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David's *Telemachus and Eucharis:* Reflections on Love, Learning, and History

Mary Vidal

> [Mentor:] Son of the wise Ulysses . . . He who has not felt his weakness and the violence of his passions is not yet wise; for he does not yet understand himself and does not know how to distrust himself.—François de La Mothe-Fénelon, *Les Aventures de Télémaque,* 1699[1]

> This is not a frivolous novel
> That is offered here, reader, for your idleness;
> A learned parable
> Will make the truth glow in your mind. . . .—"La Clef de Télémaque," 1699[2]

Understood as a sentimental depiction of mythological lovers, Jacques-Louis David's *The Farewell of Telemachus and Eucharis* (1818, Fig. 1) over the years has prompted little sustained interest or commentary when measured against the prolific literature on his earlier production.[3] Since it was painted during a difficult time in David's life, when he was an aging political exile in Belgium, one might have expected from such a committed reformer a subject and style more dedicated to political and historical reflection. Yet *Telemachus and Eucharis* has struck viewers as, at best, an aesthetic experiment binding Flemish colorism to the contours of Greek classicism, or as evidence of a late interest in psychological relationships. At worst, the painting is cited as an example of David's creative decline, for some nuanced by a suspicion of senility or of a selling out to the demands of the marketplace. The artist appears to have forgotten or cautiously avoided his revolutionary ideals. Even the heroic exploits and torments of the image's textual referent—François de Salignac de La Mothe-Fénelon's novel *Les aventures de Télémaque, fils d'Ulysse,* first published over one hundred years earlier in 1699[4]—seem to have been discarded in favor of tender sentiments and a glossy visual appeal.

Far from questioning the missing display of stirring action and evident moralizing in *Telemachus and Eucharis,* I propose this absence to be a necessary characteristic of the work. However, my reasons for doing so are quite different from those usually offered and indicate David's thorough understanding of the didactic and historical implications of representing Fénelon's text.

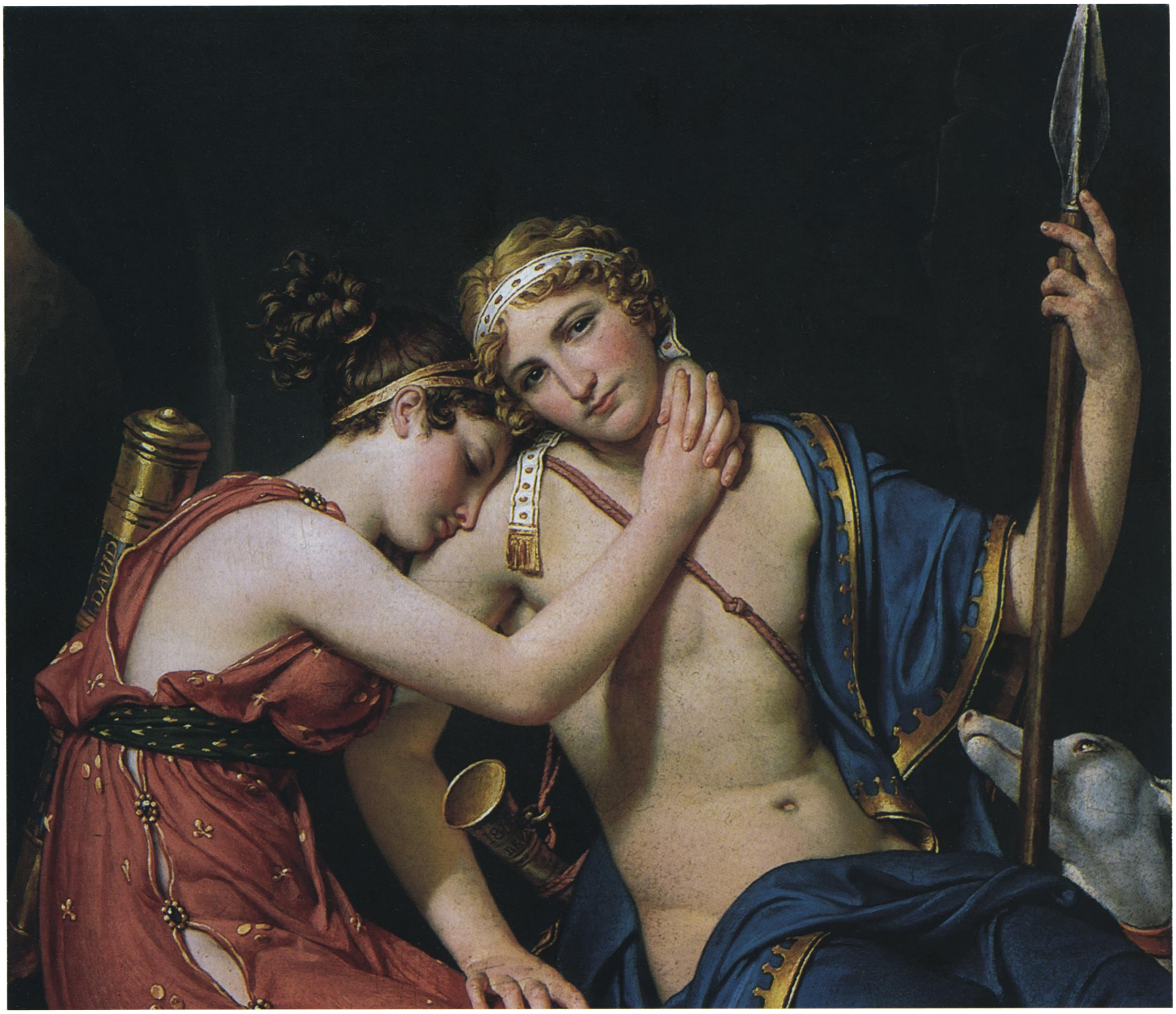
First of all, a distinction should be drawn between mechanisms internal to the painting that function to challenge and delay interpretation and an external, historiographical resistance to a search for meaning in *Telemachus and Eucharis.* As a result of the early typecasting of David as a creator of stoic and virile works, a tendency has arisen to disregard those of his images that do not obviously align themselves with his expected heroic mode. The subject of *Telemachus and Eucharis,* as all of David's history paintings dealing with amorous themes,[5] is frequently designated as "mythological." Such themes, as a consequence, have largely escaped the kind of serious attention devoted to his subjects drawn from Greek, Roman, and French history, with their more obvious relevance to the politics of the Revolutionary period. David's brand of Neoclassicism, exemplified by the *Oath of the Horatii,* is so closely identified with artistic and social reform that his amorous subjects have been generally treated as anomalies painted for aristocratic patrons, becoming guilty by association with what by 1785 the artist himself had seemed to root out from the overgrown garden of the Rococo: the decorative, the erotic, the private, and anything that lacked social utility.

Despite such historical predispositions, we need to recognize that David's images of love are quite unlike the delectable (and unreasonably maligned) mythologies of the ancien régime. One of the purposes of this study is to increase awareness that David's scenes of lovers do operate, although much more subtly than his heroic works, according to the painter's abiding conviction that art should serve moral and social functions in addition to aesthetic ones. David's mythological subjects are never drawn from the source preferred by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century painters, Ovid's *Metamorphoses. Telemachus and Eucharis,* for example, was inspired by a modern French prose epic based on the *Odyssey.* In addition to this serious, heroic lineage, David's subject formulates moral lessons, but here through an appropriately calculated indirection. Indeed, the innocent appearance of David's lovers is designed in part as an attractive packaging of didactic material and, beyond that, as an initial challenge to the viewer that serves one of the most compelling messages of both image and text: the necessity of living through the humbling enslavement to one's senses, misapprehensions, and passions in order to acquire wisdom.

Further study of the image and its literary and historical contexts reveals more, however, than a didacticism that is at once pleasurable and experience-based. Seen in relation to its conceptual pendant, *Cupid and Psyche* (1817, Fig. 2), as well as to Fénelon's novel, written for the education of an heir to the French throne, *Telemachus and Eucharis* reveals David's late interest in a subject that reflected, in a suitably indeterminate manner, on the past, on the present, and on possibilities for the future. Under the guise of fiction, the work thus partially fulfills the function of a historical memoir. For David to undertake such a project would not be unusual. In exile, he was surrounded by ex-patriots writing their own memoirs, and at the outset of his eighth decade, every new painting begun in Brussels must have seemed to the aging artist like his last opportunity for a summation or testament.[6]

Departure from Eucharis

Associating Neoclassical history paintings with the Enlightenment's call to reform society through art, modern viewers expect their lessons to be authoritative, clear, and even somewhat harsh. There may be some skepticism, then, about

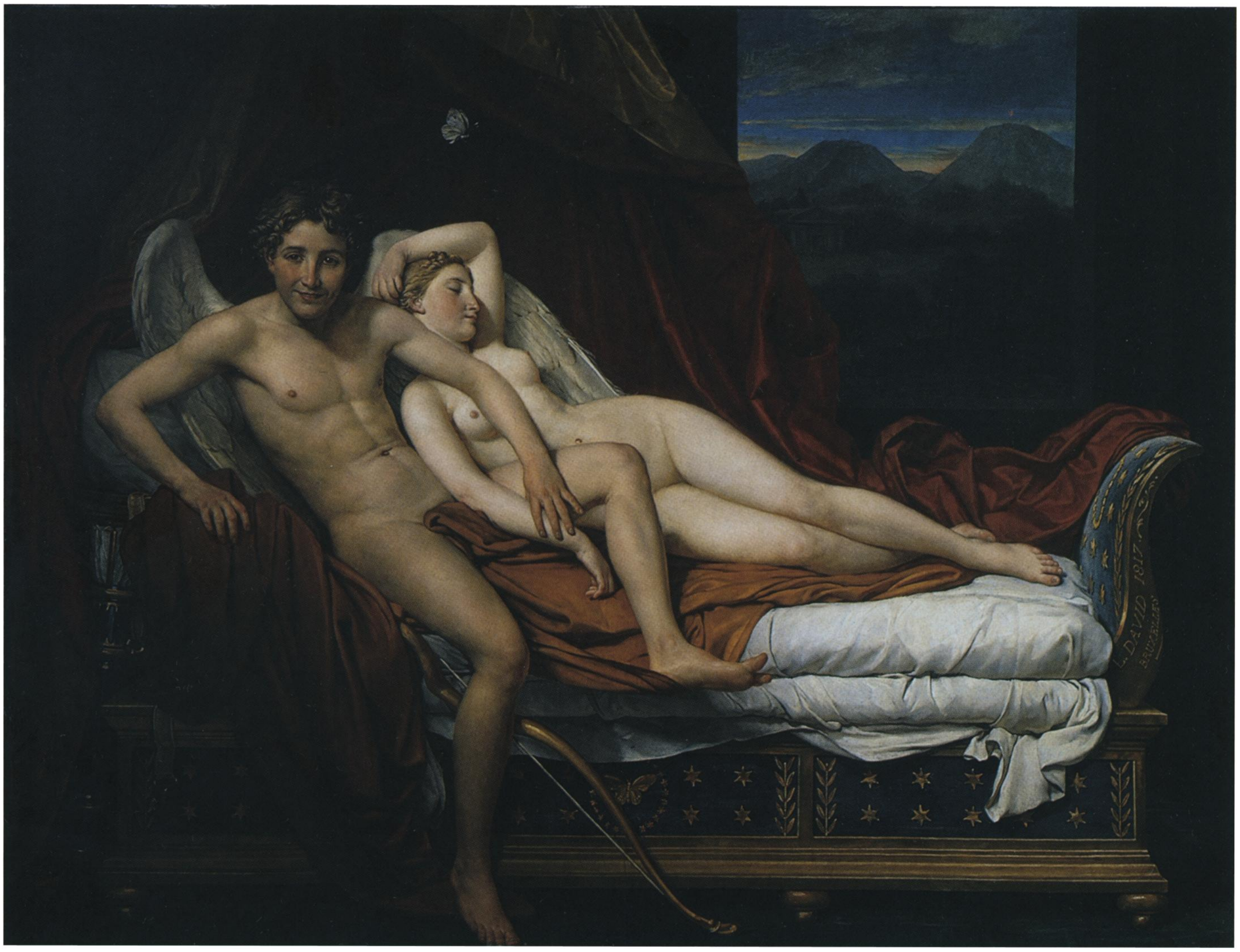


1 Jacques-Louis David, *The Farewell of Telemachus and Eucharis,* 1818. Los Angeles, The J. Paul Getty Museum

my suggestion of complexity and indirection in David's work. In the case of *Telemachus and Eucharis,* we have an especially reductive image of two figures presented close-up, half-length, and against a relatively empty, dark background that discloses little about action and context. Far from a lesson about anything, what could be more familiar and moving than this scene of the final moments together of a young couple, obliged against their wills to separate? At most this might be an elementary example of the conflict between duty and love, a persistent theme in French seventeenth-century classical theater and one that had interested the artist since the days of the *Oath of the Horatii.*

It is clear that as late as the Belgian period David continued to make use of recognizable characters and themes that would guarantee the wide appeal of his paintings at a basic aesthetic and emotional level.[7] Yet this desire to reach a wide audience does not exclude an address to more penetrating viewers interested in the complexities of human psychology and history. Many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century viewers would also have been familiar with Fénelon's text. They would have known that David's subject was an invented scene that never occurred in the long poem or novel.[8] They also would have understood that in the spirit of most of the text's episodes, David's image operated at different levels of perception and reference. As we shall see, a strategy of appealing, indirect moral commentary is shared by image and text. Appropriately, this commentary involves a certain initial distraction for the viewer that formulates a delayed process of enlightenment similar to that experienced by Fénelon's young hero.

In order to enter into David's interpretation of *Télémaque,* we must first determine whether and how the ambiguous effects of distraction and awareness I have just proposed are expressed in visual terms. Indeed, such effects are represented in the appearance of Eucharis as well as in the body, pose, and gestures of Telemachus. From David's own time



2 David, *Cupid and Psyche,* 1817. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Leonard C. Hanna Jr. Fund, 1962.37 (photo: © The Cleveland Museum of Art, 2000)

forward, and rightly so, Eucharis has been viewed as one of the artist's most exquisite female figures. What has not been brought out is how David imagined Eucharis's disarming of Telemachus (and of the viewer) through the contrast of her "chaste" but nevertheless alluring beauty. Pressed against the bare shoulder of Telemachus, Eucharis's Greek-like profile is clean and pure. At the same time, it is eroticized through an evocation of skin against skin, of lips touching flesh without kissing. Below her face, a flat expanse of milky white shoulder and back contrasts with the more sensual appeal of red drapery and a green sash that in turn both hide and accentuate the roundness of her breasts. Finally, the jeweled clasps meant to "close" Eucharis's chiton at the side also offer glimpses of flesh through revealing separations in the drapery. These slits disclose traces of the nymph's withheld/beheld charms and of her powerful physical effect on Telemachus that he would soon, and forever, regret.

The crisply outlined forms of the painting tend to seem more cool than warm in black-and-white reproductions. However, when seen in color, especially in front of the actual painting, with its contrasts of colors and hues, the flushed cheeks of the lovers, and their close-up, life-size bodies, the effect of this play between forms of purity and forms of seduction bears out what Mentor, in Fénelon's novel, called Eucharis's "modest" and therefore more "dangerous" beauty. An excerpt from the long speech on the painting by N. Cornelissen delivered to the Société Royale des Beaux-Arts of Ghent and published at the time of the first exhibition of the painting in 1818 emphasizes the struggle of Telemachus before such beauty, especially in the passage on the watchful gods that Cornelissen quotes (in his own italics) from the novel:

> In this battle where, as in the epics of Homer, *the gods and goddesses of Olympia have their attention fixed on the isle of Calypso, to see who will be victorious between Minerva and Amour,* the son of Venus succeeded more than once in bringing together the lovers. The painter has seized one of those moments; *Telemachus* has come into the grotto and already the nymph had preceded him; Wisdom, invisible, followed him, and he believes he still hears its last reproaches. . . . Love, also invisible, followed him as well into this same grotto. *Telemachus,* as did one day Hercules, son of Jupiter, seems to be seated between Voluptuousness and

> Virtue; Virtue speaks to his heart, but its voice seems nearly extinct. Voluptuousness says nothing, it shows *Eucharis,* and *Eucharis* is so beautiful![9]

Hinting at this battle, David complicates the appeal of Eucharis's features, "imbued with innocence and chastity,"[10] through a final disturbing detail: the imprisoning hold of such beauty on Telemachus shown in Eucharis's clasped hands, her fingers tightly interlocked and reddened from pressure, around his neck.

David's characterization of Telemachus's "action" and emotions is as initially innocuous for the casual viewer as Eucharis's purity and innocence. At first glance it seems as if the young hero is not struggling either with Eucharis or with himself. The mental torture of his obsession expressed in his desperate plea to Mentor in Fénelon's text—"Deliver me from myself: let me die"—seems suppressed in the image in favor of abandonment to love. Telemachus's shoulders slope, his head and torso bend, and even his skin seems to soften at Eucharis's touch, his navel open and fleshy, a shorthand emblem of desire emphasized by proximity to the pink nose and wet eyes of Eucharis's hunting dog, who gazes up at him longingly. Telemachus's physiognomy is, appropriately, that of a developing adolescent boy, androgynous and as yet unformed, and David has given him the vulnerable look of a young man under the first spell of love.

Yet in spite of an apparent acquiescence to the feminine, opposition as well as consent is marked on Telemachus's physiognomy and gestures. Contrasting with golden curls, rosy cheeks, and a face that is still roundish and wide-eyed, we glimpse a developing manhood and otherness in his powerful body and in his strong, straight nose and shadowy upper lip. Visualized through marginal notes, viewers are also helped to imagine what is less evident than love—that is, Telemachus's interior struggle. The strife between reason and passion, invisible on the face, is suggested rather in the hands and accessories. Telemachus holds his spear indecisively (two fingers closed and two open). As a symbol of his quest, the spear leans to the right, its tip pointing away from Eucharis and out of the picture. Most telling is the way his opposite hand grasps Eucharis's leg in an ambiguous gesture of desire and resistance to desire, while he looks not at the girl but at the viewer. His hard-to-read glance perhaps elicits our vicarious enjoyment but, in the context of his necessary departure from Eucharis, also calls on our rational judgment and recognition of his dilemma. The unfolding effect of the picture on the viewer, captured through such details, was imaginatively and enthusiastically described by Cornelissen in 1818:

> The features of the son of Ulysses express the anguish of his heart, the burning desires of his soul; he feels love slipping and spreading from vein to vein: but doesn't he hear, doesn't he seem to hear the severe voice of his guardian? With a very determined movement, he lays his right hand on one of the knees of the nymph. Could it be that he will make some effort to get up? Could it be that he wishes to tear himself from the arms of *Eucharis?* but could he do so, held back as he is? Virtuous and austere men, look at this painting; look at *Eucharis.* . . . But what is this! while we were contemplating with pleasure such a sweet scene, because a hint of melancholy added to the charm of its expression, *Telemachus* has gotten up vigorously, and has pulled away from the arms of the nymph; one more instant, and they would have been entwined in each other's arms.[11]

Innocence, affection, and simple pleasure are unsettled by the subtle body language and visual footnotes in David's compositions. These types of meaningful details, discerned on rare occasions by modern historians in David's other works, complicate his ostensibly straightforward subjects.[12] With her lowered eyes and simple adornments, Eucharis is undeniably modest, but her effect on Telemachus is not innocent, and her embrace is shown to be as restrictive as it is emotional. Telemachus seems to yield, but he does not fully participate in this embrace and his departure seems imminent. *Telemachus and Eucharis* thus operates superficially like an image of true and harmonious love while visual clues and literary context hint at ambiguity, disharmony, rupture. What at first presents itself as a straightforward picture, meticulously described, shining with gold accents, emotionally naive, paradoxically insinuates its status as a troubling illusion.

A Pedagogy of Experience

As revealed in the physiognomies and actions of the couple, David is concerned in *Telemachus and Eucharis* with youthful passion and deceptive appearances, but also with a nascent movement toward awareness and transformation. An interest in these themes is already apparent in his *Cupid and Psyche,* finished the previous year (Fig. 2). Much like the earlier work, *Telemachus and Eucharis* offers certain distractions for the viewer that, while pleasurable, implicate him or her in a *process* of growing awareness. In both images, the subtlest visual prompts are used to suggest that agreeable but superficial impressions are an important part of the work's message.

We know from David himself that he considered *Telemachus and Eucharis* a "pendant" to his *Cupid and Psyche,*[13] with every indication that David had in mind a conceptual rather than an actual pairing. There is no correspondence between the sizes and formats of David's two pictures, and neither seems to have been produced, whether as part of a pair or singly, on commission. In fact, David consciously rejected the idea, if not the practice (portraiture excepted), of working on command in his later years.[14]

The "pendants" produced by David in 1817 and 1818 were both subjects in all likelihood chosen and invented by David himself, for his own reasons, with the second work, as was his habit, answering the themes and forms of the earlier image.[15] It has often been remarked, for example, that David's *Telemachus and Eucharis* is a more harmonious composition than *Cupid and Psyche.* David seems to have responded to criticisms that the figures in the earlier image were created in oppositional, disjunctive styles. In comparison with the idealized Psyche, David's too-familiar-looking figure of Cupid struck many viewers, in the diplomatic phrase of Antoine Gros, as "un peu faunesque" (a bit faunlike). In *Telemachus and Eucharis,* at least at first glance, the figures of the two lovers appear to be much more united in style and sentiment.

However, given the ambiguities and tensions I have noted in the later painting, David's response to the visual "problems" of the earlier image was not a simple repair of something that had gone wrong (for nothing, in fact, was amiss). In this regard, Dorothy Johnson's new perspective on *Cupid and Psyche* is of interest. Johnson suggests that the disjunctiveness was designed to alert viewers to the moralizing connotations of Cupid's relationship to Psyche as his captive.[16] In a recent study, I have further suggested that Cupid's humorous appearance and troubling "departure" from Psyche, both in terms of style and meaning, were a pictorial condensation of the stylistic and metaphorical "jumps" in David's antique textual source: Apuleius's *Metamorphoses, or The Golden Ass.* Within Apuleius's longer story recounting the travails of Lucius, the myth of Psyche is the most important among many inserted tales. It seems particularly at odds, like the novel's unexpected conclusion, with the larger framework. The novel itself is presented by the narrator in the preface as an excuse for entertainment and for stringing together disparate bawdy tales. Yet through the ages, readers have consistently understood the seriousness of the underlying themes of Apuleius's larger narrative, in part through the very disjunctiveness of its structure. Echoed in Psyche's story, these themes are the journey, initiation, enlightenment, and spiritual transformation of the protagonist Lucius. They are recalled in David's picture through Cupid's fumbling "departure," Psyche's transitional state of sleep, the iconography of the butterfly as a symbol both of the soul and of metamorphosis, the unusual view out the window with its dawning light, and other iconographic and compositional devices.[17]

David's pendant to *Telemachus and Eucharis* is thus, like Apuleius's *Metamorphoses,* an allegory of life's journey,[18] veiled in pleasant distractions. It is an allegory that teaches, much like the novel, through amusement and examples of going astray. As depicted by David, similar experiences are shared by the heroine of the inserted myth—Psyche is presently enjoying the luxuries of Cupid's palace but is still ignorant of his true identity; when she discovers who he is, she will lose him, then wander the earth looking for him—and by the viewer of the painting, who first takes it to be a playful, light mythology.

The veiled didacticism of *Cupid and Psyche,* its subject suited to the philosophical meditations of an aging artist in exile, supports a similar claim for *Telemachus and Eucharis.* What, then, are the continuities and differences that make these images "pendants"? What is the meaning of the changes we perceive in the later work? I would like to propose that both paintings deal with personal odysseys in which earlier physical pleasures, misapprehensions, errors, and wanderings are followed by the enlightenment and spiritual transformation of the heroine and hero. To match this emphasis on the *process* of learning, in both images David turned away from clear narratives and evident didacticism. Instead, the episodes and forms he used depict problems of recognition and interpretation. They allow for the work of recognition on the part of the beholder as well. For both he chose texts that put the main character, and to a certain extent the viewer, in the risky position of possibly missing the point in order to reach a stage of discovery that challenges humankind's ability to see beyond the surface of things.

"Les Aventures de Télémaque," or How to Grow Up to Be a Wise King

It is conceivable that a perceptive, dispassionate viewer of David's *Telemachus and Eucharis* could experience its controlled shift from distracting pleasure to heightened awareness through an analysis of forms alone. However, most viewers would depend on the interplay of image and text to move with greater assurance toward the unsettling conclusions suggested by David's painting. Familiarity with Fénelon's *Télémaque* immediately establishes the likelihood of didactic purposes for any image dealing with a subject drawn from this text.[19] The fame of *Télémaque,* its author, and the prince for whom it was written further establishes an inescapable relationship between David's subtle, conflicted rendering of *Telemachus and Eucharis* and a text that was universally understood throughout the eighteenth century as pivotal for the cultural and social history of France.[20]

Before considering the reputation and critical fortunes of Fénelon and his work, an analysis of *Télémaque* clearly indicates the moralizing aspects of the novel that most interested David. Homer had already introduced Telemachus, the son of Ulysses, as a narrator of the first four books of the *Odyssey.* It is he who sets out to find his father when he does not return to Ithaca at the end of the Trojan War. The boy's temporary disappearance from Homer's narrative when Ulysses's adventures move to center stage allowed Fénelon, centuries later, to create an original sequel filling in the son's own experiences. In the imaginative space left open by Homer, Fénelon wove a tale that both imitated the *Odyssey* and departed from it, that overwrote the father's physical exploits with the son's emotional and moral struggles. This progression from antique models to modern invention was very much suited to David's own use and transformation of his classical references.[21]

Fénelon's story begins in medias res on the isle of Ogygia, where Telemachus's father Ulysses had spent seven years as the captive lover of the goddess Calypso. The setting and circumstances on the island immediately call forth the ideas of departure, regret, falsehood, and the allure of the superficial. Calypso is beside herself with grief. The gods have ordered her to allow Ulysses to leave her island so that he may return to his beloved Penelope. As the goddess stares out at the empty ocean bewailing her loss, she sees the remains of the shipwreck of Telemachus and his father's friend Mentor (a disguise assumed by Minerva as Wisdom). Greeting the men who have landed on her island in search of Ulysses, she promises to tell them what happened to Telemachus's father. But first she leads them to her grotto, where the boy sees "with the appearance of rustic simplicity, all that could charm the eyes."[22] Here, their every need is met and exceeded, much to Mentor's dismay, who warns his charge of the softness and vanity produced by the luxuries of this not-so-simple rusticity. Calypso is immediately enamored as much with the golden-haired son as she was with his father and schemes to divert him from his quest. She misleads Telemachus, telling him that his father surely drowned as he escaped in the midst of a storm. To distract him from his sorrow she insists that he recount his adventures so far.

But old accounts need settling, for Venus has not forgotten how Telemachus turned away from the more blatant seductions of her cult on Cyprus. Soon she sends her son Cupid, disguised as an innocent-looking baby, to play among the nymphs and their guests. They are completely charmed by his innocence, yet contact with the child curiously produces havoc:

> At first nothing seemed more innocent, sweeter, gentler, more lovable, more disingenuous and more graceful than this child. To see him playful, flattering, always laughing, one would have thought that he could only give pleasure: but hardly did one give into his caresses, than one felt an inexplicable poisoning. The sly and deceptive child caressed only in order to betray. . . .[23]

As a direct result of Cupid's presence, Telemachus and one of Calypso's most beautiful nymphs, Eucharis, are soon unable to control their attraction to each other. In her jealousy Calypso plots to separate them, while Mentor continually reminds Telemachus that they set out to do something else, and that "modest beauty is far more dangerous" than "the coarse vice" offered on Venus's island of Cyprus. However, Wisdom's subtleties are difficult to absorb, now that the boy is in the full throes of a passion that is ravaging him emotionally and physically. He knows he must leave, but he uses his impressive powers of reasoning to justify at least a final meeting with Eucharis. Mentor wisely recommends a more decisive break and takes matters in hand. When he sees a passing ship, he pushes Telemachus off a cliff into the sea and then jumps in after him. They are rescued by the crew and continue their adventures until just before Telemachus is to be reunited, as in the *Odyssey,* with his father. At the conclusion, Mentor leaves the boy's side, having revealed his/her true identity as the goddess of Wisdom guiding him all along. At the end of his journey, Telemachus is now capable of seeing beyond the immediate.

David's scene of Telemachus and Eucharis's embrace in the intimate setting of a woodland cave develops a conceit inspired by Fénelon's text although not illustrative of any specific passage. David's inventiveness thus squares perfectly with Fénelon's use of the narrative lacunae of his antique model to spin an imagined complementary story. The scene of the lover's farewell is a projection from a dialogue between Telemachus and Mentor in which the boy promises to leave the island and the girl but longs for one last tender goodbye. David places the imaginary meeting in a dark cave (as if the meeting takes place in the boy's imagination?), a cave that recalls the hunts in which the couple participate as well as Calypso's "rustic" grotto, where the lure of the apparently innocent, but ultimately dangerous, charms and luxuries of the island is played out. The invented scene of farewell also cleverly encapsulates the theme of departure that opens and closes the epic and that symbolizes the turning point in Telemachus's journey toward maturity and wisdom.

In the rare modern commentaries on David's painting, only brief information about the lovers' meeting on Calypso's island has been given as the "mythological" framework of David's subject. Yet, as we shall see, many of David's eighteenth- and nineteenth-century viewers would have read Fénelon's *Télémaque* in its entirety. To understand the importance of the episode, the remainder of Fénelon's narrative needs to be considered. Both before and after their shipwreck on Calypso's isle, Telemachus and Mentor travel to various lands where they observe both good and evil governments. In the process, and among other experiences, Telemachus helps to rebuild a country, proves himself to be a courageous military leader when it is necessary, journeys to the netherworld looking for his father, and falls in love again—this time with the worthy daughter of a king.

The fictional reference of David's picture is thus epic and heroic in scale. Nonetheless, in Fénelon's narrative, heroic exploits, utopian visions, social commentary, and spiritual revelations share space with love interests and interiorized emotional struggles. Striking examples of the latter are noted in two moving passages in which Telemachus comes to understand the intimate connection between his dalliance on Calypso's island and his moral development, which is the true purpose of his journey. The first occurs just after their escape from the island, when Telemachus admits to Mentor the indecisiveness and weakness that drove him to want to see Eucharis "one last time":

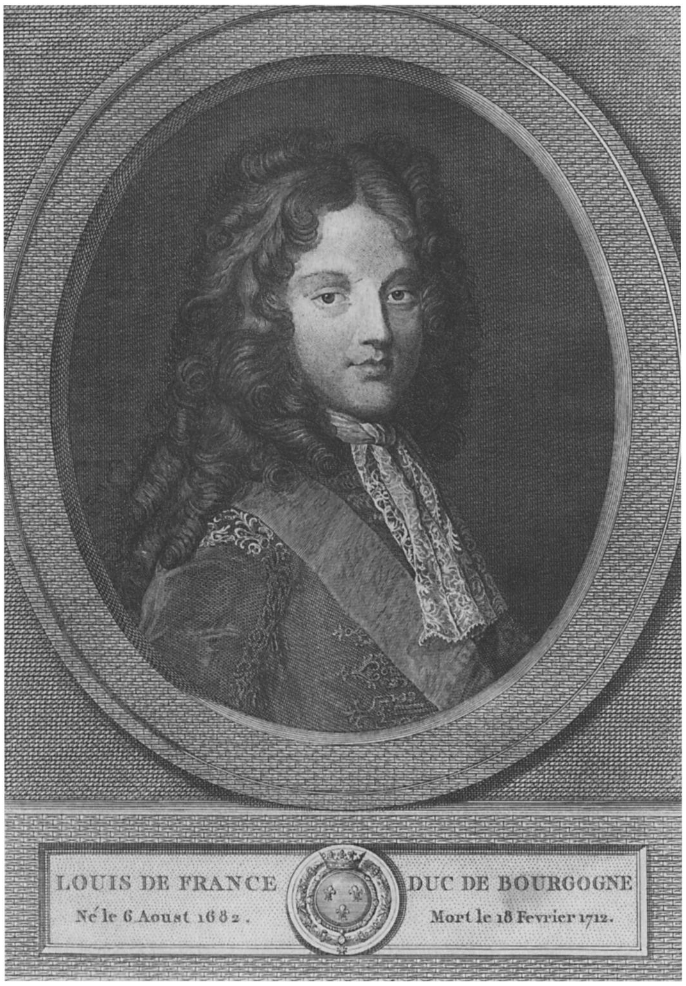
> "I feel"—he cried speaking to Mentor—"what you told me and, what I could not believe, for lack of experience: one overcomes vice only by fleeing from it. . . . I am no longer afraid of seas nor winds nor storms, I fear nothing but my passions. Love is alone more fearful than any shipwreck."[24]

Much later, in book 17, after he has found a "sensible love" with the noble Antiope, he confesses to Mentor the still painful memory of Eucharis:

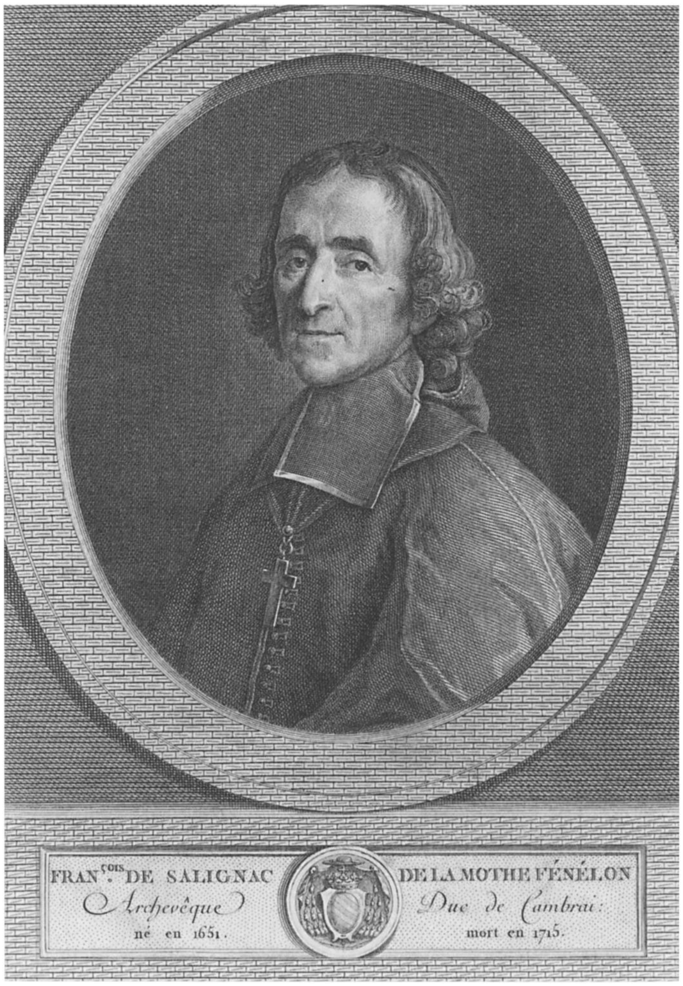
> "No my dear Mentor, this is not a blind passion like the one you cured me of on the Island of Calypso: I am well aware of the deep wound that love made in me when I was near Eucharis; I still cannot pronounce her name without being troubled; time and absence have not erased it. That disastrous experience taught me to distrust myself. But for Antiope what I feel is nothing similar: it is not passionate love; it is taste, it is esteem, it is the belief that I would be happy if I were to spend my life with her."[25]

Considered in relation to the rest of the novel, David's choice of the scene of Telemachus's farewell to Eucharis recognizes the pivotal importance of Telemachus's irrational, physical desire for Eucharis as a catalytic experience of his own humanity. The ambiguous relationship depicted by David thus certainly includes, but cannot be reduced to, a stolen moment of pleasure or even the triumph of duty over love. What Telemachus experiences with Eucharis proves to be, in his own words, by far the most challenging of his "adventures." He remembers it vividly and, more important, continues to feel it, even as he recognizes the much more constructive, enduring love that he has developed for Antiope. His overwhelming attraction to Eucharis stands then as a lived experience, a wound or scar that will *continually* remind him of his own vulnerability, of the impulsiveness of youth, of the inward conflict of passion and reason that Fénelon presents as a far greater struggle than heroic actions.

Through several devices David reveals his interest in Telemachus's interiorized struggle with self as one of the central themes of Fénelon's novel. He moves in close to the couple to deemphasize action in favor of feeling. He focuses attention


LOUIS DE FRANCE
DUC DE BOURGOGNE
Né le 6 Aoust 1682.
Mort le 18 Fevrier 1712.

3 Auguste de St. Aubin, *Louis de France, Duc de Bourgogne,* engraving, frontispiece to *Oeuvres de M. François de Salignac de La Mothe-Fénelon,* Paris: François-Ambroise Didot, 1787, vol. 1. Berkeley, The Bancroft Library, University of California



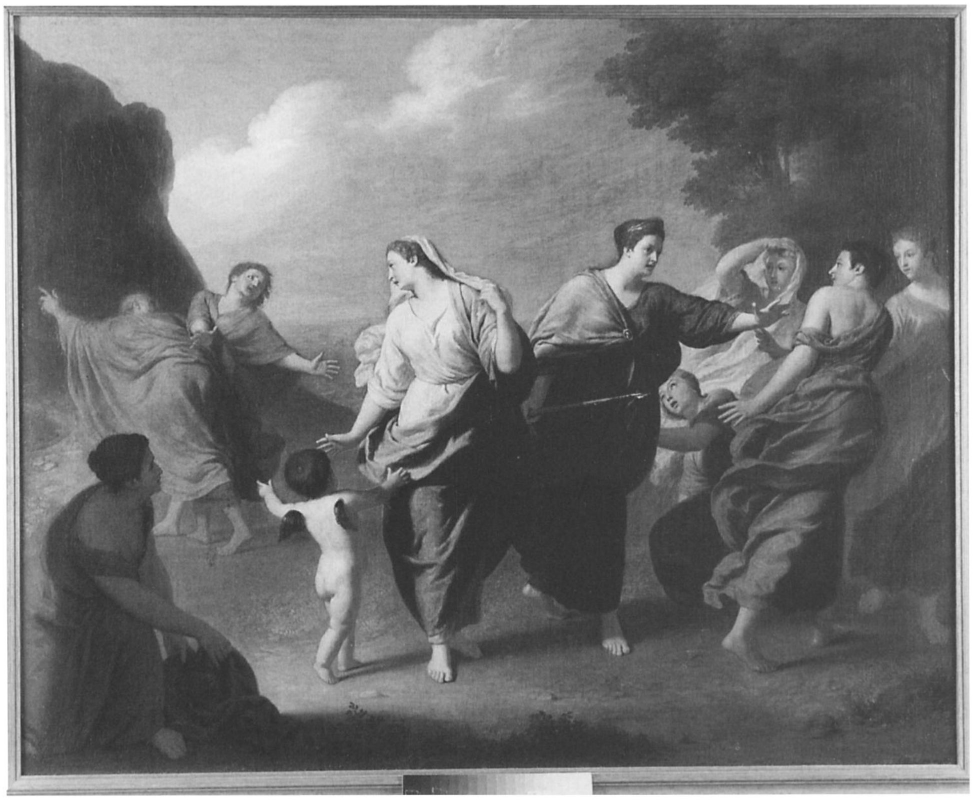
4 St. Aubin, *François de Salignac de La Mothe-Fénelon,* engraving, frontispiece to *Oeuvres de . . . La Mothe-Fénelon,* vol. 1

on Telemachus through his frontal pose and outward gaze. He reduces the readability of the facial expressions of the figures and sets the scene in a dark interior space. In his choice of episode, the artist also recognizes the difference between Fénelon's epic and its own textual referent, the *Odyssey.* Fénelon's story is not about a proven hero like Ulysses who faces and overcomes a series of physical challenges. It is about the moral progress of an unformed hero, a hero of potential, a hero who must experience for himself, beyond Mentor's promptings, the passions and illusions that make him human and that he must learn to manage if he is to be a wise ruler: "This is the purpose of life's misfortunes; they make princes moderate and sensitive to the sufferings of others."[26] At the end of the novel, before revealing himself to Telemachus as Minerva, Mentor insists on the relative importance of the moral progress of his protégé versus his outward strength and actions:

> "I am proud of you: you have committed grave errors; but they have been useful in helping you to know yourself and to be wary of yourself. Often more is gained from one's faults than from one's great actions. Great actions swell the heart and inspire a dangerous presumption; mistakes make a man enter into himself and give him back the wisdom he had lost in success."[27]

Love in Fénelon's novel is not used simply as a foil for the quest to find the father (something that in fact never takes place). Rather, love helps the hero to find himself. This is the reason that in the course of the poem Telemachus experiences three types of love in a narrative-spatial movement recalling the allegorical maps of the seventeenth-century Précieuses: first, "the coarse vice" on Venus's Cyprus, which he easily sees through; second, the more dangerous attractions of "modest beauty" on Calypso's Ogygia, which offer the illusion of virtuous love but lead to uncontrollable passions; and finally, when he arrives at Salente, the "esteem" that Telemachus discovers for Antiope, a love that will last for a lifetime and that promises familial continuity.

Of these three cases of love, David represented the middle ground between the blatant seductions of Venus's cult and the enduring admiration for a worthy companion. And while it does not seem so at first, this middle relationship with Eucharis is the most didactic, precisely because it poses the greatest challenge to interpretation (for Telemachus, who is blinded by Cupid and by Eucharis's innocent charms, and for the viewer, who is distracted by the beauty of the girl and the beauty of the work). The image pictures a conflicted relation-



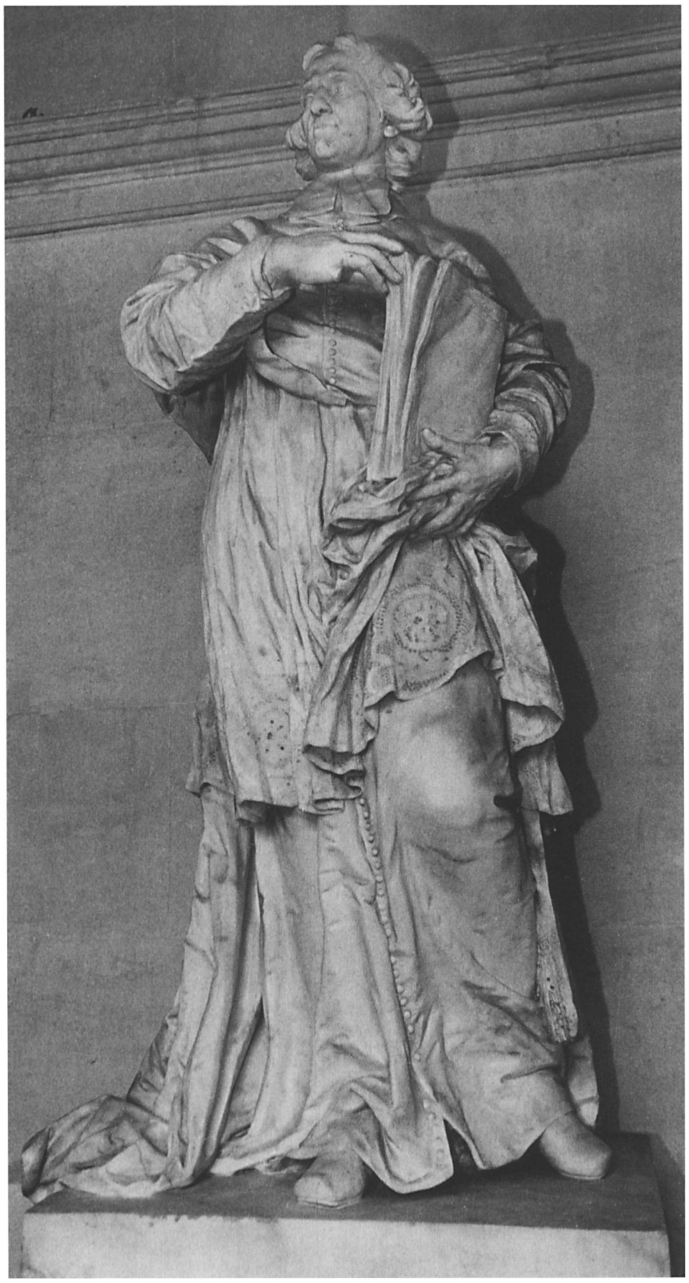
5 Henri de Favanne, *Separation of Telemachus and Eucharis,* exhibited at the Salon of 1746. Lyons, Musée des Beaux-Arts

ship that is appealing and foreshadows true love but at the same time subtly unmasks the dangers of not only passion but also perception itself.

Return to the Beginnings

Rather than just another pleasing, decorative mythological scene, just another sentimental lovers' goodbye, David represented a pivotal episode based on a text that by the early nineteenth century had become a symbol of Fénelon's genius. Inseparable from his historical identity, *Télémaque* was also widely associated with the cause of political reform in France. The viewer who readily sees the moral implications of David's painting is one who is familiar not only with the novel but also with the near consecration of Fénelon's memory. Soon after its publication, *Télémaque* became a revered text in France, its qualities and controversies associated with those surrounding the author himself in his career as a respected man of the Church, a brilliant writer, and an innovative teacher and in his stormy but obedient relationship to the crown. For those desiring reform or who were opposed to Louis XIV's model of monarchy or his policies, *Télémaque* was taken as a critique of the abuses of absolutism. As Fénelon was preceptor to Louis's heir, the duc de Bourgogne, his nearly realized project to alter the course of the French monarchy at the end of the seventeenth century—although driven by an aristocratic-religious agenda mistakenly identified by later reformers with their own liberal ideals—was considered by the *philosophes* and other reformers as foundational for the Enlightenment and even for the events of the Revolution (Figs. 3, 4).

In order to weigh the historical and personal significance of David's reference to *Télémaque,* the reputation of François de Salignac de La Mothe-Fénelon (1651–1715) must be taken into account, along with the analysis and reception of his writings. First of all, there are any number of ways, both through images and texts, to measure Fénelon's privileged place in French culture at the time. Numerous episodes from *Télémaque,* including the imagined scene of the lovers' separation and other events on Calypso's island, had been depicted by artists before David. One need only consult Salon *livrets* throughout the eighteenth century to note the attraction of the subject for a range of artists, from Henri de Favanne (Fig. 5), to Charles Natoire, the Lagrenées, and Hughes Taraval.[28] We should recall, too, that Félix Lecomte's effigy of Fénelon holding a voluminous copy of his *Télémaque* (Fig. 6) was included in the very first group of four statues commissioned in 1776 by the comte d'Angiviller for the groundbreaking historical series of the great men of France.[29] Fénelon's was also among the approximately thirty portraits of French seventeenth- and eighteenth-century great men and great women commissioned from David himself, and executed by his students between 1789 and 1791, for the king of Poland.[30] Finally, as an indication of the reverence for the bishop of Cambrai, his legend as teacher and reformer, and the rivalry between religious and secular circles celebrating his memory that continued into the early nineteenth century, there is the example of David's former student Pierre Jean David d'Angers, who completed in 1826 (eight years after David's painting and one year after his death) his monumental tomb for Fénelon for the rebuilt Cathedral of Cambrai (Fig. 7). Designed to receive the ashes of Fénelon, claimed to have been rediscovered in 1804 after the vandalisms of the Revolution, the planned tomb was the center of a protracted public debate between the clergy of Cambrai, local notables, and the Parisian administration concerning the proper means of rendering homage to this prelate-philosopher. Indeed, Arch-

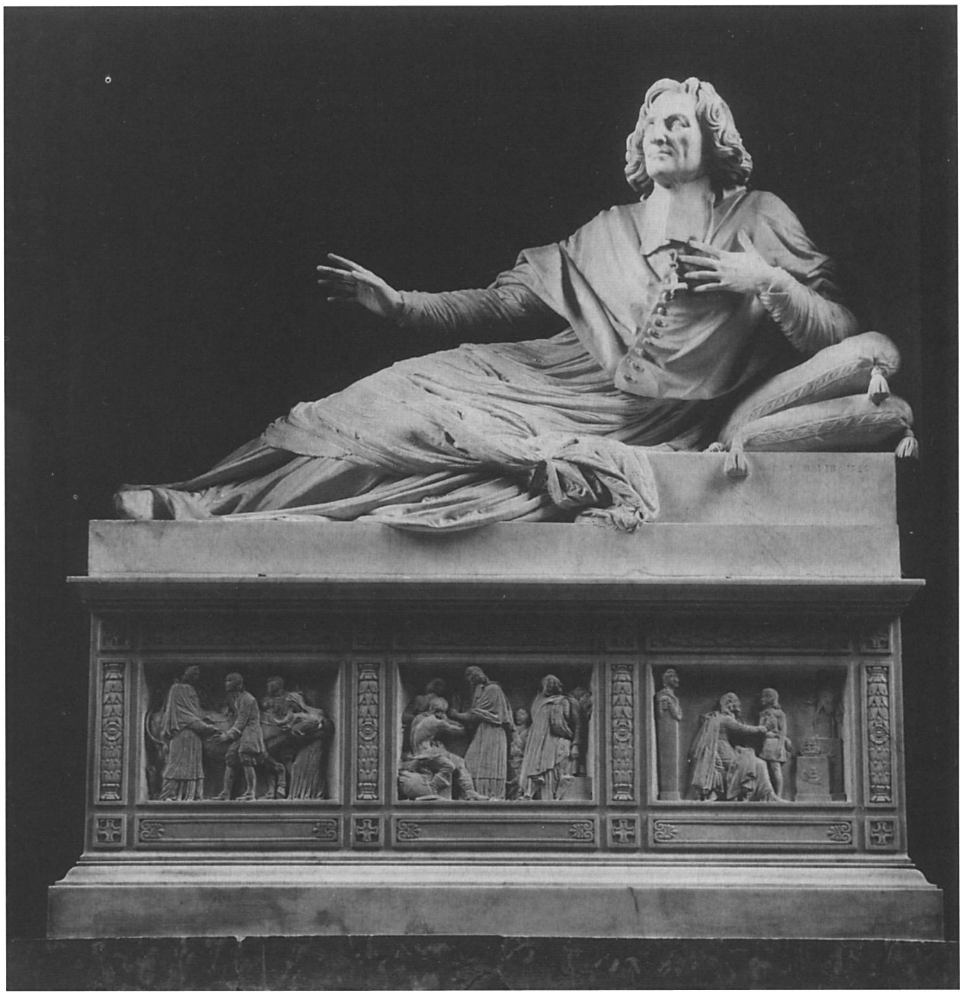


6 Félix Lecomte, *Fénelon, in Episcopal Costume, Holding the Book of Télémaque,* exhibited at the Salon of 1777. Institut de France, Paris

bishop Belmas of Cambrai refused to associate himself with the public, secular celebrations planned around the translation of the ashes, which he found offered only mythological rather than religious allusions. In the end, David d'Angers portrayed the bishop reclining, but in an animated rhetorical pose. Bas-reliefs on the stylobate below depict scenes from his life—two episodes demonstrating his humility and charity and a third one representing his preceptorship of the duc de Bourgogne (Fig. 8).[31]

For David then, and for his contemporaries, Fénelon was a revered historical figure. His best-known work, *Télémaque,* was called by one modern scholar, with some justification, the most widely read literary work in eighteenth-century France after the Bible.[32] The opening statement of Louis-François de Bausset's 1808 biography expresses and exemplifies this profound admiration: "Fénelon is already so famous, his reputation is so universally established, that it might at first seem useless and perhaps impossible to make him better known; his memory is as dear to foreign nations as to France herself; his most recommendable works have been translated into every language."[33] Information about Fénelon and his works had been disseminated throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in substantial biographies on the bishop of Cambrai, in dictionaries, in publications on the history of the *grand siècle,*[34] and in the numerous editions of his oeuvre.[35] One need only consult Albert Chérel's tabulation of the numerous editions and impressions of *Télémaque* from 1699 forward to recognize the pan-European cultural impact of Fénelon's work. If we merely consider the period from 1800 until 1818, the date when David's *Telemachus and Eucharis* was completed, Chérel lists no fewer than seventy-six editions or reeditions of *Télemaque* spread across the entire period, several accompanied by translations into English, German, and other languages, and several of them deluxe editions, including those published by the renowned Didot family of printer-publishers whose members had worked closely with David during and after the Revolution.[36] As for Fénelon's status among other eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century writers, one can hardly find a well-known French author of the period who did not pay tribute—although frequently from significantly divergent philosophical and political positions—to some aspect of Fénelon's literary talents and wide-ranging interests, with his admirers including Montesquieu, d'Holbach, d'Alembert, Diderot, and Rousseau.[37] Rousseau, for example, was an unconditional admirer of Fénelon's political thought and pedagogical methods. *Télémaque* directly inspired Rousseau's own plan in *Émile* to reform society through the instruction of the young. In fact, *Télémaque* was one of only two books (the other was *Robinson Crusoe*) that Émile was allowed to read in the course of an upbringing predicated on nature and experience rather than on the authority and fictions of texts.[38]

Within David's own circles there were admirers of *Télémaque:* the poet André Chénier,[39] David's erstwhile friend and supporter in the earlier moderately reformist years of the Revolution, and André's brother the poet and playwright Marie-Joseph Chénier, a fervent Jacobin and then a Bonapartiste, who was David's associate in the staging of patriotic Revolutionary festivals. In various texts Marie-Joseph declares Fénelon (anachronistically) to be a "philosophe" and a "patriote."[40] In 1793, a few days after the execution of Louis XVI, Chénier's original play *Fénelon,* which, like Diderot's novel *La religieuse,* deals with the tyranny of forced religious vocations, was staged for the first time in Paris, to be revived periodically. Fénelon continued to be admired by liberal as well as conservative writers who were active close to the time of the composition of David's painting. Stendahl, Mme de Staël, Joseph de Maistre, and Chateaubriand all recognized Fénelon's importance for the history and literature of France (again, approaching his works from a wide variety of perspectives). In his *Essai sur les révolutions* of 1791 Chateaubriand (an aristocrat by birth and, in turn, Bonapartiste, then moderate monarchist under the Restoration) develops, for example, an extended parallel between Plato's *Republic,* Fénelon's



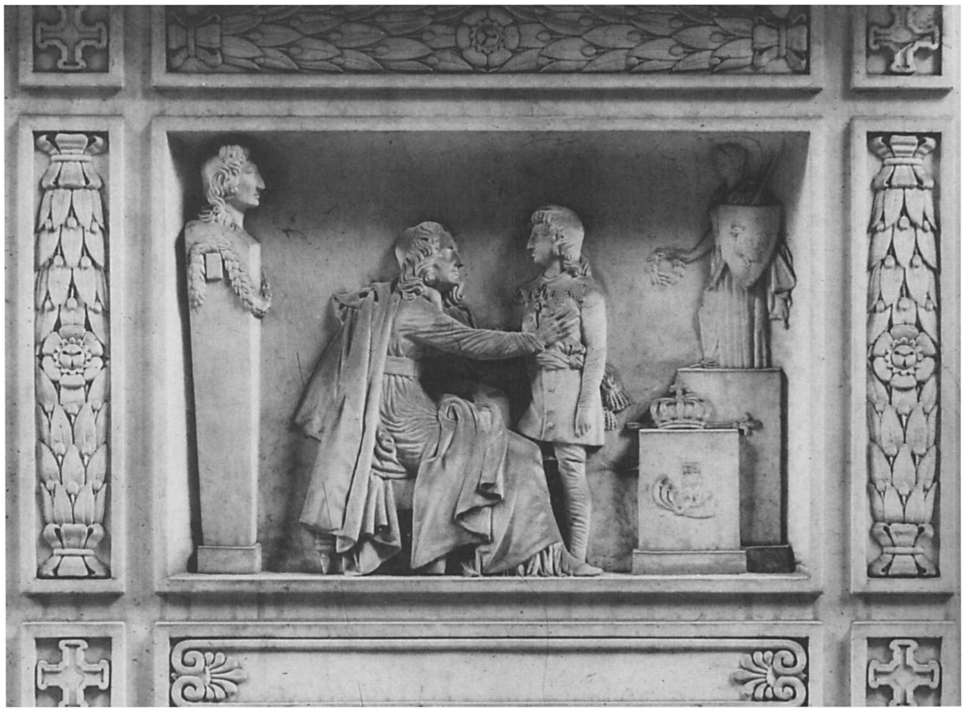
7 Pierre Jean David d'Angers, *Monument to Fénelon,* 1826. Cathédrale de Cambrai (photo: P. Thibaut © 1995 Inventaire Général, ADAGP)

Télemaque, and Rousseau's *Émile,* because in his opinion each of these authors "sought out the moral and political man."[41] And he frankly declares the key role of Fénelon and of *Télémaque* in the history of the Enlightenment and the Revolution:

> The influence of this work by Fénelon has been considerable; it includes all the principles of the day: it breathes liberty, and even the Revolution is found predicted in it. One has only to consider the period when it was published, and one can see that it is one of the first writings that changed the course of national ideas in France.[42]

The ideas and actions of this great man had clearly intrigued a whole spectrum of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writers, and it may well have been the near universality of his appeal, or the possibility it offered of national and international reconciliation and healing (a course that David himself had promoted as early as 1795 in *The Sabine Women*), that prompted and shaped David's open-ended approach to his subject. In reviewing the probable expectations of the audience for David's *Telemachus and Eucharis,* however, an important aspect of Fénelon's life and writings that concerned many of David's predecessors and contemporaries must reasonably be left aside: the very complex question of Fénelon's religious positions, especially the well-known controversy over Mme Guyon, Quietism, and the doctrine of *pur amour* (disinterested love), which ended with Fénelon's banishment from court in 1795.[43] This question is not considered here, because there is little direct or indirect evidence of an interest on David's part in the theological basis of all of Fénelon's writings. However, many other biographical and literary elements, closer to David's late interests and circumstances, stand out or are developed at length in a number of important early texts on Fénelon. Taking, for example, Andrew Michael Ramsay's *Discours sur la poésie épique* of 1717 (frequently appended to later eighteenth-century editions of *Télémaque*) and his *Histoire de Fénelon* of 1723, the *Remarques* of Henri-Philippe de Limiers of 1719 (also frequently published in later editions of *Télémaque*), Jean de La Harpe's and J. Sifrein Maury's *Éloges* of 1771, the *Vie de M. de Fénelon* (by Abbé Gallard or P. de Querbeuf)[44] in the *Oeuvres* of 1787, and Louis-François de Bausset's *Histoire de Fénelon* of 1808, the main commentaries concern: Fénelon's creative accomplishments—his style, his excellence in all literary genres, and his attempt to reconcile the ancients and moderns; his personal virtues—courage in the face of persecution, the calm acceptance of exile, his reputed tolerance, charity, and modest way of living; his innovative pedagogical methods; and his personal effort to reform the monarchy, through the education of the children of the dauphin and through texts, like *Télémaque,* addressed personally to them.

We can readily imagine that at the end of David's life and



8 David d'Angers, *Monument to Fénelon,* detail of bas-relief showing Fénelon teaching the duc de Bourgogne (photo: Cap-Viollet, Paris)

during his own exile, each of these aspects of Fénelon's character and production may have inspired or comforted the artist. However, given David's long-standing commitment to the reforming, didactic function of art, Fénelon's pedagogical skills and political ideas must certainly have proved of the greatest interest to the artist.

In particular, remarks gleaned from the *Éloges* and biographies written between 1771 and 1808, and thus within the span of David's career as a painter, point to Fénelon's method of indirect didacticism, which is matched by the manner and figural relationships of David's *Telemachus and Eucharis.* Fénelon was consistently regarded by his biographers as an innovative teacher who, well before Rousseau, advocated instilling morals as well as knowledge in his young pupils and his parishioners through pleasure rather than discipline and force. In his treatise of 1687 on *L'éducation des filles,*[45] we are continually reminded of this new principle: "Notice a great defect of ordinary educations: all of the pleasure is put on one side, and all of the boredom on the other; all of the boredom in study, and all of the pleasure in distractions. . . . Let us then try to change this order: let us make study agreeable; let us hide it under the appearance of liberty and pleasure. . . .";[46] and "The less that one gives formal lessons, the better. . . .";[47] and yet again, "indirect instructions must often be used, which are not annoying like lessons and admonitions. . . ."[48]

As applied both in *Télémaque* and in the education of the duc de Bourgogne—who after his father, the grand dauphin, was in a direct line to inherit the throne—this method was seen as the key to the success of Fénelon's educational principles. The author of the *Vie* of 1787 notes, " 'Amusements, conversations, dining, games, promenades, all through the care and the skill of the master became a lesson for the disciple, while nothing appeared to be so.' "[49] In 1808, Cardinal Bausset describes how this pedagogy of pleasure operated in *Télémaque* as a means of re-forming the character of the duc de Bourgogne:

> It was through this happy artifice that he came to give to the severe lessons of truth the charm and harmony of a poetic style, in order to insinuate them more readily in a sensitive and passionate heart. The delightful colors and enchanting interest with which Fénelon surrounded his young hero, at the very moments when the inexperience of age and the enthusiasm of passions made him commit great faults, served with less repugnance to focus the attention of M. le duc de Bourgogne on this faithful image of his own errors and weaknesses.[50]

There is much in these early appreciations of Fénelon's didacticism that David continued to honor and practice in *Telemachus and Eucharis:* the choice of a familiar and beloved story to attract the attention of his viewers, a descriptive yet harmonious style, an episode that appeals to the sentiments, "delightful colors and an enchanting interest," all for the purpose of an instruction that does not at first appear to be one.

Of course, we cannot say that David himself was painting for children of the age that concerned Fénelon in *L'éducation des filles,* nor was the artist directly addressing a successor to the throne of France. However, with the information Helmut Engelhart has recently provided concerning the circumstances of the purchase of David's painting by the Count Franz Erwein von Schönborn-Weisentheid, member of a noble family of Bavarian collectors, we can arrive at new conclusions about one of the immediate functions of the picture.[51] I would suggest that this new documentation raises the possibility that either the painter or the buyer may have had in mind the education of the count's own thirteen-year-old son, Erwein Damian, when the subject was chosen or as the work proceeded. Records concerning the purchase of the painting were carefully gathered by the clergyman Anton Endres, Schönborn's friend, artistic adviser, and the private tutor, or "Mentor," of Erwein Damian. Endres and Erwein Damian undertook an extended trip to Belgium and the Netherlands in 1818, staying in Brussels for nine months during the time the painting was being completed (David and the count had signed a purchase contract in March 1818, in which it was noted that the work was almost complete). Thus, by design, choice, or fortuitous coincidence with the tastes and personal circumstances of the collector, *Telemachus and Eucharis* penetrated a milieu for whom David's (and Fénelon's) cautionary messages related to the education of an enlightened young leader would have been highly appropriate.

Yet it is unlikely that David would have addressed the work in a limited way to a single family. It was known that the count was mounting a collection of modern works that would continue his ancestors' famed collection of Baroque art. Selling *Telemachus and Eucharis* to Schönborn was therefore a guarantee that the painting, with its moral and historical perspectives, would be seen by numerous privileged travelers to Reichartshausen Castle in Rheingau, where the count's new gallery was located.[52] However, let us recall that before selling *Telemachus and Eucharis* to Schönborn in 1818, and in the year preceding the date when the painting was begun, David had offered his services after May 1816 to the king of the Netherlands, William I. In a memoir, the artist declared to the governor of Brussels his intention to remain definitively in the country and solicited a position as "Directeur Général des Arts et Établissements relatifs à l'Étude du Dessin et de la Peinture."[53] David was now operating under the conditions of monarchy. He was surely aware that the subjects of his new paintings in Belgium, even if still concerned with the idea of reform, needed to be expressed in terms acceptable to a wider political spectrum that was not exclusive to, but included, potential clients among the aristocracy and at court.

Moreover, as soon as the painting was completed, David made his composition available to a broader audience of his "colleagues in Ghent who have seen nothing of mine" and "enlightened art lovers" through exhibitions in Ghent and in Brussels.[54] An engraving was produced by Charles Normand, after David's original, for the readers of the *Annales du Salon de Gand de 1820*—published in 1823 with a short accompanying text based on Cornelissen's speech of 1818—assuring the diffusion of the work to an even broader public with a spectrum of capacities and interests.[55] David also immediately set about having a copy made of the composition by Sophie Frémiet, a rising young history painter who took lessons from David and whose family was also in political exile from France.[56] The copy was a very fine one that David, quite exceptionally, intended to keep for a time in his own collection. According to an article in the *Journal de Commerce* of July 18, 1818, it was because it was the "favored painting" of the artist,[57] but perhaps he also had in mind further exhibitions or another engraving to be directly supervised by himself, as was the case with *Cupid and Psyche*. The copy was not sold until 1825—while the artist was still alive—to Firmin Didot, the Parisian printer-publisher who, along with other members of the well-known Didot family, had produced several editions of Fénelon's works.[58]

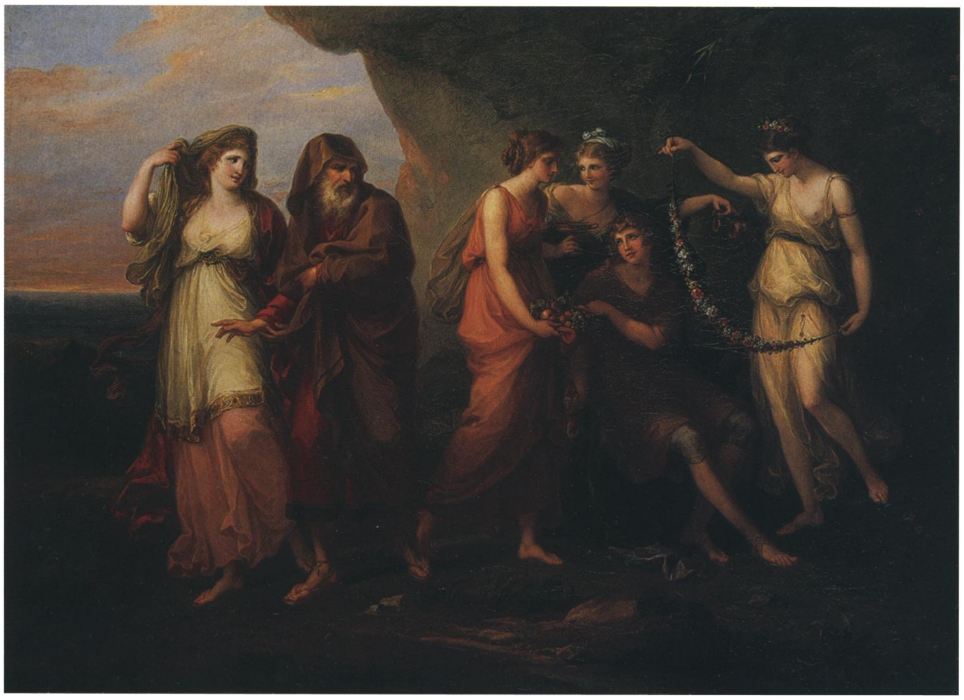
In these multiple efforts to make his work available and effective, David was counting on the public's familiarity with Fénelon's *Télémaque*. An intimate knowledge of the text marks some of the early commentaries on the painting and suggests different levels of aesthetic and didactic engagement with the subject.[59] This ease with the text, as well as the appeal of the novel for various age groups and for different reasons are affirmed in Bausset's 1808 biography of Fénelon:

> Has not Fénelon known how to distribute in the design, style, and composition of *Télémaque* a charm so unforgettable, that it is still, after more than a century, the first book that is given to children and youth, the one that is still reread at a more advanced age, and in the calm of a tranquil life, singular destiny for a book composed solely for the instruction of an heir to the throne. . . .[60]

David could thus be certain of the association of his work with the innovative, appealing pedagogy of *Télémaque*. Moreover, for Fénelon's early biographers, the general moralizing content of the novel was seldom considered separately from his pivotal historical position. The long-standing tradition of the novel's potential for reforming the monarchy through the education of the duc de Bourgogne therefore raises the question of the historical and political connotations of David's painting. As we have seen from both texts and monuments, Fénelon was best known as the preceptor to the heir to the French throne, as the teacher who turned the duc de Bourgogne from an imperious, willful child into a beloved prince. La Harpe recognized Fénelon's effort to cultivate virtue and self-control in the duc de Bourgogne: "He imbued him with the touching pleasure that is tasted in being loved, with the noble power one exercises in doing good, with the rare glory that is obtained in commanding oneself."[61]

Another important lesson for the duc concerned false appearances. In the *Vie* of 1787, the importance of teaching his royal pupil skills for perceiving the truth is gleaned from Fénelon's manuscripts: "Logic is the search for truth, it will teach you to recognize it; it has precise characteristics for attentive minds: there are rules to distinguish it, for they are not always apparent; the false often takes the appearances of truth: and it is essential for a prince above all not to make a mistake!"[62] In this, Bausset reminds us, in his *Histoire de Fénelon* of 1808, "A king, no matter how wise he is, is still a man; his mind has limits and his virtue as well."[63] Maury's *Éloge* of 1771 suggested a way in which this more universal failing of men and kings is first revealed in Telemachus's experiences on Calypso's island: "Severe readers, the representation of the loves of Eucharis and Telemachus alarms you perhaps; but was it not necessary to warn a young prince of the traps that await him as he leaves childhood?"[64]

Both of these didactic aims—the command of self and the danger of misjudgment—addressed to a potential leader of France are well served by David's choice and handling of a farewell scene that develops a rather different approach from that of artists who had treated the subject before him. Rather than showing the hero entirely out of control, obliging his elders to intervene (Fig. 5), or showing him surrounded and



9 Angelica Kauffmann, *Telemachus and the Nymphs of Calypso,* 1783. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Collis P. Huntington, 1900, 25.110.188 (photo: © 1979 The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

overcome by the luxuries of Calypso's island and the flattering attention of the nymphs (Fig. 9), David moves in close to consider the humanity of the hero, to identify the self as the locus of a struggle between virtue and voluptuousness. In so doing, David translated into visual forms the heuristic character of the text. By exploiting the very appeal of Telemachus's and Eucharis's passion the image draws the viewer in to consider the problem of how truth can be misperceived by kings and commoners alike.

Beyond such general moral principles of leadership that Fénelon deftly inculcated in his young prince, discussions of *Télémaque* and its role in the education of the duc de Bourgogne focused above all on the link between these moral principles and the actual governance of France. First of all, Maury makes it clear in his 1771 *Éloge de Fénelon* that the duc de Bourgogne and Telemachus were considered one and the same: "the real Telemachus is not the son of Ulysses, but the heir of Louis XIV . . . this young prince, given over to the most impetuous outbursts of anger, became as gentle, as moderate as his preceptor; that he was, in his twenty-fifth year, the idol of the court, of the capital, of the army, of the nation, of Europe as a whole. . . ."[65]

Secondly, the early biographers and commentaries discussed at length the novel's depiction, in the guise of Telemachus's encounters with various fictional rulers, of the benefits of enlightened monarchy versus the abuses of absolutism. The question of whether *Télémaque* was a specific satire of the reign of Louis XIV was also frequently debated. From the perspective of an era of reform in 1771, Maury formulated the perceived political purpose of the novel: "our preceptor . . . is courageous enough to tell the most daring truths to sovereigns, and to speak to them endlessly in the name of humankind. . . ."[66] In Bausset's 1808 *Histoire,* which included new documentation, this political content is confirmed by Fénelon himself:

> "As for *Télémaque,* it is a fictitious narrative in the form of a heroic poem, like those of Homer and Virgil, where I put the principal actions that are appropriate for a prince whose birth destines for rulership. . . . I put in these adventures all the truths necessary for the government, and all the defects that one can have in a sovereign power; *but I never marked any of them with a pretense that tends towards any portrait or character*" [Bausset's emphasis].[67]

Fénelon's undated late memoir concerns his general aims in composing *Télémaque* for the private use of the duc de Bourgogne beginning in 1694. It also constitutes in part a self-defense against presumptions of oppositional politics that surfaced as soon as the unauthorized and incomplete manuscript of the novel began to circulate in 1698.

Most eighteenth- and nineteenth-century commentaries and biographies deal in one form or another with this controversy over whether *Télémaque* is or is not a satire of Louis XIV's reign. A 1699 edition published in Brussels contains a verse preface to the reader entitled "La Clef de Télémaque" that both affirms the political content of the novel while defending its author against intentional malice: "Read without a satirical view / Of mind and reason this new Masterpiece / Morals and politics / Have nothing that are not placed in the most beautiful light."[68] Following this, one finds a diversity of published opinions, ranging from Limiers's "Remarques pour l'intelligence de ce poème allégorique" (1719), a proposed "key" to the identity of specific characters, to Bausset's reasoned denial in 1808 of satirical intentions based on Fénelon's virtuous character and the fact that he was still in favor when he began the novel.[69]

It is well beyond the scope of my study to conclude on the matter of the narrow and specific political content of Fénelon's novel and its relevance to David's painting. It is certain, however, that Fénelon's *Télémaque* had an established historical identity associated with an ideal of what monarchy and government should be and might have been had Fénelon's pupil become king of France or had his descendants absorbed the lessons of the book. Indeed, many of Fénelon's ethical lessons announced those of later reformers: the attack on luxury; an economic system based in agriculture, a healthy population, and work; the opposition to all wars except for defense; taxes on the idle rather than on those who make the land fertile; the monarchy as a disguised servitude for the benefit of the people; the utility of the arts to reform morals.[70]

Adding to the poignancy of lost opportunities were the often recalled list of historical facts: the death in 1711 of the grand dauphin, son of Louis XIV; the short-lived promise of the ascendancy to the throne of the duc de Bourgogne on his aging grandfather's death; the duc de Bourgogne's continuing deep attachment to Fénelon, feeding suppositions that he would have been made a trusted minister; and finally the untimely death of the thirty-year-old heir in 1712, a year after that of his father, a year before that of Fénelon, and three years before that of Louis XIV. It was the duc de Bourgogne's five-year-old son who would become king in 1715, as Louis XV, under the regency of Philippe d'Orléans.

Among the biographies and comments appended to later editions of Fénelon's works, we read hints of dashed hopes or musings on what should have been or what might still be. "Sensitive Frenchmen, smiled with gratitude at the hope of seeing shine forth the happy and tranquil days promised to them by the fortunate reign of the pupil of Fénelon" (Bausset);[71] "let the maxims of Fénelon that a great king found to be fanciful be realized by good princes who will be greater than he" (La Harpe);[72] or, "May a Telemachus be born among you! Fénelon is watching over the steps to the throne, and is only waiting for a disciple" (Maury).[73]

The known admiration for Fénelon and his novel by the last French king before the Revolution also forms an essential link in the chain of the novel's political history. In the first lines of the dedication of the 1787 *Oeuvres,* published in the year the Estates General was called, we read a compliment to Louis XVI on his commission of a sculpture of Fénelon for the gallery of great men. The author of this dedication, the abbé de Fénelon (a descendant), skillfully turns Louis XVI's tribute to Fénelon, a tribute entirely at odds with Louis XIV's actions and attitudes, into a reflection on the grandeur of both reigns:

> Occupied with the glory as well as the happiness of the nation that you govern, you have not limited yourself to rewarding rare and distinguished talents, you have wanted to pay in some fashion an honorable tribute to the memory of the great men who represented the century of Louis XIV: they still breathe in marble by your orders; and Fénelon, worthy of holding a rank among them, must be placed in that gallery which will be forever the ornament of the capital, and one of the most beautiful monuments of your reign.[74]

In the *Vie de M. de Fénelon* that follows this dedication, the biographer notes "a collection of maxims on morals and politics, extracted from Télémaque by Louis XVI, and printed under his supervision, at Versailles, in 1766: he was not yet 12 years old, and the choice of these maxims is full of wisdom and discernment."[75] Sustaining this youthful enthusiasm for *Télémaque,* and at the outset of a reign some hoped would recapture the golden age of Henri IV, Louis XVI seized the opportunity to appear to his subjects as that "good prince who was greater than [Louis XIV]" called for by La Harpe in 1771. In 1775, one year after Louis XVI assumed the throne and within four years of the delivery of La Harpe's speech to the academy, on the advice of the comte d'Angiviller, the new *directeur des bâtiments,* the king approved the commission of a life-size sculpture of Fénelon "from whom he [the king] had the honor of receiving lessons," in the words of d'Angiviller.[76] The portrait by Félix Lecomte, now at the Institut de France (Fig. 6), was designed to be displayed in the Grand Gallery of the Louvre along with a series of large-scale sculptures and paintings representing other great men and events from French history "appropriate for reanimating virtue and patriotic sentiments."[77] It would have conveyed to the public visiting the new museum both the glory of the past and previous injustices now undone. Through Fénelon's statue, Louis XVI associated his coming to power with a set of political principles that, for many different reasons and readers throughout Europe, had long represented an ideal and, for some, even a liberal model of government.[78]

David was at the French Academy in Rome when the statue was completed and exhibited at the Salon of 1777, but for a number of years after his return it was kept in the Salle des Antiques of the Louvre, where David had a studio. After 1795 the great men series became part of the decor of the Institut de France, which held its meetings in the Salle des Antiques, and then at the former Collège des Quatre Nations, where the sculptures were transferred after 1804. Each time David attended a meeting of the Institut de France, after his nomination to the Classe des Beaux-Arts in November 1795, he may have walked by the imposing portrait of Fénelon shown holding a massive volume of *Télémaque.* When the artist turned to his own meditation on a book that had become such a charged cultural icon, it is difficult to imagine that he would not have thought back to that portrait, and to its cumulative, competing associations with monarchy, opposition, conciliation, hopefulness, failed efforts at reform, and the repetition of errors throughout history.

The Cycle of History

I have taken a circuitous path from a novel begun in 1694 for the education of a young prince, to a statue designed in 1776 to bolster confidence and unity under the reign of a new king, to a painting of lovers by an aging former Revolutionary, but the path reveals the full extent of the complex didacticism of David's *Telemachus and Eucharis.*

Condensing in a single image the moralizing lessons of *Les aventures de Télémaque,* and honoring the memory of its author and his pedagogical methods, David gently, indirectly instructed his viewers. The cautionary message of Telemachus's dalliance on Calypso's island warned in general of misleading appearances and urged the *search* for meaning and truth. This message came to be expressed, at the end of David's career, through appealing fictions and in a highly descriptive, coloristic manner that paradoxically aimed to rein in human passion, excess, and ignorance through pleasure, observations, and reflection rather than through somber, violent tragedies and evident admonitions. At the same time, and following the lead of his literary sources, David's specific subjects—in *Cupid and Psyche,* a young woman asleep in the luxurious palace of Love; in *Telemachus and Eucharis,* a young man distracted from his quest by the charms of an island and its nymphs—undercut their own sensual appeal by providing subtle prompts that help us to see through the fictions and illusions of the images and that anticipate a future progress toward enlightenment and wisdom. In *Telemachus and Eucharis,* these devices operate like the invisible voices Cornelissen imagined in the lovers' cave, or like a disguised Mentor/ Minerva, goddess of Wisdom (and, it should be added, of the Arts and Sciences), who plays a key if hidden role in leading the hero, as well as readers and viewers, through experience and the senses toward enlightenment.[79]

Traced through the status and meaning of Fénelon's *Télémaque* for artists, writers, reformers, and rulers, the didactic significance of David's subject also must be understood as political and historical. This perspective remains consistent with David's earlier interests and is supported by the circumstances in which he was working in 1817 and 1818. In exile from France, not knowing whether he would be able to return or even if he wished to, facing a restored monarchy after so many years and forms of alternative governments, surrounded by ex-patriots speaking and writing from different perspectives about Revolution and Empire, David took up a text that was in itself and in its historical trajectory weighted with reflections on the past, present, and future of France.

In the context of the Restoration, the youth, vulnerability, and inexperience of Telemachus suggest the historical process to be an accumulation of missed opportunities, reversals, and the inevitable mistakes that are made in the acquisition of wisdom. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century viewers knew that Fénelon's ideal monarchy came close to taking hold but failed to do so simply because of the untimely death of the duc de Bourgogne. Kings, ministers, and reformers alike reflected on the virtuous principles of *Télémaque,* and some called on its iconography to encourage and institute change or to surround themselves with its aura. Yet in 1815, after less than thirty years of a series of bold political experiments, some of them approaching the visions of Fénelon, the clock had been turned back. In this time of historical reversal, who better to consult again than the French author who taught in his words and the circumstances of his life the necessity of experience, the ironies of history, and above all the fundamental principles of a just and moral government?

What is striking about David's interest in Fénelon and the episode he invented to convey the moral lessons of the story is the very flexible, open-ended way that his image unfolds semiotically. In David's picture, as opposed to Fénelon's novel, we are not provided with a conclusion. The painting is about Telemachus's present uncertainty, although for viewers in the know that uncertainty is played off against knowledge of the outcome in the text. However, David's image is not a straightforward illustration but rather an imagined scene that presents a Herculean-like choice with different possible endings: Telemachus could turn to embrace Eucharis or he could forcefully free himself from her embrace. The artist's pictorial medium, along with hindsight, has pushed him beyond the model provided by Fénelon, to raise moral and historical *questions* rather than provide firm answers. One viewer might muse in front of such a picture on what would have happened if a Telemachus had occupied the throne before 1789. Or, taking into consideration the dawn in 1815 of a new era of monarchy, the picture might be seen by another viewer as a call for the kind of just and moral leader that had been portrayed by Fénelon. On the other hand, *Telemachus and Eucharis* could be understood by viewers still attached to the principles of Revolution or Empire as a warning about the illusions of the Restoration, about the deceptive charms offered by a return to the luxuries and moral weakness of the Bourbons. Each of these insights as well as others are provided for in David's recollection of Fénelon and his modern epic, which for eighteenth- and nineteenth-century France was inextricably bound to the now lengthy course of modern history.

I began this study with the idea of a resistance to interpretation that is built into *Telemachus and Eucharis.* However, the difficulties of interpretation point not to an image empty of significance but to one that makes the viewer experience a slower progress toward multiple meanings, which are suggestive rather than imposed and authoritative. At the end of David's life and career, this more challenging form of image making also fulfilled personal needs that coincided with the historical and political functions I have developed at length.

David's treatment of a "youthful" subject—by this I mean one treating the rashness and mistakes of youth, the difficult choices made early in life with little or no experience, the moral development of a young man—makes perfect sense as an older man's meditation on the course of his own long odyssey through life. Statements culled from David's correspondence to friends and family show an increasing and expected reflectiveness during the Belgian period: If he had arrived earlier in Belgium, he would have become a colorist in the Flemish manner.[80] He feels happier in Brussels than he has ever been.[81] He is resigned to the possibility of a forced departure from his new home but seems to absolve himself of any wrongdoing, convinced that he has always been useful wherever he has lived and that nothing men do astonishes him.[82] He wonders if he will ever see France again and declares it is not in anyone's power to predict, as is true of all that has happened over the past twenty-seven years.[83] After finishing *Cupid and Psyche* he hopes to be granted a little more time, for he has another idea in mind, and then the "comedy is finished."[84] David justifies his behavior to his son: he was perfectly aware of his past political choices, is too proud to request clemency to be able to return to France, but time passes, and he is at peace with his conscience.[85]

In the context of this state of reflectiveness and his coming to terms with the past as well as his present circumstances, the Telemachus that David depicts struggling with his passions and his conscience is a forgiving image, an image accepting of youthful vanity, human weakness, the progress of life, and the protection of Providence. In a letter to Gros of May 13, 1817, a few months before he ordered the canvas for his "pendant" to *Cupid and Psyche,* he confesses, "I would say, without having the virtue of Socrates, it gives me pleasure to believe, like him, that I have a personal spirit who watches over all of my actions; he has given me so many proofs of this for the past twenty-five years. . . ."[86] In exile, Fénelon's text provided David's imagination with a vulnerable hero, guided and watched over in his moral and political struggles, nonetheless, by the goddess of Wisdom. Through this story of a boy on the verge of manhood, through this text imbued with moral and political insights by countless readers throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a reflection or covert "memoir"[87] on the triumphs, errors, and evolution of a nation (merged unavoidably with a reflection on David's personal involvement in that evolution) could be engaged, presented with sympathy, and serve as an emblem of the continuing struggle for a better future.

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Notes

1. Fénelon, bk. 6, lines 376–79, p. 333. Unless otherwise indicated, translations are mine. I have regularized the spelling of Fénelon in all references and titles.

2. Anon., "La Clef de Télémaque," in Fénelon, 213.

3. The notable exception to the lack of interest in David's Brussels period is the work of Dorothy Johnson, who observes David's own enthusiasm for his late paintings and discusses their experimental nature and exploration of psychological and emotional states. In Johnson's view, *Telemachus and Eucharis* concerns "the private sphere of tender love and erotic passion . . . David wanted to reveal the nature of a mutual exchange of tender affection, of the bonds of true friendship and desire. . . ." She also places the late works within the context of changes in the study and understanding of mythology in the 18th and early 19th centuries. See Johnson, *Jacques-Louis David: Art in Metamorphosis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 236–57, esp. 254–55; and idem, *Jacques-Louis David: "The Farewell of Telemachus and Eucharis,"* Getty Museum Studies on Art (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1997), 46–52. My own focus will be on the relevance of Fénelon's text and historiography to David's image and its reception.

4. An incomplete and unauthorized version of *Télémaque,* based on a pirated manuscript, was published in Aug. 1699 as a sequel to the *Odyssey,* with remaining volumes appearing later that year. Despite the efforts of Louis XIV to suppress *Télémaque,* in the conviction that it was a concealed satire of his reign, new editions were printed in subsequent years both in Paris and abroad. During his lifetime, Fénelon maintained that all published versions were inaccurate and that the work was not a satire. In 1717, two years after the deaths of both Fénelon and Louis XIV, the marquis de Fénelon, a grand-nephew, published a full version based on Fénelon's authorized manuscript. Scholars believe that *Télémaque* was begun as early as 1694, when Fénelon was still preceptor to Louis XIV's grandson and heir, for whom the work was written.

5. In David's correspondence and that of his wife we find references to both *Cupid and Psyche* and *Telemachus and Eucharis* as history paintings. Wildenstein, 207, 208, 213; and letter from Mme David, May 20, 1817, in Antoine Schnapper, *Jacques-Louis David 1748–1825,* exh. cat., Musée du Louvre, Paris, 1989, 622.

6. See Warren Roberts, *Jacques-Louis David, Revolutionary Artist* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 197–98, for a discussion of David's conflicted state of mind in his later years. For an insight into David's circumstances among the French exiles in Belgium, see Sergio Luzzatto, *Mémoire de la Terreur: Vieux Montagnards et jeunes Républicains au XIXe siècle* (Lyons: Presses Universitaires de Lyons, 1988), esp. 104–8.

7. In 1820, David gave the following advice to Antoine Gros, his former student, concerning the choice of a subject for a history painting: "Quickly, quickly, my good friend, leaf through your Plutarch, choose a subject familiar to everyone; this is very important." Wildenstein, 219.

8. An important 18th-century debate over Fénelon's *Télémaque* concerned the identification of its literary genre. Given that it was written in prose, rather than verse, was it to be called a poem or a novel? Andrew Michael Ramsay was the first to write an apology of the work as a modern epic poem matching the greatness of Homer's, and his *Discours sur la poésie épique, et sur l'excellence du poëme de Télémaque* often prefaced editions of the text, beginning with the edition of 1717. I have chosen to use both terms when referring to the text.

9. N. Cornelissen, "Eucharis et Télémaque," *Annales Belgiques des Sciences, Arts et Littératures* 1 (1818): 388.

10. Ibid., 390.

11. Ibid., 390–91.

12. Norman Bryson has discussed at length David's consistent manipulation of the marginal in earlier historical works, such as *The Death of Socrates, Brutus,* and *The Sabine Women.* This attention to the marginal in an image keeps "the dialectic between its two sides going at full strength." Bryson notes that the narrative center of David's dramas is sidestepped both in relation to the chosen texts ("the image comes from the edge of a text") and in terms of the composition, figural action, and details (for example, Socrates's passionate acolytes, who avert their gaze from their master's stoicism, or the bas-relief of the nursing she-wolf on the pedestal of the statue of Roma that blocks out the bodies of Brutus's sons). Such details "reverse the images' drift" with the result "that the viewer can feel his or her sympathy genuinely divided between the worlds of severity and of tenderness." Bryson, "Centres and Margins in David," *Word and Image* 4 (1988): 43–50. In a similar vein, Thomas Crow notes the suggestive function of the scissors in the small central sewing basket in David's *Brutus* ("a substitute for what cannot be shown," that is, the dismembered bodies of the sons); Crow, *Emulation: Making Artists for Revolutionary France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 107–8. Adding to the examples cited from among David's tragic works, I am proposing that at least two examples of David's late amorous works, *Cupid and Psyche* and *Telemachus and Eucharis,* continue the artist's strategies of representing marginally noted incidents in his chosen texts and of providing to observant viewers gestural and still-life details that open up the meanings of these images to complex causes and consequences, meanings that undercut more obvious and immediate erotic effects. I am also urging closer attention to the "eloquent bodies" in David's late works. Regarding, in general, the "corporeal eloquence" of David's figures, see Johnson, 1993 (as in n. 3), 11–69.

13. Having just completed the latter, for his next project, he ordered a canvas through the Antwerp painter van Brée on Oct. 20, 1817, noting that "it is for the historical genre . . . to make a pendant for my Psyché." Wildenstein, 208.

14. David's distaste for painting on commission is confirmed by a letter to Gros of June 22, 1820, in which he encourages his former student to undertake a real history painting: "Do not wait for commissions. Your good fortune has not placed you in that unhappy position. Rarely are beautiful works done on commission, at least, that is always how that way of doing things has affected me. That method was only good for painters of a second order." Ibid., 219.

15. For an earlier example of a conceptual pairing by David—his *Paris and Helen* with the portrait of the Lavoisiers—see Mary Vidal, "David among the Moderns: Art, Science, and the Lavoisiers," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 56 (1995): 595–623.

16. Johnson, 1993 (as in n. 3), 250–53.

17. See Vidal, 214–43.

18. The long literary and visual tradition for reading both Apuleius's *Metamorphoses* and the tale of Psyche as allegories is confirmed in the prefaces to many 18th-century editions of Apuleius's works. See Vidal, 239 n. 8.

19. My discussion of Fénelon's text is based on readings of numerous modern studies of *Télémaque.* Among the most helpful have been (in order of date of publication): Volker Kapp, *Télémaque de Fénelon: La signification d'une oeuvre littéraire à la fin du siècle classique* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr; Paris: Jean-Michel Place, 1982); Charles Dédéyan, *Télémaque ou la liberté de l'esprit*

(Paris: Nizet, 1991); Marguerite Haillant, introduction to Fénelon; Jeanne-Lydie Goré, "Le Télémaque, périple odysséen ou voyage initiatique," 121–36, and Noémi Hepp, "De l'épopée au roman, L'Odysée et Télémaque," 223–35, in *Télémaque: Je ne sais quoi de pur et de sublime,* ed. Alain Lanavère, Références 2 (Orléans: Paradigme, 1994); Patrick Riley, introduction to Fénelon, *Telemachus, Son of Ulysses,* ed. P. Riley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); and François Xavier Cuche, *Télémaque: entre père et mer* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1995).

20. Albert Chérel's 1917 study of the influence of Fénelon in the 18th century has been an invaluable resource for this article. See also Dédéyan (as in n. 19), 159–77, for a concise review of the critical fortunes of *Télémaque* in the 18th and early 19th centuries.

21. Like Apuleius's tale of Psyche rewritten by La Fontaine in the 17th century, Fénelon's novel was precisely the sort of reference that suited David's quest to revive and revise in his art the forms and morals of antiquity. See Vidal; and idem (as in n. 15), 604–6. The story of Telemachus belongs to not only ancient Greece but also modern France, not only Homer but also Fénelon, who, as a well-known arbiter of the quarrel of the ancients and moderns, provided David with yet another model for creating new art based on tradition.

22. Fénelon, 1.60–62, p. 237.

23. Ibid., 6.81–85, p. 326.

24. Ibid., 6.519–22, p. 337.

25. Ibid., 17.273–80, p. 573.

26. Ibid., 18.178–79, p. 596.

27. Ibid., 17.16–21, p. 565.

28. See the list of mythological subjects exhibited at 18th-century Salons (1699–1789) in the appendix to *The Loves of the Gods: Mythological Painting from Watteau to David,* exh. cat., Fort Worth, Tex., 1992. This list, however, does not include works representing subjects drawn from *Télémaque* that were not exhibited at the Salons, such as Jean Raoux's *Telemachus Recounting His Adventures to Calypso,* painted for the regent in 1722 (Musée du Louvre, Paris), or Angelica Kauffmann's 1783 pendants *The Sorrow of Telemachus* and *Telemachus and the Nymphs of Calypso* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Fig. 9), or later works, such as Charles Meynier's *The Farewell of Telemachus and the Nymph Eucharis* shown at the Salon of 1800 (lost); an engraving of Meynier's painting is illustrated in Johnson, 1993 (as in n. 3).

29. The "great men" series was undertaken by d'Angiviller in 1775 in consultation with Louis XVI, who had just ascended the throne. See Guilhem Scherf, "La Galerie des 'grands hommes' au coeur des salles consacrées à la sculpture française du XVIIIe siècle," *Revue du Louvre* 43, nos. 5–6 (Dec. 1993): 58 n. 4. See also nn. 35 and 78 below. The life-size statue by Félix Lecomte (Fig. 6), exhibited at the Salon of 1777, shows Fénelon holding a large volume that is identified for visitors to the Salon in the *livret* as his *Télémaque.* Jules Guiffrey, ed., *Collection des livrets des anciennes expositions depuis 1673 jusqu'en 1800, exposition de 1777* (Paris: Liepmannssohn et Dufour, 1870), 44, no. 232: "Fénelon, in bishop's robes, holding the book of Telemachus. Statue six feet in height, executed in marble for the King."

30. For documents on this commission, see Philippe Bordes, *"Le Serment du Jeu de Paume" de Jacques-Louis David* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1983), 142.

31. The history and iconography of the monument are discussed in Jacques de Caso, *David d'Angers: L'avenir de la mémoire, étude sur l'art signalétique à l'époque romantique* (Paris: Flammarion, 1988), 86–92.

32. Riley (as in n. 19), 1994, xvi. Chérel lists more than 240 editions and reeditions of *Télémaque* for the period between 1699 and 1820. On the eve of the Revolution, there is already awareness of the work's popularity: "There were innumerable editions of it. . . . This work has been translated into all the European languages, and read by men of all ages, of all stations, and of all nations"; *Vie,* vol. 1, 533.

33. Bausset, vol. 1, 1.

34. For example, Moreni (1733), Saint-Simon (1739), Voltaire (1751), *Encyclopédie,* vol. 13 (1765); see Chérel, 620–28.

35. The first biography of Fénelon was published by the Scotsman Andrew Michael Ramsay in 1723. Ramsay was converted to Catholicism by Fénelon and later became one of the founders of French Freemasonry, to which David adhered at least as early as 1787. Indeed, given the multiple references to Freemasonry in David's *Cupid and Psyche* (see Vidal), a Fénelon-Ramsay-David connection may have been inspired in part by the artist's Masonic ideals. For further information on Ramsay's Masonic activities, see Albert Chérel, *Un aventurier religieux au XVIIIe siècle, André-Michel Ramsay* (Paris: Perrin, 1926). The most substantial biography published before the date of David's painting was by Bausset in 1808. Other biographies were published along with Fénelon's works. The "Récit abrégé sur la vie de . . . Fénelon" by the marquis de Fénelon (a grandnephew raised by Fénelon) prefaced an important 1747 posthumous publication of the *Examen de conscience pour un roi* (after *Télémaque,* the most frequently reprinted work by Fénelon in the second half of the 18th century, which also appeared under the title *Directions pour la conscience d'un roi;* Chérel, 341). Jean-François de La Harpe's prize-winning *Éloge* of Fénelon presented to the Académie Française in the competition of 1771 prefaced various editions of *Télémaque* beginning in 1771; references here are to *Les aventures de Télémaque par Fénelon avec son éloge par La Harpe* (Paris: Furne, 1864). Apparently, this was an especially moving competition: " 'The lecture hall of the Academy was as if transformed into a temple in which all souls were of Fénelon's religion' "; Chérel, 401, citing Garat, *Mémoires historiques sur la vie de M. Suard. . . .* (Paris, 1820), vol. 2, 290. Several of these *Éloges* were published, such as those of d'Alembert (in 1774) and J. Sifrein Maury (1777); references here are to Maury, *Éloge de Fénelon,* in *Oeuvres choisies du Cardinal J. Sifrein Maury* (Paris: Aucher-Eloy, 1827), vol. 3. The competition as a whole undoubtedly influenced d'Angiviller's 1777 commission of a statue of Fénelon; see Andrew McClellan, "D'Angiviller's 'Great Men' of France and the Politics of the Parlements," *Art History* 13 (1990): 175–92. A lengthy life of Fénelon *(Vie),* written anonymously by the editor of the first publication of the *Oeuvres,* comprised the first volume of this nine-volume luxury edition published by the Didot family, whose members would long be connected with David (Firmin Didot purchased a copy of *Telemachus and Eucharis* from David in 1825; see n. 58 below). For a list of early editions of the novel and of Fénelon's other writings, see Chérel; and Dédéyan (as in n. 19), app. 9, 271–74.

36. On David's close ties with the Didots, see nn. 35 above and 58 below.

37. Chérel, esp. 322–23, 392–400, 403–4; and Dédéyan (as in n. 19), 161. Even a concise survey of the diverse reasons for which Fénelon's life and works were championed during the 18th and early 19th centuries and their perspectives would constitute a rather long and, given Chérel's exhaustive study of the question, unoriginal digression within my study of David's painting. My aim here is simply to provide evidence of Fénelon's reputation and exalted presence in the culture and history of France. For a more detailed study of his influence and of the literary fortunes of *Télémaque,* I refer readers to Chérel and Dédéyan.

38. It is the only book of Sophie, his companion, and she is the one who gives it to Émile. Jan Crosthwaite, "Sophie and *Les Aventures de Télémaque:* Amorous nymphs and virtuous wives in Rousseau's *Emile,*" *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 15 (1992): 189–90.

39. André Chénier's fragment *Hercule* is based on a passage from *Télémaque,* bk. 12, according to Albert Chérel, "Une source française d'André Chénier, le XIIe livre de Télémaque," *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France* 17 (1910).

40. Marie-Joseph Chénier, in Chérel, 478.

41. François René de Chateaubriand, *Essai sur les révolutions* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978), 360.

42. Ibid., 364.

43. Patrick Riley (as in n. 19) summarizes well how the doctrine of *pur amour* was the unifying concept of Fénelon's oeuvre: "As a first approximation to the truth about Fénelon, then, one can say that the whole of his practical thought—religious, moral, political—is held together by the notion of disinterested love, of 'going out of oneself' in order to lose oneself *(se perdre)* in a greater Beyond (or, in the case of God, Above). The disinterested love of God, without self-interest and hope for benefits, is pure 'charity' . . . ; the disinterested love of one's neighbor is 'friendship' . . . ; the disinterested love of the *polis* is a proto-Rousseauean ancient civic virtue." For an excellent, in-depth study of Fénelon's notion of disinterested love, see Michel Terestchenko, " 'Comme un globe sur un plan . . .' ou la volonté déracinée dans la doctrine de Fénelon du pur amour," *Les Études Philosophiques,* Apr.–June 1992: 153–77.

44. Although the author of the *Vie* is not identified, Chérel, 433 and n. 7, claims that it is the abbé Gallard who edited the first two volumes of the *Oeuvres* before the new editor of the remaining volumes, le Père de Querbeuf, took over.

45. This was one of the first pedagogical treatises to recognize the vital necessity of women's education, although judged by current standards, it promoted a narrowly defined domestic role for women grounded in a supposition of women's natural weakness. It was used for a time as a textbook at Mme de Maintenon's school for the daughters of impoverished noblemen.

46. Fénelon, *De l'éducation des filles,* in *Oeuvres de M. François de Salignac de La Motte Fénelon,* 9 vols. (Paris: L'Imprimerie de Franç.-Amb. Didot, 1787), vol. 3, 47.

47. Ibid., 45.

48. Ibid., 34.

49. *Vie,* vol. 1, 91, citing Abbé Proyard in his life of the duc de Bourgogne.

50. Bausset, vol. 2, 194.

51. Engelhart, 21–43. I would like to thank Dr. Engelhart for graciously sending me an advance copy of his article during the preparation of my essay.

52. On the history and content of Schönborn's collection, see Katharina Bott, "Franz Erwin Graf von Schönborn Kunstsammler zwischen Klassizismus und Romantik," in *Die Grafen von Schönborn: Kirchenfürsten, Sammler, Mäzene* (Nuremberg: Germanischen Nationalmuseums, 1989), 173–79. For the fame of the collection, see Engelhart, 26, who cites an ode of homage by J. F. Piré dedicated to the count and to David: "Console yourself, David; your homeland is everywhere / Schoenborn's salon alone upholds your memory; / For the true connoisseur, it is the temple of good taste / For the famous artist, it is that of glory." See also Engelhart, 40 n. 91: "The collection is mentioned in numerous contemporary descriptions of Rheingau and its castles, with David's painting receiving special mention."

53. Undated letter, after May 1816, in Schnapper (as in n. 5), 622.

54. David to van Huffel, May 20, 1818, in Wildenstein, 210, 211. Although this letter indicates a certain reluctance to exhibit the work, apparently because of the "small size of the painting," this hesitation is atypical of David's long-standing concern for exposure of and profit from his artworks. Is it due to some calculated reserve on the part of a new resident and an exile in a foreign land, or the fact that *Cupid and Psyche* had not been as well received in Belgium

as he had hoped, or because, as he states, *Telemachus and Eucharis* no longer belonged to him but to Schönborn? In any case, the first exhibit in Ghent went smoothly, and David soon agreed to lend the work again for an exhibition in Brussels for similar charitable purposes.

55. L. de Bast, *Annales du Salon de Gand et de l'école moderne des Pays-Bas* (Ghent: Goesin-Verhaeghe, 1823).

56. See Engelhart, 32, fig. 11, for a reproduction of Frémiet's copy of *Telemachus and Eucharis*. For further information on her works, including her later successes as a history painter, see D. Coekelberghs and P. Loze, eds., *Autour du néo-classicisme en Belgique* (Brussels, 1985), 252–54. Frémiet married the sculptor François Rude in 1821. For unknown reasons, relations between the Frémiet family and David broke off in 1822, although Rude produced a bust of the painter at the time of David's death in 1825.

57. Cited in Engelhart, 30: "The painting of Telemachus and Eucharis painted by M. David, seems to be the favorite of this great artist. Never has he kept either a copy or a drawing of any of his works, but he wants to keep a copy of this one. . . ."

58. For example, François-Ambroise Didot, Firmin's father, had published the nine-volume *Oeuvres de Fénelon* of 1787; Pierre Didot, Firmin's brother, had brought out two different *éditions de luxe* of *Les aventures de Télémaque*, both illustrated, in 1796. Firmin Didot's own two-volume edition of *Les aventures de Télémaque* appeared in 1800. Firmin, like other members of his family, had also published a luxury volume of *Cupid and Psyche* (1809). He owned copies of two other works by David, his *Psyche Abandoned* (ca. 1784–87, private collection) and his *Anger of Achilles* (1819, Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth). For further information on the connections between David and the Didot family, see Schnapper (as in n. 5), 520; Carol Osborne, *Pierre Didot the Elder and French Book Illustration, 1789–1822* (New York: Garland, 1985); and Vidal, 243 n. 47.

59. For example, those of Cornelissen, J. F. Piré, and Joseph Cogels. Cornelissen (as in n. 9) selects a number of excerpts from Fénelon's novel, carefully walking the reader through David's artistic responses to the text and noting the way that he has read between the lines of *Télémaque* (385–86): "It is because the virtuous work of Fénelon has the aim of inspiring a wise aversion to sensuality, that nowhere does he indicate that the young lovers had known, for a single moment, the pleasures of a happy, tranquil, and satisfying love; always the painter [Fénelon] gives them to us suffering and worthy of our pity. . . . Such is the coloration of the writer. Such will not be that of the painter [David] who must address our eyes, communicate through our eyes to our soul the sensations he wants to excite in us, or share with us; he thus shows us his *Telemachus* undoubtedly suffering, torn by contrary passions, but always arrayed with youth and vigor, always divine, always handsome, like a god." J. F. Piré's occasional poem marks an awareness of the larger literary context of the episode and the moral risks of the lovers' encounter: "There they are reunited! Tremble wise Mentor, / Eucharis is too beautiful and her lover too tender; / As much as Telemachus tries to defend himself, / Venus triumphs and Minerva will be wrong." See Cornelissen, 385–86; and Engelhart, 26, 28–29, on Piré and Cogels.

60. Bausset, vol. 1, 222.

61. La Harpe (as in n. 35), vii.

62. *Vie*, vol. 1, 102.

63. Bausset, vol. 2, 206–7.

64. Maury (as in n. 35), 22.

65. Ibid., 26–27.

66. Ibid., 26.

67. Fénelon, cited in Bausset, vol. 2, 183–84.

68. "La Clef de Télémaque," preface to *Les aventures de Télémaque, fils d'Ulysse* (Brussels: F. R. Foppens, 1699); reprinted in Fénelon, 212–13. The 1699 Brussels edition is one among several unauthorized versions that appeared in France and the Netherlands in that year; see n. 4 above.

69. Others include Voltaire's *Siècle de Louis XIV* (1751) and the 1787 *Vie*, which cites Voltaire's discussion (vol. 1, 532–33): " 'It is believed that Telemachus contains an indirect criticism of Louis XIV's government. *Sésostris* who triumphed with too much pomp, *Idoménée* who established luxury in Salente and who forgot the necessary, seemed to be portraits of the king. . . . The marquis of *Louvois*, in the eyes of the discontented, was represented under the name of *Protésilas*, vain, harsh, arrogant enemy of great captains who served the state and not the minister. Allies, who, in the war of 1688, united against Louis XIV, who afterward shook his throne in the war of 1701, were happy to recognize him in this same *Idoménée* whose arrogance was revolting to all of his neighbors. These allusions made profound impressions, thanks to that harmonious style that insinuates moderation and peace in such a tender manner. Foreigners, and even the French, fatigued by so much war, with a malicious satisfaction saw satire in a book designed to teach virtue.' "

70. For an overview of the political reforms discussed or exemplified in *Télémaque*, see Fénelon, 175–94.

71. Bausset, vol. 2, 191–92.

72. La Harpe (as in n. 35), xxiii.

73. Maury (as in n. 35), 70.

74. Abbé de Fénelon, in *Oeuvres* (as in n. 46), vol. 1, n.p.

75. La Harpe, cited in *Vie*, vol. 1, 534 n. 2.

76. From a letter of d'Angiviller addressed to Jean-Baptiste Pierre, director of the Academy of Painting, cited in Scherf (as in n. 29), 58 n. 4.

77. D'Angiviller, in an address to the academy, in *Procès Verbaux de l'Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture, 1684–1793* (Paris, 1888), vol. 8, 169.

78. Beginning in 1775, d'Angiviller would present to the king every two years a short list of names for new sculptures for the ongoing great men series. Nevertheless, it was the king himself, as seen in the abbé de Fénelon's dedication, who was intended to be honored by the recognition of such men, which included, in certain sensitive cases, the honor of reversing the injustices of the past and of his ancestors. The reason I am proposing for the choice of Fénelon could also be applied to the selection of the chancellor Michel de L'Hôpital (1504–1573), whose portrait was, along with Fénelon's, among the first four sculptures to be undertaken for the series. Chancellor of Marguerite de Navarre and then of France, L'Hôpital pursued a failed politics of religious tolerance and conciliation between Catholics and Protestants that preceded the wars of religion and nearly cost him his life in the infamous massacre of Saint-Barthélemew. In Étienne Gois's sculpture, L'Hôpital is depicted calmly facing this threat to his life. The choice of such a moment would have recalled a particularly odious episode in French history to the Salon-going public, while lending an aura of tolerance and righteousness to Louis XVI. Francis Dowley has also suggested that L'Hôpital was chosen "as an adherent of a persecuted religion [and] as a representative of tolerant government" (263); see Dowley, "D'Angiviller's *Grands Hommes* and the Significant Moment," *Art Bulletin* 39 (1957): 259–77. For a different perspective on the political motivations and conciliatory significance of the great men project, see McClellan (as in n. 35); and n. 35 above. For studies of the iconography and artistic considerations involved in this project, see Scherf (as in n. 29); n. 29 above; and esp. Dowley.

79. His audience's understanding of Minerva's complex role, especially in Enlightenment mythology, as goddess of wisdom, the arts, and the sciences, provides yet another layer to David's choice in his later works of less severe subjects to study the passions of humankind. In such works, pleasure, aesthetics, and empiricism seem to have been rediscovered (or at least recovered after the historical works that only served a series of transitory political regimes) as the most effective and enduring means of teaching viewers how to rein in the passions and acquire the knowledge and self-knowledge that for Fénelon were the foundation of good government. For the merging of art, science, and love in David's pre-Revolutionary works, see Vidal (as in n. 15), 597 n. 3, 601–6, 617–20.

80. David to Gros, Sept. 13, 1817, in Wildenstein, 208: "Si j'avais eu le bonheur de venir plus tôt dans ce pays, je crois que je serais devenu coloriste."

81. David to Gros, May 13, 1817, in ibid., 206: ". . . je n'ai jamais été plus heureux, ma femme partage mon même bonheur et c'est ce qui l'augmente."

82. David to Picard, Aug. 23, 1817, in ibid., 207: ". . . je suis résigné à tout, je n'ai rien à me reprocher, j'ai toujours fait du bien toute ma vie, j'ai été utile dans tous les pays que j'ai habités, laissons faire aux hommes, ils ne m'étonneront jamais, j'ai assez vécu pour les connaître. . . ."

83. David to Mme Mongez, Nov. 7, 1817, in ibid., 208, questioning whether he will see be able to see her new painting: "Le verrai-je, ne le verrai-je pas? Qui le sait? Cela n'est à la connaissance de personne, comme tout ce qui est arrivé depuis 27 ans. . . ."

84. David to Picard, Aug. 23, 1817, in ibid., 207: ". . . il y a un terme à tout il faut s'y conformer. Je désirerais cependant que ce ne fut pas demain, car j'ai encore quelque chose dans la tête qu'il faut que je mette sur la toile, alors elle pourra baisser, adieu les spectateurs et la comédie est finie."

85. David to his son Jules, Jan. 1, 1819, in ibid., 213: "Tous mes collègues rentrent en France. Je serai certainement du nombre si j'avais la faiblesse de redemander mon rappel par écrit. Vous connaissez votre père et la fierté de son caractère peut-il faire une pareille démarche? J'ai su ce que je faisais, je ne l'ai pas fait par passion; le temps dévoilera la vérité. . . . Ici, j'ai le repos, les années s'accumulent, je suis tranquille avec ma conscience. . . ."

86. David to Gros, May 13, 1817, in ibid., 206. *Cupid and Psyche* also deals with the themes of fate and Providential protection (Cupid), which Apuleius in *On the God of Socrates*, and following Plato, names as one of the intermediary spirits between the gods and men. See Vidal, 241 n. 27.

87. Luzzatto (as in n. 6) observes David's and Emmanuel Sieyes's exceptional silence, in contrast to their many contemporaries engaged during the Restoration in writing memoirs on the events of the Revolution and Empire. In David's case, I am proposing that we should consider the "pendants" *Cupid and Psyche* and *Telemachus and Eucharis* to be his pictorial memoirs, which remained suitably indirect, given his insecure position in Belgium as an exile who continued to be surveyed by the police, in addition to the greater emphasis on experience and the process of enlightenment in his late works.