Painting and Reform in Eighteenth-Century France: Greuze's *L'Accordée de Village*

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When Jean-Baptiste Greuze exhibited his latest work at the Salon of 1761, under the title 'A Marriage, and the instant in which the father of the bride hands over the dowry to his son-in-law',[1] the audience responded in a wholly unprecedented way. Rapturous crowds made it difficult to approach the painting, which received overwhelming critical as well as popular acclaim.[2] This extraordinary reception made *L'Accordée de Village* (*Fig. 1*), as the composition subsequently became known, a public work to an extent that no previous French painting had been. Its exhibition marks a turning point in the relationship between art and the new public sphere.[3] Paradoxically, recent studies of Greuze have tended to ignore his first great success, focusing instead on paintings that were not shown at the Salon.[4] Just why *L'Accordée* should have made such a sensation has not yet been adequately explained.

Existing attempts to account for its impact have usually done so by locating Greuze in the context of the literary phenomenon of *sensibilité*, which reached new heights in the same year with the publication of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's novel, *La Nouvelle Héloïse*.[5] Such an interpretation unduly restricts the terms of reference, however, since it fails to acknowledge the broader cultural shifts that took place in France after 1750, as the élite began to replace their frivolous concerns with a new set of reformist and utilitarian ideals.[6] Books and articles on agriculture and economic problems in general found a massively increased readership and, within a few years, commentators felt able to discern the rise of an *esprit philosophique*, which they described as 'the study of man'.[7] The great monument of this new critical spirit was the *Encyclopédie*, which embodied a belief in the benefits of applying rational enquiry to all aspects of

Fig. 1. Jean-Baptiste Greuze, 'L'Accordée de Village', 1761, oil on canvas. 92 × 117 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

human endeavour. At the same time, its editor, Denis Diderot, also argued that philosophy must be endowed with human interest; only in this way would it be possible 'to please, interest, touch', even when dealing with the driest subject-matter.[8] The Encyclopedists could not afford to neglect such considerations; it was vital to win over public opinion which had emerged as a power within the nation, rivalling that of the absolutist French monarchy itself.[9]

It is my contention here that *L'Accordée de village* played a part in the project of Enlightenment. The painting can be said to have emerged from one of the literary salons which provided a crucial forum in which new ideas could be worked out, prior to addressing the public beyond.[10] It seems likely that a significant factor in the decision of its original owner, the Marquis de Marigny, to commission such an ambitious and innovative composition for his collection was his friendship with Mme Geoffrin, who was a notable patron of the arts as well as the hostess of a salon frequented by the *philosophes*.[11] Her hospitality played an important, if indefinable, role in bringing together artists and men of letters, among them Diderot and Greuze.[12] What made it possible for the visual arts to be brought into play as instruments of Enlightenment was the existence of that other Salon, the biennial exhibition held in the Louvre and frequented by a broad cross-section of Parisian society, which gave substance to the otherwise rather abstract notion of the public.[13]

In what follows, I will first consider the means by which *L'Accordée de village* engaged the attention of the Salon audience and attempt to define the nature of its appeal. Where my analysis will decisively depart from previous accounts of the painting is in the demonstration that these effects were not an end in themselves but had a political import. *L'Accordée* can be aligned, both on the level of subject matter and of composition, with a particular ideological position. Far from simply representing an event in the private life of a humble rural family, it offered, in microcosm, a utopian vision of an enlightened social order. It held out the possibility of reconciling virtue with prosperity as nearby England was believed to have done. *L'Accordée*'s success is inseparable from the growing vogue for reformist ideals at a time when France's hegemony in Europe seemed to be in jeopardy.

I

The attention that *L'Accordée* received was in large part a consequence of the striking pictorial innovations that it represents. The shallow space and statuesque figure style endow the painting with an unparalleled sense of physical presence. It is devoid of the picturesque disorder of traditional genre scenes and the space is defined by strong vertical and horizontal lines formed by the wall and cupboard door and the shelf above. Against this austere backdrop, the figures stand out with a force which makes their formal grouping instantly legible. The composition builds up from the lower corners in twin diagonals reinforced by inward turning glances and gestures. This clarity is enhanced by differentiated use of colour and line; the pale tones and curving contours of the predominantly female left half contrast with the dark shades and angular outlines of the three men on the other side. Bright touches of colour punctuate this pattern, with the bridegroom's red waistcoat providing a focal point. The overall effect is arresting.

The startling frontality and immediacy of *L'Accordée* can be seen as a calculated response to the difficult viewing conditions of the Salon. Amidst the crowds that flocked there, a painting had to stand out from the dense, multi-layered hang and engage spectators in a much more direct and uncomplicated way in order for them to notice it at all. By 1750, critics had begun to make demands for a new kind of illusion, one that could carry absolute conviction.[14] They evoked an ideal painting, which through the stillness and dignity of figures, simplicity of setting and high finish of details could, they claimed, deceive viewers into believing in the actuality of the scene in front of them. As one critic satirically pointed out, the logical conclusion of such demands would be for painters to depict everything lifesize.[15] Evidently, the result would be indistinguishable from a tableau vivant.

L'Accordée undoubtedly did have the desired effect on those who saw it.[16] So forcefully did it call to mind a tableau vivant that, before the end of the year, the *Comédie italienne* had put on a play inspired by the painting, entitled *Les Noces d'Arlequin*; at one point, the curtain rose to reveal the actors in the same costumes and poses as the figures in the painting.[17] Greuze was praised for creating an illusion so perfect that the eye was deceived into thinking that it beheld not a picture but reality.[18] These simple pleasures were not, however, incompatible with the requirements of serious, edifying art. Sensationalist philosophy suggested that images had a greater power over human beings than did poetry because they addressed the senses, giving direct access to the soul without the mediation of words.[19] These ideas gave rise to a new interest in the art of pantomime, associated with the lowly Italian players, which, Diderot argued, could supplement the primarily verbal tradition of the *Comédie française*.[20] That the official stage's function as a public and moral spectacle was shared by *L'Accordée* is evident from *Les Noces d'Arlequin*. A comic intrigue in which Harlequin was the fiancé and a man in drag played the mother, the piece stands in relation to the painting as other *Comédie italienne* farces did to the serious plays of the *Comédie française* that they parodied.

Nothing stood in the way of *L'Accordée*'s popular appeal and didactic function since, unlike a history painting which derived from a pre-existing text, it could be understood without reference to anything beyond its frame. Visitors to the Salon would have had no difficulty in recognizing the subject, which is not in fact a wedding but a betrothal.[21] To be precise, the painting depicts the conclusion of the

contract by which the financial and other terms of the young couple's union are agreed.[22] The subject was not an entirely novel one.[23] What is innovative is the relative scale and elaboration with which Greuze depicted this central rite of passage. The drawing up of a marriage contract prior to the religious ceremony was standard practice in France among all but the very poor.[24] Since the sixteenth century, as the monarchy had gradually appropriated jurisdiction over such matters from the church, marriage had itself come to be widely regarded as a civil contract rather than a holy sacrament.[25] This secular conception of marriage was not, pace Edgar Munhall, exclusively Protestant; his claim that Greuze may have depicted a Protestant a civil ceremony is hard to credit, not least because no such institution existed in France at this date.[26] Had *L'Accordée* functioned as a statement on behalf of a persecuted minority, it could not have been exhibited at the Salon, much less excited such general enthusiasm.

In choosing to depict a familiar yet significant event in the human life cycle, Greuze might seem to be following the didacticism of the new sentimental novel. At any rate, there is clear parallel between the impact of *L'Accordée*, which forced critics to revise their habitually disdainful attitude towards genre scenes, and contemporary developments within literature, which had shown how a hitherto despised genre could gain respectability by turning to an emotionally involving and morally improving depiction of private life. A key role in this transformation was played by translations of the work of Samuel Richardson, which seemed to stand in reproof to the conventional worldliness of French fiction.[27] According to Diderot, the naturalistic depiction of ordinary lives in Richardson's novels was inherently virtuous because the reader identifies with the characters, a denial of one's individuality that affirms membership of a common humanity.[28] In the case of *L'Accordée*, such an identification is promoted by the depiction of a family group which offers a microcosm of humanity, uniting as it does young and old, men and women.[29] Moreover, the figures of the mother and sister who cling tearfully to the bride remind us that the happy event of the wedding will create a gap in the family circle; it is this underlying melancholy which excites the sympathetic response of the viewer. Like a novel, *L'Accordée* seeks to edify by creating a new intimacy, founded on the shedding of tears, between the human beings who appear within it and those who constitute its public.

In general terms, the effectiveness of the painting depends on the heightened legibility offered by the strongly differentiated physical types and the forceful expressions and gestures.[30] It was, however, the bride herself who seems to have fascinated contemporary viewers most. Comments on this figure reveal a degree of uniformity which suggests that sentimental fiction provided the critics with a standard point of reference; one saw her as a portrait of Pamela, Richardson's resolutely chaste heroine.[31] The lowered gaze of the bride, her hand not quite holding that of her fiancé, were read as the expression of her modesty, which prevents the young woman from revealing her love. This was commended in terms which highlight the ambiguity of the very concept of modesty.[32] It was held to be a natural quality in the female sex but also one that needed to be cultivated.[33] Since humanity was believed, in the optimistic assessment of sentimental moralists, to be essentially good but in constant need of moral reinforcement,[34] the modest bride can embody humanity's aspiration to virtue. This was emphasized by the widely accepted identification of the girl looking on intently at the far right as a jealous elder sister. It assured viewers that the right girl has got the man, confirming that the painting, like *Pamela*, shows *Virtue Rewarded.*

The morality of the scene depended, however, on a further opposition, in this case between the rustic innocence depicted in the painting and the spectators' own world. The true love that the young couple were assumed to feel for each other stood in implied reproof to the cynical attitude to marriage prevalent in Paris and at court. The contrast between rural and urban matrimony, which *L'Accordée* inevitably called to mind, is made explicit in a widely circulated poem inspired by the painting. It tells how a young financier, used to the 'brilliant weddings' of 'le monde', in which the heart plays no part, stumbles across the union of a loving young couple in the countryside; on witnessing this touching sight, he 'tastes the inexpressible delights of an unfamiliar feeling'.[35] This account of the scene's impact on a sophisticated urban viewer accords with Diderot's claim that 'honest and serious plays' would be most successful 'among corrupted people', since 'it is there that they will see the human race as it really is, and so be reconciled with it'.[36] Similarly, Rousseau's first preface to *La Nouvelle Héloïse* declared: 'Theatres are necessary in cities, and novels among corrupted peoples.'[37] Such comments clearly refer as much to intended as to achieved effects but nevertheless point to what is distinctive about this novel brand of didacticism.

Comparison of *L'Accordée* with *La Nouvelle Héloïse* suggest that both functioned to bring about the internalization of new moralized identities, new forms of subjectivity, among their publics. Rousseau claimed that his aim in the novel had been to inculcate virtue by presenting models of right conduct which, rather than discouraging, were accessible and uplifting.[38] The deluge of letters he received testified to its power to move people and even to change their lives; several of his correspondants claimed that 'reading this work had turned them into better people'.[39] The reader follows the path of the heroine, Julie, from frailty to virtue, undergoing a process of conversion through identifying with her.[40] Like Rousseau, Greuze endows didactic art with a new persuasive force by focusing on a charming young woman whose human desires are balanced by her sense of morality. In both novel and painting, moreover, marriage appears as the moment of truth in which potentially disruptive

female sexuality is contained and redirected towards a higher moral end.[41] The underlying message, a message with which even the most progressive thinkers would have concurred, is that happiness should be sought through virtuous submission to the general good.[42] One account of Rousseau's novel stated: 'I regard his plan as an immense machine, concealed beneath the veil of the most noble simplicity.'[43] *L'Accordée* too can be seen as a machine for the creation of order.

II

Although *L'Accordée de Village* takes its current name from the bride, Greuze's contemporaries do not seem to have felt that hers was the most important presence.[44] Her seductive figure draws the viewer into the scene, but, instead of remaining fixed on her, the gaze continues rightwards as if reading a text and comes to rest on the father of the family. The critics assumed that this figure is delivering a moral homily to his son-in-law; according to one commentator, 'his animated face, his raised hand . . . makes clear to the most stupid spectator, all the interest which agitates the good father at this moment'.[45] He is the centre of attention; as Diderot observed, 'the father is the only one who speaks. The others listen and keep quiet'.[46] He thus not only upholds virtue but also guarantees the intelligibility of the composition. The subordination of all the other figures to this one endowed *L'Accordée* with the formal and dramatic unity of a true *tableau* in the highest tradition of French painting. This expressive concentration was encapsulated by the notion that the painting speaks to the viewer; several critics identified it as a *peinture parlante*.[47] Thus, by implication, it is not simply the onlookers within the picture who heed the father's words and thereby yield to his moral authority but also the spectators outside the frame who by the simple act of looking become part of the ordered structure of the composition.

L'Accordée fulfils Diderot's dictum that 'every piece of sculpture or painting must be the expression of a great maxim, a lesson for the spectator, without which it is mute'.[48] It provides a pictorial counterpart to the *drames* which the *philosophe* wrote in response to his own demands for a didactic art.[49] Diderot found in Greuze's painting a parallel to his own attempts to rationalize classical French drama by introducing an element of realism without, however, subverting its rules. He admired the combination of formal structure and naturalism in *L'Accordée*, commenting that the 'pyramid' of conventional academic practice appeared in it as if by accident.[50] And just as Diderot's attempts to create a non-authoritarian moral art (paralleling contemporary innovations in the novel) were compromised by reliance on secular sermons interpolated into the narrative to make the message clear, so also, in *L'Accordée*, the father's rhetorical gesture, the insistent centrality of his open hands, betrays the fact that the whole scene is, as it were, put on for the spectator's benefit. The most direct connection between Greuze's painting and Diderot's *drames*, however, lies in a shared concern with the moral responsibilities of fatherhood, on which, both believed, the good order of society depended.[51] *Le Père de famille*, first performed by the *Comédie française* in February 1761, provided a precedent, perhaps even a direct model, for *L'Accordée*.[52]

Whatever the nature of the connection between them, both works embody a distinctively novel vision of fatherhood which departs from more traditional conceptions of paternal authority.[53] In the *Encyclopédie*, for example, not only is the emphasis laid on a father's duties rather than his rights but it is also made clear that these are shared between both parents.[54] The parallel positions of the father and mother in *L'Accordée* seem to echo such a conception (some critics assumed that the latter is similarly advising her daughter on how to conduct herself).[55] In Diderot's play, the widowed father seems to unite in himself the qualities of both a father and a mother; he is 'kind, vigilant, firm and tender'. Refusing to abuse his power over his children, he ends up by blessing their marriages, despite having earlier opposed both matches. His real concern for their best interests is highlighted by comparison to a ruthlessly self-seeking uncle.[56] This contrast between a loving father figure and a usurping, tyrannical one echoes the distinction made by Diderot in the *Encyclopédie* between the legitimate monarch who is paternally attentive to his subjects' welfare and the despot, whose power is arbitrary and oppressive.[57] A similar doubling of authority figures occurs in *L'Accordée*, where the notary, whose black tricorn serves as a mark of status, appears to embody authority that seeks power for its own sake.[58] Juxtaposition to his lowered, sour-featured face enhances the nobility of the father's raised head. The authority of this virtuous old man, who gives his daughter in marriage to the man she loves, is justified by his natural concern for his children's happiness.

Nevertheless, the father is distanced from his immediate family by being placed on the right of the painting between the fiancé and the notary. The latter's presence defines this male grouping in terms of the public sphere of law and reason in contrast to the private domain of natural feeling, represented by the women on the left. The father's relationship with his son-in-law is regulated by the contract, drawn up by the notary, and manifested by the handing over of the dowry. This embodies the rejection of traditional patriarchal thought by the Encyclopedists, who denied that political authority derived from that of the father, arguing instead that civil society had been initiated by a contract, which provided a consensual model for all exchanges between individuals.[59] The natural dependence of a son ends when he reaches the age of reason, after which he is obliged to listen to the advice of his elders, like the young man in *L'Accordée*, but has no need of their consent to leave home or marry.[60] The bride, by contrast, though she too is

party to the contract, remains in the state of nature; having no control over her dowry, she simply passes from her father's tutelage to that of her husband. This was justified on the grounds that women, whose natural emotionality meant that they remained child-like all their lives, were not rational, autonomous individuals; as such, they were excluded from the original contract and remained outside civil society.[61] The fundamental tenets of patriarchy, on which the absolutist French monarchy depended,[62] were not undermined by the Encyclopedists, who continued to view the family as the basic unit of society and its head as the mainstay of public order.

It is this emphasis on the handing over of authority from a present to a future head of household that makes *L'Accordée* so resonant; it evokes a polity guided by the principles which they embody. The central value upheld here is property: a money-bag, framed by the father's commanding hands, irresistibly attracts the viewer's attention. Although the critics insisted that Greuze depicts a loving union in which material interest plays no part, they had no qualms in asserting that the father is telling the fiancé to make wise use of the money.[63] For them, human relationships were inevitably tied up with property. According to the *Encyclopédie*, the family was itself a kind of property; the very word, it explained, applied only to citizens of the middling ranks of society, who hand on their name, status and virtues from father to son.[64] This conception of the family as an economic and moral patrimony, which must be preserved through careful planning of inheritance, careers and marriages, had emerged among the propertied classes in the sixteenth century.[65] Paternal authority was crucial to ensure a coherent strategy, but this ideal also meant that the father had a duty to 'establish' his children: to provide them with an occupation, an inheritance and a spouse. Although strict pragmatism dictated that the family property should be left intact to the heir, morality required that daughters and younger sons should not be made to suffer.[66] By depicting not the signing of the contract, as was usual, but the handing over of the dowry, Greuze shows that this father has fulfilled all the obligations of his position.[67]

Such a father, concerned as he was to provide for his children, was an exemplary citizen whose efforts enriched the state and provided it with new citizens to take his place. For one associate of Diderot, concern for one's dependents was the precondition of love of the public good: 'How can you have a fatherland, if you don't have a family?' Another asserted that a father, hard at work in his study, would redouble his efforts when he heard the patter of tiny feet in the next room.[68] The father in *L'Accordée* has clearly worked hard for his daughter's dowry. A couple of critics discerned the imprint of a life of labour on the bodies of the parents, apparently echoing Diderot's interest in the effects of work on the human system.[69] Diderot himself claimed that the mother consoles herself for the loss of her daughter with the thought that the fiancé is a good, hard-working boy.[70] Moreover, particular prominence is given to the tanned and worn hands of the father and mother, which contrast strongly with the paler flesh of the young couple. This is reminiscent of the plates of the *Encyclopédie* plates depicting artisanal trades where, as Roland Barthes noted, humanity often appears simply as disembodied hands around the work illustrated.[71] Here, the parents' hands indicate their industry and, as the Encyclopedists deprecated idleness above all over vices and argued that the only entitlement to property was through work,[72] demonstrate that the family fortune, of which the glass and metalware in the cupboard provide further evidence, has been justly earned.

However, the lesson in public morality that *L'Accordée* offers depends above all on the critics' identification of this household as both prosperous and rural since the rich farmer, such as Greuze depicts here, had by the 1760s come to exemplify the industrious, property-owning citizen.[73] Farmers (also known as *laboureurs*) had a vital importance for the Encyclopedists, who not only promoted the new science of agronomy but also that of political economy, in which agriculture figured as the basis of the nation's wealth. In 1756, the *Encyclopédie* published the article 'Fermiers', emphasizing how much the nation depended on their endeavours, by François Quesnay, who subsequently developed these ideas into the economic doctrine known as Physiocracy. Quesnay drew a fundamental distinction between the rich tenant farmer who owns a team of horses and the poor *métayer* or share-cropper who ploughs with oxen.[74] In its emphasis on land as the sole source of all wealth, Physiocracy epitomizes the tension between tradition and innovation in the ideals of the reformers; it preached the need for highly capitalized, market-oriented farming but, by denying that trade and industry had any real value, affirmed its proponents' loyalty to a static social order based on landed wealth.[75] Although progressive writers like Diderot were later alienated by its more authoritarian aspects, the views of the Encyclopedists and Physiocrats did not seriously diverge until the end of the 1760s.[76]

L'Accordée embodies the ideal of the Physiocrats, who believed that France could only be modernized if profitable, large-scale cultivation, then restricted to areas of Northern France such as Normandy, was extended over the whole country, eliminating small-scale subsistence farming. The household depicted by Greuze is undoubtedly integrated into a market economy; the transfer of the dowry is a financial transaction, showing that the father has access to cash. The large door at the left and the figure on the stairs about to vanish from sight also hints at links with the outside world. Not only is the bride about to leave home but, according to one viewer, both she and her mother have the air of 'la halle de Paris', of the marketplace: the one is a 'pretty shopgirl', the other 'a fat market-woman'.[77] This is less incongruous than might at first appear: when a Norman farmer needed a wife, he looked for a capable woman who could buy and sell for him since he was too busy to go to market himself

(though it would clearly be unwise to regard the painting as a 'realistic' depiction of a Norman farmer's household).[78] The tenant farmer was primarily a producer of wheat for the urban market; his success depended on his ability to exploit the dependence of consumers on this most basic of commodities. *L'Accordée* reflects the long-standing French obsession, born of recurrent shortages, with bread as the staff of life; here the farmer's productivity, his ability to make the proud boast that 'there's always bread in the house',[79] is demonstrated by the loaves stacked on the shelf at the top of the painting.

Another indication that this is a farmhouse is provided by the child on the left scattering grain to the hen and her chicks. This detail assimilates the human family with the world of nature and the domestic interior with the farmyard outside. *La Basse Cour*, a comic opera performed the following year, includes a scene in which the father contentedly watches his hens while his daughter, who is throwing them grain, looks tenderly towards her lover.[80] From around 1760, the *Opéra comique* began to follow the vogue for agriculture and to propagate enlightened ideals. In one such opera, entitled *Rose et Colas* (1764), by the dramatist Michel Sedaine, the paternal virtues are exemplified by Mathurin, a prosperous farmer, whose harvest is imminent; he provides his daughter Rose with a generous dowry and allows her to marry her beloved Colas, the son of another rich tenant farmer.[81] There was a certain logic at work here since, according to the *Encyclopédie*, the cultivation of plants and the education of children were analogous activities; farmer and father alike must take account of the natural tendencies of their field and child, respectively.[82] The good-hearted *labourer* of comic opera does seem, from one contemporary comment, to have been perceived as embodying the paternal ideal depicted by Greuze.[83]

The representations of the *laboureur* in economic theory, in literature and in painting were mutually reinforcing. Diderot's account of a visit to a prosperous farmer at Maisons, who had a wife and many children and rejoiced in the absurdly apposite name of Bled (Wheat), is strongly coloured by the rustic gaiety of comic opera. Happy, virtuous and rich, Bled belongs to the lower rungs of the broad class of useful citizens, between the privileged and the *peuple*, among whom the Encyclopedists counted themselves.[84] A significant cause of his well-being seems to be the fact that the Seigneur of Maisons is 'a dishonoured man' who skulks in his château. Many reformist writers, the Physiocrats among them, condemned seigneurial rights on utilitarian grounds, claiming that they yielded no real economic benefits.[85] That the father in *L'Accordée* is just the kind of self-reliant farmer that they admired can be deduced from the gun hanging on the wall. This distances the scene from the seigneurial system, since it must mean either that he served in the army in his youth, or, more probably, that he goes out shooting, disregarding the seigneur's exclusive right to hunt. The seigneur is thus eliminated by sleight of hand, just as the seigneur of Maisons is fortunately out of sight.

However, it is unlikely that anyone would have interpreted *L'Accordée* as an attack on the seigneurial system. As often as not, the real purpose of the Encyclopedists' denunciations of tyrannical seigneurs was to focus attention on the superior authority of the crown as the true protector of peasants' interests.[86] The generous father in *L'Accordée* provides, within the family, a model of that benevolent authority which, they argued, a king should exert on behalf of his people. Diderot compared the bad king who favoured some subjects at the expense of others to a bad father who spoils one child and ignores the rest.[87] He also argued that the iconography of Pigalle's projected statue of Louis XV for Rheims, which showed the king as the benefactor of his subjects, should be altered by the addition of a *laboureur* (personifying agriculture) and a woman and child (personifying population) to the existing figure of an artisan (who signified commerce) in order to emphasize his duty to protect the whole French people, especially the neglected peasantry.[88] The reformers were essentially replacing the ancient belief that the king must, like a father, guarantee his children's daily bread by an enlightened paternalism focused on the producer in the countryside rather than the consumer in the town.[89]

All economic writers looked to the crown to take action to reverse the disastrous consequences of having so long failed to protect agriculture. Rejecting the traditional view that poverty was the spur forcing a basically idle peasantry to work, they insisted that the harsh conditions prevailing in the French countryside served only to debilitate and demoralize them.[90] In order to create the general affluence that was the basis of a healthy economy, it was necessary to redistribute the tax burden, which at present weighed so unfairly on the peasantry. Among the reforms they demanded, economists laid special emphasis on the abolition of state control of the grain trade; it was argued that allowing farmers to profit by selling their grain freely would stimulate productivity and thus benefit the nation as a whole.[91] For a model of thriving, commercialized agriculture to contrast to their own poverty-stricken land, they looked to the example of England (as too did the less politically minded agronomists, who advocated the adoption of English farming methods).[92] The happy state of affairs supposedly prevailing over the Channel depended, they assumed, on the wise policies of the government.

These anglophile tendencies, countering the ancient enmity between the two countries, were central to progressive ideals.[93] England epitomized the true *patrie*, one in which the government guaranteed the liberty of citizens and, above all, their property rights, thereby assuming prosperity and virtue; only under these circumstances would men love their country as they did their own family.[94] However, writers who advocated following the English example did so as much out of fear as of friendship,

believing that if France failed to do so it would soon lose its European hegemony to Britain.[95] They argued that economic might served the nation's interests better than noble military valour; a readiness to learn from the enemy was thus more truly patriotic than the blind prejudices of the conservatives.[96] *L'Accordée* must be viewed in the context of this enlightened patriotism, which, by 1761, had gained new impetus from the reverses of the Seven Years War. In *Bazile et Thibault*, a novel in pictures which Greuze wrote in the mid 1760s, the virtuous Bazile heroically repels an English raid on the coast; soon after, in a scene reminiscent of *L'Accordée*, he is betrothed to his sweetheart, Manon, the daughter of a rich *laboureur*. The end of Bazile's story, his marriage, is illustrated in a drawing which has been identified as a sketch for a pendant painting and entitled *Le Départ de la mariée* (*Fig. 2*); text and image correspond exactly.[97]

This suggests that Greuze was himself familiar with the fundamentals of the new economic doctrines. More important for present purposes, however, are contemporary comments indicating that he was regarded as an artist capable of giving visual expression to the Physiocrats' programme. In 1769, Pierre-Samuel Dupont de Nemours, editor of their journal *Les Ephémérides du Citoyen*, proposed that Greuze should produce a painting to commemorate the occasion when the Dauphin demonstrated his awareness of the importance of agriculture by trying his hand at the plough.[98] In the same year, Dupont reviewed the Marquis de Saint-Lambert's long awaited poem *Les Saisons*, in which the author, a contributor to the *Encyclopédie*, set out to describe the rich *laboureur* celebrated by the Physiocrats.[99] However, Dupont complained, by describing his farmer as poor, contented, and living in a thatched cottage, Saint-Lambert repeated the tired conventions of pastoral poets and painters who rhapsodized over the happiness of the rural poor. Special condemnation was reserved for the kind of painter who depicted country life with a spade, a rake, a watering can and a cottage in the distance; he seems to have in mind the picturesque clutter of Boucher's rustic idylls.

By contrast, Dupont considered the depiction of the happy home life of the *laboureur* and his family in Saint-Lambert's poem to be worthy of comparison with Greuze.[100] The relative austerity of *L'Accordée*, with its sobre tonality, strong lines and overall sense of

Fig. 2. Jean-Baptiste Greuze, 'Le Départ de la mariée', ink and wash on paper. 53 × 65 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

order, corresponds to Dupont's typically Physiocrat vision of the disciplined productivity of a *laboureur* who is as much a manager as a worker.[101] He insisted that it was necessary to combat conventional notions about the joys of peasant poverty by promoting the image of the rich *laboureur* in order to protect farmers from the misguided attempts of royal intendants to take their profits in taxation. Thus, the prosperity of the family in *L'Accordée* should be seen as the consequence of the enactment of the reforms demanded by the Physiocrats; the image of the rich farmer might, as Diderot came to realize,[102] avert attention from the poverty of the mass of the French people but, in theory, he represented an ideal that had not yet been attained.

For contemporary viewers, *L'Accordée* offered a vision of rural life that was clearly idealized but nevertheless plausible, *vraisemblable*.[103] Diderot, for example, considered Greuze's peasants more refined than the gross figures of Teniers but not 'chimerical' like those of Boucher.[104] One detail he found almost too exquisite was the bride's white overdress; but then, he concluded, the occasion justified a bit of luxury.[105] Like the Physiocrats, Diderot distinguished between sterile luxury, based on excessive inequality, and productive luxury, the result of general prosperity.[106] As ever, the model for the latter was England, where, one traveller reported, the rural population lived amazingly well, the women being dressed with real elegance: 'a village girl elsewhere is only a peasant but here, often, the neatness of her attire and the refinement of her whole person would lead one to take her for a shepherdess of romance.'[107] Nothing, he added, could be more unlike the French peasant women, who are so worn down with labour that they can hardly be distinguished from their husbands. Thus the marked differentiation between male and female figures in *L'Accordée* is a further sign of prosperity. The sobre right half of the painting, indicating productivity, contrasts with the rococo grace of the left side, which corresponds to the luxury of exchange and consumption.[108]

III

What ultimately made *L'Accordée de village* so persuasive and compelling a vision of a new society was its overall coherence, the way that every part is integrated with the rest of the composition. According to Diderot, the figure grouping was absolutely right for the subject, while another critic wrote that all the subordinate elements were 'linked so well to the main action that it seems impossible to imagine any others'.[109] This inner logic does not simply ensure that the composition is readily intelligible but has a deeper ideological significance. The strictly unified *tableau* functions as the location of perfect order and rationality; it is a closed system in which all that appears confused and inexplicable in the phenomenal world, as it is experienced by human beings, is subordinated to a controlling intelligence, that of the artist.[110] For Diderot, the notion of the dramatic unity of the *tableau* as an expression of the causality of nature corresponds to the hope that the frontiers of human knowledge could be pushed back in order to achieve total understanding of the world and its phenomena.[111] The *tableau* imposes order upon reality, just as the *Encyclopédie* attempts to order knowledge, asserting that human reason can grasp and ultimately master the world. Thus, the order of the *tableau* invokes a future of perfect rationality, in which humanity has complete control of its destiny. From this perspective, the unity of *L'Accordée* serves to confirm that the harmonious society it depicts can one day become reality.

Greuze was admired by contemporaries for his ability to perceive, like a *philosophe*, the reality underlying the conventions of his own society.[112] *L'Accordée* could thus be seen to embody the universal principles on which nature was ordered. Dupont de Nemours, having repeated the familiar claim that social institutions, above all oppressive governments, had distorted nature and undermined virtue, asserted that some painters and sculptors, keeping themselves apart from frivolous society, had remained more in touch with the natural order. Greuze's depictions of virtuous family life were cited as examples of works of art which fulfil the task of philosophy: 'to paint nature . . . and to express with force the laws by which she showers us with benefits.'[113] For Dupont, as also for his colleague the Abbé Baudeau, it was painters working in the so-called lower genres, who, by their unparalleled naturalism, held up a model for society as a whole.[114] The Physiocratic belief, which Diderot shared, that the basis of wealth and morality lies in the physical order of nature and not some metaphysical conception of order[115] lay behind their approval of Greuze's art which was both impeccably ordered and forcefully natural. *L'Accordée* conforms in both structure and content to the new science of society.

The success of the painting lies in this combination of order and naturalism, which paralleled the reformers' hopes of creating a society purged of the arbitrary, artificial character of contemporary reality. By combining faithful depiction of the appearance of external nature, undistorted by the caprices of the imagination, with a representation of a virtuous human nature, uncorrupted by the prejudices of society, it evoked the underlying truths of a natural order. In seeking to persuade viewers through illusionism, rather than merely laying down the law like traditional didactic art, it provided a model of non-despotic authority grounded in nature: so too did its depiction of the virtues of a truly paternal rule. It held up a vision of the future from which all the problems of the present had been eliminated and evades all questions of how this utopia might be achieved, other than through the winning over of public opinion.

Moreover, its appearance of perfect harmony and control glosses over fundamental contradictions within the ideology that it promotes. *L'Accordée* represents an extraordinary reconciliation between divergent tendencies in contemporary French society,

between morality and self-interest, traditional order and a commercial economy, inconsistencies that are deeply rooted within the thinking of both Encyclopedists and Physiocrats. Its primary function is to demonstrate the natural basis of a still essentially patriarchal family and hence of a society founded on the same principles yet the very fact that the painting represents the drawing-up of a contract serves as a reminder that the social order is, as it were, man-made.[116] Its illusionism reveals a new world but, at the same time, conceals the painter's labour, as, it could be said, Greuze avoids depicting the actual work performed by the *laboureur*. For all the Encyclopedists' praise of utility, aristocratic leisure continued to be prized. Not until *Le Premier Sillon* of 1801 did Greuze paint a scene in which the farmer and his son are actually shown ploughing.

Notes

1. Salon of 1761, no. 100: 'Un Mariage, et l'instant où le père de l'accordée délivre le dot à son gendre.'

2. *Journal Encyclopédique* (hereafter *JE*), October 1761, vol. 7, no. 2, p. 55. Another critic referred to the 'goût universel pour ce charmant ouvrage'; see *Mercure de France* (hereafter *MF*), December 1761, p. 192. It was said that the painting 'a ramené tout Paris au Louvre'; see *Annonces, affiches et avis divers* (hereafter *AA*), 14 October 1761, no. 41, p. 163.

3. The major study of art and the public sphere for this period is, of course, Thomas E. Crow, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (New Haven and London, 1985). However, I believe that Crow's characterization of *L'Accordée* as 'a managed public art' (p. 151), representing an attempt by Marigny as Directeur des Bâtiments to manipulate the Salon audience, fails to do justice to its full historical importance.

4. The twin poles around which many interpretations of Greuze revolve are *La Mére bien-aimée* and *La Malédiction paternelle*; see, for example, Carol Duncan, 'Happy Mothers and Other New Ideas in French Art', *Art Bulletin*, vol. 55, 1973, pp. 570–3, and her 'Fallen Fathers: Images of Authority in Pre-Revolutionary French Art', *Art History*, vol. 4, 1981, pp. 186–202; Régis Michel, 'Diderot and Modernity', *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 8, 1985, pp. 39–42.

5. Most notably by Anita Brookner, *Greuze: The Rise and Fall of an Eighteenth-Century Phenomenon* (London, 1972).

6. Recent scholarship confirms that, far from representing a rejection of the Enlightenment as was once thought, sentimentalism is part of the same fundamental realignment towards the social dimension; see David J. Denby, *Sentimental Narrative and the Social Order in France, 1760–1820* (Cambridge, 1994).

7. See, for example, *Correspondance littéraire, philosophique et critique par Grimm, Diderot, Raynal . . .* (hereafter *CL*), ed. Maurice Tourneux, Paris, vol. 2, 1877, p. 170 (6 August 1754), pp. 488–91 (1 February 1755); G. A. de Méhégan, *Considérations sur les révolutions des arts* (Paris, 1755), pp. 209–11; C. R. Lefevbre de Beauvray, *Lettre de M. Lefebvre de Beauvray à M. H*** sur l'état actuel des beaux-arts et de la littérature en France* (Paris, 1756).

8. 'Encyclopédie', *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, Paris, vol. 5, 1755, p. 640: 'plaire, intéresser, toucher'.

9. Mona Ozouf, '"Public Opinion" at the End of the Old Regime', *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 60, suppl., September 1988, pp. S1–S21.

10. On the role of the salons, see Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca and London, 1994).

11. See Barbara Scott, 'Mme Geoffrin', *Apollo*, vol. 75, 1967, pp. 98–103. Marigny's motives for commissioning *L'Accordée* are discussed in greater detail in my thesis, 'Greuze and the Painting of Sentiment: The Family in French Art 1755–1785', PhD, Courtauld Institute of Art, 1994, pp. 50–1.

12. For the friendship between Greuze and Diderot, see *Diderot et l'art de Boucher à David*, Paris, Hôtel de la Monnaie, 1984, pp. 217–20. It is not impossible that the two men might actually have discussed some of the issues dealt with here.

13. For the constitution of the Salon public, see Crow, *Painters and Public Life*, pp. 1–22; Richard Wrigley, *The Origins of French Art Criticism* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 97–112.

14. Marian Hobson, *The Object of Art: The Theory of Illusion in Eighteenth-century France* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 62–74.

15. L. G. Baillet de St Jullien, *Lettre sur la peinture, sculpture et architecture à M. ****, n.p., 1748, p. 72.

16. One critic commented that Greuze made a hit 'sur le grand théâtre pittoresque du Sallon'; see *L'Observateur littéraire* (hereafter *OL*), 1761, vol. 4, p. 162. This review, sometimes attributed to P. Bridard de la Garde, set the tone for the other critics; it was reprinted in *MF*, October 1761, pt. 2, pp. 115–18.

17. *MF*, December 1761, pp. 193–4.

18. See, for example, *MF*, October 1761, pt. 1, p. 170.

19. For the most influential statement of this view, see J. B. Dubos, *Reflexions critiques sur la poésie et la peinture* (Paris, 1760), I, pp. 381–4 (first edition 1719).

20. Angelica Goodden, Actio *and Persuasion: Dramatic Performance in Eighteenth-century France* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 24–48, 94–111); Diderot, *Œuvres esthétiques*, ed. Paul Vernière (Paris, 1968), pp. 268–79.

21. 'Un jour de fiancailles', according to Diderot. Jean Seznec and Jean Adhémar (eds), *Salons* (Oxford, 1975), vol. 1, p. 266.

22. The word *accordée* refers to this; if this were a wedding, the bride would be a *mariée*: compare Watteau's *L'Accordée* and *La Mariée de Village*. See Donald Posner, *Antoine Watteau* (London, 1984), pp. 21–2.

23. The nearest precedent for *L'Accordée* is a depiction of the signing of a marriage contract which was engraved in 1760, under the title *La Fiancée Normande*, and attributed to 'Le Nain'. See *Inventaire du fonds français. Graveurs du dix-huitième siècle*, ed. M. Roux *et al.* (Bibliothèque Nationale, Département des estampes), vol. 13 (Paris, 1974), pp. 169–70, no. 213.

24. François Lebrun, 'Amour et Mariage' in Jacques Dupâquier (ed.), *Histoire de la population française*, vol. 2: *De la Renaissance à 1789* (Paris, 1988), pp. 308–9.

25. J. Gaudemet, 'Législation canonique et attitudes séculières à l'égard du lien matrimonial au XVIIe siècle', *Dix-septième siècle*, vol. 102, 1974, pp. 15–30.

26. This argument was put forward in Edgar Munhall, 'Greuze and the Protestant Spirit', *Art Quarterly*, vol. 27, 1964, pp. 8–9. The issue has recently been reviewed by Richard Rand, 'Civil and Natural Contract in Greuze's *L'Accordée du village*', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, May–June 1996, pp. 222–4. The arguments put forward in this article correspond closely to my own conclusions, though Rand is more willing to acknowledge a possible Protestant aspect.

27. See Georges May, 'The Influence of English Fiction on the French Mid Eighteenth-Century Novel', in E. A. Wasserman (ed.), *Aspects of the Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore and London, 1965), pp. 265–80. For a subtle analysis of the difference between French fiction up to 1760 and the new sentimental novel, see Peter Brooks, *The Novel of Wordliness* (Princeton, 1969), pp. 142–71.

28. *Œuvres esthétiques*, pp. 39–40. For an analysis of this 'aesthetic of sacrifice', see Jay Caplan, *Framed Narratives: Diderot's Genealogy of the Beholder* (Manchester, 1986).

29. Compare Diderot's assertion that the secret of great art was 'celui de présenter des objects d'un grand intérêt, des pères, des mères, des époux, des femmes, des enfants' (*Œuvres esthétiques*, p. 737).

30. This aspect of the painting has been much commented on; see, for example, Norman Bryson, *Word and Image: French Painting of the Ancien Régime* (Cambridge, 1981), p. 127; Rand, 'Civil and Natural Contract', pp.224–5.

31. Grimm in Diderot, *Salons*, vol. 1, p. 145.

32. 'On s'apperçoit que la pudeur et la présence des parents retiennent sa main, prête à poser sur celle du futur qu'elle désire, mais qu'elle n'ose toucher' (*OL*, 1761), vol. 4, pp. 164–5). The same critic called her modesty 'cette petite hypocrisie douce et honnête'. It was noted by all the other critics, one of whom exclaimed: 'On ne peut trop le répéter, la pudeur est non seulement la première des vertus mais aussi la première des graces dans les femmes' (*MF*, October 1761, p. 171).

33. According to Montesquieu, modesty was a natural phenomenon but one that could be undermined in certain conditions: 'c'est au législateur à faire des lois civiles qui . . . rétablissent les lois primitives' (Gonzague Truc (ed.), *De l'esprit des lois*, (Paris, 1961), vol. 1, p. 281). See also Philip Robinson, 'Virginie's Fatal Modesty: Some Thoughts on Bernardin de St-Pierre and Rousseau', *British Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies*, vol. 5, 1982, pp. 35–48.

34. This is neatly put by Rousseau: 'ce bon naturel veut être cultivé' (R. Pomeau (ed.), *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (Paris, 1960), p. 547).

35. Abbé Aubert, 'L'Accordée de village, conte moral, dont l'idée est prise du tableau de M. Greuze', *MF*, October 1761, pt. 2, pp. 66–8: 'hymens brillans', 'goutoit d'un sentiment nouveau/les délices inexprimables'. See also *Année Littéraire* (hereafter *AL*), 1761, vol. 6, pp. 212–14; *JE*, October 1761, vol. 7, pt. 2, pp. 62–4.

36. 'Discours sur la poésie dramatique', *Œuvres esthétiques*, pp. 192–3; 'les pièces honnêtes et sérieux . . . chez un peuple corrompu . . . c'est là qu'ils verront l'espèce humaine comme elle est, et qu'ils se réconcilieront avec elle'.

37. *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, p. 3: 'Il faut des spectacles dans les grandes villes, et des romans aux peuples corrompus.' Despite the bad relations between Rousseau and his former colleagues among the Encyclopedists, the novel did eventually receive the latter's seal of approval; see 'Roman', *Encyclopédie*, vol. 15, 1765, p. 342.

38. *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, pp. 747–9.

39. R. A. Leigh (ed.), *Correspondence complète de J. J. Rousseau*, vol. 8 (Geneva, 1969), p. 270 (no. 1372): 'la lecture de cet ouvrage les avoit rendu meilleurs'. See Anna Attridge, 'The Reception of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, vol. 120, 1974, pp. 250–64; Robert Darnton, 'Readers respond to Rousseau', *The Great Cat Massacre* (London, 1984), pp. 235–42.

40. For a discussion of how the reader's response to *La Nouvelle Héloïse* is structured by the novel itself, see William Ray, *Story and History: Narrative, Authority and Social Identity in the Eighteenth-century French and English Novel* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 258–65. Contemporaries were aware of this strategy; one review took the form of a series of letters which purport to record the response of a fashionable lady, who, by the end of her reading, has decided to leave her lover for a virtuous family life in the country; see *MF*, August 1761, pp. 14–43.

41. Julie's past errors are erased by a quasi-miraculous transformation into a good wife on her marriage; see the long letter at the end of the first half of the novel (*La Nouvelle Héloïse*, pt. III, no. 18), in which she announces her conversion from love to virtue.

42. Despite affirming that all human actions are based on *amour-propre*, the Encyclopedists were very far from offering a utilitarian defence of self-interest and tended to assume that virtue must involve some degree of self-denial. For a general discussion of these issues, see Jacques Domenech, *L'Ethique des lumières. Les fondements de la morale dans la philosophie française du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1989).

43. *MF*, August 1761, p. 28: 'Je regarde son plan comme une machine immense, cachée sous la voile de la plus noble simplicité.'

44. One commentator referred to the painting as 'cet agréable scène du *Père de famille* . . .' (*MF*, November 1763, p. 193).

45. *JE*, October 1761, vol. 7, pt. 2, pp. 53–4: 'son visage animé, sa main élevée . . . font deviner au plus stupide spectateur, tout l'intérêt qui dans ce moment agite le bon père.'

46. *Salons*, vol. 1, p. 142: 'Le Père est le seul qui parle. Le reste écoute et se tait.'

47. One critic stated that 'c'est sur cette toile que l'on peut dire que la peinture parle'; see *MF*, October 1761, vol. 1, p. 170. Other comments include 'le pinceau parle . . .' (*OL*, 1761, vol. 4, p. 164) and 'ici tout parle aux yeux' (*AL*, 1761, vol. 6, p. 210).

48. *Œuvres esthétiques*, p. 765: 'Tout morceau de sculpture ou de peinture doit être l'expression d'une grande maxime, une leçon pour le spectateur; sans quoi il est muet.'

49. See his project for a new kind of play, which he called the *genre sérieux*, in *Œuvre esthétiques*, pp. 136–8. For an interesting recent discussion of Diderot and the *drame*, see Julie Candler Hayes, *Identity and Ideology: Diderot, Sade and the Serious Genre* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 1991).

50. *Œuvre esthétiques*, p. 141.

51. For Diderot, fatherhood was 'la vocation générale de tous les hommes' (*Œuvres esthétiques*, p. 173). Greuze made clear that paternal neglect was a prime cause of a son's going to the bad in his novel in pictures, *Bazile et Thibault*; see Brookner, *Greuze*, p. 157 (scene f).

52. A recent account argues that Diderot's commentary on *L'Accordée* should be understood as an act of appropriation on the part of the writer, whose overtly moralistic interpretation of the painting served to compensate for the relative lack of success of his own play; see Andrew Mark Ledbury, 'Greuze, Sedaine and Hybrid Genre in Late Eighteenth-century France', PhD thesis, University of Sussex, 1996, pp. 158–63. This suggestion plausibly accounts for aspects of Diderot's text but I would reject the conclusion that the 'real' significance of *L'Accordée* lies in its purely formal innovations.

53. For more general analyses of the new vision of fatherhood, see Jean-Claude Bonnet, 'De la famille à la patrie', in Jean Delumeau and Daniel Roche (eds), *Histoire des pères et de la paternité* (Paris, 1990), pp. 235–8 and Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (London, 1992), pp. 17–52.

54. 'Pouvoir paternel (Droit nat. & civ.)', *Encyclopédie*, vol. 12, 1765, p. 255.

55. *OL*, 1761, vol. 4, p. 165; *JE*, October 1761, vol. 7, pt. 2, p. 54.

56. Diderot, *Œuvres esthétiques*, p. 208. See also Jacques Truchet (ed.), *Théâtre du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1974), vol. 2, pp. 66–9 (I, v & vi).

57. 'Autorité politique', Paul Vernière (ed.), *Œuvres politiques*, 1963, pp. 9–20. See also Jacques Proust, *Diderot et l'Encyclopédie* (Paris, 1967), pp. 426–7.

58. Critics viewed him as a typical minor functionary, lording it over the peasantry; see *JE*, October 1761, VII, pt. 2, pp. 54–5; Diderot, *Salons*, vol. 1, p. 142.

59. For the rejection of patriarchalism, see Diderot, *Œuvre politiques*, p. 9; Rousseau, 'Économie (morale & politique)', *Encyclopédie*, vol. 5, 1755, pp. 337–8. For an example of contract theory, see Jaucourt, 'Gouvernement', *Encyclopédie*, vol. 7, 1757, pp. 788–9.

60. This is in accordance with 'l'indépendance de l'état de la nature' (see Jaucourt, 'Enfant (Droit nat. morale)', *Encyclopédie*, vol. 5, 1755, pp. 653–4). See also Rousseau, 'Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité', *Du contrat social* (Paris, 1962), p. 82.

61. Fouquet, 'Sensibilité, sentiment (médicine)', *Encyclopédie*, vol. 15, 1765, p. 47: 'Quant aux femmes, leur constitution approche beaucoup, comme on le sait, de celle des enfants; les passions sont chez elles extrêmement plus vives en général que chez les hommes'. On the sexual dimension of contract theory, see Carol Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Oxford, 1988).

62. Jeffrey Merrick, 'Fathers and Kings: Patriarchalism and Absolutism in Eighteenth-Century French Politics', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, vol. 308, 1993, pp. 281–303.

63. *OL*, 1761, vol. 4, p. 164; *JE*, October 1761, vol. 7, pt. 2, p. 53; *AL*, 1761, vol. 6, p. 210.

64. Jaucour, 'Famille, Maison', *Encyclopédie*, vol. 6, 1756, p. 392. This article drew heavily on Montesquieu, *De l'Esprit des lois*, vol. 2, pp. 105, 107 (XXIII, chs. 4 and 7).

65. See Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Ghosts, Kin and Progeny: Some Features of Family Life in Early Modern France', *Daedelus*, vol. 106, 1977, pp. 87–114. For a later example of how these values operated, see Christine Adams, 'Defining "État" in 18th-century France: The Lamothe Family of Bordeaux', *Journal of Family History*, vol. 17, 1992, pp. 25–45.

66. See, for example: 'Éducation', *Encyclopédie*, vol. 5, 1755, p. 397; 'Père', *Encyclopédie*, vol. 12, 1765, pp. 338–9.

67. 'On regarde comme un devoir de la part du père de marier ses filles, et de les doter selon ses moyens' (Mariage (Jurisprud.)', *Encyclopédie*, vol. 10, 1765, p. 107).

68. *CL*, vol. 5, p. 302 (1 June 1763): 'comment avez-vous une patrie si vous n'avez pas de famille?'; 'Marriage (Droit naturel)', *Encyclopédie*, vol. 10, 1765, p. 104. Moreover, as a recent commentator has pointed out, the lantern and candles hanging above the father suggest that he is a prudent and watchful protector of his family; see Rand, 'Civil and Natural Contract', p. 226.

69. One wrote, of the father, that 'c'est moins la décrépitude de l'âge, que le travail et l'impression de l'air, qui a sillonné son visage' (*OL*, 1761, vol. 4, p. 164). Another noted that the mother 'paroît jouir de cette force et de cette santé que l'on ne peut entretenir que par un mélange égal de travail et de repos' (*MF*, October 1761, pt. 1, p. 172). See also Diderot, *Œuvres esthétiques*, pp. 286, 667–8.

70. *Salons*, vol. 1, p. 143.

71. 'The Plates of the *Encyclopédie*', Susan Sontag (ed.), *Selected Writings* (London, 1983), pp. 223–4.

72. Proust, *Diderot et l'Encyclopédie*, p. 476.

73. The setting was described as 'le sein d'une honnête famille rurale' (*OL*, 1761, vol. 4, p. 164), while another critic commented that the father was dressed 'en paysan opulent' (*JE*, October 1761, vol. 7, pt. 2, p. 53).

74. 'Fermiers (économie politique)', *Encyclopédie*, vol. 7, 1756, pp. 528–9. See also Jean-Claude Perrot, *Une histoire intellectuelle de l'économie politique, XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1992).

75. See Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *The Origins of Physiocracy: Economic*

Revolution and Social Order in 18th-century France (Ithaca and London, 1976).

76. On these developments, see Georges Weulersse, *Le Mouvement Physiocratique en France de 1756 à 1770* (Paris, 1910), vol. 1, pp. 52–243.

77. Diderot, *Salons*, vol. 1, p. 144: 'une jolie bouquetière', 'une grosse marchande'.

78. Jean-Marie Gouesse, 'Parenté, famille et mariage en Normandie au XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles', *Annales ESC*, vol. 27, 1972, pp. 1148–9, 1154.

79. See Olwen Hufton, 'Social Conflict and the Grain Supply in Eighteenth-century France', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, vol. 14, 1983, p. 331.

80. *CL*, vol. 5, 1878, p. 142 (15 August 1762).

81. Michel-Jean Sedaine, Louis Moland (ed.), *Théâtre de Sedaine* (Paris, 1878), pp. 130, 142–6. On the shift towards a sentimental and moralizing depiction of the peasantry in comic opera, see Robert M. Isherwood, *Farce and Fantasy: Popular Entertainment in Eighteenth-century Paris* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 101–30.

82. 'Éducation', *Encyclopédie*, vol. 5, 1755, p. 397: 'Il y a bien des analogies entre la culture des plantes et l'éducation des enfans.'

83. According to one commentator, a virtuous old peasant in Favart's *Les Moissonneurs*, a comic opera in the style of Sedaine, 'nous rapelle le souvenir d'un certain père de famille, dont nous avons admiré le tableau' (*MF*, March 1768, p. 213). This presumably refers to *L'Accordée* or a related painting by Greuze.

84. Proust, *Diderot et l'Encyclopédie*, pp. 479–80.

85. See J. C. Q. Mackrell, *The Attack on 'Feudalism' in Eighteenth-century France* (London, 1973), pp. 132–62.

86. See the comments on *Le Faux Généreux* (1758), a play which contrasts seigneurial oppression of the peasantry with the liberating effect of loyalty to the crown, in *CL*, vol. 3, 1878, p. 470; Diderot, *Œuvres esthétiques*, pp. 193–4.

87. Cited in Proust, *Diderot et l'Encyclopédie*, p. 427.

88. *CL*, vol. 4, pp. 251–2 (1 July 1760); Diderot, *Œuvre esthétiques*, pp. 716–17. For a discussion of Pigalle's statue in the context of other royal monuments, see Jeffrey Merrick, 'Politics on Pedestals: Royal Monuments in 18th-century France', *French History*, vol. 5, 1991, pp. 246–7.

89. On the traditional attitude, see Stephen Laurence Kaplan, *Bread, Politics and Political Economy in the Reign of Louis XV* (The Hague, 1976), pp. 5–8.

90. One future Physiocrat derided 'l'axiome des idiots . . . qui prétendent qu'il faut que le paysan soit misérable pour qu'il travaille . . . il est de toute faussetée. La misère n'entraîne que le découragement'; see the Marquis de Mirabeau, *L'Ami des Hommes* (The Hague, 1758), vol. 1, p. 109.

91. On the development of the arguments in favour of liberalizing the grain trade, see Kaplan, *Bread, Politics and Political Economy*, pp. 97–125.

92. For examples, see A. J. Bourde, *Agronomie et agronomes en France au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1967), pp. 277–92.

93. For a brief account of the qualities that anglophiles discerned in England, see Frances Acomb, *Anglophobia in France, 1763–1789* (Durham, NC, 1950), pp. 3–15.

94. See, for example, Jaucourt, 'Gouvernement', *Encyclopédie*, vol. 7, 1757, pp. 790–1. On the liberal notion of the *patrie*, see Jacques Godechot, 'Nation, patrie, nationalism, patriotisme en France au XVIIIe siècle', *Annales historique de la Révolution française*, vol. 43, 1971, pp. 481–92.

95. One journalist, for example, observed that, though France had learnt a great deal about 'les arts utiles' from England in recent years, failure to apply these lessons would mean that 'la France ne tardera pas d'être enchaîné au char de sa rivale' (*JE*, 1758, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 74–5).

96. These rival views are best illustrated by the *querelle* over the *noblesse commerçante*. The Abbé Coyer argued that the nobility must transform itself from a military caste into a productive class on the English model; his principal opponent, the Chevalier d'Arcq, maintained that France's integrity depended on the traditional military role of the nobility. For an account of the debate, see Mackrell, *The Attack on 'Feudalism'*, pp. 77–103.

97. Brookner, *Greuze*, pp. 159–61 (scenes o, s & y).

98. *Éphémérides du Citoyen* (hereafter *EC*), 1769, vol. 8, pp. 165–6.

99. See author's preface in J. F. de Saint-Lambert, *Les Saisons* (Paris, 1769), p. xx. On Saint-Lambert and the poetry of the seasons, see Guitton, *Jacques Delille et la poésie de la nature en France de 1750 à 1820* (Paris, 1974), pp. 70, 213–31.

100. *EC*, 1769, vol., 4, pp. 99–101, 94. For the passage in question, see Saint-Lambert, *Les Saisons*, pp. 51–2.

101. On his farm, Dupont wrote, there are 'des écuries commodes, des étables faites avec son . . ., des granges vastes et solides . . . des greniers secs et bien aérés' (*EC*, 1769, vol. 4, p. 101).

102. *Œuvres politiques*, p. 99: 'Vouloir représenter une campagne par quatre fermiers aisés, c'est oublier la misère de la multitude.' Diderot was writing in revulsion at the suffering caused by the liberalization of the grain trade; for the immediate context of his statement, see Kaplan, *Bread, Politics and Political Economy*, pp. 590–610.

103. One critic, for example, claimed that Greuze 'sait ennoblir le genre rustique sans en altérer la vérité' (*OL*, 1761, vol. 4, p. 162).

104. *Salons*, vol. 1, p. 143.

105. *Salons*, vol. 1, p. 142.

106. For this distinction, see Diderot, *Salons*, vol. 3, 1983, p. 121. See also Proust, *Diderot et l'Encyclopédie*, pp. 464–79.

107. J. B. Le Blanc, *Lettres de M. l'abbé Le Blanc, historiographe des Bâtiments du Roi, cinquième édition de celles qui ont paru sous le titre de Lettres d'un François* (Lyon, 1758), vol. 2, p. 88: 'une jeune villageoise ailleurs n'est qu'une paysanne, ici, souvent à la proprété de sa parure et la gentillesse de toute sa personne, on la prendroit pour une de nos bergères de roman.'

108. Compare Barthes' comments on the 'austerity of creation, luxury of commerce' which distinguish the *Encyclopédie* plates of workshops and shops; see *Selected Writings*, pp. 221–2.

109. Diderot, *Salons*, vol. 1, p. 141; *AL*, 1761, vol. 6, p. 210: 'si bien liés à l'action principale qu'il semble qu'on ne pouvoit en imaginer d'autres.'

110. One critic, for example, insisted that a properly ordered tableau, in which each figure expressed the appropriate emotion, conformed to the laws of nature, which decreed that 'les effets sont toujours proportionnés aux causes' (J. B. Le Blanc, *Lettre sur l'exposition des ouvrages de peinture, sculpture, etc de l'année 1747 et en général de l'utilité des ces sortes d'exposition à M. R.D.R.* (Paris, 1747), p. 128). See also, for a similar conception of the artist's function, Marmontel, 'Fiction', *Encyclopédie*, vol. 6, 1756, pp. 680–1.

111. As Michael Fried observes, 'for Diderot pictorial unity was a kind of microcosm of the causal system of nature, of the universe itself' (*Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (Berkeley, 1980, p. 87). Diderot's position derives from a longstanding preoccupation in French thought, particularly aesthetics, with devising finite spatial schemes within which reason could hold sway, unchallenged by the chaos of external phenomena; at the same time, he and some of his contemporaries hoped to expand the dominion of reason, thus colonizing aspects of experience hitherto outside its sphere. See Geoffrey Bremner, *Order and Chance: The Pattern of Diderot's Thought* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 11-26, and, on order in his aesthetic theory, pp. 107–35.

112. One critic commented that Greuze knew how to render 'tout ce que la nature peut présenter aux yeux les plus éclairés' (*AL*, 1761, vol. 6, p. 211).

113. 'de peindre la nature . . . et d'exprimer avec force les loix par lesquelles elle nous comble de biens', 'Du Principe commun de tous les Beaux-Arts et de leurs rapports avec l'utilité publique', *EC*, 1771, vol. 6, pp. 47–8, 51–2, 53–4.

114. Baudeau argued that every human society should conform faithfully to the natural order, 'comme les Peintres copient servilement la nature dans les portraits' (*EC*, 1767, vol. 3, p. 153).

115. Ellen Marie Strenski, 'Diderot, for and against the Physiocrats', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, vol. 57, 1967, pp. 1439–46.

116. With the weakening of patriarchal authority, the marriage contract becomes the crucial underpinning of the social order; hence, assaults on its integrity, notably adultery, force society to confront its own contingent nature. See Tony Tanner, *Adultery in the Novel: Contract and Transgression* (Baltimore and London, 1979).