

## **Métissage**

The Merging of Theater and Politics in Revolutionary France

**Paul Friedland**



The Occasional Papers of the School of Social Science are versions of talks given at the School's weekly Thursday Seminar. At these seminars, Members present work-in-progress and then take questions. There is often lively conversation and debate, some of which will be included with the papers. We have chosen papers we thought would be of interest to a broad audience. Our aim is to capture some part of the cross-disciplinary conversations that are the mark of the School's programs. While members are drawn from specific disciplines of the social sciences—anthropology, economics, sociology and political science—as well as history, philosophy, literature and law, the School encourages new approaches that arise from exposure to different forms of interpretation. The papers in this series differ widely in their topics, methods, and disciplines. Yet they concur in a broadly humanistic attempt to understand how—and under what conditions—the concepts that order experience in different cultures and societies are produced, and how they change.

Paul Friedland is Assistant Professor of History at Bowdoin College. He was member of the School in 1997-98. During 1997-2000, the School was engaged in a four-year focus on the process of globalization and different kinds of local responses to it. But Friedland's paper is an example of how the School also supports projects not directly related to a theme.

Paul Friedland came to the Institute to finish a study then called "Representation and Revolution: The Theatricality of Politics and the Politics of Theater In France, 1789-94." Friedland found that the "dramatic" style of the French Revolution had become a standard feature of historical accounts. Indeed, for as many contemporary observers as historians, the political and theatrical stages of Revolutionary France were seemingly indistinguishable. But Friedland found that all the observers who made this claim were content to merely take note of the theatricality of Revolutionary politics, as if it were a fact that required no explanation. This universal agreement coupled with a universal lack of curiosity interested Friedland: he decided to ask the question of how, when, and why politics and theater became so intimately intertwined. The paper we produce here is one part of Friedland's detailed account of the historical facts that lie behind this question. But his forthcoming book, tentatively titled *The Tyranny of Actors*, also considers how the concept of "representation"—in both the political and the aesthetic or philosophical senses—changed in the larger culture over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. On the basis of this historical study, Friedland then addresses the relevance of the French Revolution to the study of modern representative democracy. In so doing, he takes up the interdisciplinary challenge to speak to political scientists, historians of the arts, and modern cultural historians.

—Debra Keates, Series Editor



## Métissage: The Merging of Theater and Politics in Revolutionary France

In 1789, the status of dramatic actors in France remained much as it had been for centuries. Officially, they possessed no civil status, and along with Jews, Protestants, and executioners, they were excluded from all forms of political life. As far as the Catholic Church was concerned, actors were in a state of excommunication; Catholics were forbidden to have anything to do with actors, and unless they had renounced their profession before dying, actors were denied a resting place on holy ground. Unofficially, although the incessant vilification of actors by the Catholic Church had abated somewhat by the middle of the eighteenth century, the social stigma had endured. In the public mind, actors—*comédiens*<sup>1</sup>—remained immoral, incontinent vagabonds, who roamed provincial villages, presenting scandalous spectacles both on and off the stage. Even the more “respectable” actors who performed in the larger cities, often as part of established theater companies, were often not spared the general opprobrium attached to their profession. As a young actor who was performing at the theater of Bordeaux wrote to his friend in 1772, “Actors are reviled here [in Bordeaux]. If an honest man [. . .] sees in you qualities worthy of esteem, he would never say so aloud; he would only dare call himself your friend when there are no witnesses.”<sup>2</sup> Twenty years after writing these lines, the (former) actor Jean-Marie Collot-d’Herbois had become one of the most important political figures in all of France. As one of the twelve members of the all-powerful Committee of Public Safety that ruled France during the Terror, the former social outcast had moved to the very center of power.

Collot d’Herbois’ journey from the theatrical to the political stage is certainly remarkable, particularly given the stigma attached to actors even in the late 18th century. Even more extraordinary, however, is the fact that he was not alone: almost at the very moment of the Revolution’s birth, actors rushed to fill positions of prominence in the Revolutionary government, administration, and military. The reaction of non-theatrical contemporaries to actors’ involvement in the Revolution ranged from horror and confusion to acceptance of the actors’ new role as the necessary and positive outcome of the Revolutionary agenda on human rights.

Individuals who were suspicious of the Revolution recoiled in horror at what they perceived to be a veritable swarm of actors making their way onto the political stage; here, they thought, was tangible proof of the general theatricalization of French politics and society for which the Revolution was to blame. Almost as if they were witnessing the crumbling of a barrier that had previously separated raw sewage from fresh water, these individuals reacted as if their world was being contaminated by profane beings who only months before had been kept at bay by an officially-sanctioned *cordon sanitaire*. Even for many individuals who were sympathetic to the Revolution, this swirling together of previously discrete forms was a source of great worry and confusion: the Revolution had given birth to a world in which actors mixed familiarly with politicians, and in which the political and the theatrical intermingled to such a great extent that neither was properly distinguishable from the other.

In the following essay, I am primarily concerned with establishing the very *fact* of this intermingling. From theatrical actors who embraced political careers, to the pronounced

theatricality of Revolutionary politics, to the overwhelming importance of spectacles for the Revolutionary government(s), I am here concerned with assembling in one place the various personages and entities that occupied this new theatrico-political “site” brought into existence by the Revolution.<sup>3</sup>

#### Political Actors<sup>4</sup>

On the eve of the storming of the Bastille, when the inhabitants of Paris took up arms between 12 and 14 July, 1789, both with the intention of fighting the royal troops and of imposing order on the increasingly chaotic situation, a volunteer guard militia (soon to be called the National Guard) was spontaneously created. Each district formed its own detachment made up of volunteers from the neighborhood. And theatrical actors, like the other inhabitants of Paris who were comfortable enough financially to be able to properly equip themselves, joined in the formation of these detachments. Actors joined detachments primarily in the District des Cordeliers, and in the District de St. André des Arcs, the two districts that not coincidentally housed the more prominent theaters of Paris. Of the actors who volunteered, several were elected to high-ranking positions in the Guard. In the following statement, Naudet, an actor at the Théâtre Français, modestly describes how he came to assume command of the guard in his district:

During the time of the revolution, on 13 July, disturbed by the rumors that were spreading around Paris, & sharing the alarm of my fellow citizens, I reported to my district, in order to share in their danger and their duties: I was entrusted with the command of a post, which I eagerly accepted. My post was at the Théâtre Français.

I found myself at the head of 43 individuals among whom numbered *comédiens*. We entrenched ourselves in a location which we believed would be one of those by which the [royal] troops would enter. I was in charge of this fortification. Saint-Prix [also an actor at the Théâtre Français] brought over some lead, out of which I made 2000 bullets. M. Dugazon [another actor at the Théâtre Français] furnished a barrel of gunpowder; I prepared cartridges. The Parisians showed a great deal of courage, which I augmented, if at all possible, by raising their level of confidence; & I can say that the post which we manned would have been well defended [had it been attacked]. I ask no thanks for what occurred; I intend only to praise the courage of my fellow citizens.<sup>5</sup>

Naudet is careful, here, to downplay any ambitions on his part. His assumption of command seems natural enough: he “found” himself at the head of a small detachment, and he did his best to encourage those under his command. Nowhere in the above statement does Naudet betray any sense that his assumption of military command was at all incongruous with his profession, and indeed he mentions casually enough that several other actors participated in the fortification of the area around the Théâtre Français.

Those whom Naudet commanded apparently had few qualms about being led by an actor. Five days after the events described above, Naudet was formally elected by his troops as the Colonel of the regiment. In those same elections, Grammont, also an actor at the Théâtre Français, was named lieutenant-colonel; and their colleague Dugazon was named captain.<sup>6</sup> In addition to these three individuals, St. Prix, Marcy, Champville, and Talma, all of whom were also actors at the Théâtre Français, were elected as officers of varying rank.<sup>7</sup> The Théâtre Français itself was closed from 12 July until 20 July,<sup>8</sup> and we can only speculate

whether the closing was due to the understanding on the part of the directors that prospective spectators might be preoccupied with political events, or to the simple fact that so many of the theater's actors were busy commanding the troops of the district guard.

If, in the heady days surrounding July 14, Naudet and his troops seemed blissfully unaware that the prospect of a bunch of actors assuming control of a detachment of the National Guard might provoke controversy, they were soon brought back to reality. No sooner had the dust cleared, than several accounts, ranging from amused satire to vitriolic indignation, were published about these “*Comédiens commandants*.” In fact, Naudet's modest account of his assumption of command was written in direct response to his many detractors, and is contained in a pamphlet aptly entitled *Réponse de M. Naudet, comédien du roi, aux injures répandues contre lui dans différens journaux* [Response by Mr. Naudet, comédien du roi, to the insults that have been spread against him in several newspapers].

Indeed, in almost every instance in which actors crossed over onto the political stage, they were lambasted by journalists and pamphleteers who were quick to unmask these migrations as evidence of both the insatiable political ambitions of dangerous clowns, and the inherent theatricality of the Revolution itself. Many of these authors seemed convinced that the actors' election was either a mistake, or a provisional measure to meet the needs of a temporary emergency.<sup>9</sup> But this was not to be the case. Naudet would remain active in the National Guard well into the Revolutionary period, and would even be accused (most probably unjustly) of using his troops to force helpless theater spectators into submission.<sup>10</sup> Dugazon went on to become the aide-de-camp of the sectional commander of the National Guard, Santerre. And, according to Louis-Sébastien Mercier, Dugazon would, in his capacity as a military officer, order the drum-roll that preceded Louis XVI's execution.<sup>11</sup>

The military service of Naudet and Dugazon, however distinguished, was eclipsed by the illustrious military career of their colleague Grammont. Guillaume-Antoine Nourry, known to everyone by his stage name Grammont, was among the most politically involved actors of his day.<sup>12</sup> He associated with the likes of Danton, Desmoulins, and Héroult de Séchelles, and his star rose (and fell) along with theirs. For the first two years of the Revolution, Grammont continued to serve in the National Guard, while at the same time performing at the Théâtre Français. Toward the end of 1791, Grammont moved to the politically left-wing Théâtre de Montansier. In 1793, he was hired to serve as adjutant-general on the staff of Charles-Philippe Ronsin, the recently-appointed Brigadier General. The fact that Grammont was plucked from relative military obscurity to serve on Ronsin's general staff was no doubt related to the fact that Ronsin was not only a Brigadier General; Ronsin was also a prolific playwright.<sup>13</sup> After being hired by Ronsin, Grammont engaged in a little theatrical cronyism of his own, bringing several of his fellow actors on board with him onto the general staff.<sup>14</sup>

Oddly enough, just as Dugazon was rumored to have been involved in the execution of Louis XVI, so Grammont was reported to have headed the cortège which accompanied Marie-Antoinette to the guillotine.<sup>15</sup> Grammont himself would later meet the same fate, however, when he and several other defendants (including prominent dechristianizing politicians Chaumette and Gobel, as well as the widows of Desmoulins and Hébert) were tried, convicted, and executed *en masse* for the crimes of “debauchery” and “atheism” in one of the Terror's show-trials.

Naudet, Dugazon, and Grammont were all actors at the Théâtre Français in 1789, and indeed most of the actors who participated in the National Guard in the earliest days of the Revolution were from the same theater, a circumstance that was no doubt related to the fact that the Théâtre Français, otherwise known as the Comédie Française, was the most prestigious theater in France at the time,<sup>16</sup> and its actors, who had the right to refer to themselves

as the *Comédiens du roi*, were accorded a greater degree of respect than their colleagues from other theaters.

As the Revolution progressed however, and as the stigma attached to actors was increasingly dismissed as an irrational prejudice of the Old Régime, actors from the less prestigious theaters began to enlist in various military units, and many of them eventually rose to positions of command as well. For example, the actor Fusil, who performed at the Spectacle des Variétés Amusantes, served in 1793 as the aide-de-camp of General Tureau in the Vendée, and went on to play an important role in the suppression of the Lyon rebellion.<sup>17</sup> Another actor by the name of Dufresse quit his job at the Théâtre Montansier to become a captain in the army; the following year he was promoted to the rank of adjutant-general of the Armée Révolutionnaire in the Northern region.<sup>18</sup> He was, however, arrested for his excesses in July of 1793 (it had been his idea to have a guillotine-on-wheels as the image for the wax seal of the *armée révolutionnaire* of the North). Dufresse was eventually acquitted and reinstated, and went on to become a general-baron of the Empire, serving in numerous campaigns, and later as governor of the Deux-Sèvres.<sup>19</sup> Yet another actor, by the name of Saint-Preux, who performed at the Théâtre de la Cité, joined the National Guard in August of 1789; in 1792, when many of the theatrical troops of Paris formed individual detachments to defend the nation against foreign invaders,<sup>20</sup> Saint-Preux was named a second-lieutenant of his theater's troop. He must have distinguished himself in this capacity, for in 1793 Saint-Preux was asked by the Minister of War to serve as the Commissaire du Conseil Exécutif to watch over the French armies in Italy. He went on to serve *en mission* several times at the special request of the Minister of War, and at one point found himself in command of ten thousand soldiers. After performing his duties with distinction, Saint-Preux returned to his job as an actor at the Théâtre de la Cité.<sup>21</sup>

The actors I have mentioned are, for the most part, those who distinguished themselves in their military service. Countless others served in the rank and file. And there were those as well who cannot exactly be said to have served with distinction: one Parisian actor by the name of Fouchez, known by the stage name of Clairval, a performer in a traveling theater company, rose to the rank of lieutenant in the Armée Révolutionnaire of the Northern region. Clairval crossed over into enemy territory, where he defected along with General Dumouriez, and shortly thereafter took advantage of the opportunity to perform as an actor in the Belgian Theater. He was later court-marshaled for this act of military (and theatrical) treason.<sup>22</sup>

As surprising as the impressive careers of these actor/soldiers might be, particularly in light of the stigma still attached to their profession, more surprising—and for the purposes of this study, more significant—were the actors who embarked upon careers as political representatives. After the long-standing injunction against their eligibility for public office was lifted in December of 1789, several actors brought their oratorical skills to the political stage, achieving a success that would have been unthinkable only months before. And indeed, to many disaffected members of the French population, the thought of actors playing a role in politics, remained unthinkable, or at the very least unacceptable.

Here, it seems appropriate to return to the story of Jean-Marie Collot-d'Herbois, no doubt the most infamous example of an actor turned politician. After his experiences in Bordeaux, where he had written of his ill-treatment at the hands of the provincial bourgeoisie, Collot-d'Herbois moved to the city of Lyon, where he worked as an actor at the Théâtre de Lyon, eventually becoming director of that theater in 1787. He had begun writing plays as well, and in 1789 he moved to Paris to continue his career as a dramatist. In December of 1789, Collot was fortunate enough to see one of his plays performed at the

Théâtre Français.<sup>23</sup> Over the next year or two Collot went on to achieve both critical and popular success as a Parisian playwright.<sup>24</sup>

Even while Collot was busy writing plays for the theatrical stage, he was becoming increasingly involved in political activities. He joined the Jacobin Club early in the Revolution, and quickly became a prominent member.<sup>25</sup> In 1792, Collot was elected to the National Convention as a deputy of Paris. By March of 1793, Collot was named to the alternating honorary post of President of the Jacobin Club.<sup>26</sup> And in September of 1793, Collot reached the pinnacle of his political career (and indeed the pinnacle of Revolutionary politics as a whole) when he was named to the all-powerful Committee of Public Safety. Collot remained on the twelve-member Committee of Public Safety until, fearing a purge, he was instrumental in the overthrow of Robespierre on 9 Thermidor.

Not unlike the *Comédiens commandants*, who were subjected to the heckling of those disbelievers who could not forget that these supposed officers were in truth actors, Collot could never quite escape the taint of theatricality no matter how high he climbed in his political career. For some individuals, Collot would never be anything but an actor pretending to be a politician, although it may not have been very prudent to mention this conviction out loud. When Hébert's widow was put on trial (coincidentally, alongside the actor Grammont), a witness by the name of Marie Jolly (herself an actress at the Théâtre Français) testified that Mme Hébert had once heckled Collot from the audience at the Cordeliers club:

[I]n the meeting of the Cordeliers in which the deputation from the Jacobins arrived [. . .] [the witness Marie Jolly] found herself seated next to the wife of Hébert, and the moment when Collot d'Herbois, deputy, stood up on the speakers' platform [another] citizeness asked Mme. Hébert whether this citizen [on the platform] was a patriot. [Mme. Hébert] responded that it was Collot d'Herbois an actor and a schemer; [the witness further stated] that the entire time that Collot d'Herbois was speaking, Mme. Hébert kept saying with irony 'It's a *coup de Théâtre*; doesn't it seem like he's acting in a play [*ne semble t'il pas qu'il joue la Comédie*]'?<sup>27</sup>

If references to Collot's stage career could be dangerous at the height of his power, when Collot himself was put on trial after Thermidor for having masterminded the brutal suppression of the federalist rebellion in Lyon, references to his theatrical background were almost obligatory. Numerous pamphlets, not to mention official evidence presented at Collot's trial, all claimed that the true motive for Collot's savage treatment of the Lyonnais had been his personal revenge for having been booed off the stage some six or seven years earlier, when he had been an actor at the Théâtre de Lyon. In fact, Collot was actually accused of taking the time, amidst the horrors of the "rape" of Lyon, to search out citizens of the city who had been in the parterre on that fateful day when he had been forced to endure the audience's whistles of disapproval; having found them, he lined them up before a cannon and exacted his revenge. The following letter, purportedly drafted by the "the people of Lyon" was entered into evidence at Collot's trial:

Legislators, glance if you will at our City,  
 You will see ruins, and mounds of corpses;  
 [...]  
 You will see 213 unfortunates, [who]  
 without interrogation,  
 without a hearing, were gunned down and hatcheded

all at once  
 And you will hear in the midst of this bloody day,  
 Collot d'Herbois shouting in the throes of  
 a rabid joy:  
 'Now I have exacted vengeance for the whistles  
 to which I was  
 subjected at the theater of Lyon.'<sup>28</sup>

Worth mentioning also, in connection to the repression of the Lyon rebellion, is the curious coalition of people with a theatrical background who, in a variety of different capacities, seem to have descended on this city at the same time. According to the historian Richard Cobb, the troops which Collot accompanied to Lyon were "the strongest detachment of the Parisian *armée* ever brought together, with one clear aim: to accelerate the measures of repression."<sup>29</sup> And the general in command of these troops was none other than the playwright-turned-Brigadier General Ronsin. On Ronsin's general staff, was the actor Fusil, who not only took part in the military repression of the city, but also performed as a member of the Commission Temporaire, responsible for the subsequent judicial repression of Lyon and its environs.<sup>30</sup> And, last but not least, Antoine Dorfeuille, an itinerant actor before the Revolution, was appointed Président de la Commission de Justice, in which capacity he sent hundreds, and by some accounts thousands of Lyonnais to their death. Dorfeuille seems to have embraced his new position with relish, characterizing his judicial repression of the Lyonnais, in a letter to the President of the National Convention, as a "festival" of justice:

May this festival forever impress terror upon the souls of rascals and confidence upon the hearts of republicans! I say festival, citizen president; yes, festival is the word. When crime descends to the grave humanity breathes again, and it is the festival of virtue.<sup>31</sup>

Inevitably, the extraordinary confluence of actors on the Revolutionary stage, and around the repression of Lyon in particular, proved fodder for claims of a revolutionary/theatrical conspiracy. At the close of the century, Befroy de Reigny, a consistent critic of the theatricality of Revolutionary politics, began compiling a dictionary of all the new words, concepts, and people that the Revolution had brought to light. Under the heading "Collot-d'Herbois," we find not only the accusation that the repression of Lyon was the result of the Collot's personal vendetta as an actor,<sup>32</sup> but also the accusation that the large number of actors who played a role in Revolutionary politics was no mere coincidence; the "Comédien-Législateur"<sup>33</sup> Collot d'Herbois himself, was responsible for master-minding the theatrical infiltration of the Revolutionary stage:

Collot d'Herbois, no sooner invested with the so-called [*prétendu*] power of Representative, delegated a portion [of those powers] to a bunch of his *comédien* and *histrion* friends; and it is to [Collot's] credit that we owe the strange spectacle of a band of Generals, Commissaires, Aides de camp, etc. entering from the [stage] wings and placing, in their turn, their old comrades [into positions of power].<sup>34</sup>

Conspiracy or not, there is no question that the various theatrical and political threads are at times difficult to untangle; in this respect, the career of another actor/politician, Fabre d'Eglantine, serves as a case in point: Philippe-François-Nazaire Fabre, who later added the stage name d'Eglantine to his other names, began his theatrical career in 1772 as an actor in a traveling theater company.<sup>35</sup> After performing on the stages of half a dozen French cities,

Fabre eventually found his way to Lyon, where he performed at the Théâtre de Lyon for the 1784-85 season, and where he made the acquaintance of Collot d'Herbois. Fabre moved to Paris in 1787, where despite some initial difficulties, he began to achieve a certain degree of success as a playwright, and even had several of his plays performed at the Théâtre Français.

At the very beginning of the Revolution, Fabre became active in politics. He allied himself with Danton, and became one of the more important members of the Club des Cordeliers. Fabre was named secretary of that society in 1790, and later that same year assumed the position of President of the district des Cordeliers; in this latter capacity, incidentally, Fabre drafted a district decree declaring that all theaters within his district were under the exclusive control of the district government and were off-limits to the National Assembly.<sup>36</sup> In 1792, Fabre was elected as a deputy of Paris to the National Convention, where he is perhaps best remembered for his role in the creation of the Revolutionary Calendar.

While a representative to the National Convention, Fabre continued to enjoy success as a playwright,<sup>37</sup> although the theatrical Almanac of 1792 does claim that one of his plays was booed by spectators—a theatrical reaction that Fabre apparently interpreted as a political insult, for he proceeded to denounce the audience at the subsequent meeting of the Jacobin Club.<sup>38</sup> To make matters more confusing, Fabre was at this time involved in a relationship with Marie Jolly, the very same actress who was in attendance at the Cordeliers Club when Collot d'Herbois came to speak, and who would later bear witness against Hébert's wife for calling Collot an actor.<sup>39</sup>

Fabre's political and theatrical careers came to an end in January of 1794, when he was arrested for having "trafficked his opinion as representative of the people."<sup>40</sup> And a month later, Robespierre would denounce Fabre as the "principal author" of an "entire scheme of imposture and intrigue."<sup>41</sup> Not unlike the retrospective unmasking of Collot, when Fabre had fallen from grace and the veil of power had been lifted, critics invariably saw only a duplicitous actor with his own personal agenda, posing as a legitimate representative of the people.<sup>42</sup>

Another theatrical figure who played a comparatively minor role in Revolutionary politics, but whose name was nonetheless linked to many of the key political players of the day, was Jean-François Boursault-Malherbe. In 1789, Boursault was an actor as well as director of the main theater of Marseille. After the storming of the Bastille, Boursault, by his own account, helped to lead the assault on royal positions in Marseille, and went on to help found Marseille's *Assemblée Patriotique*.<sup>43</sup> Shortly thereafter, Boursault moved to Paris, where he became active in political clubs, and where he allied himself with the likes of Collot-d'Herbois and Billaud-Varennes.<sup>44</sup>

In 1791, when theatrical enterprises underwent deregulation, and it became permissible for any citizen to open a theater,<sup>45</sup> Boursault founded the most radical political theater of his day, which went by the somewhat misleading name of Théâtre Molière. Among the first plays to be produced at this theater was the virulent anti-royalist, anti-aristocratic, and anti-clerical tragedy *La Ligue des fanatiques et des tyrans*, whose author was none other than the future Brigadier General Ronsin.

During the 1791-92 theatrical season, Boursault directed as well as acted in several plays, many of which were rather heavily laden with radical political content. The revenues of the Théâtre Molière were apparently somewhat disappointing, however, and with the severe decline in spectatorship associated with the political upheaval of 10 August 1792, Boursault's theater came perilously close to bankruptcy. In early September of 1792, Boursault took it upon himself to send a letter to Danton, who as a result of the events of

10 August now headed the Provisional Executive Council. Boursault's letter to Danton and his fellow ministers requested government subsidies for the Théâtre Molière; accompanying the letter was a personal note of support from Chaumette, a prominent member of the insurrectional Commune.<sup>46</sup>

The letter was well received by Danton, who forwarded Boursault's letter to the Minister of the Interior with the following note of support:

I have the honor of sending to you, sir, a report by Mr. Boursault, the director of the Théâtre Molière, which requests [government] aid to avoid both his bankruptcy as well as that of his theater.

It is for you to appreciate, sir, in your wisdom, to what extent the generosity of the nation can be extended to a theater, in its moment of need, which has presented to the public only those plays which are appropriate to the acceleration of the progress of the Revolution. [signed: The Minister of Justice, Danton].<sup>47</sup>

Such important political connections were no doubt responsible for the fact that shortly after the above exchange of letters, Boursault crossed over from political theater to the theater of politics. He was named an elector of the city of Paris and, apparently deeming it prudent to suspend his theatrical activities for the time being, he handed over the leadership of the Théâtre Molière to one of his associates. One can only speculate as to whether this decision was merely the practical consideration of a man with a busy schedule, or whether Boursault suspected that a role played simultaneously on the political and theatrical stages would elicit unwelcome comments from a wary political audience.

After several months, Boursault attained the post of "supplementary" deputy to the National Convention, in which capacity he served on several government missions in the provinces.<sup>48</sup> After Thermidor, Boursault returned to the world of the theater, where he resumed his position as director of the Théâtre Molière; changing with the times, and no doubt sensitive to the backlash against Jacobin radicalism, Boursault rechristened his theater the Théâtre des Variétés Etrangères. Instead of Jacobin political plays, Boursault now presented such politically-neutral plays as translations of German dramatists of the *Sturm und Drang* movement.<sup>49</sup>

Despite the fact that Boursault's political star did not rise nearly as high as Collot d'Herbois' or Fabre d'Eglantine's, he was nevertheless subject to the same anti-theatrical attacks. Indeed, perhaps because Boursault was not as powerful, his critics did not have to wait until his downfall in order to express themselves. In a pamphlet written by Boursault's creditors (of which he apparently had many), he was accused, much like Fabre, of acting the role of a politician for motives of personal gain:

We will prove to Boursault, that no matter how talented he has been at fooling his fellow citizens as if he were [acting] at the theater [*jouer ses concitoyens comme à la comédie*]; no matter how much skill went into creating the particular roles which he put on for each one of us (and he came up with quite a few of them)—we will prove to him, we say, that all that glitters is not gold.<sup>50</sup>

And his creditors went on to contrast their own heartfelt patriotism to Boursault's actorly insinuation onto the political stage: "[Unlike Boursault] we have not presented ourselves as actors on the patriotic arena of our Sections. With republicanism in our hearts, we have allowed our morals [and] our actions, to speak [for themselves]."<sup>51</sup>

Such attacks on actors who entered politics should remind us that they had to overcome

a significant degree of hostility and suspicion on the part of the general public in order to make the transition from actor to politician—a fact which makes their presence on the Revolutionary stage all the more surprising. And indeed, I have mentioned only the more prominent of the actor/politicians; other actors took part in the political life of Revolutionary France at a less visible level. Antoine Trial, for example, an actor at the Opéra-Comique, became a friend of Robespierre, and assumed the civil post of Commissaire municipal, in which capacity he was eventually to sign Robespierre's death certificate.<sup>52</sup> Countless others took part in the less official aspects of Revolutionary politics: actors were present at the storming of the Bastille,<sup>53</sup> and they also played a part in several provincial uprisings in the summer of 1789.<sup>54</sup> In fact, the role of an actor by the name of Bordier in a political uprising in Rouen in the summer of 1789 was the impetus for a veritable textual explosion of anti-theatricality, and became one of the most controversial episodes of that summer.

Celebrated in certain circles for his performances as a harlequin in Parisian boulevard theater, Bordier seems to have arrived in Rouen with the intention of spreading the enthusiasm and ideals of the Parisian populace to the less enlightened provinces. After participating in—or perhaps even leading—an assault on the residence of the local representative of royal authority, the *hôtel de l'intendance*, Bordier was apprehended by authorities and, after a brief trial, hanged as an example to all those who would disturb the peace. In the waves of panic and confusion that swept through provincial France in the summer of 1789 (collectively referred to as the “Great Fear”), Bordier seems to have played the unenviable role of a kind of human lightning rod, absorbing and channeling the enormous anxieties and uncertainties of the moment. This actor, who in the subsequent texts commenting on his case was often portrayed as a human chameleon, personified the mixing of theatrical and political forms, the profane and the sacred, that so suddenly upset the established order in 1789.<sup>55</sup> And post-mortem characterizations of Bordier reflected that peculiar combination of amusement and horror that politico-theatrical hybrids seemed to inspire.

For those actors who chose not to—or were not able to—break into official politics, clubs often provided an outlet for political expression. Actresses in particular, who were forbidden to assume political office because of their sex (and whose presumed duplicity was compounded by the fact that they were not only actors but women)<sup>56</sup> were active in—and in one case even founded—political clubs. Madame Vestris, for example, the sister of the soldier-actor Dugazon, mentioned above, achieved a great deal of success both on the stage of the Théâtre Français and in the political clubs of Paris. As a theatrical almanac declared in 1792,

If women could be appointed deputies to the National Assembly, [Mme. Vestris] would have had all of the votes of her Section a long time ago. She attends [political] clubs, rushes around the Sections, drafts motions, and often goes to see the municipal authorities; she is, in short, a woman citizen like no other.<sup>57</sup>

But the actress who left the most indelible mark on Revolutionary politics was undoubtedly Claire Lacombe, who, despite her late arrival on the political scene, became the co-founder of the most important political organization for women in Revolutionary France: La Société des citoyennes républicaines révolutionnaires. In 1791, Lacombe was an actress in the theater of Marseille, and even at the beginning of 1792 she was still working in the theater, although she had moved to the theater of Toulon.<sup>58</sup> At some point before the summer of 1792, however, Lacombe moved to Paris, where she made her political début in a rather

remarkable fashion: she managed to make her way to the platform of the National Assembly, where she, after declaring herself to be “a Frenchwoman, an artist without a position,” not only called for the replacement of Lafayette, but offered her services to the nation in “combating the enemies of the Fatherland [. . .].”<sup>59</sup> The deputies were so impressed by her speech that they ordered its immediate publication.

Lacombe’s political career reached new heights when, some two weeks after her speech at the National Assembly, Lacombe took part in the storming of the Tuileries, and was wounded in the assault. She was awarded a tricolor sash for her heroism, which she in turn presented to the National Assembly. Around this time, she took to delivering speeches in many of the political clubs, most notably the Jacobin Club, and read several petitions before the National Convention.<sup>60</sup> And it was also at this time that Lacombe co-founded with Pauline Léon the *Société des citoyennes républicaines révolutionnaires*.

Lacombe’s *Société* played an important role in orchestrating the downfall of the Girondins, during the summer of 1793.<sup>61</sup> But no sooner did the Jacobins consolidate their power, than they began to move against the *Société des citoyennes républicaines révolutionnaires*, as they did against many of the other clubs that had helped to bring them to power. On 16 September, Lacombe was denounced in the Jacobin club in rhetoric which had overtones of anti-theatricality in its emphasis on Lacombe’s talent for speaking:

The woman who is denounced before you is very dangerous in that she is very eloquent; she speaks well at first and then attacks the constituted authorities. In a speech I heard she fired a red-hot broadside into the Jacobins and the Convention.<sup>62</sup>

Lacombe managed to avoid imprisonment until her arrest on 2 April 1794. Despite petitions submitted on her behalf by Collot d’Herbois and others, Lacombe remained in prison until August of 1795, after which time she resumed her theatrical career at the theater in Nantes.

Given this phenomenon of actors who played a role in Revolutionary politics, one is tempted to ask whether the reverse phenomenon took place: were there any Revolutionary political figures who embarked on a theatrical career? According to Paul d’Estrée, an early twentieth-century historian of the theater during the Terror, several prominent political figures secretly tried their hand at play writing, and often preferred romantic dramas and farces to the political plays that we might have expected of them:

Camille Desmoulins read his play “*Emilie ou l’Innocence vengée*” to his friends; Saint-Just wrote the farce “*Arlequin-Diogène*”; [The prominent Girondin and renowned orator] Vergniaud co-authored ‘*la Belle fermière*,’ and [Member of the Committee of Public Safety] Billaud-Varenne wrote several comedies and operas, which alas never left his desk to confront the stage lights.<sup>63</sup>

But if several actors made their way into the world of politics, and a few politicians harbored secret theatrical ambitions, we should be careful not to conclude that the theatricality of the Revolution resides simply in these individuals who performed (or wanted to perform) on both stages. In fact, the very possibility of their crossing over is itself no doubt a consequence of a general convergence of theater and politics at a more fundamental level: the merging of the theatrical and political *forms* themselves. Revolutionary politics borrowed, at its very inception, from the theatrical *mise en scène*. And Revolutionary theater increasingly came to be regarded as an affair of state. Politics, in short, became entertaining.

And theater suddenly became important.

### Theatrical Politics

The most striking example of the theatricalization of politics in Revolutionary France is undoubtedly the manner in which the debates in the National Assembly were conducted, and in particular the innovation of large, “theatrical-style” audiences that attended the sessions of the of the nation’s representatives. Even before the National Assembly had officially come into existence, the deputies of the third estates had distinguished themselves from the deputies of the first two estates by breaking with tradition, and allowing an audience to witness their debates. As a British Embassy official observed in his dispatch to London in May of 1789,

The Tiers-Etat meet regularly every day in the grand Assembly Hall and admit strangers to hear the Debates, from which much inconvenience has arisen and their deliberations much prolonged. I am told that the most extravagant and disrespectful language against Government has been held, and that upon all such occasions the greatest approbation is expressed by the Audience by clapping of hands and other demonstrations of satisfaction; in short the encouragement is such as to have led some of the Speakers to say things little short of treason.<sup>64</sup>

English observers in particular seemed struck by the “disorderly” nature of debate among the deputies. Upon observing a session of the assembly of the third estate in June of 1789, Arthur Young complained in his [diary] of a “want of order among [the deputies]; more than once to-day there were an hundred members on their legs at a time, and Mons. Bailly absolutely without power to keep order [. . .]. The rules and orders of debate in the House of Commons of England, as I afterwards took the liberty of mentioning to Mons. Rabaut-St. Etienne, [...] would have saved them at least a fourth of the time.”<sup>65</sup> When, after a tour of the provinces, Young returned to Paris in January of 1790, he found the character of debate in the National Assembly much the same:

The want of order , and every kind of confusion, prevails now almost as much as when the Assembly sat at Versailles. The interruptions given are frequent and long; and speakers, who have no right by the rules to speak, will attempt it [. . .].<sup>66</sup>

If English observers seemed struck by the “disorderly” character of the debates in the National Assembly, no doubt implicitly comparing the Assembly with their own House of Commons, French observers seemed less inclined to perceive the proceedings of the Assembly as disorderly, than as ordered by a set of rules that—at least for some individuals—seemed entirely inappropriate to political discourse: namely, the still boisterous character of the theatrical parterre. In January of 1790, for example, the *Mercure de France* reported an incident in which a speech by Mirabeau was interrupted with whistles—the most common form of expressing displeasure among theatrical audiences; the *Mercure* lamented, “and thus it is true that a certain segment of the public gives itself the right to treat and regard the deputies of France as if they were actors [*comédiens*].”<sup>67</sup>

Even apart from the behavior of spectators, one need only look at the architecture of the halls in which the various incarnations of the National Assembly gathered in order to understand that the phrase political stage was no mere metaphor during the Revolutionary period. And in fact, a brief history of the various locales in which the Assembly met reveals not

only that each of the *salles*—a term which, incidentally, has both theatrical and political connotations—was constructed and perceived as a kind of theater, but also that each successive *salle* was decidedly more theatrical than the previous one. If we were to go back as far as the convocation of the Assembly of Notables in 1787, we would find that the *salle* constructed especially for this assembly was built inside a large hangar, which had been recently built to house props and scenery for the Opéra of Versailles, on grounds of the Hôtel du Menus-Plaisirs, the administrative office in charge of arranging all royal spectacles and festivities. When the King came to inspect the new *salle*, two days before the official opening, he was shocked by the “theatrical” quality of the building and in particular by the lavish spectator boxes that had been built at the top of the hall, along the sides. The King felt that these spectator boxes were inappropriate to a political assembly that was meant to conduct its deliberations behind closed doors, and he ordered the spectator boxes removed, thereby delaying the opening of the Assembly of Notables an entire month.<sup>68</sup>

Two years later, the Estates General met in a newly-constructed *salle*, built on the grounds of the Hôtel des Menus-Plaisirs (as a matter of fact, on the same spot as the now-demolished Assembly of Notables, and designed by the same architect). This time, spectator boxes were left intact; in fact, the walls on three sides of the *salle* supported “amphitheaters” which provided an impressive amount of spectator seating for the invited audience.<sup>69</sup>

When the newly formed National Assembly followed the King to Paris in 1789, in the wake of the October Days, after a brief stint in the archbishop’s palace, the Assembly moved on 9 November to the *salle du manège*, the riding hall of the Tuileries Palace that had been the site of horse shows in the old régime, and was therefore well equipped to handle spectators. Arthur Young, after remarking on the disorderly nature of the debates (quoted above) turned his attention to the spectator galleries in the *salle de manège*:

I forgot to observe, that there is a gallery at each end of the saloon [ie. hall] which is open to all the world; and side ones for admission of the friends of the members by tickets: the audience in these galleries are very noisy: they clap, when anything pleases them, and they have been known to hiss; an indecorum which is utterly destructive of the freedom of debate.<sup>70</sup>

It was in this same *salle du manège* that such dramatic events as the trial of the King unfolded, an event which despite all its historical import, did not prevent audiences from behaving as if they were watching a show. As Mercier described the scene to his readers: “No doubt you imagine a state of composure, a kind of awe-inspired silence in that auditorium. Not at all. The back of the hall was converted into loges in which ladies dressed with the most charming carelessness ate oranges or ices and drank liqueurs.”<sup>71</sup>

The next locale for the Assembly (at this point the National Convention) was not only theatrical, it *was* a theater. On May 10 1793, the Convention moved into the Salle de Spectacle in the Tuileries Palace, a theater which had previously housed the actors of the Comédie Française and the Théâtre de Monsieur. According to the historian Joseph Butwin, although the theater was refurbished and redecorated, it “never lost its theatrical character [. . .].”<sup>72</sup> On the occasion of the Convention’s transference to the *salle de spectacle*, Robespierre criticized the length of time it had taken for this new *salle* to be prepared, implicitly comparing this new political arena to dramatic theaters by contrasting the architectural sluggishness of the new régime with the theater-building mania of the old: “The kings or the officials of the old government had a magnificent Opera house built in a few days, and, to the shame of human reason, four years have gone by before we have prepared a new place for the national representation!”<sup>73</sup>

Although the behavior of spectators and the very character of the buildings in which the assemblies met were very much within the theatrical realm, it was undoubtedly the performances of what can only be described as “political actors” that most clearly impressed upon contemporaries the extent to which theatrical forms had invaded the political arena. If some faulted the spectators for their behavior, others such as Edmund Burke, seemed to think that the blame might be shared equally between the spectators and the political actors themselves: “They [the representatives to the National Assembly] act like the comedians of a fair before a riotous audience; they act amidst the tumultuous cries of a mixed mob of ferocious men, and of women lost to shame, who, according to their insolent fancies, direct, control, applaud, explode [boo] them; and sometimes mix and take their seats amongst them; [ . . .].”<sup>74</sup> Indeed, there were reports that deputies had taken acting lessons,<sup>75</sup> or were planting paid “*claqueurs*” in the audience to applaud their speeches.<sup>76</sup> And the oratorical skills of several of the deputies garnered them the applause of both political and theatrical critics. In this respect, Mirabeau, arguably the greatest orator of the Assembly, seems to have occupied a place in the public mind that stood on the very threshold of the political and the theatrical.

Certainly, if we were to look at Mirabeau’s critics, Counter-Revolutionaries and Jacobins alike never tired of calling him a *Comédien*, thereby hoping to cast aspersions not only on his political legitimacy, but also—at least for the Counter-Revolutionaries—on the legitimacy of the Revolution itself.<sup>77</sup> But observations on Mirabeau’s dramatic style were not always intended as criticisms. Actors themselves were apparently impressed by Mirabeau’s theatrical talents. According to the *mémoires* of the actor Fleury, Mirabeau had just completed a particularly rousing speech, when the great actor Molé rushed up to Mirabeau and reflected on the career he might have had in the theater: “Oh! *monsieur le Comte* [ . . .] what a speech! what a voice! what gestures! my God! my God! how you have missed your calling!”<sup>78</sup>

Indeed Mirabeau was so renowned for his skills as a politician and an orator that his contemporaries seemed somewhat confused as to how to perceive him: was he a great representative of the nation, or a great orator? Did one admire his speeches for their content or for their delivery? When, for example, spectators had gathered to attend a performance of the controversial political drama *Brutus*, the opening act of the play had to be postponed when audience members spotted Mirabeau and another deputy from the Assembly in the audience: “[Spectators] showered them with applause, [ . . .] [and sent] a deputation from the parterre to invite [Mirabeau] to descend to the galleries so that everyone could see him with ease.”<sup>79</sup>

Perhaps the most tangible evidence of contemporaries’ inability to categorize Mirabeau as either a political or a theatrical figure is provided by a text which was originally published in 1786 with the title *Le Poëte au foyer, ou L’Eloge des grands hommes du théâtre françois, scène lyrique nouvelle en prose*, and republished in 1791 with a few slight modifications: *Le Poëte au foyer, ou L’Eloge des grands hommes du Théâtre de la Nation; y compris celui de Mirabeau. Scène lyrique nouvelle*. Although the change from “Théâtre Français” to “Théâtre de la Nation” merely reflects that theater’s name change, the addition of Mirabeau to the great men of the theater defies comprehension unless we recognize the existence of that liminal area between politics and theater that admitted such possibilities of métissage.<sup>80</sup> The earlier version of *Le Poëte au foyer* contains a series of reflections by a narrator as he passes before the busts of the great men of the French stage (Molière, Corneille, Racine, Regnard, Destouches, Crébillon, Voltaire), before offering his final reflections. Apart from a few minor changes,<sup>81</sup> the 1791 version of this play contains the identical series of reflections with one major change: Stuck in between reflections on Voltaire and the final reflec-

tions is the following, heartfelt paean to the recently departed Mirabeau:

(To [the bust of] Mirabeau, with resolve:) Active citizen, upholder of France, the greatest of heroes, brave soldier, well-known merchant, good patriot, rare and sublime genius, man above the prejudices of the nobility, [above] pride, insolence and impertinence; friend of humanity, equality, democracy in the midst of aristocracy [. . .] How many tears do we shed upon your tomb!<sup>82</sup>

Finally, when the editors of the Almanac of theatrical productions of the year 1792 struggled to differentiate between good and bad forms of notoriety (*célebre* and *fameux* respectively) they felt no qualms applying these terms to actors on both the political and theatrical stages, and the example of Mirabeau came immediately to mind:

Several journals, in giving an account of a [theatrical] *début* made reference to the FAMOUS [*FAMEUX*] Pr,ville. This expression does not do justice to a man of whom one can only say and think good things; and Famous does not suit him. We used to say the famous Mandarin and the celebrated Baron; just as today we say the FAMOUS [*FAMEUX*] Brissot and the CELEBRATED [*CELEBRE*] Mirabeau.<sup>83</sup>

If Mirabeau, as an individual, seems to have occupied a kind of liminal space between the political and the theatrical, the same can be said for a variety of spectacles that were neither properly theatrical nor political, but rather both at the same time. One such political spectacle was the *Spectacle Militaire*, the brain child of a man by the name of Texier, who called it “a little spectacle, different from all those which are established in this city [. . .].”<sup>84</sup> Indeed it was: Texier proposed to re-enact several Revolutionary “battles and sieges,” presumably replete with all the military accouterments, under the huge circus tent which covered the center of the Palais Royale, and which was known as the *Cirque National*. The fact that the *Spectacle Militaire* was not easily categorized is evidenced by the fact that Texier first applied for permission to the Major-General of the National Guard of the city of Paris, who issued the following reply: “The General permits [the proposed spectacle] and refers [Texier] to the Mayor and to the Bureau of Police, both for the permission to open a spectacle as well as for the [censorship] approval of his plays and pantomimes.”<sup>85</sup>

A somewhat different take on political spectacle, which was also to be found at the Palais Royale, was the exhibit established by Peter Curtius, a naturalized French citizen of German origin. Part house of horrors, part wax museum, Curtius’ show was changed periodically to suit the taste of Parisian crowds. In 1791, one would have found the shirt worn by Henri IV at the time of his assassination, in which one could still see the hole made by Ravaillac’s knife (for the benefit of skeptics, the shirt was “accompanied by all of the authentic and historical certificates”). Close by, there was what Curtius claimed to be the mummified corpse of an Egyptian princess who had died three hundred years earlier. And, alongside the shirt and the mummy, there were the wax figures of the King, Bailly, La Fayette, and “several of the illustrious Deputies of the National Assembly.”<sup>86</sup>

Undoubtedly the most popular example of political spectacle, however, was the *Assemblée Fédérative des Amis de la Vérité*, which as coincidence would have it also took place in the Palais Royale under the same circus tent which Texier had chosen for the site of his military spectacle. The *Assemblée Fédérative* was a kind of “pretend” National Assembly, open to club members of the *Amis de la Vérité* who, for the price of nine *livres* every three months, were entitled to gather on Fridays (and later Mondays as well) to pretend that they were legislators and harangue one another.

At first glance there are several factors that might lead us to categorize the *Assemblée*

Fédérative as more spectacle than politics: The Assemblée did, after all, meet under a circus tent, which on other days of the week was used for dances, concerts, and galas.<sup>87</sup> And there was also the fact that these representatives-for-a-day were charged an entrance fee by the club president/theatrical entrepreneur Abbé Fauchet. The same almanac of spectacles that reported on Curtius' wax museum also included the Assemblée Fédérative in its list of spectacles, and observed somewhat sardonically:

M. l'abbé Fauchet [. . .] has installed [under the circus tent] a miniature [version] of the Assemblée Nationale under the name of Amis de la Vérité, with the following difference: that our real legislators are paid to make laws, whereas the Amis de la Vérité pay and take up a collection amongst themselves in order to make laws for us.<sup>88</sup>

Critics of the Assemblée Fédérative were quick to point out the theatricality of its proceedings. The radical journal *L'Orateur du Peuple* reported that, "No one can hear anything, but they applaud and boo to excess [. . .]. [And it is] with these acrobatics [*batelage*], these grand words, [and] these staged scenes [*scènes de tréteaux*] that our enemies attempt to lead the people on a false path."<sup>89</sup> This remark, which seems virtually identical to contemporary criticisms of the National Assembly, only serves to show that the Assemblée Fédérative had been all too successful in its imitation of the National Assembly, theatricality and all. And it is important to point out that, if the meetings of the Assemblée Fédérative had been purely and unselfconsciously theater, no one would have taken the trouble to paint them in theatrical terms. But it was precisely the fact that members of the Amis de la Vérité insisted on their political relevance that drew the fire of critics. And, as the following account of the opening session of the Assemblée Fédérative indicates, the Amis de la Vérité had good reason to think of themselves as a legitimate political organization:

The inauguration of the Assemblée Fédérative of the Amis de la Vérité took place at the Cirque National on Wednesday the 13th of this month [October, 1790] [. . .]. A large number of deputies of the National Assembly, MM. the Electors of 1789, former provisional Representatives of the Commune [of Paris], many members of the new Municipality, and [many members] of all the patriotic Societies of the capital, [. . .] formed an assembly of four to five thousand people, not counting the attentive female spectators with which the galleries of the Cirque were filled [. . .].<sup>90</sup>

Such an impressive premiere is testimony to the political importance of the society as well as its leader, the Abbé Fauchet. Although the almanac of spectacles may have portrayed Fauchet as a theatrical entrepreneur and a showman, he himself preferred the title "*Procureur-Général*" [Attorney General] of the assembly. Before we write off Fauchet's title as hubris, however, we should consider the fact that he probably had good reasons to think of himself as something more than an entrepreneur of spectacles: he was the co-founder of the journal *La Bouche de fer*, a liberal political journal whose contributors included Anacharsis Cloots, Condorcet, Thomas Paine, and Etta Palm. And, even as early as 1790, he could claim significant experience in the world of politics. In addition to the title of "*Procureur-Général*" of the Assemblée Fédérative, he had been an original elector of 1789, a member of the Comité Permanent, the body that eventually became the Paris Commune, and a four-time President of the Commune itself.<sup>91</sup>

Indeed, Fauchet's political connections were such that he had some very influential friends. When his Assemblée Fédérative was derided as an admission-charging spectacle, none other than Camille Desmoulins stood up in his defense:

I certify that [Fauchet] professes the same doctrine as the Jacobins [. . .]; I certify that I have never noticed any other difference between the two [political] clubs other than that in the former one pays nine *livres*, and in the latter, twelve *livres*.<sup>92</sup>

Others were less credulous of his sincerity. We have already seen how the *Orateur du Peuple* characterized Fauchet's Assembly as a theatrical event with dangerous political implications. When Fauchet was later elected to the Legislative Assembly and to the National Assembly, the *Mercure* found his political performance disturbingly theatrical: "Almost with each sentence, M. Fauchet was interrupted by the applause of the galleries and by outbursts of laughter from the Assembly that seemed as if it were enjoying the performance of a fairground entertainer [*le spectacle d'un saltimbanque*]."<sup>93</sup>

Depending upon the observer, therefore, the Assemblée Fédérative was either a theatrical performance with political aspirations or a festive political assembly of the people, which just happened to meet under a huge circus tent. Abbé Fauchet was similarly characterized either as a showman with political pretensions or a farcical politician. The various spectacles and individuals that I have mentioned here, and indeed the National Assembly itself and its deputies, seemed to have occupied a conceptual position that was neither political nor theatrical, neither serious nor laughable, neither sacred nor profane, but all at the same time.

In this swirling mass of representative forms that defies categorization, one must also include the theater of the French Revolution, which very quickly after 1789 had taken on profound political importance. And indeed there is a fascinating logical equilibrium between the theatricality of politics and the politics of theater: if the antics of the National Assembly were often compared to the behavior of theatrical actors and audiences, then it stood to reason that political battles in the theaters should have been compared to the scene at the National Assembly. Take, for example, the political uproar that arose when the actors of the Théâtre Français announced their decision to expel one of their own for having attempted to recruit the parterre in his efforts to force the *comédiens français* to perform the controversial Revolutionary drama *Charles IX*. The following account of this announcement of expulsion and the audience's reactions to it details not only the various denunciations with decidedly political overtones, but also the invocation of the image of the National Assembly that seemed strangely appropriate to this theatrical/political squabble:

[The Actor Fleury announced:] "My troupe, persuaded that M. Talma has betrayed [*trahi*] its interests and compromised the public tranquility, has unanimously decided that they will have nothing further to do with him, until such time as the [authorities] have come to a decision [on this matter]."

This short harangue was applauded by some, and booed by the majority. The tumult had reached its apex when [the actor] Dugazon burst forth from the wings onto the stage: Gentleman, he cried, the *comédie* [*française*] will take the same actions against me as [they have taken] against Talma. I denounce the entire *comédie*: it is false that Talma has betrayed this society, and compromised public safety; his only crime is in having told you that we could perform *Charles IX*, and that's it.

At these words, disorder and tumult erupted once again in every corner of the *salle*; motions were made from every corner, orators from [political] clubs vied for the right to speak [. . .].

Sulleau, the editor of a morning newspaper, tried to restore order and, parodying in a very buffoonish manner the President of the National Assembly, he called on people to speak, cried out 'Order! Order! Order!' shaking an enormous bell with all the force of his arms, and in the end, put on his hat, when he realized that all his efforts were in vain [. . .]. [Eventually] the agitation had reached so violent an intensity that it was necessarily to call in the military, and to go and warn the Mayor of Paris.<sup>94</sup>

Theatrical actors and audiences were not the only ones to recognize the political importance of theater. Revolutionary legislators, keenly aware of the need to propagate the ideals of the Revolution to a largely illiterate populace, repeatedly seized on the idea of the theater as a school of public education. Particularly as the Revolution moved to the left, in the years 1792-94, government officials played a greater and greater role in encouraging theatrical productions with overt political messages. We have already seen Danton's interest in Boursault's political theater, and this was but one of the many governmental forays into the world of the theater. Government involvement in theatrical productions would reach its apex in the carefully-choreographed festivals and state-subsidized political dramas of the Terror (not to mention the strange spectacle of political executions). But the subject of theatricality and the Terror is a complex subject in itself that must be addressed on its own terms.<sup>95</sup> I conclude this essay, therefore, with a narrative of certain events that took place immediately before the Terror, in the winter of 1792-93; it is a narrative derived from a series of letters between a theatrical entrepreneur and the Minister of Foreign affairs—a story which, perhaps more than any other, gives an indication of the extent to which politics and theater had become intertwined by the eve of the Terror.

In the autumn of 1792, the armies of France prepared for an invasion of neighboring territories, having only just repulsed the forces of the anti-Revolutionary coalition from French soil. To many, it seemed only natural to hope that the people of Europe might embrace the French armies as enlightened liberators rather than foreign invaders. For the first time in the history of Europe the conquest of neighboring territories would not simply be an exercise in military might but also, the Revolutionaries hoped, a philosophical victory—a victory of the new ideals of justice, liberty, and equality over prejudice, injustice and tyranny. Perhaps it was natural, under such circumstances, for those in command to think of calling upon the theater as an indispensable tool in the conquest of foreign minds. In France itself, the government had already taken such steps as sponsoring free “educational” performances of Revolutionary dramas for those who could not afford to pay for their own tickets. What could be more simple than to sponsor similar performances for the benefit of the soon-to-be “liberated” Belgians, and thereby take advantage of their shared language to spread the principles of the Revolution?

Even if, however, we might find it perfectly understandable that the French should think of exporting the Revolution by theatrical propaganda, there remains something remarkable about the story I am about to tell. There was a curious urgency to the desire to export French actors to Belgium, an urgency that was perhaps more about the *form* of the political messengers than about the *content* of the message. It was almost as if one could not export the Revolution without simultaneously exporting its theatricality. In the following account of what is arguably the first theatrical propaganda troupe in modern times, one glimpses not only the easy familiarity with which government and military officials mingled and exchanged ideas with theatrical entrepreneurs and actors, but also the shared, almost unexamined assumption that the one thing the Belgians truly needed, almost at the moment of their “liberation,” was a horde of actors, shipped in from Paris.

The story begins in October of 1792, when General Dumouriez, fresh from his rout of

enemy forces at Valmy, had arrived in Paris to acknowledge the appreciation of a grateful people. Everyone knew that the General would shortly be departing for the imminent invasion of Belgium, and he was flooded with a variety of invitations during his brief visit to the capital. One of these invitations was from Mademoiselle de la Montansier, a sixty-two year old theatrical entrepreneur known to everyone as La Montansier, and a fixture in the Parisian theatrical world since the very beginning of the Revolution.<sup>96</sup> Dumouriez graciously accepted her invitation to attend a performance of *Le Départ des Volontaires* on the evening of 11 October at the Théâtre de la Montansier. During the intermission, La Montansier took the opportunity of the General's visit to propose a very interesting idea concerning the General's impending invasion of Belgium. As she would report her conversation to Dumouriez in a letter to government authorities the following month, "[. . .] I asked for his approval to bring to Brussels—as soon as he entered [that city]—a propaganda troupe [of actors]." In response, the General "smiled, agreed and gave me a rendez-vous for Christmas [in Brussels]."

Dumouriez seems to have erred on the side of caution: His troops arrived in Brussels more than a month ahead of schedule, on 14 November. No sooner did La Montansier hear the news of Brussels' "liberation" than she set about putting her plans into action. She immediately dispatched her lover and business partner, the actor Neuville, to Brussels, where he met with Dumouriez to discuss the arrival of the propaganda troupe. Dumouriez was still enthusiastic about the idea, although he apparently did not think it would be proper simply to oust one of the Belgian theater companies so that La Montansier and her troupe could move in; he therefore delegated a General Moreton on his staff to look into the matter.

Fortunately for La Montansier and her project, one of her very own actors by the name of Dufresse, who like so many other actors had pursued a military career on the side, had recently been appointed to General Moreton's staff.<sup>97</sup> Neuville and General Moreton, presumably with the intercession of Dufresse, began discussing the possibility of combining Montansier's troupe with a local Belgian troupe, thereby resolving the problem of how to occupy an existing theater without dispossessing its resident troupe. As La Montansier reported in detail to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Lebrun, she was very excited about the possibilities of what such a combined Franco-Belgian acting troupe might offer:

The Belgian troupe possesses a superb opera [company], and superior voices, both male and female—and especially [an actor] by the name of Mick who performs the roles of Lazir and Cheron. My [company] possesses Saint Val, Dufresse, the aide de camp of General Moreton, Grammont [the actor/soldier]<sup>98</sup> and other talented individuals: with this variety of talent of both genres, we will be able to provide for Brussels everything that has come out to date in terms of patriotic plays and items that could even be pantomimed, such as the *Marseillaise* for which I have a superb score that I have not been able to bring off in Paris because of the pomp that it requires.<sup>99</sup>

We ought to step back for a moment and ponder the context of this letter: in the midst of international war and political radicalism, a Parisian theatrical entrepreneur was corresponding with the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the specifics of a Franco-Belgian theater company. And we should also note that Montansier's letter to Minister Lebrun was written exactly twelve days after the capture of Brussels, by which time her associate Neuville had not only arrived and negotiated with Dumouriez and Moreton, but had managed to relate the details back to Montansier back in Paris. All of this would seem to indicate that Neuville had been dispatched to Paris virtually on the day of Brussels' capture: such was the urgency

of this mission.

Montansier's purpose in contacting Minister Lebrun was to garner the support of government officials so that her troupe would officially be under the protection of French forces. Like any good entrepreneur, as future correspondence would bear out, she hoped to plant the seed for more tangible support in the form of direct government subsidies; for the moment, however, she asked simply for the government's endorsement:

[A]ll my preparations are underway for the departure of the members [of our troupe] and of the baggage necessary for my enterprise. And so that neither one nor the other encounters any difficulties on the road, nor any delay, and so that they receive security and protection in Brussels or in the other towns of Brabant, I dare to ask you for some sort of public writ [*acte ostensible*] that would manifest some sort of good will on the part of the government for this enterprise and for the members who are participating in it.

And then, to press her point, Montansier stressed the strategic importance of this mission to "propagate" the ideals of the Revolution, and expressed the hope to Minister Lebrun that the Executive Council would agree with her:

The Belgian [*Brabanconnes*] heads are still filled with prejudices. What I am doing as an individual should perhaps be seen by the Ministers, as wise as [they are] patriotic, as a very essential measure in order to propagate the great principles of our Revolution: I will go so far as to think that, if it succeeds, it will have earned the right to the goodwill of the Fatherland, and if it does not succeed it will have still [earned the right] to its encouragement. But, it is for the wisdom of the [executive] council to consider what circumstances might require or merit. My only objective at this moment is to beg you to accord me this ostensible sign of goodwill that I solicit with confidence of a minister who as equally estimable for his enlightenment as for his talents and his personal qualities.<sup>100</sup>

To this letter, Montansier appended a list of proposed theatrical productions to be performed in Brussels, including such well-known dramas as Voltaire's *Brutus* and *La Mort de César*, and Chénier's *Charles IX*, all of which had caused a sensation among Parisian audiences. And then, worth noting in the context of our discussion here, is the following: of the four comedies in the suggested repertory, three were by the actors/playwrights/politicians Fabre d'Eglantine and Collot d'Herbois.<sup>101</sup>

The letter could not have arrived on the Minister's desk at a more opportune moment. Only days earlier, Minister Lebrun had received a report from a man by the name of Chépy, one of the ministry's agents *en mission*, who had suggested that the Belgians were badly in need of a little Enlightenment:

I arrived in Brussels the day before yesterday [. . .]. Here are the results of my first impressions: Mons seemed cold to me: it had more the air of a conquered city than a liberated one. In the intervening countryside on the way to Brussels, I was aware of stupor more than any other sentiment. In Brussels: a frightening carelessness, no political ideas whatsoever, a fear of a return (of the Austrians)—the nobility and the clergy moving about, intriguing, the third estate divided, without principles, without any position, without Enlightenment: in truth we will have many obstacles to overcome and it will be necessary to deploy a bit of force, and moreover to rely on our energy and our indefatigable activity.<sup>102</sup>

What better method of counteracting the Belgian “stupor” than a troupe of Parisian actors? A few rousing dramas, a few politically-appropriate comedies, and some inspirational songs and marches might be just what the Belgians needed to see that they had not been conquered, but liberated—liberated by a people who, at the very least, knew how to put on a good show. No doubt with Chépy’s observations in mind, Minister Lebrun wrote back to Montansier immediately upon receipt of her letter:

I cannot but applaud the laudable desire to propagate in Belgium, with all of the powerful means at your disposal, the principles and love of liberty and of Equality, while the success of our armies are liberating the Belgian inhabitants from the servitude and the slavery into which they have been plunged for so long. Your enterprise is so beautiful that I must rush, on my part, to obtain for you all the encouragements of which it is worthy.

These were not empty words of praise. Lebrun promised to bring Montansier’s project to the attention of the Executive Council that same night, assuring her that the council would be equally enthusiastic about her proposal. And then, in a remark that no doubt riled La Montansier, Lebrun informed her that she was not actually the first theatrical entrepreneur to have thought up the idea of flooding Belgium with French actors:

You will find yourself in good company in Brussels, as I am informed that our best artists of the Opéra and from other Theaters of the Capital have proposed to make an appearance there, and to unite with us in instructing the Belgians in the great art of liberty by the charm and the gaiety of their talents.<sup>103</sup>

True to his word, Lebrun presented Montansier’s project to the Executive Council. And, as he had suspected, their reaction was equally enthusiastic. They immediately issued a decree along the lines that Montansier had suggested, and made a promise of future “encouragements.” Lebrun took the opportunity to address the issue of expenses: “I am proud to be at this moment the agent of the [Executive] Council in informing you of its satisfaction, and I invite you to come and see me in order to determine together what can be done to compensate you for the expenses that will necessarily be entailed in the execution of your project.”<sup>104</sup>

La Montansier’s reply was as immediate as it was effusive:

Worthy Citizen Minister,

I am in receipt of your second letter, and I am re-reading it in order to convince myself that it is no illusion. How kind are your expressions and your conduct! How touched I am! How shall I describe my gratitude to you: oh! when the interests of *la chose publique* inspire in us such good will towards brothers, it is beautiful to find oneself a Republican, and to have in one’s ministers veritable fathers!<sup>105</sup>

With La Montansier’s troupe committed to Brussels, foreign minister Lebrun was free to deploy the remaining troupes elsewhere in Belgium. Two days after his note to La Montansier informing her of the Executive Council’s response, Lebrun dashed off a note to the administrators of the Opéra. Liège had just fallen to Dumouriez’s troops, and it was to this freshly-liberated city that Lebrun planned to dispatch his next theatrical battalion, waiting in the wings:

I have this moment received the good news of the entry of Dumouriez into Liège, after a stubborn battle of ten hours, and it is with this first city that

your artists should begin their patriotic mission. I owe you thanks for the alacrity with which you have undertaken this enterprise. It is an act of patriotism of which the [Executive] Council was appreciative. [The Council] thought that nothing should be lacking to the performance troupe and they invite you to submit the costs of costumes that may be necessary, persuaded that at the same time that one speaks to the heart, it is also necessary to speak to the eyes.<sup>106</sup>

As with Montansier's troupe, the urgency with which the troupe from the Opéra was dispatched to the front is telling. A cultural invasion was needed to consolidate the gains made by the military. As Lebrun put it, the performers will "propagate (by the charms of Gaiety and the Graces which are part and parcel of their talents) the principles of liberty and equality which the force of our arms have established in Belgium."<sup>107</sup>

Although I did not discover the fate of the Opéra troupe in Liège, the fate of La Montansier's troupe in Brussels is well documented by her continued correspondence with Lebrun: La Montansier arrived in Brussels, along with her troupe, at nine o'clock in the morning on 2 January 1793, and reported immediately to General Moreton, whom Dumouriez had delegated to handle the establishment of her troupe. Moreton greeted her very warmly, but proceeded to apologize profusely: as much as he hoped to do the bidding of the Executive Council, the theater owners of Brussels had let it be known in no uncertain terms that they had no intention of cooperating with La Montansier. Far from considering the combined Franco-Belgium troupe that La Montansier had hoped to create, the theater owners would not even allow French actors inside their theaters "at any price whatsoever." It would seem that if the Belgians had not been successful in repulsing French military might, they were doing their best to resist the theatrical invasion. Nevertheless, Moreton promised La Montansier that he would "make use of all the authority that was at his disposal" in order to persuade the Belgians to come to an arrangement, "while observing, however, the respect which is due to property."<sup>108</sup>

A meeting was arranged in Moreton's headquarters, between Montansier and the Belgians. They suggested that they would be willing to rent out a theater, but for a sum which La Montansier found exorbitant. As she wrote in her letter to Minister Lebrun, however, the importance of the mission left her no choice but to accept: "I confess to you, I see no other means by which to fulfill the desires of the Executive Council than to come to an agreement with the [Belgian theater] directors, convinced that if the revenues do not meet my expenses and there is a deficit, [the Council] will come to my aid."<sup>109</sup> La Montansier assured Lebrun, however, that if the French government was going to have to subsidize her mission—as was appearing increasingly likely—the government's money would be well-spent, no matter what the cost might be:

I assure you, Minister citizen [*sic*—the appellation was relatively new] that never has an expense been more well-spent. After the small amount of time that I've been here, and from everything I hear, I think I can tell you that this country is far from the public spirit that ought to animate it. The aristocracy still reigns. The nobles still have a lot of clout; Priests have a great deal of influence: Religious prejudices reign here in all their force. The inhabitants are very wary; it is difficult to get through to them and I think that it is necessary to employ all the means that the politics of a free people can sanction in order to strip off the blindfold that covers the eyes of the inhabitants of this country.<sup>110</sup>

Before La Montansier had given her final acceptance of the Belgian proposal, no doubt awaiting word from Paris that the government would cover her losses, the Belgians appar-

ently had the audacity to launch a surprise theatrical counter-attack: “Would you believe it? During this interval [while thinking over their proposal] they performed *Pierre le cruel* an anti-revolutionary tragedy by De Belloy.” For Lebrun’s benefit, La Montansier cited a few of the “aristocratic verses with which the work is riddled” including such lines as “even a guilty king is a sacred object.”<sup>111</sup> What La Montansier neglected to mention, understandably enough, was that her intimate acquaintance of the play stemmed from her having produced it at her theater in Paris little more than a year before—testimony to the swiftness with which the political climate changed in those crucial years 1791-93.<sup>112</sup>

January 1793 was a different world from the fall of 1791, and Citizeness Montansier, as an agent of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Revolutionary France, was very clear in her abhorrence for what, under existing conditions, could only be construed as royalist propaganda. She and General Moreton “invited” the Belgians for a meeting at the General’s headquarters. During this meeting, which would last from eleven in the morning until nine at night, General Moreton played a heavier hand: he informed the Belgian theater of his extreme displeasure, and let them know that if they ever again attempted to perform any such play, he would

make use of all his power to punish them severely, and that, furthermore, the best method of removing from them the means [of doing so in the future] would be to come to an arrangement with [Montansier], because the Executive Council of France believed, in its wisdom, that it was necessary to send a patriotic troupe to put on plays suitable for the enlightenment of the public spirit and to propagate the principles of liberty and equality.

According to La Montansier, “This dressing-down by the General rendered them better disposed to enter into an agreement [. . .].” And, after ten hours of negotiations, Moreton, La Montansier and the Belgian theater owners had come to an understanding: The French troupe had procured a lease through Easter, although at terms which to La Montansier seemed “very onerous.”<sup>113</sup>

If La Montansier (and France) had to some extent been taken advantage of by the crafty Belgians who had “consulted their [own] interests rather than their patriotism,” she nevertheless prided herself on having stipulated that the lease should run through Easter, “regarding it as very important to perform during the holy week and to bring the first blow against the religious abuses with which this country is infected.” In addition to going head-to-head with religious spectacles, Montansier hoped to offer several free performances for the city’s poor, reminding Lebrun that, “it is important to enlighten this class!”<sup>114</sup>

At the conclusion of this last letter to Lebrun, La Montansier did not neglect to mention the unpleasant necessity of government subsidies for her enterprise: “I have no doubt that, because of my good and useful intentions, the executive power will come to my aid, in the event that the [theater’s] receipts do not equal the expenses [. . .]. I am far from imagining any kind of profit, the happiness of being useful to my country will be the sweetest recompense, but at the same time, I cannot hide from you that I will not [personally] be able to bear any kind of deficit [. . .].” And here, La Montansier took it upon herself to suggest a political solution to the anticipated shortfall: “I believe [. . .] that the provisional representatives of the Belgian people would be able to subvent any losses that I might have if the Executive Council of France should judge it proper to invite them to do so.”<sup>115</sup>

We know that La Montansier’s propaganda theater was not exactly an unqualified success. The bill that she would eventually present to the Executive Council contained a rather hefty deficit.<sup>116</sup> And, as for the free performances intended to enlighten the poor, an agent of the French government reported back to the Ministry of Foreign affairs that, “The three

or four times that free performances were given, the hall was filled only with French soldiers; not one native inhabitant showed up [. . .].”<sup>117</sup> What the Minister of Foreign affairs and La Montansier had hoped would lead to a cultural awakening of the Belgian people, in the end proved to be little more than a morale boost for French troops garrisoned in Brussels or passing through. If the Belgians themselves were unmoved by La Montansier’s productions (or unwilling to attend in the first place), then at least French troops knew a good show when they saw one. As the government agent reported back to Paris: “A great number [of soldiers] pass through here; they go to the show [spectacle]; the patriotic plays electrify them [. . .]. After the play [*la comédie*], they get up on stage and dance the *Carmagnole* and sing the *Marseillaise*.”<sup>118</sup>

On 24 March 1793, Austrian forces reclaimed Brussels, forcing French troops (and troupes) into a hasty retreat. In the confusion, La Montansier was forced to abandon ten trunks filled with expensive costumes. When, upon her return to Paris, she presented her final bill to the National Convention, she offered to swallow the expense of the abandoned trunks, but hoped that, “the Council, in according some sort of compensation to the artists who compose the troupe, will render justice to their zeal and patriotism.”<sup>119</sup> Such, then, was the ignominious end of a project that had engendered such enthusiasm at the highest levels of the French government. After spending some 53,000 assignats of the government’s money, it was not clear that the first propaganda troupe of the modern world had enlightened anyone at all.

The success or failure of Montansier’s troupe is immaterial for our concerns here, except insofar as it indicates that Revolutionary principles and the Revolutionary zeal for theater may have had difficulty crossing national-cultural boundaries. Much more important, for the purposes of this study, is what Montansier’s mission tells us about the inter-connections between theater and politics in Revolutionary France on the eve of the Terror: virtually simultaneous with Belgium’s fall into French hands, officials at the highest levels of government were conferring with French theater entrepreneurs about the logistics of dispatching French actors in order to complete their conquest of neighboring territories. One might argue that these French theater troupes were nothing more than the means toward the specific end of educating the Belgians in Revolutionary principles, and that French actors were in some sense no different than propaganda pamphlets. If this were the case, then why not simply flood Belgium with Revolutionary literature? The answer, of course, was that the fall of Belgium offered the Revolutionary government the unique opportunity to export something that could not be conveyed by the written word: the exciting theatricality of the Revolution. They hoped that the same spirit that “electrified” the French military troops who attended Montansier’s performances might animate the Belgian populace with enthusiasm for the Revolution. Belgian “stupor”<sup>120</sup> could be eradicated by armies of Revolutionary actors, just as Belgian territory had been captured by the Revolution’s soldiers. And to this end, the French government was willing to devote not only large sums of money, but the time and efforts of France’s generals who, in the middle of the most important military conquest to date, reserved entire days in order to bring about Revolutionary theater on Belgian soil.

Actors storming the political stage, politicians in the National Assembly behaving like actors, and both of them suddenly discovering the profound importance of political theater—all of these phenomena testify to the convergence of politics and theater in Revolutionary France. Within a remarkable short span of time, France had been transformed from a nation in which actors were virtually ostracized from every aspect of social and civic life, to a nation in which actors and politicians—and theater and politics in gen-

eral—mixed so familiarly that they had become virtually indistinguishable.

But why did these two stages suddenly merge in 1789? The answer is a long and complicated one that relates, I believe, to the changing theory of representation itself as it was practiced on both the theatrical and political stages of pre-Revolutionary France. In both politics and theater there was a profound theoretical revolution some four decades before the Revolution itself. Prior to the mid-eighteenth century, actors on both stages believed their fundamental task to be the re-presentation<sup>121</sup> or embodiment of a fictional body (a character in a play, or the corpus mysticum of the French nation) that had no visible or tangible presence of its own. In the decades after 1750, however, the task of actors on both stages was redefined: theatrical actors were prevailed upon to represent their characters abstractly, in a manner that seemed realistic to the audience, rather than a manner that the actors experienced as real. And with respect to political representation, the theoretical innovations of the patriotes who dreamed up abstract schemes of representation at mid-century were eventually put in practice in 1789 when the invention of a revolutionary political body known as the National Assembly marked the sudden triumph of abstract representation on the political stage. Unlike previous political bodies that had claimed to be the French nation, the National assembly merely claimed to speak on its behalf. The merging of stages that I have described in this essay is therefore the sudden practical result of a parallel political and theatrical revolutions in the theory and practice of representation. The convergence of theater and politics that seemingly occurred so suddenly in 1789 was actually several decades in the making.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Throughout this essay I occasionally retain the French word *comédiens*, which is usually translated into English simply as actor, but which in French retains the overtones of someone who cannot be taken seriously—a concept lost in its usual translation.
- 2 Collot d’Herbois, *Quelques lettres inédites de Collot-d’Herbois*, ed. by M.A. Preux (Douai, 1869), 16.
- 3 The word and the concept of an historical “site,” where seemingly unrelated concepts find an historically-specific common ground, are from the preface to Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage, 1973). Although I have avoided, in this essay, explicit attempts to theorize the “causes” of the merging of the political and theatrical stages, I have done so elsewhere. See my article “Parallel Stages: Theatrical and Political Representation in *Early Modern and Revolutionary France*” in *The Age of Cultural Revolutions: Britain and France, 1750-1820*, edited by Colin Jones and Dror Wahrman (Berkeley: University of California Press, forthcoming).
- 4 For this portion of the essay, I am indebted to the work of several theater historians, many of whom wrote the better part of a century ago, but whose studies remain the most authoritative, factual accounts of the actors and the theaters of Revolutionary France. Above all, I have relied extensively on Henri Lyonnet’s “Comédien Révolutionnaires,” which I consulted both in its manuscript form (at the Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal), and in the serialized version in *La Nouvelle Revue*. Other accounts of Revolutionary theater which have proved extremely useful include Paul d’Estrée, *Le Théâtre sous la terreur: théâtre de la peur, 1793-1794* (Paris, 1913); A. Pougin, *La Comédie-Française et la Révolution* (Paris: Gaultier, Magnier, [1902]); Henri Welschinger, *Le Théâtre de la Révolution: 1789-1799* (Paris: Charavay Frères, 1880); and Jacques Hérissey, *Le Monde des théâtres pendant la révolution: 1789-1800* (Paris: Perrin, 1922). In addition, the more recent book by Noëlle Guibert and Jacqueline Razgonnikoff, *Le Journal de la Comédie-Française, 1787-1799: La Comédie aux trois couleurs* (Paris: Sides, 1989), although intended as a popular history, has proved invaluable in many respects.
- 5 *Réponse de M. Naudet, comédien du roi, aux injures répandues contre lui dans différents journaux* (Paris, 1790), 1-2.
- 6 Naudet gives the information concerning his own appointment and that of Saint-Prix in his *Réponse de M. Naudet, comédien du roi*; however, two letters contained in the archives of the Comédie Française [Naudet file], written on 19 September and 3 October 1789, are signed: Naudet, Lieutenant de la garde nationale parisienne. A letter written on January 28, 1790 indicates that he is a Capitaine de Grenadier. The information regarding Grammont’s rank is contained in *Les Comédiens commandans*

MM. Naudet, Grammont, St-Pry [sic], Marcy, Dugazon, Chamville, tous Comédiens français. *A Messieurs les Parisiens* (Paris, 1789), 5.

- 7 For information on Saint-Prix's military service see A.N. f/17/1294, dossier 4. Talma's National Guard identity card can be found in the Talma file of the archives of the Comédie Française. De Boizi reported in his *Considérations importantes sur ce qui se passe, depuis quelques tems, au prétendu Théâtre de la Nation, et particulièrement sur les persécutions exercées contre le Sieur Talma* ([1790]), that Talma "had had the honor of being admitted in the *compagnie des chasseurs volontaires de l'ancien district des Cordeliers*", although he gives no precise date. On the military rank of the others mentioned here, see *Les Comédiens commandants*. See also Henry Lyonnet, *Comédiens révolutionnaires* (unpublished manuscript, at the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal), 27. Much of this work was later published in serial form over a period of years in the *Nouvelle Revue*. Lyonnet also mentions that Fusil and Michot from the Théâtre de la rue de Richelieu were in the National Guard, and that Baptiste Cadet from the Théâtre Montansier was in the grenadiers.
- 8 Volume 20 of the "Feux" contained in the archives of the Bibliothèque de la Comédie Française.
- 9 See, in particular, the quotations from *Les Comédiens Commandans MM. Naudet, Grammont, St-Pry, Marcy, Dugazon, Chamville, tous Comédiens français. A Messieurs les Parisiens* (Paris, 1789), 11, on the "provisional" nature of these appointments and the hope that the actors will soon "step down"; and from [Ducroisi], *L'Homme aux trois révérences ou Le Comédien remis à sa place; étrennes à ces messieurs: Pour l'année 1790. Par un Neveu de M. l'Abbé Maury* (N.p., [1789]), 10, on the "hasty choice" of the actors and the conviction that they will shortly be sent back to the theaters.
- 10 See de Boizi, *Considérations importantes sur ce qui se passe, depuis quelque tems, au prétendu Théâtre de la Nation, et particulièrement sur les persécutions exercées contre le Sieur Talma* (N.p., [1790]), 12: "Will you forgive Mr. Naudet . . . [for his] abuse of the grenadiers which he has the honor of commanding, in making use of them to impose silence upon those among you [in the parterre] who would [otherwise] like to force him to show the respect which he owes you? Is this the kind of work which suits a National Guard? Does [the Guard] wish to brought down to the vile functions of the old regime's satellites?" Naudet defended himself against this charge (as well as a similar allegation leveled by Camille Desmoulins in No 39 of his *Révolutions de France & de Brabant*) in his *Réponse de M. Naudet*, in which he included a letter written by the grenadiers whom he commanded, assuring Parisians, "that Mr. Naudet has never made use of the individuals who compose [his troop] for service at the Théâtre Français." [p. 9]. For another defense of Naudet see [J-B Laborde], *Justification des comédiens français. Opinions sur les chefs d'oeuvre des auteurs morts, & projet de décret portant réglement entre les auteurs dramatiques & tous les comédiens du royaume* (Paris, 1790), 8-9.
- 11 Cited in Lyonnet, "Comédiens Révolutionnaires" in *La Nouvelle Revue* (15 January 1924), 179.
- 12 My information on Grammont's career is derived from the following sources: Richard

Cobb, *The People's Armies*, trans. by Marianne Elliott (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987), 68-70; d'Estrée, 298-99; Lyonnet, 51-52; and C.G. Etienne and A. Martainville, *Histoire du théâtre Français, depuis le commencement de la révolution jusqu'à la réunion générale* (Paris, 1802), 2:178. I have also relied upon references to Grammont contained in Noëlle Guibert and Jacqueline Razgonnikoff, *Le Journal de la Comédie-Française*. Perhaps the most detailed, if not the most rigorously footnoted, biography of Grammont can be found in the chapter entitled "Un Comédien Révolutionnaire" in Pougin, 295-332.

- 13 O Ronsin's military career and his relationship with Grammont and the other actors of the Théâtre Montansier, see Cobb, 62-70.
- 14 *Ibid*, 69. Cobb gives the names of Folleville, Gaillard, and Lavault, and remarks that Grammont had but one adjunct who was not an actor. [Cobb cites AN, T 1632 as the source for his information].
- 15 Lyonnet, d'Estrée, and Guibert all seem certain of this fact. D'Estrée cites Compardon, *Histoire du Tribunal révolutionnaire* (Paris, 1866), t. I, 149. See also Pierre Frantz, "Pas d'entracte pour la Révolution," in *La Carmagnole des muses: l'homme de lettres et l'artiste dans la Révolution*, ed. by Jean-Claude Bonnet (Paris: A. Collin, 1988), 383. Pougin quotes several sources, not all of them reliable, in support of his assertion that Grammont was indeed present [Pougin, 322-325]. The careers of executioners and actors were often linked in the eighteenth century imagination, no doubt because these were the only two groups of individuals in the ancien régime to be deprived of a civil status solely on the basis of their professions.
- 16 The Théâtre Français possessed the exclusive privilege to perform virtually all of France's dramatic masterpieces.
- 17 Lyonnet, 54. Lyonnet writes that Fusil was booed off the stage for his Jacobin ties when he first returned to the theater after Thermidor.
- 18 Lyonnet, 53.
- 19 Cobb, 230. According to Cobb, Dufresse's enthusiasm for the terror was more "play-acting" than real conviction, thus accounting for his acquittal by the Thermidorian court.
- 20 Most of the theaters of Paris formed such troops in response to the general alarm. On the troop formed by the Théâtre Montansier, see AN, c.163/(micro), n. 372, piece 25 (3 September 1793). See also Lyonnet, 31-34. For information on troops assembled by the Théâtre de la Liberté, Théâtre de l'Egalité, and the Théâtre du Palais see AN, c.163/(micro), N. 374, f. 69, piece 24 (7 September 1792). See also the document cited in Alexandre Tuetey, *Répertoire général des sources manuscrites de l'histoire de Paris pendant la révolution française* (Paris: Imprimerie nouvelle, 1890-1914), v.4, 239 (no1918), which refers to the troops formed by the Théâtre de la rue Richelieu and the Théâtre du Palais [Tuetey gives his source as AN: C167 no405]. And a document contained in the archives of the Bibliothèque de la Comédie Française details the formation of the troop of actors of the Théâtre de la Liberté et de l'Egalité. [Box labeled 1791-

1793].

- 21 My source for Saint-Preux's military career is an undated archival document, apparently in Saint-Preux's own hand [AN, f171294, dossier 4] with the heading "Conduite civique du citoyen Auvray dit St. Preux depuis l'année 1789."
- 22 AN, aa40, Doss. 1300. Lyonnet mentions another actor/soldier by the name of Maillot who similarly strutted the stages in enemy territory. [Lyonnet, "Comédiens Révolutionnaires," *La Nouvelle Revue* (May 1, 1924), 59].
- 23 "Le Paysan magistrat" was performed at the Théâtre Français (newly renamed Théâtre de la Nation) on December 7, 1789 [Guibert, 72].
- 24 The Almanac of Parisian theater for the year 1792 gave the following review of Collot's play "Les deux Porte-Feuilles": "This little play, full of gaiety, and an analogy to current events, is one of the plays which has had the most success in the [Théâtre de Monsieur]." [*Almanac générale de . . . 1792*, 74.] The Almanac also referred to Collot as one of the "authors who are justly appreciated by the sane portion of the Public" (35).
- 25 By 1792 Collot had become active on the Committee of Correspondence, which the historian François Furet has called "the most important of the [Jacobin] Club's internal organs . . . [and] the heart of the Jacobin apparatus." [François Furet, "Jacobinism" in *Critical Dictionary*, 707].
- 26 Colin Jones, *The Longman Companion to the French Revolution* (London: Longman, 1990), 183.
- 27 Testimony of Marie Jeane Elizabeth Brocard Jolly, 26 ventose II, AN, w78, plaq. 2, pièce 131.
- 28 *Archives nationales*, F/7/4438, plaq. 7, pièce no. 4.
- 29 Cobb, 368.
- 30 *Ibid*, 373 and 580. On Fusil's career as an actor, see above.
- 31 Dorfeuille, quoted in R.R. Palmer, *Twelve Who Ruled: The Year of the Terror in the French Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 170-71. On Dorfeuille's theatrical and political career see Lyonnet, "Comédiens Révolutionnaires" in *Nouvelle Revue* (15 August 1924), 373-374. In addition to his role as the President of the Commission de Justice in Lyon, Dorfeuille had also been the *Commissaire des représentants du peuple* in Roanne.
- 32 "Collot d'Herbois, [when performing as an actor in pre-Revolutionary Lyon] . . . seeing that the Lyonnais persisted in their irreverence by greeting him with boos [when he appeared on the stage], swore that sooner or later he would avenge himself upon them . . . Chance played only too well into his plans and desires!" [Louis-Abel Beffroy de Reigny], *Dictionnaire néologique des hommes et des choses, etc. par le cousin Jacques*

- (Paris, Year VIII), 3:392.
- 33 *Ibid*, 395.
- 34 *Ibid*, 394.
- 35 For the theatrical background on Fabre d'Eglantine I have relied primarily on Lyonnet's short biography in "Comédiens Révolutionnaires," *Nouvelle Revue* (15 August 1922): 90-94 and (1 September 1922): 276-281.
- 36 *Arrêté du district des cordeliers, Du 5 Mars 1790. Extrait des registres des délibérations de l'assemblée du district des Cordeliers. Du 5 Mars 1790* (N.p., [1790]).
- 37 See the favorable notice in *Almanac générale de . . . 1791*, 146. It is also worth noting that both Fabre's and Collot's signatures are included among the twenty-five most prestigious playwrights in Paris who signed a document in support of authors' property rights to their plays. [See *Réponse aux observations pour les Comédiens Français* (N.p., 1790), 56.] Despite this fact, both Collot and Fabre were singled out by the actors and theater directors of Lyon as two out of four "justly famous" playwrights who, in contradistinction to the rest of their colleagues, treated actors in a considerate fashion. See *Mémoire pour les Comédiens du Spectacle de Lyon; contre les Auteurs Dramatiques* (N.p., n.d.), 48.
- 38 See *Almanac générale de . . . 1792*, 240.
- 39 See above. Both Lyonnet and Guibert (p.352) make reference to this relationship.
- 40 Lyonnet, 279.
- 41 Robespierre, "Report on the Principles of Political Morality (5 February 1794)," in *The Old Régime and the French Revolution*, ed. by Keith Michael Baker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 383. See also Butwin, 146.
- 42 See also the comment which Billaud-Varenne made to Danton when the latter attempted to defend his friend: "Woe betide the man who has sat by the side of Fabre-d'Eglantine and who is still duped by him." Cited in Albert Soboul, *The French Revolution: From the Storming of the Bastille to Napoleon*, trans. by Alan Forrest and Colin Jones (New York: Vintage, 1975), 368.
- 43 See Boursault's letter addressed to Danton and others, dated September 3, 1792. (AN, F171069, dossier 2.)
- 44 Arthur Pougin, "Un Original: Boursault-Malherbe, fondateur du Théâtre Molière en 1791" extracted from the *Revue d'art dramatique* [and contained in the collection of the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal (Rt 3159)], 195. Lyonnet notes that this article was also printed in *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Théâtre* (2<sup>o</sup> année N<sup>o</sup>6).
- 45 *Loi relative aux spectacles, donné à Paris le 19 janvier 1791* (Paris: de l'imprimerie

royale, 1791). Article One of this decree, which effectively abolished the privileges of France's established theater companies and in particular the exclusive privileges of the Comédiens du Roi, declared that, "All citizens will [henceforth] be allowed to open a public theater and to represent plays of all types, upon making, prior to the opening of their theater, a declaration to the local Municipality."

- 46 AN, F171069, dossier 2.
- 47 AN, F171069, Dossier 7 (5e division. Théâtres ans iv-vii).
- 48 See Pougin, "Un Original," 197, and Lyonnet, manuscript, 25.
- 49 Lyonnet, manuscript, 25.
- 50 *Réponse des citoyens Jean-Baptiste GODEFERT, marchand de bois; Jacques-Charles PROTAIN, peintre [ . . . ] etc., etc. A un écrit imprimé chez Linodin, imprimeur de la Section des Lombards, rue Saint-Martin, no 250, Intitulé: Réflexions nécessaires ... l'intelligence de l'état actif et passif, présenté par le citoyen BOURSAULT ... ses créanciers. Ledit écrit, signé DUMONSSEAUX, suivi d'un ARRETE de la SECTION DES LOMBARDS, du 28 octobre 1792, l'an premier de la République Française. Signé POULLENOT, président; Pour expédition, DUMONSSEAUX, secrétaire, et COLMET secr,taire-greffier* (N.p., [1792]), 4.
- 51 *Ibid*, 5.
- 52 See Lyonnet, 52-53. See also Frantz, 383.
- 53 Lyonnet claims that Beaulieu, an actor at the Variétés amusantes, was present at the taking of the Bastille, and was later named a captain in the National Guard. (See Lyonnet, Chapter XX in *La Nouvelle revue* (May 1, 1924): 54-55. Lyonnet mentions another actor by the name of Ribl, employed at the Théâtre de Nicolet, who also was present at the taking of the Bastille, and who was also later named a captain in the National Guard (Lyonnet, Chapter XXI in *La Nouvelle revue* (July 15, 1924): 170).
- 54 See above for Boursault's comments on his activity in Marseille during the Revolutionary *journées*. In addition, the provincial actor Brisse, who was later to become mayor of Nancy, claimed that he took part in revolutionary events in Rouen during the summer of 1789. (AN, F171216).
- 55 See *La Mort subite du sieur Bordier, acteur des Variétés. Lettre d'un négociant de Rouen, ... M. Guillaume, Marchand de Draps, rue Saint-Denis, du 22 Août 1789* (N.p., [1789]); *Bordier aux enfers, comédie en un acte* (Paris, 1789); and *Jugement de Bordier, dans l'Empire des morts, ou Lettre de Lekain aux amateurs* (Paris, [1789]).
- 56 In this respect the Revolutionaries tended to follow Rousseau in his singling out of actresses as doubly duplicitous. See, in particular, Rousseau's *Lettre à Mr. d'Alembert sur les spectacles*, originally published in 1758.

- 57 *Le petit Almanac des grands spectacles de Paris* (Paris, 1792), 157.
- 58 Much of the biographical background on Lacombe can be found in Lyonnet, *Nouvelle Revue* (1 September 1924): 83-90.
- 59 Claire Lacombe, *Discours prononcé à la barre de l'Assemblée nationale, par Madame Lacombe, le 25 juillet 1792, l'an 4e, de la liberté* (Paris, [1792]), as translated by Darline Gay Levy, Harriet Branson Applewhite, and Mary Durham Johnson, *Women in Revolutionary Paris: 1789-1795* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press), 156.
- 60 Lyonnet, 86, and *Women in Revolutionary Paris*, 144.
- 61 *Women in Revolutionary Paris*, 144.
- 62 Cited in *Ibid*, 183.
- 63 d'Estrée, *Le Théâtre sous la terreur*, 268. On Vergniaud's eloquence, as well as his writing and possibly acting in plays, see also Jean-Denis Bredin, "Vergniaud ou le génie de la parole" in François Furet and Mona Ozouf, *La Gironde et les Girondins*, (Paris: Editions Payot, 1991), 369-70.
- 64 *Dispatches from Paris, 1784-1790*, excerpted in Keith Baker, ed. *The Old Régime and the French Revolution*, 188-89.
- 65 (June 15th, 1789) Arthur Young, *Travels in France during the years 1787, 1788 & 1789*, edited by Constantia Maxwell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), 144.
- 66 *Ibid*, 254.
- 67 Cited in Goodden, "Dramatising of Politics," 204. See also a similar example cited by Goodden in which the *Mercur*e reported that a proposal by the Abbé Maury, on the floor of the Assembly, could not be heard because it was drowned out by "a general brouhaha, and the applause of the galleries [. . .] which either think of themselves as the representatives of France or believe that they are attending the Comédie Italienne" (*Ibid*).
- 68 Alain-Charles Gruber, *Les grandes fêtes et leurs décors à l'époque de Louis XVI* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1972), 141-2.
- 69 *Ibid* 144-5. See especially figures 104 and 105.
- 70 Young, *Travels in France*, 254. For the dates on which the National Assembly moved into its various salles, I have relied on the list provided in Colin Jones, *The Longman Companion to the French Revolution*, 166.
- 71 Mercier, quoted in Marie-Hélène Huet, *Rehearsing the Revolution*, 2.
- 72 Butwin, 144.

- 73 Maximilien de Robespierre, “Sur le gouvernement représentatif [Prononcé à l’Assemblée nationale, séance du 10 mai 1793]” in Robespierre: *Textes Choisis* (Paris: Editions Sociales, 1957), 2:151.
- 74 Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. Conor Cruise O’Brien (New York: Penguin, 1981), 161.
- 75 See Goodden, 199.
- 76 *Ibid*, 210. See also Butwin, 148.
- 77 See, for example, the pro-Jacobin pamphlet *Le Véritable Portrait de nos législateurs, ou Galerie des tableaux exposés à la vue du public depuis le 5 mai 1789, jusqu’au premier octobre 1791* (Paris, 1792), which brands Mirabeau a “Grand Comédien” (p. 9), and claims that the bulk of his speeches were scripted by others. (p.14). See also *Evénemens remarquables & intéressans, à l’occasion des Décrets de l’auguste Assemblée nationale, concernant l’éligibilité de MM. les Comédiens, le Bourreau, & les Juifs* (N.p. 1790) in which a fictional Mirabeau not only confesses before the National Assembly that he is an actor, but also unmasks a good number of his political colleagues as fellow thespians.
- 78 Cited in Goodden, “The Dramatising of Politics,” 206.
- 79 Etienne and Martainville, 1:195-96. See also Hérissey, 85.
- 80 It is interesting to note that a mid-nineteenth century bibliography seemed so confused by the title that it branded this work a satire. A reading of the play reveals quite plainly, however, that the work is not a satire. See Joseph de Filippi, *Essai d’une bibliographie du théâtre: ou, Catalogue raisonné de la bibliothèque d’un amateur, completant le catalogue Soleinne* (Paris: Tresse, 1861).
- 81 For example, the phrase “seal of the magistrates” (p. 17) of the 1786 version is replaced with “seal of the nation” in the 1791 version (p.9). In addition, a reference which might have explicitly excluded individuals outside the theater in the 1786 version—“The stage represents the Foyer of the Théâtre Français, where the busts of the Great Men of the Theater are arrayed in relief”—was transformed in the later version to “The Theater represents the Foyer of the Théâtre de la Nation, where the busts of Great Men are arrayed.”
- 82 De Valigny, *Le Poète au foyer, ou L’Eloge des grands hommes du Théâtre de la Nation; y compris celui de Mirabeau. Scène lyrique nouvelle* (Paris, 1791), 11-12. See, for comparison: De Valigny, *Le Poète au foyer, ou L’Eloge des grands hommes du théâtre français, scène lyrique nouvelle en prose* (Paris, 1786).
- 83 *Almanac générale de tous les spectacles de Paris et de la province, pour l’année 1792*, 225.
- 84 BN: Mss., nouv. acq. fr. 2665, fol. 266. “Permission de l’état-major général de la grade nationale et de la municipalit, au sieur Texier, pour l’ouverture d’un spectacle, sous le

nom de spectacle militaire, où seront représentés des combats et sièges, et requête présentée au district par ledit Texier qui vient de traiter avec l'entrepreneur du Cirque du Palais Royal. 15 juin 1790.”

- 85 *Ibid*, fol. 267.
- 86 [L-A Beffroy de Reigny, Mayeur, Ribié, Saint-Aubin], *Almanac générale de tous les spectacles de Paris et des provinces, pour l'année 1791*. (Paris, 1791), vol. I, 266-68.
- 87 *Ibid*, 258.
- 88 *Ibid*, 258-59.
- 89 Cited in J. Charrier, *Claude Fauchet: Evêque constitutionnel du Calvados, député à l'assemblée législative et à la Convention (1744-1793)* (Paris, 1909), 169.
- 90 *La Bouche de fer*, 3 (October 1790), 17.
- 91 *La Bouche de fer*, no<sup>o</sup>1 (1790), 15.
- 92 Cited in Charrier, 169.
- 93 Cited in Goodden, 204.
- 94 C.G. Etienne et A. Martainville, *Histoire du théâtre français, depuis le commencement de la révolution jusqu'à la réunion générale* (Paris, an x [1802]), vol. I, 156-57.
- 95 I address the subject of theatricality and the Terror in my forthcoming book *The Tyranny of Actors: Theatricality and the French Revolution*.
- 96 For background information on La Montansier, which I have occasionally made use of in this, see Ch. Gailly de Taurines, “Une Campagne en Belgique” in *Revue des Deux Mondes* (avril, 1904), 670-683; Lyonnet, 31-36; and Marie-Laurence Netter, “Theatres and their Directors” in *Theatre, Opera, and Audiences in Revolutionary Paris: Analysis and Repertory*, edited by Emmet Kennedy, Marie-Laurence Netter, James P. McGregor, and Mark V. Olsen (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1996), 70-71.
- 97 Dufresse had been Moreton's ordinance officer at Jemmappes (Lyonnet, 34) and, according to Montansier's letter, was now Moreton's aide de camp.
- 98 See above.
- 99 Letter from Montansier to Minister of Foreign Affairs Lebrun, November 26, 1792. (A.N. F/1e/11, Dossier 5.)
- 100 *Ibid*.
- 101 *Ibid*. Gailly de Taurine wrote, in his 1905 article, that Montansier's list was appended

to her first letter. (675). By the time I consulted these documents, however, the repository was loose in the folder, without a date.

- 102 Letter from Chépy to Lebrun, 18 November 1792 (received the 21st)[A.N. F/1e/11, Dossier 2].
- 103 Letter from Lebrun to La Montansier, 27 November 1792. (A.N. F/1e/11, Dossier 5.)
- 104 Letter from Lebrun to La Montansier, 29 November 1792. (A.N. F/1e/11, Dossier 5.)
- 105 Letter from Montansier to Lebrun (n.d.), in *Ibid.*
- 106 Letter from Lebrun to the administrators of the Opéra, 1 December 1792. (A.N. F/1e/11, Dossier 7.)
- 107 *Ibid.*
- 108 Letter from Montansier to Lebrun (4 January 1793). (A.N. F/1e/11, Dossier 5.)
- 109 *Ibid.*
- 110 *Ibid.*
- 111 Letter from Montansier to Lebrun (8 January 1793). (A.N. F/1e/11, Dossier 5.)
- 112 According to the database of the Parisian Stage Daily Performance Report of the Artfl project at the University of Chicago, compiled by the editors of *Theater, Opera, and Audiences in Revolutionary Paris*, *Pierre le cruel* was performed at the Théâtre de la Citoyenne Montansier four times over the course of October and November 1791. In addition to *Pierre le cruel*, Montansier's theater had performed two other plays by de Belloy from July to December of 1791: seven performances of *Zelmire* and two performances of *Gabrielle de Vergy*.
- 113 Letter from Montansier to Lebrun (4 January 1793). (A.N. F/1e/11, Dossier 5.)
- 114 *Ibid.*
- 115 *Ibid.*
- 116 Bill [from Montansier] to the [Executive] Council (A.N. F/1e/11, Dossier 7.)
- 117 Report of Deshacquets to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, cited in Gailly de Taurines, 681.
- 118 Cited in *Ibid.*
- 119 Bill [from Montansier] to the [Executive] Council (A.N. F/1e/11, Dossier 7.)

120 See above.

121 Throughout this essay, I use the hyphenated form *re-presentation* to refer to the act by which an intangible body is presented in concrete form; this form of re-presentation is analogous to the Catholic conception of transubstantiation in which the body and the blood of Christ are materially re-presented, or incarnated within the bread and the wine of the Eucharist. I use the non-hyphenated form *representation* to refer to the process by which an intangible body is abstractly represented in spirit rather than in substance; this form is analogous to the various Protestant conceptions of the Eucharist in which the body and blood of Christ are symbolically referred to by the bread and the wine.



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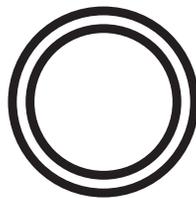
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