

TRIALS BY DEVIANCE: SEXUAL SLANDER DURING THE WARS OF
RELIGION, THE FRONDE, AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

by

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Abstract

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This interdisciplinary dissertation in the fields of history, religion, mythology, politics, literature, cultural studies, art, gender, and sexuality examines how sexually slanderous texts against persons at or near the top of the French monarchy of the *Ancien Régime* assaulted both the reputation of its targets and contributed to regicides and to the eventual revolution. And, while the foremost aim of sexual slander, which increased significantly with each reign, was to harm the target, paradoxically it also helped to recreate and solidify gender and sexual norms.

The texts analyzed in this dissertation were written against Henri III (1551-1589), Cardinal Mazarin (1602-1661), and Marie Antoinette (1755-1793). In these periods there appear to be four common factors: a civil war, a deteriorating economy, a "problematic" ruler, and an

environment in which censorship was loose and sexually explicit texts were popular. Though each political figure dominated France nearly 100 years apart, slander attacking them reveals remarkably similar traits, emphasizing sexually deviant acts, such as rape, incest, bestiality, and sodomitical and tribadic practices. The texts also employ the same techniques, among which, verisimilitude, intertextuality, hyperbole, repetition, accumulation, ventriloquism, mythological, and biblical references, xenophobia (notably against Italy), scapegoating, and obscenity.

The first chapter examines sexually slanderous texts condemning Henri III during the Wars of Religion. Protestants, Catholics, and courtiers condemned the Valois king for his effeminate dress and his intimate relations with his male favorites, referred to as mignons. Ultimately, the king was assassinated in 1589 by Catholic fanatic Jacques Clément (1567-1589).

The second chapter analyzes texts against Cardinal Mazarin, the *de facto* ruler along with queen regent Anne d'Autriche (1601-1666) during the civil wars of the Fronde. Both cardinal and queen were attacked for their supposedly sexual relationship. Mazarin was also denounced for

sodomitical acts, his Italian heritage exploited in claims that he enjoyed the "Italian Vice".

Sexually slanderous texts against Marie Antoinette are the focus of the third and final chapter of this dissertation. The queen was not only cast as having cuckolded the king and of having borne false heirs, but she was also accused of tribadic relations with her female favorites.

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Introduction

In early-modern France, there were three "fundamental taboos," according to Pierre Goubert and Daniel Roche: God, the monarch, and sex (Goubert and Roche 226). They constituted proscribed topics, and by that token they lent themselves well to slander, which as Peter Moogk puts it, "makes the taboos of a society explicit" (Moogk 526). Put another way, since the purpose of slander is to devalue the target, one effective way to achieve this end is to depict him or her as engaging in behavior deemed taboo. In texts of slander, Henri III (1551-1589), Cardinal Jules Mazarin (1602-1661), and Marie Antoinette (1755-1793) were all portrayed as sexually transgressing their prescribed gender roles in ways that subverted both the monarchy and God.

This dissertation defines slander as a verbal, textual or visual pronouncement made to defame individuals as well as institutions. Webster's Third New International Dictionary defines slander as an "utterance of false charges or misrepresentations which defame and damage another's reputation [or] a false and defamatory oral statement about a person" (s.v. "slander"). The assault on reputation was particularly important in the *Ancien Régime*, for as Sarah Maza states, "[t]his was a society...in which

power and social standing were contingent upon appearances and reputation" (Maza I 119). Where the object of slander is a revered figure or institution, a decrease in reputation translates into a decrease in power, which makes slandering by its very nature political. And the exchange of information through slander can be seen as a reclamation of power through the act of defamation, as Baudrillard puts it (Baudrillard 43). Indeed, by lowering the reputation of the slandered object, scandalmongers in the *Ancien Régime* were taking authority away from the monarchy and its representatives in order to empower themselves. In Foucauldian terms, those slandering eventually say "I will no longer obey," which is an expression of resistance (Foucault I 449).¹ And if, as Michel Foucault argued, possessing power means having the ability to punish, then slander, which aims to punish by means of character attacks, must be seen as an instrument of power (xxv).

¹ Of course, slander can also be used by those in power against individuals in weaker positions to manipulate and ensure control of them. This dissertation, however, focuses only on slander used against the most powerful members of the monarchy by individuals who, by definition, would always be of a lower social position than cardinals, kings or queens.

The Production and Dissemination of Slander

During the *Ancien Régime*, slander came in many forms, including pamphlets, books, songs, poems, letters, jokes, and various visual media, such as prints and posters.²

Robert Darnton describes several types of written and oral forms of slander that are particular to this period:

[T]he *chroniques scandaleuses* appeared as an anonymous amalgam of everything thrown up by public discussion of public affairs [that] expressed the *on dit*.... *libelles* belonged to the mass of printed matter floating amidst the rumors, gossip, jokes, songs, cartoons, and broadsides that swirled through the streets of early modern Paris (Darnton I 80, 138).³

The *chroniques scandaleuses*, mostly anonymous texts, contained a diverse universe of information, had no consistent narrative voice and discussed everything from troop movements to the sexual lives of the upper-classes (80). *Libelles*, on the other hand, were slanderous texts in book form that concentrated generally on specific individuals (as opposed to the *chroniques scandaleuses*,

² I performed much of the primary research for this dissertation at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris within a period of six years.

³ There is overlap between rumor, gossip and slander. The main difference is that rumor and gossip are typically in oral forms while slander tends to be in written form. Of course, written slander would likely begin as either rumor or gossip. While the monarchical government had trouble finding and punishing authors of written slander, rumor and gossip were even more challenging to control by virtue of their predominantly oral nature. On rumor and gossip, see Pamela Stewart and Andrew Strathern's *Witchcraft, Sorcery, Rumors and Gossip* (2004) and Jean-Noël Kapferer's *Rumors: Uses, Interpretations, and Images* (1990).

which focused on many individuals within one text). To the corpus described by Darnton, Jean Marie Goulemot adds *nouvelles à la main*, "handwritten news-sheets, filled with unfounded rumours and the most injurious political denunciations" (Goulemot 23). These various forms mixed freely with rumor, gossip, jokes, *bons mots*, songs, cartoons, and broadsides, each adding its own particular style to the corpus of media used to slander. Together these categories inundated sight and sound in the streets of early-modern France. For the literate, the *chroniques scandaleuses* and *libelles* were the choice forms of slander; and for the illiterate, *bons mots*, jokes, songs, cartoons, and broadslides were employed. Of course, there was inherent overlap between these groups, since the literate could also understand the forms consumed by the illiterate, who could always be read to by others (indeed, there was reading aloud in public spaces, such as cafés). There were also certain kinds of slander popular in particular periods: satires⁴ and dramatic dialogues, such as the

⁴ While sexual slander is the subject of this dissertation, satire and slander often overlap. Typically satire aims to be humorous while slander's goal is to vilify. Of course, slander is often comical, while satire can be scathing and defamatory. The term "satire" is defined in the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* (4th ed. 1762) as an "[o]uvrage moral en prose ou en vers, fait pour reprendre, pour censurer les vices, les passions déréglées, les sottises[;] les impertinences des hommes, ou pour les tourner en ridicule"; "signifie aussi, [t]out écrit ou discours piquant, médisant contre les personnes" (s.v. "satire"). Thus, satire can represent either a general

anonymous Satire Ménippé (1593) and Dialogue d'entre le Maheustre et le Manant (attributed to François Morin de Crome) (1593), were written to attack Henri III. Songs in verse, such as Scarron's La Mazarinade (1651), were employed to attack Cardinal Mazarin, while plays, such as Le Godemiché royal (1789), were the choice form used to condemn Marie Antoinette. Still, most types of written

condemnation of vice and unregulated passion or an attack on specific individuals. Richelet's Dictionnaire français (1680) defines it more comprehensively:

Ce mot en général se dit de la prose et des vers et signifie tout discours où l'on reprend & où l'on médit. Mais il se dit particulièrement en parlant des vers. On peut dire alors que c'est un poème qui corrige agréablement les hommes de leurs vices, de leurs erreurs & de leurs folies. Ses sujets sont les sots & les fripons du siècle. Elle doit être vive, plaisante, morale & variée (s.v. "satire").

Richelet emphasizes the lively and the amusing; he does not refer to defamation. On the other hand, a "libelle," perhaps the word closest in meaning to slander, had already been defined by Nicot in 1606 as a "Famosum epigram [et] [p]rogramma famosum," or slanderous epigram or edict (s.v. "libelle." Le Thresor de la langue francoyse). In his definition of "libelle," Richelet clarifies that most authors of such texts are anonymous, which he does not say about satires (though there are examples of anonymous satires (Scarron and Cyrano, for example, both wrote scathing libels attacking Mazarin) (s.v. "libelle." Dictionnaire français (1680)). Clearly there is slippage between satire and libel, since both can be in poem form and each can defame. The slanderous texts studied in this dissertation are generally specific to one individual and sexually hyperbolic in a manner that satire is not. However, what further complicates the confusion between the two terms is that slander does sometimes target an institution, as it does during the French Revolution, when attacks on the king and queen are also an attack on the monarchical system. Voltaire uses the two terms in the title of his Mémoire sur la satire, à l'occasion d'un libelle de l'abbé Desfontaines contre l'auteur (1739) to refer to the abbé Pierre François Guyot-Desfontaines' (1685-1745) criticism of his work and which led to a war of words between the two men (Voltaire I 355-377).

slander were used to varying degrees in all the periods of the *Ancien Régime*.⁵

It is difficult, however, to gauge the exact numbers of slanderous texts produced: since their trade was illegal, there was little effort to document their production. In the case of media such as posters, their ephemeral nature makes it even harder to determine numbers; for a defamatory poster hung in a public place would likely have survived only until it was removed. It is also difficult to quantify slander in the *Ancien Régime* in general because much of it was in oral forms, such as jokes or *bons mots* traded in cafés. Indeed, since French society had low literacy rates, the audience for slander may have heard it second hand; thus, slanderous texts likely reached a wider audience than the individuals who had originally bought them. Additionally, according to Jeffrey Sawyer,

⁵ All types of texts could be accompanied by defamatory images of the objects of slander. The act of "speaking out" through images has been described by Boyer de Nimes as "*écriture parlée*," taken from his 1790 work *Histoire de caricatures de la révolte des français* (Hunt I 321). This term suggests how a non-literate form of slander could carry the same weight as denunciations through the use of words. In general, there were few slanderous images attacking Henri III and virtually none condemning Mazarin. Annie Duprat believes that this lack is due to slanderers' disinterest in visual forms of media in the mid-1600s, but still, the disinterest remains unexplained (Duprat 290-291). Marie Antoinette, on the other hand, had many images in her likeness, for her over-the-top fashions and extravagant hairstyles lent themselves well to caricature and print media had advanced such that images could be disseminated more easily. Slanderous images are not analyzed in depth in this dissertation, but their presence cannot be ignored, since they often went hand-in-hand with written forms of slander.

topics of slander were "woven" into daily discourse and were discussed in sermons, town meetings, and marketplace conversations (Sawyer 69). Accordingly, there were many different and frequently overlapping ways to consume slander. Of the slander that still exists or was documented to have existed, we know that there were a few hundred texts condemning Henri III, about 5000 attacking Cardinal Mazarin, and several thousand more against Marie Antoinette - thus, a dramatic increase from the earlier periods to the French Revolution.⁶

In early-modern France, slander was produced and spread both by those within the court, who desired more influence, and by those outside the court, who wanted to change certain leaders or, in the late 18th century, the entire regime.⁷ Scholars, such as Robert Darnton, Sarah Maza, and Jeremy Popkin, agree that authors of slander were in all likelihood wealthy themselves or paid by wealthy

⁶ Harvey Chisick estimates there existed between 7000 and 8000 pamphlets in the revolutionary period, thousands of which targeted specifically the queen (Chisick I 152).

⁷ Furthermore, Marie Antoinette commissioned pamphlets attacking her enemy, Louis Phillippe Joseph d'Orléans, Duc d'Orléans (1747-1793) (himself the supposed author or commissioner of thousands of anti-monarchic pamphlets), whom the queen disliked reputedly because of his bad manners and disturbance of the peace (he ended up a strong supporter of the French Revolutionary cause) (Darnton I 79). Furthermore, according to Olivier Bernier, the brothers of Louis XVI (1754-1793) inspired the production of several pamphlets; Louis Stanislas Xavier, Comte de Provence (1755-1824) wanted to take his brother, Louis XVI's, place, and Charles-Phillipe, Comte d'Artois (1757-1836) wanted his children to inherit the throne (Bernier 86).

patrons.⁸ Analogously, before 1789, according to Lynn Hunt, the audience for forbidden⁹ political texts would most likely have been the upper classes, given the length of the texts, the typography, and the content of the work; put another way, the complexity of the writing and the quality of print would have been more suited to the better educated upper classes (Hunt I 316). However, as Sara Beam argues, less sophisticated language was often employed in slander because authors wanted to reach an audience beyond their own class, not because of their rank or education (Beam 5).

Despite the difficulty of measuring the size and nature of the audience, the slander of literate individuals is clearly easier to gauge than oral forms. That only a minority of Frenchmen was literate already helps define who could have read written slander, but the only evidence concerning literacy remains the data from Louis Maggiolo's useful, but problematic, late 19th century study on

⁸ The anonymous pamphlet from 1693, Les Amours d'Anne d'Autriche épouse de Louis XIII avec Monsieur le C.D.R. le veritable père de Louis XIV, states that there is a thriving industry of people paid to "satiriser [l]es ennemis [des autres]"; while the text does not say specifically it was the upper classes, it can be assumed that it was people with means who could afford to pay for the production of slander (10).

⁹ Darnton defines "forbidden" texts as works that seek to undermine the monarchy, the church or "conventional" morality; in other words, texts that treat the three fundamental taboos - God, the monarch, and sex - in a "subversive" manner (Darnton I 4).

literacy in France in 1690.¹⁰ Called the MARRIGA signature count, the survey was based on Maggiolo's review of documents, such as marriage petitions, as a way to measure who could write; he determined a person's literacy by how well a person signed their name. Though hardly conclusive of the overall literacy rate, the data suggest that less than 25% of men and less than 10% of women had some basic schooling in 1690; 25% of men were able to sign their name compared to less than 10% of women (Sawyer 38; 67 n.1). Of course, we cannot know whether the subject's hands were held by someone else in signing, which points to a major flaw in Maggiolo's study (Sawyer 38; 67 n.1; Goubert and Roche 101, 201). There was also a difference in literacy rates between cities and provinces; Goubert and Roche state that at the end of the 17th century it appears that about 75% of individuals were literate in Paris, as opposed to 15-20% in rural areas (Goubert and Roche 202-203).¹¹ What

¹⁰ While no data exist from before the period studied by Maggiolo, available information, according to Pierre Goubert and Daniel Roche, indicates that the level of literacy was probably similar in 1600 as it was in 1690 (Goubert and Roche 202). According to Jeffrey Sawyer, Maggiolo's analysis is the earliest and most useful examination of literacy in France prior to 1690 (Sawyer 38).

What complicates literacy studies in this instance is that there is no word in France for the ability to read; the word that comes closest is "*alphabetisation*," which refers mostly to basic reading and writing skills (Sawyer 67 n.1).

¹¹ According to Goubert and Roche, literacy rates vary in other French cities; Rouen, for example, had about a 57% rate of literacy as opposed to 75% in Paris (Goubert and Roche 202-203).

does seem to be consistent in cities and in provinces is that women in general were significantly less literate than men. Accordingly, it can likely be inferred that by and large it was men in urban areas who read slander. And among men who could read, craftsmen were generally more literate than peasants and Protestants more than Catholics,¹² which leads to the possible conclusion that Protestants may have been the largest audience for written slander (Goubert and Roche 204; Burke 251).

By 1789, when one third of French people were literate, a larger majority of individuals could read slander than in the earlier periods. Of course, there is no way to measure whether a person could read and understand any type of text, regardless of complexity; for instance, some slander was written in Latin or in various dialects. Although literacy rates do not shed light on whether slander was in fact read by the literate, they help define three potential audiences for slander: the super literate, who could have read all written slander, regardless of difficulty; the semi-literate, who could read slander written in basic French; and the illiterate, who

¹² Since the Reformation (begun in 1517), Protestants had to be able to read the Bible on their own and were therefore much more literate than Catholics.

could listen to slander, read aloud, or view slanderous images.

While there is a very incomplete picture of slander's consumers, there is some information as to how written slander was disseminated in early-modern France. Generally, its distribution was not well organized and therefore was slow throughout this period, according to Sawyer (Sawyer 1). As Darnton observes, there were modes of communication that intersected and overlapped in the public sphere, typically starting at the top of the hierarchy and trickling down to the masses; "*mauvais propos*" (gossip) at court became "*bruit public*" (rumor) that made its way to non-courtiers, before being turned into a "*nouvelle à la main*," that was eventually printed as a "*libelle*" (Darnton II 9) (see Darnton's "Communication Networks" chart at illustration 1). This explanation is corroborated in the anonymous 1792 pamphlet, *La Journée amoureuse ou les derniers plaisirs de M...-A...[Marie Antoinette]*, in which rumors at court snowball into full-fledged slander:

La plupart de ces infamies sont de grossières calomnies. Un lache courtisan les ourdit dans les ténèbres; un autre courtisan les met en vers et en couplets, et par le ministère de la valetaille¹³ les fait passer jusqu'aux halles et aux marchés aux

¹³ "Valletaille" refers to valets.

herbes. Des halles elles sont portées chez l'artisan, qui à son tour les rapporte chez les seigneurs qui les ont forgées, et lesquels sans perdre de temps s'en vont l'œil-de-Bœuf se demander à l'oreille les uns aux autres, et du ton de l'hypocrisie la plus consommée: "Les avez-vous lus? Les voilà. Elles courent dans le peuple de Paris." Telle est l'origine et tel est le voyage de ces mauvais petits vers ... (in L'Anthologie Erotique 1044).

This process explains how the defamatory, shadowy words of a dissatisfied courtier could turn into verse and couplets, reach the popular market places, and then return back to the upper class that produced them. To speed the process of dissemination, authors of slander often made direct calls for readers to circulate their texts; in the words of the anonymous author of Le Godemiché royal (1789) "*Prends ce manuscrit: va l'imprimer et le distribuer dans toutes les villes...*" (in l'Anthologie Erotique 1059). This type of call to action was an efficient way for courtiers, who might have commissioned the text, to get their money's worth; the further slander spread, the likelier it was to hurt the target's reputation.

What sometimes slowed the dissemination of slander, however, was censorship¹⁴; slander was neither permitted nor

¹⁴ On censorship in France, see Le Contrôle des idées à la Renaissance. (ed. par J.M. De Bujanda (1996)), Alfred Soman's "Press, Pulpit, and Censorship in France before Richelieu" in Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society (1976) at 439-463, and Charles Walton's Policing Public Opinion in the French Revolution: The Culture of Calumny and the Problem of Free Speech (2009).

officially tolerated by the monarchy. According to Alfred Soman, royal authorities generally thought the best way to manage slander was to ignore it; they believed that to expose slander by punishing its authors would only serve to make the public hungrier for its juicy contents (Soman 461). Throughout the 16th century, the main method of ridding France of slander was to order known copies be surrendered to officers of the court; and anyone keeping copies after the surrender was subject to punishment (452). Of course, the process of surrendering was more or less ineffectual, observes Soman; for once slander had been read or viewed, its contents could easily be passed on orally, thus making the text itself no longer necessary to its circulation (453). If the author of slander could be identified (which was unlikely given the clandestine nature of slander's creation and subsequent distribution), that person could be put to death (Sawyer 52).¹⁵ However, in

¹⁵ There were few times when an author of slander was put to death: Geoffrey Vallée in 1574, Pierre Desguez, sieur de Belleville in 1584, François le Breton in 1586, and Guillaume Reboul in 1611. Most of these men were harshly punished, says Soman, due to their low social rank (only Belleville was of higher rank, but Soman states that his case had complicating factors) (Soman 455). One mitigating factor was the class of the slanderer in relation to the slandered party. The most problematic offences were when someone of lesser rank slandered someone of higher rank; thus, for a common person to slander a noble was seen as seditious and thus subject to harsher punishment, whereas an infraction between equals was settled more easily (445). Of course, slandering of a king or queen always would have been seditious; therefore, individuals responsible for slander against either king or queen would be subject to the most severe punishments (445).

general, while a producer of slander could be executed, censorship laws were frequently evaded and culprits were most often given a fine or a few months in prison (Soman 455).

By the mid-16th century, the government had passed laws to prevent slander and to punish its creators and distributors; the Edict of Chateaubriand (1551) was created to prevent and punish blasphemy, and three additional articles of royal legislation were passed in 1560 to regulate both written and oral forms of blasphemy and slander (441). One of the laws of 1560 stated that scandalmongers were "enemies of public tranquility" because slander led their audience to riot and sedition; thus, this law makes clear the government's fear that slander could have devastating consequences (441). Next, in 1563, Charles IX (1550-1574) made it necessary for all printed books to have a royal permission sealed by the chancellor and approved by the Privy Council. And then in 1566, a new tool, the *privilège*, was established, a type of copyright that allowed printers to have a monopoly over their texts for a certain number of years. Both the royal permission and the *privilège*¹⁶ were meant to give royal authorities

¹⁶ Even if a royal privilege were granted, the text in question could be found defamatory later on; the copyright merely allowed the work to be officially published, but the content could still be deemed

more control over the texts being disseminated (454).¹⁷ However, as Soman indicates, it is unclear that these additional measures were effective, since enforcement was handled by several jurisdictions and was not consistent (sometimes permission was obtained through bribery) (454). For the most part (up to 1650), the business of censorship was an ad hoc system,¹⁸ but then the Parlement hired censors to examine books submitted for permission (457).

Systematic censorship effectively took hold during Cardinal Richelieu's (1585-1642) tenure as chief minister from 1624 through 1642 (with the exception of the period

objectionable by royal authorities once it was actually in print (Sawyer 60). Additionally, publishers used old printing permits to issue new pamphlets as a way to avoid having to obtain the required governmental approval (Beam 4). However, as a general matter, the royal privilege was often ignored altogether by writers and printers who found it too difficult to get (many of the privileges were given to individuals favoured by the monarchical government) and instead opted to do their work underground, according to Jean-Dominique Mellot (in Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies after Elizabeth L. Esitenstein 55). Additionally, while the 1629 code Michaud allowed for the trial and punishment of authors of illegal texts, it was not particularly effective, according to Philip Taylor (Taylor 123).

¹⁷ Censorship went beyond printed slander; according to Soman, sermons in church, one of the main sources of information in the *Ancien Régime*, would also sometimes be subjected to the laws of defamation (Soman 449). Indeed, in 1600, Nicolas de Noyon, a priest in western Paris, was charged with treason after giving a sermon on divorce at the exact moment when Henri IV (1553-1610) was getting married for a second time (the Parlement put the priest on probation) (449). Prognostication was also subject to censorship; astrology was seen as trying to know what only God could know and thus extremely dangerous, says Soman (447). Indeed, predicting the death of a king (a tactic often used in slander against Henri III) could undermine the reign of that king if it were believed (447).

¹⁸ Early in the 17th century, Marie de Médici (1575-1642) complained openly that scandalmongers were not being punished for defamatory pamphlets (Sawyer 62).

during the Fronde (1648-1653)). And then, as Robert Darnton explains, Louis XIV (1638-1715) seized control of the press and cracked down on the illegal book trade: "[t]he reorganization of censorship, and of the police all contributed to a new variety of absolutism, which drove the libellistes underground or out of the country" to places such as England, Liège and Bouillon in Belgium, Maestricht in the Netherlands, Cologne in Germany, Neuchâtel and Genève in Switzerland, and Avignon (at this time part of the papacy, not France) (Darnton I 200).¹⁹ These geographical distances allowed publishers to avoid having to obtain a royal privilege, which consequently led to more slanderous texts being printed and then disseminated within France (Goubert and Roche 224; Sawyer 60). By the 18th century, texts had to get through 179 censors, whose decisions were enforced by the police; this additional hurdle to speedy production meant that authors continued successfully to go underground to avoid publishing laws altogether (Darnton I 6; Soman 457). However, during the Revolutionary period censorship laws were evaded with relative ease due to governmental turmoil (Sawyer 47). The

¹⁹ Slander was also printed in France; the author of the anonymous Les Amours d'Anne d'Autriche épouse de Louis XIII avec Monsieur le C.D.R. le veritable père de Louis XIV (1693) speaks of "*libelles que la France nous donne liberalement*" (9-11). While this pamphlet addresses the trade of slander in the mid-1600s, it is equally true that slander in the 1500s and 1700s was also printed both inside and outside of France.

heavy production of slander against Marie Antoinette is no doubt also a reflection of the freeing of the presses from official authorizations, which was sanctioned by a decree of the Constituent Assembly in August 1789. The Assembly further freed the press later that month when it decreed freedom of thought and expression.

Another reason that censorship laws were not particularly effective was that the powerful frequently commissioned slander, and it was not in their interest to have its authors or printers punished. Indeed, there was some collusion between the highest levels of the court and slanderers. This complicity went both ways, for it is also known that royal authorities sometimes paid off producers and publishers of slander. Scandalmonger Charles Thévenau de Morande (1741-1805) received a royal pension for suppressing Mémoires secrets d'une femme publique (1773), a text attacking Louis XV's (1710-1774) mistress Madame du Barry (1743-1793); Morande agreed he would not libel du Barry in the future (Darnton I 76). Similarly, in 1792 the court paid for the creation of fake letters between Cardinal de Rohan (1734-1803) and Marie Antoinette; in these texts Jeanne de La Motte (1756-1791) had written that the cardinal and the queen were complicit in the Diamond Necklace Affair, the event that spawned numerous pamphlets

accusing Marie Antoinette of squandering France's money.²⁰ By working with the culprits, the monarchy implicitly acknowledged that, though they could not stop slander altogether, they could try to manage it.

Sexual Slander, its Techniques, and Topics

Of the various categories of slander, sexual slander is typically the most blasphemous, for it often mixes the three "fundamental taboos": sex, god, and monarch. Sexual slander uniquely highlights what was considered most troubling, bringing to the surface the unacceptable, as Peter Moogk explains: "To be damaging, epithets and accusations must identify a victim with something that is generally regarded as evil" (Moogk 526). Sexuality is deemed sinful and evil and is shrouded in numerous, overlapping taboos. In the History of Sexuality, Foucault argued that since the onset of Christianity, sexuality had been cast as an activity solely acceptable for procreative means within marriage (Foucault II 14). This codification of sexuality therefore meant the disallowance and vilification of other types of sexual expression, such as extramarital relations and sodomitical sexual practices.

²⁰ On the Diamond Necklace affair see supra Chapter III.

When and how to have intercourse were institutionalized and imposed through various prescriptive agencies, such as the church, in which "man" was told to fight his "inferior" urges and to confess whenever he transgressed in thought or in deed (25, 66). Accordingly, various forms of sexuality are used in slander to depict the target as having caved into his or her inferior, base desires, which are inherently the antithesis of Christian values. To be sure, the attempt to use sexual slander against someone is also an attempt to portray him or her as defying God. In addition to depicting the target as acting contrary to god's will, sexual slander against those in power also communicates that the targets are not in control of their bodies; and, if they are unable to rule themselves, they are therefore unfit to rule others.²¹

²¹ There is one notable exception to this rule; kings in the *Ancien Régime* were generally expected to have mistresses, and there were texts written concerning the king's sexual relations with them, for example, a series of texts written at the end of Louis XIV's (1638-1715) reign, such as Gatien de Courtilz's famous Le Grand Alcandre frustré ou les derniers efforts de l'amour et de la vertu (1696). Most works produced during Louis XIV's reign present the king's sexual prowess favorably; Robert Darnton believes that by casting Louis XIV as "the virile master of a powerful kingdom...[slanderers] may have actually reinforced the cult of the King" (Darnton I 213). Additionally, there were sexually explicit texts written during the revolutionary period that attacked Louis XV's (1710-1774) mistresses, Madame de Pompadour and Madame du Barry, for instance in Pidansat de Mairobert's Anecdotes sur Mme. La comtesse du Barry (1775) and in the anonymous Les Fastes de Louis XV (1782); both texts try to prove how Pompadour and du Barry slept their way to the top of the monarchy. I do not treat such texts as part of the corpus of sexually slanderous texts studied in this dissertation because they do not portray the king as being sexually deviant, which is focus of my work.

For sexual slander to achieve its purpose and to show the target as defying God, slanderers employed various techniques, such as verisimilitude, intertextuality, repetition, hyperbole, accumulation, ventriloquism, mythological and biblical references, xenophobia, scapegoating, and obscenity. Although sexual slander is often unbelievable, even ludicrous (surely only the most naïve audience would believe that a king or queen had sexual relations with animals), slanderers often presented their texts as history or biography, according to Darnton, the emblem of verisimilitude, frequently deploying actual words uttered by real individuals, such as valets (Darnton I 76-77). Indeed, in Jeffrey Sawyer's view, "pamphleteers worked hard to relate their partisan arguments to a basic fund of historical memories"²²; in other words, the anecdotal and the commonplace were frequently used to make readers feel the text could be true (Sawyer 96). Corroborating this point is the anonymous La Journée amoureuse ou les derniers plaisirs de M...-A... (1792), in which an unnamed character confirms that slanderous texts sometimes contain truth: "*Parmi ces feuilles, il en est qui disent parfois la vérité*" (in L'Anthologie Erotique 1142).

²² Jeffrey Sawyer is speaking here about Denis Richet's study of pamphlets from 1612-1615, but his argument is equally valid for all periods studied in this dissertation.

Of course, scandalmongers could also try to create an illusion of "realness" by stating that the text (frequently epistolary) was obtained from an unidentified person, a common technique in the 18th-century novel.²³ Thus a 1793 compilation of Marie Antoinette's supposedly authentic correspondence, Lettres de conspiration de Marie Antoinette d'Autriche..., are said to have been "found" in Chantilly.

Further, in circulation, slanderous texts vouched for each other; Darnton refers to this phenomenon as "rampant intertextuality" where "repetition [was] a cynical substitute for veracity" (Darnton II 34). Indeed, repetition was used as a technique to propagate untruths as facts; if a lie is told enough times and confirmed by several sources, it becomes its own truth, which is why repeating charges is particularly effective. Maurice Lever believes in this circulation theory as well; he posits that each anecdote relies on a "*répertoire d'anecdotes, illustrant chacun une vérité déjà connue ailleurs[, qui] ne renvoie[] nullement à des faits extérieurs, mais à la collection des pamphlets prise comme un tout organique ...*" (Lever in l'Anthologie Erotique 1037). Thus, a lie or anecdotal fiction told in one text would be cited as truth

²³ The most famous example is Choderlos de Laclos's epistolary novel, Les Liaisons dangereuses (1782), in which the author goes into great detail regarding the provenance of the letters.

in a subsequent piece of slander, regardless of the dubiousness of the original source.

Such techniques of verisimilitude must produce "lifelike" and "plausible" facts, which seem real enough to be believed as truth, as Roland Barthes writes in Le Bruissement de la langue; what is relayed must therefore be grounded in the realm of the possible (Barthes I 147). As Rosalind Krauss suggests, verisimilitude is neither fact nor entirely fiction, but instead, an "inarticulate third meaning" (Krause 165). In other words, there is a continuum on which truth resides on one side and fiction on the other; in between the two is a fuzzy mixture of truth and untruth. Reality is embellished and lies are based on verisimilar anecdotes; neither is completely accurate nor entirely false. Besides, veracity is in the eye of the beholder. For while an actual fact may be real, if someone does not believe it, it is no less true; yet the fact is not true for that person, it is not part of *their* reality. If a pamphlet states that Marie Antoinette had sexual intercourse with Cardinal Rohan and readers believe it, then it is true for those readers, even if the underlying facts are pure fiction. Conversely, if the truth was that Marie Antoinette was a good mother and faithful wife, but readers of slander didn't believe it, then it seems to be

fiction. Also, if the public generally "accepted as true," to use Gérard Genette's term, that the queen was a whore, then any statements about her supposed sexual acts outside of marriage would already be steeped in what was believed and would fit in with an existing narrative (Genette 242).

A different technique, a type of ventriloquism, is also used by slanderers not only to reinforce their arguments but also to clear themselves from possible charges of sedition. A character in the slanderous text mouths the author's views; as Jeffrey Sawyer notes, "instead of overtly revealing their political views by writing in the first person, pamphlet authors argued through fictional [or fictionalized] characters" (Sawyer 87). For instance, in La Journée amoureuse ou les derniers plaisirs de M...-A..., Marie Antoinette states that Louis XVI is "*indigne de porter [la couronne]*," thus making the queen the author's mouthpiece and absolving himself of the charge (in L'Anthologie Erotique 1149). Of course, to have the queen speak makes the author's words more convincing: who better to criticize the king than his wife?

At other times, scandalmongers use mythological characters instead of historical figures as stand-ins for the targets. In this technique there is a key (either actual or more likely understood) indicating which

characters represent which historical individuals. For example, in Artus Thomas's L'Isle des hermaphrodites (1605) Henri III and his mignons are depicted as an ancient people of hermaphrodites inhabiting an island; the author never once mentions the king or his favorites by name. A later example is the anonymous Le Godemiché royal (1789), in which Louis XVI is represented as Jupin (a familiar name for Jupiter) and Marie Antoinette as Juno; again, the author never directly names the king and queen. As ventriloquism permits an author to conceal their identity behind real people, the use of allegory enables the authors to hide behind mythological characters; if the authors were accused of blasphemy, they could argue that their texts were not meant to represent actual individuals (a claim harder to make, of course, if there is a written key to their work, which is surely why keys so rarely exist).

As with mythology, authors of slander often used historical or biblical comparisons. The citation of scripture, which it was blasphemous to refute, is particularly effective. For example, Claude Joly's 1642 Recueil de maximes véritables et importantes pour l'institution du roy contre la fausse & pernicieuse politique du cardinal Mazarin, prétendu surintendant de l'éducation de Sa Majesté cites the Bible (often

incorrectly) to support claims that Mazarin is devastating the country. This enables Joly to position himself as a man of God, which gives him the credibility to criticize Mazarin. And steeping slander in biblical or political history as exemplary helps make the case that rulers who deviate from biblical teaching should not be accepted. For instance, Anne d'Autriche (1601-1666) and Marie Antoinette are both identified with ruthless female rulers of antiquity and the more recent past, such as Roman Empress Messalina (17/20-48) and Catherine de Médici (1519-1589). Similarly, Henri III is compared to Caligula (12-41), reputed for excessive and deviant manifestations of sexuality as well as a complete disregard for his subjects and scripture.

In many of these uses of the Bible or history, authors of slander highlight the foreignness of their targets as a way to distance them from French interests. Mazarin, Anne d'Autriche, and Marie Antoinette were all foreigners by birth (Italian, Spanish, and Austrian)²⁴ and their land of origin was not only employed against them in slander, in which they were portrayed as non-French and therefore not

²⁴ Queens by definition were always foreign so as to secure alliances between France and other nations.

aligned with the good of the country, but also each was accused of conspiring with their homeland to hurt France.

When the emphasis on the foreigner leads to xenophobia, scapegoating can emerge, or the persecution of one to avenge the whole. In Le Bouc émissaire (1986), René Girard describes common factors used against scapegoats, among which are an emphasis on poverty, wealth, minority religion, nationality, sickness, and physical abnormality (Girard 18). Scapegoating can also be described as the demonization of the "outsider" by the "insider." But, as Girard explains, those at the top of the monarchy were always in a sense outsiders because of their highly privileged status; he calls them "marginal insiders" (18). The king, the cardinal, and the queen studied in this dissertation were all both marginal insiders due to privilege and outsiders due to foreignness or failing to conform to certain gender norms.²⁵ Girard believes that persons of power are typically turned into scapegoats in periods of turmoil, such as war, when an insider is pitted against the masses (19). And when the marginal insider is murdered, their "difference" is symbolically eliminated, thereby allowing for the return to old norms (24).

²⁵ On foreignness and the failure to conform to gender norms, see supra below section entitled "Problematic Ruler" and Chapters I, II, and III.

Scapegoating holds the target accountable for a threatening societal ill (i.e. poverty, war, certain sexual practices, etc.), and has the potential to facilitate the construction of a community of likeminded people who define themselves as being *not* like the vilified person.²⁶ In the case of Henri III and Marie Antoinette, their "difference" (i.e., effeminacy, gender and nationality) was symbolically destroyed by their assassination. And while Mazarin was not executed - or made to "pay" for his difference - he was nevertheless "castrated" and "murdered" in slanderous texts, which supports that the elimination of difference does not necessarily culminate in actual death. In texts condemning Henri III, Mazarin, and Marie Antoinette, the argument often is made directly or indirectly that the person at - or near - the head of the monarchy needs to be killed for the monarchy to function properly. Of course, by the time of the French Revolution, it was the monarchical system as a whole that had become the reviled "outsider" and thus was overthrown.²⁷

Scapegoating often enables authors of slander to cast their targets as dehumanized or non-human. And

²⁶ By painting the target as a potential enemy of France and her people, xenophobic attacks are an appeal to nascent national consciousness.

²⁷ The murders of Henri III and Louis XVI differ primarily because the former king was killed by a fanatic while the later was condemned to die by the State.

dehumanization can be a precursor to violence; for once the human elements are removed, the person is no different than an animal or monster to be slaughtered. One way scandalmongers dehumanize the target is to call them a harpy. Henri III, Mazarin, and Marie Antoinette are all depicted as mythological harpies in texts and prints, respectively in the anonymous Le Martire des deux frères (1589), Cyrano de Bergerac's Le Gazettier des-intéressé (1649), and the anonymous Description historique d'un monstre symbolique pris vivant sur les bords du lac Fagua, près de Santa Fe, par les soins de Francisco Xaviero de Meunrios, comte de Barcelone (1784).²⁸ The term "harpy" did not appear in a French dictionary until 1694:

*[U]n [o]iseau fabuleux extrêmement gourmand, & que les Poètes feignoient avoir un visage de femme, & des ongles fort crochus & fort tranchants.... Il se dit fig. De ceux qui ravissent le bien du peuple... On appelle aussi, Harpie, Une meschante femme criade et acariastre (s.v. "harpie." Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française. 1st ed. 1694).*²⁹

²⁸ This last text's author is cited as Francisco Xaviero de Meunrios, comte de Barcelone; according to Annie Duprat, Louis XVI's brother, Louis-Stanislas Xavier, Comte de Provence, was hostile to Marie Antoinette, but his authorship is far from certain. More likely, the true author exploited the brother's dislike of the queen to claim he wrote or commissioned a text against her (Duprat 132).

²⁹ Marie-Madeleine Fragonard provides a more comprehensive definition of harpy; she describes them as "les monstres mi-femme mi-oiseaux assez puants qui souillent d'ordure la nourriture du roi Phinée" (Zeus had punished King Phineus for his gift of prophecy by having the Harpies ruin his food whenever he was set to eat) (Cyrano 149-50 n.114; Hamilton 120). According to this definition, the fact that the Harpies are "puant" suggests their bodies are disease-ridden and obviously unfit to rule France. Further, since the king's food is contaminated by the Harpies' "ordure," or filth, he spreads sickness onto the royal

Thus, by comparing targets of slander to a harpy, scandalmongers imply that this monster has claws to steal others' food (i.e., France's nourishment). Since "Acariastre," according to Nicot means "[c]il ou celle qui se gouverne par furie, et hors de toute raison...," comparisons to a harpy also suggest an irrational, "feminine" manner of governing (s.v. "acariastre." Le Thresor de la langue française. 1606). And since they are represented typically as having female heads and sexually indeterminate bodies, any comparisons to harpies imply that the object of slander is sexually ambiguous, and thus sexually corrupt.

While branding the target of slander a mythological monster is hardly a way to create a convincing reality, this technique is part and parcel of a broad use of hyperbole by authors of slander. Hyperbole functions by embellishment and magnification, with no necessary relation to truth. For instance, to say that Henri III had sexual relations with his male favorites (or "mignons"), a frequent accusation against him in slander, may not be truthful, yet slander went much further by claiming that the king used these men for sexual gratification and gave

body and thus the state and he will also turn into waste the nourishment of the French people.

them money in return, thereby casting them as prostitutes. Not only is the underlying idea - that the king committed sexual acts with his mignons - dubious, but also the stories produced become all the more spectacular by turning the king into a john and his favorites into whores. Similarly, in Bordel patriotique institué par la reine des Français, pour les plaisirs des députés de la nouvelle législature (1791), Marie Antoinette speaks of her creation of a national whorehouse in which girls and even nuns come to learn the art of prostitution; thus, the queen is depicted as a madam, who has turned France into a brothel and its most innocent citizens into whores. As these examples suggest, there are at least two resulting possibilities from the use of hyperbole: the stories are so far-fetched that the reader believes none of them, or the reader believes that because the stories are so outrageous there must be a grain of truth at their core. Of course, it is possible that readers could believe all of them; however, stories involving sexual acts between animals and Mazarin, for instance, would seem a far stretch of reality for even the cardinal's most ardent opponents. Without trying to define the intention of slanderers, it seems safe to assume that their goal was to have their audience think their hyperbolic tales were based on facts. Of course, the

inherent risk of hyperbole is to alienate the audience by straining its credibility; yet, since slanderers employed this technique extensively, it can perhaps be argued that, in their experience, people tended to believe hyperbolic tales in part (if not in toto) rather than dismiss them completely.

Frequently coupled with hyperbole in slander is the accumulation or piling up of negative traits, which has much the same purpose and effect as hyperbole. By providing multiple examples of the target's supposed negative characteristics, scandalmongers succeed if just one of the examples is believed to be true by the audience. In Le Martire des deux frères, for instance, Henri III is not just accused of being "*un Turc par la tête,*" but also an "*Allemans par le corps, harpye par les mains, Anglais par la jarretière, [et] Polonais par les pieds*" (51, 54). This quote depicts the king as the sum of different nationalities (Turkey, England, Germany, and Poland) as well as a harpy to assert that he is not only thoroughly a foreigner, but a monster; and the parallel structure of the characteristics gives equal weight to each (even the harpy - the only non-xenophobic attack - is included with the

rest).³⁰ I call this proliferation of attacks the “kitchen sink” technique, where there is often an accumulation of adjectives to describe the target of slander. An author will make a statement and modify it with similar, even synonymous adjectives. For instance, Henri III’s soul is described in the anonymous pamphlet Contre les fausses allegations que les plus qu’Architofels, Conseillers cabinalistes proposent pour excuser Henri le meurtrier de l’assassinat par lui perfidement commis en la personne du duc de Guise (1589) as “*une âme orde, sale, vile [et] basse*”; while none of the adjectives nuance the notion of the king’s bad soul, each serves to spice up the writing and reinforce the underlying concept (13). Adjectives could be removed and the phrase would mean the same thing. Such excessive attacks would seem to undermine the goal of verisimilitude, and yet, kitchen sink accusations grab a reader’s attention, thereby making the charge more memorable. And the more memorable an accusation, the more easily the audience can transmit it to others.

Kitchen sink attacks often work in tandem with attacks on the gender or sexuality of slander’s target. The more slanderers can define the object of slander as other,

³⁰ For an in-depth analysis of this quote, see supra Chapter I. The depiction of harpies in slander is discussed on page 28 of this introduction.

abnormal or monstrous, the easier it is to signal that the target is not conforming to society's proscribed gender or sexual roles. As Peter Moogk argues, the types of insults used in New France (i.e. Canada) in the mid-1700's (his observations are equally valid for France in the early-modern period) "reveal a rigid traditionalism in social values with regard to the two sexes"; defining and reinforcing gender stereotypes were meant to point out where men and women transgressed, making clear what was "acceptable" or "normal" (Moogk 541). Men were typically attacked for dishonesty in matters of money and property and for failing to ensure their wife's faithfulness; thus, the terms "*cocu*," "*connard*," "*maquereau*," "*sot*," and accusations of sexual impotence or of having to resort to rape were employed as a means to denigrate men (541-542). Similarly in France, Henri III and Mazarin are both accused of raping women and Louis XVI is called an impotent cuckold. Whereas attacks against men lay bare underlying gender expectations, the moral standard for women was much higher, according to Moogk (542). A woman's worth was tied closely to her chastity since an unfaithful wife would cast a shadow of doubt on the paternity of her children,³¹ and

³¹ Of course, many aristocratic women had lovers; as with many areas of social behavior, what was tacitly allowed in court circles was often at odds with what was tolerated in the lower classes. Still, even in the

her reputation could be ruined with so much as a hint of impropriety (542). Among the many names given to women who were not chaste are "putain" or "carogne" (whores), " salope" (slut), and "garce" (debaucherous woman and/or prostitute) (542). Terms such as these were often used to slander Marie Antoinette, who was depicted as an unfaithful wife whose children may not have been those of Louis XVI. On the contrary, a man's reputation was often enhanced by being seen as sexually active and therefore powerful, even in extramarital relations.³²

As these insulting terms suggest, early-modern sexual slander verged on or constituted the obscene, a term that Furetière defines in 1690 as "impudique," "lascif," and "deshonneste" (dirty, lascivious, and indecent) (s.v. "obscène." Dictionnaire universel. 1690). To understand the use of the obscene in early-modern slander, Peter Moogk enlists anthropologist Edmund Leach's three-pronged theory: "(1) dirty words-usually referring to sex and excretion; (2) blasphemy and profanity; [and] (3) animal abuse - in

highest circles, it was expected that affairs be handled discreetly. And to be sure, no matter a woman's class, the issue of paternity was always important. This upper-class lifestyle in which women had affairs is depicted in Choderlos de Laclos' Les Liaisons dangereuse where Madame de Merteuil acts very differently privately and sexually than she does in society where she positions herself as highly religious.

³² On the other hand, queens were not expected to have lovers, for sexual relations with someone other than the king could affect the royal bloodline.

which a human being is equated with an animal of another species" (539-540). The slander studied in this dissertation falls within these three categories. "Dirty" words were employed to describe the sexual acts of the targets and blasphemous words to describe their actions. In fact, the very act of slandering the king was blasphemous since the king rules by divine right. The use of animal epithets was also a means of attack; Anne d'Autriche was contemptuously called "âne d'Autriche," Marie Antoinette "l'Autri-chienne," and Louis XVI was cast as a pig.

While Moogk's categorization of types of obscene attacks is helpful, it does not address what Gary Ferguson refers to as "comic degradation" in "obscene" texts (Ferguson 175). Plays on words, such as "âne d'Autriche" and "l'Autri-chienne," are misogynistic, but they are clever and entertaining. And to depict the king's limp penis can be as comical as it is degrading, bringing the king down to earth by pulling off his divine robe and exposing his phallus, the symbol of power, as useless. Comic degradation is often burlesque in nature, contrasting the target's presumed dignity with his or her supposedly base desires. Defined by the Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française (4th ed. 1762) as "[b]ouffon, facétieux, rempli

de pensées, d'expressions, de termes propres à faire rire," the burlesque is a technique authors employ in slanderous texts to depict the object as acting in a ridiculous, buffoon-like, degraded manner (s.v. "burlesque").

Beyond comic degradation, and the burlesque, obscene attacks are complex forms. One reason for this complexity, according to Joan DeJean, is that, prior to 1660 obscenity was only understood in relation to Church morality,³³ but with the expansion of print culture notions of censorship modified the definition of obscenity to include anything that offended the censors' sense of morality (DeJean I 2, 10, 13).³⁴ In fact, during the early-modern period, claims Lynn Hunt, the French viewed obscene texts condemning the monarchy no differently than obscene texts created to incite desire. Because of this fundamental ambiguity, it is helpful to think of obscenity as a continuum with the sexual at one pole and the anti-monarchical at the other. Obscene texts in the *Ancien Régime* fall, to varying

³³ Joan DeJean cites Molière's *L'École des filles* (1655) as the moment when a modern definition of "obscene" was born, and for which it was used to describe "secular offense[s]," such as a lack of modesty (DeJean I 13-14).

³⁴ While notions of obscenity became more grounded in print culture after 1660, the French did not make any official law against obscenity until 1791, and it was only in 1819 that the law was extended to cover written publications (the 1791 law covered only visual offenses) (DeJean I 126). The 1791 and 1819 laws do not actually contain the word "obscene," but, DeJean argues, the laws were intended to forbid what was deemed obscene (126).

degrees, somewhere between these two poles, some being more sexual and others more anti-monarchical. These two poles converge in texts in which the anti-monarchical is sexualized. And, of course, the comically obscene could be either sexual and/or anti-monarchical.

On Sexual Slander

The focus of this dissertation is in one particular aspect of early-modern obscenity: sexual deviance, which included sodomitical and tribadic practices, rape, incest, and bestiality.³⁵ Henri III, Mazarin, and Marie-Antoinette were all accused of engaging deviant sexual acts with members of the opposite and members of their own gender. In slanderous texts, Henri III was accused of raping a nun, Mazarin was charged with having sexual intercourse with the queen, Anne d'Autriche, and Marie Antoinette was blamed for besmirching the royal bloodline through her extramarital affairs.

³⁵ Masturbation and adultery were also considered deviant sexual practices in the early modern period. Masturbation was considered a serious sexual offense, so much so that the Church said masturbation required absolution and that only the bishop could absolve people of this sin (Loude 66). Of course, adultery, while a deviant act, was generally common and even expected of kings who often had one or more mistresses. While many scholars, such as Suzanne Desan, place the rise of the conjugal family as becoming the norm in the late 18th century, others, such as Elise Noël McMahon, instead see its formation already earlier in the mid-17th century (Desan 131; McMahon 41-42).

While acts such as these were considered deviant, accusations of sodomy were even more transgressive. To depict figures of the monarchy as participating in sodomitical acts was to show them defying God and nature. For as Richelet's dictionary of 1680 states "sodomy" was regarded as contrary to nature and as sinful:

*Péché de la chair contre nature,*³⁶ *qui a été apellé de la sorte, de la ville de Sodome qui périt par le feu à cause de cet exécration péché... La sodomie est un peché que tout homme qui a une goutte de bon sens doit abhorrer... (s.v. "sodomie." Dictionnaire français. 1680).*

Thus, to commit sodomy is to sin against God and nature; and all men with "good" sense "should" abhor this sin. While identifying sodomy with the biblical city of Sodom, the "atrocious sin" is not described here; however, the reference to Sodom implies that the consequence of sodomy is death by fire.³⁷ But sodomy was associated with a gamut of crimes punishable by death, such as effeminacy, atheism, and bestiality, according to Jeffrey Merrick (Merrick 679).³⁸ Louis Seifert argues that the overlapping of

³⁶ "*Péché de la chair contre nature*," according to Michel Loude, was the phrase used in the *Ancien Régime* to describe the most serious sexual "offences," such as anal sex.

³⁷ Just as God punished the ancient city of Sodom by burning it to the ground, so too were individuals sometimes burned at the stake in early-modern France for committing this crime.

³⁸ Nicot defines "*effeminer*" as "[m]ol et effeminé: n'ayant aucune virilité," or lacking of virile traits (s.v. "*effeminer*." Thresor de la langue française. 1606). On charges of effeminacy against Henri III,

transgressions evidences "fuzziness of boundaries between types of deviance" (Seifert I 25). Thus, while Richelet's definition speaks of one particular "sin," it connotes several different ones. In the primary corpus of this dissertation, slander often casts its target as having committed one or more of these sodomitical acts. For instance, Henri III was condemned in slander for irreligion and anal sex with his male favorites and Mazarin was accused of having sexual relations with both men and animals.

And yet sodomy was most associated with anal sex between men. Indeed, Didier Godard speaks of a continuum of sexual transgressions of which homosexual practices are always the "supreme stage" (Godard I 63). There were many words in early-modern French for anal sex and for men who commit it: "*vice italien*," "*goût de collègue*," "*peché philosophique*," and "*bougre*," to name a few. Some of these terms suggest that the origin of sexual relations between men was ascribed to countries other than France. Such foreign terms as "*italian*" are often used to describe the target as non-French, and therefore as against French interests, while simultaneously confirming stereotypes

see Chapter I. The *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* (1st ed. 1694) defines "*athéisme*" as "*Impiété qui consiste à ne reconnoistre aucune divinité*" and "*bestialité*" as "*Le crime de ceux qui abusent des bestes*" (s.v. "*athéisme*" and "*bestialité*").

about sexual practices in those countries. Italy was accused of importing anal sex into France and, in Godard's terms, of being "*particulièrement favorable aux amours masculins*" (219).³⁹ As for "*bougre*,"⁴⁰ the term points to Bulgaria as the culprit, as Gilles Ménage's Les Origines de la langue française (1650) makes clear: "*Je suis de l'avis de ceux qui derivent [sodomie] de Bulgarus [Bulgaria]*" (Ménage 131). And the terms "*péché philosophique*" and "*goût de college*," which ascribe sodomy to intellectuals and students, respectively, indicate that anal sex was seen as prevalent among learned men. These words also evoke ancient Greek philosophers and historians, such as Plato (429–347 BC), who was known for his intellect as well as for his supposedly sodomitical preferences – another way of ascribing sodomy to a foreign culture.⁴¹

³⁹ The link between Italy and sodomy is not entirely the fiction of French xenophobia; according to Evelyn Walsh, in second half of the 15th century, up to one third of Florence's adult male population had been accused of engaging in sodomitical relations (Welch in Sex 213). Godard states that the connection between Italy and sodomy lasted until the beginning of the 19th century, when the bourgeoisie began to categorize sodomy as a pathology, thus medicalizing it rather than treating it as a habit picked up abroad (Godard II 65). Moreover, this xenophobia was not, according to Godard, exclusive to France in this period; Spain and Switzerland also commonly blamed Italians for Sodomy (67). In fact, in both Spain and Switzerland, a significant proportion of those accused of sodomy were Italian (67).

⁴⁰ The word "*bougre*" was not used much by the Revolutionary period (Godard I 126).

⁴¹ On Greece and accusations of tribadism, a form of sodomy, see below at 44.

In early-modern Europe, male-on-male sodomy was not an uncommon practice, according to Randolph Trumbach's Sex and the Gender Revolution; even medical discourse of the period acknowledged that men could be attracted to handsome men as well as to women (Trumbach 5; Seifert II 48). Still, just because sodomy was understood to be a possibility in nature, it was not seen as an acceptable practice and was widely condemned by religion and the State. However, in Didier Godard's view, aristocrats - a generally protected class - had the possibility of living more openly than commoners (Godard I 168). Purported sodomites among the ruling elite from the 16th through the 18th centuries included Henri IV's (1589-1610) illegitimate son, César de Vendôme (1594-1665), Louis II de Bourbon, Prince de Condé (le grand Condé) (1621-1686), and Marquis Charles-Michel de Villete (1734-1793) - none of whom were prosecuted legally for sodomitical behaviour.⁴² According to Godard, there were also some famous sodomites in early-modern France who were commoners yet still protected by the court, such as writers Denis Sanguin de Saint-Pavin (1595-1670), Jacques Vallée, sieur des Barreaux (1599-1673), and the "Abbé,"

⁴² Vendôme's hotel de Vendôme was called the "*hotel de sodome*," according to Louis Crompton (Crompton 339). Thus, while not punished legally for sodomy, slander often held aristocratic individuals accountable for their supposed preferences by exposing their practices in slander.

François le Métel de Boisrobert (1589-1662) (167-71). For men not protected by the court, the chance that their sodomitical activity would be prosecuted was far greater; indeed, sodomitical acts that were tried sometimes led to the accused being burned at the stake (167).⁴³ However, when someone was burned for sodomy it was in nearly all cases because an additional crime or crimes had been committed, such as rape⁴⁴; for, even if death was the recorded punishment for sodomy alone, it was not typically carried out.

Prior to the 18th century, says Trumbach, it was not the active male partner, but the adult passive male who was perceived as a threat to the dominant gender and sexual ideology (Trumbach 6). For as Trumbach suggests, in European society before 1700 it was culturally understood that males could desire both young men and women and "[a]dult men expressed this by having sexual relations with adolescent males and with women" (5). Older men could sodomize young men, provided that the older man took the

⁴³ Claude Le Petit (1639-1662), himself a sodomite, was burned alive in 1662 after having a hand cut off; he was executed, however, for his libertine writings.

⁴⁴ One of the most famous executions for sodomy was in 1725 when Benjamin Deschauffours was burned at the stake for having kidnapped, raped, prostituted, and murdered a young boy. His case shows that when someone was given the death penalty for sodomy, it was often because he had committed additional crimes.

sexually active role and the younger partner remained passive; the youth was considered not entirely formed as a "man" and was thus an acceptable object of desire for adult men (5).⁴⁵ This practice was acceptable, according to Trumbach, so long as the adult partner did not take on the passive or female role, which was seen as an "illogical" step downwards into servitude. However, if the young male was the active partner, he would be viewed as assuming the "male" role, moving upward toward the male sphere. While Trumbach's conception that the passive adult sodomite was more problematic than the active adult sodomite is accurate, his understanding that certain forms of sodomy were acceptable is not reflected in early modern sexual slander that uses sodomy precisely as a means to cast the target as engaging in unacceptable behavior. I do agree, however, that in the 18th century notions of what was "natural" changed; in his 1771 text, Traité de la justice criminelle en France, lawyer Daniel Jousse argues that the active and passive sodomite are equally reprehensible, and he advocates burning alive men found guilty of performing either sexual role (Godard I 95-96).

⁴⁵ The younger, passive partner is sometimes referred to during the *Ancien Régime* as Ganymede, a character in Greek mythology who was a handsome boy and Zeus's lover. By the 18th century Ganymede had become synonymous for a passive sodomite (Guirard 360; Merrick and Ragan I xiv).

Another act regarded as against nature was tribadism or sexual relations between two women, an act defined in the dictionaries of the period. If Furetière defines "tribade" as a "*Femme impudique*" or a shameless woman... "*amoureuse d'un autre de son sexe,*" and the Dictionnaire de L'Académie Française (1762) as a "*femme qui abuse d'une autre femme,*" then a tribade is a woman who uses her body (and her partner's body) excessively and unnaturally, with implications of violation (s.v. "tribade." Dictionnaire universel. 1690 and Dictionnaire de L'Académie Française. 4th ed. 1762. For Richelet a tribade is "*celle qui s'acouple avec une autre personne de son sexe & qui contrefait l'homme*"; thus, a woman who "mimics" a man by penetrating the passive female partner with fingers or a dildo (s.v. "tribade." Dictionnaire français. 1680). Diderot and d'Alembert's Encyclopédie ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers (1751-1772) goes further to rank tribadism on the same level as transgressive male sodomy: "*espèce de dépravation particulière aussi inexplicable que celle qui enflamme un homme pour un autre homme*" (Diderot and d'Alembert 16:617). However, despite the strong condemnation of an inexplicable depravation Randolphe Trumbach believes that the tribade was not as threatening to norms of gender and sexuality as

the male sodomite, though the active tribade was more troubling than the passive partner due to a fear that she was rendering the male irrelevant (Trumbach 8). By contrast, the older passive male sodomite was not seen as usurping the female role, but instead, as lowering himself to female passivity. Whereas the active tribade was a threat to men, the passive sodomite was a disgrace, rather than a threat, to women. Thus, the older passive male sodomite and the active tribade most challenged the "natural" order by subverting their assigned gender roles.

As with male sodomy, tribadism is traced to foreign countries and cultures, including Greece, the Orient and Bulgaria. Furetière says tribadism comes from the Greeks: "*Les Grecs ont fait ample mentions de ces tribades*" (s.v. "*tribade.*" Dictionnaire universel (1690)). In Dames galantes, written at the end of the 16th century and published in the mid-17th century, the Abbé Brantôme argues that "*lesbiennes*"⁴⁶ originated in "oriental" countries where women are cloistered, such as Greece and Turkey where they don't have access to men (Brantôme 219). Certainly Brantôme would have no way of knowing what women in Turkey

⁴⁶ The word "*lesbienne*" was used as a synonym for "*tribade*" by the Abbé Brantôme in Dames galantes; this term however, was not widely adopted until the 19th century (Crompton 351).

and Greece were doing sexually, yet he still promotes the idea of their rampant tribadism.

In addition to the word "*tribade*," "*bougre*," typically used to designate a male sodomite and pointing to Bulgaria as the source of sodomy, was sometimes turned into the feminine "*bougresse*" to indicate a tribade, as in the 1792 anonymous pamphlet Les Nouvelles du ménage royal sens dessus dessous, ou la fluxion de Marie-Toinon et Louis son mari, garçon serrurier au Temple, avec un détail de leur grande dispute et les nouvelles de leur ménage envoyées à Coblençe, par M. Sans-culotte, in which, after having climaxed, the queen says to the Princesse de Lamballe (1749-1792): "*Ah bougresse !.... [T]u réunis en toi seule les talents divers des tribades passées et présentes*" (in L'Anthologie 1141). The reference to "*tribades passées*" may point to foreign cultures, while I believe "*tribades présentes*" is likely a reference to ladies of the French court, such as Jules de Polignac (1749-1793) and the Princesse de Lamballe, who were often accused in slander of having sexual relations with the queen.

Sodomites and tribades were often conflated with hermaphrodites, and scandalmongers treated same-sex sexual relations as a sign of problematic biology. Works such as Ambroise Paré's Des Monstres et prodiges (1573) and Jean

Riolan's Discours sur les hermaphrodites (1614) claimed that hermaphrodites were really sodomites (here meaning a man who has sexual relations with men) who, according to François Cusset's Queer Critics: La Littérature française déshabillée par ses homo-lecteurs (2002), were thought to be "*écartés du rôle d'homme par le souvenir du vagin qu'ils avaient à la naissance*"; in other words, the male sodomite, aware he once had a vagina, is impelled to have sexual relations with men instead of women; in this sense, sodomitical acts result from an already problematic hermaphroditic body (Cusset 69). Cusset explains as well understandings of hermaphroditism as it is related to the tribade:

[Elles sont] androgynies⁴⁷ femelles dont l'appendice genital est en fait un clitoris géant, boursouflé jusqu'à sembler une queue, ou encore ces astolphes⁴⁸ effrayants munis des deux sexes, un scrotum étriqué recouvrant chez eux la naissance d'une fente utérine (69).

⁴⁷ In this citation, Cusset uses "androgynie" interchangeably with hermaphrodite, which Nicot also does, defining "androgynie" as "Androgynus, Hermaphroditus" (both meaning hermaphrodite) and Furetière does, describing "androgynie" as a "hermaphrodite qui a les deux natures, qui est mâles et femelles tout ensemble" (s.v. "androgynie." Le Thésor de la langue françoise. 1606 and Dictionnaire universel. 1690). In his definition of hermaphrodite, Furetière refers to mythology; it can be argued that the term had mythological as well as biological connotations (s.v. "hermaphrodite." Dictionnaire universel. 1690).

⁴⁸ In "l'Adultère" Voltaire refers to wives of the Astolphes as sexually depraved (Dictionnaire Philosophique 51).

The hermaphrodite's inter-sexed genitals are described as primarily female with an oversized clitoris that functions like a penis or scrotum behind which is a uterus. The word "effrayants" casts hermaphrodites as fearfully monstrous. Paré and Riolan's works address the issue of the enlarged clitoris, which Riolan calls as large as a finger and can be used like a penis for tribadic relations; thus Paré believes the clitoris should be excised, evidencing anxiety not only about hermaphrodites and tribades, but also about female sexuality in general (Park in The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early modern Europe 172).⁴⁹

⁴⁹ On notions of the clitoris in 16th-century medical texts, see Katherine Park's "The Rediscovery of the Clitoris: French Médecine and the Tribade, 1570-1620" (171-194) in The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe (1997).

One case of particular interest in 1601 involved Marin le Marcis, who had been raised as a woman, but had intersex genitals. When Marin wanted to get married to another woman, there was fierce debate about whether she was a hermaphrodite or a tribade. While Paré believed she was a tribade, Jacques Duval, author of Traité des hermaphrodites (1612) argued she was a male-dominated hermaphrodite and therefore not guilty of sodomy. Marin and his girlfriend were convicted of sodomy, but that verdict was overturned based on Duval's "scientific" evidence that proved Marin produced male-like sperm (The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early modern Europe 180; Grenblatt 73-75). According to Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park, the case of Marin was the start of a long tradition of suspicion regarding hermaphrodites' affirmation of their sex and therefore their sexuality; rather than rely on the word of the concerned individual, doctors were brought in to make the final determination of the hermaphrodite's sex (Daston and Park in Premodern Sexualities 426-427). Indeed, according to Daston and Park "Riolan reclassified several alleged hermaphrodites as women with enlarged clitorises, and then branded them as...tribades" (431). On hermaphrodites, see Kathleen Perry Long's Hermaphrodites in Renaissance Europe: Women and Gender in the Early Modern World (2006) and Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park's "The Hermaphrodite and the Orders of Nature: Sexual Ambiguity in Early Modern France" in Premodern Sexualities (1995) at 419-438.

Henri III, Mazarin and Marie Antoinette are all depicted as hermaphrodites in sexual slander as a means of casting them as biologically abnormal.

Ultimately, in addition to homosexual acts, both incest and bestiality were included in sodomy's net, acts of which Henri III, Mazarin, and Marie Antoinette were all accused. For Furetière, incest is a crime, "*qui se commet quand on a la compagnie charnelle de personnes qui sont parentes jusqu'à un certain degré prohibé par l'Eglise*" (s.v. "*inceste.*" Dictionnaire universel. 1690).⁵⁰ And, as with sexual relations between men, incest was identified as coming from Italy.⁵¹ While marriage between cousins was not uncommon in early-modern France (in fact, Infanta Marie-Thèrese (1638-1683) and Louis XIV (1638-1715) were double-first cousins), incest with one's sister (said of Henri III with Marguerite de Valois (1553-1615)), one's nephew (said of Mazarin), or one's son (said of Marie Antoinette) were

⁵⁰ Furetière states that the degree (or generation) to which one must be removed from a relative in order to have sexual relations with him or her has historically been between four and eight (s.v. "*inceste.*" Dictionnaire universel. 1690). On church laws regarding incest, see Brissaud and Howell's A History of French Private Law. Vol. 3 (1912) 122-123).

⁵¹ In Tableau de l'amour considéré dans l'estat du mariage (1687), Nicolas Venette writes about the frequency of incest in Rome among the ruling class: "*Nectimène & Valeria rechercherent toutes deux les caresses de leur propre père. Agrippine se prostitua à son fils. Julie reçut des plaisirs amoureux de l'Empereur Caracalia, son gendre, qui l'épousa ensuite*" (147).

crimes punishable by death. And sexual relations with animals, a crime "*qui se commet avec des bêtes & qu'on punit du feu,*" according to Furetière, was considered especially repugnant and given the harshest criminal sentences; those found guilty of it could be tortured and burned at the stake (s.v. "*bestialité.*" Dictionnaire universel. 1690; Loude 165). Here again, this form of sodomy was assigned to another culture; in Venette's Tableau de l'amour considéré dans l'estat du mariage (1687), bestiality is said to come from Italy and Egypt (Venette 147).⁵²

For sexual slander to be most effective, the target must be seen as committing or having committed a transgressive sexual act, such as any of the sodomitical practices described above. Merely talking about the target as sexually active is not sufficient, for the person has to be identified as subverting their prescribed gender and sexual roles. Slanderers rely on convention, tradition and laws to damage their prey effectively; in other words, for slander to function, there must be a cultural transgression. And since sodomitical attacks are also

⁵² Venette states: "*Semiramis s'abandonna à un cheval[, u]ne fille de Toscane du temps du Pape Pie V se fit couvrir d'un chien, & la plus part des filles Egyptiennes s'accouplent encore aujourd'huy avec des boucs*" (Venette 147). In this case, the act is described as still prevalent in Egypt.

often xenophobic slurs, the target is doubly vilified; not only is the target defined as non or anti-French, but he or she is also painted as corrupting France's morals. Both treason (often implied in xenophobic slander) and sodomy were crimes punishable by death, and by depicting the targets as having committed both crimes, writers of sexually slanderous texts were in essence striving to send the accused to their execution. For if sexual slander was to be believed, the target could end up on trial and punished (as Marie Antoinette ultimately was); thus, punishment and maybe execution is the mostly unstated goal of sexual slander.

Crisis and Slander: Historical Context and the Goals of this Dissertation

The examination of sexually slanderous texts in the periods that span 1574-1793 raises a fundamental question: why was there so much written sexual slander produced in only three turbulent periods - each almost 100 years apart? Existing scholarship does not offer many clues. Despite the rich and varied history of sexual slander, books and articles on sexual slander discuss particular moments in time, rather than broad trends (or the theory and rhetoric)

of sexual slandering in the *Ancien Régime*.⁵³ And while Robert Darnton's The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France (1996), Annie Duprat's Les Rois du papier: la caricature de Henri III à Louis XVI (1994), and The Invention of Pornography: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity, 1500-1800 (1993), edited by Lynn Hunt, span several centuries and focus on the wide-ranging category of

⁵³ By and large, there is less scholarship on sexual slander in the 16th and 17th centuries than in the 18th century. There are articles on Henri III, such as Katherine B. Crawford's "Love, Sodomy, and Scandal: Controlling the Sexual Reputation of Henri III" (2003) and books analyzing sexuality in general in the 16th century, such as Didier Godard's L'Autre Faust: L'Homosexualité masculine pendant la Renaissance (2001), but there is no work devoted to the sexual slandering of the Valois king. Nicolas La Roux's La Faveur du roi: Mignons et courtisans au temps des derniers Valois (vers 1547-1589) (2000) examines the relationship between the king and his male favorites, but it does not address comprehensively slander against them, and instead, analyzes the historical role of favorites.

For the 17th century, several works deal exclusively with the Mazarinades; Christian Jouhaud's Mazarinades: La Fronde des mots (1985) and Hubert Carrier's La Presse de la Fronde (1648-1653) - Les Mazarinades: La Conquete de l'opinion (1989) are significant in their breadth, but they too do not focus on the sexual aspects of slander. The most important texts on sexual attacks directed against Mazarin are articles, such as Jeffrey Merrick's "The Cardinal and the Queen: Sexual and Political Disorders in the Mazarinades" (1994) and Lewis Seifert's "Eroticizing the Fronde: Sexual Deviance and Political Disorder in the Mazarinades" (1995).

In contrast to the earlier periods, there is a trove of scholarship on sexual slander against Marie Antoinette. This includes most notably, Chantal Thomas's The Wicked Queen: The Origins of the Myth of Marie Antoinette (2001) and Hector Fleischmann's Les Pamphlets libertins contre Marie Antoinette: d'après des documents nouveaux et les pamphlets tirés de l'enfer de la Bibliothèque Nationale (1976). These texts provide context and an analysis of sexual slander against Marie Antoinette, and they describe the ways in which the queen's sexual practices with men and women of all classes undermined the king's authority. In particular, Thomas closely reads the most slanderous pamphlets to chart effectively the ruin of Marie Antoinette. As with scholarship of the earlier periods, these works are specific to one century and do not analyze how slander against the queen relates to sexually slanderous texts written centuries earlier.

the "forbidden" and the obscene, they do not examine sexually slanderous texts exclusively. Darnton recognizes this gap in scholarship on "political libel" (a term he uses to encompass various sorts of slandering) and calls for a study of its history (Darnton I 198).⁵⁴

Perhaps the simplest hypothesis is that sexually slanderous texts appear during moments of crisis in France (meaning a period in which events, such as regicide or war, destabilize fundamentally France). However, this theory does not work for the entirety of French history, since there are certainly other moments of crisis that resemble the periods examined in this dissertation but when sexual slander does not proliferate. For example, Henri IV's regicide follows the assassination of Henri III, yet there are no sexually slanderous texts condemning him; this implies that regicide is not necessarily linked to sexually slanderous texts. There are other instances of intense civil war that devastated and destabilized the nation, such as the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453) and the five Wars of Religion (1562-1574) prior to Henri III's reign; yet during

⁵⁴ Part of the reason that the study of sexually slanderous texts is challenging is due to its highly inter-disciplinary nature. To understand sexual slander's context and content, it is necessary to be well versed in literature, history, economics, politics, religion, mythology, and gender and sexuality studies.

these conflicts there were no sexually slanderous texts used to defame the monarch or those closest to him.

Maybe then, there is not one particular reason that makes each of the three emblematic periods analyzed in this dissertation ripe for sexual slander, and instead, we need to consider the existence of a confluence of several factors. In each of the periods examined here there appear to be four consistent factors: 1) a civil war; 2) a ravaged economy; 3) a "problematic" ruler who had real (e.g. cardinal Mazarin or the kings of France) or imagined (e.g. queens or queen regents) control of France; and 4) an environment in which censorship was loose or looser than at other periods and sexually explicit texts were popular or appeared with high frequency. While one or more of these issues marked other reigns, none appears to have contained all four at once. The paragraphs that follow outline briefly each of these factors as they relate to the three moments of crisis studied in this dissertation.

Civil War

Each period analyzed in this dissertation corresponds to a defining moment of civil war in France, which, I believe, is the primary reason that the three targets -

Henri III, Mazarin, and Marie Antoinette - are attacked in sexually slanderous texts. During the first reign examined - that of Henri III - France was entrenched in the devastating Wars of Religion - a lengthy and complex conflict between Protestants and Catholics that lasted for twelve years from 1562 through 1580. When Henri III claimed the throne in 1574 after the death of his brother, Charles IX (1550-1574), the fifth war was in progress.⁵⁵ This war was brought on by another of Henri III's brothers, Hercule François, Duc d'Anjou and duc d'Alençon (1555-1584), who led a group of Protestants and moderate Catholics (called the "*malcontents*") and who tried to gain reforms for tolerance towards Protestants.⁵⁶ Henri III's reign began less than two years following the Saint

⁵⁵ Of the eight wars of religion, spanning the years 1562 through 1598, the first took place between 1562 and 1563 when Catholics killed 100 Protestants (called Huguenots) attending mass in Wassy. This event spurred Protestants into action and led to several battles within two years, until the Amboise Edict (March 1563) put a stop to the war. However, the peace proved temporary and the second war of religion began in 1567 and lasted through 1568; this time it was Protestants who started the violence because they feared the influence of the anti-Protestant Catholic, Charles de Guise, Cardinal de Lorraine (1524-1574) over the young Charles IX (1550-1574). Battles between the two sides continued until the Edict of Longjumeau (March 1568) quelled the violence for less than a year. The third war of religion (1568-1570) was essentially a continuation of the second war; a new edict in 1570 again tried to restore peace, but again this edict failed, leading to the fourth war, which took place from 1572 to 1573. The fourth war finally ended with the Edict of Boulogne (July 1573), which tried to establish peace between the two religions - a truce that would not last long. On the Wars of Religion, see generally J.H.M. Salmon's Society in Crisis: France in the Seventeenth Century (1975).

⁵⁶ Like his mother, Catherine de Médici, Henri III advocated tolerance toward Protestantism.

Bartholomew Massacre (August 1572) - the most violent event of the French Wars of Religion.⁵⁷ The Edict of Beaulieu (May 1576) that ended this phase of the war allowed for the freedom of reformed Protestants to worship in most places; but the edict angered ultra-Catholics who did not want Protestantism to gain this right and they responded by creating the extremist Catholic League, which had several thousand members who aimed to wipe out the Protestants.⁵⁸ During the sixth war (1576-1577), the League put pressure on the crown to rescind the Edict of Beaulieu; this was achieved with the Treaty of Bergerac, also known as the Edict of Poitiers (October 1577). Rightfully angered by

⁵⁷ The massacre started at the August 1572 wedding of Protestant and future king Henri de Navarre (1553-1610) to Catholic Marguerite de Valois (1553-1615), when there was an attempt on the life of head of the Protestant camp, Gaspard de Coligny (1519-1572) (he was successfully assassinated two days later). Then, two days afterwards several Protestant leaders were killed, which led to pandemonium throughout France and resulted in about 15,000 deaths. Historians generally believe that Catherine de Médici was involved in the initial decision to kill Protestant leaders, but James Smither posits that the massacre may not have been planned by any one party but instead, erupted after the execution of a small number of Protestant leaders (Smither 29, 30).

⁵⁸ The Catholic League was led by Henri I de Lorraine, Prince de Joinville, Duc de Guise (1550-1588) and his clan, including the duc's brother, Louis II, Cardinal de Guise (1555-1588), who did not only oppose Protestants but also challenged Henri III's authority. Indeed, an unnamed supporter of the king had warned him that should the duc de Guise gain more influence, Henri III would soon be "*infailliblement accablé et détroné par la Ligue*" (cited in Solnon 358). Thus, Henri III ordered the murder of the Duc and Cardinal de Guise in December 1588. By ordering the execution, however, Henri III became a target for de Guises' supporters; in fact, much of the sexual slander disseminated after the death of the de Guise brothers condemns the king for having ordered their assassination.

this new edict, Protestants initiated the seventh war (1579-1580), which ended with the Treaty of Fleix (November 1580) that confirmed the Edict of Poitiers. The eighth and final war (1585-1598) began when it became clear that Henri de Navarre (1553-1610), a Protestant and distant cousin of Henri III, would be heir to the crown, even though this was unacceptable to Catholics. During Catholic League revolts in Paris in 1589, Henri III fled France, only to be assassinated by Catholic League member and monk, Jacques Clément (1567-1589).⁵⁹

The second period of sexual slander discussed in this dissertation corresponds to another high point of armed civil crisis in France - the Fronde⁶⁰ - the series of civil wars that took place from 1648 until 1653.⁶¹ These wars involved three major issues: parliament's attempts to circumvent the monarch's authority, the nobility's desire for more power in government, and taxation during a royal

⁵⁹ After thirteen years, the eighth war of religion finally ended with the Edict de Nantes (April 1598) (signed by the new king Henri de Navarre, who had by now converted to Catholicism), which established limited tolerance of Protestantism. While this document by no means ended religious conflict in France, it did usher in the official end of the Wars of Religion.

⁶⁰ The Fronde was named after slingshots employed by children and used to target Mazarin's windows.

⁶¹ For a comprehensive analysis of the Fronde, see generally Orest Ranum's The Fronde: A French Revolution, 1648-1652 (1993).

minority.⁶² The Fronde officially began in 1648 when the Parlement of Paris revolted against the renewal of the bond tax and, more generally against the policies of Regent Anne d'Autriche (1601-1666). As Sara Beam writes, the queen regent's policies were condemned as "extortionist and invasive": one of the policies was to force government officials to surrender their salary for four years to pay for the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648).⁶³ The Parlement tried to fashion itself into a legislative body in order to restrict royal authority; this phase of the war is variously called the "*première Fronde*," "*Fronde parlementaire*," "*vieille Fronde*," or "*Fronde Parisienne*". The next conflict, the "*Fronde des Princes*" (1650-1653), began when Prince Condé, Armand de Bourbon (1629-1666), rival of Mazarin and commander of the rebel army, led his forces against the monarchy.⁶⁴ During this war, Mazarin was forced into exile by the courts (1651-1652), until Condé

⁶² Some believed that the right to be taxed expired upon the death of Louis XIII (1601-1643), but Mazarin increased taxes.

⁶³ The Thirty Years' War was another source of armed crisis (although not a civil war) during this period. Through the Peace of Westphalia (two treaties dated May and October 1648) France had emerged victorious in the war, which had originally started in 1618 as a religious war between Catholics and Protestants. However, this end did not stop conflicts with Spain (one country involved in the war), which continued through around 1660, when Louis XIV married the infanta of Spain.

⁶⁴ The ambitious Condé revolted because he believed he was entitled to more power in the monarchy as a result of his assistance to the monarchy during the first phase of the Fronde.

finally backed down and the king, no longer in his minority, punished or exiled certain frondeurs, pardoned others, and allowed Parliament to return to Paris assuming that it would no longer attempt to direct affairs of the state.⁶⁵

The third period of history studied in this dissertation is the defining and culminating moment of the *Ancien Régime* – the French Revolution.⁶⁶ In 1789, the Third Estate (essentially the bourgeoisie and the poor) became the National Assembly: it took certain powers away from the king and placed it with elected officials from the first, second and third estates. In this destabilized, volatile context there were continuous uprisings in Paris in 1789.⁶⁷ This unrest ultimately led to the invasion of city arsenals and then the storming of the Bastille in July 1789. The revolutionary zeal leading to the taking of the Bastille turned into pandemonium and rioting across France. Soon

⁶⁵ While the main conflicts of the Fronde had concluded by 1653, there were later eruptions, such as the "*troisième Fronde*" (1649-1659), concerning the rebellion of provincial nobles, and a "*quatrième Fronde*" (1661), involving disputes with the Jansenists, who were adversaries of Mazarin and the king.

⁶⁶ For a comprehensive examination of the French Revolution, see Georges Lefebvre's *The French Revolution: From its Origins Through 1793* (2001), *The French Revolution: Recent Debates and New Controversies* (ed. Gary Kates 1998) and Emmet Kennedy's *A Cultural History of the French Revolution* (1989).

⁶⁷ There were earlier uprisings in Paris in 1787-1788 due to food shortages.

after, the royal residence was attacked by rioters in October 1789, and the family was taken prisoner.⁶⁸ Violence in the streets continued and took over 1,000 lives.⁶⁹ Then in January 1793 the National Convention tried the king for treason and quickly thereafter ordered his execution. Marie Antoinette's trial and subsequent execution for treason came several months later, in October 1793. With the figureheads of France gone, the country had officially declared an end to monarchy as it had functioned for centuries.

Economy

France's economy during each period studied in this dissertation was in particularly bad shape.⁷⁰ Indeed, the economy in each period was affected - indeed defined - by the civil wars. Emmet Kennedy sums up the effect of civil wars - "devestation, dislocation, and disruption of

⁶⁸ The royal family tried to escape from Paris in 1791, but they were apprehended.

⁶⁹ Among the victims was the queen's close friend (and rumored lover in slander), Maria Teresa Louisa di Savoia-Carignano, Princesse de Lamballe (1749-1792).

⁷⁰ The economic conditions in France during the two-hundred year period covered by this dissertation are far too vast and complex to examine thoroughly here, so I only discuss them in broad terms, highlighting main areas of financial hardship and their effects during the three high points of conflict. On France's economy in the *Ancien Régime*, see Joël Félix's chapter, "The Economy," in Old Regime France 1648-1788 (ed. William Doyle, 2001) at 7-41.

industry" - which were especially true during the Wars of Religion, the Fronde, and the French Revolution (Kennedy 384). Armed conflict exasperated an already terrible situation. For instance, during the Wars of Religion, France's economy, which had been more or less prosperous in the early part of the century, had plummeted. The trade of precious metal from America made prices in France rise and currency decline, while bad harvests and disease (there were plagues throughout the 1580s) hurt all classes (hunger for the poor and death for all were common), a grim picture made worse by the continued rise of taxes. Furthermore, as with most wars, land, buildings, and bridges (which affected the ability to trade) were destroyed in the conflicts, not to mention the thousands of people who were killed (approximately 15,000 alone in the St. Bartholomew Massacre in 1572) and the thousands more who fled the country to escape religious persecution and war.

By the time Mazarin became cardinal, France was in no better position than it had been during the reign of Henri III. Due to France's involvement in the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), the country was again impoverished (including the land itself in the northeastern parts of the country). To make matters worse, there was a lack of bread in many regions of France (leading to starvation) in addition to

plagues (1620s and 1630s) and high mortality rates (the death rate had doubled). The Fronde further destabilized the country, for fighting across France (although the conflicts in Provence and Paris were particularly bad) ruined villages and towns and, as it had during the Wars of Religion, inhibited trade from various regions, such as Marseilles and Lyons, and with foreign locations, such as Flanders and Spain.

The fragile and deteriorating conditions before and during the French Revolution can be attributed in part to France's assistance in the American Revolution in 1778, which helped America win the war against the British, but which ultimately put France on a path to economic ruin. Poverty and hunger were rampant generally and the national debt was extremely high. One of Louis XVI's economic stimulus plans - to build a customs barrier in Paris in 1784, called the wall of the *fermiers généraux*⁷¹ - was meant to restrict smuggling (in order to help revenue), but it had the opposite effect of allowing the *fermiers généraux* to tax people in Paris who had formerly been exempt, leading to higher financial stress on commoners.⁷² Bad

⁷¹ The *fermiers généraux* were indirect tax agents who often acted arbitrarily with respect to whom and how much they taxed.

⁷² In addition, this wall was costly and was said to hide criminals and therefore to encourage crime, according to Andrew Hussey (Hussey 188).

harvests in 1788 resulted in a sharp decline of agricultural output, which was followed by a decrease in jobs for textile merchants who had far fewer customers (it was reported that 25,000 silk workers were out of work in Lyons alone). In 1787 Louis XVI tried to assist the economy by raising taxes on all landowners (and thus the clergy and nobles), but the Assembly of Notables rejected this plan. Of course, during the Revolution, officially begun in 1789, France slipped further into debt and suffering, including the devastation of parts of the country and even the extreme poverty of many nobles. As late as 1792, Louis XVI agreed with the new Legislative Assembly that war should be declared on the Holy Roman Empire, a development that only served to further destabilize the economy.⁷³

"Problematic" Ruler

If civil war in France (with its economic consequences) was the main catalyst for the production of sexually slanderous texts, the gender, character, and nationality of the individual with power or imagined power is perhaps the second most significant factor. In each of

⁷³ France had officially declared war on Austria on April 20, 1792, but Prussia was on Austria's side, making the conflict essentially France against much of Europe.

the periods examined in this dissertation, the person at or near the top of the monarchy was "problematic," by failing to conform to ideals of "frenchness", "masculinity," and/or even "femininity." For instance, as I show in the first chapter of this dissertation, Henri III was an easy target for sodomitical accusations because he had a close entourage of handsome male favorites, referred to as "*mignons*," with whom he frequently cross-dressed and practiced the art of Italian refinement, both of which helped cast them as effeminate.⁷⁴

While authors of sexually slanderous texts attack Mazarin for being a sodomite, much in the same manner they did Henri III, Mazarin's low and foreign birth as opposed to any perceived deficiency in his masculinity, made him an easy target in sexually slanderous texts as shown in the

⁷⁴ There is debate among historians as to Henri III's sexuality; however, there is general consensus that Louis XIII (1601-1643) was a sodomite. Yet, Louis XIII's sexuality was not used as a means to slander him as it had been against Henri III. One notable exception was Gédéon Tallement de Réaux (1619-1692), who pointed out the king's sodomitical leanings in *Historiettes* (1659), a collection of gossip stories about life at court that may or may not be based on truth (Tallement Vol. 2 72). Louis XIII was not attacked, as Henri III was, according to Louis Crompton, because he "lacked the stigma of femininity" of his predecessor and because he was so devoted to the Catholic cause (Crompton 336-337). Whereas the earlier king was interested in "female" hobbies, such as clothes, art, and literature, Louis XIII instead enjoyed the more "masculine" activities of hunting and warfare (336). However, Henri III had been a war hero prior to his reign as king of France, but his more "masculine" past was ignored in slanderous texts once he became king. On Henri III's status as a war hero and his supposed effeminacy, see *supra* Chapter I. On the changing image of the monarch, see Norbert Elias's *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners* (1939).

second chapter of this dissertation.⁷⁵ Indeed, many of the 5,000 texts,⁷⁶ collectively referred to as Mazarinades, cast the prime minister of France as a meddling foreigner bent on ruining France through his influence on Anne d'Autriche and the king, and whose corrupt body and deeds can be traced back to his Italian roots.

While Henri III was an easy target because of his failure to conform to proper gender roles and Mazarin was attacked for his Italian and humble roots, Marie Antoinette was attacked because of both her foreign birth and her gender.⁷⁷ In the third chapter of this dissertation, I analyze how the late 18th century queen, like Mazarin, was frequently attacked for being a foreigner who never had French interests at heart.⁷⁸ Marie Antoinette was also the

⁷⁵ As a result of the regencies of Italian born Catherine de Médici (who was seen as the force behind the St. Bartholomew Day Massacre) and Marie de Médici (whose reign was marked by revolts of the nobles), the French feared that concentration of power in the hands of an Italian would again have devastating consequences for the State. On the use of Mazarin's nationality in sexually slanderous texts, see *supra* Chapter II.

⁷⁶ Robert Darnton states that pamphlets against the cardinal were printed in such large numbers that in the first few months of 1649 alone there were as many as ten a day produced (Darnton I 206).

⁷⁷ During Marie Antoinette's trial, Jacques-René Hébert, owner of *Le Père Duchèsne*, wrote in that paper that the queen should be chopped up and turned into pâté (Hunt II 112). Of all the slander I have studied in this dissertation, none goes so far as to call for mutilation and cannibalization of a member of the monarchy.

⁷⁸ Since Marie Antoinette was a woman, writers of sexual slander could attack her in a manner that could not have worked against Henri III or Mazarin: for instance, they argued that her children were not those of the king. Indeed, it was alleged in slanderous texts that a Swedish

face of the real - or imagined - power of women at the turn of the 19th century, and scandalmongers found in her the ideal scapegoat: a woman and a foreigner who could easily be blamed for influencing French women to be more independent.⁷⁹ To be sure, as the sexual accusations show, the queen was perceived as subverting the prescribed roles of good mother, dutiful wife, and respectable queen, as one refrain often cited in slander against her stated:

"mauvaise fille, mauvaise épouse, mauvaise mère, mauvaise reine, monstre en tout" (Kates 292).

aristocrat, Axel Fersen (1755-1810), had fathered her children (he may have actually been her lover), which of course has implications for the continuation of the divine bloodline. To be sure, maintaining the royal bloodline by producing an heir was the queen's primary purpose. On accusations of sexual deviance, including tribadism, against Marie Antoinette, see supra Chapter III.

⁷⁹ Vivien Gruder believes that sexual attacks against the queen generally "express the underlying fear that female dominance was displacing masculine representations of authority"; this fear seems to be reflected in the many pamphlets that depict the queen acting contrary to her prescribed gender role and engaging in tribadic sex with women to the exclusion of men (Thomas 120-21; Gruder 267). Moreover, it was not only the queen who was seen as transgressing her proper gender role in this period. There was a general fear that women were moving into the male sphere by initiating their own political groups; the women's clubs and popular societies that were formed in the 1790s were labeled "dangerous" and causing "disorder" because their female members were becoming "masculinised," "giving up [their] sex," and engaging in sexual misconduct (Ragan 34). Just two weeks after Marie Antoinette's execution, a law was passed that forbade women from creating and/or joining political clubs (Kates 294). On female power in the revolutionary period, see supra Chapter III.

Social, Cultural, and Political Environment

In each of the three "high points" of sexual slander studied in this dissertation there was a general ineffectiveness of censorship, thereby making the production and dissemination of slanderous texts easier.⁸⁰ As I showed earlier in this introduction, there were laws passed to prevent slander and punish its agents beginning in the mid-16th century; however, even in periods of relative calm in France, these laws were evaded with ease because enforcement was handled by many different jurisdictions and was therefore inconsistent.⁸¹ Furthermore, Joan DeJean has found that in most instances in the periods that cover Henri III and Mazarin, censorship laws were generally not put to use; indeed, she finds that there were only "short bursts" of actual censorship (DeJean I 24-25).⁸² And while censorship laws kept increasing to

⁸⁰ On censorship laws during each period studied, see section above entitled "The Production and Dissemination of Slander."

⁸¹ Censorship was perhaps at its most effective under Louis XIV, who prioritized censorship as a means to validate his absolutism, but this effort came after the Fronde during which censorship was particularly weak (Darnton I 200).

⁸² Perhaps the most famous of these "short bursts" are represented by the trials of Théophile de Viau (1590-1626) and Claude le Petit (1638-1662) in the 17th century, and Sade at the end of the 18th century, in which each author was "made an example" by the courts as a means to dissuade others from producing sexually explicit texts. Viau was imprisoned for two years and then banished from France for sexual writings, some of which were included in the compilation Le Parnasse satyrique (1622). Le Petit's fate was more extreme; he was burned at

the end of the 18th century, they were nevertheless most ineffective during the Revolution, as is reflected in the thousands of pamphlets written against Marie Antoinette. And certainly, after the freeing of the presses from official approval in 1789, there were no longer legal hurdles to producing slander, and thus sexually slanderous texts were produced and disseminated more liberally.

Above and beyond the particularly leaky censorship laws during the three periods examined in this dissertation, the popularity of sexually explicit texts may have contributed to a culture in which sexual attacks were more frequent.⁸³ While there does not appear to be a cumulative effect of sexually slanderous texts across periods in terms of content (i.e., there are texts written against Henri III, Mazarin and Marie Antoinette that all

the stake for his poems contained in Le Bordel des muses: Ou les neuf Pucelles putains (written between 1639?-1662 and published in 1663), some of which accused Mazarin of having sexual relations with Anne d'Autriche. Sade (1740-1814), on the other hand, spent significant amounts of time in prison and in an insane asylum for his sexually explicit work.

⁸³ One area for future study is the ways in which the rise of libertinism corresponds to the production of sexually slanderous texts. Perhaps not coincidentally, two of the periods of slander studied in this dissertation align closely with periods of libertinage. Henri III's reign, while not part of 17th-century libertinage, nevertheless occurred at the time of Pietro Aretino's and François Rabelais' sexually explicit writings. And texts attacking Mazarin and Marie Antoinette correlate with periods of strong 17th-18th-century "libertine" productions. This alignment seems to indicate that the intellectual movement and progression of libertinage may have had an effect on slanderous writings, and that the greater the intellectual opposition to dogma and sexual repression, the more scandalmongers tended to write in opposition to royal authority.

call for their mutilation and murder), the volume of sexually slanderous texts in each period does appear to grow commensurate with the rise of sexually explicit literature. To be sure, the paucity of sexually explicit works in the late 16th and 17th centuries compared to the late 18th century appears to correspond loosely to the amount of sexually slanderous texts produced.⁸⁴ This is not to say that there were no popular texts in the mid to late 16th century that contained descriptions and discussions of sexual acts.⁸⁵ In fact, one of the most famous Renaissance texts featuring explicit references to bodily functions and practices⁸⁶ - François Rabelais' Pantagruel series (1532-

⁸⁴ To be sure, the increasing literacy of the French and advances in printing also explain why there are so many more written texts sexually slandering Marie Antoinette. On literacy in France, see section above entitled "The Production and Dissemination of Slander."

⁸⁵ On sexually explicit texts in 16th century France, see David LaGuardia's Intertextual Masculinity in French Renaissance Literature: Rabelais, Brantôme, and the Cent nouvelles nouvelles (2008) and Lawrence D. Kritzman's The Rhetoric of Sexuality and the Literature of the French Renaissance (1991). On sexually explicit texts and books meant to teach women about sexual practices in the 16th and 17th century, see James Grantham Turner's Schooling Sex: Libertine Litterature and Erotic Education in Italy France and England 1534-1685 (2003). On 17th century erotic texts, see Esprit Créateur's special edition, Writing About Sex: The Discourses of Eroticism in 17th-Century France (1995). On sexual literature and sexually explicit medical texts, see Jean Mainil's Dans les règles du plaisir: Théorie de la différence dans le discours obscène romanesque et médical de l'Ancien Régime (1996).

⁸⁶ According to Joan DeJean, the term obscene began to reflect its current meaning - concerning the use of the genitals - in 1579 (in the middle of Henri III's reign) when Laurent Joubert used it to describe his Erreurs populaires (1578), which discussed childbirth (DeJean I 9). Also, as mentioned earlier in this introduction, obscenity was defined in print by Molière in his 1663 (two years after Mazarin's death) Critique de L'Ecole des femmes (13). Thus, both obscene and obscenity

1564) - was so popular that it was reprinted eighty times in the 16th century. In the middle of the 17th century, some very sexually explicit texts were published, among which, Claude Le Petit's (1639-1662) incendiary collection of poems Le Bordel des muses: Ou les neuf Pucelles putains (written between 1639?-1662 and published in 1663)⁸⁷ and Nicolas Chorier's influential sexual instruction manual fiction, L'Académie des dames (1660).⁸⁸ In the late 18th century, there are hundreds of examples of sexually explicit works; among those that came to define the 18th century sexual (and libertine) novel are Pierre Ambroise François Choderlos de Laclos's (1741-1803) Les Liaisons dangereuses (1782),⁸⁹ and virtually all of Sade's (1740-1814) obscene work (including Justine ou les infortunes de la vertu (1787)).⁹⁰

had come to represent a more sexual and secular meaning in two of the periods studied in this dissertation. These correlations deserve further examination in the study of sexual slander. On the term "obscene," see section above entitled "Sexual Slander and Its Topics."

⁸⁷ The exact title of this text is Aloisiae Sigoeae Toletanae Satyra Sotadica de arcanis amoris et Veneris. Aloisia hispanice scripsit, latinitate donavit Joanees Merusius V.C. L'Académie des dames, was written in Latin and was only published in French in 1680.

⁸⁸ Chorier's text concerns Tullia who initiates the younger Ottavia in sexual practices. One of the more explicit (and blasphemous) scenes involves sexual relations between nuns and a young gardener.

⁸⁹ Laclos' epistolary text concerns the sexual exploits of the aristocracy.

⁹⁰ Sade's texts are among the most "obscene" ever written. They are all similar in subject matter and involve sodomy (among everyone including

In this perspective, my dissertation examines the ways in which sexually slanderous texts helped to contest, undermine and delegitimize the monarchy in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. Sexually slanderous texts were produced during the French Revolution, which certainly contributed to the decline in perceptions of the monarchy, could not have been written, in my view, without the sexually slanderous texts that came before. A template for slander that attacked the monarchy through the sexual practices of the monarch (or those closest to him) had been used during the reign of Henri III and reinforced during the Fronde and then the French Revolution.

Perhaps more tellingly, scandalmongers even republished slanderous texts from earlier periods to attack their leaders. Slanderous texts, such as Scarron's La Mazarinade, condemn Mazarin by comparing him to the detested Concino Concini (1575-1617), the Italian favorite of Marie de Médici (1575-1642) who was executed and then

the clergy - typically the most deviant in Sade's work), genital mutilation, rape and murder. Sade himself was inspired by the sexually explicit Thérèse Philosophe (1748) attributed to the marquis d'Argens; the appearance and popularity of this earlier book in 1748 shows that a market for such works was already beginning prior to the late 18th century. For a detailed analysis of forbidden bestsellers in France and the literary underground in France before the Revolution, see Robert Darnton's The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France (1996).

castrated by a Parisian mob (Scarron 286-294).⁹¹ Indeed, texts condemning Concini were reprinted during the Fronde with little to no modifications - a repetition, according to Olson, that turns fact into allegory, with Mazarin as a new Concini (Olson 107). In fact, Scarron states that the cardinal should "[*craindre*] *le destin de Concine*" and even equates them by name: "Concini [and] Mazarini" (Scarron 286, 294). And d'Aubigné's scathing denunciation of Catherine de Médici (1519-1589), Les Tragiques (1616), was reprinted in 1649, 1650, 1660 and 1663 to cast Anne d'Autriche as evil as the earlier regent, and to serve as a "ham-fisted warning" to her during the Fronde, according to Katherine Crawford (Crawford II 403).⁹² To be sure, the reprinting of slanderous texts attacking Concino Concini and Catherine de Médici during the mid-1600s is evidence that earlier slander was indeed used as a model for later incarnations. In texts across the three periods, scandalmongers identify patterns of sexual deviance in the monarchy. However, by the late 18th century, writers of

⁹¹ In 1613 regent Marie de Médici elevated Concino Concini, husband of Marie's foster sister and lady-in-waiting, Léonora Galigai (1571-1617), to the office of marshal. With his newly minted power, Concini tried to control royal patronage, which led to three rebellions of the upper nobility (Bonney 819). Pamphlets, such as Agrippa d'Aubigné's Complaintes du sang du grand Henry de tres-heureuse mémoire et de tous les bons françois exaucées (sic) (1617), attacked Concini, as a "tyran", and called Léonora the sorceress "Medea" (Kinser 685-686; Crawford 402). Like her husband, Léonora was also put to death.

⁹² On Catherine de Médici and Les Tragiques, see supra Chapter I.

sexually slanderous works were no longer criticizing just one individual at a time (even if this was the king, the queen or his prime minister), but rather the whole monarchy and its troubled history. Accordingly, each supposed sexual transgression of Marie Antoinette was not treated as an isolated event, but instead as part of an inherently corrupt system.

Because the volume of sexually slanderous texts increases significantly between the reigns of Henri III and Louis XVI - the beginning and terminal point of this dissertation - it is tempting to make the argument that sexually slanderous texts in the late 16th century start as a whisper and crescendo with the collapse of the monarchy during the French Revolution. But to do this would be to ignore slander against Henri III and Mazarin that advocate their mutilation and death, and it would also mean disregarding the late 16th century king's assassination and the 17th century cardinal's many forced exiles from Paris. Certainly, sexually slanderous texts in all three periods emphasize that the person at or near the top of the monarchy, whether king, cardinal, or queen, should be removed. Thus, judging from the perspective of sexual slander, the seeds of revolution were not born in the late 18th century, but were initially sown two hundred years

earlier. Indeed, as Kathryn Hoffman explains, the desacralization of the monarchy "came long before [the] [R]evolution, in tiny slips and breaks, ruptures and resewings of the ancient régime" (Hofmann 168). The one dramatic difference between sexual slander in the earlier periods and the Revolutionary period is that in the late 18th century the throne itself was not regarded as worth saving once the figureheads were removed.

The chapters that follow will show how charges of sexual deviance were directed at rulers during the Wars of Religion, the Fronde, and the French Revolution, and identify precise moments when a desacralization of the monarchy takes place. The dissertation begins in the 1570s with sexual slander directed against Henri III, then moves on to sexual slander against Cardinal Mazarin in the 1650s, and concludes with sexual slander against Marie Antoinette before and during the French Revolution.

The Seeds of Sexual Slander in France: Henri III and His Monstrous Mignons

The murder of Henri III (1551-1589) in 1589 by Ultra-Catholic fanatic Jacques Clément (1567-1589), was foreshadowed in sexual slander during his reign, which called, in both veiled and explicit ways, for his assassination. So hated was Henri III that one anonymous and unnamed text cited by Pierre de l'Estoile, dated 1589, praises Clément for ridding France of this "tyran,"¹ a word often used in sexual slander to designate the king

¹ Nicot defines "tyran" as "[u]n mauvais et cruel Roy ou Seigneur" and the Dictionnaire universel (1690) as "[u]n usurpateur d'un estat, oppresseur de la liberté publique qui s'est empiré par violence ou par adresse de la souveraine puissance...[et] un Prince qui abuse de son pouvoir, qui ne gouverne pas selon les loix, qui use de violence et de cruauté envers ses sujets" (s.v. "tyran." Thresor de la langue française. 1606 and Dictionnaire universel. 1690). Thus, by calling Henri III a tyrant, scandalmongers were casting him as the opposite of what a French monarch should be; instead of protecting his subjects, he exploits them. This term was often used in written criticisms of kings in the *Ancien Régime*.

Nicot's Thresor de la langue française (1606) is the French dictionary closest to Henri III's reign. Nicot often provides definitions in Latin; when he does, I provide the Latin translation and an English translation of the Latin. However, many terms used in this chapter were not defined in print prior to Richelet's Dictionnaire français (1680), Furetière's Dictionnaire universel (1690), or the Dictionnaire de l'Academie française (1st ed. 1694); accordingly, I frequently cite them. There are also some instances where Nicot provides only a very cursory definition of a term (usually the same word translated in Latin); in any such instances, I use the later dictionaries. I acknowledge that these dictionaries were created more than 100 years after Henri III's reign and may not represent exactly what terms meant in the earlier period.

(L'Estoile IV 110).² Another anonymous text from the same year, Chanson Spirituelle (1589), lauds the "honneste"³ Clément for stabbing the king and giving France reason for celebration (127). Excitement over the murder of a king would not be seen again until the murder of Louis XVI (1754-1793).

Catholics, Protestants, courtiers, and a small group of Calvinists (the *monarchomaques*) bore various powerful resentments against Henri III, and these groups used pamphlets primarily to attack the king.⁴ It is estimated

² Luckily for historians of the period 1574 through 1611, Pierre de l'Estoile's (1546-1611) memories, which are not mentioned in writings from the period, cover the reigns of Henri III, Henri IV (1553-1610), and Louis XIII (1610-1643). L'Estoile sheds light not only on historical events and odd occurrences (a boy burned at the stake for supposedly having impregnated a cow), but also on slander (L'Estoile V 194). His multi-volume work includes his own commentary as well as a compilation of slanderous texts circulating at the time. L'Estoile transcribes slander throughout his journals, typically in verse, but rarely cites any sources. However, words he attributes to Henri III are corroborated in other texts of the period (L'Estoile I intro. 8). He states that his memoirs include a collection of more than 300 defamatory libels (L'Estoile IV vii). Unfortunately, these volumes did not survive and we only have L'Estoile's word that they existed (vii). It can probably be assumed that at least some of these 300 libels appear in other sources, but we will never know for certain.

³ Nicot defines an "*homme honneste*" as one who is "*louable, et vertu, de bonne reputation*"; thus, to call Clément "*honneste*" is to cast him as deserving praise for his goodness, understanding this is the ethical definition rather than the mere mondain definition (s.v. "*homme honneste*." Thresor de la langue française. 1606).

⁴ According to Katherine Crawford, it was also said that both Henri III's brother, Hercule François, Duke of Anjou and Alençon (1555-1584), and sister, Marguerite de Valois (1553-1615), commissioned pamphlets against the king in order to advance their own political agendas (Crawford I 522).

that about 900 such pamphlets,⁵ mostly anonymous, were published in the years 1583-1588 (Crompton 330).⁶ Catholics and Protestants were incensed that the king was unable to end the bloody religious wars, which had been raging since 1562,⁷ and they sought to undermine his rule by emphasizing the monarchy's decline and decay as a result of the king's corrupt morals (Merrick and Ragan I 95). Aside from Catholics and Protestants, courtiers also criticized the king, whom they saw as elevating his close friends for plum positions at court; indeed, according to Nicolas Le Roux, Henri III changed the traditional structure of court hierarchy by marginalizing dignitaries and nobles from powerful clans in favor of a group of favorites known as the "mignons" (Le Roux 717). In fact, this small coterie

⁵ This number is based on the Bibliothèque Nationale's catalogue; however, Annie Duprat believes that the number of anti-Henri III pieces of slander is closer to 800, including about 60 visual caricatures (Duprat 32-33). In my research, I found that differences in estimates are not uncommon; there are also discrepancies in the total number of slanderous texts in the other periods studied in this dissertation. The reasons are multiple. It is possible, for instance, that one study includes images among the tally while another excludes them. It is also possible that some numbers include pieces thought to have existed at the time (such as those referenced in L'Estoile that no longer exist today), while other studies do not include such texts. Therefore, the number of slanderous texts for each period studied should be taken as estimates only.

⁶ Some texts included slanderous images. Prior to the Revolution, print images were not subject to the same type of Royal Authorization required for written texts, which made their creation and distribution, according to Annie Duprat, "*assez libre*" (Duprat 136). Print images are beyond the scope of the texts analyzed in this chapter. Because the majority of slanderous texts against Henri III were in pamphlet form, pamphlets will be the main body of work analyzed in this chapter.

⁷ On the Wars of Religion, see supra Introduction.

of intimates, a group of handsome men close to the king's age,⁸ who had been his chosen entourage since his days as the duc d'Anjou, was attacked even more in sexual slanderous texts than the king, and they were often used as metonymies for attacking him.⁹ As the anonymous Chanson Spirituelle (1589) states, the king "*a mesprisé les seigneurs et les princes de plus hauts tilters [sic], et a avancé aux honneurs des petits coquins et belistres,*" both pejorative names given to the mignons (L'Estoile IV 123).¹⁰ The last group that attacked the king in texts of sexual slander, the critical "*monarchomaques,*" were Calvinist polemicists who envisioned a monarchy, in which the king would be, says Annie Duprat, "*soumis à la suprématie des Etats généraux,*" or legislative body, that included representatives from the first (clergy), second (nobles), and third estates (others) (Duprat 24).

Even with varying sources of opposition to Henri III, sexual slander against the king did not argue for the

⁸ They were between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four in 1573.

⁹ On the mignons, see sections below entitled, "The Sodomitical Mignons: Cats-in-Cul, Culus, and the King's Other Ganymèdes" and "The Mignons: Blaming the King by Attacking Those Closest to Him."

¹⁰ A "coquin" is defined by Nicot as an "*homo mendicus,*" or beggar, and the Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française (1st ed. 1694) defines "*belistre*" as a "*coquin, gueux, homme de neant*"; thus, "*coquin*" and "*belistre*" are synonymous, an example of scandalmongers' accumulation of interchangeable words to reinforce their point (s.v. "*coquin.*" Thresor de la langue française. (1606); s.v. "*belistre.*" Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française. 1st ed. 1694).

abolition of the monarchy. According to James Smither, slander of this period drew "upon the same basic model, one which balanced a belief in monarchy as the proper system of government for France predicated on the notion that the king's powers were limited by law, tradition and the interests of his subjects" (Smither 36, 45). Thus, since the system was thought to malfunction only when the king ignores these various demands, sexual slander against Henri III argues primarily for the king to be replaced.

To argue for the king's removal, slanderers tried to show that he was personally unfit to rule and attacked him for being everything a ruler should not be. Despite his earlier status as a war hero, a stable marriage to Louise de Vaudémont de Lorraine (1553-1601), and several mistresses, Henri III was nevertheless seen as "changeable, frivolous, effeminate, timid, and irresolute," as Robert Darnton puts it (Darnton I 204).¹¹ Each of these qualities is linked to misogynist notions of the "feminine," and none is appropriate for a king who is supposed to be constant, serious, masculine, self-assured, and resolute. The most damning charge was effeminacy; Nicot defines "*effeminer*"¹²

¹¹ On Henri III's war-hero status, see section below entitled "Con ou Cul: A Cross-Dressed War Hero's Ambiguous Gender and Sexuality."

¹² Nicot does not define the adjective, "*effeminé*," and only defines the verb, "*effeminer*."

as "[m]ol et effeminé: n'ayant aucune virilité," or lacking of virile traits (s.v. "efféminer." Thresor de la langue française. 1606).¹³ However, scandalmongers seem loath to call the king effeminate openly; thus in Les Tragiques (1616) Protestant Agrippa d'Aubigné refers to him as having "la geste effeminé," which solely describes his movements and not his entire person (d'Aubigné 72). But where mignons are mentioned, authors of sexual slander are more direct; in Les Tragiques, d'Aubigné calls them "[des] monstres effeminés" (69), linking the monstrous to the effeminate, and thus implying that to be effeminate is to be monstrous.

The king's appearance seemed to confirm accusations of effeminacy; he wore makeup, jewelry, and even cross-dressed on occasion (Crompton 328). Although men wore jewelry prior to Henri III's reign, as paintings of wealthy men of the period reveal, Henri III was viewed as excessive in his wardrobe and the first king to dress consistently in this manner, writes Leonie Frieda (Frieda 314-315). However, Gary Ferguson argues that it was not the clothing, makeup

¹³ Effeminate is different from feminine, which is defined in the Dictionnaire de L'Académie Française (1st ed. 1694) as: "Qui ressemble à la femme" (s.v. "feminin"). However, there is overlap between the two terms since "mol," or softened, was a stereotype of femininity. The definition of feminine has no negative connotation here, but effeminate is defined in strictly negative terms. Thus, that Henri is feminine is not the problem, but rather that he is effeminate.

or jewelry that were problematic, but the fact that the king and his mignons did not adequately conform to what Ferguson calls "traditional images of virility"; indeed, d'Aubigné states in Les Tragiques that the mignons try to "erase" ("effacer") "*toute marque virile*" (Ferguson 100; d'Aubigné 79).¹⁴ Ferguson believes that because of this perceived degradation of masculinity, the dress of the kings and his mignons were often linked to moral corruption, including sodomy; to degrade virility is to be morally deviant (Ferguson 100). Accordingly, in Les Tragiques Henri III is criticized as being a "fantôme d'homme-femme," a "Roy femme," and an "homme Reyne" (whereas his mother, Catherine de Médici (1519-1589), is called a "femme hommace"¹⁵) (d'Aubigné 72). The antitheses,

¹⁴ Ambassador of Spain from 1564 through 1571, don Francès de Alava, described the duc d'Anjou as being "*très doux, très mou, très jeune fille*"; "gentle," "soft," and "young girl" (here used as an adjective) make clear the duc's effeminate person (Le Roux 128). To be sure, gentle and soft can refer to either body or mind and "young girl" can describe body, mind or even dress.

¹⁵ "*Hommasse*" is defined by the Dictionnaire français (1680) as describing a woman "*qui tient de l'homme*" (s.v. "*hommasse*"). There is no word like effeminate to describe a woman who is unacceptably masculine; "*hommasse*" is the closest term that describes this type of woman. By calling Catherine de Médici "*hommace*," d'Aubigné makes the queen as masculine as her son is effeminate. Catherine is largely absent from sexual slander of the period, but she does appear in the anonymous text, Contre les fausses allegations que les plus qu'Architofels, Conseillers cabinalistes proposent pour excuser Henri le meurtrier de l'assassinat par lui perfidement commis en la personne du duc de Guise, Conseillers cabinalistes proposent pour excuser Henri le meurtrier de l'assassinat par lui perfidement commis en la personne du duc de Guise (1589), in which she is accused of having extra-marital sexual relations and of having conceived Henri III from someone other than the king. The accusation that Henri III is a bastard, according

male-woman, female-king, and male-queen, cast Henri III as straddling both genders; as is often the case in sexual slander, scandalmongers reinforce their point- here that the king is neither entirely male nor entirely female- by stating it in synonymous ways. Since "*fantôme*," according to the Dictionnaire française (1680), is a "*sorte de spectre affreux*" or "*une vision fausse qu'on a la nuit de quelque chose qui épouvante*," the blending of genders is described as being frightening (s.v. "*fantôme*").

Those who slandered sexually Henri III relied heavily on name-calling rather than describing sexual acts. For instance, terms such as "*bougre*," posits Jean-François Solnon, were meant to insult the king but did not necessarily accuse him of participating in sodomitical sex (Solnon 233). When there is more detail about sexual behavior, it usually implies debauchery, but specific descriptions of acts are rare. For example, Jean Boucher's Le Martire des deux frères (1589) condemns the king generally for "*ses lacivitez, mechancetez, ordures &*

to Annie Duprat, "*renforce l'idée de decadence qui accompagne 'le déclin du sang royal'*," and also calls into question the legitimacy of Henri III's rule (Duprat 78). This allegation made sense historically since Catherine did not have any children during her first nine years of marriage; it was only later that she gave birth to ten children, thus, justifying suspicion that, all of a sudden, a seemingly barren queen began to give birth so prodigiously. She is denounced specifically in slander for her supposed sexual relations with the Cardinal de Lorraine (1524-1574), who is said to be the birth father of her children (Le Resveille matin des François et de leurs voisins (1574); d'Aubigne 45).

sodomies" and the anonymous Contre les fausses allegations que les plus qu'Architofels, Conseillers cabinalistes proposent pour excuser Henri le meurtrier de l'assassinat par lui perfidement commis en la personne du duc de Guise (1589) echoes this statement, stating that the king has "*une âme orde, sale, ville, [et] basse,*" without defining exactly what is "dirty" or which types of sodomy he commits¹⁶ (Boucher 7, Contre les fausses allegations 13).

These two quotes are typical examples of sexual slander, since they list more or less interchangeable words. For instance, "*lacivitez,*" "*mechancetez,*" "*ordures,*" and "*sodomies*" can all describe "deviant" sexual and/or criminal acts: the Dictionnaire français (1680) defines "*lacivité*" as a "*mouvement indécent de corps et d'esprit en matière d'amour charnel*"; "*mechanceté*" as an "*action noire, action méchante, crime*"; "*ordures*" as "*infamies, dérèglement de vie, honte, deshonneur*"; and "*sodomie*" as "*péché de la chair contre nature*" (s.v. "*lacivité,*" "*mechanceté,*" "*ordure,*" and "*sodomie*"). The four words belong to the realm of sinful or deviant behavior, without providing specificity as to what exactly

¹⁶ While the term "*sodomies*" refers to acts, such as anal sex between men (its most common meaning), sodomy's meaning is sufficiently broad as to cover any number of behaviors considered abhorrent in early-modern France; thus, its use here is general and does not specify any one act in particular. On sodomy, see supra Introduction.

the king has done. The second citation, "*une âme orde, sale, vile [et] basse*" is similarly an accumulation of synonyms. Indeed, Nicot defines both "ord" and "sale" as "*immondus, impurus, inhonestus,*" or filthy, impure, and shameful (s.v. "orde," "sale." Thresor de la langue française. 1606). Nicot also groups "vile" and "basse" together, when he writes, "*chose vile et basse,*" and he separately defines vile as "*vilis,*" or worthless, and "bas" as "*infimus,*" which also means vile (s.v. "vil," "bas." Thresor de la langue française. 1606).

This chapter examines how authors of sexual slander directed their venom against the king and his coterie's private (i.e., sexual) lives. The primary texts cited in this chapter are Pierre de l'Estoile's Mémoires (1574-1611), Pierre de Ronsard's posthumous poems, and Agrippa d'Aubigné's Les Tragiques (1616).¹⁷ L'Estoile was a moderate Catholic, generally supportive of Henri III; however, his journals include many pieces of sexual slander

¹⁷ Ronsard and L'Estoile's texts were published posthumously and likely were never meant to be published. It is possible that both men feared punishment for their often-defamatory work. However, this is not to say that slander cited in L'Estoile's text was not contemporaneous with Henri III's reign; indeed, L'Estoile transcribed slander he came across in daily life. And while d'Aubigné's Les Tragiques was published during the author's lifetime in 1616, it was written forty years before in 1576. Certainly, by 1616 the events of 1576 were long in the past and Henri III was dead; accordingly, publishing a work condemning Henri III would have been easier in 1616, since texts about prior reigns would not have sparked as much legal trouble as slander against a sitting king.

he compiled that attack the king. Ronsard, a Catholic, wrote virulent anti-Henri III sexual slander, but mostly, according to Gary Ferguson, because he believed he did not receive sufficient money or favor from the king thus showing that in Ronsard's case it was personal animus rather than religious sentiment that motivated his attacks (Ferguson 135). D'Aubigné wrote slander against the king because he was outraged at the persecution of Protestants during the Wars of Religion.¹⁸ His Les Tragiques, cited throughout this chapter is an epic poem that attacks Henri II (1519-1549), Catherine de Médici and Henri III, among others, and its central theme is that God will vindicate Protestants while Catholics will be damned.¹⁹ In the texts of these three disparate authors the king is predominantly depicted as a cross-dressed hermaphrodite whose sexual tastes were always "unnatural" and mostly sodomitical in nature. And yet, despite accusations in sexual slander that Henri III was a sodomite, there is no historical proof: on the other hand, it is known that he had sexual relations with his wife and other women. Still, scandalmongers rarely speak of the king's non-sodomitical

¹⁸ On the Wars of Religion, see supra Introduction.

¹⁹ Les Tragiques is composed of seven different sections: "Misères," "Princes," "Chambre dorée," "Feux," "Fers," "Vengeances," and "Jugement."

preferences, which would not cast the king as deviant (indeed, most kings had mistresses), and instead focus primarily on sodomitical acts, which reflect moral corruption. One way that slanderers could hint at sodomy without necessarily having to state it directly was by describing the king and his mignons as Italianized, since Italians were widely constructed to have this particular "vice."²⁰ Moreover, in sexual slander the king was compared to various Roman emperors, such as Nero, Caligula, and Elagabalus, all thought to be unjust and licentious. Eventually, slander against Henri III became so violent that it called for the king's torture and murder.

²⁰ On the Italian vice, see supra Introduction.

A Cross-Dressed War Hero: Female Clothes, Effeminacy, and Deviant Non-Sodomitical Sex

Before becoming king of Poland in 1573, the then Duc d'Anjou was head of the Catholic Royal Army in 1568 and proved to be an astute military leader. He led two very successful and widely reported battles, one at Jarnac in March 1569 and another at Moncontour in October 1569; these victories made him a war hero. At Jarnac, the young Henri, a mere eighteen years old, defeated Protestant troupes (Protestant leader, Louis I de Bourbon (1530-1569), commonly known as the Prince Condé, was killed in this battle). At Moncontour, Henri sealed his status as war hero with another winning battle; after this second win the *Te Deum* was sung for him in churches and poets wrote of his valor (Solnon 78). The military prowess of the Duc d'Anjou caught the attention of the Polish, who elected him king of Poland in 1573.²¹ But no sooner had he become king than Polish pamphlets criticizing him began to circulate. He was the target of both Polish Calvinists and nobles: the former, for puritanical reasons, condemned him for his

²¹ According to Jean-François Solnon, the Polish were afraid of military action against them by Russia, and the Polish government saw Henri III as someone who could potentially protect them from this threat (Solnon 40).

supposedly loose morals, the latter were angered that he had not married the deceased Polish king's sister, Anne Jagellon (1523-1596), also known as "*l'Infante*."²² In these attacks, according to Jean-François Solnon, the Duc d'Anjou was described as "*occupant ses nuits à jouer aux cartes, passant ses jours à danser la volte, une danse que les Polonais jugeraient obscene*" (160-161).²³ As in France a few years later, the Duc d'Anjou gained the reputation of an idle king only interested in immoral pleasure and entertainment. In fact, Venetian ambassador, Giovanni Michiel (1516-1590), stated that the king's "old gallantry and serious ideas...have entirely disappeared: he has given himself up to a life of such idleness, sensual pleasures dominate his existence, he takes so little exercise that everyone is astonished" (quoted in Frieda 314). Michiel's words cast the king in terms that recall the definition of "*effeminer*": "*[m]ol et effeminé: n'ayant aucune virilité,*" and lacking the kind of virile exercise that would prevent

²² Anne Jagellon had supported Henri's bid to become king of Poland with the hope that she would be rewarded by marriage, but according to Solnon, the Duc d'Anjou never had the intention of marrying her (Solnon 161-162).

²³ Margaret McGowan describes the volta as a physically demanding dance in which men held tightly their female partner while engaging in leaps requiring much skill (McGowan 99). The dance was considered risqué due to the female partner's swirling skirt, which sometimes allowed for the sight of the chemise or even a naked thigh (129). For a picture of this dance, see illustration 7.

On the obscene in early-modern France, see supra Introduction.

him from becoming soft (s.v. "effeminer." Thresor de la langue française. 1606).

When the Duc d'Anjou became king of France in 1575, the reputation of an idle king followed him to France. Furthermore, the king was now known for his lack of "masculine" pastimes, such as hunting, to which François I (1515-1547) and Henri II (1503-1555) were devoted. Instead, says Leonie Frieda, Henri III enjoyed stereotypical feminine activities; in one such instance, the king is said to have maniacally fixed the hair and dress of Louise de Vaudémont de Lorraine for hours in preparation of their wedding (Frieda 323).

Not surprisingly then, when Henri became king of France, he was immediately attacked for his sartorial (read feminine) predilections. Cross-dressing in the *Ancien Régime* was accepted in certain situations, such as at the theater where men often played female parts and during *fêtes* at Versailles, where men sometimes performed in women's clothing (Godard II 119; Bullough 76). In addition, according to Olivier Godard, cross-dressing by men in France was less subversive than women cross-dressing, who were seen as usurping male privileges; Godard reasons that it is for this reason that women were

sometimes executed for cross-dressing (Godard II 120).²⁴ Nevertheless, Henri III and his mignons were frequently attacked in sexual slander for his clothing, which was not always called directly feminine, but was often described as being similar to what women would wear. Descriptions of their dress as being "feminine" are apparently based in fact: according M. Augustin Challamel's The History of Fashion in France (1882), the king and his mignons, like noble women, wore velvet bonnets, huge collars and cuffs, and their pourpoints were left open to exhibit lace imported from Venice (Challamel 109) (see illustrations 2 and 3). Furthermore, according to Katherine Crawford, at the king's regularly scheduled Sunday court parties, cross-dressing was frequent; at one such party in 1577, L'Estoile reports that the king dressed like ladies of the court, wearing a pearl collar on his exposed throat in addition to three linen collars - two of ruffles and one turned upside down (Crawford I 524-525; L'Estoile I 180). The king also regularly wore significant amounts of jewelry: earrings and pearl necklaces, as well as rings of gold, and precious stones, and enamel. Of course, earrings were not uncommon on men at Court; specifically, Charles IX wore earrings and

²⁴ Godard marks the rise of the bourgeoisie at the end of the 18th century as the moment when male transvestism was linked routinely with homosexuality; before then, he states, sexual deviance and clothing were seen as separate from one another (Godard II 120).

made his entourage wear them (Godard II 119). However, even before Henri III became king, the ambassador of Spain from 1564 through 1571, don Francès de Alava, noted that the Duc d'Anjou wore "*deux pendants d'oreilles avec des émeraudes tellement grandes qu'il n'y a pas une mauresque en Afrique qui en eut de plus grandes*" (119). By comparing the duc's earrings to that of a "mauresque," de Alava condescendingly implies that even an African with bad taste would not wear such excessive ornamentation. Perhaps the size of the earrings in combination with other jewelry and female clothing made Henri III stand out. D'Aubigné criticizes the king's dress harshly in Les Tragiques when he calls it an "*habit monstrueux*"; for d'Aubigné, the king's fashion represents a monstrous subversion of sartorial codes, or as the Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française (1st ed. 1694) defined "*monstrueux*" - "[ce q]ui est d'une conformation contraire à l'ordre de la nature" (d'Aubigné 72; s.v. "monstrueux"). Thus, the king's dress is "unnatural," one way d'Aubigné attacks the king as being "abnormal," making his wardrobe a metonymy of the man.

While scandalmongers cast Henri III's activities and dress as effeminate and monstrous, the king's life was in many ways what would have been perceived as "normal" for a French monarch. In addition to his relationship with the

queen, Henri III was said to have had sexual relationships with other women, although there is little documentation about their nature.²⁵ However, there is more information regarding Marie de Clèves (1553-1575), who would go on to marry Henri I de Bourbon, Prince of Condé (1552-1588). The king's love for her was said to be so profound that while in Poland from 1573-1574, he wrote love letters to her signed in his own blood, a "fact" confirmed by his valet de chambre, Gilles de Souvré, Marquis de Courtanvaux, Baron de Lezines (1540-1626), who supposedly helped make the incisions to draw blood (Le Roux 156; Solnon 163). When Henri returned from Poland in 1575, he tried to have Marie's marriage to Condé annulled so that he could marry her; but she died in childbirth soon after (Solnon 194). The king's mourning was so great that he took to wearing Marie's cross and earrings, a practice soon prohibited by his mother, Catherine de Médici, who saw the king's passion as a distraction from an increasingly troubled France

²⁵ One such relation was with Louise de la Béraudière (1546-1591), known as "*la belle Rouet*," a woman of the court rumored to have been impregnated by the king (Solnon 96). The king was also reported to have spent the night with famous Italian courtesan, Veronica Franco (1546-1591) while in Venice in 1574 (179). The list of other women he is reported to have slept with includes Renée de Rieux de Châteauneuf (1550-1582), Silvie Pic de La Mirandole (1530-1576), and Louise de Stavay (287). The king apparently banished from court one of his mignons, François d'Espinay (1554-1597), and his wife Jeanne de Cossé (?- 1602), because d'Espinay had reported the king's extramarital activity to de Cossé, who then spread this information, which eventually got back to the queen (288).

(195).²⁶ However, neither his marriage nor the affairs with other women are used in sexual slander against Henri III, most likely because they fail to show the king acting in a non-normative manner, since most kings did have mistresses.

Henri III's heterosexual pairings in sexually slanderous texts aim to make the most deviant claims. In Les Tragiques, d'Aubigné states that the king kidnaps children for sex: "*Il volle des enfants pour s'eschauffer sur eux en la fleur de leurs ans*" (d'Aubigné 73). D'Aubigné casts the king as a threat to the children (i.e., the future) of France, using them to become sexually stimulated instead of being a father figure, the role assigned to kings, to his subjects. In addition to pedophilia, scandalmongers accuse Henri III of engaging in rape and incest. One charge, written on the door of the Poissy abbey in 1579, was that the king had raped a nun; stealing the nun's virginity, which is akin to blasphemy,

²⁶ It is also possible that the politically astute Catherine wanted her son to stop wearing Marie de Clèves' jewelry, which generated attacks, such as the one by de Alava, on his effeminate dress and nature. Furthermore, in the words of Katherine Crawford: "heterosexual excess was considered effeminate - a sign of weakness usually associated with women, who were considered less sexually restrained because they were deficient in reason" (Crawford I 518). Thus, Henri's wearing of Marie's jewelry could have been seen as coming from an "inferior" female mind, for it showed him to be lacking in "male" restraint. Another anecdote, reported by L'Estoile, is that the king removed a pair of earrings from the head of his deceased mignon, Jacques de Lévis, Comte de Quéulus (1554-1578) as a keepsake (L'Estoile I 244). This sentimental anecdote provided additional fuel for slander writers already critical of the king's excessive use of jewelry.

shows the king acting counter to his divine role as king and representative of God on earth (L'Estoile III 227; Duprat 45, 83). And no less a travesty of God's law, d'Aubigné's Les Tragiques and Le Divorce Satyrique ou les amours de la reine Marguerite de Navarre (published posthumously in 1663) accuse Henri III of having sexual relations with his sister, Marguerite de Valois (1553-1615) (d'Aubigné 76, 949 n.3). In fact, d'Aubigné accuses all Valois brothers - Henri, François (1555-1584), and Charles (1550-1574) - of engaging in sexual acts with their sister; thus, they are sexually corrupt as a family (949 n.3).²⁷

²⁷ D'Aubigné pairs the "sins" of sodomy and incest together in Les Tragiques as vices common to the court (d'Aubigné 79). Any accusation against court behavior is an indirect attack on the king, who is supposed to be in control of his courtiers. The charge of incest in sexual slander would rear its head again during the trial of Marie Antoinette two hundred years later, when she is accused of having sexual relations with her son - the *deus ex machina* that precipitated her execution. See supra Chapter III.

The Mignons: Blaming the King by Attacking Those Closest to Him

Just as the supposed incest of Henri III's siblings pointed towards the king's deviance, the mignons were also metonymically cast as an extension of him in sexual slander. Already in the early 1570s scandalmongers began referring pejoratively to the king's favorites as "*les mignons*." Nicot defines them as individuals whom the king "*traittoit doucement et supportoit*," citing Cicero's term of affection, "*deliciae meae*" ("my sweet love") (s.v. "*mignon*." Thresor de la langue française. 1606). Thus, the word can signify both a favorite, or one who is liked and supported financially, but it also can mean one's object of love and desire. "Mignon" is defined more comprehensively by the Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française (1st ed. 1694) as: "*Favory, soit en matière d'amitié, soit d'amour. La plupart des Princes ont des mignons, des favoris qui les gouvernent. Beaucoup de Dames ont des mignons de couchettes*" (s.v. "*mignon*"). As defined, the term is not an insult, but it has negative connotations of excessive

influence over the king.²⁸ In the Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française's definition, only women are singled out as having mignons for sexual purposes ("*mignons de couchettes*").²⁹ Indeed, Henri III's sister, Marguerite de Valois, referred to her lovers as "*mignons*," and there was even the feminine "*mignonne*" used by Ronsard to describe a female object of desire in his "*Ode à Cassandre*" (1553) (Godard II 145). Despite its potential to mean a close friend or a lover, slander writers used the term pejoratively against Henri III's favorites, especially in 1576, after the formation of the Catholic Ligue de Péronne, which used the word as an insult to attack the king through the company he kept (Le Roux 267).³⁰

Most mignons, says Gary Ferguson, came from the lesser provincial nobility and their elevation as favorites would not have been unusual, but sexually slanderous texts repeated the charge that they were from obscure families,

²⁸ According to Nicolas Le Roux, favorites were in general given duties, rather than specific titles. The lack of titles created a certain ambiguity in their role, which allowed slanderers to endow them with more power than they may have actually had (Le Roux 459).

²⁹ While the 1694 definition makes no mention of Henri III, Furetière's Dictionnaire universel (1690) refers specifically to "*les mignons de Henri troisième*," which shows that more than 100 years later mignons had come to be primarily associated with Henri III's reign (s.v. "*mignon*").

³⁰ The Catholic Ligue de Peronne was opposed to the paix de Beaulieux (1576) giving Protestants certain rights.

raised to positions above their class (Ferguson 148). Even the king's sister, Marguerite de Valois, called one of them, Louis de Béranger de Gaz (also known as le Guast) (1545-1575), a "potiron," or pumpkin, that popped up out of nowhere (Le Roux 175). In sexual slander, the mignons were often held responsible for the dire circumstances of France's economy; and the king was criticized for supporting them financially.³¹ While it is said that Henri III provided each of his mignons with significant amounts of money as well as houses and cash advances, this money, writes Jean-François Solnon, was actually redistributed by the mignons to other men in their group (i.e., their

³¹ The anonymous poem, Les Vertus et propriétés des mignons (1576), explains how the mignons are nourishing themselves at France's expense:

*[U]ne petite vermine
De Mignons, venus en trois nuits,
Qui, comme la chenille, paissent
Nos fleurs, aussitot qu'elles naissent,
Et mangent en l'herbe nos fruits* (L'Estoile I 144-145).

While France's coffers are dry, the mignons, like vermin and caterpillars, eat and ruin the country's fruits (i.e., the nation's money). The Dictionnaire français (1680) states that in addition to its primary meaning of "poux," vermin can refer to people who are of an "engeance méchante & haisable" (s.v. "vermine"). Another, anonymous text cited in L'Estoile and dated 1578 states that "le peuple [est] mangé par ces beaux petits Fouille-merde!" (L'Estoile I 248). Here again, France's people are presented as something akin to a fruit or flower being eaten by the mignons, who are called "fouille-merde," defined by the Dictionnaire universel (1690) as those who "traitte des affaires sales & desonestes" (s.v. "fouille-merde"). The king is not directly accused of creating this situation, although his guilt is implied since he is responsible for supporting the mignons financially. One unnamed anonymous text (dated between 1577-1579) does criticize the king for privileging his mignons over everyone else by stating "qu'à seuls mignons le Roy fasse largesse" (L'Estoile I 334).

individual entourages) for armor, horses, and various provisions (Solnon 259-260, 268).³² What was unusual, however, was the unprecedented and exclusive access to the king's company that the mignons had; according to Nicolas Le Roux, they were effectively a "*cour dans la Cour*" (Le Roux 273). Thus, Solnon says, Henri III's proximity to these male favorites "*busculait les usages...en se libérant de l'influence des lignages traditionnels*" (Solnon 294). This unusual proximity created an air of suspicion around the activities of the king and his mignons, Ferguson argues, and only encouraged "projections of moral turpitude on the part of the excluded" (Ferguson 180). Additionally, starting in 1578, the king further restricted access to his person; he ate separately from the court, with no public "lever" or waking ritual (181). One anonymous pamphlet from 1589, La Vie et faits notables de Henry de Valois, reflects the king's seclusion and refers to him as living

³² According to Katherine Crawford, certain mignons did very well financially due to the king's support. François d'Espinay, seigneur de Saint-Luc (1554-1597), was given a chateau at Rozoy-en-Brie, the government of Brouage, and commands in Piedmont and Picardy (Crawford I 526). François d'O, marquis d'O, seigneur de Fresnes et de Maillebois (1535-1594), was made gentleman of the chamber and councilor of state, and he was given military commands and governments in Normandy and the Isle-de-France; eventually, he was also made superintendent of finances (526). For Jean Louis de Nogaret de La Valette, Duc d'Épernon (1554-1642), the king secured the posts of governor of La Fère, Metz, and Provence (536). Anne de Batarnay de Joyeuse (1560-1587) was given the government of Mont-Saint-Michel, became admiral of France, a chevalier of the Order of the Holy Spirit, and governor of Normandy and Alençon (536-537).

"à la Turquesque," like a Turkish king who has a harem of decadent favorites that is hidden from view (quoted in Ferguson 181).

Henri III called his male favorites "*ma chère bande*," "*ma troupe*," and "[*ma*] *petite troupe*" (Le Roux 210, 254; Solnon 229, 261). A select group of three mignons was commonly known as "*archimignons*," whom the king called "*ses trois enfants*," states Nicolas Le Roux (Le Roux 210, 254). While the words "*bande*" and "*troupe*" describe a military group,³³ the king's use of these words suggests instead an affectionate and privileged solidarity with his mignons. Evidence of this affection has been inferred from Henri III's signature in letters to his mignons, with "S". M. Marcel Dommergues says this sign may refer to the Spanish "*Sabio, Solo, Solicito, Secreto*," or "secret, solicitous, single-minded, sage," which was used by lovers (Lettres de Henri III 316 n.3). The anonymous author of Contre les fausses allegations que les plus qu'Architofels, Conseillers cabinalistes proposent pour excuser Henri le meurtrier de l'assassinat par lui perfidement commis en la personne du duc de Guise contemptuously refers to the king's affection for Jacques de Lévis, Comte de Quelus

³³ Nicot defines "*bandes*" as "*copiola*," or small military forces, and "*troupes*" as "*les regimens, les compagnies de gens de guerre*" (s.v. "*bandes*," "*troupes*." Thresor de la langue française (1606)).

(Caylus) (1554-1578) and Louis de Maugiron (?-1578), two mignons killed in the infamous "*Duel de Mignons*,"³⁴ in describing the king's creation of their tombs as a "canonization" (22). An exceptional sign of affection for his dead mignons was the lavish black and white marble tombs that the king erected in the church of Saint-Paul (Ferguson 152) (see illustration 4 for a rendering of the tombs).³⁵ In fact, the king broke with tradition when he publicly mourned Caylus and required the presence of the entire court at the funeral - a privilege typically given only to the royal family, and thus seen as inappropriate (Ferguson 153; Le Roux 404).

L'Estoile provides the most comprehensive description of the mignons, using scathing, hyperbolic terms to portray them as effeminate men, a criticism that could apply equally to the king:

³⁴ The *Duel des mignons* was a battle between three of Henri III's mignons and three of the Duc de Guise's favorites in which two men from each party were killed. The battle, which took place on April 24, 1578, may have been over a woman or may have been a recreation of the Roman legend, in which two sets of triplets, the Roman Horatii and the Alban Curiatti, fought to settle the war between Rome and Alba Longa (672-642 BC). In *Apologie pour Hérodote* (1566), Henri Estienne wrote that the senseless duel came from Italy, so often made the source of problems in slander; he states that murder between family members was not uncommon in Italy and that France "*a pris le style d'Italie en matière de tueries*" (quoted in Le Roux 398).

³⁵ In 1588 the tombs were destroyed by a group of Frenchmen incensed at the murder of the de Guise brothers. On the de Guise murders, see supra Introduction.

Le nom de Mignons commença, en ce temps [vers 1576] à trotter par la bouche du peuple, auquel ils étaient fort odieux, tant pour leur façons de faire qui étaient badines et hautaines, que pour leur fards et accoutrements efféminés et impudiques³⁶ [...] Ces beaux mignons portaient leurs cheveux languets, frisés et refrisés par artifices, remontant par-dessus leurs petits bonnets de velours, comme le font les putains du bordeau, et leur fraises³⁷ de chemises de toiles d'autour empesées et longues de demi-pied, de façon qu'à voir leur tête dessus leur fraise, il semblait que ce fut le chef Saint-Jean sur un plat; le reste de leurs habillements fait de même: leurs exercices étaient de jouer, blasphemer, sauter, danser, volter, quereller et paillarder, et suivre le Roi partout en toute compagnies (L'Estoile I 142-143).³⁸

L'Estoile's accumulation of negative traits, evidenced by the adjectives "odieux," "hautaine," "effeminé," and "impudique" is countered by only one positive word, "beau"; they are hateful, prideful, and licentious men "softened"

³⁶ Henri III and his mignons all wore heavy makeup that whitened their faces and rouged their lips; while it was not uncommon for men to wear makeup in this period, the king and his coterie's made up faces must have been excessive, for in *Les Tragiques*, d'Aubigné says that each resembled "une putain fardée" or painted whore (72). Accoutrements may be referring to perfume, of which the king and his mignons wore in large amounts.

³⁷ A "fraise" is the giant collar worn in this period.

³⁸ This quote refers to what could be described as public opinion ("la bouche du peuple"); yet historians, such as Sara Maza, have consistently argued that "public opinion," as we know it today, did not really come into existence until the 19th century. Annie Duprat attempts to make sense of L'Estoile's use of the term "opinion" throughout his memoirs, stating that it is his way of indicating that slander was being disseminated broadly in France (Duprat 73). While Duprat's argument is logical, there are some suggestions in L'Estoile's work that there was a public sphere, closer to the 19th-century concept, or at least that there were signs of a somewhat cohesive public body earlier than previously thought.

(i.e., feminized) by their pleasure-seeking lifestyle.³⁹ While some cross-dressing in Renaissance France was acceptable, the mignons' excessively "effeminate" dress is treated as transgressive by L'Estoile. Indeed, their hairstyle is compared to that of whores, and their collars are so large their faces look like St. John the Baptist's decapitated head on a plate, a particularly violent image that dehumanizes them.

In reality, the mignons were, according to Solnon, a combative group, "*prêts à toutes les folies au combat*"; a statement proven by the infamous "*duel des mignons*." The mignons' eagerness to fight shows that they, like the king, were not the effeminate creatures depicted in sexual slander. Nevertheless, L'Estoile criticizes many of their activities; in their conversations, they make fun of others and profane God and they dance the provocative volta ("sauter").⁴⁰ They also follow the king everywhere like

³⁹ Nicot defines "*odieux*" as "*odiosus*" or hateful, "*hautaine*" as "*celuy qui tient son rang hault, un superbe*," "*effeminer*" as "[m]ol et effeminé: n'ayant aucune virilité," and "*impudique*" as "*impudicus*" or shameless and unchaste (s.v. "*odieux*," "*hautaine*," "*effeminer*," "*impudique*." *Thresor de la langue française*. 1606). Nicot defines "*pudique*" as "*pudicus*" or modest, chaste, and virtuous; thus, "*pudique*" is the antithesis of "*impudique*" and would mean licentious, impure, wicked, and dishonest (s.v. "*pudique*").

⁴⁰ "*Jouer*" is defined by the Nicot as "*ludere*" or "*moquer*," "*blasphémer*" as "*Sacrilego maledicto se obstringere*" or guilty of sacrilegious cursing, and "*quereller*" is defined by Richelet as "*dire des choses piquantes*" (s.v. "*jouer*," "*blasphémer*." *Thresor de la langue française*. 1606; s.v. "*quereller*." *Dictionnaire français*. 1680).

sycophants. Finally, the mignons are condemned for relations with women of ill repute; "paillarder" means to be associated with whores (s.v. "paillarder." Thresor de la langue française. 1606).

The Sodomitical Mignons: Cats-in-Cul, Culus, and the King's Other Ganymèdes

While some sexual slander attacked Henri III and his mignons for relations with women, rumors of sodomitical relations between the king and his mignons dogged the king for most of his reign. The fact that Henri III's marriage with Louise de Vaudémont de Lorraine remained childless seemed to give credibility to sexual slander that the king was interested in sexual practices with men; to be sure, the lack of an heir could be blamed on the king's sodomitical preferences.⁴¹ Yet, while the king was certainly close to his mignons, there is no evidence of sexual relations between them. Nevertheless, Didier Godard

The Dictionnaire français (1680) defines "sauter" as "faire des sauts" and states that the word is sometimes combined with "danser" (to dance) as in "il ne fait que danser and sauter" (s.v. "sauter").

⁴¹ Louise did have a miscarriage in 1576, which was the cause of her later sterility. Additionally, in one unnamed anonymous slanderous text, reported by Pierre de L'Estoile, the queen is accused of complicity in this lack of an heir, because of her supposed sexual liaisons with an unnamed cousin; for the most part, however, she is left out of slander completely (Duprat 250). According to Annie Duprat, there exists no other sexual slander against her (251).

believes that since the king was often accused of having sodomitical relations with his mignons without ever denying it, he must have been a sodomite, whereas Jean-François Solnon and Jacqueline Boucher warn against making such assumptions - a view to which I adhere (Godard II 136; Solnon 287; Ferguson 167). Like the king, the mignons had mistresses with which historians, such as Maurice Lever, assume involved sexual relations (Lever 80-81).⁴² And Jean-François Solnon confirms that the mignons, Anne de Batarnay de Joyeuse (1560-1587) and Jean Louis de Nogaret de La Valette, Duc d'Épernon (1554-1642), were "*amateurs de femmes*" (Solnon 267). The only historical hint of a possible sexual relationship is that Henri III did sleep for three consecutive nights with his mignon, Jean Louis de Nogaret de La Valette, Duc d'Épernon (1554-1642); however, while this arrangement may have been unusual (indeed, Le Roux calls it "*assez exceptionnel*"), it is hardly indicative of whether anything took place between the sheets (Le Roux 297). Still, L'Estoile treats the sexual relations between the king and his mignons as fact, calling

⁴² Jacqueline Boucher posits that one favorite, Louis de Maugiron, was a sodomite; however, Gary Ferguson disputes Boucher's evidence as "questionable" (Ferguson 180). Other than Maugiron's possible sodomy, no other favorites of the king are known to have been sodomites.

the favorites "*lit compagnons*" and "*mignons de couchette*" (L'Estoile I 232; L'Estoile II 260).

Scandal mongers often state that the king and his mignons engaged in sexual practices at Ollainville. The fact that Henri III frequently entertained his mignons at a secluded estate in Ollainville provided verisimilitude to accusations of sodomy. In Les Tragiques, d'Aubigné refers to "*le secret d'un village, [o]ù le vice triple de sa lubricité, miserablement cache une orde volupté, [d]e honte de l'infame et brute vilenie, [d]ont il a pollué son renom et sa vie*" (d'Aubigné 73).⁴³ This location is one of shameful, vile, and thoughtless, filthy pleasures ("orde," "honte," "infame," and "brute vilenie"⁴⁴). The accumulation of more or less synonymous words (all meaning or describing various types of lascivious behavior) enables d'Aubigné to make the case hyperbolically that the king has ruined both his reputation and his life ("*son renom et sa vie*"). And d'Aubigné's use of the term, "vice," could always potentially mean the Italian vice.

⁴³ The notion of a secret location will appear again in slander against Marie Antoinette in which she is accused of participating in a secret society of tribades. On Marie Antoinette, see supra Chapter III.

⁴⁴ Nicot defines "vilenie" as "*impuritas, probrum, turpitude,*" or impure, disgrace, and turpitude, and he refers to "*coluio,*" or refuse (s.v. "vilenie." Thresor de la langue française. 1606). Accordingly, "vilenie" can be scatological in nature; referring to excrement is one way to allude to anal sex.

Rather than speak of a village, Jean Boucher's Le Martire des deux frères instead refers to a dark prison, a "cachot," akin to a house of prostitution where, "au lieu de chasteté, & pudicité, [il n'y a] rien que bordelage, luxure, sodomie, & lascivité" (Boucher 21). Nicot defines both "chasteté" and "pudicité" as "Pudicitia," the Roman goddess of modesty and chastity; the synonymous words again show how slander writers bolster their arguments by accumulating interchangeable words (s.v. "pudicité." Thresor de la langue française. 1606). "Bordelage" is defined by Nicot as the Latin "Meretricium," which means relating to prostitutes, thus, referring to the mignons as the king's whores (s.v. "Bordelage." Thresor de la langue française. 1606). Boucher also accumulates terms to describe the non-normative sexuality that takes place in the "cachot," where the sin of "luxure" (synonymous with "lascivité") occurs.⁴⁵ Sodomy here is a manifestation of both "luxure" and "lascivité".

The mignons' supposed sodomy is implied when scandalmongers call them hermaphrodites. L'Isle des

⁴⁵ Nicot defines "luxure" as "libido," and the Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française (1694) defines "lascivité" as a "[f]orte inclination à la luxure"; thus again words close in meaning are used together to strengthen the author's claims (s.v. "luxure." Thresor de la langue française. 1606; s.v. "lascivité." Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française. 1st ed. 1694).

Hermaphrodites (1605),⁴⁶ attributed to Artus Thomas, relies on the mythological metaphor of a race of hermaphrodites. The text does not mention by name either Henri III or his mignons, but historians have pieced together sections of the work that likely relate to specific people and to historical events. The purpose of L'Isle des Hermaphrodites, according to Pierre de L'Estoile, was to attack the king's mignons:

Ce petit libelle...découvroit les moeurs et les façons de faire impies et vicieuses de la cour, faisant voir clairement que la France est maintenant le repaire et l'asyle de tout vice, volupté et impudence, au lieu que jadis elle étoit une académie honorable et séminaire de vertu (l'Estoile Supplément 384).

The court has become a haven of impious and licentious individuals - "vieux" pertains to "vitiosus," or being full of vice; and again, references to "vice" in this period could always include the Italian vice (s.v. "vieux." Thresor de la langue française. 1606). Indeed, the mignons parade all vices ("tout vice") shamelessly, instead of the old virtues of honorable France, which was like a seminary in L'Estoile's idealized view.

⁴⁶ L'Isle des Hermaphrodites was published in 1605 but it is believed to have been written sometime between 1575-1580. Indeed, L'Estoile writes that L'Isle des Hermaphrodites appeared in 1605, but was likely written earlier (l'Estoile Supplément 384). With a new king, Henri IV, on the throne of France, it would have been less dangerous to publish the text in 1605 than it would have been to do so during Henri III's reign and run the risk of being prosecuted for defaming a sitting ruler (Dubois in L'Isle des Hermaphrodites 19).

L'Isle des Hermaphrodites was used as propaganda for Henri IV ("*un prince sain et éclair*") around 1605 by defining the previous monarch as corrupt, according to Claude-Gilbert Dubois and Annie Duprat (Dubois 20-21, 39; Duprat 17). As Nicolas Le Roux puts it, the new monarch could be seen as well advised, the old as blinded by his entourage (Le Roux 720). Henri IV would claim victory over vice, present himself as the savior of his country, and confirm his legitimacy as the new monarch (Dubois 20-21; Le Roux 622).⁴⁷

Above and beyond the comparison to a race of hermaphrodites, slanderers also imply the sodomitical when describing the mignons' bodies. In the anonymous Les Vertus et propriétés des mignons (1576), their faces are called "*ganimédiennes*," a reference to Ganimède, who was used in the early-modern period to refer to a passive sodomite; in the text's own terms, "*entre [les mignons] ils pratiquent l'art de l'impudique Ganimède*" (L'Estoile I 146-147; Ferguson 175).⁴⁸ What bothers most one anonymous

⁴⁷ Henri IV said that he would not punish the author of Isle des Hermaphrodites, since the writer "*[a] dit la vérité*" (Lever 85). However, Henri IV did decree that all other slander against his predecessor be burned; perhaps that Isle des Hermaphrodites does not explicitly name its targets is the reason its later distribution was not as problematic as other more direct attacks against Henri III (Duprat 289-290).

⁴⁸ On passive sodomites, see supra Introduction.

author, cited in L'Estoile, is that the mignons parade their sodomitical passivity; he refers to them as "*Ganimèdes effrontés*" (L'Estoile I 335). In addition to implying sodomy, L'Estoile's journals provide many direct accusations of sodomy against the king and his mignons, such as one anonymous text that refers to them as "*princes de Sodome*" (L'Estoile I 301). Additionally, even the names of two mignons were turned into slanderous words indicating anal sex; Caylus was called "Culus" ("*cul*" meaning ass) and Saint-Luc's name was turned into the anagram, "*Cats in cul*," meaning "penis in ass" (Le Roux 659).⁴⁹ In an unnamed posthumous verse, Ronsard also casts the anuses of the mignons as being inscribed with the marks of sodomy, stating that their asses "*plus que les cons sont ouverts*" (quoted in Ferguson 137). This openness implies that the mignons are passive sexual partners, who have been sodomized to the point of having an orifice that is more like a vagina than an anus.⁵⁰

D'Aubigné also directly accuses the mignons and the king of sodomy, stating in Les Tragiques that they operate "*[p]ar le cul d'un coquin chemin au coeur d'un roi*" (d'Aubigné 73). Henri III bestows his love on his mignons,

⁴⁹ "*Cats*" comes from the Italian word for penis, "*cazzo*" (Le Roux 659).

⁵⁰ The image of a gaping anus appears again in slander attacking Cardinal Mazarin. See supra Chapter II.

here called "coquins," or "homme[s] infame[s] & lasche[s]" - men whose actions are base and whose existence is contrary to a life of honor (s.v. "coquin." Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française. 1st ed. 1694). Additionally, d'Aubigné refers specifically to sodomitical male penetration (sex "par-derrère") and to the mignons as being like the Roman sodomite "Bathille,"⁵¹ whose name was eponymous with sodomite, according to Henri Weber; indeed, d'Aubigné uses "caresser un Bathille" to describe sodomitical sexual relations (d'Aubigné 69, 76).

However, far from simply - and metonymically - blaming the mignons for sodomy, Ronsard directly accuses the king. In another unnamed posthumous verse, he chastises the king for wasting the royal seed that, "by law," should be saved for the commonwealth to produce an heir to the throne: "Foutez bouches, culs et cons, et d'une main lubrique; Donnez-vous de Vénus le savoureux plaisir; Avec vos Mignons, consommez à la loisir; Qui est dû, selon droit, à la chose publique" (quoted in Godard II 126). While the first two lines could imply sex with a woman, that the king "fucks mouths, asses and cunts," the first part of third

⁵¹ The Nouveau dictionnaire historique, ou, histoire abrégée de tous les hommes qui se sont fait un nom par une société de gens-de-lettres (1805) by Louis Maïeul Chaudon and Antoine François Delandine states that Bathille was known for using "[les] plaisirs les plus libertins" to gain favor with *grands seigneurs* (Chaudon and Delandine 116-117).

line, "*avec vos mignons*," makes clear that Ronsard also means sex with the male favorites. Even more clearly, in another unnamed posthumous text, Ronsard openly accuses the king of having sodomitical sex: "*[Le Roi] aime à semencer le champ qui n'est herbu, [e]t, comme un vrai Castor, chevaucher le derrière*" (quoted in Godard II 126-127). By depositing his seed on - or in - the anus - the field without grass - the king is sowing barren terrain that will never yield an heir. Unlike the mythological Castor who straddled both the immortal and mortal worlds, and the amphibious beaver (another meaning of "castor"), who lives on both land and water, the king straddles only his mignons.⁵² The word "castor", says Pierre Guiraud, was slang for pederast in early-modern France, for beavers, like sodomites, have sex from behind (Guiraud 207). This text is an example of what Gary Ferguson calls "comic degradation" (Ferguson 175). The metaphor's clearly humorous element does not take away from the citation's aim

⁵² In the poem, "*Sur le navire de la ville de Paris protégé par Castor et Pollux, ressemblants de visage au Roy et à Monsieur le Duc d'Anjou*" (1571), Ronsard refers in a positive manner to Henri III and his brother, Charles IX, as Castor and Pollux, the twin sons of Zeus and Leda. However, as has already been described, Ronsard would be one of the most scathing critics of Henri III towards the final years of the king's reign. His later comparison to Castor is a reference to sodomy while his earlier text has a reference to power.

to paint the king as a sodomite who doesn't use his sperm in the appropriate manner.⁵³

In yet another unnamed posthumous sonnet, Ronsard claims that the king is the active sexual partner with his male favorites:

*Le Roi, comme l'on dit, accole, baise et lèche
De ses poupins mignons le tein frais, nuit et jour.
Eux, pour avoir de l'argent, lui prêtent tour à tour
Leurs fessiers rebondis et endurent la brèche.
Ces culs devenus cons engouffrent plus de biens
Que le gouffre de Scylle, hai par des Anciens...
(quoted in Lever 79-80).*

The king lies next to, fucks and licks his mignons, while they "endure" it, putting up with sodomitical sex, like prostitutes, to get something in return; with fresh makeup on their faces at all times like whores, they always appear desirable to the king.⁵⁴ Their asses are turned into "cunts" that swallow money, as bottomless as the hated and dangerous water monster, Scylla.⁵⁵

⁵³ On comic degradation as a technique in slander, see supra Introduction.

⁵⁴ L'Estoile also casts the mignons as whores; he calls them "Friquenelles," or immodest women, which is what one could call prostitutes or tribades (L'Estoile I 248; Guirard 354). "Friquenelle" comes from "fricarelle," which means "tribade" (Guiraud 352). On tribades, see supra Introduction.

⁵⁵ Scylla is a female monster in Greek mythology that lived by a channel of water, here a metaphor for the vast amounts of money Henri III spends on his favorites. In the myth, those who passed by the body of water were in danger of being eaten by Scylla. In Ronsard's text, the mignons are like Scylla; they will eat whatever goods France has to offer.

Blaming Italy: Forks and Fucks

Sodomy and other sexual vices were frequently blamed on Italy in Renaissance France⁵⁶; thus, scandalmongers often cast the king and his mignons as Italianized.⁵⁷ Italy's supposed culpability was in large part due to jealousy of Italy's virtual monopoly on wealth, art, and culture.⁵⁸ In the late Renaissance, Italy led France and England in wealth and spending, according to historian Richard Goldthwaite; in fact, the richest Italians were significantly wealthier than French families from the same class (Goldthwaite 60). Italians were also more prodigious in their artistic and architectural output than other

⁵⁶ In the early-modern period Italy was not a country, but instead was a group of city-states and their backup regions. Italy became a unified country in the early 19th century.

⁵⁷ On the "Italian vice," see supra Introduction. Ironically, after Henri III's short reign as king of Poland from 1573-1574, the Polish began to refer to sodomy as "*le vice français*"; Poland, like France, pointed the blame away from its own people and onto another country (Godard II 66). On anti-Italianism in the sixteenth century, see Henry Heller's Anti-Italianism in Sixteenth Century France (2003) and on Italian influence on France, see Jean François Dubost's La France italienne: XVIe-XVIIe siècle (1997).

⁵⁸ Italy was the arbiter of taste and luxury in the Renaissance. Italians' expertise in carpentry, pottery and metalworking (today referred to as fine arts) was impressive to Charles VIII (1470-1498), who had visited Italy in 1494. According to Richard Goldthwaite, when Charles returned to France, he brought back painters, ebonists, furniture makers, alabaster artisans, goldsmiths, organ makers, and embroiderers, in addition to vast amounts of carpets, books, pictures, statues, and furniture (Goldthwaite 25-26). The next monarch of France, Francis I (1494-1547), continued to view Italy as the source of culture and convinced many major Italian artists, such as Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), to come to France under his patronage, while he simultaneously worked to import works of art, such as da Vinci's Mona Lisa, from Italy to France.

nations in Europe (61). Italian cities had populations of 10,000 to 40,000 people, about three times the number of people living in comparable cities in France; this urbanization, which led to a larger production of art and architecture, contributed to Italy's dominance (100). Italian commerce was strong, exporting more luxury goods to France than France exported to Italy (28). In fact, since the end of the Middle Ages, Italy had a near monopoly on luxury goods, such as silks, spices, and tin-glazed pottery, which were imported from the Near East, and then exported throughout Western Europe (13, 17).

That Italian wealth engendered jealousy is evident in writings of the period. Henri III's brother and sometime rival, François d'Alençon,⁵⁹ argued in his Déclaration (1575) that Italians were at the root of France's problems. L'Estoile states that Italians are becoming rich at the "*despens du François*," a likely criticism of Queen Catherine de Médici, who provided money to many Italians at Court (L'Estoile I 267). Catherine came from a long line of successful Italian bankers and had strong Italian alliances at Court, described by Nicolas Le Roux as "la

⁵⁹ François d'Alençon, a constant thorn in Henri III's side, wanted his brother's post and rallied others to his side. In fact, François was so invested in gaining power that, according to Solnon, he created a second court, in which he was a sort of "*second roi*" with his own favorites (Solnon 214).

colonie italienne" (Le Roux 67). Albert de Gondi (1522-1602)⁶⁰ and Louis de Gonzague (1539-1595), the most famous examples of Italians elevated by Catherine, were also close advisors to Henri II, who appointed Gondi duke of Retz as well as *Premier Gentilhomme de la maison du Roi*; and Gonzague became duke of Nevers.⁶¹ In Les Tragiques, d'Aubigné refers to the "*venin florentin*" that is infecting France as a result of the Italian alliances of Catherine, whom he dubs an "*impure Florentine*," a snake whose venom is poisoning France (d'Aubigné 38).

Italians were thought capable of murderous crimes. Whenever there was an unexpected or unusual death, Italians were often suspected of being the culprit. It was also commonly believed in the early-modern period that Italians invented poisons; and thus, if someone died of an unknown or unidentified cause, poisons were sometimes thought to be the reason (Weber in d'Aubigné 1096 n.7). In Les

⁶⁰ According to Nicolas Le Roux, Albert de Gondi owed much of his large fortune to Catherine de Médici, who had made Gondi's mother, Marie-Catherine de Pierrevive, wealthy due to her role as *gouvernante des enfants de France* and *Dame d'honneur* of Marie Stuart (1542-1587) (Le Roux 64). Furthermore, many others in Gondi's family were also given plum positions at court (66).

⁶¹ Gondi and Gonzague were advisors on the massacre of Protestants on the day of La Saint-Barthélemy; Gondi counseled Catherine on Protestant leader, Gaspard de Coligny's (1519-1572) murder (In Les Tragiques d'Aubigné calls Gondi "*un bourreau froid*," or cold-blooded executioner) (d'Aubigné 66, 67; Weber in d'Aubigné 940 n.8-9;). Of the two Italians, Gondi was accused in slander of being most responsible for the Saint Bartholemew Massacre (Le Roux 84).

Tragiques, d'Aubigné calls poisons one of "*leurs inventions*" (1096). Indeed, when Catherine's son, Charles, died of a mysterious illness in 1574 (today thought to have been tuberculosis), Catherine was suspected; she was also accused of killing her son, François, in the anonymous Protestant pamphlet Legende de Sainte Catherine (1616) (1096 n.7).

Furthermore, an Italian sensibility had become pervasive in France. Among the cultural forms and styles imported into France were Italian theater and the *Commedia dell'arte*, which was performed at Henri III's court. Henri III liked to have concerts given during his dinner and at Court in general - reminders of the concert in his honor at the Palace Foscari in Venice - and he invited a troupe of Gelosi actors from Venice to perform (Solnon 276).⁶² In addition to fine art and music, Italians had significant intellectual influence in France. For example, Italian philosopher, Jacopo Corbinelli (1535-1590) had been close to Catherine de Médici and had tutored both Henri III and his brother the Duc d'Alençon. Additionally, in 1582 the king invited Italian philosopher, Giordano Bruno (1548-1600), to give a series of classes on the art of memory.

⁶² The performers were unfortunately captured and held hostage by Protestants until Henri III paid for their release (Solnon 225).

The influence of Italian style could also be seen in table manners. Refined tableware was new to the French, who had hitherto been accustomed to eating with spoons, knives, and even their fingers. In fact, Henri III imported the fork from Venice and began to require its use at court meals. This practice may have contributed to the view that the king was effeminate; for table manners were confused with what Richard Goldthwaite terms "affected manners," which in turn were conflated with effeminacy (Goldthwaite 246).

In addition to a generalized influence of Italian mores, sodomy was thought to be brought into France by Italians.⁶³ Thus, L'Estoile writes of Henri III: "[d]être bougre ... cela lui vient d'Italie," placing blame on Italy for the king's sodomy rather than holding the king accountable for this behavior (L'Estoile II 311). As with the Fall of Rome in A.D. 476, thought to be due in part to sexual decadence, sexual slander against Henri III often links moral decay to historical ruin. L'Estoile refers to sodomy as "*la graine de Florence [q]ui ruinera nostre France,*" a grain that will grow and flourish (L'Estoile I

⁶³ L'Estoile cites one virulently anti-Italian anonymous text from 1578, in which Italians are called "*bougrins,*" or little sodomites, who deserve to have their heads broken, a threat of violence that reflects the potent xenophobia against Italians in this period (L'Estoile I 266, 267).

245). In a 1578 text, attributed to Ronsard by L'Estoile, the author goes so far as to name the specific Italian clan responsible for the Italian vice, "*ceux de Médicis*," thus implicating the king's mother in the spread of sodomy (L'Estoile II 185). The anonymous Contre les fausses allegations que les plus qu'Architofels, Conseillers cabinalistes proposent pour excuser Henri le meurtrier de l'assassinat par lui perfidement commis en la personne du duc de Guise (1589) states that Henri III imported sodomy into France and calls the practice "*l'art que (à l'Italienne) [Henri III] nomme gentile*" (meaning "*honestus*," or decorous, according to Nicot); thus, the king is cast as treating sodomy as a respectable act instead of a grave sin (Contre les fausses allegations... 51; s.v. "*gentil*." Thresor de la langue française. 1606). L'Estoile reports that one of the mignons, Paul de Stuer de Caussade, comte de Saint-Mégrin (1560-1578), was a "*bardache à Rome*,"⁶⁴ or passive sodomite, in the city historically associated with the fall of an empire (Godard II 134; L'Estoile I 248).⁶⁵

⁶⁴ "*Bardache*" was not defined officially until the Dictionnaire français (1680), which described one as a "*jeune homme dont on abuse honteusement*" (s.v. "*bardache*").

⁶⁵ Beyond sodomy, sexual diseases such as syphilis were referred to commonly as the "*mal napolitain*" (although also sometimes as "*le mal français*"). With this backdrop, references in slander to syphilis thus necessarily could always implicate Italy. In L'Isle des Hermaphrodites

Henri III's Identification with Roman Emperors and Monsters

In linking Henri III's deviant sexuality to the Fall of Rome, scandalmongers evoked Roman emperors, such as Nero (AD 37-68), Caligula (AD 12-41), and Elagabalus (AD 203-222).⁶⁶ These attacks serve to provide analogues to the kings who were considered monsters. In Les Tragiques, d'Aubigné compares the king and his mignons to "*Néron marié avec son Pytagore*," for in AD 64 Nero married in public his favorite, Pythagorus, and is said to have been the "wife," or passive sodomite (d'Aubigné 73; Williams 252). The anonymous author of Contre les fausses allegations que les

this disease is said to have originated in the Mediterranean (Thomas 140). In slanderous texts Henri III is sometimes called a "*syphilitique*," referring to the disease he apparently contracted in Venice in 1574.

⁶⁶ In addition to the definition provided for "tyrant" earlier in this chapter, the definition in Dictionnaire universel (1690) says that Nero (AD 37-68) and Caligula (AD 12-41) are examples of past tyrants (s.v. "tyran"). Nero was thought by early Christians to have been the antichrist; and Caligula was known for sexual excess and violence. Thus, when authors of slander state that Henri III is a tyrant, they call to mind rulers known for tyranny and vice; Nicolas Le Roux argues that corrupt morals are presented in slander against Henri III as the most obvious sign of tyranny (Le Roux 624).

Slanderers also compared the king to individuals considered vile in the Bible, such as disgraced king Saul (who killed women and children and finally killed himself), traitors such as Judas (who precipitated Jesus's crucifixion) and Cain (who killed his brother Abel), mad king Nabuchodonosor, and beautiful Absalom (who, due to his extreme attention to artifice, got his locks caught in a tree prior to being speared to death) (Duprat 174; Contre les fausses allegations... 25; Le Martire des deux frères 16, 23). These attacks were not sexual in nature but sought to portray the king as failing to uphold his divine role.

plus qu'Architofels, Conseillers cabinalistes proposent pour excuser Henri le meurtrier de l'assassinat par lui perfidement commis en la personne du duc de Guise thus calls Henri III a "*Neron français*," and in the anonymous La Vie et les faits notables de Henry de Valois (1589), he is likened to the Roman emperor Caligula, known for his monstrous violence and sexual depravity (Contre les fausses allegations... 9; La Vie et les faits notables de Henry de Valois 78). The anonymous Le Songe creux envoyé à Henri de Valois par un parisien (1589) also compares the king to Elagabalus, the Roman emperor said to have dressed as a woman, to have organized the most decadent orgies, and to have had five wives and a male lover (Ian Maclean 184). By extension, another anonymous unnamed text, cited in *L'Estoile*, compares the mignons to Elagabalus, for they too "*prennent les habits des folles demoiselles*" (*L'Estoile* I 337). All three emperors to whom the king and/or his mignons are compared met grisly deaths; Nero stabbed himself to death, Caligula was assassinated, and Elagabalus's grandmother ordered his guards to hack him to death (Maclean 184). These murders cast a shadow of death on the French king and his mignons.

As with comparisons to monstrous kings, descriptions of a human as a beast or as a monster dehumanize the

subject, thus making it is easier to attack the target as a threat to be fought and killed. As Annie Duprat argues, by depicting Henri III as a beast or monster, slanderers were making a case that he is "*une bête sauvage à abbatre*" (Duprat 118). In Les Tragiques, d'Aubigné declares that "[c]e Roy donc n'est plus Roy, mais monstrueuse beste"; thus, in addition to removing his status as king, d'Aubigné also desacralizes him (d'Aubigné 65).⁶⁷ Jean Boucher's Le Martire des deux frères (1589), also depicts the king as a monster: "*un Turc par la tête, Allemans par le corps, harpye par les mains, Anglais par la jarretière, Polonais par les pieds, pour un diable en l'âme*" (Boucher 51, 54). This citation contains three techniques of sexual slander: the use of hyperbole, the use of xenophobic accusations, and the negative verbal accumulations to describe the target. In this quote, the king's head/mind is identified as being Turkish, which always had negative connotations; indeed, the Dictionnaire français (1680) defines Turks as "*avares, brutaux, perfidies, scelerats, & sans foi,*" the

⁶⁷ Another anonymous slanderous text, Discours veritable de ce qui est advenu aux Etats généraux de France tenus à Blois en l'année 1588 (1589), strips Henri III both of his Christianity (always linked to his divine role as king) and his humanity: "*O parjure infidèle, dissimulateur et hypocrite, indigne non seulement du nom de très chrétien mais du nom de Français et passant plus outre je dis que tu es indigne de porter le nom d'homme*" (26).

If the king is not worthy of being called human, then he is no better than an animal and should be treated as such (i.e., brought to the "*abattoir*").

opposite of what a Christian king's mind should be (s.v. "turc").⁶⁸ Further, the king's body incarnates the sum of France's rival nations, Germany and Poland.⁶⁹ And "*anglais par la jarretière*" is a reference to Henri III's election to the English Order of the Garter in 1575, which was seen as contrary to the Catholic religion, according to Roy C. Strong (Strong 66).⁷⁰ The king's hands are likened to those of a "harpy," which has wings, as do devils (Duprat 62, 106, 113) (see illustration 5).⁷¹ Indeed, the diverse negative physical elements add up to turning the king into a devil whose "âme" or soul is inherently corrupt.

The quote from Le Martire des deux frères contains most of the accusations in sexual slander against Henri III. One notable absence here is Italy, which was often associated with sodomy. Moreover, the text only invokes

⁶⁸ As we have already seen, Henri III was accused of living "*à la Turquesque*," which implied moral and sexual decadence.

⁶⁹ Germany and Poland were part of the Holy Roman Empire, which surrounded much of France. France and the Holy Roman Empire had been in conflict for many years during a series of wars in which France had ceded territory to the Empire. Furthermore, France had designs on gaining territory in Italy; these ambitions were blocked by the Holy Roman Empire, which had more success in Italy.

⁷⁰ Both Catholics and Protestants were present at the Order of the Garter's election ceremony, which provided more fodder for Catholics to criticize the king for not supporting the Catholic religion vigorously enough (Strong 66). Henry III was officially inducted into the Order in 1585 and had a two-week long celebration in his honor. The celebrations were, according to Roy C. Strong, exceptionally grand; perhaps the excessive nature of these *fêtes* explains why the Order is cited in slanderous texts (Strong 60).

⁷¹ On harpies, see supra Introduction.

gender or sexuality by noting the king's harpy-like hands, but it does not invade the king's bedroom. However, the passage does present the king as part-human, part-animal, and part-monster. Indeed, the 16th-century surgeon, Ambroise Paré, posited that monsters with both animal and human body parts are created when sodomites and atheists (often conflated under the umbrella term "sodomy"⁷²) have sex with animals (bestiality was also defined as a form of sodomy) (Paré 63).⁷³ Thus, monsters are conceived when one type of sodomite copulates with another type of sodomite. Accordingly, this raises the allegation that the king is the progeny of an act of bestiality.

Conclusion: To the Dogs

Slander against Henri III increasingly called for violence against the king after the execution of the de

⁷² Due to his supposed deviant sexual practices, the king is accused in slander of not following his prescribed duties as Christian monarch. In various slanderous texts the king is called both "athéiste" and "Antéchrist," both words always potentially linked to sexual practices thought to be satanic (Duprat 50, 57). As an illustration that the king was not regarded as a true Christian, a rumor circulated in 1575 that he, in collusion with his mother and her allies, stole a cross from Sainte-Chappelle and offered it to the Venetians (Duprat 67; Le Martire des deux frères 6).

⁷³ There was significant interest in monsters and other biological curiosities in the mid-1500s. Apart from the work of Ambroise Paré, there was also doctor Pierre Belon's Histoire naturelle des estranges poisons marins, which was a great success in 1551 (Duprat 111).

Guise brothers,⁷⁴ so much so that starting in 1585, the king was concerned about his assassination and hired a special force of forty-five gentlemen, known as the *Quarante-Cinq*, to protect him.⁷⁵ In fact, Le Martire des deux frères states that God's will is not to let the de Guise murders go unpunished, thereby implying that the king should be punished or killed (70).

The king's precautions were not unwarranted since slanderous texts began to call for physical violence against him. The Advis d'un lieutenant general de province à un des premiers magistrates de France (1589), attributed to 16th-century lawyer, Jean Bodin, states that the king's assassination is "inevitable"; d'Aubigné also surmised in Les Tragiques that the king would be assassinated (Duprat 101; d'Aubigné 77). Such a prophecy is one way to publicize the wish that the king be killed, without stating it directly.⁷⁶ Another approach was to declare that France cannot survive if the king lives, as the anonymous author of Histoire veritable de la plus saine partie de la vie Henri de Valois jadis Roi de France (1589) puts it: "Nous

⁷⁴ On the murder of the de Guise brothers, see supra Introduction.

⁷⁵ Forty-five corresponds to the number of *Gentilshommes ordinaires* or men who served at court all year (as opposed to those who served by quarters) (Le Roux 520).

⁷⁶ On prophecy as a form of slander, see supra Introduction, n.14.

somme taillés, s'il ne meurt, de voir des cruautés sanglantes et pitoyables, ce que nous prions à Dieu de détourner" (quoted in Duprat 100). Because the French are "taillé," or cut up, over seeing the bloody and pitiful cruelties of the king (i.e., the death of the de Guise brothers), his own death will ensure the end of this order.

One assault that calls directly for the king's murder can be found in the 1589 anonymous text L'Athéisme de Henry de Valois où est montré le vray but de ses dissimulations et cruautés in which the author has God state: "*Je t'ai élevé de la terre, je t'ai constitué duc de mon people et tu n'as laissé de pécher, va les chiens te mangeront et personne ne te pleurera*" (22-25). The author speaks for God to ask for a particularly gruesome death - that dogs eat Henri III - because he has used his sacred position for sin. The author desacralizes the king to such an extent that his death would leave no body, once torn apart and eaten by dogs.

A poster from 1588 condemning the de Guise murders and captioned, "*Tombeau sur le trespas & assassinat commis aux personnes de Messieurs de Guyse à Blois le xxiiij,*" calls on spectators to kill the king and his mignons (see poster at illustration 6). The image depicts a crowned skeleton (Henri III) that is stabbing the de Guise brothers; thus,

making the king personally responsible for the murders and representing him as a dead man. The accompanying legend openly speaks of regicide: "*Le peuple a de son gré pris les armes en main, qu'il ne délaissera, jusqu'à tant que la vie au traître et ses Mignons on ait ici ravie*" (cited in Duprat 95). It is the people, then, who will not put their weapons down until the king and his mignons have been killed.

By the time Jacques Clément assassinated Henri III, the king had been murdered repeatedly with words in texts of slander. Foreshadowing events against royal bodies during the French Revolution, Henri III's bowels were said to have been stabbed post mortem; if true, it is evidence that sacrificial violence continued even after his death (Duprat 284). Even if not true, it shows that there may have been a desire to create the illusion of post-mortem violence, which would have proven that France has been vindicated. Furthermore, after the king's death, slander continued to attack him in order to justify the murder; one such text, Charme et caractères de sorcellerie de Henri de Valoys (1589), strangely signed "Genebrard, J. Boucher, Jourdans et Perseus,"⁷⁷ emphasizes the king's atheism to

⁷⁷ Genébrard is likely a reference to Catholic League member and renowned theologian Gilbert Genébrard (1535-1597). Leading theorist and member of the Catholic League Jean Boucher (1548-1644) was in fact

show that death was merited: "[I]l est mort misérablement, comme un chien, sans Dieu, sans foi, et sans religion" (cited in Duprat 72). The author accumulates synonymous expressions that make the same point: the king is an atheist. Additionally, after his death, slander against Henri III reported that he had refused the last rites, a refusal that underlined the lack of religiousness of God's representative on earth. Nicolas le Roux characterizes the post-murder slander as justification or legitimization of the regicide (Duprat 394; Le Roux 397, 651).

The ritualistic murder of Henri III, or of any French king for that matter, is always more than just a murder, due to the king's affirmed link to God: regicide is always sacrilege. While it is dangerous to make cause and effect statements about history, it is nevertheless valid to point out that the king's murder took place after years of threats against him in slanderous texts. These threats and the king's subsequent assassination prefigure the attacks against Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette and show that their descacralization and murder were not an isolated

an author of slander against Henri III and is possibly the author of this text. Jourdans may be a reference to Claude Jourdan who was a Catholic notary. The author of Charme et caractères de sorcellerie de Henri de Valoys uses these names to provide Catholic credibility to his work. Perseus is a character in Greek mythology who slays monsters and referencing him is a way the author implies that Henri III is a monster to be killed.

occurrence, as historians such as Robert Darnton have implied. Desacralization of the monarchy begins with the assassination of Henri III.

Disordered Sex in the Mazarinades

Authors of slanderous texts during the Fronde (1648-1653) used deviant sexuality as a means to discredit Cardinal Jules Mazarin (1602-1661), whom they accused of sodomizing queen regent Anne d'Autriche (1601-1666), a male cousin, and even some animals. Various factions wrote slanderous texts during the Fronde to defame the cardinal, whom they held accountable for the civil war.¹ The corpus attacking Mazarin is called the Mazarinades (named after Scarron's eponymous La Mazarinade (1651)²), and consists of a disparate grouping of 5,000 slanderous texts disseminated during the Fronde (Jouhaud I 1; Garcia 69).³ Whereas there were hundreds of slanderous texts written against Henri III, there were now several thousand condemning Cardinal Mazarin. The Mazarinades systematically

¹ These factions included groups from all segments of French society: nobles, clerics, bourgeois, and poor people all fought for their interests. On the Fronde, see supra Introduction.

² One compilation of Mazarinades, Collection of Popular Songs or Verse in French (2 Vols. available in manuscript form at the New York Public Library Special Collections Room), is cited throughout this chapter; while some of the texts in this collection are known Mazarinades, others are not. The collection consists of two volumes handwritten in pen and ink; the first volume has numbers corresponding to each song or verse while the second volume has no such numbers to indicate page.

³ While 5,000 (Goubert puts it at 5,200) is the "official" number of Mazarinades, according to C. Moreau's definitive catalogue, Bibliographie des Mazarinades (1965), this number is based on what has survived and leaves unaccounted all other media, such as purely oral forms (Chislock 625 n.7; Goubert 344). Indeed, Sara Beam believes that the actual number may have been closer to 7,000, and that of the possible 7000 Mazarinades disseminated during the Fronde, only 5000 are still in existence (Beam 4).

discredited Cardinal Mazarin, and sometimes the queen, portraying them as perpetrators of sexual corruption who threatened the welfare of France. Mazarin was also blamed in slanderous texts for causing the Fronde and scandalmongers demanded that he pay, if not in the flesh, then in "effigy," as critic Christian Jouhaud puts it (Merrick 667).⁴ While some of the Mazarinades actually call for the murder and mutilation of Mazarin, the texts more often employ sexual slander to ruin the credibility of the cardinal - and with it his political power over the king and the country.

The Mazarinades took different forms depending on their audience: pamphlets, newssheets, and booklets for the literate; speeches (given by "*criailleurs*" or individuals who shouted slanderous words in public), songs, sketches, jokes, ballets, engravings, wax figures, and marionettes for the rest.⁵ While diverse in the accusations leveled against the cardinal and the queen, as well as varied in style and form, the Mazarinades functioned, according to Geoffrey Treasure, as part of a

⁴ Writers of Mazarinades were not the only ones who held the cardinal responsible for the nation's ills; in fact, the Parlement of Paris officially blamed Mazarin for France's problems in a remonstrance dated March 23, 1652 (Bonney 819).

⁵ In this chapter, as in chapters I and III, I focus primarily on written texts rather than visual images. As a general matter, paintings and engravings during this period were chiefly created and disseminated by Mazarin's government to shape a positive image of the cardinal; for instance, engravings were created to show Mazarin's passion for the arts and sciences (see illustration 8) (Garcia 5, 8, 19).

"thriving folk industry," that gave the public the purportedly "true" details of every aspect of Mazarin's life and made little distinction between the political and the personal (i.e., the sexual) (Treasure 181).

The Mazarinades aimed to discredit the chief minister, who along with regent Anne of Austria,⁶ was caring for the very young Louis XIV, his godson (1638-1715).⁷ Mazarin was in charge of the affairs of the State during the minority of the king; he was also the superintendent of the king's education beginning in 1648. The overarching fear expressed in the Mazarinades is that the cardinal will have a nefarious influence over the impressionable young king and thus harm France for decades to come (Church 9). The title of Claude Joly's 1642 collection of maxims, Recueil de maximes véritables et importantes pour l'institution du roy contre la fausse & pernicieuse politique du cardinal Mazarin, prétendu surintendant de l'éducation de Sa Majesté, encapsulates the argument of this writer, as the

⁶ The queen's role in general was in a period of transition during Anne's regency; prior to this regency, queens were coronated, much in the same way as the king (Norberg 251). But after the reign of Marie de Médici no queen was ever coronated again; instead, thereafter a queen's only claim to the throne was based on her marriage to the monarch (251). However, one way a queen could have substantial power was if she became regent, as permitted under Salic law; this role was not seen as a threat to the monarch since a female relative, according to law, would be far less likely to usurp the crown than a male relative (252).

⁷ The role of godfather was understood at the time to mean "*père spirituel*," and as such, was considered important and influential (Goubert 112). The king was considered a minor until the age of thirteen; thus there were five years in which Mazarin would be providing spiritual guidance and education.

vitriolic adjectives, "*fausse & pernicieuse*," used to describe the politics of the cardinal confirm. Additionally, the term "*prétendu*" makes clear the author's intent to discredit the cardinal's authority over the king's education. The text argues that Mazarin is in a position to fill the king's head with his own ideas, which could have dangerous consequences for the country: "*L'innocence du Roy est une table rase, sur laquelle il luy a esté aisé d'imprimer tout ce qu'il luy a pleu... [C]ette âme tendre & facile, [] ne peut [pas] encore estre capable de discerner le bien d'avec le mal, ny le vrai avec le faux*" (Joly 4). The author casts the innocent, gentle, and malleable king as a blank slate on which any idea, good, bad, or corrupt can be "imprinted," but it is clear that Joly believes the cardinal will only teach the king "*le mal*" and "*le faux*."

Joly spells out the negative consequences of Mazarin's power in educating the king:

[C]e serait un mal qui pourroit devenir à la longue incurable, & qui serait enfin capable de produire de si mauvais effets, qu'une subversion générale de l'Estat (dont Dieu nous garde) s'en pourroit suivre dans un accablement des peuples & de la Monarchie tout ensemble, la parole de Dieu estant très-asseurée & infaillible : "que les Royaumes sont transférez d'une nation à une autre par les injustices & les violences..." Et c'est pourquoi encore, il est très-important de pourvoir de bonne heure, que la doctrine corrompue que ce mauvais Précepteur a donnée au Roy, ne lui pénètre jusqu'au cœur, qui est le lieu "d'où sortent les mauvaises pensées," capables d'exciter toutes ces tempestes (6-7, 10).

In addition to invoking the word of God, this passage contains three biblical "citations" - the first is noted as "Eccli 10" and the second as "Matth 6.15" and "Marc 6.7" - to bolster Joly's authority that if "*ce mauvais Precepteur*" is allowed to continue influencing the king, there will be a reckoning with God, whose will has been subverted. Although Joly's references appear to be citations from scripture, only one phrase, "*d'où sortent les mauvaises pensées,*" is an actual quote from the Bible (but it is from Marc 7.21 and not from any of the three specifically mentioned in the passage). The other "biblical" citations subvert scripture since the author has created false quotes to support his argument, clear evidence that his aim is to support his own ideas rather than to cite the Bible correctly.⁸ Joly also emphasizes that the cardinal's corrupt doctrine will penetrate and imprint ("*jusqu'au cœur*") the young king, which will in turn create "tempests" of violence and injustice. Indeed, Joly posits that the nation of France will

⁸ While the quotes themselves may be incorrect, the topics of certain of the biblical sections referenced are relevant; Marc 7.21 adds meaning to Joly's text by describing different types of sin; it states that men are corrupt in their hearts and carry within them the potential to be adulterers, fornicators, and murderers. Matth 6.15 appears to be irrelevant and is perhaps a misquote; this particular biblical passage discusses the forgiveness of men's sins. The references to Eccli 10 and Marc 6.7 are more consistent with this slanderer's themes: the first relates to a hierarchy turned on its head - a type of "*monde à l'envers*" - as represented by the slave riding a horse while his master walks on land (Mazarin being the slave to master Louis), and the second concerns Jesus's granting authority to the twelve apostles over unclean spirits (Mazarin being the unclean or "*corrompu*").

be ruined by the cardinal's "*mauvaises pensées*."⁹ In this quote the cardinal is treated as resembling an incurable disease infecting France by way of the young king's body.

In addition to reflecting fear of the cardinal's influence on the king, the Mazarinades aim to show that Mazarin will continue to create disorder in France by refusing to follow the "Creator's blueprints for harmony throughout creation," as Jeffrey Merrick puts it, a universal order where:

[T]he sun governed the planets, the mind governed the body, husbands governed wives, fathers governed children, masters governed servants, and kings governed subjects. The conservation of the body human depended on the collaboration of its various parts under the control of the head, and preservation of the body politic depended on the cooperation of its various members under the sovereignty of the crown (Merrick 672).

A specific hierarchy or "*ordre*" must be followed if France is to maintain its power, but Mazarin subverts it in two significant ways. First, according to slanderous texts that highlighted the sexual acts purportedly enjoyed by the cardinal, his mind does not "govern[] the body" (672). Second, if masters should govern

⁹ There is current debate regarding the emergence of the notion of a nation in France; scholars such as Pierre Goubert and David Bell argue that this concept develops from 1700 through to the French Revolution ("Vive la Nation!"), while Domna Stanton believes that it happens earlier in the 17th century and others place it in the mid to late Middle Ages (Goubert 74; Bell 11; Stanton I 1-21). The term "nation" here does seem to indicate a unified French land and Goubert concedes that "*certain beaux discours ou texts savants*" from the early 1600s employ the word (Goubert 74). On the rise of a French "national" identity during the reign of Louis XIV, see Joan Dejean's The Essence of Style: How the French Invented High Fashion, Fine Food, Chic Cafés, Style Sophistication and Glamour (2005).

servants and kings their subjects,¹⁰ then Mazarin should be taking orders from Louis, rather than giving them to him - for, as Merrick argues, in Mazarin's case, "the body, which should have been the 'slave,' instead usurped the role of master" (676). Jean Bodin's (1530-1596) writings confirm this notion of hierarchical order: France should be run like a household with the king at the top of the pyramid and everyone else under his rule. With Mazarin in the top spot, this structure and thus harmony in France are subverted (Farquhar 135). Furthermore, as Bodin argues in Colloquium Heptaplomeres De Rerum Sublimium Arcanis Abditis,¹¹ harmony is only achieved when, like voices and instruments in music, seamless blending occurs (Kuntz 35). Like Mazarin's usurping of power, his voice (as cardinal) does not blend but rather overtakes the voice of the king.¹² Of course, what complicates the ideal order is the fact that the king was in his minority during the Fronde, making true adherence to the hierarchy impossible, a fact that the Mazarinades ignore.

In the Mazarinades, the cardinal's undermining of the proper hierarchy is traced again and again back to his foreign and supposedly low birth, despite the fact that he did become a

¹⁰ Again evoking "Eccli 10," cited earlier.

¹¹ This text was published in 1857, though it had circulated 300 years prior.

¹² Ironically, mostly individuals of lower rank than the cardinal wrote the Mazarinades; accordingly, both the cardinal and writers of slander were, in their own respective ways, committing transgressions by not "obeying" those "above" them.

naturalized French citizen in 1639 and then changed his name in 1646 from the Italian Giulio Mazzarino to the more French Jules Mazarin; he also called himself French "*par reconnaissance et par tempérament*" (Marseille 523).¹³ Scandalmongers use xenophobic and classist rhetoric to argue that Mazarin was not fit to lead France both as prime minister and through his education of the young king. Many of the Mazarinades rehash the purported "facts" of his birth into an "obscure" family; his father is variously described as an oyster-seller, button-seller, pirate, innkeeper or bankrupt (Treasure 181; Perkins 231). Mazarin's birth is summed up by Cyrano de Bergerac in the pseudo-biography Le Gazettier des-interessé (1649) with the biting words "[il a été] *nai dans une pauvreté honteuse,*" and Joly adds in Recueil de maximes véritables et importantes pour l'institution du roy contre la fausse & pernicieuse politique du cardinal Mazarin (1642) that the cardinal is an "*homme de vile naissance*"; thus, neither the cardinal's class nor clan is worthy of his position in the monarchy (Cyrano 46; Joly 206). His rise from a "*basse naissance,*" as Scarron puts it in La Mazarinade, was problematic enough in a hierarchically rigid

¹³ In the sexual slander written against Henri III, the issue of his class was not applicable, although he was criticized as being too Italianized (and his mother was Italian). However, despite this main difference between the two corpuses of sexual slander, the sexual claims are fairly similar in both periods, with the exception that Mazarin was accused more often of non-sodomitical crimes than was the Valois king. On sexually slanderous texts against Henri III, see supra Chapter I.

France, but combined with a foreign birth, it provided his adversaries even more ammunition for calling into question his authority and legitimacy (Scarron 289).¹⁴

This chapter seeks to show that during the Fronde writers of slanderous texts were engaged in a manner not seen in France since Henri III's reign. While disparate in form, these texts all rely on techniques of slander, such as repetition, accumulation, hyperbole, metaphor, scapegoating, xenophobia, and obscenity to bolster their arguments that the cardinal and the queen were unfit to rule.¹⁵ Now, however, the main target of slanderous texts was not the king himself (as was the case with Henri III), but rather the two people closest to him - Mazarin and Anne D'Autriche.¹⁶ While this chapter analyzes some famous

¹⁴ While Mazarin was cast as a problematic "other" due to his low foreign birth, there was significant upward mobility in the 17th century; in particular, a group of office holders called the *noblesse de robe* or *noblesse de dignité* (as opposed to the *noblesse d'épée*, which consisted of the hereditary aristocracy) was a noble class of "conscious creation" through the selling of titles, which by the end of the 17th century numbered 40,000-50,000 families (Le Roy Ladurie 2). Cardinal Richelieu (1585-1642) promoted this class over *the noblesse d'épée* at the time of the Thirty Years War (1618-1648). Additionally, the rise of the bourgeoisie began in the Middle Ages; the 17th-century monarchy relied heavily on this class to fulfil its administrative and financial needs, according to Robert Mandrou, "*pour peupler bailliages et présidieaux, recettes des finances et généralités*" (Mandrou 107).

¹⁵ On techniques of sexual slander, see supra section of Introduction entitled "Sexual Slander, its Techniques, and Topics".

¹⁶ While Henri III was the specific target of much sexual slander during the Wars of Religion, he was often attacked indirectly through his mignons (i.e., the mignons were cast as metonymies of the king). On the other hand, the attacks against Mazarin are not meant to target the king (who was just a boy and therefore could not be believably sexually slandered), but the cardinal himself who was seen as the agent of problems in France. On sexual slander against Henri III and his mignons, see supra Chapter I.

Mazarinades by well-known authors Paul Scarron (1610-1660) and Cyrano de Bergerac (1619-1655), many anonymous texts (the majority of Mazarinades were anonymous) will be examined as well.¹⁷ An inconsistent system of royal censorship did not deter writers,¹⁸ who produced sexually slanderous texts against the cardinal that primarily focused on three themes: his low¹⁹ and foreign birth, his rumoured sexual habits, and his supposedly deviant genitals. Anne d'Autriche was also attacked²⁰; both she and Mazarin were condemned for their close (i.e., supposed sexual and sometimes sodomitical) relationship. Sexually slanderous texts against both targets sought to show that France's hierarchy had been turned on its head and that disorder in the highest places of the monarchy was going to spread across the nation and cause the demise of France. Eventually, as with slanderous texts during Henri III's reign, writers of scurrilous texts began to write violent fantasies in which the bodies of Mazarin and the queen are mutilated and destroyed, in particular

¹⁷ Paul Scarron was originally under the patronage of Mazarin and the queen, but Mazarin, offended by one of his texts, cut off the author's pension, causing Scarron to lose his fortune at which point he became an avid frondeur. Cyrano de Bergerac, on the other hand, had come from a family with links to Parlement that had suffered under Richelieu's and then Mazarin's financial policies. Despite his scathing attacks against the cardinal, he also wrote texts supporting Mazarin.

¹⁸ On censorship in early-modern France, see supra Introduction.

¹⁹ Mazarin was actually born into a family with royal Italian connections, but slanderers ignore this fact.

²⁰ On attacks against Anne d'Autriche, see section below entitled "Anne d'Autriche: Dangerous Foreigner, Unfit Queen, and 'Cardinal' Sins."

that the queen will be strangled and the cardinal castrated, or worse yet, dismembered and gutted.

17th Century Press and the Limits of Slander in the Mazarinades

The Mazarinades must be viewed in relation - in opposition - to "official" printed matter sanctioned by the monarchy, such as the *Gazette*, a printed journal started in 1631 under Cardinal Richelieu (1585-1642) and run by Théophraste Renaudot (1586-1653), who had been secretary and doctor of the king. This weekly periodical supplanted the fairly irregular *nouvelles à la main* (news-sheets) as the primary source of news; the *Gazette* spread information about current battles and troop movements as well as accounts of marriages, deaths, and similar "non-controversial" topics (Miller 302; Brown 366).²¹ The *Gazette* held a privileged place in the government, according to Minnie Miller, since there were no other such publications that had the royal stamp of approval (Miller 302). In fact, according to Pierre Goubert and Daniel Roche, Louis XIII (1601-1643) originally put the *Gazette* under government control in order to filter information and to ensure a flattering image of the monarchy (Goubert and Roche 229). Indeed, in exchange for a "legal monopoly" of the press, the *Gazette* systematically

²¹ The first daily paper, *Le Journal de Paris*, appears nearly 150 years later in 1777.

praised the king and cardinal Richelieu while promoting the monarch's policies and family; and there were frequent written contributions by both Richelieu and Louis XIII to the *Gazette's* pages (Sawyer 137; Levy 294).²² Accordingly, when Mazarin and Anne d'Autriche were in charge of the monarchy, during the minority of the king, the *Gazette* praised them without question (Miller 302). To be sure, the monarchy did not allow for any publication that judged or reflected on ethics, religion or politics in a manner that would negatively reflect on the actions of the monarch or his government (Brown 367). Thus, while not censorship per se, the act of limiting official publications to only those that would revere the king and support his policies is itself a form of censorship, although ultimately not a very effective one.²³

In contrast to the press created specifically and systematically to glorify the monarch and monarchy, there were thousands of clandestine texts produced without government

²² In addition to promoting their policies through the *Gazette*, the monarch and Richelieu used other media, such as aggrandizing paintings, to create a glorified image of the king. Moreover, according to Emanuel Le Roy Ladurie, Richelieu employed sympathetic writers to spread both information and disinformation that served his and the monarchy's politics and reputation (Le Roy Ladurie 77). Richelieu had a monopoly on printed material in general; in fact, he even established a royal printing house, Sublet des Noyers, in 1639-1640 to ensure that favorable views of the monarchy would be disseminated widely (77). The "press" was placed under strict monarchical control during the reign of Louis XIV, which, according to Robert Darnton, had the effect of also stifling slander against the king (Darnton I 205). On the management of Louis XIV's image, see Peter Burke's The Fabrication of Louis XIV

²³ On censorship in the *Ancien Régime*, see supra Introduction.

permission or privilege, whose aim was to criticize the monarchy's policies and individuals with power. But when the Fronde began in 1648, there was an outbreak of the sort of uncensored, highly critical and sexually explicit press that had appeared during the reign of Henri III. The fact that 800 of these texts were published between January and March of 1649 alone shows the high level of demand for this type of text; indeed, 800 already exceeds the total number of clandestine works attacking Henri III (Miller 302-303). In addition, there was a second "explosion" of pamphlets in 1651, from the time Armand de Bourbon, Prince of Condé (1629-1666), a rival of Mazarin as the commander of the rebel army during the Fronde, was released from prison through his occupation of Paris (Beam 4).²⁴ Periods of heaviest production took place when Anne d'Autriche was not in Paris (she and her son fled the city for fear of their safety four times, sometimes with Mazarin, within four years beginning in 1648), thereby reducing the effectiveness of the government's already weak system of censorship; this led to slanderous texts being printed with less scrutiny (4).

²⁴ Condé had been incarcerated for promoting himself as the savior of France (thus, usurping Mazarin's glory) due to his military successes at the onset of the Fronde, during which he fought for the court; later, after breaking with the court, Condé occupied Paris when he was unable to convince the queen to concede more power to him.

While Paul Scarron (La Mazarinade in 1651) and Cyrano de Bergerac (Le Ministre d'estat flambé en vers burlesques and Le Gazettier des-intéressé in 1649), wrote the more famous Mazarinades, most of these 5,000 texts were anonymous. They were also produced in different dialects, such as normand, picard, gascon, provençal, and patois parisien, which allowed for nationwide dissemination (Carrier I 300). The texts varied in length and could range from one to one hundred pages; a longer text in more sophisticated language could appeal to the literate while a one page text in simple grammar could be read by someone with rudimentary reading skills. In addition to the different levels of language, lengths, and dialects used, the Mazarinades also varied in their content: they are semi-historical and sprinkled with facts,²⁵ entirely fictional, violent or obscene,²⁶ and often contain many of these elements at once (Beam 2).

Readers of the Mazarinades were likely from the bourgeoisie (see Beam) or the upper classes (see Sawyer); both groups would have been more literate than the often illiterate poorer classes (5). There is scant evidence from booksellers of the period concerning the purchase of these slanderous texts, although the records of one Grenoble book dealer, Nicolas, show that about

²⁵ On the verisimilar in slanderous texts, see supra Introduction.

²⁶ On obscenity in the *Ancien Régime*, see supra section of Introduction entitled "Sexual Slander, its Techniques, and Topics".

two thirds of Mazarinades were purchased by legal officials and more than one half were by officials in the sovereign courts; furthermore, nobles accounted for about 12% of the purchases, clergymen 7% and merchants and artisans about 5% (Sawyer 68-69). Unfortunately, Nicolas' data is only relevant for those who bought on credit, since he kept no records for those who paid cash; and given the illegal nature of this kind of book trade, many individuals would not have wanted to have their names associated with the purchase of slanderous texts and thus would have paid cash (68-69). It also seems that pamphlets were bought, read and then resold; thus, initial purchase records only indicate the text's first footprint and would not account for all subsequent audiences (69).²⁷ Of course, since sexual slander was typically the most transgressive form of slander, its purchase may have been of an especially clandestine nature.

While the large volume and varied registers of the Mazarinades point to a growing "public" that was critical of the monarchy's policies, not a single Mazarinade directly condemns the young king or the monarchy as an institution. However, any attack on those closest to the king (Mazarin and Anne d'Autriche) is a metonymical attack on the king. Furthermore, only one fifth of the entire corpus of Mazarinades actually

²⁷ This fact would be equally true for the other two periods studied in this dissertation.

advocates for changes in government policies, such as Mazarin's fiscal plans, which included the selling of offices (the *noblesse de robe*); instead, the majority focuses on the perceived moral deficiencies of the cardinal and the queen (Beam 4). To be sure, making political arguments would have taken more skill and knowledge than slandering Mazarin through *ad hominen* attacks (Smith 118).

Disorder in the Court: Mazarin's Effect on the Nation, His "Saucisson," and Evil Sperm

No matter the format, dialect, or register, the Mazarinades use the same techniques to slander Mazarin's supposed sexual perversions, which have already caused or will cause France's disorder and ruin. In general, the Mazarinades stress that the cardinal must be defined by "ordre," or what God "*a mis dans cet univers,*" thus, any deviation from the established order would indicate that Mazarin was creating disorder and defying God (s.v. "ordre." Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française. 1st ed. 1694). In Furetière's definition, "[u]n homme vit dans le désordre, lors qu'il ne vit pas selon les loix, qu'il est adonné à la débauche, au libertinage[,] ou qu'il se trouve en un estat deshonneste & indécent" (s.v. "désordre." Dictionnaire universel. 1690). The word "desbauche," defined by Furetière as

an "*habitude vicieuse, abandonement au vin, aux femmes, au jeu, et aux autres vices,*" or addiction, is characterized as "*deshonneste,*" which Furetière describes as "*ce qui est contre les règles de l'honneur, de la bienfaisance, de la pudeur*" (s.v. "*desbauche,*" and "*deshonneste.*" Dictionnaire universel. 1690).

Sexuality would only be one aspect of such rules. In the Dictionnaire de Académie Française (1st ed. 1694), disorder is associated with a perversion of both morals and God:

Manque d'ordre, renversement, desrangement, confusion des choses qui ne sont pas dans l'estat, le rang & la disposition où elles devroient estre...

Il se dit aussi [d]es choses morales [et] Il se dit aussi, [d]es personnes qui sont dans le vice & le dérèglement (s.v. "désordre").

As this dictionary and the Mazarinades make clear, "man" is expected to fight his unruly sexual impulses ("*déréglé*"), because not combating such urges leads to derangement: "*déranger,*" according to the Dictionnaire français (1680), means to "*defaire l'ordre*" (s.v. "*déranger*"). Michel Loude explains the expectation in the 17th century for man to maintain order over his passions: "*Dieu, le Père est...ce rempart de l'homme contre sa folie: entendons contre cette explosion vitale, cette espèce de mouvement libre et désordonné²⁸ de machine en furie*

²⁸ In the Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française (1st ed. 1694), "*désordonné*" is synonymous with "*deréglé*" (s.v. "*désordonné*").

dérégulée qu'est l'homme passionné" (Loude 178).²⁹ Not being in control of one's sexual passions, according to Loude, would be to "*détrôner Dieu le Père,*" "*et d'opérer une transmutation du monde*" (178).³⁰ The ultimate master and king to be obeyed is God, and the king's divine right means that he has a direct link to God. Thus, if Mazarin were not obeying the monarch, he was failing to obey God. Rather than obedient, the cardinal is "*déréglé,*" which is akin to disordered ("*qui est en désordre*"), according to the Dictionnaire français (1680) (s.v. "*dérégler*"). As a cardinal, Mazarin should conform to God's will, yet the Mazarinades portray him as defying God by not submitting to the king.³¹ Again, however, because the king was just a boy, it would not have been possible for him to be the master.

²⁹ Descartes depicts man overcoming his passions in Traité des passions de l'âme (1649), a very positive view of human capacities. Since "*les passions de l'âme [sont] véritablement jointe [sic] à tout le corps,*" if any part of the body does not function properly, it makes the whole body "defective" (Descartes 710, 720, 790). He also argues that the most "*basse,*" "*orgueilleux,*" and "*faible*" of men are the most likely to give way to their passions.

³⁰ However, as in most cultures, the existence of one strict view of how "man" should behave does not mean that there are no counter arguments; in fact, there was a different belief in the Renaissance that "man" should enjoy himself and relish in his passions. Indeed, sexual literature, such as Italian Pietro Aretino's (1492-1556) explicit Sonetti Lussuriosi (1524) and his French contemporary, François Rabelais' (1494-1553) Pantagruel texts (1532-1552), celebrate man's urges rather than argue for passions to be contained.

³¹ Mazarin is a cardinal and thus expected to be in control of his passions as is the rest of the clergy. However, despite this expectation, the clergy were often accused of sexual misconduct in slander. Indeed, there is a long history of sexual slandering of the clergy dating back to the Middle Ages; for instance, it was a common theme that clergymen preyed on young girls despite their vows of chastity. While this rich history deserves scholarly examination, the topic is not analysed in this dissertation.

In addition to casting Mazarin as usurping the king's (and therefore God's) supreme position, the Mazarinades portray the cardinal as a foreigner who steals France's money and plots against France. Mazarin did amass a large fortune that, according to Richard Bonney, was noted by the public, already conditioned to viewing Italians as wealthy.³² In fact, an inventory of Mazarin's fortune showed that he had more money than the vaults of the Bank of Amsterdam (Le Roy Ladurie 95).³³ Both Anne and Mazarin, like Catherine de Médici before them, were accused of privileging their respective birth countries over France; in 1637, two years after the war between France and Spain commenced,³⁴ Anne was caught secretly corresponding with her brother, Philip IV (1605-1665) of Spain, which led to speculation that she was sharing governmental secrets.³⁵ Mazarin was officially charged in 1651 with illegally transferring funds to Italy (although he was not prosecuted since Anne D'Autriche did not support the charges) (Bonney 821-822).³⁶ In Le Gazettier

³² On wealthy Italians, see supra Chapter I.

³³ Indeed, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie posits that Mazarin was wealthier than eighteenth-century multi-millionaires; his fortune included land, loans, and liquid wealth (Le Roy Ladurie 96).

³⁴ France had been at war more or less consistently since the Thirty Years' War began in 1618.

³⁵ On Catherine de Médici's privileging of Italians, see supra Chapter I.

³⁶ The fear of powerful foreigners transferring money abroad is also exploited in slander against Henri III and Marie Antoinette (see supra Chapters I and III).

des-intéressé (1649) Cyrano treats the theft as fact, when he states that Mazarin "*transport ses larcins en Italie*" (Cyrano 51).

Above and beyond accusations of theft, Italians were cast as sexually deviant in the early-modern period;³⁷ this deviance is reflected particularly in Mazarinades that mention Mazarin's "Italian" penis, which comes into humorous play in several texts. For instance, one anonymous author writes in Les Logements de la cour à Satin-Germain en Laye (1649) that "*sa personne [Mazarin] fut pour elle [Anne d'Autriche] le saucisson d'Italie*" ("saucisson" is a large piece of sausage meat, defined by the Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française (1st ed. 1694) as "*fort gros*"³⁸), and Scarron in La Mazarinade calls this penis a "*baguette*," described by Nicot as being six or seven *pieds* long and used to hit dogs (Carrier I 452; La Mazarinade 284; s.v. "*sausisson*." Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française. 1st ed. 1694; s.v. "*baguette*." Le Thresor de la langue francoyse. 1606). These terms synecdochally reduce Mazarin to his sexual member. Indeed, the main bodily attraction of the Mazarinades is often Mazarin's penis. Despite the comic elements, casting the

³⁷ On Italian's supposed sexual deviance, see supra Chapter I.

³⁸ The Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française (1st ed. 1694) also says this type of meat has a "*fort haust gout*," part of the definition clearly not applicable when the term is employed to describe Mazarin's penis (s.v. "*saucisson*").

cardinal's penis as large enough to beat a dog reflects anxiety about the organ that has come to represent him.

Indeed, although a consistent trope of erotic literature is the equation of a man's worth with his penis size, lauding large penises and denigrating small ones,³⁹ Mazarin's big penis is not valorized, but ridiculed as being Italian sausage.⁴⁰ As

³⁹ In fact, one unnamed and undated text attributed to poet François Maynard equates a large member to virility and good fortune:

La Roche, mon parfaict amy,
 Je te donne pour ton estreine
 Un vit de deux pieds et demy
 Qui foutut six pieds tout d'une haleine
 Car pour dire la vérité
 Une telle félicité
 N'est mesprisabile ny commune,
 Mesmement en l'age où l'on vit
 Où maint homme a de la fortune
 A la mesure de son vit (quoted in Loude 86).

According to this text and many others, a man would have more or less success in life depending on the size of his member. Conversely, one unnamed and undated vitriolic poem from Sigogne (1560-1611) likens a small penis to those of "*les nains, monstres en petitesse*" (quoted in Loude 90).

⁴⁰ In fact, ridiculing large penises is more consistent with the Western European anxiety over the African penis, even though this comparison is never directly stated in the Mazarinades. When Europeans began traveling to African cultures in the 15th century, the focus of many travel texts was the differences between the bodies of Western Europeans and those of Africans, who, due to the extreme climate of their lands, had "grotesque, exaggerated bodies and savage, out-of-control behaviors" (Friedman 83). According to David Friedman, the stereotypically large African penis came to represent the "savage" nature of blacks:

[The African penis] was stared at, feared (and in some cases desired), weighed, interpreted via Scripture, meditated on by zoologists and anthropologists, preserved in specimen jars, and, most of all, calibrated. And, in nearly every instance, its size was deemed proof that the negro was less a man than a beast (83).

Like, the African penis, the Mazarinades' focus on the cardinal's genitals becomes proof that he too was less man than beast. While this quote certainly evokes 18th, 19th and 20th century notions of race and racism, set forth by individuals such as geologist Dr. Charles White (1728-1813), the general concept can be traced back to the 17th century with work done by the first comparative anatomist, physician Edward Tyson (1650-1708). Indeed,

is often the case, writers of slanderous texts turn positive attributes into negative ones to make their case. As Jeffrey Merrick shows, the Mazarinades cast Mazarin "as a deformed and despotic monster, endowed with oversized and undisciplined genitals, who gained unnatural authority through unnatural means" (Merrick 691). By giving the cardinal a huge penis, by exaggerating his virility, slanderers are perhaps also implying the cliché that penis size equals political strength and that Mazarin may wield his member politically at France's expense.⁴¹

Mazarin is defined not only by his genitals, but also by his bodily fluids, sperm and vomit. Here, however, there is no comic element; instead, his fluids are demonized. His sperm is described as corrupt and demonic - "cursed pus"; the seed of life is reduced to something like a diabolical sickness, more akin to death than to life (Merrick 690).⁴² Cyrano subscribes to this view of a demonic fluid when he describes Mazarin's vomit; in Le Gazetteur des-intéressé (1649) he describes the cardinal as a "monster" vomiting poison, just as a dragon spews fire ("*il vomit tout le venin qui luy reste*") not only on the French

Winthrop D. Jordan states that already in the 17th century blacks were noted in Europe as having "extraordinary" genitals (Jordan 82).

⁴¹ Apart from calling the cardinal's penis exceptionally large, there are typically no detailed descriptions of his sexual member in the Mazarinades.

⁴² Jeffrey Merrick does not provide the name or date of the text from which "cursed pus" comes. This concept evokes a medieval theological idea: that semen is a satanic fluid of which demons are composed (Friedman 3, 68).

people, but also on God ("*il n'a pas seulement vomy son venin contre les hommes, il l'a mesme vomy contre Dieu*") (Cyrano 56, 64). Since snakes, whose shape is often viewed as phallic, produce venom, it seems clear that Cyrano is not just referring to vomit from the mouth, but is also calling to mind sperm erupting from a penis. Descriptions of Mazarin's vomit can also be read as a sign of his chaotic internal state. The venom vomited by Mazarin is similar to what Loude calls "*cette explosion vitale, cette espèce de mouvement libre et désordonné de machine en furie dérégulée,*" a sexual "explosion" from the mouth or penis of a man "*en furie dérégulée*" (Loude 178).

Beyond venom, Cyrano compares Mazarin's body as a whole to a fantastic monster in Le Gazetteur des-intéressé: "*la vie de Mazarin eut este sim[ple]ment imaginaire, comme celle des dragons*" (Cyrano 63). The word "*imaginaire*" may suggest that since the cardinal was not born to rule France, his leadership is more fantastic than real. And by comparing Mazarin to "*les Harpies,*"⁴³ not only is the cardinal feminized as diabolical; he is also animalized and turned into a monster who steals food from others (i.e., from the French people) and who governs irrationally (63).

⁴³ On harpies, see supra Introduction.

The Italian Vice: Sodomy and Soiled Underpants

Over and beyond oversized genitals and diseased bodily fluids, the most problematic of all accusations against Mazarin was that he was a sodomite. Historically, there is no such evidence; indeed, according to Philippe Delorme, biographers of Mazarin have concluded that he had only one romantic relationship in his life and it was with the daughter of a notary during his youth, but rumors circulated about his sexuality, due to the lack of female mistresses in his adult life (Delorme 232). The cardinal is variously described in several anonymous, unnamed and undated texts as "*un bougre accompli*," who "*laisse le c[on] pour le c[u]*," who "*vit comme à Sodome*," and who is "*reconnu dans Sodome*" (Song and Verse Collection Vol I, 77, 258, 259).⁴⁴ This piling up of offences, a technique used in all slander examined in this dissertation, is to be expected with sodomy, which was associated with a whole gamut of crimes such as "irreligion, bestiality, depravity, and effeminacy," as Merrick states (Merrick 679).⁴⁵ Slanderers accuse Mazarin of multiple transgressions; the more crimes he is

⁴⁴ At times, Mazarin is even denounced for masturbation and bestiality, two other variants of sodomy; in La Mazarinade, Scarron calls him "[u]n bougre venant en droite ligne d'Onan, mastuprateur insigne" (Onan is a biblical character whose name became eponymous for onanism and who has been held up as an example of someone who "spilled his seed" for sexual pleasure rather than procreation) and "*un bougre à chèvres*" (Song and Verse Collection Vol I, 295).

⁴⁵ On sodomy see supra Introduction.

"guilty" of, the more powerful their argument that he is unfit to rule France.

The so-called Italian vice is highlighted in the many Mazarinades that touch on Mazarin's sexual relations with boys and men. Of course, the cardinal's Italian heritage made him a convenient target for such attacks due to Italy's reputation as the birthplace of sodomy. The cardinal was even accused by Louis XIV's valet, Pierre de la Porte (1603-1680), of having molested the young king in his posthumous Mémoires de la Porte, premier valet de Louis XIV (1756).⁴⁶ In La Custode de la Reyne qui dit tout (1649), attributed to Claude Chauvigny de Blot (1610-1655), the cardinal is accused not only of having had anal sex with men in Italy, but more generally, of spreading "vice," which necessarily could always include the "Italian vice"⁴⁷:

*François, de qui l'Empire est Saint & glorieux,
Ne souffrez point chez vous le triomphe du Vice,
Prepare à Louys un Trosne de Justice,
Afin que dignement ils suivent ses Ayeuls* (1).

To let vice triumph would be to let the cardinal conquer the French people. The call to Frenchmen ("*François*") is used to

⁴⁶ Since this text was published nearly 100 years after the Fronde, I do not treat it as part of the Mazarinades in this chapter. However, the dates of publication are less significant than the sexual slander itself: the molestation of a young king long before Marie Antoinette was condemned for her supposed incest with the dauphin, a charge that resurfaced at Marie Antoinette's trial (in her case it was more than just molestation - it was incest). On Marie Antoinette's supposed sexual relations with her son, see supra Chapter III.

⁴⁷ La Custode de la Reyne qui dit tout (1649) accused the king of having anal sex with Anne d'Autriche and of having sex with men; thus, the word "vice" in this text seems to suggest the "Italian Vice".

remind them of their "*Sainte & glorieuse*" history as well as their "*Ayeuls*". And in Pierre du Pont's L'Ambitieux, ou le portrait d'Oelius Séjanus en la personne du cardinal Mazarin (1649), Mazarin is cast as a new Lucius Aelius Sejanus (20 BC-AD 31), the early Roman ruler, seen as a usurper of Roman Emperor Tiberius's (42 BC- AD 37) power; like Sejanus, Mazarin was accused of sodomy (Olson 108). In this text, du Pont links the cardinal to this early foreign ruler known for engaging in deviant sex in the same way Henri III had been compared to Caligula.

In the attacks for his Italian vice, the cardinal practices not just active sodomy, but also passive sodomy, always the more problematic role for an adult male; Mazarin steps "downwards" from the male (active sexual partner) to the female (passive sexual partner) role. In Le Gazzetier des-intéressé, Cyrano states that the cardinal used his body as a woman (i.e., the passive sexual partner) and slept with powerful men to gain power, money, and glory; prostitution is how Cyrano explains the cardinal's rise in France (Cyrano 46-47). Another text accusing the cardinal of being a passive sodomite (as well as an active one) is Scarron's La Mazarinade:

*Sergent à verge de Sodome,
Exploitant par tout le royaume,
Bougre bougrant, bougre bougré* (Scarron 295).

Here, Mazarin's penis is associated with Sodom, and any connection with this ancient city is necessarily linked to its biblical fate; thus, the penis, which metonymically stands for the cardinal, is doomed like Sodom.⁴⁸ Furthermore, Mazarin is accused of exploiting the whole kingdom ("*pour tout le Royaume*") of France with his sexual member; therefore, should the cardinal continue to maintain authority, France might end up ruined like Sodom. The quote inundates the reader with various forms of the word "*bougre*," to drive home the "fact" of Mazarin's "vice," and to show that he is a sodomite sodomizing (the penetrator) as well as a sodomized sodomite (the penetrated). Elsewhere in La Mazarinade, the cardinal is accused of being a "*femme aux hommes*" - another manner of casting him as a passive sodomite (295). Scarron also calls the cardinal "*Ganimède*" and a "*bardache*," or passive sodomite (286, 288).

As part of the accusations of sodomitical practices, a number of anonymous popular songs of the period as well as Scarron's La Mazarinade describes the physical body of Mazarin as displaying external signs of sodomy. Indeed, his anus shows signs of passive sodomy; a common refrain is "*les hemoroïdes, vous ont mangé tout le cu...*," the hemorrhoids providing a humourous scatological detail (Song and Verse Collection Vol. I,

⁴⁸ On sodomy and historical comparisons in sexual slander, see supra Introduction.

61, 258). The anus is inscribed with the marks of a body ravaged by the practice of anal sex; Mazarin has been sodomized to such an extent that there is nothing left of the original anatomical part except signs of its destruction. Indeed, Mazarin's anus is hyperbolized to become the cardinal's defining feature. As with the oversized penis, evil sperm, and venomous vomit, the cardinal's person is erased and he is instead eclipsed by - and reduced to - a swollen and sickly excremental site.

The image of the anus as excremental site appears in Scarron's La Mazarinade, in a verse that highlights Mazarin's "*caleçons pleins de merde*" (Scarron 290). In the 17th century, according to George Vigarello, purity and cleanliness were measured by the whiteness of one's undergarments, as a sign of the interior state (Vigarello 70). In the popular 17th-century manual on civility, L'Honnête Homme ou l'art de plaire à la cour (1630), Nicolas Faret writes that an "*honnête homme*," no matter what his social rank, always has clean undergarments: "*C'est assez qu'il ait toujours de beau linge et bien blanc, qu'il soit bien chaussé, que ses habits, s'ils ne sont pas riches, du moins ne soient n'y vieux, ni sales...*" (Faret 93). The image of underpants soiled with fecal matter thus underscores the cardinal's corrupt interior state. Neglecting to use his anus in the proper manner for defecation, and instead

using it for sexual intercourse, Mazarin turns it into a leaking and disordered orifice. Thus, deviant sexuality leads to (and in Mazarin's case, paradoxically also comes from) his corrupt Italian body.

In the Mazarinades, sodomy is also paired with incest, here cast as another sodomitical act. The cardinal is accused of having sex with his nephew, Paolo Mancini (1636-1652), in an unnamed text of 1652 by Blot:

*Cy-gist le petit Mancini,
Le neveu de Mazarini!
L'Oncle en pleure comme une vache,
S'escriant: Hélas! Quel malheur!
Il m'estoit neveu et bardache
(Carrier I 303).⁴⁹*

Mazarin's nephew had died fighting in the faubourg Saint-Antoine during the Fronde and was rumored to be the cardinal's lover (Merrick 683). The phrase, "*il m'estoit neveu et bardache*," assigns the passive sexual role to the nephew, instead of the cardinal, who is portrayed as a man willing to corrupt his own nephew. The implication is that if he debases a family member, what will he do to France?

Sexual slander often defies logic; thus, the Mazarinades alternately portray an "over-virile" cardinal (i.e., his enormous penis with which he fucks the queen) as a man to be feared, and an "under-virile" cardinal (i.e., a passive

⁴⁹ A similar anonymous version of this text can also be found in the Song and Verse Collection Vol. I, 226.

sodomite), whose sodomy will infect the nation; in both cases France will suffer. And while the threat of Mazarin's virility is implied in slanderous texts describing his oversized (and therefore powerful) sexual organ, texts such as Scarron's La Mazarinade, depicting Mazarin as one who engages in passive sodomitical acts make him a threat to France for the opposite reason: lack of virility.

Anne d'Autriche: Dangerous Foreigner, Unfit Queen, and "Cardinal" Sins

Although Mazarin is the primary target of sexual attacks in the Mazarinades, Anne d'Autriche is accused as well of disordering the nation. Of course, this accusation also stems from her foreignness, even though she had been "frenchified" when she was made queen,⁵⁰ renouncing Spain in 1615, and signing a document attesting that she and her future children would be excluded from rights of succession in Spain (Delorme 37).⁵¹ Despite these acts of renunciation, Anne's Spanish national origin did cause concern, since Spain was regarded as France's

⁵⁰ Or, as Abby Zanger puts it, the queen was "transformed" from Spanish into French through sartorial and other rituals (Zanger I 160).

⁵¹ Furthermore, according to custom, the future queen was "exchanged" on the island of the Bidassoa - a place where the princess symbolically turned from Spanish into French (Dulong 13).

foremost enemy.⁵² Moreover, although regencies were permitted under Salic law, they were regarded as inherently unstable, even dangerous. According to Emanuel Le Roy Ladurie, Cardinal Richelieu believed that queen regents represented a dangerous faction.⁵³ And Anne's husband, Louis XIII (1601-1643), even tried to prohibit his wife from becoming regent upon his death, but she convinced Parlement to override the will of the late king.

Despite the efforts to cleanse Anne of her Spanish origins and her own posturing in paintings where she was depicted as being a submissive (i.e., harmless) regent,⁵⁴ she was nevertheless cast in sexually slanderous texts as a criminally and sexually corrupt queen. The queen is accused of potential regicide and other crimes in the anonymous Les Larmes de la Royne et du cardinal Landriguet⁵⁵ (1652):

⁵² The discord was due to Spain's involvement in both the final years of the devastating Wars of Religion (when Spain had tried to prevent Protestant Henri IV (1553-1610) from becoming king) and the Thirty Years' War.

⁵³ Richelieu wrote and commissioned plays that attacked Anne d'Autriche (Le Roy Ladurie 42, 78).

⁵⁴ The queen commissioned prints and paintings during her regency to attenuate the threat of her regency; in one she is positioned adjacent to and below the young king, thus loyal and deferential to him (see paintings at illustrations 9 and 10). By contrast, Marie de Médici glorified her regency in the famous monumental series of paintings she commissioned Peter Paul Rubens to produce, among which, "The Arrival of Marie de Médici in Marseilles" (at illustration 11) (Norberg 253). On these paintings, see Deborah Marrow's The Art Patronage of Maria de Médici (1982).

⁵⁵ The title of Les Larmes de la Royne et du cardinal Landriguet can be read in two different ways; Randy Conner indicates that the word "reine" or "royne" in Renaissance France also meant "a bawdy or bohemian woman imagined

Si nous considerons les désordres que les Brunehaults, les Fredegondes, & les Isabeaux ont causé dans ce Royaume, nous frémirons d'horreur. Les adultères, les regicides, les empoisonnements, incendies, & sacrilèges, ont rendu la mémoire de ces trois Roynes exécration à tous les français... [T]ous les maux que ces trois bonnes Dames ont fait en France, n'approchent pas de bien loin ceux qu'elle souffre à présent (4).⁵⁶

This quote compares Anne d'Autriche to three "exécration" queens known for their promiscuity, ruthlessness and murderous conduct, only to affirm she is worse than they and that France suffers from crimes she has or will commit.⁵⁷

The attacks against Anne d'Autriche often centered on her close affiliation with Mazarin; by attacking both individuals who had more or less total control over the young king,

to be a gypsy" (Conner 41). Thus, while "reine" appears benign, it could in fact be read as an insult.

⁵⁶ Queen Brunhilda (543-613) helped incite a war against Neustria and was ultimately executed at the behest of Clotaire II (584-629); she was tortured for several days, had her relatives killed in front of her, and finally dragged through the streets by a horse to her death. Queen Fredegonda (545-597), a rival of Brunhilda, was mistress to King Chilperic I (539-584) and became queen after convincing him to kill his wife Galswintha (540-568); she also ordered the execution of king Sigebert and her stepchildren. Queen Fredegonda also had women burned at the stake with little evidence they had done wrong. Queen Isabeau of Bavaria (1371-1435) sympathized with the English and the Burgundians, both enemies of France during the Hundred Years War; these sympathies led to the Treaty of Troyes (1420), in which her son, Charles VII (1403-1461), was disinherited in favor of Henry V of England (1387-1422). By referencing Isabeau in the pamphlets, the author implies that Anne d'Autriche may disinherit her son and choose instead a foreign enemy to be king of France. On foreign queens, see supra Introduction.

⁵⁷ This same tactic continues to be used well into the 18th century, when Marie-Antoinette is likened repeatedly to, among others, Messaline, the first-century Roman empress reputed for her voracious sexual appetite. On comparisons of Marie Antoinette with other foreign queens, see supra Chapter III.

scandal mongers implied that the king needs to be freed from them. And, attacking the queen is one more way for scandal mongers to target Mazarin; sexually slanderous texts portray the cardinal as corrupting the queen (the highest female representative of France) with his sexual (i.e., Italian) deviance.⁵⁸ Indeed, the queen is treated as a metonymy of France in sexual slander portraying her debasement; for, if she is ruined, won't the same happen to France and her people? Moreover, slanderous texts during the Fronde were the first historically to condemn a French queen's "private" (i.e., sexual) life as a means to "weaken" her claim to the regency (Beam 12).⁵⁹ By contrast, the regents Marie and Catherine de Médici were rarely blamed for sexual licentiousness in slanderous texts.⁶⁰ Perhaps it was Anne d'Autriche's failure to repudiate Mazarin publicly during the Fronde, says Katherine

⁵⁸ On the supposed sexual deviance of Italians, see supra Chapter I.

⁵⁹ Sara Beam argues that while the private lives of previous French queens (i.e., the Médicis) were occasionally attacked, the large volume of Mazarinades shows that this sort of consistent personal condemnation was more commonplace during the Fronde (Beam 12).

⁶⁰ The most notable instances of slander against Catherine de Médici were written by Protestants in the anonymous Discours merveilleux de la vie, actions et déportments de Catherine de Médicis, Royne-mère (1649) and d'Aubigné's scathing Les Tragiques (published in 1616 though written more than 50 years earlier) (Crawford II 402). It is somewhat surprising that charges of extramarital sexuality were not brought in earlier periods against queens since it was their reproductive potential to create an heir that carried them to the throne (Beam 15). On Les Tragiques, see supra Chapter I.

One way Catherine de Médici likely helped protect herself from attacks against her character was by casting herself as a widow in black. There is very little skin in any paintings of her (see illustration 12).

Crawford, which led critics to use sexual slander as a means to condemn both the cardinal and the queen (Crawford II 404). Anne d'Autriche and Mazarin were united in their policies and care of the king, which made it convenient for slanderers to attack them both and often at once. And some historians, such as Philippe Delorme, believe there was a sexual affair between them (others, such as Emanuel Le Roy Ladurie, see it as purely platonic) and there were rumors of a secret marriage, which also cannot be confirmed (Crawford II 403; Perkins 297-99; Treasure 193; Le Roy Ladurie 85). Delorme cites a letter from Mazarin to Anne as proof of a physical relationship between them: "*[V]ous ne sauriez vous imaginer le soulagement que l'on a...quand l'on recoit certaines visites, de fois à l'autre, le soir, à l'honneur desquelles on ne peut aspirer dans l'état où je suis*"; this "*soulagement*" following night visits to Anne could be read as sexual in nature (Delorme 425). Moreover, in a 1651 letter to the queen, Mazarin writes that the two are "*unis ensemble par des liens que vous êtes tombée d'accord plus d'une fois avec moi qu'ils ne pouvaient être rompus, ni par le temps ni par quelque effort qu'on y fit*"; Delorme wonders whether these so-called "ties" were marital (233). Aiding this suspicion was the fact that Anne demanded that Parlement confer on Mazarin the right of counsel over the young king upon Richelieu's death in 1642, and chose him to be prime minister, a definitive measure to keep the

cardinal close to her. Moreover, that the queen's residence was adjacent to Mazarin's gave credibility to rumors of sex and/or marriage, over and beyond the fact that the cardinal and the queen fled Paris together during the Fronde, such as in 1648 during the Paris revolts.⁶¹

Although Anne d'Autriche was a supporting character in sexually slanderous texts during the Fronde, at least one anonymous pamphlet, Les Amours d'Anne d'Autriche épouse de Louis XIII avec Monsieur le C.D.R. le veritable père de Louis XIV⁶² (1693), focuses solely on the queen⁶³; indeed it is one of the earliest works of slander dedicated entirely to defaming sexually a queen of France.⁶⁴ Ostensibly the text aims to present a "*recherche exacte de la petite Naissance de Louis le grand,*"⁶⁵ and its plot centers on the fact that she could not

⁶¹ Joëlle Garcia argues that Mazarin's government was aware of the rumors concerning the cardinal and the queen and thus that Mazarin is rarely seen next to the queen in engravings disseminated by the monarchy (see illustration 13).

⁶² The pagination of this text is not linear and starts over twice; therefore, there may be instances of multiple pages having the same page number.

⁶³ However, this text was written twenty-seven years after Anne's death and was primarily meant to challenge Louis XIV's power by slandering his dead mother. I examine this text here because it attacks Anne d'Autriche in a manner that does not include Mazarin.

⁶⁴ This text is different from the majority of Mazarinades because it is a novel with a cohesive plot; it is closer in form to slander against Marie Antoinette, see supra Chapter III.

⁶⁵ This text correctly points out that Louis XIV was born after twenty-three years of a childless marriage and argues that this timing should raise questions about his paternity. The royal couple did have difficulty conceiving and the queen had several miscarriages prior to the birth of her son. Anne d'Autriche was married at age ten, so while the figure twenty-

have become pregnant by her husband, Louis XIII, an "*impuissant*" whose sperm is "*toute petite*" (Les Amours d'Anne... 2, 15).⁶⁶ On the advice of Richelieu and Anne's confessor, Père Joseph, so says this text, she thus decides to have sex with C.D.R.

(identified only as an unmarried "*chevalier*"), to conceive an heir and to prevent France from being vulnerable to attacks by other countries (57-58, 80, 105, 112). An extraordinary measure, the cardinal and confessor liken this extramarital sex to the incest that must have taken place when the earth was first being populated (106-107). In light of this reason for extramarital sexual relations the text undermines its own slanderous content: it is hard to claim that the queen is immoral for corrupting the royal bloodline while also saying that she has no other choice. However, slanderous texts often have contradictory positions that cannot be resolved.⁶⁷

In Les Amours d'Anne d'Autriche..., Anne d'Autriche is portrayed as an imbecile who listens to the bad advice of Richelieu and the confessor and then blindly carries out their plan. After a comedic bed-switching scheme (humor often

three is historically accurate, the queen would not have been of childbearing age for the first few years of her marriage.

⁶⁶ Unrelated to sexual slander but equally libellous is this text's assertion that Louis XIII prefers Mohammed to God and the Koran to the Bible (Les Amours d'Anne... 8). Like much slander of the period, targets are attacked for a variety of "offenses," ranging from the sexual to the blasphemous, which were often conflated under the umbrella of sodomitical crimes.

⁶⁷ To be sure, France would be worse off if other countries learned that the king was illegitimate.

coexists with the most blasphemous slander in these texts), the queen ends up in the chevalier's arms and offers her body to love's "*plusieurs sacrifices*" (129). Nevertheless, the author harshly castigates her as a hypocrite: [*L]a passion de la Reine s'échauffant à mesure que les embrassemens continuaient, Elle devint une parfaite bigote en matières de plaisirs, comme Elle l'avait été en matière de religion* (131). Anne is cast as being as devoted to sexual pleasure as she had been to religion. The queen is often portrayed as the passive partner to Mazarin, who forces his sexual deviance on her. In La Custode de la Reine qui dit tout (1651), attributed to Blot, for example, the cardinal is accused of "fucking" the queen: *Peuple, n'en doutez plus, il est vray qu'il la fout et que c'est par ce trou que Jules nous canarde*" (quoted in Carrier I 452). But Mazarin's use of the queen's "hole" also represents the mistreatment of the people of France (the all-encompassing "*nous*"), who have suffered and will continue to suffer under him. As "*canarder*" ("*tuer avec une arme à feu*" in the Dictionnaire français (1680)) indicates, Mazarin will not only create pain, but decimate those under him (s.v. "*canarder*"). In other texts, the queen is called "*âne d'Autriche*," an expression that implies the queen serves as the cardinal's donkey, a beast of burden taking the seminal "loads" of Mazarin (Merrick 690). As his beast of

burden, the proper hierarchy of the state is inverted; Anne should have been master to Mazarin.

In some texts the queen is accused of willingly being sodomized by the cardinal. In general, Louis Seifert suggests, the image of Mazarin sodomizing the queen seeks to show that the female head of France is "tolerat[ing] what her people cannot [and] [s]o doing, she exposes herself and the State to the disorder of sodomy" (Seifert I 30). For example, in an unnamed 1643 song by Claude de Chouvin, the Spanish queen has the Sicilian "*bougre...[d]ans le cul*" (cited in Muchembled 92). In this text, both the queen's and Mazarin's birth nationalities are cited, which casts them as "other"; not only are they practicing criminal sodomy (itself seen as coming from Mazarin's homeland), but they are also distinctly criticized for not being French. In La Custode de la Reyne qui dit tout, the queen is again accused of being sodomized by Mazarin:

*Son crime est bien plus noir que l'on ne pense pas;
Elle consent, l'infame, au vice d'Italie,
Et croirait sa desbauche estre moin accomplie,
Si son cul n'avoit part à ses sales esbats (1).*

In this stanza, the queen is depicted as consenting to anal sex - here referred to as "*sales esbats*," or dirty pleasures - with the cardinal. The text cautions that if the cardinal continues to sodomize the queen (herself accomplished in the act), the people of France will be reduced to a similarly debased

position; but, while the queen willingly allows herself to be sodomized, the people of France will have it forced on them. And, if this anti-reproductive sex is forced on the French people, then the nation will literally and figuratively be barren. Indeed, since the queen consents to sodomy, she is described as "infame," which Nicot defines as "ignominiosis," or disgraced, as someone who has lost her "honor." Thus Blot suggests that by having sex with the cardinal, the queen has lost what is most important for a woman.⁶⁸

What it means for a woman to be accused of engaging in anal sex in the 17th century is suggested by Claude le Petit (1638-1662) in L'Heure du berger (1662). He compares a woman's body to a city consisting of "trois portes," the first being the mouth, which is used for nourishment, the second the vagina, "le

⁶⁸ In addition to the importance of a woman's honor, women in the 17th century were expected to maintain their modesty (clearly a queen who engages in sodomitical sex is lacking modesty), as le Père (Pierre) Lemoyne explained in La Galerie des femmes fortes (1647):

Il n'y a rien de plus naturel à la femme que la pudeur. C'est un voile qu'elle n'achète point, et qui ne coute rien à faire. Il naît, se forme, il croît avec elle. Sa chevelure ne pousse qu'après ce voile, et il lui demeure encore après la chute de ses cheveux. Il est de tous les pays et de toutes les raisons, de toutes leurs conditions et de tous les âges... (39).

Lemoyne refers to "pudeur" as something that is born and grows simultaneously with a woman, regardless of her national origin or class, and continues to live on after her death. "Pudeur" is defined by the Dictionnaire français (1680) as "bonne honte" and as a quality that is governed by certain unnamed "loix"; there is the assumption that these laws should be so obvious as not to need explanation, though the word "shame" suggests that the rules would govern the sexual (s.v. "pudeur"). Thus, when the queen - who represents France and the "pudeur" and honor of the country - degrades her modesty, she also degrades France.

chemin ordinaire et le plus fréquenté de honnestes gens, quoy qu'elle ne soit pas toujours ouverte à tout le monde quand on veut - the acceptable entry that civilized ("honnestes") men penetrate, and the only one that civilized women allow to be penetrated (Le Petit 48). As to the third "porte," the anus, Le Petit writes:

[E]lle est dans l'endroit le plus sale et le plus infecté de la ville. Elle est presque toujours fermée : il est défendu à toute sortes de personnes de quelque qualité et condition qu'elles soient (hormis aux Apothicaires) d'y passer sous quelque prétexte que ce soit sous peine de fagot... (Le Petit 49).

As this passage suggests, anal sex for any individual (although Le Petit's text primarily concerns women) is an act fraught with immoral implications, for which one could be burned at the stake ("sous peine de fagot"); indeed, only the medical apothecary is allowed near this most dirty and most infected orifice to perform enemas. Given the metaphor of a woman's body as a city (or in the queen's case a country), the queen is not keeping her anus - and by extension, her country - secure from the contamination of outside intrusion. Put another way, the queen is allowing Italy to dominate France.

For the queen to engage (passively or actively) in anal sex also transgresses her primary role as "breeder" of the

sacred head of France (Zanger I 56).⁶⁹ By exchanging the reproductive path (symbolizing her role as woman and mother) for the excremental, Anne insults God's emissary by divine right. Although the queen did not have a "divine dimension" in France, since Salic law prevented her from inheriting property or the throne (which was necessary for the rite of succession),⁷⁰ the queen's anatomy was the vessel for the king's birth, and thus had a biological connection to this sacred being (182 n.57, 79-80). In general, the queen's role was to be the female representative of France; thus, the use of her body for anything other than the good of France ran counter to her duty to be a good queen (and along with it a good wife and mother).

Fantasies of Castration and Execution

Despite the paucity of slanderous texts against the queen, she was the subject of calls to violence; according to Philippe Delorme, the phrase "*mais je voudrais bien étrangler notre putain de reine*" (Delorme 274) was sung in the streets of Paris in 1648.⁷¹ In addition to expressing violent fantasies regarding

⁶⁹ The queen's body was not sacred; only that of the king, as Bossuet explained: "*Dieu établit les rois comme ses ministres, et règne par eux sur les peuples [et] la personne des rois est sacrée*" (Politique de Bossuet 79-80).

⁷⁰ Additionally, when the queen dies, the notion does not apply that queenship passes to the next queen, as is the case with the king ("*Le roi est mort, Vive le roi*"); her body thus dies as a mortal (Zanger I 159).

the queen, slanderous texts were threatening violence most especially against Mazarin. Indeed, in La Mazarinade, Scarron imagines that Mazarin's genitals *will* be mutilated:

*On te coupera, pauvre Jule,
Et l'une et l'autre testicule;
Et lors, o cardinal pelé,
cardinal détesticulé,
N'étant plus ni femme, ni homme,
Comment paroitra-tu dans Rome,
Mutilé du fatal boudin (Scarron 287).*

Devoid of testicles the cardinal will no longer have a sex, he will be neither man nor woman. The violent excision of the cardinal's testicles turns Mazarin into a passive sodomite permanently unable able to assume the role of active partner; "détesticulé," he is left with nothing but the shaft (the "boudin"), which cannot function phallically without its other parts. Mazarin thus becomes a symbol of the defeated phallus; Jouhaud sums up the symbolic power of such a fictional castration: "*L'émasculatation sur le papier répare la mutilation symbolique de la communauté, coupée à vif dans son unité*" (Jouhaud I 61). De-testiculization also eradicates the phallus controlling and exploiting the nation, allowing Scarron symbolically to reclaim France's power.

This passage from La Mazarinade calls to mind Concino Concini (1575-1617), the Italian favorite of Marie de Médici

⁷¹ A slightly different version of this text exists in the Song and Verse Collection: "*Je voudrais biens étranglé notre c... de Reyne*" (Vol. II, n.p.)

(1519–1589) who was executed and then castrated by a Parisian mob; the earlier Italian serves as a model for what Scarron sees as a fitting future for Mazarin (Merrick 692). As Todd Olson observes, comparisons to Concini were effective due to the similar historical situations: two queen regents and two Italian favorites seen as the source of France's problems (Olson 107).⁷² Olson believes that Concini's death provided a precedent for Mazarin's removal: "If Concini was an evil root that had to be ripped out...it would logically follow that any other foreigner who had power over a queen regent had to be eliminated" (107). For Mazarin's comparison to Concini to be complete, another verse in La Mazarinade imagines the ultimate physical punishment: death! "*Cher Jule, tu sera pendu*" (Scarron 296). Scarron then describes the gruesome fate of Mazarin's dead body: "*Ta carcasse désentraillée, par la canaille tirillée, ensanglantera le pavé*" (294). As in the earlier citation

⁷² Regencies were always an unstable moment when elite groups vied for more power in the court and Marie de Médici's regency was no exception. Indeed, one of Marie's enemies, Louis II de Bourbon, Prince de Condé (1621-1686), tried to supplant the regent first by attempting to control the Estates General and then by rebellion. This power struggle led to a virtual pamphlet war between them; Condé accused the queen in his Manifeste (1614) of not caring for France and its people, and Marie's supporters responded with pamphlets attacking Condé's motives (Sawyer 2, 33-35; 43). This back-and-forth ended in 1617 when Marie's Italian favorites, Concino Concini (1575-1617) and his wife, Léonora Galigai (1571-1617), who had inspired great resentment among the nobles for their proximity to the throne, were both put to death upon the order of Louis XIII, now in his majority. Not only were the queen's favorites made scapegoats, but Queen Marie herself, already in a power conflict with her son, was exiled and died.

stating that castration "will occur," these two passages also use the future tense to confirm Mazarin's certain execution.

If "the specter of death...defines eroticism," in the Mazarinades, as Louis Seifert argues, then the sexually violent images in slanderous texts are all cast in the shadow of capital punishment (Seifert I 22). Put another way, depiction of castration carried to its extreme could always lead to death. To be sure, Sade points this out in any number of his texts showing that murder accompanies the ultimate orgasm⁷³; for him sexual acts are about domination, which he shows are linked to corporal punishment and death.

The representational abuse that Mazarin's body suffers in sexually slanderous texts during the Fronde more or less ended with the conclusion of the civil wars, which confirms my theory that major armed conflict is the primary catalyst for the creation and dissemination of sexual slander. Once there was a return to peace, there were always less sexually slanderous texts.⁷⁴ The cardinal's murder had been depicted in texts like

⁷³ While Sade's works were written at the end of the 18th century, his work is clearly based on a tradition that was begun in the violent sexual slander studied in this dissertation.

⁷⁴ Once the Fronde had ended and Louis XIV (1638-1715) had reinstated order, sexually slanderous texts again became scarce. Moreover, the longstanding conflict with Spain (France had been at war with Spain since 1635) was ameliorated with the signing of the Treaty of Pyrenées (1659) and with the king's politically advantageous marriage to Spanish Marie-Thérèse (1638-1683) in 1660. By 1670 France was the strongest country in Europe due to the king's massive investment in building up the army and navy. Perhaps it is

Scarron's La Mazarinade; however, in real life Mazarin's body was not attacked as had been the case with Henri III, and later with Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI, where slanderous texts mirrored their eventual deaths.⁷⁵ This fact shows that sexual slander and murder are not inherently linked; in other words, sexual slander is not a pre-condition to murder. Yet, the imagined deaths in sexually slanderous texts, which are similar across all the periods studied in the dissertation, also suggest that slander can incite violence, which in two out of the three cases studied in this dissertation did end in assassination or execution.

Another aspect of sexual slander that does not necessarily "fit" across the periods studied in this dissertation is the use of sexual deviance to define the target as foreign and therefore hostile to French interests. Since Mazarin and later Marie Antoinette were foreign born, xenophobia lent itself easily to accusations of deviant sexuality; indeed, there is a long tradition of the foreigner being linked to corrupt sexuality.⁷⁶ However, this is not the case with Henri III who was accused primarily of committing sodomy (always depicted as one of the

due to this relative lack of conflict in comparison to the Fronde that there were few sexually slanderous texts against the monarchy.

⁷⁵ On slanderous texts against Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI, see supra Chapter III.

⁷⁶ On foreign countries and deviant sexuality, see supra Introduction.

most corrupt sexual acts), but was not himself a foreigner (although he and his court were Italianized and his mother was Italian).⁷⁷ To be sure, blaming the "other" for having imported sexual corruption allows those slandering - and by extension, their audience - to distance themselves from certain acts such as sodomy. Even if the goal of sexual slander were just to defame the target and had no broader "nationalist" agenda, the very fact that the "other" is so clearly defined in sexual slander by problematic and criminal sexual behavior creates an environment wherein prejudicial links (i.e., Italians' supposed importation of sodomy into France) are forever etched in the minds of the audience. And by depicting what is unacceptable, slanderers are inherently defining what is acceptable; the marginalized always help define the normative. Even if slanderous texts do not define how a proper Frenchman should be, name-calling demarcates what he should not be - neither a foreigner nor a sodomite.

While slanderous texts were not used during Henri III's reign or the Fronde to make the case that monarchy should be abolished, slanderers in both periods inundated the "public" with sexually slanderous language to argue that grave threats were corrupting the nation and that political changes within the

⁷⁷ On the Italianized court of Henri III, see supra Chapter I.

system were needed (Beam 20). By attacking the person at - or near - the top of the monarchic structure, slanderers limited themselves by implying that just this one person, the tyrant (or in the Anne d'Autriche's case, the one complicit with the tyrant), needed to be replaced.⁷⁸ They did not outline sweeping changes to the French monarchy. Historians, such as Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie and Christian Jouhaud, have thus argued that the Mazarinades were not "revolutionary," since they did not advocate for the murder of the king nor for the replacement of the entire monarchical structure (Le Roy Ladurie 122; Jouhaud II 42-43, 62-63). According to Le Roy Ladurie, "[t]heir critique was far from revolutionary - the most daring of them restricted themselves to the familiar Bodinian distinction between a monarchy worthy of the name (good, moderate) and a tyranny or despotism" (Le Roy Ladurie 122). Thus, the monarch and monarchical system were viewed as inherently good, but outside influence (e.g., Mazarin) was corrupting them; instead of criticizing the monarchy as a whole, slanderers directed their ire at specific targets closest to the child monarch.

Christian Jouhaud, like Le Roy Ladurie, does not see the Mazarinades as revolutionary, but his reasoning is different; Jouhaud looks at them as a series of splintered texts written to

⁷⁸ On the charge of tyranny, see supra Chapter II.

vent personal animus rather than works created to support each other as a cohesive unit. Consequently, Jouhaud views the Mazarinades as akin to a boxing ring (my words) wherein many different parties use words to assert their power and knock out symbolically their enemies (see generally Jouhaud I; Jouhaud II 42-43, 62-63). However, despite the general consensus among scholars that the Mazarinades are not radical or revolutionary, there are some historians, such as Hubert Carrier, who do believe that certain Mazarinades, such as La Guide ou Chemin de la liberté (1652),⁷⁹ are more radical than others in that they called indirectly for more than just a changes of ruler and instead for changes in the monarchical system (Carrier II et La Fronde, Vol. 1, 11). I disagree with these scholars and believe that the "revolutionary" slanderous texts produced in the 18th century that eventually called for revolution could not have been created without the foundation laid by slanderers during Henri III's reign or during the Fronde (Beam 20). In other words, each text may not have been "radical," whatever each author means by the term, but their very existence as a whole was new and paved the way for the staggering amount of venomous slander produced against Marie Antoinette. To be sure, the sexually slanderous texts targeting Anne d'Autriche, such as the

⁷⁹ Le Guide ou Chemin de la liberté (1652) attacks Louis XI (1423- 1483) directly and states that his reign was the official beginning of tyranny in France; it thus indicates that France is not currently "free"; of course, to become free again could imply revolution.

Les Amours d'Anne d'Autriche..., were clearly the sorts of attacks that were to come against France's final queen of the *Ancien Régime*. However, one main difference during the Revolutionary sexually slanderous texts is that it is no longer those closest to the king who are attacked, but instead the king and queen themselves.

Marie Antoinette: The Monstrous Effigy

Pamphlets and libels proliferated and gained frenzied momentum in the period leading up to the French Revolution. The utterances slandering the queen, Marie Antoinette (1755-1793), reflected what Evelyne Lever refers to as the "collective imagination" of courtiers who wanted more power in the court as well as the starving commoners who wanted material assistance from the monarchy (Lever 164).¹ The queen was perceived as monstrous for ignoring her prescribed roles of good mother, good queen, and dutiful wife (the refrain often cited in slander against the queen is "*mauvaise fille, mauvaise épouse, mauvaise mère, mauvaise reine, monstre en tout*") (Kates 292). As part of her denounced monstrosity, Marie Antoinette was labeled a whore who ran the court like a brothel, a mother who murdered children, and a vile queen who tried to poison the king. As Chantal Thomas and Evelyn Lever confirm, it was repeatedly said that she had made the king impotent and that her children were

¹ Moreover, when Marie Antoinette first came to France, Louis XV's (1710-1774) chief mistress, Madame du Barry (1743-1793), and her followers feared losing power in the court since Marie Antoinette did not respect the mistress and barely acknowledged her existence (Weber 20). Jeremy Popkin sees these courtiers' involvement in the creation and dissemination of slander as a necessary element to the "circulation of [these] materials [that] depended...on the complicity of wealthy and powerful members of France's traditional elites" (Popkin 352). This complicity is evidenced by the fact that both the Duc d'Orléans (1747-1793) and the Comte d'Artois (1757-1836) were protectors of different printshops known to publish pamphlets (362).

Except where noted, all citations to Lever in this chapter refer to Evelyne Lever.

fathered by, among others, the dashing Swedish aristocrat, Axel von Fersen (1755-1810) (Thomas 116, Evelyne Lever 163).²

Moreover, in the 1792 pamphlet by Louise de Keralio (writing under the pen name Louis Marie Prudhomme),³ Les Crimes des reines de France depuis le commencement de la monarchie jusqu'à Marie Antoinette, the author considers that: "[u]ne femme qui peut tout est capable de tout; une femme, devenue reine, change de sexe, se croit tout permis, & ne doute de rien..." (Keralio vii).⁴ If a woman who becomes queen changes her sex, then, being queen cannot co-exist with being a woman.

Finally, slanderous texts against Marie Antoinette propagated the myth of a foreign tribadic conspiracy, in which the queen of France, her mother Marie Theresa (1638-1683),

² Ironically, Fersen appeared very seldom in sexual slander of the period, yet he is, according to Antonia Fraser, the only man with whom Marie Antoinette likely did have an extramarital sexual relationship (Fraser I 203). Fraser believes that all of Marie Antoinette's four children (the first in 1778 and one who died at birth) were in fact fathered by the king since conception coincided with his conjugal visits to the queen (Fraser I 203, 217).

³ While Louis Marie Prudhomme, editor of the periodical *Les Révolutions de Paris*, is listed as the author of Les Crimes des reines de France depuis le commencement de la monarchie jusqu'à Marie Antoinette, according to Lynn Hunt and Carla Hesse, the actual writer is the radical militant author and historian Louise de Keralio (1758-1822) (Maza I 208). The misogynistic tone of the entire text is ironic given that Keralio was a woman.

⁴ Marie Antoinette was often accused of changing gender. This was not the first instance of a queen being accused of having changed gender. Marie Antoinette's mother, Maria Teresa (1638-1683), was dubbed King Maria Theresa (Weber 85). Past queens, such as Queen Elizabeth I of England (1533-1603), and Catherine de Médici (1519-1589), queen of France, were also viewed as having switched genders: each had her own manner of trying to alleviate the discomfort of male elites with female rule - Elizabeth denied her active sexuality by presenting herself as a virgin queen and Catherine de Médici eliminated sexuality from her persona by presenting herself as a widow in black after her husband's death.

empress of the group of European countries known as the Holy Roman Empire, and Catherine II (the Great) (1729-1796), tsarina of Russia, were accused of being sexually intimate with each other. Thomas explains that behind this ludicrous rumor concerning the three contemporary female heads of state "lay the fear that men were losing their grip on the political reins," and that there was a "disintegration of gender boundaries" (Thomas 120-21; Kates 294).

Anxieties surrounding the instabilities and deviations in the queen's prescribed gender role as queen, wife, and mother played out in sexual slander.⁵ Marie Antoinette was accused of failing to conform to gender roles because of her purported extreme interest in carnal pleasures and her voracious sexual appetite: she was accused of partnering with men, women, relatives, courtiers, peasants, and animals.

Until her trial in 1793 Marie Antoinette never publicly responded to sexual slander that was disseminated to discredit her.⁶ Her first and last public response to the longstanding rumors of sexual impropriety was during her trial; when publicly

⁵ "Sexual slander" is a term that I consider interchangeable with the term "political pornography" coined by Caroline Weber to describe the same corpus of slander against Marie Antoinette (Weber 208). The main form of sexual slander in the 18th century was the pamphlet, which could be in the form of plays, songs, poems, engravings, and poetry (Hunt I 309; Fraser I 254).

⁶ She did, however, write privately to her mother of the "miserable gazettes," as she called them, which at times brought her to tears (Fraser I 147).

accused of incest ("*pollutions indécentes*") with her son, she cried aloud in the tribunal,

[S]i je n'ai pas répondu à cette déclaration, c'est que la nature répugne une pareille inculpation, et qu'elle en appelle toutes les mères qui sont présentes (Acte d'Accusation 11).

In her response the queen casts herself as a good mother and makes a plea to *all* mothers who, by virtue of their sex, *should* understand that it is *unnatural* and therefore impossible for a mother to have sexual relations with her child. This plea would remind those in the tribunal that she was a loving mother rather than the evil and perverse queen denounced by the judges. Of course, by this time her fate had already been decided, and the trial was merely a formality.

While Marie Antoinette was the primary subject of slanderous attacks in this period, towards the end of her reign the king too was being denounced in the same manner. But the queen largely represents a stand-in for the monarch since there was still a reluctance to criticize the king, Louis XVI (1754-1793), directly prior to the very end of the reign. Indeed, before the 1790s, the king had been largely absent from sexual slander, only occasionally appearing as a secondary character or being criticized by another person in the texts. Only a few years after the king was directly attacked in slanderous texts was he tried and sentenced to death: this timing supports the

notion that slander leveled against him was the last step before the ultimate act of desacralization - regicide.⁷

The Volume of 18th-Century Slander

The actual volume of sexual slander against Marie Antoinette cannot be gauged today, for much of its forms (e.g., pamphlets, songs, libels) were an ephemeral way of presenting information, and little or no effort was made to preserve them. However, the fact that a single slanderous anonymous text, Les Essais historiques sur la vie de Marie Antoinette, published in 1783, sold between twenty and thirty thousand copies indicates how large an audience there was for this type of material (Kates 291). Sarah Maza describes the general universe of 18th-century printed matter in Private Lives and Public Affairs: The Causes Célèbres of Pre-Revolutionary France:

In the years between the Maupeou crisis⁸ and the Revolution, one could find just about anything, and increasing

⁷ Although I comment on some slander directed against the king, the main focus is sexually slanderous texts written against Marie Antoinette.

⁸ When René Maupeou (1714-1792), chief minister under Louis XV, "forcibly disbanded the parlements," there was large scale slandering against him by means of pamphlets in the years between 1771 through 1774 (Maza I 6, 53). One such piece of slander echoes slander used against Henri III and Mazarin in which the cardinal is depicted as not being exclusively male in his tastes: in Les Fastes de Louis XV, de ses ministres, maîtresses, généraux et autres notables personnages de son règne (1782), Chancellor Maupeou is referred to "as a sort of she-man: his dwelling contained 'elegant furnishings and delicious boudoirs in which the most fastidious courtesan would not be out of place'" (180). This slanderous text will not be studied in detail but is worthy of greater scholarly attention as is all sexual slander written against secondary historical figures.

quantities of it, on the streets of Paris: official newspapers and uncensored foreign gazettes, the handwritten newsheets called *nouvelles à la main*, and pamphlets that ranged from arid political tracts to heretical "philosophy" and pornographic slander. There can be no doubt that all of these contributed, in different ways, to the political education of the French nation (Maza I 119).

Lynn Hunt states that 200 obscene pamphlets were published in the years between 1789 and 1792 (Hunt I 309), but this number does not account for other forms of sexual slander in periodicals, engravings, songs, and posters, and it does not include the many thousands of non-slanderous texts. The queen's presumed lover, Axel Von Fersen, wrote to his father in 1789 that there were ten to twelve new pamphlets appearing daily (Fraser I 254).

The amount of slander against Marie Antoinette can be attributed in part to the freeing of the presses by a decree of the Constituent Assembly after the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen, dated August 26, 1789.⁹ The Assembly further liberated the press later that month when it affirmed the more general notion of freedom of thought and expression. This new-found freedom likely contributed to the rise in slanderous texts attacking the queen. However, Even before the freeing of the presses, in the period between 1745 and 1785 official periodicals had grown from fifteen to eighty-two,

⁹ On early modern press and censorship, see supra Introduction.

showing that the importance of the "press" in general was growing significantly. Further, it was now cheaper and easier to print information, making it accessible to a larger audience that included both nobles and lower classes. While there was more slander written in this period than in all previous epochs, sexual slander employed largely the same types of media and techniques employed in the attacks against Henri III and Mazarin, notably, the use of hyperbole, charges of transgressing gender roles, xenophobic accusations, comparisons to negative historical characters, and allegations of non-sodomitical and sodomitical sexual deviance.

Trial Briefs as Sexual Slander

Like sexual slander, late 18th-Century legal briefs written in connection with court cases were a type of text that promoted a cause at another person's expense. These briefs were highly anticipated by the reading public, which wanted to get a glimpse of other people's secret lives and troubles. Their popularity was remarkable according to Maza: "[t]rial briefs were published in quantities that 'outstripped ... most other kinds of printed matter at that time - press runs of six to ten thousand in the 1770s, up to twenty thousand in the 1780s,'" and for which there

were sometimes mobs waiting for the latest trial brief (Maza I 2).

Trial briefs and sexual slander studied in this chapter share more similarities than differences. Neither type of text was necessarily based on fact and both aimed, in Maza's words, to "instruct," "seduce," and "mobilize" their readers by titillating them (12, 32). Of course, trial briefs were legal, written within the confines of the law, while sexual slander was produced illegally (or, as Maza puts it, "without") and more often than not, was printed anonymously (119). The public of readers that came together in their collective judgments can be likened to a jury learning the facts and then making a decision as one body; for Maza, this public decision or opinion began to replace the authority of the monarchy (121). The audience for this material came together as a "public" in a scale unseen in prior centuries. Trial briefs and written slander were transmitted quickly from one person to the next, and were exchanged liberally in cafés and were even printed in newspapers (Fraser I 128).¹⁰ Maza further argues that trial briefs were

¹⁰ In 18th-Century France, cafés provided a space for information sharing between individuals from lower classes and the bourgeoisie (Davetian 31). Scholar Benet Davetian argues, in French Court Society, The French Revolution and the Paradoxes of French Civility (2006), that cafés were "a modified form of the elite intellectual salons" and facilitated intellectual discussion (Davetian 32). This environment would have been conducive to exchanging stories such as those described in sexual slander. Since cafés also provided alcoholic drink, inhibitions would have been considerably lessened, making individuals more likely to share provocative information and gossip.

used "as a form of pamphlet literature" that made "increasingly open appeals to lay readers to judge the cases for themselves" (16). By the 1770s and 1780s there was what Maza refers to as "a real, and growing, public of readers" anxious for the latest trial briefs (121).

The Queen's Sartorial "Sins"

Like trial briefs, fashion journals were becoming common in the late eighteenth century, and were created to convince their readers to adopt current sartorial trends.¹¹ Marie Antoinette's whimsical fashion and hairstyles were reported in these periodicals and made the French aware of the queen's opulent and fashion forward styles.¹² While at first she was seen as a fashion icon, it was not long before the queen's fashion choices came to symbolize the nation's uncontrollable spending and disastrous finances. Eventually the queen's fashions took on moral implications for scandalmongers; she was a woman whose

¹¹ Fashion journals, such as the *Galerie des modes*, were undergoing a period of expansion. Even though they were expensive and created for wealthier women, its images were available to a much broader audience due to pirating (Weber 107).

¹² The hairstyle made famous by Marie Antoinette was the *pouf*, which was often expensive due to its extravagant nature. One of the queen's most famous *poufs*, *La Belle Poule*, was an homage to the French ship helping quash colonial uprising in America; the queen had a mechanical model ship built into her hair (see illustration 14) (Weber 123). On clothing and luxury in 18th-century France, see Joan Shovelin's "The Cultural Politics of Luxury in Eighteenth-Century France" (2000), Jennifer Jones's "Repackaging Rousseau: Femininity and Fashion in the Old Regime" (1994), and Daniel Roche's The Culture of Clothing: Dress and Fashion in the Ancien Régime (1997).

fashion choices reflected decadent morals and disordered sexuality. Scandal mongers exploited a moralistic fear that France's women would fall prey to promiscuity. Indeed, not only were some of the early lampoons of Marie Antoinette based on her hairstyle, but according to Hector Fleischmann, a collector of Marie Antoinette pamphlets, the first pamphlets against the queen appeared in 1775 and argued that the queen's love of the *pouf* was representative of her "levity" (Weber 122; Fraser I 114).

In the 1770s the queen also popularized another fashion, simple loose-fitting dresses such as the *robe à la polonoise* and the *gaulle* that were thought to be a sign of women's immorality due to the style's resemblance to a slip (Weber 147, 162) (see illustrations 15 and 16). Loose-fitting dresses shaped like undergarments would allow easier access to a woman's body than the corsets and other tight-fitting silk dresses of the period, thus the women who wore them would be seen as wanting to be fondled. Indeed, Pierre Saint-Amand theorizes that "the accessibility of the [queen's] genitalia" was seen as her way of using her "organ of influence" to entrap men with the possibility of sex (Saint-Amand 379). These dresses were also thought to make lower class women indistinguishable from aristocratic women of the court, thereby lowering the position of queen while elevating that of the "people" (Weber 159).

Further, the queen refused to wear the corset, expected at Versailles, until Marie Theresa convinced her that it was necessary to keep her figure an "acceptable" shape so as to avoid the possibility of divorce (70-71). However, the queen's refusal to wear the corset was even criticized in pamphlets coming from inside the court (70).

The queen also had a history of dressing in men's clothes, including riding gear, the male "jockey's cap," and assuming the male hairstyle of a low ponytail (152-53) (see illustration 17).¹³ She adopted a male silhouette by wearing riding breeches paired with a short jacket and waistcoat as opposed to the traditional long skirts worn by women in this period (81).¹⁴ In one satirical text, Paul Barre's Mademoiselle Javotte (1787), the author writes that the hat now belongs to women, indicating that women were co-opting male style, and as such, were "compromise[ing] male dignity" (Weber 152).¹⁵

¹³ Henri III, like Marie Antoinette, was also accused in slanderous texts for transgressing gender "norms" by his adoption of female clothing. On Henri III's fashion, see supra Chapter I.

¹⁴ Women were not the only ones in this period who challenged notions of appropriate gender roles and clothes. The Chevalier d'Éon (1728-1810) was a soldier and spy who, for the second half of his life, dressed as a woman (and was eventually recognized legally as a woman), even offering to fight as a woman with other female soldiers during the Revolution. The fact that he was not punished for challenging the separate gendered spheres is evidence of inherent sexism - a man can cross over into the female domain but a woman not into the male one.

¹⁵ Of course, there were earlier instances of cross-dressing by women, especially of women who enlisted in the army. However, the noblewomen who assisted in the Fronde insurrection (1652-1653) did not elicit a strong reaction since they were at war (Krimmer 38).

While the earliest criticisms concerned the queen's sartorial choices, the onslaught of slanderous texts against her truly began with what is commonly referred to as the Diamond Necklace Affair.¹⁶ The Affair took place in 1785 and involved an extremely expensive necklace (valued at 1.8 million pounds then or about 100 million dollars today), the purchase of which Marie Antoinette was alleged to have orchestrated (see illustration 18). In fact, it was a poor woman, Jeanne de La Motte (1756-1791), with claims to royal blood who was behind the transaction. La Motte convinced the Cardinal de Rohan (1734-1803) that Marie Antoinette wanted the necklace (which had originally been created in the hopes of selling it to Madame du Barry) and that he could win favor with the queen by acting as an intermediary in the purchase. Eager to curry favor with the queen (who had hitherto ignored and disliked him), the cardinal purchased the necklace and turned it over to La Motte so that she could then sell it to the queen.¹⁷ Instead, La Motte gave the necklace to her own husband to disassemble and sell as diamonds. Marie Antoinette had actually refused to purchase it

¹⁶ Maza argues that the frenzy for slander really began as a result of this Diamond Necklace Affair. In an act of self promotion, Jeanne de La Motte (1756-1791), the woman behind the scheme, spread free trial briefs in her defense throughout Paris in the 1780s while "*colporteurs*" or peddlers also sold copies of briefs in the streets (Maza I 124, 227).

¹⁷ It is hard to imagine that the king would not have purchased the necklace for the queen had she requested it, for he lavished her constantly with clothes and jewels.

in the past, but she was nonetheless implicated in the story by scandalmongers. In fact, the public believed that the queen had tried to buy the necklace, thereby wasting the money of an already bankrupt France. This belief ignited a firestorm of anti-queen pamphlets that never again cooled down during her reign. Following the trial in 1786, the *parlementaires* issued a statement that acquitted the cardinal, but admonished the queen for her expenditures and friendships that had nothing to do with the actual case at hand:

With her most Christian Majesty's reputation for frivolity and indiscretion with her succession of male and female "favorites" of dubious repute,¹⁸ we [the *parlementaires*] find it entirely plausible that the Cardinal de Rohan did so presume [that the queen had requested his assistance in acquiring the necklace] (Weber 170).

The language of the *parlementaires* echoes Barthes's notion that "verisimilitude...is entirely subject to (public) opinion" (Barthes I 147).¹⁹ The queen had long been accused of excess, beginning with the expensive and frivolous *pouf*; the parliamentary judges were merely confirming that excess.²⁰ The

¹⁸ The queen's relationship with her favorites, with whom she was accused of having sexual relations, will be examined later in this chapter.

¹⁹ On verisimilitude, see supra Introduction.

²⁰ The financial excesses of which the queen was accused (including the accusation that she funnelled significant amounts of money out of France to benefit her brother, the emperor Leopold (1747-1792)), began early in her reign, but will not be discussed in detail here. However, the post Revolutionary English text by Stewarton, The Female Revolutionary Plutarch, Containing Biographical, Historical, Revolutionary Sketches, Characters, and Anecdotes (1806), defends the queen by putting her spending in perspective; apparently, her private expenses were much less than Madame du Barry's and

judges' language also helped to condone the pamphlets and libels that embellished the negative qualities associated with the queen.

The Foreign Threat: Austrian Conspiracies and Native Tongue

Over and beyond her lavish expenses - true or fabricated, Marie Antoinette's foreign birth was a primary theme in slanderous texts and represents a call to arms for those wanting to protect France from outside forces, notably Austria.²¹ Sarah Maza argues that one theme that "played out *ad nauseam* in the pamphlets of the 1790s [was that] Marie Antoinette was a cold-blooded *politique* whose principal aim was to undermine the kingdom and turn it over to her brother, the Austrian emperor[, Leopold II (1747-1792)]" (Maza 207). Further, there was concern that the queen was taking money out of France and providing it to her brother to fund Habsburg efforts against France; it was rumored that she was attending mysterious night meetings, disguised as a man, with an Austrian Committee in the Bois de Bologne (Kaiser 586). Another far-fetched concern was that the queen was being bribed by England to make France a colony of

the whole of the queen's donations did not equal the money given to Mademoiselle de Fontanges (1641-1707), Louis XIV's mistress (Stewarton 58-59). If such an assessment is correct (it is difficult to measure today), then it shows that Marie Antoinette was held to a different standard than the king's mistresses.

²¹ On theme of foreign queens, see supra Chapter II.

England (593). These fears are reflected in many pamphlets in which authors refer to the queen by nationality rather than by name - for instance, the title of the pamphlet attributed to Mayeur de Saint-Paul, L'Autrichienne en gouguettes, ou l'orgie royale: opéra proverbe (1793). In the anonymous pamphlet Louis XVI et Antoinette, traités comme ils le méritent (1793), the author in addressing the king calls the queen "*Ton Autrichienne*," using the disrespectful "tu" form (6). And of course, the word "*chienne*" is built into the word "*Autrichienne*," meaning "bitch".²²

Other instances in which the queen's foreignness is invoked suggest that it is her foreignness, rather than the specifics of her nationality, that are being criticized; indeed more often than not her nationality is cited incorrectly.²³ In La Confession de Marie Antoinette: ci-devant reine de France, au peuple franc, sur ses amours et ses intrigues avec M. de la Fayette,²⁴ les principaux membres de l'Assemblée nationale, et

²² The derogatory nickname "L'Autrichienne" was actually given to the queen years earlier by Louis XV's daughter Adelaide (1732-1800), showing that slanderous tendencies were often born in the court (Fraser I 47).

²³ Ironically, Marie Antoinette was actually more French than her husband in terms of blood; she had two French grandparents while he only had one. On xenophobia in sexual slander, see supra Introduction.

²⁴ The Marquis de la Fayette (1757-1834), an aristocrat, general, and politician, had been a key player in the American Revolution. He was a liberal royalist who left France during the Revolution, thus it is not surprising that he is described as being involved in counter revolutionary actions (Thomas 174).

ses projets de contre-révolution (1790), the anonymous author refers to Marie Antoinette as "*une femme allemande*" (in l'Anthologie Érotique 1078). Similarly, in Tel gens tel encens (1793), the anonymous pamphleteer describes her as "*une femme qui portait dans son cœur, toute la férocité allemande qu'elle a déployée ... contre tout ce qui portoit le nom français*" (21). And as a "*farouche Allemande*," Marie Antoinette is a woman "*naturellement méchante*" whose heart cannot be softened (21-22). The words, "*férocité*" and "*farouche*," relate back to the French belief that Prussia robbed France of land in the Seven Years' War.²⁵ Furthermore, if "*allemand*," was not the nationality of the Austrian queen, it was her native tongue. In addition to their common language, Austria and Germany could be conflated as part of the Holy Roman Empire. Further, Austria had little identity to separate it from Germany, as Thomas Kaiser explains:

[Austria] was but one fragment in two overlapping political mosaics - the Hapsburg domains and the Holy roman Empire - both of which, moreover, incorporated peoples of many different cultures [and] [b]ecause Hapsburg power emanated from so many geographical regions, there was no particular "people" or land to associate with that power, especially when viewed from abroad (Kaiser 581).

²⁵ The Holy Roman Empire and France had a long history of strife dating back to the Middle Ages when an Anglo-German-Flemish alliance was seen as a threat to French domains. Germany cemented its reputation as a threat to France in the early 1500s after France and England fought the Hundred Years War (1337-1453) and when Spain and Germany became aligned, thereby geographically surrounding France. The hatred of Austria dates back to roughly the same time, beginning with Charles Quint (1500-1558), emperor of Hapsburg Austria and then King of Spain.

Thus, for the 18th-Century French, Austria and Germany would appear to be indistinguishable in terms of their political weight and shared language. In the anonymous pamphlet L'Isariote de la France ou le député autrichien (1789), the author states that "*Le député Autrichien, gouverneur & tyran de la France, fruit d'un des plus licentieux concubinages, est le composé de matière hétérogène, fabriqué de plusieurs races, en partie Lorraine, Allemande, Autrichienne, Bohémienne, &c. &c.*" (4-5). The writer lists several nationalities as proof of the impurity of Marie Antoinette's lineage.

Two Vile Austrian Queens and a Dirty Italian Cardinal

Attacks on the queen's Austrian origins are similar to those directed against Anne d'Autriche, whose life, in many ways, mirrors that of Marie Antoinette. Both were sent to France at a young age for political marriages - Anne to Louis XIII and Marie Antoinette to Louis XVI.²⁶ Both were maligned by the French people, Anne for her close (and supposed sexual) relationship with the despised Cardinal Mazarin, Marie Antoinette for her alleged financial and sexual extravagances (which I discuss later in this chapter). Here, however, the parallels end. In the Mazarinades, Anne d'Autriche is for the

²⁶ On Anne of Austria, see supra Chapter II.

most part a secondary character to Mazarin; she is portrayed primarily as an innocent victim of the cardinal's sodomitical practices. But in the late 18th century, Marie Antoinette is the primary target of incessant and virulent slander, with Louis XVI playing merely a secondary role. Indeed, the treatment of Marie Antoinette most closely parallels that of Mazarin himself. Like Marie Antoinette, Mazarin figured prominently in sexual slander. He was (like Marie Antoinette) foreign born and blamed for importing disorder into France (Although Anne d'Autriche was also foreign born, Mazarin would have been considered less legitimate, since he had not married into the monarchy). In a similar manner, the attacks against Marie Antoinette sought to demonstrate that France and the monarchy were being poisoned by foreign influences - those closest to the king yet furthest from monarchical legitimacy.

As with Mazarin's "*vice d'Italie*," Marie Antoinette is portrayed as having imported her foreign "vices" into France. In Les Essais historiques sur la vie privée de Marie Antoinette d'Autriche, reine de la France, pour servir à l'histoire de cette princesse (1789), the anonymous author writes: "*Marie Antoinette [a] apporté à la cour de France le germe de tous les vices,*" implicitly vices from Austria (Les Essais... 13; Weber 143). The word "*germe*" invokes the medical language of disease, with the implication that these vices can (and will) spread in

the same way as an infection. France is cast as victim to the threat of perverse foreigners.

Crimes of Foreign Rulers and Biblical Women: Sex, Poison, Incest, and Murder

While Anne d'Autriche did not figure conspicuously in slanderous texts during the Fronde, she is still demonized in those instances in which she is mentioned. Both Anne d'Autriche and Marie Antoinette are often compared to past female rulers, who are viewed as abhorrent in the 18th century; and as Pierre Saint-Amand argues, "with each new [historical] name, Marie Antoinette becomes the bearer of a new history, a new narrative for which she will have to stand trial" (Saint-Amand 393).²⁷ Maurice Lever argues that the queen was often compared to Catherine de Médici (1519-1589) to show that she was both "*l'étrangère et l'usurpatrice*," perhaps also to show that both women failed to produce heirs for the first several years of their marriages (Lever in L'Anthologie Érotique 1033-34). Since Catherine de Médici lost her husband, Henri II (1547-1559), and became regent, inheriting a troubled France that was undergoing civil wars between the Protestants and Catholics, the comparison with Marie Antoinette suggests that France will also be subject

²⁷ On the use of historical comparisons in sexually slanderous texts, see supra Introduction.

to war if Marie Antoinette becomes politically involved. And since the Médicis (including French regent, Marie Médici (1575-1642)) were thought gifted in the art of poisons, any comparison would also evoke sinister plots to poison the king, thereby elevating Marie Antoinette to regent, as Catherine and Marie did in fact become (Correspondence de la Reine avec d'illustres personages 112). Further, in Correspondence de la Reine avec d'illustres personages, the author has Marie Antoinette herself invoke the name, Médicis, in a letter (obviously fake despite the author's insistence to the contrary). In a letter to the Comte d'Artois, her rumored lover, the queen allegedly writes "*Je n'aime pas assez le[s] Parisiens pour m'opposer aux coups qu'on leur prépare; & l'on peut, sans être une Médicis, se complaire un instant à les voir s'entredétruire*"; she is thus happy to see the destruction of her subjects (111-12).

Another frequent comparison was to the powerful Roman empress Valeria Messalina (AD 25-48), wife of Claudius I (BC 10-AD 54), reputed to have been vicious and sexually insatiable. In one slanderous text from 1791, an anonymous author refers to Marie Antoinette as "*Messaline*" (Grande fête donnée par les maquerelles de Paris... in L'Anthologie Érotique 1111).²⁸ In the

²⁸ The queen's close friend, La Duchesse de Polignac, is also dubbed Messalina in the pamphlet by the abbé Compagnon, La Messaline Française (1790), which shows that the queen's coterie was lumped together by scandalmongers (Fraser I 200).

transcript of Marie Antoinette's trial, the queen is stripped of her title (she is referred to as "veuve Capet"), and likened to former murderous queens: "Messalines, Brunehaut, Frégonde et Médicis...dont les noms [sont] à jamais odieux..."²⁹ (Acte d'Accusation - Interrogatoire complet et jugement de Marie Antoinette, dite Lorraine d'Autriche, Veuve de Louis Capet 1-

2).³⁰ The transcript also calls Marie Antoinette a new Agrippina:

*...la veuve Capet, immorale sous tous les rapports et nouvelle Agrippine, est si perverse et si familière avec tous les crimes, qu'oubliant sa qualité de mère et la démarcation prescrites par les loix de la nature, elle n'a pas craint de se livrer, avec Louis Charles Capet, son fils, et de l'aveu de ce dernier, à des indécentes dont l'idée et le nom seul font frémir d'horreur (6-7).*³¹

Calling Marie Antoinette by the name of this early Roman empress (AD 15-59), who was rumored to have been sexually involved with

²⁹ On foreign queens, see supra Introduction and Chapter II.

³⁰ Marie Antoinette was not the only public figure in the late 18th century to be compared to reviled rulers of the past. The Comtesse du Barry, for example, is called a "Moderne Médicis" in the anonymous 1789 text, Les Essais historiques sur la vie privée de Marie Antoinette d'Autriche, reine de la France, pour servir à l'histoire de cette princesse (8).

³¹ It was true that Marie Antoinette's young son stated that his mother and aunt had behaved in a sexual manner with him, but this was only after being "induced" into responding by his examiners (Fraser I 413, 426, 431). Thomas Kaiser argues that the charge of incest by Jacques Hébert at the queen's trial was spurred by the hope to save the queen's life, thus prompting her to make the famous statement calling on all mothers to sympathize with her (Kaiser 612). However, there was no reason for Hébert, consistently writing against the queen in his *Père Duchesne*, to want to spare her life. This shows that even the kind of accusations made against her were used to condemn her since there was a widespread belief that she was manipulating information for her benefit (Kaiser 612).

her brother, the infamous Caligula (AD 12-41), underscores how "unnatural" and perverse the queen's alleged indiscretions were considered. Like Agrippina before her, Marie Antoinette is defying "*les loix de la nature*," by engaging in "*indécences*" with her son.³²

The compilation of what purports to be the queen's letters, Correspondence de la Reine avec d'illustres personages, is actually an ode that ends with comparisons of Marie Antoinette to reviled queens:

*...Plus prodigue que l'Egyptienne
Dont Marc-Antoine fut épris;
Plus orgueilleuse qu'Agrippine,
Plus lubrique que Messaline,
Plus cruelle que Médicis (112-13).*

Of the four powerful and controversial queens cited in this poem, each is described with a single adjective: prodigal for the unnamed Cleopatra (69 BC-30 BC), arrogant for Agrippina, lewd for Messalina, and cruel for Marie and/or Catherine de Médicis. And as the repeated "*plus*" suggests, Marie Antoinette is cast as being *more* prodigal, arrogant, lewd, and cruel than these women.

In addition to being likened to past female rulers, Marie Antoinette was also compared to reviled biblical figures.³³ In

³² Perhaps this comparison also suggests that Marie Antoinette is too intimate with her brother, Austrian emperor Leopold II, who was often portrayed in the pamphlets and libels as conspiring with his sister to take over France.

³³ On the use of biblical associations in slanderous texts, see supra Introduction.

Les Crimes des reines de France depuis le commencement de la monarchie jusqu'à Marie Antoinette (1783), Louise de Keralio states that they should be viewed through the lens of Delilah, suggesting that queens will ruin great men as Delilah did Samson (Keralio viii). He further warns that he foresees "*dans l'avenir les noms de Jézebel, d'Athalie,*" two reviled murderous and idolatrous biblical women; he advises "*ajoutez à ces noms la liste de ceux dont ce livre donne l'histoire...*" (xvi, 1).

On one occasion, Marie Antoinette is also compared to a male ruler, Caligula, the infamously licentious early Roman emperor. In the pamphlet, Les Adieux de La Fayette ou cadet Capet³⁴ à Antoinette, et sa dernière correspondance en fuyant les terres de la Liberté (1792), the vengeful queen says to the Marquis de La Fayette (1757-1834):

Je veux...me procurer le plaisir que Caligula se donnait autrefois et dire en voyant cinq ou six enragés démocrates à mes pieds...Ah ! Les jolies petites têtes que je ferai couper lorsque je voudrai! Avec quelle sensualité je savourerai alors le plaisir de la vengeance (in l'Anthologie Érotique 1127).

The pleasure here is the "sensual" enjoyment of beheading pretty women; sexual deviance and murder are linked for the author of this text. In a non-sodomitical sense of the word, "male" sexual pleasure would have meant the active sexual role to the

³⁴ Cadet Capet refers to Louis XVI's brother, Charles Philippe, comte d'Artois (1757-1836). Capet was the name given to Louis XVI once his title of king was removed.

female's passive role. The comparison is intended to elevate the debauched queen to the status of male ruler who indulges his lust for the blood of his people. For the author, Marie Antoinette has subverted her gender role by desiring sexual pleasure, which in itself was not seen as a woman's "right," and specifically desiring "male" sexual pleasure. More important, she is shown as a queen who wants to kill her subjects for sexual gratification.

In addition to comparing the queen to other rulers, slanderous texts also compare Marie Antoinette to French women deemed suspect - for instance, the mistresses of Louis XV, Madame de Pompadour (1721-1764) and Madame du Barry (1743-1793). In fact, both du Barry and de Pompadour (as well as Louis XV) were themselves targets of slander in the years prior to Marie Antoinette's reign, although my research has shown that the volume of this slander is not great and much of it was written after Louis XV's reign. In Les Fastes de Louis XV (1782), for example, de Pompadour is accused of employing artifice to move ahead in aristocratic society and du Barry is accused of having learned her courtly skills as a whore - "*en faisant le trottoir*" - in Paris (179). Slander against these two women is used in the late 18th century to show that Marie Antoinette, with her lavish spending and rumored sexual appetites, acted more like a

mistress than a queen.³⁵ In the anonymous Les Essais historiques sur la vie de Marie Antoinette (1789), the two women "se ressemblèrent encore dans l'art de tromper & d'avilir celui [e.g., the king] qu'elle doivent faire respecter" (although the author claims that du Barry brought a certain honor to her role as mistress while Marie Antoinette "prostituted" the venerable role of queen (5). Sarah Maza argues that once Marie Antoinette was linked to du Barry and de Pompadour, the queen became the center of negative attention for slanderers, whose focus shifted away from the morals of Louis XV and onto Marie Antoinette (Maza I 182-83). Moreover, she believes the comparison between the queen and the two mistresses exposes anxiety regarding the rise of female power as a source of disorder: "The displacement of unbridled female sexuality from its normally interstitial position in society to the center of power both reflected and generated social disorder" (182-83). Marie Antoinette, du Barry and de Pompadour did not confine themselves to the "private" "feminine" space, instead they reigned openly at Versailles; and whereas the prior queen Maria Leszczyńska (1703-1768) was docile and non-political, Marie Antoinette and Louis XV's two mistresses became dominating figures at the court. The perceived power of the mistresses and

³⁵ Even the queen's brother-in-law, the Comte de Provence (1755-1824), apparently likened Marie Antoinette to Louis XV's mistresses due to her expenditure (Weber 119).

the queen over the king differentiates the end of *Ancien Régime* from earlier periods. For scandalmongers, the combined power of these women revealed a backward system in which the king does not rule his women; and this example could mean that all men would cease to control their wives. This female displacement of the male (king) is an unstated topic in almost every piece of slander against the queen, beginning with the fear that she was replacing the king in her bed.³⁶

Fear of an Illegitimate Heir: Fountains of Sperm and a Bastard at Court

The criticism of Marie Antoinette turned into an "epidemic" of sexual slander in 1775, following the rioting concerning rising bread prices, known as the Flour War (*guerre de farines*), when it was first noted that the queen was not getting pregnant (Fraser I 138). That she failed to produce an heir - her most important function as queen - could be clearly attributed at court to the "fact" that the marriage was said to be

³⁶ Louis XVI, unlike his father and most kings before him, did not take a mistress, even though it was expected for kings to do so (Fraser I 182). This refusal placed the queen in the unusual role of both wife and mistress, for all the king's romantic and sexual attention was focused on her. While the king stated that his refusal to take a mistress was based on his desire to bring decency to the monarchy, the result may have given the impression that he was breaking custom due to his lack of "masculine" desire (183).

unconsummated for a full seven years.³⁷ Most historians agree that the king had sexual problems, possibly a physiological problem with the foreskin or a psychological problem (he had been instructed as a boy about the "evils" of Austria which may have reduced his ability to copulate with an Austrian woman) (644).³⁸ In the examples that follow, pamphlets and other forms of slander reflect the anxiety that France is perhaps not going to have a legitimate heir to the throne.

However, once Marie Antoinette begins to have children, slanderous texts claim they have been fathered by other men. In the anonymous pamphlet, La Journée amoureuse ou les derniers plaisirs de M...-A...: Comédie en trois actes, en prose, représentée pour la première fois au Temple, le 20 août 1792, the princess de Lamballe³⁹ states that everyone in the court knows that the dauphin is the comte d'Artois' son; in fact, the only one who does not know this fact is the king himself (in L'Anthologie érotique 1149-50). In another anonymous pamphlet, Les Nouvelles du ménage royal sens dessus dessous, ou la fluxion de Marie-Toinon et Louis son mari, garçon serrurier au Temple, avec un

³⁷ A dauphin finally arrived in 1780, a full eleven and a half years after marriage.

³⁸ The king's doctors did in fact diagnose him as having a condition named "phimosis" in which the foreskin is too tight, thus making intercourse painful (Weber 125).

³⁹ The princesse Marie Thérèse de Lamballe (1741-1792) was one of the queen's favorites and also served as her Superintendent of the royal household.

détail de leur grande dispute et les nouvelles de leur ménage envoyées à Coblençe, par M. Sans-culotte (1792),⁴⁰ the dauphin, already a boy, questions his father's paternity:

Je croyais qu'il [d'Artois] était à Coblençe...ton mari est bien mon papa roi ci-devant...mais mon père...dis-moi donc, ma petite maman, comment s'appelle-t-il?" [to which the queen replies] *"Tais-toi mon enfant...Ta naissance est un mystère...C'est le secret de l'amour..."* (in L'Anthologie érotique 1133-34).⁴¹

Even the dauphin knows that his mother has a sexual relationship with d'Artois and that the king is not his birth father. A court in which the dauphin is not the king's son is a court "sens dessus dessous," literally upside-down, and a monarchy that is fundamentally disordered.

The fear of an illegitimate king is exploited in many texts. In the anonymous pamphlet, Fureurs utérines⁴² de Marie Antoinette, femme de Louis XVI (1791), the king is unable to satisfy the queen, which results in infidelity:

*Toinon*⁴³ *jure... "Je ne serai point foutu aujourd'hui*
...
Louis est impuissant, mais d'Artois ne l'est pas.
D'Artois est aussi beau que le fringant Narcisse.

⁴⁰ The *Sans Culottes*, named for their short trousers, were individuals from the Third Estate, such as artisans and workers, who played a large part in the riots and civil unrest leading up to the Revolution.

⁴¹ This reference is to d'Artois, who had taken refuge in Coblençe since July 7, 1791. The inclusion of a real fact here provides the text with verisimilitude. On verisimilitude, see supra Introduction.

⁴² "Uterine fury" was thought to be an actual medical condition in the early-modern period, rendering a woman hysterical (Wells I 221-222).

⁴³ Toinon is short for Antoinette.

*D'Hercule il a la force, il aura mes appas;
Lui seul de mon affront va me faire justice"* (in
L'Anthologie érotique 1119).

The king is impotent and, as a result, the libidinous queen looks to d'Artois for sexual satisfaction. The king is not performing his royal duty to impregnate the queen, and the queen is ignoring her primary role as dutiful wife and vessel for the king's sperm. The impotence of the Louis XVI could be pinned solely on the king, but the queen's supposed sexually aggressive behavior is also to be blamed. That the queen chooses the king's brother (along with many others) for sex over her husband shows her to be a castrating figure - literally removing and denying the utility of the royal penis. Maurice Lever summarizes the accusations against the unfaithful queen:

Accuser la reine de tromper son époux, c'est l'accuser de trahir la France. Lui imputer des batards, c'est la soupçonner de trancher elle-même le fil héréditaire de la dynastie. Autrichienne et adultère, la voilà doublement ennemie de la nation (Lever in L'Anthologie érotique 1030-31).

In Fureurs utérines, the queen is depicted inundated with the sperm of men other than her husband. The image of fountains of sperm recurs often in sexual slander against Marie Antoinette and assumes in this particular pamphlet hyperbolic dimensions:

*Le foutre d'Artois, le foutre de Toinon,
Sans cesse anéantis, régénérés sans cesse,
Inondant de ses flots, tétons, cul, couilles et con...* (in
L'Anthologie érotique 1120).

This sexually excessive language stresses that sperm other than the king's is entering the queen in large quantities, transformed into an endless fountain of ejaculate; "régénéré sans cesse" implies a never-ending stream of viable spermatozoa, which then "inundates" the queen's vagina. The more sperm present, the greater the chances for fertilization. The pamphlet's culminating point - "*Enfin, Toinette est grosse et mon Charlot papa*" - feeds into the fear of an illegitimate dauphin, while simultaneously showing the level of the queen's debauchery (1120).⁴⁴

The notion of impregnation by endless amounts of sperm appears again in the anonymous pamphlet, Bordel royal: suivi d'un entretien secret entre la reine et le cardinal de Rohan... (1790). The queen "ouvr[e] les portes du temple de l'amour" to multiple characters, among whom, a priest and the Chevalier de B... to whom she says, "Vous auriez infusé votre bouillon génératif dans ma chaudière" (in L'Anthologie Erotique 1082). By describing the "bouillon," here representing sperm, and the "chaudière," representing the queen's vagina, the author reduces the bodies of the queen and her lover to Petri dishes in which an illegitimate heir will most certainly be created; the word

⁴⁴ Charlot here is d'Artois.

"génératif" makes clear the Chevalier's fertility. The queen praises and demands the Abbé's abundant sperm:

Je vous ai fait donner un évêché pour avoir dix fois arrosé mon jardin...L'abbé, prenez en main votre arrosoir, arrosez mon jardin...Mon jardin a besoin d'être arrosé souvent.

[to which the abbé replies:] Votre jardin est comme une éponge, et même plus qu'une éponge, car sitôt qu'elle a ce qu'elle peut contenir d'eau, elle cesse de boire (1083).

In addition to the typical allusion to bountiful sperm, this passage describes the genitals of the queen and her lover as a garden and hose: the royal vagina thirsts for (and like water to a fertile garden, cannot live without) copious amounts of sperm. Highlighting the likelihood of impregnation is the word "éponge" which implies that the vagina will retain every last drop of sperm provided.

The concept of a sponge like vagina demanding sperm is also evident in the anonymous pamphlet, Bordel patriotique institué par la reine des Français, pour les plaisirs des députés de la nouvelle législature... (1791), in which the queen cries: "Le con me brule, il lui faut des torrents de foutre pour le rafraichir" (in L'Anthologie Erotique 1098). With so much sperm ("torrents") from so many different men, one of their discharges is bound to impregnate the insatiable queen. The author then has the Cardinal de Rohan, another of the queen's lovers identified in the play, promise her fertility: "Ce soir, j'irai coucher avec vous...Nous travaillerons cette nuit à un

nouveau duc de Normandie," to which Marie Antoinette responds "*C'est une chose faite*" (1085).⁴⁵ The queen here not only willingly has sex with someone other than the king, but she also states it is as fact that she will become pregnant by him.

The double trope of the queen as whore/creator of an illegitimate son is exploited in Fureurs utérines.. in which Marie Antoinette succeeds in convincing the Duc de Coigny⁴⁶ to impregnate her:

*Elle voudrait donner un dauphin à la France,
Elle l'en prie en grace, et Coigny le lui fait.
Par mille jeux lascifs ce cher dragon prélude.
Il n'avait fait que foutre avec précaution.⁴⁷
Cette fois, d'être honnête il perdit l'habitude.*

...
*Notre couple amoureux trois fois décharge ensemble
Trois fois en fait autant avant de se quitter (in
L'Anthologie Erotique 1123).*

Here the unfaithful, reckless, and scheming queen gets her dauphin:

*Au compte de Louis arrive un gros dauphin,
Juste au bout de neuf mois, à dater de l'époque
Où Coigny le jeta dans le moule royal.*

⁴⁵ Citing the Cardinal de Rohan as one of the queen's lovers is further evidence that sexual slander against Marie Antoinette was often illogical; the queen had always disliked the cardinal (even more so after the Diamond Necklace Affair) and went for years without speaking to him, making sexual relations between the two highly unlikely (Fraser I 232).

⁴⁶ The Duc de Coigny (1737-1821) was a man two decades older than the queen, who greatly admired her and was also one of her favorites (L'Anthologie 1121; Fraser I 144).

⁴⁷ "Précaution" refers to an unidentified form of birth control. Prophylactics were already in existence at this time and commonly used by aristocrats (Fraser I 203).

Le roi se félicite, et la reine s'en moque (1124).

That the wayward queen mocks the king behind his back after producing a "false" heir shows her enormous contempt for the divine monarch.

This motif is echoed in many sexually slanderous texts. In the anonymous pamphlet, Bordel patriotique..., the queen goes so far as to announce "*J'ai fait le roi cent fois cocu*" (in L'Anthologie érotique 1106) and likewise in the anonymous pamphlet, Les Adieux de La Fayette ou cadet Capet à Antoinette, et sa dernière correspondance en fuyant les terres de la Liberté (1792), she states: "*Ah, pauvre Louis XVI! Si tu n'es plus roi de France, tu es bien le roi des cocus*" (in L'Anthologie érotique 1128).

Such mockery of the king in some pamphlets is coupled in others, with the production of still another illegitimate heir. In Les Adieux de La Fayette... "*Rohan...[c]ouche enfin avec elle et la rend bientôt mere*" (1124). And again, the queen confirms an illegitimate pregnancy in the anonymous pamphlet Les Essais historiques sur la vie privée de Marie Antoinette d'Autriche, reine de la France, pour servir a l'histoire de cette princesse (1789), when she states "*je suis grosse,*" a pregnant condition that even serves as a form of birth control, allowing her the freedom to engage in more extra-marital debauchery: "*Elle profite de son etat...*" (68, 69).

The queen's reckless indifference to keeping the royal bloodline pure leads the author to liken her to a monster: "*La grossesse de la Reine avance, elle est monstrueuse, elle a une gorge enorme qu'elle affecte de montrer indécemment*" (71). The pregnancy is treated here as unnatural; indeed, the queen's condition has "*une conformation contraire à l'ordre de la nature*" (s.v. "*monstrueux.*" Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française. 1st ed. 1694). Not only is the queen's failure to hide her "*gorge enorme*" treated as lewd and indecent, but in slanderous pamphlets against her, as in Mazarin's case, her body is often described as monstrous and contrary to nature.

The Queen and Her Male Sex Partners

In addition to creating/reflecting anxiety about the production of an illegitimate heir, Marie Antoinette's non-sodomitical extra-marital sex is often excessive in its representations. In the anonymous pamphlet, La Confession de Marie Antoinette..., the queen discusses the sexual favors she gave to more than four men at once, Barnave, Le Chapelier, Pétion de Villeneuve and Duport⁴⁸:

⁴⁸ Antoine Barnave (1761-1793), a National Assembly lawyer who, along with the lawyer Jérôme Pétion (1756-1794), was in charge of bringing the royal family back to Paris after an escape attempt in 1791. Jean le Chapelier (1754-1794) was a jurist and politician, guillotined in the Terror. Adrien Duport (1759-1798) was a jurist and politician who managed to flee the country to avoid likely execution.

Je les ai gagnés, séduits, sans qu'aucun ne se doute que je les ai trompés. C'est un art qui n'appartient qu'à moi seule. C'est l'héritage que ma mère m'a transmis en me donnant le jour (in L'Anthologie érotique 1079).

Although the number of Marie Antoinette's sexual activities may seem excessive, the surprising lack of sexual detail here is less important than the queen's militaristic attitude - "gagné," "trompé," and "art" - terms commonly used in 18th-Century texts to describe sexual conquests by men, an analogue to their prowess in war. Here she is depicted as strategic as a soldier, a quality that could capitalize on the view of Austria as a threat to France.

Marie Antoinette was frequently said to use sexual prowess to manipulate politics, a sort of "hysterical persuasion," as Saint-Amand puts it, to influence the male domain of politics (Saint-Amand 385). For example, in La Confession de Marie Antoinette..., the queen tries to realize her "*projets contre-revolutionnaire*" by sleeping with La Fayette (a man whom, in reality, the queen had never liked) and making him "*Presque aussi roi que mon mari*" in order to influence him to "*abandonne[r] ... la folle idée de rendre le peuple français libre*" (in L'Anthologie érotique 1078; Fraser I 319).⁴⁹ Indeed,

⁴⁹ An example of the repetitive nature of slander is a passage from another anonymous pamphlet, Bordel royal: suivi d'un entretien secret entre la reine et le cardinal de Rohan... (1790), where the queen refers to her enemy, Cardinal Rohan, with words similar to those she uses about d'Artois above: "*Vous serez toujours mon mari*" (in L'Anthologie érotique 1085).

after providing him sex, she states triumphantly "*maintenant il est mon plus zélé partisan*" (in L'Anthologie érotique 1078).

Above and beyond her use of political power to thwart the goals of the French people, Marie Antoinette is shown to be undermining the hierarchical class structure of early-modern France. The different social classes were expected to respect this structure and keep within their clan, but sexual slander often shows the queen seeking to have sexual relations with men (and women) of all classes - that is - lower classes. In Bordel patriotique..., the queen's sexual exploits show complete indifference to class boundaries:

...Mme de Polignac [et moi,][n]ous nous faisons foutre toutes les deux par les plus vigoureux fouteurs de la cour, de la ville et du village. Le prince de Poix, après s'être assommé à force de me foutre en con, me procura un champion qui l'aurait emporté sur Hercule, dont j'ai fait mon valet de chambre (in L'Anthologie érotique 1096-97).⁵⁰

The queen undermines class structure here by having sex with any "vigorous fucker," no matter his class; and by showing the queen as a sperm receptacle for such men, the author infers that the

⁵⁰ It should be noted that Yolande (Jules) de Polignac (1749-1793), one of the queen's closest friends, did not fare any better in sexual slander than the queen. In La Confession de Marie Antoinette: ci-devant reine de France, au peuple franc, sur ses amours et ses intrigues avec M. de la Fayette, les principaux membres de l'Assemblée nationale, et ses projets de contre-révolution, Polignac is called "*la femme la plus lascive, la plus libertine, la plus intrigante et la plus fastueuse qui ait jamais existé*" (in L'Anthologie érotique 1075).

The Prince de Poix (1715-1794) served the royal family until August 10, 1792, the day the palace of the royal family was stormed by the revolutionary masses (Fraser I 447).

royal heir could come from a lower class, thereby spoiling the bloodline.⁵¹ While the pro-revolutionary faction was interested in destroying the concept of pure bloodlines and aristocratic superiority, authors of sexual slander ironically invoked the bloodline to show that the queen's behavior is destroying the monarchy and the social order, rather than praise such behavior as democratic. Thus, they appear to "elevate the common man," a goal of the revolution, by showing the queen as being sexually available to all men, while simultaneously condemning this availability as dangerous for the very monarchy they seek to destroy (Hunt I 325).

The Lodge of Lesbos and the Queen's Tribadic Exploits

Beyond accusing her of sexual extra-marital relations with men, authors of sexual slander also emphasized Marie Antoinette's purported tribadic proclivities and liaisons with women, such as her close friends, Madame de Polignac and the Princesse de Lamballe.⁵² Tribadic accusations often appear in

⁵¹ Louis XV was also criticized for his sexual relations with women of "vile classes"; however, his escapades were not exploited by authors of sexual slander, perhaps because women were held to a higher standard in terms of their sexual activity and men would be expected to utilize prostitutes who would come from lower classes (Weber 21).

⁵² Antonia Fraser argues that while a sexual relationship likely did not take place between the queen and her two favorites, she believes there may have been a "romantic" infatuation with Jules de Polignac (Fraser I 32). Such romantic feelings toward women were in vogue in the late 18th Century, praised in such enormously popular novels as Rousseau's Julie ou la nouvelle

the same texts that cite the queen's supposed extramarital non-sodomitical transgressions. Typically, authors of sexual slander are unconcerned by inconsistencies within the text, eager instead to accuse the queen of as many transgressions as possible. Thus, it is not uncommon for a text to claim the queen solely likes sexual relations with women only to have her copulate with a male lover in the next sentence. To be sure, engaging in tribadic relations would be cast as far more "monstrous" than extramarital non-sodomitical affairs since they were often seen as an ultimate rejection of men, rendering the male irrelevant.

By the late 1700s tribadism was noted as being common among Parisian women. According to Louis Crompton:

[L]esbianism was to become a widely recognized phenomenon in Parisian life, as journalists exploited the theme... A...private news sheet, the *Correspondance littéraire*, edited by Grimm and Diderot, suggested that lesbian groups in Paris were well organized, though still clandestine: "There exists, it is said, a society known by the name of the Lodge of Lesbos..." (quoted in Crompton 491-92).⁵³

In addition to being viewed as widespread, tribadism was also thought to be flaunted like a "point of pride," as the periodical, *Mémoires secrets*, suggests in 1783:

Heloise (1761), which preached ideas of close female friendships that bordered on the romantic (91-92).

⁵³ Sapho herself appears in many pamphlets and is even cited as the author of the 1792 pamphlet *Le Cadran des plaisirs de la cour ou les aventures du petit page chérubin, pour servir de suite à la vie de Marie Antoinette, ci-devant Reine de France*.

Tribadery has always been in vogue among women as homosexuality [pederasty] among men; but one did not flaunt these vices with so much scandal and notoriety as today. As the former is not punished by the laws, it is less surprising. Consequently our prettiest women give themselves over to it, glory in it and make it a point of pride (493)!⁵⁴

The idea of a secret society inhabited by "our prettiest women" (the implied maleness of "our" points to female subordination) is frightening to men. The term, "Lodge of Lesbos," evokes secret societies whose happenings and practices are mysterious, thus suspect. Secret societies also bring to mind the notion of recruitment of others into the group, thus the converting and educating of women in tribadic sex. Such a group of women have no need for men, as opposed to women who have sex together for the titillation of the male gaze.

Accusing Marie Antoinette of tribadism exploited any number of social and political fears - unease about the queen's foreignness, about women usurping power, about men being displaced. The abbé Brantôme argues in Dames galantes that "lesbiennes" originated in "oriental" countries like Greece and Turkey, where women were "recluses," as well as from Italy, but the term, "German vice," was also synonymous with tribadism in this period (Brantôme 219).

⁵⁴ This quote refers only to upper class women, as poor women would not have been the subject of the Mémoires secrets, which was largely interested in the goings-on of the court. Further, the quote is correct in asserting that women, at least aristocratic women, were not likely to be prosecuted by the law for tribadery under the *Ancien Régime* (Bellhouse 697).

Authors of sexual slander had begun to accuse the queen of tribadism by 1775, when Marie Antoinette wrote to her mother complaining that political pamphlets and libels were accusing her of having sexual relations with men and women (Crompton 495). The fact that Marie Antoinette was the patroness of two purported tribades, the notable opera star, Sophie Arnoult (1740-1802), and the actress Françoise Raucourt (1756-1815), perhaps gave tribadic accusations a certain amount of credibility (495).⁵⁵ The anonymous pamphlet La Journée amoureuse ou les derniers plaisirs de M...-A... (1792), alludes to this patronage to provide a "historically factual" account spoken by Marie Antoinette: "[J]e me suis fait manier par les célèbres tribades"; while the "célèbres tribades" are not named, it is likely the text is referring to Sophie Arnoult and Françoise Raucourt (in L'Anthologie Erotique 1153).

Tribadic slander sometimes is used to titillate and arouse, as in the anonymous poetic pamphlet, Grande fête donnée par les maquerelles de Paris... (1791), in which women replace the penis with the finger:

De ses dames d'honneur, Jules [de Polignac] était la plus belle.

Jules, de ses talents, vite instruisit Toinon.

Toinon suivit de près son lubrique modèle,

Et mieux que lui bientôt sut feuilleter un con.

La cour ne tarda pas à se mettre à la mode.

⁵⁵ In this period actresses were also viewed as prostitutes, thus associating with them was a sign of vice, especially for women (Weber 128).

*Chaque femme à la fois fut tribade et catin:
On ne fit plus d'enfants; cela parut commode,
Le vit fut remplacé par un doigt libertin
(in L'Anthologie érotique 1121-22).*

This passage aims to titillate its readers by employing graphic phrases, such as "*feuilleter un con*" and "*un doigt libertine*," to reference the act of manual stimulation of a vagina. The phrase, "*Jules était la plus belle*," echoes the notion in the *Mémoires Secrets* of the "prettiest women" joining in a pact of tribadism, the "dame d'honneur" being more *une "dame de plaisir"*. Through sarcasm and irony the passage expresses disapproval of the women's behavior: "*lubrique modèle*" suggest deviance but the phrase "*on ne fit plus d'enfants*" is a direct attack on women using their bodies for pleasure, not procreation, their primary role. And in Bordel patriotique..., an excessive number of terms emphasizes non-procreative sex. The queen and her coterie of "*Ganymèdes*," "*bardaches*," "*pédérastes*," "*gamahuceurs*," "*gamahuceuses*," "*tribades*," "*sodomites*," and "*enculeurs*," participate in "*la jouissance antiphysique*," a blanket term for all sexual practices other than penis into vagina (in L'Anthologie érotique 1089).⁵⁶

⁵⁶ The author piles up diverse terms: "*bardache*" is a passive sodomite, "*pédérestes*" are males who have sex with young men or boys, "*sodomites*" is a general term for those who practice many types of offences ranging from sex between men to bestiality as described earlier in this dissertation, "*tribades*" are women who have sex with other women as described above, "*gamahuceur(euse)*" are those who practice cunnilingus, and "*enculeurs*" practice anal sex (in L'Anthologie 1162, 1165, 1175). On sodomy and tribadism, see supra Introduction.

However, titillation is subordinated to repulsion in the anonymous pamphlet, Les Derniers soupirs de la garce en pleurs (1790). The queen becomes a monstrous figure similar to ones described in the Renaissance text by Ambroise Paré, Les Monstres et les prodiges (1585): her clitoris is hideous and long and her vagina a giant disgusting hole. Marie Antoinette's troubled genitals and breasts are described at length throughout the pamphlet:

[Son] con toujours ouvert... mutilé... raz, [son] horrible matrice, qui ne furent jamais sans poireaux, chaude-pis, [ses] énormes tétons flasques...

[Son] con si dégarnie, si vaste & si profond, [ses] deux tétons si mous, [son] infect matrice...quelle large ouverture, d'un con fangeux [et] [son] clitoris affreux... (7-10, 12-13).

Elizabeth Colwill makes sense of the text's obscene and graphic images:

[Marie Antoinette is] reduced to a repulsive feminine essence complete with sagging breasts, [a] disease ridden woman... The violently misogynistic language of this pamphlet would have resonated on a number of levels by the end of the eighteenth century. The "repulsive" structure of the yawning vagina could have recalled the toothed vagina of ancient derivation. The "hideous clitoris" signified the enlarged organ of either the tribade or the hermaphrodite. For some readers the description of the queen's genitals may have called to mind the African "Hottentot apron," or genital elongation, which had long excited the prurient commentaries of European travelers (Colwill in Merrick and Ragan II 69).

The queen's gaping hole features a vagina that has been abused (in fact "mutilated") as a result of her licentious sexual

practices. And like the frightening, castrating, toothed vagina, the clitoris that was repeatedly described as so elongated that it was often likened to a penis, exposes the fear that a woman no longer needs a man. Also, as Colwill mentions, the long clitoris evokes images of "barbaric" African women. That the queen's genitals call to mind the "Hottentot apron" is another way in which the author xenophobically reminds the reader of the queen's foreignness. Further, just as Mazarin's penis and anus had been often described as being contaminated with sickness, so too is Marie Antoinette's vagina depicted as being diseased; the green and yellow liquid running down her leg recalls the "cursed pus" emanating from the cardinal's genitals.⁵⁷

One fantasy that authors of sexual slander held was to "overthrow[] Lesbos," according to Louis Crompton, (Crompton 497). Moreover, women were going to have to pay for their "sins" of transgression, chief among them tribadism. The Princesse de Lamballe, allegedly one of the women in the queen's tribadic "league," was among the first to be murdered in the Terror; her head was mounted on a pike, coiffed, and paraded through the streets and in front of the house where Marie Antoinette was under house arrest (497). Rumor has it that at the time of her death her vagina was cut out, and that a man in

⁵⁷ On Mazarin's bodily fluids, see supra Chapter II.

the crowd put it on his face as if it were a mustache (Thomas 122). This symbolic gesture suggests that the troubling genitals, implicated in alleged acts of tribadism, had now been reappropriated - literally on the mouth of a man, instead of on the mouth of a woman.

The Queen is Dead...Long Live the Traditional Woman

By 1793, the old regime had been officially and violently disassembled; the queen and king were dead and France was looking toward a new political future. That this future would turn out to be a recycled version of the old is a subject beyond the scope of this dissertation, but one result of the political shift is clear: the temporary obliteration of the monarchy, and with it, women with political power.

In the last years of the old regime, sexual slander directed against Marie Antoinette reflected a virulent anxiety regarding female political power. The queen's execution came on the heels of a period in which women had begun to infiltrate seriously the male political sphere, the queen being the most recognizable figure in this new development.⁵⁸ This gaining of political power is evidenced by the womens' political clubs created between 1791 through 1793 in which women sought to

⁵⁸ The queen's execution also allayed fears of a regency with the queen exerting Austrian influence over a young king (Kaiser 597).

develop revolutionary ideas and take action to support the war (Desan in Recreating Authority 12).⁵⁹ These clubs were often established by women who had first attended male Jacobin clubs without being allowed active participation (14). While at first men were supportive of these women's clubs - partly in the hope that females would not be swayed by anti-revolutionary "fanaticism" - the Jacobin male deputies eventually became concerned that women were vying to lead democracy, instead of accepting the role of assisting men in revolution (17, 30). During the Revolution women's clubs and popular societies were labeled "dangerous" and thought to be causing "disorder" because their female members were becoming "masculinized," "giving up [their] sex," and engaging in sexual misconduct (34). Ultimately, in 1793, the National Convention banned the women's Revolutionary club, and just two weeks after Marie Antoinette's execution it banned political association by females altogether. Indeed, it can be argued that the execution of the queen - an historical first - was in response to anxiety surrounding the growing power of women (Fraser I 427).⁶⁰ Even before the demise

⁵⁹ These clubs were not just small groups of women coming together, but could include thousands. One such club in Bordeaux had a founding ceremony attended by 3500 active participants (Desan in Recreating Authority 13).

⁶⁰ While the actual charge against the queen was high treason despite the lack of any hard evidence, Sarah Maza, relying on Lynn Hunt's analysis, argues that women had wrested power from men and that this crisis led to the scapegoating, and ultimately, the murder of the queen:

of the Old Regime, the exclusion of women from politics was a logical result of the perceived unreasonable "nature" of the female sex (Maza I 208-10). In 1789, the "all-male elective and representative assembly" supplanted the court as "the effective and symbolic center of political life in France," a court that, according to Maza, had been "in essence a household writ large," and was therefore gendered female due to its domestic nature (Maza 313). Whereas the stage-like court system focused on appearance, the new legislative body now "was the domain of the word, of textuality, of rationality" (313). The aim of the new system was to address methodically the nation's problems through the passing of reasoned laws (313). In fact, as Mary Bellhouse ironically points out, it was only after women had been excluded from politics and pushed into the private domain of home and family that the symbol of France became a woman - the female was

[F]ollowing René Girard, cultural crises that culminate in ritual violence directed at a scapegoat - in this instance, the Old Regime monarchy and its "public women" - are usually accompanied by fears of gender confusion, by anxieties arising from the perceived masculinization of women and feminization of men (Maza I 181).

The queen was the ultimate "public woman," and the mountain of slander written against her made her both the primary scapegoat and the clearest illustration of the misogynistic fears of authors of sexual slander. On scapegoating in slanderous texts, see supra Introduction.

It is certainly true that women did lose political power during and after the Revolution (i.e., their clubs were closed and they did not get the vote); however, it can be argued that the knowledge they gained about politics served them well later in the 19th century when there was another surge of female political involvement. Furthermore, while women did lose significant political power during the Revolution, there were a few instances where they actually gained rights, such as equal inheritance laws and the short period in which divorce became legal.

no longer a threat to what was now a re-appropriated male sphere (Bellhouse 680-81).

That women and politics are not compatible is, as we saw, the dominant theme of Louise de Keralio's slanderous text, Les Crimes des reines de France depuis le commencement de la monarchie jusqu'à Marie Antoinette (1792). She echoes Rousseau's argument in Lettre à d'Alembert (1758) that the leaders of a corrupt society are women who "sédui[sent]," "trompe[nt]," and "gouverne[nt] leurs maîtres," but in an enlightened society, women should stay in their place, that is in the home (Rousseau 436). Indeed, in a monarchy, there may be many "inconveniences," but the worst, for Keralio is "l'ascendant des reines... [qui] [d]u fond de [leur] boudoir...régler[ont] la marche des armées, le fort sort des colonies," that is using their "private" power in the "boudoir" to exercise military authority (Keralio viii, xv). But, paradoxically, Keralio also casts women as having a "faiblesse naturelle [qui] s'unit facilement à la barbarie," "natural" weakness combining with primitiveness (1). For Keralio, women's passions transform them into savages and animals:

[L]eur esprit en délire ne connaît plus de frein, & l'excès de la fièvre ardente dont le transport les dévore, les précipite de crime en crime, jusqu'à transformer enfin ces êtres doux & timides en animaux plus féroces & plus indomptables que les hommes les plus barbares & plus ignorans (2).

Keralio describes women as worse than "*les hommes les plus barbares [et] ignoran[ts]*," which, like the Hottentot apron, evokes the "uncivilized" people of Africa. Indeed, the phrase, "*l'excès de la fièvre ardente dont le transport les dévore*," suggests images of Africans in a murderous and uncontrolled trance.

In some ways, Keralio's fears of women usurping political power were realized by the murder of Jean Paul Marat in 1793 by Charlotte Corday (1768-1793).⁶¹ The young and beautiful Corday, believing that Marat was an anarchist whose intentions would lead to the death of many, took her political ideas to the extreme: murder. At her trial she showed no remorse and even appeared cheerful, choosing death by guillotine rather than apologizing for what she had done (Kindleberger 998).⁶² After her trial, the judges expressed great disbelief that a woman could commit such a politically motivated crime and they had Corday's body examined post-mortem to see if she was a virgin (she was); they believed that if she were not a virgin, then the

⁶¹ Jean Paul Marat (1743-1793) was founder of the anti monarchy paper, *L'Ami du Peuple*.

⁶² Shortly after Corday's execution, two American publications reported that Corday "blushed deeply" prior to decapitation, a blush that remained on the head after being guillotined (Lewis 43). According to Paul Lewis, this rouging of her cheeks "captures the widely shared ambivalence and tension surrounding treatments of female resistance and power in the 1790's, a sense that women who fought back risked losing their womanliness with its gender specific virtues" (43). As long as Corday blushed like a girl, she had not entirely appropriated a "masculine" political role; the rouging serving as proof of her feminine biology.

man who had slept with her was surely to blame for her actions (Gelbart 205; Kindleberger 995). The judges also could not conceive how a woman could independently premeditate murder - a completely rational act - the opposite of woman's supposed "emotional" and "irrational" mind. At her trial, Corday rationally stated that she thought the murder of Marat - one man - necessary to save one hundred thousand others (Kindleberger 997).

While Corday acted out violently her political intervention, Olympe de Gouges (1748-1793) boldly advocated in Déclaration des droits de la femme et de la citoyenne (1791), for the inclusion of women in the nation as citizens equal to men - a text that further proved that Keralio's fears were being realized.⁶³ And in Toxicodindronn, Combat à mort des trois gouvernements (1793), De Gouges argues for a plebiscite to choose their form of government - a monarchy, federalism or republicanism (Vanpée 47).⁶⁴ She was arrested, put on trial, and found guilty of illegally posting copies of this pamphlet. During her trial, she was further accused of being sympathetic

⁶³ De Gouges dedicated Déclaration des droits de la femme et de la citoyenne to Marie Antoinette, emphasizing her hope that the queen is being falsely accused of complicity with foreign power and that she will help restore dignity to the monarchy (de Gouges I 87). De Gouges appeals to Marie Antoinette as a "mother and wife," to argue that the queen should defend the cause of the "unfortunate sex" (88).

⁶⁴ The argument against de Gouge was that her text sought to re-establish the monarchy and it was illegal in 1793 to write any such text (Vanpée 47).

to Marie Antoinette in La France sauvée, ou le tyran dethroné (1792), a play where she described the queen as complex and thoughtful, not the one-dimensional figure of sexual slander (61, 64). Unabashed in her convictions, de Gouges defiantly screamed to the crowd at her execution: "*Enfants de la patrie, vous vengerez ma mort*" (65 n.49).

At a moment when women were excluded from politics, both de Gouges and Corday chose instead to follow "virile models" of political involvement (Kindleberger 975).⁶⁵ To borrow Patrice Higonnet's phrase about Corday, both women were making "archetypically masculine statement[s]" in the political realm (quoted in Kindleberger 975).⁶⁶ The anxiety caused by women acting like men was clearly stated in 1793 by the president of the Paris Commune, Pierre-Gaspard Chaumette (1763-1794): he

⁶⁵ A third female revolutionary figure, Marie-Jeanne Philipon Roland or Madame Roland (1754-1793), was also condemned to death for spreading "antirevolutionary" notions through an education program called the "Office of Public Opinion" (Szymanek 99). Madame Roland is not studied in detail here as she, unlike Charlotte Corday and Olympe de Gouges, actively denied her political activism and insisted she only helped her husband (100). She too spoke on the scaffold, but her words were not nearly as defiant as the other two women - "*Vous me jugez digne de partager le sort des grands hommes que vous avez assassinés. Je tacherai de porter à l'échafaud le courage qu'ils y ont montré*" - to the end presenting herself as the weaker sex (100). However, it is certainly arguable that her actions spoke louder than her words.

⁶⁶ Women also participated in the army during the Revolution starting in 1789. In March 1791, 300 women petitioned the French legislative assembly for the right to bear arms and fight for their country (Krimmer 38-39). This petition was rejected in 1792, thus denying women the "right" to serve; however, female military assistance was tolerated on the condition that it was unofficial, until 1793, when it was outlawed altogether (39-40).

called politically active women "*viragos*" who act against the laws of nature (Desan 34).

The perceived masculinization of the female sex during the revolutionary period, and the execution of political women, such as Corday and de Gouges, parallels the ultimate fate of Marie Antoinette, which sexual slander against her steadily prepared. The texts cited in this chapter show Marie Antoinette to be a promiscuous woman whose exploits deviated from the female private sphere and penetrated the male domain, a monstrous model of virility. As the most obvious emblem of the new roles French women were assuming, the queen was decimated over and over in slanderous texts. In effect, her trial began long before her actual death, for she was condemned in all the slander written against her "extreme" sexualization. This slander not only undermined and eventually annihilated Marie Antoinette's transcendent queenship, it ultimately also eliminated respect for the monarchy. In this sense, the queen can largely be considered a stand-in for the king; she took the slanderous punches that authors were loathe to direct at the monarch himself.

Conclusion: Castrating the Pig

The ultimate target of slander against the queen was Louis XVI himself. Indeed, all slander showing the queen having sex with someone other than her husband was an attack on the monarch's own power and authority. At bottom, whatever the queen was doing "wrong" was the king's fault for not controlling his wife. And if the king could not control his own wife, then how could he rule an entire nation?

However, sexual slander of this period rarely focuses directly on the king. Where it does, in a small number of texts, there continues to be a reluctance to criticize him. Only at the end of his reign does some sexual slander appear against Louis XVI, perhaps a sign that the final stage of the monarchy's desacralization and thus its demise had begun.⁶⁷ In the 1789 pamphlet, L'Autrichienne en goguettes, ou l'orgie royale: opéra proverbe, the drunk king is described as disinterested in sex, and so concerned with his lock-and-key hobby that he does not satisfy his wife sexually, who therefore looks elsewhere for sexual gratification. While his wife is having sex nearby, he remarks: "*J'étais occupé à terminer une*

⁶⁷ Sexual slander against the king became most virulent at the end of his reign although a few examples do date from the early 1790s.

serrure dont je suis très content" (7).⁶⁸ The author of this and similar texts neuter the king, and thereby deny him respect as a man, let alone as king. In one image disseminated immediately prior to his execution, the king is drawn as a "limp penis," as Bellhouse puts it; the assault on his genitals is an assault on his "male" authority, indeed on his sacralization (Bellhouse 681).

In another instance, the anonymous pamphlet La Tentation d'Antoinette et de son cochon dans la tour du temple (1792), directly assaults the king by referring to him as a fat, bottom-feeding pig.⁶⁹ Even more disrespectfully, the king is called a sodomite in the anonymous pamphlet, Le Godemiché royal (1789), where he is represented by Jupin (a familiar term for Jupiter or king of the gods) "[qui] encule Ganymède."⁷⁰ Indeed, in this text Marie Antoinette is described as having sex with everyone but the king, who is shown to be penetrating a male. Ironically, the king is the "active" sexual partner with a man,

⁶⁸ The king's lock and key hobby is an historical fact, allowing the author to blur the line between fact and fiction.

⁶⁹ The particular nickname of "cochon" for the king was used in a number of texts, including the anonymous pamphlets Grande fête donnée par les maquerelles de Paris, à toutes leurs putains, le jour de l'arrivée du roi, de la reine et de leur famille, en réjouissance du retour de leur père et mère... (1791) and La Journée amoureuse ou les derniers plaisirs de M...-A... (1792). Historians such as Antonia Fraser and Caroline Weber agree that the king was obese, a fact hidden by flattering portraits; however, there is evidence that courtiers mocked him behind his back for his ungainly appearance (Weber 38; Fraser I 34).

⁷⁰ On Ganymède, see supra Introduction.

but is incapable of sexual relations with his wife; he is "passive" to her "active" role with other lovers.

A common strategy in the small body of sexual slander directed against the king is to have other characters ridicule him - the author thus only serving as the ventriloquist. In Grande fête donnée par les maquerelles de Paris..., Jean Paul Marat is used as a mouthpiece for slander, this time speaking directly to the king: "*Puisque, sire, vous n'aimez que la bouteille, et que ne pensiez qu'à remplir votre bedaine sans vous soucier de vous distinguer dans les ébats amoureux, il est juste que vous soyez cocu, canard comme vous l'êtes*" (in L'Anthologie érotique 1112). Marat insults the king, calling him a drunk, useless in sex, and unaware or unconcerned that he is cuckolded by the queen. Rather than act like a "man" by proving his worth through sex ("*distinguer dans les ébats amoureux*"), he is only interested in stuffing his fat stomach; the vulgar "*bedaine,*" or fat belly, indicates that crude language can now be used against the king. Later in this same poem, the Greek style chorus of "*putains*" echoes the same sentiment with words about the queen's "*gros cocu de mari*" (1117).

Other authors enlist the queen to speak ill of the king. For instance, in Le Godemiché royal it is the queen who states: "*Mon mari, être le plus apathique qui jamais ait existé sur la*

terre, fera tout ce que l'on voudra qu'il fasse, pourvu qu'on lui dise que c'est pour le bien" (in L'Anthologie Erotique 1077-78). By attributing the statements to the queen, the author can both speak out against the king and not take ownership of the words. And in the anonymous pamphlet, La Journée amoureuse ou les derniers plaisirs de M...-A... (1792), the queen utters contempt for the king: "*Ce n'est point du tout pour conserver à ce souldard une couronne, qu'il est indigne de porter...*" (in L'Anthologie Erotique 1149). Finally, in this same pamphlet, the queen and the Princesse de Lamballe are given the role of attacking the king as "*le cochon*" and "*le bougre*" (1149). With the monarch's life devalued even by the ones supposed to be on his side, how could the king have the authority to rule the rest of the nation? This assault paves the way to his ultimate desacralization - the guillotine. The Princesse de Lamballe sums up his abjection, his obliteration as man and king: "*Ne me parle point du roi comme d'un homme. C'est une grosse masse de chair, et rien de plus*" (1149). Reduced to a slab of meat, the king, no longer a man, is nothing but what Barthes calls the "phallus perdu" (Barthes II 156). And losing the phallus was but the inevitable precursor to losing his head.

Conclusion: Abiding Images and the Narrative Effects of Sexual Slander

Beyond its immediate impact - causing damage to the monarchy - sexual slander has had a powerful influence on the historical narratives of its targets as well as gender normativity in the early-modern period. Two of the three historical figures analyzed in this dissertation, Henri III and Marie Antoinette, have continued to be depicted in accordance with the reputation constructed in the slanderous texts that condemned them. Henri III is still seen as a sodomite (portrayed as hyperbolically effeminate in Shekhar Kapur's 1998 film, Elizabeth), while Marie Antoinette is even now identified primarily with excess (for instance, in Sofia Coppola's film, Marie Antoinette (2006), as a gambling fashionista involved in a sexual relationship with the dashing Axel von Fersen). Only recently have scholars, such as Nicolas Le Roux and Evelyn Lever, begun to treat Henri III and Marie Antoinette as more complex figures. Indeed, academic works (including this one) are in one sense responsible for reinforcing sexually slanderous charges, because they, like early-modern scandalmongers, repeat claims of sexual deviance (if only to refute them).

While the Valois king and Austrian queen were not the sexual monsters represented in slanderous texts, there

nevertheless was an overlap between their lives in historical narratives and in slander. As the first chapter of this dissertation shows, Henri III was described as effeminate even by non-scandalmongering contemporaries, such as Spanish ambassador Francès de Alava. Furthermore, his excessive interest in clothing and male favorites was not considered "masculine" - his day-to-day fashions were similar to those that ladies of the court wore and his privileging of the mignons at the expense of more noble families was unprecedented. For these reasons, Gary Ferguson concludes that Henri III was and remains today a "queer figure [whose] conduct and the culture he fostered around himself were suspicious to contemporaries"; for Ferguson, the early-modern king was "queer" because he cast himself in divergence from gender norms (Ferguson 190). Scandal mongers could easily prey on the king's deviations from social conventions, such as requiring the presence of the entire court at the funeral ceremony of his mignon Caylus, which made him a suspect figure. Because Henri III's "unusual" behavior resonates even now as being in opposition to stereotypes of masculinity, Ferguson claims that Henri III "resists complete recuperation" by what he calls somewhat reductively a "heteronormative (literary) history" (190). Today, when effeminacy is almost always seen as congruent with homosexual behavior, Henri III tends to be judged by historians through a

21st century lens; in other words, his "queer" behavior appears even stranger now than it seems to have been in the late 16th century. Still, during his reign, slanderous texts cast the Valois king as failing to conform to gender norms; however, instead of describing an effeminate man who may have had sex with men, scandalmongers represented him as a raging sodomite, more like a woman than a man and possibly even a hermaphrodite.

Marie Antoinette shares a fate similar to that of Henri III because she too is lastingly linked to her double in slanderous texts - an exaggeration, but not entirely dissimilar from the person depicted in the historical record. She rebelled against gender norms by briefly eliminating the corset, wearing revealing attire, dressing like women of the lower classes, and appropriating male styles, all of which, like the Valois king, set her apart as "queer." By forging an identity as a sartorially brazen queen, she made clear her independence from some traditions. Perhaps it was in part a result of this defiance that slanderers endowed her with extreme power and showed her to be an emasculating figure who controlled the king, and by extension, the country.

Scandalmongers interpreted Henri III and Marie Antoinette's deviations from gender norms and customs as a reflection of corrupt morals and deviant sexuality. Rather than embodying a "father-figure" - the king's traditional role - Henri III

instead was called a "*Roy femme*," and an "*homme Reyne*," which is evidence of a subversion of the powerful father and the subservient mother (d'Aubigné 72). For slanderers, Marie Antoinette was a tribade who cuckolded the king with men and whose vagina threatened France by producing false heirs - a representation radically different from her prescribed role as compliant wife and good mother. In retrospect, Marie Antoinette's supposed transgressions appear to be more subversive than those of the king. Firstly, since the queen's purpose was to give birth to an heir, her supposed extramarital sexual relations could have serious consequences for the royal bloodline, whereas the king's sodomitical sexual exploits were, by that measure, inconsequential. Secondly, whereas Henri III had been relegated to the "inferior" feminine sphere, Marie Antoinette was placed in the "superior" masculine realm. Put another way, Marie Antoinette was usurping privileged male space while Henri III was merely slumming in feminine territory.

However, in contrast to Henri III and Marie Antoinette, Mazarin has never been associated with "excessive" fashion and sexuality. The cardinal has largely escaped their fate, for there is less focus on his personal life in scholarship about him, and thus fewer repetitions of salacious rumors about his character and sexual practices. Moreover, texts, such as Geoffrey Treasure's Mazarin: The Crisis of Absolutism in France

(1995), portray the cardinal as an adept prime minister who worked tirelessly for the good of France, whereas Henri III and Marie Antoinette are typically seen as incompetent in terms of governing and diplomacy. To be sure, Mazarin oversaw the successful solidification of the French state and his diplomatic skills helped to end the Thirty Years' War. As a result, unlike Henri III and Marie Antoinette, the cardinal is portrayed in the historical record as being nothing like his double in slander - neither flashy nor effeminate. In fact, accusations of sodomitical behavior against him were not based on any perceived gender ambiguity. Rather, it was Mazarin's Italian heritage that prompted charges of sodomy and these were pinned on his threatening homeland, since Italians were often accused in the *Ancien Régime* of having brought sodomy into France. His Italian heritage was more "guilty" than the cardinal himself, thus making him foreign but not "queer".

Whereas every sexual attack on the cardinal overlays the specter of xenophobia, similar charges against Henri III and Marie Antoinette primarily involved gender transgression. Put another way, all Italians could be suspected of sodomy, but not all kings or queens were.⁷¹ Although it could be argued that

⁷¹ It could also be said retrospectively that anti-Italianism was a conduit for attacks against deviations from gender norms, starting with the anti-Italianism apparent in slanderous texts condemning Henri III. Catherine de Médici was an Italian and therefore anti-Italian slander against her son could be viewed as an attack against her. Xenophobic charges against Henri

Marie Antoinette's birth nationality may have contributed to sexual attacks against her, there were no widespread stereotypes of Austrian sexual deviance and no common expressions, such as "*le vice italien*," ascribing specific sexual acts to Austria.

Whatever the differences among the three subjects of study in this dissertation, the question remains: why did slanderers focus on perceived deviance of the flesh? While it is certainly true that *ad hominem* attacks lend themselves easily to charges of personal corruption (sexual or otherwise), the use of the body to defame has particular significance when it involves the monarchy. The king was a divine being, assigned by God to protect the kingdom. As Ernst Kantorowicz explains in *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (1957), the monarch was believed to have two bodies, a sacred and a human body; the corporeal merely housed the sacred. Attacks in slanderous texts on the physicality of the king forced readers to remember his human form, and thus, according to Elisabeth Fraser, "demonstrated popular rejection of the notion of the king's divinity" (Fraser II 345). Indeed, the ultimate affirmation of the humanness of the body is death. For this reason, texts portraying the king engaging in sexual acts

III and Mazarin can ultimately be traced back to Catherine and Marie de Médici with whom the stereotype of Italians usurping French power started. In this manner, much of the sexually slanderous content examined in this dissertation can be seen to reflect concern about queens (necessarily foreign) in power, including Marie Antoinette.

or, ultimately, calling for his assassination are inherently an attack on his sacredness, and by extension, on the divine nature of the monarchical institution. And that post-mortem slander stated that Henri III refused last rights implied that the body of the king was not divine and therefore could not pass on to the next monarch. Thus, while sexually slanderous texts against Henri III do not explicitly call for significant changes in the system of government, they nevertheless question the fundamental godly principles on which the monarchy was based.

Of course, Mazarin and Marie Antoinette were not kings, and therefore not sacred. During most of the *Ancien Régime*, there were relatively few sexual charges against kings in slanderous texts, evidencing a reluctance to challenge the monarch's divine nature; there were, however, sexually explicit works produced attacking those metonymically closest to him. To describe the queen's gaping vagina overflowing with non-royal semen dramatizes sexual disorder existing beside the king, indirectly condemning his judgment by the company he keeps and contaminating him as well. Furthermore, Mazarin and Marie Antoinette were depicted in slanderous texts as leading (or misleading) the country. Of course, during the Fronde Louis XIV was a minor, not yet responsible for governmental decisions, thus making Mazarin and Anne d'Autriche *de facto* rulers of the country. Attacks against the cardinal and the queen therefore

aimed to destabilize Anne's regency, a problematic interregnum in any monarchy, when, for all practical purposes, there was no ruling king. Indeed, regencies were a reminder of one major flaw in the monarchical system (i.e., that years could pass without a divinely chosen adult monarch), which sexual slander served to expose.

While not a regent, Marie Antoinette was represented in sexually slanderous texts as more powerful than her husband. By portraying Marie Antoinette as in charge of the nation slanderers could imply that a strong king was needed for the monarchy to function properly, and by that token, that the king was ineffectual, and possibly that his connection to God was broken. The queen was represented as having supplanted an adult king as the figurehead of France, and thus having rendered the monarch impotent and irrelevant. Moreover, depictions of Marie Antoinette as the true ruler of the king - and therefore the kingdom - revealed anxiety about the changing role of women in the *Ancien Régime*, with the rise of women's political clubs. Sexually slanderous texts against her also sought to delegitimize her power, and with it, female power; her punishment was an example for other "deviant" women who challenged their subordination to their husband. Through attacks on the queen's sexual dominance, slanderers helped define what was unacceptable and thus acceptable for women.

Indeed, domesticity and conjugality became the bourgeois norm after the Revolution.

Analogously, sexual slander against Henri III concerned more than the need to rid France of "le tyran"; it effectively charted the course for defining normative masculinity as being non-effeminate and non-sodomitical. By casting Henri III as an effeminate sodomite, slanderers conflated effeminacy with sexual relations between men in a way that is usually first attributed to the 19th century. Since the goal of slander generally is to "other" the target, slanderers were inherently defining themselves in opposition to Henri III. And while Italy was renowned for many positive qualities, such as the arts and architecture, in sexual assaults on Mazarin, slanderers were effectively saying that they - and by extension France - were not what being Italian implied sexually in that period (i.e. sodomites).

Thus, sexual slander reveals moments not only of rupture in the monarchical system, but also of the development of certain gender norms. It exposes what was proscribed and prescribed for gender roles in France at specific historical moments. And because it was meant to be disseminated in various media across all classes, "excessive" sexual slander may in fact be one of the most accurate representations of what people believed or were encouraged to believe concerning gender roles and sexual

activity. Of course, it is hard to know whether sexual slander reflected or revised such norms; I would argue that it was likely a combination of the two. Regardless, while sexual slander may have chipped away at the monarchy, it also gradually reconstructed and reinforced notions of gender and sexual normativity.

Illustrations

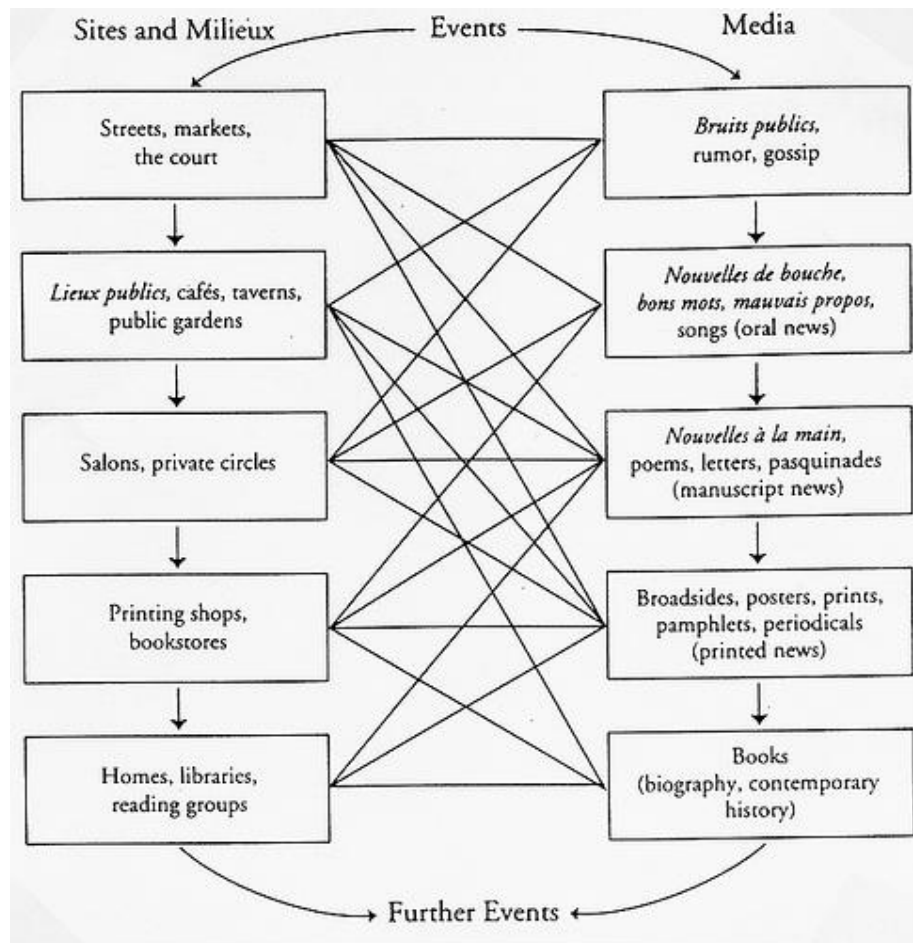


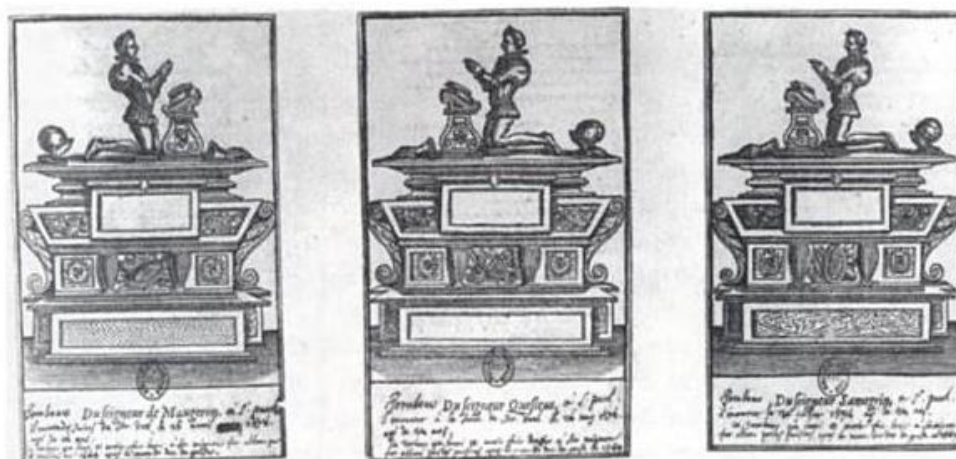
Illustration 1: Robert Darnton's
"Communication Networks" Chart



Illustration 2: Henri III



Illustration 3: Henri III



Tombeaux de Caylus, Maugiron et Saint-Mégrin à Saint-Paul
Les Antiquitez croniques et singularitez de Paris (...) par Gilles Corrozet,
 augmentées par N. B. parisien. Livre second : De la sepulture des Roys et Roynes de France,
 Princes, Princesses et autres personnes illustres, representez par figures
 ainsi qu'ils se voyent encores à present ès Eglises où ils sont inhumez. Recueillis par Jean Rabel,
 Paris, Nicolas Bonfons, 1588, fol. 106 v^o-110 v^o.

Illustration 4: Tomb of François Louis de Maugiron



Illustration 5: Portrait Monstrueux et Allégorique
d'Henri III

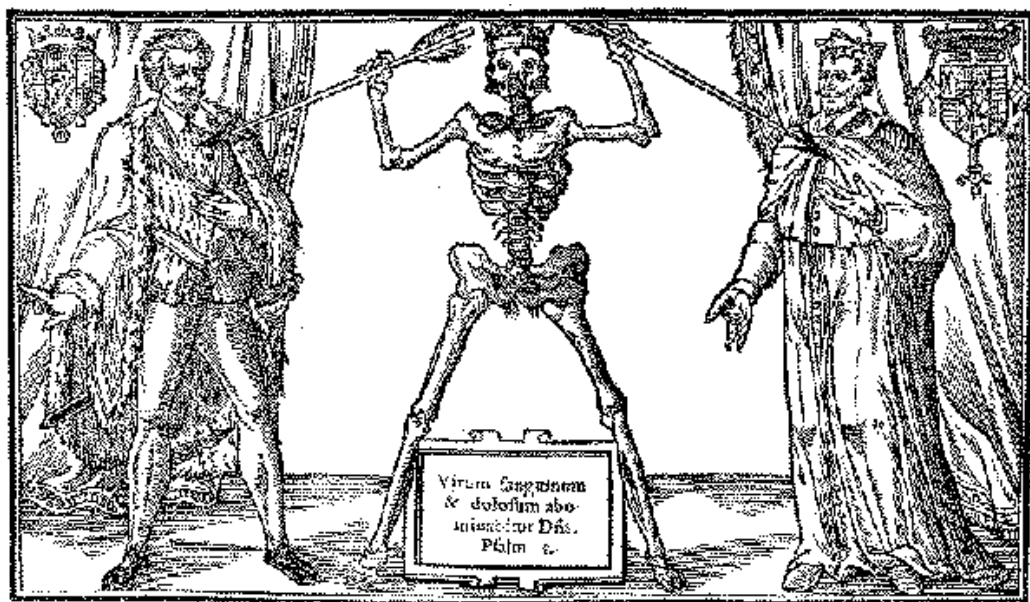


Illustration 6: Tombeau sur le Trespas & Assasinat Commis
aux Personnes de Messieurs de Guyse à Bloys



Illustration 7: La Volta (Bal à la cour des Valois, 1562)



Illustration 8: Mazarin



Illustration 9: Anne d'Autriche and the King



Illustration 10: Anne d'Autriche and Her Children



Illustration 11: "The Arrival of Marie de Médici in Marseille" by Peter Paul Rubens



Illustration 12: Catherine de Médici



Illustration 13: Anne d'Autriche (on the left) and Mazarin (in the back)



Illustration 14: Rendering of Marie Antoinette's Hairstyle



Illustration 15: Robe à la Polonoise



Illustration 16: Robe de Gaulle



Illustration 17: Equestrian Portrait of Marie Antoinette
in Hunting Attire, 1783



**Illustration 18: Rendering of the Infamous Diamond
Necklace**

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