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From *Femme Idéale* to *Femme Fatale*: Contexts for the Exotic Archetype in Nineteenth-Century French Opera

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by

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ABSTRACT

Chromatically meandering, even teasing, Carmen's *Seguidilla* proves fatally seductive for Don José, luring him to an obsession that overrides his expected decorum. Equally alluring, Dalila contrives to strip Samson of his powers and the Israelites of their prized warrior. However, while exotic *femmes fatales* plotting ruination of gentrified patriarchal society populated the nineteenth-century French opera stages, they contrast sharply with an eighteenth-century model populated by merciful exotic male rulers overseeing wandering Western females and their estranged lovers.

Disparities between these eighteenth and nineteenth-century archetypes, most notably in treatment and expectation of the exotic and the female, appear particularly striking given the chronological proximity within French operatic tradition. Indeed, current literature depicts these models as mutually exclusive. Yet when conceptualized as a single tradition, it is a socio-political—rather than aesthetic—revolution that provides the basis for this drastic shift from *femme idéale* to *femme fatale*.

To achieve this end, this thesis contains detailed analyses of operatic librettos and music of operas representative of the eighteenth-century French exotic archetype: *Arlequin Sultan Favorite* (1721), *Le Turc généreux*, an entrée in *Les Indes Galantes* (1735), *La Recontre imprévue/Die Pilgrime von Mekka* (1764), and *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1782). Taking cues from Edward Saïd's concept of Orientalism as a reflection of the collective fears of western society, it places them within a socio-political and cultural context via appropriate primary and secondary sources. It applies the same method to operas representative of the nineteenth-century French exotic archetype: *L'Africaine* (1865), *Carmen* (1875), *Samson et Dalila* (1877) and *Lakmé* (1883).

To account for the nineteenth century's break with eighteenth-century exotic plot archetypes, this study documents the socio-political backlash against female liberties following the French Revolution. Such documentation includes a combination of primary-source historical accounts, political documents—most importantly the 1804 Code Napoléon—and secondary source commentary. The resulting history presents a continuous—though malleable—lineage of French exotic opera that responds to shifting socio-political and cultural fluctuations.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 1

Chapter 1: Eighteenth-Century Exotic Opera Models.. 12
Arlequin Sultan Favorite
Le Turc Généreux
La Rencontre imprévue/Die Pilgrime von Mekka
Die Entführung aus dem Serail

Chapter 2: The Abduction-Plot as Projection of Societal Concerns 32
Orient as Popular Culture
Eighteenth-Century Views on the Feminine
The Exotic and the Feminine as Obstacles to Society

Chapter 3: Revolutionary Anti-Feminist Backlash 47
Revolutionary Involvement
Festivals and Imagery
The Rights of (Wo)Man: Vacillating Views
1793: The Terror and the Demise of Women's Rights
Inequity as Law: the Code Napoléon

Chapter 4: Nineteenth-Century Exotic Opera Models 74
L'Africaine
Carmen
Samson et Dalila
Lakmé
Further Archetypes and Readings

Chapter 5: Recognizing Altered Ideologies 93
Taking Stock: Archetype Alterations

Bibliography 99

LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

Example 1: Letellier, *Arlequin Sultane Favorite*,
Arlequin's lament, set to Jaconde. 16

Example 2: Rameau, *Le Turc Généroux*,
Scene VI, "Air for the African Slaves." 19

Example 3: Gluck, *Le Rencontre Imprévue*,
Act I, No. 2, Air "Castagno, castagna, pistafanache." 23

Example 4: Mozart, *Die Entfuhrung aus dem Serail*,
Act I, Scene 3, Aria "Solche hergelaufne Laffen," mm. 146–76. 28

Example 5: Mozart, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*,
Act II, *Marten aller Arten*, mm. 60–68. 44

Example 6: Bizet, *Carmen*,
Act I, Scene 5, "Habeñera," mm. 1–8. 80

Example 7: Saint-Saëns, *Samson et Dalila,*
Act II, Scene 3, Duet "Mon coeur s'ouvre à ta voix," mm. 40–47. 84

Example 8: Saint-Saëns, *Samson et Dalila*,
Act III, Scene 2, Ballet, "Bacchanale," m. 1. 85

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustration 1: Dupré, "Libertas Americana" (1783). 57

INTRODUCTION

Given the prevalence of quintessential nineteenth-century exotic operas typified by *Mignon* (1866), *Carmen* (1875), *Samson et Dalila* (1877), and *Lakmé* (1883), eighteenth-century exotic opera plot archetypes appear as a completely distinct genre. Rather than threatening *femmes fatales*, male rulers who displayed mercy towards wandering Western women and their pursuers epitomizes the exotic character. In the eighteenth-century archetype, the exotic poses no realized threat to gentrified society; instead, the exotic offers misplaced Westerners temporary freedom from societal expectations for proper self-conduct as a type of trial for their fidelity, which all successfully accomplished. For example, in librettist Jean-François Letellier's *Arelquin sultane favorite* (1715), the captured Isabella considers allowing her Turkish captor "just a little kiss on the chin!"[1] However, in the end she cannot betray her European suitor. This pattern carries through to Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, wherein the captured Konstanze welcomes torture and death rather than infidelity to her hero, Belmonte.

If eighteenth-century opera librettos employed the exotic primarily as a means of escapism or trial, nineteenth-century counterparts aligned the female form with the exotic and in turn labeled both as dangerous. Scholarship has largely ignored this significant change, as the discussion of exoticism often begins and ends with the nineteenth-century model. This treatment skews scholarship heavily toward nineteenth-century *femmes fatales* Carmen and Dalila and their sisters, solidifying exploration on the exotic female form as having been continuously identified as an Other alongside exotic topics,

[1] Jama Stilwell, "A New View of the Eighteenth-Century 'Abduction' Opera: Edification and Escape at the Parisian 'Théâtres de la Foire,'" *Music and Letters* 91 (2010): 67.

subsequently ignoring other influences on the genre, such as effects of socio-political upheaval.

Although the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century exotic plot archetypes are often perceived as vastly different, substantial common thematic material allows their formation into single continuum. However, large-scale alterations beg contextualization. In the absence of an artistic stimulus, the conflation of the female form with the exotic must be reasoned elsewhere. Exploration of altered conventions—in this case the gender of stock characters—and their implications indicates reaction to specific socio-political and cultural ideology. As alterations between archetypes center on the treatment of the exotic female as an unwelcome Other, this thesis explores eighteenth- and nineteenth-century French exotic opera in relation to specific changes in legal treatment and public ideologies regarding women following the French Revolution. Contextualizing materials mitigate the shift towards an unfavorable representation of the exotic conflated with the female form. This results in a continuous lineage of French exotic opera rather than two disparate traditions.

The pervasiveness of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century exotic opera models are well documented. The prevalence of each of these models allows a general plot overview to describe a large body of work. Exotic French opera in the eighteenth century adheres to a handful of archetype-markers. Cultural historian Daniel Wilson summarizes this tradition succinctly:

> A European woman . . . is separated from her lover, taken prisoner by Turkish pirates and sold to a sultan as a slave. The sultan falls in love with her, but the Christian woman remains steadfast and true to her beau. He in turn, soon finds his way to the seraglio and plans (together with a nervous servant) the abduction and escape by ship. Often the woman has a chambermaid or other woman-servant, who, though chased by a coarse harem guard, resists his advances; this

> constellation provides broad comedy. The abduction is eventually discovered; the sultan threatens to punish the Europeans horribly, but he finally forgives them magnanimously and allows them to return home. All join in a concluding hymn of praise of the unexpected nobility of the Muslim monarch.[2]

The eighteenth-century archetype, featuring a lost or captured Western woman pursued by an exotic male ruler, explores the exotic in order to revel in the excitement of the unknown and untamed. Through these operas, the French public could imagine a world in which power, gender, and class limitations altered, if only for a brief time before the ultimate rescue of the young heroine. Rousseau articulated such gender limitations, stating that though men could earn virtue through reason, women were fundamentally barred from rational thought or action. To be sure, female liberty exceeded that following the Revolution, but the attainment of female virtue was limited to preserving one's chastity or marital monogamy. Though the heroines in the eighteenth-century archetype ultimately remain faithful to their Western suitors, they are offered temporary recourse to imagine an alternate existence for themselves within the exotic environment.[3]

Nineteenth-century French exotic opera has become similarly codified, though featuring drastically different narratives. Ralph P. Locke describes a typical plot:

> Young, tolerant, brave, possibly naïve, white-European tenor-hero intrudes, at risk of disloyalty to his own people and colonialist ethic, into mysterious, dark-skinned, colonized territory represented by alluring dancing girls and deeply affectionate, sensitive lyric soprano, incurring wrath of brutal, intransigent tribal chieftain (bass or bass-baritone) and blindly obedient chorus of male savages.[4]

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[2] Daniel Wilson, "Turks on the Eighteenth-Century Operatic Stage and European Political, Military, and Cultural History," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 2 (1985): 79.

[3] Dorinda Outram, *The Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 82.

[4] Ralph Locke, "Constructing the Oriental 'Other': Saint-Saëns's 'Samson et Dalila,'" *Cambridge Opera Journal* 3 (1991): 263.

Operas in this world feature an exotic female character as a threat to the civilized European male and, by extension, gentrified society. These plots bind the female form to the exotic, labeling these twice-Othered figures as both deviant and dangerous. This archetype differs from the eighteenth-century model in its rejection of the orient and of aberrant females.

The operatic stage could not ignore such drastic socio-political upheavals as the French Revolution, Terror, Napoleon, and the Restoration. Indeed, in the roughly hundred years that span the changes to exotic plot archetypes, France subjected its citizens to more governments than most modern countries have experienced to date. From the 1789 National Assembly and the fall of the Bastille came the condemnation of the monarchy and aristocracy. The 1792 installation of the Republic brought the Committee of Public Safety, the execution of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, and the Great Terror in Paris. The first Empire began with the 1804 coronation of Napoleon, but only a little over a decade fell to a restored monarchy. In 1830–1848, the self-proclaimed citizen-king Louis-Philippe reigned, only to be replaced after a short tenure by Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte as president of the Second Republic, which was swiftly replaced in 1852 by the Second Empire of Napoleon III. The Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871 dominated the formative years of the Third Republic. Officially proclaimed by Leon Gambetta on September 4, 1870, it was overshadowed by the establishment of the Paris Commune in the waning months of 1871. The Third Republic only gained its true form in 1875 with the passing of the French Constitutional Laws and remained intact until the onslaught of World War II.

Shifts in government produced sweeping changes to legislation and public opinion

regarding women. While Revolutionary law conducted a nearly gender-blind family law, under Napoleon, errant wives and daughters could be imprisoned, daughters' rights were diminished, and formerly liberal divorce laws now disadvantaged women. These changes seem to correlate directly to nineteenth-century alterations to the exotic plot archetype: the identification of the exotic character as both female and dangerous.

This thesis suggests that plot archetypes generally considered mutually exclusive, in fact, constitute a single tradition altered primarily through legislation diminishing women's rights in the wake of the French Revolution. Chronologically, this study begins with an exploration of eighteenth-century exotic models and progress toward comparison and nineteenth-century exotic operas, ending with the invasion of *Wagnerisme* into Parisian opera. Eighteenth-century librettos considered include *Arlequin Sultan Favorite*[5] (1721), *Le Turc généreux*, an entrée in *Les Indes Galantes*[6] (1735), *La Recontre imprévue/Die Pilgrime von Mekka*[7] (1764), and *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*[8] (1782). These operas represent a substantially larger tradition that encompasses *Les Époux esclaves ou Bastien et Bastienne à Alger* (1755), *La schiava liberata* (1768), *Der Kaufmann von Smyrna* (1771), *Der Bassa* (or *Pascha* or *Baron*) *vona Tunis, oder Julie*

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[5] Jean-François Letellier, *Arlequin Sultane Favorite* in *Le Theatre de la Foire ou l'Opéra Comique, contenant les leilleures pièces qui ont été représentées aux Foires de S. Germain et de Laurent*, ed. Lesage (Paris, 1721–37), 203–85.

[6] Louis Fuzelier, *Les Indes galantes* (Paris: L'Avant-scène, 1982).

[7] Louis Hurtaut Dancourt, *La rencontre imprévue, comedie en trois actes meslée d'ariettes, tirée de l'ancien Théâtre de la foire* (Vienna: Dans l'imprimerie de Ghelen, 1763).

[8] Gottlieb Stephanie, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail: komisches Singspiel in drei Aufzügen* (Frankfurt: C. F. Peters, 1983).

(1774), *L'incontro improvviso* (1775), *Das Grab des Musti oder Die Zwei Geizigen* (1779), *Das Serail, oder die unvermethete Zusammenkunft in der Sclaverey zwischen Vater, Tochter und Sohn* (1778), *Zaide* (1866), *Adelheit von Veltheim, Ein Schauspiel mit Gesang* (1780), and *Belmonte und Constanze oder Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1781). While some of these examples were originally produced outside of France, the first archetypal examples originate in Paris. Rise of the nineteenth-century conception of the exotic typified by a female character begins with Eugène Scribe's libretto to Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine*[9] (1865). This libretto appears unique because although the exotic character is filled by a woman, the exotic character as an ultimately merciful ruler remains, perhaps serving as a link between the two traditions. The typified exotic *femme fatale* appears in opera librettos beginning a year after *L'Africaine*, exemplified by *Carmen*[10] (1875), *Samson et Dalila*[11] (1877) and *Lakmé*[12] (1883).

This thesis argues that though the majority of existing scholarship considers the exotic operas of the eighteenth- and nineteenth- centuries as separate traditions, they instead belong to a single, though transformed, lineage. It posits that the extensive exotic archetype set in place during the eighteenth century in the form of the "abduction plot" waned through the period of the French Revolution, only to resurface in the mid-

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[9] Eugène Scribe*, The Meyerbeer Libretti Grand Opéra 4: L'Africaine,* trans. Richard Arsenty (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008).

[10] Henri Mailhac and Ludovic Halévy, *Carmen*, in *The Authentic Librettos of the French and German Operas*, 1–52.

[11] Ferdinand Lemaire, *Samson et Dalila,* in *The Authentic Librettos of the French and German Operas*, 253–78.

[12] Edmond Gondinet and Philippe Gille, *Lakmé*, in *The Authentic Librettos of the French and German Operas*, 279–318.

nineteenth century, reconfigured to adhere to new political and social realities concerning French women. This tradition gave rise to the exotic *femme fatale* embodied by Carmen and Dalila. In this investigation, the changed gender of exotic characters in opera points towards a change in the treatment of women, mirroring legislative and social modifications.

This thesis examines librettos of both the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century exotic archetypes and identifies the salient features of each. Secondary literature complements these librettos, indicating socio-political correlations. A handful of these librettos have been subjected to scholarly treatment. In "Turks on the Eighteenth-Century Operatic Stage and European Political, Military, and Cultural History,"[13] cultural historian Daniel Wilson documents cultural ideology surrounding the eighteenth-century exotic plot archetype. Jama Stillwell builds upon his work in relation to "abduction" plots as escapism in "A New View of the Eighteenth-Century 'Abduction' Opera: Edification and Escape at the Parisian 'Théâtres de la Foire,"[14] referencing an early *opéra-comique, Arlequin sultane favorite*. While culture-based in methodology, her work provides a more opera-centric focus and further relates these exotic abduction-plot operas as an option for the theater-going Parisian to escape from the domestic. This article also stresses the ability to step outside conventional gender roles within the confines of this theatrical archetype. Georgia Cowart's article "Of Women, Sex and Folly: Opera under the Old

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[13] Wilson, "Turks on the Eighteenth-Century Operatic Stage and European Political, Military, and Cultural History," 79–92.

[14] Stilwell, "A New View of the Eighteenth-Century 'Abduction' Opera," 51–82.

Regime"[15] focuses on the *querelle des femmes* of 1670, predating material directly involved in this thesis by fifty years—but it addresses further implications of the long-standing tradition of gendered approaches through cultural history regarding opera's role in the degradation of morals. The most well-known abduction opera, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1782), premiered in Vienna, representing the geographical spread of the popular plot, but also its last stand.

Likewise, an exploration of the nineteenth-century operas and librettos expands to include contextualizing materials. Locke's book *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections*[16] applies Edward Said's scholarship on exoticism to musical models and explores various binaries, including the important distinction between the self and other in musical representation. Locke's case study of *Samson et Dalila*[17] provides a thorough investigation of both the cultivation of the exotic and the conflation of the exotic with the character of Dalila. Pivot scholar Susan McClary also offers insight into the application of feminist criticism as a "key" to developing deeper understanding of musical works in her monograph *Feminine Endings*.[18] McClary further examines the exotic female as a

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[15] Georgia Cowart, "Of Women, Sex and Folly: Opera under the Old Regime," in *Cambridge Opera Journal* 6 (1994): 205–20.

[16] Ralph P. Locke, *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[17] Locke, "Constructing the Oriental 'Other': Saint-Saëns's 'Samson et Dalila,'" 261–302.

[18] Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991).

case study in *Georges Bizet: Carmen*,[19] documenting the story from the Mérimée novel, to Bizet's incarnation to films by Carlos Saura, Peter Brook, and Francesco Rosi. Most important to this project, her monograph deals with Carmen's place in nineteenth-century French culture, illustrating how the female Other permeated literature as well as opera, and exposing a larger cultural concern of women in society. This thesis also considers the dichotomy exposed by Catherine Clément's *Opera, or the Undoing of Women*,[20] which discusses the downfall of nineteenth-century female characters, answered by Carolyn Abbate's "Opera; or, the Envoicing of Women."[21] The latter argues that the former failed to take music into account, and that through music these women were more empowered than their threatened male companions. These arguments inform a discussion on the perception of the nineteenth-century *femme fatale* on the stage.

Given the nineteenth century's correlation between the female form and the exotic, documentation of legal and social change regarding female repression constructs a bridge through the intervening years, c.1780–1860. A section regarding festivals in the intervening years provides investigation into means of disseminating these new values to the public; by modeling how women should behave in post-Revolutionary France, public festival operated as a tool of the state. This study consults Mona Ozouf's book entitled

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[19] Susan McClary, *Georges Bizet: Carmen* Cambridge Opera Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[20] Catherine Clément, *Opera, or the Undoing of Women,* trans. Betsy Wing, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

[21] Carolyn Abbate, "Opera; or, the Envoicing of Women," in *Musicology and Difference,* ed. Ruth A. Solie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 225–58.

Festivals and the French Revolution,[22] depicting female roles in Republican-sponsored festivals, wherein ruling political parties could model ideal behavior. Maurice Agulhon's *Marianne Into Battle: Republican Imagery and Symbolism in France, 1789–1880*[23] deals with the use of the popular female name Marianne as allegory for the fledgling republic, acknowledging both the positive and negative attributes and usage of the term and its feminine associations. This symbolism, often expressed via public festivals explored in Ozouf's monograph, exhibits current public and political opinion on female roles. Primary source documentation of legal changes take the form of the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Mand and of the Citizen,[24] the feminist response from Olyme de Gouges, *The Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female Citizen*,[25] and the Code Napoléon.[26] Therefore, though the exotic plot archetype appears to lie dormant during these years, important socio-political changes radically reshape its re-appearance in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The following chapters provide an investigation of existing literature on

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[22] Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, trans. Alan Sheridan, (Combridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1988).

[23]Maurice Agulhorn, *Marianne Into Battle: Republican Imagery and Symbolism in France, 1789-1880*, trans. Jamet Lloyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

[24] "Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen," in *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, Online Academic Edition, accessed 8 May 2013, http://www.brittanica.com/bps/additionalcontent/8/116846/Declaration-of-the-Rights-of-Man-and-of-the-Citizen.

[25] Sophie Moussett, *Women's Rights and the French Revolution: A Biography of Olympe de Gouges*, trans. Joy Poirel (London: Transaction Publishers, 2007).

[26] A Barrister of the Inner Temple, *Code Napoléon: or The French Civil Code* (Paris, 1804. Reprinted Washington, D.C.: Beard Books, 1999), 43–45.

eighteenth- and nineteenth- century exotic opera plot archetypes, identification of their key differences, and contextualization in socio-political change. Through this contextualization a unified lineage emerges, which reconceptualizes the exotic opera plot archetype as a medium for reflection and response to current events, specifically through the exploration of legal and social changes to the status of French women.

CHAPTER 1
Eighteenth-Century Exotic Opera Models

Eighteenth-century exotic archetypes on the French operatic stage differ from their nineteenth-century counterparts most significantly in the intended presentation and reception of the exotic. Far from the threatening wiles of Carmen and her sisters, the characters that populated the eighteenth-century stage descend from the *commedia dell'arte* and present a comedic interpretation of the orient. These works feature immediately recognizable stock characters, which transfer to those representing the exotic: primarily a merciful male as the exotic ruler—possibly aided by a servant of the same race—who holds a chaste Western female captive. Narratives likewise adhere to extreme regularity, with the clemency of the exotic male ruler happily resolving potential conflict. Music for these works corroborates the comedic intent, through both direct attempts to generate comedy or through the lack of serious differentiation, or "other-ing" of the exotic figures, as found in the nineteenth-century exotic archetype. This chapter surveys and identifies comedic intent in librettos and music of four exemplary works: *Arlequin Sultan Favorite* (1721), *Le Turc généreux*, an entrée in *Les Indes Galantes* (1735), *La Recontre Imprévue/Die Pilgrime von Mekka* (1764), and *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1782). The comedic alignment of this tradition demonstrates the ultimately unthreatening nature of the exotic.

In August 1752, an Italian troupe brought the intermezzo *La Serva Padrona* to Paris, igniting the now-infamous *quarelle des bouffons* regarding the merits of Italian comic opera. However, similar Italian acting troupes of the *commedia dell'arte* tradition had in fact been present in Paris for nearly two centuries. The troupe that first performed in 1571 and, as of 1644, reigned as favorites of then-queen regent Anne of Austria and

her advisor, the Italian Cardinal Mazarin.[1] Popular performances resulted in cultural transfer of some aspects of the *commedia dell'arte*, notably the use of epitomized stock characters. Common character types include old men, or *vieillards*, prominently Pantalone, a nearly always-greedy character seeking to part a pair of young lovers, frequently because he wishes to marry the young girl. A pair of young lovers, known by their costume in the latest fashion, includes a female, whose name borrows from classical antiquity, such as Isabella, and a male *innamorato*, bearing the same qualities as his female counterpart. The female half of the pair often exhibits a high degree of intelligence and a capacity for scheming. She also upholds the values of society, never deigning to stain her reputation. Finally, the servants embody clown-type characters. The male Arlequin figure appears particularly apt at hatching plots that fail, creating comedic diversion. The Arlequin usually pairs off with a female maid figure, typically named Columbina and servant of the young female. The Columbina figure exhibits intelligence and dons smart apparel. The following survey of eighteenth-century exotic operas evinces the presence of these stock characters in an equally recurring plot archetype. In illustrating the abundance of the presence of *commedia dell'arte* characters, the survey aligns the eighteenth-century archetype and subsequently the view of the exotic with comedic amusement. In the abduction archetype, a male Turkish ruler separates the young lovers, and seeks to win the affections of the young lady. Thus, the exotic male ruler (possibly taken in summation with his henchmen, if any) may play a type of Pantalone role.

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[1] Virginia Scott, *The Commedia dell'Arte in Paris, 1644–1697* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1990), 18–19.

Musical allusion to the exotic found in many of the abduction plots is found in the use of the *stile alla turca*, or Janissary style. Janissary bands originated in the Islamic Ottoman Empire, and therefore served as an emblem of the orient for Western Europe. Rather than attempting to recreate these ensembles, Western composers sought only to suggest Turkish music. Eighteenth-century composers achieved such allusion through incorporating color instruments, including cymbals, tambourine, cylindrical bass drum (duval), piccolo, and the iconic jingling Johnny, or Turkish crescent. Other musical characteristics include repeating notes, scale runs, unison writing, leaping intervals, simple harmonies, and sudden dynamic changes.[2] The absence of music acting as a strong distinguishing factor separating Western couples and their exotic captors presents itself as the strongest musical argument for this archetype acting as comedy rather than serious opera. Though the Janissary style presents itself in some of the following examples, its use and placement within the works considered suggest it as regional marker rather than an "othering" technique, and, in one case, as an added comedic element.

Arlequin Sultan Favorite

The first known abduction opera, librettist Jean-François Letellier's *Arlequin Sultan Favorite*,[3] premiered in 1721, featuring elements that eventually codified salient features in the prolific archetype. The characters borrowed from the *commedia dell'arte*

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[2] Thomas Bauman, *W. A. Mozart: Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, Cambridge Opera Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 62.

[3] Jean-François Letellier, *Arlequin Sultane Favorite* in *Le Theatre de la Foire ou l'Opéra Comique, contenant les leilleures pièces qui ont été représentées aux Foires de S. Germain et de Laurent*, ed. Lesage (Paris, 1721–37), 203–85.

retain their conspicuous names, indicating origin. The work opens on a Turkish seraglio, where the Sultan holds innamorato Léandre and his servant, Arlequin, as captives; Arlequin makes it known that the Sultan also holds Léandre's wife, Isabella, and her servant—coincidently Arlequin's love interest, Colombine—hostage. The Sultan enlists Arlequin, whom the Sultan favors, to persuade Isabella to return the Sultan's attention. Although Arlequin and Columbine attempt to sway her, Isabella ultimately refuses to stain her fidelity, even to garner their freedom. Arlequin then aides Isabella by forming several attempts at escape, ultimately resulting in comedic failures. These only enrage the scorned Sultan, who threatens revenge, but a harem slave intervenes to prevent any punitive actions. Her testimony of the young lovers abiding faithfulness moves the ruler towards forgiveness, and ultimately he frees all captive Europeans with full pardons. In this early example, the Sultan alone embodies the exotic. Though his pursuit of Isabella appears distasteful to audiences, the Sultan's ultimate clemency renders all previous threats harmless. As representative of his culture, the Sultan presents a contrary lifestyle, but concedes to the lovers, nullifying any threat to the Western gentrified couple and their secondary companions. Isabella, representative of her gender, refuses to yield, likewise acting harmlessly throughout. Therefore, the abduction plot exhibits neither the exotic nor the feminine as a legitimate threat to Western society.

Musical elements corroborate the plot's alignment with comedic entertainment. While the majority of the surviving manuscripts and prints of these early *opéra-comiques* include no music, Jama Stillwell identified the popular tune *Joconde* in a collection of common French songs and aligned it with the libretto to create a score of Arlequin's opening lament, seen in Example 1. The familiar tunes, taken from popular songs, made

the omission of music notation common and also aligns the earliest example with unsophisticated entertainment.

Example 1: Letellier, *Arlequin Sultane Favorite*, Arlequin's lament, set to *Jaconde*.[4]

ARLEQUIN

Sous la puis - san - ce d'un Ty - ran Nous voi - ci donc Es - cla - ves,
Dans un Pa - ys où l'Al - cor - an Ne souf - fre point de ca - ves:

On n'y voit point de Ca - ba - rets, O mi - sè - re in - oui -

- e! Me voi - là sev - ré pour ja - mais De vin et d'eau de vi - e.

As Stilwell notes, public familiarity with the tunes expanded comical resources, as references to previous texts created "endless possibilities for stock references, burlesque incongruities, and double entendres."[5] Attempts at distinguishing exotic characters through music prove futile. Furthermore, the setting of *Arlequin Sultane Favorite* in the Parisian *théâtres de la foire*, essentially street fairs, solidifies the genre growing from a comedic, rather than serious, operatic origin.

Le Turc Généreux

The archetype maintained comedic intent as it transitioned to grander trappings in Rameau's 1735 *Le Turc Généreux*, an entrée in *Les Indes Galantes*, his first *opéra-ballet*.[6] *Les Indes Galantes* presents four "entrées" or shorter works bound together by shared exotic topics. The entrées, *Les Incas du Pérou*, *LeTurc Généreux*, *Les Fleurs*, and

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[4] Stillwell, "A New View of the Eighteenth-Century 'Abduction' Opera," 58.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Louis Fuzelier, *Les Indes galantes* (Paris: L'Avant-scène, 1982).

Les Sauvages, indicate the term "Indies," like "exotic" or "orient," referred to any land or peoples outside Western Europe. *Les Incas du Pérou* takes place near a Peruvian volcano, *Les Turc Généreux* on an island in the Indian Ocean, *Les Fleurs* involves a Persian Prince, and *Les Sauvages* centers on a tribe of North American Indians.

Le Turc Généreux utilizes the abduction plot archetype. Its truncated form eliminates peripheral characters, though ballet sequences and choruses—integral to the French stage tradition—remain. The plot begins as distraught Western captive Emilie bemoans the unwanted attention of her captor, pasha Osman. Attempting to abate Osman's advances, Emilie relates her devotion to her betrothed, Valère. Unmoved, Osman instructs Emilie to forget the past, but she cannot and rejects his advances. A choral interlude depicting the dangers of the sea reveals Valère held captive on the island, as Emilie soon discovers. Pasha Osman discovers the pair and promises swift retribution, hoisting his scimitar aloft. In a moment of extreme drama, Osman delivers freedom instead of death. Osman subsequently reveals his past encounter with Valère, who freed him from slavery. The men embrace as brothers, renew their friendship, and the Pasha sends the lovers off together, heavily laden with golden treasures. Though the plot completes its course, the entrée continues with Western lovers extensively proclaiming their joy in multiple short arias, interspersed by requisite celebratory ballet corps and chorus.

In its truncated form, the plot lacks comedic events usually provided by failed escape attempts and the secondary characters of the Arlequin and Columbina. However, the archetype remains comedic, especially as the pasha's threat is immediately resolved happily. Emilie likewise resists his advances, upholding her honor. Furthermore, little

differentiation occurs between the exotic pasha and the Western lovers. The plot draws parallels between Osman and Valère, as each frees the other from captivity. This parallel of the exotic and Western character freeing each other mediates their national, religious, and cultural differences. Musically, Rameau confines indicators of the Janissary style through the tambourine and duval drum as well as leaping intervals and simple harmonies, to the choral and ballet sequences, as seen in Example 2. These orchestral colors, also exhibited in other ballet and choral sequences, indicate an exotic setting, but fail to create cultural difference between exotic and Western characters. The restriction of musical indicators of the Far East to ballets and choruses of the African slaves indicates their difference, but mainly serves to remind the listener of their locale. Furthermore, while the plot identifies the male ruler Osman as Turkish, it specifies the slaves as African; the Turkish ruler may serve as an intermediary character between his slaves, linked to Janissary stylistic elements, and his captives, whose Western musical aesthetic he shares.

Example 2: Rameau, *Le Turc Généroux*, Scene VI, "Air for the African Slaves."[7]

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[7] Jean-Philippe Rameau, *Les Indes Galantes*, vol. 7 of *Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683–1764): Ouvres Complètes*, ed. Paul Dukas (Paris: A. Durand et Fils, 1902): 129–30.

130

Vons
Alt.
B. C.

Vons
Alt.
B. C.

Vons
Alt.
B. C.

The Janissary elements remain absent from pasha Osman's musical material. That Osman sings in the same style as his Western captives aligns him with their gentrified society, a concept bolstered by his ultimate clemency. Lack of musical delineation abets the plot's focus on similarities between the two men and subsequently the mercy rather than the dangers of the exotic. The three remaining entrées of *Les Indes Galantes* do not adhere to the abduction plot, but also reinforce similarities rather than differences by emphasizing "noble" qualities in exotic figures.

La Rencontre Imprévue/Die Pilgrime von Mekka

Gluck's *La Recontre Imprévue/Die Pilgrime von Mekka*[8] of 1764 returns the archetype to its full cast, this time featuring a Calendar, more colloquially known as a whirling dervish, as a comedic character. The plot finds the young innamorato, Prince Ali of Balzora with his loyal servant, Osman, in Cairo, continuing a two-year search for the Prince's beloved, the abducted Rezia. The Sultan of Egypt holds Rezia captive and hides her disguised among his harem. The Sultan wishes to claim Rezia for his own, but she refuses to break her fidelity to Prince Ali. This particular take on the archetype adds a test of the Prince's fidelity throughout her long captivity. Upon discovering the Sultan's harem, some of the slaves trick Ali into believing Rezia is dead. Three of the Sultan's harem slaves then tempt him in turn. However, Ali resists their urges and locates Rezia. The pair attempts to escape dressed as pilgrims traveling to Mecca, but the Calendar alerts the Sultan. Though initially threatening, the Sultan yields upon hearing of their long-standing devotion. The Sultan of Cairo, though bestowing the necessary clemency at

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[8] Louis Hurtaut Dancourt, *La Rencontre Imprévue, Comedie en Trois Actes Meslée d'ariettes, tirée de l'ancien Théâtre de la foire* (Vienna: Dans l'imprimerie de Ghelen, 1763).

the opera's close, appears on stage surprisingly little compared to the other merciful male rulers considered here.

While the sultan appears automatically aligned with the exotic, orientalist features also emerge in other characters. Some hint of the orient's dangerous allure takes the female form of the harem temptresses. Their airs appear dance-like, and exhibit the large leaps and simple harmonies of the Janissary style. Though seeming to foreshadow the nineteenth-century exotic *femmes fatales*, Ali's ultimate rejection of their offers renders the threat empty and the exotic ultimately innocuous.

A further threat of malicious intent seems to appear in the Calendar's indication of the lover's flight. However, the Calendar exists mostly as a comedic character: he whirls about in fervor and spews nonsense syllables rather than any threatening lyrics. The Calendar's air in Example 3 exhibits many aspects of the Janissary style, including striking leaps, repeated notes, sudden dynamic changes, and a simple harmonic structure. However, the Calendar's comedic function limits the legitimacy of his threat. Repeated marks of "*Il tourne*" throughout this air indicate the Dervish as beginning to whirl; paired with the gibberish, the scene would appear amusing rather than daunting. In previous abduction archetypes, the comedic character ultimately proves the undoing of the young lovers, exemplified by Arlequin's mishaps in *Arlequin Sultane Favorite.* Therefore, though secondary exotic figures such as the Calendar and the harem slaves may present potential dangers, the Sultan's mercy ultimately renders them powerless.

Example 3: Gluck, *Le Rencontre Imprévue*, Act I, No. 2, Air "Castagno, castagna, pistafanache."[9]

AIR

(LE CALENDER.)

N.º 2.

Con moto.

LE CALENDER.

PIANO.

Cas - ta - gno, cas - ta - gna,

Pis - ta fa - na - che; Ri - ma - gno, ri -

- ma - gna, Mous - ti li - ma - che: Quic, ——— bil - lic,

lou - lou ga - gne, Quic bil - lic, lou - lou ga - gne,

[9] Christoph Willibald Gluck, *Le Rencontre Imprévue/Der Pilger von Mekka: Opéra Comique en Drei Akten von L. H. Dancourt*, Piano reduction, Jean-Baptiste Wekerlin (Paris: Gustave Legouix, 1891), 13–15.

Me_ca che_fa ron_quil_lo; Fi_pir_li mir_li_ma_gne,

Se_li_man_ca, ver_guil_lo, Se_li_man_ca, ver_guil_lo,

La le_ra_la le_ra_la le_ra_la le_ra_la le_ra_la, le_ro_lo le ro_

_lo le_ro_lo le_ro_lo le_ro_lo, le_ro_lo!

OSMIN. — Le diable t'emporte avec ton lerolo

Le CALENDER

Me_ca chefa ron_quil_lo, Fi_pir_li mir_li ma_gne, Se_li man_ca,ver_guil_le, Se_li_man_ca,ver_guil_lo, La le_ra_la, le_ra_la le_ra_la le_ra_la le_ra_la, le_ro_lo le_ro_lo, le_ro_lo le_ro_lo le_ro_lo le_ro_lo!

8

f

con 8a

Die Entführung aus dem Serail

Mozart's Singspiel of 1782, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*,[10] demonstrates the spread of the exotic abduction archetype outside of France, and reigns as the most popular and well-known example of the archetype. Christoph Freidrich Bretzer's libretto, *Belmonte und Constanze, oder Die Entführung aus dem Serail*—previously set by Johan André in Berlin—begins with innamorato Belmonte seeking his abducted indended, Konstanze. He happens upon Osmin, servant of the Pasha Selim. Osmin refuses to divulge any information and drives Belmonte away. Belmonte's former servant, Pedrillo, portrays the Arlequin character and derives great joy from provoking Osmin. Meanwhile, Pasha Selim pursues Konstanze—the Isabella character in love with Belmonte—who refuses despite lavish affection and threats of torture. While adhering to the archetype, Konstanze makes the most prominent show of fidelity compared to the other Isabella characters considered. She celebrates death as an acceptable alternative to staining her honor. Her servant, Blonde, likewise refuses the advances of Osmin. Belmonte has reunited with Pedrillo, and the two scheme to escape their captors. Pedrillo inebriates Osmin to eliminate any lookout and then reunites with Blonde, Belmonte, and Konstanze. However, before their flight begins, Osmin recovers his senses and calls for guards. Pasha Selim, betrayed, threatens them; his rage intensifies upon learning Belmonte is the son of a bitter enemy. Though prepared to die, the Western captives are surprised by Selim's ultimate show of mercy; the Turkish ruler breaks the cycle of violence by freeing his captives.

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[10] Gottlieb Stephanie, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail: komisches Singspiel in drei Aufzügen* (Frankfurt: C. F. Peters, 1983).

Mozart scholar Thomas Bauman notes the broad use of the Janissary style, remarking: “Earlier Oriental operas had turned to the *stile alla turca* for instrumental numbers (such as overtures and marches) and for choruses. Mozart, too, provided for the style in these categories, but he also saw fit to utilize it elsewhere.”[11] Nearly all of his integration of “Turkish” stylistic elements involve Osmin, who appears as a more frightening version of *La Rencontre Imprévue*’s Calendar. Music suggests the “other-ing” of this character through the use of the Janissary style in his aria “Solche hergelauf,” which describes a litany of torture methods: “You will be hanged, then beheaded, then be drowned and then be shredded, on the spit we will broil you, and in oil at last we will boil you.”[12] Example 4 depicts the coda, identified as exhibiting the *stile alla turca* by its inclusion of the bass drum (*tamburo grande*) and cymbals (*piatti*) as well as repeating figures and dramatic dynamics. However, like the Calendar, Osmin’s absurdly comedic moments undercut his potentially dangerous side, as in the Act II drinking scene. Bauman agrees, citing one of Mozart’s compositional goals in introducing “Turkish” music as “not to heighten the brutal sadism possessing Osmin at the end but rather to renter his unbridled anger comical.”[13] Bauman further remarks on the passage:

> So artfully did Mozart blend traditional “Turkish” features and general musical tokens of rage that it is difficult to separate them: the monophonic opening with progressively shorter note values, the heavily accented cut time, menacing half-steps, irregular phrase lengths, diminished seventh chords, obsessive repetition of figures rising by step, upward-mounting scalar thrusts, incisive dynamic contrast and frequent *f–p* punctuation.[14]

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[11] Bauman, *W. A. Mozart: Die Entführung*, 65.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid., 67.

[14] Ibid.

The ultimate clemency of Pasha Selim renders him a mere curiosity of the orient.

Example 4: Mozart, *Die Entfuhrung aus dem Serail*, Act I, Scene 3, Aria "Solche hergelaufne Laffen," mm.146–76.[15]

[15] Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail: Deutsches Singspiel in drei Aufzügen, KV 384* (New York: Kalmus, 1933), 56–58.

Stangen, dann ver - braunt, dann ge - bun - den und ge - taucht, zuletzt ge - schun - den, ge - schun - den, ge -

schunden, erst ge - köpft, dann ge - hangen, dann ge - spiesst auf heissen Stangen, dann ver - brannt, dann ge -

These examples stand as representative of an even larger body of work, which includes *Les Époux esclaves ou Bastien et Bastienne à Alger* (1755), *La schiava liberata* (1768), *The Captive, a Comic Opera* (1769), *Der Kaufmann von Smyrna* (1771), *Der Bassa* (or *Pascha* or *Baron*) *vona Tunis, oder Julie* (1774), *L'incontro improvviso* (1775), *Das Grab des Musti oder Die Zwei Geizigen* (1779), *Das Serail, oder die unvermethete Zusammenkunft in der Sclaverey zwischen Vater, Tochter und Sohn* (1778), *Zaide* (1866), *Adelheit von Veltheim, Ein Schauspiel mit Gesang* (1780), *Belmonte und Constanze oder Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1781) and *Le Corsaire* (1784).

The most crucial feature of this collection of eighteenth-century operas is the ubiquity and consistency of the comedic intent evidenced through the stock character of the male ruler as the exotic character, and his eventual show of mercy to his Western

captive and her comrades; indeed, as representative of the exotic, the male ruler's mercy seems to uphold rather than defy the norms of Western society. This plot archetype, drawing on figures of the *commedia dell'arte*, aligns itself first and foremost with comedic entertainment, emphasized musically by popular tunes as well as the Janissary style. This style, though indicating oriental locale, fails to musically ostracize the exotic characters. Though the exotic land provides excitement, it ultimately poses no threat to the continuation of Western gentrified society. The following chapter explores how this position reflects larger societal issues of the *Ancien Régime*.

CHAPTER 2
The Abduction Plot as Projection of Societal Concerns

As demonstrated in the preceding chapter, stock characters—especially the merciful exotic male ruler and Western female captive—permeate the eighteenth-century exotic archetype of the abduction plot. The previous chapter also aligns the archetype with a comedic, rather than serious, performance tradition, through direct ties to the *commedia dell'arte* and requisite joyful finale. As representative of the exotic and the feminine, the male ruler and his Western female captive, respectively, pose no threat towards the Western patriarchal society, in stark contrast to their nineteenth-century counterparts. The eighteenth-century abduction plot female refuses to yield to her captor, and the exotic male ruler ultimately shows mercy by releasing his captives. While these actions exhibit deference to Western patriarchal values, dramatic tension draws on the fears of one or both of these stock characters surrendering to their supposedly more base instincts. This chapter defines the social context for the exotic and feminine archetypes, and identifies the fidelity of the Western female as a key social fear. Through the eighteenth-century abduction plot, Europeans could collectively work through deep-seated fears of both female and exotic licentious proclivity from a safe distance on an oriental stage.

Orient as Popular Culture

References to the exotic in Western entertainment abounded throughout the eighteenth century. The Turks posed legitimate military threat in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but their power began to wane beginning with the 1699 Treaty of Carlowitz that followed a failed siege of Vienna. (Still, war between Turkey and either Austria or Russia continued intermittently until the Treaty of Jassy in 1792.) However, by

the 1760s and 1770s, larger European political players rendered the Ottoman Empire to pawn status, devoid of influence.[1] Though a decreasing military threat, the Turks—and indeed all of the Orient they represented—remained a public fascination and therefore a key component in popular entertainment. The Orient reached such a level of cosmopolitanism as to incite the ladies of the court under Louis XV to don a decorative, though heavily imagined, appearance of harem girls.[2] The continued allure of the Orient, according to scholar Edward Said, centers on defining the self (Europe, or the Occident) through differentiating it from the "Other" (Turkey, the Middle and Far East, or the Orient). The practice of "other-ing" is in fact a self-reflexive exercise, and the Orient becomes a "sort of surrogate" for the self.[3] Said continues by describing the Orient as an adjacent "stage" to Europe, a place on which Europeans could project themselves and their culture while maintaining a safe distance:

> The idea of representation is a theatrical one: the Orient is the stage on which the whole East is confined. On this stage will appear figures whose role it is to represent the large whole from which they emanate. The Orient then seems to be, not an unlimited extension beyond the familiar European world, but rather a closed field, a theatrical stage affixed to Europe. An Orientalist is but the particular specialist in knowledge for which Europe at large is responsible, in the way that an audience is historically and culturally responsible for (and responsive to) dramas technically put together by the dramatist. In the depths of this Oriental stage stands a prodigious cultural repertoire whose individual items evoke a fabulously rich world: the Sphinx, Cleopatra, Eden, Troy, Sodom and Gomorrah, Astarte, Isis and Osiris, Sheba, Babylon, the Genii, the Magi, Nineveh, Prester John, Mahomet, and dozens more; settings, in some cases names only, half-imagined, half-known; monsters, devils heroes; terrors, pleasures, desires. The European imagination was nourished extensively from this repertoire: between the Middle Ages and the eighteenth century such major authors as Ariosto, Milton, Marlowe, Tasso, Shakspeare, Cervantes, and the authors of the *Chanson*

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[1] Wilson, "Turks on the Eighteenth-Century Operatic Stage," 81.

[2] Ibid., 83.

[3] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1979), 3.

> *de Roland* and the *Poema del Cid* drew on the Orient's riches for their productions, in ways that sharpened the outlines of imagery, ideas, and figures populating it. In addition, a great deal of what was considered learned Orientalist scholarship in Europe pressed ideological myths into service, even as knowledge seemed genuinely to be advancing.[4]

Accepting Said's classification of the Orient functioning as a stage upon which Europeans portray their own societal concerns, what specific concerns does the abduction plot archetype address? Residual misconceptions arising from the Crusades remained in the European consciousness, chief among them the perceived sexual promiscuity of Mohammed and the utilization of violence as a method of propagating Islam. The idea of sexual promiscuity descends from both the existence of harems and either an ignorant conception or malevolent altering of the promises of the Islamic paradise transferred as a primary characteristic of all Muslims. This characterization of Muslims spread to include all exotic figures as representative of the other, opposite of the Western, Christian self.[5] Hence, abduction plot portrayals typify exotic characters as ruled by sexual passions in contrast to the proprietary self-restraint exemplified by Western European characters.

The previous chapter found the abduction plot's depiction of the exotic to be both harmless and comedic. However, dramatic tensions—however resolved—derive from the exotic male ruler's desire for the Western female and her refusal of him, inciting threats of violence. These dramatic tensions reflect European societal fears of Oriental control over their females, whom Western culture classified as unable to resist advances, as will be shown below. Extremely early dramatic works—written when the Ottoman Empire

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[4] Ibid., 63.

[5] Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1960), 274.

posed a legitimate threat to the West—illustrate a tragic demise of European standards. The plot of *Ibrahim Bassa* illustrates this point:

> In Daniel Casper von Lohenstein's drama *Ibrahim Bassa* (1653), the abduction fails and is used only to demonstrate the constancy of the captured lovers and the cruelty of the sultan. Ibrahim, who was originally a Christian, is brought captive back to the court of the sultan Soliman along with his lover, Isabella, with whom the sultan is in love. After his lecherousness wins out over his few grains of reason, Soliman finally has Ibrahim executed. In this way he combines paradigmatically the twin Muslim stereotypes of violence and lasciviousness. In this drama we find clearly illustrated a primary motif in the European relation to Islam: the fear that the European woman will fall under the sexual control of the Muslim, will be dragged into his "bed of disgrace," as Isabella puts it. This motif appears whenever a Christian woman is brought to the harem of a sultan, and therefore also in the Turkish operas of the eighteenth century.[6]

Eighteenth-Century Views on the Feminine

Female chastity or fidelity ranked high among concerns for a male-dominated patriarchal society. Indeed, philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau denied females a route to virtue through rational thought and action—which he believed them incapable of—and declared the sole feminine path to virtue lay in either continued chastity or marital fidelity. In addition to reducing female virtue to sexual purity, Rousseau also posits women as destined to fail at this solitary purpose. Rousseau believed the female task a high standard as he accepted that women were constantly controlled by emotion, passion and sexual desire.[7] In his 1762 novel *Emile*, Rousseau allots four sections for the cultivation of an ideal citizen free from prejudice, and his hero Emile learns to cultivate curiosity, leaves the family home, and sows his wild oats. Yet when Rousseau finds his protagonist a mate, he takes a decidedly different tone. Rousseau nearly completely

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[6] Wilson, "Turks on the Eighteenth-Century Operatic Stage," 84.

[7] Dorinda Outram, *The Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 82.

ignores Sophie's upbringing and schooling, as her sole purpose is to please her husband and raise productive citizens to "perpetuate his property." Sophie must remain in the home in order to assure Emile of the legitimacy of their children, as women left unattended outside the home could not be trusted.[8] While defective attributes in males, especially of lower social classes, were corrupted by their situation, the female gender was categorized by nature as an "imperfect animal, without faith, law, fear, constancy."[9] Rousseau's novel found much of its inspiration for the characterization of females from popular societal beliefs. French music scholar Georgia Cowart notes the deficiencies attributed towards women extended to both physical and mental faculties:

> The view of women as "the fragile sex" could apply either to the body or to the mind, thus indicating physical delicacy as well as susceptibility to passion or madness. Even the more positive attributes associated with women, such as compassion, gentleness and love, are considered reflections of physical weakness, and therefore have the negative corollaries of laziness, jealousy and fear. Virtue is masculine; voluptuousness, its polar opposite, is feminine.[10]

This description typifies female pre-disposition to corruption as an essential aspect of their very character. To overcome it would defy nature. Early-modern European pseudo-sciences corroborated such popular characterizations. Physiology likened the female womb to a ravenous creature, which, if left unengaged by sexual intercourse or reproduction, could wander through the body, controlling a woman's thoughts, speech,

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[8] Olwen H. Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship in the French Revolution: The Donald G. Creighton Lectures, 1989* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 4.

[9] Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France: Eight Essays* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975), 147.

[10] Georgia Cowart, "Of Women, Sex and Folly: Opera under the Old Regime," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 6 (1994): 205.

and actions. If a doctor presumed the existence of such symptoms, the errant woman received a diagnosis of hysteria. Though by the late seventeenth century physicians noted that males also suffered from emotionally based ailments resembling symptoms of hysteria, they maintained that women, by the laws of nature that created them as inferior, were especially prone to contracting it.[11]

Socio-economic reasoning provides a more logical, though equally prejudiced argument for the pre-occupation with female virtue. As Natalie Davis has noted, in the eighteenth century, the patriarchal family "streamlined itself for more efficient property acquisition, social mobility, and preservation of the line." Women were increasingly withdrawn from these activities—with the notable exception of marrying to achieve financial security for their families, though only when ordered to do so by the family patriarch—as a result of state building and commercial capitalism.[12] Fear of mixing private and public spheres led to the association of women's behavior with national concerns. As Jama Stilwell notes in her study of gender roles at work in *Arlequin Sultane Favorite*, "The obsession with women's sexual behavior seem to have extended far beyond the simple assurance of a cohesive unit, stemming instead from several anxieties closely connected with the well-being of the French state."[13] The jump from the family unit to an issue of national health stemmed from fears of muddying bloodlines and botched inheritances, a continuation of Rousseau's distrust of female faithfulness outside the family home.

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[11] Davis, *Society and Culture*, 147–48.

[12] Ibid., 149.

[13] Stilwill, "A New View of the Eighteenth-Century 'Abduction' Opera," 66.

Writings from the period also reflect a collective cultural obsession with maintaining female chastity or marital fidelity. So-called "moralist" treatises regarding acceptable roles for women as wives and mothers abounded in the 1690s and 1700s. Among them one finds titles such as: *Le portrait d'une femme honneste, raisonnable et véritablement chestienne* (1693), *Caractères divers des femmes mariées* (1694), *La Vie des gens mariez* (1694), *Devoirs de la vie domestique* (1706), and *L'Art de rendre les femmes fidelles* (1713). These conservative tracts glorify the roles of the domestic and deplored activities like "card games, novels, plays and operas," which could leave household duties unattended. These writings reiterated the propagation of the home as the only safe and appropriate place for the virtuous woman.[14] Therefore, during the latter part of Louis XIV's rule in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, society observed the "increasingly physical and discursive confinement of women to the familial domestic sphere."

Many novels from the age present concerns over preservation of proper heirs. Madame de Tenain's *Histoire du Comte de Clare, Nouvelle Galante* (1696) relates a long-term affair of titled aristocrats told in explicit detail. Though topically an illicit romance, the plot results in an account of an illegitimate child gaining access to another's fortune, a fear that extended beyond the family to the well-being of the nation. The plot encourages obsession with control of female fidelity as the only means to obtain proof of paternity. Though fiction, the tale presented a believable scenario.[15] Fairy tales, like the

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[14] Lewis C. Seifert, *Fairy Tales, Sexuality, and Gender in France 1690–1715: Nostalgic Utopias* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 179.

[15] Joan DeJean, *Tender Geographies: Women and the Origins of the Novel in France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 139–40.

exotic and the novel, serve as a mirror on which society could reflect its concerns while maintaining a safe distance through degrees of distance, in this case their existence in an alternate reality. Lewis C. Seifert notes in *Fairy Tales, Sexuality and Gender in France 1690–1715: Nostalgic Utopias* that "since they play with the boundaries between the imaginable and the unimaginable, folk- and fairy-tales have proven to be a particularly apt medium for pondering the seemingly insoluble question of Woman."[16] The fairy tale repeatedly dwells on parental figures and from the Rennaisance onward exhibited a shift away from "folkloric tale-types concerning incestuous fathers" towards the now-ubiquitous evil mother or step-mother. Increasingly from the seventeenth through the nineteenth century, tales valorized the maternal role to "underscore the virtue of 'good' mothers and the horror of 'evil' ones."[17] These evil mothers plot against kind-hearted husbands to abandon maternal responsibility, illustrated in the "Hansel and Gretel" tale type of d'Aulnoy's "Finette-Condron." By contrast, Murat's "L'Heureuse peine" inverts the scenario: the virtuous mother opposes a deserting father to illustrate appropriate maternal devotion.[18] Thus, both the novel and fairy tales reflect intent to guide women towards familial and maternal devotions by offering both negative and positive models, which in turn correspond with published moralist tracts. All of these publications reiterate the same message: woman belonged at home for the well-being of her family as well as the state.

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[16] Seifert, *Fairy Tales*, 176.

[17] Ibid.,178.

[18] Ibid.,183.

The Exotic and the Feminine as Obstacles to Society

For a society thoroughly convinced that women were intrinsically weak and capriciously passionate, the abduction plot acted as a crucible by placing them in a likewise licentious territory. Could the feeble and easily persuaded female, devoid of natural inclination towards constancy, be trusted among the equally deviant exotic—despite her European morals? Could patriarchal values survive at the hands of the female *and* the exotic despot? Societal obsession with preserving female fidelity appears in all of the abduction-plot works and was illustrated through the examples surveyed in the previous chapter. Stillwell reports the plot of *Arlequin Sultane Favorite* subjects Isabella to the naturally "licentious" Oriental setting. To be sure, Isabella's prudence upholds Western values in the foreign land, allowing for a favorable ending. Yet Stillwell considers far more than just the ending, remarking on the continued reinforcement of patriarchal hierarchy:

> Fidelity is reinforced throughout the entire work as well. Any feminine behavior that does not fall under the umbrella of virtuousness is portrayed here as patently ridiculous.... Laughter is constantly created through the implication that the chaste heroine might actually consider capitulating to the Sultan's desires. Throughout the piece, serious speeches such as "Je ne traihirai point Léandre/ Quel que soit mon nalheureux sort;/ Je saurai me donner la mort,/ Plûtot que de me render" (I will not betray my Léandre, whatever my sad fate may be; I would not rather die that give myself to that man!) are burlesqued through coillisions with blatantly coquettish speeches such as "Oui, ma retenuë/ Peut etre souffrir sela" (Well, I suppose my discretion could allow that [just a little kiss on the chin]!)[19]

Furthermore, the use of the *vaudeville* to create double entendres, as discussed in chapter 1, appear in the setting of "I will not betray my Léandre." By using the tune to "Quand le péril est agréable"—which references a great show of power with nothing to

[19] Stilwell, "A New View of the Eighteenth-Century 'Abduction' Opera," 67.

back it—Letellier suggests Isabella's words are empty, revealing desire despite her declared fidelity. That she, a woman supposedly ruled by passion as all females were, overcomes temptation becomes increasingly meaningful as the music reveals her supposed true desires. By utilizing another popular song, as in the case of Arlequin, Letellier creates a double meaning. Though her words appear at their most serious, the frivolity of the *vaudeville* tune suggests that her will is less resolved than her words.[20]

The very origin of the eighteenth-century abduction plot represented a location "away" from patriarchal regulation. The abduction plot as seen in Lettelier's *Arlequin Sultan Favorite* originated in venues at street fairs, or "théatres de la foire." These carnivals represent a fleeting difference from the norm and may be compared to a masked ball, in which disguised participants could give themselves over to fantasy. Like fairy tales or the orient, the displacement from the status quo may be viewed as a temporary foray away from social constraints. By mapping this concept onto the abduction plot, Jama Stillwell reads an escapist angle into the abduction archetype.[21] In another, "naturally licentious" land, would the Western female give into the more base inclinations of her gender? Stilwell argues that these plot archetypes allow Western females to explore alternatives to their own world. The values system of the Orient would prize one yielding to the despot's desires. However, Mary Hunter tempers that while "social norms are tested and strained within the comic world of the opera—the Western female finds herself in a position where yielding to a threatening captor appears reasonable, perhaps even necessary for survival—ultimately these norms are re-

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[20]Ibid.

[21] Ibid., 71–78.

established at the end, and are even celebrated with a euphoric final ensemble number.[22] Ultimately, though the abduction plot archetype may have allowed for escapist fantasies in an environment of strict social codes, the female characters—primarily the lead young female lover, but also the secondary maid figure—choose to remain committed to their estranged Western love interests regardless of bribes offered or punishments threatened by their Turkish captors. Therefore, while the exotic alternative presents itself, the female characters choose to uphold the Western patriarchal society by protecting their chaste status. In a progressive touch, *La Rencontré Imprévue* includes a test for the Western male *innamorato*, Prince Ali, to overcome temptation, though the harem slaves attempting to seduce him mainly serve to emphasize the "natural" licentiousness of the exotic populace and provide convincing evidence of the locale.

The final work considered in the previous chapter, Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, offers two extremely clear moments regarding the importance of Western female fidelity to the plot. Constanze's Act II aria expressing her commitment to fidelity functions as the musical pinnacle of the Singspiel, highlighting her continued faithfulness as an integral part of the abduction plot archetype and overturning popular conception of female virtue found women lacking the strength to resist passionate advances. While most grand showpieces of this era occur as a reflection of a joyous outcome—as illustrated in *Le Turc Généreux*, wherein Emilie's exuberant finale outbursts nearly double the length of the *entrée*—it appears Mozart himself relocated the *aria di bravura* for the heroine to the only other logical place, capitalizing on Constanze's "unusual"

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[22] Mary Hunter, *The Culture of Opera Buffa in Mozart's Vienna: A Poetics of Entertainment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 66–67.

strength for a woman in her position. Though the B section includes pleas for mercy, Constanze ultimately overcomes not only her supposedly feminine predisposition to be easily supplanted, but also the threat of bodily harm. The text reads as follows:

A.	
Martern aller Arten	Tortures of every kind
Mögen meiner warten,	May await me,
Ich verlache Qual und Pein.	I deride agony and pain.
Nights soll mich erschüttern,	Nothing can unnerve me,
Nur dann würd' ich zittern,	I would only tremble
Wenn ich untreu könnte seyn.	If I could be untrue.
B.	
Lass dich bewegen,	Let yourself be moved,
Verschone mich!	Spare me!
Des Himmels Segen	May heaven's blessing
Belohne dich!	Be your reward!
C.	
Doch du bist entschlossen.	But you are determined.
Willig, unverdrossen	Willingly and unwearied
Wähl' ich jede Pein und Noth.	I choose pain and misery.
Ordne nur, gebiethe,	Order away, command,
Lärme, tobe, wüthe,	Bluster, storm, rage,
Zuletzt befreyt mich doch der Tod.	In the end death shall free me.
(*geht ab*)	(*exit*)[23]

Thomas Bauman identifies "Turkish" markers in the music of Constanze's aria, perhaps referencing the more menacing Osmin through the shared qualities as well as a proclivity for violence as a supposed aspect of Islamic faith. The reference to violence appears apt, particularly given the text of the third stanza, in which Constanze lists possible punishments, as Osmin listed punishments he wished to enact. The musical markers also serve as a reminder of Constanze's location outside of Western patriarchal society. Under threats of torture and even death, her yielding to the Pasha's demands

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[23] Bauman, *W. A. Mozart: Die Entführung*, 79.

appears understandable, even reasonable. That she maintains her fidelity, despite her supposed feminine pre-disposition to passion, as well as threats of the East heighten the drama of the situation.

Example 5: Mozart, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, Act II, *Martern aller Arten*, mm. 60–68.[24]

[24] Mozart, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, 132.

Bauman begins by identifying the diatonic scales of the ritornello as reflecting the *stile alla turca*. Bauman cites the main motif as "unisono, vigorously triadic, duple with firm downbeats, and invoking immediately the sharpened fourth degree," illustrated in Example 5, as further markers of the *stile alla turca*, developing his claims of association within this aria.

The Quartet to end Act II also dwells on female sexual conduct, with Belmonte expressing doubts regarding Costanze's faithfulness. These doubts appear ill-founded after her aria, but they nevertheless reflect the view of woman as weak and unlikely to resist temptation. Here, his suspicion functions to heighten the magnitude of her resistance. Pedrillo wonders to Blonde that Osmin, in owning her, may have forced her to yield to his advances. Thought Blonde defends herself truthfully, Pedrillo hints that if Osmin violated her—even against her will—that she would not be worth his trouble to save. Both ladies convince their respective lovers of their loyalty, and, in an inversion of roles, the men beg forgiveness at having doubted.[25] This trope of males begging forgiveness also flourished outside the exotic archetype; the finale of Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* provides the most notable instance. Musical corroboration of female fidelity as the main source of tension and a prominent and necessary facet of the abduction plot redoubles the evidence of societal preoccupation with control of female sexuality and a cultural need to play out collective fears on the stage.

The eighteenth-century abduction plot archetype reveals European society's preoccupation with two supposedly licentious parties: the exotic and the feminine. Even though the reality of an exotic military threat, embodied by the Ottoman Empire, had

[25] Bauman, *W. A. Mozart: Die Entführung*, 51–52.

receded, it still provided an ideal stage on which Europeans could project fears of preserving female virtue. By placing the assumedly weak female, susceptible by nature to being swayed by passion, in the also assumedly licentious Orient, patriarchal society demands her strongest commitment of fidelity. Pressure, too, from her captor, in the form of bribes as well as threats of torture, increase the Western female's likelihood of yielding to the male ruler's requests. However, while infidelity appears imminent and even understandable, the female character remains true to her European lover.

The male ruler's act of clemency rather than violence or cruelty—which, alongside licentiousness, was considered integral to the character of Oriental figures, both real and fictionalized—corroborates the female's yielding to the confines of societal limitations. Thus, these *femmes idéales* prolong dramatic tension, guarantee a joyous ending to the work, and ultimately pose no threat to gentrified society. With her society strengthened thanks to her show of fidelity, the Western female becomes free—with dignity and appropriate morals intact—to resume her duties in the world.

Chapter 3
Revolutionary Anti-Feminist Backlash

The period of the French Revolution presents a highly contradictory state of female freedoms and political involvement. While initially taking crucial steps forward both in terms of female status and freedoms, the years of upheaval ultimately regressed to limit female liberty in most all forms and arenas, galvanizing inequity into law. From 1789 to early 1793, disguised women who served in the army were recognized for their valor, and the abstract female form served as a figure of the French "motherland." In festivals and on the seal of the Republic beginning in 1792, the popular allegory of the goddess Liberty replaced the masculine Christian God, symbolizing "fertility, renewal, and varieties of the public good."[1] However, in 1793, tides began to change against female figures and legal rights. Masculine reason replaced Liberty as allegory, and feminine glorification in patriotic festivals declined. A woman's role outside the home and her influence over her husband's politics were completely dismissed. Under Robespierre, the Jacobin party further restricted women from any sort of political involvement. The state made a concerted effort to divert woman's political interest entirely to the home, where raising families with national pride and loyalty to the state became her chief job, though any real power in the domestic realm was given wholly to her husband and eventually her male children.[2] These and further exhibits of the dismissal of females from the public and political sphere constitute events to which changing exotic opera plot archetypes reflect and react.

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[1] Jann Pasler, *Composing the Citizen: Music as Public Utility in the Third Republic France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 128.

[2] Ibid., 128–29.

The preceding chapters discussed examples of the exotic archetype of the abduction plot as well as its social context and implications. As years of political and social upheaval surrounding and following the French Revolution raged on, exotic topics in French opera appeared to lay dormant. However, legal and social changes during the period regarding treatment of females reshaped the eventual resurfacing of this archetype in later generations. Attempts to curb female liberty and political involvement reflect a new, far more insidious fear: women could deliberately seek societal ruin through overthrowing patriarchal rule. This was a significant alteration to the previous view of women, which posited their potential ability to cause social ruin rather than actively campaigning for it. This chapter traces the state of women's rights via a two-pronged approach. After a brief overview of some of the more visible female contributions to Revolutionary activities, it explores the female as modeled in popular festivals and women's societies. Next it calls attention to specific legal changes regarding the rights of female citizens. This chapter draws upon primary source documents, such as Olympe de Gouges *The Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female Citizen* and the Code Napoléon, as well as secondary interpretations of the effects of such documents. In the aftermath of the French Revolution, the power and roles of the female became more limited, public expectations were altered, and, as subsequent chapters document, her depiction on the operatic stage morphed. Indeed, the changes to women's liberties in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries enacted direct and long-standing alterations to the exotic opera archetype.

Revolutionary Involvement

As previously addressed, disguised female individuals served in military Revolutionary forces. However, their collective efforts garnered both attention and action. The largest political—and somewhat military—display of female power for change during the Revolution appears in the women's march on Versailles and the Royal family. On October 5, 1789 when they heard that soldiers there "had trampled the tricolor cockade and worn in its place the white of the Bourbons or the black of the aristocratic counter-revolution," the enraged women of Paris, too long deprived of means to feed their families, marched to Versailles.[3] Between eight hundred and two thousand women first forced entry and ransacked the Hôtel de Ville in search of ammunition. Finding no cache, they prepared to create a bonfire of files. Though exact accounts of the events vary, history credits National Guardsman Stanislas-Marie Maillard with redirecting their attack and convincing them instead to target Versailles. The crowd divided, some seeking ammunition at Invalides, while others rallied more women to their task. The crowd rendezvoused at the Place Louis XV, armed with brooms, kitchen tools, and a few pikes. Led by Maillard and drummers, they set out for Versailles, eventually tailed by the fearful National Guard and other groups of men. Upon their arrival at Versailles, the rowdy crowd ordered an audience with the king. After significant delay a group of about twelve delegates secured his promise of increased provisions for Paris, but the large gathering remained displeased and refused to leave. Their continued presence threatened the royal family until the king appeared to promise bread as well as his return to the

[3] Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 58.

capital. The women returned to Paris triumphant with the royal family as well as wagons full of flour from the king's private store in tow.[4] While the men had taken the Bastille, the women of Paris delivered the royal family back to the people of Paris.

Women also took part in far more mundane ways of promoting and maintaining the ideals of the fledgling Republic, as Lynn Hunt describes:

> During most of the Revolution, but especially in 1792 and 1793, political mobilization took place primarily outside of regular, official government channels. The clubs, the popular societies, and the newspapers took on themselves the responsibility for converting local populations, including local army garrisons, to the republican cause. Women's clubs and societies or artisans and shopkeepers explicitly devoted themselves to republican self-improvement.… In short, the power of the revolutionary state did not expand because its leader manipulated the ideology of democracy and the practices of bureaucracy to their benefit; power expanded at every level as people of various stations invented and learned new political "microtechniques." Taking minutes, sitting in a club meeting, reading a republican poem, wearing a cockade, sewing a banner, singing a song, filling our a form, making a patriotic donation, electing an official—all these actions converged to produce a republican citizenry and a legitimate government.[5]

However, while women exhibited the capacity for incredible dedication to the Revolution through their services, they felt no need to wait patiently on unfulfilled promises. Perhaps ironically, women, relegated to the domestic sphere, saw the shortcomings of the new Convention most clearly. Wives and mothers stood in bread ration lines during the bitterly cold winter of 1794–95, when rations rarely reached ten ounces and often dipped to as low as two ounces per day. While their male counterparts could idealize the principles of the Revolution, women faced harsh realities of survival within an inadequate system. Resentment towards a Revolution that their family members had died for and they themselves had promoted resulted in women's protests to the

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[4] Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship*, 7–12.

[5] Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class*, 72.

Convention beginning on March 27, after the end of the severe winter. The number of women—usually those without young children—in riots rose significantly. They began acting not only as participants, but also as instigators of such disturbances. Though mass arrests were made, the Convention resisted harsh punishment lest they create popular martyrs.[6] Despite most women backing down when faced with an organized militia, the Convention learned that it could no longer count on an empowered crowd to follow the cause blindly. Hufton remarks:

> Silence, the politicians had learned, had to start with women. They had to be stopped from inciting riot, for without the incitement there could be no riot. If the women were prevented from gathering together they would not generate the courage to protest and individual insurgents could be dealt with by the police. If the numbers of war widows and women living on military pensions were reduced then the grievances of the wives of heroes could not be used to legitimate and hallow criticism of the government and the inadequacy of its policies. There is nothing more revelatory of government fears and guilt than these legislative initiatives and little that the collection does not tell us about the role of city women in the Revolution. This body of laws constituted an inglorious end, and unworthy codicil to the history of the engendered crowd in the French Revolution. The popular revolution was indeed over and it was evident that popular sovereignty was dead beyond recall.[7]

The female crowd had to be contained and prevented from taking an active role in politics. Hence, the lasting impact of the Revolution was a severe curb of women's rights, as exhibited through the changes to their treatment in popular culture as well as their legal rights. The effects of these changes would continue well into the twentieth century, when France lagged behind most other Western powers in granting female suffrage and continued to uphold laws limiting the civil liberties of its female citizens.

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[6] Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship*, 42–48.

[7] Ibid., 49–50.

Festivals and Imagery

Involvement and esteem for French females in festivals and imagery of the new Republic, like political involvement, blossomed early but quickly wilted. First, the very embodiment of the country found itself called by the female name Marie-Anne, also seen in print as Marianne. In his book *Marianne Into Battle*, Maurice Agulhorn explores the use of the popular name and its complications as a symbol of the Republic. Prominent among concerns is the seeming conflict with the obvious Catholic associations, for what could be more Catholic "than the combination of the name of the Holy Virgin and that of her mother?" However, Agulhorn observes that during the eighteenth century, the common people more often chose names of popular saints, while the aristocracy tended towards distinctive names of mythology or Greco-Roman antiquity. Therefore, Marianne was adopted by a regime that aligned itself with the popular and viewed itself as of the common people.[8] Early imagery of the Revolution and the Republic followed suit, using the female figure as a new rallying point to replace unification previously provided by the church under the monarchy. Indeed, the female figure was pitted against the masculine Christian god in myriad public festivals.

These festivals took on different guises and names—The Festival of Reason, The Festival of the Supreme Being, and the Festival of the Federation—and while these different festivals served slightly different purposes, all were meant to unite French citizens behind the cause of the Revolution and later the Republic. Given the exclusion of the Church in post-revolutionary France, these festivals served as replacement for the

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[8] Maurice Agulhon, *Marianne into Battle: Republican Imagery and Symbolism in France, 1789–1880*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 33.

Catholic mass, in that they brought citizens together to behold a common wonder: a new state. The new order also allowed participation by its previously excluded female population. Indeed, as Mona Ozouf relates in her survey of revolutionary festivals, the presence of women permeated prolific French historian Jules Michalet's entire account of the festival culture, romanticizing his historical account. The involvement of women became a main focal point of the festivals; indeed, Michalet viewed the entrance of women and children into public life as a major attribute of the Revolution. His focus on the female figures drew attention away from the more war-derived and grotesque features of these mass gatherings.[9] Though females heavily colored Michalet's accounts, he was not mistaken in perceiving their special status. Like the name Marianne, a symbol of the Republic was necessary to replace the masculine Christian god of Catholicism that remained associated with the ancien regime. Thus, many festivals, but especially the Festival of Reason, featured a female goddess, most often identified as Liberty, though somewhat ambiguously. In *Festivals and the French Revolution*, Mona Ozouf illustrates the ubiquity of the female goddess as a visual centerpiece and rallying point of the festival:

> Nevertheless, the deity of the French, here as in so many festivals, was still Liberty, not Reason. The arrangements for the festival do nothing to remove the equivocal aspect of the project. Chénier's anthem opened the presentation with this invocation: "Descend, O Liberty, Daughter of Nature." At the summit of the mountain, at the entrance to a small round temple dedicated to Philosophy, "the faithful image of beauty appears" was certainly meant to represent Liberty. There was no goddess of Reason, but halfway down, on the Greek altar, her flame was burning. If we leave Paris and turn to the provinces, we find the same uncertainties in the scenic arrangements. Sometimes, as in Paris, the female figure at the center of the festival is certainly Liberty: at Saint-Sever she is identified by her "imposing attitude," and at Meyssac she is depicted pouring wine into a

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[9] Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 19.

> vessel, a flaming cap on her head.... Sometimes, however, she is Reason. But even more often her attributes are left vague: Like Equality she carries a level, like Liberty a cap or a pike, or, like Death, a guillotine. If is far from being the case that she is always given the flame—according to the *annales patriotiques et litéraires* the only correct attribute for Reason—and a book. At Confonlens she is represented as a shepherdess, carrying a crook decked out with tricolor ribbons, in the midst of a "swarm" of companions. At Corbeil she is a beautiful, virtuous woman, decorated with warlike attributes, surrounded by wounded men, and although the song dedicated to her may theoretically be addressed to Reason, she is actually Victory. Elsewhere, crowned with oak, vine leaves, and ears of corn, she could be Nature. Or again, as at Saint-Gatien-de-Tours, she is a winged figure, certainly more like Fame than Reason. The "deity," in all simplicity, the president of the regenerated people's club of Port-Brieuc pronounced her, and he was right. The Main point was that this was a tutelary female figure. What facilitated this syncretism was, in the case of the statue, the possible reuse of another image. Thus the people's club of Rodgez suggested keeping the colossal Virgin that crowned the bell tower... and turning into "the only deity that will soon be recognized on earth." Reason? No, Liberty again.[10]

Despite the number of representations of female goddesses and the esteem for the females projected, female involvement and glorification remained limited. Festivals defined virtuous female roles as restricted to the patriotic wife and mother. The Festival of the Supreme Being exhibited the abundance of the state and featured cornucopias on chariots bearing dairy, fruits, and breads to be placed on an altar and shared among attendees. The wealth of the country extended from foodstuffs to citizens, specifically women, who could provide a stable future. Ozouf depicts the understanding and acceptance of a certain destiny for such virtuous women:

> And it was a festival of fecundity: the maidens' banderoles—"When we are mothers"—declared their destiny, while mothers gave suck to their infants, especially males. Pregnant women, in themselves allegories of the permanence of the Revolution, were summoned imperiously: "The General Council of the commune requests each of you to appear at sic o'clock in the morning at the place de la Liberté, with your husband, who, given the condition of pregnancy in which

[10] Ibid., 98–99.

> you find yourself, must perform his duty of accompanying you and holding your arm; you will be able to hold a child by the hand.[11]

The imperious demands of attendance by pregnant females and their families seemed to demand a show of the proper female obligation. If this imagery failed to make obvious their point, a model of the ideal women situated within the domestic realm of the nuclear family was presented in multiple locales, as Ozouf describes:

> To illustrate this legitimate plenitude, there were also tableaux … of the "Good Family": a woman busying herself with a bassinet, a father teaching a child perched on his knee to read, another child embracing them, a fourth crowning them. This "tableau vivant of morality and patriotism" was held as often as possible in the countryside, so much so that the festival might be called, and sometimes quite simply was called, a spring festival. More often than any other, this festival emptied the city streets, was held in the public gardens (as at Saint-Malo) in meadows (as at Caen), or, in the villages, at the precise spot where the houses ended.[12]

Apparently attempting to assault festival attendees from all angles possible, organizers also used music to illustrate the acceptable roles a French woman could play, not only in bearing and raising children, but also instilling in them a patriotic spirit that bordered on zealotry. Étienne Méhul, a French revolutionary composer in Napoleon's good graces and an early recipient of the Legion of Honor (*Légion d'honneur*), wrote "Chant du départ" (1794), which illustrates in its text French mothers giving up their sons for the good of the country, proclaiming:

> Expect no tears from mothers' eyes …
> We have given you life, warriors,
> But your life's no longer yours;
> Henceforth your days are your country's.

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[11] Ibd.,115.

[12] Ibid., 116.

She is your mother before us.[13]

In this stanza, mothers bemoan the loss of their sons but also admit that the country's needs come before their own. Upon completing their role as mother and cultivating a sense of duty to the state, a woman sent her product off to the country. Her only acceptable act of public utility and political involvement ended.

Female roles were limited not only in acceptable shows of patriotism, but also in organizational levels of festivals. The Constitutional Committee rejected Madame Mouret's *Annales de l'éducation du sexe*, which advocated for a female contingent to take part in the Festival of the Federation on July 14, 1790. Therefore, females were not allowed to take official part in the festival meant to honor the National Guards and troops of Paris, perhaps because of the military nature of the festival. This festival in particular lay outside the realm of domesticity. The Committee allowed the women to present a tableau, although outside the official festival activities. However, Ozouf tempers this characterization with the acknowledgement that not all of France held women in such limited roles and remarks that "outside Paris other Festivals of the Federation were not so sexist. In Denezé-sous-le-Lude, women held their own federation, in which the armed young men lay down their weapons at the women's feet."[14] Despite more temperate opinions in the countryside, it appeared that the brief period of female involvement and esteem was drawing to a close.

However popular and varied the image of the female goddess, by June 1793, as the Terror began, the sanctified female form took on a less prominent role as Hercules

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[13] Louis-Albert Bourcault-Ducoudray, "L'Enseignement du chant dans les lycées," *La Revue Musicale*, 3 (1903), 725.

[14] Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, 44–52.

replaced all her incarnations. Lynn Avery Hunt remarks in her book *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution*:

> It is impossible to know exactly what the deputies of the Convention had in mind when they chose Hercules for the seal, because the choice aroused little official comment. … However, they were almost certainly attracted to the masculinity of the figure since they had already voted to replace the female goddess of Liberty on the seal.[15]

The Hercules figure, associated with the royal Bourbon line from Henry IV onward, underwent a transformation in order to gain new association with a republican government. It appears that the image of the hero first emigrates to America before returning to France. The engraver Augustin Dupré struck a medal for Benjamin Franklin in 1783, when the American statesman served as ambassador to France. On one side, the head of a young girl appears along with the words "*Libertas Americana*." The reverse features the young child Hercules strangling two serpents, while a goddess bearing a shield with a *fleur-de-lis* protects it from an attacking leopard, shown in illustration 1. More plainly, France guards the infantile America.

Illustration 1: Dupré, "Libertas Americana" (1783).

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[15] Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class*, 103.

Most importantly, the engraving aligns Hercules with freedom and democracy rather than an *ancien regime*. Dupré also transfers Hercules to France on the highly visible five franc piece upon the proclamation of the Republic. The coin depicts a grown Hercules flanked by two female figures of Liberty and Equality. The inscription reads "Union and Force."

However, before Dupré's five franc coin was struck, French painter Jacques-Louis David—famous for portraits of Napoleon, including "Napoleon at the Saint-Bernard Pass" (1801) and "The Coronation of Napoleon" (1806) among other political works—aided in the realignment of Hercules. In addition to painting, David, an active Republican and member of the Jacobin party, organized Republican imagery for presentation at festivals and ceremonies. His Hercules, a costumed propaganda figure, debuted at such a festival, following the image of the female goddess Liberty-Marianne in the parade. Rather than blatantly altering the monarchist traditions associated with Hercules, David merely chose certain aspects over others and inverted their intent. By the time of the Revolution associations of Hercules with "Rhetoric" and "Persuasion" had already diminished. Therefore, David merely aligned the Herculean features of "Courage" and "Force" with the common people against their oppressors, that is, any enemies of the Republican state. Thus, the Herculean figure loses association with the "power of individual kings" and takes on a new, collective power of the newly franchised public. The reimagined popular Hercules not only replaced the old power of the king, but also the image of the female goddess Liberty and female embodiment of the new

government as Marianne.[16] Hunt remarks on the connection between a male symbol and the banishment of women from active participation in politics and government:

> David's Hercules recaptured and rehabilitated a distinctly virile representation of sovereignty, a concept that had connotation of domination and supremacy in any case. Yet Hercules was not a paternal emblem of authority; in the David-Dupré figuration he was a powerful brother protecting the sister figures of Liberty and Equality. The masculinity of Hercules reflected indirectly on the deputies themselves; through him they reaffirmed the image of themselves as a band of brothers that had replaced the father-king. In addition to supplanting the king, Hercules dwarfed his female companions. In this way, the introduction of Hercules served to distance the deputies from the growing mobilization of women into active politics. On the grounds that women's active participation in politics would lead to "the Kinds of disruption and disorder that hysteria can produce," The Convention outlawed all women's clubs at the end of October 1793. That action preceded David's proposal for a gargantuan statue by only a few days. In the eyes of Jacobin leadership, women were threatening to take Marianne as a metaphor for their own active participation; in this situation, no female figure, however fierce and radical, could possibly appeal to them. Hercules put the women back into perspective, in their place and relationship of dependency. The monumental male was now the only active symbol.[17]

Herculean imagery faded after the Terror, and when pictured after this point, female goddesses always accompanied him, rather than allowing him to stand solitary. However, while female allegories of Liberty and the Republic (Marianne) continued, imagery of Napoleon Bonaparte himself overcame all others. The reign of female imagery and esteem drew to a close. Likewise, early female liberties soon saw themselves curtailed by the Republic and Empire, as leaders transformed these societal emblems into enduring laws.

The Rights of (Wo)Man: Vacillating Views

The government in the years during and directly following the Revolution, though freeing many from the punishing inequity of feudal laws, in fact set women back further,

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[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid., 104.

directly naming them as an inferior subject to males, who, without control, could overturn order. In 1789 the Constituent Assembly held debates over which groups of people would possess citizenship and suffrage in the new Republic. The assembly only excluded three specific factions: the poor who could not pay a tax equal to three days wages, servants whose impartiality could not be guaranteed, and women. Though the first two groups received heavy debate, particularly by the vocal Jacobin leader Robespierre, female exclusion passed unchallenged. This quiet un-event set a precedent that continued until the mid-twentieth century.

On August 26, 1789, during the Revolution, the National Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. The document contained seventeen articles listing universal rights to be upheld at all times. The list includes philosophy espoused by the Enlightenment and shares much in common with Thomas Jefferson's July 4, 1776 United States Declaration of Independence. Coincidently, Jefferson resided in France at the time of the adoption of the French Declaration, working as a United States diplomat. The Declaration lists as natural that all men are born free and equal, that Liberty consists of freedom of all actions that will not harm others or break the Law, that freedom of speech and the press must not be impeded, and freedom from religious persecution, among others.[18] In 1793 the government adopted a lengthier version with more explicit statements of some rights as well as the abolishment of slavery. The

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[18] "Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen," in *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, Online Academic Edition, accessed 8 May 2013, http://www.brittanica.com/bps/additionalcontent/8/116846/Declaration-of-the-Rights-of-Man-and-of-the-Citizen.

document contains no mention of women; after all, French females found themselves ineligible for citizenship. The omission, however, could not escape notice or response.

Olympe de Gouges, like many citizens, favored the Revolution, as evident in her openly patriotic plays. However, she opposed the Jacobin party, to which Robespierre subscribed, and denounced the massacre at the scaffold, once even saving a condemned man's life through an impassioned speech. She also acted as a major figure for female rights in the new regime. In direct response to *The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*, de Gouges penned *The Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female Citizen* in 1791, which she addressed to Marie Antoinette, who was technically still queen. The document draws heavily from the 1789 *Rights of Man*, with additional provisions for women and children. De Gouges incorporated elements with which she had direct personal experiences: her mother died destitute, so she campaigned for elderly shelters; a mother herself, she demanded medical establishments to provide clean birthing environments; having suffered an unhappy marriage, she expounded upon the rights to fair divorces; and finally, born an illegitimate child, she insisted on legal recognition for such children.[19]

De Gouges begins her unprecedented document with a striking address and appeal to reason, asking boldly:

> Man, are you capable of being just? It is a woman who poses the question; you will not deprive her of that right at least. Tell me, what gives you sovereign empire to oppress my sex? Your strength? Your talents? Observe the Creator in his wisdom; survey in all her grandeur that nature with whom you seem to want to be in harmony, and give me, if you dare, an example of this tyrannical empire. Go back to animals, consult the elements, study plants, finally glance at all the

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[19] Sophie Moussett, *Women's Rights and the French Revolution: A Biography of Olympe de Gouges*, trans. Joy Poirel (London: Transaction Publishers, 2007), 62–63.

> modifications of organic matter, and surrender to the evidence when I offer you the means; search, probe, and distinguish, if you can, the sexes in the administration of nature. Everywhere you will find them mingled; everywhere they cooperate in harmonious togetherness in this immortal masterpiece.
>
> Man alone has raised his exceptional circumstances to a principle. Bizarre, blind, bloated with science and degenerated—in a century of enlightenment and wisdom—into the crassest ignorance, he wants to command as a despot a sex which is in full possession of its intellectual faculties; he pretends to enjoy the Revolution and to claim his rights to equality in order to say nothing more about it.[20]

The articles that immediately follow adhere to the form of the *Rights of Man*, modifying them as soon in the terse Article I, from "Men are born free and equal in rights," to "Woman is born free and is equal to man in her rights." However, they soon address the power inequity de Gouges observes, calling for women to regain "natural rights" taken from them by man's "perpetual tyranny" in Article IV. De Gouges does not ask for preferential treatment for females, repeatedly reiterating the female citizen's duty to uphold the law and to be subject to the courts as any of her male counterparts. Previously, women were not considered fully responsible for their actions, a sentiment that, Mousset notes, ended with the very public conviction of Marie Antoinette, a female symbol of contempt for the Revolution and arguably more of a figure-head than her husband.[21] The final portion of de Gouges's document was a "Form for Social Contract Between Man and Woman," which was intended as a fairer contract for marriage, and

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[20] Gouges, Olympe de, *The Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female Citizen*, City University of New York Library Online, accessed 6 November 2013, http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/americanstudies/lavender/decwom2.html.

[21] Moussett, *Women's Rights and the French Revolution*, 67–70.

well ahead of its time, though its main tenets now form the modern PACS (*pacte civil de solidarité*), or French civil union.[22]

In early years following the Revolution, it appeared that great progress in family law, historically connected with the state of women's liberty, could be achieved. With the 1791 Constitution, the National Assembly granted marriage status as a "civil contract." As the Republic was proclaimed the following year, upon receiving a steadily increasing number of petitions in favor of divorce, the Legislative Assembly added further liberties, as they "legalized divorce, reduced paternal authority over marriage choices, lowered the age of majority, removed all nuptial matters from clerical control, and established a secular état civil for recording births, marriages, divorces and deaths."[23] Again, while tinged with Revolutionary idealism, these liberal alterations found some basis in the best interests for both the new state and its economy, as Suzanne Desan summarizes in her book *The Family on Trial in Revolutionary France*:

> On the most basic level, this idea developed out of utilitarian and populationist Old Regime discourse, enhanced by mercantile state theorists, physiocrats, and various philosophes: marriage was a useful, natural duty of subjects, who should produce population for state and society. Drawing on this logic … divorce proponents in the Old Regime and the New had argued that divorce would benefit the state by allowing couples from broken households to remarry and multiply.[24]

Removed from sacred status, this contract, like any other, could be subject to termination. Moreover, the feudal relationship between husband and wife vanished. However, while the new civil status liberated marriage in some respects, it also became

[22] Ibid., 76–79.

[23] Suzanne Desan, *The Family on Trial in Revolutionary France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 49–50.

[24] Ibid., 55.

increasingly entwined with civil identities in the new order. The civil nature of the marriage contract also imbued it with "moral and political power" previously absent from the ecclesiastical sacrament, and "harnessed sexuality to the state and common good."[25] Also in 1792 two more feminist tracts became available in France: Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* and Theodore Gottlieb von Hippel's *On Improving the Status of Women*. On June 28, 1792, the Convention voted to give support to single mothers and grant abandoned children citizenship, but maintained that political rights excluded women. More liberal ideas of property also evolved alongside family law. Though it failed to come to fruition, an early draft of a Civil Code by Jean-Jaques Cambacérès in 1793 proposed that if a couple lacked a marriage contract, husband and wife shared equal control over their property.[26]

1793: The Terror and the Demise of Womens' Rights

However, 1793 also began the gradual political and legal demise of women's rights that would color perceptions of gender in France for the next century and beyond. The Jacobin party reigned through the Terror and precipitated many of the anti-feminist actions. On October 30, 1793, the Jacobins, perhaps fearing the kind of riots previously acted against the monarchy, prohibited meetings of five or more women, including female Jacobins' clubs. The Constitution of 1793 excluded women from all politics as well as the army, overturning the former recognition some women received for their acts of military valor. This followed the execution of Marie Antoinette on October 16 and preceded that of Olympe de Gouges—whose anti-Jacobin sentiments resulted in the

[25] Ibid., 56–57.

[26] Ibid., 64.

consideration of her writings as "an assault against the people's sovereignty"—on November 3.[27] Another politically involved female, Marie Jeanne Roland, who publically defected from the Jacobins alongside her husband, joined these high-profile women as a martyr upon the scaffold the same month. It is worthy of distinction that the outlawing of female gatherings, as well as the executions of prominent females, closely follows the June 1793 replacement of the female goddess Liberty with the overtly masculine Hercules. It appears early involvement and esteem women enjoyed died along with the initial idealism of the Revolution, devolving into strict rulings aimed at promoting the greater good and survival of the new regime. In *Citoyennes: Women and the Ideal of Citizenship in Eighteenth-Century France*, French scholar Anne Smart comments that 1793 appeared to proclaim "good *citoyennes* should stay at home and that politically minded *citoyennes* would be guillotined."[28] Smart also comments on the acceptable Jacobin female roles, summarizing:

> Both in speeches of leading Jacobins and interpretations of those speeches, the revolutionary *citoyenne* seems to suffer from the Mary/Eve syndrome, in that femininity is defined as either "bad" or "good." The "good" *citoyenne* takes the form of the republican mother who happily breastfeeds her child at home; the "bad" *citoyenne* leaves the home to meddle in politics. Neither of these models constructs a positive and active civic identity.[29]

The 1795 Constitution enacted a further political stipulation, banning women from attending any political debates, even as mere spectators, effectively dismissing "women's desire to become active outside the home and influence their husbands'

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[27] Moussett, *Women's Rights and the French Revolution*, 86–95.

[28] Anne K. Smart, *Citoyennes: Women and the Ideal of Citizenship in Eighteenth-Century France* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2011), 154.

[29] Ibid.

politics within the home."[30] Political speeches glorifying motherhood mirrored the messages found in festivals and imagery as an active role in society. However, Smart concludes that idealizing domesticity denies women any such role, for the very definition of citizenship relies on the "ability to exercise full political rights in the public sphere[—] a necessary condition for belonging to a nation." Relegated to the home, females could not attain such actions.[31]

Inequity as Law: the Code Napoléon

The year of the Terror, 1793, was a pivotal year in political tides turning against feminine representations of France, female rights, and political involvement. However, rather than subsiding after the Terror, the limitations of women increased as Napoleon declared the Empire. Indeed, Napoleon Bonaparte galvanized these inequities into law, which lasted far beyond his own reign. In November 1799, Bonaparte and his troops seized control, drafted the Constitution of the Year VIII, and secured his election as First Consul. The Constitution of the Year X increased his power by declaring Bonaparte First Consul for life. Through military victories, Napoleon asserted himself as the only viable option for a singular ruler. On May 18, 1804, the Senate named him Emperor and on December 2 of the same year, he was crowned and consecrated by Pope Pius VII in the Notre-Dame de Paris.

Napoleon's misogyny was no secret. Mona Ozouf's profile of Madame Claire de Rémusat, who survived the Terror that claimed her father and became a lady in waiting to Josephine through her own political transformation and cunning, depicted his hatred:

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[30] Pasler, *Composing the Citizen*, 128.

[31] Smart, *Citoyennes*, 206.

> He displayed contempt, never so conspicuous as when it was directed toward women, combined as it was with a touch of fearful timidity. He was convinced that a concealed female power had weakened the kings of France. ... If the women were beautiful, or at least young, he might value them. But outside these exceptions, he would have gladly opined that that a well-organized country could kill its women the way nature condemns insects to prompt death as soon as they have achieved the work of maternity. In his court, therefore, he wished and had only pretty little sheep.[32]

The *Code civil des Français*, promulgated on March 21, 1804 and known later as the Code Napoléon, reflects the increasing explicit naming of women as threats to the state. The first document formally includes many positive social reforms which continue to flourish in most first-world countries, including freedom of religion, separation of church and state, and the practice of appointing government jobs to the most qualified rather than by privilege of birth. However, as Desan notes, “More often than not, the authors of the Code reacted against revolutionary innovations in family law” by reasserting “patriarchal authority of fathers over children and husbands over wives.”[33] In providing such patriarchal authority to male citizens, the document codifies Napoleon’s—and French society’s—growing fear of female power. Sophie Moussett provides this introduction:

> The Code Napoléon had included the inequity of the sexes to the law. A husband was meant to protect his wife, and she was to submit herself to ‘the sovereign and absolute judge of a family’s honor.’ When a woman married, she relinquished all of her legal rights; these were only regained mid-20th century. She had to bear her husband’s name, live wherever he chose to settle and acquire his nationality. Since sexual relations were part of conjugal duty, there were never any cases of rape between spouses. In the case of adultery, women were more severely punished than men because they could bear illegitimate children. Husbands had the right to control their wives’ correspondence, and their use of force upon them

[32] Mona Ozouf, *Women’s Words: Essay on French Singularity*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 94–95.

[33] Desan, *The Family on Trial*, 284.

> was accepted. When a husband died, his wife was neither heir, nor usufructuary, nor testamentary guarding, nor member of the board of guardians—she was at her children's mercy. Her civil incapacity was complete.[34]

The Code Napoléon spends considerable time discussing the rights of females, most often in terms of their marriages—daughters who grew out of their fathers' rule and remained unmarried enjoyed more freedoms than their married sisters. Book I, "Of Persons," devotes an entire chapter to marriage, another to divorce, and several others to parental power. Book III, "Of Contracts or Conventional Obligations in General," also deals with the intricacies of the marriage contract as well as the passage of material goods. The Code Napoléon many of the civil aspects of marriage established by the Revolutionaries, such as the free and willing consent of both parties. It also prohibited marriage of men under eighteen and women under fifteen. However, it also reinstated a number of regulatory measures. Sons under twenty-five and daughters under twenty-one required their parents' (or at least their fathers') permission. Though grandparents could give permission, the husband's decision always superseded his wife's. Thus, a grandfather could grant permission to marry or not despite his wife's differing opinion. Those over twenty-five could petition for three consecutive months to gain rights to marry, and those over thirty required no paternal permission.[35] Moreover, the feudal language of marriage, the wife owing fidelity to the husband in return for protection and shelter, which was banished in 1791, returned in the Code Napoléon, which stated in Articles 212–14:

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[34] Moussett, *Women's Rights and the French Revolution*, 101.

[35] A Barrister of the Inner Temple, *Code Napoléon: or The French Civil Code* (Paris, 1804. Reprinted Washington, DC: Beard Books, 1999), 43–45.

> 212. Married persons owe to each other fidelity, succour, assistance.
>
> 213.The husband owes protection to his wife, the wife obedience to her husband.
>
> 214. The wife is obliged to live with her husband, and to follow him to every place where he may judge it convenient to reside: the husband is obliged to receive her, and to furnish her with everything necessary for the wants of life, according to his means and station.[36]

The Code Napoléon also regulated divorce, creating obstacles, which overturned the Revolutionary view of the marital contact as one easily broken by unhappy parties. Often these regulations placed women at an unfair disadvantage. Husbands could divorce adulterous wives with little evidence, but wives could not level the same charge unless a husband brought a mistress into their shared home. Even divorce by mutual consent fell under harsh regulatory measures. Such regulations often appeared prejudiced by the view of the female as confined to a maternal role. Divorce could not be granted for husbands under twenty-five or wives under twenty-one or within two years of the marriage, presumably because of the existence of young children during these years. Divorces were also prohibited for couples married for twenty or more years, or after the wife was forty-five years or older.[37] This restraint obviously links to a female's reproductive years, further encoding the view of women as only useful in procreation and in nurturing new French citizens. If she was incapable of remarrying and producing more children, divorce under mutual consent could serve no greater purpose to the state. Divorced wives, even if their adulterous husbands were to blame, were restricted to waiting ten months to remarrry while men faced no such restriction. In cases of mutual consent, neither party

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[36] Ibid., 59.

[37] Ibid., 76.

could remarry for three years, as a deterrent for couples considering such an action. The law also worked to deter adultery by forbidding marriage to an "accomplice" in adulterous acts.[38]

Laws regarding illegitimate children reflected the eighteenth-century fears of stolen or wrongfully endowed inheritance. Though such children could conduct maternity searches after obtaining a form of written proof, Article 340 prohibited mothers or illegitimate children from proving paternity under any circumstances. Children were also barred from claiming any man or woman currently married as a parent. Moreover, the code prohibited a married man from acknowledging illegitimate children conceived during his marriage. Laws also fiercely guarded inheritance. If a father did recognize an illegitimate child, the child was legally barred from becoming an heir. As a creditor on the father's will, a child could be allotted only up to three-fourths of the father's estate and only up to a third if other legitimate heirs existed. The creation of such laws claimed to aid in "resanctifying marriage, clarifying its legal boundaries, safeguarding family property, and privileging male heads of household in order to secure order." While debates contended the rights of paternity suits, ultimately the codifiers assumed "that mothers were responsible for the conception and care of the child" rather than fathers.[39]

Title V of the Code "Of the Contract of Marriage and of the Respective Rights of Married Persons" deals exclusively with the details of the marriage contract and specifically with the distribution of property and ownership. The wife shared in community property, consisting of all moveables possessed at and acquired during the

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[38] *Code Napoléon*, 83.

[39] Desan, *The Family on Trial*, 305–06.

marriage as well as all immoveables acquired during the marriage.[40] However, the husband maintained much control over the joint property, referred to as "the community" in the Code, unless the community had been broken through means of divorce, in which case the wife would gain control of her portion. In the absence of her husband's consent, a wife—even with legal authorization—could not bind the property of the community except to contract a public trader. She was likewise prohibited from altering or selling community property, even to recover a jailed husband, and was barred from intervening in an establishment for their common children. Meanwhile, husbands retain the right to manage their wives' properties, with the one exception of alienating her immoveables (owned prior to the marriage and therefore exempt from community) without her consent.[41] The husband also alone retains all rights to management of the elements of the dowry.[42] In the case of separation of goods because of divorce, the wife had to contribute to the education of their common children and take on the responsibility solely should the husband be left without such means—in other words, an early example of maternal child support. This article, however, also appears to have assumed that children would continue to reside with their father, as no such mandate for paternal child support appears in the Code.[43] Even in the dissolution of the community through the death of a husband, the wife faced great legal scrutiny regarding property. A widow found herself third in line to inherit goods, after legitimate heirs and legally recognized natural children. Having

[40] *Code Napoléon*, 383.

[41] Ibid., 392–95.

[42] Ibid., 430.

[43] Ibid., 399.

already served her duty as wife and mother, the state treated her as no longer necessary or worthy of support.[44] Married women could also not inherit succession from a relative without the consent of her husband.[45]

Despite Napoleon's abdication in April 1814 and final defeat at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 at the end of the Hundred Days, his Civil Code and all its gender inequities continued through the restored Bourbon monarchy and Second Empire. Therefore, while pre-Revolutionary France by no means allotted rights and privileges to women, the Revolution and its aftermath arguably further handicapped their liberties. While initially the Revolution appeared to liberate its female citizens—legalizing divorce, limiting parental authority, and even esteeming conjugal affection rather than feudal relationships in marriage—events surrounding the Terror of 1793 severely limited female involvement and esteem. Suzanne Desan concludes "that the gradual construction of domesticity drew on the revolutionary validation of women's moral role, but also developed as a *reaction* against the gender instability and the political and legal power of women forged during the Revolution."[46] Perhaps in viewing first-hand the power women showed themselves capable of wielding, the new government grew fearful of their continued involvement. Thus, fathers and husbands possessed complete control over their daughters and wives. Matters of property were kept at arms reach from them. A married woman had to take on her husband's nationality and reside wherever he chose. Clearly, the writers of the Code Napoléon feared a society that permitted too free a reign for

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[44] Ibid., 197.

[45] Ibid., 213.

[46] Desan, *The Family on Trial*, 313. Original emphasis.

female citizens and set about incapacitating them through law. The Code Napoléon made inequities explicit, all but naming women as an enemy of the state through their thorough incapacitation. As the next chapter suggests, the eighteenth-century exotic archetype changed its profile in the nineteenth century to reflect this new social danger: the female who failed to conform to the patriarchal standards identified in the Revolution and its legal and social outcomes.

Chapter 4
Nineteenth-Century Exotic Opera Models

As discussed in chapter 2, the exotic, through misconceptions or malicious intent, was associated with sexual licentiousness, just as women were though to be fueled by passion rather than reason. However, the eighteenth-century abduction plot archetype illustrates the Western female upholding patriarchal society by remaining chaste, refusing the exotic male ruler's advances. The socio-political changes wrought by the French Revolution explicitly names women as an enemy of the state through increasingly harsh legislation and limiting social roles. This shift from women merely harboring the potential to upset cultural norms and political status quo to actively embracing such anarchical goals mirrors the shift in the exotic opera archetype. The licentious exotic aligns with the passion-ruled female in a single character, both deviant and dangerous. Though this represents a significant alteration to the archetype, the social reflection grows from the same pre-occupation with perceived female sexuality and its destructive potential. This chapter chronologically surveys selected operas indicative of the typical nineteenth-century exotic opera to illustrate the ubiquity of the archetype in France. The survey emphasizes the exotic character as newly female and therefore evidence of and reaction to post-Revolutionary distrust of the women.

The Orient remained a popular artistic theme throughout the nineteenth century. Esteemed writer Victor Hugo's collection of poetry *Les Orientales* (1829) features stories entitled "Cri de guerre du mufti," "La Douleur du pascha," "La Sultane Favorite," and

"Le Derviche." Visual art also followed the trend, with painters depicting items such as opium pipes and Oriental costumes.[1]

Perhaps the most noticeable difference between plot archetypes of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century French exotic operas is the apparent lack of abduction in the latter that threatens the Western character. However, while abduction fails to occur in the literal sense, the female exotic character surely holds the Western male captive in a metaphorical sense. This captivation, as in the eighteenth-century model, must be broken to resolve tension and restore and maintain Western patriarchal standards, just as the physical abduction of the eighteenth-century paradigm must be ended to resolve dramatic tension. As acknowledged above, the study of exotic opera often fails to consider both eighteenth- and nineteenth-century models and at the very least, considers them disparate traditions. In contextualizing the altered gender roles in the stock character of the exotic figure, this thesis must illustrate a continuous, through highly altered, lineage of exotic operas. Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine* (1865) illustrates a link between the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century exotic archetypes, with the exotic character embodied by a female, but still in a ruling position and able to grant clemency to ensure a positive outcome for the Western figures. From *L'Africaine*, the survey moves chronologically through French exotic operas, examining *Carmen*, *Samson et Dalila*, and finally, *Lakmé*. These operas also illustrate the pervasive nature of the exotic trope drawing on both literary and biblical inspiration for plot. These models also represent exotic opera composed in

[1] Ralph Locke, "Constructing the Oriental 'Other': Saint-Saëns's 'Samson et Dalila,'" *Cambridge Opera Journal* 3 (1991): 261–302, 265.

France, though the nineteenth-century exotic archetype, like the eighteenth-century model, spread outside French borders.

L'Africaine

This blended approach aligns the exotic with the female form, but exhibits restraint and upholding Western order and illustrates the exotic archetype in flux. Indeed, the eighteenth-century abduction plot remains, but altered gender roles reflect a renewed fear of female power.

The opera begins in Lisbon, where the Western heroine, Inèz, finds herself forced by her father, Grand Admiral Don Diego, to marry Don Pédro. Her true love, Vasco da Gama, believed dead in an expedition, miraculously reappears, boasting of a new world he has discovered. Da Gama presents two natives—female Sélika and male Nélusko—as evidence of the race of the new land. However, when the Grand Inquisitor refuses de Gama's request for a further expedition, de Gama attacks him and is subsequently jailed. In prison, Sélika, revealed as the queen of the newly discovered land, intervenes to save da Gama—whom she loves—from Nélusko's vengeful attempt to murder him. Meanwhile, Inèz agrees with her father to marry Don Pédro in exchange for da Gama's release. Don Pédro mounts an expedition of the new lands, which Nélusko pilots, though his intent remains impure, and he plots against the Westerners. Nélusko's vengences rears its ugly head, leading him to pilot the ship into the storm, with the intent of killing his Western passengers. Though da Gama attempts to warn Don Pédro, Nélusko is able to mount an attack by leading the locals against the Westerners as the strom howls; it appears that only da Gama survives. Reinstated on her island, Sélika greets her people. Though she saves da Gama from becoming a sacrifice by naming him as her husband, she

swears to uphold the island's laws, which include executing all foreigners. Da Gama accepts his fate until he hears the voice of his beloved Inèz, as the locales lead her to execution. He reunites with her, but Sélika discovers the pair, hurt by da Gama's betrayal. However, seeing their devotion, the queen releases them to escape on da Gama's boat. Sélika, spurned by her love, ends the opera by committing suicide by inhaling poisonous blooms; Nélusko follows his queen to death.[2]

The merciful nature of the Other in *L'Africaine*—the exotic female ruler—and the subsequent positive outcome of the opera illustrates a definite link to the eighteenth-century abduction plot. Though the exotic female wields power, her mercy ultimately reestablishes—arguably even strengthens—the conventions of Western patriarchal society. Susan McClary offers one caveat to this interpretation: Meyerbeer's Jewishness may play a role in the favorable view of the Other, as he himself would identify as such in an increasingly anti-semitic nineteenth-century France.

Though the elements of the abduction plot appear strong, changes and additions signify a meaningful alteration to the opera's message and reception. While Sélika's release of da Gama allows a happy ending for the Western lovers as well as the upholding of Western patriarchal values, a subsidiary plot line reveals shifting paradigms. Da Gama escapes the Orient, but Don Pédro is killed by it. He falls to the Nélusko model of exotic danger and violence. Thus, while retaining elements of the eighteenth-century abduction plot, *L'Africaine* also helps develop the operatic model of female as representative of a volatile and malevolent exotic—in other words, toward the exotic *femmes fatales* of

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[2] Eugène Scribe, *The Meyerbeer Libretti Grand Opéra 4: L'Africaine,* trans. Richard Arsenty (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008).

Carmen, Dalilah, and Lakmé. These operatic characters may reflect women's lowered legal status in the nineteenth century and react specifically to their removal from political and other public arenas.

Carmen

The often-performed *Carmen*, an operatic staple, appears as a major representative and critical model of the nineteenth-century exotic plot archetype. *Carmen* takes place in Seville, 1820. A troop of soldiers, watching the square's daily bustle, encounters the modest Michaëla, searching for brigadier Don José. Not finding him, she departs. Don José eventually appears and expresses indifference while the other onlookers leer at the cigarette-factory girls, inquiring after Carmen, whom they all desire. Upon entering, the infamous Carmen "asserts her desire for universal dominion by flinging at the silent Don José the flowers she wears in her dress."[3] Don José, though beginning to take notice of Carmen, finds comfort in Michaëla and her message from his mother. He decides to follow his mother's wishes and devote himself to the meek Michaëla. However, a violent quarrel erupts between Carmen and another girl at the cigarette factory; Carmen has wounded the other. The officer in command orders Don José to bind Carmen's hands and take her to jail. While the officer writes the order, Carmen bewitches Don José into allowing her to escape. Escorted by Don José and two other guards, Carmen creates a disturbance and escapes with help from gypsy friends. Carmen, at the Inn near the ramparts after her escape, hears that Don José's imprisonment—for allowing her escape—is ended. The Captain and the bullfighter

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[3] Henri Mailhac and Ludovic Halévy, *Carmen*, in *The Authentic Librettos of the French and German Operas: Complete with English and French or German Texts and Music of the Principal Airs* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1939), 3.

Escamillo, reinforce Carmen as the hypnotic female figure by fawning over her. Carmen instigates trouble again, causing a fight between Don José and the Captain, which effectively forces Don José to miss the call and become a deserter. Hiding in the country, the love between Carmen and Don José wanes, and is tested further by Escamillo's appearance. Michaëla also treks to find the pair and hastens Don José to his dying mother's bedside. In his absence, the faithless Carmen joins Escamillo at the bullfights in Seville. Don José appears in search of her, but when they meet, Carmen scorns him and adds insult to injury by cheering Escamillo's victory in the arena. In a fit of rage, Don José stabs and kills her just as Escamillo enters.[4]

Carmen, in her direct desires, makes no pretense of commitment to Don José. However, without promising fidelity, Carmen strips Don José gradually of his honor by neglecting his duty to his post, forcing him to allow her escape, compelling him to become a deserter, obliging him to forgo the faithful women: his mother and Michaëla. *Carmen* introduces the character Michaëla—absent from Merimée's novel—as an alternative to the *femme fatale*. She is all that Carmen is not: chaste, demure, and respectful of societal confines. She dares not attempt to hold any power over Don José. In doing so, she fails to capture his eye and imagination like Carmen, but she also survives within the patriarchal confines of the opera setting as well as in the eyes of the audience. Carmen does not share the same fate: she does not die merely because of her sexual appetite—which women, exotic or otherwise, had long been known to possess—but because she acts on it, which in turn destroys all elements of Don José's upstanding life and promising career. For a French audience, Carmen causes all of Don José's downfalls

[4] Henri Mailhac and Ludovic Halévy, *Carmen*, 1–52.

as she breaks his duty to the state while—though unmarried—refusing to give him the fidelity demanded of women in the Code Napoléon. Moreover, by disrupting a soldier's duty, Carmen oversteps her boundaries by entering a military/political arena, also denied to French women in audience attendance.

Musically, Carmen appears no less formidable or enticing. As Susan McClary explains in *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender and Sexuality,* Carmen's musical language, "marked by chromatic excesses … reveal[s] her as a 'master' of seductive rhetoric." She points specifically to the opening lines of the "Habañera," our first introduction to Carmen, identifying her "erratic means of descending" chromatically through the tetrachord, either granting or withholding the tonic as a form of musical seduction (see Example 6).[5]

Example 6: Bizet, *Carmen*, Act I, Scene , "Habeñera," mm. 1–8.[6]

[5] Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 57–58.

[6] Georges Bizet, *Carmen* (Paris: Choudens Pére et Fils, 1877), 79.

However, Carmen is not bound to one musical style, as McClary notes in *Georges Bizet: Carmen*, for while her "public persona is semiotically promiscuous: she sings 'gypsy' music … she can converse fluently in José's musical tongue and seduces him in the 'Seguidilla' by dictating to him in his own histrionic style the terms of his passion."[7] Carmen singing in both dialects signals a dangerous trespassing of gender roles, both on and off stage. The female, aligned with the exotic socially and stepping out of the exotic musically, diverges from several assumed roles. This new association of the female with the exotic empowers Carmen in the role of the exotic female to shed her assumed gender roles and to pose a legitimate threat to Western patriarchal society.

While Carmen woos Don José in a Western style, he finds himself precariously situated in a world digressing from Western standards; musically, this is mirrored by an increasing chromaticism that threatens to spiral beyond the aural boundaries of tonality. Again, McClary provides a summation of Don José in the opera's final moments and the ultimate triumph of Western patriarchy as aligned with tonality:

> As José pleads with Carmen to give in, the harmonic bassline turns into a maddeningly slippery chromatic floor. Not only José but also the listener... longs for this flood of chromaticism to be stopped, for stability to be reestablished—even though we know that the triumph of tonal closure means the violent murder of Carmen. Bizet's musical strategies, in other words, set up almost unbearable tensions that cause the listener not only to accept Carmen's death as "inevitable," but actually to *desire* it.... Chromatic slippage (carefully defined throughout the opera as "the feminine") is purged once and for all from the discourse as though by natural necessity.[8]

Thus, McClary argues that the "slippery" chromaticism of the bass-line, aligned with Carmen's refusal of male authority, incites the tonally inclined audience to wish for its

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[7] Susan McClary, *Georges Bizet: Carmen* Cambridge Opera Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 57.

[8] McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 62.

end. Upon Carmen's elimination, Western patriarchy, represented by tonality, reinstates its rule.

Samson et Dalila

Samson et Dalila, though based on biblical text, underwent quite a transformation to stress the seduction of Samson and its disastrous result. Camille Saint-Saëns completed the score in 1872, and though parts of the work were performed in Paris in 1875, the premiere occurred in Weimar in 1877, with the full-mounting of the opera in Paris only taking place two decades later. Despite its premiere outside of France, it was created in the same atmosphere and spirit as the other nineteenth-century exotic works.

The first act opens on the city of Gaza, where the chorus of Hebrews despairs. Yet Samson assures them of victory and displays his immense strength by slaying the blasphemous Philistine Abemelich. At the Temple of Dagon, a Philistine deity, the High Priest encourages the Philistines to avenge his death, raging against the Israelites and their leader, Samson. Focus returns to Samson and the rejoicing Hebrews, but soon danger enters in the form of Dalila and the Priestesses of Dagon. The seduction of Samson ensues, with the priestesses dancing and Dalila singing to Samson of springtime. This song aligns Dalila's female form with the unpredictability of nature and contrasts it with association of the masculine with reason and the strategic movement of armies. The second act concentrates on Dalila, who, in her home, invokes Love to aide her in ensnaring Samson. The High Priest of Dagon encourages these efforts and offers her money. She refuses the bribe, explaining she harbors her own patriotic reasons for desiring the defeat of the Israelites. When Samson arrives, Dalila begins to woo him ("Mon coeur s'ouvre à ta voix") and ultimately succeeds. He enters her house as

Philistine soldiers circle it. Dalila cries for the soldiers, and Samson exclaims from inside her dwelling, "I am betrayed!" In the final act, the Philistines keep Samson, blind and bound, as a prisoner. In the Temple of Dagon, the High Priest and Dalila taunt the fallen warrior before a large crowd. Placed near supportive pillars, Samson entreats God for a final moment of strength. Finding his prayer granted, he breaks the pillars, killing himself and all the Philistines within the temple.[9]

Samson et Dalila represents the most malevolent and treacherous of the nineteenth-century exotic opera archetype, for Dalila purposely and explicitly uses her seductive powers not to gain Samson's affection, but to incur the ruin of his military/political aims. Ralph Locke points out the binarisms at play, positing that "Samson, the proto-European, is male and favored by God; Delilah, chief representative of the East, is female and seeks his downfall and that of all the God-chosen West."[10] This plot directly reflects the public's fears of irrational and passionate females proving ruinous if allowed to participate in public or military/political life.

Dalila's seductive numbers, "Printemps qui commence" and "Mon coeur s'ouvre à ta voix," utilize, as Locke notes, "standard Romantic-era techniques for conveying beauty, passion, and seductiveness," rather than musical signifiers of the exotic. These love songs instead involve "ecstatic vocal leaps, melodic phrases that extend

[9] Ferdinand Lemaire, *Samson et Dalila*, in *The Authentic Librettos of the French and German Operas: Complete with English and French or German Texts and Music of the Principal Airs* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1939), 253–78.

[10] Ralph P. Locke, "Constructing the Oriental," 271.

asymmetrically, rich harmony, liquid writing for the winds and (in "Mon coeur") the evocation of gentle breezes."[11] These attributes appear in Example 7.

Example 7: Saint-Saëns, *Samson et Dalila,* Act II, Scene 3, Duet "Mon coeur s'ouvre à ta voix," mm. 40–47.[12]

[11] Ralph P. Locke, "A Broader View of Musical Exoticism," *The Journal of Musicology* 24 (2007): 1.

[12] Camille Saint-Saëns, *Samson et Dalila* (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1929), 288.

However, Saint-Saëns *does* invoke musical markers of the Orient in the famous Bacchanale, which aurally recreates the lascivious "exotic" behavior seen on stage (Example 8) by means of a repeated augmented second between the G-sharp and F-natural in the recitative-like oboe solo, among other methods.

Example 8: Saint-Saëns, *Samson et Dalila*, Act III, Scene 2, Ballet, "Bacchanale," m. 1.[13]

The oriental-sounding Bacchanale, associated with the exotic and therefore Dalila, could also create the appearance that, like Carmen, Dalila woos her target with his own Western musical language, stepping out of the Oriental language exhibited in the Bacchanale to identify the Philistines—including Dalila—as the plot's exotic Other.

[13] Ibid., 376.

Lakmé

In India an English settlement incurs the anger of Nilakantha, a Hindu priest who punishes trespassers with death. Following prayers, Nilakantha leaves his daughter, Lakmé, and her servant Malika who sing the famous “Flower Duet” while gathering flowers. Though not overtly exotic, the “Flower Duet” features a repetitive instrumental chromatic motive throughout, offering an Oriental atmosphere without overwhelming the vocal parts, which keep to embellished parallel minor thirds nearly throughout. Lakmé places her jewels on a bench near the river before she and Malika paddle in a boat out of sight. Meanwhile, Gérald, a British army officer; his officer friend Frédéric; Gérald’s fiancée, Ellen; her companion Rose; and the girls’ governess, Mistress Benton, unwittingly trespass on Nilakantha’s territory. Upon seeing Lakmé’s jewels, they depart, but Gérald remains to make a sketch for Ellen. He eventually gives up this venture and turns to leave, but not before Lakmé returns to spot him. Though initially alarmed—she warns him of the harsh penalty for trespassers—the pair captivates one other and begina to fall in love. Gérald hides himself upon Nilakantha’s return, but observing Lakmé’s behavior as well as Gérald’s footprints, Nilakantha declares the intruder must die. At the bazaar, Nilakantha forces Lakmé to perform the “Bell Song” in order to lure the intruder. The plan succeeds, and upon revealing Gérald, Nilakantha stabs him. Lakmé, disobeying her father’s orders to leave, rescues Gérald with her servant Hadji, by taking him to a secret hut in the forest where Lakmé treats him with medicinal plants. The pair wish to drink sacred waters to unite themselves, which Lakmé leaves to fetch. In her absence, Frédéric appears and reminds Gérald of his duties to the regiment as they deal with unruly Hindus. Frédéric leaves and Lakmé returns. Hearing the fifes and drums, Gérald

refuses the sacred water, and learning of his decision, Lakmé eats the poisonous *dartura stramonium* and dies in his arms as her father returns.[14]

The plot of *Lakmé* breaks from the more malevolent characterizations of Carmen and Dalila, but the exotic female remains dangerous. By building a relationship with a Western male, she threatens his commitments: to his fiancée, Ellen; to his regiments; and, as his regiment is engaged against uprisings of her fellow Hindus, to his own country and patriotic alliances. Rather than posing a direct threat of overt attack, Lakmé's position as distractor exhibits the threats of the potential power and sway women could hold over males, by diverting their attention away from proper duties. Moreover, while Lakmé may not condone using herself as a weapon to lure and trap the Western male, her father finds no qualms about using his daughter in such a manner, as when he forces Lakmé to sing the "Bell Song" at the bazaar. Thus, the exotic enemy uses the female form as a means to attack the Western male. The final duet between Lakmé and Gérald also exhibits a strong musical binarism with the martial fife and drums calling Gérald back to duty with his regiment. Both the "Bell Song" and the military music serve to call Gérald, but in drastically different directions. Though Lakmé is described as beautiful, her *singing* effectively lures Gérald into her father's trap. Like the "Flower Duet," the "Bell Song" does not appear obviously exotic in the vocal part, but does feature a drone-like bass, piccolo, and percussion reminiscent of traditional markers of the exotic.

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[14] Edmond Gondinet and Philippe Gille, *Lakmé*, in *The Authentic Librettos of the French and German Operas: Complete with English and French or German Texts and Music of the Principal Airs* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1939), 279–328.

Further Archetypes and Readings

The operas discussed above stand as representative of others that share some or all of the archetypal elements. These operas also represent the extensive spread of the nineteenth-century archetype outside of France, mirroring the spread of the abduction plot model one century earlier. Ambroise Thomas's *Mignon* (1866), while not acting as a *femme fatale*, attracts a Western male to her band of gypsies, though she is in need of rescue from them, playing on the fear of the Orient. Giuseppe Verdi's *Aïda* (1871) is based on a scenario attributed to the French Auguste Mariette, an Egyptian scholar. As the Ethiopian Aïda captures the attention of Radamès, a Captain of the Guard, she threatens his—and therefore all under his command—loyalty to the King, exhibiting the continued threat of the female to the military/political health of a state. *Madama Butterfly*, Giacomo Puccini's 1904 opera, appears as a near copy of *Lakmé*, transplanted to Japan, though the action stretches out over several years.

Richard Strauss's *Salomé* (1905), based on the German translation of Oscar Wilde's play (1891; the original play was written in French), provides an excellent example of the spread of the genre. Salomé seduces to get what she wants—control over John the Baptist. When she fails to seduce John himself to gain control over him, she turns to her own "othered" stepfather, Herod. As Carolyn Abbate argues in "Opera; or, the Envoicing of Women," in revealing her corporeal body to Herod in the Dance of the Seven Veils, she also reveals her true nature: male, in the sense that she desires control and bloodshed. While Salomé appears as the exotic female, the male whose power she corrupts is not John the Baptist—who dies a martyr—but her stepfather, Herod. She steps out of her feminine boundaries to control the male in power. Abbate writes:

> Salome's monstrousness is associated with transgression, with her taste for decapitated Jochanaan's salty lips. She, like Carmen, can be interpreted as a monster who is punished by plot because she inverts nineteenth-century culture's stereotyped gender roles (she wants sex and says so) and thus claims a powerful male privilege.[15]

However, Abbate also argues that in addition to attempting to usurp roles traditionally attributed only to men, Salomé's commandeers the musical soundscape. The music aligns the listener with what Salomé is hearing rather than reality. In the execution of Jochanaan, Salomé refuses to acknowledge any sound that would confirm the reality of Joachanaan's death—"There's not a sound. I don't hear anything. Why doesn't he cry out, this man?"[16] Though the execution indeed has occurred, a deluded Salomé refuses to hear it; and Strauss, subverting the truth in order to align audience's hearing with Salomé's perception, offers no musical marker that would contradict her belief in his continued existence. In compounding "the aural delusions that wind through Salomé's world," Abbate argues that Strauss "relinquishes male authority" over the music. Through her power in the music, Salomé usurps control and deflects her objectification. The music becomes her subject and an accomplice in her sensual destruction of the men around her. Thus, music and plot appear to break free from Western patriarchal rule under the power of the deviant female. She, and the music she sings, must end.

This principle transfers easily to other *femmes fatales* considered. Carmen, moving between Western and exotic styles, proves master of her music. Her movement to the Western style represents her emergence from the exotic (aligned with the other/feminine) into the Western (self/male) position of control, and therefore a newly

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[15] Carolyn Abbate, "Opera; or, the Envoicing of Women," in *Musicology and Difference*, ed. Ruth A. Solie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 237.

[16] Ibid., 247.

threatening position. The exotic music fails to objectify her; rather, she uses it to enrapture of Don José. Likewise, Dalila, cognizant of her mission—made explicit in her rejection of the bribe from the Philistine priests—may be considered a self-aware act of her traditionally Western Romantic musical language, as she utilizes it with the sole purpose of enacting Samson's downfall for "patriotic reasons." While Lakmé herself does not attempt to cause the downfall of Gérald *per se*, her father—another embodiment of the exotic and her own flesh and blood—uses her vocality as a weapon to ensnare the trespassing Western male.

In exploring female vocality in opera, Abbate challenges Catherine Clément's thesis that operatic females are condemned to death based on plots. Instead, Abbate counters that these women gain control and victory through their vocality, that their music "is a realm beyond narrative plot, in which women exist as sonority and sheer physical volume, asserting themselves outside spectacle and escaping murderous fates."[17] By involving the audience as a continuation of the male/self, Abbate also posits that these characters succeed in reversing male objectivity:

> Visually, the character singing is the passive object of our gaze. But, aurally, she is resonant; her musical speech drowns out everything in range, and we sit as passive objects, battered by that voice. As a voice, she slips into the "male/active/subject" position in other ways as well, wince a singer, more than any other musical performer, enters into that Jacobin uprising inherent in the phenomenology of live performance and stands before us having wrested the composing voice away from the librettist and composer who wrote the score.[18]

The *femmes fatales* of the nineteenth-century exotic plot archetype indeed escape and transcend societal boundaries through their vocality. Moreover, their exotic voices

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[17] Ibid., 254.

[18] Ibid.

serve as the main asset in their seduction of the Western males in search of control of their sexual lives and political/military involvement. However, while these women achieve this success, reacting against the limitations set upon them during and closely following the French Revolution, their corporeal bodies are killed in the plot to maintain continuance of the Western patriarchal rule. If Abbate's claim of escape through music nullifies Clément's claim of females dying as an integral point of operatic plots, their music creates mere spirits allowed as defiance of patriarchal rule while their physical bodies die to eliminate threats to the state.

The uniquely nineteenth-century *femmes fatales* represent a shift from the eighteenth-century abduction plot, identified by their point of attack: the Western male, but more specifically, the Western soldier. The Western male as soldier defines the particular model of fear of the female as uniquely post-Revolutionary. In ensnaring a soldier, the exotic female disrupts his military/political life: Carmen forces Don José to allow her escape and later creates a deserter at odds with his commander by causing a fight between him and his Captain; Dalila launches a direct attack on Samson's weakness, causing a victory for the Philistines; and Lakmé turns Gérald's attention from his duty to suppress her people. This aspect of the plot reacts directly to Jacobin and post-Revolutionary banishment of Frenchwomen from political and public life. Yes, these women exhibit lascivious appetites unacceptable in nineteenth-century Western society, but alone, this behavior merely constitutes a heightening of deep-seated fears of uncontrolled female sexuality already present—through less threatening—in the eighteenth-century abduction plot archetype. The application of female seduction as a means to corrupt the military/political Western patriarchal society reflects and reacts to

new regulations, which explicitly name females as an enemy whose aspirations of power must be squelched.

Chapter 5
Recognizing Altered Ideologies

In exploring exotic archetypes in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century opera, a question of difference emerges. As Ruth Solie explains in her introduction to a collection of essays on difference:

> The question … is not "Is there difference?" or "What's the difference?" but, rather, "How do social life and culture construct the differences that all of us understand and enact in daily life?" For musicologists, as for other scholars of cultural phenomena, this particular line of reasoning may be of great importance: if identities are a matter of social role, we may be able to study the mechanisms—including musical ones—by which those roles are delineated, communicated, learned, and perhaps challenged.[1]

If the question at hand regards the social and cultural construction of differences, then the exploration of two adjacent, though altered traditions also begs the question of the social and cultural changes that created them. In doing so, the "series of tightly interconnected binary dualisms: good/evil, male/female, culture/nature, reason/emotion, self/other, and so forth"[2] are examined over a period of time to observe developments in each and how they interact and react to one another based on changing social and cultural constructions.

The eighteenth century overwhelmingly utilized the exotic setting as a stage, if we apply Said's presentation of the Orient as an adjacent stage on which Europe could project societal fears. He states a view that orientalism acts as a "corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it" and continues to surmise that Orientalism in Western culture functions as a means for "dominating, restructuring, and

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[1] Ruth Solie, introduction to *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 10.

[2] Ibid., 11.

having authority over the Orient."[3] In the nineteenth century, as the female form aligns with the Orient as an additional exotic factor, a binary to the Western male, the utility of Orientalism as a process of subjugation extends to the female. The use of the exotic as a stage onto which society projected fears continued into the next century, albeit in a less strict fashion. The nineteenth-century archetype continues to use the exotic location to place distance between the cautionary tale and the actual boundaries of the French nation. Though not grounded in a particular place—settings range from Lisbon to Seville to North Africa—it never comes to France, though some locales harbor significant French influence because of Napoleon's conquests, and despite the fact that all librettists considered are of French nationality. In addition to staying well outside French territory, the Westerners who fall under the spell of exotic temptresses, never directly represent the French, but some other European nationality, often Spanish, and, in the case of *Lakmé*, English. Though these operas represent fears of what the exotic—now aligned with the female form—may incur upon the upstanding male citizen, French writers and librettists would not allow the danger to come so close to home as to create a susceptible Frenchman as the Western male lead.

This thesis seeks to establish the nineteenth-century *femme fatale* archetype of exotic opera as an outgrowth of the exotic typified in the eighteenth-century by the abduction plot archetype. In doing so it recognizes that great alterations to the tradition appear between these two models. The exotic figure transforms from a male rule capable of showing clemency towards Westerners to an alluring female character that challenges and threatens the Western male, and, by extension, Western patriarchal society. For

[3] Said, 3–4.

posing such a threat, the exotic female must be removed and punished. The greatness of this alteration begs contextualization, found in the legal and social changes surrounding French women during and closely following the French Revolution.

Taking Stock: Archetype Alterations

The shifts in exotic opera plot archetypes from the eighteenth to the nineteenth centuries center largely on the exchanging of gender in the key role of the exotic character. The exotic male ruler transforms into an exotic female deviant. While both appear sexually lascivious, the male ruler relents in the face of the love of the Western pair, essentially yielding to and validating Western conventions, while the female deviant revels in her defiance of such conventions. Likewise, the characterization of the exotic figure moves from an initially threatening tone towards a merciful and understanding position, while the threatening nature of the female deviant remains untamed and is even amplified through her actions.

Another way to view the shift in the exotic opera archetype between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries isolates the genders and their representations in each plot archetype. The two main males of the eighteenth-century stage include the exotic ruler and the estranged Western lover. The former, while creating tension through his threats of taking the Western female for himself, ultimately respects Western law and produces a happy outcome because of his mercy. The Western lover is characterized as gallant, brave, and moral because of his great concern for preserving the honor of his lady through her continued chastity. These males enjoy esteem through their respect for societal norms. Peripheral males of the eighteenth-century tradition—either a servant to the Western lover or to the male ruler—serve as an extension of the values each culture

portrays, while serving as comedic relief by mocking his exotic captors rather than expressing fear. The Western male's servant also expresses concern for the state of the captured female(s), and the exotic leader's servant expresses desires associated with the Orient. The males of the nineteenth century, while helpless at the hands of the female deviant, find themselves as societal outcasts for having fallen victim to female wiles. They appear to lack self-control and, by extension. a strong sense of duty and moral fiber. Though they ultimately succeed in bringing about the end of the female figure's attempt to gain control of them and/or a political/military situation, these Western males pay a heavy price for having allowed the female to gain the upper hand. While the female must be removed in order to remedy the problem, they too share blame for yielding to their baser desires. This easily translates to a warning to the French audiences about allowing women to claim powers denied to them legally and socially. Women permitted to step outside the boundaries created for them spell the ruin of not only man, but also the state, and the men set in place to guard these women should use their power over them lest they become incapacitated.

The female heroine of the eighteenth century represents the *femme idéale*. These figures thwart societal concerns over the supposed lascivious nature of the female based on the purported weakness of her mind and body. When faced with a genuinely lascivious exotic male ruler in a region associated with sexual misconduct in the eyes of the Western world, she appears with an increased sense of duty to her Western lover through her dedication to preserving her chastity: consider Isabella in *Arlequin Sultane Favorite*, who considers the dangers of "one kiss on the chin," or Constanze of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, who defiantly proclaims she would choose horrible torture

and eventual death over such a shameful act as yielding to Pasha Selim. However, the result in each remains the same: the *femmes idéales* of the eighteenth-century opera stage refuse to step outside the confines that Western society has drawn for them. They remain faithful and virtuous despite the atmosphere allowing them to be persuaded otherwise. Likewise, when present, the Western female's servant, while allowing for a measure of comedic material, follows her lady's ways in preserving her honor.

The *femmes fatales* of the nineteenth-century provide a stark contrast. These female figures seek control denied to the women of France through legal, social, and moral standards. In the cases where the Western male character is a soldier, the control of the man becomes an allegory for political/military control. The male as soldier also creates a link from the single man to the well being of the state. If the soldier, a representative of the country as a whole, falls to the allure of an exotic female, so too, may the country bend to the will of women and outside influences. Females, stripped of political involvement by the Jacobins in 1793, of citizenship and suffrage in *The Rights of Man and of the Citizen*, and of property ownership and management rights in the Code Napoléon, appear on the stage in an attempt to wrangle such power back into their control. Each *femme fatale* approaches tackles her goal differently: Dalila appears the most military in her desire to bring about the downfall of the Israelites, while Lakmé's threat comes in the form of pulling Gérald away from his military duty to the state. While less dire than Dalila's plotting, Lakmé's desire for attention appears dangerous to French citizens who were expected to put nothing before the good of the *pátrie*. Moreover, they use sexual temptation to achieve control. The limitations placed on women in the Code Napoléon through sanctions involving marriage, divorce, and the treatment of illegitimate

children appears to punish their mothers, and purports the supposed lascivious nature of females. The *femmes fatales* of the exotic opera stage make a mockery of these laws by utilizing their sexual nature to gain control of their desired target. These heroines thwart the conventions of Western patriarchal society and react to the new constraints placed upon their gender during and immediately following the French Revolution. However, their behavior, portrayed as hostile towards individual men as well as the continued existence of the state, can only end by their death. The threat posed appears too great to allow these women to continue to exist, and therefore, in their tragic ends, they serve as warnings to the French people: uphold the legal, social, and moral constraints of women, or it will spell the end of not only men, but of your entire society.

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