L'AUGUSTE AUTRICHIENNE: REPRESENTATIONS OF MARIE-ANTOINETTE IN 19th CENTURY FRENCH LITERATURE AND HISTORY

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by

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APPROVAL PAGE

The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the dissertation entitled

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presented by Kalyn Rochelle Baldridge,

a candidate for the degree of doctor of philosophy,

and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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ABSTRACT

Maria Antonia Josepha Joanna, or as she is most well-known, Marie-Antoinette (1755-1793) spent her entire life under the watchful eye of many. Fashioned from birth as an Austrian aristocrat, she was transported to France at age fourteen to meet and marry the future king of France. From the onset of her arrival, French writers made attempts to capture what they observed. However, personal bias, political leanings, and accepted rumor led them to do more than record what they saw. Rather than simply narrate a scene, these early witnesses of Marie-Antoinette became the interpreters of her thoughts, motives and feelings. As these interpretations grew, they became widely accepted as truth and eventually became the agents leading to Marie-Antoinette's demise, as previous biographers and historians of Marie-Antoinette have amply discussed.

In this dissertation I suggest going beyond an analysis of the literature that led to Marie-Antoinette's death, and examining the numerous times that Marie-Antoinette's story was reinterpreted during the century after her death. I will examine nineteenth-century texts from several different authors and genres, including: the historical biographies of Christophe de Montjoye, Lafont d'Aussonne, Alcide de Beauchesne, Edmond and Jules Goncourt, and Horace de Viel-Castel; the eye-witness testimonies of Jean-Baptist Cléry, Henriette Campan, and Rosalie Lamorlière; the historical fiction of Elisabeth Guénard Brossin de Méré and Alexandre Dumas; and finally the archival compilations of Emile Campardon and Gaston Lenotre. I will examine each author's choice of genre, as well as how contemporary trends in literature, historical studies and even ptolitics influenced their interpretation of Marie-Antoinette.

Introduction

Who was Marie-Antoinette? A pampered Austrian princess sent to France by her scheming mother in order to destroy the kingdom of a great enemy? A gentle and generous character who adopted injured peasant boys and naively gave money to those who harmed her? A frivolous and featherbrained nobody who, once in power, only used the position to buy diamond necklaces and towering headdresses? A sexually deviant monster who not only engaged in sexual activity with anyone she pleased – men, women, her own children and animals – but used these unnatural encounters to corrupt the nation of France? Or was she, although a queen, an example for women of all classes because she embodied the most simple and virtuous of Christian characteristics? The truth is that Marie-Antoinette is often considered to be all of the above, and far too often, many of them at once. "Considered to be" is a revealing phrase when it comes to the "cracking" of the curious case of Marie-Antoinette. Indeed, the Marie-Antoinette who *was* will perhaps never be recognized more than the Marie-Antoinette who "was considered to be". Therein lies the interest of this study, as it will reveal examples of French texts which aided to construct, establish, maintain and perpetuate the multiple identities of Marie-Antoinette – identities that this study will demonstrate were based on the authors' attempts to perpetuate his or her own ideologies founded on whatever "truths" were relevant at the time he or she was writing.

Before looking at varying written representations, or rather, interpretations of Marie-Antoinette, we can say what we *do* know about this woman: Maria Antonia Josepha Joanna, born on November 2, 1755 to Holy Roman and Austrian Emperor Francis I and his wife Empress Maria Theresa, was the couple's fifteenth child. The youngest female member of this austere family known for their "bourgeois" values, Antonia grew up pampered by all, having opportunities for the finest education, and most importantly, being fashioned to continue the

political influence of her family under the watchful eye of her mother who was determined to see all of her children marry advantageously. Maria Theresa's intricate planning paid off, and Antonia was promised to the *dauphin* of France in 1764, when she was just nine years old. In May 1770, at the border of Austria and France, fourteen year old Antonia surrendered all that was Austrian about her, including her servants, her clothing, her mother tongue, and even her name, and became a French princess as dictated by French tradition and custom. After her marriage to Louis XV's grandson, Louis-Auguste, the young woman would only remain the *dauphine* of her new homeland for four years. In 1774, the king passed away making his nineteen year-old grandson and the eighteen year-old Marie-Antoinette the new king and queen of France. Her reign was neither a long one nor a happy one, and just before her thirty-eighth birthday in 1793, Marie-Antoinette was executed by guillotine for crimes against the nation of France, following the execution of her husband by just a few months.

Marie-Antoinette is recognized today as having embodied many differing personalities during her short lifetime, and this is due to the vast number of authors who have recorded her story. In fact, from the moment she set foot into her new country, headed towards Louis XV's palace in Versailles, Marie-Antoinette became a person of interest in all senses of the term. In their own words, writers attempted to capture all that they witnessed, all that they perceived, all that was rumored and – as this study will show - all that they needed to believe about this young woman who would soon become their queen. Since that day over 245 years ago, these pens have never stopped writing, and thus the number of times "Marie-Antoinette" has made appearances in French literature of all genres has become impossible to count. In the century after Marie-Antoinette's trail and execution, French writers produced a mountain of texts concerning the former queen. In 1906, the *Bibliographie de l'histoire de Paris pendant la Révolution Française*

listed 341 published fictions and non-fictions concerning Marie-Antoinette, and the editor admitted that his was not an exhaustive list (Tourneaux, 11).[1] This study attempts to study the creation and evolution of Marie-Antoinette's image within these works, by consulting texts that appeared at various significant historical moments first during Marie-Antoinette's lifetime and then throughout the entire nineteenth-century.

Due to the volume of texts produced at these times, and the numerous factions competing to perpetrate diverse political stances, it is not surprising that the former queen was often portrayed in differing lights. As this study will show, each new text reflected the author's goal to unveil mystery, reveal historical fact, portray reality, or present fresh evidence for the prosecution or the defense of the first royal woman ever to be executed for crimes against the nation over which she reigned. While the following chapters will show that images that still surround Marie-Antoinette today in literature, film, and legend, can indeed be traced back to the earliest writings concerning her, the crux of this study is to reveal *why* Marie-Antoinette was of such great interest in writing. The study will reveal that in fact, Marie-Antoinette became whatever the author needed her to be at any given time according to his or her ideologies and whatever "truth" he or she was attempting to portray. In other words, Marie-Antoinette was always used to *show* something. While studies mentioned later in this introduction and in Chapter one have previously shown this to be true about revolutionary writings, this study will go further, and reveal how the same can be said of all writings during Marie-Antoinette's lifetime and then throughout the nineteenth-

[1] Maurice Tourneaux, the editor, explained he left out everything about October 5 and 6, 1789, the royal family's escape attempt to Varennes in1791, works about June 20 and August 10, 1792, the imprisonment of Marie-Antoinette in the Temple and at the Conciergerie, and finally her trial and her death, because "ces événements ont fait l'objet de nombreuses mentions dans le tome I de la *Bibliograpie*" (11). "…these events have already been mentioned several times in Volume I of the *Bibliograpie*." Tourneux's was not even the first to attempt a bibliography of works about Marie-Antoinette. Already two significant "Marie-Antoinette Bibliographies" had been published, both of which Tourneux mentions in an introductory note. The first was by Joseph-Marie Quérard and Ch. Brunet (1856), and the second, entitled *La Vraie Marie-Antoinette*, was by Monsieur de La Sicotière and Monsieur de Lescure (1865).

century. As each of the following chapters will show, new images of Marie-Antoinette were no more based on reality than the myths established in pamphlet literature. Rather, attempts to refute negative myths about Marie-Antoinette were not simply the authors' efforts to rehabilitate her image, but were exertions to perpetuate entire new ways of thinking and writing.

Similar studies about the constructed identities of other historical characters have been done. In *The Creation of Anne Boleyn* (2013), Susan Bordo offers an explanation of the myth of England's "most notorious queen". Bordo first reveals that the need to erase the "real" Anne Boleyn was based on her husband the king's desire to justify his choice to again remarry. In order to carry out this justification, any trace of Anne Boleyn as an adequate wife had to be wiped out and replaced with a demonstration of her inadequacies. Thus, authors, artists, architects and playwrights of the time were entreated to interpret the queen as a negative, scheming and manipulative woman. Bordo goes on to demonstrate how this constructed identity is what remains of Anne Boleyn today, since novelists, television writers and film directors' plots are all bolstered by such an intriguing fictional identity.

Marie-Antoinette's constructed identity specifically has also been subject to a number of previous studies, however as mentioned above, most of them focus on the construction of her negative image in revolutionary literature. For example, in *La Reine Scélérate* (1989), Chantal Thomas highlights the evolution of Marie-Antoinette's image in the revolutionary pamphlets at the end of the eighteenth century. Thomas shows how this young princess was transformed by revolutionary pamphlets "into a prostitute, a nymphomaniac, a vampire, a monster" and that these constructed identities were eventually accepted as reality, thus creating a myth of the "monster Marie-Antoinette" (24). This myth, she argues, was important because it provided revolutionaries with justification for her execution. Even after her death, the myth continued to

persist and still continues to persist since it is independent of the actual person of Marie-Antoinette. In *La Reine Brisée* (2006), Annie Duprat also highlights the idea of the "myth" of Marie-Antoinette as independent of her person, and that the person Marie-Antoinette was indeed guillotined because of this myth. Duprat demonstrates that on October 16, 1793 the woman executed was not Marie-Antoinette, but rather "a collection of all the hatred from the endangered area" (17). Thus, both authors highlight the significance of the negative myths regarding Marie-Antoinette and the power these myths played in leading the queen to her death.

In Lynn Hunt's *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (1992), in which she uncovers a striking, collective and at times unconscious metaphor that existed in eighteenth-century France between traditional familial order and the structure of the nation[2], she argues that French revolutionaries sought to rid their nation of the "bad parents" – i.e. the king and queen – and to replace them with a new familial structure: a brotherhood who themselves would become the new "good" parent, *La Nation*.[3] In order to do so, however, revolutionaries had to demonstrate how faulty the former parents were. Since republicans maintained the "underlying sense that [the king] represented the masculinity of power and sovereignty", it was Marie-Antoinette who was most viciously attacked in revolutionary pamphlets, and most especially in her role as a mother. Hunt clearly outlines how though the king was punished to the death as well, his personal character and private life were not in question. Rather, it was Marie-Antoinette who bore the brunt of the pamphlet's accusations, as revolutionaries attempted to reveal that she represented all that men feared about the female race.[4] Indeed, according to Hunt, the Tribunal's most

[2] In fact, Hunt believes that "most European countries in the eighteenth century thought of their rulers as fathers and of their nations as families…" (xiv).
[3] Although *La Nation* is a feminine word, Hunt explains that the new "nation" was indeed a masculine mother, and thus it was not threatening (99).
[4] Marie-Antoinette was accused of using her body to destroy the nation: "In short, Marie Antoinette had used her sexual body to corrupt the body politic either through 'liaisons' or 'intimacies' with criminal politicians or through her ability to act sexually upon the king, his ministers, or his soldiers" (95). She was accused of teaching the king

grotesque accusation – incest with her eight-year old son –was the ultimate blow to Marie-Antoinette's motherhood, and this is exactly what the republicans had intended. Thus, the incest accusation was not even surprising, but only an extension of Marie-Antoinette's crimes against motherhood that the pamphlets had 'uncovered'. By exposing Marie-Antoinette as a bad mother, revolutionaries were setting the stage for a new leadership to become the guardian and keeper of France. "When they executed Marie-Antoinette, republican men were not simply concerned to punish a leading counterrevolutionary. They wanted to separate mothers from any public activity […] and yet give birth by themselves to a new political organism" (121).

In *Queen of Fashion: What Marie-Antoinette wore to the Revolution,* author Caroline Weber traces the evolution of Marie-Antoinette's wardrobe while arguing that the queen used her clothing to make public statements, carve a niche of influence for herself, and sometimes just to survive (3). Weber shows how Marie-Antoinette was France's "most conspicuous and controversial fashion plate" and that she had spent "a lifetime forging […this] powerful link between fashion and politics" (9). Weber therefore grants Marie-Antoinette much more power than Thomas, Duprat, and Hunt do. In her argument, it was not others' representations of Marie-Antoinette that dictated how she was perceived; it was her own. On her own initiative, albeit with the king's money, she was able to present herself as "the court's supermodel, its ruling diva, the Queen of Glamour" (Pierre Saint-Amand, cited in Weber, 109). Yet, even though this self-projecting queen had, in the same way as her great ancestor Louis XIV, helped "invent fashion as a high-stakes political game, […] this politics of costume held [Marie-Antoinette] - far more

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the art of dissimilation, which was considered a dangerous female trait. Whereas the republicans praised transparency, they portrayed the aristocracy as secretive and manipulative. Dissimilation, for them, would be the downfall of the republic, and this was one of Marie-Antoinette's greatest vices (96-98). Women would also corrupt the political sphere, and as queen, Marie-Antoinette represented a woman who had transformed into a man and was thus trying to control everything (114-118).

than any of history's subsequent fashion queens – quite firmly by the throat" (291). Even though in *Queen of Fashion,* Marie-Antoinette exerts power over how she is represented, Weber does not fail to remind the reader that in the end her representation – her self-created "myth" - still lead to her death.

Each author mentioned above showed how representations, images and public perceptions of Marie-Antoinette contributed to her final guilty verdict and ultimately, to her death. Their assertions are similar to the claim this study makes in that each author agrees that Marie-Antoinette was the needed scapegoat for revolutionary hatred, and thus was used to signify more than what she actually was. This study will go beyond these negative representations and show that even before her reputation was intentionally tarnished for the purpose of justifying her death, Marie-Antoinette was already being used to portray more than herself. Likewise, it will show that the new attempts to interpret her after her death were just as much based on the authors' needs to perpetuate his or her ideologies as were the revolutionary pamphlets.

One study which most closely resembles this one in method is Dena Goodman's *Marie-Antoinette Writings on the Body of the Queen* (2003). In this text, Goodman et al. showed how Marie-Antoinette's body has been represented or perceived in literature, art, stories and the media since her death.[5] Susan Lanser highlighted in the book's afterward, that this collection of articles about Marie-Antoinette, was "more centrally about her *representation* – that is, about Marie-Antoinette's displacement into text" (277-278, author's emphasis). While taking a similar approach, this study differs from Goodman et al. in that it focuses on the beginnings of Marie-

[5] In each of the chapters, Goodman et al. argue that Marie-Antoinette had, in fact, many bodies and each one was, during her lifetime, or has since been fashioned and manipulated. The subjects covered include, but are not limited to: how the public perception of Marie-Antoinette changed after the 1864 publication of her private correspondences with her mother (Chapter 1); how Marie-Antoinette's role and image as queen changed during and after the Diamond Necklace Affair (Chapter 3); Marie-Antoinette's image in the *libelles,* and pornography and femininity during French revolutionary times (Chapters 4 &5); existing ghost stories about Marie-Antoinette (Chapter 8); and how film directors have chosen to represent Marie-Antoinette (Chapter 9).

Antoinette's representation in French writings of many genres and then its evolution throughout an entire century. It is also unique in its focus on sources used by the authors of these nineteenth-century and earlier texts, so as to reveal *where* certain stories originated, as well as which sources were and still are considered reliable and which are not. By examining works from a variety of literary genres, including historical studies, eye-witness testimonies, propagandist brochures, and even historical fiction, this study first reveals how often the realm of fact and fantasy intersect in the case of Marie-Antoinette and then take a step further showing why.

This study does not attempt to judge which author told Marie-Antoinette's story more correctly, but simply to reveal *how* each author told it and why. It is in some ways similar to the method which Hayden White calls 'Formalist' in his own examination of methods used to record history. "I will not try to decide whether a given historian's work is a better, or more correct account of […] the historical process than some other historian's account […]; rather, I will seek to identify the structural components of those accounts" (White, *Metahistory*, 3-4). In his study of the historical writings of Michelet, Ranke, Tocqueville, and Burckhardt, White indeed did not rank the historians based on his opinion of the merit of their accounts. Rather, he determined categories of "emplotment" based on the way each historian recorded events and then explained how patterns in philosophical thought and storytelling fit into these same categories. In other words, White demonstrated that while recounting historical events and facts, what historians were really doing was telling a story with a beginning, a middle, and an end. Because of this, historians remained confined to the same literary patterns as novelists, and White wanted to reveal which pattern each historian had followed.

By taking an approach similar to that of White, this study will first reveal elements and patterns within the works, and then go further by attempting to reveal *why* each author chose to

portray Marie-Antoinette in the way he or she did. In other words, the goal of this study is not to uncover new historical truths about Marie-Antoinette, nor to evaluate works in which others have tried to do so. Rather, it will reveal which methods and sources were used to record these "truths", and which personal and political motivations perhaps led the authors to write in the way they did. As we will see, Marie-Antoinette's image – which underwent at least four major shifts in the nineteenth century - was always being used to show *something* – either how a woman should or should not behave, how magnificent or corrupt the Bourbon dynasty was, how necessary or unnecessary the French Revolution was, how mysterious and powerful the historical process was, and finally, how archival evidence could separate history from fiction.

Due to this, Marie-Antoinette's image can very much be linked to the concept of nationalism which, as many theorists including Benedict Anderson in his book *Imagined Communities* (1983), have shown was an artifact created near the end of the eighteenth century (48). Basing his work on former theorists such as Ernest Renan who argued that "l'essence d'une nation est que tous les individues aient beaucoup de choses en commun, et aussi que tous aient oublié bien des choses[6] ", Anderson argues that a nation's definition is "an imagined political community" (49). It is imagined because "many of the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members" (49). It is imagined as limited because of an internal understanding or belief that other nations lie outside of its borders (50). It is imagined as sovereign, because the concept of nation was created as the "emblem of freedom", being born during the Enlightenment and the Revolution (50). Finally, it is imagined as community because individuals within believe they live in comradery regardless of uncontestable existing

[6] The essence of a nation is that all individuals have many things in common, and also that they have each forgotten several things. Renan, Ernest. *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?* (*What is a nation?*) (1882) This was originally a speech that Renan gave at a conference at the Sorbonne on March 11, 1882. (Here cited in Anderson, 49).

inequalities (50). In short, the idea of nation, according to Renan and Anderson, is nothing more than a humanly constructed ideology. Anderson goes on to argue that it was within written texts (newspapers, novels, etc.) that this constructed concept of nation was developed and perpetuated. When belief in former ways of thinking died - Anderson highlights these three: biblical scriptures; the divine right of kings; and the concept that the origins of the world and men were essentially identical – "the search was on for a new way of linking fraternity, power and time meaningfully together. Nothing perhaps precipitated this search nor made it more fruitful, than print-capitalism, which made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to related to themselves to others in profoundly new ways" (52). Thus, for Anderson "nationalism" is best constructed and highlighted within the written text.

This study will indeed reveal how this is true in the case of Marie-Antoinette. Each chapter will reveal how authors used Marie-Antoinette's image to demonstrate their own beliefs and agendas, or allowed their own beliefs and agendas to influence their image of Marie-Antoinette. In doing so, nineteenth-century authors were indeed developing an identity they hoped would either unite the French reading public in admiration for the former queen and what she represented, or the other way around. In terms of semiotics, it can be said that Marie-Antoinette, the person became the "signifier", and she was used to represent the "signified". However, since the "signified" was so often changing during the tumultuous years of pre-revolutionary France, and then throughout the ever-changing regimes, ideologies, and ways of thinking and study of the nineteenth century, we can thus say that Marie-Antoinette became the "unsignified signifier" in writings concerning her life and times. In other words, Marie-Antoinette's identity became an adaptable myth, able to be changed and used at all times according to an author's purpose. Here, I use the word "myth" as Roland Barthes defined it in his *Mythologies* (1957). Barthes said that

myth is the way we say or talk about something. According to Barthes, the function of myth is to present an ideology or set of values as if it were a natural or fundamental condition of the world, when in fact it is no more than a humanly-conceived perspective. A myth does not show "truth", but rather expresses and reveals the intentions of its teller.

In order to reveal how Marie-Antoinette's image indeed became a useable myth and how certain stories about her persisted, for each text chosen this study will attempt to answer the following questions: how was Marie-Antoinette portrayed in this work; what was the overriding goal of the author; was it of a political nature; did he/she have a personal agenda; when was this work published; was his/her portrayal of Marie-Antoinette, in anyway, influenced by the time period in which he/she was writing; which identities of Marie-Antoinette had preceded the identities formed in this work; does this author make use of previously published sources; if so, which ones; do future authors use this author's point of view; if so, where and how it is manifested? by answering these questions for each examined text, this study determines to reveal how authors from various moments in the nineteenth century were either motivated to construct a certain identity for Marie-Antoinette, or were using Marie-Antoinette's constructed identities for their own means. In doing so, the study will reveal the amazing power of the myth as a factor in historical and national memory, and why these stories have persisted for so long.

Although the majority of the study is concerned with nineteenth century works published *after* Marie-Antoinette's execution, in Chapter one, I will consider publications concerning Marie-Antoinette during her French lifetime, from 1770 to 1793. Publications from these years are significant to this study for two reasons: first, in order to reveal the evolution of representations of Marie-Antoinette from when she first arrived in France until her execution twenty-three years later; and second, in order to compare the pre-revolutionary perspectives of

Marie-Antoinette with those written in the following century. While the first part of Chapter one reveals that the earliest representations of Marie-Antoinette praised characteristics which she had yet proven to embody, the second part of the chapter focuses on how pamphleteers and other republicans reversed positive characteristics and invented a multi-faceted "monster" which included four principle identities: *L'Autrichienne, Messaline, Madame Déficit* and *Madame Veto.* As mentioned above, many studies have previously demonstrated that the Marie-Antoinette of the pamphlets was an exaggerated and often invented version of the queen used in order to fuel hatred and spark dissention towards the royals and the nobility in France. In the beginning of this chapter, a new examination of the even earlier positive representations will indeed reveal this same tendency. From the moment she set foot into France, Marie-Antoinette became a place holder for what France needed at the time. She was constructed, from the beginning, to fulfill any role in French writing that was needed at the time.

Chapter two will discuss works written during the early years following Marie-Antoinette's death and the Terror, from 1797 to 1800. These works come from three different genres: the earliest acclaimed historical biography of Marie-Antoinette by historian Christophe Félix de Montjoye (1797); the eye-witness testimony of Jean-Baptiste Cléry, one of Louis XVI's last servants in prison (1798); and finally, a best-selling historical-fiction novel by Elisabeth Guénard Brossin de Méré (1800). The two historical works attempted to erase the monstrous identity revolutionary pamphlets had created and to construct a new identity for Marie-Antoinette: an ideal queen who stood in direct contradiction to the pre-revolutionary identities discussed in Chapter one. They employed this new ideal image of Marie-Antoinette in order to highlight what a good woman and a good mother should be. Since revolutionaries had tarnished Marie-Antoinette's image in regards to her personal life – most specifically her capabilities as a wife

and a mother - new historical writings had to show how indeed she *had* been the very picture of a good mother. In this way, they attempted to critique the Revolution and to prove that Marie-Antoinette not only embodied the ideals of motherhood, simplicity and equality that the Revolution had claimed, but in fact carried them out with more efficiency. A comparison of the idealized Marie-Antoinette in the two acclaimed historical works with one of allegorical fiction will reveal how much history and fiction already overlapped, even in the earliest representations of Marie-Antoinette after her death. While Guénard's portrait of the queen is less than ideal, this chapter will reveal how her use of previously published sources led her to make the same claim of expiation for Marie-Antoinette as a victim of the injustice of the Revolution.

Chapter three will include works written during the first ten years of the Bourbon Restoration, from 1814 to 1824. The chapter again discusses works from three genres: a new historical novel by Elisabeth Guénard (1818); the well-known memoires of Marie-Antoinette's first-lady-in-waiting, Jeanne-Louise Campan (1822); and a biography by historian Lafont d'Aussonne (1824). Each work reveals a continuation of the myth of the ideal queen already established in earlier works, but also shows strong evidence of the influence of royalist restoration rhetoric. "Marie-Antoinette" in writings at this time became the mascot of the acclaimed Bourbon forgiveness and mercy. Since restoration rhetoric was heavily influenced by Catholicism, Marie-Antoinette's restoration identity was indeed that of a martyred Christian queen – the perfect blend of royalty and humility that the restored Bourbons were seeking to perpetuate.

Chapter four will speak exclusively of a series of historical serial novels featuring Marie-Antoinette that novelist Alexandre Dumas published from 1845 to 1853. Dumas's representation of the queen took quite a different approach than that of previous authors. Dumas neither vilified nor idealized Marie-Antoinette, but rather used a combination of previous myths along with a

vast repertoire of Romanesque techniques in order to highlight the new nineteenth-century fascination with history, historical study and the historical process. His detailed and quite fascinating representation of the queen allowed Dumas to illuminate the *true* main character is his novel series – History.

In Chapter five, three acclaimed historical accounts from the 1850s will be examined: *Louis XVII, sa vie, son agonie et sa mort* by Alcide de Beauchesne (1852); *L'Histoire de Marie-Antoinette* by Edmund and Jules Goncourt (1858); and *Marie-Antoinette et la Révolution Française* by Horace Viel-Castel (1859). Each of these authors used Marie-Antoinette's story to demonstrate the value and trustworthiness of the new methods of studying, researching, and writing that were beginning to dominiate nineteenth-century texts. Indeed, the influence of Realism and Naturalism and a developing nineteenth-century historiography is quite apparent in each text, and thus demonstrates the authors' belief in the realiability of historical research amoung primary sources. However, a detailed study of *all* of their sources will reveal the persistence of several Marie-Antoinette myths, even as these works announce their portrayal of the "real" queen.

In Chapter six, I will compare two document compilations from the latter half of the nineteenth century: *Marie-Antoinette à la Conciergerie,* by Emile Campardon (1863); and *Marie-Antoinette, la Captivité et la Mort* by Gaston Lenotre (1898). Both works attempted to offer a completely objective representation of Marie-Antoinette by simply assembling documents related to the final months of her life into an organized and thematic collection. In this way, like the authors in Chapter five, these authors used Marie-Antoinette's story as a way to demonstrate their method of research - archival studies - could indeed shed light upon and reveal certain truths about what "really" happened. Although in certain ways both authors succeeded in this

empirical goal, a detailed study of their sources will reveal that certain stories surrounding Marie-Antoinette remain controversial even when traced back to their origins. Thus, Chapter six will once again reveal the porous relationship between fact and fiction in the case of Marie-Antoinette, as well as the itinerary of Marie-Antoinette sources available in history and fiction.

Finally, the conclusion of the study will compare findings from the six chapters with more recent post-modern works of fiction, revealing that even subjective points of view and personal interpretation are not enough to erase previously established myth. In these more recent literary representations, which should be attempts to challenge constructed and proposed identities for Marie-Antoinette, we will see that she is still used to show the author's perceived vision of how the world "should be". The conclusion will also reexamine four more recent biographies (see titles below) as primary sources themselves in order to further demonstate how historical and fictional accounts each pull from the same sources.

Throughout the study, I will consult four biographies of Marie-Antoinette from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in order to provide a more recent historical perspective. In chronological order by date of publication, these works are: *Marie-Antoinette* by Stefen Zweig (1932); *Queen of France* by André Castelot (1957); *Marie-Antoinette, the Last Queen of France* by Evelyn Lever (2000); and *Marie-Antoinette: The Journey* by Antonia Fraser (2001). The use of these works is not an attempt to refute or confirm nineteenth-century authors' perspectives, but rather a means of comparison between former and current perspectives concerning Marie-Antoinette and the past. An Austrian whose works were originally written in German, Zweig for a time enjoyed the status of one of Europe's most "famous and translated authors" ("Rise and Fall"), and his account is of interest here since the author has gained particular recognition in

France.[7] Zweig's original title *Marie-Antoinette: Bildnis eines mittleren Charakters*[8], reveals the author's opinion, which is indeed reflected as Zweig seeks to show how *unremarkable* Marie-Antoinette was. André Castelot, on the other hand, views Marie-Antoinette from a French royalist and conservative perspective, and thus his portrait offers a quite positive and more enthusiastic depiction of the queen. Evelyne Lever, also French, is an acclaimed historian who has also published other historical biographies about French monarchs, including Louis XVIII (1988), and Louis XVI (1991). She is especially interested in Marie-Antoinette, having published seven Marie-Antoinette works.[9] Finally, Antonia Fraser, a British woman, will offer another "outside" view, and this time from a woman's perspective. Her biography of Marie-Antoinette, although not written originally in French, still received much attention and received an award from the Franco-British Society in 2001 the year of its publication.[10] As this study will show, the themes, stories, mysteries and fascinations these four biographies reveal – themes which also surround Marie-Antoinette in recent fictional literature - were established in the earliest literary representations of the queen and have outlasted even dramatic shifts in historical, literary, political and even religious perception.

All French quotations translated to English in the footnotes are my own translations unless otherwise noted.

[7] Indeed, Zweig's bibliography includes over thirty works of fiction, fifteen historical works and biographies, and even a few theatrical works, all of which have been translated into one or more languages. In France, Zweig's continued influence was manifested in 2003 when the French Senate commissioned and inaugurated a statue in his honor in the Luxembourg Gardens. The statue (by Felix Schivo, 2003) features Zweig's head above a plaque with his name and an open book. It was inaugurated in December 2003 in the presence of the artist and several French dignitaries.

[8] *Marie-Antoinette: the Portrait of an Average Woman*

[9] Lever's other titles are: *1792, les procès de Louis XVI et de Marie-Antoinette* ; *L'Affaire du Collier* (2004) ; *Les dernières noces de la monarchie. Louis XVI et Marie-Antoinette* (2005) ; *C'était Marie-Antoinette* (2006) ; *Marie-Antoinette, correspondance (1770–1793)* ; and *Marie-Antoinette: Journal d'une reine* (2008).

[10] Enid McLeod Literary Prize

Chapter 1: Marie-Antoinette in Pre-Revolutionary and Revolutionary literature (1770-1793)

The myths of the goddess and the monster queen

"Marie-Antoinette connut les deux extrêmes. Avant d'être celle que l'on exècre, celle dont l'existence offusque l'Histoire, elle fut applaudie avec enthousiasme, sans raison particulière, parce qu'elle plaisait " (Chantal Thomas, *La Reine Scélérate,* 13).[11]

"Voilà une figure touchante entre toutes, une figure épique et tragique, s'il en fût, image et victime de la plus grande calamité qui ait passionné le monde.[12]" (Sainte-Beuve, 1866) [13]

The creation of the literary myth of Marie-Antoinette did not begin after she died. In order to understand the development of her myth in nineteenth-century French literary representations, it is important to study what was written about her *before* her death. In this chapter then, we will consider publications concerning Marie-Antoinette during the years 1770 to 1793, from the time she came to France as betrothed to the future king, until twenty-three years later when her subjects executed her for that very reason. Publications from these years are significant to this study for two reasons: first, in order to see how early literary representations of Marie-Antoinette had already created a fictional identity for her before her death, as we will learn in this chapter; and second, in order to later compare these pre-revolutionary representations to those written in the century after her death, which will be discussed in the remaining five chapters. French public opinion in the eighteenth century was fickle, and writings which began in praise of the young dauphine, soon turned sour reflecting and influencing the change in public opinion and, as Zweig

[11] Marie-Antoinette was familiar with both extremes. Before being tried and becoming one whose existence offends History, she was applauded with enthusiasm, without any specific reason, because she was pleasing.
[12] Here is a most touching epic and tragic figure, if there ever was one. Here is the picture and the victim of the worst slanders which ever impassioned the world.
[13] Taken from his dedication to a bibliography of works concerning Marie-Antoinette by M. Arneth; cited here from Maurice Tourneux's *Bibliographie de l'histoire de Paris pendant la Révolution Française.*

would later say, eventually leading the queen to the scaffold.[14] As we will see here, Marie-Antoinette became a myth the moment she set foot onto French soil.

Written accounts of Marie-Antoinette at the time of her entrance into France reflect an overall positive attitude. This study of the French literary image of Marie-Antoinette begins on May 7, 1770. Coming directly from the royal palace in Vienna, where she had been pampered her entire life, Marie-Antoinette's youth and beauty contrasted greatly with the other royal woman living at Versailles at the time. Louis XV's wife, Maria Leszczynska, had been dead for nearly two years by the time Marie-Antoinette arrived in France, leaving his unmarried daughters Victoire, Sophie, and Adelaide as the only women from the royal family with which the French could compare their new *dauphine*.[15] Next to these aging women who were quite unattractive[16] and lived secluded lives, the youthful and personable Marie-Antoinette draped in jewels and other finery, appeared like a breath of fresh air. Her youth and beauty inspired the positive literary representations Castelot mentions in his biography of Marie-Antoinette:

> In the unanimous opinion of witnesses, and from the first moment of her entry into France, Marie-Antoinette's smile charmed and attracted […] [One spectator wrote:] "As one watches the princess it is difficult to refrain from feeling a respect mingled with tenderness." And [Castelot continues] in all the accounts one finds the same astonishment of her contemporaries at Marie-Antoinette's complexion, a complexion "literally a blend

[14] Zweig's exact words are: "…on usa de tous les moyens pour la conduire à la guillotine; journaux, brochures, livres attribuent sans hésitations à la "louve autrichienne" […] toutes les dépravations morales, toutes les perversités[14]…" (5). "They used all means to lead her to the guillotine: newspapers, brochures, and books without hesitation attributed all the moral deprivation and every perversity to the "Austrian female wolf" …"

[15] Louis XV's other unmarried daughter Louise, had just recently gone to live in a convent to pray for her father's sins.

[16] See Fraser, page 65: "As for the royal aunts, ages thirty-eight, thirty-seven and thirty-six respectively, the malicious English anecdotist Horace Walpole had described them as 'clumsy, plump old wenches.' In fact, the eldest and cleverest, Madame Adélaïde, had had a certain charm in youth, even if it had now long vanished; Madame Victoire was not bad-looking but had become so fat that her father nicknamed her 'Sow'; whilst Madame Sophie, known as 'Grub,' tilted her head sideways like a frightened hare."

> of lilies and roses…which can spare her the use of rouge," noted one woman, not without envy. Marie-Antoinette's arrival among this decaying monarchy, this cankered age, this unhealthy society had the effect of a fresh bouquet of wild flowers. (20)

Many artists were inspired by Marie-Antoinette's beauty. After attempting a bust of the young woman, a sculptor named Moyne wrote the following verse in praise of her beauty: "Combien ce buste m'a coûté !/ Je croyais avoir imité/ De la nymphe la plus jolie/ Sourire fin, douce gaîté,/ Et d'une princesse accomplie ;/ Grâces, noblesse, majesté. / Fier de mon art et de votre beauté/ Je crus dix fois ma besogne finie ; / Je revenais, vous étiez embellie, / Et mon art était dérouté" (cited in Montjoye, 62). [17] Here, Marie-Antoinette is not only likened to a deity figure from Greek mythology (*nymphe*), but her beauty also causes the artist to feel inadequate as is revealed when he expresses his inability to capture perfectly her stunning beauty.

Not only a positive youthful addition to the aging court at Versailles, Marie-Antoinette brought hope for a peaceful relationship between France and Austria after years of warfare. Therefore, certain earlier representations praised the Austrian heritage and blood line of Marie-Antoinette.[18] Positive representations of this type focused on Marie-Antoinette's descent from a long line of royalty: "From the most august blood she has seen the light of day/ Yet her high birth is the least of her merits" (Fraser, 42), as well as the Franco-Austrian alliance: "The Rose of the Danube and the Lily of the Seine/ Mingling their colours, embellish both parts: / From a garland of these flowers, love forms a chain/ Uniting happily two nations hearts" (Fraser, 51).

[17] How much this bust cost me! / I believed to have imitated the most beautiful nymph/ her thin smile, her sweet happiness/ and the grace, nobility and majesty/ of an accomplished princess. / Proud of my work and of your beauty/ at least ten times I thought I had finished; / I would return, and you would be even more beautiful/ and my art would be defeated.

[18] This occurred despite the fact that many French people detested Austria and did not want an alliance with them.

In addition to youth, beauty and the symbol of peace with Austria, Marie-Antoinette, for some people, represented a return to Catholic morals and family values. Louis XV had for many years kept mistresses at court, which although coinciding with the typical behavior at Versailles, was meant to be kept secret.[19] The king's immoral behavior was well-known since he had obtained for his current mistress, Jeanne Bécu, a title of nobility. This former commoner, now Madame du Barry, and fifteen years older than the new dauphine, was "adored by Louis XV and [even] ruled over the court and organized all its entertainments" (Lever, 34). For some writers, Marie-Antoinette was the antithesis of Madame du Barry, with a milky white complexion to mirror her sexual purity. According to Fraser, Marie-Antoinette and Louis-Auguste "had the air of a gracious royal pair whose innocence in the public eye contrasted favorably with the debauched reputation of the King, his nymphets and now his wanton mistress. One popular rhyme on the subject contrasted two ruling women: Joan of Arc, who saved the country, with "the Harlot" - the Du Barry – who was now ruining it" (82). Marie-Antoinette and her new husband were indeed expected to rid Versailles of moral corruptness, so much that French writers even anticipated their wedding night activities in verse. An early poem by a Mademoiselle Cosson de la Cressonière verbalizes this hope: "Bearing the wishes of her court, She comes, by noble marriage led: 'Tis Psyche in the bloom of youth/ Conducted here to Cupid's bed" (cited in Castelot, 23).

Despite the positive nature of these early French literary representations, the fact remains that from the moment Marie-Antoinette set foot into the country, French writers began to construct an identity for her based on what they wanted to see rather than on who she really was. In these early times, Marie-Antoinette was likened to every mythical goddess of youth and beauty,

[19] "The presence of Du Barry at court constituted a problem – but only if it was allowed to become one. Morals at Versailles were lightly worn. The nobility married young, their marriages being more or less arranged, and then lapsed gracefully into extramarital relationships, which were generally tolerated provided they were conducted in sufficiently elegant style" (Fraser, 86-87).

including Hebe, Flora and Venus (Fraser, 58). The positive examples we highlighted above focus on three aspects of Marie-Antoinette: her physical appearance –which thanks to much manipulation, had satisfied the French standard of beauty and had caused her to be considered good enough[20]; her origins from a royal bloodline –which she in no way could have changed; and presumed her moral goodness, although the latter to the lesser extent, as the next paragraph will discuss. In short, after only her a few days in France, Marie-Antoinette was already a myth.

Christophe Felix Montjoye, whose biography of Marie-Antoinette we will discuss in the next chapter, remarked the omission of reality in these early representations, and laments that they focused too much on the queen's physical beauty and not enough on her goodness. Of the sculptor Moyne's poem, which likens Marie-Antoinette to a nymph of great beauty, Montjoye says "La comparer à *la nymphe la plus jolie*, trouver *sa tête charmante*, c'était plutôt blesser qu'exprimer le respect qu'on devait à sa personne ; il n'y avait rien là d'ailleurs qu'un compliment ordinaire, et qui bornait les louanges dues à la dauphine, à celles que mérite toute femme aimable" (63, author's emphasis).[21] The queen's generosity alone, Montjoye says, should have been reason for a myriad of other positive literary representations and that had these existed, the public's opinion of her would have been strengthened. "Son âme présentait un fonds inépuisable de véritables louanges qui auraient mieux nourri le respect des peuples. Tous les éloges qu'on lui adressait roulaient sur la même pensée que tout au plus on pouvait toucher en passant, pour

[20] Caroline Weber tells of the physical manipulations Marie-Antoinette underwent in order to be made acceptable to French standards of beauty. She mentions overhauls on the young woman's wardrobe, teeth, and hair all before Marie-Thérèse would allow an official portrait be made and sent to Louis XV. "Louis XV himself had made it known that he could not possibly extend an offer of marriage on his grandson's behalf without first knowing that Marie-Antoinette was attractive enough to be a credit to his court…" (15). See Weber, pages 15-17 for more information.

[21] To compare her to *the most beautiful nymph*, to find her *charming*, was really more to wound her than to express the respect she deserved. These words are nothing more than an ordinary compliment which limited the praises really due to the dauphine to those that any likeable woman would deserve. (author's emphasis)

s'arrêter sur des idées plus solides" (61).[22] For Montjoye, positive representations which omitted the full picture of her goodness were as much at fault for constructing the myth of Marie-Antoinette as the negative representations that followed. Indeed, as many of the following chapters will discuss "generosity" became one of Marie-Antoinette's most exploited and manipulated traits. Marie-Antoinette maintained the pure goddess-like identity the French writing public constructed for her only for a brief moment. Due to many factors, however, she would soon gain a whole new list of nicknames, and become one of the most frequently slandered royals in the popular literature of the day: the *libelle*.[23]

In his article "Marie-Antoinette and her fictions", author Jacques Revel groups the accusations against Marie-Antoinette found in revolutionary literature into four principle themes: 1) her irreducibly foreign character; 2) her uncontrolled sexuality; 3) her pretension to conduct her life how she wished and to create a private space for herself; and 4) her political ambition (120).[24] The rest of this chapter will show how these themes manifested themselves in negative literary representations of Marie-Antoinette and earned for her the four infamous nicknames *l'Autrichienne, la Messaline Moderne, Madame Déficit* and *Madame Veto.* The mythical identity eighteenth-century writers constructed for Marie-Antoinette was indeed more multi-faceted than only these four personalities. However, these four serve as an adequate representation of the myth because they encompass all of the evil for which Marie-Antoinette was condemned, and

[22] There were so many more ways to praise her which would have better nourished the people's respect. All of the praise she received centered on the same thought, so that all of the more solid ideas of her other virtues were ignored.

[23] Pamphlet; This study employs the word "pamphlet" to refer to the many different types of texts published against Marie-Antoinette while she was still living. This "low form" of literature, coming from "inexpensive editorial" publishers include songs, plays, satires and even book-length works, as Jacques Revel points out in "Marie-Antoinette and her Fictions" (112).

[24] The order of Revel's list is changed here in order to follow the organization of this study. Revel lists the themes in this order: 1) her uncontrolled sexuality 2) her irreducibly foreign character, 3) her political ambition, and 4) her pretension to conduct her life as she wished and to create a private space for herself (120).

are responsible for the repetition historians and fiction writers would employ in their works throughout the rest of the century.

As the initial enthusiasm towards Marie-Antoinette cooled off, the underlying bitterness of the French towards this new outsider reared its ugly head. Edmund Burke, an Irishman and House of Commons Member, visited France in 1773, and was surprised to notice continued French anger at Louis XV, for having signed a treaty with Austria in 1756. According to one of Burke's letters, the French had seen this treaty as a "national disaster" because it linked their country in friendship to the only country which prevented them from achieving the expansion of their own. Fifteen years after the treaty's signing and during Burke's visit, the French were still grumbling about it. Since Burke visited France only three years after Marie-Antoinette's arrival, he was able to witness first-hand and explain the effect that the marriage of the dauphin with an Austrian woman had on the atmosphere of the French court and their feelings towards the king: "Cet événement ajouta beaucoup à leur haine et à leur mépris pour leur monarchie. Dès ce moment, la feue reine, qui méritait sous tous les rapports, l'amour et l'admiration universels, et dont la vie avait été aussi humaine et aussi bienfaisante que sa mort fut grande et héroïque, devint l'objet d'une haine implacable, qui ne devait s'éteindre que dans son sang" (Burke, 595).[25]

Even before she arrived at the palace of Versailles, Marie-Antoinette had been dubbed *l'Autrichienne* by Madame Adelaide, one of her new husband's jealous aunts. *L'Autrichienne* means "literally, 'the Austrian woman', but the coincidental combination of the two French words for ostrich (*autruche*) and bitch (*chienne*) meant that the name would present horribly rich

[25] "This event added a lot to their hate and their mistrust of their monarchy. From this moment, the queen, who deserved from all angles, universal love and admiration, and whose life was as human and as charitable as her death was to be grand and heroic, became the object of relentless hate, which would only be extinguished by her blood."

opportunities [later] for cartoonists" (Fraser, 47).[26] As Marie-Antoinette's popularity continued to decline – first at court and then among the people – the image of an evil Austrian Woman became more and more prevalent in French publications. One of the greatest hopes for the new marriage was that the young girl would bear a son, and thus ensure the continuation of the Bourbon line. After she had been the wife of the dauphin of France for a few years, a significant problem became clear: Marie-Antoinette had not yet had a baby. Already disgruntled by the fact that she was Austrian, the public now had a 'real' reason to claim that Marie-Antoinette had been an improper choice for their future king: she was unable to produce an heir for the throne. Of course the first step to securing an heir to the throne, was to consummate the marriage. Much to the dismay of Louis XV and Marie-Thérèse, who kept herself informed of her daughter's conjugal behavior all the way from Vienna, this single act by which a man officially makes a woman his wife did not occur the night of the wedding, nor did it occur during any subsequent night for several years. Evelyn Lever tells us that the marriage was finally consummated on May 15, 1773, three years after the wedding.

The perceived sexual failure of the Austrian woman became her first visible and tangible defect. The first pamphlet directed at Marie-Antoinette was entitled *Avis important de la branche espagnole sur ses droits à la couronne de France, à défaut d'héritiers, et qui peut être utile à tout la famille de Bourbon, surtout au roi Louis XVI*. Published in 1774, *Avis important* accused Marie-Antoinette of being sterile (Hunt, *Family Romance,* 103). While the author of the pamphlet remained anonymous, the pamphlet's message was clear: Marie-Antoinette, the

[26] Annie Duprat records that the stamp collection at the *Bibliothèque Nationale Française,* contains a stamp entitled *La Poulle Autruche* on which Marie-Antoinette's head tops the body of an ostrich. The ridiculous creature exclaims, "Je digère l'or et l'argent avec facilité, mais la Constitution je ne puis l'avaler" (cited in Duprat, 80). "I can easily swallow gold and silver, but I cannot swallow the Constitution." While the word "poule" can mean "bird" in colloquial French, it is also used as a vulagar derogatory term meaning "floozy" to indicate a promiscuous woman or a prostitute.

Austrian woman, was unworthy of the throne of France because she could not fulfill the one and only purpose of a queen. Pamphlets leading up to the revolution blamed the Austrian woman for everything, even the fall of French fabric producing industries, because the clothes she made popular featured non-French fabrics (Weber, 156-157). Revolutionary pamphlets especially honed in on the 'ostrich' part of the name, producing the well-known image of the queen's head atop an ostrich's body.[27] Even after she died, the myth of *l'Autrichienne* lived on in French writing. In a post-mortem pamphlet, *Marie Antoinette au Diable*, Marie-Antoinette arrives in hell, where she anxious to find her mother and her two brothers who had become Austrian emperors, but "as for my fat porpoise of a husband, […] I want to have nothing more to do with him" (Fraser, 442). Even in hell, the mythical Marie-Antoinette maintained loyalty to her Austrian blood, forsaking her French family and insulting her French husband for eternity.

Rumors in the pamphlets added to the growing myth of Marie-Antoinette and soon dubbed her *La Messaline Moderne*, after Messalina, the infamous wife of Roman Emperor Claudius who lived over a thousand years before Marie-Antoinette. Messalina, an influential woman who during her short lifetime established a reputation for promiscuity, was accused and executed around the age of thirty for conspiracy to overthrow her husband.[28] Since Marie-Antoinette remained childless and the couple's lack of frequent sexual relations was becoming common knowledge, pamphlets exploited this to argue that, encouraged by her wicked Austrian mother, Marie-Antoinette turned to other means to provide an heir as well as to satisfy her sexual desires. In *Les Nouvelles de la Cour*, a pamphlet from 1775, Marie-Thérèse says, "My daughter, to have

[27] See Figure 1: *La Poulle d'Autruche* at the end of this chapter (page 46).

[28] That the French chose Messalina as synonomous with Marie-Antoinette was not surprising. The name "Messalina" signified for the revolutionaries all of the evil characteristics they wanted to attribute to Marie-Antoinette. Messalina was known for not only lack of faithfulness to her husband, but also her ability to manipulate him using her sexual prowess and her love of acquiring objects, lands and palaces. For more information, see Donald L. Wasson, "Valeria Messalina," *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, last modified July 16, 2013, http://www.ancient.eu /Valeria_Messalina/.

a successor/ It little matters whether the maker/ Is in front of the throne or behind it" (cited in Fraser, 139). A later, well-known pamphlet from 1789, *L'Essai Historique sur la vie privée de Marie-Antoinette*, demonstrates that this myth continued even after Marie-Antoinette had given birth to four children. In this pamphlet, Marie-Thérèse again encourages her daughter to take a lover in order to secure a dauphin, admits to having done the same thing herself, and encouraged her daughter to engage in lesbianism. "Votre mari ne peut ni pourra jamais vous faire d'enfants ; […] Il faut donc faire comme moi: prendre un faiseur ; […] tout l'univers a connu ma galanterie & les effets ; on peut ignorer la vôtre, si vous la couvrez avec soin du manteau de votre passion pour votre sexe"[29] (28-29).

Portraying the empresses' encouragement to her daughter to hide her sexual promiscuity with men with the detestable practice of lesbianism, allowed the author of *Essai Historique* to focus on another aspect of *Messaline's* personality, her dishonesty and willingness to mislead her husband. Once Marie-Antoinette finally became pregnant in May 1778, the public was not as pleased as she had hoped they would be. "Having made merry at the expense of the King's impotence, they were not likely to give up their scatological trade now that the tradition was seemingly cured. Various fathers were suggested for the coming baby, most prominently the Duc de Coigny, and most unpleasantly, the Comte d'Artois [the king's younger brother]" (Fraser, 161). The *Messaline* myth persisted and grew stronger, insisting that Marie-Antoinette had tricked her husband. The author of *Essai historique* mocks the king for having been manipulated by this dishonest woman. "Le Roi seul de la Cour étoit dans l'erreur & se l'attribuoit [le bébé]; le plus doux de maris, le seigneur du château de Versailles se complaisoit dans sa progéniture

[29] Your husband cannot and will never be able to give you children; this is a great problem, no doubt. […] So, you must do as I did: take a lover; […] the whole universe knew about my gallantry and its effects; they can remain ignorant of yours if you hide it well under the mask of your passion for other women.

prochaine, & tous les courtisans au fait du secret, applaudissoient à la sotisse du prétendu papa" (44-45).[30] In early 1781, the queen became pregnant again and on October 22, she gave birth to the dauphin of France, Louis Joseph Xavier François. It had been eleven and a half years since her marriage to the King, which had allowed writers ample time to construct the image of a dishonest *Messaline*. Even though officially, the births of the royal children were greeted with praise and celebration, the dirty rumors were lying just beneath the surface of the happy images. One image from the time of the dauphin's birth thoroughly illustrates this hypocrisy:

> The official medal might bear the legend in Latin "Public Happiness", but a malicious engraving showed Marie-Antoinette cradling her baby, accompanied by Louis XVI wearing a cuckold's horns and an angel with a trumpet who was supposed to 'announce to all parts' the birth of the Dauphin: "But be careful not to open your eyes to the secret of his birth." (Fraser 193)

Again in *Essai historique,* the author reminisces about the birth of the dauphin, and speaks of the circulating questions regarding his paternity. According to the pamphleteer, the "hero" of this pregnancy was Joseph de Vaudreuil, who was in reality the open lover of one of Marie-Antoinette's favorites, Gabrielle de Polignac.[31] In the following line, we read the author's explanation as to why a second father should be suspected for the second child: "Madame de Polignac a fait un garçon, Vaudreuil fait donc des garçons; Coigny ne fait que des filles, *ergo,*

[30] At Court, the King was the only one fooled into believing he was the father. The sweetest husband, the Lord of Versailles was pleased with the upcoming birth and all the courtiers who knew of the secret cheered at the foolishness of the supposed father.

[31] Gabrielle's full name was Yolande Martine Gabrielle de Polastron before she married the Count Jules de Polignac. Various biographers, thus, refer to her sometimes as "Yolande de Polignac" and sometimes as "Madame Jules de Polignac." Since the conclusion of this study will speak of a fictional account in which this woman is referred to by her middle name "Gabrielle", this will be the name used to refer to her here in order to avoid confusion later. It is necessary not to confuse Gabrielle de Polignac, Marie-Antoinette's favored friend, with her sister-in-law, Diane de Polignac, although Diane also benefitted from the attention her brother's wife received from the queen.

ergo… » (67, author's emphasis).[32] By the time the Queen becomes pregnant for a third time in *Essai*, she has had so many partners that she cannot even imagine who the father is. The only thing she is certain about is that she must convince the king that the baby is his. She sollicits two friends to help her, confessing: "Enfin, mes chers amis, je vous le confesse: j'ai eu Dilon, Coigny, Boezenvald, Vaudreuil, Campan, Bazin, un petit commis de la guerre, l'abbé de Vermont, & presque tout ce qui m'approche. Le résultat c'est que je suis grosse ; il faut que par votre secours le Roi le trouve bon" (87).[33] The King, who is portrayed as a fool, is easily convinced that the baby is his, and Marie-Antoinette, relieved at not having been caught, goes back to her Messalina-like, evil, manipulative, and promiscuous behavior.

As Jacques Revel points out, sexual promiscuity was the most dominant theme of the persistent four themes in revolutionary literature (2). Another 1789 pamphlet, Le *Godmiché Royal*[34], also dedicated to the sexual appetite of the queen confirms this. The author uses allegory and the earlier myths of the goddess queen to demonstrate Marie-Antoinette's sexual promiscuity. The goddess Jupon is devastated because her lover is no longer sexually pleasing her. Desperate for satisfaction, she begins using a dildo until her friend Hébée comes to offer her some assistance. Shocked that such a woman must use a dildo, Hébée offers to find new lovers for her friend. Having verified the length and the circumference of these lovers' penises, Jupon accepts the offer and the story ends leaving the reader only to imagine what will happen next. Although not a lengthy text, in light of contemporary political circumstances and rumors, the allegory's meaning is easily deciphered. Jupon was clearly a representation of Marie-Antoinette

[32] Madame Polignac had a boy, so Vaudreuil makes boys. Coigny only makes girls, *therefore, therefore…*
[33] I confess to you my dear friends, I had Dilon, Coigny, Boezenvald, Vuadreuil, Campan, Bazin, a young war assistant, Abbot Vermont, and almost all the men who are close to me. The result is that I am pregnant; and I need your help so that the king finds this a good thing.
[34] *The Royal Dildo*

who, was not only rumored to be sexually unsatisfied by her husband, but was also known for changing quickly between lovers. Hébée was most likely a representation of Gabrielle de Polignac who was said to be corrupting the queen and the men at court. This short allegory, thus mocked the king's perceived sexual indifference, the queen's perceived sexual addiction, and her closest friend's perceived role in all of the corruption.

As the revolution got underway, the *Messaline* myth only grew stronger, as seen in *Le Bordel Patriotique* of 1791. The *Bordel Patriotique* is about 70 pages long and contains nine scenes. In each scene a new character enters the story and joins in on the orgy. With each addition, the author explains in detail who is doing what with whom, how and what is being done to them, and by whom. Marie-Antoinette's sexual promiscuity even led to the corruption of the emerging revolutionary government of France and familial values. In this pamphlet, Marie-Antoinette establishes a brothel for the members of the newly formed Legislative Assembly. The pamphlet opens with a letter of invitation to the republican members to come "…de jouir & de choisir dans un nombre infini de femmes & de filles complaisantes & prévenantes à l'excès & de tout âge" (5).[35] Not only is the brothel meant for the good of the men, to relieve the stress of directing a new government, but it is also meant as a place of sexual education for women of all backgrounds. "Les femmes mariées d'un tempérament brûlé, qui ne seroient pas satisfaites de leurs maris, ont le droit d'y venir se dédommager. Les filles, & même les religieuses seront bienvenues pour y faire leur apprentissage […] arrivez maquerelles & putains de toutes les conditions recevoir des instructions, & goûter les plaisirs délicieux que je vous prépare" [36] (6-7).

[35] ...to enjoy and to choose from an infinite number of women and girls of all ages who are willing to do anything.
[36] Married women with a hot character, who are not satisfied by their husbands, have the right to come here for compensation. Girls, and even nuns are welcome here for their apprenticeships. […] Come Mesdames and prostitutes of all conditions to receive instructions and taste of the delicious pleasures that I have prepared for you.

In this place of debauchery, the fears of eighteenth-century philosopher, Jean Jacques Rousseau came true. Rousseau had maintained that there were strict lines separating the roles of the two genders and under no circumstances were these lines to be crossed. Lynn Hunt writes, "According to Rousseau, women in the public sphere would turn men into women. […] With her strategic position on the cusp between public and private, Marie-Antoinette was emblematic of the much larger problem of the relation between women and the public sphere in the eighteenth century" (90). In Marie-Antoinette's brothel, men *did* turn into women, including Bailly, the current mayor of Paris, who enjoyed having sex more with men than with women. Bailly's unnatural desire for other men even destroyed his marriage as we can see by the way he speaks to his wife: "Vous pouvez, Madame Bailly, vous fâcher tant qu'il vous plaira, vous ne ferez plus foutue par moi. Je vais débuter par enculer La Fayette, qui aura l'honneur & le plaisir de m'enculer à son tour " (32).[37] The gender boundaries are again crossed when women become the masters over their husbands. In Marie-Antoinette's brothel, the women are indeed the ones in charge. The queen especially has the right to give orders. She says to Bailly and to La Fayette, "Etes-vous prêt, êtes-vous en état ? […] Pensez que je fus Reine, & que je veux être foutue comme une Reine" (34).[38]

The social structure of Marie-Antoinette's *Bordel Patriotique,* strangely resembles the hierarchy of the *Ancien Regime* and thus even threatens revolutionary ideals. The participants in the brothel come from all sides of the political spectrum: Marie-Antoinette, Théroigne de Mericourt[39], National Guard commander La Fayette[40], Parisian mayor Bailly, the king's elder

[37] You can get mad all you want, Madame Bailly, but I will not f*** you. I'm going to start out by f***ing La Fayette, who will afterwards have the honor and the pleasure of f***ing me.
[38] Are you two ready? Are you up to it? Know that I was queen…and that I want to be f***ed like a Queen.
[39] An infamous and mysterious woman from the republican side of the French Revolution.
[40] Gilbert de La Fayette was the general of the Parisian National Guard, and someone who Marie-Antoinette did not trust, despite his continuous protection of her and her family. Although in his younger years, La Fayette enjoyed the

brother the Count de Provence, the statesman Count Mirabeau, and even the republican journalist Jean-Paul Marat. Every key figure in the Revolution plays a part, and all are willing to have relations with everyone else, regardless of age, gender, social status or religion. Yet, although all are welcome to partake, *égalité* does not exist. On pages fourteen through twenty, there is a list of members from all social classes and the price to have sex with them. Princes and princesses are the most expensive partners, starting at 2400 *livres*, while one can have sex with a monk for only 60 *livres* or a simple soldier or actress for only three! A priest from Paris costs 600 *livres*, while a priest from the countryside would cost only 200. The instigator of such inequality is of course the brothel's Madame, Marie-Antoinette, and once again her insatiable sexual appetite is leading the country– including its newly formed republican government which should be free from class distinction – straight to hell.[41]

Since *l'Autrichienne* and Messalina were such detestable identities, it is not surprising that another part of Marie-Antoinette's degenerate identity was based on now a series of comparisons to former and unpopular royal mistresses rather than to former queens of France. Since Louis and Marie-Antoinette were not sexually active for so long, this comparison hardly seems fair but it cannot be denied. Once the king and queen *had* finally consummated their marriage, Louis

support of the French people, who were proud of his heroic role in supporting the Americans on their road to independence during the Revolutionary War, La Fayette eventually met with the same disapproval that all aristocrats experienced during the French Revolution. After the unfortunate events at the Champs de Mars on July 17, 1791 when hundreds of people were massacred, La Fayette and the National Guard were blamed, and La Fayette became one of the people's favorite targets and sexual partners for Marie-Antoinette in the pamphlets. Marie-Antoinette's tense relationship with La Fayette is discussed again in Chapter four and the conclusion of this study.

[41]This is another interesting link to Messalina. Juvenal, a Roman poet in the late first and early second century CE, had written in his "sixth satire" how Messalina was said to work through the night in a brothel. Later, sixteenth-century Italian artist Agostino Carracci, etched a visual image of Messalina's clandestine work in the brothel in his famous erotic work *I Modi* (*The Ways*, also known as *The Sixteen Pleasures*). For more information, see a copy of the original etching in *I Modi: the sixteen pleasures. An erotic album of the Italian renaissance / Giulio Romano … [et al.]* edited, translated from the Italian and with a commentary by Lynne Lawner. Northwestern University Press, 1988, and Mudd, Mary; *I, Livia: The Counterfeit Criminal. The Story of a Much Maligned Woman* (Trafford Publishing, 2012).

XVI's decision never to take on a mistress, did not have the positive effect on Marie-Antoinette's reputation as one might expect. Antonia Fraser says, "For the King's distaste at the idea of a mistress, Marie-Antoinette can hardly be blamed; yet somehow she was turned into a scapegoat of this upsetting the natural order of things – as the French court saw it" (457). In fact, the French kings were known for having royal mistresses, the two most recent being the favorites of Louis XV, Madame de Pompadour and Madame du Barry who both 'reigned' at court for several years. Before that, Louis XIV, during his 72 year reign had also had many mistresses, including but not limited to Catherine Bellier, Françoise de Montespan and Louise de La Vallière. Although Louis XIII had not had female mistresses, there were rumors that he likely kept male lovers, and his predecessor Henri IV, a well-known seducer, who reigned from 1572-1610 was faithful to neither of his two wives. The public had grown used to this tradition and made the act of hating the king's favorite mistress an integral part of French culture. These royal mistresses of the past were especially criticized for threatening the country's financial situation due to their lavish extravagance and the expensive gifts which the kings bestowed upon them. When Louis XVI, unlike his predecessors, never took a mistress, his wife took on the role as the king's favorite, paradoxically becoming the target of the same mistrust and hatred as royal mistresses of the past.

Indeed, Marie-Antoinette was accused singlehandedly for bankrupting the country. This accusation eventually earned her the nickname *Madame Déficit*, which was meant to humanize the extraordinary amounts of money spent on and by Marie-Antoinette each year. This overspending began the moment she married and became officially a member of the Bourbon family. "The [wedding] festivities were over, but who was to pay the bill, […] the nine millions spent of the marriage festivities? "What do you think of my festivities at Versailles?" the King

had asked his Controller of Finances. 'Sire, I think they are…*priceless*!'" (Castelot, 41). To make matters worse, these debts were never settled. "A whole file of the National Archives is filled with the pathetic pleas of tradesmen in want who at the beginning of the Revolution were still asking to be paid at least something on account of what they had spent twenty years before for Marie-Antoinette's wedding" (Castelot, 41). Though expenses for a royal wedding had never previously been spared, they had created lasting memories of financial oppression by their monarchs for the French people.

Wedding expenses were soon linked to other extravagances. One of the main things on which Marie-Antoinette spent her monthly salary and beyond was her extraordinary clothing. The annual expenditure for Marie-Antoinette's wardrobe went from 120,000 *livres* in 1776, to 199,000 in 1784, and to more than 250,000 in 1789. [42] Marie-Antoinette's complicated and vast collection of clothing took up three rooms: "At Versailles the queen had her clothes housed in three large rooms beneath her first-floor apartment, each furnished with wardrobes, sliding shelves, and a large table on which assistants adjusted costumes before they were taken up to the royal rooms [and] had to be stored on flat individual shelves" (Spawforth, 161). Marie-Antoinette was not the first of women at court to overspend on her clothing and accessories. In fact, "at a time when a well-to-do noble family could live luxuriously on 30,000 *livres* a year, 'Du Barry [Louis XV's last mistress] spent 450,000 *livres* on a single diamond-encrusted dress bodice'" (Weber, 61). However, while it was looked down upon for a wicked and sordid court mistress such as Du Barry to overspend, it was at least expected. It became, however, deplorable and unacceptable that the queen should do so because it further proved her intent to destroy the

[42] Statistic from Pierre de Nolhac, *Marie-Antoinette,* Paris, Plon, 1936, p. 57. Cited in Duprat, Annie *Marie-Antoinette: une Reine Brisée.* In her foot note about this statistic, Duprat says "Despite his [de Nolhac's] great admiration for Marie-Antoinette, the historian was seized with dizziness when he heard these amounts" (my translation).

nation. According to one pamphlet, Marie-Antoinette "mange l'argent de la France, dans l'espoir de dévorer les Français l'un après l'autre" (cited in Thomas, *La Reine,* 233).[43]

Another of Marie-Antoinette's favorite pastimes, *Le Petit Trianon* - her private residence on the grounds of Versailles – was another way in which she spent seemingly unprecedented amounts of money. Just as she put much detail, care and expense into daily creating new fashion trends, she did the same thing to her new "miniature kingdom" at Trianon. "…elle a toujours quelque chose de nouveau à ordonner pour l'embellissement de son royaume ; […] apparaissent maintenant l'architecte, le dessinateur de jardins, le peintre, le décorateur, tous ce nouveaux ministres de son royaume en miniature" (Zweig, 123).[44] As with her wedding, and her clothing, the queen's spending on Petit Trianon caused rumors of *Madame Deficit* to run rampant. Indeed, her activities at Trianon were called "les moyens de s'amuser aux dépens du tiers et du quart" (cited in Thomas, *La Reine,* 232).[45] These myths from the pamphlets indeed became accepted 'knowledge' and Trianon became nearly as detested as the queen herself. In 1789, the deputies of the Estates General visited Versailles asked to see the queen's magnificent palace "where it was said there was a room studded with precious stones" (Spawforth, 230). In her memoirs, Madame Campan, Marie-Antoinette's first lady-in-waiting, also recalls this event:

> The deputies of the *Tiers-Etat* arrived at Versailles full of the strongest prejudices against the Court. The falsehoods of the metropolis never failing to spread themselves into the

[43] ...is eating France's money, in the hope to devour the French one by one.
The image of Marie-Antoinette devouring France's money and thus the French people brings to mind a common misogynist trope of the evil woman, or the evil mother, who brings harm to her children. In Greek mythology, the sorceress Medea had murdered her own children in order to punish her husband for infidelity. After being betrayed by Zues, another woman from Greek mythology, Lamia, had gone insane, become a demon and had taken to devouring as many children as possible – her own children and others.
[44] …she always had to have some new thing to order to embellish her kingdom; […] now appeared the architect, the garden designer, the painter, the decorator, all the new ministers of her miniature kingdom who divided her long spare time, her horribly long spare time, all while emptying the nation's treasury.
[45] …ways to amuse herself at the expense of the lower classes.

> surrounding provinces, they believed […] that the Queen was draining the Treasury of the State in order to satisfy the most unreasonable luxury; they almost all determined to see Little Trianon. The extreme plainness of the retreat in question not answering the ideas they had formed, some of them insisted upon seeing the very smallest closets, saying that the richly furnished apartments were concealed from them. (II, 32)

In the end, the total amount the Petit Trianon cost France was no more than two million *livres*, which was a fairly small amount considering other court expenses at this time (Zweig, 128). The revolutionary deputies' eagerness to discover the exorbitant luxury of this hidden palace, however, shows that written rumors about the expenses incurred there had indeed come to be perceived as fact.

Ten years after she had received Petit Trianon Marie-Antoinette's reputation for the exuberant was well intact. In July 1785, the final piece of evidence the public needed to place Marie-Antoinette at the center of France's financial trouble came into play: The Diamond Necklace Affair. On July 12, 1785 Marie-Antoinette received a strange letter from the court jeweler Charles Auguste Boehmer. In his message, the jeweler congratulated the Queen on being the new owner of a beautiful diamond necklace. He also expressed his and his business partner Paul Bassenge's joy that "the most beautiful set of diamonds in the world will be at the service of the greatest and best of Queens" (quoted in Fraser, 227). The queen, although she knew which necklace Boehmer was referring to, was at first puzzled and then annoyed. The necklace to which he was referring was extremely costly, valuing 1,800,000 *livres*, and the two jewelers had originally hoped to convince Louis XV to purchase it for Madame du Barry. Unable to convince the former king to make such an expense, even for his favorite mistress, the men had since spent many years trying to convince the new mistress of France to relieve them of the expensive

burden. To their disappointment, Marie-Antoinette had refused them as well, and had explained on numerous occasions that she could not spend such a large amount of money on jewels whilst the country was already in extreme financial trouble. Assuming they had understood her final decision, she was baffled by the letter of July 12.

She read the note aloud to her lady-in-waiting, Madame Campan, and then believing it was nothing more than another attempt to convince her to purchase the necklace, she burned the letter by candlelight saying "This letter is hardly worth keeping." (Fraser 228). She then instructed Campan to tell Boehmer that "je n'aime plus les diamants, que je n'en achèterai plus de ma vie; que si j'avais à dépenser de l'argent, j'aimerais bien mieux augmenter mes propriétés de Saint-Cloud par l'acquisition des terres qui les environnent; entrez dans tous ces détails avec lui pour l'en convaincre et bien les graver dans sa tête" (quoted in Lever, *L'affaire du Collier*, 24).[46]

The Queen though, had no way of knowing the intricate set of events that had led to her reception of this baffling letter. Several months earlier the unsuspecting Cardinal de Rohan, who had hoped for a long time to regain the Marie-Antoinette's favor, after having become her enemy several years earlier when he wrote insults about her mother, had been approached by Jeanne de la Motte, a countess who claimed to be a close confidant of the queen. In reality the two women had never been in contact. La Motte explained to the Cardinal that her friend Marie-Antoinette had chosen him to negotiate the secret purchase of the necklace on her behalf. Due to his desire to regain the queen's favor, Rohan was vulnerable, and he believed the countess. His beliefs were confirmed when he received a signed letter from "Marie-Antoinette de France", and when he met with "the queen" in a nocturnal meeting in the hidden gardens of Versailles. The "queen"

[46] I no longer like diamonds, and I will never buy another one as long as I live; and if I had money to spend, I would much better like to add to my property at Saint-Cloud. Make sure you give him these details so he can get the message this time.

was really a common woman, Nicole d'Oliva Le Guay, who resembled Marie-Antoinette and who La Motte had convinced to play this part. During the encounter, Le Guay never addressed a word to the Cardinal, but because he wanted so much to secure the forgiveness of his female monarch, he was convinced this woman was the queen and that his service to her would bring her great joy. He negotiated the purchase of the necklace, and even made the first of many payments. He acquired the necklace from Boehmer and then handed it over to La Motte believing she would deliver it to the Queen. The cardinal waited for Marie-Antoinette to wear the necklace and to give him outward recognition for his act of devotion. He grew frustrated as the weeks went on, because not only did the queen not wear the necklace, she did not show any signs of gratitude. Then Rohan became unable to make the subsequent payments. Boehmer and Bassenge began to panic and they sent the July letter to Marie-Antoinette as a way to kindly remind her that they still needed their money. When Madame Campan went to Boehmer with the queen's negative response Boehmer exclaimed that Marie-Antoinette knew she had money to pay him. After that, the story came out. The king gave orders to arrest the flabbergasted Cardinal who confusedly explained his side of the story. It was clear that he, as much as Marie-Antoinette had been blindsided by La Motte.

Although the king was furious at Rohan for his extreme naivety in the whole affair, he had to submit to the will of Parliament who eventually acquitted him of all charges on May 31, 1786. Parliament forced Rohan to apologize publically and abandon all his courtly duties forever, and yet "he was free. The Parliament had believed in his good faith. As to that fatal assumption on the part of the Cardinal that the veiled figure in the Grove of Venus was the Queen murmuring invitingly in his direction, *it was by implication a legitimate assumption*." (Fraser, 243, my emphasis). Indeed, the former extravagance of Marie-Antoinette had led the public to imagine

and even *expect* manipulative behavior from her, so, in the court's eyes the Cardinal's 'mistake' had been a legitimate one. And so, although the official declaration condemned Marie-Antoinette's enemies and proved she had had no hand in the affair, it was nonetheless "the most damning denunciation of the Queen's way of life" (Fraser, 243).

Rampant rumors surrounding the queen's exorbitant expenses and manipulative ways, had primed the public to believe her scheming role in the intriguing tale of the Diamond Necklace, and they devoured hungrily all publications about the affair regardless of their source. As early as December 1785, trial briefs began to be printed and distributed. All players in the affair "became celebrities overnight, their juicy testimony circulated in trial briefs, newspapers, and pamphlets that reached an audience of at least 100,000 readers, a vast, unprecedented number by eighteenth-century French standards" (Weber, 167). Marie-Antoinette had been declared entirely ignorant of the crime, yet it was she that received the most public criticism for the sordid affair in contemporary writings. Zweig explains that written sources of all genres that featured the story sold by the thousands:

> Un sujet plus amusant […] ne pouvait être offert aux aventuriers de la plume et du crayon, aux pamphlétaires et aux caricaturistes, aux crieurs de journaux. […] Ni les œuvres immortelles de Voltaire, ni celles de Jean-Jacques Rousseau, ni celles de Beaumarchais n'ont atteint, en dix ou vingt ans, à un chiffre d'éditions […] que ces plaidoyers en une seule semaine. Sept mille, dix mille, vingt mille exemplaires sont arrachés, encore humides, des mains des colporteurs ; dans les ambassades étrangères les diplomates passent leurs journées à en ficeler des paquets, qu'ils envoient au plus vite à leurs princes, curieux des dernier pamphlets sur le scandale de la cour de Versailles.

> Chacun veut tout lire et avoir tout lu ; pendant des semaines il n'y a pas d'autre sujet de conversation […].[47] (207-208)

Even the 1789 memoires of Jeanne de la Motte Valois, the mastermind of the affair who had been legally declared insane, met with public sympathy, sold as a best-seller, and contributed to the French dislike of the queen which had, of course by that year, reached a culminating point.[48]

The public hatred was not only directed at the queen's supposed purchase of a necklace, but was regarded as the final proof of the entire degradation of the French monarchy: "Il ne s'agit pas d'un collier dans ce procès, il s'agit de tout le système gouvernemental en vigueur, car cette accusation peut, si elle est dirigée adroitement, rebondir contre toute la classe dirigeante, contre la reine, et par là contre la royauté" (Zweig, 208).[49] However, blaming *Madame Déficit* for the financial ruin of France and for her role in the Diamond Necklace Affair, would not be the last of the public's accusations.

In 1791, Louis XVI vetoed several of the Constituent Assembly's proposed laws. The queen was blamed for her husband's refusal to accept new policies set in place by the Assembly. It was this perceived intent to control her husband which would eventually earn the queen another nickname, *Madame Veto.* This name encompassed an idea which had already been prevalent for a long time: Marie-Antoinette was trying to take control of the king, manipulate his political

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[47] A more interesting subject could not have been offered to adventure writers, pamphleteers, caricaturists, or newspaper salesmen. […] Neither the immortal works of Voltaire, nor those of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, nor those of Beaumarchais attained in ten or twenty years the same number of editions […] that these pleas did in a single week. Seven thousand, ten thousand, twenty thousand copies hot off the presses were snatched from the hands of the salesmen; even in foreign embassies the diplomats spent their days binding up packets-full, which they sent as soon as possible to their leaders, curious for the latest news about the scandal at the court of Versailles. Everyone wanted to read everything, and to have read everything; for weeks there was no other subject of conversation…

[48] *Mémoires justificatifs de la comtesse de Valois de La Motte* was the full title of Jeanne de Saint-Rémy de Valois comtesse de La Motte's memoires. The memoires were published from London where La Motte had fled after having escaped from a women's hospital in Paris.

[49] It was not about a necklace in this trail, it was about the whole strength of the governmental system, because this accusation could, if it were done correctly, bounce back against the entire ruling class, against the queen and because of that, against the royalty.

decisions and destroy the entire country of France. Before *Madame Veto* became a name for Marie-Antoinette, several of the earliest revolutionary pamphlets had foreshadowed the idea. When Marie-Antoinette is compared to Madame du Barry in this passage, the author showcases her manipulative nature and her ability – even her desire – to debase her husband:

> Ces deux femmes célèbres se ressemblèrent encore dans l'art de tromper & d'avilir celui qu'elles doivent faire respecter. Louis XV fut jusqu'à sa mort, la dupe la plus complète de la Dubarry qui, sans aucuns égards, faisoit partager sa couche avec le premier valet, comme avec le premier des courtisans. Louis XVI est également trompé & avili par sa femme, sans avoir l'air d'imaginer seulement que cela puisse être. (*Essai historique,* 5)[50]

These pamphlets followed the trend of other eighteenth century writings such as *The Unfaithful Wife* by Restif de la Bretonne or those of Rousseau which had insisted that women were manipulative and threatening to upset the natural order of things. One of the most dangerous female characteristics of the time was "dissimilation" or the act of saying one thing in public and doing another behind closed doors. Marie-Antoinette was suspected of trying to manipulate her husband into acting, and any action proposed by a woman was considered to be corrupted by their small female mind. In the *Essai historique,* for example, one reads the following opinion: "Depuis qu'il est Roi, un sourire, une caresse de sa femme change tout, fait tout, & sculpteroit la monarchie, s'il n'étoit retenu par quelques considérations que lui inspire le compte de Maurepas" (20).[51] When Marie-Antoinette appointed Gabrielle de Polignac as her

[50] These two women are similar in the art of the deception and the degradation of the one to whom they should bring respect. Louis XV until his death, was completely taken in by the du Barry who, without any consideration shared her bed with the first available valet and the first available courtiers. Louis XVI was equally fooled and degraded by his wife, without even seeming to suspect that this was possible.

[51] Since he has been King, a smile or a caress from his wife changes everything, makes everything & would have knocked down the monarchy by now if he had not been caught hold and inspired by some of Count Maurepas suggestions.

children's new governess, thus increasing her yearly allocation from the king which was already quite extravagant, rumors of the queen controlling the kingdom grew even worse.

> …on lui forma [à Mme Polignac] des petits appartemens dans lesquels il n'y avoit d'introduits que ceux & celles qui étoient destinés à former sa Cour; le Roi même n'y étoit admis que quand on avoit besoin de lui. C'était dans ces assemblées que l'on délibéroit sur les affaires les plus importantes du ministère. La paix, la guerre, la politique, la finance, le renvoi des ministres, le point de saveur & de crédit qu'on devoit leur accorder ; […] ; & l'on ne faisoit entrer le Roi pour ratifier les décisions de cette ridicule assemblée… (*Essai historique,* 70).[52]

In the epilogue of *Le Godmiché Royal*, the author laments the influence the queen possesses over her husband. "Tes projets affreux, ose les reconnoitre, / Une femme impudique a su les enfanter ; /Mais du trône des Francs tu dois être le maitre, /Et comment Antoinette, osa-t-elle y monter ?" (16).[53] This pamphlet portrays Louis just as much to blame as Marie-Antoinette unlike the *Essai Historique* which only mocked him. An example is seen in the epilogue: "… et le jour plus affreux où l'effrayant tonnerre, /Annonçant ton épouse au François consterné, / Accompagnant tes pas à l'autel préparé, / Avoit assez montré par un sanglant présage, / de deux monstres unis le sinistre assemblage ; / Ah ! que n'avez-vous donc, couple impur & hideux, / Dans cette horrible fête expiré tous les deux !" (15).[54] Louis Auguste, by uniting himself with

[52] They gave Madame Polignac a few small apartments in which only those meant to form her court were allowed. Even the King could not come in unless they needed him. It was in these meetings that they discussed the most important issues of the ministry. Peace, war, politics, finances, the hiring and firing of ministers, how much they should help them or not; […] and the King was only allowed to enter to ratify the decisions of this ridiculous assembly.

[53] Dare to recognize your atrocious projects, a shameless woman gave birth to them. But you should be the one sitting on the throne of France. How will Marie-Antoinette dare to be there?

[54] ...and this atrocious day when the terrifying thunder, announcing your spouse to the yielded French and accompanying your steps to the altar, gave us a bloody omen for the dangerous uniting of the two monsters. Oh you hideous and impure couple! If only both of you had died during that horrible celebration!

such a vile and manipulative woman, was threatening the very future of France, and was certainly compromising his own position as King. In the eighteenth century, women were dangerous because they were trying to control. Marie-Antoinette, because she was queen, was the most dangerous woman of all and the political pamphlets highlighted this danger laying the groundwork for *Madame Veto.*

Marie-Antoinette's tendency to spend time secluded with her favorite friends was another of her mistakes. Her favorite secluded hideaway, Petit Trianon, had in earlier reigns been the dwelling place for the king's favorite mistress. Since, as mentioned above, Louis XVI had no favorite other than his wife, he gave Marie-Antoinette this little 'pleasure house' on August 27, 1775. Since the queen often withdrew to Trianon allowing only her favorite friends near her, uninvited courtiers found themselves not only overcome with huge amounts of jealousy, but also with ample time to feed their overactive imaginations. For them, and soon for the public, this private world was hiding secrets, and more than just political ones. Indeed, not to be overshadowed by *Madame Veto,* the other three personalities united with this one to complete the image of the monster queen. The privacy of Little Trianon was especially critiqued in the pamphlet *Parc aux Cerfs. "*After the legend of the *Parc aux Cerfs,* the rumor of the Trianon invented an uninterrupted orgy in its groves and alcoves and a search for systematic transgression of the most elementary moral values" (Revel, 120). The author of *Bordel Patriotique* depicted one of these orgies with a shockingly graphic illustration and a detailed description:

> La reine est foutue à droite par Bazin, son valet-de-chambre, que Monsieur encule, tandis que le Chapelier léché le cul de la reine, en se branlant la pine ; au milieu Madame le Jay, libraire, tenant une poignée de verges, branle le vit au maire de Paris. […] Mademoiselle

> Théroigne le tient dans les bras, & lui chatouille les couilles, tandis que d'Antotn, le cul par terre, la gamahuche (25).[55]

In *Farewells to Her Darlings of both Sexes* of 1792, a prayer that Marie-Antoinette penned in a letter to God that a member of the National Guard "found" and published, Marie-Antoinette admits having used Trianon as a place to hide her evil deeds. The queen bemoans her loss of Trianon: "Oh Trianon! Former place of repose so dear to my heart, what have I done to be torn from your seductive enticements? Enchanting luxury, delicious garden, […] Oh sweet nights, which brought me so much happiness! Oh the pleasant days of lovers, who so often enveloped my soul in your mysterious pleasures, alas!"(cited in Mason and Rizzo, 155).[56] The fact that the happenings at Trianon remained hidden from the rest of the world enticed writers like this one to fantasize about what happened there. In this way the *Autrichienne, la Messaline moderne,* and *Mesdames Déficit* and *Veto* were all one in the same – a foreign woman whose sexual appetite and dishonest manipulations sought to control her husband, his finances, and his entire kingdom.

When Marie-Antoinette was brought to trial in October of 1793 before the Revolutionary Tribunal, they read to her a list of her crimes against the nation: 1) helping foreign powers (her brother – the Austrian emperor); 2) squandering public money; 3) having perverse ministers; 4) having taught the king to dissimulate; and 5) incest with her young son Louis-Charles Capet.[57] A comparison of the themes from revolutionary literature and the nicknames generated from them to this list of her "crimes against the nation" for which she was guillotined, reveals, as many historians have shown, that these accusations were based on rumors from popular publications

[55] On the right, the Queen is being f***ed by Bazin, her valet, who the King's brother is f***ing, while the chapel boy is licking the queen's a**, and masturbating at the same time. In the middle, Madame Jay, the librarian, holding herself is j****king off the mayor of Paris. […] Madmeoiselle Théroigne holds him in her arms, and is touching his b***s, while d'Anton, seated on the floor, is giving her oral sex.
[56] Mason and Rizzo sight the original source for this quote: Hector Fleischmann, ed. *Les pamphlets libertins contre Marie-Antoinette* (Paris: Publications modernes, 1908), pp. 311-315. Translation by Tracy Rizzo.
[57] This list comes from Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution,* pgs. 92-93

and further shaped by the radical revolutionary writings rather than on fact. Lynn Hunt claims that "Marie-Antoinette occupies a curious place in this literature; not only was she lampooned and demeaned in an increasingly ferocious pornographic outpouring, she was also tried and executed. […] The king's trial, in contrast remained entirely restricted to a consideration of his political crimes. […The queen's trial] makes a manifest, more perhaps than any other single event of the Revolution, the underlying interconnections between pornography and politics" (*The Family Romance,* 91). Annie Duprat further underlines this idea in her book *Marie-Antoinette: Une Reine brisée*[58]*,* when she asks the question "Au matin du 16 octobre 1793, qui a-t-on guillotiné? Une entité, un recueil de toutes les haines et de toutes les frustrations d'une époque en danger, ou la dernière reine de France qui n'avait pas su, ou voulu, voir les fractures du monde ?" (17).[59] According to Chantal Thomas, as Marie-Antoinette sat on trial at the Revolutionary Tribunal, it was not unusual or shocking that she should be accused of incest with her son, nor that the Tribunal president would condemn the "diabolic conspiracies of this modern day Medici"; the contents in the pamphlets had led directly to this (23). What led the heroine of our story to her death was not her tangible acts against the nation of France, but rather a feeling of mistrust and hatred towards the mythical identity that they themselves had constructed for her through a series of malicious writings.

The myth of Marie-Antoinette, the monster queen, includes multiple personalities, and this chapter has highlighted four of them - *l'Autrichienne, la Messaline Moderne, Madame Déficit,* and *Madame Veto*. First, Marie-Antoinette's foreignness was the cornerstone on which her enemies placed all the other blocks of hatred, and from this foreignness came the name

[58] *A Broken Queen*
[59] "The morning of October 16, 1793, who did they execute? An entity, a collection of all the hatred from the endangered era, or the last queen of France didn't know how, or didn't want to see, the fractures in the world?"

l'Autrichienne. Second, a lack of sexual activity ironically led to Marie-Antoinette being likened to *la Messaline moderne* and the infamous royal mistresses of the past. Much like a royal mistress, *Madame Deficit* spent all of the kingdom's money while *Madame Veto* concealed all of this evil and manipulated the king to the detriment of the emerging nation. The pamphlets created the myth of the monster queen - the very material that would send Marie-Antoinette to the guillotine. Once recorded in national literature, this myth would be hard to erase because "le mythe a sa vie propre, qui repose sur une logique interne, une imagerie traditionnelle profondément onirique. Elle est indépendante de son support. Celui-ci peut mourir de la mort physique du corps, le mythe continue de planer au-dessus de cadavre" (Thomas, 19). [60] In the chapters that follow, we will see how the authors in the century after Marie-Antoinette's execution attempted to restore the image of the queen by refuting the myth of the monster queen and creating myths of their own in literary works of all genres.

[60] "The 'myth' has its own life, which rests on an internal logic, a deeply dreamlike traditional imagery. It stands separate from its real life object. The real life object can physically die, and the myth continues to soar above the cadaver".

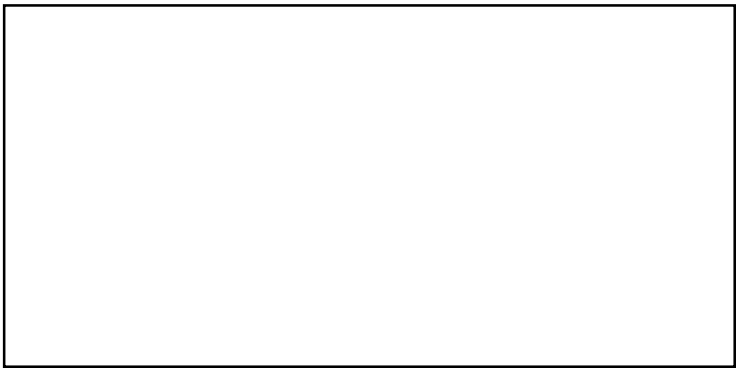

Figure 1: ***La Poulle d'Autruche***

Chapter 2: Marie-Antoinette in Post-Revolution and Pre-Restoration literature (1797-1814)

The myth of the ideal queen

Enthusiasm and rejoicing at the death of the "evil Austrian woman" would eventually provoke a reaction, and more positive representations of Marie-Antoinette would begin to reappear in French publications. Royalists were writing favorable images of the former queen as early as 1797, which shows that public interest in the royal family did not, as some claim, suddenly appear when the Bourbons returned to France in 1814.[61] Writers in the early years after the revolution based their representations of the queen on the direct contradiction of the myth revolutionary writers had constructed and focused on expiating Marie-Antoinette of the crimes for which she had been accused.[62] This chapter will examine three of these early works. Two of them, considered historical, lay the foundation for a new version of Marie-Antoinette: a new myth of an ideal woman who perfectly contradicted revolutionary myths of the monster queen. This ideal identity will persist and grow in French history and literature throughout the rest of the century. Idealization of the monarchs was indeed needed at this time in order to feed the royalist cause and create the sense that the revolutionaries' actions had been wrong. By portraying

[61] Works written about Marie-Antoinette under Restoration France (1814-1830) are often not considered reliable due to the possibility that, in order to impress the newly restored monarchs or entice the paying public with the latest juicy detail from revolutionary times, Restoration authors could have distorted or even invented their facts. Zweig expresses skepticism especailly for eye-witness accounts from the Restoration when he says: "Il va sans dire que ces rapports inventés se contredisent les uns les autres dans tous les détails, […] sur l'attitude de la reine pendant l'assaut des Tuileries, ou sur ses dernières heures on possède vingt versions différentes de soi-disant témoins oculaires" (501). "It goes without saying that these invented reports contradict each other in all their details […]. There are about 20 different versions about the queen's attitude during the assault on the Tuileries or of her final hours, and these are all called eye-witness accounts." Due to Zweig's and others' logical skepticism, it may be tempting to cast aside all positive representations of Marie-Antoinette as melodramatic exaggerations coming from the years of the Bourbon Restoration, but this is not accurate.

[62] My claim is supported by Anja Butenschön in her article "Remembering the Past in Restoration France: An Expiatory Chapel for Marie-Antoinette" when she says, "This ideal conception of a virtuous queen had already been invented by the counter-revolutionary propaganda of the 1790s […] Royalists of the Restoration adopted this well-known counter-revolutionary image and put special emphasis on the religious eschatological interpretation of the fate of the king and queen (4).

Marie-Antoinette as possessing the qualities she had been executed for *not* embodying, early royalist writers could critique the Revolution. They also could show that Marie-Antoinette had indeed fulfilled Rousseauian ideals of womanhood and motherhood, by depicting her as a simple woman who lived a quite life of humility and purety in which her daily activities focused on the education of her children and the support of her husband. The similarities of these two works with a third – an allegorical historical novel - will demonstrate the beginnings of the porous relationship between history and fiction that operates in works featuring Marie-Antoinette. While the third work of allegorical fiction does not portray the queen ideally and allows certain myths from revolutionary literature to persist, we will see that all three works make the same plea of expiation for the "last queen of France".[63]

The first of these works, *Histoire De Marie-Antoinette-Josephe-Jeanne De Lorraine, Archiduchesse D'Autriche, Reine De France*[64], one of the first post-mortem biographies of Marie-Antoinette, was published in 1797 and written by Félix-Christophe Galart de Montjoye. Born in 1746 to a noble family, Montjoye began his career as a lawyer in Aix and then moved on to conservative and royalist journalism in Paris around the start of the Revolution. Montjoye died in 1816 but not before publishing many pro-monarchical works leaving him with the reputation as "one of the most zealous defenders of the royal cause during the revolution" (Quérard, *France Littéraire,* 262). In 1790, Montjoye co-founded the royalist newspaper, *L'Ami du Roi,* and during Louis XVI's trial, he published several pamphlets defending the king.[65] One year before publishing this work, which he often calls his 'monument' to Marie-Antoinette, he had published

[63] This is in quotations because Marie-Antoinette was *not* the last queen of France although she is often referred to as such.
[64] *History of Maria-Antonia Josepha-Jean of Lorraine, Archduchess of Austria, Queen of France.* This work was first published under the title *Éloge historique de Marie-Antoinette, reine de France*, but Montjoye changed the name for the second and third editions. (Quérard, 262-263).
[65] Two of Montjoye's pamphlets were: *Avis à la convention sur le procès de Louis XVI* and *Réponse aux réflexions de M. Necker sur le procès de Louis XVI*. Both were published in 1792. (Quérard, 262-263).

a similar work about her husband, the *Éloge historique et funèbre de Louis XVI* (263). In 1797, Montjoye's royalist sympathies and writings made it necessary for him to leave France, but not before the publication of his Marie-Antoinette biography.

The first publication in 1797 was followed by a second edition in 1814 and a third in 1816. The timing of neither the second nor the third editions was a coincidence: The second edition was dedicated to Marie-Thérèse, Marie-Antoinette's daughter, and published in the same year that the young woman returned to France as the newly restored *Duchesse d'Angoulême*; the third edition was publishshed just after the discovery of the last will and testament of Marie-Antoinette among the papers of a former member of the National Assembly.[66] Taking advantage of the fact that the discovery of Marie-Antoinette's last written words once again brought the queen's sufferings to the forefront of the public mind, Montjoye's third edition of *Histoire* contains a copy of her last will and testament. As we will see, Montjoye's 1797 depiction of Marie-Antoinette was already well in-line with the ideals of the newly restored monarchy, and now having been "revue, corrigée, augmentée et ornée de figures" it was published and sold again (Quérard, 263). [67]

Histoire de Marie-Antoinette, like all acclaimed histories of the queen, has been criticized by some and praised by others. But historians who study Marie-Antoinette continue to use it as a source of information. Nineteenth century bibliographer J.M. Quérard would refer to Montjoye as mediocre and his works as simple zealous attempts to defend the monarchy (262). Despite this, in 1858 Edmond and Jules Goncourt would use Montjoye as a source for their own *Histoire de Marie-Antoinette,* and a year later Horace de Viel-Castel would cite Montjoye's words in his

[66] See Emile Compardon *Marie-Antoinette à la Conciergerie,* pages 251-261
[67] …revised, corrected, enhanced and embellished with pictures.

text.[68] A few years after that, in the preface to his 1863 archival compilation, Emile Campardon would praise Montjoye as having written the first post-mortem biography of Marie-Antoinette. [69] Even in the twenty-first century, *Histoire's* importance persists. Both Antonia Fraser and Caroline Weber have cited it as a source, reproductions of *Histoire* are still available for sale on-line, and as recently as November 2015 an authentic original of *Histoire* was sold at a live public auction in Marseille as part of an "important" collection.[70]

Montjoye's work is the first in this study in which themes refuting the accusations from the revolutionary pamphlets can be found. The themes we will discuss in Montjoye's work will persist in positive representations of Marie-Antoinette throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century. The first visible theme in *Histoire* is a retrial for the queen which will end in her expiation. Montjoye insisted on the veracity of his work, and he said he would use these facts and not his own feelings for Marie-Antoinette for the defense case of the retrial. "Je crois en un mot, que d'après les précautions que j'ai prises, cet écrit contient tout ce qu'il importe de savoir de la vie de la reine; et je me flatte que quand on m'aura lu, les préjugés élevés contre cette princesse par des hommes […] se dissiperont tout-à-fait" (xv).[71] Montjoye acknowledged first what every other author of Marie-Antoinette we will see in this study will mention: that there has never been a reputation more cruelly destroyed than that of this once beloved Queen. "Quel cœur fut plus abreuvé que le sien, du poison de la calomnie?" (vi).[72] Since it was this slander that led

[68] *Histoire de Marie Antoinette.* De Goncort, Edmond et Jules. Paris: Librairie de Firmin didot Frères, fils et Co. Imprimeurs de l'institut, Rue Jacob 56, 1858. ; Viel-Castel, Horace de. *Marie-Antoinette et La Révolution Française recherches historiques.* J. Techener, Paris: 1859. We will further discuss both of these works in Chapter five.
[69] Campardon, Émile. *Marie-Antoinette à la Conciergerie (du 1er août au 16 octobre 1793) Pièces originales conservées aux archives de l'Empire suivies de notes historiques et de procès imprimé de la Reine.* Paris: Jules Gay, 1863. We will further discuss this work in Chapter six.
[70] See Works Cited: "[MONTJOYE (C. F. L. DE)]"
[71] In short, I believe that after all the precautions I took, that my work contains everything necessary to know about the life of the queen. I am also proud to say that all the prejudices men have against this princess will disappear, once they have read my work.
[72] "What heart has ever been more flooded than hers by slander's poison?"

Marie-Antoinette to her death in her first trial, Montjoye's goal, is to provide new evidence for the defense, refuting slander accusations and arguing for a new identity.

Montjoye opens his defense of Marie-Antoinette in *Histoire* by criticizing the prosecution – the literature that had slandered the queen during her lifetime as well as contemporary slanderous literature on the same subject. He mentions Jacques Hébert and Jean-Paul Marat, two leading revolutionary journalists who had authored the republican newspapers *le Père Duchène* and *l'Ami du Peuple* respectively. It was not only their works which were abhorrent, but their very souls as well: Marat's was full of venom (II, 176) and Hébert had an "âme de boue […] endurcie par le crime" (II, 162).[73] Montjoye also condemns their post-revolutionary successors, for example François Pagès, author of the 1797 work *Histoire Secrète de la Révolution*, for continuing to tarnish Marie-Antoinette's image, naming her "la Médicis de nos jours" (43). Montjoye dismisses this "history" as well as other anti-royalist works like it as mere fiction, because "S'exprimer ainsi, c'est injurier, c'est écrire un libelle et non une histoire où tout doit être appuyé sur des preuves incontestables" (viii).[74]

Standing in contrast to these slanderous fictional works, Montjoye maintains that his elegy only contains factual information. "Quant à moi, je me borne au simple récit des faits, et je puis d'autant moins d'être démenti que je ne dirai rien qui ne soit notoire" (II, 201).[75] This claim to absolute truth was not a new idea. Claiming to present "incontestable facts" as Montjoye did (xiii), was a common literary tactic and one which even authors of revolutionary literature had employed. "…what these [revolutionary] texts have in common is a flaunted pretention to truth

[73] …a filthy soul […] hardened by crime.
[74] "To express oneself like this is to insult, to write slander, and not history in which everything should be based on incontestable facts."
[75] As for me, I stick to the simple retelling of the facts and what makes me even less refutable is that I will say nothing that is not already well-known.

with the affirmation that they hold in their possession irrefutable proofs. Many present themselves as being grounded on unpublished sources or as being themselves original sources." (Revel, 124). Montjoye employs a similar tactic when explaining the sources from which he got his information. One claim is that he spoke directly to people who had at some point observed or served Marie-Antoinette, and especially those who had done so during her imprisonment. Among these he includes Jean-Baptist Cléry (II, 140), a servant who had spent nearly his entire adult life with the royal family and whose work we will examine next, several members of the Commune (II, 152), who took turns as prison guards during the royal family's imprisonment, Monsieur Chauveau-Lagarde, Marie-Antoinette's defense lawyer (II, 203), and Monsieur Richard (II, 249), who was the concierge at the Conciergerie and who provided information concerning the queen's reading preferences during her imprisonment. Montjoye also uses several already published eye-witness accounts including the testimony of a monsieur Cahier, which proved to him that all of France was *not* in favor of the duc d'Orléans (II, 24), and that of former commune secretary Dejoly who, having replaced Duranthon as Minister of Justice, was present with the royal family on August 10, 1792 as they fled the Tuileries to take refuge in the National Assembly. Montjoye also mentions consulting contemporary documents that were already available to the public including correspondence and other writings of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette (II, 22 & 221-222), and some Parisian newspapers (II, 201). When speaking of newspapers contemporary to the Revolution, Montjoye argues much information is exaggerated or inaccurate. In the preface of his first edition, he also claims using certain documents which before had been unknown although he does not say what these documents are (xiv-xv). In the 1814 and 1816 editions, both published under the shorter title *Histoire de Marie-Antoinette,*

Montjoye includes a copy of a letter from Princess Chimay[76], which would later be used as evidence in the controversy of the queen's last communion.[77]

Montjoye's next vital step in the rehabilitation of the queen is to prove that Marie-Antoinette was not the *Autrichienne,* the *Messaline,* and the *Mesdames Veto* and *Déficit* of the pamphlets. To refute myths of the evil *Autrichienne,* Montjoye depicts her foreign royalty not as a crime, but as that which made her wonderful – even as she was being led to the scaffold. In a long passage, Montjoye depicts the "Austrian Woman" in a different light:

> " Marie-Antoinette en posture de criminelle, sous l'humble vêtement qui la couvrait descendue d'un des plus beaux trônes de l'univers sur cette charrette qui la conduisait à la mort; Marie-Antoinette placée entre l'exécuteur et le ministre de la religion, présentait une image qui parlait trop fortement du néant des grandeurs humaines, pour qu'à sa vue chacun ne restât pas immobile et plongé dans un océan de réflexions. La majesté dont tout cet appareil lugubre ne pouvait dépouiller Marie-Antoinette ; la sérénité de son front, son attitude clame, sa résignation, l'indulgence qui brillait dans ses yeux, rappelèrent la fille de Marie-Thérèse, la reine de France, et élevèrent pour elle dans tous les cœurs, l'intérêt le plus tendre. Partout sur son passage, le peuple garda un religieux silence ; on ne vit en elle qu'une victime des manœuvres et des calomnies de l'infâme Ph….De tous les spectacles qu'avait donné jusqu'alors la révolution, aucun n'avait fait sur les âmes une plus forte impression, aucun n'avait inspiré plus d'horreur pour les monstres qui s'étaient emparés de l'autorité publique.[78] (213)

[76] See Quérard, 263 for publication information and Montjoye, 1816 pages 230-242 for the letter.
[77] The controversy of the last communion will be discussed in Chapters 3 and 6.
[78] Marie-Antoinette, dressed and positioned like a criminal, had descended from one of the most beautiful thrones in the universe to this cart which was taking her to her death. The sight of the queen, placed between the executioner and the minister of religion, said so much about the lack of human greatness and generosity that no one present remained untouched, but rather was plunged into an ocean of reflection. Even all of this mournful clothing could not strip the majesty away from Marie-Antoinette. The serenity of her face, her calm attitude, her resignation, the

In this passage, Marie-Antoinette's royal Austrian blood could not be hidden, despite her enemies' attempts of dressing her, seating her, and killing her like a common criminal. Montjoye employs the following vocabulary to highlight the majesty of the queen: *plus beaux*, *plus forte*, *fortement, grandeurs*, *brillait*, *la reine de France, spectacles*, and to show that even as she was being led to her death, the majesty of Marie-Antoinette kept people in awe, her innate royal qualities remaining visible despite the most threatening of circumstances. Yet, *L'Autrichienne* in Montjoye's story is not the evil and manipulative foreign woman of the revolutionary pamphlets who longs to destroy France. Although she posseses majestic qualities that make her a *spectacle*, she is more so the ultimate picture of humility. Montjoye's pathos of humility (*posture de criminelle, humble*, *cette charrette*, *resignation*, *victime*) indeed highlight the antithesis of an evil foreign woman sent to manipulate and destroy France. Indeed, the "Austrian Woman" had not destroyed France as the revolutionary literature had claimed. Rather, it is she who has been used and manipulated and who is now the victim of the true dictators. It was the new public authority – "the monsters" - who were leading a fearful people to its demise.

The second part of the myth of the monster queen which Montjoye had to destroy was the *Messaline moderne.* Much like the *Autrichienne,* manipulative Messalina sought to destroy her husband through whatever means necessary. To combat this facet of the revolutionary myth Montjoye demonstrates how Marie-Antoinette sought to protect Louis XVI even in the early years of their life together. Less than a month after Louis XV died of small pox and the young couple became the king and queen of France, Marie-Antoinette became fearful of losing her own

clemency that gleamed in her eyes, reminded spectators of the daughter of Marie-Theresa and the Queen of France, and inspired the dearest thoughts towards her in every heart. All along the way, a religious silence covered the crowd. The people saw in her only a victim of the Duke d'Orléans's manipulation and slander. Of all the spectacles they had seen during the revolution, none had made such a strong impression on their hearts, and none had inspired more horror in them against the monsters who were now the public authority.

husband to the same disease. She thus encouraged him and his brothers to receive a smallpox vaccine. This preventative measure, not at all unusual in Austria, was a new idea in France and one which generated fear among many for the life of the new king. While some used the inoculation as early proof of an Austrian plot to destroy the French monarchy, Montjoye speaks of it to demonstrate the zeal with which the young Marie-Antoinette sought to protect her husband's life. In Montjoye's account, after Louis XVI received and survived his smallpox vaccination, the queen is relieved, joyful and reassured because her husband will never experience the agonizing death his grandfather had. This same protective behavior towards her husband, Montjoye says, would remain a pattern for the rest of the king's life (I, 85-86). Indeed, many years later, on June 20, 1792 when an angry mob stormed the Tuileries palace, threatening the lives of the king, the queen, and all of their supporters, the safety of her husband is Marie-Antoinette's greatest concern. The king is separated from his family for a brief moment, and Marie-Antoinette is devastated, torn between the desire to remain with her children or to join and thus support her husband. "Enfin sa tendresse pour Louis XVI l'emporta sur les sentimens maternels ; elle déclara qu'elle voulait se réunir au roi, et se mit en devoir de le joindre" (7).[79] When the guards around warned Marie-Antoinette that to be near the king was to put herself in danger, she responded, "N'importe, ma place est auprès du roi […] ; je veux […] le joindre, et périr, s'il le faut, en le défendant" (7-8).[80] In order to demonstrate that the queen was the contrary of what the revolutionary pamphlets had claimed and to critique the mistakes of the Revolution, Montjoye needed to capitalize on those moments in which her behavoir "proved" the opposite. Marie-Antoinette is thus exploited as a devoted and loyal wife in Montjoye's *Histoire*.

[79] Finally, her tenderness for Louis XVI won over her maternal feelings. She declared that she wished to be reunited with the king, and she began doing everything in her power to make it so.
[80] "That does not matter. My place is with the king. […] I want […] to join him, and die defending him if I must.

A second aspect of the myth of *la Messaline moderne* was her vile sexual behavior. Sexual accusations against Marie-Antoinette reached their summit at her trial before the Revolutionary Tribunal, when Hébert accused her of incest with her son. Montjoye's lengthy portrayal of Marie-Antoinette's noble reaction against this accusation proved her innocence.

> Quant à cette honteuse fable d'un inceste, imaginée par Hébert, la reine, après l'avoir entendue, se contenta de jeter sur le calomniateur un regard de mépris et ce fut-là sa seule réponse ; elle ne lui en devait pas d'autre. […] Mais après quelques questions, un juré dont l'âme était aussi corrompue que celle d'Hébert, ne rougit pas de parler ainsi au président. « Je vous invite à faire observer à l'accusée qu'elle n'a pas répondu sur le fait dont a parlé le citoyen Hébert, à l'égard de ce qui s'est passé entre elle et son fils. Le président ayant fait l'interpellation: « Si je n'ai pas répondu, dit la reine, c'est que la nature se refuse à répondre à une pareille inculpation faite à une mère. » Se tournant ensuite vers le peuple, elle ajouta, en élevant la voix avec une noble fierté: « J'en appelle à toutes les mères qui peuvent se trouver ici. » Son mouvement et le ton avec lequel elle prononça ces mots, firent la plus vive impression sur tous les esprits. Juges et spectateurs, tous, regardèrent Hébert comme un infâme et maladroit calomniateur.[81] (II, 199-200)

Montjoye invented neither Hébert's accusation nor Marie-Antoinette's poignant response. Revolutionary Tribunal documents and periodicals record the same words as Montjoye portrays above. In his description, however Montjoye juxtaposes Marie-Antoinette's controlled response

[81] After having heard Hébert's shameful incest fable, the queen's only response – and the only one the accusation merited - was to look on him with disgust. […] But, after a few more questions, a juror whose soul was as corrupted as Hébert's, was not ashamed to push the matter with the president. "I would like to point out that the accused did not respond to what Hébert said about what happened between her and her son." The president questioned her [and she responded]: "If I did not respond, it is because nature refuses to respond to such an accusation against a mother." Then, turning towards the people she raised her voice with noble pride and added, "I cry out to all the mothers present here today." Her movement and tone had the strongest impression on every person there. Judges and spectators alike looked at Hébert as a clumsy and odious slanderer.

and her innate nobility with the immoral nature of her accusers to show that the *La Messaline moderne* from revolutionary literature had no part in the personality of the real Marie-Antoinette.

As proof against accusations of *Madame Veto,* whose main goals were to manipulate her husband, control France and lead it to its ruin, Montjoye focuses rather on the nearly impossible position Marie-Antoinette faced as the queen of France.

> ... quoiqu'assise sur un des premiers trônes de l'Europe, [elle] ne fut cependant point souveraine ; elle jouissoit de tout l'estime, de toute la confiance du monarque qui occupoit avec elle ce trône ; mais elle n'étoit que son épouse, que sa compagne ; elle ne partageoit pas même son autorité ; […]. Son rang l'environnoit de toute la pompe, de toute la majesté royale, et néanmoins tout éminent qu'il étoit, il la plaçoit simplement à la tête des sujets, et lui imposoit pour seule obligation, de leur donner l'exemple de l'obéissance. (1-2)[82]

By revealing the great paradox of Marie-Antoinette's life, Montjoye manages to refute accusations of *Madame Veto* claiming that she really had no influence at all. She was given the same riches, honor and glory as her husband and yet was forbidden to exercise any decision-making capabilities. Constantly forced to submit to the will of another, while at the same time needing to give the impression that she had everything under control, Marie-Antoinette faced the same dilemma as all previous queens had. Montjoye's sympathetic analysis foreshadows Chantal Thomas's more contemporary feminist approach in her chapter "Les princesses otages"[83] in which she demonstrates, using several of France's queens as examples, the courage with which

[82] ...although seated on one of the finest thrones of Europe, she was however not at all sovereign; she enjoyed all esteem and complete confidence of the monarch who reigned with her; but she was only his wife, his companion; she did not even share his authority; […] Her rank surrounded her with all pomp and all royal majesty, and nevertheless as great as it was, it simply placed her at the head of her subjects, and imposed her with one single obligation, to give them the example of obedience.
[83] "The hostage princesses"

the queens of France faced their hopeless state. "[Il faut] reconnaître la vigilance et l'intelligence qu'il leur fallait pour ne pas succomber aux pressions dont elles étaient l'objet ou à l'indifférence dans laquelle elles végétaient. Et quand on pense à Marie-Antoinette, […] il faut avoir à l'esprit la dureté de ce statut" (39). [84]

Even from her powerless position, Montjoye's Marie-Antoinette did not seek to gain power or influence over her husband as *Messaline* or *Madame Veto* would have done. Instead, she made a conscious decision to support her husband for the good of France. "La reine de son côté se fit une règle de ne jamais interroger le roi sur les secrets de l'état […]. Dès que le roi avait pris une résolution, elle l'adoptait, aveuglement comme le reste de ses sujets, et quelle que fût son opinion personnelle, elle n'avait jamais d'autre volonté que la sienne" (I, 86).[85] As Montjoye suggests here, Marie-Antoinette was not unaware of her subordinate position as the king's wife. She "blindly" supported the king not because she did not have personal opinions, but because she wanted the best for him and for France. By being a supportive wife, Marie-Antoinette was an example for all women in her century to follow – the antithesis of *Madame Veto.*[86]

This lack of power and influence prevented Montjoye's Marie-Antoinette from engaging in the activities which had earned her the name *Madame Déficit* in revolutionary literature. Since her enemies had claimed *Petit Trianon* as one of *Madame Déficit's* main expenditures, Montjoye

[84] [We have to] recognize the vigilance and intelligence the queen's needed so as to succumb neither to the pressures of which they were the objects, nor to the indifference in which they vegetated. And when we think of Marie-Antoinette, […] we have to keep the difficulty of this position in mind.

[85] The queen made it a personal rule to never ask the king about the secrets of the sate […]. As soon as the king made a decision, she would blindly adopt it as did the rest of his subjects, and no matter what her personal opinion she kept it to herself. She had no other opinion than his.

[86] By emphasizing the difficult situation Marie-Antoinette faced as queen, not only does Montjoye defend the queen against accusations that she is was a meddling *Madame Veto*, but he openly examines the hardships faced by women in general. At this time, women shared everything that belonged to their husband, and yet were forbidden to own anything themselves, or to act publically. They needed to give the illusion that they had their family and their household under control, when in reality the important decisions and the financial stability of the home were dependent on the husband's will. By reminding the reader of this difficult position, Montjoye's opening lines do not simply plead sympathy for his fallen queen, but they also solicit support for the position in which all women in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century found themselves.

uses instead the small chateau and its surrounding gardens to defend another much disputed trait: Marie-Antoinette's generosity. He claims that she had the *hameau* (hamlet), a charming imitation village one can still find on the grounds of *Petit Trianon,* constructed in order to "se rapprocher du petit peuple" (I, 91).[87] For Montjoye, Marie-Antoinette did not use her *hameau* to engage in hidden love affairs and manipulative political maneuvers, but rather to offer shelter and employment to twelve poor families whom she visited often, each time arriving with a gift (I, 91). Beyond the grounds of Versailles, the queen's generosity abounded. Unlike *Madame Déficit* of the pamphlets who favored only those who pleased her sexually or who could help to push her political agenda, Marie-Antoinette in *Histoire* "étoit très économe envers les personnes de la cour, […] mais elle étoit en même tems très libérele envers les personnes du peuple qu'elle croyait avoir des besoins. Sa cassette se trouva souvent tellement chargée de pensions qu'elle faisoit à des gens de cette classe, qu'elle étoit oblige d'emprunter […] pour multiplier ses bienfaits" (92).[88] If Marie-Antoinette *did* engage in any "frivolities", Montjoye argues, it was only due to her youth and naiveté. He encourages his readers to believe that the queen learned her generosity and prudence from her royal Austrian parents whose court was known for being extravagant only on special occasions and for welcoming people of all social classes to their table (I, 17-19). His emphasis on her generosity stemming from her foreign origins again combats the idea of the evil *Autrichienne.*

To make even further distinction between the extravagant and selfish *Madame Deficit* and Marie-Antoinette, near the end of *Histoire* Montjoye gives inventory of her few remaining possessions at the time she entered the Temple. The inventory includes: twenty-five *louis* which

[87] …be close to the little people.
[88] …was very money-wise towards the courtiers, […] but she was at the same time very liberal towards the general population, whom she believed was really in need. Her purse was often so full of pensions that she gave to members of this social class, that she was even obliged to borrow money […] in order to continue her good deeds.

she was resolved to keep because she wanted to repay a debt, a small purse containing a pair of scissors, some needles and thread, and some silk, a mirror, two small packets containing locks of hair from her four children and her husband, a ring which also contained the locks of hair from these same family members, and the portraits of three of her friends (II, 108). Montjoye writes, "Telles étaient les seules richesses de Marie-Antoinette lorsqu'elle fut renversée du trône ; et il était bien digne de son cœur de s'attacher à ces objets ; aussi ne peut-on les lui arracher qu'avec la vie" (II, 108).[89] These common objects – a mirror, a ring, a lock of hair – were treasures for Marie-Antoinette. The only money she had, Montjoye emphasizes, was safeguarded not for herself, but in order to pay back a debt – something which would never have concerned *Madame Déficit.* The tiny sewing kit is a reflection of the quiet life of the royal prisoners, whose daily activities consisted in prayer, reading, sewing and education. This simple existence, which Montjoye heavily highlights throughout *Histoire*, stands in stark contrast to previous images of *Madame Déficit's* extravagant lifestyle. The list of Marie-Antoinette's last possessions also reveals her strong connection to her friends and family. She guarded their memories with her life for these memories were all that she had to comfort her in her suffering. Montjoye praises Marie-Antoinette for having kept these objects and emphasizes that they were "appropriate", the right kind of possessions for a woman.

In 1798 another author represented Marie-Antoinette in his work. This second early publication, *Relation de ce qui s'est passé dans la tour du Temple*, like Montjoye's *Histoire,* contradicted myths from revolutionary literature and set the literary stage for the idealistic works of the Bourbon Restoration. Unlike *Histoire* which was an acclaimed historical biography written by a former French aristocrat, *Relation* was the eye-witness account of Jean-Baptiste

[89] These were the only riches that Marie-Antoinette had when she was removed from the throne, and it was appropriate of her heart to attach itself to these objects. She would have rather died than part with them.

Cant Héné, a servant Marie-Antoinette and her family knew simply as Cléry. Born in 1759 to a poor farming family, Cléry moved into the palace of Versailles at a young age in order to undergo training to be a servant under the tutelage of the official governess-to-be of the royal children. He eventually become the valet of Louis-Charles, Marie-Antoinette's second son, in October 1781. In May 1789, however, Cléry automatically became the valet to the *dauphin* of France when the elder royal son passed away. When the Bourbons were forced to leave Versailles in October later that year, Cléry went with them to the Tuileries, where he continued to serve the dauphin, only visiting his own family when the Assembly gave permission. On August 10, 1792 as the royal family fled the angry mob and took refuge in the National Assembly, Cléry managed to escape and travel on foot to his family home near Versailles. Two weeks later Cléry returned to Paris where he requested and received permission to serve the king's family at the Temple prison, where they had been moved. He then remained with them until the king's execution on January 21, 1793.[90] After Louis XVI's execution, Cléry was sent away only to be arrested later for his allegiance to the monarchy, although unlike them, he survived the revolution. Before his death in 1809, Cléry spent several years in exile for being a royalist, yet "sadly kept at an arms distance from the remaining royals who had also been forced into exile, despite his life-long service to their not-so-fortunate relatives" (Bashor, 1). Punished and exiled by the revolutionaries for his royalist leanings, suspected and scorned by the royals for being a revolutionary spy, Jean-Baptiste Cléry, whose principle role in life had been the service of others, in the end was unable to please either side. His single written work, on the other hand, quickly became one of the most often cited sources of the final days of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette.

[90] All biographical information for Cléry comes from historian Will Bashor's website dedicated to his book *Faithful Servant,* a biography about Cléry. See Works Cited "Bashor", for more information.

Often simply referred to as Cléry's *Journal*, this work was published for the first time in 1798, and again after his death with the permission of brother, Jean Pierre Louis Hanet Cléry, who had also served Marie-Antoinette and her family during his lifetime. The second publication appeared in 1825 only a few months after Charles X, the second and last restored Bourbon king, ascended to the throne. Along with this second publication, Cléry's brother published his own set of memoires in which he defended *Journal,* the truth of its contents, and the reliability of his brother's account.[91] Despite the rumors that its author was a revolutionary spy, since its initial publication Cléry's acclaimed eye-witness *Journal* continues to be a valuable source for historians studying Marie-Antoinette. *Journal* is either cited or copied in the following works from this study: *Irma* (1800) and *Les Augustes Victimes du Temple* (1814), two historical novels by Elisabeth Guénard, whose work is discussed next; *Mémoires secrets et universels des malheurs et de la mort de la Reine de France* (1824), an exaggerated biography by royalist historian Lafont d'Aussonne; *La Comtesse de Charny* (1852-1853), a historical serial novel by Alexander Dumas; *Histoire de Marie-Antoinette* (1858) by the Goncourt brothers; finally, *Journal* is listed as a source for the twentieth and twenty-first century biographical works by Castélot, Lever, Fraser, and Weber. Finally, Montjoye, who was his contemporary, did not directly quote *Journal,* but in the notes of his 1814 publication of *Histoire* he claims to have maintained a close relationship with Cléry throughout Cléry's imprisonment with the royal family, and that during their daily face-to-face interviews, Cléry "me laissait lire dans son âme" (II, 248).[92] Despite the fact that Montjoye presumes to correct information from Cléry's

[91] *Mémoires de P.L. Hanet Cléry.* Paris: Cossin, 1825.
[92] …let me read his soul.

testimony at moments in *Histoire*, it appears that this aristocratic historian for the most part trusted the word of the king's last manservant.[93]

Cléry's *Journal*, like Montjoye's *Histoire*, is a positive representation of Marie-Antoinette which opens with an explanation as to why he wrote. Cléry claims his intention is less to write his memoires than to provide material for authors who will later write about Louis XVI's execution. Although he warns his reader that he has neither previous experience nor talent as a writer, Cléry does claim authority on his subject and, again like Montjoye, claims exact adherence to the truth. "Seul témoin continuel des traitements injurieux qu'on a fait souffrir au Roi et à sa famille, je puis seul les écrire, et en attester l'exacte vérité: je me bornerai donc à présenter les faits dans tous leurs détails, avec simplicité, sans aucune réflexion, et sans partialité" (6).[94]

Since Cléry was recording his own memories, he does not list any other sources. He does further validate his work, however, by listing other servants and friends who remained with the royal family as they were first placed in the Temple. Some of the others Cléry mentions are: François Hue, who had formerly been in charge of announcing visitors in Louis XVI's bedroom, the Princess de Lamballe, one of Marie-Antoinette's longtime friends, Madame de Tourzel, who was the children's governess, her daughter Pauline de Tourzel, and four other ladies-in-waiting Mesdames Thibaut, Bazire, Navarre and Saint-Brice. Among these only Hue was allowed to stay in the Temple with the family. Cléry also documented the names of prison guards and revolutionary jailors, soldiers, and politicians who were present in the Temple with him, Hue and

[93] For examples as to information from Cléry that Montjoye contradicts, see Montjoye, 1814, Volume II pages 121, 167 and 248.

[94] The only continuous witness to the abusive treatment the king and his family were forced to suffer, I alone can write and attest to the exact truth. Therefore, I will limit myself to telling the facts, in all their detail, with simplicity and without any bias or personal reflection.

the royal family including: the concierge and his wife Mr. and Mrs. Tison, Santerre, Hébert, Destournelles, Simon, Toulon, Drouet, and others. Later, Cléry speaks of Louis-François de Turgy, another of the king's manservants who was in the Temple with the family. Of the people Cléry mentions as having come into contact with the royal family during their time in the Temple Hue, Turgy, and both of the de Tourznel women would also publish memoires, but many of them not until during the Bourbon Restoration.

Although he does not use the word "expiation" as Montjoye did, Cléry's intentions to clear Marie-Antoinette's name echo those of Montjoye as he contradicts one by one the accusations from revolutionary times. While pamphlets had accused the *Autrichienne* of plotting against France and joyfully threatening the well-being of the French people, in *Journal,* Cléry orchestrates a role reversal vividly describing the suffering of Marie-Antoinette at the hands of the French revolutionaries. Cléry recounts that the guards and the public degraded the royal family with chants and songs as they took their daily walks in the courtyard of the Temple. Marie-Antoinette and her family did not retaliate, even though this taunting was meant to entice an emotional reaction (44). The Temple guards also repeatedly left pro-revolutionary newspaper articles containing upsetting news where the royals were sure to find them. Cléry was sometimes able to intercept these before Marie-Antoinette and Louis could see them, but when he was not, the king and queen read the news with brave silence (80). Cléry's most vivid description of a direct attack against Marie-Antoinette's resolve occurred on September 3, 1792. The day before, the Parisian mob had begun a killing-rampage, which would last for about a week, during which they would slaughter hundreds of imprisoned royalists out of fear they would join the royalist army if ever released from prison. On the second day of these "September massacres", revolutionaries decapitated the Princess de Lamballe, Marie-Antoinette's good friend, mutilated

her body and then placed several of her body parts on pikes - including her freshly-coiffed and severed head. They carried the body parts to the Temple hoping to display them for Marie-Antoinette. Concerned prison guards encouraged the family to stay away from the window, and when the king asked why, Cléry recounts how another guard gruffly revealed: "Cet homme a dit *à la Reine*: On veut vous cacher la tête de la Lamballe que l'on vous apportait, pour vous faire voir comment le peuple se venge de ses tyrans" (23, my emphasis).[95] Marie-Antoinette fainted at this news and was spared the violent scene which Cléry then goes on to describe in detail. Louis XVI behaves exceptionally, giving the simple yet poignant remark: "Nous nous attendons à tout, Monsieur ; mais vous auriez pu vous dispenser d'apprendre à la Reine ce malheur affreux" (24).[96] Throughout *Journal,* Cléry continues this role reversal, turning the revolutionaries into the monsters and showing how The Austrian Woman and her family suffered at their hands.

Like Montjoye who refuted myths of *Messaline*, *Madame Déficit* and *Madame Veto* by showing with what zeal Marie-Antoinette protected and supported her husband, Cléry refuted her them by depicting her commitment to her family and devotion to her husband. Cléry recounts the simplicity of the family's day to day life – a simplicity which would not have satisfied *Messaline* and *Madame Déficit*. In prison, the royals spent their time praying, reading, walking in the garden, and, most importantly, educating their children. Cléry reveals that having neither the luxuries nor the responsibilities they had possessed while still at Versailles, Marie-Antoinette and Louis XVI were able to give themselves fully to their work as parents, and they did so with joy. They taught their children classic literature, geography, music, sport and especially their religious duties. The tender familial dedication paid off, making Marie-Thérèse and the young

[95] This man said *to the Queen:* They wanted to spare you the sight of the Lamballe's head. The people are bringing it to you to show you how they take revenge on their tyrants (my emphasis).
[96] We expect anything, sir, but still, you could have avoided telling the Queen this horrible news.

Louis Charles the picture of ideal, obedient children. Cléry recounts one tender moment, when the young Louis-Charles fought against the urge to sleep, staying awake very late waiting for Cléry in order to obey his mother and pass on a secret message (90). The child's words, recorded by Cléry in *Journal,* are a favorite anecdote among later writers who would continue portraying Marie-Antoinette as a perfect mother.[97]

Cléry's account is especially touching when he speaks of the day the Convention voted to separate the king from his family. Unlike *Madame Veto,* who would have enjoyed the separation and rejoiced at the demise of her husband, Marie-Antoinette was devastated. "Ce n'étaient plus des plaintes ni des larmes, c'étaient des cris de douleur" (56).[98] Later, Cléry's *Journal* gives a close firsthand account of what happened in the family's final moments together after the Convention has decided to execute the king. "La porte s'ouvrit: la Reine parut la première, tenant son fils par la main; ensuite Madame royale et madame Elisabeth: tous se précipitèrent dans les bras du Roi: Un morne silence régna pendant quelques minutes, et ne fut interrompu que par des sanglots" (161).[99] The king and his family spent almost two hours together and Cléry reveals that no one could hear what they said to each other, an omission which allowed future fictional writers and some overzealous historians to imagine and portray their last words to each other.[100] However, Cléry's picture-like description of what he *saw* has been the basis of important depictions of this moment since the publication of *Journal.* In Cléry's word picture, the once prosperous family forms a tight circle – the king seated in the center, Marie-Antoinette at his left,

[97] One work which repeats this anecdote as support for his thesis is *Louis XVII sa vie, son agonie, sa mort* by Alcide de Beauchesne (1852), which will be discussed in Chapter five.
[98] These were neither complaints nor tears. These were cries of pain.
[99] The door opened. The Queen appeared first, holding her son by the hand, and then Madame Royale and Madame Elisabeth. They all rushed into the King's arms. A sad silence dominated the room for several minutes, only interrupted by their sobs.
[100] A first example of this exists in the next work discussed in this chapter: *Irma* by Elisabeth Guénard from 1800. Subsequent representations of this moment from other authors are highlighted in Chapters three and four.

Elisabeth at his right, Marie-Thérèse seated in front of him, and the young dauphin standing between his legs. When later artists depicted this final interview, they positioned the family members similarly to Cléry's description in *Journal,* and often include Cléry himself in the scene.[101] This is the ultimate picture of familial devotion and unjust victimization – a scene in which the manipulative *Madame Veto* could have never played a part. Cléry's *Journal* challenges the myth of *Madame Veto* twice more in the final moments of Louis's life. When the queen makes a move to lead Louis into another room, the king refuses stating that he is only allowed to see them there (140). [102] The next morning, despite having promised Marie-Antoinette to come and see the family one last time before his execution, the king does not come. Cléry emphasizes the motivation behind the king's resolve not to obey his wife's wishes. He did want to see them, but chose to spare his family another devastating goodbye. In Cléry's account, Marie-Antoinette does not control her husband. It is Louis, rather, who makes the decisions – ones which reveal that he led and protected his family – and not the other way around as the revolutionary pamphlets had asserted.

Marie-Antoinette is cast in a positive light in a fictional work published well before the Restoration. *Irma,* or *Les Malheurs d'une jeune orpheline: Histoire indienne, Avec des Romances*[103]*,* was published in 1800 by novelist Elisabeth Guénard Brossin de Méré. Guénard was born in Paris in 1751 and died in 1829, and thus she lived under the reigns of Louis XV, Louis XVI, Napoleon Bonaparte, Louis XVIII, and Charles X. According to several literary

[101] See <http://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-louis-xvi-2381754-2111793-king-of-france-1774-1792-scene-last-meeting-23527799.html > for one example.
[102] In Alexander Dumas' *La Comtesse de Charny,* which we will discuss in detail in Chapter four, Dumas interprets the queen's tiny motion to move the king as her need to spent one last moment in privacy with him in order to ask his forgiveness for her past wrongdoings. For Dumas, the king's refusal to go was not based on the Convention's order that they had to stay in the front room. Rather, the king's refusal for Dumas was his way of saying to Marie-Antoinette "I do not need your apologies because I have already forgiven you for any of your past mistakes."
[103] *Irma, A young orphan's sorrows: An Indian History with short stories*

sources from the nineteenth century[104], Guénard, was "la plus féconde romancière[105]" of her time, dedicating the last half of her life to the writing of more than one hundred novels. E. Desnues in Hoefer's 1858 edition of the *Nouvelle biographie générale…* says "Son abondance a été telle que plusieurs biographes ont attribué ses œuvres à divers personnages, ne pouvant croire qu'une seule main ait suffi pour tracer tant de pages" (372).[106] Guénard's complete works reach over three hundred volumes![107] In1800, 1801 and 1802, Guénard published three best-selling novels about the royal family each from a different perspective. [108] *Irma,* was the first of these and after its initial publication, sixteen subsequent editions followed until 1816 (Michaud, 38).

Despite Guénard's productivity, later nineteenth-century bibliographers were not overly impressed by the quality of her writing, although they do not totally dismiss it. In his 1821 *Petite bibliographie biographico-romancière,* Alex Pigoreau compares Guénard with other female writers saying that she is "loin d'égaler madame de Genlis, madame Cottin, madame de Staël,

[104] Joseph and Louis Michaud's *Biographie Universelle* & Alex Pigoreau's *Petite Bibliographie*
[105] the most productive female novelist
[106] Her abundance was such that several biographers have attributed her works to several authors, being unable to believe that so many pages could have come from one hand.
[107]This unusual productivity, however, is nearly the only positive thing early bibliographers would say about her. "Guénard" was the novelist's maiden name and all of her historical and educational novels were published under this name. Behind the scenes and in fact simultaneously to her historical works however, Madame Guénard was writing another group of less-reputable sources which caused the early bibliographers to criticize her harshly. These works of a more questionable nature, which included the imagined *Memoires de la Comtesse Dubarry,* were published under pseudonyms. Desnues says "Elle n'a pas craint d'attacher son nom aux ouvrages composés pour les pensionnats, les gens du monde et même les antichambres ; mais ses ouvrages graveleux sont anonymes ou on paru sous le pseudonyme de *A.L. de Boissy, du chevalier de Guénard de Faverolles, ancien capitaine de dragons,* de *J.H.F. de Geller,* etc" (Hoefer, 372). Although he does admit "Elle fut la providence des libraires et des cabinets de lecture, et ses ouvrages inspirent souvent les auteurs de mélodrames" (372), he cannot resist also attacking her: "Contrairement au bon goût, ses production eurent une très grande vogue, et la plupart furent réimprimées plusieurs fois. […] La liste de ses ouvrages est un pêle-mêle étrange, où se trouvent confondus et côte à côte tous les genres…" (372) and at the end, he says "Après avoir parcouru cette longue liste, on est singulièrement surprise de voir qu'un aussi grand nombre d'ouvrages irréligieux ou obscènes soient sortis de la plume d'une femme" (377). Likewise, in 1821 Alex Pigoreau had referred to these works as "coarse, smutty, and salacious" (œuvres graveleuses), and he would not even record them in his bibliography, saying that since he is a father of a big family, it would not please God for him to honor books that would lead his children to their fall (211). These 'vulgar works' published under pseudonyms would make an interesting study by themselves, they do not feature Marie-Antoinette.
[108] The other two novels were: *Les Mémoires historiques de la Princesse de Lamballe* (1801), and *Histoire de Madame Elisabeth de France: sœur de Louis* XVI (1802).

madame de Flahaut, madame Gay, madame Armande Roland, mais il ne faut pas la confondre dans la foule des romanciers vulgaires: tous ses livres se lisent avec plaisir" (211).[109] In the 1857 edition of their *Bibliographie Universelle,* Joseph and Louis Michaud offer reluctant praise mixed with criticism: "elle a mis au jour plus de cent dix ouvrages, […] près de trois cent cinquante volumes. Romans d'imagination, romans historiques, compilations, anecdotes, mémoires contemporains, brochures politiques, sa plume infatigable a traité tous les genres, et elle l'a fait avec une médiocrité qui ne préservera de l'oubli aucun de ses ouvrages" (38).[110] Recent work on nineteenth-century French female writers offers the most positive description. In *La Littérature en bas-bleus*; *Romancières sous la Restauration et la monarchie de Juillet (1815-1848),* Veronica Granata says that Guénard's work is:

> …le résultat d'un ingénieux amalgame entre fiction et documents authentiques. La baronne puise dans les mémoires et les écrits des personnages évoqués dans ses productions ou dans ceux des comparses et de témoins des événements qu'elle raconte. […] La mosaïque de documents se combine avec la variété des genres narratifs, habilement alternés par la baronne pour donner à ses œuvres de fiction ou 'historiques' du pathos et de la vraisemblance. [111] (222-223)

In *Irma,* Guénard maintained this "believability and credibility" partly by choosing a popular historical subject for her novel and using the still popular expiatory form. The story is written as

[109] …is far from reaching the level of Madame de Genlis, Madame Cottin, madame de Staël, madame de Flahaut, madame Gay, or madame Armande Roland, but he should not be confused with the crowd of vulgar female novelists of the time: all of her works are read with pleasure.
[110] …she wrote more than 110 works [...] nearly 350 volumes. Imagination novels, historical novels, compilations, anecdotes, contemporary memoires and political brochures, her tireless pen wrote a bit from every genre. She did so, however, with such mediocrity that none of her works will be saved from being forgotten.
[111] …the result of an ingenious amalgam between fiction and authentic documents. The baroness draws from the memoires and writings of the characters evoked in her works or in those of the associates and witnesses of the events she is describing. […] The mosaic of documents combined with her mixing of genres, ingeniously used by the baroness in order to give her fictional or 'historical' works believability and credibility.

a letter from a fictional orphaned Indian princess, Irma, to a beloved cousin to whom she is betrothed. Irma is clearly meant to represent Marie-Thérèse Charlotte, the eldest daughter of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette. The three adults Irma speaks about most often are her mother Rainelord (Marie-Antoinette), her father Sbiloüs (Louis XVI) and her aunt Selabius (Elisabeth, Louis XVI's youngest sister who remained with the family throughout their imprisonment and was executed by guillotine like Louis and Marie-Antoinette). Guénard published *Irma* at a time, when interest in Marie-Thérèse was high. Indeed, the last remaining member of the immediate royal family, this young woman had become a romantic hero for royalists in France after the death of her younger brother in 1795. [112] Popular songs, artworks, poems and even novels featured Marie-Thérèse and her story and Guénard took advantage of this trend and contributed her own material to the evolving myths of Marie-Thérèse and of Marie-Antoinette alike.

Guénard relied heavily on published historical sources for material with which to construct her narrative and further maintain its "credibility". For example, Guénard's dependence on Cléry's *Journal* is clear as she writes about the royal family's imprisonment. As in Cléry's eye-witness account, Rainelord collapses under her enemies' cruelty when she learns that Indian rebels are outside her prison window with the head of one of her dearest friends on a pike.[113] Cléry's *Journal* had also revealed the secret correspondence he and Turgy maintained with the royals which had also allowed the king to keep in touch secretly with his family after the

[112] See Hélène Becquet, "La fille de Louis XVI et l'opinion en 1795: sensibilité et politique", *Annales historiques de la Révolution françaises* for more information.

[113] Since many other eye-witness accounts recount this exact story, this violent moment, which Cléry first vividly depicted in *Journal* has since been deemed historically accurate. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, during the September Massacres, the head of the unfortunate Princess de Lamballe was paraded in front of the Temple tower in an attempt to frighten, threaten, and taunt the royals. Although her guards tried to trick her into witnessing this cruel spectacle, Marie-Antoinette never saw the head, but fainted in horror upon learning what site was awaiting her at the window. Guénard's insistence that this is the first time Marie-Antoinette's calm faltered is also considered true to life, and according to Fraser's biography, this information was taken from the memoires of Marie-Thérèse. "The only time Marie Thérèse 'ever saw her mother's firmness abandon her' was when the Princess de Lamballe's head, heart, bloody clothes, and possibly entrails were parading in front of the family's prison windows on spikes" (389).

separation. Likewise, in *Irma* two loyal man-servants establish a secret correspondence with and between members of the royal family. In these secret letters, whose contents form the lengthy epistolary portion of Volume I, Guénard imagines and attempts to reveal the royals' emotions and thoughts as they suffer at the hands of their enemies. Another moment Guénard borrows from Cléry and then expands is the scene of Louis XVI's last interview with his family. Guénard's description of the scene visually mirrors Cléry's: "Ma mère et ma tante s'assurent à ses côtés ; je m'assis à ses pieds ; il prit mon frère sur ses genoux" (I, 107).[114] Then benefitting from Cléry's assertion that the conversation which followed was inaudible, Guénard imagines and portrays Louis XVI's final words to his family.

Rainelord's experiences in India so closely resemble what others had already written about Marie-Antoinette, that portions of the novel are no more than repetitions of stories already mentioned in this study. However, due to Guénard's "ingenious" use of genre, *Irma* at times also offers a critique of 18th century French society and the French Revolution. *Irma* is an epistolary *roman-à-clef* and allegorical tale told in the style of Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes* or Voltaires *Zadig*. Just as these eighteenth-century philosophers had used fictive oriental narrators to critique the *ancien régime*, Guénard uses a thinly disguised tale of an Indian princess to critique the events and behaviors of pre-revolutionary, revolutionary, and early post-revolutionary France. In *Irma,* Guénard speaks boldly for someone who had lived through the Terror. Guénard impressively sums up the Terror and its instigators' failed objectives less than a year after it had come to a close with statements such as "…le tribunal exécrable condamnoit, dans la même séance, et le royaliste et le républicain, et l'homme de la caste la plus élevée et le plus pauvre

[114] My mother and my aunt were at his sides, I sat at his feet, and he took my brother onto his lap.

artisan ; il falloit que le sang coulât, n'importe la source dont il partoit" (I, 27). [115] Pigoreau, in his *Petite bibliographie,* praises her boldness: " …dans un temps où l'on ne pouvait sans danger, parler de l'infortuné Louis XVI, elle a eu le courage de nous raconter les malheurs de la jeune orpheline de nos rois" (211).[116] Indeed, to publish a work sympathetic to the royals and critical of the new government was a courageous move in 1800.

Throughout *Irma,* Guénard demonstrates contempt for the French Revolution in various ways. First of all, by highlighting the suffering of Marie-Thérèse, Guénard was critiquing the Revolution. Hélène Becquet says, "Que peut-on attendre d'une Révolution responsable d'un grand nombre de morts et du malheur d'une jeune fille ? […] Plaindre Madame Royale c'est considérer que, sous un certain nombre de ses aspects, la Révolution est critiquable, voire condamnable" (7). [117] Guénard indeed critcizes the impulsive nature of the French during revolutionary times. When Irma is released from prison, she observes the enthusiastic crowd around her and laments, "Je fus très sensible aux témoignages de leur affection mais je me souvenant que […] ce même peuple s'étoit […] empressé sur les traces de ma malheureuse mère, de ma tante, lorsqu'on les conduisoit au supplice. Ah ! tout dans l'espèce humaine est inconséquent et folie" (II, 200-201).[118]

Unlike Montjoye and Cléry however, Guénard does not limit her critiques to the "vile" and "foolish" participants of the revolution. She critically analyzes members of the royal family as

[115] "…in the same session, the vile tribunal would condemn the royalist and the republican – both the man from the highest social class and the most poverty stricken artisan; There had to be blood. It did not matter from what source it came."
[116]... in a time when one could not speak of the unfortunate Louis XVI without danger, she had the courage to tell us the sad story of the young orphan of our monarchs.
[117] "What could we expect from a Revolution responsible for a great number of deaths and the misfortune of a young woman? […] To sympathize with Madame Royale was, in many ways, to consider that the Revolution could be critiqued, and was even worthy of condemnation."
[118] I was touched by their marks of affection, but I remembered that […] these were the same people who had hastened after my unfortunate mother, and my aunt, as they were led to their deaths. Oh! Everything about the human race is thoughtlessness and foolishness.

well. Guénard portrays Marie-Antoinette as having several of the negative traits – foreign pride, desire for vengeance, costly frivolity, and even manipulation – which the mythical queen of revolutionary literature had possessed, although she leaves out any inference of sexual activity. Even at the end of her life, Rainelord still expresses loyalty to her native Persia and a desire to return. "Née dans une terre étrangère, ne devoient-ils pas me rendre à ma famille, me laisser emmener mes enfans ?" (24).[119] Likewise, when accused of having orchestrated the purchase of an expensive diamond necklace, Rainelord's aggression towards the woman who had masterminded the crime revealed much anti-Indian sentiment and Guénard criticizes her for it. "La reine ne mit point il faut l'avouer, la prudence qu'elle auroit dû dans une circonstance aussi délicate ; Cette femme descendoit de la dynastie régnante ; [….] elle portoit le nom d'une branche de la famille de nos rois" (I, 214).[120] Even though Rainelord was innocent in the affair, since the other woman was a decedent of Indian royalty, the public saw the queen's vengeful pursuit as another anti-Indian plot. In the same affair, Rainelord displayed too much vengeance than was fitting for a good queen. The Indian people "ne put pardonner à la reine d'avoir poussé si loin la vengeance. Elle fut en butte aux traits les plus sanglans" (I, 215).[121]

Not only were Rainelord's foreignness and pride a problem, her frivolity in her early years greatly weakened her character and led to later emotional outbursts and fantasies. To begin, Rainelord's early fast-paced life of fashion and spending corrupted India "Rien n'égala le luxe et les prodigalités de la jeune cour, ou, pour mieux dire, de celle de la princesse. La frivolité présidoit à sa toilette ; des modes qui ne faisoient que paroître, passoient de la cour à la vielle, et

[119] Born in a foreign country, should they not give me back to my family and let me take my children with me?
[120] It must be admitted that the queen did not act with the prudence she should have in such a delicate situation; This woman was a descendant of the reigning dynasty; […] she was from one of the branches of our kings.
[121] …could not forgive the queen for having pushed her vengeance so far. Her vengeance was the worst of all the most savage traits.

entraînoient les fortunes les mieux établies, par leur ruineux changemens" (I, 172).[122] This frivolity quickly taught self-serving Indian nobles that in order to succeed financially they should not appeal to the king, who was known for financial wisdom and prudence, but to the queen who was known for rapid generosity void of contemplation (I, 205). Rainelord's easy nature in her early years, led to the later inability to control her emotions. Irma criticizes Rainelord's immoderate reaction towards her captors after a failed escape attempt. "Les traits de ma mère peignoient de l'indignation la plus profonde: je l'avouerai: elle auroit paru supérieure à sa mauvaise fortune, si en témoignant autant de fermeté elle n'avoit pas laissé éclater dans ses regards une fureur concentrée donc, hélas ! ses ennemis n'ont que trop profité" (I, 14).[123]

Finally, the worst of Rainelord's negative traits was her wish to exercise political influence and to manipulate her husband. Rainelord, "qui n'étoit plus un enfant et à qui les magnifiques bagatelles ne pouvoient plus suffire pour occuper l'activité de son âme, voulut se mêler aussi de gouverner […] Son époux résista longtemps à ses désirs, mais il y céda […] et son attachement pour elle augmentoit chaque jour son empire" (I, 183). [124] When choosing an adequate financial minister for his country, Sbilous does submit to his wife, giving Rainelord the final say " il ne suffisoit pas de lui plaire, il falloit que Rainelord, qui, à cette époque, avoit une autorité absolue, approuvât ce choix" (I, 209-210).[125] According to Guénard's analysis in *Irma*, the fall of the monarchy was due to the country's dire financial situation. As Sbiloüs in vain attempted to

[122] Nothing equaled the luxury and the lavishness of the young court, or better said, of the young princess. Frivolity was the theme of her grooming; fashions which had just appeared would disappear from the court the next day and dragged the most established fortunes to ruin.
[123] My mother's traits were filled with the worst of indignation: I will swear it: she would have appeared superior to her unlucky fate, if while expressing so much strength she had not had sent out such concentrated looks of fury, from which, alas, her enemies could only take advantage.
[124] …who was no longer a child and whose spirit was no longer satisfied by fancy trivialities, wanted to begin to govern. […] Her husband resisted her desires for a long time, but he gave in eventually […] and his attachment for her made her empire grow each day.
[125] […]; It was not enough to please her. Rainelord, who at this time had an absolute authority, had to approve of this choice.

restore his kingdom to prosperity, opposition met him on every side, and his wife's meddling and manipulation were two of the main problems.

Even though Guénard did not idolize Marie-Antoinette through her fictional personality Rainelord, *Irma* still manages to portray her as a victim to unjust circumstances, create sympathy towards her and to argue in favor of expiation. She manages this by highlighting Rainelord's immense suffering at the end of her life. In these passages, Guénard shows to what great extent Rainelord was a victim. One example is the moment when Indian soldiers arrive to separate Rainelord from her son.

> Elle fit un effort qui étoit au-dessus de la nature, pour commander au désespoir qui déchiroit son âme; elle les reçut avec dignité, mais sans hauteur. Ce n'étoit point une princesse outragée, c'étoit une mère qui ne vouloit point aigrir ceux qui alloient être dépositaires de l'objet de ses plus chères affections. […] et étouffant les sanglots qui gonfloit sa poitrine, elle serra son fils dans ses bras. […Elle] le couvrit de baisers; puis, sans attendre que l'on réitérât l'ordre d'une séparation qui brisoit son âme, elle le remit elle-même aux magistrats, sans proférer une parole. Mon frère les suivit. Rainelord étoit restée assise; et suivant des yeux cet enfant qu'elle ne va plus revoir, elle resta dans la même situation jusqu'à ce qu'il fût parvenu à la porte; mais à peine fut-elle fermée, que tombant tout-à-coup de son siège, elle demeura sur le carreau sans mouvement, et presque sans vie. (II, 26-28) [126]

[126] She made a superhuman effort in order to overcome the despair that was tearing her soul apart. She received them with dignity, but without haughtiness. This was not an outraged princess, but a mother who did not want to embitter those who would be the custodians of her most precious possession. […] stifling the sobs which filled her chest, she squeezed her son in her arms. […She] covered him with kisses. Then, without waiting for them to re-read her the order, she gave him up to the magistrates without saying a word. My brother followed them. Rainelord remained seated. With her eyes she followed the child whom she would never see again. She stayed motionless until he reached the door, but as soon as the door closed, she suddenly fell from her seat and remained on the floor, motionless and nearly lifeless.

The loss of her son following the loss of her husband, and all public support was indeed the cruelest of punishments for a woman with a nature as tender as Rainelord. Guénard shows extreme sympathy towards her. Her emotional suffering is so great, that it is manifested in her loss of physical beauty:

> Des maux de nerfs causés par l'état convulsif de sa profonde douleur l'avait réduite cette taille majestueuse qui la faisoit distinguer de toutes les femmes de sa cour. […] Son corps […] étoit courbé sans pouvoir se redresser. La plus extrême maigreur avoit ôté à son teint cet éclat qui l'avoit fait comparer par tous les poètes à la déesse du printemps. Ses cheveux se couvrirent de cette neige qui caractérise l'hiver de l'âge: enfin, il étoit presqu'impossible de la reconnoître.[127] (II, 30)

Guénard emphasizes on several occasions that Rainelord's immense sufferings have more than enough paid for her crimes of the past. "O ma mère! tes persécuteurs ne t'ont que trop justifiée, et la postérité, en apprenant les maux que tu as soufferts, pénétrée de respect pour le malheur, n'osera s'occuper des fautes dont tu as été accusée" (II, 31).[128] In Rainelord's final moments as a joyous procession leads her to the scaffold, she is no longer a vengeful, prideful woman but a suffering victim. Guénard's description echoes Montjoye's from *Histoire*:

> …la reine vêtue d'une simple tunique blanche, monta dans le char qui, jusqu'à ces temps, n'avoit servi qu'à conduire les criminels à l'échafaud. Quand je la vis, les mains liées, sur la planche qui servoit de siége à cette triste voiture, et que je me rappelois ces chars

[127] Nerve damage, caused by the convulsive state of her deep suffering had reduced her distinguished dimensions which before had made her distinguishable from all other ladies at court. Her body […] was bent over and she unable to stand upright. An extreme thinness had stolen the spark from her coloring, which before had made poets compare her to the goddess of spring. Her hair turned snowy white, as if she were an old woman. In the end, it was nearly impossible to recognize her.

[128] Oh my mother! Your persecutors have justified you, and as posterity learns of the torments you suffered, they will be struck with respect for your suffering, and they will not bother to remember the crimes of which you were accused.

> superbes où, sur des carreaux couverts d'or et de soie, elle paroissoit belle de toutes les grâces ; qu'au lieu de ces acclamations d'amour et d'idolàtrie qui l'accompagnoient, elle n'entendoit à sa dernière heure que des injures et des imprécations, je ne pouvois m'empêcher de déplorer la fragilité des grandeurs humaines. Trente mille hommes bordoient la haie, et une foule immense se pressoit sur son passage. Elle la regardoit avec indifférence: on ne voyoit sur son visage ni abbattement ni fierté ; elle avoit l'air calme et paroissoit insensible aux cris que l'on faisoit retenir autour d'elle. Cette pénible marche dura une heure. En appercevant l'échafaud, une pâleur subite couvrit son visage ; mais elle n'y monta pas moins avec courage ... (III, 25).[129]

This portrait demonstrates that all traces of a prideful, vengeful queen are gone and only the broken victim remains. Rainelord's sufferings have more than enough paid for any careless frivolities of her youth. Thus in her final assessment of Marie-Antoinette, Guénard offers her the same expiation as Montjoye and Cléry had in their works.

Although coming from different genres, the works we have discussed in this chapter show some interesting similarities. Each highlights Marie-Antoinette as not only a queen, revealing sympathy towards her difficult position, but also as a strong woman and a tender wife and mother. The idealized portraits by Montjoye and Cléry directly contradict material from the revolutionary pamphlets and demonstrate the fervor of zealous royalist writers even in the unstable years just following the French Revolution. Although Guénard's fictional historical

[129] The queen, dressed in a simple white tunic, got into the cart which until this day had only been used to drive lowly criminals to the scaffold. When I see her, her hands tied, sitting on the wooden blank that served as a seat to this sad vehicle, and I remember the superb carriages covered in silk and gold in which she appeared beautiful and full of grace, and I think that instead of the shouts of love and idolatry which used to accompany her, that at her last hour she only heard insults and cursing, I cannot help but hate the frailty of human nature. 30,000 men surrounded the cart and an immense crowd followed it along the way. She looked at the crowd with indifference: on her face could be seen neither dejection, nor pride. She was calm and appeared unaffected by the cries sounding all around her. This difficult journey took an hour. Upon seeing the scaffold, her face paled. But she did not climb the stairs with any less courage…)

novel does not idealize Marie-Antoinette and voices more criticism than did *Histoire* and *Journal*, in the end, *Irma* as well offers expiation for the queen. Focusing on the immense suffering she underwent in the latter years of her life, *Irma* is yet another portrait whose retrial seeks to prove Marie-Antoinette innocent of crimes against the nation. Pre-restoration works, as seen in these three examples, show that a tendency in literature to praise the monarchs, especially Marie-Antoinette, would not be a new phenomenon during the Bourbon Restoration. The fact that each of these sources was re-published successfully during the Restoration is further proof that their ideas, rather than joining the royalist bandwagon when the Bourbons came back to France, actually led the way for other royalist writings that would appear for the first time during that period. During the years following Napoleon Bonaparte's reign, a whole new set of works about Marie-Antoinette would appear. In the next chapter, I will discuss three works featuring Marie-Antoinette published during the Bourbon Restoration, works whose idolization of the queen would transform her into a martyr.

Chapter 3: Marie-Antoinette in Bourbon Restoration literature (1814-1830)

The myth of the martyr queen

La grande pitié qu'il y avait au royaume de France, […] c'est la véritable inspiration historique.[130]

– Jules Michelet, *Histoire de la Révolution Française* [131]

…comme le sculpteur tire la statue du bloc de marbre à force de frapper dessus, […] voilà qu'on nous sculpte une statue du courage, de la patience et de la résignation; voilà qu'on met cette statue sur le piédestal de la douleur; voilà qu'on élève ce pauvre roi, qu'on le sacre. [132]

- Alexandre Dumas (*La Comtesse de Charny,* VI, 274).

As discussed in the previous chapter, in the years immediately following Marie-Antoinette's death writers such as Montjoye, Cléry and Guénard penned mostly sympathetic portrayals of the former queen, by contradicting accusations found in revolutionary literature and offering expiation from crimes unveiled in even earlier writings. Marie-Antoinette was abhorred during revolutionary France, and though still strongly regretted in the years just following the revolution, the eventual Directory and Napoleonic governments "ne sont guère favorables à cette glorification et les romanciers eux-mêmes l'apprennent à leurs dépens […]: De 1802 à 1814, la consigne est de se taire et les inspecteurs de la librairie rappellent brutalement à l'ordre les délinquants" (Tourneux, xvi).[133] Then in 1815, the Bourbon family returned to France, took back their monarchical position, and the period known as the Restoration began. During this period almost "twenty-five years after the storming of the Bastille, new interest was aroused in revolutionary events, and for the first time since the heavy censorship of Napoleonic times, the victims' perspective could be openly considered" (Butenschön, 10). Indeed publications

[130] The great pity that existed in the kingdom of France […] is true historical inspiration.
[131] From his 1848 *Histoire de la revolution française,* cited in Susan Dunn, 285.
[132] Like a sculptor draws the statue out of the block of marble by having hit it […] that is how they have sculpted for us a statue of courage, of patience and resignation. That is how they have put this statue on the pedestal of pain. That is how they have lifted up this poor king, and have made him sacred!
[133] …were hardly favorable to this glorification [of the former monarchs] and the novelists learned this first-hand. From 1802 until 1814, public order was to keep your mouth shut [about the monarchs] and bookstore inspectors would brutally remind those who disobeyed about correct behavior.

concerning Marie-Antoinette, which had dropped to an all-time low in 1810, began a tremendous increase in 1815 and would continue a rapid augmentation until the mid-1820s.[134]

According to many historians, "openly considering" the former monarch's perspective actually meant exaggerating and distorting the truth. Stefan Zweig says: "en 1815, un Bourbon monta de nouveau sur le trône; pour flatter la dynastie, on repeint l'image diabolique sous les couleurs les plus flatteuses; pas de portrait de Marie-Antoinette datant de cette époque où elle ne soit idéalisée et auréolée" (5).[135] Likewise, bibliographer Maurice Tourneux says that the return of the Bourbons "voit éclore toute une littérature de panégyriques, d'élégies, [et] de souvenirs […]. Un événement, qualifié officiellement de 'providentiel', fournit un nouvel aliment à ce culte si longtemps proscrit" (xvi).[136] Therefore, according to Zweig and Tourneux, writers under Restoration France received and strengthened the mythical Marie-Antoinette discussed in Chapter two, in order to impress the newly restored Bourbon family. As this chapter will reveal, literary representations of Marie-Antoinette would indeed come to incarnate the ideals important to the Restoration. This chapter will highlight three of these publications: *Les Augustes Victimes du Temple,* another historical novel by Elisabeth Guénard (1818); *Les Mémoires de Madame Campan,* by Henriette Genet Campan (1822); and *Mémoires secrets et universels des malheurs et de la mort de la Reine de France* by Lafont d'Aussonne, (1824).[137] Like *Histoire* and *Journal*

[134] Statistic generated from Google's NGram: https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=Marie+-Antoinette&year_start=1800&year_end=1850&corpus=19&smoothing=2&share=&direct_url=t1%3B%2CMarie%20-%20Antoinette%3B%2Cc0 ; According to this same source, the highest peak of French titles containing the words "Marie-Antoinette" would be published in 1864. (See graphs at the end of this chapter.)

[135] …in 1815 a new Bourbon came to reign. In order to flatter the dynasty, the diabolical images [of Marie-Antoinette from the Revolution] were repainted in the most flattering ways. There was not a portrait of Marie-Antoinette from this time where she is not idealized and made into a saint.

[136] ...was marked by a whole slew of praise and memoires […]. This event, officially named "an act of God" provided new force to this cult [of the monarchy], which for so long had been forbidden.

[137] The genre historical novel would not gain popularity in France until the 1820s, meaning that at this time the novel was still very much a "woman's genre". Chapter four will discuss the importance of the historical novel in France after the 1820s and several historical novels authored by a man – Alexandre Dumas.

from the end of the eighteenth century, each of these accounts portrayed Marie-Antoinette as an ideal woman, as they contradicted the infamous personalities from revolutionary literature. In addition, dominant themes of the Bourbon Restoration ideology including *oubli* and *grâce,* commemoration, the glory of the Bourbon monarchs, and religion ultimately transformed Marie-Antoinette into a martyr.

Ideals of the Bourbon Restoration

Before discussing how these literary works contributed to the myth of Marie-Antoinette, it is necessary to situate them in their greater political, and social context. In 1814, and then again in 1815 after Napoleon Bonaparte made a brief comeback, Louis XVI's younger brother, the former Count de Provence, returned to France, declared himself king, and restored the throne to the Bourbon family. King Louis XVIII faced a difficult task in returning to France. Faith in the capabilities of a monarch had been erased for some Frenchmen by pre-revolutionary rhetoric and monarchical corruption, and for others regicide and terror had nullified the original philosophical ideals said to have fathered the revolution. Indeed, to be an effective leader, Louis XVIII needed to appease radical royalists who still dreamed of the glorious *Ancien Régime,* moderates who hoped for a constitutional monarchy, and anti-royalists – who were themselves divided - all at the same time.

In order to do this, he first developed a moderate political agenda, which included the concept of *oubli. Oubli* meant "forgetting the nation's recent revolutionary and imperial past and [most importantly] the political sympathies one shared before the restoration of the monarchy" (Butenschön, 3). Not everyone agreed with the idea of forgetting what had happened in France. Ultra-royalists "refused to forget" and, wanting vindication for the murdered monarchs and other bloody crimes of the Revolution, they strongly opposed the idea of total *oubli*, especially in

regards to the regicide (Mellon, 80). Louis XVIII finally decided on a compromise, and adopted "the Christian doctrine of '*grâce*' as a second principle of his political program, alongside *oubli* (Butenschön, 10). In doing so, he claimed to be following the example of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette, both whose acclaimed last words had been "je pardonne".[138] At his coronation, Louis XVIII used his elder brother's very words - "With all my heart, I pardon those who have made themselves my enemies, without my having given them any cause, and I pray to God that He pardon them" – to illustrate his intention to pardon the executioners of the revolution, and those who had supported Napoleon's empire (Dunn, 87). Thus, Louis XVIII's compromise was a promise that he would forgive crimes of the revolution, *and* that he would not forget the unjust deaths of his relatives. He would commemorate their greatness in life and their sufferings in death, *and* he would do so in an unprovocative way - by placing chapels and monuments dedicated to their memories in strategic locations (Butenschön, 3). This new, unprovocative architectural program would serve the greater monarchical goal of social unification and political solidarity.

On January 21, 1815, the twenty-second anniversary of Louis XVI's execution, Louis XVIII, ordered a search for his brother's and Marie-Antoinette's bodies from the grounds of the Church of the Madeleine. What little remains they found were preserved and moved to the Saint Denis Basilica where most of the former kings and queens of France were already buried.[139] Finally able to give their relatives a proper burial, the restored royal family observed a traditional Catholic mass and placed their remains at the center of the basilica's underground crypt. Louis

[138] I forgive.

[139] The Saint-Denis Basilica was raided during the French revolution, and most of the remains of past kings and queens were destroyed. Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette's remains, not having been moved there until twenty years later, were not among those removed. Even though the contents of the sarcophagi had been removed, the funerary monuments were preserved, and have since been restored to their former likeness. They merit a visit to Saint-Denis.

XVIII also commissioned a statue of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette to be placed above in the church's nave.[140] Then, the king chose a few smaller projects, including two expiatory chapels, in order to acknowledge fully the unjust deaths of his relatives and still not corrupt his "ideal of restrained commemoration" (Butenshön, 3).[141] The first chapel, simply called *La Chapelle Expiatoire,* was privately funded by Louis XVIII at the original burial place of the former king and queen. Located on the rue d'Anjou in what is now the 8th arrondissement of Paris, the chapel honored Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette on land Louis XVIII purchased for that very reason. Also in 1816, the king allowed the ministry of police to fund privately a second expiratory chapel in Marie-Antoinette's honor, which they did by transforming her former Conciergerie prison cell into a small religious chapel complete with dark-blue wallpaper covered in silver tears.[142]

In commemorating the former monarchs, Louis XVIII focused especially on glorifying the Bourbon family and restoring public faith in the monarchy.[143] In the past, French kings- and especially the Bourbons – had claimed to rule by divine right in order to convince subjects that they alone were the rulers of France. However, "the name of the Bourbons had been calumnied during the Revolution, [and it had been] neglected under the Empire. The calumnies had to be exposed, the Bourbon name restored along with the Bourbon person" (Mellon, 63-64). Restoration rhetoric had to reestablish this precedent, and so during the Restoration, the

[140] The statue was not realized right away. It would not be until 1830, during the reign of the last Bourbon brother Charles X, that sculptors Edme Gaulle and Pierre Petitot were able to complete the project.
[141] Louis XVIII resisted the ultra-royalists' urging to place "controversial" memorials in "controversial" places. For example, instead of placing an expiratory statue of Louis XVI, Marie-Antoinette and Elisabeth at the site where they had been guillotined, Louis XVIII chose to simply have the former equestrian statue of his grandfather, Louis XV, restored, and thus re-transforming *la place de la Révolution* into *la place Louis XV*. It thus restored the glory of the former monarchy, without creating a "crime scene" which would forever remind France of the sins of the Revolution (Butenschön, 3).
[142] See Butenschön pages 11-13 for a complete description of the transformation of cell to chapel.
[143] That Restoration failed to do so is certain. This study is not attempting to argue for the success of restoration ideals, only to point them out.

Bourbons again portrayed themselves as the very instruments of God, meant to restore peace and prosperity to France. Archbishop Quélen's words in this funeral oration are a clear example of this "religion" of the royalty: " [the Bourbons are] a family chosen by its good fortune and its glory, a privileged race…There is nothing under the sun which surpasses the greatness of this most Christian house of France" (cited in Mellon, 64).

Louis XVI's and Marie-Antoinette's deaths at the hands of the revolutionaries had given conservative royalists even further reason to liken the former king and queen with divinity. They compared their executions to that of a Christian martyr, or even to that of Christ himself, a relationship that could be easily established by pro-royalists, "since the king's quasi-divinity had for centuries been assumed" (Dunn, 27). Thus, during the Restoration, the former Bourbon king and queen not only were extolled and honored, but they were also portrayed as embodying the most important Restoration characteristic: they were willing martyrs for the good of their nation. Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette became a humble Christian couple – indeed an ideal at this time. "The God-like attributes of the king had traditionally made him a superhuman being, but to make Louis XVI's execution equivalent to Christ's crucifixion, it had to be shown that Louis was an innocent victim who dies willingly for the redemption of others" (Dunn, 27).

The attempt to re-sanctify the king and queen is clearly visible in the expiatory monuments Louis XVIII constructed and commissioned during the Bourbon Restoration. The statue in the nave of the Basilica of Saint-Denis shows Louis and Marie-Antoinette kneeling at an altar and gazing lovingly at open Bibles. At *La Chapelle Expiatoire,* both a statue of Louis and another of Marie-Antoinette depicted the beautified monarchs in particularly religious settings.[144] The king is dressed in full coronation robes and thus, "appearing as a personification of the French

[144] Like the statue at the basilica of Saint-Denis, both of these were finished in 1830. The king's statue was done by François-Joseph Bosio and the queen's by Jean-Pierre Cortot.

monarchy", kneels before an angel who "points heavenward […], signalizing the king's final ascension and Christian salvation" (Butenschön, 9). Marie-Antoinette who, by contrast, is only wearing a simple dress, is kneeling and gazing up into the eyes of a standing figure, the artist's personification of Religion. Finally, in the smaller expiatory chapel of the Conciergerie, there are three carefully selected wall-paintings: Marie-Antoinette receiving a final communion; Marie-Antoinette gazing peacefully out of a sunlit window after having received the final communion; and Marie-Antoinette being led away from her daughter and sister-in-law by two ferocious looking officers.[145]

In these examples, Louis, regally dressed and yet kneeling, represented the Restoration's ideal of the humble Bourbon monarch who, although he could have used his power, went willingly and humbly to the scaffold for the betterment of France. Marie-Antoinette was likewise depicted "as a loving mother, brave heroine of history and, especially, a faithful Christian" (9). These artworks, commissioned and carried out by the Bourbons, not only highlighted the greatness of the Bourbon family, but also transformed two of the Bourbon family members into humble and willing martyrs. They died willingly for good of their even bigger family: the nation of France. This was indeed "the theme of the Monarchist historians of the Restoration – one big happy French family" (Mellon, 63). The statues and paintings offer, therefore, a picture of the conservative political ideals that Bourbon rulers in early Restoration France wanted to perpetuate. These ideals would be no less prominent in conservative literature of the nineteenth century which the rest of the chapter will discuss.

[145] The three paintings are: *Marie-Antoinette, après avoir reçus les secours de la religion* (Gervais Simon, 1816) ; *La Reine Marie-Antoinette communiant dans sa prison* (Michel-Martin Drolling, 1816) ; and *Les Adieux de Marie-Antoinette* (Jacques-Auguste Pajou, 1816).

Marie-Antoinette in Restoration fiction

Fiction during restoration France, like the visual arts, was often used to push a political agenda. Susan Dunn has shown how conservative writers of fiction such as Alphonse Lamartine and the young Victor Hugo, in Restoration France and beyond, used their fictional writings to combat negative myths about Louis XVI perpetuated by radical Jacobins during the Revolution.[146] In doing so, they created myths of their own. She claims that "whereas Jacobin and royalist attitudes toward regicide were criticized for incorporating supernatural and irrational elements, the new democratic social and political faiths that superseded Jacobinism and royalism were hardly less colored by mythic and irrational features" (166). As Dunn shows, from no matter what side of the political spectrum a restoration writer was working, his writings about Louis XVI were full of magical, supernatural, and religious connotations. They transformed the myth of the king into a bigger and more significant being than Louis XVI had ever been in person. In the process, his death became a highly symbolic event, and fictional works considering his wife were no different.

In 1818, Elisabeth Guénard Brossin de Méré, the author of *Irma* from 1800, published *Les Augustes victimes du temple,* another historical novel incorporating and contributing to the literary myth of Marie-Antoinette. *Augustes victimes* was not as much of a commercial success for Guénard as *Irma* had been. Despite having been banned by the imperial police from 1806 to 1814, *Irma* managed sixteen publications between 1800 and 1816 (Michaud, 38). On the contrary, the first edition of *Augustes Victimes* was also its last. Neither was *Augustes victimes* considered a literary success for its author. Joseph Michaud mentions the novel as one of six "worthy" books Guénard wrote after *Irma,* but this small remark is the only praise it received

[146] *The Deaths of Louis XVI; Regicide and the French Political Imagination.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.

from nineteenth century bibliographers.[147] That the nineteenth century public did not appreciate the novel as much as Guénard's previous work, does not diminish its importance to this study due to its repetition of earlier published sources and myths combined with a significant amount of Restoration rhetoric.

Unlike *Irma*, *Augustes Victimes* was not an allegorical *roman-à-clef*. Instead of using fictional personalities to recount Marie-Antoinette's experiences in prison, Guénard used an omniscient narrator to tell the story. To construct her narrative Guénard relied heavily on Cléry's *Journal,* for example, to describe the beginnings of the royal family's time in prison (I, 108 – II, 30). For the final moments of Louis XVI's life, she borrowed much from the eye-witness testimony of Abbé Edgeworth de Firmont, which had been published in London in 1815. The written testimony of Marie-Antoinette's defense lawyer, Chauveau-Lagarde from 1816, provided the majority of information about the queen's trial and execution. She then used notices, letters and short anecdotes from other authors – including the royal family dentist Lemoine, the prison guard Gilbert, and the king's lawyer Malesherbes – to fill in the gaps.

Her reliance on eye-witness sources, led Guénard to claim *Augustes victimes* as more historically accurate and "less fiction" than *Irma* had been. Towards the end of *Augustes victimes,* she juxtaposed the content of the two novels:

> J'ai osé, dans un ouvrage allégorique, représenter tout ce que l'innocence persécuté a de plus touchant, tout ce que le courage dans un âge aussi tendre a de plus sublime. J'ai supplée aux traditions qui me manquaient ; et, en approchant ce portrait de la perfection,

[147] 19th century bibliographies consulted include: Pigoreau's *Petite bibliographie biographico-romancière;* Tourneaux's *Sources bibliographiques de la révolution française;* Henri Stein's *Le bibliographe moderne;* Hoefer's *Nouvelle biographie générale ;* Other than listing *Augustes victimes* as an 1818 publication, these bibliographies do not say anything else – neither about the reception of the first publication nor about any future publications – both subjects which bibliographers often mention concerning other works.

> j'étais certaine de ne pas m'éloigner de la vérité ; mais enfin c'était une fiction, et je n'étais point assujettie, comme je le suis ici, à ne rien écrire […] que ce qui est parfaitement vrai. J'ai pu, dans l'ouvrage dont je parle, […] entrer dans mille détails qui satisfaisaient la curiosité des lecteurs, et dont plusieurs me servaient à faire entendre des vérités […]. Aujourd'hui, je ne dirai que ce qui ne peut être démenti. Je n'ai pas besoin d'un intérêt factice, pour alimenter dans les cœurs les sentimens de respect et de tendresse, qui sont déjà gravés pour celle dont toutes les actions sont consacrées à la gloire de la religion, et au bonheur du monde. [148] (III, 64-65)

Indeed, Guénard had clearly updated certain passages since her earlier publication. For example, when she had recounted the king's final goodbye with his family– that tragic moment based on Cléry's account - in *Irma,* Guénard had invented a lengthy moralistic monologue for Louis XVI, during which he had spoken of forgiveness, education, religion, and the glory of a simple life (II, 106-110). In Guénard's new account however, she combines the silent portrait-like scene Cléry had left behind in *Journal* with information from the eye-witness account of priest Edgeworth de Firmont. Firmont had also maintained ignorance of the last conversation, but he had added a tragic soundtrack – "des cris perçans [et] aigus qui devaient traverser les murs" - to the scene.[149] Based on these two accounts, Guénard's new scene is considerably shorter than her last, and she admits, "On ne sait pas l'entretien qui eut lieu dans cette douloureuse conférence qui dura sept quarts-d'heure, […] La Reine et Madame Elisabeth ont

[148] In an allegorical work, I dared to represent how persecuted innocence can move us and how courage can evoke the sublime in such a sensitive age. I made up for the traditions that I was lacking, and in approaching this portrait of perfection I made sure not to stray far from the truth. In the end, however, it was still a fiction. I was not then liable to write [the exact truth] as I am here. I could, therefore, in the other work […], go into thousands of details which satisfied the curiosity of the readers, and which allowed me to make what really happened more well-known […]. Today, I will only say that which cannot be denied. I do not need false information in order to pour respect and tenderness into the hearts [of the reader] since these feelings are already engraved on them.

[149] high-pitched piercing cries which one could have heard through the walls

emporté dans la tombe ce que le Roi leur dit… " (II, 144).[150] Indeed, the king's "last goodbye" in *Augustes victimes* reflects Guénard's original sources more than *Irma* had, unveiling a less fictionalized version of this moment.

That she stays close to her source, however, does not prevent Guénard's restoration novel from telling more than historical fact. Although Guénard does not invent the king's final words, she interprets the motives of his listeners. Indeed, she follows her claim of not knowing what the king said with her own interpretation as to why Marie-Antoinette and Elisabeth never repeated his words: "…soit que le trouble qui était inévitable dans ces affreux momens en ait fait perdre le souvenir aux Princesses, soit qu'il fût fait des communications intimes, contenant peut-être des moyens de sauver les restes de cette précieuse famille, et qu'alors la moindre indiscrétion eût compromise ceux qui s'en occupaient " (II, 144).[151] By interpreting reasons why the queen and her sister-in-law never repeated the king's last words to anyone – even to Marie-Thérèse who had fainted as her father was leaving the room and thus maintained little memory of those final moments – Guénard still allows for fictional speculation of the final moment.

That Guénard does not limit her personal interpretation at any point in *Augustes victimes should be* one way in which this historical novel can be distinguished from a work of unbiased history.[152] Instead, she often uses her own voice to pronounce judgement on the authors of her sources. Guénard's evaluations of these writers are obviously sympathetic to royalist opinion.

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[150] No one knows what was said during that painful interview which lasted nearly two hours […]. The queen and Madame Elisabeth took the king's last words to their graves…

[151] ...it was either the inevitable confusion of this atrocious moment that caused the Princesses to forget the king's final words, or it was the fact that this intimate conversation contained information which would have helped the rest of this precious family to escape. If that was the case, the least bit of indiscretion would have compromised those who were making the preparations.

[152] The word "should" is emphasized in this paragraph, to point out that although historical works often claim freedom from bias, the acclaimed historical works highlighted in this study will all present an obviously biased opinion. Indeed, relating historical events without bias is always argued but impossible to do. The reason the distinction is important in this study is to show how the myth of Marie-Antoinette reappears in all nineteenth century works – whether their authors had claimed to be writing "only historical fact" or not.

She commemorates Cléry, for example, for his unequaled care for the royals and his ingenious ability to help them carry out the secret correspondence (I, 116). Likewise, she praises the queen's lawyers for their "zeal, their rare talent, and their attachment to the illustrious accused" (III, 10, my translation). In like manner, she condemns Conciergerie guard Gilbert for having instigated the interrogation of the queen after he had uncovered an escape plot (II, 209).[153] She also likens members of the revolutionary tribunal to monsters and animals, a transformation echoing themes from Montjoye and Cléry's works from Chapter two (III, 11; 13). Guénard's work should also be clearly distinguished from a historical documentary, since she invents actions and dialogue. Using this common literary device, Guénard claims to know the queen's last words. "Je rapporterai ici un trait que je tiens d'un *témoin auriculaire* […] ; ce trait, prouve jusqu'à quel point cette Princesse conserva, même au dernier moment, la noble politesse qui a toujours distingué nos Princes " (III, 22, my emphasis).[154]

Due to her reliance on older sources, many themes in *Augustes Victimes* resembles those in the historical and fictional works written earlier and discussed in Chapter two. First, like Montjoye, Guénard refutes aspects of the personality from the monster queen discussed in Chapter one. Against the infamous *l'Autrichienne,* who wanted to see the destruction of France,

[153] The only documentation existing in support of this hypothesis, is a report Gilbert wrote to his superior about his interception of correspondence Marie-Antoinette had entrusted to him. This attempted, but failed escape plot and differing hypotheses regarding it will be discussed further in Chapter six and the conclusion.

[154] Here, I will tell of a remark that I heard from *someone who heard it.* […] this remark, will prove to what point this Princess conserved, even up until her last moment, the noble manners which our Princes have always shown. (my emphasis). Guénard then recounts that (and I translate) Marie-Antoinette slipped as she was "going up the stairs of the scaffold [and] her foot slipped and lightly struck the executioners knee. She turned towards him and said, "I hurt you, Sir, and I regret it" (III, 22). This anecdote is often repeated, in fictional as well as historical sources including Castelot's *Queen of France,* page 409 and Fraser's *The Journey*, page 440. Zweig does not mention it in his account. Neither Castelot nor Fraser tell from which source they found this story, although Fraser mentions Samson in the same paragraph alluding that she possibly took the anecdote from his memoires. (Zweig had insisted that Samson's account was falsified, not even written by him but by an author who had paid Samson for the rights to use his name and write his "testimony" (see Zweig, 501). Castelot does not list Samson among his sources, but mentions using two different police reports – one from a man named Roubaud, and another from an unkown officer (see Castelot, 421).

Guénard first highlights the fact that Marie-Antoinette was a true member of the illustrious Bourbon family. In the quote above, Marie-Antoinette indeed belonged to France: "*nos* Princes".[155] After having established Marie-Antoinette as belonging to the Bourbon "race", Guénard then emphasizes that the Bourbons only and always wanted the best for France – not to destroy it as revolutionary authors had claimed. "C'est je le répète, ce qui rend tous les ouvrages qui rappellent les vertus de cette illustre famille et ses malheurs, nécessaires aux hommes actuels, pour leur faire connaître ceux qui n'ont jamais voulu que le bonheur de la France, et qui seuls pourront assurer sa prospérité et la paix avec l'Europe " (II, 175).[156]

In response to the image of *Madame Veto*, Guénard highlights moments in which Marie-Antoinette is unwilling to influence politics and lie to her husband. When the Revolutionary Tribunal accused Marie-Antoinette of manipulative behavior, for example: " 'C'est vous qui avez appris à Louis Capet, cet art d'une profonde dissimulation, avec laquelle il a trompé trop long-tems le bon peuple Français, qui ne se doutait pas qu'on pût porter à un tel degré la scélératesse et la perfide.' [Guénard tells that Marie-Antoinette responded], 'Oui, le peuple a été trompé, mais ce n'est ni par mon mari, ni par moi' " (II, 231).[157] Marie-Antoinette is the opposite of *Madame Veto*, only wanting the safety of her husband and to be close to him (II, 1).

Also in the manner of earlier authors, like Cléry, Guénard orchestrates a role-reversal. In contrast to the violent and 'monstrous' actions of the revolutionaries, the royal family remained docile and exceptional. "L'illustre famille au contraire, loin de fronder les scélérats qui exerçaient tant de rigueurs sur elle, semblait, par sa docilité angélique, les inviter à s'adoucir et

[155] *Our* princes. (my emphasis)
[156] Works which remind today's reader of this illustrious family and their hardships are necessary, so that the reader will come to recognize those whose only desire was happiness for France. It was they alone who were able to ensure France's peace and prosperity with Europe.
[157] "It is you who taught Louis Capet the art of deep deception, which he used for a long time to trick the good people of France, who in no way feared such a high degree of treachery and deceitfulness." [Marie-Antoinette replied] "Yes, the people were tricked, but it was neither by my husand, nor myself."

les attendre au repentir. Elle semblait, par le calme de ses actions, dire à ces brigands: La force nous a mis en votre puissance ; nous y resterons semblables à l'agneau que le sacrificateur égorge…" (224-225).[158] Guénard's juxtaposition of the two factions was extreme, and in the end the revolutionaries lost their humanity and became beasts, similar to the beastly Marie-Antoinette found in revolutionary pamphlets.[159] For example, Guénard described members of the Tribunal as, "affreux", "des bêtes féroces, qui n'avaient d'humain que la figure", "tigres altérés", and even "monstres" (III, 11, 13 &14 ; II, 222).[160]

Augustes victimes does not critique Marie-Antoinette, as *Irma* had done. In *Irma,* Rainelord's most positive characteristic had been pride: "Ma mère conservoit dans les fers toute la fierté de sa race […] jamais elle ne fit une démarche indigne de son rang" (I, 192).[161] In the new novel, Marie-Antoinette "avoit […] conservé le charme des manières et du caractère: dès qu'elle parlait, c'était toujours avec une si grande présence d'esprit, avec une politesse si achevée, qu'il était impossible, à moins d'avoir un cœur de bronze, de lui résister (II, 199-200).[162] Rainelord's pride was evident when the revolutionary guards came to remove her from one prison to another, thus separating her from the last of her family. Overcome with grief, Irma threw herself on the ground in front of the guards, begging them not to take her mother. Very unlike the tender queen mother who would reign in Restoration literature, Rainelord scolded her daughter's emotion: "Que faites-vous me dit-elle avec indignation ? vous, la fille des Rois, vous abaisser à la prière !

[158] The illustrious family, on the contrary, far from revolting the wicked ones who held such power over them, seemed, by their angelic docility, to invite them to soften and to expect them to repent. They seemed, by their calm actions, to be saying to the scoundrels: The strength that we have in your presence will be like that of a sacrificial lamb waiting to be slaughtered...

[159] See Chantal Thomas, *La Reine Scélérate,* page138-143

[160] "atrocious"; "ferocious beasts whose only human feature was their face"; "corrupted tigers"; "monsters"

[161]Even in chains, my mother maintained all the pride of her race; she never made one step unworthy of her rank.

[162] ...she maintained a charm in her mannerisms and in her character. As soon as she spoke, it was always with such of spirit of importance and with such complete politeness, that it was impossible […] to resist her unless you had a heart of bronze.

Sachons mourir, mais conservons la dignité du rang où la fortune nous avoit placées" (II, 40).[163] On the contrary, when the saddened and fear-stricken Marie-Thérèse threw herself at her mother's feet in *Augustes victimes*, "La Reine la rassure, lui promet qu'elle va revenir, […] la remet dans les bras de Madame Elisabeth, et s'éloigne" (II, 194).[164] Clearly Guénard's intent in regards to Marie-Antoinette's image had changed from one story to the other. In her earlier work, Rainelord did not cease to react emotionally out of pride and rage, while Guénard's Restoration Marie-Antoinette, the "auguste victime" was calm, tender, loving, patient and considerate.

Restoration ideology was also strong in *Augustes victimes.* First, Guénard attempts to address Louis XVIII's idea of *oubli*, although, like him, she ends by focusing more on *grâce* or forgiveness than on forgetting. In the opening lines of the text, Guénard shows her support for the émigrés, nobles who during the Revolution fled from France in order to escape arrest and execution, yet she pardons the revolutionary nation of France as well. According to Guénard, the evil that resided in France during the Revolution was only due to "une poignée de scélérats" and the 'people' as a whole should not be punished for it.[165] Like Louis XVIII, Guénard thus grants clemency to those who had been 'led astray' by the evil of the Revolution. Although for Guénard forgiveness was necessary, the "forgetfulness" aspect of *Oubli* was impossible, and even inconceivable. She even laments measures the nation had taken to erase memories of revolutionary France. Speaking of the Temple prison, she says, " [Cette tour] n'existe plus

[163] "What are you doing?" she said to me with indignation, "you, the daughter of kings, you only lower yourself for prayer! Let us die admirably, conserving the dignity of the rank where our fortune has placed us".
[164] The Queen reassured her, promised her she would return, […] placed her in Elisabeth's arms, and stepped away.
[165] a handful of scoundrels

aujourd'hui: elle a été abattue, comme si en la détruisant on eût voulu détruire nos douloureux souvenirs ; mais ils ne sont pas effacés" (II, 6).[166]

Having come to the same conclusion as the Bourbons about the impossibility of complete forgetfulness, Guénard commemorates the fallen monarchs. "Entourons à jamais d'un respect et d'un amour sans bournes, notre bon Roi et ses descendans; ne perdons jamais le souvenir des malheurs de sa famille ; repassons-en sans cesse la douloureuse histoire ; racontons-la à nos enfans, qui la raconteront aux leurs" (3).[167] Similar to the expiatory chapels and statues Louis XVIII had conceived during the Restoration, Guénard crafts her novel to display and preserve the noble qualities of the fallen king and queen for her own, and future generations.

> On ne saurait trop en consigner les moindres détails ; ils serviront à faire connaître jusqu'où peuvent égarer l'irréligion et l'esprit de révolte ; et l'on verra briller […] tout ce que la vertu a de plus noble et de plus touchant. C'est le tableau que j'entreprends de peindre ; d'autres l'ont fait avant moi ; […] je recueillerai dans tous leurs écrits […] pour en composer un seul récit que j'offre aux Français, comme un traité complet de la véritable philosophie fondée sur la morale chrétienne. (3-4, my italics)[168]

Augustes victimes highlights the greatness of the Bourbon family. Guénard, as we said, portrays Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette as the ultimate example of good, but she maintains that this innate goodness actually came from their Bourbon ancestors. There are, in fact, "peu de

[166] [This tour] no longer exists today. It was destroyed, as if by destroying we had wanted to destroy our painful memories. Alas, this cannot be done.
[167] Let us forever surround our good King and his descendants with respect and love without boundaries. Let us never lose the memory of the sufferings of his family; let us go over this painful history again and again; let us tell it to our children, who will tell it to theirs.
[168] If we record even the tiniest details, it would not be too much. These details will allow us to understand to what extent unbelief and a spirit of revolt can be misleading. And we will see here shining […] the most noble and touching virtue. This is the image I want to paint here; others have done it before me; but […] I will gather from all their writings […] in order to compose a single story which I offer to the French people, as a complete treaty of philosophical truth founded on Christian morality.

maisons en Europe, aussi anciennement revêtue de la puissance, que celle des Bourbons; […] ils sont d'une espèce différente des autres hommes […] Bons pères, enfans soumis, frères tendres, ils ont de tous tems donné l'exemple des vertus sociales ; et ce sont ces mêmes vertus, qui leur rendirent leur prison supportable" (36-37). [169] Guénard recalls the virtues of the Bourbon family in order to advocate keeping them on the throne. According to Guénard, all works which "rappellent les vertus de cette illustre famille et ses malheurs, [sont] nécessaires aux hommes actuels, [parce qu'ils] leur font connaître ceux qui n'ont jamais voulu que le bonheur de la France, et *qui seuls* pourront assurer sa prospérité et la paix avec l'Europe" [170] (II, 175, my emphasis). Indeed, for Guénard it was the Bourbons and only the Bourbons who could ensure future prosperity for the nation of France.

Having learned from the example of their honorable ancestors, Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette were now the supreme example of a "proper" restoration family. To perpetuate this image, Guénard highlights their devotion to one another at various moments in *Augustes victimes*. To show the father's authority as the glue which holds the family together, Guénard portrays the unconditional support of Marie-Antoinette and her children towards the king. For example, when Louis is suffering from a fever, the queen and the children care for him attentively, never leaving his side (II, 35). Likewise, during his trail, Marie-Antoinette and the children pray unceasingly for the salvation of the king (II, 99). Family virtue and devotion do not disappear after the king's death. When Marie-Antoinette herself must go to trial, her lawyers convince her to actively defend her case *only* by reminding her that they are not only defending a

[169] … few houses in Europe, as anciently powerful as the Bourbons. […] They are good fathers, submissive children, and tender brothers. They gave the example of social virtues to men of all eras. And, these virtues allowed [Louis XVI and his family] to endure their captivity.
[170] ... recall the virtues of this illustrious family and their misfortunes [are] necessary to men today, [because they] allow them to recognize those leaders who only wanted happiness for France, and who *alone* could assure its prosperity and its peace with Europe (my emphasis).

queen, but also a mother, a wife, a sister, and a sister-in-law (III, 4-5).[171] Finally, when Marie-Antoinette has a final opportunity to escape from prison, she refuses to do so because she does not want to leave her children behind. Guénard records a supposed letter from the Queen in which she wrote: "Quelque bonheur que j'eusse éprouvé d'être hors d'ici, je ne peux pas consentir à me séparer de lui: je ne pourrais pas de rien sans mes enfans, et cette idée ne me laisse pas même un regret" (II, 179).[172]

Augustes Victimes is full of religious allusions. The crucifixion of a sinless and sacrificial Christ is comparable to the executions of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette. Alphonse Lamartine would make this comparison between Christ and Louis XVI in his 1847 *Histoire des Girondins,* "Il eût pu dire comme les juste des justes dont il fut une touchante image: pour lequel de mes bienfaits me persécutez-vous ?" (cited in Dunn, 18).[173] Like Jesus, Louis XVI was murdered by the very people he was trying to save: "C'était le peuple qu'il aimait, et c'était le peuple qui le livrait à ses bourreaux" (19).[174]

As the illustrious wife of the persecuted king, Marie-Antoinette will also come to be Christ-like. First, Guénard focuses on those qualities of Marie-Antoinette which render her the ideal Christian spouse. As an obedient wife should, Marie-Antoinette followed the pious example of her husband in resignation. In addition, Marie-Antoinette was the ultimate example of a Christian mother – love being her most qualifying characteristic - after having "prouvé plus d'une fois qu'il n'est rien dont l'amour maternel ne rende capable" (70).[175] Finally, Marie-

[171] This often used anecdote was first recorded in Chauveau-Lagarde's written account.
[172] Whatever happiness I might have gained by escaping, I cannot consent to being separated from him [her son]; I can do nothing without my children, and this idea leaves me not one single regret.
[173] Just as the most righteous one of all, whom he strikingly resembled, had said, the king could have said "For which of my good deeds am I being persecuted?"
[174] It was the people that he loved, and it was the people who turned him over to his executioners.
[175] proved more than once that there is nothing which maternal love cannot do. (my italics)

Antoinette becomes herself Christ-like in Guénard's description by having the full potential to react to the persecution of the revolutionaries, but choosing to follow her pious husband's example and submit herself to the authorities in order to save her children and set an example of her own. Marie-Antoinette "semblait s'oublier elle-même pour ne s'occuper que du Roi et de ses enfans ; et dès cet instant elle déploya ce caractère de fermeté et de résignation qu'elle n'a jamais démenti dans tout le cours de sa captivité" (I, 24).[176] The decision to not make use of the potential power within her, indeed mirrored the Christ of the Bible who Catholics at this time would have surely recognized. Indeed, the Christ of the Bible was although "in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing; […] becoming obedient to death - even death on a cross!" ("Hebrews 2:6-7; 8b"). Restoration supporters claimed to imitate and praise the biblical doctrice that Jesus was equal to God, and yet, had not pursued power but instead had chosen to die. Marie-Antoinette and her husband, the ultimate examples of pious perfection, had done the same.

The theme of the bridled power of Christ and his *choice* to be crucified compared to the executions of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette dominated restoration literature in attempts to restore the image of the monarchy. As would many authors after her, Guénard likened the king and queen to martyrs, maintaining that, in the end, death by guillotine had been their choice. This was different than the earlier post-revolutionary rhetoric which had likened the royals simply to victims. During the Restoration, the king and queen had accepted this fate, as Christ had done, in order to penetrate the hearts of their executioners, convince them of their sin, and ultimately redeem the relationship between the King and his people.

[176] She seemed to forget about herself in order to take care of the King and of her children; and from that moment on she displayed *a firmness of character and of resignation that she never contradicted during her entire captivity.* (my italics)

> L'illustre famille au contraire, loin de fronder les scélérats qui exerçaient tant de rigueurs sur elle, semblait, par sa docilité angélique, les inviter à s'adoucir et les attendre au repentir. Elle semblait, par le calme de ses actions, dire à ces brigands: La force nous a mis en votre puissance ; nous y resterons semblables à l'agneau que le sacrificateur égorge, sans qu'il jette un seul cri, sans qu'il ne fasse aucun effort pour s'échapper de ses mains. Notre patience surpassera votre rage ; peut-être elle vous fera rougir de votre injustice, peut-être chercherez-vous les moyens de la réparer ; du moins, vous le feriez sans crainte, car vous avez dû juger, par la manière dont nous avons vécu au milieu de vous, que nos cœurs sont sans fiel, et ne nourrissent point de vengeance. […] le Dieu de toute clémence se servira de notre exemple, pour rappeler le goût de la vertu dans vos âmes ; alors s'opéra une réconciliation véritable entre le Roi et son peuple.[177] (I, 224-225)

In this passage, Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette mirror Paul Bénichou's description of how neo-Catholic writer Ballache portrayed Louis XVI. They are "truly a Christ-figure, announcing the coming of social regeneration and shedding [their] blood for the salvation of those who put them to death" (Dunn 31). Indeed, Marie-Antoinette and her husband in *Augustes Victimes* had "redeemed France as Jesus Christ redeemed the human race" (Ballache, in Dunn, 30).[178]

[177] On the contrary, the illustrious family, far from scolding the scoundrels who exerted so much energy against them, seemed, by their angelic docility, to be inviting them to weaken their resolve against them and to be waiting for them to repent. They seemed, by their calm actions, to say to these rascals, "We were forced into your presence, but we will stay here like a slaughtered sacrificial lamb who remains silent, and who makes no attempt to escape from the hands of his killer. Our patience will overcome your rage, and perhaps later you will be ashamed of your injustice, and you will try and find the means to make up for what you have done. You will at least be able to do so without fear, because you will have seen, by the way we lived among you, that our hearts contain no venom and that we do not want vengeance. […] The God of clemency will be reminded of the drop of virtue in your souls by remembering our example, and he will effectuate a true reconciliation between the King and his people.

[178] Dunn's citation from: Ballache, Pierre-Simon. *L'Homme sans nom,* 391

Marie Antoinette in the eye-witness accounts of the Restoration

Eye-witness accounts were among the most highly sought-out written sources concerning the royal family during Restoration France. Under the revolutionary governments and during the empire, it had been suspicious and even criminal to have known or served the monarchs, and especially to have written works casting them in a favorable light. Under Restoration France, however, reading, writing, or even knowing about eye-witness accounts became extremely fashionable practices. Their popularity can be accounted for not only by the end of Napoleonic censorship, but also by the French reading public's growing interest in the Revolution, and "specifically in the victim's perspective. […] It seems that contemporaries aimed for historical completeness – all obscurity should disappear, all gaps should be closed. [Eye-witness accounts] were now regarded as historical sources and belonged to the literary genre of memoires" (Butenschön, 10). Eye-witness accounts from the Restoration, proved so useful to fictional authors and historians alike in the years following the Restoration, that at times entire narratives are based on details taken from them. Evelyn Lever's bibliography in her book *Marie-Antoinette the Last Queen of France*, for example, includes over 40 titles of self-authored memoires or transcribed eye-witness testimonies. Most of these accounts were published for the first time under Restoration France.[179]

Probably the most well-known set of memoires regarding Marie-Antoinette are the *Mémoires de Madame Campan*, from 1822. Born in Mantes in October of 1752, Jeanne-Louise-Henriette Genet, who would later become Madame Campan, received an excellent education. She spoke three languages: French, English and Italian, and was an accomplished reader and musician. This talent gained Jeanne-Louise a position at Versailles in 1767. At only 15 years old, Jeanne-Louise

[179] The list of memoires Lever used is too long to include here, but can be found in her bibliography on pages 333-344.

became the official reader for Louis XV's daughters. Three years later, in 1770, Marie-Antoinette arrived in France. Since the new dauphine spent most of her earliest time at Versailles in the company of her aunts, Jeanne-Louise and Marie-Antoinette became closely acquainted (Mahul, 49). When Marie-Antoinette succeeded to the throne, Jeanne-Louise, now Madame Campan since her marriage in 1774, was named the first lady of the queen's bedchamber. Campan served Marie-Antoinette until August 10, 1793 when she and her family fled the Tuileries to take refuge in the Legislative Assembly. Having spent almost twenty years in Marie-Antoinette's close circle, Campan was able to write one of the most thorough eye-witness accounts of the queen's life.

Campan's memoires were published for the first time in 1822 by the Baudouin brothers, unfortunately after her death. Had they appeared earlier, Campan may have benefitted from the many subsequent publications which attest to the work's immense popularity. Indeed, the brothers published second, third, fourth and fifth editions less than a year later, and a sixth edition in 1826 (Tourneaux, 82).[180] It is possible that Campan had penned the memoires several years before their first publication in an attempt to win back Bourbon favor. When the Bourbons had returned to France in 1814, they had refused to acknowledge Campan for her many years of service. They claimed Campan was a traitor to their family since during the years of Napoleon's reign, she had accepted a head-mistress's position at a school founded by the Emperor himself.[181] Although Campan and the Bourbons never reconciled, her memoires detect no hint of criticism

[180] Tourneaux's bibliography includes editions from other publishing houses as well, but in order to save time and space, I have only included publications from the Baudouin brothers since they published the most editions.
[181] See Mahul, pages 54-56; Madame Campan was destitute after the royal family's imprisonment, but she needed money in order to support several family members. In order to do so, she founded a school, and worked very hard to ensure its success, even copying the syllabi by hand. It was this hard-working and honest reputation as an intellectual that led Bonaparte to ask her to work at his school.

towards them. On the contrary, filled with obvious sympathy towards Marie-Antoinette and praise of the entire Bourbon family, *Mémoires* is an excellent example of a Restoration text.

Other than from the Bourbons, Campan and *Mémoires* received little criticism, and the praise and use of her memoires far outweigh the criticism.[182] Comparing the text and order of *Mémoires* closely to Alexandre Dumas' revolutionary series, for example, reveals Dumas extensive use of them.[183] After Dumas, in the 1850s the Goncourt brothers and Horace de Viel-Castel used information from *Mémoires* to repaint Marie-Antoinette in a positive light. Emile Campardon named *Mémoires* as only one of two credible eye-witness accounts from Restoration France in 1863. More recent biographers and historians Castelot, Fraser, Lever, and Weber all use Campan as a reliable source of information for their biographies. Campan's *Mémoires* has had such an impact on what the world knows (or thinks they know) about Marie-Antoinette, that her character, gained a prominent role in Chantal Thomas' 2002 novel, *Les Adieux à la Reine,* and director Ursala Meir's 2012 film version.[184] Finally, based on all sources mentioned here, *Mémoires de Madame Campan,* is one of the most, if not the most, important sources of information on the Diamond Necklace Affair.

Like other works we have already discussed, Campan's eye-witness account seeks to rehabilitate the queen's image by refuting accusations found in revolutionary pamphlets. Campan

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[182] Historian Lafont D'Aussonne, like the Bourbons, considered Campan a traitor. For examples of his criticism, see d'Aussonne, Lafont. *Mémoires secrets et universels des malheurs et de la mort de la Reine de France*. Paris: Petit, Libraire, Galeries de Bois et Pichard, 1824. Pages 14, 58, 127-128, 378-380, 389; It is worth noting that although he criticized Campan and her post-revolutionary behavior, he still used *Mémoires* as a source.

[183] Dumas' revolutionary series will be discussed thoroughly in Chapter four. To name only one of several examples, in Dumas' *Ange Pitou,* Chapters 4-7, he recounts Louis XVI's decision to go to Paris and appear before the National Assembly, his voyage there and back, and the Marie-Antoinette's preparation for and reaction to all of these events. Not only does Dumas mention Madame Campan as present, but his retelling of these events follows line by line the contents from Campan's memoires. (See Campan II, 55-66 and Dumas, *Ange Ptiou,* II, 25-58) Dumas' account is obviously more romanticized: in it the reader is privy to Marie-Antoinette's emotions and thoughts; yet reliance on Campan's *Mémoires* for the skeleton of his retelling is obvious.

[184] The actress Noémie Lvovsky played the role of Madame Campan in the film. Thomas's post-modern novel and reinterpretation of Marie-Antoinette will be discussed in the conclusion of this study.

follows the example of all previous authors, swearing to the truth of her story - "Je dirai ce que j'ai vu" (ii) [185] - and then offers a portrait that directly contradicts the myth from revolutionary pamphlets. Since the revolutionary pamphlets had criticized Marie-Antoinette's sumptuousness and indulgence, in the form of *Madame Déficit*, Campan, like Montjoye and Cléry had done, highlights Marie-Antoinette's simplicity. As early as her preface, Campan speaks of the simple *habillement*[186] of the queen. "Marie-Antoinette, vêtue en blanc avec un simple chapeau de paille, une légère badine à la main, marchant à pied suivie d'un seul valet dans les allées qui conduisaient au Petit-Trianon, ne m'aurait pas fait éprouver un pareil trouble" (vi-vii).[187] Campan opens *Mémoires* with this simplified picture of Marie-Antoinette, even though the queen's dressing style did not match this image until 1783.[188] Campan also refutes accusations that Petit Trianon had bankrupted the kingdom. Even the revolutionary deputies themselves had to admit the falsity of this belief on the day they came to Trianon and found nothing of the sumptuous furnishings they had imagined (II, 32).

Against *Messaline,* Campan adamantly defends Marie-Antoinette's sexual purity, although she does lament that sometimes the queen's *légèreté*[189] towards such rumors did not aid in their reduction. "My advice was useless", Campan laments after Marie-Antoinette decided not to heed her warnings about the gossip encircling the queen's twilight walks around the gardens during the summer of 1778. Marie-Antoinette not only found these cool walks relieving from the summer heat as she was experiencing her first pregnancy, but she had also found it amusing to

[185] I will say what I saw.
[186] style of dress
[187] Marie-Antoinette, dressed in white wearing a simple straw hat, carrying a light stick in her hand, and walking followed by a single servant in the alleyways which led her to Little Trianon, would never have caused me such a fright.
[188] See Weber, pages 160-161
[189] casualness, frivolity

disguise herself and discuss with others who could not recognize who she was. “Misled by the pleasure she found in these promenades, and lulled into security by the consciousness of blameless conduct, the queen would not see the lamentable results by which they must necessarily be followed” (I, 177-178). Her naiveté was most unfortunate, Campan goes on to say, since these rumors most likely “gave rise to the Cardinal de Rohan’s fatal error” that he had indeed met secretly with Marie-Antoinette in one of the groves at Versailles, so that she might thank him for his service in the purchase of the infamous diamond necklace.

Another theme from revolutionary literature that Campan seeks to denounce, is the identity of the meddling, manipulative *Madame Veto*. As mentioned in the first chapter of this study, Marie-Antoinette was highly suspected of meddling in political affairs before and during the Revolution. Like Guénard had done, Campan does not show Marie-Antoinette as powerless. Rather than show, as Montjoye had, that Marie-Antoinette could *not* have influenced her husband if she wanted to, Campan shows that Marie-Antoinette *chose* not to use an influence she could have had. Campan recalls Marie-Antoinette saying on one occasion, “The Queens of France are happy only so long as they meddle with nothing, and merely preserve influence sufficient to advance their friends and reward a few zealous servants” (II, 25). Writing in the context of the Restoration, in which the ideal woman was meant to constantly submit to the will of her husband, Campan portrays the queen’s unused influence as a form of silent martyrdom.

However, this choice was a political one as well. Indeed, Marie-Antoinette *chose* willingly to submit to her husband’s authority for the betterment of France. Campan recounts Marie-Antoinette’s words as the queen reflected on Louis’s inaction towards the revolutionaries:

> As for myself, I could do anything, and would appear on horseback if necessary. But if I were really to begin to act, that would be furnishing arms to the King’s enemies; the cry

against the Austrian and against the sway of a female would become general in France, and moreover, by showing myself, I should render the King a mere cipher. A Queen […] ought under these circumstances, to remain passive and prepare to die. (II, 194 - 195)

According to Campan Marie-Antoinette knew she could step in and influence the politics of France. In doing this, however, she knew she would make her husband appear weak and incapable, and this was not something a good wife should do. She thus accepted her fate and willingly shared in her husband's end – and this done in order to better the nation of France. Campan's memoires thus perpetuate the most important Restoration ideal: that Marie-Antoinette had been a martyr for the nation. Eye-witness accounts' harshest critique, Zweig, completely agrees. The memoires published during the Restoration, he said "ne concordent qu'au point de vue politique, dans la fidélité touchante, inébranlable et absolue qu'elles témoignent à la cause royale, et cela se comprend si on se souvient qu'elles ont toutes reçu l'imprimatur des Bourbons" (501).[190] In this case then, perhaps if the Bourbons had read *Mémoires* before 1822, Campan would have been honored not only for her years of service to the royal family but for her later contribution to the rehabilitation of their public image.

Marie-Antoinette in historical Restoration works

In early nineteenth-century France, many comprehensive histories about the revolution were published. Examples of these include an 1823 publication from Adolphe Thiers and one in 1824 by François-Auguste Mignet both entitled *Histoire de la révolution française*.[191] As Hayden White has shown, writings about the history of the revolution in early nineteenth-century France,

[190] ne concordent qu'au point de vue politique, dans la fidélité touchante, inébranlable et absolue qu'elles témoignent à la cause royale, et cela se comprend si on se souvient qu'elles ont toutes reçu l'imprimatur des Bourbons …only reflect reality from a political point of view: they unwaveringly and absolutely testify to the royal cause. This is understandable if we remember that they each received the official license to print by the Bourbons.

[191] These works must be distinguished from the historical novel, which was also growing in popularity in France in the 1820s, and which Chapter four will discuss.

were a way for French writers and readers alike to come to grips with what had happened in their country at the end of the last century ("Romantic historiography, 635). White also maintains that the success of these acclaimed "histories" attests to "the general interest in retrieving the immediate past from the obloquy to which the conservatives had tried to consign it. Their popularity also reflected the bourgeois reading public's desire for a historiography that might be as entertaining as a […] novel" (635). Yet, coping with the past, and satisfying public interest were not these histories' only purposes. Writers such as Georg Lukàcs, Stanley Mellon and Paul Bénichou have all shown that these often biased "histories" were used as weapons in the continuing battle of words between the Conservatives and the Liberals. While Liberal writers - such as Lazare Carnot and Jean Denis Lanjuinais - were doing everything in their power to show either the necessity or the inevitability of the Revolution, Conservative writers - such as Chateaubriand and Francois Montlosier - were working hard at combatting these ideas. Some Conservatives blamed the *philosophes* and the Enlightenment for the upheaval while others used startling statistics from the Terror as daily reminders to the Liberals as to why their ideas of *libérté, égalité,* and *fraternité* had actually devastated the country.[192] In short, as Melon argues, on both sides of the political spectrum, writers were using the history of France – either ancient or recent – to show why they were right.193

One of these histories, *Mémoires secrets et universels des malheurs et de la mort de la Reine de France*, was published in May of 1824 by conservative royalist Louis Gaspard Lafont d'Aussonne. Born in Toulouse around 1769, Lafont d'Aussonne lived in Paris during the French revolution, and even spent some time between 1794 and 1811 in a Parisian revolutionary prison,

[192] Bénichou, Paul. *Le Sacre de l'écrivain.* Paris, Gallimard: 1996
[193] Stanley Melon. *The Political Uses of History; a Study of Historians in the French Restoration.* Stanford: University Press, 1958.

most likely for zealous royalist sympathies. After 1811, d'Aussonne tried to settle into numerous occupations including, a seminary professor, an ordained priest, an industry worker, a police agent, and a writer (Sapori, 11). Often surrounded by controversy, yet still sometimes considered the "pioneer historian of Marie-Antoinette", d'Aussonne passed away in Paris in March 1849 (12). During the 1820s d'Aussonne published several historical works including biographies of other women who lived at Versailles under the ancien régime, for example Madame de Maintenant and the Marquise de Montespan, as well as a few shorter works specifically concerning events from the end of Marie-Antoinette's life.[194] *Mémoires secrets* was by far his longest and most comprehensive work concerning Marie-Antoinette.

The only two publications in 1824 and 1836, demonstrate that, although highly sympathetic to Marie-Antoinette, and thus a seemingly perfect fit for Restoration France, *Mémoires secrets* faced more skepticism and criticism than praise.[195] Contemporaries of d'Aussonne questioned the veracity of his work since he was more than once put on trial for his involvement in certain "dishonorable" activities (Sapori, 11). In the preface of its second publication, d'Aussonne himself admitted the unwelcome reception his work had received upon its initial release: "Mon Livre parut dans un temps qui me semblait propice […mais] loin d'être protégé par ceux-là qui devaient tant chérir la gloire de la Reine, mon livre fut persécuté sous leurs yeux" (ii).[196] Nearly half a century later, historian Gaston Lenotre would openly criticize

[194] *La Crime du seize octobre* (1820). *La fausse communion de la reine soutenue au moyen d'un faux. Nouvelle réfutation appuyée sur de nouvelles preuves* (1824). *Mémoire au Roi sur l'imposture et le faux matériel de la Conciergerie* (1825).

[195] The 1824 publication of *Mémoires secrets* was followed by a second edition in 1836 (Tourneaux, 122). The new edition included a copy of the last will and testament of the queen, which d'Aussonne did not put in the first edition, even though it had already been discovered in 1816. This probably means that in his second edition, d'Aussonne wanted to use the queen's last written words as proof that she had never received a last communion, a controversy which will be discussed later.

[196] My book was published at a time which seemed appropriate to me […] but far from being protected by those who should have cherished the memory of the glory of the queen, my work was persecuted under their watch.

d'Aussonne's research methods and even question his personal character.[197] Regardless of criticism, subsequent authors have often used *Mémoires secrets* as an important source for their own works. In the 1840s, for example, Alexandre Dumas used *Mémoires secrets* for information regarding Marie-Antoinette's captivity for his novel *Chevalier de Maison Rouge.*[198] In 1858, Edmond and Jules Goncourt cited the work twelve times in their own biography of the queen. A year later, Horace de Viel Castel also cited d'Aussonne several times. In 1863, historian and archivist Emile Campardon praised *Mémoires secrets* as one of only two Restoration texts which did not distort and amplify the truth.[199] In the twenty-first century, Antonia Fraser briefly quoted d'Aussonne in her biography of Marie-Antoinette (423). In a 2010 article[200], historian Michelle Sapori praised d'Aussonne for his groundbreaking discovery of Rosalie Lamorlière, and in 2010, French author Ludovic Misérole's named *Mémoires secrets* his most important source for his historical novel.[201]

The closing line of d'Aussonne's preface points to the author's intent to use the re-telling of history to influence present opinions of Marie-Antoinette and the monarchy and thus determine outcomes in the future. "L'histoire, quand la sincérité y préside, est un miroir-magique, où le Passé resplendit de lumière, afin d'éclairer l'Avenir" (iii).[202] His first step in doing so, is to do what Montjoye had done – expose the falsity in revolutionary literature in regards to Marie-Antoinette. When d'Aussonne juxtaposed his own work with that of the "authors" of the

[197] See Lenotre's *Marie-Antoinette, la captivité et la mort*, pages 225, 226, 233, 260, 302-304, 355, and 364. We will discuss this work in more detail in Chapter six.
[198] *Chevalier de Maison-Rouge*, as well as Dumas's other four Marie-Antoinette novels will be discussed in the next chapter. See Thorel-Cailleteau, pages 550-593 for information about Dumas's use of d'Aussonne in *Chevalier.*
[199] See Campardon's preface to *Marie-Antoinette à la Conciergerie*, page ii. The other Restoration work Campardon accepts as valid is *Mémoires de Madame Campan* which we will also discuss in this chapter.
[200] "Les Trois Naissances de Rosalie" ("Rosalie's three births")
[201] *Rosalie Lamorlière: Dernière servante de Marie-Antoinette*. Éditions du Préau, Mérignac Cedex: 2010
[202] When sincerity presides in it, History is a magic mirror where the Past lights up in order to enlighten the Future.

Revolution, like Montjoye had done, he claimed the revolutionary "rebels" had written evil works because their very nature was evil:

> Tous les excès commis par cette assemblée, dite *nationale*, sont devenus les récits de divers auteurs. Il s'est trouvé des plumes assez complaisantes pour accorder quelques louanges ou à ses travaux, ou à ses intentions….Ma plume ne descendra jamais à de pareilles condescendances. Ami de la paix et du bon ordre, j'ai les factions et les factieux en horreur. Témoin de toutes les calamités que ces hommes de rapine ou d'orgueil ont jetées à pleines mains sur ma partie, je les ai jugés par leurs œuvres ; et je sais d'ailleurs, qu'ils ont fait le mal parce que le mal était l'élément et le besoin de leur cœur. [203] (111)

The evil spirit of revolution for d'Aussonne went as far as to spread into written works about Marie-Antoinette. "Des livres, inspirés par la haine, où payés par la vengeance et la malignité, ont parlé, dans un temps affreux, de la légèreté, des imprudences de Marie-Antoinette: ces livres n'ont répété, n'ont répandu que les propos des calomniateurs" (37).[204]

To refute these "outrageous lies" from revolutionary times, D'Aussonne claimed having spoken to many of her former friends and acquaintances from Versailles while imprisoned with them during the revolution. According to d'Aussonne, "tous ces anciens courtisans s'accordaient à reconnaître en elle une sœur affectueuse et dévouée, une épouse aimante et irréprochable, la mère la plus tendre, la plus attentive, l'amie la plus généreuse, et la reine la plus honorable que le

[203] All of the excess of the so-called *National* Assembly became the subject of many writers. These complaisant pens condescended to praise the works and the intentions of this assembly. *My* pen will never lower itself to write such things. A friend of peace and order, I hold this hatred and these rebels in contempt. A witness of all the calamity that these prideful plunderers threw by the handful onto my fatherland, I judged them by their acts. I know that they did evil because evil was the very nature and need of their heart.

[204] During an atrocious time, books inspired by hate or financed by vengeance and spite, spoke of the frivolity and imprudence of Marie-Antoinette. These books did nothing but repeat and spread the words of slanderers.

trône ait possédée jamais" (38).[205] Years later, after having been released from prison and begun his research, d'Aussonne sought out further interviews with either individuals who had spent time with Marie-Antoinette or their decedents. D'Aussonne named most of his interviewees, although sometimes he based his claims on what "at least twenty bystanders of the event" told him (43). When d'Aussonne did not obtain a face-to-face interview, he used eye-witness testimonies that had already been published to fill in the gaps. Among the personal accounts he used were Cléry's *Journal* (1798), Campan's *Mémoires* (1822), and those of Marie-Antoinette's foster brother Weber (1822)[206], and her lawyer Chauveau-Lagarde (1816). D'Aussonne also mentioned having used newspapers contemporary to the revolution, for example, *Le Moniteur.*

His most often cited interview was with Rosalie Lamorlière. Born in 1768 in Breteuil and later employed as the concierge's cook in the Parisian prison the Conciergerie, Rosalie was twenty-five years old when Marie-Antoinette entered there. Rosalie often served meals to the queen, meaning that during the last 76 days of Marie-Antoinette's life, Rosalie spent a significant amount of time with her (Sapori, 9). D'Aussonne claimed that, while researching for his book twenty-nine years after these events had taken place, "une dame d'une très grande mérite[207]" spoke to him of Rosalie and with what kindness she had served the queen during her last days (410). Rosalie's story intrigued d'Aussonne and, refusing to believe she was dead, he went in search of her. He claimed he found Rosalie, "preserved for him by Providence", residing in the Parisian hospital, *Les Incurables*, where she had been placed by none other than Marie-Thérèse, now Madame La Dauphine under Restoration France, to live out her remaining days (410-411).

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[205] …all of the former courtesans agreed that she was an affectionate and devoted sister, a loving and irreproachable spouse, the most tender and attentive mother, the most generous friend, and the most honorable queen that ever sat on this throne.

[206] Weber, Joseph. *Mémoires de Weber, concernant Marie-Antoinette, archiduchesse d'Autriche et reine de France et de Navarre, avec des notes et des éclaircissements historiques par MM. Berville et Barrière.* Paris: Baudouin Frères, 1822.

[207] …a very honorable woman

For d'Aussonne, Rosalie was a valuable source of information, and her nearly seventeen page testimony serves as the first "notice historique" for *Mémoires secrets.* Some uncertainty surrounded Rosalie's testimony and identity and it was even rumored that d'Aussonne invented Rosalie in order to prove that Marie-Antoinette had never received a last communion.[208] Yet despite the questionable nature of its origins, Rosalie's testimony remains to this day a text heavily cited by biographers of Marie-Antoinette. In fact, most authors of the historical works published later in the nineteenth century used Rosalie's testimony as an important source. Horace de Viel-Castel, Jules and Edmond Goncourt, Emile Campardon and Gaston Lenotre each *copy* Rosalie's testimony, either in full or in part.[209]

A comprehensive history of the life of Marie-Antoinette, similar to Montjoye's *Histoire* from the early post-revolutionary years, d'Aussonne's *Mémoires secrets* contains many of the same themes and strategies of defense for the queen as the earlier biography. First, like Montjoye did, d'Aussonne responds outright to material from revolutionary pamphlets and other well-known accusations concerning the queen. D'Aussonne's strategy is to view former critiques of the queen in a positive light. About *Madame Déficit,* and Marie-Antoinette's tendency to spend a lot of money on clothes and her appearance, d'Aussonne writes "Marie-Antoinette ne consentait à être belle, que par obligeance. Elle ne songeait qu'à plaire au public que pour en être aimée ; et

[208] For more information, see Chapter six of this study, and Victor Pierre's chapter "Marie-Antoinette à la Conciergerie", pages 162-231, in *Revue des questions historiques,* Volume 37. A priest who had never sworn to the Constitution named Charles Magnin had earlier in 1824, claimed to have given a communion to Marie-Antoinette, and d'Aussonne adamantly refuted his claim. He backed his rebuttal on the fact that Rosalie had never mentioned Magnin in her testimony. In fact, d'Aussonne made several arguments as to why he believed the communion was a falsified story. For his detailed rebuttal, see pages 369-374. The Bourbons wanted to believe Magnin's claims, as did most pious Catholics at the time of the Restoration. It could be that d'Aussonne wanted to refute Magnin's testimony in order to prove just how much of a martyr Marie-Antoinette had been: this godly woman was denied even the most basic Christian counsel at the end of her life.

[209] It must be noted here that the uncertainty surrounding Rosalie when d'Aussonne first introduced her was not "cleared up" until later. Had it not been for another Restoration writer, Henriette Simon-Viennot, some historians would not have believed that a woman name Rosalie ever existed. See Chapter six for more information.

elle ne souhaitait d'être aimée que pour amener tous ces cœurs au Roi" (31).[210] In addition, "Sa belle âme ne pouvait souffrir les infidélités et les voleries ; mais cette belle âme éprouvait le noble besoin de donner. Les vieillards, les petits enfans, étaient le continuel objet de son attention et de ses sollicitudes" (28).[211] Of *Madame Veto's* habit of withdrawing from the main château of Versailles and "hiding" at her little Trianon, D'Aussonne says, "Par l'effet de ce naturel simple et vrai qui savait chérir la nature, Marie-Antoinette aimait la campagne et ses habitans. Eloignée, par sa position, de ces objets qu'elle croyait plus près du boneur [sic], elle s'en rapprochait par l'imagination et par l'espérance" (32).[212] To contradict accusations of the meddling *Autrichienne,* d'Aussonne quoted the "sublime advice" Empress Marie-Thérèse gave her daughter as she was leaving Austria. "Si vous cessiez un jour d'être dauphine, faites qu'on n'aperçoive point la reine: leur *loi salique* ne veut qu'un roi" (5-6).[213]

D'Aussonne does not make Marie-Antoinette inactive. He shows how she often intervened, for example when the family attempted escape, but were captured in Varennes (142-143), but when she acts with force in d'Aussonne's account, she always does so with her family at the forefront of her mind. In addition, she backs down as soon as her husband steps forward. When questioned about their involvement in the escape attempt, both the king and queen's responses attest to changes in the myth since the early years after the revolution: "La réponse du Roi fut presque celle d'un sujet docile, et non celle d'un monarque indignement offensé. Et toute la force de la Reine fit éclater sa prudence, et toute la force de son esprit supérieur. Elle ne s'abaissa

[210] Marie-Antoinette only consented to being beautiful out of obligation. She only thought of pleasing the public in order to be loved; and she only hoped to be loved in order to bring all of these hearts to the King.
[211] Her beautiful soul could not handle seeing injustice and theft. Instead, this beautiful soul was filled with the noble need to give. She constantly gave her attention and her support to the elderly and to little children.
[212] Because of her simple and true character which knew how to cherish nature, Marie-Antoinette loved the countryside and its inhabitants. Separated by her position from these things which she believed brought happiness, she brought herself closer to them by imagination and by hope.
[213] If one day you are no longer the dauphine, act in such a way that they will not notice the queen: their Salic law only wants a king.

point aux explications, aux motifs, aux détails: elle n'articula que ces paroles: 'Le Roi désirant partir avec ses enfans, rien dans la nature n'aurait pu m'empêcher de le suivre' " (144-145).[214] Finally, denying that a sexual intimacy problem existed in the early years of the royal marriage, d'Aussonne says: "Je vais, en peu de mots, rétablir les faits ; je m'y vois contraint, pour la satisfaction des hommes sincères, et pour attester que la reine Marie-Antoinette obtint l'amour et la vive affection de son époux aussitôt qu'elle parut devant lui ornée de ses grâces naturelles, de sa physionomie distinguée, de son enjouement et de son esprit" (15).[215] In short, d'Aussonne flipped each accusation from Revolutionary times and offers an alternative explanation of the behavior of the queen. As in Montjoye's early biography, Marie-Antoinette's image in the novel is spotless.

Mémoires secrets was also full of Restoration rhetoric. First, like other royalists, d'Aussonne was not in favor of total *oubli*, yet used (or claims to use) the queen's own example of *grâce* to forgive the crimes of the revolution. D'Aussonne praises Marie-Antoinette's last words: " Quel trésor de bonté renfermait son âme! Peu d'instans avant de périr, elle écrivait ces paroles admirables, que ses larmes ont arrosées, et que nul intérêt humain ne lui dicta: 'Je pardonne à tous mes ennemis le mal qu'ils m'ont fait' " (vii).[216] Yet, even while "forgiving" the crimes of the Revolution, d'Aussonne, like Louis XVIII, intended to commemorate the queen. He calls his work a "monument" and hopes that it will remind readers of the unjust suffering of Marie-

[214] The king's answer was almost that of a peaceful subject, and not that of an angry offended monarch. And, both the queen's strength and her superior will made her act with prudence. She did not lower herself to explanations, to reasons and to details. She only used the following words: "The king wanted to leave with his children. Nothing in this world could have stopped me from following him.

[215] In a few words, I will reestablish the facts. I must, in order to satisfy those who are sincerely interested, and in order to prove that queen Marie-Antoinette obtained her husband's love and lively affection as soon as she appeared in front of him, donned with her natural manners, her distinguished features, and the liveliness of her spirit.

[216] In her soul there was such a treasure of goodness! Just a few moments before her death, she wrote these admirable words which she watered with her tears, and are completely bereft of self-interest: "I forgive all of my enemies for any evil acts they have done against me."

Antoinette in order that "une si déplorable catastrophe ne sera point perdue pour les siècles à venir" (326).[217]

Mémoires secrets was also filled with praise of the Bourbons, "cette famille bienveillante" (56).[218] A known royalist, D'Aussonne praised the "great" Bourbon kings of the past including Henri IV (15) and Louis XIV (33; 410). Recalling only their positive contributions to the kingdom of France, d'Aussonne took his place "alongside the Royalist poet, playwright, and artist in vying to resurrect ancient glories" (Mellon, 63). At the end of his history, d'Aussonne takes up to seven pages of text to commemorate the officers of the Brissac guard (400-407). These men, he extols, sacrificed everything to defend not only the lives of the illustrious Bourbon family, but also their reign. Juxtaposing this body with the Parisian National Guard, and listing each of the Brissac Guard members by name and rank, d'Aussonne honors them because of their defense of the Bourbons' true position as the monarchs of France. D'Aussonne adamantly criticizes Madame Campan throughout his text, and his reason for doing so is what he calls her "anti-royalist sympathies" and her actions against the Bourbons (378).

Susan Dunn argues that images of the king in early post-revolution years emphasized force and strength, whereas during the Restoration Louis had been painted as weaker and more docile to support the Restoration ideals and his portrayal as a martyr. D'Aussonne followed this pattern. "Louis XVI, je l'ai dit souvent, n'était point né pour les difficultés du trône, où la dissimulation est le premier devoir, et tout au moins, la première industrie du souverain" (207).[219] Indeed, as D'Aussonne points out on many occasions, Louis XVI was weak, but this very weakness was his strength. Marie-Antoinette's myth indeed followed this same change. Marie-Antoinette was the

[217] …such a horrible catastrophe will not be forgotten in the centuries to come.
[218] this kind, benevolent family
[219] As I have said many times before, Louis XVI was not at all born for the difficulties of the throne, where dissimulation is the first duty, and at least the first ability that a sovereign needs.

very picture of a pious Christian queen and she embodied the characteristics of a domestic bourgeois mother, who would serve as an example of an ideal woman during Restoration France. The author highlights this goodness even in the very young Marie-Antoinette. The duchess of Duras informed d'Aussonne how at even while she was still the dauphine, Marie-Antoinette had stopped several of the ladies from gossiping about another one of the ladies (37-38). D'Aussonne claims that "Dans les conversations ordinaires, elle ne cherchait pas à montrer de l'esprit, mais à faire valoir celui des autres. Jamais je ne l'ai vue sourire à un trait de moquerie ou de malignité: elle appelait ces sortes de discours 'le mauvais esprit'" (38-39).[220] Continuing his assessment of the young girl, "La jeune Archiduchesse […] se fit donner nos meilleurs livres, les lut avec attention, avec fruite, et se composa la plus solide et la plus aimable instruction qui puisse distinguer une princesse" (39).[221] As an older woman, and even in prison, Marie-Antoinette did not stop enjoying her work. "La Reine avait toujours aimé l'occupation et le travail ; et par l'affreuse méchanceté des tyrans, toute espèce d'occupation lui était refusé. Elle détacha quelques fils d'une toile à papier, clouée jadis sur ses murailles, et de ces fils, qu'elle unissait avec patience, elle se mit à tresser du lacet" (280).[222] One of d'Aussonne's final assessments of the queen reiterates all the characteristics he has highlighted before: "Nous y voyons le noble caractère d'une Reine qui, tombée dans l'excès de l'infortune, par les seules fautes d'autrui, n'accuse personne, ne blâme personne ; estime toujours, dans son époux, le père affectueux de

[220] In her everyday conversations, she did not attempt to show how bright she was. Rather, she did what she could to make others around her seem bright. She never did as much as smile in mockery or in spite of another. She called these kinds of actions "ill will".
[221] The young archduchess began the most attentive and fruitful reading of the best French books. In doing so, she gave herself the most solid and the most admirable instruction that could ever distinguish a princess.
[222] The Queen had always loved working and keeping herself busy. The atrocious malicious tyrants had removed everything with which she could busy herself. So, she started making a shoelace from the fibers of an old paper wall-hanging from her prison cell.

ses enfans, et le plus honnête homme de son empire ; partage, sans aigreur, son abaissement et ses privations, comme elle avait partagé, sans orgeuil, tout la gloire de sa puissance" (230).[223]

D'Aussonne did more than idealize the queen and perpetuate the idea that the Bourbons were the perfect rulers. He exploits religious jargon and themes so prevalent in the discourse of the restoration monarchy and conservative restoration writers to finally turn Marie-Antoinette into a martyr. The religious connotation is *Mémoires secrets* is very strong. D'Aussonne relied heavily on the idea of divine right, linking the reign of Louis XVI to God and Christianity. He called Louis XVI's coronation a "religious holiday"[224], and he insisted that as Marie-Antoinette observed the solemn event, she prayed and " demandait au roi des rois qu'il voulût favoriser et bénir le règne de la justice et de la probité " (36).[225] On several occasions, d'Aussonne, as Guénard had done, highlighted the fact that although she could have shown strength and power, she chose to forgive, continuing to offer the example of a non-vengeful queen. When informed of the many rumors circulating the court about Little Trianon, "La Reine pouvait les faire punir avec rigueur: elle se contenta de déclarer qu'elle n'ignorait point leur malice et leur ingratitude. Elle aima toujours Trianon, mais elle y amena plus rarement sa compagnie" (35).[226] Marie-Antoinette also continually sacrifices her strength in order to obey her husband and her king. When Louis XVI makes the decision to stay in France, regardless of the danger this means for him and his family, d'Aussonne writes that Marie-Antoinette, drying her tears and "regaining her God-given majesty" said, "'Vous ordonnerez avant tout, Monsieur, que je sois clouée aux murs

[223] Here we see the noble character of a Queen, who, fallen to total misfortune because of other's faults, accused no one, blamed no one. She always honored her spouse, the affectionate father of her children, and the most honest man in the empire. Sharing, without bitterness, his lowering and his deprivation, as she had shared in all the glory of his power without pride.
[224] fête religieuse (36).
[225] …asked the king of kings if he would bless the reign with justice and integrity.
[226] The Queen could have had them punished, but instead she declared that she would not pay attention to their maliciousness and their ingratitude. She still loved Trianon, but she took her friends their less frequently.

de ce palais.' […] Marie-Antoinette, faisant le sacrifice de ses grandeurs, de sa couronne et de sa vie, obéit à Louis XVI, parce que Louis XVI était son Roi" (219).[227]

Therefore, Marie-Antoinette was *not* powerless but was constrained by the French Salic law which, in excluding women from inheriting the throne, prevented their interference while their husbands remained living. "Si la loi Salique ne l'avait pas condamnée à un grand titre sans puissance, elle avait assez d'activité pour se grossir un parti, assez d'éloquence pour électriser les siens et la multitude, […] assez de grandeur d'âme pour faire tête aux orages, pour enlever la victoire, pour consoler et ramener les vaincus" (410).[228] Had she not been constrained by her gender, Marie-Antoinette would have been as efficient of a leader as English queens Marie Stuart and Elisabeth. In fact, she could have even been as powerful as the great Louis XIV (411)! Yet, as a proper Christian wife and exemplary queen should be, Marie-Antoinette continually chose to sacrifice herself for the good of her husband, her children, and for the nation of France. Her execution on October 16, 1793, an act d'Aussonne had called "Le Crime du 16 Octobre[229]", was the ultimate proof of Marie-Antoinette's willingness to sacrifice for her family, her king and her country.

As we have seen here, Restoration literary works were not the first attempt to rehabilitate the queen's image. Rather, they were extensions of refutations of the myth of the monster queen from revolutionary literature, which had already begun many years ago. In the Restoration, authors took the image of the victim queen from early post-revolutionary literature and turned

[227] "Sire, you command me above all others. Let me be nailed to the walls of this palace." Marie-Antoinette, sacrificing the greatness of the crown of her life, obeyed Louis XVI, because Louis XVI was her King.
[228] If the Salic law had not greatly condemned her power, she was active enough to build up resistance and to electrify her supporters and the crowd. […] Her spirit was great enough to lead the storms, to take away the victory, and even to console and forgive the defeated.
[229] A smaller work d'Aussonne published a few years before *Mémoires secrets.* D'Aussonne, Lafont. *Le crime du seize Octobre, ou Les Fantomes de Marly: Monument poétique et historique, élevé à la mémoire de Marie-Antoinette d'Autriche, reine de France, et du jeune roi son fils.* Pichard: Paris, 1820.

her into a martyr, even often showing how her martyrdom began the moment she became queen of the French. Marie-Antoinette was not a powerless victim as early-post-revolution literature had portrayed her. Rather, she was a meek martyr – one who possessed the power and the ability to resist the wrongs being done to her, but who *chose,* following the example of her pious husband and of Christ, to submit to forces greater than herself and die for the sake of the people of France. The three authors discussed here, each in their respective genre – historical novel, eye-witness account, and history – used the rhetoric of the Bourbon Restoration to bolster the myth of the martyr queen. Marie-Antoinette, the martyr queen, cyclically served to perpetuate the Bourbon ideals of forgive and forget, commemoration, the Divine Right, and especially religion. The Bourbon Restoration lasted around 15 years (1814-1830), yet during this short time publications concerning Marie-Antoinette abounded. Like the Restoration visual art works which were "ironically, influenced by enlightenment ideals of bourgeois virtue, family values, and personal integrity" conservative writings from the Restoration period also "transformed [the royal family] into something it had never been before: the intimate microcosm of a bourgeois family" (Butenschön, 4). After the Bourbon Restoration ended in 1830, publications concerning the rehabilitation of this family declined again until the mid-1840s. The following chapters will discuss the representations of Marie-Antoinette which appeared after 1840 beginning with an in-depth look at the lengthiest fictional representation of Marie-Antoinette ever written.

Figure 2: Graph of 19th century French texts containing "Marie-Antoinette" in the title

https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=Marie-Antoinette&year_start=1800&year_end=1900&corpus=19&smoothing=1&share=&direct_url=t1%3B%2CMarie%20-%20Antoinette%3B%2Cc0

Chapter 4: Marie-Antoinette in the historical fiction of Alexandre Dumas (1845-1853)

The myth of the trivial queen

"Une des grandes erreurs de l'homme est de croire que le monde tout entier est fait pour sa courte vie, tandis que ce sont des enchaînements d'existences infiniment courtes, éphémères, presque invisibles […] qui font le temps […] travaille à son œuvre mystérieuse, et poursuit son incessant genèse" (Dumas, *La Comtesse de Charny*, III, 48).[230]

"…history remains a fictively determined attempt at recovering the past in the only way possible - through the creation of a narrative about it" - Alun Munslow[231]

Between 1770 and 1824, Marie-Antoinette's identity had undergone four major shifts in French writings from all genres. From goddess, to monster, to victim, to martyr, Marie-Antoinette's identity - whether fashioned in a fictional or historical account - had never been an accurate picture of the woman. When Charles X abdicated the throne in 1830, the Bourbon Restoration came to an end, and the last king France would ever recognize, Louis-Philippe, reigned for the next 18 years until 1848. Louis-Philippe was a d'Orléans- a cadet branch of the Bourbons who had for generations coveted the throne possessed by their Bourbon relatives- and so adoration of the Bourbons in politics, in the arts, and in literature diminished. Even though his father had been one of the last royal victims of the Terror, Louis-Philippe, unlike his cousins before him decided to focus on the future, rather than the past and construct the most moderate version of a monarchy that France had ever known. This opened the door for continued publications containing critiques, analysis and speculations as to *why* the Revolution had happened, but until the late 1840s publications concerning Marie-Antoinette saw another dramatic decline. In 1845, however, historical fiction novelist, Alexandre Dumas used a combination of all of these myths in an unprecedented and still unequaled fictional

[230] One of man's great errors is to believe that the whole world was made for his short life, while it is really the linking of these infinitely short existences, fleeting, nearly invisible […] which makes time do its mysterious work, and follow its continuous creation.
[231] Munslow, Alun. *Narrative and History*. New York, Palgrave: 2007. Page 29.

representation of Marie-Antoinette. Although it had been nearly 50 years since the end of the Revolution, writers from many sides of the political spectrum were still arguing about the relevance or necessity of the French revolution, and thus far the century had been marked by frequent government upheavals. When Dumas wrote his Marie-Antoinette series, like Guénard had done in 1818, he did not leave his more liberal political opinions open for speculation. Rather, he showed himself in favor of the recent changes France had undergone towards a more moderate type of monarchy by clearly critiquing certain ideals from the Bourbon restoration particularly involving those about Marie-Antoinette and her family. A true *romancier* yet unable to avoid political propaganda in his fiction, Dumas combined his sources with a vast repertoire of Romanesque techniques to perpetuate a new nineteenth-century vision of history, to reject idealistic rhetoric from the Bourbon Restoration, and to show the mistakes of the revolution.

Born in 1802 in Villers-Cotterêts, a small town to the north-east of Paris, Alexandre Dumas was introduced to historical fiction when he read *Ivanhoe* by Scottish author Sir Walter Scott.[232] It was the reading of this historical novel that started Dumas "on the path that would lead to his ultimate triumphs in the realm of historical drama and romance" (Stowe, 21). By the time he was twenty years old in 1822, a friend's stories of Paris had captivated him, and Dumas left his birthplace for the capital where he began writing fiction and earning a living as a copyist. At this time, the novel in France was becoming a most appreciated genre, and its success was due, coincidently, to Walter Scott's 1814 novel, *Waverly,* which would later be called the first historical novel. [233] Scott's popularity was unrivaled in France from 1822-1827 (Lyons, 135).[234]

[232] According to Richard Stowe, a friend – Swedish aristocrat Adolphe de Leuven - sent Dumas this novel from Paris. Leuven spent his summers in Villers-Cotterêts and this was how he and Dumas became acquainted (19).
[233] It was Georg Lukács in his 1937 essay *The Historical Novel* who would label Scott's *Waverly* from 1814 the first historical novel ever. (See: Lukács, Georg. *The Historical Novel*. Merlin Press, London: 1962, page 19.)
[234] "Les cinq années suivantes (1822-1827) semblent avoir été celles de la passion pour Scott en France. Scott était surtout disponible en éditions in-12, chaque roman comprenant quatre volumes séparés, à 10 francs. Ces séries

Soon however, public appreciation of Scott's genre spread to French authors, like Dumas, who had begun writing historical novels of their own. Having begun his literary career with theatrical works, Dumas indeed published his first successful combination of history and fiction - a drama entitled *Henri III et sa cour* – in 1828. Ten years later, in 1838, yet another literary phenomenon began: French newspapers began paying authors to publish their novels as *roman-feuilletons* (serial novels), and Dumas's historical novels were among the most sought after. Due to Dumas' first serial novel, *Le Capitaine Paul,* the newspaper *Le Siècle* gained over 3000 new readers. [235] Ingeniously combining history and fiction, Dumas went on to author hundreds of other stories. Although extremely popular with the French reading public, due to his numerous publications and their sometimes undetermined length, caused Dumas and his work to come under the scrutiny and criticism of his contemporaries. First, critics expressed unbelief that one man could be so overwhelmingly productive. Rumors and even official accusations that Dumas did not author all of his novels, but took advantage of his collaborators' talent abounded. Second, the poetic liberties Dumas took with his sources sometimes caused his novels to be categorized as popular adventure novels or gothic novels, instead of works of historical fact. In Richard Stowe's biography of Dumas, he shows the falsity of the first critique by demonstrating how Dumas was cleared of accusations that he had not authored all of his novels, and the irrelevance of the second critique by showing that it was not Dumas's goal to write works of "factual, systematic historical information" (Stowe, 112).[236] Criticism aside, today, Dumas' historical

étaient faites pour les cabinets de lecture, qui pouvaient louer les volumes séparément à plusieurs abonnés en même temps. […] En 1828, donc, cinq éditions différentes des œuvres complètes de Scott étaient déjà disponibles en France" (Lyons, 135). "There was a passion for Scott in France from 1822-1827. Scott's novels were available in a 12-in format each containing four separate volumes. These novels were made for the *cabinets de lecture* (reading rooms) which could rent their volumes separately to several clients at a time. […] In 1828, there were already five editions of the complete works of Walter Scott available in France.

[235] See Martyn Lyons, *Le Triomphe du Livre,* Chapitre 8 "Vers une culture littéraire nationale".

[236] Of the rumors that Dumas did not author his own novels, Stowe says, "The rumors took tangible and scrupulous form in 1845 with the publication of a pamphlet entitled *Fabrique de Romans, Maison Alexandre Dumas et C*^{ie}

novels remain some of the most well-known of the genre around the world. The French are proud to call Dumas one of their own, and "the best of Dumas's fiction remains a living part of France's literary patrimony" (Stowe, 144). Dumas passed away in 1870, and was buried in his hometown. However, in 2002 Dumas was once again honored, when accompanied by a solemn ceremony and a passionate speech by then then French president Jacques Chirac, his remains were moved to France's *Panthéon* – an architectural tribute to the nation's heroes – placed there alongside Voltaire and Rousseau, Victor Hugo and Émile Zola.

Publication of Dumas's "Marie-Antoinette Series" spanned the years of 1845-1853 during the peak of his popularity as a serial novelist. He began his representation of Marie-Antoinette with the best-selling serial novel *Le Chevalier de Maison-Rouge* (*The Knight of Maison-Rouge*) in 1845, and soon followed it with a series of four more tales: *Joseph Balsamo, Mémoires d'un Médecin* (*A Doctor's Memoires*), in 1846-1858; *Le Collier de la Reine* (*The Queen's Necklace*) in 1849-1850; *Ange Pitou*[237] in 1850-1851; and finally *La Comtesse de Charny* in 1852-1853.[238] The plot of each book is centered on a significant moment in the queen's life and framed by the

(Novel Factory: Alexander Dumas & Co.) Its author […] attacked Dumas personally and professionally, accusing him of taking advantage of collaborators who actually wrote his books for him and of buying manuscripts to which he then merely signed his name. Several of the collaborators – including Auguste Maquet – […] disavowed Mirecourt's claims. The attack was censured […] and Mirecourt was condemned…" (113).
In defense of Dumas historical writing, Stowe says in his conclusion, "A clear awareness of what any writer did not attempt to do is prerequisite to fair appraisal of what he did; such awareness is nowhere more needed than in the case of Dumas *père.* […] There is little point or profit in faulting Dumas because he was not a highly cultivated man of letters, a meticulous stylist and craftsman of refined and sensitive tastes, a scholar or a thinker. These were simply not his attributes" (143). And earlier in the text, Stowe says that even though one does not come to Dumas for "factual, systematic historical information, […] it remains a work of history as well as of fiction. […] When reading Dumas one knows what it felt like to live through the St. Bartholomew's Days massacre, to be involved in the Fronde, or to live in the fishbowl of Louis XVI's Versailles. Because at his best he so thoroughly engages our interest and concern, Dumas succeeds in making us […] 'contemporaries of his characters'. Their world becomes our world" (112).

[237]The title of the English version is *The taking of the Bastille*.

[238] According to Sylvie Thorel-Cailleteau, the original publication dates (all in *feuilleton*, serial fashion) of the novels are: *Joseph Balsamo*: 1846-1848; *Le Collier de la Reine:* February 23 – June 8, 1849 & November 14, 1849-January 27, 1850; *Ange Pitou*: December 17, 1850- June 26, 1851; *La Comtesse de Charny*: 1852 -1853; *Le Chevalier de Maison-Rouge*: May 21, 1845 - February 12, 1846.

well-known events of the French Revolution. *Chevalier de Maison-Rouge* was the first Marie-Antoinette novel Dumas wrote, but in it he recounts the end of the queen's life - from after the king's execution in January 1793, until her own in October later that year. In *Joseph Balsamo* Dumas goes back to the beginning and recounts Marie-Antoinette's youthful years as the dauphine from 1770-1774. *Le Collier de la Reine* is Dumas's retelling of the events surrounding the Diamond Necklace affair, and covers from April 1784 to the summer of 1785. *Ange Pitou* is the story of the summer of 1789 beginning in July with the fall of the Bastille and ending in October when a mob of angry Parisians invaded Versailles. *La Comtesse de Charny* is by far the lengthiest of the series, covering every revolutionary event from October 1789 to the king's execution in January 1793.[239] Although Dumas's Marie-Antoinette series is often named the least popular of his three epic-series, considering the immense popularity of Dumas's other two series, this one can still be called a success. [240] In a list of French best-sellers from 1846-1850, *Le Chevalier de Maison Rouge* even topped *La Reine Margot* in overall number of sales (Lyons, 379). That Dumas had *four* novels on this same list attests to the immense productivity and popularity of the author.[241]

For his Marie-Antoinette series, Dumas relied heavily on previously published sources. Dumas's bibliography (really, the sources he mentions throughout the series that he and his

[239] Although there is a knight named Maison-Rouge in all five novels, Maison-Rouge from *Chevalier de Maison-Rouge* cannot be the same Maison-Rouge from the other four. In *Chevalier de Maison-Rouge,* Marie-Antoinette does not know the man who loves her and is devoted to her, where as in the earlier books, Maison-Rouge is one of her most trusted friends. In addition several other characters introduced in *Joseph Balsamo* possess names and character traits which suggest that they will eventually be linked with characters from *Chevalier*. However, if Dumas began his Revolutionary series with the idea of a "prequel" to *Maison-Rouge,* he must have at some point changed his mind. By the end of *La Comtesse de Charny,* all of the fictional characters have either died or moved away, and the story is brought to a firm conclusion. This leaves Dumas' final tale of Marie-Antoinette's life, *Chevalier de Maison-Rouge,* standing apart from the rest of the series even though it concludes the tale historically.
[240] The other two, The d'Artagnan trilogy (begun in 1845) and the Valois cycle (begun in 1846), each contain one of Dumas' most well-known works - *Les Trois Mousquetaires* and *La Reine Margot* respectively.
[241] *Le Comte de Monte Cristo* and *Les Trois Mousquetaires* preceded *Le Chevalier de Maison Rouge* and *La Reine Margot.*

collaborators used) includes: documents from the national archives; memoires from the historical characters who gain a role in his plot. Sources include but are not limited to Cléry, Campan, Chauveau-Lagarde, Joseph Weber, Jérôme Pétion, Marie-Jeanne Roland, and even Marie-Antoinette's hairstylist Léonard; portions of revolutionary newspapers from journalists such as Camille Desmoulins, Louis-Marie Prudhomme, and Jacques Hébert; revolutionary pamphlets; and even theoretical works which were meant to analyze the French Revolution, for example Thomas Payne's *Rights of Man* (1791-1792) and Jules Michelet's *l'Histoire de la Revolution française* (1848-1853). To speak about Marie-Antoinette in the Conciergerie, Dumas used d'Aussonne's *Mémoires secretes* as well as d'Aussonne's version of Rosalie's testimony. For this reason, Dumas did not recount a last communion between Marie-Antoinette and Charles Magnin.

Much *unlike* the other authors who wrote about Marie-Antoinette, Dumas does not claim expertise on the Revolution or on Marie-Antoinette, but rather is honest about the nature of his work: he constructed a fictional narrative that is a combination of all the sources that came before him. Dumas was indeed a writer of Romantic historical novels; although he scoured authentic sources for details, his goal was not – as would be the case for later writers – to recount the facts exactly as they were. Rather, to the facts he added the key elements of Romanticism: the triumph of passion over reason; the love of nature; the fascination with the exotic; and, of course, the return to the past, in order to portray his historical subjects. As previous writers had done, Dumas cast judgement on the authors of his sources throughout the narrative - sometimes in favor of them, and sometimes against. For example, in *La Comtesse de Charny,* Dumas quotes a passage from Prudhomme in which the journalist criticized the king and queen for how they behaved after their attempted escape from France in June 1791. In Prudhomme's article, he

labeled the king a *monstre* for having eaten a chicken and playing with his son after being returned to the Tuileries. He then calls the queen a *sybarite,* a *prodigue* and a *messaline*[242] for having asked for a bath with the door closed and for a new pair of shoes since hers were full of holes after the journey. Dumas follows Prudhomme's passage with his own, rather sarcastic, remarks to the journalist. "Ah! Monsieur le journaliste, que vous m'avez bien l'air de ne pas manger du poulet qu'aux quatre grandes fêtes de l'année, de n'avoir pas d'enfants, de ne point prendre de bain, et d'aller dans votre loge de l'Assemblée nationale avec des souliers percés" (IV, 111).[243] Later in the same novel, Dumas dedicates an entire chapter to evaluating the opinions of revolutionary journalists, including Marat, Prudhomme, Desmoulins, Robespierre, and Palisse, and of analyzing a few revolutionary newspapers including *La Bouche de fer, La Patriote* and *Le Républicaine* (IV, 147-158). He even recounts the events surrounding the writing of *La Marseillaise* and speaks of the emotional effects the words have on him. "D'où vient que moi-même, en écrivant ces dernières strophes je suis tout ému? D'où vient que, tandis que ma main droite trace, tremblante, […] l'invocation au génie de la France, d'où vient que ma main gauche essuie une larme près de tomber sur le papier ?" (III, 206-207).[244]

Whatever his opinion of his sources, Dumas shows appreciation for these documents as useful to his retelling. His fascination with the original documents is evident, and his genius lies in the melding together and the presentation of the sources to enliven history for his readers. The disparities between the eye-witness accounts and prior histories, for example, did not deter him.

[242] Only a sybarite, a person devoted to luxury and pleasure, would have asked for new shoes. This shocking behavior caused her to be a prodigy in Prudhomme's eyes. As for the fact that the queen wanted to take a bath in private, Prudhomme's conclusion was that this was Messalina-like behavior.
[243] Oh, Mr. journalist, you seem to be the type of person who only eats chicken on national holidays, who does not have children, who never takes a bath and who goes to his seat at the National Assembly with holey shoes!
[244] As I am writing these last lines of the song, how is it that I am so emotional? How is it that as my trembling right hand is transcribing […] this prayer to the genius of France, my left hand is wiping away a tear ready to fall on the paper?

Rather, unsurprisingly for a writer of romantic fiction, Dumas reveled in their differences. Remarking the importance of each eye-witness account, Dumas says, "Le récit que nous venons de faire a déjà été fait de cent manières différentes […] Mais après tous ces récits, le nôtre compris, il en restera encore autant à faire, car l'histoire n'est jamais complète. Cent mille témoins ont chacun leur version, cent mille détails différents ont chacun leur intérêt et leur poésie, par cela même qu'ils sont différents" (*Ange Pitou*, II, 198-199).[245]

When Dumas speaks about archival sources, his emotional reaction is no less evident. One document he mentions is the register at the revolutionary prison. With an emotional description, he encourages the reader to go and see the source for themselves.

> Non moins curieuses, est le registre de l'Abbaye, encore tout taché aujourd'hui du sang qui rejaillissait jusque sur les membres du tribunal. Faites-vous montrer ce registre, vous qui êtes à la recherche des émouvants souvenirs, et vous verrez […] sur les marges, […] écrites d'une écriture grande, belle, pesée, parfaitement lisible, parfaitement calme, parfaitement exempte de trouble, de peur ou de remords, et vous verrez, […] au-dessus de ces deux notes: « Tué par le jugement du peuple », ou: « Absous par le peuple », ce nom: Maillard. La dernière note est répétée quarante-trois fois. Maillard a donc sauvé, à l'Abbaye, la vie de quarante-trois personnes.[246] (VI, 112-113).

[245] The story that we have just told has already been told in 100 different ways. […] But after all these accounts, ours included, there will still be others to give, because history is never complete. 100,000 witnesses each have their own version and their 100,000 various details each having their own interests and their own poetry, which makes each one different.

[246] No less curious is the register at the Abbey prison, still today stained by the blood that splashed onto the members of the tribunal. Go and look at this register, you who are looking for emotional memories, and you will see […] in the margins […] in big, beautiful, serious, perfectly legible and calm penmanship that is free from trouble, fear or guilt, you will see […] written above these two notes: "Killed by the judgement of the people" Or "Forgiven by the people", the name: Maillard. This second notation is repeated forty-three times. Therefore, Maillard saved the lives of forty-three people at the Abbey.

A close examination of another document which lists Marat as a member of the *comité du massacre*, Dumas says, will show the corruption of the violent revolutionary commune. According to Dumas, who quotes Michelet as his source, a man named Panis added Marat's name to the list by forging his signature onto the original act even though, as a non-member of the Commune, he should not have been eligible for the "massacre committee" (VI, 105). Dumas's passionate descriptions of the sources fill the reader with curiosity and the desire to seek out the original documents in order to verify his claims. In his book *The Historical Novel*, Jerome DeGroot says that "While a historian can only recall facts, the romance writer has the opportunity to create real-live characters with real emotions and reactions based on these historical facts. It is through the understanding of these true to life characters that we can understand all that is necessary for us to understand History" (17). Indeed, Dumas's ingenious use of sources allows the reader to experience the historical events of the French Revolution through the emotions and reactions of his characters. In this way, Dumas not only brings history to life, but he makes it exciting.

In this way, the representation of history and its process concerned Dumas more than the study and evaluation of Marie-Antoinette. Therefore, also *unlike* other works from this study, Dumas's Marie-Antoinette series was not primarily motivated by a desire to demonize or rehabilitate the queen. The first proof of this is that Dumas did not consecrate time solely to writing his version of Marie-Antoinette, but rather worked on her series simultaneously with several other publications.[247] More importantly, Marie-Antoinette is not the central focus in

[247] To name one example: While publishing *Chevalier de Maison Rouge*, Dumas was also finishing *La Guerre des femmes*, *Vingt ans après*, and *La Dame de Monsoreau*, as well as the publication of *Le Comte de Monte Cristo* (Thorel-Cailleteau, 533).

Dumas's series, even though the events surrounding her guide the story's narrative.[248] While the action of the story is undoubtedly centered on Marie-Antoinette, she is by no means the instigator of any action. Instead of creating a new identity for Marie-Antoinette, Dumas uses myths already in place, combatting some and conceding to others, in order to make the historical process - now understood as a powerful force- the main character of his novels, overshadowing the importance even of Marie-Antoinette.

Dumas's perception of the importance of history was not unique to him. Rather, a new understanding of history, born out of the events of the French Revolution, was greatly affecting the writings of most nineteenth century authors. In his well-known 1937 essay, *The Historical Novel* Georg Lukács argues that after the French Revolution and for the first time since literature and writing began, man had begun to see history as not only an intricate web of interrelated events but also a process which directly affected him as an individual.[249] Lukács shows how German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's writings influenced this new view of history, by arguing that revolution was *necessary* in any country's evolution.[250] Hegel's

[248] Richard Stowe agrees with this: "Marie-Antoinette is unquestionably the pivotal historical character in this series of novels, however episodic her role may sometimes seem" (Stowe, 106). She is merely a passive character affected by the actions and will of Joseph Balsamo.

[249] Scott argues that it is the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars which primed writers to write historical novels and readied the public to read and receive them. Here is the explanation in Lukács' own words: "It was the French Revolution, the revolutionary wars and the rise and fall of Napoleon, which for the first time made history a *mass experience*, and moreover on a European scale. During the decades between 1789 and 1814 each nation of Europe underwent more upheavals than they had previously experienced in centuries. And the quick succession of these upheavals gives them a qualitatively distinct character; it makes their historical character far more visible than would be the case in isolated, individual instances: the masses no longer have the impression of a "natural occurrence". One need only read over Heine's reminiscences of his youth in *Buch le Grand*, to quote just one example, where it is vividly shown how the rapid change of governments affected Heine as a boy. *Now if experiences* [like this] *are taking place all over the world, this must enormously strengthen the feeling first that there is such a thing as history, that it is an uninterrupted process of changes and finally that it has a direct effect upon the life of every individual*" (23, my emphasis).

[250] "This new phase in the ideological defense of human progress found its philosophical expression in Hegel. As we have seen, the central historical question was to demonstrate the necessity of the French Revolution, to show that revolution and historical development are not opposed to one another […]. The philosophy of Hegel provides the philosophic basis for this conception of history. Hegel's discovery of the universal law of transformation of quantity into quality is, seen historically, a philosophic methodology for the idea that revolutions constitute necessary,

philosophy opened up the way for men to see history as a "the total life of humanity as *a great historical process*" (29, my emphasis). In contrast to the Enlightenment's conception of history in which progress was considered a struggle between reason and unreason, "according to the new interpretation the reasonableness of human progress develops ever increasingly out of the inner conflict of social forces in history itself; according to this interpretation *history itself is the bearer and realizer of human progress*" (28, my emphasis). Indeed, in the nineteenth century, men had come to regard history as a powerful force, an unending and mysterious process by which humans could evaluate their past, accept their present and anticipate their future. This new view of history prevailed in the historical novels of the nineteenth-century and dominated Dumas's Marie-Antoinette series.

For Dumas, history was important enough to merit personification in his Marie-Antoinette series, and to do so he employed a popular character from the romantic gothic novel: Doctor Joseph Balsamo. Often doubling as the infamous Count Cagliostro, a historical figure known for his use of sorcery and claims of immortality, Balsamo is the mysterious force behind everything that happens in the series, whether it be fictional or not. Balsamo, in Dumas's Marie-Antoinette series, is all-encompassing, all-knowing, all-powerful and ever-working. First of all Balsamo claims to have existed since the beginning of time. He backs up his claim of having no beginning and no end by recounting personal stories from time periods as far back as ancient Egypt (*Collier de la Reine,* I, 1025-1030). Also, like the historical process, Balsamo is constantly at work. Balsamo's influence is the instigator for each new character or plot twist in Dumas's story. In *Collier de la Reine,* for example, Balsamo orchestrates the meeting between the Marie-Antoinette's look alike, Nicole, and Jeanne de la Motte, who then used the young woman to trick

organic components of evolution and that without such a 'nodal line of proportions' true evolution is impossible in reality and unthinkable philosophically" (Lukács, 28).

Cardinal Rohan in the Diamond Necklace Affair. Balsamo has indeed been orchestrating this meeting since the very beginning of *Joseph Balsamo* when he made certain that Nicole left her country village for Paris, thus making it possible for her to meet Jeanne several years later (*Joseph Balsamo,* I, 127-163). Again like the historical process, Balsamo is mysterious and unpredictable. At many moments throughout the series, Balsamo appears suddenly without introduction or warning, and even when not physically present his influence was always working behind the scenes. Also like the historical process, Balsamo was the instigator of what Dumas labeled as time's 'continuous creation'.[251] Indeed, in the first prologue of the first novel of the series, Balsamo met with a group of ghosts at the top of a dark mountain and presented a plan for the crumbling of the French monarchy (*Joseph Balsamo,* I, 35-51). Balsamo's plan, like the historical process, took many years to carry out but was unable to be interrupted and could not be prevented. Although as the plan unfolded and the French monarchy came to its end, many reputations were harmed and many individuals died, in the end it was all for the sake of the progress of humanity and Balsamo himself is the "bearer and realizer" of this progress. Thus, although fictional and historical events surrounding Marie-Antoinette provide a backdrop for the story, it is the historical process personified by the gothic character Balsamo that occupies center stage in the novel.

In order to further highlight the historical process in his Marie-Antoinette series, Dumas used historical and fictional intrigues surrounding Marie-Antoinette to show where he saw necessity and fault in the Revolution and the Restoration. First, Dumas does not elevate the Bourbons to godlike status. Instead, he uses their idealized identities from the Bourbon restoration and re-humanizes them. Royalist writers during the Restoration portrayed the Bourbons as a faultless

[251] "incessant genèse" (Dumas, *La Comtesse de Charny,* III, 48).

family, but Dumas continually highlights their negative qualities. "One aspect of the general restoration effort to glorify the French monarchy [had been] the attempt to portray France as one big happy family" (Mellon, 63). Attacking this premise, a belief Lukács later labeled "legitimism", Dumas demonstrated dissension, and often very petty dissension, between members of the royal family itself. He especially highlighted the conflict between the last three Bourbon kings – Louis XVI and his two younger brothers, the Count de Provence and the Count d'Artois, or, by the time Dumas was writing, the late Louis XVIII and Charles X. In the opening chapters of *Collier de la Reine* for example, Provence, tries to create martial problems between his elder brother and Marie-Antoinette by playing on Louis XVI's jealousy and trapping Marie-Antoinette in a lie (I, 1079). Louis XVI is thus portrayed as a jealous and mistrustful husband, while Provence is portrayed as manipulative and meddling. Were it not for the intervention of the youngest brother, d'Artois, who in turn is portrayed as willing to use all possible means to outwit his elder brothers, Marie-Antoinette – innocent in this matter - would have spent the night in the snow and would have appeared guilty to Louis XVI the next day.

Louis XVI is no longer the wise and humble leader of his family that the Restoration had tried to propagate. In *Ange Pitou* Dumas reveals a portrait of Louis XVI which nearly reverts back to revolutionary rhetoric, making him appear at times nonchalant, a glutton, and weak. Long on display in the French National Archives, is Louis XVI's journal entry from July 14, 1789, the day members of the French third estate stormed a long-lasting monarchical symbol, the *Bastille* prison, marking the official onset of the Revolution. On that day, Louis XVI wrote one word: "*Rien*".[252] More likely a reference to what he had (or in this case had *not*) hunted that day, rather than to the happenings in Paris, this journal entry has not ceased to be used as an example by

[252] "Nothing".

historians as to Louis XVI's lack of concern towards political events. Dumas, likewise, used the nonchalance of the journal entry to add to his plot and set up an entire juxtaposition between the king and Marie-Antoinette. In Dumas's account, Marie-Antoinette is ecstatic when her husband asks to have his dinner in her room on the evening of July fourteenth. All day, Marie-Antoinette had been discussing the matter and trying to plan the monarchy's next move while the king has watched silently. The queen believes that the king wants to eat in her room in order that the two may plan together the correct way to respond to the people. The king begins eating so heartily, however, that he does not have time to talk. Purposely highlighting that this gluttony comes from his Bourbon ancestry, Dumas critiques Louis XVI. "La fille de Marie-Thérèse ne pouvait croire, dans un pareil moment, que le fils de saint Louis demeurait aux besoins matériels de la vie ordinaire. Marie-Antoinette se trompait. Le roi avait faim, voilà tout" (292-293).[253] When the queen and a few of the courtiers in the room ask the king to declare war, he chuckles, and "continuait de souper avec cet appétit proverbial de la famille des Bourbons (294).[254]

Another way that Dumas outright critiques the Bourbon Restoration is to expose Restoration rhetoric as faulty and dishonest. One restoration rhetoric that Dumas counters is the conservative idea that the "vile works" of eighteenth-century *philosophes* had caused to the Revolution. "For Restoration Conservatism, the eighteenth century is an ideal target, the *philosophe* a perfect scapegoat" (Mellon, 72). Dumas shows the opposite in regards to the philosophes of the Enlightenment by highlighting the evolution of a young man, Gilbert, throughout the Marie-Antoinette series. Gilbert not only ironically embodies the admirable characteristics of a hard-working, self-made nineteenth-century bourgeois man, but his character is strengthened and

[253] Marie-Theresa's daughter could not believe that in such a moment a descendant of Saint Louis would remain subject to the material needs of ordinary life. Marie-Antoinette was mistaken. The king was hungry, that's all. .
[254] kept eating with this hearty appetite typical of the Bourbons

ultimately saved by his very eighteenth-century philosophical ideas. Gilbert begins as a poor servant living in the country who no one (except Balsamo) considers of consequence. However, Gilbert's innate belief in the *égalité* of all men leads him to Paris, where his already strong convictions are strengthened when he becomes acquainted with none other than Jean-Jacques Rousseau. By the end of the series, Gilbert is not only a successful doctor and a wise and honest political adviser for individuals on *both* sides of the revolutionary conflict, he has evolved into a humble man (after learning from a one very grave mistake[255]), and a loving and generous father.

Whereas the Bourbon Restoration perpetuated the idea that the monarchs were God's chosen caretakers of the people, Dumas uses Gilbert's republican voice to critique the royals in his series for doing the opposite. Using the very method of Restoration writers, Gilbert likens the new nation of France to Christ while pleading with Marie-Antoinette to accept the political changes happening around her. "La France, c'est le Christ qui vient de naître dans une crèche, au milieu des humbles pour le salut du monde, et les peoples se réjouissent à sa naissance, en attendant que les rois plissent le genou devant elle […]. Il en est temps encore, prenez l'enfant sur l'autel, et faites-vous sa mère " (*Comtesse de Charny,* II, 135).[256]

Marie-Antoinette does not heed Gilbert's advice, but rather envisions a way to secretly resist the rebellion and disguise that she is against the goals of the revolutionaries. "Il fallait donc tout ensevelir dans l'oubli, faire semblant d'oublier, et se souvenir, semblant de pardonner et ne pardonner point." (*Ange Pitou,* II, 3). [257] Marie-Antoinette's reaction exposes another dishonest

[255] Carried away by his emotions (another ironic characteristic in Gilbert since it depicts a contrasting *romantic* ideal) when Gilbert is seventeen years old, he takes advantage of and impregnates a girl. Well into his thirties by the end of the novel, Gilbert is forever ashamed of his passionate crime and does everything in his power to reverse its damage, including developing a good relationship with his son and gaining the forgiveness of the young woman.
[256] France, is like Christ, newly born in a manger for the salvation of the world. The people rejoice at her birth, and wait for the kings of the earth to kneel before her […] There is still time! Madame, take the child on the altar and become its mother!
[257] So, it was necessary to bury everything and forget, or at least, pretend to forget yet remember; seem to forgive and yet not forgive.

quality of the Bourbon monarchs. The Bourbons had often been critiqued during the Restoration for claiming to be moderate and yet continuing in anti-liberal actions. Dumas's Marie-Antoinette, a representative of the Bourbon family, likewise wants to crush the revolution while manipulatively hiding her true intentions behind the mask of consent. This clear example of dissimilation fit well with the rest of Marie-Antoinette's negative characteristics which persists for the majority of the series.

Indeed, Dumas portrays Marie-Antoinette mostly negatively throughout his series. Rather than idealizing the queen and seeking to reject the myths from revolutionary literature, Dumas spends a significant amount of time highlighting Marie-Antoinette's well-known personalities from revolutionary literature. He uses vast portions of his narrative to show how these myths developed or how the names were used against her. In certain places Dumas even showed that Marie-Antoinette *merited* these nicknames. At the beginning of *Joseph Balsamo,* for example, the dauphine is already showing characteristics of the infamous *l'Autrichienne.* Just before inviting a young woman to come and live at Versailles with her, Marie-Antoinette asks the young lady whether or not she speaks German. When the woman gave an affirmative answer, Marie-Antoinette responds suspiciously "Admirablement! Oh! Cela s'accorde bien avec mes projets" (I, 149).[258] Later, after even further moral decline, Marie-Antoinette embodies all of the characteristics of the Austrian Woman. In her first appearance in *Ange Pitou*:

> Ce n'était plus la douce et belle fiancée, ange protecteur de la France, que nous avons vue apparaître au seuil de cette histoire, franchissant la frontière du nord une branche d'olivier à la main. […] Non ! C'était la reine hautaine et résolue, au sourcil froncé, à la lèvre dédaigneuse ; c'était la femme dont le cœur avait laissé échapper une portion de son

[258] Wonderful! Oh, this goes along very well with my plans!

> amour, pour recevoir, en place de doux et vivifiant sentiment, les premières gouttes d'un fiel qui devait aller au sang en coulant sans cesse. C'était enfin […] non plus Marie-Antoinette, non plus la reine de France, mais celle qu'on commençait à ne plus désigner que sous le nom de l'Autrichienne. (283-284)[259]

Indeed, this Austrian Woman has come a long way since her entry into France nineteen years before. No longer claiming to offer peace and prosperity for the nation of France, the queen is now defined by her "anti-French" characteristics and has become the foreign woman as had always been suspected. While pretending to support the revolutionaries' ideals, Marie-Antoinette secretly plots and hopes for vengeance. Even her later dreams from her prison cell reveals her hopes to crush a people who, after all, she does not consider her own. "Mais bientôt, dans son rêve toujours, grilles et verrous tombèrent ; elle se vit au milieu d'une armée sombre, impitoyable ; elle ordonnait à la flamme de briller, au fer de sortir du fourreau ; elle se vengeait d'un peuple qui au bout du compte n'était pas le sien" (*Chevalier,* 422).[260]

Dumas also clearly addressed the personality of *Madame Déficit* throughout his series, using a combination of previous Marie-Antoinette stories to develop this personality. While giving unmerited financial gifts to favorite friends was actually a quite normal practice for aristocrats at the time, it was one for which Marie-Antoinette in particular had been accused as discussed in Chapter one, and Dumas highlights this at several moments in his series. At the beginning of *Joseph Balsamo,* for example, Marie-Antoinette insists that a country family come to live at

[259] This was no longer the sweet and beautiful fiancée, the guardian angel of France that we saw at the beginning of this story, who crossed over the northern border with an olive tree branch in her hand. […] No! This was a haughty and resolved queen, frowning with her scornful lower-lip. This was a woman whose heart had let a part of its tender and life-giving love escape, in order to allow the entrance of the first drops of poison, which would from then on run through her blood, in its place. In short, this was no longer Marie-Antoinette, the Queen of France, but the woman who the French had begun to call "The Austrian Woman".

[260] But always in her dreams the locks and the gates fell down. She saw herself surrounded by a serious army without mercy. She ordered that the torch be lit and that the soldiers take out their swords. She had her vengeance on this people, who, in the end, were not even her own.

Versailles with her where they would be financially supported without any contribution for the rest of their lives (150-151). She also later decides to house and support several families at her little "playhouses" at Trianon (563). Dumas again speaks of *Madame Déficit's* frivolous generosity in *Le Collier de la Reine,* when the queen undertakes a rescue mission for an aristocratic woman fallen on hard times (1047). Concerned by rumors that a descendent of King Henri III was now living in obscurity, Marie-Antoinette sets out in a sumptuously decorated sleigh, lavishly dressed, royally coiffed, and armed with money to offer to the "suffering" woman. Even though a decree issued earlier that day had banned the use of sleighs on the streets due to the dangerous slush they created, Dumas shows an unaware *Madame Déficit* gaily racing to the aid of the very woman who will mastermind the Diamond Necklace Affair (1048-1049).

Jeanne de la Motte Valois is indeed manipulative, but she is not solely to blame in Dumas's account of the affair of the necklace. La Motte's crime is, in fact, only made possible by the forbidden desires of *Madame Déficit.* Before La Motte appeared in *Collier de la Reine,* Louis XVI had offered Marie-Antoinette the diamond necklace as a gift.[261] Marie-Antoinette's initial reaction was characteristic of *Madame Déficit:* enthusiastic for luxury and tinged with vice:

> La reine le saisit vivement et l'attira à elle. 'Oh ! que c'est beau ! mon Dieu ! que c'est beau !' […] 'Oh ! c'est magnifique, dit enfin la reine retrouvant la parole, magnifique, répéta-t-elle avec des yeux qui s'animent, soit au contact de ces diamants splendides, soit parce qu'elle songeait que nulle femme au monde ne pourrait avoir un collier pareil.

[261] This again is purely Dumas's invention. Louis XVI never offered the diamond necklace to his wife. Dumas adds this as part of the plot to show the Queen's continued desire to possess the necklace, when in reality she had refused it several times when the jewelers had offered it to her.

> ‘Alors, vous êtes contente ? dit le roi. ‘Enthousiasmée, sire. Vous me rendez trop heureuse.’ (1097)[262]

However, uncharacteristically for *Madame Déficit,* once the queen realizes the exorbitant cost of the necklace, she refuses the gift, saying she could never accept such an item while France is under such extreme financial strain. [263] For a moment, the romantic Dumas allows queenly duty to trump selfish desire. Later in the novel, however, as Jeanne manipulatively tempts Marie-Antoinette with the necklace (1290-1294) *Madame Déficit* finally succumbs to her desires and plans a way to secretly finance the purchase of the necklace. Only when the king later discovers the plot and with his own secrecy attempts to outwit his wife, does the queen realize her error and cancel the order. [264]

Dumas simultaneously mocks several of the queen’s revolutionary personalities in an early scene of *Joseph Balsamo* when Louis XV gives his new grand-daughter the *Petit Trianon.*[265] The

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[262] The queen seized the necklace and pulled it towards her. “Oh! It is so beautiful! My God, it is so beautiful!’[…] “Oh! It’s magnificent, she said finally able to speak, “magnificent” she repeated, her eyes brilliantly sparking either from the reflection of the splendid diamonds or because she was thinking of how no other woman in the world could possibly have a necklace like this one. “So you are happy?” asks the king. “Enchanted, sire. You have made me too happy.

[263] Marie-Antoinette says, “ ‘Jamais ! […] Je refuse de me pendre un million, et peut-être un million et demi au cou, car j’estime ce collier quinze cent mille livres, n’est-ce pas ? […] Et je refuse de pendre à mon col un million et demi quand les coffres du roi sont vides, quand le roi est force de mesurer ses secours et de dire aux pauvres: ‘Je n’ai plus d’argent, Dieu vous assiste!’”(1098) “Never! [...] I refuse to have a million, and maybe a million and a half around my neck, because I’m guessing that’s how much it costs isn’t it ? […] And I refuse to hang a million and a half around my neck when the king’s treasury is empty, and the king is forced ration his help and to tell the poor, ‘I have no money, God help you!”

[264] Dumas’s Marie-Antoinette indeed eventually gives in to her weakness, and begins having secret meetings with the finance minister Calonne in order to find the funds to purchase of the necklace. In this case Dumas is *not* relying on historical accounts of the affair, but rather on his invention. (According to Campan’s account, which most historians use as fact, Marie-Antoinette had no intention of purchasing this necklace, and she remained totally unaware of the purchase of the necklace, until the jewelers approached her for the money.) In Dumas’s account seems at first Marie-Antoinette’s scheming will work, but then the finances are blocked by the king. Finally, the more reasonable Queen Marie-Antoinette cancels the order and returns the necklace to the jewelers. Unfortunately, she entrusts the return of the necklace through Madame de la Motte who keeps the necklace and writes fake receipts to all parties involved, thus bringing the fictional plot of the novel back in line with the true events story of the affair.

[265] In reality, Little Trianon was a gift to Marie-Antoinette from her husband after they became King and Queen. This rather significant anachronism could be another of Dumas’s attempts to combine many myths of Marie-Antoinette into one moment.

young dauphine's anti-French sentiments are highlighted as she excitedly shares her construction and landscaping ideas with the king. She wants to furnish the small chateau and build up its gardens to make them completely different than the typical French décor and gardens of the main chateau. Such formalities, she claims, bore visitors and residents alike. What is more, the fruit trees and flowers that French landscaper Le Notre had placed there are unnatural (562-563). Her ideas are insatiable, "Des rivières, des cascades, des ponts, des grottes, des rochers, des bois, des ravins, des maisons, des montagnes, des prairies…" (*Joseph,* 563).[266] Her unending list of whimsical wants not only reminds readers of the large amounts of the nation's money *Madame Déficit* spent on fulfilling her frivolous desires, but also to the many hidden places Marie-Antoinette constructed where *Madame Veto* and *Messaline* could conduct their "vile and secret deeds". Indeed, in *Joseph Balsamo* when Louis XV arrives to see what changes the dauphine has made to Little Trianon, Marie-Antoinette jumps out from behind a bush, where she has been consulting with her architect (562).

Messaline comes out in full form in *Collier de la Reine,* when a necklace is not the only forbidden desire to which Marie-Antoinette succumbs. Beginning in *Collier de la Reine* and lasting until the end of *Comtesse de Charny*, Dumas employs a fictional love story between the queen and Olivier de Charny based on rumors of the relationship that had existed between Marie-Antoinette and Swedish Count Axel Fersen.[267] Occurring simultaneously with the historical events leading up to and during the revolution, Dumas used this complicated love story

[266] Rivers, waterfalls, bridges, grottos, boulders, wooded areas, ravines, houses, mountains and prairies…
[267] Most authors in the nineteenth century did not write extensively about Marie-Antoinette's connection with Count Fersen, because when they were writing, not many details were known. Dumas, capitalizes mostly on rumor and on what little *was* known at the time, and uses Axel Fersen as the inspiration for one of the most important plots in his Marie-Antoinette series. Fersen would make a few appearances in literature in the nineteenth century before his and Marie-Antoinette's were published in 1877. After this time, when rumor was seemingly replaced with fact, Fersen would become one of Fiction's and History's favorite secondary characters in the story of Marie-Antoinette, as will be discussed in the conclusion of this study.

to again show that Marie-Antoinette's frivolity and sentimental desires often overshadowed her duties to the nation of France. Her initial infatuation and love for Charny and then her later anger and sadness at losing his love more deeply affect Dumas's Marie-Antoinette than the loss of the love of her entire nation. Not only does *Messaline* let the love of a man who is not her husband overshadow her duty to her friends and her family, but her obsession with Charny even overshadows the horrors of the revolution. When she accepts the help of Count Mirabeau, for example, it seems for a moment that she is acting out of political wisdom. However, Dumas soon reveals the reason for which his version of Marie-Antoinette accepted Mirabeau's aid:

> … la reine avait cédé pour deux raisons: la veille, elle avait éprouvé une grande douleur de cœur et que lui proposer une intrigue à nouer et à dénouer, c'était lui proposer une distraction. La seconde, c'est que la reine est femme, c'est qu'on lui a parlé de M. de Mirabeau comme d'un lion, comme d'un tigre, comme d'un ours, et qu'une femme ne sait jamais résister à ce désir se flatteur pour l'amour-propre d'apprivoiser un ours, un tigre ou un lion. Elle s'est dit: Il serait curieux que je pliasse à mes pieds cette homme qui me hait ; que je fisse faire amende honorable à ce tribun qui m'a insultée. Je le verrai à mes genoux, ce sera ma vengeance ; puis, si, de cette génuflexion, il résulte quelque bien pour la France et la royauté, tant mieux ! (I, 292).[268]

Dumas highlights here that Marie-Antoinette's choice was not one of political prowess, but rather the rash decision of an embittered woman, tainted by her obsession of lost love and her hope for vengeance on the people. Later, the king and queen go to the *Fête de la Fédération* and

[268] "The queen agreed to your plan for two reasons. The first is, the day before she experienced a horrible heartbreak and to propose such an intriguing plan to her, one she could analyze and think over, was to provide her with a distraction. The second reason is that the queen is a woman, and that you spoke to her of Mirabeau like a lion, like a tiger, like a bear. A woman never knows how to resist her desire to flatter herself and her self-love to tame a bear, a tiger or a lion. She said to herself: 'It would be quite wonderful to see this man who hates me fold at my feet, that I could force this man who insulted me pay a worthy price. I will see him at my knees this will be my vengeance; then, if some good comes comes to France and it's royalty from this groveling, all the better!" .

pretend to support the new nation by swearing loyalty to its formation. As the unsuspecting crowd gathers to praise the unification of the new nation with its monarchs, Dumas again shows that Marie-Antoinette's mind is clouded with thoughts of her now former lover:

> Qu'importaient à cette femme en de pareils moments les populations accumulées à ses pieds ? qui lui importaient ces flots d'hommes poussés […] en criant: 'Vive le roi ! vive la reine !' Une voix connue qui eût murmuré à son oreille: ' Marie, rien n'est changé en moi ! Antoinette, je vous aime !' cette voix lui eût fait croire que rien non plus n'était changé autour d'elle, et eût plus fait, pour la satisfaction de ce cœur, pour la sérénité de ce front, que tous ces cris, que toutes ces promesses, que tous ces serments (III, 46).[269]

Finally, throughout the entire flight to Varennes, which will fail and end with the royal family's humiliating and frightful escort back into Paris, Marie-Antoinette is so engulfed by her lover's grief that the suffering of her husband, the endangerment of her children, and the gravity of the situation each are overshadowed by her grief over losing Charny. Dumas allows the extreme emotions and feminine capriciousness of *La Messaline Moderne* to render Marie-Antoinette unable to recognize the significance of the events happening around her, insensitive to her husband's grief, and even more willing to dissimilate her true feelings towards the new nation of France and its people. Dumas's Marie-Antoinette is only able to give up her infatuation when Charny disappears from the scene after having officially declared his love for another woman (his wife). Finally surrendering her hope for love, however, still does not remedy Dumas's

[269] What did it matter to this woman in such a moment that the population was accumulated at her feet? It was of little importance to her these waves of men […] crying "Long live the King! Long live the Queen!" One well-known voice murmuring in her ear "Marie, nothing has changed in me! Marie, I love you!", would have made her believe that nothing else around her had changed. This would have done more for the satisfaction of her heart, and for the serenity of her mind, than all of these cries, all of these promises, and all of this devotion.

Marie-Antoinette. Instead, her very worst characteristics take over as *Madame Veto* begins to make an appearance.

Once Marie-Antoinette's heart is hardened as a result the loss of Charny, *Madame Veto* with all of her worst qualities - jealousy, pride, manipulation and control of her husband, and finally hatred and vengeance - begin to appear. As Marie-Antoinette reacts to Charny's "betrayal", Dumas highlighted an even further moral decline. "Marie-Antoinette s'étonnait de reconnaître que le malheur [de la politique] n'était rien au près du chagrin [de perdre son amour] car ce que le malheur n'avait pu faire, le chagrin l'opérait en elle. Hélas ! c'était ici que le serpent de la jalousie se reprenait à mordre plus profondément" (II, 5).[270] The 'serpent of jealousy's' bite has disastrous effects on Marie-Antoinette's already questionable character. "Du moment où elle s'était sentie jalouse […], elle avait commencé à diminuer moralement. Suite de cette infériorité, ses caprices. Suite de ses caprices, la colère. Suite enfin de la colère, les mauvaises pensées, qui conduisent après elles les mauvaises actions. Plus l'âme du jaloux est grande, plus le danger dans lequel il se jette est grand" (II, 135).[271]

In addition to jealousy, Marie-Antoinette's pride is showcased for nearly the remainder of the novel. As the danger towards her family grows daily, so does her pride. One example of her pride is the way she treats General La Fayette, the commanding officer of the National Guard. Dumas highlights numerous occasions when La Fayette puts the needs and safety of the royal family above his own. However, according to Dumas, Marie-Antoinette detests him and refuses to trust him because he had participated in the American war, and had helped to bring the rebels

[270] Marie-Antoinette was surprised to see that her misfortune (in politics) was nothing next to her grief (losing her love). Because, that which misfortune had been unable to do in her, grief was doing. […] Alas! It was here that the serpent of jealousy recommenced to bite more deeply. .

[271] From the moment where she felt jealous […], she had begun her moral decline. Following this inferiority, her whims. Following her whims, anger. Finally, following her anger, the evil thoughts which led her towards evil actions. The bigger the soul of the jealous person, the bigger the danger in which it throws itself. .

to victory against their monarch.[272] Marie-Antoinette continually rejects La Fayette's aide and convinces her husband to do the same. Dumas calls this rejection of the people who could help her and the acceptance of those who probably will not help her "étrange aveuglement[273]", and it is *Madame Veto's* pride that keeps her in this position (V, 45).

As in the revolutionary pamphlets, Dumas's *Madame Veto* is hungry for power. Dumas's Marie-Antoinette loses all hope to ever be happy again as a woman, but she still hopes once again to become powerful. "La reine puissante? Peut-être […] est-ce encore possible ; mais la femme heureuse, jamais ! jamais ! jamais !" (V, 76-77).[274] Her thirst for power is so strong, that Marie-Antoinette begins to behave as a man. First, she attends cabinet meetings with the king, and actively participates as he loses minister after minister. As each subsequent man tries to reconcile the monarchs to the people, encouraging them to trust La Fayette, the queen's resolve against him only grows stronger, and she repeatedly encourages her husband to feel the same. At these same meetings, the queen convinces the king to use his power of veto – the very act that earned her the infamous nickname. Once housed in the Tuileries, an excited fever overtakes the queen and scares Gilbert: "Il y avait dans toute la personne de Marie-Antoinette quelque chose de joyeux et de satisfait qui le fit frissonner. Il eût mieux aimé la reine pâle et abattue que fiévreuse et animée comme elle était [275]" (V, 222). This fever, which causes Marie-Antoinette to

[272] This was indeed the case, as was mentioned in Chapter one of this study. La Fayette's role in the American Revolutionary War, had indeed caused Marie-Antoinette to detest him, and to see him as a threat to aristocratic power. For a time, La Fayette enjoyed the praise and appreciate of the French people, and it was even he who suggested that the Estates General be convened (Lever, 193). A true aristocrat, however, who took his role of protecting the king and queen seriously, La Fayette would later be accused of sleeping with Marie-Antoinette in the pamphlets as well as being the instigator of the massacre of the Champs de Mars. In the end, La Fayette benefitted from neither the queen's love nor the public's love – although he did manage to escape the guillotine, and still was adored in the United States.

[273] Strange blindness

[274] Powerful queen? Maybe […] it is still possible; but happy woman, never! Never! Never!

[275] There was something joyous and satisfied filling up Marie-Antoinette that made him shiver. He would have rather seen the queen pale and abused than feverish and animated as she was.

lose the "pale" and "beaten" façade that earlier post-revolutionary literature had perpetrated, also causes her to behave like a man. She leads Gilberts all around the château, showing him that under her orders, the men in the palace – the officers and guards who submit to her – have fortified and secured the chateau. Gilbert warns the queen that she is behaving like a man, but she answers confidently that there are certain circumstances when it is necessary for a woman to act like a man (V, 226). Finally, the Austrian Woman's hate of the French who have harmed her reputation with vicious nicknames, and threatened her powerful position, causes *Madame Veto's* final wish to be one of vengeance:

> Mais ce qu'elle haït, et du plus profond de son cœur, c'est ce peuple qui a mis la main sur elle comme sur une fugitive ordinaire, qui l'a comblée de dégoûts, poursuivie d'injures, abreuvée de honte. Oui, elle le haït bien, ce peuple, qui l'a appelée Madame Déficit, Madame Veto, qui l'appelle l'Autrichienne qui l'appellera la veuve Capet. Et si elle peut se venger, oh ! comme elle se vengera ! (IV, 159-160) [276]

Although he spent significant amounts of time perpetuating negative myths about Marie-Antoinette, again it was *not* Dumas' goal to portray the queen as an evil woman. He also allows Marie-Antoinette moments of innocence or true character development. One example, of this is on her wedding night in *Joseph Balsamo*. When the future Louis XVI enters the nuptial chamber, Marie-Antoinette is enrobed in a long white gown, her delicate body barely making a dent on the golden bed. The young girl is a virgin and awaits, terrified, for her new husband. Louis XV enters the room to wish the new couple well, and a humiliated Marie-Antoinette springs from the bed and covers herself from neck to toe with an outer garment. When she is again alone with her

[276] But, that which she hated, and with the deepest part of her heart, was the people, who had treated her like an ordinary fugitive, who had filled her with disgust and showered her with insults and shame. Yes, she truly hated this people, who had called her 'Madame Deficit', 'Madame Veto', who now called her 'The Austrian woman' and who will call her 'The Widow Capet'. And if she can have vengeance, oh! How greatly will she have it!

husband, she appears so distressed that he remarks, "Madame […] Vous êtes bien pâle, et l'on dirait que vous tremblez" (484).[277] Similarly, towards the end of *Chevalier de Maison-Rouge*, Dumas permits Marie-Antoinette a moment of true character development, as she struggles internally with a decision to either accept an escape plot which will endanger the lives of two of her guards, or refuse to escape and thus ensure their safety (420-423). In this brief moment, and a few other isolated areas in the other novels, Marie-Antoinette is concerned how her actions will affect others, but for the majority of the novel – and the rest of the books - she remains either a passive damsel in distress or unconcerned with anything than her own reputation and desires.

Indeed, it is not until the final chapters of his series, that Dumas demonstrates that captivity alone rescued Marie-Antoinette's image, allowing it to be rehabilitated later. He could have, at all moments, painted her as a loving, kind, capable and compassionate woman, but these admirable qualities only appear amidst her greatest suffering. After the mob murders Charny who is guarding the royal family as they make their way from the Tuileries palace to the National Assembly, the heartbroken Countess de Charny implores Marie-Antoinette to lead her to her husband's body. As the Countess lifts her deceased husband's head into her lap, she tells Marie-Antoinette that this had been the last time she would ask anything of her. Through the queen's reaction, Dumas offers the first proof that great hardship is the anecdote Marie-Antoinette needed for change. Finally a humbled woman, Marie-Antoinette sadly replies, "Mais moi, j'ai à vous demander autre chose […] Me pardonnez-vous ? [278] "(*Comtesse de Charny,* VI, 23). Later, as she is sweeping the floor of her prison cell at the Temple, a dejected Louis XVI remarks that it is his fault that she has been reduced from her once grandeur to this sad state. Again Dumas highlights the change taking place in Marie-Antoinette as she tenderly replies: "Et

[277] Madame […] You are very pale, and it looks like you are trembling"
[278] "But I have something further to ask of you […] Do you forgive me?"

comptez-vous pour rien, la gloire d'être la femme du meilleur et de plus persécuté des hommes ? "(VI, 205). [279]

To bring the Marie-Antoinette's transformation to completion, Dumas employs a scene which by now was well-known thanks to Cléry's *Journal* and subsequent publications: the king's final goodbye to his family. Like the other authors discussed in this study, Dumas uses Cléry's mention of the queen's slight movement to lead Louis aside into another part of the room in his account. Going further than d'Aussonne or Guénard in his interpretation, however, Dumas interprets the small movement as a means to add to his plot. In Dumas's account, Marie-Antoinette wants to be alone with her husband for a few moments in order to confess and repent for any of the times she had betrayed or hurt him. "Là, sans doute allait-elle tomber à ses pieds, et, au milieu des larmes et des sanglots, lui demander pardon" (VI, 248).[280] Anticipating his wife's motives, the king offers his forgiveness before she even has a chance to ask for it. Pulling his last will and testament from his pocket, Louis points to a certain paragraph, and asks the queen to read theses lines aloud, "Je prie ma femme de me pardonner tous les maux qu'elle souffre pour moi, et les chagrins que je pourrais lui avoir donnés dans le cours de notre union, comme elle peut être sûre que je ne garde rien contre elle, si elle croyait avoir quelque chose à se reprocher" (VI, 248).[281] As she reads the words in an audible but soft voice, Marie-Antoinette feels the weight of guilt and shame at her past actions being lifted. Here, Dumas employs a new nickname – a religious one – in order to deepen the effect of the king's forgiveness and again highlight Restoration rhetoric:

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[279] And do you count it for nothing that I am the wife of the best and most persecuted of men? .
[280] There, without a doubt, she was going to fall at his feet, and in the midst of tears and sobs ask for his forgiveness.
[281] I ask my wife's forgiveness for all the evils she has suffered because of me, and for whatever grievances I may have given her in the course of our marriage. I want her to be sure that I hold nothing against her, in case she believes she has anything for which to be sorry. (These words *are* found in the king's last will and testament, although he did not have a copy of it with him when he saw his family for the last time. This is another example of Dumas ability to manipulate authentic sources and historical fact as a means to add to his plot.)

> Ainsi elle mourrait tranquille, la pauvre Madeline royale ; son amour pour le roi, si tardif qu'il fût, lui valait la miséricorde divine et humaine, et son pardon lui était donné, non pas tous bas, mystérieusement, comme une indulgence dont le roi lui-même avait honte, mais hautement, mais publiquement. Qui oserait reprocher quelque chose à celle qui allait se présenter à la postérité, doublement couronnée et de l'auréole du martyre et du pardon de son époux? Elle sentit cela ; elle comprit qu'à partir de ce moment elle était forte devant l'histoire; mais elle n'en devint que plus faible en face de celui qu'elle aimait si tard, sentant bien qu'elle ne l'avait point aimé assez. (VI, 248-249) [282]

Again, while her husband's forgiveness marks a total justification for Dumas's Marie-Antoinette, Dumas only allows this change to occur after Marie-Antoinette suffers greatly at the hands of the passionate revolutionaries. Indeed, if she had not lived at this particular moment in history, it is questionable if the frivolous, selfish, manipulative and vengeful woman who dominated the majority of Dumas's series, would have ever repented of her wrongs. Dumas prefigures what Zweig would advocate nearly a century later: it was the events of the Revolution and how they have been recorded in history that made Marie-Antoinette commendable, and not her own morality and greatness. "Peu avant que la forme humaine ne se brise, le chef-d'œuvre impérissable est achevé, car à la dernière heure de sa vie, à la toute dernière heure, Marie-Antoinette, nature moyenne atteint au tragique et devient égale à son destin" (Zweig, 9).[283]

[282] Thus, she would die peacefully, the poor royal Madeleine; her love for the king, as late as it came, accorded to her divine and human mercy. His forgiveness, he had given to her, not quietly, mysteriously, as if the king had something to be ashamed of, but publically. Who would dare to reproach the Queen who would present herself to posterity crowned not only with the halo of a martyr, but also with the forgiveness of her spouse? She felt this; she understood that from this moment forward she would be strong in the face of History; but she only became weaker in front of this man whom she loved too late, feeling that she had not loved him enough.

[283] Just before her human body was destroyed, the eternal masterpiece was completed. Because, in the last hour of her life, at her very last hour, Marie-Antoinette, a woman of average nature, reached tragedy and became equal to her destiny (9).

Not only was the revolutionaries' treatment of the monarchs deplorable in Dumas's eyes, he also saw the regicide as a huge mistake. Thus, the final way in which Dumas critiques the Restoration, is to attack the idea that the king and queen were martyrs. Rather, he shows how excessive revolutionary passion caused revolutionaries to commit their gravest mistake. For Dumas, by killing the king and queen the revolutionaries had given royalists a powerful weapon. In 1958, Stanley Mellon wrote that since the beginning of the Restoration, the regicide had been "a ready-made scapegoat through which the entire Revolution can be assailed […] a powerful weapon in the hands of the Conservatives, a weapon which they never relinquished" (Mellon, 37). Dumas, who had experienced the Restoration first hand, understood that the Conservative writers of the Restoration had wanted "their countrymen to equate the Revolution with regicide" and that they had attempted to use this "unanswerable argument" as a means to erase the significance of the event (37). In *La Comtesse de Charny*, therefore, Dumas shows his disapproval – albeit through hindsight – that it was the Revolutionary mistake of regicide that had made the Restoration's rhetoric of martyrdom possible. He again uses Gilbert, the doctor-*philosophe*, to explain:

> Un meurtre de sang-froid, ce n'est pas un jugement ; c'est une immolation. Vous venez de donner à la royauté quelque chose du martyre, à la justice, quelque chose de la vengeance. […] nous venons d'aliéner de nous pour cinquante ans, pour cent ans peut-être, cette immense partie de la population qui juge les révolutions avec le cœur. Ah ! croyez-moi, mon ami, ce sont les républicains qui doivent le plus déplorer le sang de Louis XVI ; car ce sang retombera sur eux, et leur coutera la République. (VI, 273) [284]

[284] A murder in cold blood is not a judgment, it's a sacrifice. You have just given a martyr to the royalty. You have just given Justice something to avenge. […] Oh! Believe me, my friend. It is the republicans who should fear the blood of Louis XVI the most, because this blood will come back to haunt them and will cost them the Republic!

Dumas had, throughout the entire series, used his romantic style to reveal flaws of the monarchy. In the final pages of *La Comtesse de Charny*, Dumas used Count Cagliostro's words, to reiterate that he believed France did the right thing to abolish the despot monarchy and move in a more moderate direction. They had done the wrong thing, however, by killing Louis XVI after letting him sit in prison for so long.

> Vous aviez condamné le roi, vous auriez eu raison. Vous avez condamné l'homme, vous avez eu tort! Il fallait tuer le roi, comme était à Versailles ou aux Tuileries, inconnu au peuple. […] Mais, après l'avoir laissé cinq mois au Temple, en communication avec tous, mangeant devant tous, dormant sous les yeux de tous, camarade du prolétaire, de l'ouvrier, du marchand […] il fallait le traiter en homme, c'est-à-dire, le bannir ou l'emprisonner. […] Pendant ces cinq mois de captivité, on vous le montre dans ce qu'il a de touchant, d'innocent, de respectable ; on vous le montre le bon époux, bon père, homme bon. (VI, 274) [285]

Jules Michelet argued similarly in his lengthy historical work, *L'Histoire de la Révolution Française*, which was published nearly simultaneously with Dumas's fictional series, the principles of 1789 had been commendably "imbued with love for humanity" and making human life sacred (Dunn, 281).[286] However, for Michelet the regicide was proof that the "young inexperienced nation, facing astonishing hurdles, sacrificed its concept of justice and yielded to expediency and fear. In one swift jump, the men of the Revolution had passed from humanity to

[285] If you had condemned the king, you would have been right, but you condemned the man, [so] you were wrong! You needed to kill the king as he was at Versailles or at the Tuileries, unknown to the people. […] But, after having left him in the Temple prison for five months, speaking with everyone, eating in front of everyone, sleeping in plain sight of everyone, friend of the commoner, of the factory worker, of the merchant […], after that, you needed to treat him like a man, meaning you should have banished him or imprisoned him. […] During those five months of captivity we only saw that which was touching, innocent and respectable. We saw the good spouse, the good father, the good man.

[286] Michelet's *Histoire* was published from1848 until 1853.

barbarism" (quoted in Dunn, 281). Dumas demonstrates a similar belief in his Marie-Antoinette series. He was *not* in favor of the Restoration of the monarchy – either for the return of the Bourbons to the throne, or even just the rehabilitation of their reputation. However, for Dumas, by killing Louis and Marie-Antoinette, the revolutionaries had made a martyr out of the royalty, erasing the crimes for which they were executing them. For Dumas, it was indeed the horrible end to which the king and queen met that led to their idealized and nearly worshiped reputation during the Restoration. Thus, Dumas did not recreate the martyrdom of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette in order to awe his readers, but rather to show how and why they had come to be viewed as such.

In his Marie-Antoinette series, Dumas did what he is known for: he took a moment from French history, and using the "historical sources" he had access to, he constructed an exciting fictional narrative to add meat to the skeleton of history. Dumas, unlike other writers we have seen and will still see, was not writing to rehabilitate the queen's image. As Stephan Zweig would do years later, Dumas represented Marie-Antoinette as being nothing out of the ordinary. While Dumas does speak about and combat certain Marie-Antoinette stereotypes, showing that she was not always what rumor said she was, his representation at its conclusion moves beyond neither those found in slanderous Revolutionary pamphlets nor those in idealized Restoration literature. Instead, it was the events around her – the History – that made her great, and it was only in her suffering that Marie-Antoinette, for Alexandre Dumas, became worthy of writing about. For Dumas, Marie-Antoinette was not a goddess, a monster, a victim or a martyr. Rather, she was a useful piece through which he could portray the real main character of his story: the historical process. Furthermore, by ingeniously combing historical sources with his own fictional narrative, Dumas was able to give his opinion about the revolution and the restoration. Exposing

the faults of both, and using Marie-Antoinette's character as a means to do so, Dumas was able to represent the power of the historical process.

Chapter 5: Marie-Antoinette in historical biographies from the 1850s

The myth of the real queen

"…neither history nor literature offers a terra firma from which the other can be securely surveyed" – Lionel Gossman, *Between History and Literature.*[287]

After Dumas depicted a fictive Marie-Antoinette in his romantic revolutionary series, the remainder of Marie-Antoinette representations in the nineteenth century were marked by new attempts to write strictly historical accounts of her life.[288] Based on changes in historical and fictional writing alike, authors writing about Marie-Antoinette in the second half of the nineteenth century attempted to correct established myths by veering away from Romanticism's grand emotions and use of the supernatural. Yet even though the influence of new literary and historical movements from the nineteenth century was apparent in these mid-century works, the queen still closely resembled the Marie-Antoinette from earlier writings influenced by Romanticism and traditional research methods of historiography.

This tension between old and new ways of writing was not surprising considering the same tendencies existed in the political and social realm of France at that time. France was now under the rule of the Second Empire, which having begun in 1851 would last until 1870. Having once again created a strong centralized government, Napoleon III, reformed education, revalorized the arts and transformed the face of Paris into the new modern capital of commerce, industrialization, architecture and science. This push towards "modernity", although positive, was causing some authors and historians to reassess the past and thus perpetuate it in their works. So, while they were affected by new modes of writing and attempted to portray a more realistic

[287] Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1990, page 3.
[288] The *Bibliographie de l'histoire de Paris pendant la Révolution Française*, by Maurice Tourneux, lists 341 works about Marie-Antoinette between approximately 1770 and 1900. According to the dates Tourneux gives, 125 of these were published between the years 1845-1900, and most of these claimed the status of historical accounts.

and scientific account of Marie-Antoinette's life, they were still influenced by the nostalgia of Romanticism, their own protective emotions in regards to the former queen, and their lingering sympathies for the monarchy. All of these influences combined in works about Marie-Antoinette from the 1850s to create yet another constructed identity for the former queen of France: a real Marie-Antoinette who was used to valorize new modes of historical thinking and writing. The writers discussed in this chapter based their portraits of the queen on what they believed was more reliable material - smaller, more familiar, more "everyday" details and even items they could touch. They also emphasized the underlying reasons which had determined the fate of Marie-Antoinette. Using this new detailed-orientated focus, these later authors continued to claim a commitment to truth based on historical fact and evidence. This chapter will reveal however, that the "real" Marie-Antoinette, although slightly different than former literary and historical portraits, continued to display characteristics from her former constructed personalities. In addition, a scrutinized study of these authors own detail-oriented research method will demonstrate that their "real" accounts, were in fact based on the same sources that former historians and writers of fiction had used, even as they committed themselves to seeking out more "authentic" material in order to represent Marie-Antoinette's life with more exactness. *Louis XVII sa vie, son agonie, sa mort* by Alcide de Beauchesne (1852), *Histoire de Marie-Antoinette* by brothers Jules and Edmond Goncourt (1858), and *Marie-Antoinette et la Révolution française* by Horace Viel-Castel (1859) demonstrate well this tension between old and new ways of writing.

Realism, Naturalism and Historiography in the nineteenth century

As discussed in Chapter four, Romanticism dominated French literature during the first half of the nineteenth century. The principle years of French Romanticism are often said to be from

1820 until around 1843. Dumas's Marie-Antoinette series (1845-1853) appeared just around the time when new literary styles began to dominate French literature, although the popularity of his series does not suggest in any way that Romanticism was "out".[289] One of the new styles which developed in the second half of the nineteenth century is known today as Realism.

Realism rejected the abstract and often supernatural ideals which had dominated the Romantic Movement. Posing as the contrary of its preceding literary movement, Realism was the art of representing things as they really are, and thus primarily focused on the detailed description of ordinary, familiar, and even mundane aspects of everyday life. Realist writers maintained that the close observation and description of its subjects were those that could best represent reality. In fiction, this led authors such as Honoré de Balzac and Gustave Flaubert to write about contemporary subjects from the lower and middle classes of society, rather than describing the imagined lives of aristocrats who had lived in centuries past as many Romantic authors had done.[290] In historical studies, the focus of this chapter, the realist movement can also be seen in the *way* in which historians researched their historical subjects. Rather than only using previously published sources for their acclaimed historical works, historians influenced by realism began considering *all* documents available to them. In other words, the written word or the spoken eye-witness account were no longer the only "proofs" worth the historian's consideration. Rather, historians began observing "items" which had once belonged to their subjects. Anything was possible: hair clippings; dishes; furniture; etc. Remy de Gourmont, in his *Revue des revues,* had called this practice "creating history using the rejects of history" (August

[289] See Martyn Lyon's chapter, "Les best-sellers", in *Le Triomphe du Livre* (see works cited).
[290] Honoré de Balzac is not considered a full realist, but is often said to have been a bridge between Romanticism and Realism. He had begun experimenting with Realism in his *Comédie Humaine* as early as 1829 by focusing on simple and contemporary subjects as well as concrete objects. However because his texts still included a narrator who voiced personal opinion and emotions, many are an amalgam of both Romanticism and Realism.

1, 1896, 207). In short, historians sought sources which had been overlooked or even rejected as significant by previous historians.

Ironically, the Romantic historical novels of Walter Scott had included traces of Realism and this new type of realist historiography.

> The old historiography, whether of the ancient narrative kind or of the more recent philosophical sort cultivated by the philosophes, had dealt in types and abstractions; the new would depict the rich textures of everyday life, the passions of living men and women, and the customs and atmospheres of specific periods of cultural life. Here the model was the novelist Scott, [who was] regarded as both the supreme exponent of the 'imaginative' method of historical reconstruction and the practitioner of a distinctively modern mode of narrative representation. (White, "Romantic Historiography", 634)

However, very much *unlike* Walter Scott and other romantic artists, authors and historians in the second half of the nineteenth century sought above all else to present their stories without adding any personal interest. They denied that their emotions had an effect on their stories, and, in the interest of objectivity, they claimed to remain completely "out of the text". Gustave Flaubert's 1856 serial novel publication of *Madame Bovary* is today cited as the best example of the realist style. This was obviously different from the Romantic Movement whose fictional authors like Dumas, and historical authors like Lafont d'Aussonne often included their personal opinion about the authors of their sources in their manuscripts. The lack of personal opinion, allowed realist authors and historians to claim they were writing the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth – at least as far as they could see.

Another literary movement, of the latter part of the century was Naturalism. Naturalism capitalized on the details that realism offered, revealing the underlying forces which influenced

or, more precisely, determined the actions of its subjects. Primary underlying forces were the heredity of the subject and their social conditions and environment – in other words, things that the subject could not control or choose. These forces were so strong that they determined the fate of the subject from the start, no matter what route the subject took in order to get there. Heredity, for example, determined the subject's natural instincts and reactions, and by logical extension, the subject's end. A naturalist writer, like the realist writer, maintained that they objectively presented the material, free from pre-conceived ideas as a scientist would do. While the father of Naturalism, Émile Zola, would later admit that no novel could be totally free from the bias of the author, it was indeed to this end that naturalist authors strived.

Literary and historical theorist Mark Lilla said, "commitment to seeing history as 'process' usually means that the account of origins will be tailored to make the present appear, if not foreordained, then at least anticipated from the outset.'" (cited in Roberts, *Historicism and Fascism,* 270). Indeed, latter nineteenth-century historians writing about Marie-Antoinette sought reasons to explain why Marie-Antoinette's life ended in the way that it did. For the author Dumas, the powerful force that had led to Marie-Antoinette's downfall had been the abstract idea of the historical process. The historians in this chapter, rather, attempt to find explainable, determining factors which had led to Marie-Antoinette's necessary end - whether it be due to the aristocratic ideas on generosity and goodness she had held since birth due to her family's influence, the selfish and corrupt environment of Versailles, the "vile" ideals of eighteenth-century *philosophes,* or the downfall of religion. In doing so, they did not question the idea of the unalterable course of history, but attempted to explain *why* history took the path that it did.

The work of German historian Leopold von Ranke (1795-1891), as early as 1824, challenged historians to write about periods of the past as they actually were and to avoid attempts of

"judging the past and of instructing the present for the benefit of future ages" (Ranke in de Groot, 33). In other words, Ranke's writings rejected the way Restoration historians had written – using a nation's history as a form of politics – and wanted to portray the past in a straightforward and honest manner. Ranke did not trust historical textbooks, but rather, his methodology insisted on the study of and the reliance on more "original sources" like eye-witness accounts. He believed that even when the strict presentation of facts was "contingent and unattractive", it was still undoubtedly "the supreme law" ("Leopold Von Ranke", 1). Ranke's view of historical research was thus very much similar to literary theories on Realism and Naturalism. Often referred to as the "founder of the science of history", Ranke's ideas, popular in the 1830s and 1840s in Germany, were by 1850, greatly affecting historians in France. The fact that France's *Archives Nationales*[291], which had been established in 1789, was growing more and more organized by the year contributed to historians' ability to follow Ranke's vision of historiography. [292]

Historians in the latter nineteenth-century claimed to be revealing the factual truth about Marie-Antoinette - neither a unique claim, nor a new one. Each author this study has already highlighted, even dating as far back as the anonymous authors of the revolutionary pamphlets, had claimed that their account was the absolute truth, without bias, and would only present readers with the facts. The difference in these later works lay in the way historians used archival

[291] National Archives

[292] See "Ideology, Practicality, and Fiscal Necessity: The Creation of the Archives Nationales and the Triage of Feudal Titles by the Agence Temporaire des Titres, 1789-1801" by Katherine Ly Cox, in which she says "On 29 July 1789, a mere two weeks after the storming of the Bastille, legislators of the National Assembly voted to create a repository that would house all documents produced by and relative to the operations of the new state. It was named the Archives of the National Assembly. Revolutionaries later adopted the name "Archives nationales" on 12 September 1790 after assuming custody of records created under the Old Regime. The law of 1790 further specified the internal organization of the Archives by outlining the qualifications and duties of the National Archivist, hours of operation, and the annual budget. On 27 December 1791, legislators designed a method for receiving, cataloging, and distributing records" (1).

evidence. The three authors discussed in this chapter capitalize on this method of recounting ordinary things to bring out the "real" in the life of Marie-Antoinette. None of the three succeed in being free from personal emotion, no matter what their claims. As Zola had admitted, no narrative can ever really be free from the author's opinion. Even Ranke had "occasionally adopt[ed] a literary approach in his writing of history that tend[ed] to build up to a presentation of historical climaxes [which…] add[ed] to the readability and the drama of Ranke's works ("Leopold von Ranke", 1). In this same way, each of these works, while written as a means to show the reliability of new ways of research and study, still include Romantic tendencies and historical research methods from the early part of the nineteenth-century. Each attempt of a "real" portrait of Marie-Antoinette demonstrates the authors' subscription to dominant nineteenth-century ways of thought while equally revealing the difficulty of these claims.

Marie-Antoinette's place in these histories

Louis XVII sa vie, son agonie et sa mort; Captivité de la Famille au temple[293], by Alcide-Hyacinthe du Bois de Beauchesne, was first published in 1852. Born in 1804 in Lorient, Beauchesne spent much of his adult life in Paris, where his various employments supported his growing interest in the history of France. He directed the Department of Fine Arts from 1825 to 1830, and then, for a time, directed a section of the French National Archives. From 1827 to 1830, he even served the Bourbons closely as one of the "king's gentlemen".[294] Beauchesne's writing reveals that the time he spent working closely with the Bourbons during Restoration France as well as his time in the nation's archives engrained in him a deep appreciation for the fallen Bourbons and motivated his initial quest for historical accuracy. Before he died in 1873,

[293] *The life, agony and death of Louis XVII; The Royal Family's captivity in the Temple*

[294] Biographies of Beauchesne say he served Louis XVIII as *gentilhomme du roi*, but then list the years served as 1827 to 1830. Louis XVIII died in 1824, and so if Beauchesne was indeed a king's gentleman from 1827 to 1830, he must have served under Charles X. (See "Beauchesne").

Beauchesne had amassed a valuable collection of artifacts, and had authored two royalist works, of which *Louis XVII* was the most well-known and acclaimed.[295]

Revealing of *Louis XVII's* immediate success is that the *Acadamie Française* gave it official recognition. Nineteen editions were published between 1852 and 1911. In 1897, *Louis XVII* encountered brief criticism from historian Gaston Lenotre who criticized Beauchesne's research methods as hasty.[296] Despite this, subsequent historians including the Goncourt brothers, Horace de Viel-Castel, Emile Campardon, and Carolyn Weber used Beauchesne's history as a source for their own historical studies. Most recently, *Louis XVII* received new public interest when Beauchesne's artifact collection was sold at a Parisian auction house in March 2015. At that time, art expert Cyrille Boulay labled Beauchesne as "le premier grand enquêteur civil sur la fin de la famille royale et notamment sur la mort de Louis XVII" (Prisme, 1).[297] Auctioneers advertized the sale as "the private collection of the author of *Louis XVII, sa vie, son agonie et sa mort"* and they valued each of the objects from 2000 to 5000 euros.

As is reflected in the title, this history was not a biography of Marie-Antoinette. Beauchesne focused on her second son, Louis-Charles, or Louis XVII, as considered by some after his father's execution and before his own death in prison. Beauchesne's work thus covers the period from the birth of Louis-Charles in 1785 to his death ten years later.[298] The simplicity of his

[295]Beauchesne's collection included items such as: a page of the dauphin's homework; a fragment of a sheet on which Marie-Antoinette slept; one of Marie-Antoinette's hand-written letters; and even a few locks of hair from royal family members (Drouot Presse, 1). A second Beauchesne auction was held in September 2015 by the same auction house. Beauchesne's other historical work was *Vie de M^me^ Elisabeth, sœur de Louis XVI*, published in 1870.
[296] Lenotre blamed Beauchesne in particular for the persistent belief of two faulty claims: the floorplan of the Temple prison (Lenotre, 33) and the mistaken identity of the municipal guard Drouot (46). The public had accepted Beauchesne's version until 1897 at which time Lenotre changed the story claiming yet again to reveal the *real* truth.
[297] ...was the first great civil researcher on the end of the royal family and especially on the death of Louis XVII.
[298] The first volume is 491 pages and covers the time from the birth of Louis-Charles until the regicide of King Louis XVI. The second volume is 493 pages and starts just after the King's death, tells of the separation of Louis-Charles from his mother, and finishes with the demolition of the Temple prison after the young man has died and his sister has been released.

subject - whose life he likens to the fleeting existence of a flower - is indeed the first revelation of Beauchesne's naturalist literary style. "Je ne sais quel savant botaniste a consacré tout un livre à raconter la vie, les mœurs, les habitudes d'une toute petite fleur, au milieu des immenses sujets que lui présentait le règne de la nature à laquelle elle appartenait. Le Dauphin de France a été pour moi cette petite fleur au milieu des immenses événements de la révolution" (6).[299] For Beauchesne, it was not the grand figures of the revolution who merited hours of research in the national archives, but indeed, the youngest victim of the violence of the revolution. The simplicity of the dauphin and his story held more significance for Beauchesne than the complicated biographies of other Revolutionary figures.

Although Beauchesne used significant historical moments of the Revolution to entitle his chapters, for example, the October days, the flight to Varennes, the family's move to the Temple, etc., he does not consecrate much time discussing the details of these historical events. Rather, the body of his text focuses on intimate moments the royal family spent together, i.e. their "mundane" daily life. This was a conscious decision on the part of the author: "On m'excusera, donc si je passe avec légèreté sur des actes importants pour m'arrêter gravement sur des actes légers et éphémères. Simple narrateur de ce que j'ai recueilli, je n'ai point cherché le mouvement dramatique et les effets pittoresques" (I, 7).[300] By recounting the daily activities of the royal family and focusing on details which before had been deemed unimportant, Beauchesne hoped to give a more authentic and realistic portrait of his subjects.

[299] I do not know which botanist dedicated a whole book to tell of the life, the morals, and the habits of a certain tiny flower in the middle of the immense subject of the reign of nature to which this flower belonged which was presented to him. The *dauphin* of France was, for me, this little flower in the middle of the immense events of the Revolution.

[300] You will excuse me if I quickly pass over the important events in order to stop and consider at length the less serious and fleeting events. I am simply narrating what I discovered, and I was not at all looking for dramatic movement and special effects.

Beauchesne relies heavily on the documents from at least four different archival collections.[301] Each volume of *Louis XVII* is accompanied with twenty to thirty pages of "pièces justificatives" – copies of documents that Beauchesne found in these collections. He includes records and registries of the Commune, the police department, the Revolutionary Tribunal, the *Hôtel de Ville*, and even jailor's books from the Conciergerie and Temple prisons. He also includes smaller pieces that had been discovered during the revolution (for example, a note supposedly discovered in the Princess de Lamballe's pocket the day she was massacred) and letters written by Louis XVI, Marie-Antoinette and Madame Elisabeth to friends and family members. He uses the memoires of Cléry, Hue, Turgy, Malesherbes, Chauveau-Lagarde, Abbé Ferrand (Elisabeth's priest), the municipal guard Drouot, and even those of Madame Royale. Apparently, Beauchesne also sought out interviews with eye-witnesses. Boulay noted that "De plus, pendant vingt années, il a enquêté auprès des ultimes témoins de cette époque […] et a collecté partout les témoignages de nombreuses sources pour aboutir à la publication d'un livre sur cette enquête" (Prisme, 1).[302] Finally, his artifact collection, mentioned earlier, reveals Beauchesne's reliance on ordinary, familiar, "everyday" objects. Because of his closeness to what he considered authentic material, Beauchesne claims: "Je me trouve donc en position d'exposer après une enquête personnelle et avec certitude la moindre circonstance des événements que je raconte. J'apporterai dans mon récit la plus exacte impartialité, m'abstenant de rien hasarder de douteux, mais résolu à dire ce que je crois vrai" (5).[303]

[301] According to his footnotes, Beauchesne uses documents from the following collections: *Archives nationales de France; Archives de Paris; Archives de Versailles;* and *Archives de l'Empire*
[302] What is more, for 20 years, he attempted to speak to the last witnesses of the era […] and he collected from everywhere testimonies from numerous sources in order to succeed in publishing a book about his research.
[303] I find myself, after having done personal research, in a position to expose with certainty even the least of the events that I describe here. I will bring the full impartiality to my tale. Abstaining from anything that is by chance or doubtful, I am resolved to say [only] that which I believe is true.

In accordance with the move away from romantic history and a new emphasis on archival sources, Beauchesne thus claimed to be writing an authentic history. His methods differ from previous authors from this study, but his claims do not. "Je laisserai parler les faits, les faits parlent trop haut pour que j'y puisse rien ajouter avec le vain murmure de mon opinion ; je n'ai point à accuser, je n'ai point à maudire ; je raconterai les choses et je montrerai les hommes (8-9).[304] Beauchesne cited his reliance on archival sources as assurance that his account was as historically accurate as possible. He even claimed that he had not exhausted all of his proof when he said, "mes mains restent pleines de documents officiels, presque tous inédits, et qui viendraient au besoin confirmer la scrupuleuse exactitude de mon récit" (8).[305] He thus attempted to use the story of Marie-Antoinette and her son to demonstrate how reliance on these authentic sources could indeed reveal the truth.

However, a closer reading of *Louis XVII* reveals repetitions of the established myths which had persisted throughout the century. First of all, Beauchesne's footnotes reveal a heavy reliance on more than just "authentic" documents and material. He often cited information taken from previously written histories, such as: *Vie du jeune Louis XVII* (Antoine Blanchard, 1818); *Mémoires historiques sur Louis XVII* (Jean Eckard, 1817); and *Histoire de l'évènement de Varennes* (Raymond de Sèze, 1843), which were themselves hardly free of bias. For example, in 1817, Jean Eckard dedicated his *Mémoires historiques sur Louis XVII, roi de France et de Navarre* to "her royal highness" the newly restored Marie-Thérèse.[306] Also revealing of his probable royalist sympathies is Eckard's full title "chevalier de l'ordre royal de la légion

[304] I will let the facts speak, and they will speak so much that I will not be able to add anything that even remotely resembles my own opinion. I have nothing to accuse, I have nothing to curse. I will tell the things, and I will show the men.
[305] …my hands remain full of official documents, almost all of which are unedited and which would confirm the scrupulous exactness of my tale if necessary.
[306] This publication was by H. Nicholle.

d'honneur".[307] Since Beauchesne bases many of his facts on this material, his history reflects royalist opinions of the past.

Louis XVII includes repetitions of the myth of Marie-Antoinette that had existed since the moment she arrived in France. First of all, Beauchesne strongly refutes the myth of the monster queen from revolutionary literature. In order to do so, he first employs the direct contradiction method as Montjoye and Cléry had done in the early years after the Revolution. To show that Marie-Antoinette was not the *Autrichienne* of the pamphlets, concerned with the demise and destruction of France, Beauchesne highlights with what fervor she educated her son, the future king of France. "Elle ne perdait jamais de vue ses enfants; […] c'est en sa présence qu'ils recevaient les leçons de leurs différents maîtres" (I, 38-39).[308] Not only did she make certain the future king of France received the best instruction, but Marie-Antoinette purposely chose *French* literature as the main facet of her son's education. "Elle lui lisait ou lui faisait lire […] ces fables charmantes à la fois et profondes que le genie de la Fontaine, le talent de Perrault et de Berquin ont mis à la portée de l'enfance" (I, 25).[309] Beauchesne's Marie-Antoinette even defends *herself* against the Austrian Woman identity the French had given her. "Vous m'appelez *l'Autrichienne ;* mais je suis la femme du Roi de France ; je suis la mère du Dauphin ; je suis Française par tous mes sentiments d'épouse et de mère. Jamais je ne reverrai le pays où je suis née ! Je ne puis être heureuse ou malheureuse qu'en France " (I, 160).[310]

[307] "Knight of the royal section of the legion of honor"
[308] She never let her children out of her sight…they received lessons from every subject in her presence.
[309] She read to him, or had him read to her […] charming yet profound children's fables written by the genius and talent of Fontaine, Perrault, and Berquin.
[310] "You call me the Austrian Woman: but I am the wife of the King of France. I am the mother of the Dauphin. I am French by all my feelings as a wife and a mother. I will never see the country where I was born again! I can only be happy or sad in France.

To refute the myth of *La Messaline Modèrne,* Beauchesne first highlights the queen's commitment to her husband and children. During the preparations for the escape attempt, the marquis de Bouillé suggested that Marie-Antoinette and the dauphin escape alone. Beauchesne recounts that the queen's answer had been "Si l'on veut nous sauver, il faut que ce soit tous ensemble, ou pas du tout" (I, 75-76).[311] In addition, unlike Dumas who had capitalized on ever-increasing rumors of Marie-Antoinette's extra-marital relationship with Count Fersen in order to construct the entire fictional intrigue of three of his Revolutionary novels, Beauchesne only mentioned Fersen on four pages of text (I, 81-85). Fersen's role in Beauchesne's account was limited to only an ally in the attempted escape. As soon as the plan failed, Fersen "prit congé du Roi; il rentra dans Paris, d'où il repartit le même jour pour Bruxelles" (I, 85).[312] Beauchesne's very limited and insignificant mention of Fersen reveals the author's disagreement with the myth of *Messaline.*

Madame Déficit also underwent transformation in Beauchesne's account. Instead of a libertine engaging in the many frivolities and distractions at Versailles, the royalist author claims that "Dans un temps où la calomnie la représentait comme livrée entièrement aux plaisirs et aux distractions frivoles, Marie-Antoinette consacrait la plus grande partie de la journée à ses devoirs de mère" (I, 38).[313] Standing in stark contrast to *Madame Déficit*, Marie-Antoinette never missed a chance to teach her son the joy of charity. "Toujours prête à mettre l'exemple à l'appui du précepte, une misère, une infortune ne lui était point signalée sans qu'elle envoyât un secours, une consolation. Elle faisait participer son fils à ses bonnes œuvres, et vis-à-vis des pauvres des

[311] If you want to save us, it has to be all of us together or not at all.
[312] …took his leave from the King and returned to Paris from where he left the same day for Brussles.
[313] In a time when slander represented her as completely dedicated to pleasure and frivolous distractions, Marie-Antoinette spent most of her time being a mother.

hôpitaux et vis-à-vis des pauvres bien plus misérables encore… " (I, 65).[314] Marie-Antoinette's generous nature was indeed a trait which had always been remarked, but focusing on it to the exclusion of other less appealing traits reveals a sympathetic slant to most of the works this study has highlighted, and Beauchesne's *Louis XVII* was not an exception to the rule.

Perhaps the greatest juxtaposition Beauchesne makes between his version of Marie-Antoinette and the monster queen from the Revolutionary pamphlets is in his refutation of *Madame Veto*, the woman who dissimilated her evil actions, manipulated her husband, and tried to undermine his authority. Beauchesne's Marie-Antoinette was not inclined to act in secret. When the royal family was housed in the Tuileries, and their ministers refuse to let angry members of the populace enter the palace, Beauchesne insists that "le roi et la reine veulent que l'accès du palais reste ouvert à tous" (I, 49).[315] Secondly, Beauchesne's Marie-Antoinette supports her husband at all times, even publically declaring her shared sentiments. "Je partage […] tous les sentiments du Roi; je m'unis de cœur et d'esprit à tout ce que lui dicte son amour pour ses peuples" (I, 54).[316] She refuses to be separated from him, even in his gravest moments of danger. "La Reine […] ne résiste plus au besoin de partager les périls que ces cris [contre le roi] lui signalent. En vain on lui rappelle que si elle est épouse, elle est mère. […] 'On ne m'empêchera pas d'aller à ma place, s'écrie-t-elle; 'personne ne m'arrêtera'" (I, 156).[317] Finally, when verbally attacked by the "calomnies odieuses[318]" of one of the deputies of the people, the queen allows her husband to stand up for her and defend her against the insults. As a defense,

[314] Always ready to be an example of charity, Marie-Antoinette never saw a person in need or misfortune without sending that person help or consolation. She made her son participate in these good deeds, towards both the less fortunate patients in the hospitals and the even more miserable poverty stricken citizens.
[315] …the king and the queen want everyone to have open access to the palace.
[316] I share […] all of the king's feelings. I fully support him and everything he does for love of his people.
[317] The Queen […] could no longer resist the need to share the imminent danger that the yelling [at the king] suggested. In vain, they tried to remind her that if she is a spouse, she is also a mother. […] "No one can stop me from being where I belong", she cried, "No one can stop me".
[318] hideous slander

Louis highlighted the harmonious way in which he and his wife work together. "'Vous vous trompez', dit le Roi, 'la Reine et moi, nous n'avons pas les intentions que l'on nous prête; nous agissons de concert et dans la seule vue du bien public'" (I, 49).[319]

Beauchesne even refutes the harmful hypothesis that Dumas proposed in his Marie-Antoinette series when he maintained that Marie-Antoinette only became admirable amidst her suffering. On the contrary, according to Beauchesne: "Ce ne fut pas seulement aux jours du péril et du Malheur que se montrèrent les touchantes qualités de Marie-Antoinette. Elle n'avait pas encore subi aucun outrage des hommes ni du sort, tout était encore bonheur autour d'elle, et déjà son âme était l'asile des plus sérieuses pensées et des plus généreux sentiments" (I, 40).[320] Likewise, the queen's generosity did not suddenly appear when she was suffering. "Le goût de la bienfaisance avait précédé chez la Reine les désenchantements de la vie. Cette vertu aumônière était un besoin de son cœur ; elle était le premier instinct de son âme et non le fruit tardif du malheur" (121-122).[321] Indeed as Montjoye had pointed out in *Histoire,* and as Campan had maintained, Marie-Antoinette was an admirable woman long before she knew great suffering.

Not only does *Louis XVII* refute myths from revolutionary literature, but it employs Restoration rhetoric as well, by praising the Bourbons, highlighting Marie-Antoinette's ideal nineteenth-century characteristics, and finally, transforming her into a martyr. Echoing his own experience to time spent with the Bourbons, Beauchesne claims that "Le contact avec les Bourbons a, dans les temps de discordes, enchaîne à leur cause plus d'un ennemi" (119).[322] It

[319] "You are mistaken", said the King. "The Queen and I never had the intentions that you are saying we did. We always act in accordance with and *only* in accordance with what is good for the public."
[320] It was not only during the days of peril and Unhappiness that Marie-Antoinette's touching characteristics showed. Even before she had experienced any type of man's contempt, and when everything around her was still marked by happiness, her soul was a place of the most generous feelings and serious thoughts.
[321] The need to do good [towards others] had preceded the downfall of the Queen. The virtue of charity was one of her heart's needs. It was her soul's first instinct, and not the later fruit of unhappiness.
[322] In a time of dissension, contact with the Bourbons had caused more than one of their enemies to take up their cause.

was indeed the greatness of this family and their exceptional behavior which turned even the hardest of hearts, as in the case of Antoine Barnave. Barnave was a dedicated member of the Revolutionary Commune who spent several days in a carriage with the royal family after having been chosen to return them to Paris after their failed escape attempt. These five days of intimate contact with the Bourbons had a lasting effect. "Si Barnave n'eut point vu de près Louis XVI et Marie-Antoinette, il eut sans doute joué dans la révolution un tout autre rôle. […] Ce qui fit Barnave royaliste, ce fut d'avoir lu dans les yeux humides d'une belle Reine l'inquiétude et la prière ; ce fut d'avoir tenu entre ses genoux l'héritier du trône de tant de rois et d'avoir joué avec les boucles blondes de ses cheveux" (119-120).[323]

Similar to Restoration texts, Beauchesne highlights the characteristics in Marie-Antoinette that were in line with the ideal nineteenth-century woman. Although he writes the story of the young dauphin, he emphasizes Marie-Antoinette's role as a mother. In his writings, Rousseau had maintained that a woman's only place was in the home, where she could carry out her supreme duty as a mother. Rousseau's theories on the mother's power, which had marked Bourbon Restoration literature, was still making an appearance in this mid-century work. Beauchesne's extreme focus on Marie-Antoinette's motherhood appears to be strongly informed by Rousseau's idea of an ideal woman. For Beauchesne, the mother had almost a magical influence over her son. "…son indocilité cessait à la vue de sa mère. C'est qu'il trouvait en elle l'ascendant de l'autorité aussi bien que l'influence de l'affection. Aussi avait-il pour elle amour et respect. Cette haute et tendre institutrice savait façonner son caractère, rectifier ses défauts en même temps que

[323] If Barnave had not seen Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette so intimately, he would no doubt have played a totally different role in the revolution. […] That which transformed Barnave into a royalist was when he saw worry and prayer in the Queen's eyes, and when the dauphin, the heir to the throne of so many kings, sat on his lap and he played with his blond curls.

lui épargner des peines" (25).[324] At times, listening to the sweet voice of Marie-Antoinette, would even put the young dauphin into a dreamlike trance. "Ce couplet et ces paroles […] chantés avec âme avaient remué vivement le cœur du Dauphin, qui, silencieux et immobile dans son petit fauteuil, était tout yeux et tout oreilles à côté du clavecin" (I, 26).[325] When Elisabeth remarks that the young man is sleeping, the child replies incredulously, "Ah ! Ma chère tante, peut-on dormir quand on entend maman Reine ?" (I, 26).[326] After her imprisonment, Beauchesne tells how Marie-Antoinette was happy to be able to finally focus completely on her children's education. One of the most important lessons the former aristocrat taught her children created a curious admixture of the Restoration ideal of religion, the Protestant ethic of hard work and the Rousseauian ideal of the simple life. "Oui, mes enfants, soyez toujours laborieux et toujours unis! Le travail vous sera une consolation, votre tendresse mutuelle un appui, et la prière presque une espérance: Travail, amour et prière, mes enfants, voilà la vie ! " (I, 236).[327]

Beauchesne emphasizes that Marie-Antoinette maintained her faith in God even amidst great suffering. "La chute est honorable et belle, quand on tombe avec ses croyances: la foi monarchique eut ses martyrs" (II, 185-186). [328] His account manifests Marie-Antoinette's great faith when he recounts the bedtime prayers of the dauphin, which are carefully observed and instructed by his mother (I, 233). For Beauchesne, there was even evidence enough to support the idea that Marie-Antoinette had received a final communion from Charles Magnin.[329] Finally,

[324] "…his misbehavior would stop when he caught sight of his mother. He saw in her an authority figure as well as the hand of affection. He had for her both love and respect. This high and tender teacher knew how to form his character, to rectify his defaults and at the same time to save him from his sorrow.
[325] This verse and these words [….] sun with so much love had greatly stirred the dauphin's heart, and he was silent and immobile in his little chair, totally transfixed next to the piano.
[326] Oh! My dear aunt, can anyone sleep when my mother, the Queen, is singing?
[327] Yes, my children, always be hard-working and united. Work will be your consolation, your mutual tenderness will be your support, and prayer will be your hope. Work, love and prayer, my children, these things are life!
[328] The fall is honorable and beautiful when you fall with the faith that the queen had: the faith of the monarchists had its martyrs.
[329] This will be further discussed in Chapter six.

when standing before the scaffold, Marie-Antoinette's innocent conscience makes her experience only one emotion: pity for her those who persecuted her. "Mais la royale condamnée vêtue de blanc comme jadis les martyres de la foi chrétienne, les mains liées derrière le dos, est allée au supplice, sereine et magnanime, regardant avec calme et pitié le tumulte qui l'environnait" (II, 163).[330] Beauchesne's repetition of so many previously established myths thus weakens his attemps to highlight the reliability of his authentic sources.

A second historical biography, *Histoire de Marie-Antoinette* published in 1858 by brothers Edmond and Jules Goncourt, followed a slightly different approach from Beauchesne's *Louis XVII,* although it perpetuates the same myths found in previous nineteenth-century publications. Born in 1822, Edmond Goncourt and his brother Jules, eight years his junior, "formed a partnership that is possibly unique in literary history. Not only did they write all their books together, they did not spend more than a day apart in their adult lives, until they were finally parted by Jules's death in 1870" (Kirsh, 1). Edmond died many years later in 1896. The brothers wrote literature for many genres, but their biography of Marie-Antoinette stands out as one of their most complete works (Kopp, 717). Although the Goncourts wrote *Histoire* as part of a much larger work, in which they wrote several other portraits of women at court, as we will see, not one of these portraits held as much significance for them as the one of Marie-Antoinette. [331]

[330] But the condemned royalty dressed in white just like the ancient martyrs of the Christian faith, hands tied behind their backs, went to their torture, serene and magnanimous, looking at the chaos which surrounded them with calmness and pity.

[331] On April 27, 1853, the Goncourt brothers announced they would be writing a book of historical biographies entitited *Les Maîtresses de Louis XV* which, as its title suggest, was a portrait of Louis XV's mistresses. In his introduction to *Les Maîtresses,* author Robert Kopp tells us that this work as a whole would not appear until 1860**,** and in the meantime the brothers envisioned an even larger goal. They decided to write a *Histoire du plaisir sous la Terreur.* Although published out of order, in the end, the brothers did bring this idea to completion. The completed *Histoire du Plaisir* included: *l'Histoire des maîtresses de Louis XV* which takes the reader from 1730 to 1775; *l'Histoire de Marie-Antoinette* which covers from 1775 to the Revolution; *l'Histoire de la société française pendant la révolution* which focuses on material from 1789 to 1794; and finally *l'Histoire de la société française pendant le Directoire* which covers from 1794 to 1800. (See Goncourt and Kopp, 13) Other historical portraits of women at the court of Versailles by the Goncourts included the mistresses of Louis XV: La Duchesse de Chateauroux; Madame de Pompadour; and La du Barry. Although chronologically Marie-Antoinette follows the mistresses of Louis XV, the

Histoire's first publication in June 1858 was so successful that a second edition was published in January 1859. Five editions were published by 1879, the final edition directed by Edmond alone, because his brother had passed away in 1870. *Histoire* received a strong approval from other nineteenth-century authors who compared the Goncourts' representation of Marie-Antoinette with all of their other works. One critic, Armand de Pontmartin praised this work as being "sans doute la plus achevée des biographies publiées par les Goncourts"and "très supérieur à leurs autres ouvrages, et marque un pas décisive dans leur carrier littéraire" (Kopp, 717 ; 725).[332] Michelet's praise of the tedious amount of research and information found in the brothers' *Histoire* was their work's "consécration suprême"[333], even if he had opposing ideas in his conception of history (Kopp, 725). More recently, in his introduction to *Histoire,* author Richard Kopp says "Elle fut réimprimée une bonne douzaine de fois jusqu'à nos jours. Le livre a connu de nombreuses traductions […] elles aussi plus d'une fois réimprimées. Ainsi, *L'Histoire de Marie-Antoinette,* jusqu'aujourd'hui, est un des livres les plus répandus des frères Goncourt, notamment en France" (723).[334] Indeed, after its publication, the Goncourt's *Histoire* would be used and quoted later in the nineteenth century by historians Horace de Viel-Castel, and Emile Campardon, and in twentieth and twenty-first centuries by André Castelot, Antonia Fraser, Evelyn Lever, Chantal Thomas and Caroline Weber.

One of the Goncourt brothers' goals for the larger work in which Marie-Antoinette's story would fit [*Histoire du plaisir sous la Terreur*], is found in a journal entry which reveals their

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Goncourt brothers wrote about her first. The three other biographies of Louis XV's "favorites" were published two years later, in 1860.

[332] ...without a doubt the most complete of all biographies published by the Goncourt brothers; very superior to their other works and points to a decisive step in their literary career.

[333] Crowning achievement

[334] It has been republished a dozen times or more since its first publication. There have been a number of translations as well, and each of those has also been republished several times. Therefore, even until today, *Marie-Antoinette's History,* is one of the Goncourt brothers' most celebrated works in France.

realist approach to historiography. They wanted to "peindre la France, les mœurs, les âmes, la physionomie nationale, les couleurs des choses, la vie et l'humanité de 1789 à 1800" (*Journal I,* 1100, cited in Kopp, XIII-XIV). [335] The Goncourts ironically believed that the best way to show these "national characteristics" and "local color", was not through the story of a woman from the bourgeoisie, but rather, through the story of a queen, and in particular, of Marie-Antoinette. "Une reine, pour le peuple comme pour les gens éclairés et, mon Dieu, comme pour nous-mêmes, sera toujours plus qu'une femme ; Marie-Antoinette, aux malheurs égaux, parlera toujours plus qu'une bourgeoise à la mémoire des hommes" (*Journal* I, 426-427*,* cited in Kopp, 718).[336] The Goncourts, thus, chose Marie-Antoinette as the ultimate example of the effect of tumultuous times on an individual. She was to be used as their perfect picture of how outside forces could determine the course of a life.

However, their writing also reveals quite an emotional fascination with Marie-Antoinette, reflecting an attitude typical of writers of the Romantic era and thus revealing a tension between two opposing literary movements. "Il y avait enfin la reine, *qui effaçait toutes les femmes qui l'entourait* par sa personne, le charme […] par la voix, par l'esprit, […] que nul ne lui a rendu justice, et que tout l'ont diminué " (Goncourt, 811, my emphasis).[337] For the Goncourts, Marie-Antoinette was a victim, and as Marie-Antoinette's "knights in shining armor", they portrayed her as such in order to save her image (Kopp, 721).[338] "Que n'ont-ils fait pour mettre en valeur

[335] To paint a picture of France with all its values, its souls, its national characteristics, its local color, its life and its humanity from 1789 to 1800.
[336] A queen, for the people as well as for the enlightened, and my God, for us as well, will always be more than a woman; Marie-Antoinette, and her great misfortune, will always speak more to men's memories than a woman from the bourgeoisie.
[337] Finally, there was the queen *who erased all the women who surrounded her* with her personality, her charm […] with her voice, her spirit, […] which all have diminished and for which no one has given her justice.
[338] Robert Kopp calls the Goncourts "les chevaliers de Marie-Antoinette" ("Marie-Antoinette's knights in shining armor") himself, in his introduction to *Histoire* (721). Later, he mentions that in Sainte-Beuve's July 14, 1851 edition of *Causeries de lundi*, this author had also used the imagery of knights to speak of how the Goncourts dealt

son esprit, son ironie qui ne blesse jamais, sa gaieté, son espièglerie, son goût pour la musique (Gluck) et les lettres (Voltaire, l'*Encyclopédie*)" (720).[339] Still, for the Goncourts, Marie-Antoinette was an unfortunate woman who was at the wrong place at the wrong time, and they do indeed pass this message on to their readers. "Ils ne passent pourtant pas entièrement sous silence son imprudence et sa légèreté, mais ne sont-ce pas là des défauts de l'époque ?" (Kopp, 721).[340] Thus, the Goncourt brothers' *Histoire* reveals a tension between the opposing literary movements in the nineteenth century, making it difficult to say to which one it most closely resembles.

The Goncourts employed numerous and varied sources for *Histoire.* They selected their sources not only for historical accuracy, but also for how much these sources could be used to link their Marie-Antoinette story with "real life". They heavily relied on previously published histories. Of the authors from this study that the brothers cite several times are Montjoye, d'Aussonne and Beauchesne. In regards to the queen's last communion, the Goncourts make no mention of it except to confirm d'Aussonne's conclusion from his 1825 brochure that it never happened (958).[341] They also cite d'Aussonne's *Mémoires secrets* twelve times in their biography, and use his version of Rosalie's testimony. Information about Louis-Charles and Marie-Antoinette as a mother likewise, came mostly from Beauchesne's earlier account and Jean Eckard's 1817 account, which had been one of Beauchesne's most valuable sources. Other acclaimed historical works the Goncourts used heavily, include: *Mémoires historiques et politiques du règne de Louis XVI* by Soulavie (1801) ; *Mémoires secrets pour servir à l'histoire*

with Marie-Antoinette. "Il mentionne aussi la façon chevaleresque dont les auteurs défendent la réputation de la reine" ("He also mentioned the knightly way in which the authors defended the queen's reputation") (Kopp, 725).
[339] The brothers used all means possible to show the value of her spirit, her humor that never wounded, her gaiety, her mischief, [and] her taste for music and letters.
[340] They do not ignore her imprudence and frivolity, but were these not common flaws at the time?
[341] *Mémoires au Roi sur l'imposture et le faux material de la Conciergeire,* Paris, 1825.

de la république des lettres by L. Petit de Bachamont (1780) ; and *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire des événements de la fin du XVIIe siècle,* by Abbé Georgel (1817).[342] Among their archival sources for *Histoire,* can be found lists of royal expenditures, members of various groups, costume and furniture records, police reports and revolutionary interrogations. The brothers also spoke of a few paintings, and used many periodicals contemporary to the revolution. The most often cited include: *Journal de la Cour de la ville; Bulletin du tribunal criminal révolutionnaire;* and *Révolutions de Paris*.

The Goncourts also made heavy use of published memoirs. Unlike d'Aussonne or even Dumas who often criticized or questioned the authors of his sources, the Goncourts considered memoires as authentic documents from the past. They used unsparingly the anecdotes found within the memoires – even those memoires judged as falsified - in order to construct a narrative which offered a detailed account of Marie-Antoinette's daily activities and interesting new insight into her relationships.[343] Campan's *Mémoires* are used the most frequently, followed by Cléry's *Journal,* and then the memoires of Marie-Antoinette's foster brother Joseph Weber, and of the king's servant François Hue.[344]

In addition, the Goncourts used letters written by various members of the aristocracy. By far the two correspondences they used the most were those between Marie-Thérèse and Count

[342] The Goncourts used many other historical sources in their biography. The three names given here are a few of the sources they cited more than ten times, and meant only to serve as an example.

[343] This unsparing use of eye-witness accounts was another important part of their philosophy of history. Writers of 17th and 18th century memoires had believed they were recording facts for some future historian, and the Goncourt's confidence in these raw sources attest to their agreement with this belief. By using the eye-witness testimonies in detail, the brothers were able to demonstrate how certain individuals did or did not get along with Marie-Antoinette and how little or how much she trusted each of them. The brothers dissect her relationships with Madame du Barry, the royal aunts, her sisters-in-law, Clothilde and Elisabeth, her two brothers-in-law, Mesdames de Noailles, de Marsan, and de Lamballe, the Countess de Polignac and many more in a way that had never been done before. This detailed focus on Marie-Antoinette's individual relationships with various court members may seem tedious at times, but provides interesting insight into Marie-Antoinette's daily life and thus stays true to the brothers' realistic and naturalistic style.

[344] Once again, and for all other types of sources listed in this section, the Goncourts used a long list of sources – too long to list all of the titles. The titles given are meant only as an example.

Mercy-Argenteau and those between Count Mirabeau and his close friend Auguste Raymond d'Arenberg, the Count de La Marck.[345] In addition to using previously published correspondences, they credited themselves as being the first to publish some of the letters they used, including one which proved to them that the Duke d'Orléans had plotted against Marie-Antoinette (907), and another written by Marie-Antoinette herself to her brother, Leopold II, the emperor of Austria in 1791, in which she implored him for support (889). In fact, the brothers included several of the queen's letters in their biography. In this way, Marie-Antoinette's own voice and personality seemed to come to life in *Histoire* more than in any other previous publication. The use of memoirs and letters – more "intimate" sources than ever before used – allowed the Goncourts to render their *Histoire* true to "real life". [346]

One type of research for which the Goncourt brothers are particularly remembered is their use of sources that previous historians would have rejected. These items included things like gossip newspapers, pamphlets and brochures from the period, fashion advertisements, personal letters and secret memoires, decorative items and furniture, clothing and all sorts of daily objects. They firmly believed that " Un temps dont on n'a pas un échantillon de robe et un menu de dîner est un temps mort…[347]" (*Journal* I, 466, cited in Kopp XIV). This, perhaps more than anything else, demonstrates the Goncourts' commitment to portraying life as it actually was, and they

[345] Both of these correspondences had been previously published. According to the footnotes of this edition, *Correspondance entre le comte de Mirabeau et le comte de la Marck* had been published in 1851 by Adolphe de Bacourt, a former ambassador of France in Sardinia (Kopp, 720). The *Correspondance secrète entre Marie-Thérèse et le comte de Mercy-Argenteau,* is curiously listed in the footnotes (743) as not having been published until 1875, by M. d'Arneth and Geffroy, which is, of course, after the publication of the Goncourt's biography. An internet search for the original publication date of these correspondence revealed that there was a version of this correspondence published in 1851, also by Bacourt.

[346] It must be noted that the Goncourt brothers were innovative in their use of correspondence as an archival source. Their use of letters to find fact built a bridge between what came before them (the epistolary novel) and what would come later. Today, for example, it is common practice for historians to use correspondence to analyze an author's work. One example is Dacia Martin's work *Searching for Emma: Gustave Flaubert and* Madame Bovary, in which the author examines the role that Flaubert's correspondence with his mistress Louis Collet played in his writing of his character Emma Bovary.

[347] A time for which we do not have a dress sample or a dinner menu, is a dead time…

employed this method in their *Histoire.* Their research of *Petit Trianon* is perhaps most illustrative of their style. The brothers visited *Petit Trianon* regularly, even after their *Histoire* was published.[348] Their fascination with Marie-Antoinette's private residence rested in the many changes the queen had made to the place in order to make it especially hers, including "l'aménagement des jardins, le choix du mobilier, l'organisation de sa toilette, les robes et les coiffures qu'elle affectionne, les bijoux qu'elle porte, ce qu'elle offre à boire et à manger à ses invités, et, surtout, comment elle finance son train de vie. Il s'agit d'une véritable histoire de la vie quotidienne étayée d'innombrables documents (721).[349] Indeed, the personal touches Marie-Antoinette had added in order to make the little chateau truly the *domicile de la Reine* fascinated the Goncourt brothers. At *Petit Trianon* they were able to imagine the day to day activities of the queen and thus able to feel the closeness that authenticated their portrait of Marie-Antoinette.

Analysis of the brothers' writing style in *Histoire* cannot stop, however, at Realism. *Histoire* also exhibits strong facets of Naturalism as well, and most notably an emphasis on determinism. Similar to Dumas's series, *Histoire* perpetuated the idea that a silent yet strong and unavoidable force had been working against Marie-Antoinette since the beginning of her time in France. However, *unlike* Dumas, this force was not history, but rather the environment in which Marie-Antoinette found herself, over which she had no control. "…contre sa popularité, dans l'ombre, sans bruit, mais sans repos, se poursuivait l'œuvre de la haine et de destruction commencée le jour même où la dauphine avait quitté Vienne. Au-dessus de ses ennemis, Marie-

[348] "Ils retourneront plus d'une fois à Versailles et notamment au Trianon, un des buts favoris de leurs excursions hors de Paris, et ceci même après avoir publié leur livre" (Kopp, Introduction, 719). "They returned more than once to Versailles and especially to the Trianon, one of their favorite excursion destinations outside of Paris, even after their book had been published" (my translation).

[349] …the landscaping of the gardens, her choice of furniture, how she got ready in the morning, her dresses, the hairdos that she loved, the jewelry that she wore, what she offered her guests to eat and to drink, and especially how she paid for her lifestyle. Theirs is a true story of daily life supported by numerous documents.

Antoinette avait contre elle cette chose abstraite, aveugle, impitoyable, un principe: la politique de l'ancienne France" (756).[350]

The Goncourts highlight an example of this detrimental social environment on the young Marie-Antoinette, when they recount the young dauphine's first visit to Paris. Enchanted by the overwhelming welcome she received in the capital, Marie-Antoinette, who had for so long been neglected at Versailles, longs to return to the city again and again in order to re-experience this joy of being loved and popular (756).[351] The brothers show that in order to continue pleasing the inhabitants of the capital and receiving their praise Marie-Antoinette gave gifts, focused on looking beautiful, and always behaved gaily. These actions, considered frivolous by some, were for the brothers, a direct result of outside forces. A product of her environment, Marie-Antoinette was an innocent woman and did not behave differently than any other human woman would have in the same situation. The Goncourts insist on Marie-Antoinette's innocence by challenging their readers with a question in the preface of their later editions: "What other woman would not have done the same as Marie-Antoinette did?" (727-728, my paraphrase). In fact, Marie-Antoinette did not behave any differently than other queen before her, but she lived at a very different time, a tumultuous time. Her entire reign, according to the Goncourts, could thus be categorized "bad timing".[352] In the Goncourt's account, Marie-Antoinette thus remains justified in face of the pamphlets' accusations.

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[350] …against her popularity, in the shadows, without a noise, but without rest, the work of hatred and destruction, beginning on the very day the dauphine had left Vienna, was working. Above all of her enemies, Marie-Antoinette had against her this abstract, blind, and unforgiving principle: the ancient politics of France.

[351] Marie-Antoinette's first trip to Paris did not take place until three years after her marriage.

[352] According to the Goncourt brothers, even the larger environment of Europe was to blame. Fate had even made the other European courts silent, inactive, and unable to help the French monarchs. "Que si maintenant l'historien embrasse d'un coup d'œil plus large la position de la reine; si […] il cherche tout ce qui l'environne; s'il va plus loin que Versailles, que Paris, que la France; s'il interroge l'Europe, il demeurera effrayé des dispositions hostiles de cours, et de *la fatalité* qui fait, à tous les coins du monde, tant d'ennemis à cette malheureuse princesse. Il verra qu'il est dans les intérêts et presque *dans les nécessités de la politique* européenne de refuser à Marie-Antoinette le bénéfice de l'appui moral, de la laisser désarmée et sans secours, […] de l'abandonner enfin à la révolution, et de

It is the Goncourts' innovative use of previous pejorative myths of Marie-Antoinette from the pamphlets, which add another layer of naturalism to their works. To refute the myths of the evil Austrian Woman, *La Messaline*, and *Mesdames Déficit* and *Veto*, the brothers indeed took a slightly different approach than had been used before. Unable to deny certain facets of Marie-Antoinette's personality which blatantly shone forth when the brothers studied their "authentic sources", the Goncourts admit Marie-Antoinette's mistakes for which the revolutionary pamphlets had condemned her. "La reine, il faut l'avouer, n'était point sans avoir quelques reproches à s'adresser" (761).[353] Since their deterministic view of history allowed them to see the queen's faults as products of her environment, however, Marie-Antoinette still remained justified in *Histoire.* While admitting her errors, the brothers presented them in a positive light. They did not deny, for example, that the queen held a close correspondence with her Austrian relatives, nor that she had written to them for help against the "désordre affreux en France" in some of her letters (888-889).[354] They *do,* however, show that this foreign communication was necessary, and they highlight the great lengths that were taken to make Marie-Antoinette truly French when she first arrived in France. Marie-Antoinette's tutor, Abbot Vermond, for example, had no doubt:

> …façonné une Française dans l'archiduchesse d'Autriche ; il ne lui avait pas seulement appris notre langue et ses délicatesses ; il lui avait révélé nos mœurs jusqu'un leurs nuances, nos usages jusqu'en leurs manies, nos façons de penser et de goûter jusque dans

permettre qu'elle meure." (852-853, my emphasis) That now, if the historian would take a larger look at the position of the queen, if […] he looks at all the circumstances surrounding her at that time; if he goes further than Versailles, than Paris, than France; if he looks all around Europe, he will be horrified by the hostility of the other courts of Europe, and by the *inevitability* which made, at every corner of the world, so many enemies for this unhappy princess. He will see that it was in the interests of, and really in the *political necessity* of the European courts, to refuse help and moral support to Marie-Antoinette, to leave her unarmed and without aid, […] to abandon her finally to the Revolution, and to permit that she die.

[353] It must be admitted that the queen was not without certain faults.

[354] …atrocious disorder in France

> les riens de la pensée et du goût, notre génie jusque dans le sous-entendu, toutes les choses de la France enfin dans le plus secret de leur pratique.[355] (749)

The Goncourts, like Beauchesne, refute the myth of *La Messline Moderne* by giving limited text time to Count Fersen and his relationship with Marie-Antoinette (826-827). The attempt to veer away from this classic Romanesque literary convention and write a more realistic tale explains, at least partially the Goncourts' silence. Whereas Dumas had, as mentioned earlier, used the rumored relationship as a basis for the entire fictional plot of his series, the brothers hardly mention it. They sum up the whole relationship in a short paragraph at the conclusion of a section in which they maintain her innocence and naivety. They mention accusations against Marie-Antoinette's fidelity, but in the end, they state their agreement with the Prince of Ligne who said that "La prétendue galanterie de la reine ne fut jamais qu'un sentiment profond d'amitié pour une ou deux personnes, et une coquetterie de femme, de reine, pour plaire à tout le monde" (826-827).[356] Indeed, throughout their *Histoire,* even in matters in which her decision could have rendered critical analysis necessary, the Goncourts portray the queen as having honorable motives at the very least.

The Goncourts likewise maintain that *Madame Déficit* was not an accurate name for Marie-Antoinette. Since they copied full lists of items the queen purchased for various projects along with their prices, they do not deny that Marie-Antoinette often incurred exorbitant expenditures.[357] However, they continually emphasize the normality of this behavior. All of

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[355] …fashioned a French woman out of the young Austrian archduchess. He had not only taught her our language and its intricacies, but it had taught her our customs down to their nuances and our obsessive use of them. He had taught her our ways of thinking and living down to their last detail, and that which distinguishes our spirit from others even in small ways. He had taught her everything French down to their most secret practices.

[356] The queen's supposed extra-marital affairs were never more than a deep feeling of friendship for one or two people, and the [natural] flirtatiousness of a woman [used] in order to please everyone.

[357] A footnote on pages 739-740, for example, listed the sumptuous purchases and prices made for Marie-Antoinette on her wedding day. Later, on pages 802-803, the Goncourts listed the entire furnishings of *Petit Trianon* instigated by Marie-Antoinette.

France's queens had spent a lot of France's money; in fact, *all* inhabitants at the Versailles palace spent a lot of France's money – regardless of their aristocratic ranking or their gender. In addition to living in a palace where overspending was the norm, Marie-Antoinette was starved of attention from her nonchalant spouse, and thus used her wardrobe and her renovations of *Petit Trianon*, for example, as a means to occupy her spirit. Marie-Antoinette is again portrayed not guilty for this folly of overspending, but simply a product of her environment.

Against *Madame Veto*, the Goncourts take an exceptionally risky approach and insist on Marie-Antoinette's virility. For the Goncourt brothers, Marie-Antoinette had "un don viril[358]" (861), and engaged in a "man's work" on more than one occasion (885). This behavior rendered her even more masculine than her husband. To illustrate this, they explain the atmosphere at the Palace of Versailles on the night of October 5, 1789 and the chaos that ensued as the inhabitants of the chateau fearfully awaited the arrival of the Parisian mob: "…il n'est qu'anarchie et confusion. Les volontés flottent, les conseils balbutient, les lâchetés ordonnent. Dans le trouble, le vertige, l'épouvante, il n'est qu'un homme: c'est la reine" (863).[359] Whereas previous authors had either criticized this manly behavior or denied that Marie-Antoinette displayed it, the Goncourt brothers admit it and praise it. They even praise the queen's typically masculine behavior as having saved the honor of the king. In August 1792, in the presence of her husband, Marie-Antoinette commands the mayor of Paris to sign an order stating that the National Guard will protect the royals. "Pétion devient rouge, s'incline devant le regard de la reine, et signe

[358] a manly/strong gift
[359] …there is only anarchy and confusion. People are at their wit's end, advisers stammer, cowardice reigns. Amidst the trouble, the confusion and the horror there is only one man: the Queen.

l'ordre. La reine a sauvé l'honneur du roi: il pourra du moins mourir, la loi d'une main, l'épée de l'autre !" (903).[360]

The Goncourts also perpetuate images made popular under the Bourbon Restoration. First, they repeat the qualities Restoration literature insisted Marie-Antoinette had possessed since her arrival in France. Like Beauchesne, following the example of restoration writers, they focus on Marie-Antoinette's role as a mother as being the most important part of her life. "Tout le courage de Marie-Antoinette, tout l'amour de la vie, ce n'est plus que ce bel enfant, son dernier-né, le duc de Normandie […] que la reine aime d'autant plus. Toute son âme, c'est l'âme de sa fille, qu'elle guide à ses vertus à la bienfaisance, à la charité" (841).[361]

The Goncourts' representation of the queen is also similar to those of the restoration writers, because they likened the queen's accepting and humble behavior to that of a martyr. Although she proved herself the possessor of admirable masculine characteristics on more than one occasion, the Goncourts argued that Marie-Antoinette was hesitant to use her power and strength when she thought it would undermine her husband's reputation. Marie-Antoinette was not a power-hungry woman trying to take over the new nation of France. She used her power only out of need. More importantly, the Goncourts maintain that once she understood her husband's need of support, out of respect for him she adopted the behavior of a loving and supportive wife. "Enchainée par la faiblesse, mais jalouse de l'autorité et de la dignité [du roi]. […] Elle refusait de rien tenter, de rien oser par elle-même, de peur de cacher le roi, de le voiler…" (900).[362] Campan's *Mémoires* had revealed this same opinion. The brothers take a revealing quote directly

[360] Pétion turned red, bowed before the look in the Queen's eyes and signed the order as instructed. The queen had saved the honor of the king: Now he could at least die with the law in one hand and a sword in the other!
[361] All of Marie-Antoinette's courage, all of her love of life, was only found in this handsome child, her last-born, the Duke of Normandy […] whom the queen loved more than anything. All of her soul, was the soul of her daughter, whom she guided towards her virtues of doing good and charity.
[362] Enchained by weakness, but possessive of the dignity and the authority [of the king…], she refused to try anything alone, for fear of hiding the king behind veils.

from *Mémoires* when the queen sadly had concluded that "les devoirs d'une reine qui n'est pas régente sont de rester dans l'inaction et de se *préparer à mourir*" (900).[363] Thus, despite her authoritative masculine characteristics, for the Goncourts, Marie-Antoinette remained the ideal woman, because, in the end, she learned that her proper place as a wife was behind and not in front of her husband. She willingly, as she had done in Campan's account, put herself behind her husband for the betterment of her family and the nation of France. "Quant à Marie-Antoinette, reine bafouée et outrage, les Goncourt lui vouent un véritable culte: elle est morte en martyre de la monarchie" (Kopp, 718).[364]

A third biography of Marie-Antoinette from the 1850s, *Marie-Antoinette et La Révolution Française recherches historiques,* was published in 1859 one year after the Goncourts' *Histoire,* by Horace de Viel-Castel. Born in August of 1802, Viel-Castel spent his adult life in Paris where he supported Napoleon III and worked as the director of the Louvre. Before his death in 1864, Viel-Castel had become a lover and collector of art, and had authored several acclaimed historical works each which display strong royalist beliefs. The single publication of *Recherches historiques*, however, did not limit subsequent historians' use or praise of the work.[365] Only four years later, in 1863, Emile Campardon would name Viel-Castel as one of the "esprits distingués et littérateurs de talent, [qui] ont offert au public le résultat de leurs savantes recherches sur la reine Marie-Antoinette" (Campardon, ii-iii).[366] Like Beauchesne's *Louis XVII* and the

[363] The work of a queen who is not a regent is to remain inactive and prepare to die. (*Mémoires de Madame Campan,* op. cit., vol. II); See page 112 of this study for more of this quote.
[364] In the case of Marie-Antoinette, the scorned and insulted queen, the Goncourts devoted an entire cult to her: she died as a martyr for the monarchy.
[365] After its initial publication in 1859, *Recherches historiques* was meant to be published a second time, but for unknown reasons it never was (Tourneux, 123-124).Also see Viel-Castel's editor's *avertissement* at the beginning of *Marie-Antoinette et la révolution française,* in which the editor, Techener, said another publication would follow and he listed four illustrations that the second publication would contain. He also requested readers to send him any more information they knew of which could even further enlighten Viel-Castel's work (3-4).
[366] ...distinguished spirits and literary talents who offered the public the result of their thorough research on queen Marie-Antoinette.

Goncourts' *Histoire, Recherches historiques* is listed as a resource in the twentieth and twenty-first century writings consulted for this study including, André Castelot, Antonia Fraser, Evelyn Lever and Carolyn Weber.

Claiming from the start a strong commitment to "impartial history", Viel-Castel's main goal is one familiar to this study: his perceieved version of a "just" retrial for Marie-Antoinette. The first trial had been faulty, not providing enough evidence, and Viel-Castel intented that his version of Marie-Antoinette's biography would not only provide enough evidence and thus reveal the truth concerning the queen, but it would also demonstrate properly *how* to uncover the truth. "La postérité cherchera, comme nous, la preuve de ces crimes qui faisaient frémir d'horreur Fouquier-Tinville. Elle cherchera les preuves de cette légèreté de mœurs qui lui a été attribuée […]. La postérité fera, en un mot, ce que nous avons fait; elle ne rencontrera pas […] les preuves des crimes et des légèretés de la reine" (57).[367] For Viel-Castel, historical accuracy and acute attention to detail and fact, would justify Marie-Antoinette who had been incorrectly judged and executed during the French Revolution. In this study he claims he would "prendre l'histoire elle-même, telle qu'elle a été écrite jusqu'à ce jour, les pièces dont ses ennemis les plus acharnés ont argué, pour démontrer la lâcheté et le mensonge de l'assassinat moral qu'elle a subi avant et depuis l'exécution du 16 octobre 1793" (8).[368] The royalist author was convinced that a realist retrial was the correct research method to lead the nineteenth-century jury to reach a new verdict.[369]

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[367] Just as we do now, our posterity will look for proof of those crimes which made Fouquier-Tinville shiver in horror. They will look for proof of the loose morals which have been attributed to her […]. In short, our posterity will do as we have done; they will not find […] proof of the queen's crimes and loose morals.

[368] "…take history itself, as it was written until today, the documents about which her fiercest enemies argued, in order to demonstrate the cowardice and the lies in the moral assassination that she has undergone before and since her execution on October 16, 1793" (8).

[369] Although proclaimed in a new way, this was the same goal Montjoye had made in 1797, and that d'Aussonne had repeated in 1824.

Viel-Castel's commitment to telling only the verifiable truth, caused him, as the Goncourt brothers and Beauchesne had done, to reveal his sources in detailed footnotes. According to his footnotes, Campan's *Mémoires* overshadow all the rest of his primary sources. He quotes Campan around fifteen times in comparison with only one or two quotes from other eye-witness accounts including Joseph Weber, Hue, Diane de Polignac, Count Tilly, and Rosalie. Each time he used information from Rosalie's testimony, Viel-Castel gave credit to Lafont d'Aussonne.[370] Viel-Castel used letters as primary sources as well, and the published correspondence between Counts Mirabeau and de la Marck are the most heavily cited.[371] Viel-Castel mentions and quotes many revolutionary pamphlets, including *Essaie historique*, *Les Passe-temps d'Antoinette,* and *Lever de l'Aurore,* in order to contradict fully the "lies" found within them. Finally, he includes passages from contemporary newspapers from France and England, including *London Evening, le Moniteur, Mercure de France,* and *le Magicien Républicain*.

Viel-Castel criticizes how romantic literature impacted the story of the French Revolution. Referring to histories and fictions that resemble patterns unveiled in Dumas's series, Viel-Castel accuses this "poetization" for having justified the violence of the revolution in the name of progress.

> L'histoire de la révolution française, poétisée, a opéré un singulier travail de démoralisation, […] Qu'est-il résulté de cette poétisation?... la persuasion, pour un grand nombre d'esprits infimes, que l'état révolutionnaire seul peut enfanter le progrès: qu'à lui

[370] Viel-Castel does not mention Marie-Antoinette's last communion at all, showing that he relied on d'Aussonne's conclusion that the event had not taken place. To note another omission, Viel-Castel is one of very few historians who did not use Cléry's *Journal.* In fact he makes no mention of Cléry at all in the text.
[371] *Correspondance entre le comte de Mirabeau et le comte de La Marck*; This was the second most used correspondence in the Goncourt brother's work, only following that of Marie-Thérèse of Austria and Count Mercy.

seul appartient de conduire la société vers ses destinées futures, et que, dans l'intérêt de l'humanité, il faut entretenir chez les peuples l'esprit révolutionnaire. [372] (59-60)

Viel-Castel also criticizes the romantic attempts of the Restoration to rehabilitate Marie-Antoinette's image to the public. These representations of the queen were *too* ideal, he argued, and thus they erased historical truth.[373] To illustrate the danger of altering historical accuracy, Viel-Castel shows how the worst crimes of the manipulative and murdering Marie Stuart had been erased over time due to Romantic authors the likes of Schiller, Lebrun and Walter Scott.

> *Adoptée par la poésie,* c'est sous l'auréole du martyre qu'elle se présente à l'imagination: nous ne voulons connaître d'elle que sa beauté, son esprit et l'émouvante catastrophe de son supplice. De nos jours elle trouve encore des amis enthousiastes qui la défendent contre l'implacable réalité, qui renient ses propres lettres, les aveux qu'elles renferment et les aveux de ses serviteurs ou de ses complices. Marie Stuart incarne en sa personne toute la grâce et toute la poésie du XVIe siècle. [Elle] n'est plus aujourd'hui que la victime d'Elisabeth; l'horreur de sa condamnation, la dignité et le calme de sa mort ont effacé ses crimes, et personne ne refuse son attendrissement et sa pitié à ses malheurs. Voilà ce que deux siècles de postérité ont fait pour Marie Stuart, et *comment la vérité historique, altérée par la poésie, a été définitivement vaincue*. (4-6, my emphasis)[374]

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[372] "The poetic history of the French Revolution, undertook a particular work of demoralization, […] What has resulted from this poetization? The persuasion that for a great number of miniscule spirits, that revolution alone can create progress, that revolution alone can drive society towards its future destiny, and that in the interest of humanity, it is necessary to instill a revolutionary spirit amidst the people."

[373] This was a rather ironic argument, since Viel-Castel had employed many of these "romantic" histories as sources to supplement his own retelling.

[374] *Informed by poetry,* she presented herself to our imagination under the halo of a martyr: we don't want to find out anything about her except her beauty, her spirit and the moving catastrophe of her torture. In our days, she still finds enthusiastic friends who defend her against the stark reality, who deny the contents of her letters, and the confession that are hidden within them, as well as the confessions of her servants and her accomplices. Marie Stuart incarnates in her [fictional] person all the grace and all of the poetry of the 16th century. She is, nowadays, only the victim of Elisabeth; the horror of her condemnation, and the dignity and the calm of her death [as seen in fictional literature] have erased her crimes, and no one refuses his tenderness and his pity towards her woes. That is what two centuries of posterity have done for Marie Stuart, and *how the true story, altered by poetry, was definitively conquered*.

Regardless of his claims, Viel-Castel was obviously not entirely opposed to the rehabilitation of imperfect queens in literature. Just after his accusation of the "overly poetic" Romantic writers, he expresses frustration that Marie-Antoinette had not benefitted from the same "literary" forgiveness as Marie Stuart when it is *she* who deserves it more. His work, he says would remedy this, but it would not be based on inaccurate claims of innocence as Marie Stuart's romantic representation had been. "Nous ne comptons pas faire un appel à cette indulgence miséricordieuse, si facilement accordée à Marie Stuart; un tel rapprochement nous semblerait une injustice" (7).[375] Rather, his new account would be based on fact, and fact alone. The facts would justify the queen and convince people to forgive her, *not* his unmerited or falsified praise.

Viel-Castel bases his entire portrait of Marie-Antoinette on an authentic piece of evidence he had acquired at a public auction. A collector of historical artifacts and art, Viel-Castel had purchased a letter in which Marie-Antoinette's father, Emperor Francis of Austria had written to his children many years ago (1-2). Entitled "Instructions pour mes enfans (tant pour la vie spirituelle que la temporelle)"[376], the use of this letter demonstrates Viel-Castel's belief in the influence of heredity on a person's destiny. He and his editor decided this letter would be best prefaced with a biography of the queen in order to show that the admirable qualities of Emperor Francis had indeed been instilled in the illustrious Marie-Antoinette: "Ce livre vient, après plus de soixante ans, attester, contrairement aux accusations des bourreaux de 1793, que l'éducation donnée à la jeune archiduchesse, destinée au trône de France, fut aussi morale et aussi religieuse que l'était, vers la fin du XVIII siècle, l'éducation des personnes le plus sagement élevées" (9).[377]

[375] I am not going to base my case [for Marie-Antoinette] on the same kind of merciful indulgence that Marie Stuart received. Such a thing seems unjust to me.
[376] Instructions for my children (as much for their spiritual lives as their earthly ones)
[377] After more than 60 years, this letter comes to attest – contrary to the accusations of the executioners of 1793 - that the education given to the young archduchess destined for the throne of France was as moral and religious as the education given to the most accomplished people in the eighteenth century.

In other words, Marie-Antoinette had moral and religious qualities, because her father had had moral and religious qualities. Moreover, since she was a very young girl, her father had made certain that the innate morality of the Hapsburg race would be a constant influence in his daughter's life.

Marie-Antoinette's genetic goodness, however, had not led to a positive outcome. More than any of the other authors in this study, Viel-Castel places blame on very specific, concrete factors that had caused the downfall of Marie-Antoinette. For Viel-Castel, Marie-Antoinette's goodness had sharply contrasted with the environment she encountered in France. Indeed, it was these outside influences in her social environment which would eventually lead to her corruption. The first culprit was the moral and financial corruptness of French society in the 1700s. Viel-Castel praises Louis XVI for having tried to bring about financial reform, and laments that others had been unwilling and had refused to accept the changes of the reforms which, in turn, had led to further problems. He also blames the eighteenth-century *philosophes* for "doing away with religion"[378], and for having encouraged the disrespect of the king and the queen. Indeed, Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, d'Alembert, Helvétius, d'Holbach, and Raynal "doivent être considérés, non-seulement comme les pères de la révolution française, mais comme les instigateurs de la Terreur, les complices antécédents de Robespierre" (30 -31).[379] Viel-Castel also blames the French military's participation in helping the Americans rebel against their English monarch. He agrees with Germaine de Staël, who had argued that participation in the American

[378] Viel-Castel quotes several 18th century authors to illustrate his point. One is Boulanger, who says in *Christianisme dévoilé:* "La crainte de Dieu, loin d'être le commencement de la sagesse, serait plutôt le commencement de la folie" (footnote, page163). "The fear of God, far from being the beginning of wisdom would be more like the beginning of insanity."

[379] …should be considered, not only as the fathers of the French Revolution, but as the instigators of the Terror, the preceding accomplices of Robespierre. This was obviously not a unique idea. The *philosophes* had long been blamed for being the precursors to revolutionary thought, as Chapter three pointed out.

Revolutionary War had greatly affected the French mindset "Tous les Français qui furent envoyés pour servir avec le général Washington revinrent pénétrés d'un enthousiasme de liberté qui devait leur rendre difficile de retourner tranquillement à la cour de Versailles, sans rien souhaiter de plus que l'honneur d'y être admis" (26).[380] In short, Viel-Castel believed that many concrete events of the eighteenth century had directly led to the Revolution. With so many factors in place, revolution could not have been avoided. "Il faut attribuer la révolution à tout et à rien ; chaque année du siècle y conduisait par toutes les routes" (26).[381] Indeed, the corruption in the environment around Marie-Antoinette and the forces at work within it had been the ultimate determining factors to her downfall.

However, Viel-Castel's work is not only marked by the influence of new modes of historical research and literature. First of all, not all of Viel-Castel's sources are primary ones. As Beauchesne and the Goncourts had done, he borrowed material from previous historians, many of which had also claimed impartiality but had not totally succeeded. Among the sources important to this study, Viel-Castel employs Montjoye's *Histoire,* Lafont d'Aussonne's *Mémoires secrets,* Beauchesne's work on Louis XVII, and the Goncourts' *Histoire*. Other histories Viel-Castel used multiple times are, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire des événements de la fin du XVIIe siècle,* by Abbé Georgel (1817)[382], and *Eloge historique de Mme Elisabeth de France,* by Antoine Ferrand (1814).[383]

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[380] All Frenchmen who were sent to serve with General Washington came back full of enthusiasm for liberty which must have made it difficult for them to return happily to the court at Versailles, without anything but the hope of the honor of being admitted.

[381] It is necessary, therefore to attribute everything and nothing to the revolution; each year of the century by every road had led to it. It must be noted here, that Viel-Castel was neither the first nor the last to argue that these factors had led to the French Revolution. As discussed earlier in this study (99-100), many attempts had already been made by historians attempting to explain the Revolution and to uncover the reasons *why* it had occurred.

[382] The Goncourt brothers used Georgel's history very often in their *Histoire* as well.

[383] Viel-Castel cites Ferrand more than almost any other work which demonstrates his strong reliance on this source. Interestingly, however, Viel-Castel contradicted Ferrand once in his text, and the footnoted "proof" he offered

Viel-Castel also continued in the footsteps of all previous Marie-Antoinette authors by refuting myths from the Revolution. To contradict accusations of the *l'Autrichienne,* Viel-Castel employed Restoration rhetoric to highlight the greatness of the Bourbons of the *Ancien Régime.* Quoting Marie-Antoinette from her foster brother, Joseph Weber's memoires, Viel-Castel tells how Marie-Thérèse of Austria educated her youngest daughter in a way to instill respect for former French kings. Under the empress's tutelage, Marie-Antoinette had decided she would most prefer to reign over the French, more than any other court in Europe, because "c'est sur eux qu'ont régné Henri IV et Louis XIV, dont l'un donne l'idée du bon, et l'autre celle du grand" (15).[384]

To continue refuting myths, Viel-Castel employs the risky "accept and change" approach that the Goncourts had used just a year earlier in regards to *La Messaline Moderne*. He does not ignore the possibility nor deny that a love affair existed between Marie-Antoinette and Count Axel Fersen, but he speculates that any liaison which existed between the two nobles would have been born only out of true love. Neither does he deny that Marie-Antoinette might have had other extra-marital affairs, but "les amours de celle-ci ne furent ni nombreux ni scandaleux, ni d'une nature dégradée, mais ce furent des amours" (153)[385]. He insists that if Marie-Antoinette had been with other men who were not her husband (a speculation for which no actual proof existed, he reminds his readers) then it was done out of love, the greatest of all religious virtues. To attempt to shed light upon the probability that Marie-Antoinette was not maritally unfaithful, Viel-Castel copies a lengthy explanation of the falsity of one particular accusation from the

against Ferrand's claim, he took from *Histoire de Madame Elisabeth,* by Elisabeth Guénard, who, as Chapter two discussed, was mostly known for her fictional accounts (177-178).

[384] One day, her illustrious mother was asking her about the characteristics of various European peoples. She asked her over which group she would prefer to reign if she were called to make the decision. Without hesitating, Marie-Antoinette responded, "Over the French. It was the French that Henri IV and Louis XIV ruled over, and one of them was good and the other one was great."

[385] Her loves were neither numerous nor scandalous nor of a degraded nature, but they were [true] loves.

correspondence between Counts Mirabeau and La Marck. The counts' letters reveal that English Lord Holland had written in *his* memoires that he had *heard* from General Talleyrand who had *heard* from Madame Campan that on the night of October 5, Count Fersen had been in Marie-Antoinette's bedroom, and barely escaped before the mob entered the room. However, the counts' letters say, Campan had written in her own *Mémoires* that she had not even been at Versailles on October 5, so she could not have possibly known if Fersen had been there or not, and in fact, did not mention Fersen being there in her *Mémoires*. They concluded that since Campan could not have known, she never would have admitted his presence to Talleyrand, who in turn never could have told the entire story to Lord Holland (154-156). This lengthy description of he-said/she-said is an example of the great lengths Viel-Castel went to in order to contradict Messalina myths, while claiming to report only facts.

Viel-Castel employs Restoration rhetoric and praises Marie-Antoinette's familial love and innocence despite accusations.

> Durant ces quatre années, l'épouse accusée de trahir la foi conjugale, la mère corruptrice de ses enfants, la Messaline moderne, se sacrifie pour son mari et pour ses enfants: elle a pour son mari le courage qui lui manque quelquefois ; elle a pour ses enfants des tendresses sans borne, comme si un pressentiment envoyé par la Providence l'eût avertie qu'elle n'aurait plus longtemps à les leur prodiguer. Elle dissimule ses craintes et ses angoisses, elle attend la solitude de la nuit pour pleurer, car elle ne veut ni décourager sa famille, ni encourager ses ennemis, par le spectacle de ses chagrins.[386] (143)

[386] During these four years, the spouse who was accused of betraying marital faith, of being a mother who corrupted her children, of being a modern Messalina, sacrificed herself for her husband and her children. For her husband, she had the courage that sometimes he lacked. For her children, she had tenderness without end, as if God himself had warned her that she would not have a very long time to devote herself to them. She hid her fears and her anxiety and she waited until she was alone at night to cry, because she wanted to neither discourage her family nor encourage her enemies by showing her woes.

Marie-Antoinette, thus – even when presented more "realistically" – still obtained the ultimate Restoration designation, the martyr. Although a capable woman, Marie-Antoinette willingly chose to suffer in silence for the betterment of her husband and her children.

Not only did Viel-Castel again transform Marie-Antoinette into the ultimate example for a nineteenth-century woman to follow, but he also made her a martyred saint and even comparable to Joan of Arc (51). During the final scene in *Recherches historiques,* Viel-Castel even likened her to Christ. As the citizens of Paris were violently and shamelessly calling to her "Messaline! Messaline!", Viel-Castel's Marie-Antoinette, just as Christ is reported as having done while dying on the cross, at the hands of his merciless executors, "les regarda avec pitié, et, du fond de son cœur chrétien, s'éleva cette prière: Mon Dieu pardonnez-leur, car ils ne savent ce qu'ils disent" (354).[387] Thus, Viel-Castel's attempt to preside over a retrial for Marie-Antoinette based on strictly verifiable fact was also marked by his tendency to rely on previous sources whose contents, as we have already seen, were just as much based attempts to perpetuate a certain political stance or ideology. Realiance on these already biased sources caused continued repetition of long-established Marie-Antoinette myths.

Although this chapter has discussed only three of several dozen histories published about Marie-Antoinette in the second half of the nineteenth century these three works represent how changes happening in literature and historical studies affected the continuing myth of Marie-Antoinette. Inspired in different ways, and authored from various points of view, the three works from the 1850s have much in common. Each was written from a man's perspective and said to be a historical work as opposed to fictional literature. Each of the authors was a collector of either

[387] …looked at them in pity, and from the bottom of her Christian heart she prayed, "Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are saying". This is nearly a direct quotation from the Bible: "Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.'" ("Luke 23:34").

items, documents, or experiences linked to Marie-Antoinette, and much of their works' inspiration was due to their contact with these items or places. Beauchesne, the Goncourt brothers and Viel-Castel used this new material previously overlooked in order to give the queen a more realistic face. Using the new more "realistic" sources, the three authors at times presented Marie-Antoinette as possessing the very faults for which she had been criticized during the Revolution. Due to the ever-increasing influence of Naturalism, however, presenting the queen with faults was no longer as dangerous as it had been during the Restoration. In fact, the presentation of the queen's "faults" in this case allowed for an even further white-washing of her image - by showing that the fault lay with the corrupted social environment in which Marie-Antoinette had been placed, rather than her own error. No matter what, Marie-Antoinette could not have changed her ultimate destiny. In this way, the histories can be linked to Dumas's fictional series which had also depicted history, personified in Balsamo, as an unchangeable force which dictated the end of all things. However, unlike Dumas, the forces in the new histories were not mysterious and hidden, but rather were tangible and concrete. The corrupted morals of the eighteenth-century, the innate goodness of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette, and the overall political climate in France led to the queen's ultimate fate. Still worshiped and revered, the former Hapsburg princess and Bourbon queen, although at times embodying the characteristics from the accusatory revolutionary pamphlets, would still overcome them. The new view of history as an inevitable force was doing wonders for the reputation of the martyred queen of France. However, encounters with items and experiences once so closely linked to Marie-Antoinette, did not fail to inspire in the authors a zeal for the memory of the queen which they were then compelled to put into their own words. While it cannot be denied that the authors did demonstrate facets of Realism and Naturalism to create their representations of Marie-

Antoinette, it must be admitted that like authors from the Bourbon Restoration, they depict her as a faultless victim, a perfect wife and mother and even as a martyr. Beauchesne the Goncourt Brothers and Viel-Castel thus had united to again rehabilitate the queen's image in a Romantic fashion revealing the difficulty of a completely factual retelling of Marie-Antoinette's life.

Chapter 6: Marie-Antoinette Compilations and Controversy (1860-1900)

An archival search for truth

"A notice in the Conciergerie today adjures the visitor: 'This prison can now serve as the laboratory of a new experience; to look without passion at the symbols of murders long past.' Looking without passion is always a good plan where history is concerned. But is it really possible with regard to the career and character of Marie-Antoinette?" (Antonia Fraser, *The Journey*, 450)

The three historical accounts of Marie-Antoinette in Chapter five revealed how changing theories of history and new literary movements in the nineteenth century resembled one another and were together contributing to the way historians wrote about their subject matter. The growing importance of concrete information along with the ever-increasing popularity of the novel had caused many historians to construct new literary-like narratives about the life and times of Marie-Antoinette. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, along with historical narratives, historical writing about the queen entered a new stage of archival compilation. Archival compilations were organized collections of documents which, once written separately from each other were now combined by historians under similar themes. Since the creation of the official national archives in 1789, French historians had had access to all documents concerning the events of the Revolution, and all in one place. By amassing these documents in an orderly fashion, historians claimed to offer readers clarification and information on a complicated and controversial topic. This chapter will discuss two of these compilations both of which centered on the end of Marie-Antoinette's life: *Marie-Antoinette à la Conciergerie*, published in 1863 by national archivist Émile Campardon; and *Marie-Antoinette (la Captivité et la Mort)*, published in 1898 by well-known historian Gaston Lenotre.

Rather than weaving their sources into a narrative, both Campardon and Lenotre simply copied them verbatim and organized them into themed chapters. This meticulous documentation

of previous publications shows that Campardon and Lenotre both distrusted the ability of the narrative to remain impartial while recounting historical events. Yet even more than the narrative accounts from Chapter five, Campardon and Lenotre's archival compilations were again attempts to uncover what had "really happened" to Marie-Antoinette.

While documents within each compilation reveal the persistence of the myths and themes throughout the century, the interest in this chapter lies in *how* the historians chose, recorded, organized and presented the myths surrounding the queen. First of all, each man had a different opinion about which texts could be trusted and used. While Campardon employs only what he had been able to locate in the national archives, Lenotre demonstrates more trust in eye-witness accounts and the previously published histories that had uncovered them. Their differing views of the sources caused them to also hold differing conclusions regarding several significant moments in Marie-Antoinette's life. Comparing their research and treatment of the Carnation Affair, the Revolutionary Tribunal, and the queen's last communion with the beliefs already held about these issues, this chapter reveals that a completely factual retelling of Marie-Antoinette's life was still impossible, even a century after her death.

Born in 1834 to a bourgeois family, Émile Campardon was a historian who worked in the National Archives for forty-nine years beginning in 1857. In 1884 he became the director of the judicial section of the archives and remained so until 1908 (Stein, 251; Vapereau, 278). During this time, Campardon authored twenty-five works concerning the history of France before and during revolutionary times. Although considered at times a " précurseur des études modernes et révolutionnaires", a twentieth-century bibliographer wrote in Campardon's obituary that "il avait conservé, à côté d'un certain voltairianisme, que ses études sur le XVIIIe siècle avaient encore accentué, de vieilles habitudes d'autrefois, auxquelles se mêlaient beaucoup de misanthrope"

(Stein, 215).[388] Based on the compiling of archival sources and yet indeed still revealing a slight nostalgia for the France of times past, Campardon's 1863 work *Marie-Antoinette à la Conciergerie*, was one of two books concerning Marie-Antoinette that he published before his death in 1915.[389]

The first publication of *à la Conciergerie* was soon followed by a second edition.[390] The work received contemporary attention, being noted as one among several of Campardon's works concerning the revolution which had "fait quelque bruit" (Vapereau, 278).[391] Lenotre cited Campardon in his end-of-century text, and even though the two historians held differing opinions about historical accuracy, Lenotre admitted that "l'avis de l'éminant historien est d'un grand poids" (368).[392] Campardon's research indeed proved useful for many later historians including: André Castelot who used his account of the Diamond Necklace Affair to greatly subsidize his work (426); and Antonia Fraser and Evelyn Lever who both cited *à la Conciergerie* as one of their significant primary resources for information on the end of the queen's life (Fraser, 481; Lever, 339).

Based on information he provided in his preface, Campardon compiled documents in *à la Conciergerie* with two primary aims in mind. The first, was to provide thorough and complete details of the last 76 days of Marie-Antoinette's life - from August 1 until October 16, 1793 - the time she spent isolated in the Conciergerie. During this time, the French had designated Marie-

[388] …he had conserved, along with a certain *voltairianism,* which his study of the eighteenth century still emphasized, the old-fashioned tendencies of the past, with which was also mixed much misanthropy.
[389] See Stein pages 217-219 for a list of Campardon's other publications. The second Marie-Antoinette work was *Marie-Antoinette et le procès du Collier* (*Marie-Antoinette and the Diamond Necklace Affair*) (1864).
[390] Gustave Vapereau, in his *Dictionnaire universel,* says the second edition of *à la Conciergerie* was published in 1867 (278). Another catalogue, *Catalogue méthodique de la bibliothèque publique de Nantes,* Volume 5, listed a second augmented edition as having appeared in 1864 (page 104).
[391] …made quite an impression. Literally: "made some noise."
[392] This important historian's opinion carries much weight.

Antoinette by still another nickname - *la Veuve Capet,*[393] and Campardon refers to this name as the subject of his compilation (III). Campardon defined his retelling of *la Veuve Capet's* story in precise detail as significant because "Les historiens de la Reine, emportés par la rapidité de leur récit, n'ont pu s'étendre sur ces soixante-seize jours […] avec tous les détails désirables" (IV).[394] His second goal, echoing that of Montjoye, d'Aussonne, and Viel-Castel was to give Marie-Antoinette a re-trial. Campardon does not hide his attempt to convince readers of a verdict. He does not, as Montjoye had done and as Lenotre would do, suggest that after reading his work readers will be able to determine for themselves Marie-Antoinette's guilt or innocence. Rather, he predicts his readers' reaction. The sources, he says will, "montrent une fois de plus avec quelle noblesse Marie-Antoinette supporta sa chute. Toujours grande, toujours Reine, elle conserva jusqu'à la fin cette dignité." (X).[395] He determined that his readers will come to the same conclusion after they have evaluated the "pièces authentiques[396]" in his compilation.

Campardon's clear opinion about Marie-Antoinette is not the only opinion he found in his preface. He also gives his own personal evaluation about previous Marie-Antoinette publications. Of the earliest acclaimed historical works about Marie-Antoinette, Campardon praises Montjoye and the anonymous author of a work entitled *Procès des Bourbons* (1798). He criticizes and pushes aside all works written during the Bourbon Restoration except Campan's *Mémoires* and d'Aussonne's *Mémoires secrets*. Finally, of the works published during his own lifetime, he commended the three works discussed in Chapter five by Beauchesne, the Goncourts and Viel-Castel. According to Campardon, these authors had so thoroughly researched and

[393] Louis Capet's Widow
[394] Historians of the queen, carried away by the pace of their narrative, were unable to focus on the desired amount of detail of these 76 days.
[395] …again show with what nobility Marie-Antoinette suffered her fall. Always great, always Queen, she conserved her dignity to the end…
[396] authentic documents

recounted the queen's life, that telling the whole story again from when she arrived in France until she died would be repetitive and useless.

Once finished with his own survey of nineteenth-century representations of Marie-Antoinette, Campardon shares his emotions in regards to writing an account of the end of her life. Naming this time period in her life "Marie-Antoinette's agony", Campardon insists that human words are insufficient to sufficiently depict the depth of her sufferings. The idea of rewriting the tragic ending to the Marie-Antoinette's story terrified him, so instead, "…il m'a semblé préférable de mettre sous les yeux du lecteur les pièces authentiques elles-mêmes, copiées scrupuleusement avec leurs fautes d'orthographe, en expliquant, au moyen de notes, ce qui pourrait sembler incertain ou obscur" (v).[397] Indeed, Campardon trusted fully in the sources' ability to interest and convince the reader. "Les documents ont d'ailleurs une éloquence brutale qui en rend la lecture extrêmement attachante, et intéresse autant que la meilleur des histoires" (v).[398] Although Campardon's personal views are made clear in his eleven page preface, this is the only place in the text in which the author's opinion about his sources and his obvious sympathy for Marie-Antoinette can be observed. Of all the works in this study which claimed to give Marie-Antoinette an unbiased re-trial based on fact and fact alone, the body of Campardon's account best reaches this goal.

Campardon's sources are too numerous to list here, but his clear and straightforward approach was so methodic that it can be easily explained. He divides his chapters into thematic moments concerning the end of Marie-Antoinette's life: plots to help the queen escape from the

[397] I preferred to directly show the reader the authentic documents, copied scrupulously even with their written mistakes, and to use my notes to explain anything that could seem obscure or uncertain.
[398] The documents are brutally eloquent which makes the reader quickly attached to them and as interested in them as with other great histories.

Conciergerie; her trial in front of the Revolutionary Tribunal; and her execution.[399] In each chapter, he places any document he found in the archives related to that topic.[400] His work is full of footnotes, but they do not (as in previous works) cite previously published narratives or other testimonies confirming or contradicting information in the text. Rather, Campardon's footnotes simply list where in the nation's archives the original document could be found - including the box number, file number and page number.[401] For example, the first document he cited, *Rapport du Gilbert* [concerning his observation of an imposter visiting the queen and trying to help her escape], was located in the "*Archives de l'Empire,* carton W297, dossier 261, cote 27e" (1).[402] Not only was Campardon very thorough in documenting where the original document could be found, he was also determined to give full biographical information for each person mentioned in each document. For example, a police report from September 11, 1793 in Chapter one, was signed by three men (55-57). In a footnote after each name, Campardon states the man's full name, age, spouse, occupation, and any other information known. He then gives– again with box, file and page number – the location of this information in the archives.

With only a few exceptions, Campardon offers no other "proof" or "justification" for his sources, other than that they were located in the nation's archives. Campardon's nearly full reliance on archival material reveals his belief that examining the contents of the archives could alone provide the necessary factual historical information. This belief is not surprising

[399] There are indeed, only three chapters in the body of Campardon's text, which only take up about 140 pages: *Conciergerie, Le Tribunal Révolutionnaire,* and *l'Échafaud* (the Scaffold). After that, for the next 200 pages, Campardon labeled his text "Notes historiques", and filled this section with any other document he found concerning Marie-Antoinette's time in prison, or her burial and later replacement of her remains.
[400] While Campardon only used archival sources, his compilation at times was not unique. Chapter one, for example is nearly identical to a chapter from *Le Procès des Bourbons* from 1798. Campardon's version did include additions: two new interviews, apparently discovered after *Le Procès* was published; and Campardon's footnotes which are discussed above.
[401] By far the most common collection Campardon cites is *Les Archives de l'Empire,* but he also cites *Les Archives de la ville de Paris* more than once.
[402] *Empire's archives,* box W97, file 261, page 27.

considering the time at which Campardon penned his compilation – at the height of Naturalism and of Ranke's influence on the correct way to record history.[403]

Campardon's scrupulous notetaking and footnoting system allows a thorough tracing of several aspects of the myth of Marie-Antoinette. In his preface Campardon speaks of five different times when a royal evasion was envisioned (IX-X).[404] Due to the secretive nature of these escape plots, previous authors' attempts to explain them and their surrounding circumstances had been either confusing or simply written off as unimportant, for example in the well-known escape attempt, the Carnation Affair. Beginning with Montjoye, the plot had posed serious problems for historians. The only information Montjoye gave of the affair in his 1797 version of *Histoire* was that a nameless visitor to the Conciergerie, who the guard Michonis had allowed to enter, gave the queen a carnation in which a note was hidden. At that time, his conclusion of the affair had been that "On n'a jamais trop connu le fond de cette aventure qui ne fut pas conduite bien adroitement, puisque par le bruit qu'elle fit, elle aurait mis en péril les jours de la princesse s'ils n'y eussent pas déjà été" (Montjoye, 167- 168). [405]

After Montjoye's initial conclusion and the publication of *Le Procès des Bourbons,* differing accounts of the happenings surrounding the Carnation Affair were without end. In the 1814

[403] Also trending at the time in intellectual historiography was an enthusiasm for statistical studies, which, as Lionel Gossman has shown, had greatly increased between the 1830s and 1850s (41). Both the reliance on archival sources and the haste to make charts and graphs to explain them demonstrate nineteenth-century historians' attempts to make the retelling of history an exact science.

[404] The Baron de Batz had masterminded the first escape attempt for the king on the day of his execution. The second is now known as the Carnation Plot, in which Michonis and Rougeville were the chief players and was well-known. The third attempt, which Campardon claimed to be the first historian ever to reveal, whose accomplices were a M. Basset, a nineteen-year old wig maker, and a Madame Fournier. Both of these conspirators were executed for their role in the attempt, but Campardon doubted that these two could have organized the attempt alone, and admitted that one could only speculate at who had been the real mastermind behind the attempt. The fourth and fifth "attempts" were more just wishful thinking: the fourth was a hope by Rougeville to recommence his failed escape plan, and the fifth was a wish made by Monsieur Maingot who, the moment the queen was guillotined, was discovered under the scaffold dipping his handkerchief into her blood and carrying a carnation.

[405] No one ever found out much about this adventure, which was not managed very well. By the ruckus it created, it would have put the Queen's life in danger if it had not been so already.

version of *Histoire*, Montjoye included a new footnote saying that Cléry, among other authors, had "horribly disfigured" the Carnation Affair (167). Montjoye said that authors who had written just after him told this story: At a dinner, an "ex-chevalier[406]", named "d'Ed…v…e", convinced the municipal guard Michonis to bring him into the Conciergerie dressed as a guard in order to see the queen. According to this same footnote, several authors attributed this version of the Carnation Affair to Montjoye. Montjoye, offended by the accusation that he had used the words "former knight", called the entire story outrageous, and could not imagine how it had been attributed to his work. He also claimed that now (1814) he *did* know the name of the "hero" who had entered into the cell and given a carnation to the queen, but he did not give it here, although he did give a hint. Since the man's name started with an "M" and ended with a "T", however, this was even further proof that he would not have given the name "d'Ed…v…e" in his *Histoire*. Curiously, the letters "M" and "T" remind the reader of "Maingot", an individual who was discovered under the scaffold holding a carnation and dipping his handkerchief in Marie-Antoinette's blood just after her execution. The letters do *not* at all, however, signal the name "Rougeville" which, by 1814 was the name associated with the Carnation Affair. According to the court testimonies discussed later in this chapter, Rougeville was indeed who had convinced Michonis to allow him into the Conciergerie.

Contrary to what Montjoye said in 1814, Cléry's *Journal* from 1798 did not mention the Carnation Affair, as it ends on Louis XVI's execution day. In two later publications, written well after Cléry's death, the editors, while adding endnotes and "historic evidence" to Cléry's *Journal*, each recorded a different story. In 1825, editors the Baudouin brothers, recounts the affair saying that Michonis allowed Rougeville to enter the queen's cell, that Rougeville gave her

[406] Former knight

a carnation with a note hidden inside, and that the guards took the paper way from Marie-Antoinette as she was in the middle of writing a response by pricking the paper with a needle (313-315). In 1848, editor Casterman's explanation is the same as the account Montjoye had condemned, and is contributed to "the author of *Vie de Marie-Antoinette*" (210).

In her first historical novel, *Irma,* Guénard does not go into detail about the escape attempts, except to continuously remark how much of an emotional affect the mention of escape had on her Marie-Antoinette character, Rainelord. In *Les Augustes victimes du Temple,* on the contrary, she speaks of several escape attempts. In regards to the Carnation Affair, Guénard said she read several accounts, and not knowing which version was true, that she would tell the story using the version that she herself believed the most plausible (204). For Guénard, Marie-Antoinette recognized Rougeville when he entered into her cell. In *Augustes victimes,* at the sight of this man, a whole slew of thoughts went through Marie-Antoinette's mind. She turned pale, began to tremble and had tears in her eyes. Rougeville dropped a carnation and told the queen to pick it up, read the note, and that he would come back on Friday. She then reminded the reader that she was not certain this story was true, but that it conformed to the two following pieces of evidence she had included: a report by the gendarme Gilbert to his general, and the queen's first interrogation about the Carnation Affair. In this report Gilbert claims he was playing cards with one of the female servants and that they did not notice the exchange, but that Marie-Antoinette herself had confided in him about the incident later. Although she copied it, Guénard called Gilbert's letter an "imposter's masterpiece" (209). Guénard took her information from *Le Procès des Bourbons* to which she referred her readers for the rest of the information surrounding the affair (223).

In d'Aussonne's *Mémoires secrets,* Marie-Antoinette swallowed Rougeville's note right away after having read it. He highlights the consequences of the affair: that the Richards and the two municipal guards were replaced and that only Rosalie was allowed to remain and serve Marie-Antoinette. Rosalie spoke of this incident in her testimony as well, which agrees with Guénard's telling that the queen recognized Rougeville when he entered the room. Dumas, of course, used the affair as a base for the entire plot of *Chevalier de Maison Rouge.* His account aligns with the Baudouin brothers' historical notice when they said that a man name Rougeville loved the queen and wanted to help her escape, and a woman loved by a municipal guard, also committed herself to the project (Cléry and Baudouin, 313). Finally, the Goncourt brothers mention it as well, but the entire plot takes less than one page to describe. In their account, the note was torn into millions of pieces and the Queen is caught while trying to respond "I am watched at all times. I can't speak nor write" (Goncourt, 940, my translation). The Goncourts signal that they took their information from the Tribunal's transcript of Marie-Antoinette's second interrogation at the Conciergerie on September 4, 1793.[407]

While Campardon's documents do not clear up the situation at all, they *do* reveal all people who were questioned about the affair, what their answers were, and how each of these people were related to the others. Campardon's approach of simply transcribing the interrogations of all of those supposedly involved, allows the reader to see the unfolding of the plot from various eye-witness points of view. Included are the statements of Gilbert, Madame Harel, Jean-Baptiste Michonis, Pierre Fontaine, Jean Maurice Françoise Lebrasse, a Citizen Perrey, François Defraisne, Madame Richard and finally of Marie-Antoinette herself. The sheer volume of information included in these eye-witness testimonies and interrogations explains why previous

[407] See their footnotes, page 940.

authors had struggled to find a definitive version of the story of the Carnation Affair. The mystery surrounding the affair also reveals *why* it had inspired so many differing versions.[408]

For Chapter two, Campardon compiled all documents concerning Marie-Antoinette and the Revolutionary Tribunal. This included the testimonies of Louis-Charles, Marie-Thérèse, and Elisabeth, Marie-Antoinette's official ten-page accusation, the list of the men who signed it, a list of members of the Tribunal during the trial, a list of forty-one witnesses who testified against the queen, an account of the jurors' departure for deliberation, a list of the questions on which they deliberated, the jurors' and Marie-Antoinette's return into the courtroom and the announcement of the final verdict. Included in the list of witnesses against the queen are Hébert, Manuel, Simon, Richard, Gilbert, Harel, and Michonis. Rather than including the unique testimony of each witness, the court document simply stated the same thing after each witness's name: "…lequel a déclaré qu'il connait l'accusée, que c'est d'elle qu'il entend parler, qu'il n'est son parent, allié, serviteur ni domestique, non plus que de l'accusateur public, après quoi il [ou elle] a fait sa décalation" (ex., 103).[409] It is not clear why the court documents did not include witnesses' unique testimonies. Is it because these pre-formulated words were really all that the witnesses said? Or was the court attempting to hide that amongst the large number of witnesses they had procured, they had not uncovered a single piece of concrete evidence against their defendant? Either way, just as Campardon had predicted in his preface, the reader *does* come to the conclusion that Marie-Antoinette was not guilty of the crimes for which she was accused. Although Campardon again makes no comment here revealing his opinions about the documents,

[408] Campardon was not the first to do this. See footnote 390 on page 192 of this study.
[409] …who declared that he [or she] knew the queen, and that he was neither her relative, nor her ally nor her servant, no more than her public accuser, after which he gave his testimony.

his compilation does indeed make a strong statement in defense of Marie-Antoinette in Chapter two.

In Chapter three, "The Scaffold", Campardon compiled all documents concerning the happenings during the few hours between the end of Marie-Antoinette's trial and her execution. This includes Marie-Antoinette's last will and testament, a few documents informing the police and prison guards at the Force and the Conciergerie that the queen had been condemned to death, and the date and time of her upcoming execution, a statement from the man who transported Marie-Antoinette back to the Conciergerie after the trial, a short letter to the tribunal secretary urging him to add Marie-Antoinette's name to the death list, and a thirty-three entry inventory of items found in Marie-Antoinette's cell after her execution. Although as seen here, much factual information is available, as in his previous chapter, it is the *lack* of intriguing details that is the most revealing here. Whereas previous authors of narratives had revealed Marie-Antoinette's last thoughts as the Tuileries palace came into her view on her way to the scaffold or her last words after she had accidentally stepped on the executioner's foot, these kind of details which before had only been based on hearsay were not available in Campardon's compilation. Simply copying documents that existed indeed allowed Campardon to prove a point – even without saying a word. In Chapter three he again reaches his goal of proving what "really happened" without inserting his personal feelings into the text.

After only three chapters and 139 pages, the main portion of Campardon's work comes to a close, and yet the compilation along with its appendix is 347 pages long, creating a noticeable imbalance with the length of main body of the work. For the next 208 pages, only excluding the table of contents, Campardon adds archival documents concerning Marie-Antoinette written or

published after her death.[410] This proves the simple fact that more information about what happened *after* Marie-Antoinette's execution was available than about what happened to her while she was still living. Campardon's presentation of such a noticeable imbalance is very revealing in regards to the myth of Marie-Antoinette. Before she died, the lack of concrete information about her allowed for such a wide-range of myth making to occur. Without the evidence needed to complete the story, previous authors had simply "filled in the holes" themselves, authoring dramatic narratives about Marie-Antoinette's childhood, adolescence, marriage, motherhood, crimes, imprisonment, etc. based on previous historical writings which themselves were based on either hearsay, invention or the eye-witness testimonies of people who had had a biased political agenda or a strong emotional attachment to Marie-Antoinette. Campardon's detailed and nearly scientific method of recording information, reveals the myth of Marie-Antoinette as such.

Published thirty-five years later in 1897, *La Captivité et la mort de Marie-Antoinette* by Louis Léon Théodore Gosselin, is another archival compilation. Born in 1855, Gosselin was a playwright, journalist, and historian who wrote under the pen-name Gaston Lenotre. Known for his research and compilation of primary documents, Lenotre is attributed with several historical works and collections about Revolutionary France, including *La Captivité et la mort.*[411] Having

[410] These historical notes include but are not limited to: the memoires of several people who were close to the queen such as her daughter Marie-Thérese and her defense lawyers Chaveau-Lagarde and Tronson-Ducoudray, exerpts from a few prominent Parisian newspapers such as *Le Moniteur* and the *Père Duschène,* and most interestingly, official meeting minutes from the Chamber of Deputies on February 22, 1816. This meeting occurred after Marie-Antoinette's last will and testament had been discovered. The deputies met with King Louis XVIII to discuss how the letter would be preserved and put to use. These minutes show how Louis XVIII used the discovery of this letter to the advantage of the Bourbon Restoration, by ordering the publishing of it in order to restore glory to the name Marie-Antoinette. Campardon also lists the numerous monuments that Louis XVIII ordered constructed in honor of the Queen and the inscriptions that each one bore.

[411] Just a few of Lenotre's other works about the French Revolution are: *Un conspirateur royaliste pendant la Terreur. Le Baron de Batz* ; *La Guillotine et les Exécuteurs des arrêts criminels à Paris et dans les départements pendant la Révolution* ; and *Le Vrai chevalier de Maison-Rouge, A.-D.-J. Gonzze de Rougeville*

been recognized and admired by his contemporaries, Lenotre was elected into the *Académie Française* in 1932, but was never able to fulfill his post. He nonetheless saw at least forty-seven editions of *La Captivité et la mort* published before his death in 1935.

To say that Lenotre's historical research on Marie-Antoinette was appreciated is an understatement. The forty-seven editions published before Lenotre's death were followed by many more. By 1951, at least 60 editions had been published, and the most-recent French edition of the compilation appeared in 2012.[412] The continued success of *La Captivité et la mort* can be explained by the fact that it was cited in nearly every subsequent historical account of Marie-Antoinette's life and death since its publication. Twentieth and twenty-first century authors who cited *La Captivité et la mort* and who have been listed in this study include André Castelot, Antonia Fraser, Evelyn Lever, and Caroline Weber. These authors mostly used Lenotre as their go-to historian when citing an eye-witness account. Indeed, *La Captivité et la mort* is an excellent resource if one is searching for an original version of a difficult-to-locate eye-witness account concerning Marie-Antoinette.

Like Campardon, Lenotre introduces his compilation with a preface which revealed his personal opinions and his goals for the work. His final goal for *La Captivité et la mort* was another repetition of the idea of a retrial for Marie-Antoinette. Less overt than Campardon, Lenotre suggests that he would first present the facts and then the reader could decide the verdict. "Sachons d'abord comment les choses se sont passées, on jugera plus tard. […] Quand le dossier sera complet, viendra l'heure du réquisitoire et des plaidoiries: du moins le verdict sera-t-il rendu en connaissance de cause et chacun pourra, en toute sûreté de conscience, la condamner

[412] Agnières: Archéos, 2012.

ou l'absoudre, s'il y a lieu" (xx-xxi).[413] According to Lenotre, the need for retrial was due to the many faulty beliefs, or myths, surrounding Marie-Antoinette, which had persisted during the century following her death. Lenotre claims that his research would reveal many occasions where historians of the past "got it wrong" either due to their hastiness to produce a story, their zeal to support their own agenda, or simply their disrespect for their authentic sources. Whatever the case, Lenotre meant for his retrial to right the wrongs committed towards the historical memory of Marie-Antoinette.

As evidence, Lenotre was determined to use mostly eye-witness testimonies. He did not take stock in many historical narratives of the past, for example, no matter when they had been written. Histories written just after the revolution, he said, were not serious enough considering the grave subject matter (IX). During the Restoration, he said, another "flood" of texts, under names such as *Les Augustes victimes* and *Les Illustres persécutés,* had exhausted the "stock de banalités élégiques" concerning Marie-Antoinette in only a few months.[414] Lenotre found of interest and authenticity only the publications of eye-witness accounts that appeared during the early years of the Restoration (1815-1820). He considered that these first "precious and rare" testimonies had been written late enough for the authors to have appropriately assessed the Revolution, yet early enough to still contain accurate information (XI). The nearly exclusive use of eye-witness accounts marks a significant difference between Campardon's and Lenotre's accounts. Campardon limited his use of published eye-witness accounts to only Rosalie, Marie-Antoinette's daughter, and Chauveau-Lagarde. On the contrary, Lenotre's primary documents were exclusively eye-witness accounts. Although Lenotre did not record where he found each

[413] Let us first find out how things really happened and we will judge them later. […] When the file is complete, then will come the final speeches of the prosecution and of the defense: at least the verdict will be given with full knowledge, and everyone will be able, in good conscience, to condemn her or to pardon her, as the case may be.
[414] reserve of useless elegies

account, he assured the reader that the words found in his compilation are exact copies of the original brochures, all which had been previously published, but many of which had been "corrupted" or fallen into oblivion. Because many had been forgotten and most had been manipulated, republishing these documents in their original state was not a futile effort. He laments that after having appeared in print for the first time, the testimonies had been at the mercy of historians who had then manipulated them for their own means. According to Lenotre, since these were the only authentic documents historians had available to them, they had overused them. They had quoted them so much that the reading public, had ceased to seek out the original testimonies, and read them in their entirety, simply "taking the historians' word for it". Since the original documents had not contained enough entertaining and shocking details, authors and historians had taken it upon themselves to "spruce up" history – adding to and changing the sources they had, as they constructed numerous myths about Marie-Antoinette's personality and the events surrounding her. Lenotre condemns this practice outright in his preface, and claims to put the exact copies of the original testimonies again at the disposal of the reading public.[415]

Whereas Campardon had mostly stayed loyal to a nearly scientific naturalistic approach in *à la Conciergerie,* Lenotre's later account reveals a tension between former and future literary styles. First, adhering to an important facet of Realism, Lenotre praised the simplicity of his witnesses. "Ce n'étaient ni des gentilshommes de la Cour ni des historiographes à brevet: les Dangeau et les Saint-Simon de cette sombre époque sont une concierge, un garçon d'office, un

[415] Lenotre's exact words are: "Tous les historiens […] n'ont eu d'autres sources de renseignements ; depuis si longtemps, chacun les maquille, les farde, les dramatise et les arrange au mieux de la thèse à soutenir qu'elles semblent absolument méconnaissables à ceux qui prenne la peine d'en consulter le texte intégral dans les exemplaires originaux" (X). "All the historians […] had nothing other than these sources for information. Therefore, they have been improving them, painting them, dramatizing them, and changing them to best support their own agenda for a long time. This practice has made the sources seem untrustworthy to those who take the time to consult the entire texts in their original form."

tapissier, une servante, un gendarme, un balayeur…" (VII).[416] Likewise, their unrefined nature and "unschooled" style added to their authenticity: "le style de ces témoignages ne vise pas à la recherche ; mais je crois qu'ils paraîtront plus saisissants, dans leur sincérité frustre, que les poétiques, et magistrales amplifications des écrivains officiels de la Restauration" (vii-viii).[417] In addition, Lenotre remains faithful to his sources and always included the original authors' original footnotes and notes in the margins. For example, in the testimony of Jacques-François Lepitre, Lenotre includes two of his notes: "M. Turgis (sic), aujourd'hui premier huissier de la chambre de Mlle la duchesse d'Angoulême (Note de Lepitre)"; "Quelquefois, pendant la nuit, au moyen d'une ficelle on descendait ou l'on montait les billets par les fenêtres du second et du troisième étage (Note de Lepitre)" (163).[418]

The use of archival material was not new, as previous chapters have revealed. But when former historians had used them, they had chosen which words to use and how, weaving them into an objective narrative that served their own opinion. Lenotre shows a more "modern" use of his sources, where when he allows the subjectivity of each author to remain. Lenotre indeed reveals the budding tendencies of future literary styles when he includs all portions of the eye-witness accounts, even those which are unfavorable to the Bourbon monarchs. In the testimony of municipal officer Daujon, for example, there is a very rare critique of Elisabeth. "J'ai toujours remarqué en elle beaucoup d'une espèce d'orgueil mesuré et soutenu qui paraît sans but comme sans objet, que rien ne semble amener, que rien ne dédommage et que, plusieurs personnes, et

[416] These were neither gentlemen of the Court nor qualified historians: The Dangeaux and the Saint-Simons of this somber era are a concierge, a kitchen boy, an upholsterer, a woman servant, a gendarme, a sweeper…
[417] …these type of testimonies are not researched. However, I believe that in their raw sincerity they will be more striking than the masterful and poetic amplifications of the Restoration's official writers.
[418] "Mr. Turgis (sic), who is today the premiere bailiff for the Duchess of Angoulême."(Lepitre's notation); "Sometimes, at night, they would pass notes to each other using a string between the second and third floor windows" (Lepitre's notation).

peut-être elle-même, prenaient pour de la dignité" (57).[419] Later, in this same testimony we read a rather harsh critique of Louis XVI. "Pâle, tremblant, les yeux gonflés de larmes, l'intérêt de ses jours parut seul le toucher. Loin de se rappeler qu'il avait été roi, il oublia qu'il était homme, il fut lâche comme un tyran désarmé et suppliant comme un criminel convaincu" (58).[420] Although his sympathy for Marie-Antoinette and the other royals remains apparent, Lenotre's regard for honesty and his dedication to the subjectivity of the viewer does not allow him to remove unfavorable descriptions of the monarchs from his compilation. This ever increasing reliance on subjectivity was a step away from the Naturalism of the nineteenth century, and would soon dominate the twentieth-century literature of modernity.

Lenotre's work, however, avoided total subjectivity. While Lenotre does allow his sources to speak for themselves, he does not permit their historical "mistakes". When he believed his sources at fault, he corrected the author's information in a footnote. For example, he criticized Beauchesne's lack of research on the structure and layout of the Temple prison in 1792. "…bien des historiens ont […] étudié la question, [de la topographie du Temple] sans prendre la peine de recourir aux documents originaux. Beauchesne, par exemple, s'est contenté, comme base de son livre sur *Louis XVII*, d'un plan de […] 1811 […] et auquel il n'a rien changé…que la date ! Il le donne, en effet, comme étant un plan du Temple en 1793" (33).[421] Later, Lenotre again blames Beauchesne for a long-lasting case of mistaken identity between a municipal officer named

[419] I always noticed her moderate yet constant pride which appeared without goal and without reason. I could not understand what brought it on and how she justified it, and I believe that many people, including herself, mistook it for dignity.
[420] Pale, trembling, his eyes swollen from crying, only the fear for his life seemed to touch him. Far from remembering that he had been King, he forgot that he was a man. He was a coward, who acted like an unarmed tyrant and a convicted criminal.
[421] Although many historians have […] studied the [layout of the Temple prison], they have never, […] taken time to look at the original documents. Beauchesne, to give one example, contented himself with a map of the Temple's grounds from 1811 for his book on *Louis XVII*. He did not change anything…only the date! He then presents it as a map of the Temple in 1793.

Danjou and the municipal officer we have already mentioned named Daujon. While he does credit Beauchesne as having been the first to publish Daujon's testimony, and he admits the similarity between the two names, he does not excuse nor hide his disapproval of Beauchesne's hasty error.[422] Another, more simple refutation Lenotre makes is to François Lepitre's account, when he simply stated: "Ce n'est pas vrai: les barrières ne furent pas fermées…" (181).[423]

Lenotre does not always claim from where the "correct" information came, and when he does, he is not consistent. Lenotre bases his corrections of Beauchesne's errors, for example, on eye-witness accounts. He outlines the layout of the Temple based on his readings of several eye-witness accounts. Piecing together information from his readings of Moelle's and Goret's testimonies, Lenotre concludes that "on pouvait bien pénétrer en voiture dans la cour du Palais, mais qu'il était impossible d'aller plus loin autrement qu'à pied" (43).[424] He was able, by his own scrutinized research, to disprove "toutes les narrations modernes où Louis XVI est représenté montant en voiture, au pied de la Tour, pour aller, soit à la Convention, soit à l'échafaud, sont erronées sur ce point" (43). At times, his notes also reveal that he based his claims about the correctness or incorrectness of the eye-witness accounts, on previously published historical accounts. For example, in Citizen Dufour claimed in his testimony to have served breakfast to the royal prisoners a little after 8:30 in the morning. Lenotre follows this comment with the following footnote based on information he attributed to *Archives parlementaire*: "Le 11 août à sept heures du matin, et non à neuf, comme l'insinue Dufour, le Roi

[422] Lenotre's exact words were: "…la confusion est née, sans doute, de la similitude des noms, l'erreur, cependant, n'aurait pas été commise, si Beauchesne, qui le premier, en a publié quelques pages, avait étudié le manuscrit tout entier…" (46). "… the confusion without a doubt came from the similarity of the names. The error, however, would never have been committed if Beauchesne, who was the first to publish a few pages from this testimony, had studied the entire manuscript."

[423] This is not true. The barriers were not closed.

[424] …one *could* get into the courtyard of the Temple in a carriage, but it was impossible to go any further, except on foot.

et sa famille reprenaient leurs places dans la loge qui leur avait été assignée la veille" (13).[425] In addition, he sometimes uses one eye-witness account to point out mistakes in another or support claims in another. He uses information from Madame de Tournzel's testimony to contradict information Turgy had recorded in his. This use of non-primary documents to refute eye-witness testimonies' claims, and using one eye-witness to contradict another, goes very much against Lenotre's proposed claim of simply copying the accounts as they are and letting them speak for themselves. This is quite different from Campardon's approach which, with one exception, had avoided pointing out discrepancies, leaving them up to the discretion of the reader.[426] Regardless of this difference, Lenotre was still writing at a time when historians were dedicated to revealing exact truth. He determined to find and reveal facts as his reliance on archival sources reveals.

Like Campardon, Lentore addresses the Carnation Affair in his compilation, but states that it was too adventurous and complex to explain entirely in *La Captivité et la mort* (217). Instead, he directed the reader to his previous attempt to "dégager l'inconnu[427]" from this situation found in his 1894 work *Le vrai chevalier de Maison Rouge.*[428] Also a compilation of primary documents, *Le vrai chevalier* was a detailed 300 page explanation of the entire affair, which Lenotre revealed, was inspired by Dumas's novel *Chevalier de Maison Rouge* which "everyone knows" (3). Lenotre does not criticize Dumas's retelling of the events, even as historically inaccurate as they were, but rather he praises Dumas's *Chevalier* for what it was - a "roman de l'illustre

[425] On August 11, at seven in the morning, and *not* at nine, as Dufour said, the King and his family took the seats they had been assigned the day before.
[426] During Pierre Fontaine's interrogation, Campardon noted the following error: "Il y a évidemment erreur dans l'énnnciation de cette adresse; au lieu de carré Saint-Denis, qui n'a jamais existé, il faut lire carre Saint-Martin, lequel est, comme on le sait, voisin de la rue Phélippeaux" (27). "There is obviously an error in this statement. Instead of Saint-Denis square, which never existed, Saint-Martin's square should have been noted. This is the square, as we all know, that is next to Phélippeaux street." This is the one time in his text where Campardon corrects information in a document.
[427] remove the unknown
[428] *The Real Knight of Maison-Rouge.* Paris: Didier Perrin, 1894.

conteur [qui] est à la fois le prétexte et la raison d'être de cette étude historique" (3).[429] Lenotre even opens his compilation with an extract from Dumas's novel and an explanation of the main characters and the novel's plot (1-8). However, Dumas's poetic liberty was for Lenotre "le charme et le défaut des romans historiques" (8)[430], and he was determined as a historian to provide a complete detailed account of the Carnation Affair so that when readers put down the Romantic novel, they could have an answer to their question "Qu'y a-t-il de vrai dans tout cela?" (8).[431]

Lenotre's coverage of the details of the Carnation Plot differed from Campardon's. First of all, while Campardon only included the transcriptions of the interrogations concerning the affair, Lenotre prefaced *his* own copy work with a long explanation of the details and players in the affair. The types of sources he used were similar to those employed in *La Captivité et la mort,* again revealing a reliance on eye-witness accounts yet, at times, deferring to previously published historical studies. Lenotre then does what Campardon had done, and copied the transcripts of the Communes interrogation sessions with players in the Carnation Affair. Yet, whereas Campardon, like the author of the anonymous *Procès des Bourbons* had taken and copied the sources directly from the documents found in the national archives, Lenotre claimed to have found a copy of the trial transcript copied down by none other than Rougeville himself (294).[432] Staying consistent with his preferred method, Lenotre copied Rougeville's manuscript

[429] …a novel by the great story-teller, which is at the same time the pretext and the *raison d'être* for this historical study.
[430] the charm and the error of historical novels
[431] What truth is in all of this?
[432] Lenotre's full explanation was: "Où Rougeville s'en procura-t-il une copie ? Dans le *Procès des Bourbons*, publié à Hambourg, dira—t-on? Je ne le crois pas. Evidemment les royalistes avaient, dans les Comités mêmes, des amis dévoués […] qui fouillaient tous les cartons, ouvraient tous les dossiers. La publication du *Procès des Bourbons* suffirait seule à le prouver. Quelqu'un avait copié, en pleine Terreur, les documents originaux. Rougeville était bien capable d'une pareille audace. Toujours est-il qu'il se procura, en juin 1797, alors qu'il était en prison, les pièces concernant le complot dont il avait été le chef et qu'il les publia sous son nom !" (294). Where had Rougeville gotten his hands on a copy? In *Procès des Bourbons,* published in Hamburg, some said. But I do not believe this.

down to its very last detail. He followed this detailed copy work with a meticulous comparison between Rougeville's text and the original, and then marked in parenthesis the places that Rougeville had modified.[433] Again, whereas Campardon copied his sources as they were and left interpretation to the discretion of the reader, Lenotre continued to "correct" the original documents. He uses Rougeville's copies to help him better reveal details of the story that previous copies had not included. "Il s'est efforcé aussi, en arrangeant certains membres de phrases, en supprimant certains autres, de donner plus de relief à son dévouement, de mettre plus en scène sa personnalité" (295).[434]

Lenotre's account of the Revolutionary Tribunal also differs greatly from Campardon's, although the two men, in this case, reach and support the same conclusion. Unlike Campardon whose primary sources concerning the trial came from official court documents, Lenotre employs another eye-witness account to reveal what had happened before the trial took place which had perhaps led to the guilty verdict. According to Lenotre, the Commune had decided to move Marie-Antoinette to the Conciergerie as a means to entice foreign powers to intervene and take the queen off of their hands (217). Only when this plan failed, and the failed Carnation Affair surfaced, did the revolutionaries decide the queen's trial was inevitable. The testimony of

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Evidently even in the Committees, the royalists had friends […] who searched in the cartons and opened up the files. The publication of *Procès des Bourbons* proves this. Someone had dared, in the middle of the Terror, to copy the original documents. Rougeville was more than capable of this same audacity. He procured the documents, and then in June 1797 while he was in prison, he published the documents concerning the plot that he himself had orchestrated under his own name!

[433] "Nous avons eu la curiosité d'en comparer le texte avec celui des originaux et nous l'avons trouvé absolument conforme, sauf quelques modifications de détails, quelques arrangements de mots qui éclairent d'une lueur assez étrange le caractère de Rougeville. Ainsi, il a pris soin de modifier son signalement, mettant: *beaucoup de cheveux sur le dessus de la tête*, au lieu de *peu de cheveux*... etc. Il s'est efforcé aussi, en arrangeant certains membres de phrases, en supprimant certains autres, de donner plus de relief à son dévouement, de mettre plus en scène sa personnalité." (294-295). I was curious enough to compare Rougeville's copies with the originals and I found them exactly the same except for a few details. The few things Rougeville had changed strangely illuminate Rougeville's personality. While in prison he was careful to modify his physical description in the text, writing "a lot of hair on his head", instead of "a little hair", for example.

[434] By changing certain parts of sentences and getting rid of other parts, he was also able to more fully express his devotion and to better reveal his own personality.

an English spy, Francis Dracke, who attended a secret meeting of the Committee of Public Safety on September 2, 1793, was Lenotre's chosen eye-witness testimony to reveal to the pubic how the Revolutionary Tribunal came to their final verdict. Dracke's notes reveal that it was at this meeting that "On y résolut la mort de la Reine" (220). [435] Jacques Hébert was among the most adamant supporters of this resolution, according to Dracke. His account quoted Hébert as saying, "J'ai promis la tête d'Antoinette, j'irai la couper moi-même si on tarde à me le donner" (220).[436] Hébert's principle reason for wanting the queen's death was vengeance. He believed all members of the Committee would eventually die for the Republic, and he wanted to leave the greatest amount of destruction behind for the enemies of France to deal with later (221). After Hébert spoke, the Committee sent for Fouquier-Tinville, the public prosecutor, and asked him to report "ce qu'il prétendait faire sur la Reine" (222).[437] Dracke claimed that Fouquier-Tinville had said he would write whatever the Committee wanted him to in the act of accusation against the queen (222).[438] From this account, Lenotre concludes that Marie-Antoinette's fate was sealed before her trial. In a way, this "pre-trial" document compliments Campardon's records of what happened during the trial. Although different, both Campardon's and Lenotre's compilations prove their point that Marie-Antoinette was indeed unfairly condemned by the Revolutionary Tribunal.

A final Marie-Antoinette story that the two historians handled differently was the story of Marie-Antoinette's last communion. Like the Carnation Affair, the story of the queen's last communion is full of mystery. In the late summer and early fall of 1793, the royalist hope of Marie-Antoinette being released from prison and expedited from France was diminishing daily.

[435] They decided there that the queen would die.
[436] I promised Antoinette's head, and I will go and cut it off myself if you wait much longer to give it to me.
[437] What [evidence he was planning on using against the queen]
[438] Francis Dracke's letter was preserved by J.B. Fortescue in *Historical manuscripts Commission.*

As her seemingly undeniable fate crept closer and closer, royalists became increasingly concerned with not only their queen's comfort while she remained in prison, but also for the well-being of her immortal soul. A royalist and pious young woman, Thérèse Fouché, who had been visiting revolutionary prisons for some time in order to bring religious comfort to the condemned prisoners, heard that Marie-Antoinette was being moved to the Conciergerie and wanted to act. Mademoiselle Fouché decided to ask the concierge, Mr. Richard, if she could bring a priest who had not sworn to the constitution into the prison so that the queen might speak with him and be comforted. After first convincing Richard, the concierge, to allow Father Charles Magnin to come with her, and then convincing Marie-Antoinette to see him, Fouché managed to bring the priest into the queen's cell for a visit.[439]

According to Magnin's and Fouché's testimonies, both of which Lenotre includes in his compilation, the queen was very much grateful and wished to continue seeing the priest and the young woman. Magnin declares to have taken the queen's confession twice while Richard was still the concierge (so before the Carnation Affair) and then once again after Richard was arrested and a Mr. Bault replaced him.[440] During the last visit at the beginning of October 1793, both Magnin and Fouché testify that Magnin gave communion to Marie-Antoinette, and that

[439] All information here concerning the story of the queen's communion has been pieced together from the testimonies of Mademoiselle Fouché and Father Magnin, as transcribed by Count Robiano in 1824, Magnin's own testimony which he wrote down for himself in 1825, Lenotre's summary of the event from *Marie-Antoinette la Captivité et la mort* (pages 292-307), and from a study in the 1890 *Revue des Questions historiques* (Volume 47) in the chapter "Marie-Antoinette à la Conciergerie" by author Victor Pierre.

[440] Magnin's exact words are: "Je déclare donc qu'avec l'assistance du Très-Haut, j'ai eu le bonheur de confesser deux fois la Reine de France, et de lui porter la sainte communion pendant que Richard était encore concierge de la prison de la Conciergerie. Je déclare, en outre, que le sieur Bault, successeur de Richard à la Conciergerie et connu de Mlle Fouché, pendant qu'il était concierge à la Force, céda de même à ses instances ; la porte du cachot s'ouvrit pour elle. La présence d'un être si dévoué adoucit de nouveau la situation de la Reine et, par ses soins et ses sollicitations, j'obtins de nouveau gardien le bonheur de me présenter à Sa Majesté" (taken from Lenotre, 325). "I declare, that with God's help, I had the opportunity to hear the Queen of France's confession twice and to bring her the Holy Communion while Richard was the concierge at the Conciergerie. I also declare that Mr. Bault, Mr. Richard's replacement who Ms. Fouché knew from her visits to *La Force* [another prison], also gave in to her urging, and allowed her to visit the prison cell. The presence of such a devoted servant again softened the Queen's situation, and thanks to her care and urging, I again obtained the opportunity to see Her Majesty."

Fouché and the two gendarmes on duty, Prud'homme and Lamarche, also received it. Even though the knowledge that Marie-Antoinette had received a communion before her execution might have brought comfort to many anxious royalists, Magnin and Fouché kept their encounters with the queen a great secret for a long time. In fact, Magnin says that for several years, he and Fouché only spoke of the communion to a few people.[441] Due to this, Marie-Antoinette's daughter did not find out about the communion until eleven years later in 1804, when one of the informed few, the princess of Tarente, visited her in Russia and told Marie-Thérèse the story.

Marie-Thérèse and her uncle the future Louis XVIII happily received this information, although Magnin and Fouché's identities remained unknown to them. Later, during the Bourbon Restoration, another informed person, the princess of Chimay, urged Magnin to reveal his identity to the king and the duchess in order to ensure the pious public that the queen had in fact received communion and said a confession before her death. After some resistence, Magnin was finally persuaded, and on October 16, 1814, he met with the Duchess of Angoulême, and spoke to her of his meetings with Marie-Antoinette, the confessions and the final communion. The duchess and her uncle the king, apparently believed Magnin and thanked him with an important promotion[442], but for unknown reasons, they kept the details of the story to themselves for ten years.

Once the story had surfaced, it began making small appearances in literature. Montjoye had mentioned the communion in his 1797 version of *Histoire*, and included a letter from Chimay in

[441] The people Magnin spoke to were (in the order he lists in his testimony): Julie, the Mother Superior from the Saint-Roch Charity and her companion Jeanne, who gave Ms. Fouché some warmer undergarments and a pair of elastic garters as a gift for Marie-Antoinette. (Interestingly, when the queen's remains were uncovered in 1815, she was wearing one of these garters.). They also spoke to a Mademoiselle Trouvé, another priest named Monsieur Blandin, and the princess of Chimay, who had been one of Marie-Antoinette's ladies-in-waiting. In 1803, Chimay shared the story with another friend, the princess of Tarente, who was on her way to see the Duchess of Angoulême in Russia. It was here that Marie-Thérèse heard the story for the first time. (See Lenotre, 328-329).

[442] In 1816, in recognition for his service to her mother, Marie-Thérèse made Magnin the Priest at Saint-Germain-d'Auxerre. See Magnin's own telling of how the news came to Marie-Thérèse in Lenotre, pages 328-330.

his 1814 edition in which she confirmed the fact that the communion had taken place (Montjoye, 1814, 232-242). In 1818 in *Augustes victimes,* Guénard did not claim openly that the communion had taken place, although she hinted that it did. According to her, "on rapporte[443]" that, when given the opportunity to confess to a priest the Commune had provided, Marie-Antoinette had politely refused, and told him that she had already received this service by another means.[444] After that, Guénard demonstrated faith that the communion had in fact taken place, when she expressed doubt that Marie-Antoinette would have reported it to her sister-in-law since it would have endangered the priest, and this was not at all typical of Marie-Antoinette's character.

> Mais cela ne parait pas vraisemblable; car c'était donner lieu à des recherches pour savoir comment […] S.M. avait pu avoir quelque communication avec un prêtre non assermenté ; ce qui n'eût pas manqué, dans ce tems de terreur, de compromettre quelques-uns des ecclésiastiques […] et on a vu au contraire avec quel soin la Reine a évité, dans toutes ses réponses, ce qui pouvait compromettre ceux qui lui étaient attachés…[445] (III, 17)

Even though it had made brief appearances in literature, it was not until 1824, when a Count Robiano published a short brochure entitled: *Marie-Antoinette à la Conciergerie, fragment*

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[443] They say…

[444] Guénard linked statement with information from Marie-Antoinette's last letter to Elisabeth. She said that Marie-Antoinette's refusal of the priest the Commune had provided followed the plan she had made for herself, and that she would later report in her letter to Elisabeth. In the letter, her exact words were: "Je meurs dans la religion Catholique, Apostolique et Romaine, dans celle de mes pères, dans celle où j'ai été élevée, et que j'ai toujours professée, n'ayant aucune consolation spirituelle à attendre; ne sachant pas s'il existe encore ici des prêtres de cette religion; et même le lieu où je suis, les exposerait trop, s'ils y entraient une fois" (cited here from Guénard, *Augustes victimes,* III, 132). "I die an Apostolic Roman Catholic, the religion of my fathers, in which they raised me and which I have always professed. Not knowing if any priests of this religion still exist in Paris, I die without any hope of spiritual consolation. Even if there is a priest of this religion left, coming to the place where I am would put them in danger, even if they came just one time."

[445] But this does not seem likely. These words would have enticed research into how Her Majesty could have had communication with a priest who had not yet sworn to the Republic, and in this time of terror this would have, in turn, compromised several priests, […] and we have seen, on the contrary, with what care the Queen had always avoided compromising with her words those who were attached to her.

historique (*Marie-Antoinette at the Conciergerie, a historical document*), in which for the first time a wide-spread public was informed of Marie-Antoinette's last communion.[446] Robiano was from Belgium and is described by Victor Pierre in "Marie-Antoinette à la Conciergerie" as "un homme aimable, spirituel, instruit, très curieux des choses de l'esprit, Catholique et royaliste, ses sympathies étaient tout entières pour la famille de Bourbon" (214).[447] Having heard the story of the communion, Robiano requested interviews with Magnin and Fouché. He met with each of them several times, listened to their stories, and copied down what they told him. Needless to say, the idea that Marie-Antoinette had received communion and had confessed to a priest still loyal to the throne, had been not only a great comfort to the restored Bourbons and their enthusiastic followers, but also an important political playing piece fitting in well with the religious rhetoric of the Bourbon Restoration. In addition, the brochure was a public sensation because it added to "news about Marie-Antoinette", which as Chapter three revealed, were quite popular at that time.

However, "*Le Journal de la librairie* du 22 mai 1824 annonça dans la même livraison et sous deux numéros consécutifs (2,606 et 2,667), *les Mémoires secrets et universels des malheurs et de la mort de la Reine de France*, par Lafont d'Aussonne, à côté d'une modeste brochure ayant pour litre: *Marie- Antoinette à la Conciergerie, fragment historique, par le comte de Robiano*" (Pierre, 214).[448] In *Mémoires secrets,* d'Aussonne made the bold statement that the story of the queen's

[446] Montjoye, after having spoken to the Princess of Chimay, wrote about the queen's communion, *and* mentions Mlle Fouché and Father Magnin by name (239-242) in his 1814 version of *Histoire.* It is unknown why this rather large addition to Montjoye's work did not seem to stir up suspicion. It was not until 1824 when d'Aussonne would attack Robiano's work on the queen's communion that the story became widely known.
[447] "…a likeable, spiritual and educated man, who was very curious about spiritual things. He was a royalist and a Catholic, and his sympathies lay totally with the Bourbon family."
[448] The May 22, 1824 issue of the *Bookstore Journal* announced in the same subscription and under two consecutive numbers (2,606 and 2,667) *The universal and secret memoires of the misfortunes and the death of the Queen of France,* by Lafont d'Aussonne, next to a short brochure entitled: *Marie-Antoinette at the Conciergerie, historic fragment,* by the count de Robiano.

communion was false. His arguments were accusing and insulting, and he called the story a fable invented by Magnin and Fouché as a means to mislead the public.[449] He did not stop with this brief denunciation in *Mémoires secrets*. Three months later, on August 11, 1824, Victor Pierre tells us that d'Aussonne published a letter in the *Gazette de France* in which he claimed Robiano never even existed, and that it was the conniving Charles Magnin and the dishonest Thérèse Fouché who had invented, and authored this false story of the queen's communion for their own gain.[450] Then, on November 26, 1824 d'Aussonne published an entire brochure refuting the communion, entitled *La fausse communion de la Reine soutenue au moyen d'un faux, nouvelle réfutation appuyée sur de nouvelles preuves.*[451]

When the contents of this new brochure were found affixed to the entry way of his church in Saint-Germain d'Auxerre[452], Father Magnin, who had always remained publically silent, decided to make a public statement. He did so in his church, in front of a large congregation in late November or early December 1824. "M. Magnin […] en présence d'une nombreuse assistance, il protesta avec une charitable modération contre une imputation si révoltante. Il rapporta le fait et ses principales circonstances. Puis, se tournant vers l'autel, il éleva ses mains et affirma devant Dieu que tout ce qu'il venait de dire était la pure vérité" (Lenotre, 304).[453] When news of Magnin's public declaration got out, d'Aussonne counteracted, by publishing yet another work in

[449] See d'Aussonne pages 368-371 for his full accusation.
[450] See Pierre, 215-216.
[451] *The Queen's false communion supported by a dishonest man, a new rebuttal with new proof* ; This brochure was published by several different publishing houses: Pichard, Pelicier, Petit, Dentu, Ponthieu, Delaunay and Audot, and sold for the price of 20 *sous.*
[452] Pierre, page 217.
[453] Mr. Magnin […] in the presence of many witnesses protested against such a revolting accusation. He told of the fact [the communion] and its principle circumstances. Then turning towards the alter, he lifted his hands and affirmed before God that all he had just said was the pure truth." (Lenotre takes this information from an article entitled "La Communion de la Reine Marie-Antoinette à la Conciergerie" which appeared in *Le Monde* on March 31, 1863. The late publication date attests to the fact that the controversy went on for many years.)

early 1825: *Mémoire au Roi sur l'importance du faux matériel de la Conciergerie.*[454] Pierre describes the contents of this new work as being "moins des arguments que des injures de plus en plus grossières contre M. Magnin et Mlle Fouché" (219).[455] In response, Magnin finally felt compelled to write down his story for himself for the first time. Rather than publishing it, however, he made several copies of his written testimony, certified them with his signature, and gave them to a small number of people, including king Charles X, the Duchess of Angoulême, R.P Fouché (the nephew of the aging Thérèse Fouché) and François Robiano.[456]

D'Aussonne outlines his entire rebuttal in *La fausse communion* and in an end note in *Mémoires secrets* (369-374), but he used Rosalie's testimony and the fact that she had never mentioned Magnin and Fouché as chief evidence to support his argument. Since *Mémoires secrets* had been the first place Rosalie's testimony had ever appeared, and since her name had never before surfaced in official documents concerning the Conciergerie, her identity became doubted by those who believed d'Aussonne had invented her simply as evidence to say the communion had never taken place.

The debate went on for a few more years, but "Lafont était à bout d'injures autant que d'arguments ; M. Magnin dédaignait de lui répondre ; la discussion tombait d'elle-même et le public se laissait détourner vers d'autres objets" (Pierre, 221).[457] Rosalie's identity was continuously questioned, and then, in 1838 Barbe-Henriette Simon-Viennot, a well-known woman author, published *Marie-Antoinette devant le XIXe siècle* in which she included Rosalie's testimony after having gone herself to the hospital where Rosalie lived and speaking to Rosalie

[454] *Letter to the king of the importance of the false story from the Conciergerie*
[455] ….less arguments than new and even worse insults at the expense of Mr. Magnin and Ms. Fouché.
[456] See Pierre, page 219 for a complete list of people who received an original copy of Magnin's testimony.
[457] Lafont had used up all of his arguments and his insults, and Magnin scornfully refused to answer to him. The discussion stopped, and the public turned their attention to other things.

herself. Michelle Sapori tells us that the facts that Rosalie told her were "les mêmes quasiment que celles faites à Lafont d'Aussonne" (14). [458] Sapori states that if d'Aussonne had been the only author claiming Rosalie's existence then her identity would still be in question, but if a person as trustworthy as Simon-Viennot published almost the same thing, then it was for certain that this was a testimony the public could count on for the truth. Indeed, added to d'Aussonne's account, Simon-Viennot's work had made the fact that Rosalie existed unquestionable. "L'effort conjugué de Lafont d'Aussonne et Simon-Viennot nous a légué un témoignage éternel sur les derniers moments de la reine, rendant tout aussi éternelle celle par qui il nous arrivait. Pas un livre depuis, on les compte par centaines, qui n'ai parlé de Rosalie pour évoquer le récit du passage de la reine à la Conciergerie. Incontournable et cependant inconnue Rosalie" (15).[459]

Later authors continued to write about Rosalie, and continued to give credit to Lafont d'Aussonne as the historian who had discovered her. For several years, historical and fictional works about the queen did not mention a last communion nor that there was a controversy about it, yet Rosalie's testimony and d'Aussonne's work continued to be used. In Dumas's *Chevalier de Maison-Rouge,* for example, *and* in the historical narratives of the Goncourt brothers and Viel-Castel, the authors used Rosalie's testimony and d'Aussonne's work as important sources, but did never mention the last communion.[460] At the time of Campardon's publication in 1863, communion controversy had faded from public view. As mentioned previously, Campardon praised d'Aussonne for his groundbreaking research on Marie-Antoinette, and numerous times

[458] …mostly the same as she had told them to Lafont d'Aussonne.
[459] The joint effort of Lafont d'Aussonne and Simon-Viennot gave us an eternal witness about the last moments of the queen, which also made the one who told us this testimony eternal. Not one book since, and we can count them by the hundreds, has *not* spoken of Rosalie when speaking of the queen at the Conciergerie. Unavoidable and yet unknown Rosalie.
[460] Beauchesne, on the contrary, used d'Aussonne as a source but made no mention of Rosalie in his text. He did, however, believe that enough evidence had existed in support of the communion and gave his full explanation in the footnotes of *Louis XVII* (II, 142-143).

throughout his text he uses and gives credit to d'Aussonne for the information he had included in his 1824 work.[461] "Lafont d'Aussonne […] a pu se mettre en rapport avec des personnes qui par leur position ont été à même de lui faire connaître, de la façon la plus certaine, les derniers moments de la veuve de Louis XVI. Je lui ai emprunté, entre choses, la déclaration de Rosalie Lamorlière" (IV). [462] Like the historians from the 1850s Campardon made no mention of Marie-Antoinette's last communion.

In 1864, one year after Campardon's work, Magnin's personal testimony was finally published for the first time in French newspaper *Le Monde*.[463] The debate resurfaced, and the questions were revisited, and in 1890, Victor Pierre wrote an entire investigation for his chapter in *Revue des questions historiques*. At this time Pierre admitted "il n'est pas rare de rencontrer des personnes, même versés dans les choses de la révolution, pour que le fait de la communion de la reine ne soit une révolution étrange ou une nouveauté suspecte" (Pierre, 166).[464]

Finally, in 1897, Lenotre makes a clear statement about what he believed about Rosalie and the communion controversy. Lenotre accepts that Rosalie had existed, but makes it clear that it

[461] See Campardon pages 101, 108, 181, 207 and 351.
[462] Lafont d'Aussonne, alone, […] was able to get into contact with people who by their position were able to tell him with all certainty about the last moments of Louis XVI's widow. I borrowed from him, among other things, Rosalie Lamorlière's declaration.
[463] Although Robiano had published Magnin's retelling of the communion, and Magnin had written down in his own retelling much earlier his own words were not published until 1864. In 1864, *Le Monde* was the first newspaper to publish Magnin's testimony in its entirety in *Le Monde.* The text of the testimony came to the newspaper by way of the United States, where a nephew of Fouché, Simon Guillaume Fouché, had heard that the debate was still going on, and that the words of his aunt were still being slandered and put into question. Fouché claimed to have been holding on to this signed testimony of the Magnin since the time his aunt had given it to him. A few years later in 1879, author Maxime de la Rocheterie produced a similar copy from his home in Belgium, which he claimed to have received from François Robiano's son. Pierre invites the reader to consider here: "N'est-il pas singulier que la pièce la plus authentique et la plus précieuse sur la communion de la reine nous arrive de deux pays étrangers, […] les États-Unis et la Belgique, et que les dépositaires de cette pièce, sans s'être concertés, sans même se connaître, se soient fourni l'un à l'autre, à une si grande distance d'espace et de temps, un contrôle réciproque ?" (168). "Is it not interesting that the most precious and authentic piece of evidence of the Queen's Communion came to us from two foreign countries […] the United States and Belgium? And is it not interesting that the two men that gave this evidence, without speaking to each other, even without knowing each other, were able to prove each other's authenticity, even across such great distance and time?"
[464] It is not rare to meet someone, even an expert of the Revolution, for whom the fact of the Queen's communion is not a strange discovery or a suspicious piece of new information.

was not due to d'Aussonne's research, but to Simon-Viennot's. "Notre défiance est telle à l'égard de cet écrivain que nous aurions hésité à accepter le récit de Rosalie, si nous n'avions été en mesure d'en vérifier l'authenticité. Les pages suivantes [Simon-Viennot's interview with Rosalie…] nous fixent sur la véracité du [son] récit" (260).[465] Still, Lenotre includs Rosalie's testimony in full here and only footnotes places were he believed d'Aussonne was mistaken. For example, in the middle of Rosalie's testimony, Lenotre places this footnote: "Cette parenthèse est bien certainement une adjonction de Lafont d'Aussonne. On verra combien il lui importait que les gendarmes fussent toujours les mêmes. Rosalie ayant donné leurs noms, Dufrène et Gilbert, il espérait pouvoir convaincre de mensonge les partisans de la Communion de la Reine à la Conciergerie" (233).[466] In the end, Campardon and Lenotre agree about the authenticity of Rosalie's testimony, although their reason for believing differs. As far as the communion is concerned, however, Lenotre believes it, and this is confirmed in that he includes the full testimonies of Charles Magnin and Thérèse Fouché in his compilation.

It is not surprising that Campardon did not mention the communion at all in his text. Campardon placed emphasis, in the rest of his work, on documents that he could touch, and information he had seen with his own eyes that had been recorded in the national archives. Since the communion was not documented in the archives, it is understandable that Campardon would not include Magnin's and Fouché's testimonies in his compilation. However, in regards to Rosalie's testimony, Campardon's trust is puzzling, as Victor Pierre remarked in his review of the controversy and its subsequent investigations:

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[465] Our mistrust of this author [d'Aussonne] is so great that we would have hesitated to accept Rosalie's testimony, if we had not been able to verify its authenticity. The following pages [Simon-Viennot's interview with Rosalie…] will show us the truth of the testimony.

[466] This information was certainly one of Lafonte d'Aussonne's additions. We will see how important it would be to him that the two *gendarmes* always stayed the same. He hoped to convince those who believed in the "Queen's Communion" of its falsity, by making Rosalie give these two names – Dufrène and Gilbert.

> Dans les documents authentiques publiés sur le séjour de la reine à la Conciergerie (interrogatoires divers, pièces administratives), le nom de Rosalie Lamorlière n'apparaît pas […] Or, les administrateurs, qui touchent à tant de détails dans la consigne donnée par eux le 10 septembre, ne parlent pas de Rosalie. Enfin, n'est-il pas étrange que, dans les nombreux cartons des archives qui ont fourni à M. Campardon tant de notes biographiques sur les personnes les plus obscures, il ne paraisse pas avoir rencontré une seule fois le nom de Rosalie Lamorlière.[467] (Pierre, 197-198)

In fact, of the eye-witness testimonies that Campardon uses, Rosalie's testimony is the furthest removed from "authenticity". Chauveau-Lagarde and Marie-Thérèse had each written their memoires themselves, not to mention that their identities were not at all in question, as was Rosalie's. Still, Campardon concludes that, "j'ai contrôlé du reste avec les documents officiels le récit de Rosalie, et je l'ai toujours trouvé dans ses points les plus importants, absolument conforme à la vérité" (iv-v).[468] Perhaps Campardon accepts Rosalie's testimony simply because it added interesting detail to the story of the end of Marie-Antoinette's life – something for which he had criticized previous authors – and that he manages to avoid doing in the rest of his work.

On the contrary, the fact that Lenotre chose to include second-hand eye-witness testimonies from one man, but adamantly distrusted the second-hand eye-witness accounts from another is surprising. Lenotre does *not* agree with Campardon about the quality of Lafont d'Aussonne's research, but he *does* agree with Campardon regarding Rosalie's testimony: "…si Lafont d'Aussonne y a volontairement ou non, commis, quelques erreurs de rédaction, le fond même

[467] In the official documents concerning the queen's time in the Conciergerie (various interrogations, administrative papers) Rosalie Lamorlière's name does not appear […] Likewise, those administrators who wrote with so much detail in the order they gave on September 10, do not speak of Rosalie. Finally, is it not strange that in the numerous cartons of archives which Mr. Campardon used to make his biographical notes on the most obscure people, that it seems he never encountered the name "Rosalie Lamorlière" one single time?

[468] I have compared Rosalie's testimony with the official documents I have, and I have always found it to be absolutely true on the most important matters.

reste d'une authenticité absolue, authenticité reconnue plus tard et certifiée par Rosalie elle-même" (226).[469] This is not the only criticism Lenotre makes of d'Aussonne. *La captivité et la mort* is sprinkled with criticism towards d'Aussonne's research and personal character.[470] On the other hand, evidently, Robiano's research method had earned Lenotre's respect. "Le comte de Robiano poussa le soin de la fidélité historique jusqu'au scrupule. Chaque jour, au sortir de ses entrevues avec Mlle Fouché ou l'abbé Magnin, il mettait par écrit ce qu'il avait recueilli et venait le lendemain leur donner lecture des notes qu'il avait transcrites afin de s'assurer qu'elles étaient bien exactes et conforme en tous points à leurs souvenirs". (306) [471] He praises Robiano's brochure and marks it with his historical seal of approval concluding that: "Rédigé dans de telles conditions, le récit de M. de Robiano peut être considéré comme le plus fidèle" (307).[472]

Whether the communion took place or not is irrelevant to this study. How the story came to be, and how the myth persisted, however, is not. Campardon's praise of d'Aussonne and the omission of this infamous controversy in his work shows that he did not believe the communion took place, while Lenotre's compilation includes documentation supporting the fact that it did. Campardon and Lenotre were not the first authors, nor would they be the last, to disagree on the truth of the communion. Although these authors had used a similar method to conduct their research, they still could not agree on certain "truths" about Marie-Antoinette. The mystery remained unsolved as did many facets in the myth of Marie-Antoinette – showing once again that historical truth feeds fictional myths as well as pulls from them.

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[469] …if Lafont d'Aussonne, whether voluntarily or not, committed errors [in Rosalie's testimony] the foundation of it remains absolutely authentic, and this authenticity was later confirmed by Rosalie herself.

[470] See Lenotre, pages 225, 226, 233, 260, 302-304, 355, and 364.

[471] Count Robiano took his job of writing down the facts very seriously. Each day, upon leaving his meeting with either Ms. Fouché or Mr. Magnin, he would write down what he had heard. Then, the next day, he would return and read his notes aloud to them as a way to ensure that they corresponded exactly with their memories." (Lenotre got this information about Robiano's research from the 1870 writings of Maxime de la Rocheterie, who got *his* information from Count L. de Robiano, who was the son of the François Robiano.)

[472] Written under such conditions, Robiano's work can be considered a most reliable source.

Conclusion: Marie-Antoinette after the nineteenth century

Tracing the myths

This study has shown the broad spectrum of Marie-Antoinette's image from virgin goddess to corrupted monster in pre-revolutionary literature, and then from regretted to worshiped, manipulated to exposed, and even to copied, in literary representations in the century after her death. Nineteenth-century writings of Marie-Antoinette's story, while retrials attempting to correct exaggerated personalities from writings that had led the queen to her early demise, were also the authors' attempts to perpetuate certain stances or ideas that he or she believed to be true at the time. This led the earliest nineteenth-century writers to focus less on writing the "facts" about Marie-Antoinette and more on contradicting the myth of the monster queen in order to show the faults of the Revolution. The early texts thus display exaggerated myths of their own, as seen in Chapters two and three of this study. In the late 1840s and early 1850s, Alexandre Dumas re-humanized the ideal and martyred Marie-Antoinette from pre-Napoleon and Restoration literature. Although Dumas allows immense suffering to erase previous crimes, his interpretation uses Marie-Antoinette to highlight the "continuous creation" of History. The historical process indeed takes center stage in Dumas' revolutionary series, and Marie-Antoinette only serves as a means to portray its significance. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, historical biographies were influenced by Realism, Naturalism and new exigencies of historical writing. The authors of these historical biographies intended to demonstrate the efficacy of each movement as a means to arrive at historical accuracy using Marie-Antoinette as an example. However, as the authors attempted to correct established myth by veering away from Romanticism and approaching Marie-Antoinette's retrial from a more scientific point of view, they did not easily surrender their sympathy or their fascination for the queen, and thus previously established myths still persisted. In order to remove fiction indefinitely from the story

of Marie-Antoinette, historians towards the end of the century employed an even more seemingly straightforward method of historiography: reproducing archival sources. These sources, however caused "a return to "the real" problematic. They suffer from not only the danger of human error and the contamination of human intention but also from the bias of generic convention: they select, omit, emphasize, minimize, hierarchize, [and] organize lived experience according to the poetics of the genre they employ" (Fort, 10). Indeed, since personal bias, political leanings, and accepted rumor each had influenced initial interpretations concerning Marie-Antoinette, even an intense study of original revolutionary texts, did not allow a consensus regarding the life and times of this woman. By tracing the evolution of Marie-Antoinette's literary image from her first days in France to the end of the nineteenth century, and by demonstrating how the manipulation of this image always served a purpose, this study has shown the amazing power of the myth as a factor in historical and national memory, as well as how inseparable the realms of fact and fantasy are in the case of Marie-Antoinette.

Developments in historical and literary thinking and writing since the nineteenth century have not minimized this intersection of fact and fiction, but rather have encouraged it. According to Jerome de Groot in *The Historical Novel*, post-modernism has fueled the comeback of this multifaceted genre, even maintaining some of its original characteristics and goals (112). Since nineteenth-century writers of historical novels often needed to defend their genre due to the heavily criticized practice of combining poetry and history[473], it is not surprising that post-modern thinking offers to writers of historical fiction a sense of liberation. Indeed, as post-modern authors are no longer confined to writing the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, they are free reinterpret and challenge the master narratives of History. They can even do

[473] The attacks and accusations against Alexandre Dumas discussed in Chapter four are a good example of this.

so without including the lengthy explanations of their validity and their goals, which characterized the accounts from the nineteenth century. Paridoxically though, often out of their refusal to overinterpret the facts, a certain objectivity derives and what has come before continues influencing what they write.

In the late twentieth and into the twenty-first century, theories of post-modernism have not only influenced the historical novel genre as a whole, but they have inevitably effected representations of Marie-Antoinette. In three recent historical novels about Marie-Antoinette written in French, *Les Adieux à la Reine* (2002), *J'ai aimé une reine* (2003), and *Rosalie Lamorlière, dernière servante de Marie-Antoinette* (2010), the influence of post-modern thinking is evident. As will be discussed in this conclusion, however, even amid post-modern ideas of subjectivity and open-ended interpretation, myths of Marie-Antoinette will still come into play as previously established mixtures of fact and fiction continue to feed the plots of the stories.

Les Adieux à la Reine, published in 2002 by historian and scholar Chantal Thomas, is one example of a post-modern historical novel based on events from Marie-Antoinette's life. Thomas has been a professor at universities in France as well as in the United States, and is the author of numerous works from various genres including essays, short stories, historical studies, and historical novels. At the time of *Les Adieux'*s publication, Thomas was the director the French *Centre national de la recherche scientifique*. *Les Adieux* was not Thomas's first work on Marie-Antoinette, as discussed in the introduction of this study. She published *La Reine Scélerate,* an in-depth look at Marie-Antoinette in revolutionary pamphlets, in 1989.

Les Adieux is a fictional account of two days of Marie-Antoinette's life from the point of view of a fictional character, Agathe Simone Laborde, her reader. The days are July 15 and 16, 1789, and Agathe recounts the events that took place at Versailles that day from memory twenty-one

years later from Vienna where she has since moved after first immigrating to Switzerland in 1789. As Marie-Antoinette's reader, Agathe often found herself in the queen's room at odd hours – sometimes even in the middle of the night. Arriving when called, yet even then sometimes forgotten – Marie-Antoinette often wanted to hear a story and then would quickly change her mind but not dismiss the young girl. Therefore, Agathe spent much time in the queen's bedroom, often unnoticed, which allowed her to observe the queen in the most private moments with her most intimate friends. From her unique and intimate perspective, Agathe tells of the two days when chaos reigned at the chateau of Versailles, after the taking of the Bastille and the flight of the nobles.[474]

Thomas exploits a variety of Marie-Antoinette myths – both positive and negative ones - as material for her novel whose end result is to turn this queen into a powerless yet fascinating victim. She first capitalizes on the queen's kindness and generosity, making them overarching features of her personality. When Agathe arrives at Versailles, for example, after being hired as the reader, the leading man-servant asks if she indeed can read. If not, he explains much to Agathe's surprise, Marie-Antoinette will not be angry. "…même elle vous découvrirait analphabète, je suis certain qu'elle ne le prendrait pas en mal. Sa Majesté est pour tout ce qui l'approche d'une bonté illimitée" (14).[475] Even a resident stalker, a fictional character affectionately named *l'Amoureux de la Reine* by the courtiers at Versailles, who roams the grounds of the chateau day and night in order to catch a glimpse of Marie-Antoinette, is treated with kindness by the generous queen (138-139).

[474] Thomas personifies the chaos at the chateau of Versailles during these two days with the invisible yet significant character *La Panique.* After the Bastille has been overrun, *La Panique* moves into the palace at Versailles enticing fear in all of its inhabitants, forcing many of them to leave. See pages 195-197 and page 216.
[475] …even if she were to find out that you are illiterate, I am certain that she would not take it badly. Her Majesty is unlimitedly gracious with all who approach her.

L'Amoureux de la Reine is not the only person at Versailles who is obsessed with Marie-Antoinette. Many inhabitants of the chateau are, in fact, mesmerized by the queen's sensual nature, which occupies a large role in the novel. From the very moment she sees the queen, Agathe is enchanted by Marie-Antoinette's presence and beauty. "La première vision que j'ai eue de Sa Majesté m'a plongée dans un état de ravissement inouï " (15).[476] From that moment, Agathe is, if not in love with Marie-Antoinette, at least obsessed by her. Although the only way Agathe can express her adoration of Marie-Antoinette to the queen herself is by reading aloud to the best of her ability, she does not attempt to hide her feelings from herself nor the reader "J'aimais la regarder" (100).[477] On one particular occasion, the beauty of Marie-Antoinette is almost more than Agathe can handle. "La Reine était couchée de côté. […] Je crus voir ses hanches pour la première fois, car sous l'ampleur des jupes cette partie du corps se dissimule. […] Je fis un effort: je détournai les yeux de ce corps de sirène, étendu dans la pénombre bleutée. […] Puis, je revins à elle" (218-219).[478] Only when the queen and Agathe read theater dialogues together, can Agathe vocally express her emotions for this woman – although even then she attempts to hold back. " 'Je crois [read the queen] que vous m'aimez, Félicie.' Et je répondis de toute mon âme avec une ardeur que je tentai de limiter, lorsque je m'aperçus que, de son côté, la Reine lisait platement " (33).[479]

Although Agathe's love for the queen goes unrequited, and Agathe suffers in silence, she is able to observe and understand Marie-Antoinette's own silent obsession for her long-time

[476] The first time I saw Her Majesty, I was plunged into a state of incredible ecstasy.
[477] I loved to look at her.
[478] The queen was laying on her side. […] I believe that is the first time that I saw her hips since normally they were hidden beneath her large skirts. [...] I made an effort to turn my eyes away from this Siren's body, spread out under the blue twilight. […] Then, my eyes drifted back to her.
[479] "I believe that you love me Felicity," [the queen read]. I responded fervently, with my whole soul, even trying to limit myself, when I realized that the queen was responding to me in a flat voice."

favorite at court, Gabrielle de Polignac. A naïve mistake on the part of Marie-Antoinette is when the queen exchanges the authentic friendship of the faithful and loyal Princess de Lamballe for that of the false and shallow duchess (155).[480] The queen's rather sensual obsession with Gabrielle allows the duchess's sister-in-law, the powerful and manipulative Diane de Polignac, to exercise much power over the queen. As Chapter one of this study discussed, Marie-Antoinette was often criticized for her display of masculine characteristics and the use of them to manipulate. In Thomas's interpretation however, Marie-Antoinette herself is conquered by the masculine Diane (87-88; 232) and the manipulative Gabrielle, who if she feels a certain affection for the queen, she also understands the benefits she and her family could gain from this. She therefore responds to the queen's loving declarations with calm and coolness (183).

Marie-Antoinette is powerless against the manipulation of the Polignac sisters, and Thomas creates an image of a Marie-Antoinette who is negatively influenced by them as much as she, during her lifetime, was accused of influencing others. As the ultimate icon of beauty and fashion in the late eighteenth-century, Marie-Antoinette was often imitated by women all over the country who wanted to be just like the queen. In *Les adieux,* it is Marie-Antoinette who admires Gabrielle, and thus attempts to imitate her. "…la Reine si fascinée par le charme de son amie que, sans s'en apercevoir, elle l'imitait (elle avait soudain le même rythme lent – qui n'était pas le sien d'habitude – ou le même froncement de nez, qui ne lui allait pas du tout…)" (179).[481] In addition, though during her lifetime she was always dressed, pampered and kneeled before, in

[480] This is not an original plot twist, but rather Thomas's interpretation of known events. In her early years at Versailles, Marie-Antoinette's favorite was the Princess de Lamballe. Later, however, Lamballe was replaced as the queen's favorite by Gabrielle de Polignac. During the revolution, Lamballe demonstrated continued loyalty to the friendship, when she chose to return to Paris amid great danger. She was eventually imprisoned and brutally murdered, as was discussed in Chapter two. Gabrielle de Polignac, as will be discussed in this chapter, immigrated to Switzerland in July 1789 and passed away a few years later (Fraser 285; 443)

[481] …the queen was so fascinated by her friend's charm that she unknowingly tried to imitate her. (She suddenly had the same slow rhythm, which was not at all like her, or the same frown, which did not suit her at all….)

the end Thomas's Marie-Antoinette performs these very acts for Gabrielle "Dans un silence de mort, elle ôta elle-même à son amie la robe vert pale, commença de lui passer un jupon, et voulut même lui enfiler ses bas. C'est elle maintenant qui était à genoux aux pieds de Gabrielle" (234).[482] Marie-Antoinette, thus, becomes a victim and yet again a martyr (88) in *Les Adieux*. Her martyrdom is not however, on the hands of the French revolutionaries, but of those in whom she had placed, or rather misplaced, her trust.

Marie-Antoinette's unrequited love is one way in which Thomas demonstrates Marie-Antoinette's powerlessness, and this inability to change her situation is certainly the overall theme of this post-modern feminist retelling of her life. Thomas shows, on a number of occasions, how little power the queen had and how often this power was subject to the will of the men around her. After the taking of the Bastille, for example, Marie-Antoinette embarks on a mission to convince the king to flee Versailles. Under the watchful gaze of Agathe, Marie-Antoinette and a rather harsh Madame Campan, begin preparing for the family's flight (96). In the end however, the plans are nullified because the king decides not to leave. "La Reine avait renoncé à partir. Le Roi n'avait pas suivi sa décision. Ce devait être pour elle une blessure insupportable" (158).[483] Marie-Antoinette herself laments that since her arrival in Versailles, the great Louis XIV, who although passed on to another life, had prevented her from living as if the palace is her home. "Dès le début Versailles m'a refusée. Versailles était déjà occupé, par le Grand Roi, qui ne l'a jamais quitté. Dans chaque salle où j'entrais, il était là, en jeune homme, en vieillard, en danseur, en amant, en guerrier, toujours en gloire. Le château est sous son

[482] A deadly silence filled the room, as the queen herself lifted off her friend's pale green dress, began helping her to put on the petticoat, and even wanted to help her put on the stockings. It was now she who was kneeling at Gabrielle's feet.

[483] The queen had given up on her idea of escape. The king had not followed her decision. This must have wounded her unbearably.

surveillance. Ce ne sera jamais chez moi" (103).[484] As in previous portraits (the Goncourt's for example) the queen's powerless situation is the cause of her frivolity and obsession with "unimportant" things. In Thomas's fictional account, Marie-Antoinette is reduced to nothing more than a woman who chose her friends unwisely and displayed little initiative of her own. In the midst of danger, for example, unable to do anything else, Marie-Antoinette abandons herself to a discussion with Gabrielle about the various names for the differing shades of green of their gowns (175).[485] Even her proposal to escape is overshadowed with her obsession of what will become of her jewelry (97).[486] Others encouraged her frivolity in order to keep her down and themselves in a position of power. Indeed they used her rank of "queen" to their own advantage.

Another post-modern account of Marie-Antoinette's life, *J'ai aimé une reine* by Patrick Poivre d'Arvor (2003) also capitalizes on the sexual myths surrounding Marie-Antoinette but ultimately shows her lack of power. In a personal note at the back of his novel, this accolated author of over twenty novels and longtime news director of the longest-running television station in France (*Télévision Française 1*, TF1), calls his novel "d'abord le produit de l'imagination très fertile de l'Histoire" [et] "celui des fantasmes de l'auteur" (*Note de l'auteur*).[487] Poivre d'Arvor's account is less sympathetic than Thomas's and more often than not, he portrays Marie-Antoinette

[484] Since the beginning, Versailles has rejected me. It was already occupied by the Great King, who had never left. In every room I enter, he was there – either as a young man, an old man, a dancer, a lover, or a glorious warrior. The palace is still under his surveillance. It will never be my home.

[485] Many other smaller repetitions are found throughout the novel, but since they are quite numerous they all cannot be mentioned here. Marie-Antoinette's inability to concentrate on "serious subjects", like philosophy (88); Marie-Antoinette's love for nature (88; 174-175); Marie-Antoinette's two styles of walking (199); the infamous ink blot (104); the influence of Marie-Thérèse's letters (219-222); Marie-Antoinette's beauty faded too soon (100); the Chevalier d'Eon (144); *l'Autrichienne* (103, 128, 129; 104); *Madame Deficit* (100, 102); *Messaline* (184-185; 134); *Madame Veto* (99, 101).

[486] This is yet another interpretation of "factual" information. Madame Campan spoke of this incident in her *Mémoires* (II, 59-60).

[487] …first of all, the product of the very fertile imagination of History [himself], and also that of the author's fantasies.

as a power hungry *Autrichienne* or *Madame Veto,* whose engrained despotic principles are the reason for her personal downfall as well as a chief contributor to demise of France.

In his retelling, Poivre d'Arvor highlights a love story between Marie-Antoinette and Gilbert de la La Fayette, whose position as the general of the Parisian National Guard and his previous participation in the American War actually made this man one whom the queen most distrusted and outwardly demonstrated contempt during the Revolution. The idea of love existing between La Fayette and Marie-Antoinette is not new to this novel but rather Poivre d'Arvor's personal interpretation of "facts". After the massacre on the Champs de Mars in July of 1791, La Fayette had become one of the revolutionary public's favorite sexual partners for the queen in the pamphlets, as discussed in Chapter one.[488] One revolutionary periodical, *Le Magicien Républicain,* even recorded that when her pockets were searched just after her execution, Marie-Antoinette had two portraits in her pocket - the portrait of her favorite La Fayette, and that of her husband (cited in Lenotre, 379). Poivre d'Arvor indeed uses this rumored love story as the basis for the plot of his novel. Although they are never able to consummate their mutual passion for one another, first due to logistics and secondly due to Marie-Antoinette's pride, Marie-Antoinette and Gilbert remain in love with each other despite the differing political ideologies which separate them.

In part one of *J'ai aimé une reine,* like Agathe in *Les Adieux à la reine,* La Fayette is fascinated and falls madly in love with the *dauphine* Marie-Antoinette at first sight. Her beauty and sensuality are so overwhelming that, after less than one page of text, La Fayette is obsessed. Throughout the remainder of part one of the novel- even while getting married, voyaging to and from the American colonies, aiding in the American Revolutionary war, and engaging in

[488] See page 30 of this study, footnote 35.

numerous love affairs - "Marion" (La Fayette's secret nickname for the queen) is constantly at the forefront of La Fayette's thoughts. In part two of the novel, it is no longer possible for Gilbert to maintain the hope that he and Marion can engage in a relationship since, even though they are both members of the aristocracy, they share neither the same views nor goals. Showing himself completely supportive of the republican ideals for which he had helped the American colonists fight, Gilbert offends a prideful and stubborn Marie-Antoinette upon his return from the colonies. After this fateful meeting, the two are never again able to engage in the flirtatious sexual banter that had characterized their relationship before his departure. Although Gilbert will often remember the less-troubled times with fondness, especially later when he partly blames himself for the dangerous situation in which Marie-Antoinette finds herself, he never again is able to express vocally his constant desire to hold her in his arms.

Poivre d'Arvor portrays La Fayette as generous and egalitarian, while Marie-Antoinette is the contrary. Gilbert expresses dismay at the slavery he sees in the American colonies (116), encourages his new American friends to abolish slavery (200), freely gives away even his own grain to suffering peasants in the country-side of France (206), establishes a society to aid people of color in France (232), and abhors the way Protestant citizens of France are treated so unfairly by the despotic Catholic monarchy (206). La Fayette's beliefs about liberty and equality do not please Marie-Antoinette who is portrayed as his opposite. Indeed, the queen was "en grande partie responsable de la chape de plomb qui s'était abattue sur la couronne qui paralysait peu à peu le pays. C'était clair: elle ne voulait aucun changement et poussait le roi à l'immobilisme" (206).[489] Marie-Antoinette does not even possess the quality of generosity, so often accorded to

[489] "…was in a large way responsible for the heavy weight that had fallen on the crown and that was little by little paralyzing the country. It was clear: she did not want to change a single thing and was influencing the king to this end.

her in other fictional and historical accounts. "La Fayette […] avait décidé d'effacer tout à fait Marie-Antoinette de sa mémoire et de se consoler avec Adélaïde. Il y avait au moins en elle une authentique générosité" (225).[490]

La Messaline moderne is alive and well in this text as Marie-Antoinette does have a very active love affair with Count Axel Fersen. Poivre d'Arvor explains that it was because Fersen had continued supporting the monarchs and even plotted their escape that he was able to fill the hole in Marie-Antoinette's heart that La Fayette had ceased to fill. Gilbert, ever the generous man, refuses to hold bitterness towards the prideful queen who continuously rejects even his most sincere offers of support and friendship (235; 247). La Fayette employs a means to bring the greatest comfort to the woman he cares for, even in the midst of house arrest. "Pourtant, ce fut Gilbert lui-même qui, oubliant toute rancœur à l'égard de Marion, […] accepta de leur accorder, […] une immense faveur qui aurait pu lui valoir l'échafaud. […] Grâce à Gilbert, le Suédois [Fersen] put souvent s'introduire nuitamment dans les châteaux de la reine et jusque dans son lit" (251).[491]

The queen's ability to secretly and passionately love Fersen is not surprisingly linked to Poivre d'Arvor's reading of Louis XVI's weakness. This weakness further allows *Madame Veto* to take control and manipulate her husband's actions. "Plus énergique que son mari complètement désemparé, Marie-Antoinette le poussa à faire acte d'autorité et à passer ses

[490] "La Fayette […] had decided to completely erase Marie-Antoinette from his memory and to console himself with Adelaide. At least *her* generosity was genuine.

[491] In fact, it was Gilbert himself who, letting go of all bitterness towards Marion, […] accepted to grant her […] a great favor which could have led him to the scaffold. […] Thanks to Gilbert, [Fersen] could often come into the queen's rooms, and even her bed, at night. In *Marie-Antoinette, The Last Queen of France*, Evelyn Lever reveals that Fersen recorded in his journals that La Fayette had indeed ordered a door at the palaces remain open and unguarded at all times so that Fersen could get through (238-239). Lever interprets Fersen's secret visits as many times for political reasons, while Poivre d'Arvor interprets them as strictly sexual ones. These varying interpretations are a revealing example of a subjective reading, or at least a subjective repeating, of the facts.

troupes en revue en leur adressant une allocution pour réveilleur leur énergie" (332).[492] The queen's love affair with Fersen and the king's inability to act and his disinterest are very reminiscent of Alexandre Dumas's interpretation of the royal couple: Marie-Antoinette, obsessed with the Count de Charny, had little time for her husband who was not bothered by this, as he was too preoccupied with lock making, hunting and eating.[493]

The queen's affair with Fersen and the king's naivety and weakness are not the only themes in *J'ai aimé une reine* that echo Dumas's portrait of the queen. Poivre d'Arvor also mirrors Dumas's version in that due to her royal pride, Marie-Antoinette is blind to those who want to help her. Poivre d'Arvor's prime example of this, as had been for Dumas, is her prideful refusal to trust La Fayette, one of the only people who could save her.[494] Her "blind hatred[495]" combines with myths of *Madame Veto* and *Messaline* to form the ultimate picture of the monster queen:

> [Le roi] préféra écouter sa femme qui, elle, n'avait rien oublié. Elle reçut avec une immense froideur ce traître qui s'était pris pour son amoureux. Alors qu'elle eût eu grand besoin de lui par ces temps où, chaque nuit, sous ses fenêtres, le peuple chantait le refrain: « Madame Veto avait promis de faire égorger tout Paris », elle tendit à son sauver une main glaciale, détourna les yeux, refusa de se souvenir de leur première entrevue, dix-huit ans plus tôt, de leurs émois réciproques, et tira même un trait définitif sur les multiples tentatives du général pour la sauver... [496] (324)

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[492] More energetic than her distraught husband, Marie-Antoinette pushed him to use his authority to inspect his troops and to give them a speech in order to re-motivate them.
[493] See Dumas, *La Comtesse de Charny,* I, 23-24; *Ange Pitou,* 142-143 & 292-294
[494] See page 146 of this study.
[495] "haine aveugle"; Dumas used the words "étrange aveuglement" (blind hatred) in *La Comtesse de Charny* (V,45)
[496] The king preferred to listen to his wife, who had forgotten nothing. She received this traitor, who had once taken himself for her lover, with immense coldness. At the same time as she needed him greatly, since every night the people gathered under her windows singing, "Madame Veto promised to slit the throats of every Parisian", she held a cold hand towards her savoir, and turning her eyes away from him. She refused to remember their first meeting eighteen years ago and the emotions they had shared and even badly interpreted the general's multiple attempts to save her.

Poivre d'Arvor's narrative also resembles that of Dumas in that he arrives at the same conclusions in regards to the regicide and Marie-Antoinette's ultimate expiation. For him, the purity of the revolution was ruined by the execution of the king. The news of the king's death by guillotine "le laissa longuement prostré. Pour lui, il s'agissait d'un assassinat, et le drapeau tricolore, qu'il avait contribué à créer […] serait à ses yeux à jamais souillé" (341).[497] The revolutionary cause is even further sullied when the queen is dreadfully treated and eventually guillotined herself. For Poivre d'Avron, like Dumas and Zweig, Marie-Antoinette only became "worthy of her destiny" amidst great suffering. While reading Marie-Antoinette's last will and testimony, Gilbert is particularly touched by her words to her son about vengeance. "Que mon fils n'oublie jamais les derniers mots de son père, que je lui répète expressément: qu'il ne cherche jamais à venger notre mort" (357) ![498] From his reading of this passage of the queen's letter, Gilbert deduces that Marie-Antoinette would not have pursued him for his role in her demise. La Fayette understands Marie-Antoinette's delayed forgiveness and upholds it as a worthy example of this virtue, even if she only acquired it when there existed no other hope. As in Dumas's account, Marie-Antoinette was only able to forgive after having suffered and been brought "down to earth", and thus, only forgivable after her great suffering.

One final recent French historical novel does not highlight legends about Marie-Antoinette's sensual side at all, but rather exploits images of Marie-Antoinette made popular during the Restoration. Post-modern in the respect that this novel retells Marie-Antoinette's story from a new perspective, Miserole's method is slightly modern since he employs a footnoting system and a bibliography to inform his readers from where he took his information. *Rosalie Lamorlière,*

[497] …left him listless for a long time. For him, this was an assassination, and the tri-colored flag, that he had himself helped to create, […] would forever be sullied in his eyes.
[498] My son should never forget the last words his father said to him, and which I will repeat to him here: May he never seek to avenge our death!

dernière servante de Marie-Antoinette (2010), by Ludovic Miserole is a very sympathetic portrait of Marie-Antoinette containing images similar to those in the Restoration works from Chapter three. Miserole based his novel on the writings of Lafont d'Aussonne and Madame Simon-Viennot, as well as Rosalie's testimony as recorded by both of them. Miserole also lists Campardon, Lenotre, Castelot, Lever, and Zweig among sources for his novel.

In this account, narrated from a third-person perspective, Miserole centers on the elderly Rosalie who, at 79 years old, is living out her last days in *Les Incurables,* the very Parisian hospital where d'Aussonne and Simon-Viennot both claim to have had interviews with the woman. Curious about the grandmother he never knew, the young Adolphe Lacroix enlists the help of a nurse, Helen Grancher, to visit Rosalie and uncover the mystery of why she abandoned her first and only daughter, Adolphe's mother, a few years after having served Marie-Antoinette. Marie, Rosalie's long lost daughter, and Adolphe's mother, also a main character in the novel, is embittered by the fact that her mother abandoned her so long ago for reasons she cannot understand. Helen's visits to Rosalie take place in 1847 and 1848, just before Rosalie's death and on the eve of the 1848 Revolution in which reactionaries revolted against Louis-Philippe hoping to abolish the monarchy once and for all. During Helen's visits to *Les Incurables,* the aging Rosalie shares memories and reflections of her time spent in the Conciergerie with Marie-Antoinette. These memories are again the author's re-interpretation of the "facts" which he took mostly from Rosalie's original testimony as recorded by d'Aussonne and Simon-Viennot in the nineteenth century.

Unlike the queen in *Les Adieux à la reine* and *J'ai aimé une reine,* Rosalie's overall description of Marie-Antoinette is not one of a beaten individual. Marie-Antoinette is rather a strong woman who could not escape from the destiny that awaited her, but one who accepted her

fate with the upmost dignity and royal pride. These noble characteristics fascinate Rosalie and instill in her an almost religious respect for Marie-Antoinette. After the concierge Richard and his wife are removed in the fallout of the Carnation Affair, they are replaced by Monsieur and Madame Harel. Unlike the Richards, who maintained a distant yet kind relationship with the two women, Madame Harel treats Rosalie badly, and Marie-Antoinette more like prisoner than a queen. Rosalie explains the queen's reaction to Granger: "A chaque fois, elle regardait la femme Harel droit dans les yeux. On aurait dit que malgré le numéro 280 qui lui avait attribué sur le registre d'entrée, Madame lui rappelait à la citoyenne qu'elle n'en demeurait pas moins Reine de France et que toute captivité qu'elle fut, elle entendait bien marquer son rang…" (111-112).[499] Using information found in Chauveau-Lagarde's testimony, Miserole's Rosalie recounts to Helen how Marie-Antoinette, although decided guilty even before she went to trial, remained the ultimate example of composure and pride, silencing even for a moment, the malicious *tricoteuses.* "Encore une fois elle marquait son rang et se rendait à la mort la tête haute, épargant à ses ennemies la joie de voir une femme abattue. Elle ne leur montrerait aucun signe de faiblesse" (299).[500] Rosalie, like Agathe and La Fayette, is so fascinated by the queen that when she passed away she wished to be buried in a white linen shroud, the "only treasure she had ever possessed" to which she had sewn pieces of linen which had once belonged to Marie-Antoinette (319).

From Rosalie's perspective Miserole also gives a detailed reinterpretation of the Carnation Affair. Since Rosalie was a passive yet present eye-witness testimony of the events, her retelling

[499] Each time, she looked directly at Madame Harel. It was as if, even though they had named her Number 280 on the register at the Conciergerie, Madame was reminding the citizen that she was no less Queen of France, and that even amidst her captivity, she intended to maintain her rank.
[500] Once again she proved her lineage and faced death with her head held high, preventing her enemies from having the joy of seeing a beaten woman. She would not show them a single sign of weakness.

is very dramatic, and depicted as nearly successful. Michonis and Rougeville come to the Conciergerie with an order to move the queen from this prison to another one. Richard, still the concierge at that point, "jeta qu'un bref regard" at the paper, led them to the queen's cell, and then, worried, went away allowing them to carry out their mission. The men and Marie-Antoinette had passed two out of three doors separating them from freedom, when the gendarme Gilbert, who had previously accepted 50 gold pieces for his cooperation in the escape, suddenly appeared ordering Marie-Antoinette to return to her cell. In a footnote, Miserole explains that he took this plot development from Castelot. "Rien dans les textes n'indique que c'est le gendarme Gilbert qui a fait échouer l'évasion de Marie-Antoinette. Pas même dans le récit qu'en a fait Rougeville. A notre connaissance, André Castelot a été le premier à émettre cette hypothèse. Nous avons fait le choix de suivre cette thèse" (194).[501] The falied Carnation Plot, added even more to Rosalie's almost religious devotion for Marie-Antoinette. Indeed, the event had had such a profound effect on Rosalie that as she is dying at the end of *La dernière servante*, a red carnation appears before her eyes suspended in the air. Slowly, as it melts away, Rosalie's life slips away as well (315).

Miserole stays true to Rosalie's original testimony again when he speaks of the Communion. As discussed in Chapters three and six, Rosalie never mentioned the moment in her memoires. In *La dernière servante,* when Helen asks Rosalie if Charles Magnin's story is true, Rosalie responded "On l'a dit, mais pour ma part, je n'ai rien vu" (301).

Lack of communion, however, does not prevent *La dernière servante* from deploying religious references. Miserole filled his novel with rhetoric similar to that used during the

[501] Nothing in the texts indicated that it was the gendarme Gilbert who made the escape plan for Marie-Antoinette fail. [It does not even say this] in the account that Rougeville himself wrote. To my knowledge, André Castelot was the first to suggest this hypothesis, and I chose to follow his thesis in my account.

Restoration discussed in Chapter three. First of all, one of the largest themes of this novel is forgiveness. Using Marie-Antoinette as her ultimate example, Rosalie is able to pardon all of the people who have mistreated her in her lifetime, including a nun from the hospital who in twenty years never had a kind word for her. This forgiveness allows Rosalie and Sister Sartine to spend a few precious moments together as friends before their respective deaths. "Là est la force du pardon. Ce pardon dont Rosalie avait toujours fait preuve, même durant les heures les plus sombres de la Révolution, et qui lui donnait cette grandeur d'âme" (150-151).[502] Rosalie's daughter Marie, on the other hand, remains unable to forgive her mother for having abandoned her. The other characters in the novel, however, including Marie-Antoinette who Rosalie later meets in paradise, assure Rosalie that one day Marie too will understand the gift of forgiveness. "Il se peut que votre fille se soit déjà aperçue que le pardon est la seule issue, mais il faut bien plus de courage pour pardonner que pour détester. […] Mais […] je vous fais ici la promesse qu'un jour vous vous retrouverez, l'âme et le cœur en paix. Je ne vous mentirai jamais, mon cher cœur" (313-314).[503] As Marie-Antoinette encourages Rosalie with these words, she and Rosalie's own mother stand welcoming the dying woman into heaven.

An open-ended finish concludes this novel, as Rosalie passes away before revealing *why* she abandoned Marie so long ago. It is clear she felt forced to abandon her daughter due to the identity of the father, but this identity is one which Rosalie never reveals, even to the reader. Various possibilities are hinted by either Rosalie's words, Helen's speculations, or simply the readers own curiosity each time Rosalie mentions having spent time alone with a new male

[502] There is the power of forgiveness. This forgiveness that Rosalie had always displayed, even during the most somber hours of the Revolution, was indeed what made her so admirable.
[503] It could be that your daughter has already realized that forgiveness is the only answer, but it takes much more courage to forgive than it does to hate. […] But […] I promise you that one day yours and your daughter's hearts and souls will be united again in peace. I would never lie to you, my dear one.

character. These possibilities include the concierge Richard (206), Louis Larivière (113), and even Philippe d'Orléans or his valet Gamache (280-284). In the end, though, Miserole leaves the identity of Rosalie's one and only lover up to the interpretation of the reader.

That these three recent fictional accounts of the queen's life differ in their representation of history is not surprising. As we saw in Chapters one and four in the works of Elisabeth Guénard and Alexandre Dumas, Marie-Antoinette's life was full of the material needed to create a riveting fictional tale: hidden passageways; scandalous affairs; a seemingly unhappy marriage; the secrets of Trianon; the Diamond Necklace Affair; the unprecedented events of the French Revolution; the torture and suffering of the royal family; mysterious escape attempts; and finally, the regicide. All of these happenings, when combined, create not only the intriguing history of France in the late eighteenth century, but also open the door for an uncountable number of fictitious works. In the post-modern era, which liberates the writer of historical fiction to interpret the facts as they please, plots can and do have even more intrigue. However, as this study has shown, since these fictions base their interpretations on acclaimed historical accounts which themselves remain open to interpretation, the same myths of Marie-Antoinette continue appearing even in recent gendered and post-modern publications. Thus, even as recent authors intend to use Marie-Antoinette's story to invent new plot twists and add new intrigue to the tumultuous France of the late eighteenth century, the identities constructed for Marie-Antoinette during the nineteenth century continue to make their appearance and have their effect.

To conclude this discussion of how fact and fiction often intersected to create these persistant myths in the case of Marie-Antoinette, I would like to show how more recent historians chose to find and explain some of the stories discussed in this study. First of all, even though the sources each historian chose to trust or not slightly differ, they mostly took their information from the

same places. In regards to previously published historical sources, each of the four authors gives a similar explanation: "There have been too many works published in order to give a full list of sources I used", and yet a comparison is possible, if we only consider those works previously mentioned in this study, either primary or supplementary. Castelot, for example, lists the Goncourt brothers, Emile Campardon, Gaston Lenotre, Horace de Viel-Castel and Stefen Zweig as sources he used for information regarding Marie-Antoinette. Lever used these same sources, except for Viel-Castel. Fraser uses all of the same sources and added to them – even including works previously questioned for their accuracy.[504] In Zweig's case it is difficult to judge as he did not include any footnotes denoting from where he took his material. He does however, as do each of the other three authors, heavily use correspondences and in particular between Marie-Thérèse and Count Mercy-Argenteau and any letters that Marie-Antoinette wrote herself.

Zweig was a huge skeptic of eye-witness accounts (*mémoires*, *souvenirs* and *relations*) concerning Marie-Antoinette published during the Bourbon Restoration. For him, these stories present idealized images of Marie-Antoinette, and simply cannot be trusted. "…Celui qui recherché la vérité historique fait bien (contrairement à ce qui s'est passé jusqu'à ici) d'écarter […] comme témoins peu dignes de foi, à cause de leur mémoire trop complaisante, toutes ces femmes de chambre, tous ces coiffures, pages et gendarmes mis en avant. Ce que nous avons fait d'une façon systématique" (501).[505] Whereas Zweig seems to almost mock Restoration eye-witness testimonies[506], he still makes obvious use of certain eye-witness accounts, for example,

[504] For example, Fraser uses Lafont d'Aussonne as a primary source. Chapters three and six spoke of questions surrounding the authenticity of his works. She also uses a set of letters published by Feuillet de Conches whom Zweig, Castelot and the Goncourts all spend extensive time convincingly refuting.
[505] "…the one looking for historical truth does well to (on the contrary to what has been done up until this point) consider these ladies in waiting, hairdressers, and prison guards and their testimonies as non-credible sources due to their much too complaisant memories."
[506] Zweig said "Tous […] deviennent auteurs: la couturière de Marie-Antoinette, sa dame d'autours, sa première, sa deuxième, sa troisième femme de chambre, son coiffure, son geôlier, la première, la deuxième gouvernante de ses enfants, ses amis." "Everyone […] became an author: Marie-Antoinette's seamstress, her accessory adviser, her

those of Rosalie (480-481), Madame de Stael (231), and Monsieur Bault (a jailor, 478). Castelot, Lever and Fraser use eye-witness accounts seemingly without restraint. A tally of eye-witness accounts listed in the bibliographies of each of these works reveals that Castelot used over fifty ocular testimonies, Lever over forty and Fraser over thirty. Among only those previously mentioned in this study, Castelot, Lever and Fraser all use the testimonies of Cléry, Campan, and Rosalie as well as those of Weber and Chauveau-Lagarde. Only Castelot and Fraser use accounts from Thérèse Fouché, and Charles Magnin.

Although the four authors used mostly similar sources, their interpretation often differs. One subject on which each of these works heavily focuses, which remained an elusive topic in most of the texts this study examines, is the relationship between Marie-Antoinette and Count Axel von Fersen. At the same time that Zweig discredits the myths established about Marie-Antoinette during the Restoration, his account is one of the most illustrative of Marie-Antoinette's relationship to Count Fersen. Castelot does not deny that Marie-Antoinette loved Fersen, but labels their relationship as one of "Limited Lovers" (176), and spends several pages showing that, at the time he was writing, any evidence that existed about the two aristocrats being sexually involved with each other was circumstantial. Fraser comes to the conclusion that Marie-Antoinette and Fersen did sleep together (203), but only occasionally, and not exclusively. Fersen was a notorious lover of women, and Marie-Antoinette was, of course, also sleeping with her husband in order to fulfill her duty conceive children (203). Nonetheless, Fersen remained in love with Marie-Antoinette for all of his life, as Zweig, Castelot, Fraser and Lever, in whose text Fersen also plays a large role, all determine. This study made only brief mention of the relationship, because the nineteenth-century works, other than Dumas, only briefly mention him

first, second and third ladies-in-waiting, her hair-dresser, her jailer, the first and second governesses of her children, and her friends."

due to the lack of extensive research that existed on the subject at this time. It was not until 1877 that one of Fersen's great-nephews, Baron von Klinckowström published what remained of the correspondence between Marie-Antoinette and Count Ferson. In 1982, the *Archives Nationales historiques* purchased the letters, which had supposedly been destroyed, from some of von Klinckowstöm's descendants. Since then, extensive research has been done on the correspondence between the two aristocrats, whose letters switch between normal and enciphered text.[507] In the nineteenth century, however, little was known. The authors had, obviously, another motivation for wanting to hide Fersen's role in Marie-Antoinette's life. If a love affair indeed existed between them, it would not have supported the thesis of most of these writers: that Marie-Antoinette's marital behavior was above reproach.

Regarding the Carnation Affair, the recent accounts vary just as much as in the older accounts in regards to length and the importance given. Zweig recounts what he can from the facts he found: that Michonis and Rougeville entered the cell and dropped the carnation, and that after having discovered the note inside, Marie-Antoinette, who had indeed recognized Rougeville as one of her protectors from the 20th of June – yet *another* often disputed myth - confided her answer to Gilbert with the promise of a recompense, but after five days, Gilbert got worried and wrote his famous report to his superior. Zweig seems to have drawn his conclusion from the same printed documents that Campardon and the author of the *Procès des Bourbons* had used, thus archival sources. Zweig concludes that this famous affair which provided Dumas with a plot for a great novel, "est une histoire obscure qu'on ne réussira sans doute jamais à éclaircir complètement; car ce qu'en dissent les pièces du procès est insuffisant, et ce qu'en raconte le

[507] For a full description of the enciphered letters between Marie-Antoinette and Count Axel Fersen, and for a list of historians who have studied this enchanting correspondence, see Jacques Patarin and Valerie Nachef's article "I shall love you until death (Marie-Antoinette to Axel Fersen)" published in *Journal Cryptologia*, Volume 34, Issue 2, pages 104-114 in April 2010. (Bristol, Pennsylvania: Taylor & Francis).

héros de l'histoire [Michonis] sent la hâblerie" (439).[508] He does not say that Michonis and Rougeville managed to get Marie-Antoinette through two of the three prison doors separating her from freedom, as Castelot goes on to tell (352). Lever hardly mentions the affair, only to say that one day Marie-Antoinette was unsettled after having received a hidden message from a man she recognized as a faithful protector of June 20. As she tried to prick her answer, Lever says, her reply was snatched away by a gendarme on guard and Rougeville disappeared (293). Finally, Antonia Fraser gives little time to the Carnation Affair, except to admit the mystery surrounding it: "the issue is clouded rather than clarified by the arrest of the conspirators and the subsequent testimonies"; "Nevertheless one cannot help being skeptical as to how far the Queen really got on the path to freedom on this occasion" (418). Each author as well, has a different interpretation as to *how* Marie-Antoinette responded to having found the note inside the carnation. While Castelot takes nearly two pages to speak of how one deciphered the answer Marie-Antoinette pricked to Rougeville on a small slip of paper (350-351), Fraser simply says "…the Queen attempted to answer by pricking out a message with a pin. Hue heard that her response was 'negative'" (418).

Tracing the myth of Rosalie all the way to more recent works, even Zweig includes Rosalie's testimony, calling her a "pauvre fille de campagne, qui ne sait pas écrire et à qui pourtant nous devons la relation la plus vraie et la plus émouvante des soixante-dix-sept derniers jours de Marie-Antoinette" and even directly quotes the queen from Rosalie's testimony.[509] Zweig does not mention d'Aussonne or Simon-Viennot, but speaks of Rosalie as independent from these

[508] ….is an obscure story that we will no doubt ever fully understand since the documents from the trial are insufficient, and what the hero of the story told [referring to Michonis] seems too boastful.
[509] "…the poor country girl, who did not know how to write, but to whom we owe the most true and moving testimony from the last 77 days of Marie-Antoinette's life." (Zweig indeed says 77 here, whereas all the other historians and fictional writers studied here, counted 76 days.)

two. Castelot took his copy of Rosalie's testimony from Simon-Viennot's research (417). Lever calls Rosalie "a kind girl who did everything she could to improve the conditions of [Marie-Antoinette's] captivity" (293). She took what she recorded of Rosalie from Lenotre's copy of the testimony, who had included d'Aussonne's original version, along with his corrected footnotes, as well as Simon-Viennot's supplements. Fraser, who uses the simple adjective "sympathetic" to describe Rosalie, also took her information from Rosalie's testimony as recorded in Lenotre's compilation.

Each of the authors, thus, chose to believe that Rosalie's testimony was a valid one and not one mentions that the original place in which this testimony appeared was a work itself in question. Each author also has a different conclusion when it comes to the story of the Queen's last communion. Zweig does not mention the last communion, nor Fouché or Magnin. Castelot explains in his end notes that although the communion and several details surrounding it remain unclear, he cannot personally believe that Charles Magnin's story was a false one, "particularly since, the Abbé Magnin, on being violently attacked, entered the pulpit and, turning to the altar, 'raised his hands and affirmed before God that everything he had said was the pure truth'" (420). Lever does not mention the communion at all. Finally, Fraser, again non-conclusive, says that the story, to which she only dedicates one paragraph, is "perfectly plausible" (417).[510] As far as Rosalie's existence itself is concerned, however, there seems no longer to be any controversy. In the forward to Miserole's novel, Michelle Sapori signals that Marie's eventual forgiveness of her mother eventally led to "the third birth of Rosalie" (15). Indeed, Miserole tells that his inspiration for his novel came when, while strolling through the cemetery *Père Lachaise* in Paris, he came across a tombstone for the *Famille Lacroix Delamollière*, on which an inscription was

[510] An interesting conclusion since Fraser is the only one of these authors who also cited d'Aussonne's biography of Marie-Antoinette in her bibliography.

dedicated to a Rosalie Delamollière, who had served Marie-Antoinette at the Conciergerie (333). Thus, while d'Aussonne did not manage to convince all historians that Magnin was a fraud, he did manage to introduce Rosalie Lamorlière and her testimony into the historical story of Marie-Antoinette. Of all of the controversies this study has uncovered, Rosalie's existence, if not her testimony, remains the least contested.

The idea of Marie-Antoinette as a martyr has also persisted, and whether historians use this imagery to critique ideology from the Restoration or to perpetuate the image themselves, Marie-Antoinette remains the martyr queen. For Zweig, Marie-Antoinette was very much a martyr to the historical process. She was ordinary, average, a "non-heroine" (7), but destiny chose to force her out of her mediocrity and allow her first to be at the height of society and then slowly and cruelly introduce her to the most violent opposition (8-9). History did all of this, without sympathy, in order to produce a masterpiece who, in the end, if she did not merit our praise, at least deserved our comprehension and our interest (503). For Castelot, Marie-Antoinette was a political martyr who, although was not mourned by her contemporaries (411), received ample recognition from heaven as even the weather turned gloomy on the day of her execution (409). Lever remarks that after her death, and during the Restoration, royalists created the cult of the martyr queen (308). Finally, Fraser draws a parallel between Marie-Antoinette's execution and the deaths of sacrificial animals and scapegoats in the history of civilizations around the world (458). According to her, her death resulted in the community being "purged of sins or otherwise plague and pestilence" (458). In a feminist interpretation resembling Hunt's, as seen in the Introduction of this study, Marie-Antoinette was a convenient sacrificial choice because she was a foreign princess, and thus allowed many French citizens to continue to reverence the king.

Finally, Marie-Antoinette's overall significance and continuous retrial are themes which historians highlight each time they revisit the queen's story. Zweig's final conclusion echoes that of Alexandre Dumas. He believed that it was not Marie-Antoinette who was remarkable, but the times in which she lived. "Sans l'irruption de la Révolution dans son fol univers de plaisirs, cette princesse insignifiante aurait tranquillement continué à vivre comme des millions de femmes de tous temps. […] …elle aurait disparue de la mémoire des hommes comme tant d'autres princesses" (7).[511] For Zweig, like Dumas, it was History, the powerful force working to complete a finished masterpiece, which only brought Marie-Antoinette's "caractère terrestre[512]" to completion "à l'excès de son malheur" (503).[513] For Zweig, Marie-Antoinette merits the attention of contemporary readers because of how much she suffered and the tumultuous times in which she lived.

Castelot remarked that it was the unmerited hatred of her contemporaries which led to his own fascination with Marie-Antoinette's life. His choice to embark on his study was indeed inspired by the hope to understand why the queen was so hated during her lifetime (411). Castelot admits in his conclusion that he does not know if he reached his goal in his biography of the queen. The publication of his biography, however, was not the last re-trial Castelot offered Marie-Antoinette. In 1993, he co-authored a play, *Je m'appelais Marie-Antoinette,* with fellow historian Alain Decaux, which again told the story of Marie-Antoinette. When the play was brought to the stage, directed by Robert Hossein, in order to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Marie-Antoinette's death, the audience members were asked to vote for one of four outcomes:

[511] Without the interruption of the Revolution of her crazy universe of pleasures, this insignificant princess would have peacefully continued to live as millions of women of all times. […] …she would have disappeared from the memory of men like so many other princesses.
[512] ...earthy (literally "average") personality
[513] ….at the height of her suffering

acquittal, exile, prison or death. Overwhelmingly, the audience, which each week numbered over 4000 members, voted for the exile of Marie-Antoinette. A few, including the principle actress herself, Caroline Sihol, even insisted that had they been sitting on the jury of the Revolutionary Tribunal, Marie-Antoinette would have gone free (INA Histoire). Thus, Castelot's work continues to encourage its audience to offer the martyr queen expiation, as well as demonstrate how fascination for Marie-Antoinette has not diminished even today more than 200 years after her death.

Antonia Fraser mentions Castelot's theatrical re-trial in the epilogue of *The Journey*, and her conclusion of Marie-Antoinette is that this woman still is and will always be "hated by some and loved by others" (451). Fraser offers a brief re-trial of her own, by asking the question "Did Marie-Antoinette contribute to her own downfall?" (452). The woman did have faults – she loved pleasure, she was extravagant, and was not particularly prudent – but Fraser's final conclusion echoes that of Beauchesne, the Goncourts, and Viel-Castel: "Marie-Antoinette was a victim from birth" (452). As a victim, however, she reached martyr status since she proved herself courageous in the face of the unhappiest circumstances. She commemorates Marie-Antoinette for her boldness by contrasting her unemotional trip to the scaffold with that of Madame du Barry, who lost all composure when her own time came to mount the stairs leading up to the guillotine (443). Unlike the naturalist writers of the 1850s, however, for Fraser, courage such as Marie-Antoinette displayed could not "be simply inherited, with due respect to those who casually attributed Marie-Antoinette's bravery to the fact that she was the daughter of the great Maria Teresa. The Empress of Austria died in her bed at the age of sixty-three, surrounded by her family and servants, a very different, lonely fate being reserved for the Queen of France" (452).

Finally, Lever highlights Marie-Antoinette's continued ability to attract by arguing that she was not a powerless and featherbrained nobody, but indeed a woman who "perfected the art of aristocratic living in pre-revolutionary France" (309). Like the Goncourts then, Lever suggests that Marie-Antoinette remains significant because she is the best example of what an aristocratic woman should have been at the time she was living.

As someone who chose to write my doctoral thesis about Marie-Antoinette, I tend to agree with Lever's position. Being the fifteenth child, and a daughter nonetheless, of a busy royal couple could have indeed set the young girl up to be as insignificant as Zweig says, but as soon as Marie-Antoinette left her mother's protective court of Vienna and joined her new husband at the grandiose French court of Versailles, she began displaying her strength in a way that proved her uniqueness. From her first day at Versailles, she needed to conform to the etiquette that ruled there and fade into the background. She was always under the critical eye of everyone in the chateau - including one of the most powerful men in the world, King Louis XV. In addition, soon to be queen of France, she was under an enormous amount of pressure to prove just how "French" she really was, and thus her every move needed to conform to French tradition and custom. As if the demands from the French were not enough, she also received weekly letters from Austria filled with her mother's instructions and criticism. They too prompted her to conform, to behave, to blend in, so as not to make a spectacle of herself. In order to answer the demands of her mother, to please the critical courtiers at Versailles, and to fulfill the expectations of the French nation as a whole, Marie-Antoinette needed to transform herself into a suitable French dauphine, to thus become a perfect fit for this stuffy universe, and to allow all of these outside forces to indeed dictate her behavior.

Continued fascination with Marie-Antoinette thus, perhaps lies in the fact that from early on, as she attempted to follow what so many varying voices were telling her, she actually resisted the norms at Versailles, breaking tradition and creating controversy or scandal at court. She enjoyed going horseback riding and hunting with the King Louis XV, whom she called grandfather. As if participating in this masculine activity was not already enough of a shock, she also wore a pants suit, and rode straddling her horse rather than riding side-saddle as women were meant to do at the time. This strange behavior not only scared and shocked her mother who adamantly wrote her to stop immediately, but it also scandalized the courtiers at Versailles. Another example of her so-called scandalous behavior is that as soon as she became queen, Marie-Antoinette insisted that she and the king share mealtime as she and her family in Vienna had done, even though it was tradition at Versailles that the king and queen dine separately. Thus, she disrupted another ancient French tradition, this one causing even more scandal, because she had opted for an "Austrian" practice. Although seemingly simple matters, these breaks with traditional practices caused many people at court and in France to feel animosity and suspicion towards the young woman.

These breaks with tradition were not criticized by everyone, however. Originally Parisians appreciated this breath of fresh air, and thus Marie-Antoinette enjoyed immense influence and popularity at Versailles and even more so in Paris. Marie-Antoinette also led the way as the greatest fashion icon of her time. She not only started new fashion trends in clothes, shoes and accessories, but she even dictated how women all over France would wear their hair. "Among the nobility and the moneyed bourgeoisie, even those women who found such innovations shocking in the King's wife could not resist following her lead. […] 'even as the people were criticizing the Queen for her outfits, they continued frenetically to imitate her […].' Propelled to

notoriety by the ingenuity of designers […] Marie Antoinette established herself as a force to be reckoned with" (Weber, Caroline. 5-6).

Marie-Antoinette's reactions to the pressures competing to fashion her character indeed account for Lever's conclusion that Marie-Antoinette strove to represent the "perfect aristocrat" as she interpreted what it was supposed to be. Out of her attempts to conform to tradition and to please those who had authority over her, Marie-Antoinette developed a unique style and personality which, although often caused scandal, still attracted, influenced, and even addicted those around her. Even historians today who cannot agree on the truth regarding certain stories concerning Marie-Antoinette, nor about her overall significance or lack thereof, clearly demonstrate that the myth of the queen continues to hold a certain fascination over readers of all genres. Indeed, this is the same fascination that inspired Montjoye, d'Aussonne, Beauchesne, Viel-Castel and the Goncourts to write their historical accounts, that motivated Cléry, Campan and Rosalie to repaint Marie-Antoinette in the most favorable of lights, that encouraged Campardon and Lenotre to copy only "facts" in hopes of presiding over a just re-trial of the queen, and that prompted fiction writers like Guénard, Dumas, Thomas, Poivre d'Arvor, and Miserole to use these sources to inspire and inform their historical novels.

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