ABSTRACT

ALISON MANLEY
Erigone and Carle Van Loo
(Under the Direction of DR. ALISA LUXENBERG)

Carle Van Loo was an influential and successful artist of the eighteenth century who garnered the highest awards and attracted the most elite of patrons, yet, originally due to the disparagement of Rococo art with the rise of Neo-Classicism, there is an enduring scarcity of scholarship on Van Loo and his paintings. This thesis elucidates numerous aspects of Van Loo's oeuvre through a thorough examination of *Erigone*, his 1747 bacchanalian painting housed in the High Museum of Art. This intriguing painting is an exemplar of the artist's eclectic style, imbued with Rococo sexuality and influenced by Flemish art of the seventeenth century. The work was likely an amalgamation of various literary sources and visual precedents, which are explored in order to frame the scene within the mythology of the life and death of Erigone, a love of Bacchus. The amorous nature of the woman's legend leads to a suggested model for the figure and prompts a discussion of the extent to which Van Loo's female iconography was influenced by his family members. Finally, this thesis investigates the painting's provenance and its known replications as indicators of the painting's, and by extension Van Loo's, contemporary esteem. In the end, this research is meant to negate Van Loo's reputation within the history of art as solely representative of the frivolity and inanity associated with the Rococo.

INDEX WORDS: Carle Van Loo, Carle Vanloo, Erigone, 18th Century, France, Art, 1747 Salon, Rococo

ERIGONE AND CARLE VAN LOO

by

ALISON MANLEY

A Thesis Submitted to the Honors Council of the University of Georgia
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

BACHELOR OF ARTS

in ART HISTORY

with HIGHEST HONORS

Athens, Georgia

2008

ERIGONE AND CARLE VAN LOO

by

ALISON MANLEY

Approved:

___Alisa Luxenberg____ ____12/01/2008_____
Dr. Alisa Luxenberg Date
Faculty Research Mentor

Approved :

____Sharon Ferguson____ ____12/01/2008_____
Dr. Sharon Ferguson Date
Reader

Approved :

____David Williams_____ _____12/17/2008____
Dr. David S. Williams Date
Director, Honors Program, Foundation Fellows and
Center for Undergraduate Research Opportunities

Approved:

____Pamela Kleiber_____ ___12/17/2008_____
Dr. Pamela Kleiber, Honors Program and
Center for Undergraduate Research Opportunities

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I thank Dr. Alisa Luxenberg, my research mentor, for her invaluable and insightful guidance in this endeavor and throughout my undergraduate career. She has always incited the best of my abilities and I will forever be appreciative for all that she has taught me.

I would also like to thank Dr. Sharon Ferguson for all of her wonderful assistance throughout this process and, most importantly, for inspiring my intended specialization within the history of art.

Finally, I thank my mother for happily serving as the guinea pig for all of my ideas and theories throughout this research process.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

After his death in 1765, Carle Van Loo was cast into oblivion for nearly two centuries. During his career, however, he won the *Prix de Rome*, became the director of the French Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture, was named governor of the *École royale des élèves protégés*, and was appointed *premier peintre du roi*.[1] I will contend that Van Loo enjoyed a lifetime of success and admiration as a result of his successful fusion of Rococo sensuality with eclectic literary and visual precedents, producing a style that was uniquely his own. All of these facets are encapsulated in his circa 1747 bacchanalian composition, *Erigone*. Housed at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta and only attributed to Van Loo in the last few decades, *Erigone* is representative of Van Loo's enduring obscurity in the history of art, evidenced by the painting's distinct lack of scholarly discussion in direct correlation with the scarcity of scholarship on the artist and his oeuvre. In this thesis, I will examine *Erigone* as an exemplar of Van Loo's unique eclecticism and develop a more profound understanding of Carle Van Loo and his truly distinguished career.

The figure of Erigone occupies the majority of the composition, which is surprisingly large for a single-figure, albeit a half-length figure, work of art, measuring one hundred centimeters in height and nearly eighty centimeters in length. As the central focus her figure appears immediate in the foreground and little depth is conveyed. She is depicted relatively life-sized in a reclining position and in a profile view, except for her

[1] Colin B. Bailey, The Loves of the Gods: Mythological Painting from Watteau to David (Fort Worth: Kimbell Art Museum, 1992), p. 429.

head which twists back to face the viewer. Her blushing cheeks and the hint of a smile on her lips allow for a reading of her facial expression as quite coy. She is represented reaching up to pick grapes from the limb of a tree in a lush natural environment, amidst trees, leaves, and bushes and beneath a clear sky. The colors of the composition are accordingly quite earthy. The artist chose shades of creamy white for Erigone's porcelain skin and the fabric which serves to drape her body. A cerulean blue is seen both in the clear sky and the fabric which is loosely draped around her body. An olive green is seen in the grapes, the leaves on the tree, the ivy in her hair, and the plants which surround her. The repetition of the analogous shades of blue and green creates a sense of harmony and unity throughout the work. Conversely, the vivid red which is seen in the ribbon woven through her hair and the soft blush of her cheeks work as a complement to the more pervasive use of green and create a sense of intensity and dynamism. The choice of colors, then, produces a simultaneous sense of unity and variety in the composition.

The brushstrokes on the canvas produce a similar effect. While the brushstrokes designated for the skin and facial details are quite tight and controlled, the brushstrokes which make up the creamy fabric are very broad and sweeping while those for the leaves and green natural surroundings are so loose that they are nearly abstract in their presentation. Van Loo also applied loose strokes to create simple shading, add highlights, and suggest outlines of leaves or bushes. It is only in the figure of Erigone with its tighter brushstrokes that half-tone modeling is achieved, establishing a sense of three-dimensional form. The loose strokes in the rest of the composition create a more immediate, and therefore less naturalistic, shift between light and shade. In viewing the painting, these effects produce the sensation that the central figure is in focus while the

drapery and foliage, slightly out of focus with its more discernible brushstrokes, gently lead the eye around the work with broad diagonal strokes.

The fleshy and voluptuous depiction of Erigone adds a sense of weightiness to the figure, detracting from a possible reading of this work as one which fits neatly into the style of the Rococo. While certain elements are in keeping with the Rococo as this is an amorous scene with a reclining and slightly off-balanced figure, Erigone, through the implied sense of her mass and her immediacy in the foreground of a large composition, is made to appear quite stable, despite the fact that she is not depicted anchored to any perceptible ground. She is further stabilized because her reclining pose is parallel to the diagonal of the tree limb from which she plucks the grapes, creating a greater sense of balance throughout the composition. The work shares themes and motifs that were common to the Rococo, but many of the elements and qualities that comprise the work lie outside the conventions of Rococo easel painting.

The story of Erigone is found in various ancient sources as a brief portion of the history of Bacchus, known as Dionysus in Greek mythology, the God of wine. Each account differs slightly in the information provided, in part due to translations and alterations over time. The oldest known source of information concerning Erigone was written by the Greek poet Anacreon between the fifth and sixth-century B.C. His fragmentary *Ode XLIX* was translated into French by Madame Dacier in 1716 and later translated anew and edited by Antoine de la Fosse, who completed or invented the missing fragments of the poem and incorporated his translation, *Fête de Bacchus en Tableaux*, into the two-volume edition of his collected works which was published in 1747. La Fosse believed the original intention of the poem was to serve as a source of

subject matter to inspire visual images. It seems that intention was realized when, later in the same year, another French painter, Charles-Joseph Natoire referenced this poem, following the text nearly word for word, including the figure of Erigone (fig. 2) for his *The Triumph of Bacchus* (fig. 3), the painting he submitted to the 1747 *concours*. The poem describes a bacchante who squeezes a bunch of grapes in one hand as the juice runs down her fingers.[2] Natoire created just such a bacchante, and emphasized the figure of Erigone within his composition by painting her as the central and most prominent figure.

Another source which provides the story of Erigone is a poem written in the second century B.C. by the Greek poet Eratosthenes. The subject of what remains of the poem is Dionysus's introduction of wine to Athens. In the story, Dionysus presented the gift of wine to Icarius, the father of Erigone. When Icarius shared the wine with his neighbors and they became drunk, they believed he had attempted to poison them and thus murdered him. Erigone, with the help of her dog, Maera, found her father's corpse and hanged herself from a tree near his body.[3] While Van Loo did not depict this narrative, the painting perhaps references it through her proximity to a tree and the manner in which she appears to be almost hanging from the limb from which the grapes dangle.

Eratosthenes's poem was most likely still intact in the fifth-century A.D. when the Greek poet Nonnus wrote a forty-eight volume epic about the life of Dionysus. The final books of the epic were devoted to the discussion of Dionysus's many lovers, including Erigone. This poem became quite influential because it was published in 1569, translated into Latin in 1605, and then translated into vernacular French and published in Paris in

[2] Bailey, The Loves of the Gods, p. 359.
[3] N. Hopkinson, "Review: The Erigone of Eratosthenes," The Classical Review 47;1 (1997): 29.

1625 in Claude Boitet de Frauville's *Les Dionysiaques; ou Les métamorphes, les voyages, les amours, et les adventures et les conquêts de Bacchus aux Indes*.[4] According to this translation of Nonnus, Icarius welcomed Dionysus into his home and had Erigone fetch some goat's milk for their guest. Dionysus instead offered wine, which Icarius drank until he became drunk, dancing and singing songs of praise for the god. This translated story seems to have been fairly well known, as evidenced by Nicolas Poussin's repeated references to details particular to Nonnus's story in several of his seventeenth-century paintings. Poussin, a highly revered artist in the eighteenth century, was most likely familiar with the work of Nonnus through his early mentor, an Italian poet named Marino who read and referenced the Latin translation of the epic in his own work. Poussin's familiarity with the ancient work is most notably visible in the preparatory drawing, *Bacchus and Erigone* (fig. 4), in which Poussin referred to Nonnus's particular version of the story with the inclusion of the goat and the cask of wine on which Bacchus rests his foot.

An important source that referred to Erigone was Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, written by the Roman poet in 8 A.D. Ovid's work is perhaps the most well-known of the sources. It was widely referenced in literature and art since the Middle Ages when the myths in which pagan gods transform themselves to achieve sexual relations with mortals were reinterpreted to demonstrate the manner in which the Christian God becomes infused in the mortal soul. Book VI of the *Metamorphoses*, translations of which differ slightly, relates the story of Arachne and how she was transformed into a spider. In a competition with Minerva, Arachne wove a design that featured, among other scenes, a view in which

[4] Malcolm Bull, "Poussin and Nonnus," The Burlington Magazine 140; 1148 (Nov. 1998): 724.

"Liber ut Erigonen falsa deceperit uva."[5] Translated literally, this means that Bacchus deceived Erigone with fake grapes. Bacchus, referred to as Father Liber, ensnared or seduced Erigone by turning himself into a bunch of grapes that she subsequently ate.

Van Loo's depiction clearly relates to that part of Ovid's poem in its focus on the moment before Erigone plucks the bunch of grapes from the tree to consume them and figuratively and corporally become one with Bacchus. It is also of note that Ovid described the border of Arachne's weaving as being designed with intertwining flowers and ivy, an attribute of Bacchus. In accordance with that description, Van Loo situated Erigone in a scene of lush vegetation with ivy intertwined in her flowing hair. These similarities suggest that it is extremely likely that Van Loo was familiar with Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

In the first and second centuries A.D. came the writings of Hyginus and Apollodorus, respectively. Apollodorus wrote *Bibliotheca*, an encyclopedia of Greek mythology which referenced both Ovid and Eratosthenes in its telling of the story of Erigone. Hyginus wrote two works which referred to Erigone: *Fabulae* and *Astronomica.*[6] The *Fabulae*, a collection of brief mythological tales, adds a distinct dimension to the story of Erigone by including important events that occurred after her death. According to Hyginus, Bacchus was so irate with the Athenians who indirectly caused Erigone's death that he inflicted a similar punishment upon every unmarried woman in Athens, causing them to go insane and hang themselves. To atone for the death

[5] Raphaele Lyne, Ovid's Changing Worlds: English Metamorphoses, 1567-1682 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 209.
[6] R. Scott Smith and Stephen Trzaskoma, Apollodorus' Library and Hyginus' Fabulae: Two Handbooks of Greek Mythology (Indianapolis: Hacklett Publishing, 2007), p. 143.
The *Astronomica* makes clear that, to compensate for the tragedy of their story, Erigone, Icarius, and her dog Maera were eternally placed among the constellations; Erigone as Virgo, Icarius as Böotes, and the faithful Maera as Canis Major.

of Erigone and appease Bacchus, the Athenians instituted Anthesteria, a festival centered around the harvest which included a day in which adolescents swung from trees to honors Erigone. This festival of swinging might be alluded to by Van Loo's figure's slightly recumbent pose and the tree under which she is situated.

Though it seems most likely that Van Loo was primarily influenced by Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in the single moment he chose to depict, a variety of visual precedents related to Erigone might also have affected his artistic decisions. For example, in the mid-sixteenth century, the engraver Enea Vico created a woodcut depicting the hanged Erigone that could have circulated in the European art community,[7] possibly affecting Van Loo's placement of the woman directly beneath a tree. Later in the sixteenth century, a program of tapestries known as *Les Mois Grotesques* was commissioned in Vienna and designed, allegedly by Giulio Romano, to depict the months as represented by specific gods or goddesses. The month of August, represented as Ceres with a symbol of virginity, includes a medallion of Bacchus and Erigone (fig. 5) due to Erigone's own virginal quality since Bacchus only figuratively had a sexual encounter with her. Ceres and the month of August are also associated with the harvest, as are Bacchus and Erigone through Anthesteria, the celebration of the harvest. The scene, following Ovid, depicts Bacchus and Erigone in a passionate embrace within a lush natural environment as Erigone clasps the grapes that are attached to a wreath atop Bacchus's head. Within the medallion's frame is written "BACHVS VT ERIGONEM FICTA DECEPERIT VVA," or Bacchus deceived Erigone with fake grapes, a clear reference to Ovid. [8] The medallion

[7] Michael Preston Worley, Pierre Julien: Sculptor to Queen Marie-Antoinette (New York: iUniverse, 2003), p. 44.
[8] Erwin Panofsky, "A Mythological Painting by Poussin," The Burlington Magazine (1961): 321.

is surrounded by vines, grapes, and other vegetal ornamentation, much like Ovid's description of the border of Arachne's design. The medium of tapestry further relates to Arachne's story through the practice of weaving. An identical set of tapestries was replicated in the French Manufacture des Gobelins between 1687 and 1688 and was thus available to be seen in Paris by the late seventeenth century. [9]

In the seventeenth century, two works by prominent artists depicted Erigone: Guide Reni's *Erigone* (fig. 6) and the aforementioned *Bacchus and Erigone* drawing by Poussin of 1626. Reni's painting, dating to the 1630s, depicts Erigone tenderly gazing at a plate of grapes in which the god is disguised. The grapes, which she has just unveiled from beneath a pale blue cloth, are situated atop a table in what seems to be an interior space with little description. Erigone is leaning over the table, her hair flowing and her breasts exposed over a loose lilac gown which is draped beneath gold fabric, Her skin is pale and glowing with light, her figure is quite full in form, and her cheeks are flushed with a pale shade of pink. This composition was engraved by Bernard Picart for the Cabinet Crozat in 1734.[10] Thus, it is possible that Van Loo could have known this print in Paris, though the only similarities are the half-length depiction and nudity. With regard to Poussin's drawing, it was Erwin Panofsky who recognized the work as a scene of *Bacchus and Erigone*, primarily because of its close relation to Nonnus's description of the story. This particular example is quite problematic, however, for while it does include the goat and the cask of wine, the traditional motif of grapes is missing from the scene

[9] Panofsky, 320.
[10] D. Stephen Pepper, "Guido Reni's 'Erigone': A Work Restored and a Mystery Resolved," The Burlington Magazine (1986): 206.

and Bacchus is undisguised and standing before the seated Erigone. So if Poussin's drawing was in fact intended as one of *Bacchus and Erigone,* it is not a typical depiction.

After Reni's version, the Erigone subject seems to disappear until the 1740s, at which point it was revitalized, perhaps by Antoine de la Fosse's translations of Anacreon. In his 1745 *Bacchus and Erigone* (fig. 7), François Boucher depicts a bare-breasted Erigone, draped in rust and cream fabric, holding a basket of grapes against her hip and leaning back against a female attendant. Typical of Boucher's style, the figures of Erigone and her attendant are highly similar, with exposed breasts, lean outstretched legs, and pale, delicate features. The other figure stares eagerly at Erigone as she glances into the distance and makes an ambiguous gesture with her hand. Two mischievous putti play with grapes to the left of the mythological lovers, and all of the figures are situated in a highly idealized and generalized environment painted with tightly controlled brushstrokes. Boucher's painting, like Reni's, does not seem to be based on any particular ancient literary source, but given his prominence in the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture, it is likely that Van Loo, who was *reçu* in 1735, [11] would have known of or even seen this painting which features the figure of Erigone. It is also of interest to note that Van Loo and Boucher were well-acquainted. The two artists studied in Rome together beginning in 1728 and were members of the same social circles.[12] A significant difference between the two works, however, is that Van Loo's composition is cropped to depict only the upper half of the figure while Boucher reveals the figures' bodies in their

[11] Eric M. Zafran, European Art in the High Museum (Atlanta: High Museum of Art, 1984): p. 127.
[12] Cathrin Klingsöhr-Leroy, Juan J. Luna, Shearer West, and Laurie G. Winters, "Carle Van Loo," Grove Art Online, Retrieved October 2008, from Oxford Art Online database.

entirety. In this way, *Erigone*'s viewer is presented with the opportunity to imagine the pose and features of the rest of her body.

Just two years later, in January of 1747, the Academy announced a *concours*, or a competition, in which ten of the most distinguished French artists were invited to submit history paintings to be displayed in the Salon later in the same year in hopes of stimulating the genre of history painting.[13] It was in this competition that Natoire submitted and displayed The *Triumph of Bacchus* which emphasizes the central figure of Erigone as described by Antoine de la Fosse's translation of Anacreon. Carle Van Loo also submitted a bacchanalian scene, *Drunken Silenus* (fig. 8), which was very well-received by critics such as the abbé Leblanc, who claimed that Van Loo's use of color was comparable to that of Rubens, and Antoine Bret, who declared that *Drunken Silenus* was the best work in the competition.[14] Also displayed in the Salon of 1747, though not a part of the competition, was Étienne-Maurice Falconet's terra cotta *Erigone à la grappe* (fig. 9).[15] The sculpture depicts an elegantly reclining Erigone in flowing drapery leaning back to reach delicately for a bunch of grapes suspended above her from a tree encircled by climbing vines of ivy. These works were so admired that in September of 1747 the playwright Charles-Antoine Panard made reference to them in his play *Les Tableaux*. In this play performed by the *Comédiens italiens*, a character exclaims, "Erigone, Europa, and Silenus / Along with the cynical Diogenes, / These are the favored paintings, / That merit the prizes."[16] It is certain that Van Loo would have seen these other works at the Salon of 1747, and it is likely that he did not begin his own Erigone until after the Salon,

[13] Bailey, The Loves of the Gods, p. 433.
[14] Cited in Bailey, The Loves of the Gods, p. 432.
[15] Worley, p. 45.
[16] Cited in Bailey, The Loves of the Gods, p. 432.

given that he was occupied with a full-length portrait of Queen Marie Leczinska until May,[17] accepted a commission to decorate a niche in the Dauphine's oratory at Versailles, and painted *Drunken Silenus* in time for the Salon in August. It is for these reasons that the date for Van Loo's *Erigone* is designated as circa 1747, as it is most likely that he painted this work around the time of the Salon of 1747 given his time constraints and the prominent examples of Erigone iconography available at this particular Salon.

The theme of Erigone in France was not limited to literary translations and paintings. The *Théâtre des petits cabinets* of Versailles opened in January of 1747 and began to perform for small audiences selected by King Louis XV. [18] In February of the same year, a one-act original opera entitled *Érigone* was performed with Madame de Pompadour in the title role. [19] The king enjoyed this opera so much that he ordered a second performance to take place a few days later to which he brought, for the first time, the Queen and her daughters. [20] Given his status as court painter patronized by both Madame de Pompadour and the Queen, for whom he spent the first five months of 1747 painting a portrait in addition to working in the Dauphine's oratory at Versailles, it is likely that Van Loo would have known of this opera. Boucher, who had painted his own Erigone two years earlier, oversaw the stage direction.[21] Since this opera was so well-received by the king, perhaps Natoire and Van Loo made thematic choices in their Salon submissions that they thought would please him.

---

[17] Bailey, The Loves of the Gods, p. 433.
[18] Marvin A. Carlson, Voltaire and the Theatre of the Eighteenth Century (Westwood, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1998): p. 67.
[19] Carlson, p. 68.
[20] Jeanne Antoinette Le Normand d'Étoiles and Hugh Noel Williams, Madame de Pompadour (New York: C. Schribner's Sons, 1902), p. 93.
[21] Carlson, p. 68.

The subject of Erigone in the visual arts, including Van Loo's depiction of the mythological woman, continued to be prevalent among established artists after 1747. For example, Jean-Baptiste Pigalle created a terra cotta sculpture of Erigone which was sold in 1751.[22] Around 1764, Jean-Simon Berthélemy painted an Erigone modeled directly after Van Loo's work which was then in the collection of Madame de Julienne,[23] a fact which will be discussed later in relation to *Erigone*'s provenance and patronage. Berthélemy's copy is nearly identical, having changed the color of the grapes from olive green to purple. Berthélemy later painted two more variations on the theme: *Erigone couchée* (fig. 10) and *Erigone assise* (fig. 11), which has long been misattributed to Jean-François de Troy.[24] These later works differ greatly from Van Loo's work as these figures are full-length nudes in provocative poses within a more described space. It is as if Berthélemy completed the lower half of Van Loo's figure, thereby making the image more overtly sexual. N.R. Jollian made an engraving entitled *La Nymphe Erigone* (fig. 12) in 1773,[25] which follows Van Loo's half-length depiction of the nude. Between 1775 and 1785 Jean-Joseph Foucou created a marble sculpture, *Bacchante* (fig. 13), which bears a strong correlation to the aforementioned depictions of Erigone with its bare-breasted maiden leaning her head back to consume a bunch of grapes. The sculptor Clodion also made three statues entitled *Erigone*: two terra cottas dated to 1777 and 1783 as well as a life-size plaster sculpture in 1782. Pierre Julien exhibited a marble figure of Erigone in the 1781 Salon and Anne-Louis Girodet de Roucy Trioson painted his own

[22] Worley, p. 45.
[23] Nathalie Volle, Jean-Simon Berthélemy: Peintre d'histoire (Paris: Arthena, 1979), p. 70.
[24] Volle, p. 74.
[25] Worley, p. 45.

Erigone in 1793.[26] In the eighteenth century, the imagery of Erigone increasingly tended to be based on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* or Anacreon's *Ode XLIX*, no doubt as a result of the contemporary French translations of each work. Both sources focus on the moment in which Erigone consumes the feigned grapes, as does Van Loo's *Erigone* along with the aforementioned works by Charles-Joseph Natoire, N.R. Jollain, and Etienne-Maurice Falconet.

Typically, these eighteenth-century French works depict a recumbent Erigone with her arms extended to reach up and hold a bunch of grapes within a natural environment. She is generally shown in loosely draped fabric with part or all of her upper body exposed. In painting, she is often portrayed with flowing hair and blushing cheeks, perhaps in anticipation of the figurative loss of her virginity.

In that respect, Van Loo's scene and the theme in general also undoubtedly drew upon eighteenth-century France's predilection for the erotic.[27] The grapes serve as an obvious symbol of male sex organs while the recumbent pose of Erigone, often associated with Virgo for her purity, represents the tension between sexuality and virginity. A sexual reading of the grapes is supported by Boucher's 1747 painting *Are They Thinking About the Grape?* (fig. 14). In a natural environment, a young woman holds a single grape to the mouth of a young man, who stares at her longingly and reaches his hands towards her lap. The girl possesses all of the grapes, keeps them protected in the basket that rests on her arm, and only offers the boy a single taste, all of which suggest a high level of sexual tension and confirm that the girl is in control of her sexuality and virginity. This scene bears similarities to Boucher's *Bacchus and Erigone*

[26] Worley, p. 44.
[27] George Poe, The Rococo and Eighteenth-Century Literature (New York: Peter Lang, 1987), p. 33.

of two years prior because Erigone is depicted in control of a basket of grapes as she lies in the woods. In Van Loo's scene, the lack of a male, Erigone's coy smile and her control over the dangling grapes lead to an overall sense of ambiguity. According to the ancient texts, Erigone was deceived by Bacchus's metamorphosis into the grapes and thus it was Bacchus who controlled her virginity, yet here she firmly clutches the grapes; perhaps because she has yet to consume the grapes or perhaps she just ate a grape and, after experiencing that pleasure, is going back for more. Such ambiguity and sexuality would have no doubt been intriguing to the eighteenth-century French audience. However, compared to Berthélemy's and Natoire's, Van Loo's painting is less overtly erotic because the figure is more upright, she gazes directly at the viewer, her upper body is covered by her arm and the drapery, and the lower half of her body, arguably the most sexualized part of the body, is not depicted.

Just as Van Loo's representation of *Erigone* is in keeping with models provided by his contemporaries, his compositional arrangement, and use of color demonstrated in the painting were quite comparable to those of many French artists working in his time. For example, Natoire's *Jacob and Rachel Leaving the House of Laban* (fig. 15) of 1732 is almost entirely painted with the same colors of cerulean blue, olive green, creams, browns, and vibrant red. The figure of Rachel is shown reclining on the ground and twisting to face Jacob in a loosely fitting white dress with blue fabric draped over her lower half. Rachel's body is quite well-rounded, her skin is pale and creamy, her cheeks are softened with a pale shade of pink, and her hair, intertwined with a blue ribbon, is loose and flowing. The figure of Rachel is very polished and painted with tight brushstrokes, but elements of her surroundings, including the fur on the camel, the clouds

in the sky, and the leaves on the trees, are painted with loosely applied and broad brushstrokes. The leaves in Natoire's work are nearly identical to Van Loo's in size, shape, and color. In fact, their overall styles in consideration of these two works are extremely comparable. Another contemporary example is that of *Diana Leaving her Bath* (fig. 16), painted by Boucher in 1742. Again, the principle colors are green, blue, cream, brown, and a vivid red. The reclining and twisting figure of Diana is resting atop both blue and white fabric amid trees and natural elements which are implied by relatively loose brushstrokes. She has a red ribbon strung throughout her hair and her thick body is completely creamy and pale with the exception of her blushing cheeks. Though Boucher's application of paint is more controlled throughout his composition, there are striking stylistic similarities among these three contemporary French painters. It is important to note that several of the most prominent French artists at this time depicted many of the same mythological themes in very similar manners. For example, Natoire, Boucher, and Van Loo all treated the subject of *Venus Demanding Arms from Vulcan for Aeneas* (figs. 17-19) in the early 1730s, each of which is nearly identical in terms of composition and color.

The style and mythological subject matter in Van Loo's *Erigone* are quite typical of his work overall. While Van Loo worked in several genres of painting, many of his most distinguished works were mythological, such as his reception piece, *Apollo Flaying Marsyas*, and the *Drunken Silenus* he painted for the 1747 *concours*.[28] Among his mythological works, there are several which relate stylistically to *Erigone*. The aforementioned *Venus Requesting Vulcan to Make Arms for Aeneas* of circa 1735, as an

[28] Eric M. Zafran, European Art in the High Museum, p. 127.

earlier example of Van Loo's work, portrays a nude reclining figure of Venus, wrapped in both a white and rich blue fabric, twisting to look down towards Vulcan over whom is draped a vivid red fabric. Her hair is tied back with a blue ribbon and she is depicted with small, delicate facial features and pale skin. While the figures are quite detailed, the clouds on which Venus rests, the glimmer off Vulcan's armor, and the scene within the forge are all illustrated with broad, sweeping brushstrokes. Though this is a multi-figural composition which is not set in a wooded environment, the colors, figural qualities, and brushstroke are quite similar to *Erigone*. As a perfectly contemporary example, *Drunken Silenus* of 1747 illustrates a bacchanalian scene with a nude, rather weighty, reclining central figure who occupies a vast portion of the canvas. The bacchante who pours the wine into his golden cup is nearly bare-breasted with a loose white dress around which is wrapped blue fabric. She has a red ribbon strung around her hair and wears a wreath of ivy on her head. The composition is cluttered with elements relating to the story of Bacchus, including a barrel of wine, bunches of grapes, and a goat, all of which demonstrate Van Loo's familiarity with the subject. The most prominent colors in the painting are the creamy hues of the articulated figures' skin, the blue of the sky made of feathery brushstrokes, and the olive green of the leaves atop each figure's head. There are obvious stylistic similarities despite the fact that this painting focuses on a male amid a multi-figural composition. As a much later example, *The Three Graces* (fig. 20) of circa 1763 depicts three full-figured nude women with delicate features elegantly poised with white fabric draped over their interlocking arms and shoulders. The figures consume the majority of the canvas and their creamy skin is offset by fabric in a warm shade of indigo which stretches across two limbs of a tree. The tree which extends diagonally above the

women, the figural types, the depiction of the feathery, olive-colored leaves, and the loosely-defined details of the natural surrounding are all reminiscent of the stylistic elements of *Erigone*. These three examples, spanning nearly three decades, demonstrate that the stylistic and compositional elements present in *Erigone* are quite typical of Van Loo's work overall, particularly within his mythological paintings.

In terms of Van Loo's female ideal, I would argue that there are trends in its bodily characteristics and facial features which, although in keeping with many female figures depicted by his contemporaries, constitute a recognizable female type in Van Loo's paintings. To demonstrate this point, I examine three works by Van Loo that focus on nude female. *Une naïade* (fig. 21), an allegorical painting commissioned for the royal palace in Stockholm, was shown in the 1741 Salon and depicts a nude who twists around to face the viewer.[29] Like Erigone, her ample body, composed of broad shoulders, muscular arms, and a thick torso, dominates the pictorial space. Her head appears too small for her more massive body. She has long wavy hair, a delicate nose, large, almond-shaped eyes beneath a thick eyelid, flushed cheeks, narrow lips, and a small, pointed chin. This particular image, in composition and figural type, shares many similarities with Antoine Watteau's *Le Nymphe de Fontaine* (fig. 22), which Van Loo engraved for the *Figures de différents caractères*, a 1726-28 publication of prints made after Watteau's drawings.[30] A second example of Van Loo's female iconography, one more contemporary with *Erigone*, is *Une nymphe au bain* (fig. 23), shown in the 1750 Salon.[31] Though this image is only known in the form of a photograph, it illustrates the same

[29] Sahut, p. 55.
[30] Sahut, p. 183.
[31] Sahut, p. 102.

bulky bodily type of a seated woman who twists to face the viewer. It also shares with Erigone many of the same facial characteristics, such as the wavy hair, large eyes which seem elongated on the outer corners, thick eyelids which fold over the eyes, and narrow lips. *The Three Graces*, previously discussed in terms of color and composition, portray three nude women. Though the figures' bodies are less muscular and thick than the previous examples, the bodies are still quite ample compared to their smaller heads. All three faces bear a great resemblance to one another, with the same distinct eye shape, delicately pointed noses, and pointed chins which create a somewhat triangular head shape. Among these examples, the bulky types and specific repeated facial features do suggest a common thread in Van Loo's depiction of women.

I would suggest that this tendency may be the result of Van Loo's conscious combination of Flemish and contemporary French sources. The art historian Marie-Catherine Sahut observed, "Vanloo se distingue par la richesse de sa matière picturale, travaillée avec un étonnant métier, et surtout par la monumentalité de ses figures, d'une beauté sans grâce ni galanterie."[32] Indeed, his figures do assume a degree of monumentality in the way they absorb the majority of the pictorial space, and the juxtaposition of delicate facial features atop ample bodies, while it may create a beautiful image, lacks the certain grace and elegance which came to define the Rococo figures of his contemporaries. Admired in his time for his eclecticism of subject matter and style, [33] it is highly possible that his figural iconography relies on a fusion of those influences which had the greatest impact on his life and career. Deriving perhaps from his Flemish descent, strong connections are visible between Van Loo's works and the compositional

[32] Sahut, p. 65.
[33] Grove Art Online

arrangement of seventeenth-century Dutch genre scenes, the colors and body type of Rubens, and the distinct lack of overt idealization demonstrated by artists such as Jacob Jordaens. Compare *Erigone*, for example, to Jordaens's *The King Drinks* (fig. 24) of circa 1640 and the strongest similarities are found in the concentration on the less than perfect aspects of the figures, particularly the fleshiness of the jowls and chins. In terms of the body, it is this refusal to idealize that often marks Van Loo's figures as distinct among his contemporaries. As in *Erigone*, there is a weightiness to the figures' bodies. While Van Loo's scenes do not necessarily fit neatly into the contemporary conventions of the Rococo, his figures are influenced by the sensuality associated with the style, perhaps more than anything to appeal to the taste of his modern patrons. Many seventeenth-century Dutch artists, particularly Rubens, frequently endowed their figures with great sensuality, but primarily through a voluptuousness that ran counter to the Rococo's emphasis on refinement. Overall, I argue that Van Loo's figures are generally rendered in a Rococo manner and influenced by seventeenth-century Dutch artists while his paintings are unified by an overall contemporary sensuality.[34]

While there do appear to be common characteristics in his portrayals of women throughout his career, I would argue that the features of Erigone's face are slightly more distinct, as if based on a model as opposed to relying on established conventions. The depicted features, such as the broad forehead, small lips which are nearly lost on the recessed chin, and the large eyes that seem elongated on the outer corners, are common to his female iconography, but there are unique qualities to the proportions of her face and

[34] I focus more on female iconography because of the focus on a female subject. Also, at this point artists could not study the live female model so Van Loo likely drew from various sources to create his nudes.

the shape of her nose which may be emphasized because the figure is life-sized and positioned in the immediate foreground, nearly protruding into the viewer's space. Her features could also be interpreted as unique to a specific model because the cropped scene and the figure's dominance within the canvas, as well as her gaze directed toward the viewer, create a personal and intimate scene like a portrait.

Upon further investigation, the distinct visage of Erigone bears a strong resemblance to that of Marie-Marguerite Lebrun as portrayed by her husband, Carle's nephew, Charles-Amédée-Philippe Van Loo in *The Magic Lantern* of 1764 (fig. 25), a painting which depicts the artist's family with an optical device poised in a trompe-l'oeil roundel. In these two painting, Erigone and Marie-Marguerite are depicted with the same uniquely shaped eyes whose outer corners are extended, dark shading under the eyes, similarly arched eyebrows, and comparable triangularly-shaped heads. The slope and shape of the upturned noses are highly similar and each woman is depicted with small or perhaps slightly pursed lips and pointed, recessed chins. The wavy hair in each painting falls within the same hue of ashy blonde and both women are portrayed with blushing cheeks. It would be difficult to compare the characteristics of the bodies as Marie-Marguerite is fully dressed, but her more elongated neck and slender fingers would suggest that, unlike the figure of Erigone and assuming the artist provided a faithful representation, Marie-Marguerite did not have a bulky body. The generalization of Van Loo's figure, though, indicates that he was not following the form of a real model. Finally, if the two figures were modeled on the same woman, there would be an age disparity of about seventeen years, based on the date of each painting, a factor that coincides with the relative ages of the two painted women. That is to say, disregarding

the mythological implications associated with Erigone, she is depicted as a younger woman, with flowing locks, wide, youthful eyes, and with an expression which could be interpreted as playful based on her gaze and slight smirk. Marie-Marguerite, conversely, is presumably more mature based on the style of her hair with its slightly gray tint, whether natural or a result of powder, the way in which she is fully covered by her clothing, the inclusion of her children, the oldest perhaps being around ten years of age, and a general air of reflection based on her upright pose and thoughtful gaze.

While the similarities are striking between these two works by closely connected family members, the argument for a specific model would not hold up without evidence of the woman's relationship to the two men. Marie-Marguerite was the daughter of the painter Michel Lebrun and Amédée's cousin, which meant that she, too, came from a family of artists and would most likely have been a familiar face to Carle. The most convincing argument for her role as the model, however, revolves around the fact that Amédée and Marie-Marguerite were married in 1747, the very year in which *Erigone* was painted and Amédée was *reçu* by the Academy. At this time both men were living in Paris. Therefore, Carle was undoubtedly acquainted with his nephew's wife. Also, the published accounts of the Hôtel-de-Ville in Paris which contains a record of the marriage state that in 1747, Marie-Marguerite was twenty-five years old, [35] supporting the idea of this woman as the young model for the figure of Erigone. In light of the familial connection between the two artists, Marie-Marguerite's recorded age, and the marriage of 1747, the similarities between the features of Erigone and Marie-Marguerite in the two paintings are too strong to be disregarded as sheer coincidence.

[35] Actes d'état-civil d'artistes français, peintres, graveurs, architectes, etc., extr. des registres de l'Hôtel-de-Ville (Orléans: H. Herlusion, 1873): p. 261.

If Marie-Marguerite served as the model one can reexamine the painting as related to their nuptials. In the mythological narrative of Erigone, Van Loo's scene captures the moment just before or just after the woman becomes one with her lover. She is shown as youthful, playful, nude and thus sexualized, and, most relevantly, in an amorous state. Despite the character's grim fate, this particular scene would have been perfectly appropriate to mark a marriage. In fact, the subject matter is comparable to that of Natoire's *Triumph of Bacchus* (fig. 26) of 1749, which, along with the now-lost *Triumph of Amphitrite*, was commissioned for the marriage of Ange-Laurent and Louise-Elisabeth Chambon and featured, as Colin B. Bailey, argues "restrained carnality and imitation of pleasure" that were suitable for impending nuptials.[36] One should recall that in his 1747 version of the *Triumph of Bacchus*, Natoire emphasized the figure of Erigone. In the later version the emphasis was on Bacchus, perhaps because the pendant featured the figure of Amphitrite. Yet, the female nude in the foreground of the 1749 version bears a strong resemblance to Van Loo's figure, particularly in the similarly bulky body, reclining pose, twist of the neck, pursed lips, and position beneath a diagonally-extended tree. Reversed and cropped to the nude woman in half-length, the resemblance to Van Loo's Erigone is quite recognizable. Perhaps Natoire meant to reference Van Loo's work, which would suggest that *Erigone* was accessible at the time, even if only to a select audience. In any case, Natoire's painting supports the idea that amorous mythological scenes were appropriate commissions for marriages.

In the way that Natoire's commission involved two pendant paintings which focused alternately on a male or female figure, this new reading of *Erigone* could offer new

[36] Colin B. Bailey, Patriotic Taste: Collecting Modern Art in Pre-Revolutionary Paris (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002): p. 177.

meaning for Van Loo's *Drunken Silenus* of 1747 (fig. 8), a scene of festivities and celebration. The two paintings were never displayed together, their dimensions do not correspond, and there are no records of the works as commissioned or owned in tandem,[37] but two bacchanalian scenes produced in a short time span may have a level of resonance. If Marie-Marguerite served as the model for Erigone, could it be that features of Amédée would be incorporated into the central figure of Silenus? A comparison to Adelaide Labille-Guiard's much later 1785 portrait of Amédée (fig. 27), however, demonstrates that besides a common portliness, the two figures are not particularly similar. So while it is unlikely that Amédée served as a model for *Drunken Silenus*, the sexualized *Erigone* and Silenus could be viewed as counterparts, both thematically and in relation to a marriage.

There are multiple examples of drawings and paintings which affirm that Carle Van Loo studied after his family members. In 1737 he painted *A Pasha Having his Mistress's Portrait Painted* (fig. 28) for the prominent at art collector Jean de Julienne.[38] It has been suggested by the scholar Susan Siegfried that this scene provides a self-portrait of Van Loo in the figure of the artist as a court painter[39] before his easel and a portrait of his wife, Cristina Antonia Somis, in the guise of the Pasha's mistress. A comparison of the figure of the artist to a later self-portrait (fig. 29), proves clear similarities, particularly evident in the receding hairline. Drawings of his wife in profile (fig. 30) and from a

---

[37] *Drunken Silenus* was painted for the 1747 *concours*, which essentially guaranteed that the ten competitors' paintings would be purchased by the king and thus prevents a further reading of the two works as intended for a single location or person.

[38] Sahut, p. 65.

[39] Susan L. Siegfried, "Hybridity: Genre (Gender) and Portraiture," http://www.umich.edu/~ecsg/essays/Hybridity.htm (Oct. 2008).
His role as court painter could refer to the early 1730s when Van Loo served as first painter to the King of Sardinia, during which time he met and married his wife in Turin.

frontal view (fig. 31) also support the idea of Cristina as the model for the mistress, shown in profile beside the Pasha and depicted frontally on the canvas. This scene relates to an ancient Greek myth that was popular among artists in the eighteenth century, as evidenced by a circa 1725 representation by Giambattista Tiepolo (fig. 32). In the myth, Alexander the Great gives his concubine Campaspe to the court painter Apelles after he fell in love with her and used his artistic skills to translate her beauty to a canvas[40], a theme which becomes a romanticized autobiographical detail relating to Van Loo and Cristina's own recent marriage. This painting has a counterpart in the form of *The Grand Turk Giving a Concert to his Mistress* (fig. 33), in which Cristina serves as the model for the harpsichordist, a musical role which relates to her real profession as that of a renowned Opera singer.[41] Van Loo also depicted his wife as the central figure in Spanish costume in the *Spanish Conversation Piece* (fig. 34) of 1754 and in the role of governess in the *Spanish Lecture* (fig. 35) of 1761, both of which were commissioned by Madame de Geoffrin, an art collector known for her salon which boasted the greatest thinkers of the Enlightenment; they were later purchased by Catherine II of Russia, an eminent patron of European art.[42] Van Loo also included a self-portrait in the 1755 *Le baptême de saint Augustin* while in its pendant, *La predication de saint Augustin devant Valère*, he depicted his wife, daughter, and two sons at the margin.[43] Depicting his family members seems to have been common practice for Van Loo as his nephew Louis-Michel Van Loo

[40] Siegfried, "Hybridity: Genre (Gender) and Portraiture"
[41] Grove Art Online
[42] Sahut, p. 75.
[43] Sahut, p. 63.

is known to have painted a portrait of Carle's family in which Carle is portrayed painting his daughter.[44]

Despite the many extant drawings of his daughter and sons, Van Loo's children have not been suggested as models for any of his finished works. Based on the proportions and unique facial characteristics depicted in Van Loo's drawings of his daughter, Marie-Rosalie (figs. 36, 37), I would argue that she was the model for the young girl seen in *Painting* (fig. 38) and *Music* (fig. 39), two paintings within a series of four executed between 1752 and 1753 for Madame de Pompadour.[45] Though the features of this young girl in the two paintings have previously been described as inspired by the features of Madame de Pompadour, [46] it seems more likely that Van Loo would have used his daughter as a model. In comparing the profile views seen in the Bonnet print and the profile in *Painting*, both figures have high foreheads, a similar slope to the nose, similarly recessed chins, fleshy areas beneath the chin, plump cheeks, almost identically shaped eyebrows, the same contours of the eye and lid, and lightly-colored, wavy hair. This relationship is further supported by the compelling similarities between the portrait and a preparatory drawing for *Music* (fig. 40). The relative young ages represented in the portrait and the allegorical works generally correspond to Marie-Rosalie's actual age, as she was likely born in the early 1740s.[47] Van Loo may also have wanted to reference his daughter in these two works because they allude to the esteemed talents of her parents, a painter and an opera singer.

---

[44] Bailey, Patriotic Taste, p. 67.
[45] Rosenberg, p. 295.
[46] Rosenberg, p. 306.
[47] Sahut, p. 22. Marie-Rosalie was married as a young woman in 1758.

This interpretation, along with the many finished portraits for which his wife modeled, would confirm that Van Loo, on many occasions, based his compositional figures on his family members. The features of his wife and daughter in particular neatly coincide with the previously described characteristics of Van Loo's typical female iconography. Perhaps he was initially attracted to his wife because her features appealed to his aesthetic, or perhaps Van Loo altered her image to correspond to his characteristic female, but in either case, her features and the subsequently related features of their daughter influenced the modeling of his females' faces and allow for the possibility that other family members served as models.

Each of these aforementioned examples of finished paintings in which a family member served as a model – except the *Erigone* -- was commissioned. This raises the question of *Erigone*'s provenance. Pierre-Charles Lévesque engraved Van Loo's mythological woman and entitled the image *La Gaieté* (fig. 41). An inscription records that at the time of Lévesque's engraving, undated but produced some time before 1778 as explained below, the original painting was in the "*cabinet de M. de Peters, Peintre de S.A. Le Prince Charles, Gouverneur des Paybas*."[48] M. de Peters, or Johann Anton de Peters, was a Flemish artist and a distinguished pupil of Greuze who moved to Paris around 1745. He was known to have had a vast collection of paintings in Brussels which primarily included works by renowned eighteenth-century artists such as Vernet, Watteau, Coypel, and Chardin,[49] suggesting that Peters regarded Van Loo as among the most elite artists of the age. In 1778, de Peters sold the painting to Madame de Julienne

[48] Zafran, The Rococo Age, p. 54.
[49] Johann Anton de Peters: Ein Kölner Maler des 18. Jahrhunderts in Paris, p. 14.

in Paris, after which point Jean-Simon Berthélemy painted his replica of *Erigone*.[50] Madame de Julienne was a close relative of the esteemed art collector Jean de Julienne, who had previously patronized Van Loo with the commission for *A Pasha Having his Mistress's Head Painted*. In 1747 the French art critic La Font de Saint-Yenne wrote that Julienne was among 'ces magnifiques protecteurs du bon goût', and in his *Abécédario* of a few years later, another French art critic, Mariette, described Julienne's collection as 'un très-bel assemblage de tableaux, surtout flamands,'[51] supporting the idea that Van Loo's paintings were collected by the most admired collectors of the eighteenth century. Previously mentioned patrons of Van Loo included royalty, Madame de Pompadour, Catherine the Great of Russia, and Madame de Geoffrin, demonstrating that Van Loo attracted patrons of the highest echelons of society and Enlightenment circles.

Pierre-Charles Lévesque was a French etcher and writer who, on Diderot's recommendation, went to St. Petersburg later in the eighteenth century, where he was part of the Enlightenment circle of Catherine the Great, and wrote *L'histoire de la Russie*, the first comprehensive history of Russia. Lévesque engraved many images after Van Loo's paintings, as well as after various works focusing on the theme of Erigone, such as Deshays's *The Conquest of Erigone*, [52] suggesting that this subject had a certain aesthetic appeal. In his 1796 text, *Progrès successifs de la peinture chez les Grecs*, Lévesque explained his aesthetics and, like his fellow art historians and critics of the Enlightenment, urged his contemporaries to draw inspiration from nature and the art of

[50] Nathalie Volle, Jean-Simon Berthélemy (Paris:Arthena, 1979), p. 70. Berthélemy was known to have frequently visited Julienne's collection around this time.
[51] Bailey, Patriotic Taste, pp. 250-251.
[52] Michael Bryan, Dictionary of Painters and Engravers, Biographical and Critical. (London: George Bell and Sons, 1889), p. 50.

ancient Greece.[53] Van Loo's *Erigone*, based on ancient Greek texts and depicted within a natural environment, refers to these two ideals. Lévesque's also emphasized that the gestures of a figure must be natural and universal in order to be understood and effective. In that respect, perhaps Lévesque found Erigone's recumbent position and gesture particularly naturalistic. The title he gave to his engraving, *La Gaieté*, however, suggests a deeper significance.

La Gaieté was engraved as a pendant to *La douleur*, Lévesque's engraving after Charles Le Brun's *Porsie,*[54] a significant pairing as Le Brun was *the* authority on expression in French art. Perhaps these specific figures were chosen for their particularly naturalistic gestures and expressions which, as Lévesque implies through his assigned titles, signify two extremes of human emotion.[55] In order to disseminate his aesthetic ideals to a broad audience, Lévesque translated these paintings to print form under titles that help demonstrate visually effective and universally understood gestures.

As Van Loo's images attracted the patronage of the most elite members of society, it is also possible that the engraving could have been made, in part, for a prospective purchaser of Erigone. Since Lévesque was living in St. Petersburg until 1780,[56] perhaps as a member of the queen's Enlightened circle, Lévesque engraved these pendant works either because Catherine the Great was interested in acquiring the paintings or because Lévesque himself thought they would be of interest to her.

---

[53] Allan Cameron and Salvatore Settis, The Future of the 'Classical' (Cambridge: Polity, 2006), p. 46.
[54] Sahut, p. 65.
[55] Single-figure compositions with such titles were often found in allegorical images, such as Van Loo's *La Vérité* or *La Valeur*, painted for the palace of Fontainebleau in 1753. The pose and bodily type of the figure of *la vérité* are nearly identical to those of Erigone, which could refer to the mythological woman's characteristic truth and virtue, or the resemblance could simply mean that Van Loo directly borrowed the body and pose of Erigone and adopted the motif later in his career.
[56] Thomas Joseph, Universal Pronouncing Dictionary of Biography and Mythology (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1908), p. 1540.

Catherine, who had a vast collection of European art, is known to have purchased multiple works by Van Loo, such as the *The Spanish Lecture* and *The Spanish Conversation* which she bought from Madame Geoffrin. Diderot, Lévesque's mentor and a close acquaintance of Catherine, could have potentially influenced such a purchase as he spoke highly of Van Loo's work in the 1765 Salon just after Van Loo died.[57] Also, the artists in Catherine's circle often assumed the role of her art dealers. In 1769, for example, Catherine wrote to Falconet that she declined an offer to purchase a work by Van Loo because, 'I don't understand it enough to see what you see.'[58] If *Erigone* reflected an example of Lévesque's aesthetic ideals, perhaps an engraving of the work would effectively convey those principles to a patron such as Catherine. Another possibility is that the print was commissioned for Madame de Julienne's consideration before her 1778 purchase of the painting.[59] The Julienne art collection was renowned, so it is also possible that others might have wanted a print after a work in this collection.

With the rise of Neo-Classicism in the last decades of the eighteenth century, a purging of the Rococo style gave rise to the irreverent slogan 'Van Loo, Pompadour, Rococo.'[60] The subsequent distaste for Rococo art, disparagingly deemed frivolous and inane, meant that artists like Carle Van Loo were largely excluded from the art historical canon for centuries. While the art of many of his contemporaries has been researched and discussed in numerous modern texts, many aspects of Van Loo's life and oeuvre remain undocumented. This deficiency of scholarship hardly coincides with the success Van Loo

[57] John Goodman, Diderot on Art: The Salon of 1765 and Notes on Painting (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 10.
[58] Cited in Virgina Rounding, Catherine the Great: Love, Sex and Power (London: Hutchinson, 2006), p. 217.
[59] Sahut, p. 65.
[60] Grove Art Online

garnered throughout his career. As the first painter to the king and the director of the Royal Academy, Van Loo achieved the highest honors available to an artist in the eighteenth century, and he attracted the most elite of patrons. I contend that this great success was the result of the mastery with which Van Loo was able to fuse his own particular style, imbued with the sexuality and eroticism of the Rococo, and the eclecticism of his many diverse sources, from classical antiquity to his own family members. *Erigone* is an exemplar of that mastery. The great historical and literary sources instill the painting with intellectuality, the clever compositional arrangement and brushwork demonstrate the artist's excellent skill, and the figure's coy expression and sexuality entice the spectator's curiosity. In light of all the merits of this intriguing painting, the modern disparagement of Van Loo as a leader of the frivolous Rococo and the continuing lack of scholarly examination of his art are deeply in need of reassessment. I focused this thesis on *Erigone*, then, as a paradigm of Van Loo's unique eclecticism and style, and as verification that Carle Van Loo and his oeuvre within the Rococo deserve reconsideration and further exploration in the history of art.

Images

1.

2.

3.

1. Carle Van Loo, *Erigone*, c.1747, oil on canvas, 100 x 79.8 cm, Atlanta, High Museum of Art
2. Charles-Joseph Natoire, *Study of Erigone*, c. 1747, red chalk drawing, Private Collection
3. Charles-Joseph Natoire, *The Triumph of Bacchus*, 1747, oil on canvas, Paris, Musée du Louvre

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

4. Nicolas Poussin, *Bacchus and Erigone*, c. 1626, brown ink and wash, 18.1 x 14.3 cm, Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum
5. *Bacchus and Erigone*, detail from *Les Mois Grotesques*, late 16th century, tapestry, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum
6. Guido Reni, *Erigone*, c. 1630s, oil on canvas, 59 x 66 cm
7. François Boucher, *Bacchus and Erigone*, 1745, oil on canvas, 60 x 48.1 cm, London, Wallace Collection
8. Carle Van Loo, *Drunken Silenus*, 1747, oil on

9.

10.

11.

12.

13.

14.

9. Étienne-Maurice Falconet, *Erigone à la grappe*, 1747, terra cotta
10. Jean-Simon Berthélemy, *Erigone couchée*, late 18th century, oil on canvas, 76 x 63 cm, Paris, Commerce d'art
11. Jean-Simon Berthélemy, *Erigone assise*, late 18th century, oil on canvas, 69.3 x 51.3 cm, Williamstown, Sterling & Francine Clark Art Institute
12. N.R. Jollain, *La Nymphe Erigone*, 1773, engraving
13. Jean-Joseph Foucou, *Bacchante*, c. 1775 – 1785, marble, 31.5"
14. François Boucher, *Are They Thinking About the Grape*?, 1747, oil on canvas, 80.8 x 68.5 cm, Art Institute of Chicago

15.

16.

17.

18.

19.

15. Charles-Joseph Natoire, *Jacob and Rachel Leaving the House of Laban*, 1732, oil on canvas, 103 x 142.3 cm, Atlanta, High Museum of Art
16. François Boucher, *Diana Leaving her Bath*, 1742, oil on canvas, Paris, Musée du Louvre
17. Carle Van Loo, *Venus Requesting Vulcan to Make Arms for Aeneas*, c. 1735, oil on canvas, 128.9 x 98.4 cm, France, Collection Particulière
18. Charles-Joseph Natoire, *Venus Demanding Arms from Vulcan for Aeneas*, after 1732, Montpellier, Musée Fabre
19. François Boucher, *Venus Demanding Arms from Vulcan for Aeneas*, 1732, oil on canvas, 252 x 175 cm

20.

21.

22.

20. Carle Van Loo, *The Three Graces*, c. 1763, oil on canvas, 23 x 18 1/8", Los Angeles Country Museum of Art
21. Carle Van Loo, *Une naïade*, 1741, oil on canvas, 146 x 115 cm, Stockholm, Nationalmuseum
22. Jean-Antoine Watteau, *La Nymphe de Fontaine*, c. 1717, oil on canvas, 74 x 108 cm
23. Carle Van Loo, *Une nymphe au bain*, 1750, oil on canvas, 1750, 45 x 35 cm, lost
24. Jacob Jordaens, *The King Drinks*, 1638, oil on canvas, 152 x 204 cm, Brussels, Royal Museum of Fine Arts

23.

24.

25.

26.

27.

25. Charles-Amédée-Philippe Van Loo, *The Magic Lantern*, 1764, oil on canvas, 88.6 x 88.5 cm, Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art
26. Charles-Joseph Natoire, *Triumph of Bacchus*, 1749, oil on canvas, 81 x 101.2 cm, Houston, Museum of Fine Arts
27. Adélaïde Labille-Guiard, *Charles-Amédée-Philippe Van Loo*, 1785, oil on canvas, 130 x 98 cm, Versailles

28.

29.

30.

31.

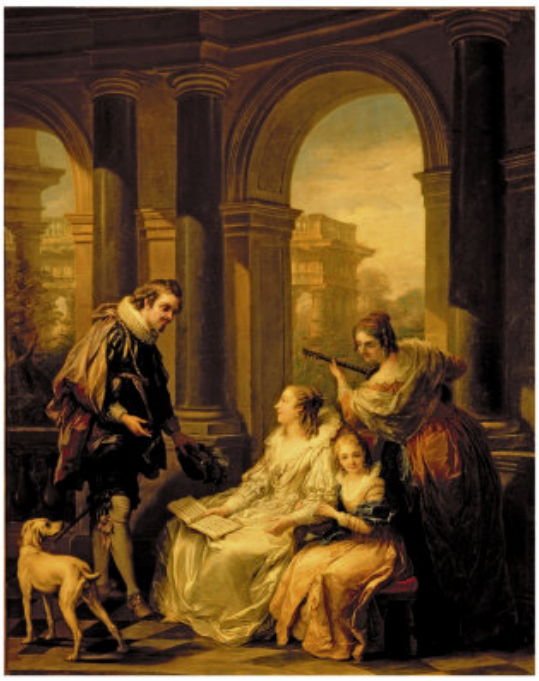
28. Carle Van Loo, *Le pacha faisant peindre sa maîtresse*, 1737, oil on canvas, 66 x 76 cm, Richmond, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
29. Carle Van Loo, *Autoportrait*, before 1765, black ink drawing, 41.7 x 30.5 cm, Paris, Musée du Louvre
30. Carle Van Loo, *Portrait of Christina Somis*, c. 1740-1745, red chalk drawing
31. Carle Van Loo, *Portrait of Christine Van Loo*, black ink drawing, 50.7 x 40.9 cm, Paris, Musée du Louvre

32.

33.

32. Giovanni Bapttista Tiepolo, *Alexander the Great and Campaspe in the Studio of Apelles*, c. 1725, oil on canvas, Montreal, Museum of Fine Arts
33. Carle Van Loo, *Le concert du sultan*, 1737, oil on canvas, 74 x 92 cm, London, Wallace Collection
34. Carle Van Loo, *La conversation espagnole*, 1754, oil on canvas, 164 129 cm, Leningrad, Hermitage Museum
35. Carle Van Loo, *La lecture espagnole*, 1761, oil on canvas, 164 x 129 cm, Leningrad, Hermitage Museum

34.



35.

36.

37.

38.

39.

36. Carle Van Loo, *Portrait de Marie-Rosalie Van Loo, presque de face*, black ink drawing, 34.2 x 29.5 cm, Paris, Collection Particuliere
37. Louis-Marin Bonnet, *Portrait de Marie-Rosalie Van Loo, de profil*, after Carle Van Loo, c. 1764, black and white ink print on blue paper, Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art
38. Carle Van Loo, *Painting*, 1752-3, oil on canvas, 87.5 x 84 cm, San Francisco, California Palace of the Legion of Honor
39. Carle Van Loo, *Music*, 1752-3, oil on canvas, 87.5 x 84 cm, San Francisco,

40.

41.

40. Carle Van Loo, *Head of Girl Looking to Left* (study for *Music*), black and white chalk drawing with pastel and touches of graphite, 23 x 18 cm, The Art Institute of Chicago
41. Pierre-Charles Lévesque, *La Gaieté*, engraving after Carle Van Loo's *Erigone*, 1747-1812, engraving

Bibliography

Actes d'état-civil d'artistes français, peintres, graveurs, architectes, etc., extr. Des registres des l'Hôtel-de-Ville. Orléans : H. Herlusion, 1873.

Bailey, Colin B. Patriotic Taste: Collecting Modern Art in Pre-Revolutionary Paris. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.

Bailey, Colin B. The Loves of the Gods: Mythological Painting from Watteau to David. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1992.

Bailey, Colin B., Philip Conisbee, and Thomas W. Gaehtgens. The Age of Watteau, Chardin, and Fragonard. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.

Blanc, Charles, and Adolphe Narcisse Thibaudeau. Le trésor de la curiosité. Paris: Vve J. Renouard, 1857.

Bryan, Michael. Dictionary of Painters and Engravers, Biographical and Critical. London: George Bell and Sons, 1889.

Bull, Malcolm. "Poussin and Nonnos." The Burlington Magazine vol. 140, no. 1148 (November 1998): 724-738.

Carlson, Marvin A. Voltaire and the Theatre of the Eighteenth Century. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1998.

Goodman, John. Diderot on Art : The Salon of 1765 and Notes on Painting (Vol. 1). New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.

Hopkinson, N. "Review: The Erigone of Eratosthenes." The Classical Review vol. 47, no. 1 (1997): 29-31.

Johann Anton de Peters: Ein Kölner Maler des 18. Jahrhunderts in Paris. Köln: Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, 1981.

La Font de Saint-Yenne. Sentimens sur quelques ouvrages de peinture, sculpture et gravure. Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1970.

Le Normand d'Étoiles, Jeanne Antoinette, and Hugh Noel Williams. Madame de Pompadour. New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1902.

Levey, Michael. Painting and Sculpture in France 1700-1789. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.

Lyne, Raphaele. Ovid's Changing Worlds: English Metamorphoses, 1567-1632. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Mollet, John William. Watteau. London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1883.

Moore, Thomas. The Odes of Anacreon. London: Gibbings & Company. 1800.

Panofsky, Erwin. "A Mythological Painting by Poussin." The Burlington Magazine (1961): 318-321.

Pepper, D. Stephen. "Guido Reni's 'Erigone': A Work Restored and a Mystery Resolved." The Burlington Magazine (1986): 206-209.

Poe, George. The Rococo and Eighteenth-Century French Literature: A Study through Marivaux's Theater. New York: Peter Lang, 1987.

Rosenberg, Pierre. French Paintings: 1500-1825. San Francisco: The Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, 1987.

Rounding, Virgina. Catherine the Great: Love, Sex and Power. London: Hutchinson, 2006.

Rouse, W. H. D. Nonnos Dionysiaca. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940.

Sahut, Marie-Catherine. Carle Vanloo: Premier peintre du roi. Nice: Musée Chéret, 1977.

Sheriff, Mary D. Moved by Love: Inspired Artists and Deviant Women in Eighteenth-Century France. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004.

Siegfried, Susan L. "Hybridity: Genre (Gender) and Portraiture." Eighteenth Century Studies (Oct. 2008) < http://www.umich.edu/~ecsg/essays/Hybridity.htm>.

Smith, R. Scott, and Stephen Trzaskoma. Apollodorus' *Library* and Hyginus' *Fabulae*: Two Handbooks of Greek Mythology. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2007.

Thomas, Joseph. Universal Pronouncing Dictionary of Biography and Mythology. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1908.

Volle, Nathalie. Jean-Simon Berthélemy. Paris: Arthena, 1979.

Klingsöhr-Leroy, Cathrin, Juan J. Luna, Shearer West, and Laurie G. Winters. (2008). "Carle Van Loo." *Grove Art Online*. Retrieved October, 2008, from Oxford Art Online database.

Worley, Michael Preston. Pierre Julien: Sculptor to Queen Marie-Antoinette. New York: iUniverse, 2003.

Zafran, Eric M. European Art in the High Museum. Atlanta: High Museum of Art, 1984.

Zafran, Eric M. The Rococo Age: French Masterpieces of the Eighteenth Century. Atlanta, High Museum of Art, 1983.