

Gluck's *Armide* and the Creation of Supranational Opera

by

Annalise Smith

Bachelor of Music History, University of Calgary, 2008

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

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Christoph Willibald Gluck's opera *Armide* (1777) is an anomaly within the context of his eighteenth-century operatic reform. While all of Gluck's other libretti had been written as an embodiment of the operatic reform, including his Italian works *Orfeo ed Euridice* (1762) and *Alceste* (1767) in addition to the French operas *Iphigénie en Aulide* (1774) and *Iphigénie en Tauride* (1779), *Armide* was based upon the seventeenth-century libretto that Phillipe Quinault had written for Jean-Baptiste Lully, the founder of French *tragédie lyrique*. The use of Quinault's libretto drew a direct comparison not only between Gluck and Lully, but also between Gluck and traditional French opera. Setting *Armide* also required Gluck to incorporate many traditional elements of *tragédie lyrique* absent in the operatic reform, such as divertissement and ballet. *Armide's* departure from the tenets of the reform were so significant that they were criticized by Gluck's French librettist François-Louis Gand LeBland Du Roullet, who found particular fault with the opera's lack of dramatic veracity.

It is the very incongruity of *Armide*—its utilization of an antiquated libretto—that makes it key to understanding Gluck's conception of eighteenth-century opera. *Armide* provides the best opportunity to explore how Gluck amalgamated the traditional forms and styles of French opera with the goals of Viennese operatic reform. Drawing out connections between *tragédie lyrique* and the precepts of his reform, Gluck demonstrated

the composer's role in strengthening and clarifying the reform qualities as expressed by the libretto. Through musical analysis, this thesis demonstrates that *Armide* maintains the musical characteristics and dramatic musical construction of Gluck's earlier reform operas. It also illustrates that while Gluck honoured Lully's conception of *tragédie lyrique*, he did not hesitate to improve what he saw as the faults of the earlier operatic style. Gluck's juxtaposition of the Italian and French operatic traditions in *Armide* elucidates his creation of supranational opera. Superseding and encompassing both the French and Italian national styles, Gluck enlivened the operatic traditions of both countries while remaining true to his own dramatic and musical conception of opera.

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Dedication

For my family, both near and far, old,
young and yet to come, who have made me what I am
and support where I am going.

For my friends, who have shared the laughter,
the tears, the frustrations, and the joys over the years,
and walk with me along the way.

Soli Deo Gloria.

Introduction: The Enigma of *Armide*

Armide is an enigma in the works of Christoph Willibald von Gluck (1714-1787). Of all his operatic successes, Gluck singled out *Armide* as the culmination of his career, stating in a 1776 letter to his French librettist François-Louis Gand LeBland Du Roullet: “I have used all the little power that remains to me to complete *Armide*, and in doing so I have tried to be more painter and poet than musician...I confess I should like to end my career with this opera.”¹ Gluck also conceived of *Armide* as the culmination of his operatic reform. His desire to be both poet and painter was an indication of the import given to text and scenic effects in the opera, as well as his perceived role in creating the entire operatic experience. *Armide* was a successful and controversial opera. Even before its 1777 premiere in Paris, the opera sparked a pamphlet war that rivalled the *Querelle des bouffons* of the mid-century, in which Gluck’s supporters and detractors exchanged heated polemics over the merits of the opera and Gluck’s Italianate musical style. *Armide* was similarly a popular opera at the turn of the twentieth century due to the connections drawn between Gluck’s operatic reform and the music dramas of Richard Wagner. Research on *Armide*, however, has been limited to short articles or passing mentions in monographs dedicated to Gluck’s reform. The most in-depth studies focus on specific comparisons to Lully, in particular the famous monologue “Enfin il est en ma puissance,” without considering the larger aims of the opera.² Study of *Armide* remains eclipsed by not only Gluck’s Italian reform operas, primarily *Orfeo ed Euridice* (1762) and *Alceste* (1767), but also his other French operas, most notably *Iphigénie en Tauride* (1779).

¹ Gluck to Du Roullet, Vienna, summer 1776, in *Année littéraire* 7 (1776): 322–3, quoted in Patricia Howard, *Gluck: An Eighteenth-Century Portrait in Letters and Documents* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 165.

² One such example being G. Buschmeier, “Glucks *Armide*-Monolog, Lully und die ‘philosophes,’” in *Festschrift Klaus Hortschansky zum 60. Geburtstag* (Tutzing: H. Schneider, 1995), 167-180.

Despite this lack of recent scholarship, *Armide* is vital for an understanding of Gluck's conception of French opera and his application of the tenets of Viennese reform opera to a new audience. Gluck's *Armide* used the Philippe Quinault libretto first set to music in 1686 by Jean-Baptiste Lully, the founder of French opera. This work was considered Lully's masterpiece and "the perfect expression of French operatic tradition."³ Yet *Armide* was not Gluck's first experience in French opera. In addition to writing numerous *opéras comiques*, Gluck revised *Orfeo* and *Alceste* for the Parisian stage in the early 1770s. He also composed the French opera *Iphigénie en Aulide* (1774) while still living in Vienna. *Armide*, however, was the first opera Gluck composed with a full knowledge and understanding of the traditional French operatic style and the expectations of the French audience. Scholars such as Jeremy Hayes consider *Armide* to be Gluck's most French work, and in no other opera does Gluck so directly confront Lully and the *tragédie lyrique*, the foundation of all French opera.⁴ *Armide* thus provides the best opportunity to explore how Gluck amalgamated the traditional forms and styles of French opera with the goals of Viennese operatic reform.

This thesis argues that in *Armide* Gluck reconciled the eighteenth-century operatic reform of Italian opera seria with the aesthetics of traditional French opera. Many of these compromises were necessitated by Gluck's use of Quinault's French libretto, which, while bearing some relation to the goals of Gluck's reform, differed from the typical dramatic schema of his earlier operas in both content and aesthetics. Gluck, however, poured his Italianate music—his harmonic language, melodic style, and musical forms—into *Armide*, assuring that the opera fulfilled the goals of his operatic reform

³ Mario Armellini, Jacket notes to Christoph Willibald Gluck, *Armide* (Les Musiciens du Louvre/Marc Minkowski, Archiv Produktion, 459 616-2, 1999), 15.

⁴ Jeremy Hayes, "Armide: Gluck's Most French Opera?" *The Musical Times* 123, no. 1672 (1982): 415.

regardless of differences in content or formal structure. This melding of styles was a deliberate choice on Gluck's part, undertaken with the goal of producing "a music fit for all nations and to do away with the ridiculous differentiation between national music styles."⁵ The exploration of the relationship between Quinault's libretto, the expectations of the French stage, and Gluck's musical operatic style reveal how Gluck, in melding the Italian and French operatic traditions, superseded both in *Armide* to create a "supranational" style.⁶

Gluck's participation in eighteenth-century operatic reform is a well-established and recognized fact. The actual goals of the reform, however, are often much more obscure, reduced to broad generalities that border on cliché. In order to understand how *Armide* embodies the operatic reform, the precepts of the reform must be clearly defined in relation to their manifestation in Gluck's operas. The first chapter of my thesis thus lays out the historical context of the reform, using *Alceste* as a model for Gluck's operatic practices. Particular attention will be given to the French influence on Italian operatic reform, as well as Gluck's experience with French opera before *Armide*, both establishing a context for Gluck's concept of and experience with French opera.

An operatic analysis cannot be strictly musical, but must, as Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker argue, "simultaneously [engage], with equal sophistication, the poetry and the drama."⁷ Keeping in mind Gluck's desire to be the "poet" of *Armide*, the second chapter of my thesis focuses on Quinault's libretto, from which so many of the unique

⁵ Gluck, "Letter to the Editor of the *Mercure de France*," Vienna, 1 February 1773, in François Lesure, ed., *Querelle des Gluckistes et des Piccinnistes: Textes des pamphlets avec introduction, commentaires, et index* (Geneva: Minkoff Reprint, 1984), 8-10, in Howard, *Gluck: An Eighteenth-Century Portrait*, 106-107.

⁶ Donald Jay Grout and Hermine Weigel Williams, *A Short History of Opera*, 4th ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 270.

⁷ Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker, "Introduction: On Analyzing Opera," in *Analyzing Opera: Verdi and Wagner*, ed. by Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 4.

characteristics in *Armide* stem. *Tragédie lyrique* borrowed many characteristics from French classical tragedy, including elements of formal organization, the sources of the plot, and the perceived purpose of the drama to both entertain and teach. However the dramatic content of the libretto, especially the three unities of times, place, and action (*les trois unités*) are more indicative of the nature of French tragedy than these structural elements, and consequently take greater precedence in this analysis. As a *tragédie lyrique*, a genre characterized by its use of scenic effects and spectacle, *Armide* valued the “*merveilleux* more than verisimilitude.”⁸ Requiring the dramatic integration of ballets, divertissements, and special effects, the *merveilleux* had a significant impact on the overall organization of acts and the progression of the drama that are unique to this genre.

The obviously French characteristics of *Armide* do not preclude the presence of reform characteristics in the libretto. Nonetheless, *Armide* differs significantly from Gluck’s previous libretti. In his 1776 critique of *Armide* in *Lettre sur les drames-opéra*, Gluck’s librettist Du Roullet charged that *Armide* lacks dramatic action, introduces “episodic and ineffective characters,” and contains superfluous divertissements, facilitating a discussion of the challenges that Quinault’s libretto created for Gluck and his conception of the reform.⁹ These dramatic criticisms are balanced by my analysis of *Armide*’s formal organization, which bears considerable likeness to Gluck’s previous reform works. In particular, the scene-complex found in Quinault’s libretto, a mixture of solo and choral singing underpinned by continuous orchestral accompaniment, bears a strong relationship to the tableau construction of Gluck’s reform operas. In addition,

⁸ James R. Anthony, *French Baroque Music from Beaujoyeux to Rameau*, rev. and expanded edition (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1997), 96.

⁹ François Gand LeBland Du Roullet, *Lettre sur les drames-opéra* (Amsterdam–Paris 1776, S. 50-53), quoted in Klaus Hortschansky, “Vorwort,” in *Armide*, Vol. 8, *Sämtliche Werke* (Basel and Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1991), X.

Gluck's concern for dramatic realism in his opera resembles the verisimilitude so prized in French classical tragedy.

Gluck's desire to be "painter" does not indicate a desire for the composer to have direct control over the visual aspects of his operas, but an attempt to represent the action and emotion of the drama through the music. Chapters three and four of this thesis therefore focus on the musical content and aesthetic goals of *Armide*. In chapter three, I will first compare *Armide* to Gluck's previous reform operas with the goal of elucidating the continuity of the reform between his Italian and French works. Given the fixed nature of the libretto, I aim to demonstrate how Gluck expressed the reform through musical means. This includes the continuity in the style and placement of arias, airs, and recitative, as well as the continued use of tableaux as the primary scenic construct throughout the opera. In addition to explicating how *Armide* expresses the principles of Gluck's operatic reform, this chapter will also outline the various methods used to reduce the impact of incongruities, especially the prominence of secondary characters, that result from Quinault's libretto.

Chapter four finally compares Gluck's *Armide* to the tradition of *tragédie lyrique*. Gluck claimed that in *Armide* he hoped "not only to express [the opera's] great beauties, but also to improve its faults."¹⁰ Modern scholars such as Carl van Vechten often find Gluck's opera superior to Lully's, judgments frequently made on the comparison of single scenes such as the dramatic monologue "Enfin il est en ma puissance."¹¹ While comparisons of specific scenes in Lully and Gluck's versions of *Armide* form a

¹⁰ Anonymous, "Annonce de l'opéra d'Armide," *Journal de Paris* (24 September 1777), in Gaspar Michel LeBlond, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la révolution opérée dans la musique par M. le chevalier Gluck* (Amsterdam: Antiqua, 1967), 258.

¹¹ Carl van Vechten, "Notes on Gluck's *Armide*," *Musical Quarterly* 3, no. 4 (1917): 545.

component of my analysis, the tonal organization, progression of musical forms, and function of the orchestra are all used to differentiate the approaches of the two composers. This analysis does not attempt to prove the superiority of either version, but to demonstrate in which ways Lully served as a model for Gluck, and in which areas the musical developments of the eighteenth century had the greater influence.

In its coalescing of the Italian and French traditions, *Armide* is far greater than the sum of its parts. Recognizing the elements of the eighteenth-century operatic reform inherent in Quinault's libretto, Gluck engaged the musical prowess he had developed in his earlier operas to create a world whose characters are as powerfully depicted in the music as they are in the text. The reconciliation of these two national styles required concessions from both operatic traditions. Yet through this exchange of dramatic and musical traits, both traditions were revitalized and once again made relevant to the contemporary audience. In the creation of this supranational opera, Gluck preserved the best features of both operatic traditions while remaining true to his own dramatic and musical conception of opera. Gluck rightly regarded *Armide* as the culmination of his career. It is the ultimate goal of this thesis to ensure that *Armide* is finally given the recognition it deserves as one of Gluck's finest works.

Chapter 1: Gluck and the Eighteenth-Century Operatic Reform

Gluck did not initiate the reform of eighteenth-century opera. Nor, it can be argued, was he its most dedicated proponent. His enduring importance in academic literature stems from the manner in which his operas coalesce half a century of musical and dramatic developments into an artistically viable whole, an achievement unsurpassed by any of his contemporaries.¹² Gluck's early works, such as *Orfeo ed Euridice* (1762) and *Alceste* (1767), endure not only for their powerful emotional impact and the beauty of his musical language but also for the historical significance of this achievement. It was in these operas that Gluck first reinvented traditional Italian opera seria, aiming, in his own words, to "strip it completely of all those abuses...which [had] for so long disfigured Italian opera, and turned the most sumptuous and beautiful of all spectacles into the most ridiculous and the most tedious."¹³ This focus on Italian opera, however, eventually burgeoned into a desire to create a supranational opera that would appeal to all nations. This international goal required Gluck to blend the Italian style with that of France. Though French opera did not enjoy the same international reputation as opera seria, *tragédie lyrique* was the only national style throughout Europe that rivalled the distinctiveness and operatic achievements of the Italian tradition, making it the logical

¹² Discussion of eighteenth-century operatic reform focuses almost exclusively on Gluck. Grout and Williams, *A Short History of Opera*, dedicates an entire chapter to the composer and his works. Likewise, in Daniel Hertz, "Gluck and the Operatic Reform," in *Haydn, Mozart, and the Viennese School 1740-1780* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995), 143-234, discussion of the reform is limited almost exclusively to Gluck's contribution to this artistic development. However, several sources do take a broader approach to the subject. Hertz's *From Garrick to Gluck: Essays on Opera in the Age of Enlightenment* (Hillsdale: Pendragon Press, 2004) discusses the impact of both theatrical reform and Traetta on the operatic reform. The collected essays in *Opera and the Enlightenment*, eds. Thomas Bauman and Marita Petzoldt McClymonds (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) do not discuss the reform in great detail, but offer perspectives on the practices and culture of opera in the late eighteenth century that contributed to Gluck's operatic style.

¹³ Christoph Gluck to Archduke Leopold of Tuscany, Vienna, 1769, in *Alceste* (Vienna, 1769), pp. xi-xii, quoted in Howard, *Gluck: An Eighteenth-Century Portrait*, 84.

point of comparison for Italian opera. Beginning with his first Parisian opera *Iphigénie en Aulide* (1774) and reaching full maturity in *Armide* (1777), Gluck's reform aspired to create an operatic form that superseded the national boundaries of both French and Italian opera. In this chapter I will outline the origins of the eighteenth-century operatic reform, explicating the interdependent relationship between French and Italian opera. A background of Gluck's engagement with the operatic reform during his formative years in Vienna will be provided, in addition to a brief discussion of his motivations for composing on the Parisian stage.

The merging of the Italian and French operatic styles was not the original goal of operatic reform in the early eighteenth century. Instead, critics aspired to enact a reform of Italian opera seria. In the century since its creation by the composers of the Florentine Camerata, Italian opera had become increasingly stagnant. The first operas gave primary importance to drama rather than music. In the preface to *Euridice* (1600), for example, Jacopo Peri stated that "one should imitate in song a person speaking...rejecting every other type of song heard up to now."¹⁴ Yet by the early eighteenth century, music had become the primary concern in opera seria for both composers and audience. Composers such as Johann Adolf Hasse (1699-1783) and Leonardo Vinci (1690-1730) wrote operas that "exalted vocal melody above all else."¹⁵ The libretti of Pietro Metastasio, the most prolific librettist of the eighteenth century, were written to suit this ideal, allowing for a succession of arias that gave the singers the chance to demonstrate their vocal beauty and

¹⁴ Jacopo Peri, "Preface to *The Music for Euridice* (1601)," in *Source Readings in Music History*, ed. Leo Treitler, rev. ed. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1998), 659.

¹⁵ Daniel Hertz, "*Traetta in Parma: Ippolito ed Aricia*," in *From Garrick to Gluck*, 272.

agility.¹⁶ Many in the audience went only to hear their favourite singer, ignoring the action that occurred in the recitative.¹⁷ Emulating the “essential cultural condition of the ruling monarch,” opera seria followed a conventional pattern of “formulaic dramaturgy...[with] repetitive scenic progress from recitative to soloist’s arias and exit, [an] immutable three-act format, and the hierarchical distribution of vocal and dramatic parts.”¹⁸ Opera seria remained a popular entertainment throughout Gluck’s lifetime. Hasse’s *Il trionfo di Clelia* premiered in Vienna in 1762, the same year as *Orfeo*, and received over twenty performances. Gluck himself composed three opera seria in the years between *Orfeo* and *Alceste*, including his own version of *Il trionfo di Clelia* that used the same Metastasio libretto as Hasse. Though opera seria became increasingly rare following the late eighteenth-century operatic reform, composers continued to produce the genre into the nineteenth century, with Rossini’s *Semiramide* (1823) as one of the last examples of the genre to appear on the stage.¹⁹

Critiques of opera seria arose in the first decades of the eighteenth century. In 1720, Benedetto Marcello lampooned opera seria in his satire *Il teatro alla moda*, laying the blame equally on the poets, “who will not need to profess any understanding of Italian meter or verse,” and the composers, who will write the opera “with little study and with a

¹⁶ Francesco Cotticelli and Paologiovanni Maione, “Metastasio: the Dramaturgy of Eighteenth-Century Heroic Opera,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Opera*, eds. Anthony R. DelDonna and Pierpaolo Polzonetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 70-72. Though his libretti were the source for many of the perceived problems of opera seria that the operatic reform aimed to eliminate, Metastasio himself was a reformer. His libretti simplified the plots of baroque opera, removing comic subplots and unnecessary spectacle. The basis of his libretti is the protagonist’s choice between personal sacrifice and the greater good.

¹⁷ Grout and Williams, *A Short History of Opera*, 221-22. Numerous eighteenth-century accounts report eating, card games, and general conversation occurring during the recitative of opera seria.

¹⁸ Martha Feldman, “Magic Mirrors and the Seria Stage: Thoughts toward a Ritual View,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 48, no. 3 (1995): 424.

¹⁹ In addition to the musical style and construction of opera seria, Rossini maintained the traditional voice divisions of the genre, substituting a female voice for the castrato that would have normally sung the role of heroic lead.

vast number of errors in order to please the audience, which...enjoys what it hears, even if it is not good, because it has no opportunity of hearing anything better.”²⁰ Though Marcello couched his critique in humour, it succinctly identified the concerns that would surface with increasing insistence by the middle of the century. Francesco Algarotti’s *Saggio sopra l’opera* of 1755, in which the author systematically identified the faults of opera seria, was one of the most influential treatises on operatic reform. Lamenting the lack of dramatic integrity in opera seria, Algarotti called for composers to “predispose the minds of the audience for receiving the impression to be excited by the poet’s verse.”²¹ The primary importance given to the text was matched by Algarotti’s call for numerous musical reforms. Many of Algarotti’s proposals, such as the use of *recitativo accompagnato* and the limitation of virtuosic ornamentation, would later emerge as important components of Gluck’s reform.²²

Though these early calls for reform were aimed at Italian opera seria, the first substantive steps towards operatic reform were taken in France. French opera, much like opera seria, grew increasingly antiquated throughout the eighteenth century. Jean-Baptiste Lully established the *tragédie lyrique* in the late seventeenth century, securing a

²⁰ Benedetto Marcello, “Il teatro alla moda,” in *Source Readings on Music History*, ed. Oliver Strunk (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1950), 519, 527.

²¹ Francesco Algarotti, “From *An Essay on the Opera*,” in *Source Readings in Music History* (1998), 915.

²² *Ibid.*, 916-919. The goals Algarotti presented in his treatise anticipate many of the goals of Gluck and Calzabigi’s reform. In addition to the use of *recitativo accompagnato* to diminish the differences between recitative and arias and the restriction of virtuosity, Algarotti argued for a thematic relationship between the overture and the drama, the removal of ritornelli before arias, and the continued emphasis on the text within the arias, resulting in less repetition and alterations to the text. It is doubtful that Gluck knew Algarotti, who, while living much of his life in Paris, died almost ten years before Gluck arrived in France. Neither does Gluck mention Algarotti’s *Saggio* in his letters. J.G. Prod’homme, however, suggests that Gluck’s French librettist Du Roullet was highly influenced by the ideas presented in Algarotti’s treatise. J. G. Prod’homme, “Gluck’s French Collaborators,” trans. Marguerite Barton, *Musical Quarterly* 3, no. 2 (1917): 249.

privilege that gave him complete control over opera in France.²³ His enormously popular *tragédies lyriques* dominated the stage—and audience expectations—to the middle of the eighteenth century, much to the detriment of Lully’s operatic successors.²⁴ Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764), the most successful French operatic composer after Lully, was highly criticized for introducing more complex harmonies and instrumentation into the *tragédie lyrique*, an addition that many saw as a “capitulation to Italian style... tantamount to musical treason.”²⁵ French opposition to the encroachment of Italian opera, which can be traced back as early as Cardinal Mazarin’s attempt to install an Italian opera company in Paris in the mid-seventeenth century, was as characteristic of French opera as Lully’s *tragédie lyrique*.²⁶

The first collisions between Italian and French opera took place, however, in the less formal arena of the *opéra comique*. Lully had impeded the development of this operatic genre, seeing it as a rival to his *tragédie lyrique*, but it enjoyed a surge of popularity after his death. Much like vaudeville, *opéra comique* integrated relatively simple songs into a spoken drama. *Opéra comique* was free of the government influence that dictated the style and content of *tragédie lyrique*, a freedom that allowed its composers and librettists to introduce and experiment with characteristics of Italian

²³ Joyce Newman, *Jean-Baptiste de Lully and his Tragédies Lyriques* (UMI Research Press, 1979), 47-48. This privilege was originally held by Pierre Perrin. When Perrin ran into financial difficulties, Lully bought the privilege, which granted him not only dictatorial powers over French opera for the length of his own life but also the right to pass the privilege on to his children.

²⁴ David Charlton, “Genre and Form in French Opera,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Opera*, 155. Charlton suggests that Lully’s *tragédie lyrique* remained so prominent on the stage due to their association with the court. It was only as the power of the court began to diminish that the opera began to break from the Lullian tradition.

²⁵ Grout and Williams, *A Short History of Opera*, 198.

²⁶ Norman Demuth, *French Opera: Its Development to the Revolution* (Sussex: The Artemis Press, 1963), 60.

opera.²⁷ This process began with the 1752 revival of Giovanni's Battista Pergolesi's comic intermezzo *La serva padrona*, which sparked a vociferous discussion on the merits of French and Italian opera. Known as the *Querelle des bouffons*, this two-year debate took place in a series of pamphlets that were published, read, and rebutted by both musicians and the educated elite.²⁸ Some of the most active participants in the debate were the Encyclopédistes, a group of enlightenment scholars so named due to their collaborative authorship of the *Encyclopédie*, an expansive dictionary of arts and sciences published between 1751 and 1772. The Encyclopédistes, led by its editor Denis Diderot, were free in their criticisms of French opera. In Diderot's satire *Le neveu de Rameau* (1761-1772), the title character, referring to Lully's *tragédie lyrique* as "plainsong," and to Rameau's operas as "bits of songs [and] disconnected ideas," calls for the integration of the Italian operatic style into the French tradition.²⁹ Composer and theorist Jean-Jacques Rousseau took a stronger stance, advocating the complete acceptance of the Italian operatic tradition without any concessions to traditional French music. Although Rousseau had tried his hand at French opera in 1752, the resulting comedy *Le devin du village* was written in an Italian style. In his seminal "Lettre sur la musique française,"

²⁷ Anthony, *French Baroque Music*, 94-95, 17. All of Quinault's libretti, in addition to being approved by Lully, had to be approved by the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, one of five such academies throughout France that "aimed to systematize the artistic and intellectual life of the regime." Such government control was characteristic of King Louis XIV's absolute monarchy.

²⁸ These pamphlets have been collected in several different volumes, including Denise Launay, ed., *La Querelle des bouffons: texte des pamphlets* (Genève: Minkoff Reprint, 1973) and Louise Eugénie Reichenburg, ed., *Contribution à l'histoire de la "querelle des bouffons": guerre de brochures suscitées par le "Petit prophète" de Grimm et par la "Lettre sur la musique française" de Rousseau...* (Paris: Nizet et Bastard, 1937). Hertz remains one of the foremost English scholars on the *Querelle*, with several essays in *From Garrick to Gluck* discussing the main polemic tracts produced in the debate. One of the most recent studies of the *Querelle* is the collection of essays *La Querelle des bouffons dans la vie culturelle française du dix-huitième siècle*, eds. Andrea Fabiano and Sylvie Bouissou (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 2005).

²⁹ Denis Diderot, *Le neveu de Rameau* (Paris: Editions Sociales, 1972), 92.

Rousseau amplified the perceived deficiencies of French opera that he had first introduced in his articles in the *Encyclopédie* (1748-1749). In the former, he observed:

I think that I have shown that there is neither measure nor melody in French music, because the language is not capable of them; that French singing is continual squalling, insupportable to an unprejudiced ear; that its harmony is crude and devoid of expression and suggests only the padding of a pupil; that French “airs” are not airs; that French recitative is not recitative. From this I conclude that the French have no music and cannot have any; or that if they ever have, it will be so much the worse for them.³⁰

Few formal conclusions were reached in the *Querelle des bouffons*, and in the realm of serious opera the debate had little immediate effect on either the French or Italian style. The inherent oxymoron of the *Querelle* was that the Italian *opera buffa* was compared not with its dramatic equivalent in France, the *opéra comique*, but with serious French opera, the *tragédie lyrique*. This comparison originated in the shared use of sung recitative in both genres, overlooking the far greater dramatic and musical differences between comic and serious opera in France and Italy. The *tragédie lyrique* was unlikely to borrow elements from comic opera, and Italian opera seria was not directly involved in the debate. Only the *opéra comique* immediately benefited from the *Querelle*, the discourse “[leading] a new generation of French composers to create a national comic opera with original music, in which the native popular idiom of the vaudeville was overlaid and enriched by a more refined, varied, and expressive style.”³¹ Nevertheless, the *Querelle* facilitated the reform of serious opera by identifying the strengths of each tradition—the rich melody and orchestral music of the Italian opera, and the dramatic integrity of the French—opening the possibility for the two national styles to benefit one another. While partisans of each national opera persisted past the end of the *Querelle* in

³⁰ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “Letter on French Music (1753),” in *Source Readings in Music History* (1998), 908.

³¹ Grout and Williams, *A Short History of Opera*, 287.

1753, there were some moderates, such as Diderot,³² who advocated for the integration of the French and Italian traditions into a new operatic style that would preserve “the form of the French opera, but [change] the music; to keep the French language, the dramatically integrated choruses and ballet, the literary qualities of the text, the flexible dramatic design, and above all, the dominance of poet and composer rather than singer; and somehow ... reconcile these features...with a modern (that is Italian) musical idiom.”³³

Conversely, attempts to reform Italian opera seria by incorporating elements of French opera began shortly after the *Querelle*. The composers most associated with these early attempts at reform were Niccolò Jommelli (1714-1774) and Tommaso Traetta (1727-1779), both of whom were active in cities highly influenced by France. Looking to the example of French opera, they expanded the role of the chorus, experimented with new styles of aria and recitative, and focused on the relationship between music and drama.³⁴ Working in Stuttgart, Jommelli’s experimentation with the forms of French opera was influenced not only by Duke Karl Eugen’s appreciation for the genre, but also by his collaboration with the French ballet master Jean-Georges Noverre.³⁵ Jommelli’s most notable achievement was the implementation of *recitativo accompagnato* in his operas, though he was limited by his continued use of Metastasian libretti. Traetta enjoyed an international reputation as an operatic composer, despite spending the

³² Daniel Hertz, “Diderot and the Lyric Theatre: “The New Style” proposed by *Le neveu de Rameau*,” in *From Garrick to Gluck*, 250.

³³ Julian Rushton, “From Vienna to Paris: Gluck and the French Opera,” *Chigiana* 9, item 86 (Firenze: L. Olschki, 1975): 284.

³⁴ Patricia Howard, *Gluck and the Birth of Modern Opera* (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1963), 28-31.

³⁵ Grout and Williams, *A Short History of Opera*, 249. Noverre was involved in a widespread operatic reform that took place in the eighteenth century. Like the proponents of opera, Noverre promoted a return to Greek ideals, natural movement, and a focus on drama as opposed to virtuosic movement.

majority of his career in Parma where he had been appointed maestro di capella in 1758. More experimental than Jommelli in the incorporation of French forms into his operas, such as the shorter French style air, Traetta's expression of the operatic reform rivaled that of Gluck.³⁶ Count Giacomo Durazzo, the director of the Viennese theatres, considered Traetta's first Viennese work, the *azione teatrale Armida* (1761), to be a reform opera.³⁷ His second Viennese opera *Ifigenia in Tauride* (1763) equally expressed the tenets of the reform, and is considered by Daniel Hertz to be the first full-length reform opera.³⁸ If Traetta never achieved the same degree of success as Gluck, his conservative librettists rather than a lack of skill or desire on his part may be responsible.³⁹

Vienna, seat of the Hapsburg Empire, also felt the influence of French opera, under the influence of not only artistic but also political goals. Hoping to forge a stronger alliance with France, Prince Kaunitz, the Viennese ambassador to France during the *Querelle des bouffons*, established a French theatre in Vienna in 1752. Under the direction of Durazzo, *opéra comique* became a regular offering in Vienna. While many popular Parisian *opéras comiques* appeared in Vienna, Durazzo also commissioned new works that rivaled the quality and popularity of those in Paris.⁴⁰ Gluck, in fact, was recruited to Vienna in 1754 for the purpose of composing French comic opera. The works of Gluck's early career in Vienna, the majority of which remain completely unknown, are

³⁶ Howard, *Gluck and the Birth of Modern Opera*, 30-31.

³⁷ Hertz, *Haydn, Mozart, and the Viennese School*, 178. Just as it had in *Orfeo*, the brevity of *Armida* emphasized the tenets of the operatic reform. In addition to considering *Armida* a reform opera, Hertz suggests that Durazzo was looking to hire Traetta in Vienna.

³⁸ Daniel Hertz, "Traetta in Vienna: *Armida* and *Iphigenia in Tauride*," in *From Garrick to Gluck*, 308.

³⁹ Howard, *Gluck and the Birth of Modern Opera*, 31.

⁴⁰ Bruce Alan Brown, *Gluck and the French Theatre in Vienna* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 195.

a mixture of French *opéra comique* and traditional Italian opera seria. Though obscure, Gluck's *opéras comiques*, written between 1755 and 1764, are fundamental to his development as a composer of reform opera.⁴¹ It was in *opéra comique*, for example, that Gluck first experimented with the integration of chorus and ballet into his operas. These works also gave Gluck experience in setting the French language, a feature of no small importance for his later Parisian operas. Significantly, the simple airs of the *opéra comique* provided Gluck with a viable alternative to the da capo arias of opera seria. These airs, which feature “a syllabic text setting, a melodic restraint, a freedom of phrase structure, and a close adaptation of music to poetry,” served as a potential model for Gluck's later reforms.⁴² While the style of the simpler *opéra comique* did not transfer directly to Gluck's Italian reform operas, these light works were the training grounds for the development of Gluck's mature operatic style. They left him with a secure knowledge of French opera and offered to the reform “a body of resources, formal procedures, and styles with which to enrich Italian opera.”⁴³

The Beginnings of the Reform

Gluck never showed personal ambition to be a reformer. Much like his involvement in *opéra comique*, Gluck was led to the operatic reform by its proponent Durazzo. Yet it was only with the arrival of Raniero di Calzabigi in 1761 that the creation of reform opera was actively pursued in Vienna. As a participant in the *Querelle des bouffons*, Calzabigi had both knowledge of French opera and the experience as a librettist

⁴¹ Ibid. Brown's monograph is the most comprehensive study of Gluck's early *opéra comique* and the effect they had on his later operatic style. Though *Orfeo ed Euridice* is the only reform work discussed, Brown lays out how the style of *opéra comique* informed Gluck's understanding of French opera and prepared him for the integration of French elements into opera seria.

⁴² Hertz, *Haydn, Mozart, and the Viennese School*, 166.

⁴³ Brown, *Gluck and the French Theatre in Vienna*, 435.

necessary to integrate the dramatic structure of French opera into a libretto in the Italian style. With Calzabigi as catalyst, Durazzo selected Gluck as the composer best suited to participate in the reform.

Orfeo ed Euridice, the first product of this Viennese trifecta, is regarded today as the first embodiment of the eighteenth-century operatic reform. Presented in 1762 for the nameday celebrations of Emperor Francis I, *Orfeo* is, in truth, an *azione teatrale* rather than a complete opera. A genre typically employed as part of a festive celebration, the *azione teatrale* dictated the short length and limited cast size of *Orfeo*. Nevertheless, the work embodies the basic characteristics of the operatic reform. For the first time, an Italian operatic production called for the integration of chorus and ballet, a simplification of the dramatic plot, and above all, a focus on poetry and drama over musical virtuosity. In integrating these elements, Calzabigi fulfilled the *Querelle's* charge that the dramatic structure of French opera should be melded with an Italianate style of music. Calzabigi's major role in the creation of reform opera cannot be downplayed, for the structure of Italian reform opera, from its integration of the chorus to its new style of aria, had to be present in the libretto before it could be incorporated by the composer. Especially at this early stage of the operatic reform, therefore, it seems that "the reform was achieved by the librettist and handed as an accomplished fact to the composer."⁴⁴ Though *Orfeo* remains one of his best-known operas, Gluck's contribution to the initial development of these reform characteristics was comparatively minor.

Five years passed before Gluck followed the success of *Orfeo* with his first full-length reform opera, *Alceste*, in 1767. Following the interim period in which Gluck wrote

⁴⁴ Howard, *Gluck and the Birth of Modern Opera*, 25

primarily traditional opera seria, *Alceste* marks his return to the operatic reform, as proudly asserted in its famous preface which outlined Gluck's reform goals (see appendix). Though connected specifically to *Alceste*, this preface has come to be regarded as a summary not only of Gluck's goals, but also of the wider eighteenth-century Italian reform movement. Heralding "a new scheme for dramatic art [that] substituted florid descriptions, unnecessary similes, and affected, cold moralizing with the language of the heart, strong passions, interesting situations and a constantly varied spectacle," the preface proposed numerous comprehensive operatic revisions without specific details on how they were to be achieved."⁴⁵ The topics range from the function of the orchestra to the relationship between aria and recitative. All of the prescriptives, however, can be encapsulated in two over-arching goals central to an understanding of Gluck's achievement: first, to place words and drama over music; and second, to create a sense of verisimilitude throughout the opera through musical and dramatic continuity.

Gluck's operatic reform sought to reverse the relationship between drama and music that had characterized Italian opera. Whereas the music of opera seria completely dominated the poetry to the extent that the drama played a supporting role in the opera, in the operatic reform the text was again given primary importance. Music was no longer written for its own sake, but was directed towards enhancing the meaning of the poetry. Textual clarity became the foremost concern in both recitative and arias, and a syllabic text setting, as opposed to one that was primarily melismatic, became the norm. In order to achieve this clarity, Gluck reduced the reliance on textual repetitions, reiterating the text in order to create musical structure but limiting himself to the repetition of entire

⁴⁵ Gluck to Archduke Leopold, *Alceste*, in Howard, *Gluck: An Eighteenth-Century Portrait*, 85.

phrases that retained the meaning of the poetry. Gluck also restricted the amount of ornamentation in his operas. Turning away from virtuoso performers of opera seria, he sought out vocalists who “would sing that which the composer has written, and not presume to write a trunkful of notes.”⁴⁶ Ignoring the demands of the singers, the operatic reform fostered a new style of performance in which the drama, and even the singer’s ability to act, outweighed the vocal agility of the performer.

The chief abuses of opera seria occurred in the realm of the aria, and it was here that the greatest refashioning of the relationship between words and music took place. Having eliminated the virtuosic abandon that was the bread and butter of the opera seria aria, the operatic reform needed to develop its own aria style. Due to the lack of any large-scale arias in *Orfeo*, the elimination of da capo arias has mistakenly been viewed as a tenet of the reform. Yet, the preface to *Alceste*, while criticizing the long ritornellos, unbalanced sections, and cadenzas typical of the opera seria da capo, never forbids the form. Neither, however, does the preface explain which types of arias are appropriate to the operatic reform. An examination of Gluck’s oeuvre reveals that the composer changed the function of the aria in his reform works. Large-scale arias, including the da capo but also rondos and through-composed forms, were still used throughout Gluck’s operas. As opposed to opera seria, Gluck’s reform limited arias to the most important dramatic moments in the opera, similar to a monologue in a spoken play. In *Alceste*, for example, Gluck writes the large-scale aria “Non, ce n’est point un sacrifice” when Alceste decides to die for her husband. Likewise, Admete’s central aria in Act two, “Non,

⁴⁶ Calzabigi to Prince Kaunitz, Vienna, 6 March 1767, first published in Vladimir Helfert, ‘Dosud Neznámy dopis Ran. Calsabigiho z r. 1767’, *Musikologie*, I (1938), 155-18, quoted in Howard, *Gluck: An Eighteenth-Century Portrait*, 80. In this same letter, Calzabigi requested that Kaunitz find singers who were able to act, as *Alceste*, the opera in question, approached everything “through the eye of the spectator, and thus through the acting.”

sans toi,” is a dramatic accusation of abandonment against Alceste. These arias are clearly distinguishable from their opera seria counterparts, maintaining textual clarity as their guiding principle.

The significant dramatic weight given to large-scale arias in the operatic reform resulted in a bulk of the musical material being transferred from the aria to recitative. Even in opera seria, recitative had conveyed the action of the opera, as opposed to the reflective nature of the arias. The operatic emphasis on drama produced “the tremendous expansion of recitative in style, flexibility, and usage... [resulting in] the greater realism and dramatic sense of the reform operas.”⁴⁷ Gluck exclusively employed *recitativo accompagnato* in his operas, using the orchestra to comment on and enhance the actions and the text of the characters. Nevertheless, some situations in Gluck’s reform operas “[required] musical comment and that unfolding of emotion for which there [was] no space in the flow of recitative.”⁴⁸ For this, Gluck developed the small aria, or air, a genre influenced by his composition of *opéra comique*.⁴⁹ Utilized to their full potential only in Gluck’s Parisian operas, the airs were based on short texts that dictated their musical brevity. Nevertheless, the airs most often employ recognizable, albeit often miniature, forms. Such brevity allowed the airs to be easily integrated into scenes of recitative without recourse to a large aria, while their clear musical structures both engaged audience interest and made the musical dialogue easily comprehensible. Due to the structure of Quinault’s libretto, airs were particularly prevalent in *Armide*.

⁴⁷ Howard, *Gluck and the Birth of Modern Opera*, 52

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁴⁹ The airs employed in *opéra comique* can be traced back to the seventeenth-century *air de cour*, a French vocal genre that also influenced Lully’s *tragédie lyrique*. In his own *opéra comique*, Gluck appealed to the popularity of this form by including airs that matched the “distinctly vaudevillian allure...in range, melodic design, even form.” Brown, *Gluck and the French Theatre in Vienna*, 208.

The operatic reform's emphasis on verisimilitude made dramatic and musical continuity essential components for Gluck's new vision of opera. Dramatic continuity was contingent first and foremost upon the librettist's ability to write a unified plot that would both progress naturally from one scene to the next and be believable to the audience. The composer's challenge was to ensure that the musical continuity supported this dramatic ideal, music enhancing the flow of the drama while not creating unnecessary delays in the action. In order to achieve this goal, Gluck organized his reform operas as a series of tableaux in which recitatives, arias, choruses, and dances were blended into a unified whole. This construction was made possible by the ubiquitous use of *recitativo accompagnato*, which, replacing the "staccato effect" of alternating arias and secco recitative found in opera seria, facilitated smooth transitions between the various musical forms in an operatic scene.⁵⁰ Gluck also unified his tableaux tonally, utilizing progressions of related keys to both unite scenes and create a sense of momentum throughout the opera. Even the overture was to relate to the drama, serving to "inform the spectators of the subject that is about to be enacted."⁵¹

Though immortalized by its preface, the 1767 Viennese *Alceste* remains one of Gluck's least performed reform operas. It is his French works, including the 1776 revision of *Alceste*, that constitute Gluck's most enduring works. The composer's move to Paris was undoubtedly caused, at least to some extent, by the deteriorating situation for opera in Vienna. In the years following *Alceste*, the climate in the Hapsburg Empire became far less amicable for reform opera and for the arts in general. Following the death

⁵⁰ Frederick Sternfeld, "Expression and Revision in Gluck's *Orfeo* and *Alceste*," in *Essays Presented to Egon Wellesz*, ed. Jack Westrup (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1966), 114.

⁵¹ Gluck to Archduke Leopold, *Alceste*, in Howard, *Gluck: An Eighteenth-Century Portrait*, 85.

of Francis I in 1765, the resources directed towards the Viennese theatres were drastically reduced.⁵² Mozart would later attribute Gluck's move to Paris to the monarchy's lack of appreciation for the composer and his works.⁵³ Seeking a new more appreciative audience, Gluck composed *Iphigénie en Aulide* (1774) as an introductory piece for Paris, hoping to gain a new audience. Supported by Du Roullet, the librettist of his French operas, Gluck continued his operatic reform in Paris. In fact, it was there that Gluck showed the greatest dedication to the reform. While Gluck's operatic endeavours in Vienna had been directed by Durazzo and Calzabigi, he worked independently in Paris, having absolute control over his operas and their libretti. In both his newly composed operas and the revisions to *Orfeo* (1774) and *Alceste* (1776), Gluck gave Du Roullet very specific instructions regarding the dramatic expression of his operas.⁵⁴ The expression of the reform in *Alceste* was dramatically altered when Gluck revised it for the French stage, the composer tightening the drama through the removal of characters and scenes as well as the repositioning of arias to attain the greatest dramatic efficacy.⁵⁵ If Gluck showed some hesitancy or lack of initiative during the early years of the operatic reform in Vienna, he had become its greatest proponent by the time of his transition to Paris.

⁵² Hertz, *Haydn, Mozart and the Viennese School*, 21, 417. Following the death of Francis I, Maria Theresa named her son Joseph II co-regent. The Empress withdrew from the theatres, leaving her son, who considered musicians "a bothersome expense to be dispensed with," in control. Hertz even goes so far as to identify Joseph II as the sole cause for the demise of opera seria in Vienna.

⁵³ Mozart to his father, Vienna, 17 August 1782, in *Mozart Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, vol. 3, 1780-1786, eds. Wilhelm A. Bauer and Otto Erich Deutsch, Complete Edition (Basel and Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1963), 220-221. In this letter, Mozart communicates his displeasure with the Emperor (Joseph II) for not appreciating his talents. He associates Gluck's departure from Vienna with the Emperor's disregard for men of talent, and suggests that he may follow Gluck to Paris, where men of talent are welcomed.

⁵⁴ Gluck to Du Roullet, Vienna, 1 July 1775, Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, Gluck lettres autographes, no. 8. Published in L.R., "Correspondance inédite de Gluck," 3-5, quoted in Howard, *Gluck: An Eighteenth-Century Portrait*, 144-147. In the letter, Gluck criticizes Du Roullet's libretto, going so far as to provide his own denouement of the opera.

⁵⁵ The differences between the two versions of *Alceste* was the subject of my undergraduate thesis, "Gluck and the *Opera Seria* Reform: The Two Versions of *Alceste*" (University of Calgary, 2008).

Gluck was a watershed for eighteenth-century French opera, as Lully had been in the seventeenth. He was the first composer since Lully to achieve widespread success on the operatic stage, with the possible exception of Rameau. His operas, particularly *Armide*, reignited the mid-century operatic debate between French and Italian opera, with Gluck seen as the champion of French opera.⁵⁶ His detractors, who advocated a more overtly Italian style of opera, recruited Niccolò Piccinni (1728-1800) from Italy to be a rival for Gluck in 1776. At the same time, Gluck was criticized by the Lullistes for daring to challenge the supremacy of Lully's *tragédie lyrique*. With additional notoriety provided by the public support of Queen Marie Antoinette, Gluck captured the political and artistic attention of Paris within the span of a year, the success of his first Parisian opera *Iphigénie en Aulide* substantiating his position as the most important and influential composer in France in the late eighteenth century.⁵⁷

Paris, however, was not completely unprepared for the revolutionary works Gluck would bring to the operatic stage. Though slow to develop, attempts at operatic reform were already underway in France. André Danican Philidor (1726-1795), in addition to his prodigious talents in chess, was an operatic composer of some note in the late eighteenth century. His primary genre was the *opéra comique*, an avenue through which he was exposed to Italian opera. Philidor transferred the Italian elements he was developing in

⁵⁶ Howard, *Gluck: An Eighteenth-Century Portrait*, 165. By July 1776, Gluck's reputation as a French composer was so great that several of his French colleagues, including François Joseph Gossec, Joseph Le Gros, Du Roullet, and Henri Larrivée, gave donations to have his bust placed in the Opéra beside Lully and Rameau.

⁵⁷ Many of the pamphlets from the Piccinni-Gluck wars are collected in LeBlond, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la révolution opérée dans la musique par M. le chevalier Gluck*. Julian Rushton remains the most prolific scholar on this controversy, discussing the differences between the two composers in numerous articles such as " 'Iphigénie en Tauride': The Operas of Gluck and Piccinni," *Music and Letters* 53, no. 4 (1972): 411-430; and "The Theory and Practice of Piccinnisme," *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 98 (1971): 31-46.

comic opera to his *tragédie lyrique Ernelinde, la princesse de Norvège*. Written in 1767, the same year as Gluck's original version of *Alceste*, *Ernelinde* incorporated arias and ensembles written in an Italian style to become the first French opera to keep "the French dramatic form while using a modern—Italian—style."⁵⁸ Though Philidor lacked direction from a likeminded librettist and remained overshadowed by the novelty and international reputations of Piccinni and Gluck, *Ernelinde* marks the beginning of operatic reform in France.⁵⁹ The work undoubtedly helped prepare the Parisian audience for the reforms that Gluck would introduce in his own compositions.

Throughout Richard's Strauss' *Capriccio* (1942), with libretto by Stefan Zweig and Joseph Gregor, the poet Olivier and the composer Flamand debate with the Countess Madeleine and her guests the enduring question: Which is superior, words or music? All parties can agree, however, that the operas of Gluck satisfy the demands of both poet and musician. Nearly two hundred years after Gluck's own lifetime, his skilful handling of the relationship between music and text was recognized as a great achievement on the operatic stage.

Countess: With Gluck it is different. He guides out poets, he knows the passions of our hearts and arouses their hidden strengths.

Olivier: Even with him the words are only a stepchild of music.

Flamand: Only with him is Music no longer a servant. As important as the text—they sing together.⁶⁰

Words and music. Composer and librettist. French and Italian. Throughout his work in the operatic reform, Gluck strove to combine these dualities, refashioning himself as the creator of a unique reform that, relying on both French and Italian opera, combined music

⁵⁸ Julian Rushton, "Philidor and the Tragédie Lyrique," *The Musical Times* 117, no. 1603 (1976): 734.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 736.

⁶⁰ Richard Strauss, *Capriccio* (Philharmonia Orchestra/Wolfgang Sawallisch, EMI Records Ltd. 1959), 108-109. Translation by author.

and drama as equals. Yet in order to truly combine the French and Italian operas into a unified whole, Gluck would have to approach the reform from a French perspective, incorporating Italian elements into French opera. For this discussion, we must turn to Gluck's most controversial achievement, *Armide*.

Chapter 2: Quinault's *Armide*: A Reformed Libretto?

Gluck and the choice of *Armide*

Gluck's reconciliation of his Italian operatic reforms with the attributes of French opera presents a paradox. The operatic reforms accomplished in Vienna were inspired by French opera, and incorporated many of its unique characteristics. These French attributes, such as "the dramatically integrated chorus and the ballet, the literary qualities of the text, the flexible dramatic design, and above all, the dominance of poet and composer rather than singer," were essential components of the Viennese operatic reform, more so than any strictly musical developments.⁶¹ In presenting reformed Italian operas on the Parisian stage and incorporating these developments into his French operas, Gluck was attempting to reform the operatic tradition that had inspired his original Viennese reforms. This paradoxical relationship—the reformed reforming the reformer—is nowhere more complex than in *Armide*. Although *Armide* is a reform opera, its use of Philippe Quinault's libretto connects it to the antiquated tradition of *tragédie lyrique*, the dramatic organization and structure of which were foreign to Gluck's previous compositions.

Gluck's projected opera reform would have been impossible without an appropriate libretto, as he observed in the preface to *Alceste*. Though the exact nature of his working relationship with Calzabigi is not completely clear, Gluck actively participated with his French librettist Du Roullet on his Parisian libretti. The author behind *Iphigénie en Tauride* (1779), *Iphigénie en Aulide* (1774), as well as the French versions of *Orfeo* (1774) and *Alceste* (1776), Du Roullet indicated that all of these libretti

⁶¹ Rushton, "From Vienna to Paris," 284.

were written to Gluck's specifications. He commented during the adaptation of Jean Racine's *Iphigénie en Aulide*, for example, that while he would have preferred to stay closer to the original play, he was "working under orders; it was necessary either to submit or to abstain from making known in France a new type of music never before heard there."⁶² Gluck's involvement became even more invasive in the French version of *Alceste*. Rejecting Du Roullet's original denouement, Gluck dictated his own conclusion to the librettist. He further usurped Du Roullet's role as librettist by providing his own text for parts of the libretto.⁶³ Gluck clearly saw the libretto, both its plot and its text, to be well within his purview as a composer of reform opera.

Having taken such an active role in the creation of his other French libretti, the fact that Gluck set Quinault's libretto for *Armide* with almost no change seems incongruous. *Armide* was the only libretto not created or altered to suit Gluck's tastes or to conform to the tenets of the operatic reform. A comparison of Gluck's opera and Quinault's libretto reveals that the composer's only changes to the text were the removal of the prologue and the addition of four telling lines of text at the end of Act three (see p. 32 of this thesis).⁶⁴ Gluck's choice to set *Armide* essentially unaltered was undoubtedly influenced by the popularity of *Armide*. Almost one hundred years after Lully's death, there remained in France "an unspoken taboo on re-setting Quinault's *tragédies lyriques*,...[for] the respect and veneration that still surrounded [Lully's] *tragédies* were such as to discourage any reckless composer from daring to try to present an ultra-famous

⁶² *Iphigénie en Aulide*, libretto (Paris, 1774), quoted in Howard, *Gluck: An Eighteenth-Century Portrait*, 109.

⁶³ Gluck to Du Roullet, Vienna, 1775, quoted in Howard, *Gluck: An Eighteenth-Century Portrait*, 145-147.

⁶⁴ There are also several occasions where Gluck redistributed the text of the libretto: these will be discussed in the following chapters.

subject in a new musical guise.”⁶⁵ After Gluck’s *Armide*, re-settings of Quinault’s libretti would become more common. Piccinni’s first Parisian opera was a resetting of Quinault’s *Roland* (1778), the same libretto that Gluck had at least partially composed before he discovered in 1776 that Piccinni was setting the text.⁶⁶ Earlier attempts to reset Quinault’s libretti, however, had been failures.⁶⁷ That *Armide* achieved such success in a city that still honoured the *tragédie lyrique* of Lully indicates just how widely Gluck was accepted on the Parisian stage.

With an unaltered libretto and the potential for a hostile audience, Gluck’s motivations for writing *Armide* remain ambiguous. Perhaps he wanted to compose another Quinault libretto after his work on *Roland* came to an abrupt end. Alternatively, scholars frequently suggest that *Armide* was a mere ploy on Gluck’s part to promote his operas in Paris. Jeremy Hayes, for example, proposes that *Armide* may have been “a possible concession to French taste.”⁶⁸ Julie Cumming similarly posits that *Armide* was “Gluck’s valiant attempt to appease the quarrelsome French audience.”⁶⁹ His desire for success on the Parisian stage undoubtedly influenced Gluck’s choice of libretti. However, several pieces of evidence contradict such a limited perspective of *Armide*. First, Gluck was quite proud of *Armide*, finding it “very little short of perfection,” and confessing to Du Roulet that he “should like to end [his] career with this opera.”⁷⁰ Were Gluck merely

⁶⁵ Armellini, jacket notes to *Armide*, 15-16.

⁶⁶ The management of the Paris Opéra tried to incite a rivalry between Gluck and Piccinni by offering both the libretto for *Roland*. When Gluck discovered the plot, he burned the music he had written for the work.

⁶⁷ Armellini, jacket notes to *Armide*, 16. In 1767, Jean-Joseph Cassanéa de Mondonville’s resetting of Quinault’s *Thésée* was a complete failure, sparking a revival of Lully’s original *tragédie lyrique*. Jean-Benjamin’s François de la Borde’s *Amadis de Gaule* was better received in 1771, but did not achieve any lasting success.

⁶⁸ Hayes, “Armide: Gluck’s most French opera?” 410.

⁶⁹ Julie Cumming, “Gluck’s Iphigenia Operas: Sources and Strategies,” in *Opera and the Enlightenment*, eds. Thomas Bauman and Marita Petzoldt McClymonds (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 224.

⁷⁰ Gluck to Du Roulet, Vienna, 1776, quoted in Howard, *Gluck: An Eighteenth-Century Portrait*, 165.

placating the French audience, surely he would not have considered this opera the culmination of his career. Second, Gluck had great respect for both Quinault and Lully. Gluck's aim was not to discredit the older composer, but to "preserve in its entirety this masterpiece of...lyric theatre," judging that he "was sufficiently skilled in his art not only to express the great beauties, but also to improve its faults."⁷¹ Gluck reportedly told Le Comte D'Escherny that Lully's operas "were a revelation for him, and that he wanted to conserve the style of Lully and the *tragédie lyrique*."⁷² Modern scholarship echoes this opinion, with scholars such as Aubrey S. Garlington arguing that *Armide* was not a concession but an "hommage à France."⁷³ Third, the story of *Armide* was a familiar operatic topic in the eighteenth century, with a rich performance history beyond Quinault's libretto. Gluck likely saw the Viennese production of the pastiche *Armida placata* in 1750, which borrowed music from numerous Viennese composers, including Hasse, Wagenseil, and Bonno.⁷⁴ He also likely saw the production of Traetta's *Armida* of 1761.⁷⁵ Gluck's pupil Antonio Salieri even wrote his own version of *Armide* in 1771 to a libretto by Marco Coltellini, a project of which Gluck was certainly aware.⁷⁶

Neither Gluck's familiarity with the story of *Armide* nor his respect for Lully and Quinault firmly establish the composer's motivations for choosing this libretto. Nevertheless, when taken together they indicate that Gluck's decision to set *Armide* was

⁷¹ *Annonce de l'opéra d'Armide*, 258.

⁷² Hayes, "Armide: Gluck's most French opera?" 408.

⁷³ Aubrey S. Garlington, Jr. " 'Le Merveilleux' and the Operatic Reform in 18th-Century French Opera," *Musical Quarterly* 49, no. 4 (1963): 493.

⁷⁴ Klaus Hortschansky, "Vorwort," in *Armide*, Vol. 8, *Sämtliche Werke* (Basel and Kassel: Bärenreiter Kassel, 1991): IX. *Armida placata* also incorporated music by L.A. Predieri and G. Abos.

⁷⁵ Ibid. Traetta's *Armida* was organized by Count Durazzo. Giovanni Ambrogio Magliavacca, the librettist of both *Armida placata* and Traetta's *Armida*, was aware of Quinault's *Armide* at the very least by the time he wrote the libretto for Traetta.

⁷⁶ John Rice, *Antonio Salieri and Viennese Opera* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 162-166.

far from arbitrary. Even so, the potential for *Armide* to be considered a reform opera depends upon the dramatic content, structure, and aesthetics of its libretto. Though *Armide* is anachronistic to Gluck and his goals, a close examination of Quinault's libretto reveals that *Armide* anticipates the tenets of the eighteenth-century operatic reform.

Quinault's *Armide*

Armide was the last and arguably the greatest libretto Quinault wrote for Lully. Unlike the majority of Quinault's libretti, which were based on Greek and Roman mythology, the story of *Armide* comes from *La Gerusalemme liberata* (1581) by the Italian poet Torquato Tasso (1544-1595).⁷⁷ Tasso's epic was a source for musicians long before being adapted by Quinault. Giaches de Wert set segments of the text as madrigals as early as 1581, and Monteverdi's famous "Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda" (1638) re-enacts one of the poem's most dramatic scenes. In contrast to its popularity with musicians, *La Gerusalemme liberata* was highly criticized in Tasso's lifetime, not only on the grounds of style, but also for its lack of unified action and verisimilitude, criticisms not unlike those that would be aimed at Quinault's *Armide*.⁷⁸ Tasso addressed these criticisms in his revision of the poem, *La Gerusalemme conquistata* (1593), but the earlier work has remained the authoritative versions of the epic.⁷⁹ Like Quinault's other *tragédie lyrique* libretti, *Armide* focuses on the dual pursuits of glory and love (la gloire

⁷⁷ Buford Norman, *Touched by the Graces: The Libretti of Philippe Quinault in the Context of French Classicism* (Birmingham: Summa Publications, INC, 2001), 329. Norman suggests that Quinault chose the story of *Armide* specifically to appeal to King Louis XIV, who had been losing interest in the *tragédie lyrique*. Quinault's previous two libretti, *Amadis* and *Roland*, were also based on Christian allegory rather than mythology.

⁷⁸ Rensselaer W. Lee, "Observation on the First Illustrations of Tasso's 'Gerusalemme liberata'," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 125, no. 5 (1981): 331.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 332. One of the primary goals of Tasso's revision was eliminate the those scenes "concerned with human love," which included not only part of the relationship between Armide and Renaud, but also the other two females in the epic, Ermenia and Clorinda. In *La Gerusalemme conquistata*, Tasso removed the final scene between Armide and Renaud (not shown in Quinault's opera) in which the pair reconciles over Armide's conversion to Christianity.

et l'amour). *Armide*, however, stands apart in that glory and love are opposing rivals. In this story, love is not a reward for glory as seen in other *tragédie lyrique* such as *Persée*. Instead, love is a distraction that the hero must avoid at all costs, and a force by which a powerful heroine may also be undone.

Armide is, by the conventions of eighteenth-century Paris, an outsider who has stepped outside the boundaries of her expected societal role. She occupies the role of villain in Quinault's libretto as an irresistible sorceress and an enemy of the Christian Knights. Yet Armide's struggles with what she perceives as the weaknesses of her femininity both drive the plot of the opera and engender sympathy from the audience, softening her villainous role. As the audience discovers in Act one, Armide's weakness is love, a hidden, shameful and frightening love for the greatest of the Christian Knights, Renaud. Pressured by her uncle Hidraot to marry, and thus assume the role of a proper woman, Armide swears that only a man who can defeat Renaud is worthy of her love. Armide's deep-seated fears of Renaud are temporarily assuaged by her court's celebration and assurances that Renaud will eventually be defeated. Yet Armide's fear of and admiration for Renaud are justified when news arrives that the knight has single-handedly set all of Armide's captives free. With Armide swearing revenge for this humiliation, the stage is set for a direct confrontation between Armide and her nemesis in Act two.

If Armide personifies the femme fatale, Renaud is the ideal warrior. Banished by his king, he remains loyal to both his moral code and his eternal quest for the pursuit of glory. Completely confident in his abilities to resist Armide's sorcery, he sends his companions back to their crusade. Armide's powers, however, are no trifling matter.

Taking advantage of his complacency, Armide traps Renaud in a soporific enchantment of dancing nymphs and shepherds in the third and fourth scene of the act. Yet as she stands triumphant over his prostrate form, poised to strike, Armide finds herself unable to kill Renaud. Overcome by feelings of love for her mortal enemy, Armide whisks Renaud away to her palace in the desert as the act comes to a close.

Armide's palace provides no oasis. The falsehood and inequality of her relationship with Renaud constantly torments the sorceress throughout the third act. Armide loves Renaud completely and irrevocably. His reciprocal love, however, stems only from her enchantments. Determined to regain both her freedom and her peace of mind, Armide calls on Hate to exorcise her love. Hate happily complies, but Armide's love ultimately proves too strong. She begs Hate to stop, fearfully accepting the warning that this love will lead only to her downfall. It is here, in Act three, scene five, that Gluck makes one change to Quinault's libretto, adding four lines of text that drastically change Armide's character:

Ô Ciel! Quelle horrible menace!
 Je frémis, tout mon sang se glace!
 Amour, puissant amour, viens calmer mon effroi,
 Et prends pitié d'un cœur qui s'abandonne à toi!⁸⁰

No longer her enemy, love is now Armide's mistress. For the first time, Armide accepts her womanly role by allowing herself to be ruled by love rather than her desires for power and control.

Armide's newfound pleasure is to be short-lived. Renaud's companions Ubalde and le Chevalier Danois, armed with magic weapons and armour, make their way past

⁸⁰ Armellini, jacket notes to *Armide*, trans. Lionel Salter, 89.

O heaven! How horrible a threat! I tremble, all my blood freezes! Love, mighty Love, come and calm my terror, and take pity on a heart that commits itself to you!"

Armide's defences to rescue her enthralled captive (Act four). Renaud's appearance on stage at the beginning of Act five, only the second time in the opera the audience has seen the knight, reveals a remarkable transformation: the once self-assured knight has become a besotted, almost petulant lover. When Armide announces her imminent departure to confer with her demonic companions, Renaud accuses her of abandonment, a far cry from the confident and calm manner of his first appearance in Act two. Armide ensures Renaud of her love and departs. Following a short *divertissement* enacted for Renaud's pleasure, Ubalde and le Chevalier Danois arrive, releasing the knight from his enchantments (scene three). Armide returns as quickly as she had left, stunned to find Renaud returned to his normal self. Having wholly given herself over to love, she attempts no sorcery, but begs Renaud to stay with her or at least allow her to follow him. Showing genuine emotion for the first time, Renaud briefly hesitates over Armide's prostrate form. Glory, however, proves stronger than the allure of love. Abandoned by Renaud, Armide has no recourse but to curse the knight, love, and her own weakness before destroying the palace that housed her doomed relationship. Love, just as Hate had predicted, has been her undoing.

While *Armide* presented Gluck with a familiar story, the format of the libretto contrasted significantly with his previous reform libretti. Clarifying these differences necessitates a basic understanding of both Quinault's *tragédie lyrique* libretti and the aesthetics of seventeenth-century French classical tragedy, on which the *tragédie lyrique* was based. *Tragédie lyrique* emerged in the seventeenth century, when French classical tragedy was at its pinnacle. Epitomized by dramatists such as Pierre Corneille (1606-1684) and Jean Racine (1639-1699), French classical tragedy traced its dramatic and

aesthetic goals to Aristotle's *Poetics*.⁸¹ Tragedy, according to Aristotle, was designed primarily as entertainment, since "we contemplate with pleasure when we find [life] represented with perfect realism in images."⁸² Racine similarly believed that "the principal rule [of tragedy] is to please and to move."⁸³ Nevertheless, tragedy was also meant to instruct the audience on proper values. Characters on stage directly showed the audiences the consequences of their actions, good and bad, and dramatists even went so far as to change the plots of historical plays so that they would reflect "contemporary moral values."⁸⁴ This emphasis on morals inevitably resulted in a greater emphasis on the emotions and motivations of the characters than on stage incident. By the time of Racine and Corneille, French classical tragedy had become "a psychological study, [in which] no complicated plot was required for the development of a passion, or a feeling."⁸⁵

French classical tragedy had numerous defining characteristics beyond its psychological focus. Structurally, each drama was divided into five acts of relatively equal length, each of which was further divided into smaller scenes. The subjects were most often historical or mythological, allowing the audience to recognize immediately the characters on stage even if only a small portion of the story was being presented.⁸⁶ Above

⁸¹ Though *Armide* was Gluck's closest tie to seventeenth-century French literature, it was not his first foray into this area. Gluck's first Parisian opera, *Iphigénie en Aulide*, was an adaptation of Racine's play, implying that Gluck had at least some knowledge of the French classical tragedy before *Armide*.

⁸² *Aristotle's Poetics*, trans. James Hutton (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982), 47.

⁸³ C.J. Gossip, *An Introduction to French Classical Tragedy* (London: The MacMillan Press LTD, 1981), 14.

⁸⁴ H.T. Barnwell, *The Tragic Drama of Corneille and Racine: An Old Parallel Revisited* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 35. For example, Greek marriage ceremonies were commonly rewritten to be performed in church, and patricide and forced prostitution are often removed from the dramas. Barnwell does note, however, that these moral cleanups often also serve a dramatic purpose in the context of the play.

⁸⁵ Alcee Fortier, "A Study in the Classic French Drama: Corneille." *Modern Language Notes* 12, no. 7 (1897): 197.

⁸⁶ Gossip, *Introduction to the Classical French Tragedy*, 56. While the use of historical or mythological stories was the most frequent, dramatists could also draw on current events in foreign countries, contemporary prose fiction, and school teachings (particularly from the Jesuits) as sources for their plays.

all, French classical tragedy was characterized by *les trois unités*, the three unities, which required homogeneity of time, action and place within drama. The ultimate goal of *les trois unités* was to create verisimilitude within the drama, so that actions happening on the stage, even if magical or fantastic, would be as realistic as possible. Though potentially abstract, the three unities resulted in highly specific guidelines for drama. The unity of time, for example, limited the drama to a relatively short duration. The most radical theorists called for a drama to occur in “real-time,” representing only the actual length of the stage drama itself. Common practice was more lenient, expanding this time to twenty-four hours.⁸⁷ Such a restrictive time span entailed a dramatic focus on “the last few hours of the dilemma which is facing the protagonists.”⁸⁸ As a result, French classical tragedy is often referred to as “crisis tragedy.” The second unity—that of place—was itself necessitated by the condensed time span of French classical tragedy. With such a short time span, characters had no time to travel. Dramas thus commonly used only one set, and when multiple locations were employed, they were generally within walking distance. In Racine’s *Berénice*, for example, the action takes place in several rooms of the same house. Of particular use in creating both unity of time and place was the *liaison des scènes*. Using this technique, in which at least one character remained on stage between scenes, the dramatist was able to ensure dramatic continuity over the course of the entire act, and potentially the play. Unity of action, while not so precise, was considered the most important, dictating good sense on the part of the

Seventeenth-century authors would also commonly write plays as a reaction to the works of a fellow dramatist.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 87. Both Scaliger and Castevetro believed that the drama should be in real-time. Other scholars, such as Scudéry and Chapelain were more lenient, extended the length of the represented drama to twelve hours. These views also stem back to Aristotle, who stated “Tragedy endeavours to keep as far as possible within a single circuit of the sun, or something near that.” *Aristotle’s Poetics*, 50.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 88.

dramatist to restrict the action to the furtherance of the main dramatic storyline. Subplots and secondary characters could exist, but extraneous action was not permitted.

A comparison with the seventeenth-century English tragedy *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare best illustrates the uniqueness of *les trois unités* to French drama. There is no restriction on time in *Macbeth*, the drama enacting several weeks, if not months. Such a broad time frame allows for a wide variety of locations, ranging from battlefields to *Macbeth's* castle. As opposed to the dramatic continuity of each act in French classical tragedy, each scene in Shakespeare's drama exists as an independent unit. From one scene to the next, there can be dramatic shifts in location and time. The action likewise incorporates greater variety, the serious elements of murder and *Macbeth's* lust for power diffused by scenes of humour. Unlike French classical tragedy, which focuses on the final moments of a story, Shakespeare intended to show the narrative from beginning to end, a complete contrast to the concept of crisis tragedy. While psychological turmoil can still be found in Shakespeare's soliloquies, exterior action takes greater precedence in the overall plot. The "coherence and sense of inevitability" provided by *les trois unités* differentiate French classical tragedy from other contemporary genres, and remain the genre's most defining characteristic.⁸⁹

Known today as Lully's librettist, Quinault first gained prominence in France writing French classical tragedy. Never achieving the fame of Corneille and Racine, Quinault received criticism "not only for the exaggerated *tendresse* with which he portrayed his young lovers, but also for taking too many liberties with his classical sources, for including secondary—and often comic—action, and for interrupting the

⁸⁹ Ibid., 92.

inexorable march toward denouement with divertissements.”⁹⁰ Quinault’s works additionally tended to feature plots in which “love is the supreme good; the hero is the slave of love, and will sacrifice his reputation, his life, or his country to do it; all of the characters, regardless of historical names and setting, are poured into the moulds established by the romances of the drawing-room.”⁹¹ Yet Quinault should not be overlooked as a contributor to the French classical tragedy, specifically for his role in “carrying on, within the scope of his limited abilities, the tradition of simplicity of theme, of emphasis on emotion rather than will and on love rather than on the heroic emotions, of verse which aims at smoothness and sweetness and poetic beauty rather than at impressive rhetoric, and of especial study of the heart of a woman.”⁹² These traits, as well as Quinault’s tendency to stray from *les trois unités*, would manifest themselves in his libretti.

If success eluded Quinault in French classical tragedy, his skills were richly rewarded when he began to write for Lully. From the 1670s onward, Quinault abandoned conventional drama to focus on the *tragédie lyrique*, the genre that he would create in collaboration with Lully. Here, the perceived faults of Quinault’s stage dramas came to full fruition.

Now at last Quinault found his proper vocation. All the qualities, good and bad alike, which had marked his plays—his metrical facility, his conventional saccharine verses, his prettiness of fancy, and the delicate artificiality of his stage world—were entirely appropriate in opera. It is said that his collaboration with

⁹⁰ Buford Norman, “Quinault’s Libretto for *Isis*: New Directions for the *tragédie lyrique*,” in *Lully Studies*, ed. John Hajdu Heyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 60.

⁹¹ Lacy Lockert, *Studies in French-Classical Tragedy* (Nashville: The Vanderbilt University Press, 1958), 254.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 255-56.

Lully was the most satisfactory partnership that has ever existed between a composer and his librettist.⁹³

This partnership was not completely equal. Lully had final approval over Quinault's libretti, and occasionally the poetry had to be written to previously composed music.⁹⁴ Nonetheless, Lully's privilege, which gave him dictatorial powers over all musical dramatic productions in France, ensured that his *tragédie lyrique* became the model for all French opera. Furthermore, Quinault's libretti enjoyed a life of their own apart from Lully's music, and were "judged first and foremost as poetry quite apart from any musical merit."⁹⁵

As the name implies, Quinault conceived of his *tragédie lyrique* as the musical counterpart of French classical tragedy, "a tragedy completely set to music."⁹⁶ Expectedly there are numerous correlations between the two, including "imitation of the passions and catharsis through rather formal stylized means [as well as] order, restraint, verisimilitude, necessity, propriety, and the dominance of the written word."⁹⁷ Though the psychological focus was not as pronounced, *tragédie lyrique* maintained a similar subject matter, using historical and mythological topics. Quinault also maintained the basic structure of the stage play, the five-act organization creating a clear correlation between the two genres.

Nevertheless, the *tragédie lyrique* is not merely French classical tragedy set to music. Losing the moralistic focus of its dramatic counterparts, the *tragédie lyrique* was

⁹³ Ibid., 279.

⁹⁴ Norman, *Touched by the Graces*, 22.

⁹⁵ Anthony, *French Baroque Music*, 95.

⁹⁶ Newman, *Lully and his Tragédies Lyriques*, 1.

⁹⁷ Norman, *Touched by the Graces*, 4.

“designed to please and divert rather than instruct.”⁹⁸ The genre was also renowned for its spectacular effects and dance, the presence of which shows the influence of other dramatic genres. From the machine play, with its spectacular divertissements, *tragédie lyrique* borrowed “the element of the supernatural,” including “miraculous movements through the air of chariots, clouds, gods and goddesses.”⁹⁹ The inclusion of ballet was influenced by the mid-seventeenth-century *ballet de cour*, a genre that established the incorporation of dance into a dramatic framework. Lully himself composed many *ballets de cour* for the French court, utilizing this experience in the creation of *tragédie lyrique*. Finally, the *comédies-ballets* of Lully and Molière were “the most immediate and most important predecessors of the *tragédie lyrique*,” consisting of a combination of dialogue and ballet scenes that allowed Lully to perfect “the art of portraying character and advancing action” that was so critical in his later operas.¹⁰⁰ Though French classical tragedy provided the dramatic themes and organization of the *tragédie lyrique*, the spectacular effects from these genres were equally important.

Borrowing from so many genres, the *tragédie lyrique* developed a unique aesthetic “that conceived of opera as having its own laws independent from tragedy and comedy.”¹⁰¹ Most prominently, it placed much less importance on *les trois unités*, particularly those of time and place. *Tragédies lyriques*, including *Armide*, typically span more than the twenty-four hours prescribed by French classical tragedy, though they do maintain some sense of verisimilitude “in that the incident takes the same amount of time

⁹⁸ Anthony, *French Baroque Music*, 96.

⁹⁹ Newman, *Lully and his Tragédies Lyriques*, 21. The machine play was not so much a specific genre as any dramatic work that gave special emphasis to visual spectacle through scenic effects.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁰¹ Anthony, *French Baroque Music*, 96.

to perform on the stage that it would take in reality.”¹⁰² Thus, while there is an implication that Armide and Renaud live together for some time, all the action on stage occurs in real-time. By contrast, “unity of place is not observed nor is any attempt made to observe it since the spectacular scene changes and variety of settings made this unity unobtainable.”¹⁰³ Ranging from the city of Damascus to Armide’s magical palace in the desert, locations in *Armide* change with every act, a common occurrence in *tragédie lyrique*.

The disregard for *les trois unités* in *tragédie lyrique* derives directly from the incorporation of the *merveilleux*. Incorporating “scenic effects, decoration, ballets, divertissements and *machines*,”¹⁰⁴ the *merveilleux* was so characteristic of French opera that the Abbé Batteaux distinguished between French classical tragedy and *tragédie lyrique* solely on the inherent spectacle of opera.¹⁰⁵ Each act of the *tragédie*, in fact, was built around a divertissement designed to “introduce some form of spectacle, either a ballet involving a large number of singers and dancers or the appearance of a miraculous machine.”¹⁰⁶ These divertissements, while incorporated into the opera as scenes of celebration or the enactment of Armide’s spells, had little bearing on the dramatic action, suspending the plot and allowing a hedonistic exhibition of dance and music that existed purely for the sake of entertainment. Depictions of the marvellous became the sole realm of opera, in which “all spectacular appearances of gods, goddesses, furies, demons, witches, etc, were not only tolerated...but encouraged.”¹⁰⁷ Though omnipresent in

¹⁰² Newman, *Lully and his Tragédies Lyriques*, 1-2.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Alfred Richard Oliver, *The Encyclopedists as Critics of Music* (New York: AMS Press, INC, 1966), 47.

¹⁰⁵ Garlington, “‘Le Merveilleux’ and Operatic Reform,” 485.

¹⁰⁶ Newman, *Lully and his Tragédies Lyriques*, 1.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

tragédie lyrique, the *merveilleux* was not universally lauded. Theorists such as Diderot and Rousseau aimed to remove the *merveilleux* from opera, citing its absence in the classical tragedies on which it was based.¹⁰⁸ Presenting one of the greatest difficulties in modern stagings of Lully's works, the *merveilleux* likewise proves a challenge in interpreting *Armide* as a reform opera.

***Armide* as Reform libretto**

Given Gluck's firm intention to establish his operatic reform style in Paris, *Armide* was an unusual choice. *Armide* deviates from Gluck's previous reform operas, and at times even seems to contradict the tenets of the Viennese reform. Admittedly, some of this disparity is superficial. The majority of Gluck's works have only three acts, though the Viennese reform opera *Paride ed Helena* (1770) was divided into five.¹⁰⁹ Plots based on Christian allegory are also unusual. More commonly, Gluck chose plots from Greek mythology, including his first opera for the French stage, *Iphigénie en Aulide* (1774).¹¹⁰ The characteristic *deus ex machina* is also absent in *Armide*, with a more realistic ending determined by the actions of the main characters.¹¹¹ Supernatural beings are the servants of Armide: they do not determine her fate.

Beyond such ostensible differences, the very nature of *Armide*—its dramatic progression, cast of characters and the presence of the *merveilleux*—creates difficulties in

¹⁰⁸ Garlington, "'Le Merveilleux' and Operatic Reform," 486.

¹⁰⁹ *Paride ed Helena* was something of a failure in Vienna. This was not a result of the five-act structure, however, but of Calzabigi's libretto, which was "in reality a thinly veiled polemic" against Metastasio. See Hertz, *Haydn, Mozart, and the Viennese School*, 232-233.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 176. Gluck's frequent setting of 'Greek' libretti was influenced by the Greek revival movement that was at the center of the operatic reform.

¹¹¹ Garlington, "'Le Merveilleux' and operatic reform," 490. The *deus ex machina* is integral to both *Orfeo* and *Alceste*. However, it was not an integral element in the first version of Gluck's *Iphigénie en Aulide*, the version performed today. Poorly received at its premiere, *Iphigénie en Aulide* was revised in response to include a *deus ex machina* that brings the opera to a close.

viewing the opera as a continuation of Gluck's reform. Having worked with Gluck on three previous operas, Du Roullet was in an ideal position to offer a critique of *Armide* in the context of the operatic reform, which he proposed in considerable detail in his *Lettre sur les drames-opéra*. Written in 1776, Du Roullet's pamphlet, a long awaited response to Rousseau's *Lettre sur la musique française*, outlined the librettist's aims for reform opera: an agreement of music and poetry, the involvement of the chorus, the use of ancient Greek models, and other recognized principles of Gluck's reform. Though much of Du Roullet's pamphlet related to *Iphigénie en Aulide*, Du Roullet discussed Quinault's *Armide* in the context of dramatically appropriate stage action.¹¹²

Armide, for example: examine Armide without hesitation, this work always cited as the masterpiece of opera, because it is written by Quinault. You find the first act of this work without movement or action, uniquely employed at one part of the action for which a scene of thirty verses seems sufficient. There will you find Hidraot, a completely episodic and ineffective character, who has no cause to be introduced, as well as the divertissement that Quinault uses to elongate the act. You are certainly discontent with the first two scenes of the second act, of which the first is fatally cold and is spoiled by four or six verses introduced in the first act, and the second seems to have been made to announce to the audience through Armide and Hidraot that the action is about to start. But many of you will think nothing more ridiculous and misplaced than the arrival of the nymphs and shepherds that Quinault, without reason, makes to sing and dance around the deeply sleeping Renaud, who is not able to hear or see them. It is true that the arrival of Armide compensates for this tedious padding which precedes her. Nothing is better, nothing is more sublime, nothing is more believably tragic than this scene where Renaud sleeps and Armide holds the knife in her hand. Never had dramatic action commenced with such worth, I say never commenced, for as you well see, sir, that the real action, the one produced by this subject, does not begin its effect in this scene. One believes that Quinault was impatient to hurry (his action) with the greatest rapidity; but hence he suspends this, he stops it to produce two acts of deathly cold. The third act, completely episodic and useless, is filled by an allegory, ingenious it is true, but misplaced, both for Armide who was vanquished by love and will not quit Renaud, and for the audience who are impatient to see the two lovers together, and the fourth act, [which] Quinault's supporters do not have the daring to try and justify. Quinault finally takes action in

¹¹² Prod'homme, "Gluck's French Collaborators," 253-254. Shortly after Rousseau's *Lettre*, Du Roullet responded with a short pamphlet that promised a longer response to Rousseau's claims. This promised response did not emerge until 1776, at which point the arguments it raised were essentially moot.

the first scene of act five. All the composition of this act is admirable. It is here, it is in the final morsel that Quinault writes for the theatre and shows himself as a true tragic-lyrical poet, a few verses whose sentiment is perhaps not exactly taken from nature. Quinault in all this act is sublime; but it does not lessen the results of this examination, that the action of this poem, of which the subject fills at the most three acts, is slower and interrupted by two acts containing almost entirely strangers, and that a part of the first and second is again useless and has to be cut out. But Quinault wanted at any price, even his own common sense, for his opera to have five acts, and admitted five divertissements.¹¹³

The specific points of Du Roulet's criticisms will be addressed individually; however, these varied criticisms all stem from what he perceived as a lack of unified, meaningful action in *Armide*. For Du Roulet, Quinault interrupts the drama with unnecessary action, caused by the introduction of superfluous characters or the inclusion of divertissement. While Act five is praised for its continuous action, Du Roulet finds Acts three and four useless due to their focus on allegory and secondary characters. Even Acts one and two contain large portions of what Du Roulet considers unnecessary material. Had Gluck permitted Du Roulet to make revisions to *Armide*, a much shorter, concise work would have surely emerged.

Du Roulet's criticisms, though harsh, identify differences between Quinault's *Armide* and Gluck's reform operas. The large cast size caused immediate problems for Gluck when he first approached the libretto.¹¹⁴ Although reform opera would not maintain the abstemious limitation to *Orfeo*'s three characters, Gluck's subsequent operas would display a penchant for smaller casts, a feature that was accentuated in Gluck's French works. In the 1767 Italian version of *Alceste*, the cast includes Alceste and her husband Admeto, their two children, their confidants Evandro and Ismene, the Herald, the Oracle, the High Priest and Apollo. This cast was further simplified in the 1776

¹¹³ Du Roulet, *Lettre sur les drames-opéra*, quoted in Hortschansky, "Vorwort," in *Armide*, X.

¹¹⁴ Hortschansky, "Vorwort," VIII. Translation by author.

French version with the elimination of Ismene and the children, and substantial reductions in Evandro's role. Regardless of cast size, *Alceste* and *Admeto* dominate both versions of the opera. One of the pair is onstage in almost every scene, while the remaining characters perform dramatically significant but relatively small roles. As the operatic reform aimed to eliminate subplots, reducing the number and importance of secondary characters ensured that the focus of the opera would always remain on the main characters.¹¹⁵

In comparison, the large cast of *Armide* contains an unprecedented fifteen secondary characters. Such a number immediately implies a diffuseness of action. However, the inflated number of roles is enhanced by Quinault's treatment of the characters. Unlike the secondary characters in *Alceste*, those in *Armide* tend to have small dramatic functions yet substantial presence on stage. Naiads, shepherds, and other inessential characters appear in every act, to whom Quinault had given substantial amounts of text, but no real dramatic significance. Most of these characters appear only once. Even seemingly central characters such as Hidraot can be redundant. Hidraot, labelled as "episodic" and "ineffective" by Du Roullet, serves only to emphasize Armide's noble heritage and, through his pressure for her to marry, both the proper role of women in society and her rivalry with and hidden love for Renaud. Furthermore, Hidraot's prominence in the first two acts—going so far as to help Armide enchant Renaud and perhaps suggesting Armide's inability to charm the knight on her own—is incongruous with his disappearance from the rest of the opera. The opera would be just as

¹¹⁵ Like *Iphigénie en Aulide*, *Alceste* was criticized at its French premiere and subsequently altered to win favour with the French public. In its original French version, the ending of *Alceste* employed a simple *deus ex machina*. The character of Hercules was only added in an attempt to gain favour with the French audience in the second version.

effective if Hidraot never appeared. The adventures of Ubalde and le Chevalier Danois diverge even further from the example of Gluck's previous reform operas. Here, the adventures of Renaud's companions as they sneak past Armide's defences occupy the entirety of Act four.¹¹⁶ Neither of the main characters even appear in the act. It is not the large cast in itself that differentiates *Armide* from previous reform operas, however, but Quinault's tendency to dilute the central plot with extraneous characters and events.

In addition to a disproportionate focus on secondary characters, Du Rouillet cites the many divertissements as a hindrance to the action in *Armide*. Feeding the French audience's love of spectacle and ballet, the divertissements introduced the majority of the secondary characters into *Armide*. Their greater disturbance, however, resulted from the cessation of dramatic action that occurred during the majority of Quinault's divertissements. Divertissements were not anathema to Gluck's reform operas. Similar scenes of dance and singing occur in both *Orfeo* and *Alceste*. Given a dramatic function, such as the celebratory scene of Act one that establishes Armide's power or, to a lesser extent, the dance of Hate's followers in Act three, divertissements are not inherently disruptive. On the other hand, the divertissement in Act two completely suspends the action. The nymphs and shepherds dance in order to enchant Renaud: the knight, however, already sleeps. This pastoral divertissement additionally undermines Armide and Hidraot's dramatic invocation of the spirits of hate and rage. The *merveilleux* outside of the divertissement was not so problematic. After all, depictions of deities, demons, and magical events were common in Gluck's reform operas. Yet none of Gluck's previous

¹¹⁶ Van Vechten, "Notes on Gluck's *Armide*," 544. The size of the roles for both Ubalde and the Chevalier Danois creates a problem for casting. Given that the entire act relies on the dramatic and musical ability of these two characters, they must be singers of a high rank, as presenting the act with secondary singers would be "to run the risk of failure."

operas share *Armide's* dependency on visual spectacle. Common in all French opera, the *merveilleux* of *Armide* stands as a significant barrier between the opera and Gluck's operatic reform.

In addition to presenting lavish spectacles, the divertissements in the *tragédie lyrique* are notable for their inclusion of the chorus. The *tragédie lyrique* chorus acts as a liaison with the audience, "commenting or even announcing events as they unfold," and serving as "a mirror of the audience's own emotional response."¹¹⁷ Gluck also gave the chorus great consideration in his operas, but his approach differs from Quinault's. In *Armide*, the chorus plays a "much less important part in the work than they do in most of the 'reform' operas."¹¹⁸ The majority of choruses in *Armide* either form part of a spectacle or accompany a soloist. Throughout the opera, Quinault uses the chorus not as a defined character but for scenic effect. Only in Act one, when they represent Armide's court, do the members of the chorus portray characters who care about the outcome of the drama. Otherwise, the chorus is spectacle and spectator, perhaps participating in the drama but essentially unaffected by its conclusion. Gluck, on the other hand, strongly advocated a defined and continuous character for the chorus. When revising *Alceste*, Gluck specifically told Du Roullet to include the chorus in the denouement of the opera, establishing its integral role in the drama.¹¹⁹ Like Gluck's earlier reform operas, *Armide*

¹¹⁷ Mary Cyr, "The Dramatic Role of the Chorus in French Opera: Evidence For the Use of Gesture, 1670-1770," in *Opera and the Enlightenment*, eds. Thomas Bauman and Marita Petzoldt McClymonds (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 105.

¹¹⁸ Hayes, "Armide: Gluck's most French Opera?" 410.

¹¹⁹ In Du Roullet's suggested dénouement, the chorus was absent for most of the action, appearing only through the magic of Apollo. Gluck's ending gave the chorus both a presence on stage as well as text. As Gluck explained to Du Roullet, "When we turn to the third act, this chorus, which has taken such an interest in the preservation of its rulers, is forgotten and seen no more. I declare that the work cannot finish until these poor people have been consoled." Gluck to Du Roullet, Vienna, 2 December 1775, Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, Gluck's letters autographes, no. 11. Published in L.R. "Correspondance inédite de Gluck," 8-9, quoted in Howard, *Gluck: An Eighteenth-Century Portrait*, 153-154.

gives the chorus a frequent presence on the stage. However, the treatment of the chorus and its integration into *Armide* does not bear out the dramatic significance given to the chorus in Gluck's other operas.

Such comparisons make it difficult to view *Armide* as a reform opera, regardless of Gluck's own position towards the work. Quinault's text does not match the qualities expected in a reform libretto by Calzabigi or Du Roullet. The prominence of the *merveilleux* and the diverse cast continually undermine the dramatic unity and concision characteristic of Gluck's mature operas. Yet beyond these external contrasts that divide *Armide* from Gluck's other works there are several innate, internal similarities that allow the interpretation of *Armide* as a reform opera. Such accord goes beyond the element of psychological focus that *Armide* shares with Gluck's reform operas. Armide's emotional distress over losing Renaud, for example, bears similarity to the loss of spouses in both *Orfeo* and *Alceste*. The more important connections stem from the aesthetic outlook and scenic construction that *Armide* shares with the eighteenth-century operatic reform.

Gluck's operatic reform was influenced by many aesthetic beliefs common to French opera. Little surprise then that *les trois unités* underlie Gluck's entire operatic reform, though the principles are never stated directly. Gluck's Italian reform operas do not necessarily abide by the twenty-four hour rule dictated by the unity of time, but they match the verisimilitude of *Armide* in that all scenes take place in real-time. There is even an element of "crisis tragedy," for both *Orfeo* and *Alceste* focus on the last moments and resolution of the conflict, rather than its origins.¹²⁰ Unity of place, with the obvious exception of *Orfeo*, can also be found in Gluck's works. All of the action in *Alceste*, for

¹²⁰ In Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*, for example, the first act of opera is a celebration of Orfeo and Euridice's wedding, Euridice not dying until the third act. In contrast, Euridice is dead at the opening of Gluck's opera.

example, takes place in the vicinity of the royal castle. Even unity of action can be expressed in Gluck's desire to eliminate all unnecessary subplots from his operas. One could potentially argue that Gluck's reform stays closer to the principle of *les trois unités* than do Quinault's libretti. Nevertheless, the presence of this French aesthetic as an underlying characteristic of the reform serves as an important bridge between *Armide* and Gluck's other operas.

More important than content or aesthetics, *Armide* is tied to Gluck's operatic reform through its scenic construction. Like Gluck's reform libretti, Quinault constructed *Armide* as a series of tableaux, scenes in which recitatives, arias, choruses, and dances were combined into a unified and continuous progression. In a structural sense, this organization most clearly differentiates Gluck's reform operas from the earlier Italian opera seria. Such a construction was undoubtedly influenced by French opera, making this correlation between *Armide* and the reform operas at least unsurprising, if not expected. However, this correlation constitutes the most significant feature that allows *Armide* to be considered a reform opera. Even though the libretto contained many elements foreign to reform opera, it provided a flexible poetic text that allowed the composer to interweave various musical elements into a continuous whole, one in which music was used to portray both the poetry and the characters. Perhaps this was Gluck's real motivation for choosing *Armide*; in its content and structure, the libretto contained the seeds of Gluck's operatic reform. The faults in the historical *Armide* that Gluck was hoping to improve upon are not attributable to Quinault's libretto, but rather to its musical setting by Lully.

Chapter 3: *Armide* as Reform Opera

History has laid the burden for the creation of reform opera at the feet of the librettist.¹²¹ Without Raniero Calzabigi's libretti, which broke from the traditions of Metastasian opera, Gluck would never have been a participant in the operatic reform. Just as the "purely literary" Arcadian movement initiated a reform of opera at the turn of the seventeenth century, so too did Calzabigi's poetic endeavours cultivate Gluck's revisions to Italian opera seria;¹²² it was Calzabigi, after all, who penned the statement of the reform goals in the preface to *Alceste*.¹²³ Calzabigi and like-minded librettists such as Du Roullet certainly deserve these accolades. At the same time, however, the importance placed on the libretto has devalued the contribution of the composer to the operatic reform. If the reform is inherent in the libretto, what role does the composer have beyond a willingness to participate? The composer's role, in truth, is perhaps more restricted than the librettist, and limited by the structure and content of the libretto. Nevertheless, the composer plays an essential role in the operatic reform. Even in the Arcadian movement, "attempts were made by both theorists and practitioners of the art to change [opera]."¹²⁴ Gluck's methods of text setting clarified, strengthened, and in some cases even created the reform qualities of the libretto. Unlike Gluck's previous libretti, that of *Armide* was not written as an expression of the reform. A product of the late seventeenth century,

¹²¹ The importance of the librettist in the creation of reform opera was first noted in the preface to *Alceste*. Modern scholars have supported this assertion, including Howards' *Gluck and the Birth of Modern Opera* (see footnote 43), as well as Hertz's *Haydn, Mozart, and the Viennese School*, 158-162.

¹²² Nathaniel Burt, "Opera in Arcadia," *Musical Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (1955): 152. The Arcadian Academy was established in Rome in 1690. Like the Florentine Camerata, the Arcadian movement aimed to return opera to its Greek roots, replacing the pastoral and amorous themes of late seventeenth-century opera with a "rigid classicism" influenced by Aristotle. The Arcadian movement's most prominent librettists were Apostolo Zeno and Metastasio.

¹²³ Hertz, *Haydn, Mozart, and the Viennese School*, 219.

¹²⁴ Robert C. Ketterer, "Why Early Opera is Roman and Not Greek," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 15, no. 1 (2003): 3.

Quinault's libretto embodied the customs and aesthetics of an antiquated age. Yet Gluck's *Armide* still expresses the precepts and musical characteristics of the late eighteenth-century operatic reform. Though possibly due to the similarities between Quinault's libretto and the tenets of the operatic reform, the greater burden for *Armide's* status as a reform opera lies with Gluck. In his choice of musical forms and styles, the placement of aria and recitative, and the expressive use of the orchestra, Gluck created a musical setting that minimized the outdated characteristics of Quinault's libretto while simultaneously strengthening the elements that supported his conception of the reform. No other work so clearly demonstrates Gluck's dedication to the reform, or his role as composer in creating it.

Gluck's first challenge when approaching *Armide* was the division of the text into recitative and aria. Employing a variety of different poetic forms and styles, Quinault "used varying rhyme schemes and combined alexandrines, associated with dramatic poetry, with the shorter lines associated with lyric poetry, including every length from two to eleven syllables."¹²⁵ Subsequently, Quinault's libretti, including *Armide*, are characterized by texts that combine a variety of rhymes and phrase lengths, even within a single text. *Armide's* text at the end of Act two, scene five ("Venez, secondez mes désirs"), for example, is based on a series of three rhyming couplets. None of the couplets, however, feature lines of equal length, and overall, the length of lines in the text ranges from eight to thirteen syllables. Furthermore, Quinault obscures the rhyme scheme by dividing the second and third couplets with punctuation.

¹²⁵ Norman, *Touched by the Graces*, 22.

Venez, secondez mes désirs
 Démons, transformez-vous en d'aimables zéphyr.
 Je cède à ce vainqueur, la pitié me surmonte;
 Cachez ma faiblesse et ma honte
 Dans les plus reculés déserts.
 Volez, conduisez-nous au bout de l'univers!

Even within such a varied poetic structure, Quinault's text suggests specific musical constructions, achieved primarily through the use of textual repetition. For example, in both of Armide's arias from Act three, "Ah! Si la liberté" and "Venez, venez, Haine implacable," Quinault repeats the opening lines of the text at the end of the poem, clearly suggesting a similar melodic return in the music. In a similar fashion, Quinault's tendency to have the chorus repeat the text of the soloist, a common occurrence in many divertissements, suggests some kind of musical correlation.

While Quinault's text occasionally suggests a specific mode of musical setting, the general homogeneity of the poetic style in the libretto meant that Gluck had to make his own decisions regarding aria and recitative for the majority of the opera. This decision was based primarily on the dramatic content of the text. Reflective texts, those moments when a character expressed some type of emotion or consistent thought, were deemed best suited to arias and airs, whereas texts that expressed dramatic action, be it physical or psychological, were set as recitatives to ensure that their dramatic import was clearly emphasized and easily understood. Gluck readily divided longer texts between air and recitative, based on their dramatic function. For example, he divided Hidraot's opening text in Act one, scene two, into a recitative ("Armide, que le sang"), in which he expresses his wish that Armide should marry, and an air ("Je vois de près la mort"), in which Gluck uses a more melodic setting to express Hidraot's fear at his encroaching death and the possible end of his lineage. Identifying the truly dramatic moments of the

libretto and creating appropriate settings were among Gluck's most important musical contributions to the operatic reform.

Quinault's libretto, however, presented Gluck with several challenges regarding text setting. Though not as prominent as in opera seria, large-scale arias marking the most significant dramatic moments of the opera remained an important element of the reform. Through rare, these moments both distinguish significant moments in the action and elucidate the emotional state of the character. Quinault, however, provides few texts appropriate for such arias, partly owing to the preponderance of dialogue in his libretto, but also as a result of Quinault's tendency to mix both reflective and action-driven passages in his longer texts, making them more appropriate for recitative. Gluck had to account for this scarcity of aria texts, finding ways to maintain their dramatic function if not their exact form. If Quinault's first challenge to Gluck was one of scarcity, however, his second was one of abundance. Quinault's divertissements consisted almost exclusively of texts appropriate for a melodic setting, the exception being the extensive divertissement of Act four. Yet to give these texts elaborate musical settings would give them a presence greater than their dramatic significance. Gluck had to find a way to make the divertissement entertaining without allowing its music to eclipse the surrounding drama.

Within the constraints imposed by Quinault's libretto, Gluck arranged the text of *Armide* into arias and recitatives based on his dramatic principles. Though neither the placement nor the length of Quinault's reflective passages matched Gluck's previous reform operas, the composer endeavoured to set the poetry in a way that conveyed its dramatic importance while still being musically viable. This resulted in three different

types of solo melodic compositions in *Armide*: large-scale aria forms, dramatic airs, and divertissement airs. These categories are both musical and dramatic—each exhibits similar musical traits that underline its dramatic function in the opera.

Though large-scale arias are infrequent in Gluck's reform operas, their paucity in *Armide* has no equivalent. Due to the restrictions of Quinault's libretto, there are only five arias in *Armide*: "Plus j'observe ces lieux" in Act two, scene three; "Venez, secondez mes désirs" in Act two, Scene five; "Ah! Si la liberté" in Act three, scene one; "Venez, venez, Haine implacable," in Act three, scene three; and "Le perfide Renaud me fuit" in Act five, scene five. With the exception of Renaud's "Plus j'observe ces lieux," all of these arias are sung by Armide. Their scarcity aside, the arias in *Armide* are similar in many regards to those in Gluck's other reform operas. For the most part, these arias coincide with the most dramatically significant moments in the opera. "Venez, secondez mes désirs," for example, follows Armide's realization that she cannot kill Renaud because she loves him. In this aria, Armide calls upon her demons to spirit her and Renaud away to her hidden palace, establishing the scene for the remainder of the opera. "Venez, venez, Haine implacable," is similarly a magical invocation that both instigates the dramatic action of the third act and embodies Armide's continuing struggle with her feelings for Renaud. Though not an aria, Armide and Hidraot's duet from Act two, scene two, "Esprits de haine et de rage" also invokes the demonic spirits, and shares many of the musical characteristics of the large aria. Armide sings the more plaintive aria "Le perfide Renaud me fuit" following her abandonment by Renaud, a direct response to the dramatic action of the final act in complete accord with Gluck's operatic reform.

The remaining two airs, “Ah! Si la liberté,” and “Plus j’observe ces lieux” diverge from the dramatic significance expected from arias in Gluck’s operatic reform. Both arias occur in moments when the aria text comprises the entire scene. Faced with these reflective monologues, Gluck had no recourse but to compose arias. However, neither aria marks an especially noteworthy moment in the drama. Opening Act three, “Ah! Si la liberté” conveys Armide’s amazement and underlying unease that Renaud has conquered her heart. In its lyricism and use of a commonplace form, the da capo, the aria contrasts with the complexity of Armide’s previous vocal offerings. Gluck’s setting of the text does, in a sense further the drama by illustrating a previously unseen side of Armide’s personality, the music conveying her potential for both love and vulnerability. Yet this aria does not mark a development in the dramatic action—Armide’s situation has not changed since the end of Act two and her previous aria, “Venez, seconde mes désirs.” Though not completely superfluous, “Ah! Si la liberté” does not have the same dramatic weight as the arias in operas such as *Alceste*.

Renaud’s “Plus j’observe ces lieux” resembles “Ah! Si la liberté” in that it explores the character’s psyche rather than encapsulating the preceding action. “Plus j’observe ces lieux” is, by far, the longest aria in the opera, reflective of the fact that, as Renaud’s only aria, an extended song was needed to both portray Renaud’s importance in the opera and, on a practical level, to satisfy the demands of the singer performing the role. Yet the pastoral nature of this aria distinguishes it more than its length. Characterized by “idyllic landscape, ... an atmosphere of *otium*, conscious attention to art and nature, [and] shepherds as singers,” the pastoral was common in French opera from

the mid-seventeenth to mid-eighteenth century.¹²⁶ Equally essential was the pastoral's allegorical function, the shepherds representing the emotions and ordeals of those in the audience, and the idealized landscape a gloss over situations which are "potentially violent, dangerous, challenging, and ironic."¹²⁷ These bucolic texts were musically paired with simple harmonies and an emphasis on woodwinds. In "Plus j'observe ces lieux," for example, repetitive melodic phrases in the woodwinds anchor both Renaud's through-composed vocal line and the modulating harmonic structure, allowing the aria to function as a coherent whole. Apart from *Armide*, pastorals were essentially absent from Gluck's reform operas, the closest example being "Che puro ciel" in the second act of *Orfeo*.¹²⁸ Gluck's reform operas portrayed believable characters in realistic situations, as opposed to the allegory inherent in the pastoral. Yet the associations between the pastoral and allegory explicate Renaud's operatic function as a parable on "the danger's of love, especially when it comes into conflict with glory and duty."¹²⁹ By using the style associated with this somewhat outdated form, Gluck strengthened the underlying message in the opera.

Though they diverge slightly in their dramatic substance, the arias in *Armide* share specific musical characteristics. Gluck employs a variety of forms in his arias, ranging from the da capo "Ah! Si la liberté" to the through-composed "Le perfide Renaud me fuit." Gluck creates these forms through some type of melodic repetition, either in the

¹²⁶ Paul Alpers, "What is Pastoral?" *Critical Inquiry* 8, no. 3 (1982): 448.

¹²⁷ Charlton, "Genre and Form in French Opera," 166.

¹²⁸ Hertz, *Haydn, Mozart, and the Viennese School*, 203-204. The text for "Che puro ciel" describes the *locus amoenus* associated with the pastoral, as well as the emphasis on woodwinds in the orchestral, in this case the oboe. However, as an extended and complex *recitativo accompagnato*, "che puro ciel" does not observe the musical simplicity expected of the pastoral. Neither does it function as an allegory within the opera.

¹²⁹ Norman, *Touched by the Graces*, 328-329. Both *Armide* and Lully's previous opera *Roland* stress the message that duty comes before love. Norman connects this to the artistic situation of the French court, Renaud an allegory for King Louis' own return to the responsibilities of the monarchy.

voice, the orchestra, or both. Though the arias often proceed from or lead directly into the surrounding music, each aria is musically independent, forming a unique, tonally closed unit that could potentially be excerpted from the opera.¹³⁰ Gluck additionally prepares each aria with an orchestral prelude, some of which are quite extended. Serving as aural markers for the arias, these preludes also anticipate the musical content of the arias and suggest their overall mood. In contrast to the prominence of the orchestra in the preludes, the arias in *Armide* contain the simplest orchestral writing in the opera. In each aria, the orchestra serves a purely accompanimental role, conveying the mood of the text while allowing the vocal line to dominate the texture and attention of the audience.

Though the melody takes central place in the arias of *Armide* and, more or less, in the operatic reform in general, Gluck's arias are far removed from the virtuosic da capo arias of opera seria. At a performance of Gluck's *Alceste*, the critic Le Suire found the arias lacking in melody to the point that they sounded like recitative, commenting, "I waited for the airs: the first passed modestly without my noticing it; I doubled my attention for the second...it escaped me with the same subtlety."¹³¹ *Armide's* arias are unlikely to go unnoticed. However, they display both a syllabic text setting and flexible form that originates in the structure and content of the text, tying them to the goals of Gluck's operatic reform.

¹³⁰ *Armide's* Act three, scene three aria is the exception to this rule, as its ending overlaps with the next scene. This aria will be discussed in Chapter 4.

¹³¹ Le Suire, *Lettre de M. Camille Trillo [Robert-Martin Le Suire], fausset de la cathédrale d'Ausch, sur la musique dramatique*, Paris, 1777, 18-19, quoted in Herbert Schneider, "Gluck and Lully," in *Lully Studies*, ed. John Hajdu Heyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 262-263.

Example 3.1: “Venez, secondez mes desirs” mm. 82-97.¹³²

The musical score is arranged in two systems. The first system (measures 82-84) includes parts for Flauto solo, Oboe I, II, Fagotto I, II, Violino I, Violino II, Viola I, Viola II, ARMIDE, and Violoncello e Basso. The Flauto solo part is marked 'solo' and 'p'. The Oboe I, II part is marked '(p)'. The Fagotto I, II part is marked '(p)'. The Violino I and II parts are marked 'p stacc. **' and 'p staccato'. The Viola I and II parts are marked '(p)'. The Violoncello e Basso part is marked 'pizzicato' and '(p)'. The second system (measures 85-97) includes parts for Flauto solo, Oboe I, II, Fagotto I, II, Violino I, Violino II, Viola I, Viola II, ARMIDE, and Violoncello e Basso. The Flauto solo part is marked '(f)'. The Oboe I, II part is marked '(f)'. The Fagotto I, II part is marked '(p)'. The Violino I and II parts are marked 'p'. The Viola I and II parts are marked '(p)'. The Violoncello e Basso part is marked '(f)' and '(pizz.)'. The score also includes performance instructions like 'simile' and 'arco ***'.

¹³² All full score examples of Gluck’s *Armide* are reprinted with permission by Bärenreiter-Verlag, Kassel. Piano vocal scores of Gluck’s *Armide* are taken from Christoph Gluck, *Armide* (Leipzig: C.F. Peters, n.d.). Piano vocal scores of Lully’s *Armide* are taken from Jean-Baptiste Lully, *Armide* (New York: Broude Brothers Limited, 1971).

example, the varying phrase lengths in the music reflect the disparate lengths of the poetic lines. Highlighting the rhyme scheme of the opening couplet, Gluck deemphasizes the rhymes in the rest of the aria, acknowledging the punctuation that divides the second and third couplets. Though Gluck repeats the text throughout the aria, these reiterations are set with similar melodic material, often using the same rhythm and melodic shape, preventing the textual repetition from becoming a mere pretense for extending the length of the aria. He even institutes a threesfold repetition of the final line, “Volez, conduisez-nous au bout de l’univers,” to strengthen the function of the song as Armide’s invocation of her demons. Such a flexible melodic setting would not be possible without the unifying effect of the orchestra. Utilizing several motifs introduced in the prelude, including an agitated triplet figure in the strings and flute, arpeggiated chords in the bassoon, and a recurring dotted figure, Gluck creates a continuous musical accompaniment that both unifies the aria and gives Armide’s vocal line the freedom to respond to the text on a phrase-by-phrase basis. Gluck thus maintains the import of the text even in the most highly melodic moments of the opera.

With so few arias in *Armide*, the bulk of the melodic material fell to the airs. Airs maintained the function they had in Gluck’s other reform operas, expressing the thoughts and emotions of characters in situations that do not warrant an independent aria. Airs are particularly prevalent in *Armide* due to Quinault’s tendency to write dialogue between characters. Though some of this dialogue best suits recitative, it often has a reflective nature suited to the air. Gluck fully integrates the various airs into the tableaux of the opera, the short melodic passages flowing in and out of the surrounding musical structure without pause. Though not musically independent, the airs are distinguished by unique

metres and key signatures as well as a more continuous orchestral style than that found in recitative. Combining the fluidity of recitative with the melodic interest of the aria, the air was an ideal middle ground to present small dramatic texts throughout *Armide*.

Each air in *Armide* responds directly to the text that it sets, letting the context determine the overall structure and mood of the piece. Not all airs, however, are created equal. Airs sung by Armide or Renaud tend to reveal much more about their personality and dramatic motivations than those sung by secondary characters. Frequently through-composed, these airs often convey as much about the character as recitative. A great deal can be learned about Armide from her opening air, “Je ne triomphe pas.” Gluck uses this air to paint a microcosm of the character and her struggle over her feelings for Renaud. From the opening flourish, the marked, militaristic dotted rhythms in the orchestra establish Armide as a leader who has usurped a powerful masculine role. The stridency of her vocal line in example 3.2A depicts an unconventional woman, one not inclined to the sentimentality expected of her sex:

Example 3.2A: Opening of Armide’s air “Je ne triomphe pas.”

97 *Toujours bien marqué*

Violino I *p* *f*

Violino II *(p)*

Viola *(p)* *(f)*

ARMIDE

Je ne tri-om - phe pas du plus vail-lant de tous. Re - naud —, pour qui ma
Doch gibt es Ei - nen, den ich nicht be-zwin-gen kann. Ri - nal - do ist der

Violoncello e Basso *(p)* *f*

The musical score for the opening of Armide's air "Je ne triomphe pas." is presented in a five-staff format. The top staff is for Violino I, the second for Violino II, the third for Viola, the fourth for ARMIDE (vocal line), and the bottom for Violoncello e Basso. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor) and the time signature is common time (C). The score begins with a tempo marking "97" and a performance instruction "Toujours bien marqué". The vocal line starts with the lyrics "Je ne tri-om - phe pas du plus vail-lant de tous. Re - naud —, pour qui ma" and "Doch gibt es Ei - nen, den ich nicht be-zwin-gen kann. Ri - nal - do ist der". The orchestral parts feature dynamic markings of *p* (piano) and *f* (forte), with the vocal line also marked *f* at the beginning of the phrase.

101

hai - ne a tant de vi - o - len - ce, L'in-domp - ta - ble Re - naud é - chap - pe à mon cour - roux.
 Kühn - ste, den ich so sehr has - se. Der un - bänd'ge Ri - nal - do ent - zieht sich mei - nem Zorn.

Her unfulfilled triumph over Renaud fosters anger and determination rather than despair. Gluck also uses the orchestra to reveal Armide's still hidden love for Renaud. When Armide talks of Renaud as being of the age when love comes easily, "Il est dans l'âge aimable," Gluck softens Armide's melodic line and replaces the accented march of the orchestra with a gently undulating string passage (see ex. 3.2B). Though this lyrical passage lasts for only a single phrase, both the connotation of the musical style and its distinction from the preceding music indicate Armide's hidden love for Renaud:

Example 3.2B: Armide's "Je ne triomphe pas," mm. 111-120.

111

ci - ble, Fit gloi - re de me voir d'un œil in - dif - fé - rent. Il est dans l'â - ge ai -
 sieg - bar, ganz un - be - weg - ten Au - ges blick - te er mich an. Er ist im slü - ßen

116

mf

(mf)

(mf)

ma - ble où sans ef - fort on ai - me... Non, je ne puis man-quer sans
 Al - ter, wo mü - he - los man lie - bet... Nein, schlimm wär mei - ne Schmach, sollt

(mf)

Renaud's airs in turn are similarly revealing. The opening orchestral measures of his first air "Le repos me fait violence," in which he extols the quest for glory (see ex. 3.3A), mimics the fanfare found at the beginning of Armide's second air, "Les enfers ont prédit cent fois" (see ex. 3.3B). In both airs, Gluck scores the fanfare for horn and strings, with an additional bassoon doubling the bass in "Le repos me fait violence." This similarity in orchestral timbre, the horn being prominent in both settings, emphasizes the identical opening rhythm of the two airs, which in turn ties together their militaristic textual theme. Renaud's declamatory melody, with its repeated turning figures and brisk meter, portrays him as a confident knight, secure in his abilities and desires. The orchestra echoes this determination, briskly articulating ascending and descending scales whose tonal security reinforces Renaud's own self-assurance. Such careful orchestral planning makes the airs as significant a contributor to character development as the recitative.

Example 3.3A: Opening of Renaud's "Le repos me fait violence."

Maestoso

58

Corno I, II
in La/A

Violino I

Violino II

Viola

RENAUD

ARTÉMIDORE

Violoncello,
Fagotto e Basso

(f) *(p)* *(p)* *(p)* *(f)* *(p)*

tenuto *p* *(p)*

Le re - pos me fait vi - o -
Rast und Ru - he sind mein Ver -

Example 3.3B: Opening of Armide's "Les enfers ont prédit cent fois."

168

Oboe I, II

Corno I, II
in Fa/F

Violino I

Violino II

Viola

ARMIDE

Violoncello

Basso

(f) *(p)* *(p)* *(p)* *(f)* *(p)* *(f)* *(p)*

p *(p)*

Les en - fers ont pré - dit cent fois Que con - tre ce guer -
Höl - len - macht hat vor - aus - ge - sagt, daß ge - gen die - sen

While Armide and Renaud's airs both enhance the meaning of the text and the nature of their characters, airs sung by secondary characters tend to have far less musical interest. Rather than through-composed songs with prominent, distinctive, and suggestive orchestra settings, airs sung by secondary characters tend to be more straightforward. They utilize simple forms, such as the ABA, and the orchestra serves as accompaniment rather than commentator on the words. Indeed, Gluck's simple musical setting of the texts for the secondary characters was his main tactic for minimizing their dramatic impact in *Armide*.

Phénice and Sidonie best embody this simpler air style. Armide's confidantes are frequently on stage with the sorceress, giving her the opportunity to speak her mind. Consequently, Quinault provided them an abundance of short texts that prompt Armide to speak. Gluck utilized two methods to prevent either confidante from becoming too prominent in the drama. First, he often combined the confidantes' texts into a single air, reducing their presence as individual characters in the opera. Second, Gluck wrote simple, melody-based airs that, while enjoyable, do not share the musical and dramatic interest of Armide's music. Gluck follows this pattern to the letter at the beginning of Act three, scene two. The brief air "Que ne peut point votre art" combines the texts of Phénice and Sidonie, each having remarked on Armide's successful enchantment of Renaud (see ex. 3.4). Though the structure of each text is radically different, Phénice given five short phrases and Sidonie two longer lines, Gluck divides their air into two equal sections. Rather than giving each confidante's text a unique musical setting, Gluck sets Sidonie's text with a variation of Phénice's original melody. This musical continuity, supported by the doubling of the melody in the violins, contrasts with Gluck's normal

practice of making the music a direct expression of the text. Gluck further diminishes the importance of the confidantes' text through the air's generic musical setting. Characterized by scalar melodic patterns with few leaps, simple repetitive rhythms, and sequential diatonic harmonies, the air never matches the musical complexity or interest of Armide's music. However, this ensures that Armide maintains the audience's dramatic and musical interest throughout the scene.

Example 3.4: Act three, scene two air for Phénice and Sidonie, "Que ne peut point."

Allegro.
Phénice.

Wie gross ist dei - ne Macht! sie schafft das Wunder -
Que ne peut point votre art! la force en est ex -

ba - re, die Lie - be er - wachte schon dem star - ren Hel - den - sinn, und hö -
trê - me, quel pro - di - ge! quel chan - ge - ment! Re - naud, qui fut si fier; vous ai -

Sidonie.

her hat kei - ne Flamme dir ge - strahlt. Tritt auf der Minne Thron,
me, on n'a ja - mais ai - mé si ten - dre - ment. Mon - trez - vous à ses yeux,

tritt auf der Minne Thron! Be-zau-bern-de, er-fah-re, wie schön sich dein Tri-
mon-trez-vous à ses yeux, so-yez té-moin vous-mê-me du mer-veil-leux ef-

p

Recit. Armide.

umph auf sei-ner Wan-ge malt! Noch schuf die Unterwelt nicht ganz Armide's Willen, ein
fet de votre en-chau-te-ment! L'En-fer n'a pas en-cor rem-pli mon es-pé-rance, il

Gluck utilized the tactic of generalized musical settings in order to diminish the prominence of the many airs in the divertissement. Dramatically integrated into *Armide*, the divertissements are nonetheless inherently undramatic, their foremost purpose to entertain. Even more than the airs for secondary characters, Gluck had to make sure that airs in the divertissements were appropriate for characters without particular consequence in the drama. Gluck's procedure was essentially the same as that seen with the confidantes; airs were set in simple forms, with a melodic focus and a simple accompaniment. What differentiated divertissement airs from those for dramatic secondary characters was their greater length. Although Gluck strove to make the airs for secondary characters within the drama as concise as possible, hastening towards the music of the main characters, the absence of either Armide or Renaud in the divertissement, and thus of the motivation for musical brevity, allowed Gluck to create larger musical forms in the divertissement airs, the composer savouring the inherently musical focus of these pieces. In the Act two divertissement, for example, the air of the

Shepherdess “On s’étonnerait moins” rivals the length of some of the arias in *Armide*. Gluck set this air as a rondo, defined by Rousseau as a piece which “has two or more repeats, and the form is such that after having finished the second one returns to the first, and so on, returning always and finishing with the same first repeat with which it began.”¹³³ Rousseau associates the rondo with grand Italian airs, implying the importance given to an aria. Yet the style of this rondo more closely resembles the airs of Phénice and Sidonie. Gluck repeats both single phrases and entire sections of this already substantial text, but notably does not establish a firm connection between text and melody. The vocal melody, which progresses almost entirely in regular four-bar phrases as opposed to the through-composition used for the central characters of the opera, conveys the general mood of the text, but makes equally clear that the purpose of the air is entertainment, rather than drama.

In his arias and airs, Gluck used the orchestra to express the inner emotions and dispositions of both Armide and Renaud. Yet of all the vocal forms in *Armide*, recitative has the greatest power to communicate both dramatic action and the psyche of the characters. This ability stems not only from the freedom of the vocal line, but also from the participation of the orchestra. Though *Armide* employs *recitativo accompagnato* exclusively, not every recitative, particularly those for secondary characters, conveys the inner emotional state of the speaker. Such recitatives are reserved for the central characters, especially Armide. There are several recitative monologues in which the orchestra matches the expressive importance of the voice. Yet the recitative that closes the opera, Armide’s “Quand le barbare,” is surely one of the finest. Leading the audience

¹³³ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de musique* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1969), 421.

through her reaction to Renaud's abandonment, Gluck expresses Armide's emotional state through both her vocal line and the orchestra, making the musical setting of the text a complete embodiment of the drama.

As the recitative opens, Armide berates herself for not killing Renaud when she had the chance. Underneath these self-recriminations, the strings sustain a driving sixteenth-note rhythm, which combined with the slow harmonic changes cause a gradual rise in tension and a growing momentum that implies Armide will soon retaliate against Renaud (see ex. 3.5):

Example 3.5: Act five, scene five, "Quand le barbare," mm. 62-64.

62 Viol. I
mf

Viol. II
(mf)

Va.
(mf)

Armide
Quand le bar - ba - re é - tait en ma puis - san - ce, Que n'ai - je cru la Hai - ne et la Ven -
Als der Ver - rä - ter noch in mei - ner Macht war, was glaubt ich nicht dem Has - se und der

Vc. e B.
f

The thrust of Armide's growing rage falters, however, when she sees Renaud departing. Her vocal line fragments into short phrases, the pitch continually rising as her agitation grows. The strings match this rise in pitch, but like Armide, they do not have the power to move forward. Armide's futile attempts to reach Renaud are copied in the orchestra, the lumbering ascending scalar passage eventually losing power and descending into Armide's call of "Traître...attends" (see ex. 3.6, mm. 73-76):

Example 3.6: “Quand le barbare,” mm. 71-79.

71

va - ge, Je fais pour m'y traî - ner d'in - u - ti - les ef - forts.
U - fer. Es schwin-det mei - ne Kraft, ich er - rei - che ihn nicht.

75

Traî - tre... at - tends...
War - tel! Bleib stehn!

Armide remains silent, waiting for an answer. It is the orchestra that responds, the five unison chords leading the music back to the tonic D minor and making it perfectly clear that Renaud will not return. As Armide once more loses herself in her rage, the driving sixteenth-note rhythms return in the orchestra. As this rhythm intensifies further with a switch to triplet sixteenth notes, it appears that Armide will finally enact her vengeance upon the knight as she calls out “Ah! Je l’immole à ma fureur...” (see ex. 3.7):

Example 3.7: “Quand le barbare,” mm. 84-85.

84

mo - - - *le à ma* *fu - reur...*
op - - - *fert mei - ner* *Wut!*

Though angry, Armide remains incapable of attacking Renaud. As she begins to question her actions, the orchestra introduces music reminiscent of the opening of Act five, the one scene in which Armide and Renaud appear as a happy couple (see ex. 3.8A). This brief passage recalls not only the key of D minor, but also the antiphonal descending melodic line shared between the violin and woodwinds (see ex. 3.8B). Armide realizes at this moment that her ‘blind error’ was not only the belief that the enchanted love she shared with Renaud would last, a love referenced in “Quand le barbare” by the reappearance of the pastoral flute and oboe, but also that in her hatred she could strike vengeance against the one man she has ever loved. This musical correlation also highlights the dramatic irony that Renaud, who had accused Armide of abandonment in the opening of Act five, has himself abandoned Armide.

94 Fl.

Viol. I

Viol. II

Va.

Armide

Vc. e B.

f *ff* *f* *ff*

L'es - poir de la ven - gean - ce est le seul qui me res - te.
 Mir bleibt nur noch die Hoff - nung, mich grau - sam zu rä - chen.

This remembrance of love lost finally spurs Armide into action. As she calls for vengeance, the orchestra once more adopts the driving sixteenth-note rhythm that connotes her magical powers. Now, however, this rhythm is combined with ascending and descending scales, the musical movement indicative of Armide's incontrovertible decision to destroy her palace (see ex. 3.9). It is no coincidence that the key representing the destruction of Armide's palace, the seat of her love, is the same D minor associated with the shared love between Armide and Renaud.

Example 3.9: “Quand le barbare,” mm. 116-118.

116 Ob. I, II (a2)

Clar. I, II (a2)

Cor. I, II (a2)

Trba. I, II *f*(a2)

Timp. *f*

Viol. I

Viol. II

Va.

Armide (Les Démones détruisent le palais enchanté; Armide part sur un char volant.)
(Die Dämonen zerstören den Zauberpalast. Armida verschwindet auf einem geflügelten Wagen.)

Vc., (Fag.) e B. pour ja - mais.
wig ge - bannt.

Much as the airs and recitatives individually express Gluck’s conception of the reform, they must still be integrated into the larger whole. All of Gluck’s reform operas utilize a tableau structure, in which the music progresses continuously throughout the various forms of a given scene. The musical continuity of these scenes supports the dramatic continuity written into the libretto, reinforcing the idea that the action on stage takes place in real-time. Gluck’s means of creating the tableaux in *Armide* are much the same as found in his earlier reform operas. However, a close examination of the opening scene of the opera (outlined in Table 1 below) demonstrates Gluck’s varied musical methods of achieving dramatic veracity and formal coherence.

The opening scene of *Armide* begins with a waltz. This lilting, Italianate melody in a cheerful F major paints a veneer of pastoral contentment over the scene. Adopting the opening orchestral melody, Phénice begins the air “Dans un jour de triomphe,” joined

shortly by Sidonie in the dominant C major. As already observed in their earlier air “Que ne peut point,” Gluck combines the text of the two confidantes into a single unified musical unit, in this case a short rounded binary air. Phénice sings the A section of the air, her regular antecedent–consequent phrases establishing the key of F major. Modulating directly into the dominant, Sidonie’s B section contrasts Phénice’s melodic line not only in key but also in its shorter phrase length and higher tessitura. As the two confidantes begin to sing together, the music transitions back to the tonic and returns to a variation of the A material to bring the form to a close. Although brief, this short piece encapsulates the poetic theme of triumph and celebration in a musical form easily understood and appreciated by the audience.

“Si la guerre” follows immediately on the heels of the opening air. Modulating directly to the key of D minor that reflects the new textual theme of war and trepidation, the confidantes’ texts are combined into a brisk ABA with coda. Gluck was careful to distinguish “Dans un jour de triomphe” and “Si la guerre,” keeping in mind the different textual theme of each unit. In “Si la guerre,” Gluck replaces the opening waltz with a strident cut-time metre, and the lilting orchestra with an agitated rising and falling pattern in the bass. The creation of these musical units was possible due to the shared textual themes of Phénice and Sidonie’s text. However, Gluck did take some liberties with Quinault’s libretto, repeating text in “Si la guerre” to emphasize the musical form and composing the coda as a duet rather than a solo. These revisions, however, enhance the musical coherence of the scene, and do not negatively affect the expression of the text.

In spite of the many distinct forms found in this scene, the action progresses quite briskly. Phénice and Sidonie’s airs, which last about two minutes altogether, are

immediately succeeded by Armide’s opening air, “Je ne triomphe pas,” discussed above. The dialogue construction of this scene, however, ensures that the music quickly returns to the confidantes, who are once again united into a single musical unit, “Qu’importe qu’un captif.” After the emotional complexity of Armide’s air, Phénice and Sidonie’s reassurances regarding the unimportance of Renaud’s continuing impunity are almost flippant in tone. “Qu’importe qu’un captif” conveys an attitude of playful blitheness, created primarily through the music’s skipping eighth notes and further enhanced by the prevalence of treble strings and woodwinds in the orchestra. Distinguishing the confidantes’ style from that of Armide, this setting also clearly indicates that neither Phénice or Sidonie has grasped the full extent of Armide’s feelings for Renaud.

Table 1: Text and musical structure of *Armide*, Act one, scene one

Musical Unit		Text	Metre	Key	Page
Air Rounded Binary	Phénice A	Dans un jour de triomphe, au milieu des plaisirs, Qui peut vous inspirer une sombre tristesse? La gloire, la grandeur, la beauté, la jeunesse, Tous les biens comblent vos désirs.	3/4	F	19
	Sidonie B	Vous inspirez une fatale flamme que vous ne ressentez jamais; L’amour n’ose troubler la paix Qui règne dans votre âme.		C	21
	Duet A	Quel sort a plus d’appas? Et qui peut être heureux si vous ne l’êtes pas!		C-F	22
Air ABA with coda	Phénice A	Si la guerre aujourd’hui fait craindre ses ravages, C’est aux bords du Jourdain qu’ils doivent s’arrêter. Nos tranquilles rivages N’ont rien à redouter.	2/2	dm- am	23
	Sidonie B	<i>Nos tranquilles rivages N’ont rien à redouter.</i> Les enfers, s’il le faut, prendront pour nous les armes, Et vous pouvez leur imposer la loi.		am- dm	25
	Phénice	Vos yeux n’ont eu besoin de leurs propres		dm	26

	A	charmes Pour affaiblir le camp de Godefroi.			
	<i>Duet</i> Coda	Ses plus vaillants guerriers contre vous sans défense Sont tombés en votre puissance!		gm [D]	27
Air	Armide	Je ne triomphe pas de plus vaillant de tous! Renaud, pour qui ma haine a tant de violence, ... Non, je ne puis manquer, sans un dépit extrême, La conquête d'un cœur si superbe et si grand!	4/4	gm	28
Air	Sidonie	Qu'importe qu'un captif manqué à votre victoire? On en voit dans vos fers assez d'autres témoins; Et pour un esclave de moins, Un triomphe si beau perdra peu de sa gloire.	2/4	Bb	30
	Phénice	Pourquoi voulez-vous songer À ce qui peut vous déplaire? Il est plus sûr de se venger Par l'oubli que par la colère.			31
	<i>Duet</i>	<i>Il est plus sûr de se venger</i> <i>Par l'oubli que par la colère.</i>		Bb	32
Air	Armide	Les Enfers ont prédit cent fois Que contre ce guerrier nos armes seront vaines, ... Incessamment son importune image Malgré moi trouble mon repos	4/4	F	33
Recit. accomp- agnato	Armide	Un songe affreux m'inspire une frayeur nouvelle Contre ce funeste ennemi. ... Je me sentais contrainte à le trouver aimable Dans le fatal moment qu'il me perçait le cœur.		dm- cm	37
Air	Sidonie	Vous troublez-vous d'une image légère Que le sommeil produit? Le beau jour qui vous luit Doit dissiper cette vaine chimère, Ainsi qu'il a détruit Les ombres de la nuit.	3/4	Eb	39

The growing tension over Armide's relationship to Renaud finally begins to bubble over in "Les enfers on prédit." Opening with a distinctive martial fanfare, the dotted rhythms and emphasis on the horn connote, in a manner similar to "Je ne triomphe pas," Armide's military prowess. Yet "Les enfers ont prédit" supersedes the former in importance as it more explicitly reveals Armide's feelings for Renaud, and stands with the subsequent recitative "Un songe affreux" as the emotional and dramatic pinnacle of the scene. Gluck carefully matched his music to Armide's text, using the orchestra to reveal Armide's hidden emotions. The result is a through-composed air that verges on arioso. Whenever Armide discusses her desire to triumph over Renaud, the orchestra maintains its militaristic opening rhythm. Yet as Armide begins to disclose her feelings for the knight, a running sixteenth-note pattern begins to inundate the orchestra, eventually replacing the dotted rhythm altogether as Armide reveals how Renaud's image never leaves her mind. Once again, Gluck's orchestral writing reveals the depths of her feelings for Renaud before she admits it to her confidantes. Armide's inability to maintain her persona of a strong military commander at the mere thought of Renaud, as indicated by the orchestra, foreshadows her inability to conquer the knight or her own hidden feelings.

In her first recitative, "Un songe affreux," Armide finally reveals the source of her hatred and fear of Renaud: her dream that she will die at Renaud's hand, still loving him. This psychological development lies at the heart of the opera. Gluck recognized and signified the importance of this short dramatic monologue by setting it as a *recitativo accompagnato*, which has the greatest freedom to respond to the meaning of the text through orchestral interjections. Armide's vocal line, melodically rather static, progresses

in a series of short phrases divided by frequent rests. While Armide sings, the orchestra maintains static chords. In the rests, however, Gluck writes short orchestral passages that evoke either the mood or the action of the text. As seen in example 3.10, the punched unison chords that fall on beat three in measures 198–201 musically depict the imagined death-blows from Renaud. These chords culminate in measure 201 on the word *mortelle*, the semitone rise on the last chord completing a dominant–tonic harmonic motion that bestows a sense of finality to Armide’s image of death. This psychological horror cannot be matched by Sidonie’s closing air, “Vous troublez-vous d’une image légère.” Balance, regularity, and musical beauty take central place in this air, the antithesis to Armide’s previous recitative. Sidonie’s return to the waltz-like pastoral mode of the opening confirms the inability of Armide’s confidantes to understand her emotional distress, and cements their position as secondary characters within the plot.

Example 3.10: “Un songe affreux,” mm. 197–202.

197

tremolando

(tremolando)

mi. J'ai cru le voir, j'en ai fré - mi, J'ai cru qu'il me frap-pait d'une at -
droht. Er stand vor mir, und wie ge - lähmt ver - mein - te ich zu sehn, daß er

201

tein - te mor - tel - le.
kam, mich zu tö - ten.

The tableau structure of the preceding scene typifies Gluck's approach to musical continuity throughout *Armide*. Surprisingly, this continuity does not rely heavily on the use of *recitativo accompagnato* as a bridge between characters and their musical offerings. Rather, the scene depends more on the careful tonal relationships between the different musical forms. As demonstrated by Table 1, each musical unit is tonally closed, and proceeds from and progresses to closely related keys. Most often, Gluck strengthens this tonal relationship by preparing the key with its dominant. The recitative, with its tonal variety and freedom, allows for modulation to a relatively distant key. However, Gluck demonstrates that such fluidity is not required to create a musically continuous and unified tableau. Directly supporting the dramatic veracity of the scene, Gluck's tableaux are created through a careful manipulation of the libretto into distinct musical units which, due to their brevity and relative autonomy, can be easily connected through tonal means into an continuous musical whole.

Throughout this examination, Gluck's text settings have reflected on the dramatic import of the characters. Secondary characters are given music that, while not of lesser musical worth, does not have the complexity or orchestral expressiveness found in the music of the central characters. Gluck himself indicated that he was trying to achieve

such a distinction in this opera, commenting that “there is a kind of refinement in *Armide* which is not present in *Alceste*, because I have found the way to make the characters speak so that you will know at once, from their manner of speaking, when it is Armide who speaks, or a confidant.”¹³⁴ The divergence of style between the central and secondary characters surely accomplishes this goal. Gluck also uses musical style to reflect upon the drama itself. The most masterful use of musical drama occurs perhaps in Act five, scene one, in the duet “Aimons-nous” between Renaud and Armide. Occurring after their extended arioso duet (“Armide, vous m’allez quitter!”), “Aimons-nous” paints a charming picture of shared love between the knight and enchantress. Armide sings nothing else like this duet throughout the entire opera. At its most extreme, the duet approaches the virtuosity of opera seria, featuring a series of harmonized melismas between Armide and Renaud that, while perhaps a subtle example of word painting on the word “flame,” exist primarily for beauty’s sake. No other moment of the opera is so Italian, or so far outside the traditional concept of Gluck’s reform. Yet the very incongruity of this duet engenders its efficacy. In the context of the operatic reform, this duet comes across as rather affected, beautiful but empty of real meaning. It thus embodies the fragile and questionable reality of the love between Armide and Renaud that the duet extols; their love is empty of meaning, nothing more than the product of Armide’s spells (see ex. 3.11):

¹³⁴ Gluck to Du Roulet, Vienna, 1776, quoted in Howard, *Gluck: An Eighteenth-Century Portrait*, 165-166.

Example 3.11: “Aimons-nous” mm. 127-136.

127

jour Que d'é-tein-dre ma flam
 aus als das Feu-er der Lie

jour Que d'é-tein-dre ma flam
 aus als das Feu-er der Lie

132

me. Non, rien ne peut chan-
 be! Nein, nichts soll mei-nen

me. Non, rien ne peut chan-
 be! Nein, nichts soll mei-nen

Gluck's musical response to his libretti, rather than the general objectives espoused by the preface to *Alceste*, constitutes the heart of the operatic reform. Changes in his operatic libretti corrected many of the perceived errors in opera seria, but even in this genre music could be used as an expression of the drama and the psychological state of the characters. In George F. Handel's *Rodelinda* (1719), for example, the opening aria "Hò perduta il caro sposo" introduces the conflict of the entire opera. Not only does the audience learn that Rodelinda has recently lost her husband solely through the text of the aria, but Handel also supports her sense of loss in both the vocal and orchestral writing. In *Armide*, Gluck explicates and refines the goals of the operatic reform, transforming them from broad generalities into specific musical procedures that allowed the reform to

come to fruition. Gluck's music creates emotions, defines the characters, and underscores the inherent drama of the libretto on the stage. The composer's careful planning ensured that the music emphasized the most essential moments of the drama, while still creating an entertaining musical production. The libretto contains the impetus for the dramatic veracity that lies at the heart of the operatic reform. But this veracity can only be created through careful attention and planning on the part of the composer.

Chapter 4: *Armide* in the Context of French Opera: Gluck and Lully

In the critical literature, Gluck's *Armide* has yet to gain an independent existence, treated almost as a 'novelty opera' whose worth depends more on its relationship to Lully than its own inherent characteristics. Current studies of *Armide* focus primarily on Gluck and Lully's different approaches to the text, comparing specific scenes and speculating on Gluck's motivations for choosing to set this libretto.¹³⁵ A systematic account of the differences between the two operas, however, does little justice to the accomplishments of either composer. Musical styles and orchestral forces changed over the course of the century separating Lully and Gluck, indicative of significant disparity. Yet there are similarities between the two works which suggest that Gluck was both aware of Lully's opera and, to some extent, dependent on the model of *tragédie lyrique* presented in the earlier version of *Armide*. Gluck's aim was not to supplant Lully's operatic vision with that of the operatic reform. Rather, in *Armide* he endeavoured to "preserve in its entirety this masterpiece of [French] lyric theatre, and judged that he was sufficiently skilled in his art not only to express the great beauties, but also to improve its faults."¹³⁶ Gluck's correction of Lully's faults stems essentially from the greater emphasis on melodic—that is to say, Italian—music that characterizes his *Armide*. Nevertheless, the sources of the great beauties of Lully's *Armide*, deriving from its scenic construction and musical forms, have an equal place in Gluck's opera, revealing his enduring debt to the earlier French tradition.

¹³⁵ Schneider's "Gluck and Lully" provides the most comprehensive comparison of the two composers, with specific attention given to *Armide*.

¹³⁶ Anon., *Annonce de l'opéra d'Armide*, 258.

Lully's *tragédies lyriques* have a greater presence in operatic history than they do on the stage. These works are rarely performed today and unfamiliar to the modern audience, being difficult to stage and rather foreign to the modern opera audience outside France.¹³⁷ Some knowledge of Lully's *tragédie lyrique* is necessary, however, in order to understand the relationship between the two versions of *Armide*. Following the structure of Quinault's libretto, Lully's *tragédies lyriques* were composed as musical tableaux that combined airs, recitatives, choruses and even dances. These tableaux were not only tonally unified, but were primarily musically continuous, greatly aided by the ability of recitative to mediate between larger forms. Recitative, in fact, was the most highly regarded element of Lully's operas. For the French, "there [was] nothing in music which connoisseurs [esteemed] more highly than recitative, and nothing in which they [were] harder to please."¹³⁸ French operatic singing emulated spoken declamation. Music, therefore, had "no other purpose than to enhance the poetic beauties."¹³⁹ Choosing text that "would be easily understandable when sung," Quinault's poetic aim was to create characters whose text "[sounded] much as a person would in certain situations, that is, [used] words and sounds that would be appropriate to the situation."¹⁴⁰ Just as Quinault espoused a naturalistic declamation in his text, so too did Lully aim to capture the sound of the French language through flexibility of both rhythm and meter in his vocal writing.

¹³⁷ Video recordings of Lully's *tragédie lyrique* remain relatively rare. Hervé Niquet recorded *Persée* with the Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra in 2005, while Vincent Dumestre recorded *Cadmus et Hermione* with Le Poème Harmonique in 2008. Lully's *Armide* was most recently produced at the Theatre des Champs-Élysées in Paris in 2008 under the direction of William Christie. The entire production can be viewed on YouTube, but at this time is not available on DVD.

¹³⁸ Francesco Algarotti, *Saggio sopra l'opera in musica*, trans. anon. (Paris: 1754), 181, quoted in Schneider, "Gluck and Lully," 259. This comment was added to Algarotti's treatise by its anonymous French translator.

¹³⁹ De Rochemont, "De Rochemont, *Réflexions d'un patriote sur l'opéra françois, et sur l'opéra italien*," 3rd Proposition (Paris, 1754), 24-25, quoted in Schneider, "Gluck and Lully," 254-55.

¹⁴⁰ Norman, *Touched by the Graces*, 24-25.

Recitative dominates Lully's *tragédie lyrique*, accounting for approximately half of the opera's music. Four of the five scene types in Lully's operas are based largely on recitative. These included recitative–dialogue scenes without songs set in fixed forms, recitative–dialogue scenes containing songs and ensembles, the scene–complex, and the recitative–monologue.¹⁴¹ The only scene without recitative was the solo aria or ensemble, a form that occurred infrequently in Lully's *tragédies lyriques*. Of the recitative scenes, the recitative–dialogue was the most common. Involving several characters in dialogue, these scenes could occur strictly in recitative, or could include airs. Lully's dialogue airs were quite short, reflecting his attention “to poetic detail and the needs of prosodic declamation at all times, even during closed forms and even when regular meter prevails.”¹⁴² This simplicity and brevity allowed the airs to be easily integrated into the surrounding recitative. Small airs were in fact so prevalent that emotionally charged conversations could take place entirely in a series of airs.¹⁴³ While recitative–dialogue scenes had the most widespread usage in the *tragédie lyrique*, the less frequent recitative–monologue was essential to the progression of the drama. These scenes “[dramatized] a major event, often a change of heart in the protagonist which [changed] the course of action.”¹⁴⁴ Only recitative–monologue scenes were accompanied by the full orchestra, the musical setting reflecting the dramatic weight of these scenes. In contrast, all other recitatives in the *tragédie lyrique* were accompanied by the continuo.

¹⁴¹ Newman, *Lully and his Tragédies Lyriques*, 111.

¹⁴² Lois Rosow, “The Articulation of Lully's Dramatic Dialogue,” in *Lully Studies*, ed. John Hajdu Heyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 92.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 93.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 99.

The remaining recitative scene-type, the scene-complex, exhibited the greatest diversity. While encompassing both recitative and airs, scene-complexes were characterized by the presence of chorus and dance. The scenes occurred in two contexts: a scene relating to the drama that involves the chorus, or a scene of divertissement. Divertissements were of central importance to Lully's *tragédie lyrique*, "[giving] occasion for most of the choruses, instrumental numbers, and dances that are so prominent in Lully's scores."¹⁴⁵ With a divertissement occurring in each act, the scene-complex occurred frequently throughout Lully's operas. Featuring the dance so admired and required in French opera, the scene-complexes had little recitative, the greater focus on melodic music balancing the predominance of the recitative in the other scenes.

With Gluck committed to setting Quinault's libretto, similarities between Gluck and Lully's operas were expected. Lully's *tragédie lyrique*, from their tableau construction to their goal of imitating the sound of spoken declamation, resembled Gluck's operatic procedures and the tenets of his reform. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, Gluck manipulated Quinault's text to strengthen this affinity. On their own, the constraints of the poetry and the obvious literary forms suggested by Quinault's libretto ensured some similarity in musical construction between the two versions of *Armide*. The associations between Gluck's *Armide* and that of Lully, however, go beyond those imposed by Quinault's libretto. They indicate not only Gluck's familiarity with Lully's version of the opera, but also his appreciation and appropriation of Lully's musical structure and organization. It was primarily through such structural similarities that Gluck paid homage to Lully and the *tragédie lyrique*.

¹⁴⁵ Grout and Williams, *A Short History of Opera*, 137.

As seen in Chapter One, operatic reform borrowed the concept of dramatic veracity from French opera. In both *tragédie lyrique* and the operatic reform, the believability of the characters, their actions and their emotions, was paramount. Drama, in theory if not always in practice, was to have precedence over the music for both Gluck and Lully. Accordingly, both composers responded to the dramatic continuity of Quinault's libretto by matching it with the musical continuity of the tableaux. Though Lully's tableaux provide an obvious model for Gluck, they do not exhibit the later composer's tonal complexity, and on the whole are rather homogeneous. This disparity has various causes. First, Lully's vocal settings of air and recitative are quite similar, reflecting the composer's careful attention to text expression. However, the similarity between airs and recitatives in *tragédie lyrique* also stems from "the virtual lack of contrasting structural elements in Quinault's poetry, [leading]...to the absence of strong differentiation between song and declamation in this style."¹⁴⁶ In Lully's Act one, scene one dialogue between Armide and her confidantes, excerpted in example 4.1, the air and recitative make use of similar rhythms and melodic movement. Sidonie's air "Qu'importe qu'un captif," for example, matches the melodic style of Armide's preceding recitative, "Je ne triomphe pas," utilizing the same interval patterns and tendency to repeat pitches. Though Lully distinguishes the recitative both by the use of continuo and a flexible shift in metre, these distinctions are mitigated by the relative similarity of timbre between the continuo and orchestra and the irregular phrases structure of Lully's airs. The second cause of homogeneity in Lully's tableaux originates in his use of a single key throughout a given scene. Though this technique strengthens the musical continuity, it also lessens

¹⁴⁶ Rosow, "The Articulation of Lully's Dramatic Dialogue," 92.

the distinction between the various musical forms. Harmonic modulations occur only between scenes, while the individual scenes themselves, with few exceptions, are harmonically static. Although from a modern perspective Lully's tableau construction does not have the sophistication of Gluck's, it nonetheless effectively creates a coherent, musically continuous structure that reflects the dramatic continuity of the libretto. Yet at the same time, Lully's harmonic construction precludes the dramatic momentum that Gluck builds through modulation to related keys.

Example 4.1: Lully's *Armide*: Act one, scene one, mm. 102-110.

- ma - ble où sans ef - fort on ai - me; Non, je ne puis man -
 - quer sans un dé - pit ex - trê - me La con - quet - te d'un

SIDONIE.

A cœur si superbe et si grand. Qu'impor-te qu'un cap -

S - tif manque à vo - tre vic - toi - re; On en voit dans vos

While Lully obviously serves as the model for Gluck's tableaux, Gluck refined the relationship between musical and dramatic continuity established in the earlier opera. The confrontation between Armide and Hate in Act three, scene three, for example, illustrates how Gluck's careful manipulation of both the text and the musical structure heightened the drama in Quinault's libretto and the emotional portrayal of the characters. As Lully's own opera provides the prototype for Gluck, let us begin with his setting. In Armide's scene three aria "Venez, venez, Haine implacable," the sorceress invokes Hate, asking the deity to come and remove her love for Renaud from her heart. Lully sets this aria as an ABA form, the direct musical and textual repetition emphasizing the structure. Scene four, transforming the D major of Armide's aria into D minor, introduces Hate, whom Lully sets as a tenor. In an extended recitative, Hate promises to eradicate Armide's love for Renaud if she truly wishes to be free. The revelry of Hate and his minions provides the motivation for the Act-three divertissement, which follows the

typical structure of aria–chorus–dance found throughout Lully’s *tragédie lyrique*. Hate begins with the solo air, “Plus on connait l’Amour,” which is subsequently sung, with variation, by the chorus. A dance follows, and as it comes to a close, the entire pattern begins again—Hate’s second air “Amour, sors pour jamais” is repeated by the chorus, and a second dance brings the divertissement to an end. As the drama once more progresses following the divertissement, Armide reveals that she has changed her mind, and begs Hate to leave her in peace. Hate acquiesces, but ends the act with the warning that love will bring about Armide’s downfall. Lully sets this entire closing dialogue as recitative, using the same D minor with which Hate opened the scene. In doing so, Lully created a tonal frame around the divertissement, providing symmetry and tonal coherence to a scene which contains a great deal of superfluous action. The structural outline for Lully’s scene can be found in Table two below.

Table 2: Act three comparison of Gluck and Lully's versions of *Armide*

Lully’s <i>Armide</i> Act three, scenes 3 – 4				Gluck’s <i>Armide</i>, Act three, scenes 3–5			
Scene 3				Scene 3			
Aria for Armide		“Venez, venez” Form: ABA	D	Aria for Armide		“Venez, venez” Form: Elided with scene 4	F
Scene 4				Scene 4			
Recitative for Hate		“Je réponds à tes vœux”	d	Recitative for Hate		“Je réponds à tes vœux”	d – e
Divertissement	Air for Hate	“Plus on connait l’amour”	F	Divertissement	Air for Hate	“Plus on connait l’amour”	A
	Chorus	Based on Hate’s air			Chorus + Hate	Based on Hate’s air	A
	Dance		F		Dance		A
	Air for Hate	“Amour, sors pour jamais”	F		Air for Hate	“Amour, sors pour jamais”	a
	Chorus	Based on Hate’s air	F		Chorus	Based on Hate’s air	a
	Dance		F		Dance		A

Recitative for Hate and Armide	Hate –“Sors, sors du sein d’Armide,” Armide – “Arrête, arrête!”	d	Duo for Hate and Armide with chorus	Hate –“Sors, sors du sein d’Armide,” Armide – “Arrête, arrête!”	
			Recitative for Hate	“N’implores-tu mon assistance”	d
			Air for Hate and chorus	“Suis l’amour” Form: Elided with scene 5	D
			Scene 5		
			Arioso for Armide	“Ô Ciel! Quelle horrible menace!”	d – G

Though dictated to some extent by Quinault’s libretto, Gluck’s divertissement structures “followed the Lullian tradition directly.”¹⁴⁷ As in Lully, Gluck followed Hate’s opening recitative with a divertissement structured on the principle of air–chorus–dance situated in a single key. It seems likely that Gluck remained faithful to Lully’s example because he had no other model for the divertissement, with such spectacles absent from his Italian reform operas due to their inherently undramatic quality.¹⁴⁸ Nevertheless, for Gluck to maintain the presence and style of the divertissement established in Lully’s *tragédie lyrique* indicates not only his awareness of the norms of French opera expected by the audience, but also a willingness to preserve and integrate them into his own conception of opera. Maintaining the long-standing French appreciation for spectacle and dance, Gluck honoured both Lully and the *tragédie lyrique* by preserving the divertissement. However, such preservation does not negate Gluck’s intention to correct *Armide*’s faults. Even accounting for the divertissement, the end of Act three features Gluck’s most sophisticated manipulation of the text for the purposes of dramatic continuity and character expression, including the single instance of added text in the

¹⁴⁷ Schneider, “Gluck and Lully,” 267.

¹⁴⁸ Dances and choruses occur in both *Orfeo* and *Alceste*. However, these never occur outside of the drama as they do in French opera.

opera. This refinement begins at the end of Armide's scene three aria "Venez, venez, Haine implacable!" with the simple but highly effective elision with the beginning of Hate's recitative in scene four (seen in Ex. 4.2). The immediate appearance of Hate strengthens the dramatic effect of Armide's spell, but it also immediately lends Hate a somewhat devious air, sneaking up on Armide and usurping her music. Hate, cast by Gluck as a contralto, may have answered Armide's summons, but only of her own free will.

Example 4.2: Gluck's *Armide*: Act three, elision between scene three and scene four.

79

(*f*)

(a2)
(*f*)

sf *p* *sf* *p* *sf* *p* *sf* *p*

(*sf*) (*p*) (*sf*) (*p*) (*sf*) (*p*) (*sf*) (*p*)

mez ma fu -
ma fu - reur. Ve - nez, ve - nez, Hai - ne im - pla -
che die Wut. Er - schei - ne, Haß! Steig aus dem

Scene IV

ARMIDE, LA HAINE, et sa suite.

Oboe I, II

Fagotto I, II

Corno I, II
in Fa/F

Violino I

Violino II

Viola

ARMIDE

LA HAINE
DER HASS

Violoncello
e Basso

ca - ble!
Ab - grund.
(La Haine sort des enfers, avec sa suite.)
(Der Haß mit seinem Gefolge entsteigt der Hölle)

Je ré-ponds à tes vœux, ta voix s'est fait en - ten - dre Jus - ques dans le fond des en -
Ich ver - nahm dei - nen Ruf bis in der Höl - le Tie - fe, und ich fol - ge gern dei - nem

Though Hate appears in only one scene of the opera, Gluck does not diminish her presence on stage as he does with other secondary characters. Rather, he emphasizes the import of her character in order to make Hate a tangible threat to Armide and her love for Renaud. As compared to Lully, Gluck's Hate has a more lengthy and involved musical presentation, not only through the melodic setting of her final dialogue, but also through her antiphonal participation in the choral airs that asserts her role as leader of the demonic hoard. Gluck's greatest coup, however, occurs when he overlays Hate's spell to free Armide from the chains of love with Armide's own desperate cries to be spared (see ex. 4.3). Over Hate's steady intonation, Gluck sets Armide's pleas as a steadily rising chromatic line, every escalation in the pitch a sharpening of her distress. The chorus of

demons eventually joins Hate, pitting Armide against the entire demonic hoard. This dynamic opposition between Armide and Hate creates for the listener a real fear that Hate may deprive Armide of her love just as she has come to accept it. Lully's choice to set this exchange as recitative makes Armide's decision to keep her love much more arbitrary and far less dangerous.

Example 4.3: Gluck's *Armide*: Act three, scene four: overlap of Hate and Armide.

Moderato. **Armide.** 111

Der Hass. Halt' Ar -

Moderato. Flied! Sors! flied Ar - - mi - dens
Sors! sors du sein d'Ar - -

ein! zu feind - li - che Me - - gö - - - re, lass' ihn
rête, ar - - rête! af - freu - se hai - - - ne, lais - se - -

Bu - - sen, hin - - weg! brich 'dei - ne
mi - - de, A - - mour! bri - - se ta

mir, den ge - - lieb - ten, ach so hol - - den Schmerz, lass' ihn
moi sous les loix d'un si char - mant vain - - queur, lais - se - -

Ban - - de, flied! brich dei - ne Ban - - -
chât - - ne, sors! bri - - se ta chât - - -

mir, lass ihn mir! zu spät ist's, dich zu
moi, lais - se - moi! je re - nonce à ton se - - cour hor - -
 de, fließ Ar - - mi - - dens Bu - - -
ne! sors du sein d'Ar - - mi - -

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Armide.

hö - ren! Nein, nein! un - mög - lich ist's, die
ri - ble! Non, non! n'a - ché - re pas, non,

Der Hass.

sen, fließ Ar - mi - dens Bu - sen, hin - weg! brich dei - ne
de, sors du sein d'Ar - mi - de, A - mour! bri - se ta

CHOR.

Fließ! fließ Ar - mi - dens Bu - sen, hin - weg! brich dei - ne
Sors! sors du sein d'Ar - mi - de, A - mour! bri - - se ta
 Fließ! fließ Ar - - mi - dens Bu - - - sen, hin -
Sors! sors du sein d'Ar - - mi - - de, A -

Lie-be zu zer - stö - ren! Lass ihn mir, mei - nen Schmerz!
il n'est pas pos - si - ble de m'ô - ter mon a - mour,
 Ban - - de, brich dei-ne Ban - - - de!
chaît - - ne, bri - se ta chaît - - - ne!
 Ban - - de, brich dei-ne Ban - - - del
chaît - - ne, bri - se ta chaît - - - nel!
 weg! brich dei-ne Ban - - - del
mour, bri - se la chaît - - - nel!

Gluck's alterations in the remainder of the Act are equally significant in delineating both Armide and Hate. Departing from Lully's recitative, Gluck set the majority of Hate's closing monologue in a rondo, "Suis l'amour," in which the chorus sings the refrain. Further strengthening Hate's portrayal as a real threat to Armide, the choral air provides a more dramatic end to the act, while the return of the chorus reflects Gluck's continued desire throughout the reform to integrate the chorus as a character in his operas. Dominated by running sixteenth notes and tremolo in the orchestra, this raucous choral air embodies the wildness of the demons. It also provides an excellent juxtaposition to Armide's closing arioso "Ô Ciel! Quelle horrible menace!" which emerges out of the dissolution of "Suis l'amour" (see ex. 4.4). Creating an elision between the fourth and fifth scenes, Armide's arioso maintains the key and sixteenth-note pattern of the rondo. The tremulous repetition of the perceived tonic, D minor, over a

chromatically descending lament bass conveys Armide's own unsteadiness following this encounter, and as she finally begins to speak, Armide momentarily finds herself unable to sing more than a repetition of the tonic note. Only when Armide calls on love for protection does her music broaden into a melody. By adding this text Gluck brought the focus of the opera back to Armide, Quinault's libretto ending act three with Hate's monologue. More importantly, Gluck's added passage transforms Armide into a sympathetic and human character. No longer the haughty and vengeful sorceress, Armide appears vulnerable, relying on a power higher than herself for guidance. There can be no doubt in this moment that Armide completely accepts her love for Renaud, making Gluck's scene the psychological turning point for Armide in the entire opera.

This scene also prefigures the conclusion of *Armide*. Gluck's use of the lament bass in the opening ten measures of Armide's arioso signals the eventual dissolution of her relationship with Renaud. The lament bass, an ostinato characterized by a chromatically descending tetrachord, first appeared in Monteverdi's "Lament of the Nymph." It was quickly integrated into operatic laments, one of the most familiar examples being Henry Purcell's "When I am laid in Earth" from *Dido and Aeneas*. The repeated use of the descending tetrachord as the harmonic foundation for laments associated the figure with sadness and tragedy. Yet the lament bass also connotes a sense of sorrow in its musical character, as "its unremitting descent, its gravity, ... offers an analogue of obsession, perceptible as an expression of hopeless suffering."¹⁴⁹ The reiterated descent of the lament bass allowed Gluck to provide Armide's musically static comments with both structure and momentum. However, Gluck's choice to juxtapose the

¹⁴⁹ Ellen Rosand, "The Descending Tetrachord: An Emblem of Lament," *The Musical Quarterly* 65, no. 3 (1979): 350.

lament bass with Armide's acceptance of love indicates that her love for Renaud will lead to unhappiness. This foreshadowing is confirmed by the D minor key of the lament bass, which, as Gluck establishes in Act five, represents the doomed love between Armide and Renaud. Both the tonality and the lament bass signify the inevitable demise of this unequal relationship. This brief arioso thus encapsulates not only Armide's choice to let love into her heart, but also its dramatic consequences.

Example 4.4: Gluck's *Armide*: Act three, scene five, "Ô Ciel! Quelle horrible menace!"

The musical score is in D minor, 3/4 time, and marked *Andante*. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system shows the vocal line for Armide and the piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "Welch ein Drohn! Oh ciel!" and "Schmach! freux! Schmach! freux!". The piano accompaniment features a prominent bass line with a lamentous quality, marked with dynamics *sf* and *p*. The second system continues the vocal line with the lyrics "welch ein Gram - - er - we - cken!" and "quelle hor - ri - - ble me - na - ce!". The piano accompaniment continues with similar dynamics and a consistent rhythmic pattern. The third system shows the vocal line concluding with the lyrics "bang'er - je fré -". The piano accompaniment concludes with a final cadence.

starrt all' mein Blut dem Schre - cken!
mis, tout mon sang se gla - - ce!

Gott der Zärt-lich - keit, dem die Schwa - che sich weiht, ich fle - he,
mour; puis-sant A - mour! viens cal - mer mon ef - froi, et prends pi-

wend' es ab, das un - er - hör - - te Leid!
tié d'un cœur, qui s'a - ban - donne à toi!

The integration of airs and arias was another arena in which Gluck looked to Lully's *Armide* as a structural model. The arrangement of Quinault's libretto suggested similar musical forms to Lully and Gluck, and in particular the arias, all five of which are common to both versions of *Armide*. The relative paucity of lengthy texts in Quinault's

libretto makes this correlation unsurprising. Yet the similarity of arias goes beyond their placement in the opera. Like Gluck, Lully introduces his arias with extended preludes that distinguish them from the surrounding music. Likewise, their syllabic setting and poetic use of repetition are similar. The major distinctions between Gluck and Lully stem from the greater capabilities of Gluck’s orchestra to add colour to the arias, and from Gluck’s tendency to use more complex forms. However, the essential dramatic expression of the arias appears comparable in Gluck and Lully as both composers recognized the inherent qualities in Quinault’s text. Nowhere does this play a greater role than the pastoral “Plus j’observe ces lieux.”¹⁵⁰ Recognizing the text’s pastoral qualities, both composers set the aria with a fluid eight-note accompaniment and a strong emphasis on woodwinds. Similarly, each used repeating music in the orchestra to organize Renaud’s through-composed vocal phrases. In Lully, for example, the orchestral interludes form a musical palindrome, the intervals recurring in the inverse order to which they appeared. Gluck’s musical repetition does not follow such a straightforward pattern, but the basic idea—musical continuity through orchestral repetition—remains the same in both operas. Though a century had passed, Lully’s techniques remained valid for Gluck.

Example 4.5A: Lully’s *Armide*: “Plus j’observe ces lieux,” mm.1-4.

The musical score for the prelude of Lully's *Armide* (measures 1-4) is presented in a grand staff format. The top staff is for the vocal line, and the bottom two staves are for the piano accompaniment. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major), and the time signature is 3/4. The piano part features a fluid eighth-note accompaniment in both hands. The word "PRÉLUDE." is written above the first measure of the piano part, and "pp (avec des sourdines)" is written below the first measure of the piano part.

¹⁵⁰ Schneider, “Gluck and Lully,” 267.

Example 4.5B: Gluck's *Armide*: "Plus j'observe ces lieux ," mm.1-5.

Andante.

It is in the treatment of airs that the unique styles of Gluck and Lully more clearly emerge. As with Gluck, Lully's airs are fully integrated into the tableau structure, constituting brief songs that flow easily to and from the surrounding recitative, or from other airs. Some airs are so short as to be periodic, exhibiting no larger form. However, Lully almost universally employs a consistent metre for all the airs within a given scene, and frequently utilizes text repetition, characteristics less common in Gluck's setting. Furthermore, while both Gluck and Lully based their placement of airs on the dramatic potential and content of the text, the two composers did not always set the same text as airs. The placement of airs demonstrates Gluck and Lully's divergent conception of what makes a text dramatic. However, the variety of musical styles in Gluck's airs additionally reflects his intention to convey not only the meaning of the text but also the character of the person speaking through his music.

Since the distinction between Gluck and Lully's airs stems from their placement in the opera and their musical diversity, the multiple airs found in Act one, scene two provide an ideal opportunity to compare the two composer's compositional procedures (see Table three). In this scene, Armide and her uncle Hidraot discuss the potential of Armide marrying, Armide finally pronouncing that she will only marry the man who can defeat Renaud. In Lully's setting, this entire dialogue takes place in a series of airs, with the exception of Hidraot's opening recitative. In the diversity of forms, these airs typify

Lully's practice throughout his *tragédie lyrique*. Repetition, however, forms the common thread through the majority of these forms. The AABB form of Armide's first air, "La chaîne d'hymen," employs repeat signs to create an exact repetition in the opening section, while the B repetition keeps the original rhythm but varies the melody. This practice of rhythmic repetition occurs throughout Lully's airs, the consistent rhythmic setting reflecting Lully's goal to have his musical settings match spoken declamation. The rhythmic repetition of the closing line in Hidraot's air "Pour vous, quand il vous plaît" creates a firm conclusion to the primarily through-composed piece, and serves similar functions in both Armide's "Contre mes ennemis," and Hidraot's "Bournez-vous vos dessins." Textual repetition allowed Lully to create recognizable musical structures and expand the length of Quinault's short texts. In fact, only the final air of the scene, Armide's "Si je dois m'engager," contains no repetition, Lully combining the metrical regularity of his airs with a flexibility of musical declamation to give the air a feeling of arioso. Apart from the variety of forms, however, Lully's airs share many musical qualities. All the airs in this scene are written in C major, and Lully provides no pause between them—the next air begins within a measure of the previous song. As demonstrated by the excerpts in example 4.6, Lully's airs in Act one, scene two exhibit a sameness that, while never resorting to melodic repetition between airs, belies the individual meaning of each text. Such homogeneity throughout Lully's scene creates unity, but as a result the expression of the text relies almost exclusively on its declamation, rather than any musical characteristics of the setting.

Example 4.6: Lully's *Armide*: Act one, scene two.

A) "La chaine d'hymen," mm. 8-10.

A

noeuds Ah! qu'un coeur de - vient mal - heu -

B) "Pour vous, quand il vous plait," mm. 7-10.

H

art que moi - mê - me. De grands Roys à vos pieds met - tent

C) "Contre mes enemis," mm. 7-9.

A

met des Roys dans mes fers, Je suis de mille amants maî -

Table 3: Act one, scene two comparison of Gluck and Lully's versions of *Armide*

Lully's <i>Armide</i> , Act one, scene two			Gluck's <i>Armide</i> , Act one, scene two		
Prelude and Recitative for Hidraot	"Armide, que le sang"	C	Prelude and Recitative for Hidraot	"Armide, que le sang"	C
			Air for Hidraot	"Je vois de près la mort" Form: through-composed	a
Air for Armide	"La chaîne de l'hymen" Form: AABB	C	Air for Armide	"La chaîne de l'hymen" Form: Through-composed with repetition	A
Air for Hidraot	"Pour vous, quand il vous plaît" Form: ABB	C	Air for Hidraot	"Pour vous, quand il vous plaît" Form: ABA	a
Air for Armide	"Contre mes ennemis" Form: ABB	C	Recitative for Armide	"Contre mes ennemis"	C
Air for Hidraot	"Bournez-vous vos désirs" form: AABB	C	Recitative for Hidraot	"Bournez-vous vos désirs"	G
Air for Armide	"Si je dois m'engager" Form: Through-composed	C	Air for Armide	"Si je dois m'engager" Form: Through-composed	e

Gluck's greatest improvement to this scene lies in the greater variety of forms and styles he employed in comparison to Lully's setting. In response to the dialogue between Hidraot and Armide, he created a unique setting for each air that reflected the underlying mood and meaning of the text. This differentiation between airs did not rely solely on key or metre, though Gluck typically changed these features from one air to the next. Likewise, the short orchestral interludes, contrasting with the rapid-fire succession of airs in Lully's scenes, were not the sole cause of each air's unique identity. Instead, the individuality of Gluck's airs stems from the unique musical setting of each text. Gluck employs both the vocal line and orchestral accompaniment to communicate the general mood of the text as well as the character of the singer. In Hidraot's airs "Je vois de près la mort" and "Pour vous quand il vous plaît," his gloomy topics of death and war are

underlined not only by the use of the minor key but also in “Je vois de près la mort” by the use of the Neapolitan to mark the words “mort” and “glace” (see ex. 4.7A and 4.7C). The switch to the major mode for Armide’s “La chaîne d’Hymen” highlights her contrast with Hidraot in both her confident mood and opposition to marriage. Hidraot’s airs are characterized by strident march rhythms in an implacable duple metre and angular melodic lines that paint him as a strong but rigid character. Armide’s lyric solo, immediately conveying a sense of calm and relaxation through its triple meter, offers a new facet to the enchantress’ personality, its grace notes, turning figures, and greater melodiousness (contrasting her Act one, scene one airs) suggesting a woman far more amenable to love than Armide appears to be. Armide gives Hidraot an ironic response, the sorceress using the musical conventions of a woman in love to reject the proffered bonds of marriage.

Example 4.7: Gluck’s *Armide*: Act one, scene 2.

A) “Je vois de près la mort,” mm. 1-8.

Andante

Schon seh' ich nah' der Par-ze Stahl mir drohen, des Lebens Traum ist bald ent-flo -
Je vois de près la mort, qui me me - na - ce, et bientôt l'â - ge, qui me gla -

B) “La chaine d’Hymen,” mm. 1-5.

Armide.

Wie Ro-sen am Torus auch glän-zen, mich
 La chai-ne de l'Hy-men m'é-ton-ne, je

C) “Pour vous, quand il vous plait,” mm. 1-6.

Hidr.

Das Gei-ster-reich ge-horcht deinem ban-nenden Stab, tief dringst du in die ma-gischen
 Pour vous, quand il vous plait, tout l'En-fer est ar-mé; vous ê-tes plus sa-vante en mon

Gluck’s division of Quinault’s text into recitative and air equally distinguishes his version of *Armide* from that of Lully. The differentiation between air and recitative, however, was not a musical consideration but a dramatic one; Gluck used recitative for those moments that had bearing on the progression of the action. As seen in table three, Gluck sets Armide’s “Contres mes enemis” and Hidraot’s “Bournez-vous vos desirs” as recitative, rather than airs as Lully did. Creating an instant contrast to the preceding airs in both orchestral texture and vocal style, Gluck’s recitative setting draws immediate attention to its text. These lines, in fact, constitute the fulcrum of the scene, revealing both Armide’s motivations—her desire to be the mistress of her own heart—and in Hidraot’s text, an ironic foreshadowing of Armide’s impending relationship with Renaud. Gluck thus identifies the dramatic core of the scene by setting this text as recitative. On the other hand, Gluck occasionally set Lully’s recitative as airs. Unlike Lully, Gluck divided Hidraot’s opening text into the recitative “Armide, que le sang” and the air “Je

vois de près la mort” due to the reflective nature of the latter. Similar disparities in the placement of recitative and air can be found throughout both versions of *Armide*. While Lully was undoubtedly cognizant of the functions of recitative and air, Gluck demonstrates a consistency in his setting of Quinault’s libretto unmatched by the earlier composer.

Though Gluck endeavoured to relay both the character of the singer and the content of the text in his musical settings, textual clarity, fundamental to both the eighteenth-century operatic reform and French opera, remained a primary concern. Gluck learned to set the French language in his Viennese *opéras comiques*, putting these skills to use first in *Iphigénie en Aulide* as well as the French versions of *Orfeo* and *Alceste*. By the time of *Armide*, Gluck’s aptitude in matching his musical settings to spoken declamation rivaled that of Lully.¹⁵¹ In fact, Gluck’s text setting often closely resembles that of the French composer. In the opening phrases of “Enfin il est en ma puissance,” for example, Gluck matches Lully’s rhythmic declamation of the text with surprisingly few alterations, maintaining a similar syllabic emphasis, although he does not utilize Lully’s metrical flexibility (see ex. 4.8). Even Gluck’s airs, constrained as they are by repeating melodic material and regular phrases structures, observe the natural emphasis of the poetic text. Gluck’s setting of Armide’s air “Ah! quelle cruauté,” for example, accentuates the same syllables in the text as Lully’s recitative setting, yet never adopts the extreme variability of metre employed by Lully. Nevertheless, his recitatives and airs are equally effective in mimicking the natural declamation of the French language.

¹⁵¹ Ironically, Lully himself was not a native French speaker. Born in Florence, Italy, Lully only first went to France at the age of fourteen where he served Mademoiselle de Montpensier. He did not enter the king’s service until the early 1650s, and was originally employed as a dancer, rather than a musician.

Example 4.8: Comparison of the opening lines of “Enfin il est en ma puissance.”

A) Lully’s Version

En - fin il est en ma puis - sance Ce fa - tal en - ne - mi, ce su - per - be vain - queur. Le charme du som -
meil - le livre à ma ven - gean - ce, Je vais per - cer son in - vin - ci - ble cœur!

The musical score for Lully's version consists of two staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The melody is characterized by frequent changes in time signature, including 3/4, 2/4, and 3/8. The lyrics are written below the notes.

B) Gluck’s Version

En - fin il est dans ma puis - san - ce, ce fa - tal en - ne - mi, ce su - per - be vain - queur: le char - me du som -
meil le livre à ma ven - gean - ce je veux per - cer son in - vin - ci - ble cœur!

The musical score for Gluck's version also consists of two staves. It begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The melody is more rhythmic and consistent than Lully's, with fewer time signature changes. A fermata is placed over the word 'meil' on the first staff. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Gluck’s aptitude in setting Quinault’s *Armide* libretto shows forth best in his dramatic monologues, which rival and arguably surpass Lully in their dramatic efficacy. A comparison of the two versions of “Enfin il est en ma puissance” aptly demonstrates this distinction. There are numerous similarities between Gluck and Lully’s versions of this monologue, including the central key of E minor and the presence of an orchestral prelude. These correspondences suggest Gluck’s familiarity with Lully’s opera, and perhaps even an intentional borrowing of these characteristics. Nevertheless, the dramatic expression of the text in each version reflects the age in which it was written. In his “Enfin” monologue, Lully masterfully captured Armide’s fluctuating emotions through sudden tonal changes, exclamations and pauses in the vocal lines, and declamatory melodic motifs representative of her vocal outbursts. However, expression of the text occurs exclusively in the vocal writing, Lully using the orchestra solely as a support system for the voice. Most commonly, the orchestra sustains the harmonies implied by

the voice in static chords, its melodic movement restricted to cadential gestures. Lully's orchestra does not interact with the voice in any of the frequent pauses, nor does it have independent melodic gestures in the course of the monologue. Only in the prelude does the orchestra have an independent voice (see ex. 4.9).

Example 4.9: Lully's "Enfin il est en ma puissance" monologue, mm. 25-35.

The musical score is presented in three systems. Each system includes a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (grand staff with treble and bass clefs). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are written below the vocal line.

System 1: The vocal line begins with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, and then a series of eighth notes: B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4. The piano accompaniment consists of a single half note G2 in the bass and a whole note chord (G4, B4, D5) in the treble.

System 2: The vocal line starts with a quarter note G#4, followed by eighth notes A4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4. The piano accompaniment features a series of chords: G4-B4-D5, A4-B4-C5, and then a sustained chord of G4-B4-D5.

System 3: The vocal line begins with a quarter note G4, followed by eighth notes A4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4. The piano accompaniment consists of a sustained chord of G4-B4-D5.

di - re? Frappons... Ciel! qui peut m'arrê - er? Ache -

The orchestra lies at the heart of the distinction between Gluck and Lully. While instrumental ensembles were not uncommon before Lully's time, the musicians that accompanied his *tragédies lyriques* were "the first large, integrated, standing orchestra under a single administration and a single leadership."¹⁵² Lully had worked extensively with the various court ensembles before assuming control of the opera, including *Les Vingt-quatre violons du Roy*, *Les Petits violons*, the *Grande Écurie*, and the musicians of *la Chambre*.¹⁵³ Though forbidden from employing these musicians for the opera, Lully modeled his orchestra on these groups, dividing the musicians into a *petit choeur* that accompanied soloists during recitative and airs and the *grand choeur* that was used for choral and dance music, with the woodwinds available to supplement both groups (see table 4). This practice of dividing the orchestra into choirs continued in France up to the end of the eighteenth century, though Gluck did not utilize this practice himself. Gluck's orchestra also differed from Lully's in the inclusion of cors, trompettes, clarinettes, and

¹⁵² John Spitzer and Neal Zaslaw, *The Birth of the Orchestra: History of an Institution, 1650-1815* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 91.

¹⁵³ Ibid, 72-82. *Les Vingt-quatre violons du Roy*, a five-part violin ensemble, played for court entertainments, balls, and state banquets. *Les Petits violons*, with equivalent orchestration and only slightly smaller than *Les Vingt-quatre violons*, were more intimately tied to the court, performing at private functions and travelling with the King. *The Grande Écurie* was a large stable of wind players, who often divided into smaller ensembles that both performed at independent venues and supplemented the court's string ensembles. *La Chambre* included singers, keyboardists, and lutenists who played in the king's household.

timbale, with these additional instruments providing Gluck with a wider range of orchestral timbres throughout his opera.

Table 4: Comparison of Lully and Gluck's orchestra for *Armide*

Lully's <i>tragédie lyrique</i> orchestra ¹⁵⁴	Gluck's orchestra ¹⁵⁵
<i>Petit choeur</i> batteur de mesure 1 clavecin 2 theorbes 2 dessus de violon 2 basses de violon 2 basses de viole	10 violons I 7 violons II 4 altos (viola) 5 violoncellos 4 contrebasse
<i>Messieurs les flutes</i> 2 hautbois et flutes 2 flûtes allemandes 2 flutes, hautbois, bassoon 2 bassons	2 flûtes 2 hautbois 4 bassons 2 cors 2 trompettes 2 clarinettes
<i>Grand choeur</i> 9 dessus de violon 3 hautecontres 3 tailles 2 quintes 8 basses de violon	timbale clavecin

Aside from a greater variety of orchestral timbres, Gluck benefitted from two developments in the eighteenth-century orchestra: orchestration and envoicing.¹⁵⁶ Orchestration arose alongside the development of new instruments in the eighteenth century, the greater variety allowing Gluck to treat “the instruments of the orchestra as a

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 90. This list of instrumentalists was created in 1704 during a reorganization of the opera. Given that the opera had remained relatively static in the years following Lully's death, Spitzer suggests that this list represents an accurate recording of Lully's orchestra.

¹⁵⁵ The instrumental balance presented here is based upon Minkowski's 1996 recording of Gluck's *Armide*. Based on a 1777 performance of *Almanach* which employed eight flutes and oboes, eight bassoons, and fifteen violoncellos, the actual orchestra used for Gluck's production of *Armide* may have been considerably larger than the instrumentation suggested here. Spitzer and Zaslav, *The Birth of the Orchestra*, 189.

¹⁵⁶ John Spitzer, “Orchestra and Voice in Eighteenth-Century Opera,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Opera*, eds. Anthony R. DelDonna and Pierpaolo Polzonetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 136.

resource for the creation of an array of timbres and effects.”¹⁵⁷ More significant to Gluck was the development of envoicing, in which the eighteenth-century orchestra “was given more and more responsibility for conveying meanings in the theatre.”¹⁵⁸ Such envoicing could occur through a symbolic use of instruments, such as the use of trombones to indicate the underworld.¹⁵⁹ More common and fundamental to this new instrumental role, however, was Gluck’s use of the orchestra “as a commentator in instrumental interjections and as partner to the singers, reinforcing or undermining the utterances of their characters.”¹⁶⁰ The partnership between voice and orchestra represents an essential, if under-recognized, element of Gluck’s operatic reform. More than any other technique employed by Gluck, the envoicing of the orchestra contributed to the greater efficacy of his dramatic monologues, and the overall expression of his operatic reform.

Gluck’s reliance on the orchestra to express the meaning of Quinault’s text can be observed throughout his setting of “Enfin il est en ma puissance.” Gluck incorporates a greater variety of accompanimental textures, a more diverse harmonic range, and interjections from the orchestra throughout the recitative. Following the lull of the pastoral divertissement, Gluck abruptly brings the operatic focus back to Armide and her quest for revenge through the recitative’s orchestral prelude, its ubiquitous dotted rhythm and sequential harmonic progressions an embodiment of the sorceress’ fury. Having successfully ensorcelled Renaud, Armide declaims her opening text over limited musical accompaniment, her recitative punctuated by non-sustained orchestral chords (see ex.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ While occurring primarily in the final scene of *Armide*, the connection between trombones and scenes of the underworld was established in both *Orfeo* and *Alceste*.

¹⁶⁰ Schneider, “Gluck and Lully,” 267.

4.10, mm. 11-17). Gluck's procedure in these opening phrases, in which Armide displays the greatest confidence and determination to kill Renaud, greatly resembles that of Lully. Yet the orchestra quickly assumes a more prominent role, entering into a dialogue with Armide. Following her declaration "Je vais percer son invincible cœur" (percer set on the highest pitches of the recitative thus far), the orchestra introduces two motifs: a *forte* ascending scale that conveys her determination to destroy Renaud, and a sudden *piano*, *ritenuto* passage, the lyrical motif characterized by a dotted rising and falling third (mm. 17-19). Anticipating Armide's "Ah! Quelle cruauté," sung after she realizes she cannot kill Renaud, this motif foreshadows her capitulation to love (mm. 49-54). The two warring desires of Armide's heart—to love Renaud or to kill him and free herself from her enemy—are thus embodied in the orchestra before they are vocalized in the text.

Following this interjection—the first indication that Armide will not kill Renaud—the sorceress attempts to bolster her resolve. As she vocalizes her ostensible motivation for killing the knight ("Par lui, tous mes captifs sont sortis d'esclavage"), the orchestra accompanies Armide's vocal line with tremolo chords that both heighten the tension and support her resolve as she prepares to strike. The scale motif reappears at a higher pitch, signalling the killing blow, and three unison chords suggest Armide has succeeded in killing the knight (mm. 23-24). Yet once again, the forward momentum of Armide's revenge dissolves, replaced by a descending 'sigh' motif played on a solo violin (m. 25). Matching the *piano* dynamic and *ritenuto* marking of the earlier interruption, the sudden texture change marks the moment that Armide realizes she cannot kill Renaud. Tremolo chords continue to support Armide's vocal line, but with its new *piano* dynamic and comparatively slow harmonic rhythm, the orchestra no longer

provides momentum, but rather a sense of stasis as Armide questions her ability to act (“Quel trouble me saisit, qui me fait hésiter?”) The suddenly low tessitura of Armide’s vocal line similarly robs the sorceress of forward momentum, and only gradually does she regain the confidence to urge herself on with the cry of “Frappons!” The orchestra matches her determination, repeating the scale motif in the tonic key of A minor as if to underscore Armide’s imperative commands (m. 29-30). Once more, the sigh motif reappears to stay Armide’s hand (m.31). The sorceress tries twice more to kill the sleeping Renaud. In both instances, however, her cries of “Achevons” and “Vengeons-nous,” mirrored by the orchestra’s scalar passages, are ultimately displaced by the sigh motif.

Unable to kill the knight, Armide has no recourse but to capitulate to her feelings for Renaud. Following her cry of “Vengeons-nous,” the sigh and scale motifs fragment into a tentative passage that emphasizes the offbeat through its chromatic appoggiaturas (m.38-40). Armide sings her final submission over this unstable accompaniment, her own insecurity conveyed in the descending leap of a diminished seventh in “Je soupire!” The sorceress remains cautious, as indicated by her low tessitura. But the gradual disengagement of the orchestra, returning to a more supportive and sustaining texture, indicates that Armide’s struggle between love and hate has ended. With the psychological conflict past, if not completely resolved, Gluck continues with the air “Ah! Quelle cruauté” and ultimately the aria “Venez, seconde mes désirs.” Gluck’s text setting throughout the monologue resembles that of Lully, both composers utilizing features such as the use of ascending intervals for Armide’s declamatory commands. In Gluck’s version, however, the orchestra also acts out the innate drama of the text, illustrating

Armide's inner conflict. By making the orchestra "an equal participant in the drama," Gluck gave *Armide* a dramatic momentum that Lully could not match with his more vocally-driven form.¹⁶¹

Example 4.10: Gluck's "Enfin il est en ma puissance" monologue, mm. 8-54.

Armide. (einen Dolch in der Hand)

Ha! endlich ist der Wurf ge-
Enfin il est dans ma puis-
Recit.

fal - - lent in die rä - chende Hand gab das Schicksal den Feind; der sor - gen - lo - se
 san - - ce, ce fa - tal en - ne - mi, ce su - per - be vain - queur: le char - me du som -

Schlaf, er o - pfer't ihn der Ra - che; durchbohrt sei nun sein trotzig Felsenherz!
 meil le livre à ma ven - gean - ce, je veux per - cer son in - vin - ci - ble coeur!

Allegro.

¹⁶¹ Spitzer, "Orchestra and Voice," 139.

Die Ket-ten jener Schaar hat er gewusst zu
 Par lui tous mes cap-tifs sont sortis d'escla-

ritenuto *Allegro.* *sf* *Recit.*

bre - chen, ha! Ar - mi - de wird es rä - chen!
 vo - ge, qu'il é - prou - ve tou - te ma ra - ge!

f *Allegro.* *p* *ritenuto*

Welch Wanken stört die That? nun, was zaudert mein Arm? ein fremd Ge - fühl durch -
 Quel trouble me sai - sil, qui me fait hé - si - ter? qu'est - ce qu'en sa fa -

Recit.

bebt den wuthgestählten Bu - sen! Durchbohrt —
 veur la pi - tié me reut di - re? Frappons... *ritenuto*

f *Allegro.* *p*

Ha! was hält mich zu - rück? Fort! es sei!
 Ciel! qui peut m'ar - rê - ter? A - che - vons!

Allegro. *ritenuto* *p*

Recit. O mein Herz! — Rache denn! —
Je fré-mis! — vengeons nous! — *più ritenuto*

Allegro.

ich za - gel - war es so, was ich Zürnen - de beschloss?
je sou - pi - re! — est-ce ainsi, que je dois me venger au - jour d'hui?

Welch milderes Gefühl, das in mein Herz sich goss! — Ach, jeder Blick
Ma co - le - re s'éteint, quand j'approche de lui! — Plus je le vois,

Recit.

ruft mir das Mit - leid wie - der, und zitternd sinkt das eit - le Werk - zeug nie - der!
plus ma fu - reur est vai - ne, mon bras tremblant se re - fu - se à ma hai - ne!

Grazioso con espressione.

Ach! wer vertilgt ihn
Ah! quel - le cru - au -

Gluck knew that, in choosing to set *Armide*, he was inviting comparisons to Lully and the conventions of French opera. The correlations that have emerged between the two versions of the opera—the similar structural organization, the similarities in text declamation, the possible borrowing of material—strongly indicate that Gluck had studied Lully’s opera. Yet Gluck did not hesitate to incorporate either the ideals of the eighteenth-century operatic reform or the musical style of his age into his version of *Armide*. Nevertheless, it appears that he never aimed to supplant French opera with his own conception of what the genre should be. Instead, Gluck sought to develop Lully’s style “to an acme of perfection.”¹⁶² Utilizing the essential characteristics of Lully’s *tragédie lyrique*, Gluck updated French opera, making it applicable to the audience of the late eighteenth century. If Gluck diverged from Lully’s model, it was out of a genuine desire to better express his own conception of opera through the *tragédie lyrique* that he believed was still a valid and relevant musical form.

¹⁶² Schneider, “Gluck and Lully,” 266.

Conclusion: Gluck, *Armide*, and the Grand Paradox

Armide, ever enigmatic, straddles a fine line between innovation and tradition. A staple on the French stage in the early nineteenth-century, *Armide* had little presence outside of France until its revival in Dresden in 1843, conducted by none other than Richard Wagner, who, having recently premiered *Die fliegende Holländer*, was beginning to formulate his operatic aesthetic. Further revivals of *Armide* occurred throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, culminating in the opera's reappearance on the Parisian stage in 1905, followed by its premiere at Covent Garden in 1906 and the Metropolitan Opera in 1910. Wagner's exploration of Gluck's works extended beyond stage productions, with Wagner discussing the earlier composer not only in shorter essays such as *Über die Ouvertüre* (1841) and *Über die Bestimmung der Oper* (1871) but also in his seminal *Oper und Drama* (1852), in which Wagner identifies Gluck as the composer who, taking complete control of the opera from the singers, made music work towards a dramatic expression of the text.¹⁶³ Comparisons between Gluck and Wagner, such as C. H. Ritter's *Reform der Oper durch Gluck und Richard Wagner*, fuelled interest in the earlier composer. Comparisons between Gluck and Wagner were so rife by the end of the century that Ernest Newman, who authored the first English biography of Gluck, derided the correlation as both convenient and erroneous.¹⁶⁴ Such

¹⁶³ Richard Wagner, *Opera and Drama*, in *Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, vol. 2, trans. William Ashton Ellis, (The Wagner Library), <http://users.skynet.be/johndeere/wlpdf/wlpr0063.pdf>, 29.

¹⁶⁴ Ernest Newman, *Gluck and the Opera: A Study in Musical History* (Betram Dobell, 1895; repr., London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1964), "The climax of metaphysical absurdity comes in the making of analogies between Gluck and Wagner on the basis of a supposed similarity between their methods of reform, unmindful of the fact that while Gluck and the eighteenth-century thinkers in general held that music should be wholly subordinate to poetry, and should strive to express not musical but poetic ideas, the practice of the nineteenth century, whatever its theories may occasionally be, is to subordinate poetry to music in any combination between them, and to use the poetry merely to supply the definiteness that is lacking in music."

comparisons, however, would continue into the twentieth century. Donald Tovey's article on Gluck in the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1911) connects not only Gluck and Wagner's dramatic reforms but also, humorously, their "caustic temper."¹⁶⁵ Carl van Vechten went so far as to call Gluck the "father of the music drama," with *Armide* exemplifying the musically "continuous whole" characteristic of Wagner's compositions.¹⁶⁶ Later in the twentieth century, Carl Dahlhaus connected Gluck and Wagner through their shared role as reformer of opera, observing that opera was "restored in the eighteenth-century by Gluck, and again, after a second decay restored in the nineteenth by Wagner."¹⁶⁷ An aesthetic accord certainly exists between the two composers, with Gluck's desire to have complete control over the opera, to be "both poet and painter" foreshadowing Wagner's concept of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* in which the composer provides the entire operatic vision. Though such comparisons between Gluck and Wagner are no longer prominent, the connection drawn between the two was instrumental in the rediscovery of Gluck and his operas at the beginning of the twentieth century.

At the same time, *Armide* is arguably one of Gluck's most traditional reform operas, imbued with the characteristics of seventeenth-century *tragédie lyrique*. Most of the antiquated elements generated by the use of Quinault's libretto, particularly the *divertissement*, do not appear in any of Gluck's other reform operas. These characteristics, while not negating *Armide*'s existence as a reform opera, do segregate the work from the rest of Gluck's oeuvre. France, for its part, viewed Gluck not as a reformer

¹⁶⁵ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th ed., s.v. "Gluck, Christoph Willibald."

¹⁶⁶ Van Vechten, "Notes on Gluck's *Armide*," 540.

¹⁶⁷ Carl Dahlhaus, "Tradition and Reform in Opera," in *Aesthetics of Music*, trans. by William W. Austin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 65.

of opera, but as “the culmination of the *tragédie lyrique* tradition epitomized by the works of Lully and Rameau.”¹⁶⁸ The relative ease with which Gluck came to dominate the French stage downplays the fact that he was the first foreign composer to gain pre-eminence on the stage where, until then, “the repertory had been dictated by French masters alone.”¹⁶⁹ Though Gluck’s reforms of Italian opera often constitute his most significant developments in the academic literature on opera, his French works appear on stage far more often than his Italian operas, belying their lack of emphasis in the critical literature.

The inherent juxtaposition of tradition and innovation in *Armide* epitomizes a parallel conflict in Gluck himself. A composer who in his early life showed no signs of refashioning opera seria, Gluck would eventually embody the operatic developments of the eighteenth century in his compositions, earning himself an enduring, and arguably exclusive, reputation as the reformer of Italian, and to a lesser extent French, opera. Gluck’s reputation as a reformer has far surpassed his reputation as a musician. Gluck’s operas did not spark any widespread following among his colleagues or successors. Even in his own lifetime, Gluck was more admired than emulated. His only pupil Salieri enjoyed many success on the operatic stage, but from a modern perspective he has been eclipsed by Mozart, a fate only slightly less pronounced for Gluck. Even in France, Gluck’s impact was less than one might expect. Gluck never wrote another *tragédie lyrique* and the vogue for resetting Quinault’s libretti initiated by *Armide* was both short-lived and relatively fruitless. Though Gluck was the more talented composer, Julian

¹⁶⁸ William Gibbons, “*Iphigénie à Paris*: Positioning Gluck Historically in Early Twentieth-Century France,” *Intersections: Canadian Journal of Music* 27, no. 1 (2006): 3.

¹⁶⁹ J.G. Prod’homme, “Austro-German Musicians in France in the Eighteenth Century,” trans. by Theodore Baker, *Musical Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (1929): 177, 184.

Rushton argues that the music of Piccinni characterized French opera from 1777 onwards, Gluck's compositions remaining a superior but ultimately unique achievement.¹⁷⁰ Paradoxically, it is easier to relate Gluck to the operas that preceded his reform than those that came after; Gluck clearly drew upon the developments of earlier operatic composers and the theories of his contemporaries, whereas his own musical developments cannot be traced into the ensuing century. The propensity of studies that identify Gluck as the culmination of either eighteenth-century operatic reform or, in France, the *tragédie lyrique*, is indicative of the fact that Gluck's reputation and extra-musical impact as a reformer far exceeds that of his operas.

Gluck's historical import as a reformer, rather than a musician, explains *Armide's* oblique reception in the critical literature: of all his operas, *Armide* has the least explicit connection to the goals of eighteenth-century operatic reform, relying on and emphasizing Gluck's role as a musician. *Armide* is thus the key to elucidating Gluck's lasting musical impact on opera. To the end of his life, Gluck considered *Armide* "the best of [his] works," surpassing even *Iphigénie en Tauride*.¹⁷¹ What makes the opera so unique to both the composer and his historical significance lies in the fact that *Armide* was Gluck's first opera that fulfilled his desire to "do away with the ridiculous differentiation between national musical styles."¹⁷² Though rarely acknowledged in the current critical literature, this goal of supranational opera was recognized by many of Gluck's contemporaries. The eighteenth-century music collector Padre Martini commented that Gluck's operas combined "all the finest qualities of Italian, and many

¹⁷⁰ Rushton, "The Theory and Practice of Piccinnisme," 44.

¹⁷¹ Gluck to Baron Jacob von Gontard, Vienna, end of 1779, quoted in Howard, *Gluck: An Eighteenth-Century Portrait*, 209.

¹⁷² Gluck, letter to the editor, *Mercure de France*, Vienna, 1 February 1773, reprinted in Lesure, *Querelle des Gluckistes*, 8-10, quoted in Howard, *Gluck: An Eighteenth-Century Portrait*, 106-107.

of those of French music, with the great beauties of the German orchestra.”¹⁷³ Baron Grimm, one of Gluck’s frequent detractors, similarly stated in 1783:

Having blended in his style Italian melody, French declamation, and the German *Lied*, it has been Gluck’s well-nigh unique privilege to influence directly and simultaneously the three great musical schools of Europe and stamp his imprint upon them. This came about because he belonged to all three without being engaged in any one of them.¹⁷⁴

Grimm’s last point is central to Gluck’s operatic style; though *Armide* utilized elements of both operatic traditions, and in a sense belonging to both, it did not wholeheartedly manifest the precepts of either, refusing to engage in the perpetuation of either national style. Gluck’s intention was not to “fix” French and Italian opera by introducing characteristics of the other (though in practice the operatic reform sometimes seems to follow such a formula). Neither was supranational opera a simple amalgamation of the best features of the two national styles. Supranational opera was achieved through Gluck’s recognition of and return to the universal origin of opera: the desire to present a realistic drama on the stage through the medium of music. The dramatic juxtaposition of Italian opera and *tragédie lyrique* in *Armide* succeeds because “tragédie lyrique preserved many features of Italian opera as it had been generations earlier.”¹⁷⁵ By acknowledging this common origin and ultimate goal, Gluck freed opera from the need to constrain itself to a specific national style. Opera instead was to follow the precepts Gluck aimed to achieve in *Armide*:

I held that melody, when thoroughly imbued with the colour of the feelings it has to express, must take shape from them, and show as many different shades of feeling as there are different nuances [in the words]; in short, that the voice, the instruments, all the sounds, the very silences, must work towards a single aim,

¹⁷³ *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. J.A. Fuller Maitland, Vol. 2. (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1908), 187.

¹⁷⁴ Prod’homme, “Austro-German Musicians,” 188.

¹⁷⁵ Hertz, “Traetta in Parma,” 271.

that of expression, and that the union between words and music must be so close that the poem is no more made for the music than the music for the poem.¹⁷⁶

Gluck suffers from a Grand Paradox. Though recognized as an historically significant composer, his works appear infrequently on the operatic stage. This relative obscurity can be traced back not only to the political upheaval of the French Revolution, but also to the imminent arrival of equally notable composers such as Mozart and Rossini, whose works eclipse Gluck's own on the modern stage. This is particularly true of Mozart, a close contemporary of Gluck's, whose works appeared on stage with the elder composer's support. While Mozart certainly had the advantage of novelty for the eighteenth-century audience, the significance modern criticism has given to Mozart's operas as "the late eighteenth-century solution to the problem of action and musical continuity" has heightened the degree to which he outstrips the earlier operas of Gluck.¹⁷⁷ Yet the very supranational reform that Gluck achieved in his operas provides the foundation for the developments and success of these subsequent composers. Both Mozart and Rossini, as well as later nineteenth-century composers such as Verdi, composed opera that superseded national boundaries and styles. However, Gluck was the first composer to successfully create such an international form of opera, utilizing all of the musical resources available to the composer to express the drama, regardless of national or historical convention. Furthermore, he was "the first composer whose talents and inclinations equipped him to adopt a certain approach to opera simultaneous with an

¹⁷⁶ Gluck, *Journal de Paris*, 12 October 1777, 2-3; reprinted in Lesure, *Querelle des Gluckistes*, 271-275, quoted in Howard, *Gluck: An Eighteenth-Century Portrait*, 178.

¹⁷⁷ Joseph Kerman, *Opera as Drama*, rev. ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 80.

external movement towards the same dramatic ends,” a correlation between music and drama that came to characterize operatic music throughout the nineteenth century.¹⁷⁸

Armide is the doorway through which to understand Gluck’s operatic motivations and the unique collision of forms and styles that occurs in his work. However, *Armide* is also the doorway into the world of modern opera, a work that set the stage for the modern consumption and dissemination of this artistic form. His compositions remain the earliest works to appear on the operatic stage without the caveat of “early opera,” an indication that “the music of Gluck’s greatest operas remains dramatically true for all eras.”¹⁷⁹ As scholarship into both Gluck and eighteenth-century opera continues, the recognition of Gluck’s contribution to opera as a musician may come to equal his reputation as a dramatic reformer. Such an acknowledgement would yield not only a greater musical appreciation of Gluck’s operas, but would also provide the necessary context for the success of composers who today are ubiquitous on the operatic stage. This secondary purpose—a wider understanding of the creation of supranational, that is modern, opera—would ultimately be the greater reward, one which Gluck recognized himself:

M. Gluck enters into competition with no one, and he will always be pleased to hear music which is better than [his] own. The only aim should be the advancement of the art.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ Howard, *Gluck and the Birth of Modern Opera*, 110.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.* 111.

¹⁸⁰ Gluck to the amateurs, *Journal de Paris*, 12 January 1778, 47-48; reprinted in Lesure, *Querelle des Gluckistes*, 405, quoted in Howard, *Gluck: An Eighteenth-Century Portrait*, 184.

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Appendix

Preface to *Alceste* (1769)

When I undertook to write the music for *Alceste*, I decided to strip it completely of those abuses, introduced either by the ignorant vanity of singers or by composers over-eager to oblige, abuses which have for so long disfigured Italian opera, and turned the most sumptuous and beautiful of all spectacles into the most ridiculous and the most tedious. I thought to restrict music to its true function of helping poetry be expressive and to represent the situations of the plot, without interrupting the action or cooling its impetus with useless and unwanted ornaments. I thought it should act in the same way as an accurate and well-executed drawing is brought to life by colour and by the well-chosen contrast of light and shade, which serve to animate the figures, without changing their shapes. I did not therefore want to hold up an actor in the white heat of dialogue to wait for a tedious ritornello, not let him remain on a favourite vowel in the middle of a word, or display the agility of his fine voice in lengthy passage work, not let him wait while the orchestra gives him time to recover his breath for a cadenza. I did not feel it my duty to skim quickly over the second part of an aria, which may well contain the most passionate and significant words, in order to have space to repeat exactly, four times over, the words of the first part, nor to accommodate a singer who wants to show in how many ways he can capriciously vary a passage, rather than ending the aria where its meaning ends. In short, I have sought to abolish all those abuses against which reason and good sense have for long cried in vain.

I considered that the *sinfonia* should inform the spectators of the subject that is to be enacted, and constitute, as it were, the argument; that the ensemble of instruments

should be formed with reference to the interest and feeling, without leaving that sharp division in the dialogue between aria and recitative; that [the orchestra] should not break up a sentence nonsensically, nor interrupt the force and heat of the action inappropriately.

I also considered that my greatest efforts should be concentrated on seeking a beautiful simplicity. I have avoided making a show of complexities at the expense of clarity; and I did not think it useful to invent novelties which were not genuinely required to express the situation and the emotions. There is no convention that I have not willingly renounced in favour of the total effect.

These are my principles. By good fortune, the libretto lent itself miraculously to my plan. The celebrated author had throughout substituted florid descriptions, unnecessary similes and affected cold moralizing, with the language of the heart, strong passions, interesting situations, and a constantly varied spectacle. Success justified my precepts, and the universal approbation of so enlightened a city has clearly shown that simplicity, truth, and nature are the great principles of beauty in all artistic endeavours. Although highly respected people have repeatedly urged me to issue this opera of mine in print, I have been fully aware of the risk which would be run in combating widely held and deeply rooted prejudices, and I have thought it necessary to arm myself with the most powerful patronage of Your Royal Highness, entreating the favour to preface my opera with your August Name, which so justly unites the support of an enlightened Europe. Great Protector of the fine arts, you reign over a nation which has the glory of seeing them rise again from universal oppression, a nation itself producing one of the greatest models, in the form of a city which was always the first to shake off the yoke of popular prejudice by blazing a trail to perfection, and which alone can undertake the reform of

this noble spectacle in which all the fine arts have so great a share. When this should come about, I shall retain the glory of having moved the first stone, and this public testimonial of Your Highness's protection from which favour I have the honour of declaring myself, with most humble deference, your Royal Highness's most humble, devoted, and obedient servant,

Cristoforo Gluck¹⁸¹

¹⁸¹ Translation by Patricia Howard, *Gluck and the Birth of Modern Opera*, 84-85.