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Article

'Feminine Virtues Violated': Motherhood, Female Militancy and Revolutionary Violence in Elizabeth Inchbald's *The Massacre* (1792)

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OCTOBER 6TH 1789 HAS BEEN SEEN TO MARK THE START of women's military involvement in the French revolution. As has been well documented, the date saw a host of Parisian market women march to Versailles in order to protest the inadequacy of bread supplies, before forcing the Royal family out of the palace, and back to the capital.¹ British journalists who recorded the event evinced great alarm at the fact the women involved in the march had been armed. *The Times* expressed horror that such a vast number of France's female inhabitants had 'taken up arms, some with bludgeons, some with firelocks',² and *Whitehall Evening Post* conveyed its trepidation of the 'French ladies' who proved themselves to 'have the courage even to take up arms'.³ French women's military involvement in their country's revolution did not cease there. The spring and summer of 1792 saw women partake in various armed parades; women were actively involved in the killing of Swiss guards which occurred during the attack on the Tuileries on August 10th 1792, and in July 1793 French Republican Charlotte Corday stabbed and murdered the tyrannical Jacobin leader, Jean-Paul Marat.⁴ The military character of France's women sparked panic among gender-conservative Britons, who feared that if British women emulated their French counterparts, the nation's gender hierarchy would be

called into question. As a consequence, the 1790s saw a great rise in British literature condemning the calamitous consequences to result when women partake in violent activism.⁵

Owing to the connection formed in 1790s Britain between arms-bearing women and revolutionary France, to write favourably of female militancy throughout this period was to assume a strongly radical stance, and to risk accusations of Francophilia. As a result, British publications justifying female militancy during this era are sparse. Yet, a few instances do exist. One 1790s author brave enough to endorse women's military rights was actress, playwright, novelist, and later drama critic, Elizabeth Inchbald. Elizabeth Inchbald was an author of reformist sentiments. She was well acquainted with a number of British radicals, including William Godwin and Thomas Holcroft, with whom she frequently discussed her literature.⁶ The congruence between Inchbald's political views and those of her radical associates has been highlighted by Gary Kelly, who lists Inchbald along with Godwin, Holcroft, and Robert Bage, as Britain's 'Jacobin' novelists.⁷

While comparisons can certainly be made between these four authors' political attitudes, Inchbald's proto-feminist sympathies clearly surpass those of her male acquaintances.⁸ Numerous scholars have noted how the language of natural rights popularised by the French revolution sparked the emergence of a large corpus of late eighteenth-century proto-feminist literature.⁹ The most notorious and widely studied advocate for women's rights of this period is radical author Mary Wollstonecraft, whose pamphlet *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, published in 1792, is often seen to epitomise the extent of late eighteenth-century feminist thought. Wollstonecraft's pamphlet is typical of 1790s feminist protests in its insistence upon an improved system of female education, and its radical remarks regarding the conjugal contract. Yet, equally typical of the period's literature, Wollstonecraft's pamphlet stops short of championing women's martial rights. Wollstonecraft insists that she wishes not 'to invert the order of things' by encouraging women's fondness for 'shooting', and she protests that she would never 'advise [women] to turn their distaff into a musket'.¹⁰ As Wollstonecraft's pamphlet suggests, with relation to arguments surrounding female militancy, Inchbald can be viewed as a somewhat anomalous 1790s feminist author, as her tragedy *The Massacre* (1792) offers a forceful vindication of women's right to bear arms.

Through offering a detailed textual analysis of *The Massacre*, this paper seeks to re-assess prior assumptions regarding the tragedy's historical provenance. I begin by arguing that Inchbald's script was written in response to a petition produced by French radical Pauline Léon in the Spring of 1791, protesting women's right to bear arms. After revealing the way in which Léon's petition challenges dominant attitudes towards arms-bearing women, I compare the depiction of female militancy offered in Inchbald's *The Massacre*, with that offered in Louis-Sébastien Mercier's *Jean Hennuyer: évêque de Lizieux* (1772) – the French original from which Inchbald's tragedy is adapted. By comparing the two scripts I highlight the way in which Inchbald's modifications enable her tragedy to be read as a dramatisation of Léon's protest. Like Léon, Inchbald too can be seen to contest the predominantly implied incongruence between arms-bearing women and family-oriented women, by suggesting that if the feminine ideal is to survive the event of violent revolution, women must be granted the right to defend themselves militantly. Through performing this re-assessment of *The Massacre's* historical provenance, I seek to illuminate the contemporary relevance of the tragedy, by illustrating its anachronistic engagement with modern day debates regarding women and war.

The Massacre and Pauline Léon

In 1792, Inchbald wrote *The Massacre*, her first and only tragic drama. The tragedy was printed by Joseph Johnson in London in September 1792. Its printing coincided with the September massacres in Paris, which saw Parisian sans-culottes perform large scale massacres of French nobles and priests. Inchbald's tragedy is set not in revolutionary France, but in the France of 1572. It depicts the horrific spectacle of the St Bartholomew massacres, an event comparable to the September crisis, in that it witnessed the slaughter of French Protestants by a Roman Catholic mob. Inchbald outlines in a footnote the similarity between the massacres of 1572, and those occurring in contemporary France, exclaiming, 'Shocking, even to incredibility, as these murders may appear, the truth of them has been asserted in many of our public prints during the late massacre at Paris'.¹¹ The inclusion of this footnote has caused numerous scholars, including Wendy C. Nielsen, Terrence Alland Hoagwood, Anna Jenkins, and most recently, George C. Grinnell, to assume that Inchbald scripted her tragedy in direct response to the Paris massacres of September 1792.¹² Yet, when one observes the date by which Inchbald had written *The Massacre*, it becomes clear that the September crisis could not possibly have inspired the tragedy's contents, and that all references to the event must have been added to the script subsequent to its initial completion.

A letter written by George Colman, dramatist and manager of the Haymarket theatre, confirms that Colman had received the script of Inchbald's tragedy by 7th February 1792, months before the September massacres.¹³ One scholar to have acknowledged the incongruence between the date on which Colman received the script, and that of the event which supposedly inspired the tragedy, is Amy Garnai. In her illuminating account of Inchbald's *The Massacre* offered in her fascinating study titled *Revolutionary Imaginings in the 1790s*, Garnai theorises that Inchbald's tragedy responds not to the September crisis, but to equally violent preceding events, including the great fear of 1789, the attacks on refractory priests, the massacre at the Champ de Mars, and the food riots which broke out in Paris early in 1792.¹⁴ While the events outlined by Garnai are undoubtedly feasible candidates for inspiring Inchbald's tragedy, my analysis draws attention to a further source which could have helped fuel the creation of the script: namely, a protest produced by Pauline Léon in 1791, demanding women's martial rights.

French radical Pauline Léon was a member of the Cordeliers Club, a French revolutionary group which promoted the founding of a Republic based on universal suffrage. She went on to become president of the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women, an extremely militant revolutionary women's club, formed in France in 1793, which consisted of a number of female sans-culottes.¹⁵ On March 6th 1791, one year before Colman received the draft of Inchbald's tragedy, Léon offered the National Assembly a document petitioning for women's right to bear arms. The petition proved popular with Léon's fellow French women, and acquired over three hundred signatures. The arguments upon which Léon founds her protest prove her familiarity with the dominant criticisms issued against arms-bearing women throughout the 1790s. At this juncture, it is pertinent to offer a brief outline of these criticisms, before I return to Léon's protest.

Mothers not Warriors: Léon's Protest and 1790s Opposition to Female Militancy

Opponents of arms-bearing women, both French and British, were quick to suggest that women who partook in military activism necessarily abandoned their domestic and familial duties. In 1793 French radical Pierre Chaumette asked, 'Since when is it permitted to give up one's sex? Since when is it decent to see women abandoning the [...] cares of their households, the cribs of their children?'¹⁶ Statements like Chaumette's appeared frequently in both nations, owing to the particular importance attributed to the role of motherhood throughout the 1790s. As academics including Harriet Guest, Anne K. Mellor, and Jane Rendall have shown, the French revolutionary years were 'characterised by a new emphasis on the values of the private, domestic and familial, as the basis for public morality'.¹⁷ Both supporters and opponents of the revolution represented the domestic sphere as the arena within which women could perform valuable patriotic duties. Writers as diverse as British loyalist Hannah More, revolutionary sympathiser Mary Wollstonecraft, and French republican Louis Prudhomme, all insisted that women could best contribute to their country's improvement not by emulating the 'most disgusting and unnatural character' of 'female warriors', to quote More, but by imbuing their children with the principles needed to grow into valuable citizens, and thereby acting as mothers of the nation.¹⁸

It was the argument of many commentators that women who adopted the role of the loyal and devoted mother were entirely immune to threats of male violence. During the French revolution, the idea that femininity could soften men's tempers was carried as far as to suggest that displays of maternal delicacy could literally put a stop to war. In his drama *The Battle of Hexham*, written in 1789, George Colman shows a number of soldiers unable to continue fighting after being 'soften'd at the scene and, dull'd with pity', when seeing their enemy, Queen Margaret, hugging and kissing her baby son.¹⁹ Margaret's display of maternal sentiments pacifies her enemies and deters them from their military acts. The scene epitomises the belief that a woman's familial loyalty is enough to awaken man's compassion, and thus to shield women against entire armies of men.

The prevalent contention then, as these examples demonstrate, was that the nation's idealised woman both should not and need not bear arms. Allowing women to do battle would detract from their familial sentiments, which, when maintained, offered women a form of self-defence against male violence which made weapons unnecessary. Both of these arguments are challenged within Léon's petition. Léon begins her protest by outlining the vulnerability of the nation's women if denied the use of weaponry. She exclaims,

Patriotic women come before you to claim the right which any individual has to defend his life and liberty. [...] Yes, Gentlemen, we need arms, and we come to ask your permission to procure them. [...] You cannot refuse us, and society cannot deny the right nature gives us, unless you pretend the Declaration of rights does not apply to women, and that they should let their throats be cut like lambs, without the right to defend themselves.²⁰

Léon pleads that by refusing women the right to bear arms, men are essentially denying them the right to live – a right which should be granted by nature, and

not by man. Aware that her proposal would be denied immediately if it seemed to suggest that women should supplant their domestic duties with military duties, Léon does not deny that a woman's first obligation should be to her family, yet she contests the idea that women who adhere to the image of the maternal ideal require no physical form of self-defence. Léon assures her readers,

Do not believe, however, that our plan is to abandon the care of our families and home, always dear to our hearts, to run to meet the enemy. No Gentlemen, we wish only to defend ourselves the same as you.²¹

Léon's request is not that a woman should leave the home in favour of the battlefield, and go out of her way to meet with the enemy, but rather that if the enemy is brought to the woman, she should be granted the right to defend herself with a more reliable shield than that of her femininity. In *The Massacre*, Inchbald dramatises the necessity of Léon's plea, by suggesting that a woman's ability to fulfil her domestic role goes hand in hand with her right to bear arms. Inchbald opposes the notion that denying women weaponry will help counteract the loss of the familial ideal, by proving that it is not female militancy, but female defencelessness, which is depriving the nation of devoted wives and mothers.

Motherhood and Militancy: Inchbald's Engagement with Léon's Protest

As I mentioned previously, Inchbald's tragedy is an adaptation of French playwright Louis-Sébastien Mercier's *Jean Hennuyer: évêque de Lizieux*.²² In order to effectively illustrate Inchbald's engagement with debates concerning female militancy, it is necessary to offer a short synopsis of Mercier's original script.²³ Like Inchbald's adaptation, *Jean Hennuyer* is also set during the St Bartholomew massacres. The drama begins with a dialogue which informs readers that while the play's Protestant hero, Arsenne, has managed to escape being harmed by the Catholic mob which rages through Paris, his wife's mother and uncle have not been quite so fortunate. Having seen his relatives killed, Arsenne seeks vengeance upon the enemy, and demands, 'to arms, to arms! [...] Let us sell our blood most dearly'. Though Arsenne had directed the demand to his male accomplices, when his wife Laura decides that she too must arm herself against the enemy, and show herself 'equal to their furies',²⁴ Arsenne accepts her decision without reproach, and the tragedy proceeds to a somewhat optimistic conclusion. In the final scene of the play, Jean Hennuyer puts a stop to the war which has broken out in Paris when delivering a speech which promotes the Christian precepts of charity over those of violence,²⁵ and the drama ends with the hopeful implication that future generations shall go on to live by Hennuyer's pacifistic ethics. Laura, having heard Hennuyer's speech, promises to fulfil her role as mother of the nation, when declaring, 'I will teach our children his name after that of God: this dear name, forever engraved in our hearts, shall be blessed in their mouths every day of their lives.'²⁶ Laura's children, symbolic of France's future inhabitants, look set to share the Christian principles endorsed by Hennuyer. The drama thus ends with the suggestion that the days of massacres and civil wars are over, and that France can look forward to a future of social tranquillity.

Inchbald's adaptation of Mercier's drama maintains much of the original content, yet the modifications made by Inchbald are significant in their

illumination of the suggested relationship between motherhood and female militancy. The heroine of Inchbald's tragedy is Madame Tricastin, a mother who conforms to the image of the familial archetype lauded by Inchbald's contemporaries. Her 'heart swells' with love for her husband, and she is 'a tender mother to [her] children'.²⁷ The vulnerability of women like Madame Tricastin when exposed to revolutionary violence is illuminated early on, when her husband, Eusebe, returns from the scene of the massacre. Eusebe informs his company that the blood on his clothes 'came from the veins of [his wife's] mother' who he had 'tried in vain to defend', and he goes on to describe how he 'saw poor females [...] try to ward off that last fatal blow, then sink beneath it'.²⁸ Eusebe himself is 'not wounded', and when asked how he managed to 'preserve [himself]' against the enemy who killed his mother-in-law, he responds that, 'my sword in my hand, reeking with blood' meant that 'I passed unmolested'.²⁹ Despite knowing his sword to have saved him from the fate received by his mother-in-law, when it is suggested that Eusebe should give his wife 'an instrument of death to defend herself', Eusebe retorts, 'No – by heaven, so sacred do I hold the delicacy of her sex, that could she with a breath lay all our enemies dead, I would not have her feminine virtues violated by the act'.³⁰ Eusebe's decision marks the major difference between Mercier's original play, and Inchbald's adaptation. While Laura's request to arm herself is accepted without debate, and both she and her children remain alive and unharmed in the drama's final scene, Inchbald illustrates in *The Massacre* the tragic results which ensue when women are denied the martial agency granted to men.

The closing scene of *The Massacre* reveals the dead bodies of Madame Tricastin and her children. Rochelle, the bearer of the corpses, exclaims,

My soldiers, bear a lovely matron butchered, with her two children by her side. [...] The eldest, to the last, she held fast by the hand – the youngest she pressed violently to her bosom, and struggling to preserve, received the murderers blow through its breast to her own.³¹

This description of Madame Tricastin's loyalty to her children even when placed in the midst of terror illuminates explicitly her compliance with the image of the maternal ideal lauded by reformists and loyalists alike. Her display of familial love is strongly reminiscent of Margaret's in *The Battle of Hexham*. The difference is that while Margaret's enemies were moved by her display of feminine virtues, and consequently left unable to harm her, Madame Tricastin's enemies prove themselves to be entirely impervious to her exhibition of maternal sentiments. Observing that within *The Massacre*, 'mothers and wives are legitimate targets for political wrath', Nielsen identifies Inchbald's tragedy as one which 'shows contempt for the promise of chivalry'.³² Eusebe believes that his wife's feminine virtues will protect her against the political enemy, as femininity is respected and revered by the male sex. Yet the men to whom Madame Tricastin is exposed prove themselves to lack her husband's chivalric virtues, leaving Madame Tricastin entirely vulnerable to their attacks.

Owing to the death of Madame Tricastin and her children, *The Massacre's* conclusion is devoid of the optimism presented at the close of *Jean Henuyer*. *The Massacre's* final scene sees Glandeve, Henuyer's equivalent, deliver a speech almost identical to that which had been delivered by his French counterpart. Glandeve convinces both parties to cease war after encouraging them, like Henuyer, to supplant their violence with 'peace and charity'.³³ Unlike Henuyer's speech however, Glandeve's words lack force, as they look set to be forgotten. While Laura had promised to pass down Henuyer's teachings to her children, Madame Tricastin cannot fulfil this

patriotic role, as neither she nor her children live to hear Glandeve's words. The tragedy's melancholy conclusion thus implies that within a nation of warring, ungentlemanly men, a mother's ability to fulfil her role as educator of the nation is dependent upon her right to self-defence. Laura is able to aid the melioration of France's future only because that she is granted an adequate shield with which to protect herself. Madame Tricastin is denied the right to bear arms, and as a result, she is denied the ability to shape the principles of her country's forthcoming generations.

Having proven then the futility of a woman's exhibition of feminine virtues when perceived by ungentlemanly enemies, Inchbald's tragedy inverts the suggestion that female militancy is to blame for the depletion of the feminine ideal. In 1793, Chaumette, railing against French women's involvement in their country's violent activism, had declared,

As much as we venerate the mere de famille who puts her joy and glory in raising and caring for her children, [...] we must despise and spit on the woman [...] who dons the masculine role and makes the disgusting exchange of the charms given by nature for a pike.³⁴

Chaumette re-enforces the view that if women are granted the right to bear arms the country will become destitute of venerable mothers, by stating that the acquisition of a pike necessitates the exchange of maternal loyalty for the disgusting characteristics of the masculine warrior. As the death of Madame Tricastin suggests however, it is not the possession of weaponry, but rather the inability to access it, which is to blame for the country's loss of maternal ideals. Had Madame Tricastin been granted the poniard that she had requested, she might have freed herself from her assassins. Yet by leaving her wholly defenceless against an enemy impervious to gender difference, the nation's loss of yet another laudable wife and mother is made entirely inevitable.

Concluding Remarks: *The Massacre's* Historical Provenance and its Relevance to Twenty-First Century Readers

There is no hard evidence to confirm unequivocally that Inchbald's tragedy was inspired directly by Léon's petition. However, the similarities in argument are undeniably striking, and it is indeed possible that Inchbald could have learned of Léon's protest from Godwin, who followed events in revolutionary France with great avidity.³⁵ Godwin was kept well informed of French affairs owing to his frequent presence at debates in the House of Commons, and his relationship with British revolutionaries including Richard Price, John Horne Tooke, and Charles James Fox, with whom he occasionally dined.³⁶ These British radicals not only sympathised with, but also corresponded with the Friends of Liberty in France, and thus acquired a firm knowledge of the activities occurring in their neighbouring country, as Godwin's diary entries testify.³⁷ Though Godwin's diary does not reference any correspondence between himself and Inchbald until the Autumn of 1792, the fact that Godwin 'read and criticised' a draft of Inchbald's novel *The Simple Story* (1791) in December 1790, and attended a performance of her comedy *Next Door Neighbours* (1791) on July 9th 1791, suggests that the two authors were in contact prior to Inchbald's completion of *The Massacre*.³⁸ And, as is evident from Godwin's later diary entries, when the two writers were in one another's company, the subject matter discussed was often of a political nature: in October 1792, for instance, Godwin called upon Inchbald to discuss the topic of massacres, and two months later the authors engaged in a debate regarding

‘France and promises’.³⁹ Given the common nature of their conversations, it is not at all unlikely that Godwin and Inchbald may have conversed about Léon’s protest.

So, what are the implications of reading *The Massacre* as a possible homage to Léon? Drawing attention to *The Massacre*’s engagement with debates regarding female militancy facilitates a reading of the tragedy as more than a mere historical artefact, of interest only to historians and literary scholars focusing on a specific time period. The tragedy’s proto-feminism grants it concurrent value to sociologists and anthropologists performing diachronic studies of Western attitudes towards women and war. Debates regarding femininity and martial combat remain prevalent within modern day society. This is well justified by the number of studies produced within the last fifteen years which draw attention to contemporary prejudices surrounding war and gender. These include, to list just a sample, Martin Van Creveld’s *Men, Women and War* (2001), Joyce P. Kaufman’s and Kristen P. Williams’s *Women and War: Gender Identity and Activism in Times of Conflict* (2010) and the compilation of essays published in *Women and Wars: Contested Histories, Uncertain Futures* (2013), edited by Carol Cohn. Interest in the topic of female militancy was refuelled in January of just last year, when Leon Panetta, Secretary of Defense, lifted the military’s ban on women serving in U.S combat units. One need only peruse the reader comments regarding Panetta’s decision, published on online newspaper sites, to acknowledge Western culture’s continued hostility towards women’s right to partake in martial combat.⁴⁰

While one cannot directly parallel Inchbald’s protestation for women’s right to defend themselves militantly with more recent endorsements for women’s right to fight on the front line, parallels can indeed be drawn between the opposition to female militancy expressed by Inchbald’s contemporaries, and the implied incongruence between motherhood and militancy heralded by twenty-first century critics. The nexus between past and present attitudes is exemplified in an article titled ‘Wartime Soldier: Conflicted Mom’, published in *The New York Times* in 2009. Both the article itself, and the reader comments published online, imply that the anti-female militancy arguments expressed by Chaumette, Wollstonecraft, More, Prudhomme, and Inchbald’s Eusebe, are far from archaic. Lizette Alvarez, the author of the article, writes of specialist Jaymie Holschlag, a mother who served for twelve months in Iraq, that ‘the violence of Ramadi had staked a claim on her patience, her tenderness and her resilience’, and that, as a result, ‘she snapped at her children routinely, at times harshly’. Alvarez’s stance clearly supports that of Eusebe’s and Chaumette’s: by partaking in violent activism, Holschlag has sacrificed ‘the delicacy of her sex’, and as a result, she has become a bad mother.

Re-enforcing the suggested discordance between maternal virtues and female militancy, one online reader condemns military women for ‘abandoning their families for glory and duty’, and another writes that ‘fighting and killing must be anathema to women’, as women’s role is to ‘bring life into the world’ and to act as ‘the ultimate caregivers and nurturers’. A subsequent reader presents an identical stance to that prevalently expressed throughout the late eighteenth century, when suggesting that the female patriot is not she who appears upon the battlefield, but she who devotes herself to the education of her children and thus fulfils the role of mother of the nation. The comment reads,

Mothers already have a mission, one of vital service to our nation: raising secure, happy strong children, who will go out into the world and change it for the better. I cannot see how it is patriotic for a

mother to choose war over raising her children.

These words comply explicitly with 1790s attitudes regarding woman's national duty, and could easily have come from the pens of Prudhomme, Wollstonecraft, or More. The comment proved popular with the article's readers, and was 'recommended' by twenty-two of the site's users.⁴¹ As articles like this suggest, while it cannot be denied that substantial progress has been made towards breaking down the barriers between women and war, age-old gender stereotypes regarding woman's supposedly essential delicacy, and the societal expectations placed upon women's devotion to child-rearing duties, continue to plague Western culture's acceptance of military women. Worryingly, the very gender prejudices which led to Madame Tricastin's death are still being endorsed by modern-day opponents of women's violent activism: three centuries on from the completion of *The Massacre*, the dominant attitude clearly persists that for a woman to partake in martial combat is to render her 'feminine virtues violated'.

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Notes

- ¹ For a detailed account of women's involvement in the march on Versailles see Olwen Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship in the French Revolution* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), chapter. 1; Lucy Moore, *Liberty: The Lives and Times of Six Women in Revolutionary France* (London: Harper Perennial, 2007), pp. 35-42, 51-52; Darline G. Levy and Harriet B. Applewhite, 'Women and militant citizenship in revolutionary Paris', in *Rebel Daughters: Women and the French Revolution*, ed. by Sara E. Melzer and Leslie W. Rabine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 79-101 (pp. 83-85); and James F. McMillan, *France and Women, 1789-1914: Gender, Society and Politics* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 21-22.
- ² *Times*, London, England, 10 October 1789.
- ³ *Whitehall Evening Post*, London, England, 15-17 October 1789.
- ⁴ For details of these events see Dominique Godineau, *The Women of Paris and their French Revolution*, trans. by Katherine Streip (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 107-119; Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (California: Routledge, 1992), pp. 81-82; and Madelyn Gutwirth, *The Twilight of the Goddesses: Women and representation in the French revolutionary era* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), p. 288.
- ⁵ The most notorious indictment of violent French women, and the consequences of their militancy, can be found in Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (London: J. Dodsley, 1790). See pp. 106-118.
- ⁶ See for instance letter from Elizabeth Inchbald to William Godwin, Friday 22 January 1796, MS. Abinger c. 3. Dep. c. 509, Fols.: 10-11, at <<http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/dept/scwmss/wmss/online/1500-1900/abinger>> [accessed 2 February 2014]. The letter sees Inchbald request feedback on her latest book from both Holcroft and Godwin.
- ⁷ See Gary Kelly, *The English Jacobin Novel, 1780-1805* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976). See pp. 64-113 for Kelly's analysis of the radical works of Inchbald.
- ⁸ For more on Inchbald's proto-feminist writing see Anna Lott, 'Sexual Politics in Elizabeth Inchbald', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, vol. 34, no. 3, Restoration and Eighteenth Century (Summer 1994), pp. 635-648, and Anne K. Mellor, *Mothers of the Nation: Women's political writing in England, 1780-1830* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), pp. 61-65.
- ⁹ See especially Gary Kelly, *Women Writing and Revolution: 1790-1827* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), and Claudia L. Johnson, *Equivocal Beings: politics, gender, and sentimentality in the 1790s: Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe, Burney, Austen* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

- 10 Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (London: J. Johnson, 1792), p. 28.
- 11 Elizabeth Inchbald, *The Massacre: taken from the French. A tragedy of three acts in prose* (London: G.G.J and J. Robinson, 1792), I. 1. p. 9.
- 12 See Wendy C. Nielsen, 'A Tragic Farce: Revolutionary Women in Elizabeth Inchbald's *The Massacre* and European Drama', in *European Romantic Review*, vol. 17, no. 3 (July 2006), pp. 275-288 (pp. 279-280); Terrence Alland Hoagwood, 'Elizabeth Inchbald, Joanna Baillie, and Revolutionary Representation in the Romantic Period', in *Rebellious Hearts: British women writers and the French Revolution*, ed. by Adriana Craciun and Kari Lokke (New York: State University of New York Press, 2001), pp. 293-316 (p. 303); Anna Jenkins, *I'll tell you what: The life of Elizabeth Inchbald* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2003), p. 138; George C. Grinnell, 'Timely Responses: Violence and immediacy in Inchbald's *The Massacre*', *European Romantic Review*, vol. 24, no. 6 (October 2013), pp. 645-663 (p. 646), <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10509585.2013.845772>> [accessed 20 December 2013].
- 13 George Colman to Elizabeth Inchbald. 7 February 1792. Forster collection. National Art Library. Victoria and Albert Museum. MS 116.
- 14 Amy Garnai, *Revolutionary Imaginings, in the 1790s: Charlotte Smith, Mary Robinson, Elizabeth Inchbald* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 171.
- 15 See Darline G. Levy, Harriet B. Applewhite and Mary Durham Johnson, *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1795* (United States of America: Illini Books, 1980), p. 72. For more on Léon's background and political activism see Moore, *Liberty*, pp. 27-45, and pp. 223-241, and McMillan, *France and Women*, p. 23.
- 16 Pierre Chaumette, 1793, trans. and quoted in Hunt, *The Family Romance*, p. 120.
- 17 Harriet Guest, *Small Change: Women, Learning, Patriotism, 1750-1810* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 159. See also Anne K. Mellor, 'The Rights of Women and the Women Writers of Mary Wollstonecraft's Day', in *A Cambridge Companion to Mary Wollstonecraft* ed. by Claudia L. Johnson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 141-159 (pp. 150-152). For a discussion of the political role of motherhood in 1790s France see Jane Rendall, *The Origins of Modern Feminism: Women in France, Britain and the United States* (London: Palgrave, 1985), p. 52.
- 18 Hannah More, *Strictures on the modern system of female education*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1799), p. 2. See also Wollstonecraft, *Rights of Woman*, especially p. 401. For details of Louis Prudhomme's promotion of this model of motherhood see Hunt, *Family Romance*, p. 122.
- 19 George Colman, *The Battle of Hexham: As performed at the Theatre Royal, Crow Street* (Dublin: P. Byrne, 1790), I. 4. p. 24.
- 20 Pauline Léon, 'Adresse individuelle à l'Assemblée Nationale par des citoyennes de la capitale', le 6 Mars, 1791, trans. in Levy, Applewhite and Durham Johnson, *Women in Revolutionary Paris*, p. 72.
- 21 Léon, 'Adresse', p. 73.
- 22 In 1773 a literal British translation was produced of Mercier's play titled *Jean Hennuyer, Bishop of Lizieux: or, the massacre of St. Bartholomew* (London: S. Leacroft, 1773). All references to Mercier's tragedy come from this translation.
- 23 Patricia Sigl was the first critic to identify Louis-Sébastien Mercier's *Jean Hennuyer* as the source for Inchbald's *The Massacre*. See Patricia Sigl, *The Literary Achievement of Elizabeth Inchbald*, Ph.D. thesis (Swansea: University of Wales, 1980), p. 185. Nielsen offers an insightful comparison of Mercier's original play and Inchbald's adaptation in 'A Tragic Farce'. See pp. 280-282. I am greatly indebted to Nielsen's comparison for assisting the formation of my argument.
- 24 Mercier, *Jean Hennuyer*, II. 4. p. 39.
- 25 Mercier, *Jean Hennuyer*, III. 3. p. 64.
- 26 Mercier, *Jean Hennuyer*, III. 9. p. 77.
- 27 Inchbald, *The Massacre*, I. 1. p. 7.
- 28 Inchbald, *The Massacre*, I. 1. pp. 8,9.
- 29 Inchbald, *The Massacre*, I. 1. p. 8.
- 30 Inchbald, *The Massacre*, II. 1. pp. 14-15.
- 31 Inchbald, *The Massacre*, III. 2. p. 30.
- 32 Wendy C. Nielsen, *Women Warriors in Romantic Drama* (Newark: University Of Delaware Press, 2012), p. 117.
- 33 Inchbald, *The Massacre*, III. 2. p. 25.
- 34 Pierre Chaumette, 1793, trans. and quoted in Candice Proctor, *Women, Equality, and the French Revolution* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), p. 165.

- 35 Godwin's diary makes numerous references to events in France, a sample of which I list here: 23rd June 1789: 'Difference of Necker and the King. He proposes to resign'. 19th June 1790: 'Titles of nobility abolished by the National Assembly'. 7th August 1790: 'D'Orleans & Mirabeau accused by the Chatelet to the National Assembly'. 4th September 1790: 'Necker resigns'. 17th July 1791: 'tumults at Paris'. All extracts from William Godwin's diary can be found in *The Diary of William Godwin*, ed. Victoria Myers, David O Shaughnessy and Mark Philp (Oxford: Oxford Digital Library, 2010), <<http://godwindiary.bodleian.ox.ac.uk>> [accessed 3 October 2013].
- 36 See for instance Godwin's diary entry for 5th November 1789.
- 37 See C. Kegan Paul, *William Godwin: His friends and Contemporaries*, 2 vols., vol.1 (London: Henry S. King & co., 1876), p. 62.
- 38 See Godwin's diary entries for 31st December 1790 and 9th July 1791.
- 39 See Godwin's diary entries for 29th October 1792, and 18th December 1792.
- 40 An article written by David Lerman titled 'U.S. Vows to put Women in Combat Roles by 2016', published in *Bloomberg News*, 25 July 2013, received twelve comments from online readers. While just one comment wrote favourably of women's right to acquire combat positions, the remaining eleven comments expressed strong disapproval of Panetta's lift on the ban. See <<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-07-24/u-s-military-vows-to-put-women-in-combat-roles-by-2016.html>> [accessed 10 February 2014].
- 41 Lizette Alvarez, 'Wartime Soldier: Conflicted Mom', *The New York Times*, 26 September 2009 <<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/27/us/27mothers.html>> [accessed 10 February 2014]. See reader comments no. 4, 5, and 14.

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