest intense, intimate emotion (see Table 2, p. 188).

Finally, even *ariettes* that do not include recitative tend to have more fluid structures than those typically found in *opéra comique*. While most *ariettes* tend to have regularly shaped paragraphs, the *ariettes* given to Alexis and Louise in *Le Déserteur* instead feature relatively regular beginnings and endings bracketing considerable more fluid "middles."[452] In these middles, one finds a relative lack of regular articulation—a harmonic and gestural imitation of the inflexions and continuities of speech.

One can see this fluidity even in the more regular B sections of the *ariette*, "On

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[451] A-E-M Grétry, *Mémoires, ou Essais sur la Musique,* vol.2 (New York: Da Capo Press, 1971), 207.

[452] I am borrowing the term "middles" from V. Kofi Agawu's *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 51-79.

s'empresse, on me regarde" in which Alexis imagines himself about to be executed.[453]

The *ariette* is in a two-part AB-CB form with A and C sections characterized by a recitative-like open-endedness and the repeated B section by more typically measured, melodic material. In the B section (figure A20), marked *lamentabile,* Alexis sings of dying without having first seen Louise again. This section begins and ends with a relatively well-defined phrase. Its middle, however, set to the text "Sans l'avoir vue ... O Ciel! Non, non ; // Quelque chose que je me dise, // Mon coeur ne peut souffrir ce cruel abandon," (mm. 30-39) is characterized first by the avoidance of strong harmonic movements—there are no clear-cut cadences. These cadences, moreover, do not, for the most part, align with the movement of the melody. The result is an irregular spinning forward motion which may be seen as less directly imitative of emotion and more suggestive of an inner anguish which the spectator can only imagine.[454]

Finally, Sedaine also works music into a "hieroglyphic" realism by placing it inside the fictional world in the form of "phenomenal" song, song that is performed and explicitly heard as such by the fictional characters themselves.[455] Sedaine was hardly the

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[453] Monsigny and Sedaine, *Le Déserteur,* 152-156.

[454] In some sense, I am seeing these moments of musical freedom as functioning similarly to what I have interpreted as seductive signs of the other's subjective freedom in the previous chapter's discussion of amorous intersubjectivity. However, I see two differences here—both in these *ariettes* in *Le Déserteur* and in Sedaine's *oeuvre* in general. First, the musical suggestion of affective interiority is relatively de-aestheticized compared to the Huron's and Azor's love declarations. In these latter, musical signs of the Huron's and Azor's subjective difference emerged within a relatively ordered musical framework. In Alexis's and Louise's *ariettes,* however, there is considerably more musical open-endedness. In fact, one can see in these "middles" an anticipation of the non-repeating, through-composed musical material that David Charlton theorizes as one component of what he terms the 'melodramatic model' (David Charlton, "Storms, Sacrifices: the 'Melodramatic Model' in Opera," in *French Opera 1730-1830: Meaning and Media* [Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000]). Secondly, while Azor's and Le Huron's passionate self-expression takes place in the presence of an other, Alexis, here, is physically alone and forced, as it were, to connect with the other through an act of the imagination. As we will see below this combination of physical aloneness and imaginative connection is entirely typical in Sedaine's *oeuvre*.

[455] Carolyn Abbate uses the terms phenomenal and noumenal song to distinguish between music performed and heard as such within the fictional world, and music, that, on the other hand, is (usually) only heard by the real-life spectators (Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991], 119).

only librettist to use "real-life" song in addition to *ariettes*. Daniel Heartz, in fact, traces one genre of song, the "Romance" from its first introduction onto the lyric stage in

Table 2. Scenes in *Le Déserteur* featuring unusual mixtures of song and recitative.

1. Acte I, Scene 6. Récitatif (accompagné). "Infidèle, que t'ai je fait?" Alexis:	Alone and suffering, Alexis apostrophizes Louise. He moves between angry accusation ("Infidèle, que t'ai je fait"), tenderness ("Toujours chérie ! toujours chérie !"), self-pity ("Est-il quelqu'un de plus malheureux ?"). He then day-dreams for 7 measures of soaring adagio ("J'accours à sa voix ; oui, c'est elle"), before returning to recitative and a final expression of perplexity ("Et pourquoi ?") [a]
2. Acte III, Scene 4. Adagio "Il m'eut été si doux" Alexis:	Alexis sings a letter he is writing to Louise. On two occasions, he is too agitated to continue writing. His despairing exclamations are rendered in passages approaching obligato recitative.[b]
3. Acte III, Scene 8. Récitatif (accompagné) and Choeur. "Où suis-je? ô ciel!" Louise:	Louise has run back to Alexis (his pardon in her hand). After she recovers from her faint, she sings barefoot and disheveled. Her comments, rendered in recitative, are interrupted by a chorus of villagers celebrating the arrival of the king. [c]

[a] Pierre-Alexandre Monsigny and Michel-Jean Sedaine, *Le Déserteur* (Paris : Choudens, n.d.), 42-45.
[b] *Ibid.,* 137-138.
[c] *Ibid.,* 161-163

Rousseau's *Le Devin du Village* through its reintroduction and subsequent development

in later *opéra comique*.[456]

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[456] Daniel Heartz, "The Beginnings of the Operatic Romance: Rousseau, Sedaine, and Monsigny," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 15.2 (Winter, 1981-1982), 149-178.

If Sedaine goes out of his way to incorporate phenomenal song into his *opéras comiques*, this song functions less mimetically than suggestively and dramatically. Instead of conveying a character's temperament, social standing, or emotional experience, phenomenal song takes on layers of meaning that ask to be interpreted, or, at other times, functions as a partial barrier to (rather than transparent medium of) communication. In Grétry's and Sedaine's *Richard Coeur de Lion,* an *opéra comique* I will discuss in more detail below, a Romance is given a starring role, functioning as a memory-stimulating, privileged form of communication among a central trio of characters. Most often, however, phenomenal song is used in Sedaine's *opéras comiques,* as a form of communicational indirection.

In *On ne s'avise jamais de tout,* the work that would go on to inspire Beaumarchais's *Le Barbier de Séville,* Dorval uses a song (that he claims to have sung to when he was a prisoner in the Orient) to secretly communicate to Lise, while distracting her guardian Marguerite with nonsense syllables: "Fils de Noraddin, // Un jour entra dans son jardin, // *A Marg.* Harseïnam robek milon femur, // *A Lise.* En revenant passez le long du mur, // *A Marg.* Harseïnam robek milon femur."[457] Later, in *Rose et Colas,* we see song put to similar use. Colas, who had snuck into Rose's house has been surprised by the unexpected return of her father, Mathurin, and is now attempting to hide in a loft. Mathurin reproaches Rose for neglect of her household duties and asks her to entertain him by singing. She agrees eagerly and seizes upon the opportunity to send a secret message to Colas: "...Quand ces oiseaux vont chanter // ... Et Jeanneton dit nuit et jour // Au bois d'amour : Aimez-moi, // Mon petit Roi, // *Ah ! rmontez vos jambes, // car on les*

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[457] Pierre-Alexander Monsigny and Michel-Jean Sedaine, *On ne s'avise jamais de tout* (Paris: Claude Herissant, 1761), 22.

voit. "[458] In *Le Déserteur,* we find song inadvertently used to block communication

entirely. Louise and her family have planned to trick this former's fiancé, Alexis, into

believing that she is marrying someone else. In this little comedy, the young servant

Jeannette has been cast in the role of a shepherdess who, posted along Alexis's path

home, will sing and spin, until accosted by the fiancé, at which point, she will break him

the bad news. Except that, as it turns out, she is a little too invested in her role as

shepherdess:

> Alexis: Parlez donc, la jeune fille.
> Jeannette: (elle chante) "J'avais égaré mon fuseau ..."
> Alexis: Parlez donc, parlez donc !
> (*Jeannette veut chanter ; mais il la prend par le bras. Elle veut reprendre son couplet, mais lui ne veut pas la laisser continuer.*)
> Jeannette: Laissez-moi donc, laissez-moi donc ; je vous répondrai au troisième couplet.[459]

The suggestive object in Sedaine's aesthetic

It is not only music but also various otherwise insignificant objects that are given

more than a simple mimetic function in Sedaine's fictional worlds. In *Le Jardinier et son*

Seigneur, to take but one example, we see a simple wig invested with social and dramatic

meaning.

A sophisticated farce and an adaptation of the similarly entitled La Fontaine fable,

Le Jardinier et son Seigneur turns around *Maître* Simon's comic overinvestment in a

local *seigneur*'s visit.[460] This former has appealed to the *seigneur,* ostensibly at least, for

help in ridding his vegetable garden of a certain pesky rabbit. It soon becomes clear,

however, that it is really all about *Maître* Simon and his social pretensions. He needs to

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[458] Monsigny and Sedaine, *Rose et Colas*, 24-25.

[459] Monsigny and Sedaine, *Le Déserteur,* 32; See also Downing A. Thomas, "'Je vous répondrez au troisième couplet:' Eighteenth-Century *opéra comique* and the Demands of Speech," in *Operatic Migrations,* ed. Roberta Montemorra Marvin and Downing A. Thomas (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 21-39.

[460] Ledbury reads *Le Jardinier* as offering "ironic variants on the pastoral" (Ledbury, *Sedaine, Greuze,* 95).

please the *seigneur* and that means completing his Sunday best with his wig. But where is the wig? The local barber appears with the precious headpiece as the impatient, self-important *Maître* Simon ("The *seigneur* is my friend, and he is coming to see me and nobody else in the village") is busy annoying his wife. Just as he is putting the wig on, Mme Simon verbally attacks him. The wig falls, is trampled underfoot and is whisked away by the barber for last minute repairs.

The wig will function throughout the rest of the *opéra comique* not only as the emblem of *Maître* Simon's social pretentions and insecurity but also of the *seigneur*'s own snobbery. *Maître* Simon wrings his hands over the untimely absence of the wig, goes so far as to misattribute the *seigneur*'s coolness towards him to the same and generally carries on scene after scene, his imperious desire to be recognized by the *seigneur* resisting even the news that this latter's entourage have driven their carriage clean over his vegetable garden on their way in. Finally, the *seigneur*, who is much more interested in ogling Fanchette, *Maître* Simon's daughter, than talking with *Maître* Simon himself, turns offhandedly to this latter and tells him to "put on his hat:"

> Maître Simon: Vois donc un peu a ce maudit barbier ...
> . . . .
> Le Seigneur **:** (aux deux filles): Regardez-moi cette jolie Enfant, cela vaut cent fois mieux que toutes vos danseuses.
> Victoire **:** Elle n'est pas mal.
> Le Seigneur **:** Pas mal, cette enfant là n'a pas de prix.
> . . . .
> Le Seigneur : Mettez votre bonnet Maître Simon
> Maître Simon (en colère) : Mon bonnet ![461]

In the *seigneur*'s casual mention of the "bonnet," we can both see *Maître* Simon suddenly stripped of his imagined elite status and the *seigneur* revealed as particularly insensitive

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[461] François-André Danican Philidor and Michel-Jean Sedaine, *Le Jardinier et son Seigneur* (Paris: Chez M. De La Chevardiere, n. d.), 20.

to his villagers. Moreover, if one so chose, one could go on and read in the wig (and hat) a certain critique of sentimental pastorale ideology: perhaps happiness is to be found in the village, but it is certainly not to be found in idealizing or seeking to please the aristocracy.[462]

Given that textual detail has been seen as a key element of the sentimental aesthetic, it will be useful at this point to take a step back as see how realistic detail and textual fragmentation, not merely in *Le Jardinier,* but also in Sedaine's considerably more sentimental *opéras comiques* function according to a different dynamic than that attributed to it by Caplan or by David Denby (who extends Caplan's argument in his *Sentimental Narrative and the Social Order*).

Denby sees detail in the sentimental text as functioning analogously to the sentimental tableau, as both standing in for and pointing movingly towards an irrecoverable loss.[463] The first example Denby offers in his exploration of this textual feature involves, like ours, a headpiece, in this instance, a "woolen bonnet" which a

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[462] In my first chapter, I looked beyond more pointed questions of cultural politics by reading the sentimental pastorale as an aesthetic shaped by the assumptions of a moral naturalism (figured in simultaneously moral and sensual sympathetic connections). This does not mean that the sentimental pastorale cannot *also* be read as ideological. Jürgen Habermas sees idyllic representations of the bourgeois family as both concealing the family's role in reproducing the social subjects needed by capitalist society *and* as celebrating an objective shared experience of simple human intimacy: "Although the needs of bourgeois society were not exactly kind to the family's self-image as a sphere of humanity-generating closeness, the ideas of freedom, love, and cultivation of the person that grew out of the experiences of the conjugal family's private sphere were surely more than just ideology. As an objective meaning contained as an element in the structure of the actual institution, and without whose subjective validity society would not have been able to reproduce itself, these ideas were also reality" (Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society,* trans. Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence [Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991], 48). Similarly, one can see sentimental pastorale *opéra comique* as presenting the world in such a way that it subtly promotes the interests of a certain power group (as Sedaine seems to be suggesting here), and also as celebrating the alignment of desire and duty that were conceivably experienced at the *Comédie-Italienne* and within worldly society at large.

[463] David Denby, *Sentimental Narrative and the Social Order in France 1760-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 49-51.

beggar holds out to passersby. The narrator of François Vernes's *Voyageur Sentimental* is moved when he learns that the bonnet had been knit by the virtuous, long-suffering, and recently deceased Marianne, whose funeral he has just attended. Denby sees the bonnet functioning as a "synecdoche, express[ing] the full emotional charge of a long sequence of events" while offering the "immobilisation ... at work in the constitution of the tableau," the tableau's hypostasizing separation of sentimental detail from the surrounding narrative flow.[464]

Although Denby (and Caplan) thus focus on the sentimental detail, the detail itself is treated as secondary to the loss to which it points (and which it conjures away). Moreover, the feeling to which the sentimental detail points (and which it conveys) may never be fully accessible, but the spectator is called upon less to interpret than to merely feel (as, it is implied, not only is interpretation bound to fail, but the very obscurity of the suggested emotional meaning functions as the source of the sentimental tableau's power).[465] In Sedaine's text, however, the detail is primary. It is not as if there is something prior to the wig, to which this latter is attempting (but always failing) to adequately point. The wig begins its life in the text innocently enough, but then accumulates meaning, or becomes meaningful as the drama progresses. Whereas the bonnet in Vernes might be understood as pointing movingly to some meaning beyond, the wig positions the spectators before the drama much as Diderot positioned himself before the hieroglyphic text as one who finds meanings that are not necessarily there.

Of course, *Le Jardinier* is not a particularly sentimental *opéra comique*. If we think back to the clearly sentimental opening of *Le Roi et le Fermier* or *Le Déserteur*

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[464] *Ibid.,* 51.

[465] *Ibid.,* 82-83.

(discussed above on p. 168 and pp. 179-180), however, we find a similar dynamic at work.

As I suggested, each fragment, each verbal detail (as it were) of Richard's anguished soliloquy, might be seen, like the fragments of the sentimental tableau, as pointing back to a never wholly accessible intimate experience of loss. However, the difference I see between Denby's sentimental sign and the fragmentation in Richard's (or Louise's) utterance is this: The former might involve a sense of an inaccessibility, or an irrecuperableness that works to absorb the spectator. However, this dynamic of exclusion/paradoxical inclusion depends on a prior obviousness of meaning. The spectator's reason is put to sleep, as it were, so that (only) his feelings may be engaged. In Denby's example, the spectator might take pleasure in a vicarious sense of loss upon recognizing the connection of the woolen bonnet to the deceased Marianne, but he can only give himself up to this pleasure because he already understands full well who Marianne is, the cause of her unfortunate death, the extent of her virtue while she was alive, and so forth. One could make a similar argument for the Diderotian example that Caplan privileges in his reading of the sentimental tableau.[466] Dorval might find a widow's tears moving (and Caplan might see them as pointing to and conjuring away loss), but this is only because we already know the very simply story behind these tears.[467] The fragment in Richard's soliloquy, on the other hand, points to an as of yet

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[466] Caplan, *Frames Narratives,* 15-16.

[467] "Une paysanne du village que vous voyez entre ces deux montagnes ... envoya son mari chez ses parents, qui demeurent dans un hameau voisin. Ce malheureux y fut tué par un de ses beaux-frères" quoted in *Ibid.,* 15. Diderot, in fact, bases his theory of the *drame* and its sentimental effects explicitly on such semantic clarity. He opens the first of his *Entretiens sur le Fils Naturel* by holding up clarity as the goal to be attained through a particularly rigorous interpretation of the unity of action: "[l]'art d'intriguer consiste à lier les événements, de manière que le spectateur sensé y aperçoive toujours une raison qui le satisfasse" (Diderot, *Oeuvres,* vol.4, 1132). He continues this discussion in his *De la Poésie Dramatique,* where, while

obscure, unspecified loss, about which the spectator may, at this point, only guess. As much as the spectator is positioned as one who is to lose himself in a moment of emotional identification with Richard, he is simultaneously called upon to use his imagination and interpretative skills. This is even true, as we will see, in the case of the Romance in *Richard Coeur de Lion* which I will discuss in more detail below. For now, suffice it to say that the Romance is explicitly presented as a musical object highly evocative of a particular moment in king Richard's past. At the same time, however, the Romance also becomes meaningful within the *opéra comique* as it is used and reused in different settings and thus becomes evocative in and of itself. In sum, where the sentimental sign positions its spectator as one who passively gives himself over to (perhaps self-indulgent) feeling, the (sentimental) detail in Sedaine's *opéra comique* often positions the spectator as an active interpreter of possible meaning.

Grimm's response to Sedaine

Sedaine's work might thus seem "hieroglyphic" in its fragmented, lacunary dialogue and open structure, in the place it accords an unstructured "musicality" of music, in its metaphoric treatment of objects, musical and otherwise. It might thus seem as if it must have positioned its spectator as one who actively inferred meaning from a multiplicity of subtle, fleeting signs. But is there also evidence that spectators did in fact relate to his work in such a fashion?

One can find at least one such spectator in Grimm, who, in his *Correspondance*

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making similar demands, he makes a distinction between nature whose order is sometimes obscure and dramatic poetry whose order must be anything but. The poet's role might be analogous to that of "l'Etre tout-puissant ... dans la nature," but if "la liaison des événements nous échappe souvent dans la nature ... le poète veut, lui, qu'il règne dans toute la texture de son ouvrage une liaison apparente et sensible ..."[467] (*Ibid.,* 1295-1296).

Littéraire, typically praises Sedaine's work in terms of the energetic, semantic plenitude of the pantomime, or the hieroglyph as Diderot first describes it in mimetic terms. His responses suggest, however, that he is more intrigued not by the intensity of Sedaine's realism, but instead by what Sedaine leaves unsaid, by the gaps between the words and the sensuous details of his world.

Grimm's reviews begin in 1759 with *Blaise le Savetier* and continue until 1773—the year in which his secretary Meister took over his functions.[468] These reviews are partially shaped by the specificity of the works in question: the light-hearted, yet polished farce that was *Blaise le Savetier* is not discussed in the same terms as *Le Déserteur* (widely recognized to have introduced a new, more intense pathos to the *Comédie-Italienne*). At the same time, most reviews of Sedaine's theater are peppered with aesthetics code-words such as "naturel," and "vrai." Grimm finds *Le Roi et le Fermier* "rempli de vérité, de naïveté ... " and describes Sedaine at the beginning of his review of *Blaise le Savetier* as having "du natural, de la facilité." In the mid-eighteenth century, the "vrai" was opposed to the "vraisemblable," and closely associated with the Encyclopedists's cultural political contestation of earlier, more self-consciously conventional and aestheticized theatrical forms. If "vrai" could be associated with the stylistically neutral transparency Diderot idealized in his dramatic reform theory, then "vraisemblable" could be used to characterize the aesthetic of the *opéras comiques* we have discussed in the first two chapters. That Grimm finds Sedaine's theater "vrai" might suggest then that he is placing it under the sign of a relatively pedestrian realism, perhaps the illusionistic mirroring of the everyday upon which Diderot insists at certain points in

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[468] Jacques Vier, "Quelques Aspects de la Critique de Meister," in *Correspondance Littéraire de Grimm et de Meister 1754-1813* (Paris: Éditions Klincksieck, 1976), 207.

his reform theory. If we take a closer look at these reviews, however, we will see that Grimm also describes Sedaine's theater in terms evocative of the musical hieroglyph.

Besides "vrai" and "naturel," Grimm uses descriptive terms that suggest he was particularly impressed with Sedaine's concern for the distinctive detail. If he explicitly and repeatedly mentions "détails," he also describes Sedaine's caracterizations and comic style in terms equally evocative of singularity and striking difference. We learn not only that "les détails [de *Rose et Colas*] sont d'un grand naturel,"[469] that "tous les détails [du *Jardinier et son Seigneur*] sont charmants,"[470] but also that in *Le Roi et le Fermier,* "il dessine des caractères avec beaucoup de fermeté,"[471] that in the *Anneau perdu et retrouvé,* "on reconnaît ... la touche ferme [et] délicate ... de M. Sedaine."[472] If this were not enough to recall the energetic precision of gesture, or the "expressions énergiques" that pack the semantic punch of entire sentences,[473] Grimm also repeatedly describes Sedaine's libretti in terms more directly evocative of the hieroglyph. Whereas he describes the work of other, lesser librettists in terms recalling the enervated linearity of more developed language, Sedaine's libretti offer energetic moments of condensed meaning and pathos. Of *Le Déserteur,* Grimm writes:

> Tout ce que cet homme sait dire et peindre d'un seul mot! J'avoue que je préfère ce mot simple, ce mot vrai, ce mot énergique, ce mot qui, au gré du poëte, remue mon âme, la trouble, l'attendrit, la console, la remplit de terreur, à toute les tirades de nos faiseurs de vers et de phrases qui ne me remplissent que d'ennui.[474]

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[469] Grimm, *Correspondance,* vol. 5, 472.

[470] *Ibid.*, vol. 4, 458.

[471] *Ibid.*, vol. 5, 192.

[472] *Ibid.*, vol. 6, 71.

[473] Diderot, *Oeuvres,* vol.4, 28.

[474] Grimm, *Correspondance,* vol. 8, 316.

Earlier, Grimm had described Sedaine's *Le Philosophe sans le savoir* in almost precisely the same terms. Regretting Sedaine's lack of literary polish, Grimm insists that he would rather accept this coarseness than see Sedaine's work marred by a surfeit of discursivity:

> A tout prendre, cette grâce, ce charme du style est la seule chose que je désirerais voir à M. Sedaine ... mais si, pour acquérir cette qualité, il fallait aussi apprendre le secret des tirades, des maximes, des déclamations théâtrales, et s'affubler de tout ce faux et pitoyable attirail de nos auteurs dramatiques ....[475]

Then apostrophizing Sedaine, Grimm continues by contrasting this flabby discursiveness with Sedaine's hieroglyphic density: "Heureusement pour nous, tu n'as pas appris à faire des phrases; tu ne sais faire que des mots; mais quelle foule de mots vrais, simples, pathétiques, de toutes sortes de caractères, toujours heureusement et judicieusement placés!"[476]

Sedaine's aesthetic might have been conceived in mimetic terms. However, as I will now argue, his very concern with a radical realism is precisely what allows one to see his *opéras comiques* as hieroglyphic in the second, more evocative sense of the term, as approaching the musical hieroglyph. One can already sense that Sedaine's theater might have functioned in this fashion for Grimm, given his previously cited mention of "mots ... judicieusement placés."[477] But there are also other indications that Sedaine's theater pulled Grimm into a mode of active interpretation.

Grimm first discusses the power of discursive gaps in Sedaine's libretti in relationship to comedy. His early works are seen as being truly humorous—unlike most other supposedly humorous *opéras comiques* precisely because jokes are merely

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[475] *Ibid.,* vol. 6, 443.

[476] *Ibid.*, vol. 6, 443-444.

[477] *Ibid.,* vol. 6, 444.

suggested, sketched out with a light hand. Or, as Grimm explains in his comparison of

Sedaine's *Le Roi et le Fermier* and Collé's *La Partie de Chasse de Henri IV*: "M. Sedaine

prend ses spectateurs pour des gens d'esprit, et ... M. Collé les prend, au contraire, pour

des bêtes. Quant il a une pauvre petite finesse à employer, il meurt de peur qu'elle ne

nous échappe, et il a grand soin de nous la bien faire remarquer par quelqu'un de ses

personnages."[478] Yet it is also the relation of individual objects to the broader structure of

these works that solicited Grimm's interpretative intelligence. Grimm was particularly

delighted with *Le Jardinier et son Seigneur* for just this reason, noting (as we saw above)

that the wig becomes the key to understanding the entire play:

> Tous les détails de cette petite comédie sont charmants ... mais la perruque l'emporte. On
> en rit d'abord comme d'une saillie naturelle et plaisante, et lorsqu'on est arrivé à la fin de
> la pièce, on s'aperçoit qu'elle roule tout entière sur cette perruque; car maître Simon la
> retrouve précisément au moment que le seigneur est partie, c'est-à-dire lorsqu'il n'en a
> plus besoin. Combien de gens qui, dans toutes leur vie, n'ont pu joindre leur perruque ![479]

The above reviews suggest that for Grimm, at least, Sedaine's work did inspire

active interpretation —whether that meant getting a joke, or discovering the importance

of *Maître* Simon's wig. In one particularly extensive review, moreover, Grimm also

explicitly uses the model of the (musical) hieroglyph to account for the peculiar reception

pattern of Sedaine's *opéras comiques*—their tendency to only gradually win over their

public:

> Indépendamment de la nouveauté du genre qui doit dérouter [le public ...] parce qu'il n'a
> point d'objet de comparaison, la touche de M. Sedaine et si légère, si spirituelle, il
> prépare ses effets avec tant de finesse, il a dans toute sa manière une si grande
> délicatesse, que je ne suis point étonné que le grand nombre ne sente et n'entende qu'à la
> longue.... Le langage de M. Sedaine est aussi fin et aussi délié que celui de la musique;
> pour en saisir toutes les beautés, il faut l'entendre plusieurs fois de suite. On ne sent tout
> le charme d'un excellent opéra qu'à la troisième ou quatrième représentation.[480]

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[478] Quoted in Arnoldson, *Sedaine,* 122.

[479] Grimm, *Correspondance,* vol.4, 458.

[480] *Ibid.,* vol. 6, 439.

Sacrifice and the sympathetic imagination

If we have seen Sedaine's work as offering a suggestive opacity—as drawing the spectator into a form of interpretative sublime, Sedaine's fictional worlds are similarly organized around productive obstacles—obstructions, absence, distances that call forth various forms of imaginative activity. In this world, sympathy is no longer a matter of facile, pleasurable connections. Instead it involves an active attempt to see the world from another's perspective and often calls forth a heroic, sacrificial response. In the next section, I will explore the various manifestations of this sympathetic imagination. Along the way, I will note not merely the analogies between these forms of imaginative overcoming and the active relationship into which Sedaine's aesthetic of suggestion draws its spectator, but the sometimes direct connection between moments of sympathetic interpretation and an intradiagetic hieroglyphic opacity.

It is in the amorous relationships of Sedaine's *opéras comiques* that one can best gauge the distance between this sacrificial, distanced sympathy and the forms of less-mediated sympathy to which I have devoted the previous two chapters. First, one must note that amorous relationships are themselves less central to Sedaine's work than to that of either Favart or Marmontel. Whereas Favart had made a name for himself in the 1740s and 1750s with light-hearted *opéras comiques* depicting naive *villageois* infatuations,[481] and all but one of Marmontel's libretti turn around the various trials of an amorous couple, Sedaine's *opéras comiques* are rarely centered on the love relationship *per se*. His comedies often derive from the tradition of French farce, which unlike the Italian

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[481] See Auguste Font, *Favart: L'Opéra-Comique et la Comédie-Vaudeville aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1970), 186-212.

tradition, did not turn around *innamorati,* but rather a quarrelling husband and wife, with an additional cast of various townspeople (*Le Diable à Quatre, Blaise le Savetier, L'Huître et Les Plaideurs*) or, when they do derive from the Italian tradition, preserve focus on the opposition between the young lovers (and their ingenious servants) on the one hand, and an older oppressive generation on the other (instead of sentimentally concentrating on the lovers themselves).[482]

This basic structure is preserved even when Sedaine turns from the light-hearted, buoyant comedies of *On ne s'avise Jamais de Tout,* and *L'Anneau perdu et retrouvé* to more serious social comedy (*Le Roi et le Fermier*), or the darker, almost melodramatic *Félix, Raoul Barbe-Bleu* and *Le Comte d'Albert*. Each of these latter four *opéras comiques* contain a pair of lovers (or, husband and wife in the case of *Le Comte d'Albert*). But in each case, the love relationship itself in not a source of dramatic tension and is introduced from the start in the most idealistic, uncompromising terms. In each of these plays, the center of interest lies elsewhere—typically in conflicts or acts of cooperation that let themselves be read as negative or positive figures of social equality and justice. In fact, out of a total production of twenty-odd *opéras comiques,* in only seven does the love relationship play an important or dominating role,[483] and, of these, only one—*Le Déserteur*—was a successful sentimental drama.

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[482] Sedaine also tends to develop the opponents, making them something more than authoritarian fathers or greedy tutors. For the difference between the tradition of French farce and that of *commedia dell'arte,* see Gustave Lanson and Ruby Cohn, "Molière and Farce," *The Tulane Drama Review* 8.3 (Winter, 1963), 133-54; and Christopher P. Pinet, "The Cobbler in French Farce of the Renaissance," *The French Review* 48.2 (Dec., 1974), 308-320.

[483] Sedaine's *opéras comiques* in which love plays a dominant role include: *On ne s'avise jamais de tout*, *Rose et Colas, Le Déserteur, Le Magnifique, Thémire, Le Faucon,* and *Aucassin et Nicolette*. Of these, only *Le Déserteur, Thémire, Le Faucon* turn primarily or exclusively around the love relationship. However, *Thémire* and *Le Faucon,* the first a mediocre pastorale and, the second, a rather wooden adaption of the similarly titled Boccaccio tale, were among Sedaine's least successful works.

Whether or not love relationships are central to his plots, however, they share a family resemblance—a resemblance that distinguishes them in turn from the father-daughter relationships of sentimental pastoral or the amorous intersubjectivity discussed in the second chapter. Whereas most sentimental relationships in *opéra comique* involve proximity and (relative) ease of communication—one lover responding to another's song, a father being moved by a daughter's plea—obstacles play a key role in most all of Sedaine's love relationships.[484] This is not to say, of course, that *opéras comiques* by other librettists are devoid of obstacles. If *opéra comique* is to be more than pure *fête,* pure sensuous celebration—if it is to have any kind of plot, there must be some kind of obstacle, loss or lack to propel the action forward.[485] Yet, relationships in Sedaine's works are distinct from those of other *opéras comiques* in that they turn around what one might call "hard" as opposed to "soft" obstacles.

As I argued in the first chapter, in sentimental pastorale, obstacles are often alternatively posed then erased. This is what I mean by "soft" obstacle. In Sedaine's works on the other hand, obstacles are presented as real problems, sometimes even hardening, instead of softening as the plot develops. One can get a sense of this by comparing Sedaine's *Les Sabots* to Monvel's *Sargines.* In each, the young hero is in love,

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[484] In *On ne s'avise jamais de tout,* one finds barriers to communication comically exaggerated by Dr. Tue, the jealous, self-interested guardian of Lise and comically circumvented by Dorval. In *Les Sabots,* it is Colin's shyness that prevents him from communicating his love to Babet. In *Rose et Colas,* the young lovers find themselves frustrated by their fathers (who for self-interested reasons want to delay their marriage). As Rose is now forbidden to speak to Colas or even open her door, this latter must find other ways to bridge the gap between them. In *Le Déserteur,* a practical joke gone awry turns into an almost tragic separation between lovers. Parental interdiction returns in *Le Magnifique,* this time in the form of silence imposed on the daughter Clementine in a precious fifteen minute meeting with *le Magnifique*, and so forth.

[485] As Propp argues in his *Morphology of the Folktale.* David Denby draws on Propp in his theorization of "misfortune" as the motor of sentimental narrative. See Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale,* trans. Laurence Scott (Bloomington: Indiana University Research Center in Anthropology, Folklore, and Linguistics, 1958), 24-32; and Denby, *Sentimental Narrative*, 71-74.

but too shy and tongue-tied to declare his affections. In each, the young hero's

presentation aria describes the problem. In *Sargines,* however, no sooner does the

eponymous hero mention his shyness than he insists that it will be overcome. *Les Sabot's*

Blaise, however, merely insists upon his shyness.[486] This shyness is never overcome

throughout the opera (it is only by chance that he learns of Babet's feelings for him). Or,

we can compare *Le Déserteur* to *L'Amoureux de quinze ans.*[487] Each opera opens with a

singularly flimsy obstacle. In the former, Alexis and Louise are to marry. But before they

do, Louise and her family decide to trick this latter into believing Louise has left him. In

L'Amoureux de quinze ans, the only thing preventing Lindor from fulfilling his desires is

his age. He wants to marry Hélène, but is, unfortunately still too young to marry. His

singularly solicitous father seems willing to approve any match at all—as long as he is

old enough. So, at the worst, the hero will have to wait a year to wed. Moreover, no

sooner is this light-weight obstacle evoked than it is conjured away, as both Hélène and

the father sing about how they have in the recent past been increasingly impressed with

the Lindor's intellectual and emotional precociousness. In Sedaine's opera, on the other

hand, the apparently flimsy obstacle quickly hardens into tragedy—materialized in the

prison walls enclosing Alexis as awaits execution for desertion.

Not only does Sedaine present his characters with more challenging obstacles,

these obstacles frequently provoke an effort of the imagination. Again, it is useful to

briefly compare love relationships in Sedaine's works to those found in the typical *opéra*

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[486] Jacques-Marie Boutet de Monvel and Nicolas Dalayrac, *Sargines ou L'élève de l'amour* (Paris: Chez Le Duc successeur de Mr. de la Chevardiere, 1788), 28-32; Michel-Jean Sedaine and Egidio Duni, *Les Sabots* (Paris: Claude Herissant, 1770), 7.

[487] Pierre Laujon and Jean-Paul-Egide Martini, *L'Amoureux de Quinze Ans Ou la Double Fête* (Paris: Cour de l'ancien cerf, 1774).

comique. In most *opéras comiques,* sympathy tends to draw its energy from the presence of the lovers. We can think of Rosine, heart pounding, creeping closer to Candor, or Mlle de St. Yves stammering after hearing the Huron's sung declaration. To these already discussed works*,* we can add the intimate conversation between Corali and Nelson in *L'Amitié à l'épreuve.*[488] Corali and Nelson feel oddly troubled in each other's presence as amorous feeling flows back and forth between them through sympathetic contagion:

> Corali: Mais vraiment, j'ai toujours quelque chose à vous dire.
> Nelson : A moi ?
> Corali : Oui, pourquoi vous troubler ?
> Nelson : Moi, me troubler ! ...
> Corali : Très fort, cela me fait trembler.[489]

Similarly, in *Les Trois Fermiers,* the gentle infatuation that binds Blaise and Babet as well as the slightly more mature love of Louis and Louise only grows through constant contact and uninterrupted exchange: "Louis: Quoi, c'est toi, ma Louise? C'est toi! queu plaisir de te voir! il est toujours nouviau, je n'm'en lasse pas."[490] However, when the lovers *are* separated, the separation tends to call forth relatively abstract evocations of the other or invocations of love. *L'Amitié à l'épreuve* opens with Nelson insisting that "he will triumph over love's flame,"[491] while in his first *ariette,* Lindor, the young lover of *L'amoureux de quinze ans*, merely apostrophizes Hélène as "Aimable objet qui m'avez

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[488] Charles-Simon Favart (with Claude-Henri Fusée de Voisenon) and A-E-M Grétry, *L'Amitié à l'Épreuve* (Paris: Dezauche, 1771).

[489] *Ibid.,* 33.

[490] Jacques-Marie Boutet de Monvel and Nicolas Dezède, *Les Trois Fermiers* (Paris: Vente, 1777), 12. After Louise asks her how she knows of Blaise's feelings, Babet explains: "Queu preuve? ... quiens, quand on n'nous r'garde pas, j'li baille ma main..... I'la baise, i'la r'baise, i'la serre ed'toutes ses forces et stapendant i'n'me fait pas d'mal; quand j's'is sous la feuillée avec les aut'jeunes filles du village .... Gni en a qu'pour moi à danser et toujours avec Blaise, je n'sais comment i'fait, mais c'est toujours son tour et l'mien, et je n'nous lassons jamais" (15).

[491] Nelson (in an *ariette*): "Non jamais jamais l'amour ne troublera la paix qui regne dans mon ame // je triompherai de sa flamme" (Favart, Voisenon and Grétry, *L'Amitié à l'Épreuve,* 25-26).

sçu charmer"[492] after having spent most of the *ariette* moping about the burden of excessive youth (ah! To be only fifteen!).

In Sedaine's libretti, not only are the lovers most often apart rather than together, but these moments of separation very often give rise to attempts to imaginatively conjure up the other's presence. Sometimes these moments present all the tell-tale signs of an ultimately narcissistic desire, a variation of sympathy as it has been most frequently understood in recent criticism. One sees the over-idealization of the love object, a subtle way of shoring up the desiring subject's self at the price of a misrecognition of the other. In *On ne s'avise jamais de tout,* one finds all the signs of such infatuation in Lise's Romance "Jusques dans la moindre chose." Like Rousseau's Saint-Preux wandering in the Swiss Alps,[493] Lise sees the image of her lover everywhere she looks, in rose petals, in clouds, in her needle-work. She sees his name on every page she reads.[494] In *Rose et Colas,* Rose's absence, her refusal to open the door or even speak when Colas knocks, not only prompts this latter to climb into Rose's bedroom through the loft window, but also inspires an *ariette* filled with fetishistic investment in conventionally sexualized objects such as a *quenouille* (distaff).[495] *Aucassin et Nicolette,* an opera structured by the sometimes violent opposition between Aucassin and his impatient, domineering father, opens with this latter obsessively evoking the cherished, but absent object: "Nicolette, ma

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[492] Laujon and Martini, *L'Amoureux de quinze ans,* 23.

[493] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Julie ou La Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761; Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1967), 49.

[494] Monsigny and Sedaine, *On ne s'avise jamais de tout,* 17-18.

[495] "C'est ici que Rose respire, // Ici se rassemblent mes vœux ; // Ce lin // Fut pressé de sa main, // Sa bouche // Touche // Cette quenouille // Si joliment // ... Elle la mouille en la filant // Que je la baise ! // ..." (Sedaine, *Rose et Colas, Théâtre de Sedaine,* 158).

Nicolette, // Non, jamais je ne t'oublirai ..."[496]

In other scenes, however, what we find is not so much an amorous imaginary, but instead an active, even sacrificial attempt to see the world from the other's point of view—a leap into the sympathetic imagination. *Le Déserteur* opens with Louise not so much desiring Alexis, as feeling for him—explicitly imagining how she would feel if she were in her shoes:

> Peut-on affliger ce qu'on aime?
> Pourquoi chercher à le fâcher?
> Peut-on affliger ce qu'on aime?
> C'est bien en vouloir à soi-même
> Je l'aime, et pour toute la vie,
> Et vous voulez que cette perfidie ...
> Ah ! mon père, je ne saurais ! ...
> A sa place, moi, j'en mourrais.[497]

Le Magnifique offers two additional variations on this form of sympathetic imagination. As discussed above (see pp. 182-183), *Le Magnifique* turns around a central rose scene, scene during which the eponymous hero attempts to communicate with an obediently mute Clémentine. What he does is use his knowledge of the context (Aldobrandin's character, for example) and his ability to interpret ambiguous signs (Clémentine's glances and facial expression) in order to first imagine what Clémentine must be thinking, then test his hypothesis. He is surprised to find her quiet, but reads what he believes to be her feelings for him in her glances. He then asks her to drop her rose as a sign of confirmation:

> ... vos yeux ont tant de candeur
> Je ne sçais, mais je m'imagine
> Voir dans ce regard enchanteur
> Qu'Aldobrandin seul est l'auteur

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[496] A-E-M Grétry and Michel-Jean Sedaine, *Aucassin et Nicolette, Oeuvres complètes de Grétry,* (1782; Bruxelles: Brietkopf and Haertel, 1883-1911), 14.

[497] Monsigny and Sedaine, *Le Déserteur,* 10-11.

> De ce silence
> . . . .
> Mais on peut tromper son adresse
> L'amour m'en dicte le moyen.
>
> . . . .
>
> Si vous approuvez mon dessein,
> Ouvrez ces doigts charmant, laissez tomber la rose. [498]

As in the case of Louise, identification is provoked by a form of distance. And yet, unlike the Diderotian tableau—at least as it has been recently interpreted—this sympathetic identification hardly takes place in an imaginary register neatly cordoned off real communication and interaction. In other words, instead of constituting a defensive psychical posture, the imaginative effort here opens onto a connection with the other. In fact, one might want to see in the Magnifique a figure for Sedaine's actively interpreting spectator, a spectator who like the Magnifique is caught up in an act of creative divination. In any case, we may certainly take it as evidence that Louise's affective imaginings cannot be merely assimilated to some form of projective identification.

In *Le Magnifique*, we find a similar concern with imagining a beloved other in a secondary love relationship between Alix, Clémentine's confidante and Laurence, the valet of Clémentine's father, Horace. Like Horace, Laurence has been released from slavery through the generous intervention of the Magnifique. The second act opens with Alix's and Laurence's first meeting after many years. It is a touching moment in which Alix first comforts Laurence by bringing him wine and cake, then goes on not only to admire his present self, "Ah! tu es mieux, tu es plus grand, tu es plus fort,"[499] but also to imaginatively extend her relationship with him into the future "quand on aura fait tes

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[498] Grétry and Sedaine, *Le Magnifique,* 34.

[499] *Ibid.,* 26.

chevaux, tu sera bien: tes habits seront trop courts, et trop étroits," before linking this future back to the past, through a mediating object, a jacket she had made for him out of love, that she kept because it reminded her of him and that now he will soon wear once again: "... je les ai encore, je te les enverrai: et ton habit brun, et ton habit rouge, et cette veste que je t'ai brodée, je n'ai pas voulu m'en défaire, cela me rappelloit ton idée."[500]

In the first chapter, I described worldly-sensuous sympathy as a relationship in which the moral and the erotic were blended, in which compassion and the altruistic gesture are inseparable from sensual pleasures. In *Le Déserteur* and *Le Magnifique* (particularly in this second amorous relationship), we find a different kind of blending. It is as if the love relationship itself has become moralized. In other words, the love relationship is itself presented as disinterested in its own way, even more so than the overtly moralized relationships discussed in the first chapter. There is certainly some self-interest involved. Over the course of *Le Déserteur,* it is clear that both Louise and Alexis think of themselves—they are each hurt and mope about at one moment or another. The difference is that here, the search for recognition from the other is de-emphasized. For the most part it is backgrounded and the relatively disinterested giving to the other is foregrounded. This has much to do with the moment of the relationship that is represented. In most *opéras comiques*, love a matter of infatuation, or what Stendhal would later refer to as the "cristallisation" phrase.[501] Here, Louise and Alexis, as well as Alix and Laurence, already know and care about each other, they already have the security that Zémire and Azor fought for, so they can turn their attention to other matters, such as taking into consideration each others' feelings through sympathetic imagining.

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[500] *Ibid*., 26.

[501]Stendhal, *De l'amour,* ed. H. Martineau (1822; Paris: Garnier, 1959), 8.

This second, more disinterested form of love relationship can, in turn, be seen as just one form of a broader moral patterning in Sedaine's *opéras comiques.* While most *opéras comiques* are rather idealizing, frothy affairs in which any possible problematic difference is simply omitted from the equation, Sedaine's *opéras comiques* are, in general, more concerned with sober attempts to see the world as another might experience it—to use some form of imaginative effort to momentarily leave the self behind and adopt the other's perspective. One can trace this moral preoccupation from Sedaine's very first *opéra comique, Le Diable à quatre.*

In this farce, a shrewish marquise gets her comeuppance when a snubbed doctor-cum-magician takes his revenge by magically transforming her into Margot, the oft-beaten cobbler's wife (while this latter is also transformed into the marquise). This transformation might evoke the common world-turned-upside-down theme of the *commedia dell'arte* (and Marivaux's theater). However, where these latter derive much of their comic energy from the fact that all characters remain aware of both their true identities *and* their sudden move up or down the social ladder,[502] in Sedaine's *Diable à quatre,* the unfortunate Marquise retains her consciousness of being the marquise, while no one else can see her that way. She thus, it is implied in a comedic, yet not entirely undidactic fashion, learns what it means to suffer the abuse she has long heaped upon others.

Le Roi et Le Fermier turns around a more explicit and more sober attempt to see the world from another's point of view. Robert Dodsley's *The King and the Miller of*

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[502] Comedy in *L'île des Esclaves,* for instance depends on everyone's awareness that Arlequin and Iphicrate have "merely" changed clothes and social status without for all that ceasing to be themselves (Pierre de Marivaux, *L'île des Esclave, L'île des Esclaves et autres comédies sociales* [1725; Paris: Bordas, 1992], 7-39).

Mansfield, the drama upon which Sedaine based his libretto, insists upon a single sentimental theme, the location of virtue in the simple life. After getting separated from his courtiers in Sherwood forest, the king is found, then taken in by the eponymous Miller, who also being of the king's own gamekeepers, has been out on patrol. Once he is at the Miller's house, the king insists on his identity as a mere man in an aside,[503] and most of the scenes including the king expand upon this explicitly presented theme. A song praising the miller's life and mocking court life is performed. Dick, the Miller's son, having just returned from London, entertains with satiric remarks regarding the polished manners that disguise an array of urban vice. Even the king joins wholeheartedly in the jolly bashing of refined manners: "Compliments in Discourse, I believe, are like Ceremonies in Religion; the one has destroy'd all true Piety, and the other all Sincerity and Plain-dealing."[504]

In adapting *The King and the Miller,* Sedaine focused less on hammering home the sentimental message and rather more on developing the interactions between the main characters Richard, Jenny and the king. Instead of merely praising the simple life, Richard sits down with the king (whom, as we have seen, he takes to be a courtier) and attempts to understand what it must be like to live at court:

> Richard: Il y a bien d'autres choses à quoi il faut s'habituer. Etes-vous toujours obligé
> d'être à la Cour?
> Le Roi. Oui
> Richard: Toujours, toujours ?
> Le Roi: Oui, toujours.
> Richard: Toujours. Mais vous devez vous ennuyer!
> Le Roi: Pourquoi ?
> Richard: Ma foi, que sais-je? c'est qu'on s'ennuie aisément de ce qu'on est obligé de

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[503] "Well, I shall once in my Life have the Happiness of being treated as a common Man; and of seeing human Nature without Disguise" (Robert Dodsley, *The King and the miller of Mansfield. A dramatick tale* [n.p: n. p, 1737], 26).

[504] *Ibid.,* 37.

faire. Il est vrai qu'on dit que le Roi est bon, qu'il y a du plaisir à le servir.
Le Roi : Oui certainement il est bon.
. . . .
Richard: Je ne conçois pas moi, comment un Roi peut être bon.
Le Roi : Pourquoi donc ?
Richard : C'est qu'il y a des gens qui ont quelquefois intérêt qu'il ne le soit pas.
Le Roi : Votre réflexion ... m'étonne. Mais à la Cour il y a d'honnêtes gens ...[505]

A few moments later, the King turns and asks Jenny about her life :

Le Roi: "Hé bien ! Jenny, êtes-vous contente de vous marier ?
Jenny : Oui, Monsieur , mais vous pourriez ajouter quelque chose à notre contentement.
. . . .

Le Roi : Mais, belle Jenny, pouvez-vous espérer de vivre heureuse dans un lieu aussi sauvage que celui-ci me le paroît ?
Jenny : Avec Richard, monsieur ....
Le Roi : N'aimeriez-vous pas mieux être à Londres, dans une grande ville, j'entends avec lui ?[506]

In Sedaine's later works, this more serious moral relationality becomes a central concern. In *Le Comte d'Albert,*[507] both aristocratic and humble folk prove themselves equally capable of heroic sacrifice (while allying themselves against a monarchy represented as a heartless, even sinister bureaucracy). Each character in turn is presented as acting for the other at the expense of the self. Antoine (the rat) has seen himself forced

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[505] Monsigny and Sedaine, *Le Roi et le Fermier,* 109-110.

[506] *Ibid*., 111-112.

[507] The Count D'Albert, have being judged and condemned to death (in absentia) for dueling makes a daring trip back to Paris in order to meet his family and make plans for a collective escape to their country estate (conveniently located beyond French borders in Brussels). Near his Parisian residence*,* he comes across a lowly porter (Antoine) who, having had the misfortune to have accidentally splashed a vain, short-tempered military officer, is about to be run through by this latter. The morally noble Count intervenes and saves Antoine's life. In the process, however, he has drawn attention to himself and is arrested. The second act opens with the Count in prison and Antoine (now serving as a prison porter) recognizing his recent benefactor. Antoine then disappears for the time being. The Count's wife and children come to bid him farewell. This series of heroic leave-takings is, however, suddenly interrupted by Antoine, who has hatched a rescue scheme and is carrying it out in spite of substantial risk to his own person. The third act takes place two weeks later at the Count's country estate. Mlle Froment and Benjamin, the bailli's son, are to be married, but M. Froment cannot help but worry incessantly about his beloved seigneur. The Count had explained that he and his family were going to arrive soon. But where are they? Surely, imagines M. Froment, the Count has been executed. The marriage is put on hold, while M. Froment prepares to go off to Paris himself. In the meantime, Benjamin, Mlle Froment, and her sister Delphine discuss love and marriage, this latter, in particular setting forth her rational, feminist views. The Count arrives and the villagers celebrate. Then, Antoine arrives. Delphine is deeply moved when she hears tell of his heroic intervention. She puts her feminist views into action and proposes to an astonished, but happy Antoine (Grétry and Sedaine, *Le Comte d'Albert,* 1787).

into backbreaking work as a porter because he has rejected lucrative, but morally degrading work as a go-between. The Count (the lion), who has been condemned to death for fighting a duel (deemed necessary by all in to uphold family honor), risks detection by political spies in order to come to Antoine's rescue. In prison, the Count receives the visit of a wife who insists on sharing his fate and children who think only of their parents. He is rescued in turn by Antoine, bent on return the favor, even at the risk of his own life.

According to Sedaine, the libretto was originally a shorter didactic play that had been requested of him for private theater and it was on Grétry's request that he reworked the play into an *opéra comique.* This transformation saw the addition of a third and final act (entitled *La Suite du Comte d'Albert*).[508] Here, after the rather dark tone of the first two acts, we find ourselves again in the rosy world of the sentimental pastorale. Concerned villagers worry at the delay of their cherished seigneur, rejoice at his safe arrival, then cap off the theatrical narrative with obligatory song and dance.

But this pastoral world is itself penetrated by Sedaine's more sober sentimentalism. While there is a subplot featuring unproblematic, parentally-approved pastoral love between Mlle Froment and her fiancé Benjamin, we also find Mlle Froment's sister Delphine expounding her no-nonsense feminist views: Not only does she, she claims, have the right to choose *and propose* to her future husband, she will only choose this latter based on his moral qualities. Mere outward appearance, and even naïve, fashionable sentimentality do not appeal to her.[509]

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[508] Edouard Fétis, "Préface," *Le Comte d'Albert* by Grétry and Sedaine, iii-vi.

[509] "Mlle Froment. Ainsi, ma soeur, vous iriez choisir le plus beau garçon du village, et vous lui diriez:
Beau garçon, beau garçon ....
Delphine. Tant mieux, s'il est beau et bien fait; mais je ne le choisirais pas parce qu'il serait beau, mais parce qu'il aurait un bon esprit, et surtout un bon coeur.
Benjamin. Vous m'auriez donc pris, moi, Mademoiselle Delphine; car je pleure quand je vois couper le

When Antoine arrives and (predictably enough) Delphine finds in him her ideal, we see not merely a reaffirmation of a virtue shorn of any self-indulgent sentimentality, but a concomitant move away from the sentimental pastorale. After presenting herself to Antoine in a remarkably business-like fashion—"M. Antoine, j'ai dix-neuf ans, je suis sage, je suis fille de mon père que voilà, qui est un bon fermier de Monseigneur, qui est mon parrain; vous avez un bon coeur, j'en ai un bon aussi, voulez-vous de moi en mariage?"[510]— she clarifies that he will serve as a model to emulate: "Vous avez délivré Monseigneur; et si jamais je suis mauvaise femme, faites-moi ressouvenir de ce que vous avez fait et je deviendrai bonne."[511] Instead of desiring Antoine, or desiring recognition from him, Delphine wishes above all to be just like him, aspiring perhaps to emulate his heroic, sacrificial engagement herself. If, for Delphine, love thus becomes a matter of morally-challenging identification rather than sensuous pleasure, Sedaine's foregrounding of Antoine's and Delphine's relationship also serves to sever the sentimental pastorale's conventional linking of duty and desire.

Grétry's and Sedaine's *Richard Coeur-de-Lion*

It is finally in Grétry's and Sedaine's most successful *opéra comique, Richard Coeur-de-Lion,* that we see the previously discussed features of Sedaine's work—a hieroglyphic aesthetics, sympathetic imagining and sacrificial response—all intertwine. As in *Le Comte d'Albert,* we find a sacrificial reciprocity worked out between

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cou à un poulet.
    Delphine. Ah ! vous, mon cher beau-frère, vous avez un bon coeur bête, et ce n'est pas de celui-là que je parle" (Grétry and Sedaine, *Le Comte d'Albert,* 130).
[510] Grétry and Sedaine, *Le Comte d'Albert,* 181.

[511] *Ibid*., 181.

representatives of higher and lower ranks (in this case, a king and his minstrel). But here, this moral connection is explicitly worked through acts of sympathetic imagining while the sympathetic imagination is itself figured not merely as a form of creative overcoming, but as an explicitly artistic transcendence of obstacle.

Richard Coeur-de-Lion turns around the rescue of king Richard the Lionhearted by Blondel, his faithful minstrel. After wandering through Germany, Blondel finds himself, as the opera opens, near the castle of Linz which he believes may hold Richard. By chance, he meets Williams and his daughter Laurette, who, it turns out, (conveniently for Blondel), has romantic ties with Florestan, the governor of the castle in question. Next, Countess Marguerite, Richard's love, appears with her retinue. Blondel, astonished at this coincidence, plays the Romance which Richard had originally composed for Marguerite as a test of the woman's identity. She recognizes the melody and allows Blondel to remain with her under the condition that he replay the Romance at her request.

The second act takes place in and around the castle. First, Richard appears on a terrace and complains in a noble aria of his lonely fate. Then Blondel appears outside the castle (and out of sight of Richard). He plays the Romance—once again as a test of identity. Richard responds enthusiastically. Blondel then replays the Romance to attract the governor's attention and, in the ensuing discussion, mentions that he will be able to meet Laurette that evening during festivities held in honor of Marguerite. In the final act, Blondel returns to relate the news of his discovery to Marguerite. Together, they decide to surprise Florestan when he comes to meet Laurette. When Florestan refuses to release Richard, they resort to force, and the opera ends with a spectacular battle sequence.

As I have attempted to suggest in this plot summary, it is not merely Richard and

Blondel, but the Romance itself that plays a central role in the opera. In some ways, the

Romance is quite unlike the hieroglyph. It does not present any formal fragmentation,

complexity or obscurity of meaning in and of itself. In fact, it is quite simple, more

simple—in its first appearance—than any other musical element of the opera. It is a

straightforward, unornamented, neatly structured melody that Blondel plays on his violin

(figure A21). Yet, as we will see, not only did the use of the Romance in *Richard* create

a kind of intriguing hieroglyphic fragmentation for the extra-diagetic spectator, but the

Romance also functions internally as a nexus of aesthetic and sympathetic

transcendence.

The text of the Romance opens with the lyric persona in a moment of crisis,

suffering from a fever which brings him to the point of death. Suddenly, the scene

changes. His lady approaches and heals him with a glance:

> Une fièvre brûlante
> Un jour me terrassait,
> Et de mon corps chassait
> Mon ame languissante;
> Ma dame approche de mon lit,
> Et loin de moi la mort s'enfuit;
> Un regard de ma belle
> Fait dans mon tendre coeur,
> A la peine cruelle
> Succéder le bonheur.[512]

One can understand the Romance as a miniature narrative in which the woman is given a

role in some ways similar to that of the sentimental heroine as she has been typically

understood. Although empowered instead of suffering, she functions to protect a (male)

subject from knowledge of his own weakness. Here, however, the subject in question is

creative not spectatorial, an author and not a sympathetic witness of suffering. Richard,

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[512] A-E-M Grétry and Michel-Jean Sedaine, *Richard Coeur-de-Lion, Collection complète des Oeuvres de Grétry* (Leipzig et Bruxelles: Breitkopf and Haertel, 1883-1911), 126-128.

as Blondel mentions, has written the Romance for Marguerite. Moreover, the fact that the Romance reproduces a central topos of the courtly love tradition suggests that instead of memorializing an actual event, it celebrates Richard's own creative power, his capacity to transcend loss through the construction of an ideal other, as well as the Romance itself.

The lyric persona's move from "illness" to "health," from painful passivity to love and artistic production obliquely anticipates the trajectory of the opera itself. If, in the past, Richard has (apparently) transcended a moment of personal suffering through amorous creative effort, Blondel sets out on a quest to rescue another suffering being through creative (re)use of the Romance. If it were not clear enough that Blondel's project is to be read as an artistic reworking of the Romance's original function, Sedaine helps his spectator out by having Blondel compare himself with Orpheus: if "Orphée animé par l'amour, s'est ouvert les enfers; les guichets de ces tours s'ouvriront peut-être aux accents de l'amitié."[513]

If we have here a double act of creative overcoming, it is not hard to see how the Romance also circulates in an economy of sympathetic imagining. A first effort of the sympathetic imagination is in fact the precondition for Blondel's entire rescue project. He only plays the Romance because he imagines (correctly) how others will respond, what this tune will mean for them. When he comes across Marguerite, he imagines the associations that the Romance will call up for her: "Voyons si vraiment c'est elle. Si c'est Marguerite, son âme ne pourra se refuser aux douces impressions d'un air qu'en des

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[513] *Ibid.,* 41.

temps fortunés son amant a fait pour elle."[514] Later when he finds himself outside of

what he believes to be the prison holding the king, he identifies with an absent Richard:

"S'il est ici, peut-il n'être pas frappé d'une romance qu'autrefois l'amour lui a inspirée!

Auteur, amoureux et malheureux: que de raisons pour s'en souvenir."[515]

More than merely the product, the Romance also functions as the stimulus of the

sympathetic imagination as it prompts first Marguerite, then Richard, to make

imaginative connections with their past selves and experiences.[516] When Blondel begins

playing the Romance for the imprisoned Richard, in the opera's central scene, these

functions combine to create an intersubjective dialogue of reciprocal active interpretation

and transcendence.

Blondel first plays the Romance (figure A22) as a test of the distanced, hidden

king's identity. The king, struck by the sounds, immediately begins to interpret (m. 9).

First, as Blondel predicted, he does think of his past authorial power and amorous

connections—"Quels sons! Ô Ciel! Est-il possible qu'un air que j'ai fait pour elle ait

passé jusqu'ici!"[517] Nonetheless, the king is still intrigued: "écoutons ..." says he, before

Blondel continues with first line of the Romance, singing about the fever that has

overwhelmed Richard in the distant past ... or, perhaps, about his own "fever"—his own

painful separation from Richard in the more recent past ... or both. The full meaning of

what Blondel sings is left unclear, but Richard's joy in hearing a familiar voice suggests

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[514] *Ibid.,* 91.

[515] *Ibid.,* 120.

[516] The Romance functions in much the same way as "veste" (jacket) did in Alix's and Laurence's relationship in *Le Magnifique,* tying past and present, self and other together through the imagination.

[517] *Ibid.,* 126.

that, for him, the Romance functions not merely as a vehicle of reminiscence but as a form of emotional communication in the present as well.[518]

The king then responds creatively by singing the next phrase (mm. 34-50), the portion of the Romance about the healing power of his beloved.[519] Again, while the king has, like Blondel, succeeded in bridging the gap between them, the actual meaning of his response is wonderfully ambiguous. Does the king mean the words he is singing? Is Blondel, who "pendant ce refrain marque la joie la plus vive, ..."[520] happy merely because he has found the king? Or because the king is implicitly recognizing him through his response as well? Whatever the case may be at this moment, we certainly see a dialogue of mutual recognition begin to unfold at some point during the duet, as Blondel goes on to invent new, contextually appropriate, yet still somewhat ambiguous words to the Romance (mm. 51-66),[521] Richard to correctly interpret them, to explicitly recognize Blondel (m. 66), and both to finally join together singing text that seems to evoke the now re-established bonds of friendship between them (mm. 75-91).[522] By the end of the duet, not only have Richard and Blondel each creatively used and interpreted the Romance in their dialogue, but, in the process, they have transformed the Romance itself from an implicitly narcissistic amorous discourse, into an identificatory space in

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[518] Not only does the king respond : "Quels accents: quelle voix! ... Je la connais! ...", but, according to the stage directions, also "marque tous les degrés de surprise, de joie, d'espérance, et se prépare à dire le refrain" (*Ibid.,* 127).

[519] "Un regard de ma belle // Fait dans mon tendre coeur. // A la peine cruelle // Succeder le bonheur" (*Ibid.,* 127-128).

[520] *Ibid.,* 128.

[521] "Dans une tour obscure // Un Roi puissant languit ; // Son serviteur gémit // De sa triste aventure" (*Ibid.,* 128).

[522] At the end of the duet, Richard and Blondel both sing: "Un regard de ma belle // Fait dans mon tendre coeur // A la peine cruelle // Succéder le bonheur" (*Ibid.,* 129).

which sacrificial self and rescued other can meet.

In the above discussion of Sedaine's fictional worlds, I have noted the primacy of the sympathetic imagination and its close connection with a proto-Kantian separation of duty from desire, even at times, with a heroic ethos of sacrifice. In Sedaine's sole sentimental drama (*Le Déserteur*), sympathy is presented less as a moment of pleasurable sensuality (as it was in the sentimental pastorale), less as a mostly pleasurable exchange (as we saw in *Le Huron* and *Zémire et Azor*), than as an opportunity to imagine what a beloved other might be suffering. Many moments of sympathy in Sedaine, however, are not amorous at all, but more sober, moral-cognitive attempts to see the world from another's perspective and possible spurs to sacrificial action. If the end of *Le Déserteur* sees a barefoot Louise running with all her might to win Alexis a life-sparing pardon, *Le Comte d'Albert* glorifies Antoine's courageous intervention, implicitly placing (through the values and choices of the untraditional Delphine) heroism above sensual pleasure and amorous desire, as well as moral drama above the sentimental pastorale. Finally, *Richard Coeur-de-Lion* implicitly sets imaginatively-mediated identificatory sympathy and the rescue project it inspires over mere amorous desire.

We can in turn, recall that this sympathetic imagination, like the other forms of sympathy I have discussed in this dissertation, resists the standard critical framework. While this latter sees sympathy as the illusory result of an unbridgeable gap between self and other, sympathy in Sedaine might indeed be the product of a response to distance and difference, but is, at the same time, represented as flowing back into and shaping real life experience. As we have seen, it is precisely this productive shuttling between

imagination and (heroic) action, past and present, as well as self and other that *Richard* produces through and celebrates in the characters' use of the Romance.

It is also through the Romance that we may now pivot back from Sedaine's fictional worlds to the imaginative efforts they inspired in their audiences. As we have already seen (pp. 198-200), Grimm saw Sedaine's *opéras comiques* as presenting their public with the challenging ambiguities of the musical hieroglyph. In the specific case of *Richard,* these intriguing hieroglyphic effects were closely linked to Romance itself.

One can first understand the Romance as emotionally binding the spectator to the opera—as setting up a dynamic of repeated loss and fulfillment, since it appears not only nine times in various contexts and forms, but also constitutes the work's most appealing and salient musical element. At the same time, the Romance awakens the spectator's hermeneutic desire, since it is at one and the same time indeterminate and meaningfully deployed. Although we are not so lucky to have documentary evidence that eighteenth-century spectators actually interpreted the Romance in this manner, it was on the other hand clear that it did fascinate its audience. Grétry mentions not only that hundreds asked him about it, but also that they understood it as a locus dramatic meaning—as "le pivot sur lequel tournoit toute la pièce."[523]

In the previous two chapters, I suggested that both sentimental pastorales and sentimental comedies were intertwined with a dominant culture of worldliness. One might now feel inclined to ask about the cultural insertion of Sedaine's *opéras comiques*. This question does not open onto an easy answer. We must first recognize that to a certain extent they participated in the socio-political conservatism that characterized

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[523] Grétry, *Mémoires,* vol.1, 374.

opéra comique in general—and particularly *opéra comique* in the 1770s and the 1780s.
The year 1770 saw Marie-Antoinette's arrival at Versailles, and, as Elizabeth Bartlet
explains, the young Daupine took an incredible liking to *opéra comique,* in general, and
Grétry's music, in particular.[524] This latter (with whom Sedaine worked during the last
third of his career) was awarded "enormous" sums of money, both one-time gifts and a
generous pension by Marie-Antoinette (who bestowed her beneficence on some favored
singers as well).[525] The *opéra comique* troupe as a whole performed ever more
frequently not only at Versailles and Fontainebleau, but at the lesser royal residences as
well. Soon, many *opéra comique* composers and librettists were writing with Marie-
Antoinette in mind.[526] And, among her tastes, as is well-known, was the pastoral.

It is hardly surprising, then, that, like the sentimental pastorale, Sedaine's later
opéras comiques tend to feature a celebration of social hierarchy—the vertical
relationship between the lowly Antoine and the Comte d'Albert and between Blondel
and king Richard even as they insist on the moral equality between all characters.

At the same time, however, we can also see Sedaine's very emphasis on moral
seriousness—his concern to sever the link between sympathy and sensual pleasure—as
an indication of his participation in an Encyclopedist discourse of republicanism.[527] We

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[524] M. Elizabeth C. Bartlet, "Grétry, Marie-Antoinette and *La Rosière de Salency*," *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 111 (1984-1985), 92-120.

[525] *Ibid.,* 94.

[526] *Ibid.,* 98.

[527] To the evidence for Sedaine's republicanism, we can add: 1) his self-presentation as one who seeks the legitimation of a broad public over the applause of a tiny elite (See Michel-Jean Sedaine, "Avertissement," *Anacréon,* reproduced in Charlton, "Sedaine's Prefaces," 234; 2) his penning of *Le Philosophe sans le Savoir,* a play specifically conceived as promoting the Encyclopedist cause and 3) his personal friendship with Jacques-Louis David. (Mark Ledbury argues that Sedaine's friendship was a determining influence on David's later republicanism. See Ledbury, *Sedaine, Greuze,* 261-302.)

can hear in *Le Roi et le Fermier*'s key scene of sympathetic, yet reasoned debate, [528] Delphine's valorization of an aesthetically pared-down virtue, the Magnifique's careful attempts to understand a mute Clémentine, the heroic tone of *Le Comte d'Albert* and, even, perhaps, of *Richard Coeur-de-Lion,* an echo of the Encyclopedists' collective self-portrayal as the stoic defenders of a common humanity and their concomitant critique of an aristocratic and what they sometimes represented as an effete worldliness. [529]

Finally, I would like to suggest that, to the extent that Sedaine's work *did* participate not merely in the ethos, but also—in its move away from the worldly refinement typical of most sentimental *opéra comique*—in the aesthetics associated with an Encyclopedist republicanism, it resists a common dystopian understanding of these aesthetic values as authoritarian and repressive. [530] In her *Styles of Enlightenment,* Elena Russo charts a shift from the "boudoir" to the "tribune," from the intimacy of conversational reciprocity mediated by playful awareness of style to the vast distance separating an eloquent *philosophe*-cum-playwright from a passive, receptive public gulled into taking representation for truth. [531] While Russo might associate the *philosophes*'s critique of literary artifice and championing of an aesthetics of the sublime with an erasure of intersubjectivity, I would suggest that—at least in the case of

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[528] The exchange between Richard and the King.

[529] For a discussion of *philosophes*'s attempts to define themselves against a worldliness which involved what they sometimes represented as a humiliating and intellectually limiting submission to the pleasures of elite patrons and to construct themselves as independent, stoic enlighteners of an always somewhat nebulous "public," as bearers of peace, tolerance and social justice to an equally vague "nation," see Michel Gaulin's chapter on D'Alembert's "L'essai sur les gens de lettres," (Michel Gaulin, *Le Concept d'homme de lettres, en France, à l'époque de l'*Encyclopédie [New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1991], 41-64;

[530] We can add Scott Bryson's interpretation of the bourgeois drama to Russo's *Styles of Enlightenment* as a second example of this critical tendency. See Scott S. Bryson, *The Chastised Stage: Bourgeois Drama and the Exercise of Power* (Saratoga: Anma Libri, 1991).

[531] Russo, *Styles,* 16-24.

Sedaine's *opéras comiques* and their positioning of the spectator—what we see is not so much a destruction, but a reworking of intersubjective space.

CONCLUSION

Candor's gentle pity, Zémire's awakening to love and Blondel's productive leap into the affective imagination: all three exemplify distinct forms of sympathy in eighteenth-century *opéra comique.* As we have seen, worldly-sensuous sympathy features moral bonds hardly foreign to refined, sensual pleasures and finds its home in the happy commonplaces of the sentimental pastorale; amorous intersubjectivity threads its sometimes empowering, sometimes trying encounter with a separate self through sinuous melodic signs of a subjective freedom itself reflected in the conflict that distinguishes sentimental comedy from pastorale; while sacrificial sympathy presents the moral-affective bond as a form of active, identificatory imagining triggered by the encounter with various forms of obstacle embedded in Sedaine's more serious lyric dramas. Finally, we have also seen how the refined pleasures not merely of worldly-sensuous sympathy but also of amorous intersubjectivity suggest continuities with the practice of sociable politeness, while in sacrificial sympathy we could detect hints of Sedaine's more republican moral-aesthetic inclinations.

If I have spent much of the past three chapters thus drawing distinctions between these forms of sympathy, it is equally important to recognize their commonality—their shared insistence on a relationality. This relationality may involve not merely connections between self and other, but also between various levels of intrapsychic bodily and cognitive experience, between inner worlds of emotion and imagination and outer worlds of action, and even, as we saw in the third chapter, between collectively imagined present, past and future. In every case, however, these forms of sympathy resonate with

models of moral and aesthetic relatedness derived from the eighteenth-century thinkers Dubos, Marivaux, Rousseau and Diderot, while resisting the common critical tendency to understand sympathy as merely the effect of some more fundamental separation between self and other.

At this point, I would like to suggest that my espousal of an eighteenth-century view of sympathy as a form of moral relationality might have more than mere antiquarian interest. Our modernity might be characterized by the relative autonomy of the moral, the aesthetic and the affective—an analytic splitting of what the eighteenth-century tended to treat as an experiential amalgam. We might see evidence of this splitting in the above-mentioned antisentimental critical models, modes of analysis which assume that moral-affective relationality is either insignificant, inexistent or necessarily politically compromised. At the same time, we can follow Michael Bell, and argue that a reconnection with eighteenth-century representations of sympathy and sentimentality makes sense in light of the fact that these latter correspond to a still broadly shared world view, to "the *de facto* sensibility, or form of life, in which most people live," as well as to our common understanding of what the literary does for us. As Bell explains: "the origins of the movement of sentiment are ... in their capacious holism, closer to a true account of our relations to literary art, and its relation to ethical experience, than are some of the sophisticated systems of cerebration which have grown up since and are predicated on the separatist view of the aesthetic."[532]

And, finally, I offer these chapters as a critical contribution to our collective understanding of these complex and culturally-resonant *opéras comiques*.

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[532] Michael Bell, *Sentimentalism, Ethics and the Culture of Feeling* (Houndsmills, Basingstoke: *Palgrave,* 2000), 31.

APPENDIX
MUSICAL EXAMPLES

Figure A1. "O toi que le hameau révère"

Source: Egidio Duni and Charles-Simon Favart, *Les Moissonneurs* (Paris: Chez l'Auteur, 1768), 124-125.

Figure A1. (*Cont.*)

Figure A2. "O toi que le hameau révère:" Anticipatory staccato

Source: Egidio Duni and Charles-Simon Favart, *Les Moissonneurs* (Paris: Chez l'Auteur, 1768), 126.

Figure A3. "O toi que le hameau révère:" Rests suggest a stealthy Rosine.

Source: Egidio Duni and Charles-Simon Favart, *Les Moissonneurs* (Paris: Chez l'Auteur, 1768), 127.

Figure A4. "O toi que le hameau révère:" "Ah ! comme mon coeur bat"

Source: Egidio Duni and Charles-Simon Favart, *Les Moissonneurs* (Paris: Chez l'Auteur, 1768), 128.

Figure A5. Pauline's "Hé! comment ne pas le chérir ?"

Source: A-E-M Grétry and Jean-François Marmontel, *Silvain, Collection complète des Oeuvres de Grétry* (Leipzig et Bruxelles: Brietkopf & Haertel, 1883-1911), 54.

Figure A6. Hélène's "Ne crois pas qu'un bon ménage"

Source: A-E-M Grétry and Jean-François Marmontel, *Silvain, Collection complète des Oeuvres de Grétry* (Leipzig et Bruxelles: Brietkopf & Haertel, 1883-1911), 40-41.
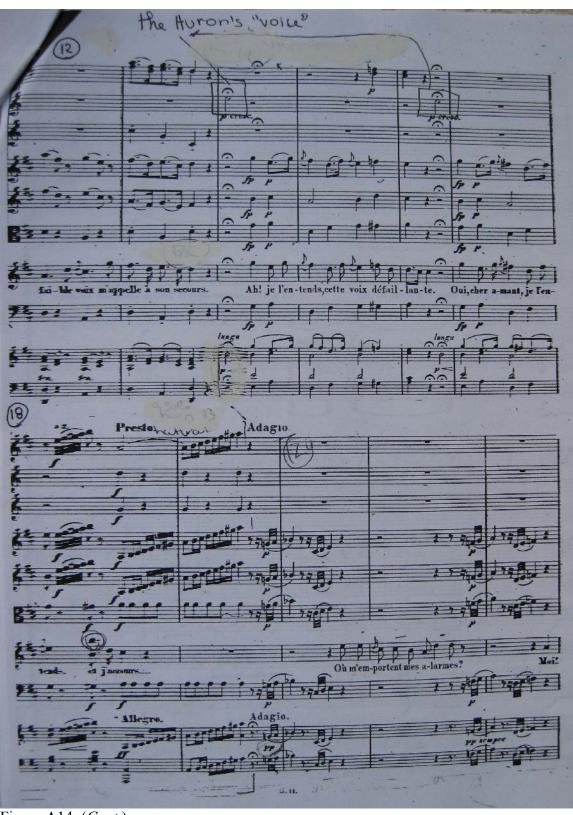
Figure A6. (*Cont.*)

Figure A7. Pauline's triplets and cadential flourishes

Source: A-E-M Grétry and Jean-François Marmontel, *Silvain, Collection complète des Oeuvres de Grétry* (Leipzig et Bruxelles: Breitkopf & Haertel, 1883-1911), 55.

Figure A8. Hélène's triples and cadential flourishes

Figure A9. Pauline anticipates Basile's drone-accompanied 6/8

Source: A-E-M Grétry and Jean-François Marmontel, *Silvain, Collection complète des Oeuvres de Grétry* (Leipzig et Bruxelles: Brietkopf & Haertel, 1883-1911), 55-56.

Figure A9. (*Cont.*)

Figure A10. Basile's drone-accompanied 6/8

Source: A-E-M Grétry and Jean-François Marmontel, *Silvain,* in *Collection complète des Oeuvres de Grétry* (Leipzig et Bruxelles: Brietkopf & Haertel, 1883-1911), 61-62.

Figure A10. (*Cont.*)

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Figure A11. The Huron's "Vous me charmez"

Source: A-E-M Grétry and Jean-François Marmontel, *Le Huron, Collection complète des Oeuvres de Grétry* (Leipzig et Bruxelles: Brietkopf & Haertel, 1883-1911), 45-47.

Figure A11. (*Cont.*)

Figure A11. (*Cont.*)

Figure A12. Gilotin's "Me prend-on pour un sot"

Figure A13. Hélène's "Si jamais je prends un époux"

Source: A-E-M Grétry and Jean-François Marmontel, *Le Huron, Collection complète des Oeuvres de Grétry* (Leipzig et Bruxelles: Brietkopf & Haertel, 1883-1911), 17-19.
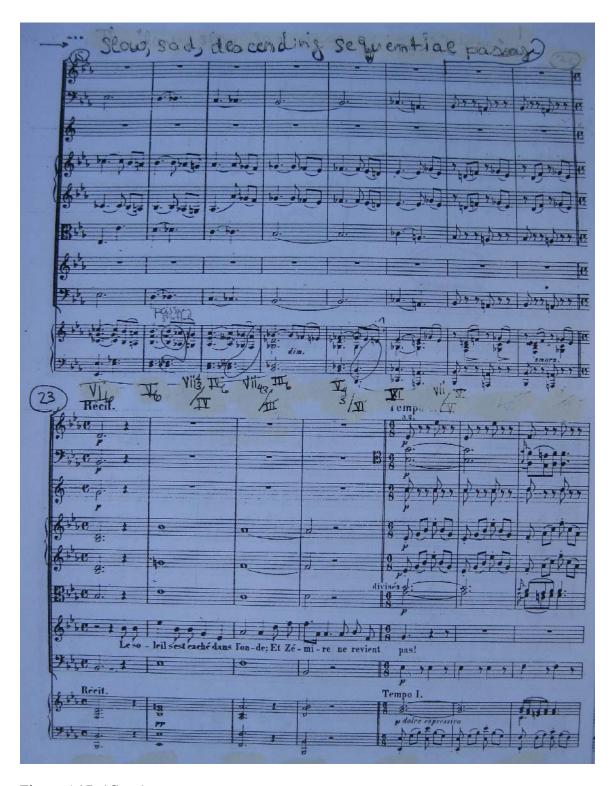
Figure A13. (*Cont.*)

Figure A13. (*Cont.*)

Figure A14. Hélène's "Ah ! quel tourment !"

Source: A-E-M Grétry and Jean-François Marmontel, *Le Huron, Collection complète des Oeuvres de Grétry* (Leipzig et Bruxelles: Brietkopf & Haertel, 1883-1911), 121-124.

Figure A14. (*Cont.*)

Figure A14. (*Cont.*)

Figure A14. (*Cont.*)

Figure A15. Azor's "Du moment qu'on aime"

Source: A-E-M Grétry and Jean-François Marmontel, *Zémire et Azor,* in *Collection complète des Oeuvres de Grétry* (Leipzig et Bruxelles: Brietkopf & Haertel, 1883-1911), 153-156.
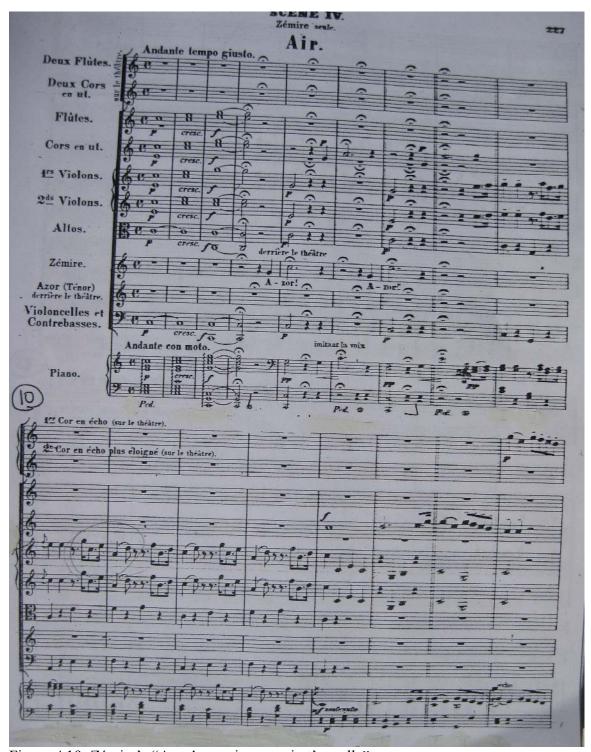
Figure A15. (*Cont.*)

Figure A15. (*Cont.*)

Figure A15. (*Cont.*)

. . . //

Figure A16. Zémire's "Air de la Fauvette"

Source: A-E-M Grétry and Jean-François Marmontel, *Zémire et Azor, Collection complète des Oeuvres de Grétry* (Leipzig et Bruxelles: Brietkopf & Haertel, 1883-1911), 160, 162-163, 166.

Figure A16. (*Cont.*)

. . . //
Figure A16. (*Cont.*)

Figure A16. (*Cont.*)

Figure A17. Azor's recitative

Source: A-E-M Grétry and Jean-François Marmontel, *Zémire et Azor, Collection complète des Oeuvres de Grétry* (Leipzig et Bruxelles: Brietkopf & Haertel, 1883-1911), 213-215.

Figure A17. (*Cont.*)

Figure A17. (*Cont.*)

Figure A17. (*Cont.*)

Figure A18. "Domestic" softening in Azor's fourth act *ariette*

Figure A19. Zémire's "Azor! en vain ma voix t'appelle"

Source: A-E-M Grétry and Jean-François Marmontel, *Zémire et Azor,* in *Collection complète des Oeuvres de Grétry* (Leipzig et Bruxelles: Brietkopf & Haertel, 1883-1911), 227-234, 237-238.

Figure A19. (*Cont.*)

Figure A19. (*Cont.*)

Figure A19. (*Cont.*)

Figure A19. (*Cont.*)

Figure A19. (*Cont.*)

Figure A19. (*Cont.*)

Figure A19. (*Cont.*)

Figure A19. (*Cont.*)

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Figure A20. Alexis's "On s'empresse, on me regarde"

Source: Pierre-Alexandre Monsigny and Michel-Jean Sedaine, *Le Déserteur* (Paris: Claude Herissant, 1769), 208, 211-212.
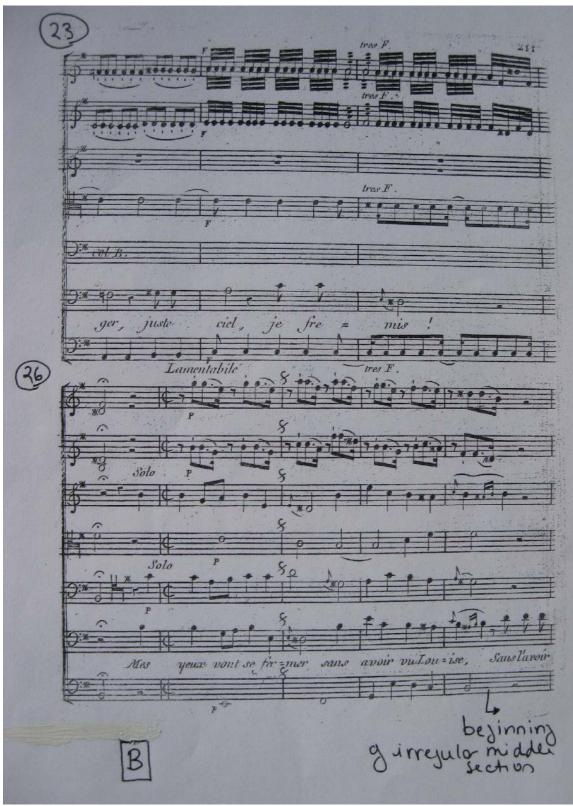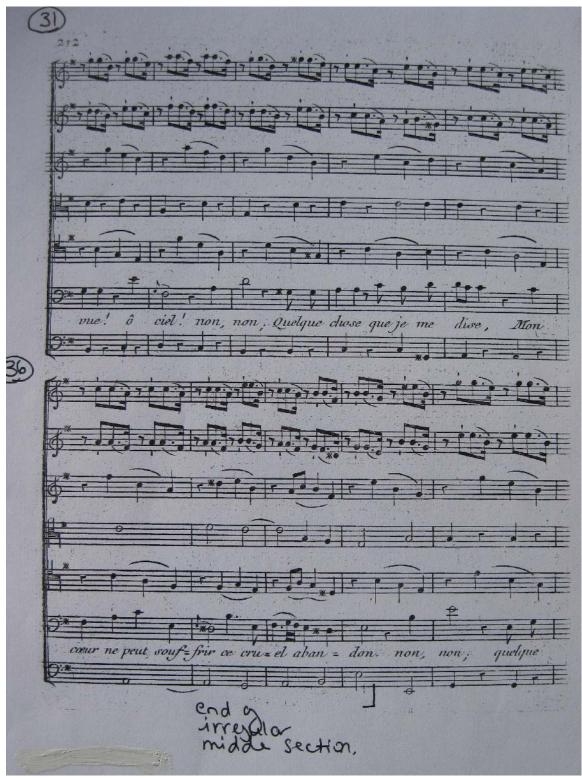
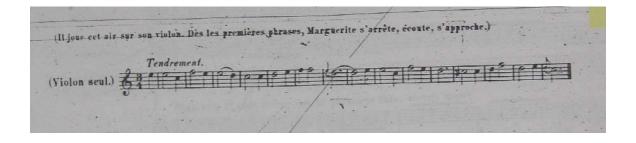Figure A20. (*Cont.*)

Figure A20. (*Cont.*)

Figure A21. Blondel plays the Romance for Marguerite

Source: A-E-M Grétry and Michel-Jean Sedaine, *Richard Coeur-de-Lion, Collection complète des Oeuvres de Grétry* (Leipzig et Bruxelles: Brietkopf & Haertel, 1883-1911), 91.

Figure A22. Blondel and Richard communicate by "rewriting" the Romance

Source: A-E-M Grétry and Michel-Jean Sedaine, *Richard Coeur-de-Lion, Collection complète des Oeuvres de Grétry* (Leipzig et Bruxelles: Brietkopf & Haertel, 1883-1911), 126-129.
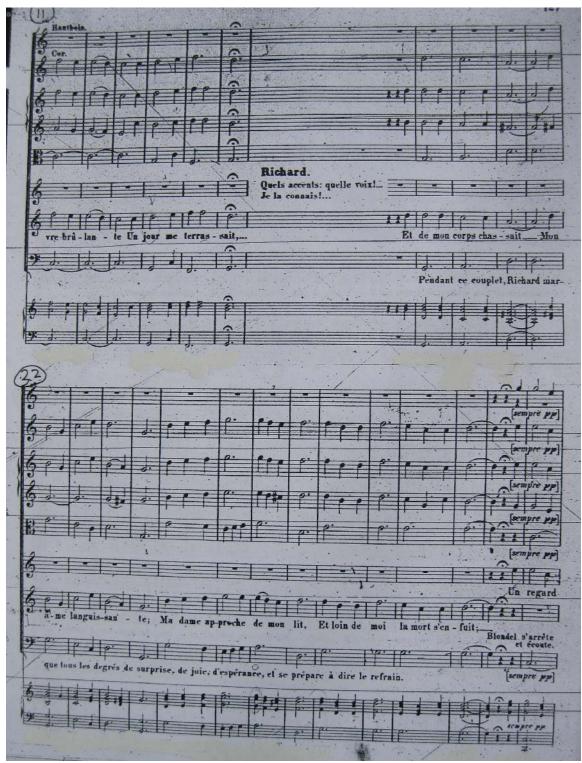
Figure A22. (*Cont.*)

Figure A22. (*Cont.*)

Figure A22. (*Cont.*)

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