Introduction

When William Faulkner received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1949, he was keenly aware of living through a period of profound anxiety. There was one question in the minds of everyone: 'When will I be blown up?' In his acceptance speech, Faulkner observed that all this instability, turmoil, and fear was making men and women turn in on themselves. They lost their best qualities: their 'hope and pride and compassion and pity'.[1] In moments of conflict, upheaval, threat and revolution, Faulkner declared, we act purely as individuals, selfishly: we sacrifice the precious power to sympathise. Nevertheless, there was, according to Faulkner, a solution. We must put aside our self-absorption, and re-locate our 'heart'. This is a book about what happens to thought at moments of extreme political, social and cultural upheaval. It focuses not on Faulkner's Cold War, but on one of the other most transformative political events in European History: the French Revolution. It follows a thinker at the centre of Parisian politics from before the fall of the Bastille, through the declaration of the Republic and the onset of the Terror, the formation of the Directory and Napoleon's coup d'état, up until Bonaparte's rise to emperor and spectacular fall at Waterloo. It asks the question: how do you construct ideas on shifting sands? Do you discard everything, and start entirely afresh with every new development? Do you hold on tightly, stubbornly, to your original thinking in the face of change? Or do you constantly adapt: maintain what works, discard what does not, executing a perpetual philosophical tap-dance?

The thinker in question is Marie-Louise-Sophie de Grouchy. Up until now, hers is a name that you will generally find only in passing references in works dedicated to more illustrious figures: to her husband, Nicolas de Caritat, the marquis de Condorcet (1743–1794), to her friend Benjamin Constant (1767–1830), or to her sometime-rival, Germaine de Staël

[1] Faulkner, 'Speech at the Nobel Banquet at the City Hall in Stockholm'.

(1766–1817).[2] Grouchy has been described by previous scholars as a glittering figure – intelligent, beautiful, witty – yet somehow nebulous, quickly passed over. This book will, instead, pause. For Grouchy offers us the rare example of a thinker who was physically at the centre of events through the entire revolutionary cycle from 1789 to 1815 and, while maintaining a core set of commitments, nevertheless continually adjusted her ideas in reaction to the events of the day. This was certainly not the case for Condorcet, killed during the Terror, or Constant and Staël, both missing from France through key periods. Even her friend Emmanuel Sieyès (1748–1836) – who famously, and probably apocryphally, declared that his main Revolutionary accomplishment was to have 'survived' the upheaval of the Terror – turned his back on many of his earlier commitments and stopped writing about politics during the Napoleonic era.[3] She was, moreover, hailed by contemporaries as a significant and influential political voice. It is only subsequently that she has faded from our history books.

A Republic of Sympathy is the tale of how thought could be produced by an eighteenth-century woman in a time of Revolution: with the manifold possibilities, drastic limitations and ambiguous opportunities that this period offered. Throughout her intellectual life, the concept of sympathy was at the heart of Grouchy's thinking. Through this sentiment, she believed, the interests of the individual and the needs of the community could be bound together without either being diminished. The choice between being selfish and selfless, declared by Faulkner as the inevitable consequence of instability, vanishes. Grouchy was deeply invested in community, but equally committed to individualism. She began by thinking about duties, and ended by talking about rights. She saw self-interest and sympathy as linked, not opposed. This book will explore the nature of Grouchy's moral and political thought, her political activity and her interaction with other intellectuals. It will, for the first time, unravel the totality of Grouchy's philosophy: a series of shifting, adapting ideas, which nevertheless consistently relied on the sentiment of sympathy. We will see how the demands of the Revolution led Grouchy not only to experiment with variations of her theory, but with different mediums of expressing her ideas, depending on what would most effectively transmit her message: whether via pedagogical treatise, journal articles, translated texts,

[2] Baker, *Condorcet*, 26–7; 342; 347; Williams, *Condorcet and Modernity*, 13; 24; 43–4; Ghins, 'Benjamin Constant and the Politics of Reason', 226; Fontana, *Germaine de Staël*, 147.
[3] Sewell (Jr), *A Rhetoric of Bourgeois Revolution*, 19–20.

commentaries, collaborative projects or embodied in her lived relationships. Through an analysis of all these sources, we will trace the twists and turns in Grouchy's thought as feudal France gave way to a constitutional monarchy, to a republic, and then to an empire.

Biography of Sophie de Grouchy

When we catch glimpses of Sophie de Grouchy in the historical record, it is often in the form of snapshots: pithy anecdotes that underline her wit and courage. One of the most famous of these was recorded by Staël. She describes Grouchy in 1797 going head-to-head with Napoleon Bonaparte, freshly returned from a campaign in Italy, at a dinner party held by Charles Maurice Talleyrand (1754–1838), contributor to the *Déclaration des droits de l'homme* and future minister of foreign affairs. Supposedly, Bonaparte turned to Grouchy after the meal was over and haughtily informed her: 'Madame, I do not like women who occupy themselves with politics'. Staël tells us that Grouchy, who was 'well known in France for her beauty, her mind, and the vivacity of her opinions', replied: 'In a country where women have their heads cut off, it is natural that they want to know why'.[4] The deeper into the archive you go, the more stories like this you find, and we will encounter many as we follow Grouchy's journey through sparkling salons, dingy Parisian backstreets and the meeting rooms of the Jacobin club: stories about Sieyès, freshly-minted author of the earth-shaking pamphlet *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers-État*, being teased by the revolutionary orator Mirabeau (1749–1791) for falling in love with the intelligent young woman after reading her first philosophical work; Pierre-Louis Ginguené (1748–1816), author and Idéologue, begging her for advice on his writing; Constant, the so-called founding father of modern liberalism, comparing her to Amalasuintha (c. 498–c. 535), a fiery sixth-century Gothic queen who negotiated with the Roman Emperor Justinian, revenged her lovers and assassinated rivals with aplomb.[5]

[4] Although Grouchy is not explicitly named by Staël, one of the copies of the manuscripts of *Dix années d'exil*, where this anecdote is found, has a note in the margin (not in Staël's hand): 'Elle cite l'anecdote de Mme de Condorcet'. Moreover, we know that Grouchy was present at the dinner in question, due to a letter from Julie Talma, close friend of Grouchy, to Alexandre Rousselin de Saint-Albin, politician during the Directory, dated 16 December 1797. Staël, *Dix années d'exil*, 50–2; 52 fn. 1; 50 fn. 3.

[5] Amalausuintha, rendered Amalasonte in French, was renowned for her intelligence and education. The 'reine des Goths et d'Italie' was immortalised on the seventeenth-century French stage by Philippe Quinault and Pierre Corneille. They emphasised both Amalasonte's political savvy and

If one were to rely purely on the book-length studies that have been written about Grouchy, from Antoine Guillois's seminal 1897 work to more recent monographs, one might reach a rather different conclusion.[6] Grouchy emerges as a beautiful helpmeet to her famous husband, the *philosophe* and Revolutionary Condorcet: clever and well-connected, perhaps, but a far cry from a politically aggressive Gothic queen. Fortunately, in recent years, a flurry of revisionist scholarship, led by Sandrine Bergès, Eric Schliesser, Marc André Bernier and Dierdre Dawson, has begun to explore the substance of Grouchy's own philosophy and political activities.[7] Yet these works tend to focus, still, on snapshots, drawn particularly from the early revolutionary period of 1791–4. To gain a genuine understanding of Grouchy's politics and philosophy – and indeed to render intelligible the apparent acclaim in which her contemporaries held her – we must take a wider-angled lens, and investigate the entirety of her active years: 1785–1815.

Sophie de Grouchy was born in 1763, the eldest child of a noble family of Norman origin in the Château de Villette, Condécourt, forty kilometres northwest of present-day Paris.[8] The Grouchy family was of well-established social status: in order to be permitted into Neuville-les-Dames, a convent-come-finishing school near Lyon where Grouchy spent the period September 1784 to April 1786 without taking religious vows, the prospective '*chanoinesse*' had to prove nine generations of noble arms on the paternal side and three generations on her mother's. In December

romantic relationships. d'Arenberg, 'Note écrite de la main du comte de La Marck'; Anon, *Aristote amoureux*; Grouchy to Ginguené, 'On Ginguené's De M. Necker et de son livre intitulé "De la Révolution française"', 1796; Rosenblatt, 'Why Constant?', 439; Benjamin Constant to Julie Talma, 10 September 1804; Talma to Constant, 17 September 1804; Constant, *Oeuvres complètes: Correspondance générale, 1803–1805*, 5:253–5; 255–7; Gros, *Philippe Quinault*, 299–303.

[6] Guillois, *La marquise de Condorcet*; Boissel, *Sophie de Condorcet*; Arnold-Tétard, *Sophie de Grouchy*. Bergès' recent book bucks this trend. However, the book is not devoted to Grouchy alone – she is considered Grouchy alongside Marie-Jeanne Roland and Olympe de Gouges – and, more importantly, Bergè focuses almost exclusively on the period 1789–95. Bergès, *Liberty in Their Name*.

[7] Forget, 'Cultivating Sympathy'; Scurr, 'Inequality and Political Stability'; Britton, 'Translating Sympathy by the Letter'; Grouchy, *Les Lettres sur la sympathie (1798)*; Bergès, *Liberty in Their Name*; Bergès, 'Sophie de Grouchy's Care-Based Republicanism'; Tegos, 'Sympathie morale et tragédie sociale'; Bergès, 'Sophie de Grouchy on the Cost of Domination'; Schliesser, 'Grouchy and Two Liberties'; Bergès, 'Family, Gender, and Progress'; Bergès, 'Condorcet and Grouchy on Freedom'; Schliesser, 'Grouchy, Smith and the Politics of Sympathy'; Halldenius, 'De Grouchy, Wollstonecraft, and Smith'.

[8] The year of her birth is almost universally given as 1764. However, the *extrait baptistaire* annexed to a notary act of the 5 of April 1824 for the parish of La Madeleine de la Cité demonstrates that she was born on 7 December 1763 and baptised on the following day. This is confirmed by the fact that in a letter to Josef Mikuláš count Windischgrätz (1744–1802) announcing their marriage, Condorcet says that his new wife is twenty-three in December 1786. 'Extrait baptistaire, La Madeleine de la Cité'; Condorcet to Windischgrätz, 'Announcing Marriage to Grouchy', 2 January 1787.

1786, at the age of twenty-three, Grouchy married Nicolas de Caritat, the marquis de Condorcet, and moved immediately with her considerably older husband to the Hôtel des Monnaies in Paris. Although she adopted Condorcet's name after their marriage – retaining it even after their divorce and his death in 1794 – this book will refer to her throughout as Grouchy, to avoid confusion with her husband.[9] At the Hôtel des Monnaies, Grouchy hosted with Condorcet an international salon, welcoming guests including future President of the United States Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826), the playwright Pierre-Augustin Beaumarchais (1732–1799), historian and future minister of Justice Dominque Joseph Garat (1749–1833), American Revolutionary war hero Lafayette (1757–1834), journalist to the *philosophe* Friedrich Melchior, Baron von Grimm (1723–1807) and Prussian internationalist thinker Anacharsis Cloots (1755–1794). It was around this time that she began to draft the treatise that would become her key work, the *Lettres sur la sympathie* (*Letters on Sympathy*). She remained by Condorcet's side as political events in the capital began to gather pace, following the fall of the Bastille and the formation of the National Assembly in 1789 and after the birth of their daughter Eliza (d. 1859) in April 1790. The couple split their time between Paris and Auteuil, then a small village outside the city, where Anne-Catherine de Ligniville, Madame Helvétius (1722–1800) also lived and hosted a salon. Grouchy participated in many of her husband's political activities during the early revolutionary period, launching with him the short-lived newspaper *Le Républicain* in 1791, drafting speeches to the National Convention to which he was elected in 1792 and likely helping him author his *Cinq mémoires sur l'instruction publique* (1791). During the Terror, when Condorcet was forced into hiding, Grouchy supported herself by running a lingerie shop in Paris and painting the portraits of those condemned to death at the guillotine. Following the death of her husband in 1794, she returned to the centre of politics. She re-launched her salon in Paris, and aided her new lover, Jacques Joseph 'Maillia' Garat (1767–1839), nephew to Dominique Joseph Garat, and her brother, Emmanuel de Grouchy (1766–1847), in their careers. She also, in 1798, published her *Letters on Sympathy*: the only philosophical treatise that would appear under her own name in her lifetime. It was released as an accompaniment to her translation into French of the seventh edition of Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) and *Dissertation on the Origin of Languages* (1761).

[9] At their divorce, the circumstances of which are explored in Chapter 5, Grouchy promised Condorcet to continue to 'carry a name that is still more dear and more honourable in my eyes than ever'. Grouchy, 'Lettres de Mme de Condorcet à son mari', 571.

Around the publication of her *Letters*, we gain a description of the then thirty-five-year-old Grouchy from her friend, the Prussian philosopher Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835):

> Rather tall than short, very slender without being skinny, only a very small bosom, rather a brownish than a very pale complexion. Her face is not remarkable, but pretty, not large, but nevertheless symmetrical features, dark eyes, which indicate seriousness and independence.[10]

When Napoleon seized the reins of power the following year – perhaps surprisingly given what we know of their earlier interactions – Grouchy initially lent him her support, publishing the newspaper *Le Citoyen français* to expound her views. However, she quickly became disillusioned with his authoritarian attitude. Fearing reprisals and police surveillance for her anti-establishment views, she moved her salon from Paris to Meulan-en-Yvelines, not far from her birthplace in Condécourt, where she had purchased a house she dubbed 'La Maisonnette'. Somewhat removed from the heart of political action, Grouchy did not, however, renounce all intellectual and political commentary, and instead embarked on various projects with the man with whom she would share a relationship until her death in 1822, Claude Fauriel (1772–1844). As well as, from 1804 onwards, publishing Condorcet's posthumous *Oeuvres*, their activities included an abortive attempt to produce a new edition of seventeenth-century French moralist François de la Rochefoucauld's (1613–1680) *Maximes*, and a translation of Danish poet Jens Baggesen's (1764–1826) *Parthenais*, published alongside a commentary on the aesthetic importance of poetry. Until her death in 1822, Grouchy continued to welcome international visitors to her salon, including Baggesen himself; Giulia Beccaria (1762–1841), the daughter of Cesare Beccaria (1738–1794) and her son; the Italian romantic novelist Alessandro Manzoni (1785–1873); Arthur O'Connor (1763–1852), the United Irish revolutionary; Carl Friedrich Cramer (1752–1807), the German printer and translator; Francisco Manoel de Nascimento (1734–1819), the Portuguese poet; and Francesco Saverio Salfi (1759–1832), the Italian writer and librettist.

Eavesdropping on the Conversations of the Past

Although the outlines of this biography have been known for centuries, many of the details – in particular the date of the initial composition of the

[10] Humboldt, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 462–3.

Letters, Grouchy's involvement in Condorcet's revolutionary career, her centrality to the publication *Le Citoyen français* and her contribution to the contemporary discourse through anonymous journal articles and co-authored texts – are new.[11] They go a long way to explaining why her contemporaries saw her as a figure of such importance. And perhaps of equal importance, the form that her political and intellectual productivity took also sheds light onto why Grouchy has hitherto presented such a challenge to historians. Albeit acknowledged as formidable by her peers, Grouchy co-wrote, translated and otherwise rarely conformed to the common framework of intellectual history. Extensive, complex and single-authored texts are frequently seen as the *sine qua non* of the history of political thought, representing, as they do, 'the most complex explorations of the limits of language or conceptual frame at a given time'.[12] Grouchy can only definitely said to have authored one such text, her *Letters*, and even that was published as an appendix to a translation.

In order to fully mine the depths of Grouchy's ideas, therefore, *A Republic of Sympathy* will embrace the maxim that while significant ideas can, of course, be captured in extensive treatises, they can also be expressed through other, more nebulous means. If this is generally true, it was particularly the case in eighteenth-century France. Denis Diderot (1713–1784), for example, is known today above all as the editor of the *Encyclopédie*, but was also the author of a varied corpus of writings in different genres. He developed his ideas throughout these texts, many of which were not published during his lifetime, due to a run-in with the censor in 1749. His works take the form of dialogues, short articles or comments on other people's writings. He never produced long treatises, or developed a single line of thought in profound detail. Yet Diderot was certainly considered by contemporaries to be a *philosophe*.[13] We should be even more wary of discounting women thinkers of this period for not having produced recognisably 'philosophical' or 'intellectual' works. Nina Rattner Gelbart has shown how eighteenth-century women scientists, although not lacking in recognition from important male contemporaries for the significance of their contributions, deployed numerous 'tactics' to make doing science possible, including remaining anonymous or intentionally playing supporting roles in scientific endeavour.[14] As this book

[11] The most detailed account of Grouchy's life remains Guillois, *La marquise de Condorcet*.
[12] Brett, 'What Is Intellectual History Now?', 127.
[13] Thomson, 'French Eighteenth-Century Materialists and Natural Law'; Lilti, 'Adieu Socrate'.
[14] Rattner Gelbart, *Minerva's French Sisters*.

will show, the same held true for women in other fields of intellectual endeavour. To understand Grouchy's thought, then, we must 'eavesdrop on the conversations of the past', using whatever occasional writings and ephemera are available to us.[15] Indeed, I will go one step further, and demonstrate that Grouchy's philosophical ideas pervaded the very fabric of her existence. A study not only of her texts, but also of the intimate matters of her lived experience can extend our understanding of her thought, past her written traces. Sometimes this will mean reconstructing an edifice of systematic thought for which there are only minimal written traces. This is not to advance the familiar proposition that Grouchy's life and times can simply shed light on her written thought.[16] Rather, I am suggesting that the practices in which she engaged can themselves be read as one element of her philosophy. Of course, I do not claim that every action taken by Grouchy was guided by a set of pure philosophical principles which can always and easily be discerned. Grouchy was constrained by her context and was often unable to act as she desired. Moreover, she was frequently motivated by an array of overlapping and interacting logics, ranging from the quotidian and banal to the principled and reasoned. To take just one example, explored in greater detail in Chapter 7: Grouchy's retreat to the countryside in 1802 was driven both by her intellectual desire to model and perform the creation of a civil sphere protected from political concerns, and by her visceral and immediate fear of Napoleon's spies. Yet despite such layered motivations, it is nevertheless possible to use such activities as evidence of Grouchy's evolving thought.

This approach is particularly appropriate for a figure such as Grouchy, whose context was not conducive to the composition of long, measured treatises. There was the fact of her gender. As we will see, it became increasingly difficult for women, as the Revolutionary period wore on, to express themselves publicly on political subjects, and be publicly acknowledged as doing so.[17] She was also living in the middle of a Revolution,

[15] This image was coined by John W. Burrow, and was recently applied to great effect in Elias Buchetmann's exploration of a contemporary of Grouchy, G.W.F. Hegel. It is his usage that inspires mine. Buchetmann, *Hegel and the Representative Constitution*, 8–9.

[16] A seminal defence of contextualism, and one of the founding documents of the so-called Cambridge School of the History of Political Thought, is Quentin Skinner's 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', where he argued that texts should be treated as interventions made in specific contexts, and an understanding of the historical context can help us to pinpoint an author's intentions. See Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas'. For a history of the Cambridge School, see Whatmore, *What Is Intellectual History?*

[17] Heuer and Verjus, 'L'invention de la sphère domestique'; Hesse, *The Other Enlightenment*, xiv; Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer*, 37.

with the real hope that she might shape the course of history. There was, quite simply, not the time or the inclination to pen complex philosophical meditations. Priority was instead placed on brief, direct reactions to fast-paced events. Yet the fact of the reactive and fluid nature of political thought in this period should be seen rather as an opportunity than a problem. The boundaries of the political changed almost day-to-day. What it was possible to do – what actions it was possible to take, what it was possible to think, how it was possible to express those ideas – changed rapidly as the world was repeatedly made and remade. Grouchy was forced to navigate these shifting boundaries every day of her political and intellectual life. The most recent turn in French Revolutionary studies puts the actions of individuals firmly front and centre, and emphasises the circumstantial nature of many revolutionary events.[18] The tendency to stress the interaction of individual agency with culturally, socially and politically imposed boundaries is particularly pronounced in scholarship on gender, which has demonstrated how the exclusion of women was less a foregone conclusion than a contingent non-inclusion, shaped by a series of choices made by legislators. Women, in turn, manipulated the categories of citizenship that were left available to them.[19] Grouchy, like many other women of the period, weighed her actions, made judgements and then wielded the resources available to her to make her move. Investigating Grouchy's navigation of these possibilities at each revolutionary moment thus provides not only an insight into her own ideas, but also allows us to identify where the constantly-shifting social, political and cultural boundaries for a woman thinker – now a noblewoman, now the wife of a radical

[18] Twentieth century historiography has not always prioritised the study of agency and contingency in explorations of the French Revolution. The Marxist approach, most famously spear-headed by Georges Lefebvre and Albert Soboul, generally saw humans simply and continuously doing and advocating what was in their own economic best interest. Revisionists from the 1780s, led by François Furet, turned to cultural and intellectual history, and began to investigate social practices as a means of explaining the public commitments of revolutionaries. But 'discourse' was given sway over individual agency, and 'either historical actors were turned into full-fledged political theorists, acting out the ideas of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, or they appeared as mere pawns in a war of words'. In contrast Colin Jones has recently taken the approach of emphasising individual agency to its logical extreme by demonstrating that the fall of Robespierre on 9 Thermidor 1794, a major turning point in the timeline of the Revolution, was far from inevitable, or indeed even foreseeable mere days before it occurred. It was decided, he argues, by the events of a hectic twenty-four hours which saw Parisians changing their allegiance from the Incorruptible to the National Assembly. Lefebvre, *Quatre-vingt-neuf*; Soboul, *Les Sans-culottes*; Furet, *Penser la Révolution française*; Rosenfeld, 'Thinking About Feeling', 698. Jones, *The Fall of Robespierre*; see also McPhee, *Living the French Revolution*; Tackett, *The Glory and the Sorrow*.

[19] Verjus, 'Gender, Sexuality, and Political Culture'; Mazeau and Plumauzille, 'Penser avec le genre'; Desan, *The Family on Trial*.

politician, now a *citoyenne*, now a political outcast – lay throughout the period.

Embracing these opportunities means loosening our grip, ever so slightly, on others. The attribution of numerous texts not hitherto associated with Grouchy, and which throw important light on the development of her thinking, are a key contribution of this book. The reasons behind each attribution are referenced in the body of the text, but those who seek more extensive details are encouraged to turn to the Appendix. They will not, however, find total certainty there. Historians are used to working with the balance of probability. This is even more the case with a woman whose manuscripts were almost never purposely preserved, who has no dedicated archive, who frequently worked in collaboration with others, who often published anonymously, and who has been the subject of myth-making since her death. Indeed, included with the attributions is a list of de-attributions: works often claimed to be by Grouchy but for which I have found no contemporary evidence. Those which I argue were written by the former marquise are those for which there is the highest probability that this is the case. My conclusions are based on a combination of content-analysis, third-party corroboration, and hand-writing comparison.

Sentiment and Republicanism

A brief note on what this book does not do. Firstly, terminology. In general, I avoid placing Grouchy in any broad theoretical categories – a recognition of the inevitable limitation of interpretative patterns largely invented by historians on the past, especially when it comes to a transitional thinker like Grouchy.[20] Nevertheless, I do refer to Grouchy as a republican. She herself applied this label to her political thought, most significantly when she co-founded the radical journal *Le Républicain* in 1791. The definition of 'republican' in the late eighteenth century has, of course, been the subject of much controversy: from Keith Baker's division of classical and modern republicanism, through Richard Whatmore and James Livesey's exploration of commercial republicanism, to Istvan Hont's championing of a more 'capacious' definition of republicanism as simply advocating a law-based regime.[21] This book will not seek to resolve the

[20] My thanks to an anonymous reviewer of this work for stressing this point.

[21] Baker, 'Transformations of Classical Republicanism in Eighteenth-Century France'; Livesey, 'Agrarian Ideology and Commercial Republicanism in the French Revolution'; Whatmore and Livesey, 'Clavière, Brissot, et la politique des girondins'; Livesey, *Making Democracy in the French Revolution*, 33; Hont, *Politics in Commercial Society*, 61; 73–5.

debate over the basic meaning of republicanism, or how to group its various declared adherents. I am far more interested in exploring how Grouchy developed her own, unique form of what she thought of as republicanism, founded on sympathy.[22] The eighteenth-century is increasingly seen as a period in which sentiment occupied a pole position in politics, and studies on the interaction between this culture of sentimentalism and the political, economic and moral thought of thinkers such as Smith, Hume, Rousseau, Diderot, and even Condorcet are multiplying.[23] *A Republic of Sympathy* will insert Grouchy into this narrative. Grouchy theorised a republic of sympathy in which the individual became invested in a political community through the workings of his or her other-oriented emotion, a sentiment that was intrinsically tied to self-interest. Her ideas originated from an engagement with Enlightenment theories of natural rights and texts on moral sentiments, and developed into a fully-fledged republican theory during the French Revolution. As the Napoleonic regime forced her to re-assess her ideas, she began to theorise a civil sphere that would support the all-important workings of sympathy. We will track how her ideas impacted her concrete political decisions, were in turn adapted in line with her political activities, and drew on and engaged with the thought of other key thinkers of the period.

This brings me to my second point. It is, perhaps, tempting to reduce what is interesting in Grouchy to her relationships with two contemporaries: Adam Smith and Condorcet. These figures, naturally, play an important role in Grouchy's history. She produced, after all, the translation of Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* that would remain the standard work in French for the next two centuries.[24] The importance of Condorcet to the formation of her ideas, and her impact on his own, was immense. Both of these intellectual connections will be explored in what follows. However, it is important to note that this book is not a re-interpretation of Smith's or Condorcet's philosophy in disguise. Indeed, the interaction of Grouchy's thought with that of these two men is just one element of her story. Over the course of her life, her ideas intersected with, agreed with, rebutted, and built on the work numerous figures. For example, Chapter 8 will demonstrate how Benjamin Constant's ideas on the moral and

[22] See Livesey, *Making Democracy in the French Revolution*, 59.

[23] Maza, *Private Lives and Public Affairs*; Denby, *Sentimental Narrative*; Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*; Festa, *Sentimental Figures of Empire*; Marshall, *The Surprising Effects of Sympathy*; Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability*; Rothschild, *Economic Sentiments*; Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights*.

[24] It was not supplanted until Michaël Biziou, Claude Gautier and Jean-François Pradeau produced a new critical edition in 1999. Bréban and Dellemotte, 'From One Sympathy to Another', 667.

political importance of sympathy were developed, in part, through an engagement with Grouchy's ideas. Her interlocutors were numerous: some are well known today; others merit re-investigation. As well as Constant, Condorcet and Smith, they include François de la Rochefoucauld, Rousseau, Staël, Fauriel, Maillia Garat, Antoine Destutt de Tracy (1754–1863), Pierre Jean George Cabanis (1757–1808), Jacques Pierre Brissot (1754–1793), Thomas Paine (1737–1809), Martial Borye Desrenaudes (1755–1825) and Charles Dupaty (1746–1788). *A Republic of Sympathy* will map this entire web of intellectual and relationships. By the end of this book, therefore, I hope that Grouchy's translation of Smith will no longer be her singular claim to intellectual fame.[25] Instead, she will be interpreted as a significant political thinker in her own right.

Chapter Summary

We will see, in Chapter 1, how Grouchy's first intellectual endeavour, began around 1786, was to compose a morally-focused educational manual for the children of *le peuple*, written in response to an Académie française essay competition.[26] This tract would eventually become the basis for her *Letters on Sympathy*. However, Grouchy's initial philosophical preoccupation was moral, not political: how individuals could discern truth for themselves, through a reasoned reflection on the natural sentiment of sympathy, and thus fulfil their duties. It was not until she became invested in an *ancien régime cause célèbre* over the next several years that her thought took on an explicitly political edge. The details of the *affair des trois roués* are explored in Chapter 2, as is Grouchy's engagement with it during the years 1785–7. She began to draw on an Enlightenment republican discourse that focused on exploring the relationship between the individual and the collective, and re-worked her original theory into an original and innovative argument. Common individuals, she declared, could understand their natural rights – and the rights they owe to others – through the use of their faculties of sympathy and reason. The *Letters on Sympathy*, as it would be published in 1798, began to take shape.

[25] Some historians, for example, describe Grouchy's *Letters* as a simple 'commentary' on TMS, rather than an example of original and innovative political and moral thinking. Whatmore, 'Adam Smith's Role in the French Revolution', 87. For my more extensive rebuttal of this description, see McCrudden Illert, 'Sophie de Grouchy as an Activist Interpreter of Adam Smith'.

[26] '*Le peuple*' refers to the population in general, as opposed to elites. As there is no English translation that does not belong to a by-gone age, I will use the French term throughout.

The ideas that Grouchy developed in this text about the relationship between sympathy, the individual, and society would provide the basis for her revolutionary thought. But this was not a project she would elaborate alone. Between 1790 and 1794, Condorcet and Grouchy embarked on a tight-knit collaboration. Chapter 3 argues that the evidence of their working relationship should be read together with the texts that they produced. Doing so enables us to fully reconstruct their developing political convictions. Central was the idea that while the individual's faculties of sympathy and reason were essential to securing rights in society, this mechanism could only be effective when each person was embedded in a community of equals, with whom they shared open communication and mutual political goals. Moreover, the state had a crucial role in fostering the emotional, as well as rational, faculties of this populace. This theory would be at the foundation of Grouchy and Condorcet's public, and radical, declaration of republicanism in 1791. The context – Louis XVI's attempted flight from Paris and the threat of a European war – and the content of this declaration will be explored in Chapter 4. For the first time, we see Grouchy elaborating an explicit theory of republicanism which emphasised the importance of equality in a polity and the right of a people to make their own constitution. Participation in such activities, bound together by ties of sympathy, would make them into good citizens. The distinction between Grouchy's ideas and those of her 'commercial' republican allies, as well as her theory's distance from neo-romanism, were thrown into sharp relief by the progression of war. In contrast to her friends Brissot and Paine, Grouchy maintained that sentimentally-based freedom could never be achieved through aggression.

The death of her first and most significant intellectual partner, Condorcet, and her fraught experience of the Terror – deprived of her wealth and living in daily fear of arrest – might be expected to have led to a rupture in Grouchy's thought in 1794. Indeed, in both classic and revisionist interpretations of this period, the fall of Robespierre and the creation of the Directory represents a turning point in the Revolution.[27] Yet as Chapter 5 will show, there is no Thermidorean caesura in Grouchy's thinking. Indeed, throughout the period of the Directory she continually reasserted the republican political-philosophical project developed in the first half of the 1790s. She finally published her *Letters on Sympathy* as an

[27] Aulard, *Histoire politique de la Révolution française*, 549; Lefebvre, *La France sous le Directoire*; Furet, *Penser la Révolution française*.

antidote to the increasingly elitist tendency of the Directory government and her intellectual allies: a reminder of the need to protect an equal republican community. The potentially radical nature of her message in the face of see-sawing Directorial politics led her to cloak her ideas in the protective wrapper of Adam Smith. While shielding Grouchy from retaliation, this choice also enabled those who preferred women to stay out of politics to remove the sting from the *Letter*'s critique.

It was only after 1800, with the advent of the Napoleonic regime, that Grouchy began to distance herself from her previous call for a strong republican state which would hold together individuals through ties of openly communicated affection. This creeping doubt, formulated in reaction to Bonaparte's ruthless suppression of political dissent, was expressed in tandem with a newly suspicious view of governmental intrusion into emotions, and will be explored in Chapter 6. Grouchy's reaction to Napoleon's authoritarianism was not purely negative, however. As we will see in Chapter 7, she also began, from 1802, to add a new concept to the roster of her political thought. Embodied in the migration of her salon from Paris to the French countryside was the idea of a civil society: a social sphere, distanced from the state, in which sentiments necessary to politics could be fostered. This development did not constitute a complete jettisoning of her earlier commitments. It was rather a reassessment and rebalancing of her political and intellectual priorities. Her aim – the forming of good citizens from individuals, and uniting them into a political community – remained the same. She had, however, begun to formulate new means. These would be developed in the final intellectual endeavours of Grouchy's career: the editing of the *Oeuvres de Condorcet* (1804), and her collaboration, with her new lover, Fauriel, in translating and commenting on Baggesen's *Parthenais* (published in French in 1810). In these, Grouchy drew on contemporary German philosophical trends, in particular the concept of an aesthetic education, to argue that poetry and philosophy, when given free range in a civil sphere protected from state interference, could nurture the moral sentiments crucial to citizens of a republic. Chapter 8 will finally call on the example of Benjamin Constant, and his engagement with Grouchy's work, to demonstrate the significance of reinstating Grouchy as a *fil rouge* in the political thought of this period. Constant's ideation of other-oriented emotion and his concept of religious sentiment drew heavily on Grouchy's work. He thus, through Grouchy, engaged with eighteenth-century debates that are we are not used to associating with this nineteenth-century, liberal thinker.

Grouchy mused that 'the philosopher . . . can only find impartial judges of his work in the generations which follow him'.[28] This was, perhaps, a naïve hope: ideas will be re-interpreted as often as new concerns emerge, and the struggle for impartiality is a constant battle which the historian is likely always to lose. Indeed, in the Conclusion we will turn to the implications of this study of Grouchy for us today, both in terms of our own view of liberal democratic society and the place of women in it. Yet we cannot even begin to interpret or judge if we do not have the material with which to do so. Grouchy, with her own writings, her instrumentalization of the words of others, and her actions, wove together a unique language of republicanism founded in sympathy. This book is dedicated to exploring, examining and explaining this political and philosophical vision. But first, let us return to 1786, where our story begins.

[28] Grouchy, 'Fragment on Dominique Vivant Denon'.