

ABSTRACT

MILD, ANNE MARIE. *Chocolate, Morality, and Gender in Eighteenth Century France* (Under the direction of Dr. Julia Rudolph).

This thesis examines the ways in which moral panic in eighteenth century France framed women's consumption of chocolate. This thesis builds on established scholarship that links anxiety about women's activity in the public sphere, fears of national physical and moral degeneration, and the hygienic solutions proposed by medical authorities. By understanding chocolate's cultural connections to luxury and libertinism, it is possible to discern male anxiety over women's consumption of chocolate. I intend to show how the moral controls placed on women are visible in eighteenth century depictions of women consuming chocolate. These visual representations demonstrate the proper moral consumption of chocolate in the private domestic sphere, often under the watchful eyes of the patriarch, and warn of the deleterious effects of consuming chocolate without proper supervision for immoral purposes. Male consumption of anti-venereal chocolate complicates this narrative, providing a concrete example of men drinking chocolate that is linked explicitly to immoral behavior. Libertines embraced both the inflammatory qualities and scandalous reputation of chocolate, using it as an aphrodisiac and celebrating it through art and literature.

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Chocolate, Morality, and Gender in 18th Century France

by

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the memory of Mr. Potter,
who taught me how to fall in love with history.

BIOGRAPHY

Anne Mild received her undergraduate degree from Mount St. Mary's University in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Her interests include histories of gender, food and foodways, sex and sexuality, commodities, culture, courts of Europe, royal mistresses, folklore, France, witchcraft, revolutions, religions, and medicine.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis grew out of an interest in Marie Antoinette and the various ways in which she became a cultural shorthand for everything perceived to be dangerous and harmful in late eighteenth century France. The dangers of women in politics, monarchs detached from their subjects, outrageous debt-inducing habits of consumption, unchecked privilege, perverted sexuality, and marital national infidelity: all these and more were encompassed in the myth surrounding her. In my preliminary research into medical chocolate, I found a similar cultural shorthand surrounding chocolate. In this thesis, I argue that earlier debates over the nature and morality of chocolate did not disappear in the eighteenth century; rather, these concerns were couched in different terms—luxury, libertinism, and moral degeneration. I see a conversation about the moral or immoral effects of chocolate taking place both in medical texts and in literature, a conversation that can be identified in certain works of art depicting the consumption of chocolate.

The shift from sixteenth and seventeenth century conversations over the morality of chocolate to those of the eighteenth century also highlights a shift in concepts of morality. Early debates about chocolate focused on personal morality. The women of Chiapas who broke the Communion fast to drink chocolate and those assumed to be in league with the Devil through connections to indigenous rituals or sorcerers were endangering their personal

salvation through their actions. However, the language of eighteenth century France shifts from a concern about personal morality to a concern about state morality. A woman who abandons her children for a lifestyle of luxury—including the frequent consumption of chocolate—is endangering not her own soul but the soul of the French nation. Those who engaged in chocolate-fueled libertine behavior were threatening the future of the nation: during a perceived depopulation crisis, unproductive sexual activity was not just immoral—it was unpatriotic. The moral degeneration of the nation was tied to individual behavior but it was for the sake of France that habits surrounding chocolate needed to be changed. There was also a significant shift concerning medical authority over moral matters, which injected medical knowledge of chocolate into debates on morality in a specific way.

My intended contribution to the scholarship is to highlight the ongoing conversation surrounding chocolate. Chocolate was not monolithic in meaning or usage, and several of my sources contradict each other or disagree. However, instead of flattening conflicting sources, I have attempted to place them in conversation with each other. The cultural values imbued in chocolate change from one presenter to the next. My sources include medical texts, treatises on chocolate as a pharmaceutical ingredient, conduct books, works of libertine and philosophical literature, and works of art. I hope that I have preserved the contrary nature of

my sources, because it is in these moments of friction that the ongoing debate can best be observed.

This is not an exhaustive study of chocolate, morality, and gender in eighteenth century France. There are angles I did not cover and sources I did not exhaust. Ideological connections between chocolate and imperialism and between chocolate and religion are, for the most part, absent from this thesis. However, these connections do exist, and I believe they help to inform the moral character of chocolate in Europe from the sixteenth through the eighteenth century. While not explicitly included in this thesis, these connections must not be forgotten while considering chocolate, morality, and gender in eighteenth century France.

I have included here a timeline of my primary sources, which may help understand the chronology of chocolate in a thesis that is arranged more or less thematically.

PRIMARY SOURCE TIMELINE

1000-1500 CE: Popol Vuh written sometime in this period.

1519: Hernan Cortes encounters chocolate as a beverage in the court of Moctezuma II.

1565: Nicolás Monardes publishes *Dos libros. El uno trata de todas las cosas que traen de nuestras Indias Occidentales que sirven al uso de medicina*.

1571-1615: Francisco Hernandez writes various letters and manuscripts about his experiences in Mexico, including detailed descriptions of cacao and how it is used by the natives.

1591: Juan de Cárdenas publishes *Primera parte de las problemas y secretos maravillosos de las Indias* which contains three chapters discussing cacao and chocolate.

1618: Bartholomeo (or Barthelemy or Bartolomeo) Marradon publishes *Del Tabago, los daños que cause y del Chokolata* in Seville. It includes an imagined conversation about chocolate which is later reproduced as *Du Chocolate. Dialogue entre un médecin, un indien, et un bourgeois* in 1685.

1631: Antonio Colmenero de Ledesma first publishes *Curioso tratado dela naturaleza y calidad del chocolate, dividido en quatro puntos*.

1640: Antonio Colmenero de Ledesma's treatise is published in English as *A curious treatise of the nature and quality of chocolate. Written in Spanish by Antonio Colmenero, doctor in physicke and chirurgery. And put into English by Don Diego de Vades-forte*.

1643: Antonio Colmenero de Ledesma's treatise is published in French as *Du Chocolate: discours curieux, divisé en quatre parties* in Paris.

1685: Phillippe Sylvester Dufour publishes *Traites Nouveaux et curieux du café, du thé, et du chocolat*. Marradon's *Dialogue* is reproduced within this work.

1698: Nicolas Lemery publishes the first edition of *Traité universel des drogues simples* in Paris. Later editions are published in 1715 and 1732.

1710: Pierre Dionis publishes *Dissertation sur la mort subite . Avec l'histoire d'une fille cataleptique* in Paris.

1715: Louis XIV dies. Beginning of the Regency of Philippe (II) d'Orleans, also called the Régence.

1723: End of the Régence and beginning of the reign of Louis XV.

1739: François Boucher paints *Le Déjeuner*.

1743-44: Jean-Etienne Liotard paints *La Belle Chocolatière*.

1744: Jean-Etienne Liotard paints *La Chocolatière*.

1749: Rousseau publishes his *Discourse on the Sciences and the Arts*.

1750-1780: Jean-Etienne Liotard paints a portrait of his wife and daughter drinking chocolate sometime in this period.

1751: First volume of the *Encyclopédie* of Diderot and d'Alembert published.

1754: Conflict between France and England begins in North American colonies.

1756: Seven Years' War officially begins.

1759: The Marquis de Sade publishes *Philosophy in the Bedroom*.

1761: Jean-Jacques Rousseau publishes *La Nouvelle Heloise*.

1762: Jacques Ballexserd publishes *Dissertation sur l'éducation physique des enfans* in Paris.

-Antoine Baumé publishes *Elemens de Pharmacie, theorique et pratique* in Paris.

-Jean-Jacques Rousseau publishes *Emile*.

1763: Treaty of Paris ends the Seven Years' War. France loses colonial holdings in North America.

1768: Jean-Baptiste Charpentier paints *La Famille du duc de Penthièvre* also called *La Tasse de chocolat*.

-S.-A. Tissot publishes *De la sante des gens de lettres* in Lausanne.

1772: Marius-Pierre Le Mazurier paints *Réunion de la famille Barre dans son intérieur*.

1773: De Lignac, *De l'homme et de la femme considérés physiquement dans l'état du mariage* (Lille: J.-B. Henry, 1773), 186.

1774: M. Varnier, "Nouvelle maniere de composer du chocolat," *Gazette du Commerce* (Paris: Knapen, 1774-04-05), 220.

1775: Guillaume-René Le Fébure publishes *Le medecin de soi-même, ou Méthode simple et aisée pour guérir les maladies vénériennes* in Paris.

-M. Dupont du Misgnil publishes *Exposition succincte des moyens qu'il convient d'employer pour combattre avec succes les principaux accidents qui surviennent aux femmes les premiers jours de leurs couches*.

1778: J.D.T. Bienville publishes *De la nymphomanie ou traité de la fureur uterine* in Amsterdam.

1782: Le Grand d'Aussy publishes *Histoire de La Vie Privée des Français* in Paris.

1784: Joseph Raulin publishes *Nouvelles observations sur la phtisie pulmonaire* in Paris.

1785: Marquis de Sade writes *Les 120 Journées de Sodome*.

-Louis Marin Bonnet paints *The Lover Heard*.

1788: Amédée Doppet publishes *Traité du fouet et de ses effets sur le physique de l'amour, ou Aphrodisiaque externe*.

1790: Marquis de Condorcet publishes "On the Admission of Women to the Rights of Citizenship."

1797: Marquis de Sade publishes *Juliette*.

CHAPTER 1

“La physique et la morale”: Moral Panic and Medical Chocolate

Is it moral to consume chocolate? The history of this question is a tangled one, inextricably linked with histories of medical expertise, moral judgment, Church control, female behaviors, and male anxiety. The historian Bruno Bernard postulated in 1996 that by the eighteenth century, the consumption of chocolate had become so widespread and unobjectionable in Europe that earlier debates concerning its morality had been left far behind.¹ While it is true that the great moral debates over chocolate remain, for the most part, relegated to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Bernard is incorrect in his assumption that the conversation was finished by the eighteenth century. In fact, the moral anxiety surrounding the consumption of chocolate, especially by women, never entirely disappeared; rather, the same anxiety centering around the inherent immorality of chocolate that fueled debates in the previous centuries was framed and expressed in different ways in Europe generally and in France particularly during the eighteenth century. Proper moral consumption of chocolate in France occurred under the watchful eyes of medical professionals, aristocratic and bourgeois fathers, and mothers who were tasked with the moral formation of the next

¹ Bruno Bernard, “Est-il moral de boire du chocolat?”, *Chocolat: De la boisson elitaire au bâton populaire, XVI-XX siècle* (Brussels: CGER, 1996).

generation of Frenchmen and women. This moral formation would be the source of the physical and moral regeneration of the French nation: through women, in the domestic sphere. Simultaneously, aristocratic libertines delighted in the association of chocolate with luxury and scandalous behavior, especially aphrodisiac and anti-venereal chocolate. While it is true that one rarely finds explicit prohibitions forbidding the consumption of chocolate for moral reasons, it was a commodity intrinsically linked to two of the greatest causes of “moral degeneration”, luxury and libertinism, both by opponents of these two causes and by their champions.² By placing chocolate into its proper context, we can discover an ongoing conversation over the morality of chocolate and how it should be properly consumed.

I will begin this chapter by providing the foundation for eighteenth century anxieties about the possible immorality of chocolate: the sixteenth and seventeenth century debates over chocolate’s satanic or sorcerous associations.³ These debates are theoretically connected to broader questions of gender, power, and perception. What about indigenous knowledge was so threatening to colonial powers? Why were indigenous aliments considered seductive, demonic, or inappropriate for women? How were efforts by the Catholic Church to control

² Piero Camporesi, *Exotic Brew: The Art of Living in the Age of Enlightenment*, trans. Christopher Woodall (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994); J.D.T. Bienville, *De la nymphomanie ou traité de la fureur uterine* (Amsterdam: 1778; later edition Paris: 1886).

³ Beth Marie Forrest and April L. Najjaj, “Is Sipping Sin Breaking Fast? The Catholic Chocolate Controversy and the Changing World of Early Modern Spain”, *Food and Foodways*: Vol 15, Issue 1-2, 2007.

women's consumption of chocolate accepted or resisted—and how were these efforts to control female behavior echoed in subsequent centuries? Such a conversation must necessarily begin with an overview of chocolate's social and religious significance in indigenous Mesoamerican cultures. Only through understanding the cultural significance of chocolate for the “savage” peoples of the New World can we understand why it was associated with satanism and sorcery by sixteenth and seventeenth century Europeans, and therefore first considered an immoral aliment.

I also intend to show the acceptable and widespread use of medical chocolate in France, sometimes called *chocolat de santé* or health chocolate. In this chapter, I will give an overview of how chocolate was used medically by the indigenous peoples of Mesoamerica and how this knowledge was translated by European colonizers into a system of medical knowledge with which they were more familiar. The introduction of chocolate to the European consumer, both for medical use and for pleasure, sparked the first debates over chocolate's characteristics: how would it fit into the Galenic system of the humors that ruled European medicine?⁴ Did chocolate's origins—its connection with a savage and sorcerous people who used it in unholy and bloody rituals—make it immoral for Europeans, especially

⁴ Antonio Colmenero de Ledesma, *A curious treatise of the nature and quality of chocolate. Written in Spanish by Antonio Colmenero, doctor in physicke and chirurgery. And put into English by Don Diego de Vades-forte* (Imprinted at London: By I. Okes, dwelling in Little St. Bartholomewes, 1640).

European women, to consume? In this chapter I intend to show how the humoral nature of chocolate was debated, how these debates were resolved, and how the humors related to morality. This topic raises questions concerning when it was appropriate for women to consume chocolate and who had the moral and medical authority to supervise and authorize this consumption—questions to which I will return both later in this chapter, and in subsequent chapters.

Next, I will investigate anxieties about moral degeneration in eighteenth century France. A supposed falling birth rate, along with other signs of “national degeneration” both real and perceived, prompted male experts to intervene on behalf of the nation.⁵ Both medical and moral authorities increasingly prescribed stricter control over women’s roles, especially in the domestic or private sphere, in reaction to anxieties about moral degeneration. Health activists in particular believed that the key to the regeneration of the nation was a strict regime of moral and physical hygiene. The importance of the family was intrinsically connected to this idea of moral hygiene; according to some theories, it was the failure of mothers to fulfill their familial duties properly that led to dangerous libertine behavior and

⁵ Sean M. Quinlan, *The Great Nation in Decline: Sex, Modernity and Health Crises in Revolutionary France c.1750–1850* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2007).

malformed or sickly children.⁶ One attempt to address the failings of French mothers was the increased writing and publication of conduct books. Conduct books were intended as guides for young women entering public life from the relative shelter of the home or convent; however, they oftentimes addressed mothers as well both in their warnings against immoral behavior and in their exhortations to display the finest female virtues.⁷ The doctors and moralists who identified libertinage and luxury as sources of moral decay spoke authoritatively on the subject of women's health and behaviors. The authority of educated physicians increased over the course of the eighteenth century as they attempted to standardize French medicine and exclude those without the proper medical and moral training—namely, charlatans and women—with varying degrees of success.⁸ It was this masculine medical authority which could condemn the unmonitored consumption of chocolate, a luxury good that had libertine connotations, by women while at the same time approving the medical consumption of chocolate when prescribed by male physicians for

⁶ Quinlan, *The Great Nation in Decline*; Shane Agin, “*Comment se font les enfants? Sex Education and the Preservation of Innocence in Eighteenth-Century France*”, *MLN*: Volume 117, Number 4, September 2002 (French Issue), p. 722.

⁷ Nadine Bérenguier, *Conduct Books for Girls in Enlightenment France* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2011).

⁸ M. Laignel-Lavastine and M. Raymond Molinery, *French Medicine*, part of *Clio Medica: A series of Primers on the History of Medicine*, ed. and trans. E. B. Krumbhaar, MD, volume XV (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), p 98; J.P. Goubert, “The Art of Healing: Learned Medicine and Popular Medicine in the France of 1790”, in Foster and Ranum, *Selections Annales*, Vol 6, 1-23.

female patients.

I intend to investigate the ways in which medical theories of the connection between the physical and the moral contribute to eighteenth century understandings of the moral character of chocolate. These theories, specifically the theory of medical vitalism proposed by medical practitioners and professors at the University of Montpellier, are attached to a larger debate in medical theory about the connection between the physical and the moral.⁹ According to proponents of vitalism, moral deficiencies could cause physical illness; in the same way, physical actions (such as the consumption of chocolate) could affect an individual's morality. This conception of the connection between the physical and the moral will be explained further in this chapter.

An important element to understanding how the consumption of chocolate by *women* was a matter of such moral concern is the “question of women,” both in a broader societal context and in the medical world. Something specific and new was happening in eighteenth century France: a sustained and serious discussion about the proper sphere for female activity. While the *querelle des femmes* has a long history in France, philosophical and medical texts in the eighteenth century show that this particular obsession with women's role

⁹ Elizabeth A. Williams, *A Cultural History of Medical Vitalism in Enlightenment Montpellier*, (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2003).

had a massive resurgence and took on a different character during the Enlightenment. Male authors—philosophes as well as moral and medical authorities—asked questions and expressed anxiety about women’s suitability for public and political life. Calls for women to return to the safe and proper confinement of the private domestic sphere increased throughout the eighteenth century, although not without dissent. I will examine questions and anxiety about women in public life in greater detail in Chapter 3. In this chapter, I intend to show how medical theories of the pathological nature and increased sensibility of the female body affected the ways in which women were perceived both medically and morally.

I. Food of the Gods, Food of the Devil: Chocolate as Indigenous Aliment

What is the innate character of chocolate? For Europeans encountering chocolate for the first time, this question was of the utmost importance. Medically, chocolate’s character would determine how it was incorporated into European medicine: how it was used would be determined by whether it was hot, cold, wet, or dry. These characteristics could also have a moral impact on the consumer; once chocolate’s character had been established as “warming,” medical professionals warned against its overuse. Women in particular, due to the “sensibility” of their natures, could easily overdose (as it were) on chocolate and find their passions inflamed, which could lead to immoral behavior and sexual indiscretions.

It was the indigenous peoples of Mesoamerica—the Olmec, the Maya, and the

Mexica—who first prepared and consumed chocolate.¹⁰ They first attached social, religious, and medical significance to chocolate, and divided the social and religious consumption of chocolate along lines of gender and class. The indigenous peoples of Mesoamerica universally considered chocolate as divine, the food of the gods. The Olmec-derived culture called “Izapan” by archaeologists mentioned cacao several times in the sacred text *Popol Vuh*, the “Book of Counsel.”¹¹ The Postclassic Yucatan, a Mayan nation, believed that the Opossum God ate cacao, or *kakaw*.¹² Many other gods were thought to enjoy cacao as well: Tlaloc the god of agriculture and fertility required sacrifices of cacao before he would let rain fall to water the tender young corn.¹³ Chocolate was consumed during religious rituals to emphasize the connection between the gods and humans: by experiencing the sensory delight of “flowering chocolate drink”, the celebrants of these rites tasted the “hedonistic pleasures of the gods [and] experience[d] divinity.”¹⁴ Not only was chocolate the food of the gods, but it also intrinsically held a sacred life-giving force. The Classic Maya believed that cacao pods

¹⁰ Teresa L. Dillinger, Patricia Barriga, Sylvia Escárcega, Martha Jimenez, Diana Salazar Lowe, and Louis E. Grivetti, “Food of the Gods: Cure for Humanity? A Cultural History of the Medicinal and Ritual Use of Chocolate”, *The Journal of Nutrition*, August 2000, 130; Sophie and Michael Coe, *The True History of Chocolate* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2013); Marcy Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures: a History of Tobacco and Chocolate in the Atlantic World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

¹¹ Sophie and Michael Coe, *The True History of Chocolate*, 38-40.

¹² Coe, *True History*, 42.

¹³ Coe, *True History*, 30.

¹⁴ Coe, *True History*, 32-33.

were imbued with a divine substance called *k'ik'*, which also moved through humans as blood. This sacred energy, called *teotl* by the Mexica, was inherent in chocolate: “The divine forces immanent in godly blood are transferred to cacao and chocolate, which then invigorates its human consumers, who return the gift with blood and chocolate offerings of their own.”¹⁵ This passage refers to the offering of chocolate by Mesoamericans to the gods as symbols of blood or in fact covered in blood. Priests of different nations pierced their ears, legs, or genitals to let a shower of blood fall onto cacao beans destined as sacrificial offerings to the gods.¹⁶ Chocolate was often reddened with *achiote*, what we today know as annatto, in order to increase its resemblance to blood.¹⁷ This intoxicating and valuable food was continually used in ritual sacrifices even during Spanish colonialism in Mesoamerica, which contributed to Europeans drawing connections between chocolate and sorcery or witchcraft.

Since chocolate was considered to be both intoxicating and valuable by Mesoamerican cultures, there were limits on who could consume it. Chocolate was consumed both ritually and for pleasure mainly by adult men of higher classes. It was seen, especially by the Mexica, as unsuitable for women and children, as it was a sensually intoxicating

¹⁵ Marcy Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane, Pleasures: a History of Tobacco and Chocolate in the Atlantic World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 35.

¹⁶ Norton, *Sacred Gifts*, 33.

¹⁷ Coe, *True History*, passim, Norton, *Sacred Gifts*, passim.

beverage. Chocolate also had strong connotations of class. Mexican men would enjoy chocolate after a meal along with tobacco. The famous Mexica emperor, Motecuhzoma Xocoyotzin, was said to drink 50 jars of chocolate after his imperial feasts.¹⁸ While few recipes for chocolate á la Motecuhzoma survive, chocolate's status as a beverage of elites continued for centuries. Mesoamerican chocolate culture was transmitted to European culture, first through contact with European explorers and later through colonial relationships. The production and consumption of chocolate was also gendered in Mesoamerican cultures, in some ways subtle and in others obvious. The production of chocolate in the Mexica empire was explicitly gendered: "chocolate making was exclusively women's work" and slaves with skill at making chocolate were taken as wives.¹⁹ The resemblance of chocolate to blood and its symbolic substitution is a recurrent theme throughout Mesoamerican cultures, one which continued in the field of medicine.

The indigenous peoples of Mesoamerica possessed knowledge of chocolate both as a principal cure and as a base for other pharmaceutical ingredients for centuries before they first encountered Europeans. Mexica medicine was based on paired attributes, similar to the Galenic theory of the humors which ruled European medicine until the nineteenth century.

¹⁸ Coe, *True History*, 96.

¹⁹ Norton, *Sacred Gifts*, 16.

“Hot/cold, dark/light, humidity/drought, and weakness/strength” were factors of balance, and just as in European humoral theory, an imbalance caused illness in the body and balance restored health.²⁰ Mexica practitioners of medicine used preparations of chocolate to treat illnesses of the stomach and intestines, infections, childhood diarrhea, fever, faintness, and phlegmy coughs.²¹ Cacao “fat”, or cocoa butter, was used to treat wounds.²² While there is no mention of medicinal chocolate being prescribed differently for men and women among the Mexica, Dillinger et al, working from information provided in *The True History of Chocolate* by Sophie Coe, did report the earliest known division by gender in general consumption of chocolate. The Mexica restricted the consumption of chocolate to adult men, “specifically, priests, highest government officials, military officers, distinguished warriors and occasionally sacrificial victims for ritual purposes...because the Mexica perceived cacao to be an intoxicating food, and therefore unsuitable for women and children, as well as a very valuable and prestigious food, and thus reserved for nobility.”²³ The question of the unsuitability of chocolate for women—or rather, its particular effects on women—would continue to puzzle the minds of chocolate prescribers and consumers throughout the

²⁰ Dillinger et al, “Food of the Gods,” 2059.

²¹ Dillinger et al, “Food of the Gods,” 2060.

²² Norton, *Sacred Gifts*, 59.

²³ Dillinger et al, “Food of the Gods,” 2058.

eighteenth century.

The use of chocolate as medicine in Europe resulted from the colonial relationship between the Americas and Europe. The first problem that chocolate posed was figuring out how to fit chocolate into the already-established system of medicine. Like any new and exotic ingredient, Europeans relied on Mesoamericans to demonstrate the usage and benefits of chocolate, to show how to prepare it properly, and to show that it was safe and good to drink. In understanding the colonial relationship to commodities, especially tobacco and chocolate, Marcy Norton wrote that “[w]hen Europeans and others came into contact with these goods, they learned not only about what tobacco and chocolate should taste like, smell like, look like, and where and when they should be consumed, but also about these more abstract associations.”²⁴ These associations ranged from religious, such as the use of chocolate in rituals and ceremonies, to social, such as the connections between chocolate and status or its incorporation into marriage ceremonies. Norton argued that Europeans absorbed the social and medical associations of chocolate into their society just as they absorbed the lands of the New World into their empires. However, this analysis of the relationship seems overly simplistic. While Europeans definitely took context clues from Mesoamericans about chocolate’s value both as an elite beverage and as a medicinal one, they also translated

²⁴ Norton, *Sacred Gifts*, 9.

Mesoamerican social and medical ideas about chocolate into ideas that could be more readily understood by European consumers. This is most clearly seen in the way that chocolate was integrated into the system of the humors.

The debate on chocolate's humoral nature at first glance seems to have little to do with the moral character of chocolate. However, when discussing debates on the nature of chocolate and its incorporation into the Galenic system of the humors, it is crucial to remember that these debates had moral implications. The relative cold or hot qualities of chocolate were not seen as value-neutral. Rather, these debates and the decisions ultimately made by medical and pharmacological authorities affected the ways in which chocolate could be consumed and the moral implications of that consumption, especially in regards to female consumption of chocolate. Women were considered to be phlegmatic—cold and wet—so a hot and dry aliment could rouse their passions and make them more susceptible to sexual advances. However, while chocolate is often characterized as warming, there were those—especially when it was first introduced to Europeans—who disagreed with this characterization.

As a pharmaceutical ingredient, chocolate was ascribed different humoral qualities—hotness, coldness, wetness, and dryness—in varying intensities by dissenting scholars, physicians, and pharmacists. The main figure in charting the entry of chocolate into the

humoral system is Nicolás Monardes. In 1565, Monardes published *Dos libros. El uno trata de todas las cosas que traen de nuestras Indias Occidentales que sirven al uso de medicina* (Two Books. Book one concerns those things brought from our West Indies that are useful in medicine).²⁵ Norton pointed to Monardes as “the first humanist-trained university doctor to systematically consider American materia medica.”²⁶ Norton also praised Monardes for his sensitive approach to Mesoamerican medicine, which she argues can be seen in his willingness to convey native knowledge about native ingredients and his call for a “systematic interrogation” of Mesoamerican medical practitioners instead of “denying Indian origins of medicinals.”²⁷ While Monardes wrote primarily about tobacco, his methods were copied by Philip II of Spain’s Royal Physician, Francisco Hernández, in his writings on chocolate during his 1570 trip to New Spain (Mexico).²⁸ According to Hernández, the cacao seed was “temperate in nature” but inclined to be “cold and humid,” and generally was a very

²⁵ Norton, *Sacred Gifts*, 110.

²⁶ Norton, 110.

²⁷ Norton, 114.

²⁸ While Norton praised Hernández’s syncretism of European and Mesoamerican medicine, Sophie Coe lambasted the Royal Physician for his “slavish application of Galenic theory.” (Norton 123, Coe 122.) Coe lamented the loss of an immense store of native knowledge; the Mexica had classified thousands of native plants and understood the medicinal properties of each one, but this knowledge was lost in the translation of Mesoamerican medicinal knowledge into the more Euro-friendly and intelligible system of the humors. Hernández’s great work, a treatise on the plants of New Spain which listed over 3,000 species, was therefore incomplete and inaccurate, and historians must look to other sources in order to understand what plants the Mexica used medicinally and how they used them.

nourishing substance.²⁹ Dr. Juan de Cárdenas of Mexico, a Spanish physician, was another who only understood chocolate through the humoral system. In 1591 he put forth the claim that while chocolate was cold in nature, the spices and additives of the New World were hot, resulting in a neutral final product. Hot persons could therefore drink chocolate with atole (corn) and sugar to cool themselves.³⁰ De Cárdenas also believed that chocolate had three parts:

- (1) A “cold,” “dry,” and “earthy” part
- (2) An oily part which is “warm and humid” and associated with air. There is more of this part in chocolate made from old cacao; oil is likewise increased with more toasting.
- (3) A very “hot” part with a bitter taste; this gives one headaches [perhaps not far off the mark, as this is a symptom of caffeine, and possibly theobromine, withdrawal].³¹

In 1618, Bartholomeo Marradón published an invented dialogue between a doctor, an “Indian,” and a bourgeois in which they argue about chocolate. The physician in this fictional encounter is against the consumption of chocolate and does not see it as having any beneficial qualities. On the contrary, he claims that since cacao beans have such “an astringent and bitter taste...one does not marvel that those who taste them have a horror of

²⁹ Coe, *True History*, 122.

³⁰ Juan de Cardenas, *Primera parte de las problemas y secretos maravillosos de las Indias* (Mexico: En Casa de Pedro Ochatte, 1591) as quoted by Coe, *True History*, 134.

³¹ de Cardenas, *Secretos Maravillosos*, as quoted by Coe, *True History*, 123.

the beverage made of them.”³² The imaginary physician continues his tirade against chocolate by invoking the humoral system: “the principal causes of the obstructions, opilations, and hydropsies which are familiar in the Indies must be attributed to Chocolate and to Cacao, being of an earthy and cold nature.”³³ These initial encounters between European medical practitioners and Mesoamerican chocolate as a medicinal substance are a crucial step for the understanding of chocolate in French medicine and French society.

Spanish medicine was divided on the utility and effects of chocolate—a theme which will continue through to French medicine as well, from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. Hernández, de Cárdenas, Marradón and other experts also disagreed on whether or not chocolate was beneficial. Antonio Colmenero, a Spanish doctor in physicke and surgery, published his treatise on the medicinal uses of chocolate in 1631. This treatise, written in Spanish, was translated into several languages: the French edition, *Du Chocolate: discours curieux, divisé en quatre parties*, was translated by René Moreau, “professeur du roy” or King’s professor of medicine in Paris in 1643. Colmenero explained the various preparations of chocolate and how they can change its nature from hot to cold or from earthy to astringent. For example, since chocolate is “so hot and dry,” one should only add black pepper or

³² Marradón’s dialogue was reprinted in Dufour 1693: 383-87. This passage is quoted by Coe, *True History*, 134.

³³ Marradón’s dialogue was reprinted in Dufour 1693: 383-87. This passage is quoted by Coe, *True History*, 134.

“*Tauasco*” if preparing chocolate for a patient with “a very cold Liver.”³⁴ On the other hand, Colmenero also advised adding anise seed to medicinal chocolate, “for there is no *Chocolate* without it, because it is good for many cold diseases, being hot in the third degree; and to temper the coldness [sic] of the *Cacao*.”³⁵ The question of whether chocolate should be qualified as a hot medicine or as a cold medicine continued for decades after this treatise was published; since the medicine of the humors was so inexact and arbitrary, the debate was difficult to settle one way or the other. Colmenero advised physicians to use ingredients with well-established qualities, like cinnamon, saffron, or raisins, to balance chocolate according to the individual needs of their patients.

In 2003, Stéphanie Paternotte and Pierre Labrude published an article in the *Revue d'histoire de la pharmacie* that focused on various qualities ascribed to chocolate as a pharmaceutical ingredient.³⁶ The dictionnaires and treatises presented by Paternotte and Labrude in some ways show the lack of standardization when it comes to medicinal chocolate in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. By the second half of the eighteenth century, however, the character of chocolate seems more fixed. Nicolas Lemery

³⁴ Antonio Colmenero de Ledesma, *Du Chocolate discours curieux, divisé en quatre parties* (Paris: Sebastien Cramoisy, 1643). 8.

³⁵ Colmenero, *Du Chocolate*, 9.

³⁶ Stéphanie Paternotte and Pierre Labrude, “Le chocolat dans quelques ouvrages français de pharmacie et de médecine des XVIIe, XVIIIe et XIXe siècles. Ses effets fastes et néfastes avérés ou supposés”, *Revue d'histoire de la pharmacie*, Vol. 91, No. 338, 2003, pp. 197-210.

published his *Traité universel des drogues simples* in 1698.³⁷ His monograph on “chocolatum [or] chocolate” introduces themes of gendered consumption through the use of chocolate as an aphrodisiac. Lemery also included a recipe for chocolate: grind the chocolate to a paste, add sugar reduced to a “subtle powder”, cinnamon, cloves, amber, and musk. This preparation of chocolate, redolent with rich and luxurious spices, is to “excite vapors in women.”³⁸ The other ingredients were considered aphrodisiacs as well as chocolate; by combining these potent ingredients with chocolate, it was hoped that their strength would be greatly increased. Chocolate is also referred to in this monograph as a panacea. The *Dictionnaire raisonné universel de matière médicale*, published in Paris in 1773 by P. F. Didot le jeune, is one text that includes a vivid representation of the origins of drinking chocolate: pictures of the cacao plant. While the description of the preparation of chocolate in this text is very succinct, the properties of cacao, the ingredients for mixing and the finished product are largely developed in this text. The fruits of cacao “greatly nourish”; they are “refreshing, softening or sweetening, and calming.”³⁹ The frequently-added ingredients vanilla and cinnamon, in combination with chocolate, “fortify the stomach, warm, aid the

³⁷ Paternotte and Labrude indicate that the publication date was much later, in 1732; they may have been working from a later edition.

³⁸ Paternotte and Labrude, “Le chocolat,” 199-200.

³⁹ Paternotte and Labrude, 200.

digestion and revive the spirits.”⁴⁰ The *Dictionnaire* specifically recommends this preparation of chocolate as having “very great utility for those who are exhausted with women.”⁴¹ It is unclear from the context of this passage whether this exhaustion is of a sexual nature or just a general exhaustion at having to be around women at all. However, as it was also recommended “for those who indulge in violent exercise”, combined with contemporary accounts of chocolate being used to stimulate the sexual appetite, it is likely that the former is the more correct interpretation and that it was intended for use as an aphrodisiac or proto-Viagra.⁴² Chocolate is also “good for the chest, one recommends the usage of physickes prepared with milk; but there should not be vanilla in this composition: it gives a nourishing and sweet essence that has the virtue of blunting the acrimony of the humors.” Chocolate in milk in small quantities was considered “an excellent breakfast for persons with consumption... [and] beneficial to old people and those recovering from a long illness.”⁴³ This preparation, however, is not recommended for men of letters, hypochondriacs, or the general public as it was thought to cause nausea.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Paternotte and Labrude, 200.

⁴¹ Paternotte and Labrude, “Le chocolat,” 200.

⁴² Paternotte and Labrude, 200.

⁴³ Paternotte and Labrude, 201.

⁴⁴ The particular health needs of men of letters are given much attention towards the later half of the eighteenth century; this thread runs through most of the literature on medicine that I have referenced in this thesis.

Bruno Bernard chronicles European debates on the morality of chocolate in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in “Est-Il Moral de Boire du Chocolat?” Bernard points to the 1618 *Dialogue du chocolat entre un médecin, un indien, et un bourgeois* as one piece of evidence of the peculiar moral dilemma facing the Catholic Church: the consumption of chocolate by Catholic women in New Spain. Bernard quotes the *Dialogue* to establish the character of chocolate: “Jésus! C’est une grande irrévérence et porter peu de respect au culte divin; c’est même manquer de civilité et d’honneur aux assistants.”⁴⁵ The “great irreverence” and lack of respect refers to the habit of some Spanish Catholic women living in Chiapas, Mexico, who were so addicted to chocolate that they could not even make it through a Mass without imbibing the “Indian drink.”⁴⁶ Bernard points to this episode as a source of “persistent rumors of the maleficent powers of chocolate.”⁴⁷ The *Dialogue* presents evidence of these mystical evil powers: a Jesuit priest who committed a number of “murders and homicides” and the women who were enchanted by Indians. The *Dialogue* comes to the conclusion that it is best to abstain from chocolate, especially to avoid “familiarity and frequentation with a nation so suspected of sorcery”—that is, the native peoples of the

⁴⁵ Bruno Bernard, “Est-il Moral de Boire du Chocolat?”, *Chocolat: de la boisson élitaine au bâton populaire ; XVIe - XXe siècle*, ed. Bruno Bernard, Brussels: Nieuwenhuize, 1996.

⁴⁶ Bernard, “Est-il Moral?”, 83.

⁴⁷ Bernard, 83.

Americas. However, women in New Spain continued to drink chocolate even when threatened with excommunication. When the English Dominican Thomas Gage recounted this anecdote twenty years later in *A New Survey of the West Indies*, he blamed the women of Chiapa for poisoning the Bishop, who had forbidden them to drink chocolate during Mass under threat of excommunication. Gage claimed that these gentlewomen, who were “somewhat light in their carriage... have learned from the Devil many enticings lessons and baits to draw poor souls to sin and damnation; and if they cannot have their wills, they will surely work their revenge either by Chocolate or Conserves.”⁴⁸

In the second half of the 17th century, chocolate’s reputation as a seductive and immoral beverage was solidly fixed. Bernard writes that chocolate, along with having a “sulfurous” or devilish reputation, was established as associated with “a certain moral decadence tied to pleasure and, at the same time, to crime.”⁴⁹ This echoes the accounts of murderous Jesuit priests and indigenous sorcerers casting their spells over European women. Bernard also marks the second half of the 17th century as the era of chocolate being associated with the clergy and the nobility. Coffee was associated with Protestant countries and societies, with a more ascetic style of living and a more vigorous work ethic; chocolate,

⁴⁸ Thomas Gage, *A New Survey of the West Indies*, 232.

⁴⁹ Bernard, “Est-il Moral?”, 84.

on the other hand, was associated with Catholic countries and especially monarchies, and characterized a lifestyle that was criticized as lazy, lascivious, and frivolous.⁵⁰ Bernard echoes Nikita Harwich and her tale of the “chroniqueur” of Paris who said that “des grands” drink chocolate every day, the old often, and the people never.⁵¹ Bernard also echoes Harwich emphasis of the figure of Despina, the maid from Mozart’s *Così fan tutte* who is forced to beat the chocolate until it is frothy enough for her mistress, but who never tastes the luxurious drink for herself. There is also a connection specifically between chocolate as a luxury drink and female consumption of chocolate. Bernard notes that as it was “[a]ssociated with the first hours of the day, chocolate appeared elsewhere in the iconography of the times in association with an eroticism more or less explicit.”⁵² Bernard points specifically to Pietro Longhi’s *Petit déjeuner* as an example of this eroticism.⁵³

Did chocolate become “reasonable” in the second half of the eighteenth century? The vocal moral debates over chocolate were muted and public imagination was captured by a host of other immoral behaviors—decadence and radicalism, luxury and libertinism were the

⁵⁰ Bernard, 85.

⁵¹ Nikita Harwich, *Histoire du Chocolat* (Paris: Editions Desjonquères, 1992) 77-78.

⁵² Bernard, “Est-Il Moral?”, 85.

⁵³ As Longhi is not a French painter nor was he painting in France, I chose not to include this work in my discussion of female consumption of chocolate. However, Longhi’s depiction of a fashionable woman of leisure reclining in her boudoir surrounded by male admirers while she drinks her morning chocolate is a visual representation of precisely the type of decadent and immodest female behaviors identified by French moralists as a major cause of national degeneration.

watchwords as France drew closer to revolution. Bernard points to familial consumption of chocolate as a sign that it has lost its immoral reputation. However, I intend to argue that despite the fairly widespread consumption of chocolate, eighteenth century French consumers and moral and medical authorities still participated in conversations concerning its immorality. These conversations about chocolate were merely framed in different ways and centered around different themes: around women's activity in the public or private sphere, around the connections between physical illness and immorality, around the role of women in the regeneration of the nation, around the authority of medical experts to prescribed moral regimens. While intense publicized debates over the nature and morality of chocolate were left behind in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the eighteenth century debate over the morality of chocolate continued in a subtler but still identifiable manner.

II. Moral Degeneration and the Depopulation Crisis

Anxiety about moral degeneration in eighteenth century France prompted male "experts" to prescribe stricter control over women's roles, especially in the domestic or private sphere. Sean M. Quinlan, in *The Great Nation in Decline: Sex, Modernity and Health Crises in Revolutionary France c. 1750-1850*, chronicles both this anxiety about moral degeneration and the responses of male medical professionals who saw themselves as uniquely suited to ameliorate the situation. In examining the theory of vitalism and its

context, Elizabeth Williams reiterates the belief of medical practitioners and theorists in their moral authority.⁵⁴ The connection between the physical and the moral, a foundational element in the theory of medical vitalism, is key to understanding why medical authorities perceived themselves as qualified to make moral judgments and prescribe remedies for moral and physical degeneration; I will return to this later in the chapter.

During the second half of the eighteenth century, moral and medical authorities believed that France was experiencing a national decline. The “depopulation and degeneration” of the nation was evidenced by perceived falling birth rates (which were, in reality, rising), numerous health crises, and a general abandonment of the patriotic values of civic virtue and family life.⁵⁵ France was sick, both morally and physically. It was in this atmosphere of degeneracy and decadence that doctors “began commenting upon a wide array of concerns not usually associated with public health: ideal health and beauty, upper-class morals and manners, the place of women in society, child education and sexual hygiene.”⁵⁶ These medical professionals saw themselves as uniquely poised to address both the moral and the medical issues facing the nation. The medico-philosophical discourse on the physical

⁵⁴ Elizabeth A. Williams, *The Physical and the Moral: Anthropology, Physiology, and Philosophical Medicine in France, 1750-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Williams, *Medical Vitalism*.

⁵⁵ Quinlan, *Great Nation in Decline*, 20.

⁵⁶ Quinlan, *Great Nation in Decline*, 20.

and the moral gave doctors and physicians a special authority and insight into the human condition. While many reputable and respected *philosophes* and authors supported these claims of medicine's particularly ability to heal society, it was the medical community who championed themselves most ardently.⁵⁷ By promoting a program of "physical and moral hygiene... these doctors redefined their public personas, casting themselves as moral crusaders."⁵⁸ According to these moral crusaders, "high society had been corrupted by luxury, libertinism and disorderly women—and urban elites needed moral hygiene to halt this decadence and decline."⁵⁹ This moral hygiene was paired with physical hygiene to create a program for national regeneration.

Framing medical expertise as the best weapon in a moral crusade for the heart of the French nation, doctors hoped to "transform the self, sexuality and community in order to regenerate a sick and decaying nation."⁶⁰ They believed that one of the most serious causes of physical and moral degeneration was the disordered behavior of women. Women who neglected their natural role as mothers, engaged in illicit sexual relationships outside of marriage, chased the approval and desire of society through their *bel esprit* or great wit, and

⁵⁷ See Anne C. Vila's *Enlightenment and Pathology* for a discussion on how Diderot, Rousseau, Laclos, and Sade incorporated ideas of sensibility that rested on a foundational understanding of the physical and the moral into their various works.

⁵⁸ Quinlan, 4.

⁵⁹ Quinlan, 20.

⁶⁰ Quinlan, 4.

indulged their tastes for luxury and pleasure were all to blame for the physical ailments of venereal disease, vaporous attacks, low birth rates, and high infant mortality. One way to solve the crisis was to return women to the home, separate them from sick and decaying “society,” and to re-emphasize their importance as mothers. The biomedical knowledge of medical authorities “promised to transform domestic relations by identifying the natural parameters between men and women, and by emphasizing women’s roles as wives and mothers within the domestic sphere. Physical and moral hygiene were considered the keys to the regeneration of the nation.”⁶¹ It may be helpful to note that “health activists dealt less with real-world health problems than ideal forms of personal conduct and behavior: the way things ought to be and how to make them so.”⁶² This idealized visualization of a morally regenerated France, with women in their proper domestic place, is echoed in Chapter 3’s discussion of visualizations of women consuming chocolate in the private sphere.

Women, especially mothers, were targeted for a program of moral and physical regeneration for several reasons. One of these is that women were considered the moral heart of the French nation. Lieselotte Steinbrügge’s *The Moral Sex: Woman’s Nature in the French Enlightenment* lays out in detail the foundations and the practical implications of the

⁶¹ Quinlan, 5.

⁶² Quinlan, 5.

eighteenth century idea of women being the moral sex. Steinbrugge uses the writings of Poulain de la Barre, Florent de Puisieux, Dom Philippe-Joseph Caffiaux, Mademoiselle Archambault, Antoine-Léonard Thomas, Pierre Roussel, Denis Diderot, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Choderlos de Laclos, Madame de Miremont, Madame Espinassy, and Madame d'Epinau to present the moral landscape of eighteenth century France and women's role in this landscape. Her central thesis focuses on the way “the accentuation of creatureliness, and thus also of emotionality, over enlightened rationality predestined women to adopt a particular role.”⁶³ This role was that of a moral authority, a role which Steinbrugge claims was missing in the masculine world of business and commerce. Steinbrugge goes on to describe how the “exclusion of women from public life and its complement, their relegation to private life, appeared to qualify women particularly for the realm of *morality*, conceived of in bourgeois society as a genuinely private morality, and one that could only be socially efficacious through the private sphere.”⁶⁴ In this way, women became the moral sex, responsible for the moral character of society and for the preservation of “humane qualities” and virtue.

⁶³ Lieselotte Steinbrugge, *The Moral Sex: Woman's Nature in the French Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 6.

⁶⁴ Steinbrugge, *Moral Sex*, 6.

Moral and medical experts in eighteenth century France emphasized that a woman's place was in the home, and her duty was to bear children, to nurture them, and to educate them in morals. However, "as women neglected their natural family values, they became sick and infertile and dragged down the family and all of society with them"; this was the reason for the degeneration of the French nation.⁶⁵ Quinlan places this particular brand of woman-blaming squarely in the second half of the eighteenth century: "By the 1770s, then, medical practitioners had moved from intellectuals and libertine rakes and had made upper-class women largely responsible for physical and moral degeneracy."⁶⁶ According to the physician Ménuret, "Parisian women and the labouring classes abused their health. Women, in particular, were luxurious and indulged in libertine debaucheries."⁶⁷

In an effort to help women control their health and hygiene through moral instruction, the second half of the eighteenth century saw an increase in the writing and publication of conduct books. As Steinbrugge explains in *The Moral Sex*, "educating girls increasingly came to mean training them to be the moral sex."⁶⁸ "It was a sign of the times that even the provincial *Académies* acknowledged the significance of the problem [of female education].

⁶⁵ Quinlan, *Great Nation in Decline*, 50.

⁶⁶ Quinlan, 50.

⁶⁷ Quinlan, 79.

⁶⁸ Steinbrugge, 98.

In 1777, the *Académie de Besançon* asked the question: ...How might the education of women contribute to the improvement of men's morals?"⁶⁹ Conduct books "focused on the moral and social behavior of girls," addressing them directly in their prescriptive and descriptive texts.⁷⁰ Intended as guides for young women entering public life for the first time, they sought to correct the negative impact of libertinism and luxury upon society. These conduct books were addressed to young women, but also spoke to the very absent mothers whose actions they decried. Although many "modern" women had neglected their children in pursuit of pleasure or self-satisfaction, their decadent lifestyle need not be passed on to the next generation—and, indeed, perhaps these women could learn a thing or two from texts intended to instruct their daughters. As Bérenguier wrote, "Paramount among the social ills that the authors [of conduct books] denounced was the grievous failure of mothers to fulfill their role."⁷¹ Authors of conduct books believed that in many cases the damage to feminine morals and French society had been irreparably done in the form of low birth rates and infant mortality—but that there was hope for young women and girls to learn from the mistakes of their mothers. The authors of conduct books at times warned about the general wickedness of

⁶⁹ Nadine Bérenguier, *Conduct Books for Girls in Enlightenment France* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2011), 2.

⁷⁰ Bérenguier, *Conduct Books*, 2.

⁷¹ Bérenguier, 3.

the world and “informed their young female readers about prevailing social rules and practices in order to alert them to the hurdles that they would face as they began venturing out of the relatively protected space of the home and the convent.”⁷² Conduct book authors were aware of the challenges facing their readership and often admitted the deficiencies of both mothers and daughters in morals and intellect or education. Puisieux, in *Conseils à une amie*, wrote: “These maxims will be useless to the majority of women, those whose main purpose in life is to drink, to eat, to sleep, to bare [sic] children, to gamble, to cheat on their lovers, their husbands, and their spiritual directors, and to speak ill of other women; I provide no comments on such actions.”⁷³ Conduct books also condemned the errant mothers who had placed France in a perilous position by neglecting their duties as women and mothers in favor of luxury and libertinism. The message was clear: mothers who had neglected their children should return to the home and set both themselves and their domestic sphere in order.

Sean Quinlan asserts,

After Le Camus and Brouzet, medical crusaders saw child mortality as a symptom of degeneracy and decline, and they used this issue as a vehicle to attack upper-class moral and manners. As these writers saw it, urban elites preferred to live a corrupt life of luxury and libertinism, so they left their

⁷² Bérenguier, *Conduct Books*, 3.

⁷³ Bérenguier, 43

children with wet-nurses and domestic servants and thereby caused child sickness and death.⁷⁴
 There was also fear that immoral behavior in parents could cause illness in children.

Vandermonde's "emphasis on the mechanisms of heredity has moral implications: newborns also inherit their parents' virtues, vices, and qualities of mind."⁷⁵ Tissot also believed that heredity played a role in national degeneration: "Children show the effects of the ills of their fathers; our ancestors began straying somewhat from the most healthy mode of life" and their choices resulted in successively weaker generations until the current state of the French nation, a generation that "no longer know[s] strength and health except in octogenarians or through hearsay."⁷⁶

One element of the crusade for moral hygiene was the sending of doctors out into the country. Many medical professionals praised the health and virtue of the imagined country farmer and his loving and virtuous wife and children. The country mother, it was assumed, had healthy and stout children who resisted disease because she had nursed them herself on virtuous milk and had taught them physical and moral hygiene. The actual state of health in the country, however, was not always as pretty and perfect a picture. When sent out into the

⁷⁴ Quinlan, *Great Nation in Decline*, 28.

⁷⁵ Kathleen Wellman, "Physicians and Philosophes: Physiology and Sexual Morality in the French Enlightenment," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35.2 (2002), 273.

⁷⁶ Tissot, *De la santé des gens de lettres* 186, as quoted by Vila, 105.

country, “doctors either praised local women for their moral rectitude and personal virtue, or they bemoaned that luxury and libertinism had corrupted provincial morals.”⁷⁷

While this chapter will address the concerns of moral and medical authorities dealing with women addicted to luxury and libertine behavior, a more thorough investigation in the role of libertinism as a source of moral degeneration in the moral panic of eighteenth century France will take place in Chapter 2.

III. The Physical and the Moral

Medical theories of the connection between the physical and the moral framed eighteenth century understandings of the moral character of chocolate. While the dyad of the physical and the moral was integrated into philosophy and literature, it was explored in a particular way by the proponents of vitalism, especially those practicing and teaching at the University of Montpellier. It is helpful to place vitalism at the center of medical theories of the physical and the moral, and therefore at the center of the conversation surrounding the morality of chocolate, because of the special relationship between vitalism and theories of the female body. While not all vitalists were concerned with women’s medicine or the effects of gender upon the health of the body, there was a distinct group of medical professionals who both belonged to the medico-intellectual community of the University of Montpellier and

⁷⁷ Quinlan, *The Great Nation in Decline*, 70.

were considered experts in the science and medicine of the female body. For example, the work of Pierre Roussel is a frequent addition to histories of medicine and gender in the Enlightenment. However, Williams claims that “few of these works [by other historians] show any comprehension that Roussel’s work functioned within an elaborated vitalist discourse of physical and moral variability, or that most of the “enlightened” medical experts on women were associated with Montpellier.”⁷⁸ The University of Montpellier is singled out in this case because it was the birthplace and home of vitalist theory, and the site of debates between vitalists and mechanists. Medical professionals from the University of Montpellier were respected throughout France, a fact that was at times used to lend credibility to medical treatises published in Paris or elsewhere.⁷⁹ Menuret, Jean Astruc, Joseph Raulin, Pierre Pomme, Edme Chauvot de Beauchêne, Tissot, and Roussel: Williams names all these medical professionals as authorities on the female body and as associates of the University of Montpellier in one way or another.⁸⁰ Anxieties or fears about the warming and inflammatory properties of chocolate are tied to medical theories about the female body because it was female consumption of chocolate that concerned male moral and medical authorities.

⁷⁸ Williams, *Medical Vitalism*, 230.

⁷⁹ M. Varnier, “Nouvelle maniere de composer du chocolat,” *Gazette du Commerce* (Paris: Knapen, 1774-04-05), 220.

⁸⁰ Williams, *Medical Vitalism*, 230.

“La physique et la moral,” or the theory of the connection between the physical and the moral, has a long history in French medicine and philosophy. These theories were interpreted and understood in a new way in the eighteenth century, in part due to the work of the Montpellier vitalists. Sean Quinlan, in *The Great Nation in Decline*, defined the physical and the moral dyad in eighteenth century France:

thinkers not only believed that physical and moral relations determined basic mental facilities—instinct, sense, memory, reason, judgment, foresight, and industry—but they also influenced social phenomena writ large in terms of manners, morality, letters, the arts and science, wealth and industry. ... As such, the physical and the moral harboured a powerful ideological dimension... contemporaries conflated the ‘moral’ world of the mind or soul with explicit issues about politics and personal morality—especially in periods of profound social upheaval.⁸¹

These medical professionals perceived an “implicit connection” between their own practice and the “philosophy and practice of morality.”⁸² Tissot declared in *De la santé des gens de lettres* that there was a “close union, a perfect interlinking, a reciprocal dependence between the science of morals and the science of health.”⁸³ Rousseau agreed with Enlightenment physicians who believed that “morality could be achieved through material means—that is, by proper understanding and treatment of the body.”⁸⁴ Some medical professionals

⁸¹ Quinlan, *The Great Nation in Decline*, 8-9.

⁸² Vila, *Enlightenment and Pathology*, 186.

⁸³ Tissot, as quoted by Vila, 187.

⁸⁴ Vila, *Enlightenment and Pathology*, 186.

“challenged metaphysical ideas about the soul, life and death itself by emphasizing that material factors determined moral qualities.”⁸⁵ Roussel, for one, disagreed with this assessment. The physical and the moral were definitely connected, but rather than the physical shaping the moral, he believed that the moral shaped the physical. For example, it was not excessively large ovaries that caused uterine furies but rather “excessive venereal desire” that could cause enlargement of the ovaries: “the repeated reading of erotic literature, for example, could increase the size of [female reproductive] organs.”⁸⁶

Because of the connection between the physical and the moral, Roussel believed that “morality provides the most solid basis for medicine.”⁸⁷ Similarly, the medical crusaders of the second half of the eighteenth century believed that medicine provided a solid base for national morality. “Menuret’s [Encyclopedie] entry asserted strong claims about the competence of physicians in matters of sex, marriage, and family and, more generally, about the entanglement of physical and moral causes in health and disease.”⁸⁸ Due to their medical

⁸⁵ Quinlan, *The Great Decline*, 11.

⁸⁶ Roussel, *SF* 125-7, 139-44, as quoted by Wellman, 269.

⁸⁷ Roussel, *SF*, 8, as quoted by Wellman, 267.

⁸⁸ Williams, *Medical Vitalism*, 227.

expertise, “The Montpellier physicians believed that they could serve as the ultimate philosophes in eighteenth-century France.”⁸⁹

The theory of vitalism promulgated by medical authorities at the University of Montpellier was an important part of the larger conversation about the connection between the physical and the moral. As opposed to the Cartesian model, which emphasized division between reason and the passions in its insistence on mind-body dualism, vitalism saw the body as animated by a vital force.⁹⁰ The physical and the moral were not separated but rather intimately united in the human body. Elizabeth A. Williams, in researching the vitalists of the University of Montpellier, found the following:

In place of the body machine perspective that sought “laws” universally valid for all phenomena, the Montpellier vitalists posited an absolute distinction between living, “organized” being and brute, inert matter. They attributed this life to the action of a force, principle, or power whose origin and ontological status were unknowable. They saw life as enabled by the interrelated and harmonious activities of the “body economy” and as engaged in a constant struggle against processes of disharmony, destruction, and disintegration commonly conceived of as illness. They perceived ceaseless interactions of internal disposition and external milieu that eventuated in distinctive human types formed by age, sex, temperament, region, and other powerful influences on the vital economy.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Anne C. Vila, *Enlightenment and Pathology: Sensibility in the Literature and Medicine of Eighteenth-Century France*, 63.

⁹⁰ Williams, *Medical Vitalism*, 85-86. 89-90.

⁹¹ Williams, *Medical Vitalism*, 3-4.

Vitalist conceptions of the connection between the physical and the moral, and what that connection meant for French society, spread from the University of Montpellier out to the general reading public in various ways. A recipe for aphrodisiac chocolate published in Paris credits a medical expert from the University of Montpellier for its efficacy.⁹²

Vitalism connects to chocolate consumption through its contributions to the theory of the physical and the moral. Chocolate, a warming aliment, affected both the body and the morals. Like reading erotic literature, overindulgence in chocolate could have a negative effect on both the morals and the body, leading to bad behavior and bad health in a sort of vicious loop. If unchecked or unmonitored by male authorities, female consumption of chocolate could result in an unstoppable downward spiral with morals and body reflecting back on each other leading to worse and worse consequences and, eventually the degeneration of the nation.

IV. Women in Eighteenth-Century France: Context and Debates

It is also necessary to ground any discussion of women and medicine in a thorough comprehension of how French society understood women in the eighteenth century. There were competing theories about women and their relationship to men, both anatomically and

⁹² M. Varnier, "Nouvelle maniere de composer du chocolat," *Gazette du Commerce* (Paris: Knapen, 1774-04-05), 220.

intellectually. Some Enlightenment *philosophes* believed that women should be considered equal to men. One of the strongest proponents of women's rights during the Enlightenment was the Marquis de Condorcet. His pamphlet "On the Admission of Women to the Rights of Citizenship" argued that women should be extended all the rights and protections under the law that were afforded to men. Condorcet also believed that any inferiority in women was caused not by nature but by "education and social conditions," and that women, if educated alongside men and given the same rights, would contribute just as much to society, the sciences, and the arts.⁹³ However, Condorcet was by far in the minority, and most other *philosophes* pointed to nature as the determinant of women's social and intellectual inferiority. Diderot, famous for collecting knowledge of all kinds into his *Encyclopedie*, wrote that nature made woman an imperfect version of man: "Men, by the prerogative of their sex and by the strength of their temperament, are naturally capable of all sorts of uses and commitments, whereas women, either because of the fragility and delicate disposition of their sex are excluded from several roles, and are incapable of certain commitments."⁹⁴ Diderot also believed that men were naturally suited to governing, whereas women were

⁹³ Marquis de Condorcet, "On the Admission of Women to the Rights of Citizenship," in *The French Revolution and Human Rights: A Brief Documentary History*, translated, edited, and with an introduction by Lynn Hunt (Boston/New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1996), 119–121.

⁹⁴ Denis Diderot and Jean Le Rond d'Alembert, eds., *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts, et des métiers par une société des gens de lettres*, 17 vols. (1751–65) (Paris: Briasson, 1756), 6:468–76.

naturally suited to submission. Another Enlightenment *philosophe* who contributed a great deal to popular attitudes toward women was Rousseau. Rousseau's works *Emile* and *La Nouvelle Heloise* set up clear definitions for women's roles in an Enlightened society. Rousseau considered the physical differences between men and women to be proof of women's inferiority. According to Steinbrugge, "It was Rousseau's concept of the moral sex that came to set the terms for the late-Enlightenment *querelle des femmes*."⁹⁵

As Wellman wrote, "discussions of sexual morality frequently became discussions of ways to control female sexuality."⁹⁶ Women's bodies were seen as peculiar in eighteenth century France. In *Women and Medicine in the French Enlightenment: The Debate over "Maladies Des Femmes"* Lindsay B. Wilson examined *maladies des femmes*, "disorders thought to be *derived* from the sexuality of women."⁹⁷ In medical theory of eighteenth century France, women were considered to interact with their reproductive systems in ways that were inherently different from men. Women's bodies were considered inferior and were thought to be constantly physically affected by their sexual organs in a way men's bodies were not. The "passions" had no outward receptacle in women's bodies the way they did for

⁹⁵ Steinbrugge, *The Moral Sex*, 90.

⁹⁶ Wellman 275.

⁹⁷ Lindsay B. Wilson, *Women and Medicine in the French Enlightenment: the Debate over "Maladies des Femmes"* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 5, emphasis mine.

men (the testicles being considered the manly receptacles of passion). The female body, having no such outward storage receptacle for the passions, was easily overtaken by passions swirling throughout the body without resistance. It was the presence of these unbounded passions that disordered the female body, causing a multiplicity of medical problems.

Rousseau and Roussel supported each other in the notion that women's physiology predetermined them for specific societal roles. They also supported the connection between the physical and the moral. In the works of both Rousseau and Roussel, "the more sharply physiological differences are drawn the more prescribed social roles become, leading to ever more vehement moral pronouncements."⁹⁸ According to Sauvages, "women experienced innumerable ills peculiar to "*le sexe*." The variability of women's ills was especially great because women were particularly prey to the influence that more often than any other introduced *bizarreries* into the history of disease, the "passions of the soul." Indeed Sauvages speculated that probably half of the chronic diseases known to physicians resulted from "moral causes."⁹⁹

Widely-accepted theories of the increased sensibility and inherently pathological nature of female bodies affected the ways in which women were viewed both medically and

⁹⁸ Wellman, 271.

⁹⁹ Williams, *Medical Vitalism*, 103.

morally. For many medical theorists, the physiological nature of the female body represented or necessitated a moral character and social role distinct from that of a male body. Roussel was one medical authority who promulgated such theories. Roussel derived foundational concepts of his own theories of physiology from the vitalists: “the emphasis on the soul and on the differences between male and female, and an appreciation of morality as a guide to medicine.”¹⁰⁰ Roussel’s central argument hinged on the idea that female bodies are less changed by puberty than male bodies. Although men and women may have similar bodies in childhood and are equally unprepared and unfit for reason as children, men move further from their “primitive constitutions” than women, who remain “delicate and tender” and retain the “temperament proper to children” even as adults.¹⁰¹

Roussel saw women’s presence in political and aesthetic spaces as a disordered and unnatural infiltration which “shattered sexual complementation, uprooted healthy domestic roles and caused physical and moral degeneration.”¹⁰² Even the menstrual cycle was suspect to Roussel; he followed Rousseau’s belief that women in a state of nature did not menstruate and that “Leisure and luxury caused an overabundance of humoral blood”—meaning that

¹⁰⁰ Wellman 268. While other historians classify Roussel as a vitalist, Wellman does not place him completely in this category.

¹⁰¹ Roussel *SF* 19, as quoted by Wellman, 268.

¹⁰² Quinlan, *The Great Nation in Decline*, 49.

menstruation itself was a symptom of disordered womanhood.¹⁰³ “As Roussel told male readers, a woman’s proper place was in the home; when she left it, she caused disease and disruption.”¹⁰⁴ “Just as all physiological evidence reinforces the considerable weakness of women, so too the “softness” of the female constitution heightens sensibility.”¹⁰⁵ Thomas’ theory of female passion “also implies the possibility of licentiousness, of the uncontrollable, which requires constant suppression. A moral corrective is necessary.”¹⁰⁶ Both Thomas and Rousseau assign feminine morality a particular function: to regulate “female sexuality and sensuality to ensure that biological reproduction continues along orderly lines.”¹⁰⁷

While the disease was clear, the solution was paradoxical. In order to “cure this sickness and conflict in the body politic, women must learn a new science of manners and hygiene, one that extolled the dignity of motherhood and child education.”¹⁰⁸ This new science, however, was considered by some to be far beyond women’s capacity for reason. Women were considered unable to properly reason for themselves, a key component to a regimen of moral and physical hygiene that required individuals to balance their needs and

¹⁰³ Quinlan, *The Great Nation in Decline*, 49.

¹⁰⁴ Quinlan, *The Great Nation in Decline*, 49.

¹⁰⁵ Wellman 269.

¹⁰⁶ Steinbrugge, *The Moral Sex*, 92.

¹⁰⁷ Steinbrugge, *The Moral Sex*, 92.

¹⁰⁸ Quinlan, *The Great Nation in Decline*, 50.

their desires. Women were also considered to be lacking in the self-control needed to properly “navigate the decadent world of old regime France” where luxury and libertinism tempted from every side.¹⁰⁹ Moral and medical authorities resolved this paradox by emphasizing the need for women to return to the domestic sphere under the control of their husbands, who, as men, were reasonable and best able to direct them.

While sensibility made women susceptible to nervous diseases and immoral behavior, it also made them uniquely qualified for their proper roles as mothers and moral guides. Anne C. Vila in *Enlightenment and Pathology* details how Rousseau uses the “natural sensibility” of Julie and Saint-Preux as a cautionary tale to support a societal system of female domestication and virtue.¹¹⁰ Julie’s natural sensibility, more sensitive than that of Saint-Preux due to her womanly nature, leaves her susceptible to decisions based on passion instead of reason. The first half of the novel shows how uncontrolled female sensibility leads to immoral personal choices that have a negative effect on society, albeit in a small way. In the second half of the novel, Julie’s female sensibility is controlled and ordered by Wolmar, her husband. Sensibility is not allowed to run wild; rather, it is “only allowed to operate on the condition that it be strictly controlled. . . . Rousseau invokes a particular institution to

¹⁰⁹ Quinlan, *The Great Nation in Decline*, 42.

¹¹⁰ Vila, *Enlightenment and Pathology*, 198-224.

exert that control and to define the meaning of true sensibility.”¹¹¹ This particular institution is marriage; the proper atmosphere in which sensibility can express its positive qualities without the negative effects is “the domestic milieu—a milieu that must, like sensibility itself, be constantly regulated.”¹¹² When Julie leaves the public sphere for the private, entering into domestic life with the cold and reasonable Wolmar as her husband and controller, she atones for and erases the dishonor of her illicit affair with Saint-Preux: “the chaste and sensible wife, the worthy matron, obliterate the remembrance of the guilty lover.”¹¹³ Released (or protected) from the fashionable French society that allowed her sensibility free reign and led her into immorality, Julie is properly positioned to enjoy the benefits of sensibility: an increased love and devotion to her children, to whom she dedicates most of her time and energy. Antoine Léonard Thomas, in his *Essai sur les femmes* published in 1772, emphasized this crucial role of sensibility in the domestic sphere: “Where is this character, at once touching and sublime, which is capable only of deep feeling? Do we find it in the cold indifference and unhappy strictness of so many fathers? No: we find it in the burning, passionate souls of mothers.”¹¹⁴ Julie’s burning, passionate soul is no longer

¹¹¹ Vila, *Enlightenment and Pathology*, 199.

¹¹² Vila, *Enlightenment and Pathology*, 199.

¹¹³ *La Nouvelle Heloise*, 17, as quoted by Vila, 199.

¹¹⁴ Thomas, quoted by Steinbrugge, 92.

uncontrollably attracting male attention outside of marriage or leading her into immorality; rather, under Wolmar's strict control, all her passion is contained in the domestic sphere and focused on her children. These themes of the domestication of women, so prevalent in the popular literature of the eighteenth century, are echoed in visual representations of women, to which I will return in Chapter 3. To protect the physical and moral health of the family and of the nation, women were to consume chocolate in private, in a domestic setting.

Chocolate became a consumable symbol of the Baroque period, "associated with the idle clergy and nobility of Catholic and absolutist regimes."¹¹⁵ In eighteenth century France, these connotations also took on a feminized aspect. The revolutionary movement in the late eighteenth century characterized the Ancien Regime and absolutist monarchs as effeminate and emasculated. The perceived influence of women in the government as personified by Marie Antoinette was pointed to as a reason for moral, social, and economic collapse. Marie Antoinette drank chocolate or coffee every morning for breakfast. However, unlike coffee, chocolate did not mark the beginning of a day of work, but rather a shift from one kind of leisure to another.

Women were considered the moral heart of the nation. When they were led astray into luxury and libertinism, the overabundant sensibility of their natures made them

¹¹⁵ W. Clarence-Smith, *Cocoa and Chocolate, 1765-1914* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000), 13.

susceptible to nervous diseases and immoral behaviors. Male experts in medicine and in morals believed that women only needed some instruction and guidance from men to put the nation back on the path to regeneration.

The relation between the physical and the moral has definite repercussions for those living in luxury and libertinism. The connection between luxury, gender, and chocolate will be further explored in Chapter 2's discussion of libertinism. I will also return to the question of libertinism and medicine, especially regarding Tissot and his insistence that libertinism and luxury were the enemies of moral hygiene.

It was not only medical experts who believed they had the solution; cultural and intellectual authorities also had something to say about the connection between the physical and the moral, and how to morally navigate chocolate as a luxury commodity. Again, the importance of pushing women out of public life and returning them to the domestic sphere was emphasized. Mothers should tend to the education of their children in morals in order to bring about harmony in the home and positive social change in the nation. These male experts, both medical and moral, visualized an idealized world in their writings. This idealized world is visualized in a different way in the following chapter. Paintings depicting chocolate consumption in a positive way might reflect not how mothers or other women actually were but instead how they ought to be. Images of women drinking chocolate with

their children emphasize the importance of privileging their child's education over their own pleasure; domestic activities in the private sphere center around the proper upbringing of the next generation of moral French citizens.

CHAPTER 2

In the first chapter, I explored the medical debates on the connection between the physical and the moral and how physical actions could have a moral impact, especially concerning the consumption of chocolate. I discussed both the introduction of medical chocolate to the European world and moral questions surrounding the consumption of chocolate in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. I addressed several ways in which anxiety about moral degeneration in eighteenth century France prompted male “experts” to prescribe stricter control over women’s roles, especially in the domestic or private sphere; this control extended to the ways and spaces in which women could consume chocolate. I also addressed the importance of early childhood education and the role of mothers in forming the moral character of the next generation of French men and women. In the next chapter, I will explain how this moral anxiety affected conservative and bourgeois men and was expressed through paintings of women consuming chocolate. These idealized visualizations delineated concrete boundaries for the moral consumption of chocolate by bourgeois women.

Women’s consumption of chocolate was one behavior that contributed to moral panic in eighteenth century France. Amidst concerns of national moral degeneration, male painters provided a visual example of proper conduct for women—a prescribed manner in which to

consume chocolate. While the following chapter will attempt to address the relationship between chocolate and bourgeois morality, there were other groups in France operating with their own distinct moral codes at this time, and these groups had different relationships with the consumption of chocolate. One such example is the way chocolate was incorporated into libertine morality, both through visual and textual media and in practice.

There were two groups of medical experts tangled in this complicated web of libertinism, moral panic, medical knowledge, and chocolate. First, there were the moral crusaders, the defenders of moral hygiene—those physicians who considered themselves uniquely suited to offer medical solutions to a France afflicted with social ills. Second, there were those who prescribed *chocolat de santé* for a variety of medical issues. I am including in this second group those medical professionals who sold or prescribed chocolate for the treatment of venereal disease, or *chocolat anti-venerien*. Both moralists and medical professionals emphasized the deleterious effects of uncontrolled female sexuality, expressed explicitly through libertine behavior and implicitly through female consumption of chocolate.

Popular perceptions of chocolate in Ancien Régime France linked it to heated blood, inflamed temperaments, and sexual activity, especially in women—though men were not immune to chocolate’s seductive charms. Madame de Sevigne wrote in a letter to her daughter, “Are you not afraid of how [chocolate] can burn the blood? What if all the effects

that appear miraculous mask some sort of diabolical combustion? ... The Marquise de Coëtlogon drank so much chocolate when she was pregnant last year that she gave birth to a baby who was black as the devil and died.”¹¹⁶ Madame du Hausset, lady-in-waiting to Madame de Pompadour, wrote in her memoirs of her mistress’ habit of taking “chocolate *a triple vanille et ambre* at her breakfast” in order to keep her position as Louis XV’s favored maitresse-en-titre.¹¹⁷ Du Hausset chronicles a specific incident in which this habit, along with a daily diet of “truffles and celery soup,” provoked a “very heated state” in Mme de Pompadour. When confronted, the distraught mistress burst into tears and confided both to her waiting-woman and to her “dear friend” the Duchesse de Brancas that she had “determined to adopt a heating diet” to correct the “misfortune” of her “very cold temperament”—for, as any maitresse-en-titre worth her salt could tell you, “men, you know, set great value on certain things.”¹¹⁸ Mme de Pompadour was not the only royal mistress to turn to chocolate in order that the king might enjoy “certain things”; Madame du Barry was also famous for plying both the king and her other lovers with chocolate in order to help

¹¹⁶ Madame de Sevigne, lettre 25 October 1671, trans. Christine A. Jones, Wonders and Marvels blog, updated February 2015, <http://www.wondersandmarvels.com/2015/02/the-chocolate-baby-2.html>.

¹¹⁷ Madame du Hausset, *The Private Memoirs of Madame Du Hausset: Lady's Maid to Madame de Pompadour* (London: E. Wilson, 1825), 34.

¹¹⁸ Du Hausset, *Memoirs*, 35.

them keep up with her voracious sexual appetites.¹¹⁹ While the lax morality of the aristocracy allowed such indiscretions—for the most part—with impunity, sexual impropriety and the increased possibility of immoral behavior inherent in chocolate's nature would have been scandalous to a bourgeoisie that saw libertinism and luxury as harmful to the very health and soul of France.

In this chapter, I intend to expand Chapter 1's conversation of how moral and medical authorities blamed luxury and libertinism, especially as perpetrated by women, for the degeneration of the nation. In order to revitalize French society, these authorities emphasized the domestic sphere as the proper space for women. By exhibiting the virtuous moral characteristics of patriotic motherhood, sexual control, and submission/obedience to paternal and spousal authority, French women had the power and the responsibility to physically and morally regenerate the French nation. I also intend to show that uncontrolled and disordered female sexuality, which was blamed for the degeneration of the nation, was explicitly and medically linked to the consumption of chocolate.

Medical theories held luxury and libertinism partially responsible for the degeneration of the nation. At the same time, however, chocolate was an accepted medical treatment for

¹¹⁹ Stewart Lee Allen, *In the Devil's Garden: A Sinful History of Forbidden Food* (New York: Ballantine Publishing, 2002), 35-36.

various ailments and was used as an aphrodisiac and treatment against venereal disease. The existence of *anti-vénérien* chocolate presents a different and more nuanced picture of eighteenth century France than either image promulgated by moral crusaders; neither the bleak reality of female-derived social sickness nor the optimistic outlook for a domesticated future accurately represented the state of national morality. While women's sexual impropriety and pursuit of decadence and pleasure were blamed for the decay of societal values, Ann Kathleen Doig and Felicia B. Sturzer in *Women, Gender and Disease in Eighteenth-Century England and France* identify husbands using anti-venereal chocolate to surreptitiously treat their venereal disease without their wives knowing.¹²⁰ Rather than errant wives and mothers, this evidence points to a culture of uncontrolled, illicit, secretive male sexuality spreading venereal disease and partaking in chocolate. In this chapter I intend to provide examples of aphrodisiac and *anti-vénérien* chocolate and address the paradoxical issue of medical chocolate consumption. I argue that masculine medical authority mediated the risks of chocolate consumption for women; in other words, chocolate consumption for women was moral so long as it was performed under the watchful eyes of male doctors or in the domestic sphere under the control of husbands and fathers.

¹²⁰ Ann Kathleen Doig and Felicia B. Sturzer, *Women, Gender and Disease in Eighteenth-Century England and France* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 220.

In order to understand why libertinism was singled out as an immoral lifestyle and source of national degeneration, it is necessary to first understand what is meant by libertinism in eighteenth century France. In this chapter I intend to provide a brief overview of the evolution of libertinism in France. The meaning of the word *libertine* changed over time from a derogatory slur thrown at intellectuals who rebelled against the religious establishment or a term describing general bad behavior to an identifier of a sexually promiscuous, anti-religious, decadent lifestyle celebrating the violation of social mores and the pursuit of pleasure above all else. This process of change and evolution also involved the increased integration of chocolate into libertine culture, through lifestyle, literature, and art.

Libertinism and luxury, blamed for the degeneration of the French nation, were tied to chocolate both explicitly and implicitly. Both men and women engaged in libertine behavior; however, the language used by critics of libertinism to describe its negative effects on national morality was, in many instances, highly gendered. In this chapter I will show how chocolate's status as a luxury good was cemented in eighteenth century France both by its devotees and by its detractors. I also intend to provide proof of the intimate connection between chocolate and libertinism. Donatien Alphonse Francois, the Marquis de Sade, is often upheld as the supreme example of late eighteenth century libertinism. A famed chocoholic and sexual deviant, he was one of the most rigorous embracers of both

accusations of moral degeneration and the consumption of chocolate. In this chapter I will provide examples from Sade's life and work that show how intimately he wove chocolate into the fabric of his particular brand of libertinism, in many ways the ultimate libertine archetype.

I. Luxurious Libertines and Patriotic Motherhood

Moral panic over libertinism and luxury reinforced the importance of domesticity for the regeneration of the nation. Moral and medical experts continued to seek to push women out of public life and keep them confined, controlled, and busy as full-time patriotic mothers. Attempts at morally reforming both the court and the nation were not, however, new and revolutionary movements when they appeared in the eighteenth century. Towards the end of his life, Louis XIV, influenced by his morganatic wife Madame de Maintenon, pushed for moral reform in several ways. One concrete example is his 1684 edict designating the Salpêtrière hospital “as not only a refuge for destitute women, but a prison, workhouse, and reformatory for street prostitutes and promiscuous or *libertin* women.”¹²¹ This piece of legislation was more than just another attempt to assert control over female sexuality. It

¹²¹ Chad Denton, *Decadence, Radicalism, and the Early Modern French Nobility: The Enlightened and Depraved* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2016), 33.

specifically targeted public displays of “licentiousness”, explicit and illicit female sexuality, as immoral and libertine.

Between 1750 and 1770, physicians “involved themselves in a broader public debate about morality, social class and the family, and the health means to reform upper class mores.”¹²² Critics of the libertine lifestyle identified libertinism as one source (out of the many) of the physical and moral degeneration of the French nation. Libertinism, with its “flamboyant and effeminate lifestyle... had caused nervous disease and sexual degeneracy,” especially among the elites of France.¹²³ The France imagined by these social critics and moral crusaders was “characterized by self-restraint, paternal authority, happy motherhood and sexual control.”¹²⁴ In my previous chapter, I showed the ways in which these “virtuous” moral characteristics as applied to chocolate consumption were expressed through the idealized world of art, specifically paintings of women consuming chocolate. While those alarmed by the immorality of chocolate sought to more strictly regulate the ways in which it was consumed, libertines embraced both accusations of moral degeneration and the consumption of chocolate.

¹²² Sean Quinlan, *The Great Nation in Decline*, 13.

¹²³ Quinlan, *The Great Nation in Decline*, 13.

¹²⁴ Quinlan, *The Great Nation in Decline*, 20.

The anxiety over moral degeneration prompted doctors and “medical philosophers” to lend their expertise to the problem. Physicians who considered themselves the defenders of public health through programs of physical and moral hygiene held strong moral convictions that often condemned lifestyles that celebrated the consumption of chocolate: the luxurious lifestyle of the upper classes who drank chocolate for breakfast as a symbol of wealth and status, and the lifestyle of sexually promiscuous libertines who consumed chocolate both for pleasure and as an aphrodisiac. On the other hand, not all medical professionals who prescribed chocolate for their patients were concerned about the moral implications of chocolate. Although some certainly were aware of the deleterious health effects of poor quality or incorrectly mixed chocolate, these are not always connected to moral causes or implications.

Luxury and libertinism were often paired as twin causes of moral degeneration in pre-Revolutionary France. Physicians who joined the moral crusade identified “sickness as a consequence of immoral behavior. ...Luxury and libertinism had corrupted a prophylactic instinct needed to keep society virtuous and healthy.”¹²⁵ Quinlan’s choice of “prophylactic” is an interesting one, considering that uncontrolled sexual activity was the cause of societal illness and degeneration. The “symptoms of moral rot” included a whole host of physical

¹²⁵ Quinlan, *The Great Nation in Decline*, 22.

ailments: “gout, stones, obstructions, intestinal disorders, cold sores, ulcers, inflammations, supparations, headaches, migraines, sensitive eyes, insomnia, somnolence, lethargy, dropsy, consumption, tumors, birth defects, scirrhous, apoplexy, enervation, convulsions and delirium. These diseases fell under one master pathology: nervous disease.”¹²⁶ While scientists and physicians, such as Albrecht von Haller, Charles Bonnet, and Théophile de Bordeu were developing new ideas about sensibility, medical crusaders applied them to the perceived moral and social crisis: “[a]s they saw it, luxury and libertinism had exasperated the body’s sensibility and caused a plague of nervous disease.”¹²⁷ As discussed in Chapter 1, women were considered to be particularly susceptible to nervous diseases due to the excessive sensibility of the female body.

Tissot was one of many medical professionals who identified the libertine lifestyle as a source of physical and moral degeneration. He specifically calls out those born into privilege who choose not to use the benefits of their station to improve society by their good example but rather squander their wealth and health in libertine activities:

Leave me, like others, to behold with regret, that person who, by their birth, station, and education, ought to give essential examples to society, and whose health is as important as their influence might be powerful, are precisely who

¹²⁶ Quinlan 22-23, referencing S.-A. Tissot, *De la santé des gens de lettres* (Lausanne, 1768), pp. 182-86 n. 1; and Jacques Ballexserd, *Dissertation sur l’éducation physique des enfans* (Paris, 1762), pp. 23-29.

¹²⁷ Quinlan 23, referencing SRM 116, d. 2, *L’Enuë de la Vallé*, ‘Mémoire au concours sur les affections de l’âme, les maladies nerveuses, l’hystéricisme, l’hypochondriacisme, la mélancholie,’ 7 Mar. 1786.

give the worst, because they continually labour to destroy it, by following a mode of life which is directly opposite to it, and which is so far from increasing their pleasures, shortly deprives them of the very power of enjoying them, by throwing them into that state which excludes all.¹²⁸

In the same *Essai*, Tissot “flatly told the privileged and wealthy that they were morally and physically depraved” and recommended a regimen of physical and moral hygiene based on the lifestyle of an imagined country farmer.¹²⁹ The libertine lifestyle which caused so many ills went hand in hand with dissipation and luxury, vices to which even “respectable” persons were susceptible.

In 1771, inspired by Tissot’s *Onanisme* (1760), J.D.T. Bienville published a treatise in which he explicitly connected the uncontrolled consumption of chocolate by women to disordered and immoral female sexuality. In his treatise *De la nymphomanie ou traité de la fureur utérine*, Bienville identified “over-civilization” of women as one cause of nymphomania, and female over-consumption of chocolate was one symptom of this over-civilization.¹³⁰ Like other concerned medical and moral authorities writing in eighteenth century France, Bienville associated chocolate with a lifestyle of luxury and self-indulgent behaviors. The “abuse of coffee and chocolate,” which is “prodigious” in female spaces,

¹²⁸ Tissot, *Essai sur les maladies des gens du monde*, 2nd edition (Lausanne, 1770) 83, 161-162, as quoted by Quinlan, *The Great Nation in Decline*, 39.

¹²⁹ Quinlan, *The Great Nation in Decline*, 38.

¹³⁰ Ann Kathleen Doig and Felicia B. Sturzer, *Women, Gender and Disease in Eighteenth-Century England and France* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing: 2014), 52.

corrupts the “animal harmony” of the female body and causes an inflammation of the passions.¹³¹ Bienville also wrote of chocolate’s negative effects on female behavior beyond sexual misconduct. He blamed chocolate for a whole host of immoral behaviors that could lead to sexual impropriety but were themselves fairly damning; this “detestable” chocolate led women to enter rooms “too freely,” to respond “impertinently,” to behave too familiarly and with a minimum of decency, and to walk about shamelessly.¹³² The situation imagined by Bienville, and alluded to by many other medical and moral critics of his day, is as follows: “sexual desire born of an overheated body affects the young girl’s brain so dramatically that... [she] is soon whispering the most shocking proposals” to even unattractive men.¹³³ This chocolate-fueled sexual desire was responsible for decaying national health and morals, especially among the elites.

II. Aphrodisiac Chocolate and *Chocolat Anti-Venerien*

Medical theories of libertinism held it responsible for the degeneration of the nation. At the same time, the medical community endorsed the use of chocolate for innocuous health concerns and acknowledged the efficacy of aphrodisiac and “anti-venereal” chocolate. The use of chocolate as medicine especially to “warm the stomach” was common in eighteenth

¹³¹ J.D.T. Bienville, *De la nymphomanie ou traité de la fureur uterine* (Amsterdam: 1778), 24.

¹³² J.D.T. Bienville, *De la nymphomanie*, 78.

¹³³ Doig and Sturzer, *Women, Gender and Disease*, 52.

century France. Male medical professionals could administer chocolate to patients safely without the threat of immorality; there was no worry of immoderate consumption or inflamed passions if the chocolate was consumed under the watchful eye of a physician.

In his *Dissertation*, Pierre Dionis draws upon established medical knowledge on the question of sudden death, “la mort subite.” Dionis writes that according to Monsieur Lancisi (probably referring to Giovanni Maria Lancisi, the Italian physician and anatomist), the true cause of sudden death must be sought in the intemperance of those who have died; that is to say, their deaths were the result of daily habits established over time, and not the work of a single instant. Dionis identifies chocolate as a habitually-used substance, although he does not seem to believe it can be responsible for sudden death (either immediately or in the long run). Along with tobacco, coffee, tea, and wines and liqueurs, chocolate “can very well alter one’s health, but none of these kill in an instant.”¹³⁴ Dionis condemns the practice of blaming “innocent causes” like tobacco, chocolate, or earthquakes for sudden deaths, a practice that he sees occurring in Rome in order to make sense of a quantity of sudden deaths.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ Pierre Dionis, *Dissertation sur la mort subite . Avec l'histoire d'une fille cataleptique* (Paris: L d'Houry, 1710), 17.

¹³⁵ Pierre Dionis, *Dissertation*, p. 38.

Dionis later writes that Lancisi drank chocolate often and in quantity, citing his advanced age (over eighty years) as the reason.¹³⁶ According to Dupont Du Misgnil, “The warming foods—wine, coffee, chocolate—dilute the blood and make it circulate with too much impetuosity. Many stomachs have trouble digesting chocolate, and vanilla makes it truly warming.”¹³⁷ This text reinforces the perception of chocolate as a “warming” food product. In his observations on pulmonary tuberculosis, Raulin details the account of a tuberculosis patient with the specific foods he recommended and forbade. Raulin specifically forbade “strong spirits and strong drinks, except chocolate with *demi* vanilla.” Raulin goes on to describe the wrongly-named “health chocolate”, which he claims is very irritating and warming (perhaps because of the inclusion of cinnamon?), as opposed to chocolate with vanilla, which is sweet, soothing, and healing.¹³⁸

When they addressed the subject of aphrodisiac chocolate, medical professionals came into contact with the immoral possibilities inherent in chocolate consumption. Some of these medical authorities decried the use of chocolate as an aphrodisiac, but others provided useful and efficacious recipes for chocolate, both aphrodisiac and *anti-vénérien*. While

¹³⁶ Pierre Dionis, *Dissertation*, p. 40-41.

¹³⁷ Dupont Du Misgnil, *Exposition succincte des moyens qu'il convient d'employer pour combattre avec succes les principaux accidents qui surviennent aux femmes les premiers jours de leurs couches; par M. Dupont du Misgnil, docteur en medecine en l'universite de Reims, exerçant a Troyes* (1775), 8.

¹³⁸ Joseph Raulin, *Nouvelles observations sur la phtisie pulmonaire* (Paris: Méquignon, 1784), 22.

aphrodisiac chocolate could conceivably be used within the boundaries of controlled marital sexuality (though it may be unlikely), the use or prescription of *anti-vénéérien* chocolate was a definite indicator of libertine or immoral sexual behavior—men were not at risk of contracting venereal diseases from sexual encounters with their well-behaved bourgeois wives.

While modern medicine has disproved the aphrodisiac qualities of cantharides, or Spanish fly, in the eighteenth century it was still considered a powerful aphrodisiac. This is clearly evidenced by real and imagined use by eighteenth century individuals and by its inclusion in literary works. It may have been paired with chocolate in order to create a super-charged aphrodisiac capable of inflaming even the most modest and virtuous women to uterine furies that fueled orgies rivaling the ancient Romans. *Elemens de Pharmacie, Theorique et Pratique* mentions that some combine chocolate with cantharides—that is, the supposed aphrodisiac Spanish fly.¹³⁹ *De l'homme et de la femme considérés physiquement dans l'état du mariage* warns of combining cantharides with chocolate, citing the case of a man who experienced both a “violent ardor” and painful dysuria (difficulty urinating) as a result of such a potent combination. An aphrodisiac electuary, however, according to the

¹³⁹ Antoine Baumé, *Elemens de Pharmacie, theorique et pratique* (Paris: La Veuve Damonville & Musier Fils, 1762).

author, can be safely prepared and consumed.¹⁴⁰

“Le medecin de soi-meme, or an Easy and Simple Method Against Venereal Disease with a Recipe for Aphrodisiac Chocolate, As Useful As It Is Agreeable by M. le Febure de St. Il... esquire, doctor of medicine, physician of the city of Versailles, professor of venereal maladies and of the art of labor and delivery” is another text that gives some context for chocolate’s use as an aphrodisiac. This text emphasizes the established nature of chocolate as an aphrodisiac: “One cannot but applaud at the composition of aphrodisiac chocolate that M. le Febure proposes: it is, according to us, the best way that one can administer the “sublime-corrosif.”¹⁴¹ According to this text, it would appear that aphrodisiac chocolate was utilized not only to inflame the passions, but to administer the remedy or antidote for the possibly unpleasant consequences of unbridled passion and unrestricted sexual activity: venereal disease. This “sublime-corrosif” seems to be a solution of mercury, added in some way to preparations of chocolate: “la solution de sublimé dans une tasse de chocolat.”¹⁴² Mercury, or “mercure sublime-corrosif,” was a popular treatment for venereal diseases.

¹⁴⁰ De Lignac, *De l'homme et de la femme considérés physiquement dans l'état du mariage* (Lille: J.-B. Henry, 1773), 186.

¹⁴¹ Guillaume-René Le Febure, *Le medecin de soi-même, ou Méthode simple et aisée pour guérir les maladies vénériennes. Tome 2 / , avec la recette d'un chocolat aphrodisiaque, aussi utile qu'agréable* (Paris: Michel Lambert, 1775), 1070.

¹⁴² Le Febure, *Le medecin de soi-meme*, Tome 1, 349.

There are several possible situations that would call for the addition of mercury to chocolate intended as an aphrodisiac. The first possibility is that this aphrodisiac chocolate was intended to be consumed by two parties before sexual activity, and one or both of them already had a venereal disease and were taking mercury to treat it. Another possibility is that the chocolate was intended to protect the drinker against catching a venereal disease from the other sexual partner. Perhaps in this case the man who bought chocolate advertised as *anti-vénérien* had already been diagnosed with a venereal disease and he intended to use the chocolate to both seduce and safeguard an undiseased woman. On the other hand, the individual mixing and administering the chocolate might have believed that it could cure venereal disease while simultaneously stimulating the sexual appetites; for example, a man who knows his sexual female partner has venereal disease (possibly a sex worker) and doses her with mercury-infused chocolate both to help treat her disease and as a prophylactic measure against catching the disease himself. Without personal accounts of exactly what Frenchmen ate and drank before pursuing illicit sex in the eighteenth century, it is difficult to absolutely understand why mercury would be added to chocolate and why this chocolate would be advertised as *anti-vénérien*. However, working from the context of the advertisements and from available knowledge about health, sex, and morals in the historical context, it is possible to say that most likely *anti-vénérien* chocolate was intended to

supplement a lifestyle of risky or illicit sex.¹⁴³ Sexual activity that resulted in venereal disease was most likely taking place outside the boundaries of marriage and would definitely be qualified as an immoral action. This document gives only clues to what could possibly a thriving industry of aphrodisiac or *anti-vénérien* (or both) chocolate. Under “Materials” at the end of the text is listed one Martin, an apothecary, working in rue Croix des Petits-Champs, opposite that of Boulloi. This Martin carries aphrodisiac chocolate, as well as special underwear intended to ward off venereal diseases.¹⁴⁴

One connection between high medicine or medical theorists and medical chocolate is the publication of a recipe for chocolate in the “Gazette du Commerce.” The author of the recipe is one M. Varnier, described as a doctor of medicine at the University of Montpellier and a “medecin” at the Hospital of Vitry-le-François.¹⁴⁵ The University of Montpellier was one of the premier institutions of medicine and medical learning in France in the eighteenth century, and the home of the vitalists. Their theories concerning the connection between the physical and the moral created a specific understanding of how a moral character could be

¹⁴³ There is also a warning that one must not take the “sublime-corrosif” except in the form of chocolate. This could be because they knew mercury was poisonous. If the general population was aware of mercury’s poisonous qualities, it could mean that chocolate, since it was considered a wholesome or highly nutritive substance or food, was thought to counteract the harmful effects of mercury or perhaps to temper them.

¹⁴⁴ Le Fébure, *Le medecin de soi-meme*, 1047.

¹⁴⁵ M. Varnier, “Nouvelle maniere de composer du chocolat,” *Gazette du Commerce* (Paris: Knapen, 1774-04-05), 220.

described to chocolate, or to the consumption of chocolate. Varnier began by emphasizing the widespread use of medical chocolate and its long history in Europe, identifying chocolate for the reader as an established medical substance. As everyone knows, the author continues, chocolate is strongly warming. The repeated description of chocolate as warming (“échauffant”), which appears not only in this text but in most others that describe the uses of medical or aphrodisiac chocolate, shows that practitioners of medicine in the eighteenth century still situated chocolate within the Galenic system of humoral medicine. Because of its warming qualities, chocolate is considered a good food for the feeble, for convalescents, and for the aged. M. Varnier also gives a recipe for “purgative” chocolate, which includes other pharmaceuticals from the New World (i.e. jalap). M. Varnier’s discussion of aphrodisiac chocolate betrays his disdain for such a preparation; he does not even consider this to be true chocolate, as it only resembles chocolate in color and, in truth, contains very little cacao.

III. The Evolution of Libertinism

Libertinism and luxury—two vices associated primarily with the aristocracy—were often blamed for the physical and moral degeneration of the French nation. The “noble libertine” was a familiar figure at Versailles, born in some ways of the Regency of Philippe II

d'Orléans and the “relaxed and skeptical atmosphere” of his court.¹⁴⁶ Libertinism in France began as an intellectual, anti-religious movement and, over the course of the eighteenth century, evolved into a lifestyle championing rebellion against social mores and the pursuit of pleasure and self-gratification above all else. Libertine morality in the context of eighteenth century France can be essentially understood as a gleeful rejection of traditional moral constraints and a purposeful transgression against some elements of aristocratic morality, especially concerning the Catholic Church, and the emphasis in bourgeois morality on privacy and family. In libertine literature, there is a focus on primacy of the body—and especially the pleasure of the body—over the soul. In other words, as Marcel Henaff writes, “if the soul does not exist, everything is allowed.”¹⁴⁷

The words libertine and libertinage or libertinism have a long history in France, and definitions for these concepts have changed and shifted over the course of centuries. The first libertines were not sexual deviants but religious rebels. The critics of early libertinism identified it as a moral threat but also as primarily intellectually dangerous activity rather than illicit sexual activity, and anti-religious sentiment or “skepticism toward ecclesiastical

¹⁴⁶ Denton, *Decadence*, 19.

¹⁴⁷ Marcel Hénaff, *Sade: The Invention of the Libertine Body* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 24.

and scriptural authorities.”¹⁴⁸ Descended from the individualistic and questioning intellectual legacy of the Reformation and the Huguenots, a libertine went further than they ever dared in his defiance of the Catholic Church: he was “someone who not just has no belief in religious truths, but mocks the very concept of faith, and because of this defiance of religion feels free to engage in illicit speech and behavior.”¹⁴⁹ The archbishop and author Fénelon was one of the critics of this earlier libertinism. In 1713, Fénelon wrote a letter warning his nephew the Marquis de Fénelon about the moral dangers that the “libertinage of the mind” at Versailles posed to his young soul.¹⁵⁰

Sexual morality is by no means static in any society across class or time. According to manuals for decent behavior and *honnête homme* written before 1660, “The well-being of society required not only the preservation of chastity before marriage, but also no desire or attempt to seduce or corrupt the wife of another.”¹⁵¹ Roberts identifies a shift in aristocratic literature after 1660 that essentially eroded the “Christian side of the *honnête homme*,” caused by the Counter-Reformation and the rehabilitation of the philosophies of Epicurus.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ Chad Denton, *Decadence, Radicalism, and the Early Modern French Nobility: The Enlightened and Depraved*, 26.

¹⁴⁹ Denton, *Decadence*, 26.

¹⁵⁰ Fénelon, as quoted by Denton, 26.

¹⁵¹ Warren Roberts, *Morality and Social Class in Eighteenth-Century French Literature and Painting*, (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1974) 15.

¹⁵² Roberts, *Morality and Social Class*, 15.

Roberts points to this philosophical revival as one source of the relaxed moral attitudes towards marriage as expressed in aristocratic literature of the eighteenth century. Libertine morality, or immorality, was a step beyond the aristocratic rejection of the chaste Christian idea of love. Affairs within marriage were not only pardoned but enthusiastically pursued: pleasure, especially sexual pleasure, was considered the only proper goal in life. Under the enlightened sexual boredom of Philippe d'Orleans, "It became fashionable to treat marriage as a mere cover for sexual adventures."¹⁵³ Harwich points to the Régence, the period between 1715 and 1723 when Philippe d'Orléans served as Regent for the minor Louis XV, as the point when chocolate finished establishing itself in France. Every day, the Regent took chocolate while receiving the first visitors of his day; those lucky enough to be "admitted to chocolate with the Prince" would have his ear first thing in the morning.¹⁵⁴ The Régence is also the era some scholars identify as the establishment libertinism at Versailles: "The Regent... set the style. It was under the Regency that the French aristocracy turned libertinage into a way of life."¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Antony Copley, *Sexual Moralities in France, 1780-1980: New ideas on the family, divorce, and homosexuality (An Essay on Moral Change)* (London: Routledge, 1989), 47.

¹⁵⁴ Harwich, *Histoire du Chocolat*, 77.

¹⁵⁵ Copley, *Sexual Moralities*, 47.

Disordered female sexuality was believed to be the cause of, among other concerns, falling birth rates in France. “Luxury, philosophic free-thinking and sexual free-living” were all blamed for the perceived crisis of depopulation.¹⁵⁶ Tissot believed that the population decline “stemmed from a variety of possible causes—” among them libertinism and debauchery. Critics of libertinism who claimed that it was to blame for (supposed) falling birth rates had reason for their accusations and alarm. The Marquis de Sade, arguably the most well-known and widely-read creator of libertine content in pre-Revolutionary France, wrote of female characters who abhorred pregnancy and spoke of childbirth disparagingly. Sade’s heroines even characterized pregnancy as “unnatural.” Examples of such ideological distaste for pregnancy can be found in *Philosophy in the Bedroom*, which chronicles the libertine education of Eugenie, a fifteen-year-old virgin, at the hands of three older and more sexually experienced libertines. Madame de Saint-Ange, Eugenie’s friend and primary instructor, extols the virtues of contraception and abortifacients while warning her protege against ever allowing herself to suffer the indignity of pregnancy. Saint-Ange exhorts the young Eugenie to “be the implacable enemy of this wearisome child-getting.”¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ Quinlan, *The Great Nation in Decline*, 57.

¹⁵⁷ Donatien Alphonse Francois, Marquis de Sade, *Philosophy in the Bedroom*, (1759) 248.

The nobility of eighteenth century France “became associated with both skepticism and illicit sexuality.”¹⁵⁸ No single aristocrat embodied these libertine ideals more perfectly than Donatien Alphonse Francois, Marquis de Sade. Antony Copley claims that Sade realized that “attitudes toward family and marriage are the lynchpin of sexual morality...by the mid-eighteenth century, a new ideal of domesticity or privacy and of conjugal love was beginning to make its claims felt, advocated by the philosophes and linked to the middle class.”¹⁵⁹ Sade persistently attacked this new ideal, Copley theorizes, due to his strained familial relationships and cold-hearted parents; whatever the reason, Sade’s life and works both stand as testament to his refusal of domesticity and middle-class morals. Denton notes that by the eighteenth century, “libertine literature in France continued the humanist tradition of combining education with sexual liberation, showing women as well as men enjoying sexual pleasure, and using prostitutes and sodomites to call into question the rationale behind moral regulations.”¹⁶⁰

IV. Libertines, Luxury, and Chocolate

¹⁵⁸ Denton, *Decadence*, 19.

¹⁵⁹ Antony Copley, *Sexual Moralities in France*, 37.

¹⁶⁰ Denton, *Decadence*, 40.

Libertinism and luxury were tied to chocolate in several ways. Harwich points to the eighteenth century as the period of the “consecration of chocolate” in Europe.¹⁶¹ In 1768, a Parisian chroniqueur stated on the subject of chocolate that “*Les Grands* take it every day, the old often, and the people never.”¹⁶² This seems to me to indicate a distinct class-based consumption of chocolate. Most likely, this division was primarily economic. The aristocracy could afford to consume chocolate every day as part of a lavish and pleasure-driven lifestyle.¹⁶³ “On the eve of the Revolution, a study directed by Lavoisier dedicated to the provisioning of Paris estimated that the annual consumption of cacao was around 120 tons, the equivalent of 200 grams per inhabitant.”¹⁶⁴ This consumption was consolidated in the upper classes and the Paris metro region, according to inventories that show which households owned the kitchen items necessary for the proper preparation and service of chocolate. Harwich also provides the “evocative testimony” of the character of Despina from Mozart’s *Così fan tutte* in 1790. Despina laments her responsibility of preparing chocolate for her mistresses every half hour: “[...] et il faut que je reste à le renifler, la bouche sèche.

¹⁶¹ Harwich, *Histoire du Chocolat*, 76.

¹⁶² Harwich, *Histoire du Chocolat*, 77.

¹⁶³ “The old” could refer to a variety of persons. However, this statement is most likely referring to the fact that chocolate was considered a medically superior food for the elderly and for invalids.

¹⁶⁴ Harwich, *Histoire du Chocolat*, 77.

Ma bouche n'est-elle pas faite comme la vôtre? Oh, mes belles dames, pourquoi faut-il que vous ayez l'essence, moi seulement l'odeur?"¹⁶⁵

La Toletta, “an elegant pamphlet on weddings...published in Bologna” painted the picture of a woman of quality, a “feminine idol” whose outward appearance was modeled on the gay and frivolous lifestyle of Parisian women, those who truly knew how to live.¹⁶⁶ The pamphlet listed all the little luxuries that a “modern” woman needed: dressing-room, comb, mirror, *toupet* and curls, hairpins, cream, facepowder, bonnet and veil, feathers, ribbons, beauty spots, perfumes, books, and—of course—chocolate.¹⁶⁷ Chocolate is in this way identified as part of a luxurious and distinctly Parisian lifestyle, one concerned with style over substance and pleasure over everything.

Libertinism and chocolate established themselves in French society at the same levels around the same time, as discussed earlier in this chapter: the Regency of Philippe d'Orleans. French libertines embraced chocolate as a pleasurable and delicious commodity that held the possibility for inflaming the passions and inciting sexual behavior that would be considered immoral by conservative and bourgeois moralities. The art, writings, and

¹⁶⁵ Harwich 78.

¹⁶⁶ Piero Camporesi, *Exotic Brew: The Art of Living in the Age of Enlightenment*, trans. Christopher Woodall (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), 18.

¹⁶⁷ Camporesi, *Exotic Brew*, quoting *La Toletta*, 19.

practices of French libertines show a relationship with chocolate that celebrated, rather than sought to regulate, the aphrodisiac effects of chocolate and its potential for inciting immoral behaviour. Libertines embraced the “inflammatory” cultural perception of chocolate wholeheartedly. The potential for the inspiration of immoral behaviour was, in libertine ideology, a conflagration (maybe not the right word) devoutly to be wished.

Libertine ideology, especially as perfected by Sade, ties philosophy to practice through the consumption of chocolate. Sexual pleasure, radical philosophy, and the deliberate breaking of taboos or violation of social mores are all present in the works of Sade, sometimes simultaneously. Sade establishes a libertine morality that focuses on the literal nature of the body.¹⁶⁸ Sade read the works of La Mettrie, whose *Man a Machine* “provides the ideal model for the system of well-arranged organs making up the soulless body.”¹⁶⁹ Marcel Hénaff, in his examination of Sadean philosophy, makes much of this supposed soullessness of the libertine body, which is reduced to a “pleasure robot.”¹⁷⁰ If libertine bodies are merely mechanical and pleasure-seeking, there is neither the need nor the capacity for morality. Hénaff utilizes Sade’s texts in interrogating various facets of libertine morality. The search for the extraordinary—even the extraordinarily ugly, for new experiences, and

¹⁶⁸ Marcel Hénaff, *Sade: The Invention of the Libertine Body*, 18-19.

¹⁶⁹ Hénaff, 24.

¹⁷⁰ Hénaff, 24.

for new combinations of familiar things is one element that Hénaff explores deeply. “What Sade is calling most profoundly into question is the notion that desire needs somehow to be taken in hand: [rather,] all its forms, even the most extravagant, are legitimate and attainable.”¹⁷¹ Rather than controlling sexual desire or regulating it according to a specific moral code, libertinage embraces sexual desire and sexual pleasure without limits. Chocolate is likewise embraced because it is both a mechanism and a source of pleasure. Chocolate is pleasurable to consume: the taste, texture, and temperature are all pleasant and agreeable. Moreover, chocolate can be prepared and consumed in a variety of ways which appeals to the libertine delight in infinite combinations and variations. The effects of chocolate upon the body are pleasurable as well: it warms the stomach, inflames the passions, and gives energy and stamina to the consumer.

V. The Marquis de Sade: Chocolate and Libertinism

The most shining and extreme example of the libertine passion for chocolate is the life and writings of the Marquis de Sade. Sade married chocolate and libertinism both through his philosophical works and through his own actions. In his writings, Sade has his characters drink chocolate to regain their energy after an orgy or to prepare themselves for the next round of taboo sexual and intellectual activity.

¹⁷¹ Hénaff, *Sade*, 39.

Louis Petit de Bachaumont, in his *Secret Memoirs for the History of the Republic of Letters*, recounts an infamous episode in the history of chocolate, one which inextricably linked it to libertinism and sexual immorality in French imagination.

Friends write from Marseilles that M. le comte de Sade ... gave a ball ... Into the dessert he slipped chocolate pastilles so good that a number of people devoured them. There were lots of them, and no one failed to eat some, but he had mixed in some Spanish fly. The virtue of the medication is well known. It proved to be so potent that those who ate the pastilles began to burn with unchaste ardor and to carry on as if in the grip of the most amorous frenzy. The ball degenerated into one of those licentious orgies for which the Romans were renowned. Even the most respectable of women were unable to resist the uterine rage that stirred within them. And so it was that M. de Sade enjoyed the favors of his sister-in-law, with whom he fled to avoid the punishment he deserves. Several persons died of their frightful priapic excesses, and others are still quite sick.¹⁷²

It is unclear whether this sensationalized account is in fact referring to an incident in Marseilles involving prostitutes, sodomy, flagellation, and the aphrodisiac Spanish fly; Copley mentions this second incident as leading to a charge of poisoning being brought against Sade, but says nothing of the ball-turned-orgy recounted by Bachaumont.¹⁷³ Maurice Lever's biography of Sade notes that "Chocolate inspired [in him] an irresistible passion. He

¹⁷² Louis Petit de Bachaumont, translation from Lever, 1993: 208, as quoted by Coe, *The True History of Chocolate*, 229.

¹⁷³ Copley, *Sexual Moralities in France*, 45.

loved it in all its forms: in cream, in cakes, in ice cream, in bars.”¹⁷⁴ During one of his many imprisonments, Sade wrote to his wife asking that she send the following to him in prison:

Boxes of ground chocolate and of mocha coffee
 Cacao butter suppositories [a Martinique remedy for his piles]
Creme au chocolat [a frequent demand]
 Half-pound boxes of chocolate pastilles [lots of these]
 Large chocolate biscuits
 Vanilla pastilles *au chocolat* [perhaps chocolate-coated]
Chocolat en tablettes à l'ordinaire [chocolate bars]¹⁷⁵

Sade also wrote frequently to his long-suffering wife requesting chocolate cake, as he did from his prison cell in Vincennes in a letter written 9 May 1779: “I asked ... for a cake with icing, but I want it to be chocolate and black inside from chocolate as the devil’s ass is black from smoke. And the icing is to be the same.”¹⁷⁶ It was during his time in prison that Sade wrote the bulk of his libertine texts, including the infamous *120 Days of Sodom*. Whether this massive collection of sexual and moral deviance is purely a thought experiment, a sexual fantasy, or something else entirely is still debated by scholars. It is unclear whether the actions depicted in his writing are a to-do list for Sade or whether he was simply carrying out

¹⁷⁴ Maurice Lever, 311, as quoted by Coe, 230.

¹⁷⁵ Donatien Alphonse Francois, Marquis de Sade, *Lettres et melanges litteraires* (Paris: Editions Broderie, 1980), 147 as quoted by Coe, 230.

¹⁷⁶ Lever 311, as quoted by Coe 230.

the libertine directive to push the boundary on all moral fronts; either way, it may be significant that chocolate fueled these orgiastic writings.

Juliette, or Vice Amply Rewarded integrates chocolate seamlessly into the idealized libertine lifestyle. Published just at the turn of the century, *Juliette* is a characteristically libertine and Sadean text: the eponymous heroine seduces, tricks, murders, robs, philosophizes, and climaxes her way across Europe and through life. While employed as a sex worker by Madame Duvergier as a young libertine-in-training, Juliette is pimped out of the Archbishop of Lyon, a venerable (old) man and a proper libertine who prizes the ass most highly. This “devout sectator of Sodom” is so anally obsessed that the rest of Juliette’s genitals must be kept hidden during their encounter, lest the sudden appearance of her feminine “anterior charms” disrupt his fantasy.¹⁷⁷ Like most of Sade’s orgy scenes, the libertine directing the tableau has very specific orders for each participant. His demands must be met perfectly in order for the scene to reach a satisfying climax. For the Archbishop, this takes the form of two female asses stacked before him—one to be “colled and nuzzled” and the other to be penetrated—while a third woman flogs the “pontifical behind” with a bundle of switches.¹⁷⁸ After “the discharge that reward[s] us [the participants] for all this trouble,”

¹⁷⁷ Donatien Alphonse Francois, Marquis de Sade, *Juliette*, (1797) 132.

¹⁷⁸ Marquis de Sade, *Juliette*, 133.

the exhausted Archbishop returns to his bed and calls for “his breakfast chocolate” to be brought in to him.¹⁷⁹ In this scene, Sade associates chocolate with the clergy, a familiar connection for his audience. While drinking chocolate for breakfast was common amongst the upper classes, Sade specifically places the consumption of chocolate at the end of this scene of sexual indulgence and gratification rather than at the beginning. This reinforces contemporary accounts of chocolate characterized as a nutritive substance—as a “warming” drink that can be substituted for a meal in a pinch, it is the perfect fuel for the libertine lifestyle. Chocolate, in this particular example, is a aliment enjoyed by those accustomed to luxury in order to regain the sexual energy expended in libertine pursuits.

Sade plays on the cultural connection between chocolate, luxury, and immorality on several occasions in *Juliette*. While the Archbishop of Lyon is a devoted chocolate-drinker, Juliette later encounters another august personage who is more willing to share both pleasure and chocolate with her despite her birth: the King of Sardinia. This instance also reinforces the concept of breakfast chocolate as a means to refresh and refuel the libertines of Juliette’s acquaintance. While traveling across Europe in search of sexual adventure and financial gain, Juliette engages in a mutually satisfying sexual encounter with the King of Sardinia. After both parties have been satisfied, the King “offered [her] half his cup of breakfast chocolate”

¹⁷⁹ Marquis de Sade, *Juliette*, 133.

and the two libertines “chatted of politics” while recovering from their energetic encounter.¹⁸⁰ It may be important to note here that while Juliette is not noble, she gains and maintains access to the libertine lifestyle through her wealth. Interestingly, Juliette is not offered chocolate either before or after her “masculine virginity” is supposedly taken by the Archbishop—rather, she is ignominiously shoved out the door while the Archbishop takes chocolate in bed to recover from the expenditure of his sexual energy. It is only once she has become so rich that she interacts with royalty on an even footing that she partakes of the decadent beverage. It is assumed that one cannot be libertine and poor; luxury and libertinism go hand in hand.

Breakfast chocolate is not, however, universally beneficial in the libertine world Sade created in *Juliette*; it can also be used to commit crimes that delight a libertine soul. The eponymous heroine and her companion Sbrigani are forced to utilize chocolate in a nefarious way in order to escape from the clutches of the ogre-like cannibal Minski. Juliette and Sbrigani decide to drug him with doctored chocolate, and that “after administering the soporific to the ogre while breakfasting with him [and] once we had emptied his coffers we would quit the place forthwith.”¹⁸¹ Everything goes according to plan: “Swallowing the

¹⁸⁰ Marquis de Sade, *Juliette*, 567.

¹⁸¹ Sade, *Juliette*, 609.

chocolate into which we had slipped the stramonium, Minski sank a few minutes later into a torpor so deep that we had no trouble persuading the household that its overlord was dead” and escaping with the better part of his wealth.¹⁸² *120 Days of Sodom* also references chocolate, in the context of a huge feast scene:

First of all there was a soup made with fish stock and twenty dishes of hors-d’oeuvres. These were followed by twenty entrees which in turn gave way to twenty other fine entrees, consisting solely of chicken breasts and game disguised in every possible manner. This was replaced by a course of roast meats that featured everything imaginable that is most rare. After this arrived cold patisserie, which soon yielded to twenty-six sweets of every shape and form. The table was then cleared and what had been removed was replaced by a full spread of cold and hot sugared patisserie. At last the desserts were brought on, comprising a prodigious number of fruits, despite the season, ice-creams, chocolate and liqueurs, the latter to be drunk at the table. As for wines, they were changed at each new course.¹⁸³

The immense mass of food, its rarity, delicacy, variety, and fineness, is repeatedly emphasized. Chocolate in this work reinforces the luxurious style of living, eating, and consuming to which true libertines are accustomed.

In conclusion, generally the culture of eighteenth century France interacted with chocolate in different ways. Moral panic over libertinism and luxury reinforced ideals of domesticity and sought to continue to push women out of public life and into full-time

¹⁸² Sade, *Juliette*, 609.

¹⁸³ François de Sade, *Les 120 journées de Sodome ou l’École du libertinage* (UGE, 1975), vol. i, p. 134, as quoted by Piero Camporesi, *Exotic Brew*, 10.

motherhood. Medical theories of libertinism held both libertinism and its product, the uncontrolled sexuality of women, responsible for the degeneration of the nation. Chocolate used medicinally was considered, if not moral, at least morally neutral. At the same time, the medical community endorsed aphrodisiac and *anti-vénérien* chocolate, which was intimately tied to libertine behaviors. Libertinism and luxury were both linked to female consumption of chocolate, a connection most clearly expressed in the writings of the Marquis de Sade.

CHAPTER 3

Chocolate, Morality, and Gender: Examples in Eighteenth Century French Painting

Health activists envisioned an ideal France that could be built on the moral foundation of virtuous mothers. This ideal France would be characterized by male authority and ordered female sexuality, and could be condensed into a single image: happy mothers teaching moral lessons to their children in the domestic space of the home. However, medical professionals were not the only authorities who believed they had a solution for the moral and physical degeneration of the nation. Cultural and intellectual authorities also contributed to the conversations surrounding chocolate consumption and women's spaces. There was a distinctly masculine and, in many ways, republican anxiety in eighteenth century France that increased exponentially in the years leading up to the 1789 Revolution. Women's presence in the public sphere and activity in political life was often considered detrimental to the health of the nation.

The idealized France envisioned by medical authorities had much in common with the idealized visions presented by eighteenth century French painters. In many cases, artists presented images of women drinking chocolate in domestic, feminine, and private settings. Several of these images show mothers educating their children—and, in a special way, their daughters—on proper taste and morals. Like Julie in Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Heloise*, the

women in these images act as the moral center of the home, a position reinforced by their centrality in each image. While I chose several images that include both men and women, in each work of art the focus of attention is on the female actors rather than the male. However, these visual representations of female chocolate consumption also display in certain cases the luxury, decadence, and sexual liberty that moralists blamed for the degeneration of the French nation. In several paradoxical images, the Happy Mother instructs her daughter in a private, feminine, domestic setting while simultaneously displaying the trappings of class-blurring luxury through dress and furnishings. This visual contradiction exemplifies the complex nature of class divisions in eighteenth century France: bourgeois individuals and families aspired to the social status, political representation, and luxurious lifestyle of the aristocracy while moral and medical authorities (themselves often belonging to the middle class) denounced the decadence and sexual license of the aristocracy.

The paintings I have chosen to discuss in this chapter are visual translations of the arguments of Chapters 1 and 2. The textual primary sources I used in both chapters are reaffirmed in the following paintings in different ways. Here I have endeavored to show the various ways chocolate was imagined and imaged: as nutritive, domestic, and an opportunity for motherly pedagogy; as feminine, luxurious, and blurring the lines of class and social stratification; as erotic, aphrodisiac, and breaking the confines of the domestic sphere. Each

painting I have chosen highlights one or more of these overlapping concepts attached to chocolate. These paintings also highlight some definite distinctions in moralities between social classes in France, distinctions which are nevertheless complicated rather than confirmed by the consumption of chocolate. While differences in class morality are not absolute, there are distinctions in how social classes think about morality or see a moral issue. The idea of luxury and libertinism as causes of moral degeneration complicates the “modest luxury” of the bourgeois families in several of these paintings.

While luxury and decadence were being blamed for the degeneration of the nation, those calling for political and tax reform included both progressive nobles and members of the Third Estate, especially those in the legal professions. It was from the Third Estate that many republican revolutionaries came: Danton, Marat, Robespierre, Bailly, Jacques-Louis David, Camille Desmoulins, Choderlos de Laclos, and others. These men can be described as bourgeois, for the most part: working professionals who were neither noble nor peasant, including those who made their living from investments rather than labor. Both Sarah Maza and Lynn Hunt identified a distinctly republican anxiety in the writings and actions of these revolutionary men which feared the inclusion of women in political life and blamed women’s “escape” from the domestic sphere for various social ills. Sarah Maza saw the Ancien Regime as giving women a recognized (though often limited) role in royal and aristocratic

courts: female rulers, relatives, and mistresses all had their place in the old order. This, Maza posited, could be viewed concretely in the court at Versailles, which represented “the male-female world of familial and sexual bonds.”¹⁸⁴ This world with a small, clearly defined space for women, however, was replaced by the “all-male contractual universe of the assemblies”, a republican fraternity with no real place for women and an intense anxiety about women's activity in the public (and especially political) sphere.¹⁸⁵ This fraternal world is in some ways prefigured by the calls of both moral and medical authorities for women to return to the home and regain their proper status as mothers.

Sarah Maza struggles to identify a bourgeois self-consciousness in eighteenth-century France. Rather than an immovable bedrock, Maza characterizes the social order of Old Regime France as “shifting sand” with fluid and often indistinct boundaries.¹⁸⁶ Maza claims that it is difficult or impossible to identify a cohesive and self-identifying bourgeois class in the classical Marxist sense in eighteenth-century France.¹⁸⁷ There was, according to Maza, no rising of the middle class in the latter half of the eighteenth century; rather, the increase in purchasing power and consumption of luxury goods was widespread and affected every

¹⁸⁴ Sarah Maza, “The Diamond Necklace Affair Revisited (1785-1786): The Case of the Missing Queen,” in *Marie-Antoinette: Writings on the Body of a Queen*, ed. Dena Goodman (New York: Routledge, 2003), 64.

¹⁸⁵ Maza, “The Diamond Necklace Affair,” 64.

¹⁸⁶ Sarah Maza, *The Myth of the French Bourgeoisie: An Essay on the Social Imaginary, 1750-1850* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 41.

¹⁸⁷ Maza, *The Myth of the French Bourgeoisie*, 52.

socioeconomic group in France, although it was most obviously concentrated in the cities. This widespread increase in the consumption of luxury goods contributed to the shifting or blurred lines that separated classes and social groups.¹⁸⁸ However, the very fluidity of social categories that makes this identification so difficult seems to me the perfect indicator of possible bourgeois anxiety about women's place.

While Maza makes a compelling case for the cautious removal of the word "bourgeois" from studies of eighteenth-century France, there are moments where her argument falls short. The category of bourgeois can still be useful even if it is ahistorical or imposed by historians, as opposed to the self-identification of a person or distinct social class. Maza's claim is not so much that the bourgeoisie did not exist, but that there was no sense of self-identification. Rather than carve out a social space for "the middle class," she claims that republican identity focused more on the unity of the Third Estate as a whole—doctors, lawyers, merchants, artisans, and peasants all equal in terms of rights and privileges and all unified in brotherhood.¹⁸⁹ While this may be true, *bourgeois* still existed at the time as a label and was used to refer to individuals and groups—even if it was increasingly used, as Maza claims, as an insult. Maza herself includes examples of individuals referring to

¹⁸⁸ Maza, *The Myth of the French Bourgeoisie*, 55.

¹⁸⁹ Maza, *The Myth of the French Bourgeoisie*, 74-75.

themselves as bourgeois or as representing a group of bourgeois. It is useful here to examine the voting laws put into place by the revolutionary governments. While Maza claims the language of the Revolution was anti-bourgeois, the fact remains that voting rights were based on the ownership of property; the language of the Revolution judged privilege more harshly than class.

It could be argued that identifying either a bourgeois morality or a bourgeois anxiety is both impossible and useless. If Sarah Maza is right, the word should be stricken from this thesis entirely. However, I defend my use of the term bourgeois in referring to a sensibility, a morality, and an anxiety shared by a number of people—even if those people might not have seen themselves as a cohesive social group or claimed to have a class identity. The men and women to which I am referring have certain characteristics in common. In general, they were aspirational: they aspired to the wealth, social status, and power of the aristocracy. These aspirations were displayed in their choices of dress, manners, and style of living and eating. They were, if not wealthy, at least comfortable: they could afford luxury goods like chocolate as well as elegant furnishings and art for their homes. Most importantly, they were invested in pushing women out of public life and into the domestic sphere. For the purposes of this thesis, I use the familiar shorthand of “bourgeois” in order to describe this aspirational and anxious group.

This chapter explores the ways in which chocolate complicated class identities rather than cementing them. Chocolate consumption was not explicitly connected to one particular class; it was, however, often associated with a certain kind of lifestyle. The consumption of breakfast chocolate provided a different experience than drinking coffee or tea. Unlike the coffee widely embraced by all classes in Paris from the Queen all the way down to the “shopgirl, cook, and chambermaid”, which provided the energy for a long day of hard work, breakfast chocolate signified a shift from one kind of leisure to another.¹⁹⁰ Le Grand d’Aussy, an antiquarian and historian who published his *Histoire de La Vie Privée des Français* in 1782, noted that coffee consumption took some time to catch on in France, but after 1750 “even the lowest classes”—in Paris at least—had developed a taste for the caffeinated breakfast beverage.¹⁹¹ In comparison, chocolate was most popular with the upper classes. It is likely that cafe au lait, which did not require costly spices or sugar to make it drinkable, was a cheaper breakfast than chocolate for those Parisians who needed an energy boost to begin their busy mornings. However, it is also possible that, in addition to the economic factor, chocolate’s association with luxury and leisure were causes for its rejection by the working classes of Paris. The middle class, that great hodge-podge of people hovering

¹⁹⁰ Le Grand d’Aussy, *Histoire de La Vie Privée des Français*, Volume III, Paris, 1782, p. 125, as quoted by Jim Chevallier, “Breakfast in the Eighteenth Century: The Unexamined Meal,” 2003.

¹⁹¹ Le Grand d’Aussy, p. 125.

somewhere between the aristocracy and the working poor, were also uncomfortably in the middle of debates about morality and luxury. Chocolate consumption could signify the luxury and leisure of the upper class, inspiring envy; it could also signify the moral decay of that class, prompting both guilt for aspiring to the lifestyle of the aristocracy and feelings of disdain for holding moral superiority over the aristocracy.

Chocolate has been both exalted and villainized, used as medicine or to conceal poison, considered both an unhealthy inflamer of the passions and as a nutritive drink for invalids. While the morality of chocolate was far from the central question of French cultural, medical, and philosophical thought during the eighteenth century, the answers to this question reflect deeper truths about class identity and gender roles in a rapidly-changing French intellectual and social landscape. Chocolate was a commodity with ties to imperialism and global trade; its consumption was linked to health, luxury, royalty, sexuality, and the loss of inhibitions. Over the course of the eighteenth century, the elitist nature of chocolate was challenged and complicated by libertine excess and bourgeois and republican moralities. Chocolate was also in some ways a gendered commodity. In this chapter, I argue that chocolate was increasingly characterized as a feminine and private drink, in some ways utilized by a bourgeois class to both keep bourgeois women restricted from public political life and to enforce a new code of morality that emphasized the importance of privacy and the

family.

The political writings of educated men in eighteenth century France betray an increasing concern over the feminization of the public sphere. This concern plays out in diverse arenas: through the visual culture of political pornography, through pamphlet literature, through political philosophy, and through revolutionary and republican actions. Philosophers concerned about the moral state of France often laid the blame at the feet of women, either through their excoriations of the feminized or effeminate monarchy and aristocracy or through identifying particular women whose public or private actions were harmful to the life of the country. It is possible to discern this concern in the visual culture of eighteenth century France as well as the literary culture. One clear example is the depictions of women in political cartoons in the period leading up to and through the French Revolution, especially from 1780 to 1800. The female body is a stand-in for female vice in the public sphere, a shorthand that coalesces most obviously in depictions of Marie Antoinette. Dena Goodman, Chantal Thomas, Lynn Hunt, Joan Landes, and Sarah Maza have all written extensively on the body of Marie Antoinette in the political pornography of eighteenth century France.¹⁹² Through imagined visual representations of her female body, both her

¹⁹² Dena Goodman, ed., *Marie-Antoinette : Writings on the Body of a Queen* (New York: Routledge), 2003. Lynn Hunt, *Eroticism and the Body Politic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), 1991. Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 1992. Joan B.

feminine vices (“uterine furors,” uncontrollable lust, and excessive spending on luxurious gowns and jewels) and her unfeminine vices (attempting to influence politics and engaging in sexual encounters in women) were conveyed to a credulous public. The veracity of these accusations was irrelevant; the invented image became proof of Marie Antoinette’s crimes against France. However, this pornographic pamphlet literature is not the only, nor even the most important, visual representation of female bodies in eighteenth century France. The art of the Rococo was peopled with female bodies, including portraits of particular women or families drinking chocolate, paintings female servants preparing chocolate, and etchings or engravings of women consuming chocolate in a sexual or romantic context. I believe it is also possible to discern another cultural shift in eighteenth century France: despite habits of male chocolate consumption, chocolate was increasingly associated with women and the domestic sphere.

It is crucial to remember that in eighteenth century France certain values are attached to chocolate, not the other way around. While chocolate may have come to be considered an immoral, feminine, and elitist drink unfit for citizens of the Republic, women and elites were not necessarily wedded to the consumption of chocolate. The repetitive imagery surrounding

Landes, *Visualizing the Nation : Gender, Representation, and Revolution in Eighteenth-century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), 2001. Chantal Thomas, *The Wicked Queen : the Origins of the Myth of Marie-Antoinette* (New York: Zone Books), 1999.

women and chocolate in eighteenth century French art gives a glimpse into the lives of certain social groups of women: the female servants who prepare and serve the chocolate, the fashionable women of leisure who consume it at their dressing tables or while lounging in their boudoir, the well-to-do mothers who drink chocolate with their daughters, the bourgeois family drinking chocolate in comfortable domestic scenes, the aristocratic families who drink chocolate together at formal breakfast tables. These paintings may not directly be a result of republican concern over women in the public and political sphere. However, they display a distinct consciousness or concern over how women should consume chocolate. The innate moral ambiguity of chocolate, and the possibility that chocolate could induce immoral behavior, especially in women, creates a tension that is visible in depictions of women consuming chocolate. In the following works of art, chocolate is usually depicted as a luxury commodity, one that is best suited to a private, domestic, and above all feminine sphere.

I. The Creation of Public and Private Spheres and the Place of Women: A Historiographical Approach

In his introduction to *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, Jürgen Habermas pointed out that feminist historians and social theorists had “identified institutional divisions between the public and the private as a thread running through the history of the subordination of women.” Furthermore,

Habermas claimed that his work offered important insight into what he called the “sociostructural transformation” of this division between public and private.¹⁹³ While this division has been repeated again and again in the work of various historians writing on women in political culture, others have challenged and modified Habermas’ insights. For example, some have argued that it is necessary to be aware of what social groups are affected by (or are effecting) these supposed institutional divisions. For peasants in France during the eighteenth century, there was little division between public and private. Both women and men worked in the house and outside the house. Men sold their labor as day workers in the field, and women sold both their labor in the same manner and the fruits of their labor: the eggs, milk, and cheese from their livestock and small handicrafts.¹⁹⁴ Artisans, too, made little distinction between public and private spheres. Artisan women of Paris were an inextricable part of public life, selling their wares on the streets and interacting both with men and with other women in the pursuit of their daily bread.¹⁹⁵ There was also a marked transience to artisan households, and the requirements of neighborliness despite—or because of—this transience blurred the distinction between public and private spheres even further. Even the

¹⁹³ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1991), 2.

¹⁹⁴ Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2008.

¹⁹⁵ Janine M. Lanza, “Women and Work,” *The Ashgate Research Companion to Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (ebook, Taylor and Francis) 2013.

most prestigious social group in France, the Bourbon royal family, lived with porous and unclear boundaries between private and public spheres. Certain moments of daily life at Versailles were accessible to the public; the whole world could watch Marie Antoinette put on her morning rouge or see Louis XVI as he was ceremoniously dressed by favored courtiers.

The groups most concerned about the division between private and public spheres—and women’s role in these spheres—were those who believed women’s involvement in public life had contributed to the moral degeneration of the nation. Many of these were political theorists who later would work to limit women’s participation in the political life of the Republic. Does their concern about women in politics stem from their preoccupation with dividing society in public and private spheres and assigning dominion in each sphere to different genders? In what ways did these artificial divisions work to the benefit of the haute bourgeoisie? Joan B. Landes has explored such questions by focusing on representations of the female body in protorevolutionary and revolutionary visual culture. In eighteenth-century French political culture, she argues, female eroticism blurred the lines between public and private.¹⁹⁶ Landes presents Marie Antoinette in particular as a threat to the future Republic

¹⁹⁶ Joan B. Landes, *Visualizing the Nation: Gender, Representation, and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 5. There is also the fact of salon culture in 17th and 18th century France and the effects of female eroticism in that context on the political landscape of the court.

because the queen blurred these lines between public and private spheres: the femininity she embodied and represented was incompatible (in the republican mindset) with a virtuous public sphere. Marie Antoinette's private pleasure-garden at the Trianon, her innovative fashion choices, and her possible involvement in political decisions were all indicators of immoral female eroticism operating in both spheres and obscuring the boundaries of public and private. Here it may be important to remember that Marie Antoinette drank chocolate almost every morning for breakfast, presenting the ultimate example of an aristocratic woman publicly consuming chocolate.¹⁹⁷ Here, too, she blurred the lines between public and private: chocolate was considered an inflamer of the passions, allegedly served by Louis XV to the frigid Madame de Pompadour and by Madame du Barry to lovers who lacked her stamina.¹⁹⁸ It was a popular breakfast item throughout Europe in the eighteenth century, but breakfast was a private affair; it was only the royal family at Versailles whose daily routines were open to the public in such a particular manner. The paradoxical status of chocolate as both aphrodisiac and health food is continued in eighteenth century French paintings of men and women consuming chocolate.

In the paintings I have chosen, physical spaces as well as commodities are gendered.

¹⁹⁷ Marie Antoinette's morning rituals, like those of the King, were open to the public in varying degrees. Her predilection for chocolate is documented in the memoirs of Madame Campan, her reader.

¹⁹⁸ The rumor of chocolate in some cases takes on a life of its own. The myth of aphrodisiac chocolate producing uncontrollable orgies is later repeated in accusations against the Marquis de Sade.

The contrast between works of art depicting men drinking coffee and women drinking chocolate is marked, and serves to reinforce the bourgeois conception of separate spheres for men and women.¹⁹⁹ Rococo art depicting women's consumption of chocolate can be understood as a masculine effort to create and define a private sphere populated by women. The deliberate choices made by each painter reinforce or help to create societal expectations for women. The female form as depicted served in some ways as a model for female viewers on how to safely consume chocolate.

While these works of art may represent specific scenes in the lives of eighteenth century French women, they are also confined and limited in their subject matter. These paintings situate chocolate within a specific setting; the social and economic class of most of the subjects is not explicitly given, but most of the images seem to portray comfortable, rather than struggling or ostentatious, households. Overwhelmingly, the persons depicted consuming chocolate are women. The only time men consume chocolate in these paintings is at the family breakfast table, in a domestic setting firmly situated within the feminine private sphere. This is a marked contrast with the depictions of similar commodities like coffee and tea. Does this mean that men did not consume chocolate? Of course not! We have records of

¹⁹⁹ Men drank coffee in public, especially in coffeehouses, which were places of political debate and philosophical conversation. There were particular intellectual and republican concepts attached to coffee and to the physical spaces of coffeehouses, especially in Paris.

eighteenth century French men who were devoted consumers of chocolate. A few could even be categorized as chocoholics, such as the Marquis de Sade, who sent his wife a list of the various kinds of chocolate he required while imprisoned for his libertine activities.²⁰⁰ However, the fact that so few works of art contain images of men consuming chocolate without women seems indicative of a cultural gendering of chocolate.

II. The Drink of Kings: Luxury and Modest Consumption

Possibly the most famous depiction of chocolate consumption in eighteenth century France is the portrait of the family of the duc de Penthièvre, also called “The Cup of Chocolate” (Figure 1). Chocolate in this painting is a signifier of wealth and fashionable elegance. When Europeans first encountered chocolate in Central and South America, it was considered a beverage of elites. The Mexica ruler of Tenochtitlan, Moctezuma, drank chocolate every day. It was considered a food fit for the gods and for royalty. This prestigious association was still attached to chocolate across the Atlantic.²⁰¹ In the late 1680s, chocolate was consumed in public along with other sweet beverages. Nikita Harwich points to a comedy of Dancourt, *Arlequin, lingère du Palais*, in 1682 which includes a scene of a *limonadier* crying his wares in public: biscuits, lemonade, macarons, coffee, and chocolate à

²⁰⁰ Donatien Alphonse Francois, Marquis de Sade, *Lettres et melanges litteraires* (Paris: Editions Broderie, 1980), 147 as quoted by Coe, 230.

²⁰¹ Coe, *The True History of Chocolate*, passim.

la glace.²⁰² In the same year, *Le Mercure Galant* signaled that chocolate would be among beverages served during receptions held three times a week at Versailles.²⁰³ By the second half of the eighteenth century, chocolate had earned its reputation as a luxury good mainly consumed by the aristocratic class and those who aspired to their style of life. This particular painting has several ties to the royal Bourbon family of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. First, the daughter-in-law of the duc de Penthièvre was the Princesse de Lamballe, the dear friend of Marie Antoinette. Marie Antoinette appointed the Princesse de Lamballe Superintendent of the Queen's Household. This position was the highest that the Queen could appoint, and involved caring for the royal children. Another tie to the monarchy is through the artist: Jean-Baptiste Charpentier also painted a portrait of Marie Antoinette. Jean-Baptiste Charpentier, also called Jean-Baptiste le Charpentier or Jean-Baptiste Charpentier le Vieux, was born in Paris to parents from Normandy in 1728 and died in 1806. While few details of Charpentier's life have survived, it is known that he was the official painter of the duc de Penthièvre. He painted *La Tasse de Chocolat* while he was employed as the painter for the duc de Penthièvre and during his period of exhibition at the Academie, from 1762 to 1774.²⁰⁴

²⁰² Nikita Harwich, *Histoire du Chocolat*, 73.

²⁰³ Harwich, 73.

²⁰⁴ "Charpentier, Jean-Baptiste the Elder," Web Gallery of Art, http://www.wga.hu/bio_m/c/charpenj/biograph.html, created by Emil Krén and Daniel Marx, accessed 2/12/2017.

He also exhibited at the Salon de la Correspondance in 1780 and 1785.²⁰⁵

Rather than conveying Charpentier's convictions about the morality of chocolate, the family portrait of the duc de Penthièvre depicts the duc's aesthetic and moral ideals. *La Tasse de Chocolat* is a family portrait celebrating the aristocracy and the Ancien Regime.

Chocolate in this context serves as a status symbol, showing that the family Penthièvre were arbiters of taste. Charpentier's work while employed as the painter for the duc de Penthièvre is firmly situated in aristocratic and wealthy circles. Another tie between chocolate and the monarchy of France is the relationship between the Royal family and the porcelain factory at Sèvres that created chocolate sets for families like the chocolatière and cups depicted in this portrait. The aristocratic family of the duc de Penthièvre does not see luxury as a moral failing, but as the proper expression of their class identity and proximity to the royal household.

The image of the "Reunion de la famille Barre dans son intérieur" provides a contrast to that of the family of the duc de Penthièvre (Figure 2). This family of merchants are solidly middle-class, drinking what appears to be chocolate in an informal and domestic setting. What does this tell us? First, chocolate was a commodity that was not limited to the nobility in France. Chocolate was consumed by middle-class, monied French families. David

²⁰⁵ Web Gallery of Art.

Garrioch uses this painting to show how “moderate consumption—what Denis Diderot called *luxe de commidité*—was necessary for respectability but the excessive luxury (*luxe d’ostentation*) of *les grands* was a sign of moral deterioration.”²⁰⁶ Sarah Maza provides examples of eighteenth-century anxiety over the insidious luxury infecting all social classes, indiscriminately as a disease. An anonymous Montpellier chronicler noted the visual finery of working girls in white stockings and houses crammed with chocolate pots and silver plate while bemoaning the deleterious effects that the desire for luxury had on one’s morals.²⁰⁷ No doubt he would be pleased to note the absence of furbelows and baubles in the attire of the Barre family women; their virtue was undoubtedly safe if they had not yet started selling themselves for ruffles and lace.

Does chocolate bring men back into the private sphere? And is this an acceptable way to be private? For the Duc de Penthièvre and his family, the luxury of chocolate overrules any domestic connotations; drinking chocolate is not about teaching, but about indulging. The image of the Barre family, however, places men firmly in the domestic sphere. Fatherhood and the teaching of taste to the next generation of wealthy bourgeois seems to be an acceptable way for men to interact with chocolate. Rather than chocolate domesticating

²⁰⁶ David Garrioch, *The Making of Revolutionary Paris* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004), 274.

²⁰⁷ Maza, *Myth of the French Bourgeoisie*, 42.

men or leading them to immoral behavior, it could be that in a family setting, men make chocolate masculine and tame its latent immorality rather than become feminized and ruled by their passions. However, the consumption of chocolate by men in these paintings could be a further complication that chocolate places on their identity, especially when taken into consideration alongside the existence of anti-venereal chocolate. The possibility that men could medicate venereal diseases secretly, with a specially-mixed cup of breakfast chocolate, lends a different reading to scenes of domestic bliss. The possible hypocrisy of fathers drinking anti-venereal chocolate—either to continue a surreptitiously immoral lifestyle or to mitigate the effects of past immoral behavior—right under the noses of their loving wives and obedient children emphasizes the ideal, rather than the real, nature of several of these images. It is unlikely that the artists deliberately painted domestic scenes of families drinking chocolate in order to highlight the hypocritical behavior of French fathers. However, armed with the knowledge of other sources detailing the use of anti-venereal chocolate, a modern observer can consider the paintings I have chosen as reinforcement for these sources. The image of the loving family was crucial to regenerate the morals of the nation; however, it was more frequently women, not men, who must mend their behavior in order to bring about this regeneration of health and morals through their return to the domestic sphere and their rededication to the proper upbringing of their children.

III. An Education in Taste: Bourgeois Parents and Children

The conservator Rose-Marie Herda-Mousseaux placed great emphasis on the relationship between parent and child and the domestic sphere in eighteenth-century images of chocolate consumption. Herda-Mousseaux curated a collection of eighteenth-century representations of tea, chocolate, and coffee and the Parisians who consumed them; the pieces from the collection were then published along with relevant scholarly articles in 2015. In artistic representations of chocolate-drinking, Herda-Mousseaux notes a “ritualization of this practice [of consummation] during the meal; the scenes chosen by the artists are essentially related to two meals of the day: the morning breakfast and the snack between dinner [lunch] and supper.”²⁰⁸ Francois Boucher’s “Le Déjeuner” is one example of the former (Figure 3). Some academics believe this is a sort of self-portrait of sorts, an image of the artist’s family at the breakfast table.²⁰⁹ This would situate Boucher firmly in the realm of bourgeois morality. This painting is another example of a domestic scene displaying consumption of chocolate in the private sphere. The family seems well-off; the home has fine furnishings and while their clothes are not ostentatious, they are well-dressed and we can assume that they are comfortably wealthy. Herda-Mousseaux interprets family scenes of

²⁰⁸ Rose-Marie Herda-Mousseaux, *Thé, café ou chocolat? : les boissons exotiques à Paris au XVIIIe siècle* : Musée Cognacq-Jay, 27 mai-27 septembre 2015, 20.

²⁰⁹ Vincent Pomarède and Marie-Claire Le Bourdellès, “Le Déjeuner,” The Louvre, accessed November 7th, 2017, <http://www.louvre.fr/oeuvre-notices/le-dejeuner>.

chocolate-drinking as lifting the veil of privacy from the privileged moments of intimate reunion. There is also a pedagogical element to these paintings; family scenes or those between mother and daughter show how consuming “exotic flavor... takes the form of a rite of passage for children.”²¹⁰ Rather than introducing children to immoral behaviour, bourgeois parents teach their children the proper way to consume chocolate; this directed consumption leads to an ordered formation of taste. To paraphrase Herda-Mousseaux, this type of representation of chocolate consumption underlines the importance accorded to the formation of taste in the children of the haute bourgeoisie.²¹¹ Their education in taste, which extends beyond chocolate to modes of dressing and acting, is an important part of their identity. Their morals are formed alongside their taste; these intimate family scenes highlight the importance of family and privacy in bourgeois morality. This education in taste also reinforces the intended sphere, public or private, for which children of different genders are destined.

Images of mothers and daughters drinking chocolate both represented a pedagogical relationship and acted as a pedagogical tool. Jean-Etienne Liotard painted several works depicting women preparing or consuming chocolate: “La Chocolatiere,” “La Belle

²¹⁰ Herda-Mousseaux 24.

²¹¹ Herda-Mousseaux 24.

Chocolatière,” and “Madame Liotard and her daughter” (Figures 8 and 4).²¹² These paintings focus on two things: the relationship between working-class women preparing and serving chocolate and their wealthy upper class employers drinking it, and the relationship between mother and daughter, teaching the daughter how to be a woman, which includes the drinking of chocolate. In 1743, the Swiss painter Jean-Etienne Liotard was invited to Vienna to paint a portrait of the Empress. Every morning, “une jolie soubrette” would bring a cup of chocolate and a glass of water to his bedroom.²¹³ Liotard painted this pretty young maid, Nandl Baldauf, in the piece titled “La Belle Chocolatière.”²¹⁴ The “anonymous preparers” of chocolate are contrasted with the known and knowable bourgeois women consuming the finished product.²¹⁵ These lower-class women face the same fate as Despina, the poor maid destined to always beat the chocolate to its perfect frothiness yet never allowed to taste its decadent goodness. Jean Chevalier’s “Portrait of an elegant lady and her daughter” is another pedagogical painting (Figure 5). Chocolate in these paintings are depicted as a private female drink: children are not drinking chocolate out in public, but girls are drinking it with their mothers. In this way bourgeois mothers can control the effects of chocolate on the passions

²¹² For the sake of brevity, I have not included “La Chocolatiere” and “La Belle Chocolatiere” in this paper. There are also several other works depicting women consuming chocolate that I simply did not have space to include.

²¹³ Harwich 76.

²¹⁴ Harwich 76.

²¹⁵ Herda-Mousseaux 24

of their daughters. There are no boys in these paintings drinking chocolate. The young girl has elaborate curls and is wearing clothes that mimic her mother's, a commentary on the transition to adulthood. Perhaps at this point a boy drinking chocolate with his mother would be too feminine or inappropriate; very young boys and girls were dressed alike, so this distinction is significant in pointing out the adolescent nature of the daughters in these paintings.

IV. Chocolate in the Boudoir

The innocent sexuality of "The Lover Heard" as well as the explicit sexuality of "La Crainte" both explore chocolate as an aphrodisiac. "The Lover Heard" by Louis Marin Bonnet is also called "The Proposal" (Figure 6). It is unclear whether this proposal is a proposal of marriage or of an illicit sexual encounter. The chocolatiere is on a table where the woman sits, with only one chocolate cup showing; this seems to indicate that the woman either drank chocolate before the lover came, or in his presence but did not offer him a cup. If the woman drank chocolate alone, perhaps it put her in an amorous state, so that she is more receptive to his advances and his proposal. Her poses and facial expression are coy but receptive; she shows a lot of bosom as well as a scandalous peek of ankle. There is also a statue of a woman with a lot of bosom showing in the background, setting the stage for the encounter between the two lovers. The ripe fruits on the table with the chocolate could

indicate that she is sexually ripe, but they also serve as a “memento mori.” In the same way, the clock reminds the two lovers that time is passing and that their youth is not eternal, urging them to seize the moment. In this image, chocolate acts as a social lubricant, easing the interaction and creating intimacy between the primary actors. Chocolate becomes almost a third person in the interaction between the lovers. This is undoubtedly an example of chocolate as aphrodisiac; we know that it was used in this way and there are primary sources that warn against chocolate’s “inflammatory” and arousing qualities. An engraving which continues this theme of chocolate and sex is “La Crainte” by Noel Le Mire (Figure 7).

The *Lover Heard* hints at the physical intimacy that could be compelled by chocolate; *La Crainte* asserts that this promise of intimacy has been fulfilled and shows the aftermath of chocolate’s compelling effects. A young woman lies in a bed with rumpled sheets, her breast exposed and a pot of chocolate on the table. Her bedroom is clearly marked as a feminine domestic space, with fine furnishings; she may be bourgeois, or a member of the dissolute and self-indulgent aristocracy. The rug has an elaborate pattern and the furniture is carved and covered in rich fabric, indicating wealth and comfort. There are two cups on the small table for chocolate but no one else in the room, which gives the viewer the impression that her visitor has recently left. One of the two upholstered chairs is overturned, perhaps by the swift flight of the absent lover. What has caused his sudden departure? The requisite small

dog prances in the corner, an established symbol of male sexuality, its head pointed in the direction of the door. Perhaps chocolate led this otherwise moral woman to commit an indiscretion; perhaps she used chocolate as a tool in the seduction of her unwitting lover, who has vanished in a fit of moral self-recrimination. Whichever interpretation is correct, in the context of this engraving chocolate is presented as explicitly sexual and immoral, having a particular effect on women.

V: Libertine Women and Chocolate

The “Portrait of Mademoiselle de Charolais dressed as a Franciscan Friar” illustrates certain aspects of libertine morality and how they are connected to chocolate (Figure 9). Initially, the most striking element of this portrait is Mademoiselle de Charolais’ vestment: she is attired as a Franciscan friar in rough brown cloth. Despite her ascetic clothing, Mademoiselle de Charolais is rosy-cheeked and bright-eyed with flowers in her hair and pearls around her neck. Melizza Percival identifies this as a sort of visual satire, contrasting the rough clothing of a lowly friar with the decadence and opulence of the French court: “the purported simplicity of her attire contrasts with the self-conscious artifice of the French court.”²¹⁶ The tradition of cross-dressing for erotic and sacrilegious purposes is well

²¹⁶ Melizza Percival, “Portraits of mademoiselle de charolais as a franciscan friar: Gender, religion and Cross-Dressing” *Art History* 37 (5) 2014, 893.

established in libertine literature. Cross-dressing, especially in religious vestments, also correlates to the iconoclastic ideology of libertinism. Mademoiselle de Charolais' deliberate choice of vestment can also be understood in the context of the origins of libertinism: the religious libertines of the 17th century who sought a moral code not controlled by the Catholic Church.

Chocolate functions as part of the scene, indicating several possibilities. The cup of chocolate on Mademoiselle de Charolais' writing table could be intended as a light-hearted or satirical poke at the Franciscans' purportedly austere lives, hinting at the possibility of clerical hypocrisy, or it could refer to the Church's complicated relationship with chocolate.²¹⁷ Chocolate also serves as a reminder of Mademoiselle de Charolais' scandalous or immoral connections to Louis XV: she served as a procuress of young women for the king's pleasure. The inclusion of chocolate in this painting makes sense for several reasons. First, just as in the family portrait of the Duc de Penthievre, chocolate in this painting serves

²¹⁷ When chocolate was first introduced to Catholic European consumers, there was a question of whether or not consuming chocolate broke the pre-Communion fast required by canon law. This was the first recorded instance of chocolate's moral character or the morality of chocolate being formally debated in print. See Caro Davila, Manuel, *Discurso fisico, y moral sobre la question theologica, que pregunta: si el chocolate quebranta el ayuno*, Granada: Antonio de Torrubia, 1699 and Pinelo, Antonio de Leon, *Question moral: si el chocolate quebranta el ayuno eclesiastico: tratase de otras bebidas i confecciones que usan en varias provincias*, por la viuda de Iuan Gonzalez, 1636. The Jesuit order was also famously addicted to chocolate; see Piero Camporesi, *Exotic Brew*, for more on this subject.

as a shorthand for wealth and luxury. The cup of chocolate functions as a status symbol and a reminder that while Mademoiselle de Charolais may be attired in the clothing of a friar, she has taken no vow of poverty to eschew worldly luxuries. Chocolate also reminds the viewer of sex in the context of aphrodisiac chocolate in direct opposition to the traditional vow of chastity. Chocolate's connection with sexual activity also shows Mademoiselle de Charolais' contempt for the vow of obedience, both as professed by the Franciscan friars and as demanded of women by the patriarchal structure of Ancien Régime France. While aristocratic women had certain freedoms, they still lived with the implicit understanding that their lives were ultimately ruled by men; this painting shows a distinctly libertine contempt for the systems that kept even aristocratic women from achieving complete parity with men. This portrait of Mademoiselle de Charolais is also significant for its connection to that most-famous libertine of them all, the Marquis de Sade. Mademoiselle de Charolais was his father's lover; Sade kept a miniature of this painting in his room.

VI: Conclusion

How can we understand Rococo paintings of women drinking chocolate in the context of the active roles of women during the French Revolution and the following gradual exclusion of women from political life? What do these paintings tell us about the moral expectations for bourgeois women? Chocolate is depicted as an inflamer of passions, capable

of leading women into sexually promiscuous and immoral behavior. These depictions of women consuming chocolate can be understood as an attempt to regulate the consumption of chocolate, to strengthen the division between public and private spheres, and to keep bourgeois women—and their consumption of chocolate—confined to the domestic spaces of the private sphere.

CONCLUSION

When I began asking questions about conceptions of the morality of consuming chocolate in eighteenth century France, I soon realized that I was bumping into more serious and broad questions about women, the public sphere, and morality in general. Greater minds than mine have investigated these larger questions; while I do not know if I have contributed anything revolutionary to the conversation, I do see my work as intersecting with, or at least operating in the same theater as, these broad topics in some ways. For example, moral anxiety about women's consumption of chocolate in eighteenth century France operated in conjunction with republican anxiety about women in the public sphere and political life.

The public activity of women, both bourgeois and aristocratic, in salons and the publishing world was one source of republican anxiety. The female body, both real and imagined, of Marie Antoinette was another symbol of aristocratic oppression and feminine meddling against which bourgeois republicans fought. The ways in which women were public before, during, and after the French Revolution have been investigated by respected historians such as Joan Landes, Lynn Hunt, and Sarah Maza to name just a few. Efforts to contain women to the private sphere were not limited to moral and medical pronouncements or prescriptive paintings; they continued throughout the Revolution, through actions like the closing of women's political clubs.

Moral anxiety about the consumption of chocolate was also linked to concerns about luxury, even beyond the subtext of “luxury” as a stand-in for chocolate. The relationship between the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie was a complicated one. While bourgeois could feel morally superior to indolent and indiscrete aristocrats, they also envied them and imitated them. They filled their homes with fine furnishings and attired themselves and their wives in elegant clothing. At the same time, however, moral crusaders warned of the deleterious effects of decadent living. Both men and women were accused of pursuing luxury and pleasure, but the brunt of the blame—and the responsibility of the cure—was placed on women. Bourgeois women were guilty of neglecting their children in pursuit of a lifestyle far beyond their means. Even without the specter of sexual impropriety, excessive consumption of chocolate was a sign of that most heinous of bourgeois sins: forsaking economy and mismanaging the household.

How can the conundrum of chocolate being used both morally as a medicine and immorally as an aphrodisiac be reconciled? The key to this question lies in who has the authority. Libertines make no claim to moral authority; they rejoice in immoral behavior, breaking taboos, and violating social mores. On the other hand, doctors came to claim moral authority in a new and total way in the second half of the eighteenth century.

Questions about chocolate in eighteenth century France prompt further questions about chocolate's integration into European culture. To what extent did the indigenous cultural significance of chocolate transfer to the European consciousness? Did chocolate's status as a beverage of the elites stem from its status in indigenous cultures, or from the rare, exotic, and expensive nature of chocolate in Europe? These questions are themselves attached to larger questions about colonial and imperial relationships, the relationship between producers and consumers of chocolate, and trans-Atlantic understandings of cultural symbols.

Attempting to understand the gendered moral implications of chocolate consumption in eighteenth century France also helps to frame questions about how we understand, moralize, or gender chocolate today. While I am not claiming that modern society's gendered conception of chocolate consumption or perceptions of chocolate as seductive, "naughty," or immoral are based on the culture of eighteenth century France, I do believe that it is worthwhile to take a closer look at the foundations of our societal conceptions of chocolate.

APPENDIX A

Works of Art



Figure 1: *La Famille du duc de Penthièvre , ou, La Tasse de Chocolat*. Jean-Baptiste Charpentier.



Figure 2: Réunion de la Famille Barre dans son intérieur.



Figure 3: François Boucher, *Le Petit-déjeuner*, 1739, 61.5 x 81.5 cm, oil on canvas,

Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Figure 4: Madame Liotard and her Daughter, Jean-Etienne Liotard. Painted between 1750 and 1780



Figure 5: “Portrait of an Elegant Lady and her Daughter, drinking hot chocolate”, 1755, Jean Chevalier, oil on canvas.



Figure 6: Louis Marin Bonnet, *The Lover Heard*, c. 1785, 26 x 21.2 cm, stipple and wash manner, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City.



Figure 7: Noël Le Mire, *La Crainte*, between 1734-1801, Engraving on paper, 45.2 x 34.2 cm, The Clark Art Institute Museum, Williamstown, MA.



Figure 8: La Belle Chocolatière, Jean-Etienne Liotard. 1745. Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister.



Figure 9: Portrait of Louise-Anne de Bourbon-Condé (1695-1758), Mademoiselle de Charolais. Charles-Joseph Natoire, c. 1730. Château de Versailles. Oil on canvas.

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