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DAVID'S BASKET:

ART AND ACTIVISM IN THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

by

PAUL WERNER

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Art History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, the City University of New York.

1998

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THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

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Abstract

DAVID'S BASKET: ART AND ACTIVISM IN THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

by

Paul Werner

Adviser: Professor Carol M. Armstrong

Can art cause political change? This dissertation proposes Jacques-Louis David's painting of 1789, The Lictors returning to Brutus the Bodies of his Sons, as a means of asking a question which is fundamental to the study of the French Revolution, and to the Modernist project which the French Revolution initiates.

The *Introduction* outlines the parameters of this discussion. Just as revolutionary historiography has been concerned with problems of agency and will, so, too, Art History has drawn an unquestioned analogy between artistic *motivation* and political *goals. Section One* clarifies the expectations brought to this painting by the audience of 1789. The Brutus was a site on which questions of political allegiance were thrashed out: allegiance to the Royal image, allegiance to current epistemological issues and mostly, allegiance to the enlightened elites of the Royal Academies. *Section Two* traces a parallel development of David's Brutus and the events of 1787 - 1789. The Brutus was undoubtedly political in intent, but David's intentions, like his politics, changed month-to-month, even week by week. *Section Three* raises the question of art's capacity to cause political change, as seen through the Brutus and David's career. The Enlightenment critique of society necessitated a belief in the possibility of change through culture, while denying such change in actuality, whereas the French Revolution affirmed change - within limits. David's Brutus, and David himself, were more the pawns of this ideology than its creators. The *Conclusion* narrates the author's personal experiences in a politically and culturally charged moment, the events of May, 1968, and draws conclusions applicable to the broader issue of politics and the arts.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS...vii

TEXT

INTRODUCTION..1

SECTION ONE...28

Chapter One..33

Chapter Two..50

Chapter Three..71

SECTION TWO..100

Chapter Four...103

Chapter Five...124

Chapter Six..145

SECTION THREE...169

Chapter Seven..171

Chapter Eight..189

Chapter Nine...211

CONCLUSION..236

ILLUSTRATIONS..*252*

BIBLIOGRAPHY...*294*

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

[#1] Jacques-Louis David. Brutus. Oil on canvas, 1789. Louvre, Paris.

[#2] Adélaïde Labille-Guiard. Portrait de feûe Madame Louise-Elisabeth de France, Infante d' Espagne, Duchesse de Parme, avec son fils âgé de deux ans. Oil on canvas, Salon of 1789. Musée national ou Château, Versailles.

[#3] Elizabeth Vigée-Lebrun. Self-Portrait. Oil on canvas, after 1783. National Gallery of Art, London

[#4] Jean-Baptiste Marie Pierre. Figures du petit peuple à Rome. Etching, 1756.

[#5] Jean-François-Pierre Peyron. The Death of Socrates. Oil on canvas, 1789. Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen.

[#6] P. -L. Debucourt. Un Trait de Bienfaisance du Roi. Oil on canvas, 1785. Musée national du Château, Versailles.

[#7] Jean-Charles Le Vasseur, after J.-L Le Barbier le jeune. Bienfaisance du Roi. Engraving ,1780.

[#8] Robert Guillaume Dardel. Descartes percant les ténèbres de l' ignorance. Terra cotta model. Wallace Collection, London.

[#9] Jacques-Louis David (attributed). Brutus witnessing the execution of his sons. Lead with ink in parts, grey wash. Thaw Collection, New York.

[#10] Jacques-Louis David. The Elder Horatius defending his Son. Black chalk, ink and wash on paper, circa 1784. Louvre, Paris.

[#11] Francesco Primaticcio. Ulysses Shooting through the Rings. Red chalk heightened with white, traces of squaring in red chalk, on pink prepared paper. circa 1570. Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

[#12] Etienne-Barthélémy Garnier. Consternation de Priam. Oil on canvas, Salon of 1793. Musée des Ursulines, Mâcon.

[#13] Jacques-Louis David. Brutus and Members of his Household. Drawing in black chalk, 1787-1788. Musée Bonnat, Bayonne.

[#14] Jacques-Louis David. Brutus. Figure Drawing. Black chalk, 1787-1788. Musée Bonnat, Bayonne.

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[#15] School of Phidias. Figure G., from the East Pediment of the Parthenon. Athens, late fifth century BCE. British Museum, London.

[#16] Chiaramonte Niobid. Roman copy after a Greek original. Museo Gregoriano, Vatican.

[#17] Lucius Junius Brutus. Bronze, c. 200 AD. Palazzo degli Conservatori, Rome.

[#18] Jacques-Louis David. Les Amours de Paris et Hélène. Oil on canvas, signed and dated 1788. Louvre, Paris.

[#19] Jacques-Louis David. Brutus. Detail: The Scroll in Brutus' hand.

[#20] P.-A. Demachy. Fête de l' Etre Suprême. Oil on canvas, 1794. Musée Carnavalet. Paris.

[#21] Jacques-Louis David. Study for Brutus. Oil on paper pasted to canvas, 1789. Nationalmuseum, Stockholm.

[#22] Attributed to Jacques-Louis David. Brutus. Compositional Drawing. Pen and wash on paper. Signed and dated lower left: "L. David faciebat 1787." J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu.

[#23] Jacques-Louis David. Weeping Servant. Black and White Chalks, 1789. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Tours.

[#24] Charles de Wailly. Projet pour le salon du Muséum. Drawing, 1789. Musée Carnavalet, Paris.

[#25] Jacques-Louis David. Three Women. Black chalk, circa 1787. Louvre, Paris.

[#26] Jacques-Louis David. Compositional Study for Brutus. Brown chalk, circa 1788. Robert Lehman Collection, New York.

[#27] Jacques-Louis David. Compositional Study for Brutus, 1788-1789. Black chalk. Musée Bonnat. Bayonne.

[#28] Jacques-Louis David. Fainting Daughter. Black crayon, fragment of a larger sheet, 1789. Fondation Custodia, Paris.

[#29] After Callimachos. Bacchae. Roman copy, circa 200 CE. Palazzo degli Conservatori, Rome.

[#30] Jacques-Louis David. Brutus, detail: The Fainting Daughter.

[#31] Jacques-Louis David. Brutus, detail: The Basket.

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[#32] [Anonymous]. Les Parques Nationalles. Engraving, November 1791. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris

[#33] Death of Socrates. Oil on canvas, 1787. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

[#34] [Anonymous]. Le doigt magique. Engraving, circa 1785. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

[#35] Carle Vernet. Le Triomphe de Paul-Emile (The Triumph of Aemilius Paulus). Oil on canvas, Salon of 1789. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

[#36] Carle Vernet. Le Triomphe de Paul-Emile (The Triumph of Aemilius Paulus), detail: Muscius Scaevola.

[#37] Carle Vernet. Le Triomphe de Paul-Emile, detail: Roman Temple.

[#38] Anonymous. Sainte Geneviève under Construction. Engraving, circa 1787. Musée Carnavalet, Paris

[#39] Jacques-Louis David. Serment du Jeu de Paume. Pen and brown ink on paper, 1791. Louvre, Paris.

[#40] Jacques-Louis David. Marat à son dernier soupir. Oil on canvas, 1793. Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts, Bruxelles.

[#41] Jean-Baptiste Regnault. La Liberté ou la Mort. Oil on Canvas, 1795. Kunsthalle, Hamburg.

[#42] Jacques-Louis David. Mort de Joseph Barra (Death of Barra). Oil on canvas, 1794. Musée Calvet, Avignon.

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INTRODUCTION

Can we change the world through sheer will? On April 28, 1789, violence broke out in Paris. Fifteen thousand demonstrators converged on the house of the manufacturer Jean-Baptiste Réveillon, and sacked it. Royal troops opened fire, leaving perhaps three hundred dead in what would remain one of the bloodiest days of the French Revolution.[1]

The Réveillon Uprising ushered in the great historic changes of 1789: the meeting of the Estates General called to resolve the State's fiscal crisis on May 5, the Tennis Court Oath to write a new Constitution on June 20, and the Fall of the Bastille on July 14. The humiliated King entered Paris on July 17, legitimizing the

[1] Jacques Godechot, La Prise de la Bastille (Paris: Gallimard, 1965), 174-191; English version: The Taking of the Bastille (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970), 133-51; see also Jean Callot, "L' Affaire Réveillon," Revue des questions historiques (1934, CXXI): 35-55; (1935, CXXII): 239-254; George Rudé, The Crowd in the French Revolution (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), 27-44; William Doyle, Origins of the French Revolution, Second edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 165-167.

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power of the Parisian middle class under the protection of the tricolor flag and the volunteer militia. On August 4 the Assembly voted to abolish aristocratic and corporate privileges under the pressure of a nationwide panic, the Great Fear; on August 26 the Declaration of the Rights of Man was passed, closing the first phase of the French Revolution with the collapse of the Autocratic State. All of this was accompanied by an acute awareness of the threats and promises of popular violence. In the Réveillon Uprising the people of Paris had found a new, collective ability to influence the political process.

On April 28, however, the wider implications of the uprising were not so clear. The *motivation* of the demonstrators was clear enough: Réveillon, a wealthy manufacturer who had risen through the ranks, an elector to the Estates General, was widely thought to be planning to lower wages for all workers. But the *goals* of the demonstrators were as vague to themselves as to others. Indiscriminately, they mixed shouts of support for the King, his minister Necker, and the King's brother, the Duke of Orléans, with the predictable denunciations of priests, aristocrats, and the rich. For their part, observers assigned responsibility for the riot to professional criminals, or aristocrats, or the Duke of Orléans, or the King's other brother, the Count of Artois, or the English, or priests, or the writer Choderlos de Laclos, or to any of the above in any number of combinations. Government troops reacted at first with apathy, then overreacted, and after the massacre the Royal administration tried to distance itself from the repression. The event was never fully investigated,

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and when those apprehended were interrogated by the police they seemed unable to identify their "leaders," or even to explain their goals.[2]

Did the working men and women of Paris show an unconscious, yet concerted, determination to assert political power on April 28? Did they stumble into a consciousness of their own interests despite themselves? Were they led on by professional agitators with hidden motives, or manipulated by intellectuals with a better grasp of the wider political picture? Were the motives imputed to them only in the eyes of terrified upper- and middle-class beholders? Were the demonstrators merely responding to the notion of lowering their wages with the blind fury of a "people's veto"? Or were they simply using the Réveillon Uprising the way others use a canvas, for the pleasure of "expressing" their true, innate and pre-social character?[3]

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[2] Godechot, La Prise de la Bastille, 187-189; Pierre Baudin et Raoul Cadières, Les grandes journées populaires. Histoire illustrée des révolutions (1789-1830-1848-1870) (Paris: Ancienne Librairie Furne, n. d.), 216-240; see also Pierre-Victor Malouet, Mémoires de Malouet, ed. Baron Victor-Pierre Malouet (Paris: Didier 1868), I, 281; Baron de Besenval, Mémoires, ed. Berville et Barrière (Paris: Baudouin Frères, 1821), I, 347-48; the accusation against Choderlos de Laclos is in Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, Mémoires du Prince de Talleyrand, ed. Duc de Broglie (Paris: Calmann Lévy 1891), Vol. I, 208; see also Graham E. Rodmell, "Laclos, Brissot, and the petition of the Champ de Mars," Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century vol. 183 (1980): 189-222; Jean-Paul Bertaud, Initiation à la Révolution Francaise (Paris: Perrin, 1989), 41-42, 106; Raymonde Monnier, "Réveillon, Jean-Baptiste," in Albert Soboul, Dictionnaire Historique de la Révolution Française (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1989), 904-905; Jules Michelet, Histoire de la Révolution française [Paris, 1847-1853], (Paris: Gallimard, la Pléiade, 1952), I, 86-87, with commentary by Gérard Walter, I, 1299-1300.

[3] See the claim, put in the mouths of the Parisian demonstrators, that "bloodshed and fire are for us celebration" ("Le sang, la mort, sont pour nous une fête"), in M. Peltier, "Histoire de l' année 1789," reprinted in Chansonnier historique du XVIIIe siècle, Emile Raunié, ed., X (Paris: A Quantin, 1880), 342; Jean-Gabriel Peltier (1765-1825) eventually became an indefatigable purveyor of lurid (and fictional), tales of slaughter during the French Revolution. The idea of a "veto" is raised in Baudin et Cadières, Les grandes journées populaires, 240.

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In mid-September of 1789, Jacques-Louis David's Brutus was unveiled at the Royal Salon, the exhibition of painting, drawings and sculpture sponsored every other year by the French Crown. Judging by the painting's reception, it is not at all obvious that David intended to provoke a revolution with his painting. And yet the Brutus continues to raise the same questions that were raised by the Réveillon Uprising: did the Brutus consciously present a revolutionary message? was it unconsciously, yet determinedly, in sympathy with the Revolution? Did it influence the course of events? Was David a spontaneous activist or a cynical manipulator, or was he himself being manipulated?

In retrospect, David's whole career was bound to raise such questions. In the years leading up to the French Revolution he played two, apparently contradictory parts. As a promising member of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture he benefited from royal largess and commissions. As an ambitious painter he developed a reputation as a gadfly and victim of the same royal administration. The great works of his early maturity - the Oath of the Horatii (1785), the Death of Socrates (1787), and finally, the Brutus (1789), were painted in the midst of this ambiguous state of affairs.

That ambiguity rises to a peak in the events surrounding the Brutus. David gave the painting its final form in those first fiery days of 1789, and unveiled it to the public in mid-September, in the midst of social and political turmoil. Shortly thereafter he played a supportive role among the young painters determined to reform the Academy. By 1793 the Academy had been suppressed and David

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himself had turned into a major artist of the Revolution and a major political actor. That same year he joined the "regicides," the group of representatives who voted the death of Louis XVI, and when the National Assembly fell under the sway of his friends Robespierre and Marat he became a leading organizer of public propaganda displays and a member of the inner circles of Government. The Classically inspired rhetoric of individual heroism displayed in the Brutus, the Horatii and the Socrates became a model for the posturing of David and his powerful colleagues. After the fall of Robespierre in 1794 he returned to private life, only to be brought back into service under Napoleon. Finally, after the Monarchy was restored, he went into exile in 1816; he died in Brussels in 1825.

David's own, intensely politicized life set the terms by which the political influence of the Brutus has been interpreted. Yet the story of David's career cannot in itself answer the initial question: is will-power enough to create political change?

Specifically: can an artist will a revolution? can a painting embody that will? can the will within the painting communicate itself to the viewers? and can those viewers then be brought to act according to that will? Such questions were raised shortly after the Revolution began; they were asked of the Revolution as a whole long before they were asked of David; and today, any attempt to answer them reveals some of the most basic faultlines in our thinking about the French Revolution, its politics, its culture and its art. Most important, this attempt raises a thorny question: what is the political function of art? And this question returns us once more to the initial question around David's Brutus: I refer to the implicit

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analogy, so often raised but so rarely questioned, of artistic *motivation* with political *goals*.[4]

To turn again from Art History to History: what were people really doing when they did what they said they were doing in the French Revolution? The question of political agency, of the individual's ability to influence events, is a fundamental problem in sociology, and it plays a large part in the historiography of the French Revolution.

In 1910 the conservative historian Augustin Cochin suggested there were two conflicting answers, which he called respectively la thèse du complôt (the Conspiracy Thesis), and la thèse des circonstances (the Circumstantial Thesis).[5] Each proposed to trace the behavior of revolutionaries to its root causes. Both interpretations still inform our thinking about the motivation of artists, politicians, and artist-politicians in 1789 - as in 1998.

According to the Circumstantial Thesis, "The general will, the civic will, lies beyond the tangible, actual, will of the greatest number."[6] The paraphrase is Cochin's, but the thought is Rousseau's, and Kant's, and many others': it is a commonplace of eighteenth-century Enlightenment thought from Montesquieu on.

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[4] Donald Drew Egbert, Social Radicalism and the arts. Western Europe (New York: Khnopf, 1970), is a good example of such unverified suppositions.

[5] Augustin Cochin, La crise de l'histoire révolutionnaire: Taine et M. Aulard (Paris: H. Champion, 1909), 32.

[6] "La volonté générale, la volonté citoyenne, dépasse la volonté actuelle, telle quelle, du plus grand nombre." Cochin, *ibid*, 3. All translations are the author's unless otherwise indicated.

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For each of these writers argued for the existence of a perfect, universal rule of behavior at a remove from the individual's will, but with which the individual sought to harmonize.[7] This idea was expanded by the French revolutionaries to suggest that the Common Will was not simply, as Rousseau had suggested, a thing of the past, or a thing of the imagination (as Montesquieu and Kant believed), but of the here-and-now. In the thought of Revolutionary writers the Common Will turned into a theodicy, a working through of Divine Justice. That thing which drove "The People" to apparently irrational excess was an unconsciously apprehended group self, a group will, something above and beyond the sum of its parts. What the revolutionaries did, therefore, inevitably hid a deeper meaning, not readily apparent; the more obscure their motives appeared to an outside observer, the more exalted the ultimate unfolding of their actions. History itself could be read as a "Hermeneutics of Revealed Meaning." [8]

In the following century, Liberal historians of the French Revolution passed beyond the revolutionary creed that the present was a regeneration-in-the making to the proleptic belief that the past had been an unfolding of "our modern Credo,

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[7] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Du Contrat Social Livre II, Ch. 3, 6 [Paris: 1762] (Paris: Garnier Flammarion 1966), 66-67, 73; on the "kingdom of ends," see Immanuel Kant, Gründlegung für Metaphysik der Sitten (Riga, Hartknoch,1785), #431-436; Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals, transl. James W. Ellington (Indiana: Hackett, 1981), 37-41; Charles-Louis de Montesquieu, "Des Lois dans le rapport qu' elles ont avec les divers êtres," De l' Esprit des Lois [1748], Première Partie, Livre Premier, Chapitre Premier, in Oeuvres, ed. Roger Caillois (Paris: Pléiade 1949), 232-234.

[8] E.g., Constantin-François Volney, Ch. I, "Caractères de la Loi Naturelle," La loi naturelle ou Catéchisme du Citoyen Français (Paris: Sallior, An III [1793]), *in* Oeuvres, Vol. I (Paris: Fayard, 1989), esp. 452-453; Annie Jourdan, "Le culte de Rousseau sous la Révolution: la statue et panthéonisation du Citoyen de Genève," Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century vol. 324 (1994): 70; Bernard Manin, "Rousseau," in Dictionnaire Critique de la Révolution Française," ed. François Furet and Mona Ozouf (Paris: Flammarion, 1988), 872-875; Mona Ozouf, "Regeneration", *ibid.*, 821-831.

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which the Revolution attempted to apply."[9] For Jules Michelet and, later, for the historians of the Third Republic, the Revolution was "the coming of the Law," and its agent "the People itself, the whole People, everybody."[10] In other terms, the Revolution was the coming-into-being of Democracy itself. For only a democracy could be founded on the belief that the State was the objective representation of the myriad desires and needs that make up the social fabric. Only in a democracy, supposedly, could the whole social structure be reflected in the political organization. The French Revolution, like the American, became the founding myth of a democratic culture.[11]

By the end of the nineteenth century left-leaning historians took the same concept one step further by suggesting that the motivating agent of the French Revolution was the teleology, not of a democratic present, but of a socialist future. Marxist historians found an event like the Réveillon Uprising especially challenging because it seemed to mark the crystallization of the consciousness of the French proletariat, the moment when the working men and women of France realized their "objective interests," thus shifting from a "class in itself," a group of people unconsciously united by similarities of position within the economic structure, to a "class for itself, " a group that had become conscious of its common interests and

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[9] "Notre Credo moderne, que la Révolution entreprend d' appliquer." Michelet, "Préface de 1868," *op. cit.*, I, 11.

[10] "L' avènement de la Loi." *ibid.*, "Introduction", 21; "Le peuple même, le peuple entier, tout le monde." "Préface de 1847," 7.

[11] François Furet, Penser la Révolution Francaise (Paris Gallimard, 1978), 19-22; the classic critique of the "democratic myth" can be found in Karl Marx, Critique of Hegel's Doctrine of the State [1843], reprinted in Early Writings, introduced by Lucio Colletti (New York: Vintage Books, 1975), 57-198.

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was ready to act on them.[12] By implication the participants of the French Revolution were driven onward by the barely discerned vision of the forthcoming World Revolution. The Bourgeois Revolution of 1789 contained the seeds of the proletarian revolution that had already begun in Russia.[13]

In opposition to this approach, Cochin revived the Conspiracy Thesis. Following a theory which dates to the first days of the French Revolution, the Conspiracy Thesis assigned enormous powers to small coteries of the educated elites in fomenting the French Revolution: Jews, Freemasons, artists, writers and the like.[14] The concurrent suggestion that the ideologies of the Enlightenment had seriously weakened the political fabric was a commonplace of French conservative thought in the nineteenth century: it was forcefully proposed by Alexis de Tocqueville at mid-century.[15]

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[12] Georges Lefebvre, Quatre-Vingt-Neuf (Paris: Maison du Livre Français, 1939), 106-107.

[13] Furet, Penser la Révolution Française, 140 sqq.; see also Eric J. Hobsbawm, "Beyond the bourgeoisie," Chapter 2 in Echoes of the Marseillaise. Two centuries look back on the French Revolution (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press-1990), 33-66; J. Friguglietti, "Mathiez, Albert-Xavier-Emile," in Historical Dictionary of the French Revolution, 1789-1799, ed. Samuel F. Scott and Barry Rothaus (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984), II, 645.

[14] The most notorious is Abbé Barruel, Le Patriote véridique ou Discours sur les vraies causes de la Révolution actuelle (Paris, 1789) and Mémoires pour servir à l' histoire du jacobinisme, 4 vols (Londres, 1797-1798); both are discussed in Jacques Godechot, La Prise de la Bastille, 327 and La Contre-révolution (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1961), 46-53; see also Amos Hofman, "Opinion, Illusion , and the Illusion of Opinion: Barruel's Theory of Conspiracy," Eighteenth-Century Studies Vol. 27, No. 1 (Fall, 1993): 27-60.

[15] Alexis de Tocqueville, L' Ancien régime et la Révolution française, ed. J. P. Mayer [Paris: 1853; revised 1856] (Paris: Gallimard, 1986), Livre III, ch. 1, 229-241.

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But Cochin's contribution was to restate the divergence between the two theses as a question of agency. The French Revolution was, indeed, the result of a plot, but the plotters were not all that unconscious: they were the radical thinkers, writers and artists of the pre-Revolutionary Enlightenment, Edmund Burke's "intriguing philosophers."[16] These groups, Cochin argued, provided revolutionary motivation through the deliberate organization of communities with shared values - the sociétés de pensée - which provided the People with the imagined equivalent of a "mass will," albeit one that was consciously nurtured and developed.[17] Borrowing from the conservative sociologist Gustave Le Bon, Cochin intimated that "The People" behaved as they did because they were manipulated (or hypnotized) by evil upper-class leaders.[18] What the People did, therefore, inevitably hid a deeper meaning, at odds with its appearance: the more obscure their motives appeared to

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[16] Edmund Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France [London, 1790] (Chicago: Gateway Editions, 1962), 22.

[17] Augustin Cochin, La Révolution et la libre-pensée: la socialisation de la pensée, 1750-1789; la socialisation de la personne, 1789-1792; la socialisation des biens, 1793-1794 (Paris: Plon, 1910), 172-173; the concept is anticipated in Gustave Le Bon, La Révolution Française et la Psychologie des Foules [Paris, 1912] (Paris: Flammarion, 1925), 57.

[18] "Le peuple n' agit jamais sans meneur et...s' il prend une part considérable dans les révolutions en suivant et exagérant les impulsions reçues, il ne dirige jamais les mouvements qu' il exécute." Gustave Le Bon, La Révolution Française et la Psychologie des Foules, 57; see also *ibid*, 60-64, on mass hypnosis; Le Bon's theories were to have important repercussions, notably in the work of Freud; see Sigmund Freud, Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego (Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse, 1921), translated by James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton, n.d.); see also Robert A. Nye, The Origins of Crowd Psychology: Gustave Le Bon and the Crisis of Mass Democracy in the Third Republic (London and Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1975), xxix, xl; Georges Lefebvre, "A Propos des récents articles de George Rudé," Annales Historiques de la Révolution francaise No. 133 (Octobre-Décembre 1953): 289-291; Interestingly, there is a discussion of the figure of Brutus during the French Revolution in Le Bon, *op. cit.*, 175.

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an outside observer, the greater the manipulation by outside forces. History itself could be read as a Hermeneutics of Suspicion. [19]

Cochin's emphasis on small groups, often easier to document than large masses, was particularly sympathetic to American and English sociologists and historians of the early nineteen-fifties, because the opportunity to study narrow, well-documented sections of society matched American scholarship's fascination with quantifiable results. At the same time, the interest of historians gradually shifted away from a "social" explanation of the French Revolution and toward a "political" one, meaning that the answer to the motivations of the revolutionaries was now to be sought in the study of politically connected groups, not in the blind strivings of French society as a whole.[20] The study of the upper- and middle classes was in the ascendant; the study of "the People" was in eclipse; the idea that politicians could, or should, "represent" society at large faded away, while the operative model for government shifted from the conception of Rousseau and Hegel, for whom the State is the transcendence of individual wills, and back to the

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[19] "Interprétation comme soupçon," "Inteprétation comme restauration du sens." The somewhat inadequate English terms are as given in Paul Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation, transl. Dean Savage (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 33 sqq.; see Paul Ricoeur, De l' Interprétation. Essai sur Freud (Paris: Seuil,1965), 35-44; Erwin Panofsky oscillates between the two, most notably when he compares the "false" Classicism of the Middle Ages with the "accurate" Classicism of the Renaissance; Erwin Panofsky, Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art [First edition, 1960, based on 1952 lectures] (New York: Harper and Row, 1972).

[20] E.g., Alfred Cobban, The Social Interpretation of the French Revolution (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964); however, see Cobban's response to his critics in "The French Revolution: orthodox and unorthodox interpretations," in Aspects of the French Revolution (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968): 275-287.

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more conservative views of Locke and Hobbes, for whom the State merely restrains and mediates in the hopelessly destructive war of man against man.[21]

Similar questions of agency still divide historians of the French Revolution. Among these questions, the "transparency" of revolutionary motive - the extent to which revolutionary actions reflect or match the intentions of the actors - plays an important role. Thus in 1978 François Furet, in the most influential book of revolutionary historiography of the past thirty years, anticipated a shift away from Michelet, who "celebrated the memorable coincidence between values, the people and men's actions," to Tocqueville, who "constantly examines the discrepancy he discerns between the intentions of the actors and the historical role they played."[22] Since Furet, and no doubt thanks to Furet, the study of the causes of the French Revolution has progressively shifted from involuntary to voluntary motivations, from the true unconsciousness of the Circumstantial Thesis to the false consciousness of the Conspiracy Thesis. Whether the two theses are true opposites; whether either should be preferred; whether they can or should be reconciled; and whether the motives of the revolutionaries themselves are a valid criterion of truth, are questions that seem today as relevant to art historians as to sociologists and historians of the French Revolution.

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[21] See the discussion in Colletti, "Introduction," in Marx, Early Writings, 31-2.

[22] François Furet, Interpreting the French Revolution, trans. Elborg Forster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press/Paris: Maison des Sciences de l' Homme, 1981), 16; original text: "[Michelet] célèbre la coïncidence mémorable entre les valeurs, le peuple et l' action des hommes;" [Tocqueville] "ne cesse d' interroger l' écart qu' il soupçonne entre les intentions des acteurs et le rôle historique qu' ils jouent." Furet, Penser la Révolution Française, 35; a similar comparison is drawn in Keith Michael Baker, Inventing the French Revolution. Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 1.

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The belief that Agency (the ability to accomplish one's will), and Will (motivation and goals), are inextricably linked has become something of an article of faith in Art History. Take the locus classicus known to every art historian through its description by Erwin Panofsky: a man is walking down the street; he raises his hat; ergo, I have only to familiarize myself with the cultural givens of the gesture, then filter those through the personality of the man in order to understand, first, what the man is trying to say, second, how he says it, and finally, what he really means. "Form" and "content" describe the various levels through which this "real" meaning of the work (*Sinn*) is conveyed.[23]

But what if there is a difference between what the man is trying to do and what he actually does? What if he is trying to say one thing and actually ends up saying something else? What if he is trying to do or say several contradictory things at once? What if, like the Réveillon rioters, he is busy crying Vive le Roi! while dumping stones on the heads of the King's representatives? Those are vexing questions, and Panofsky cheerfully sidestepped them: what the man really wants to say, according to Panofsky, lies "beyond the sphere of conscious volition," meaning

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[23] Erwin Panofsky, "Introductory," in Studies in Iconology. Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939] (New York: Icon Books, 1972); see also Michael Ann Holly, Panofsky and the foundations of Art History (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), chapter 6, 158-193; Keith Moxey, "Panofsky's Concept of 'Iconology' and the Problem of Interpretation;" Arthur Danto, "Commentary," New Literary History XVII (Winter 1986, no. 2): 265-274, 275-79.

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that the man may decide to do something as mundane as raising his hat, but may not decide what the true, "intrinsic meaning" of his action may be.[24]

But what, then, *is* this intrinsic meaning? This is a question that anyone interested in the processes of art production - as opposed to an appreciation for the finished product alone - must find deeply troubling, because it is an *ethical* question, centered on the value of certain actions of the artist, and his responsibility for these actions. For it is one thing to decide what a painting says once it is finished, quite another to decide what it should say while I am producing it, and yet a third to decide whether the finished painting says what I meant it to say when I began it. When Panofsky's man raises his hat, the ultimate meaning ("hello," presumably), is equal to the sum of the man's intentions. However, in a painting, again according to Panofsky, the "intrinsic meaning" is something else than the sum of the various intentions of the artist plus the sum of the social constraints and pressures that went into it.

Obviously this question challenges one's understanding of the meaning of signifier and signified - an understanding that has become seriously compromised in certain forms of Deconstructionist thought.[25] If we are indeed entering the Post-

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[24] "The meaning thus discovered may be called the *intrinsic meaning* or content; it is essential..[It is] above the sphere of conscious volitions." Panofsky, *op. cit.*, 5.

[25] Oswald Ducrot and Tzvetan Todorov, "Autour du signe," in Dictionnaire encyclopédique des sciences du language (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1972), 133. English version: Oswald Ducrot and Tzvetan Todorov, Encyclopedic Dictionary of the sciences of language (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979); see also Anthony Giddens, Central Problems in Social Theory (London, Macmillan, 1979), 10-48, for a critique of Derrida's position in its application to theories of agency. On the problematic of "revolutionary" motivation, see Myriam Revault d' Allonnes, La persévérance des égarés (Paris: C. Bourgois, 1992).

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Modern Age, and if Modernism is a condition that begins, roughly, in the mid-eighteenth century, then it may well be said some day that Modernism was a period in which analyses of the complex relationships of cause, effect, and human intentionality were swept aside in favor of a linear view of will as power. "Power," of course, comes from the French pouvoir, to be able: according to the ethics that we have ourselves inherited from the Enlightenment, power is knowledge. I work my will through what I am able to do or not do, whether this choice is conscious or not.[26]

And yet Panofsky's analysis, which is very much in the line of post-Kantian German hermeneutics, suggests that there is always a "real" meaning to the artwork, whether the artist knows it or not. Motivation and goal do not, strictly speaking, belong to the artist: they are only the two poles of the vector of agency, along which the artist strings iconography and form like so many beads. Only the position of the terms is disputed, e.g. with "social determination" taking precedence over "aesthetic intuition" or vice-versa - or sometimes with the two alternating within the same narrative.[27]

Not surprisingly, artistic judgment in these cases must reduce itself to the question of whether the artist or his critics "got it right." For the myriad tokens of

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[26] William Charlton, Weakness of Will. A Philosophical Introduction (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), and discussion in Risto Saarinen, Weakness of the Will in Medieval Thought: from Augustine to Buridan, Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 44 (Leiden, New York, and Cologne: E. J. Brill, 1994), 1-3.

[27] In the case of David, this theory is developed in Walter Friedlaender, David to Delacroix, transl. Robert Goldwater (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952) [Von David bis Delacroix. Hauprömungen der französischen Malerei, vol. I. Leipzig, 1930].

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human intention or historical determination within a painting are to Panofsky mere vehicles for the elaboration of an ultimate meaning. Either the artist helped the message along, or he hindered it, and to hinder it means a loss of artistic power.

Likewise, in art or in politics, the history of the French Revolution oscillates between a "hermeneutics of suspicion" and a "hermeneutics of recollected meaning," between the faith that what the artist or activist does is exactly what she says or thinks she wants, and the suspicion that whatever she does, she acts merely as an instrument of something or somebody else.[28] For it is pretty much taken for granted that an actor who does not understand or agree with his part is either a fool, or a knave: either the dupe of sinister forces, or a hypocrite who does not believe his own words. Conversely, an actor who does understand her part should be able to act upon it; in the common parlance, she "knows what she's doing;" she "becomes all things by understanding them."[29] It is not surprising, then, that for those who study the French Revolution there has been a continuous, uneasy hovering between accusation and exoneration, Plot and Circumstance, irrational Inspiration and commonsense Imitation, deviousness of intent and transparency of motive.

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[28] I have alternated the use of masculine or feminine pronouns wherever necessary or possible; see Sylvan Barnet, "Sexist Language," in A Short Guide to Writing about Art, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper Collins, 1989), 138.

[29] Giambattista Vico, The New Science, quoted in Michael T. Taussig, The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 1; Isaiah Berlin, Vico and Herder: Two Studies in the History of Ideas (New York: Viking Press, 1976, 13), 53.

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In the field of Art History these disputes were given added impetus by the revival of left-wing political activism among artists and intellectuals in the 1960s, and by the reaction to that activism in American universities and English cultural institutions. David's own political activism in the years 1793-1794 was too obvious an example to be left out of these discussions, and in the late 1960s the dismantling of the Circumstantial Thesis by Historians of the French Revolution gave some added scholarly ammunition to the opponents of a political role for art.

The dispute was ignited in 1966, when L. D. Ettlinger suggested that

> When David chose Brutus' rectitude as the theme of his Salon painting for 1789 he did nothing *extraordinary*, nothing in any way linked with current political views.[30]

And in 1973, Robert L. Herbert took the argument further:

> David's painting...was composed without reference to the revolutionary implications of the theme. It was the events of 1789 to 1794 which redefined the painting.[31]

Herbert's main argument was, that David had begun working on the Brutus by 1787; that the theme, composition and preparatory drawings all preceded the bloody days of 1789; and that previous to that "there was hardly a hint of republican feeling."[32] Therefore, there could have been no political intention on David's part.

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[30] L(eopold) D(avid) Ettlinger, "Jacques Louis David and Roman Virtue," Fred Cook Memorial Lecture, November 23, 1966, Journal of the Royal Society of Arts no. 5216, Vol. CXV (January 1967): 117; Hugh Honour, Neo-Classicism (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968), 195 claims this paper "demolished" the argument for David's political involvement.

[31] Robert L. Herbert, David, Voltaire, Brutus and the French Revolution: an Essay in Art and Politics (New York- Viking Press-1973), 16

[32] Herbert, *op. cit.*, 54.The curious assumption that all politics previous to the French Revolution had to be republican or nothing is based on a misreading of Louis Hautecoeur's own misreading of the Marxist historian Alphonse Aulard; see Alphonse

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Anita Brookner, who shared these views, summed up the Plot Theory in a nutshell, but also laid bare its principal weakness:

> [The Brutus was] most *wilfully* misread by some historians as textual evidence of David's adherence to the revolutionary cause....The enormous literature which has grown up around the Brutus picture concerns itself largely with the problem of whether or not this was a committed *republican* work and therefore a *deliberate* political act...[The Brutus] could be (and has been) read as a conspirator's blueprint [Italics added].[33]

According to Brookner, not only was the Brutus not answerable to the Circumstantial Theory, the adherents of Circumstantial Theory were themselves "willful" conspirators.

However, Brookner's argument, like Herbert's and Ettlinger's, was seriously flawed, both in premise and in fact. First, the evidence brought to bear was misleading. True, few people were openly republican in 1789; few people were openly republican until late in 1791, and even then, many revolutionary leaders were reluctant to commit themselves to a republic in practice. This should not be twisted to suggest that few people were politically engaged in 1789, or 1787, or earlier. True, as far back as the eighteenth-century Whigs, English conservative writers have harbored the belief that politics is best left to a few hidden elites, and that by extension any public form of politics is anomalous; but their view might have been greeted with considerable amusement in late eighteenth-century Paris (or

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Aulard, The French Revolution. A Political History 1789-1804, trans. Bernard Miall (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons 1910), 125-126; Louis Hautecoeur, Louis David (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1954), 99; Ettlinger, *op. cit.*, 106; and Honour's far more nuanced argument, that "nor were there Republicans - in any meaningful sense of the word - in France at this date," in Neo-Classicism, 71); for a systematic critique of Herbert's argument, see Christopher Sells, "Some Recent Research on Jacques-Louis David," Burlington Magazine CXVII, (December 1975): 811-13.

[33] Anita Brookner, David (London: Chatto and Windus, 1980), 90.

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twentieth-century Paris, for that matter), though it seems to have reappeared of late in American conservative discussions about the "End of Politics."[34] In the field of art and patronage this attitude is so persuasive, even today, that it usually passes unnoticed and unquestioned. In any case, Ettlinger's suggestion is highly implausible; the implication that the Revolution began on July 14, 1789 at 1:30 in the afternoon has been aptly characterized as absurd.[35]

Second, the grasp of historiography was weak. For instance, Ettlinger quoted the historian Alfred Cobban for his own purposes, oblivious of the fact that Cobban's emphasis on *political* factors over *social* ones actually favored a political interpretation of the Brutus: for Cobban the radical mobilization of the well-educated was more influential in the years leading up to the Revolution than social pressures within the society at large.[36] Politics among a large elite - of which David himself was a part - was still politics, whether or not it openly attacked the established order.

Third, the theoretical premise was never justified. Neither Ettlinger, Herbert nor Brookner addressed the issue of agency in David's work. For all of them sidestepped the possibilities implied in the Réveillon Uprising: that the Brutus might have been an act with a political motivation, conscious or not, without necessarily

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[34] "Whig Oligarchy," in The Columbia Companion to British History, ed. Juliet Gardiner and Neil Wenborn (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 805.

[35] "Des absurdités." Furet, Penser la Révolution Française, 27; Interpreting the French Revolution, 13.

[36] Ettlinger, *op. cit.*, note 2, p. 123; Theda Skocpol, States and Social Revolutions; a Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 64.

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being an act with a conscious political goal, a "deliberate political act," as Brookner put it. To argue from the very narrow question of whether the Brutus could or could not reveal evidence of a conspiracy was to leave the Circumstantial Thesis out of consideration altogether.

Herbert compounded the problem by finding a political influence for the Brutus, but one that was fortuitous: the painting's fame as a revolutionary statement originated in its wholesale adoption by the revolutionnaries themselves in 1790, during a performance of Voltaire's play of the same name. Thus David's revolutionary fame, and the supposed fame of his Brutus during the Revolution, were quite independent of the original message of the painting -- assuming, of course, like Panofsky, that there is such a thing as an "original" message to begin with. To suggest that the fame of David's Brutus after 1790 owed nothing to David's original agency was to imply that David the revolutionary did not "get it right," even if David the artist did.

In the meantime, the Circumstantial Thesis was alive and well. In 1978 and again in 1985, Thomas E. Crow set out on a far-ranging, in-depth and highly influential analysis of the contestatory milieu of the pre-Revolution. Expanding on the research of the historian Robert Darnton, Crow described the political preparedness of the small, educated group of administrators, artists and amateurs that made up the world of art in the years leading up to 1789, and placed David

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squarely among them.[37] By the same token, Crow placed himself among the so-called "Revisionists," the international group of scholars who, in the various disciplines of History, Cultural History, Philosophy and Art History, were attempting to justify and perhaps even to revive the political and cultural virtues of the Enlightenment and its achievement of a "bourgeois public sphere," a "democratic sociability." There is, for instance, a distinct similarity between the ideas of the art historian Thomas Crow and those of the historian Lynn Hunt.[38] In their view the French Revolution marked the coming into being of a new, vital culture firmly entrenched in the middle class view of life.

What was this culture? Whose interests did it serve? Did it cause the French Revolution? Did an artist like David represent its interests? And did David's Brutus somehow communicate its message? Crow described the gradual emergence of a culture which, from the 1630 Fronde on, was indifferent, if not openly hostile, to

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[37] Robert Darnton, "Trends in Radical Propaganda on the Eve of the French Revolution. 1782-1788" (D. Phil. diss., Oxford University, 1964); "The High Enlightenment and the Low Life of Literature in Pre-Revolutionary France," Past and Present 51 (1971): 79-103; reprinted in French Society and the Revolution, ed. Douglas Johnson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976): 153-87; Thomas E. Crow, Jacques-Louis David's 'Oath of the Horatii': Painting and Pre-Revolutionary Radicalism in France (Ph. D. Dissertation, Los Angeles: UCLA, 1978); "The Oath of the Horatii in 1785: Painting and Pre-Revolutionary Radicalism in France," Art History I (December 1978): 424-71; Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); similar recent implications concerning David's pre-revolutionary activism have been drawn in David Dowd, Pageant-Master of the Republic. Jacques-Louis David and the French Revolution, University of Nebraska Studies New Series, no. 3 (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska, June 1948); Frederick Antal, "Reflections on Classicism and Romanticism," in Classicism and Romanticism (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), 1-45; Christopher Sells, "Some Recent Research on Jacques-Louis David," Burlington Magazine CXVII (December 1975): 811-13; Albert Boime, "Marmontel's Bélisaire and the Pre-revolutionary Progressivism of David," Art History vol. 3 (March 1980): 81-101.

[38] Lynn Avery Hunt, Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 215. Jürgen Habermas, Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit(1962); English version: The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society, transl. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989).

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the culture of the centralized State, and whose most successful area of contestation and public expression was the biennial Salon of the eighteenth century. There, Crow suggested, was developed a social formation that shared something of Stanley Fish's "interpretive communities," and something of Furet's "new political sociability, waiting in the wings to take over the entire stage."[39] This community was outwardly devoted to the relatively safe issues of aesthetics, while inwardly developing into a politically effective unit:

> Nowhere was the disparity between the reigning culture of the Old Regime and the needs and expectations of a largely bourgeois audience more apparent than in the public exhibition.[40]

In the Salon, then, the "bourgeois audience" could confront its own expectations, and by defining itself, emerge as a cogent political unit. By implication an artwork like the Brutus might actually be an agent of change by reflecting it: both Crow's dissertation and his subsequent article on the same topic used as epigraph a passage from an anonymous critic of 1789, which suggested that:

> [...]Revolutions were prepared by the great feelings of the Artists themselves, and therefore genius seems only to march alongside of freedom when in fact it has already laid out everything for her triumph.[41]

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[39] "Une nouvelle sociabilité politique, qui n' attend que l' occasion pour occuper toute la scène;" Penser la Révolution Française, nouvelle édition. (Paris: Gallimard, 1983), 58; Interpreting the French Revolution, 37. Furet uses the term "democratic sociability" ("sociabilité démocratique") further on in the passage (38, 59), presumably to distinguish the world of culture and opinion from the world of political power. Hunt conflates the two; Stanley Fish, Is there a text in this class? The authority of interpretive communities (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980).

[40] Crow, Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris, 228.

[41] "Ce sont les grands sentiments des Artistes eux-mêmes qui ont préparé ces révolutions." Vérités agréables ou le salon vu en beau par l' auteur du Coup de patte (Paris, 1789), 3. The anonymous author is either Louis-François Lefébure or Louis Carrogis Carmontelle; the attribution to Carmontelle (by Crow), or to Lefébure (by Wrigley), are based on the authorship of a 1779 review also entitled Coup-de-patte; see Richard Wrigley, "Censorship and Anonymity in Eighteenth-Century French Art Criticism," Oxford Art

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To which Crow added: "[the artists] have become revolutionaries, the natural enemies of [a shaky social] hierarchy."[42]

Easy to say, but hard to prove. Like many historians of the past twenty years, Crow wished to evade the old, vexing argument as to whether the initiators of the New Order of the French Revolution were a class in the traditional Marxist sense, that is, as defined by their relationship to the means of production. Yet it was difficult to do so without sacrificing the sense of a wider historical determinism: if the Revolution had not been caused by economic shifts, then what had caused it?

Culture and art seemed to offer a better form of explanation for the organizational cohesiveness of the revolutionaries. Crow's narrative described a marginalized, fractious group awaiting the artist who would hand back to it its own "image." To use the Marxist category implicit in Crow's argument, it was thanks to David and the Salon that the Bourgeoisie became a class in itself, "for then the once-disenfranchised audience, via its representation as an oppositional public, had itself come to dominate."[43]

Journal 6 , no. 2 (1983): 25; "APPENDIX IV. A Question of Attribution: Lefébure or Carmontelle?," in The Origins of French Art Criticism: from the Ancien Régime to the Restoration (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1994), 360-62; Neil McWilliam, A Bibliography of Salon Criticism in Paris from the Ancien Régime to the Restoration, 1699-1827 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 99; Crow, Jacques-Louis David's 'Oath of the Horatii': Painting and Pre-Revolutionary Radicalism in France, 2-3; "The Oath of the Horatii in 1785: Painting and Pre-Revolutionary Radicalism in France," 424.

[42] Crow, "The Oath of the Horatii in 1785," 425.

[43] Crow, 254. These are the concluding words of the last chapter; see also Hunt, Politics, Culture and Class, 13.

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For Hunt, likewise, various social formations coalesced around various forms of an "image of consensus" without quite ever managing to control that image - Hunt herself called her approach a "language of class struggle - without class."[44] In either case, the old Marxist sequence of agencies had been reversed: cultural, rather than economic, production reconstituted a communality of culture which eventually defined a language and a rationale for action, around which a new social formation coalesced.[45] Thus works of art - "images of consensus" - played a central, if occasionally ill-defined role in the new, post-Marxist narratives of Hunt, Crow, and others: they provided the agency that had been withdrawn from traditional liberal and Marxist theodicies.

Crow's thorough research, like Hunt's broad inclusion of cultural phenomena, has had a deep and constructive effect on the history of the art of the French Revolution, and the present writer freely acknowledges his debt. At the same time, both writers raise serious, unanswered questions, which the present work attempts to tackle.

There is an odd shift in Crow's theoretical stance at the precise moment when David's pictures of 1789 come up for discussion:

> Their effect, finally, is to oppose nature to art. [....] [David's painterly decisions] naturalize the image; they make possible the dissonances [...] of the picture by linking them to the order of nature itself.[46]

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[44] Hunt, Politics, Culture and Class, 51.

[45] Similar approaches to the problem of historical agency have been attempted in a variety of historical settings, e.g. Georges Duby, Les Trois Ordres ou l' imaginaire du féodalisme (Paris: Gallimard, 1974); The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined, transl. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

[46] Crow, Painters and Public Life, 240, 241.

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The most significant word in this passage is "finally:" in one page, in one word, even, Crow's narrative premise shifts from Social History to Natursgeschichte, that is, to a Kantian-inspired narrative in which art through the process of History uncovers its true, a-historical essence.[47] For Crow as for so many art historians, the whole point of Art History is to move Art beyond History, and back into the realm of Nature.

Crow's conclusion has something for everyone: traditional art historians might recognize in Crow's "dissonances" the idea of the Kantian Sublime and in his opposition of Nature and Art the idea of Kant's Regulative Ideas, though how this can be reconciled with the Kantian distinction between the phenomenal and the noumenal categories of perception is unclear.[48] Sociologists in the 'Fifties mode will identify with the suggestion that class dissension disappears with the full development of industrial society; and right-of center historians of the French Revolution will appreciate the suggestion that the "Révolution Sage" - the good, peaceful, reformist French Revolution - must be distinguished from the "bad" Revolution of the Terror and popular massacres.[49] Deconstructionists of a certain

[47] Roger Cardinal, German Romantics in Context (London: Studio Vista, 1975), 80-83, *passim;* Moishe Barasch, Modern Theories of Art, Vol. 1: From Winckelmann to Baudelaire. (New York: New York University Press, 1990), 173 sqq.; Michael Podro, The Critical Historians of Art (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), gives a good overview of the many traditional variants on this approach within nineteenth-century Art History, but oddly ignores its roots in Kant and the Naturphilosophie of Friedrich Wilhelm Schelling.

[48] In actuality, the idea that the two can be reconciled through art comes from Schiller, not Kant; see Tomas Llorens, "On Making History," Architecture, Criticism, Ideology (Princeton Architectural Press 1985), 24-47, esp. 29-30; Michael Ann Holly, Panofsky and the Foundations of Art History (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1984), 116.

[49] Giddens, Central Problems in Social Theory, 235; Furet, Penser la Révolution francaise, 25, 49; Hobsbawm, Echoes of the Marseillaise, 64.

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Anglo-Saxon stripe will recognize their own narrative ploys, in which historical metanarratives are seen to collapse into confusion, only to be replaced by the invention of various Regulative Ideas of the critic's own devising: "flatness," "desire," "visuality," or whatever.[50] In any case, the problematic introduced by Panofsky remains; whether the "Regulative Idea" issues from Society as a whole, or from the realm of Art, is a mere, minor variation on a theme.

The "Regulative Idea" that Crow uncovers in David's Brutus is named again and again in Crow's book: "dissonance," "discontinuity," "dislocation," "disassociation."[51] The new political order that David introduced was matched by a new style, whose definition was chaos and unintelligibility. And yet, as Crow makes clear in his postscript, neither this social group nor the artist who represented it were able to move beyond this great moment: the Brutus was their triumph, and their end. In effect, then, what began as a social history of French Painting in the Eighteenth Century, in which the content of art was predetermined by social conditions, now turns into something closer to Panofsky's model, in which the Great Artist's ability to recognize and use the "innate meaning" of History becomes a grand drama of human free will and predestination: David's Brutus as a theodicy.

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[50] Michael Fried, Absorption and Theatricality: painter and beholder in the age of Diderot (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1980); Norman Bryson, Tradition and Desire: from David to Delacroix (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), etc.. For Derrida's own understanding of "chaos," see Jacques Derrida,"signature événement contexte," in Marges de la philosophie (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1972), 365-393.

[51] Crow, Painters and Public Life, 236, 241, 252, 253.

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The Brutus deserves a closer look; so does the criticism of the Brutus. For the ideas that I have outline here are embedded deep in the history of French Revolutionary art and politics. They are embedded even deeper, in those issues of free will and predestination that our culture has unconsciously inherited from its theological past. My first task is to return the structure and context of David's painting to the realm of the known -- to bring order out of apparent chaos. My second task is to discover how the content, form and criticism of the Brutus can be correlated with political events. My third is to ask how, and under what conditions a work or art may participate in, or even influence, political change in its time. My investigation breaks down into four separate sections. First: what were the unstated expectations about agency and will brought to this painting by the audience of 1789? Second: what can a closer examination of the Brutus at its moment of production tell us? Third: what were the interpretations given of this painting and its creator after 1789? And finally: what can a politically committed artist learn from David's painting?

To begin at the beginning: can artists cause political change? The answer, if there is one, leads to three other questions: what did that mean in 1789? what has it meant until now? what might it mean tomorrow? Let us begin with the first.

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SECTION ONE

As you know, Sir, the love of theory has dominated our era. New systems have been devised, approaches unknown to our wiser forebears, constructs often distant from all accepted knowledge, in order to perfect men, it was claimed, and to effect among them the happiest of revolutions. Letter to the Editor, 1789.[1]

[1] "Le goût des systêmes, vous le sçavez, Monsieur, a prévalu dans notre siècle. On a inventé des nouveaux plans, des méthodes inconnues à la sagesse de nos pères; des combinaisons souvent éloignée de toutes les idées reçues, pour perfectionner, a-t-on dit, les hommes, & opérer parmi eux la plus heureuse révolution." Abbé Rivet, "Lettre au Rédacteur," Année Littéraire Tome V (1789): 137.

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The intellectual and political crisis that culminated with the French Revolution was more than a crisis in the meaning of political agency: it was a crisis in the representation of agency. How would the common will be embodied in political institutions, and who would embody this will?[2] David's Brutus is one among many works that attempted to answer this question in 1789.

One caution. It would be naïve to confuse political representation with visual representation: the two categories are not necessarily interchangeable. Nevertheless, it is possible on occasion for a visual representation to function as an analog for a political or social question at a specific historical juncture.[3] It remains to be shown that in 1789 such conditions existed, and that the Brutus provided a bridge between the two homonyms: a visual representation, yes, but one that allowed viewer, artist and critic to negotiate a triple question: *how* was power to be represented at the end of the Old Regime? *Who* was to wield it? And how was one to represent these conflicts?

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[2] Furet, Penser la Révolution Française, 46-52; Interpreting the French Revolution, 25-28; Hunt, Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 26, 54, 88.

[3] Pierre Bourdieu, "Le champ intéllectuel: un monde à part," in Choses Dites (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1987), 167-177; Michel de Certeau, "Le pouvoir de parler," in La prise de parole et autres écrits politiques, ed. Luce Giard (Paris: Editions du Seuil), 59-62.

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The story is well-known, but perhaps it needs to be rewritten. According to the doxa, in the second half of the eighteenth century History Painting was widely viewed as a "school for morals," a lesson in virtuous behavior, either by way of warning or example; in two words, an exemplum virtutis.[4] History painting eventually developed its own appropriate style, the forthright, sober manner made famous by David, as most suitable for its message of moral integrity and social cohesiveness. This visual honesty was ideally suited to represent the ethos of the emerging middle classes. Ergo, the argument continues, the style exemplified in the Brutus stood as a symbol of opposition to the aristocracy, and anticipated (or perhaps even helped along) the French Revolution.[5]

The suggestion that a particularly rational or sober style inevitably reflects the values of the middle classes represents a curious misreading of both the sociologist Max Weber and the art historian Heinrich Wölfflin: Wölfflin did not believe such a reading applied to the late eighteenth century, and Weber did not believe such a reading was possible to begin with.[6] As for the belief that there was a middle class to represent in 1789, it has long been known, even among Marxist historians, that traditional definitions of class do not quite fit the society of the pre-revolutionary period, and do not particularly coincide with the makeup of those groups and corporations that participated in the various actions of 1789: the needs of classes in the usual sense (the aristocracy, workers, peasants, petit bourgeois,

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[4] Robert Rosenblum, "The Exemplum Virtutis," in Transformations in Late Eighteenth Century Art (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 50-106.

[5] Antal, "Reflections on Classicism and Romanticism," 6-13. This interpretation can be found, in one form or another, in most introductory textbooks in Art History.

[6] Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, trans. Talcott Parsons (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), 14, 76-78; first published as Die

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mercantile capitalists), actually overlapped, converged and diverged in a bewildering way, and they continued to do so after 1789. There was a conflict, not a congruence, between productive forces on the one hand, and social relations on the other, and contrary to the standard interpretation, this conflict was not resolved by the coalescing of any one group into a "class in itself," let alone a "class for itself."[7] In any case, a one-on-one correlation of class and perceived actions would explain as little about artistic creation as it has about political activity; as Mikhail Bakhtin explained, the arts cannot "be correlated with socioeconomic factors, as it were, behind culture's back."[8] The best we can say of History Painting in the last

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protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus, 1904-05; Heinrich Wölfflin, Principles of Art History [1932], transl. M. D. Hottinger (New York: Dover Publications, n.d.), 234.

[7] "The material forces of production come into conflict with the existing relations of production...Then begins an era of social revolution." Marx, Preface to the Critique of Political Economy [1859], Early Writings, 427-428; the literature that has grown up around the denial, acceptance, or misrepresentation of this idea is stupefying; see George Rudé, "La composition sociale des insurrections parisiennes de 1789 à 1791," Annales Historiques de la Révolution française no. 127 (Juillet-Août 1952): 288; Lefebvre, "A Propos des récents articles de Georges Rudé," 289-291. George V. Taylor, "Noncapitalist Wealth and the Origins of the French Revolution," American Historical Review, LXXII (January 1967): 469-496; Jeffrey Kaplow, "On Who intervened in 1788," American Historical Review LXXII (January 1967): 497-502/487-507; George Rudé, "The Motives of popular insurrection in Paris during the French Revolution, London University, Bulletin of the Institute for Historical Research, vol. xxvi (1953): 56-57; Colin Lucas, "Nobles, Bourgeois and the Origins of the French Revolution," Past and Present, Vol. I, no. 60 (August 1973): 84-126; reprinted in Johnson, ed., French society and the Revolution, 88-131. Michel Vovelle and Daniel Roche, "Bourgeois, rentiers, propriétaires: Eléments pour la définition d' une catégorie sociale à la fin du XVIIIe siècle, Actes du Quatre-Vingt-Quatrième Congrès National des Sociétés Savantes, Dijon 1959, Section d' Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine (Paris: Ministère de l' Education nationale, Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques, 1960); Adeline Daumard & François Furet, Structures et relations sociales à Paris au XVIIIe siècle (Paris: Armand Colin, 1961), reviewed in Jean-Yves Tirat, "Problèmes de méthode en histoire sociale," Revue d' Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine tome X (juillet-septembre 1963): 211-218; George C. Comminel, Rethinking the French Revolution (London: Verso Books, 1987); discussions are summarized in Michel Vovelle, La Chute de la monarchie. Nouvelle Histoire de la France contemporaine (Paris: Seuil 1972), 22-34; see also Theda Skocpol, States and social revolutions; a comparative analysis of France, Russia and China (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1979): 56, 58; William Doyle, The Ancien Régime (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1986), 26; Origins of the French Revolution, 22, 129; Hobsbawm, Echoes of the Marseillaise, 41-42.

[8] Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin, "Response to a Question from the Novy Mir Editorial Staff," in Speech genres and other late essays, transl. Vern McGee (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 1; see also Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin and/or Pavel N. Medvedev, The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship. A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics [1928], transl. Albert J. Wehrle (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 30-36.

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years of the Old Regime, is that it shows an ill-defined class using a flexible style against a moving target. The best we can say of David's Brutus, is that its target is not fixed, though the protagonist is identifiable.

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CHAPTER ONE

Was David's Brutus a visual challenge to the established order? According to David's biographer Miette de Villars, writing in 1850:

> The painting of Brutus was only finished in 1789. When it came out M. Pierre, First Painter to the King, came, as was his right, to see this composition. After examining it carefully he said to David:
>
> "Go on, Sir. Keep it up. In your Horatii you gave us three figures placed along the same parallel line, which had never been seen before. Here, you place the main protagonist in shadows. This is like [the mountebank] Nicolet, more and more amazing! At any rate, you are right, the public finds this attractive, there's nothing left to say. But where have you seen, for instance, that one can make a commonsense composition without a pyramidal line?"
>
> According to the Academy, the organization of a painting was nothing more than an acrostic to fill in. [9]

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[9] "Le tableau de *Brutus* ne fut terminé qu' en 1789. Lorsqu'il parut, M. Pierre, premier peintre du roi, vint, comme c' était son droit, voir cette composition.

Après l' avoir examinée, il dit à David:

'Allons , monsieur, continuez. Vous nous avez fait dans vos *Horaces* trois personnages sur la même ligne, ce qui ne s'était jamais vu! Ici, vous mettez le principal acteur dans l' ombre! C' est comme chez Nicolet, de plus fort en plus fort! Au reste, vous avez raison, le public trouve cela beau; il n' y a rien à dire. Mais où avez-vous vu, par exemple, que l' on pût faire une composition qui eût le sens commun, sans employer la ligne pyramidale?'

Avec les idées de l' Académie, la composition n' était autre chose qu' un bout rimé à remplir." Miette de Villars, Mémoires de David, peintre et député à la Convention (Paris: n. p., 1850), 100-101; "acrostic" is my translation for "bout rimé," a parlor game of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in which the line endings of a sonnet were provided and the participants were asked to fill in the context.

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The anecdote is endearing. See David the daring innovator confronted by stodgy bureaucrats. See artistic genius pitted against the Academy. See David creating a painting that is an intuition of the future, while in the background a new class stirs, awakens, and prepares to step into the breach left vacant by the Academy and the Monarchy -- these last two being, for all intents and purposes, interchangeable.

As it happens, Pierre died on May 15, so he could hardly have seen David's Brutus, which was not shown at the Salon until mid-September and was "far from finished" as late as August.[10] Nevertheless, the tale is particularly revealing of the patterns of thought that directed and restricted a reading of the Brutus before and after the Revolution. First of all, it reflects the widespread belief that the Royal Academy and its minions were opposed to innovators of any kind, and to David in particular. Pierre had been widely viewed as an abrasive and arrogant bureaucrat, which may explain why Miette introduced him into his narrative as the very model of the stodgy, reactionary academic.[11] Whether it was Pierre or someone else, the critical viewer quoted by Miette was only one of a large group who were either fascinated or troubled by the composition of the Brutus - a reaction that comes up

[10] "Correspondance du Comte d' Angiviller avec Pierre," ed. Marc Furcy-Raynaud, Nouvelles Archives de l' Art Français 3e série, tomes XXI-XXII (Paris: J. Baur 1905-1906): 257-258; Olivier Aaron, Jean-Baptiste Marie Pierre. 1714-1789 (Paris: Galerie de Bayser, 1993), 79-80. The unpublished dissertation on Pierre by Mme. Monique Halbout was not available to me; see also Jules David, Le Peintre Louis David, 1748-1825. Souvenirs et documents inédits; par J.L. Louis David son petit-fils (Paris: Havard, 1880), 57.

[11] Jean Locquin, La Peinture d 'histoire en France de 1747 à 1785; étude sur l' évolution des idées artistiques dans la seconde moitié du XVIIIe. siècle (Paris: H. Laurens, 1912; reprinted Paris: Arthena, 1978), 43; see for instance Denis Diderot, Salon de 1761, in Oeuvres Complètes, ed. Jean Assézat (Paris: Garnier, 1876) Vol. X, 113-115; Salon de 1763, *ibid.*, 175-176.

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again and again in the reviews of the Salon of 1789, and subsequently.[12] Miette's insertion of Pierre into this anecdote betrays an agenda that has been repeatedly taken up by critics of the Brutus: Miette, who fancied himself a revolutionary, was implying that the inability to understand David's work was itself a symptom of political reaction; that by contrast, the ability to understand the Brutus was a mark of political progressivism. Pierre, in his double occupation of Painter to the King and Director of the Academy, remains the perfect "straight man" for David's imaginary performance.

The "pseudo-Pierre" had, in fact, raised two, interrelated issues around the form of the Brutus: first, that the main protagonist was in shadow; second, that the composition as a whole lacked unity because it lacked the focus that a more prominent protagonist would provide - even though, more so than the Horatii, the painting is roughly based on the traditional pyramidal composition so dear to the Academy. To place the protagonist at once in shadows and outside the center of the composition was somehow to erase him from active participation in the picture.

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[12] [Anonymous], "ARTS. Suite des Observations sur le Salon de 1789," Journal de Paris no. 312, supplément, (novembre 1789): 1450-51; [Anonymous], "Exposition des peintures et gravures de MM. de l' Academie royale, au Salon du Louvre, 25 aout au 8 octobre 1789," Mercure de France 43, 24 octobre 1789, 81-92; [Anonymous], "Lettre des graveurs de Paris," Journal Général de France 120, 6 octobre 1789, 495; [Anonymous], "Observations sur les peintures et sculptures exposées au salon du Louvre," Année Littéraire Tome VI, Lettre II (1789): 29-30; [Anonymous], "Suite du Salon de 1789," in Correspondance littéraire, philosophique et critique par Grimm, Diderot, Raynal, Meister, etc., Maurice Tourneux, ed. (Paris: Garnier 1881) Vol XV, 536; [Louis-François-Henri Lefébure or Louis Carrogis Carmontelle], Vérités agréables ou le Salon vu en beau par l' auteur du Coup de patte et du triumvirat (Paris, 1789), 2-3; P. A. Coupin de la Couperie, "Essai sur Louis David, peintre d' histoire, suivi d' une liste des ouvrages de David," Revue Encyclopédique [1827], édition augmentée, t. XXIV (1837), 23; A. Rabbe, "Notice sur Jacques-Louis David," Biographie universelle et portative des contemporains (Paris 1827): 1223; J. N. Paillot de Montabert and V. Parisot, "David, (Jacques-Louis)," in Michaud, Biographie Universelle t. X (Paris/Leipzig, 1837), 200; Etienne-Jean Delécluze, David. Son école et son temps (Paris, Didier, 1855), 123, 220; Léon Rosenthal, Louis David (Paris: Librairie de l' art ancien et moderne, 1905), 36; Brookner, David, 92; Bryson, Tradition and Desire, 72; Thomas D. Puttfarken, "Brutus and Theories of Pictorial Unity in France," Art History IV: 3 (1981): 291-304.

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Of course, all of this depends on the presupposition that the figure of Brutus *was* the protagonist. The painting itself is broken up into a series of events, and its full title, as it first appeared in the official booklet distributed at the Salon, reflects its narrative complexity [**Illustration 1**]:

> J. Brutus, first consul, has returned to his home after condemning his two sons who had joined with the Tarquins and conspired against Roman freedom; lictors are bringing back their bodies for burial. This painting, thirteen feet by ten, is for the King. It will be shown only at the end of the show.[13]

The practice of substituting a lengthy description for a title had traditionally been frowned upon in the Academy, but such explanations had become common in the last years of the Old Regime, when the actions or ideas represented by history painting became so complex that there was a chance they might escape the viewer.[14] In this case, it is significant that the title, like the composition of the painting, draws our attention away from the main protagonist and towards the painting as a whole.

The narrative of the painting is set in Roman Antiquity. Brutus, the founder of the Roman Republic, has condemned his own sons to death for conspiring against the new-born state. Seated in the foreground, he stares out at the viewer, holding a scroll that describes their crime, while further back two headless bodies

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[13] "J. Brutus, premier Consul, de retour en sa maison, après avoir condamné ses deux fils, qui s' étoient unis aux Tarquins & avoient conspiré contre la Liberté Romaine; des Licteurs rapportent leurs corps pour qu' on leur donne la sépulture.

Ce tableau, de 13 pieds sur 10, est pour le Roi; il ne paroîtra que vers la fin de l' exposition." Entry 88, "Catalogue of the Salon of 1789," Catalogues of the Paris Salon 1673-188, compiled by H. W. Janson (New York: Garland Publishing, 1977) Vol. VI, 21.

[14] Stefan Germer and Hubertus Kohle, "From the Theatrical to the Aesthetic Hero: on the Privatization of the Idea of Virtue in David's Brutus and Sabines," Art History Vol. 9 no. 2 (June 1986): 169; F. H. Dowley, 'D'Angiviller's Grands Hommes and the Significant Moment,' Art Bulletin Vol. XXXIX, No. 4 (December 1957): 260.

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are carried in. To the right and further back a group of three women cluster, while a fourth, isolated, sits far right. For clarification, the anonymous critic for the Année Littéraire added: "The scene is set in the home of Brutus; his wife and daughters give themselves to despair when they see the bloody corpses borne in by the lictors, while Brutus tries to hide from this hideous sight."[15]

Halfway between the two groups and slightly below the exact center of the painting there is a basket containing yarn, embroidery, scissors. This image at the center is worth some attention. In the language of the time, it is known as a bouche-trou, i.e. an object placed in the painting to hide a perceived gap in the composition.[16]

To return to the painting as a whole: there is no reason why the figure of Brutus should have been taken as the main focus of the painting, even if Brutus were the main protagonist. In 1789 as today, critics were perfectly capable of drawing the distinction between the theme of a painting and its hero. Nor should one assume without justification that certain portions of the painting are "significant," and others not. Two critics recently gave an unconsciously revealing glimpse of this position and its logical flaws: "Some critics [in 1789] grasped, moreover, that the production of significant meaning in this painting resulted from the contrast and combination of pictorial means."[17]

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[15] "La scène se passe dans l' intérieur de la maison de Brutus; sa femme et ses filles se livrent au désespoir en appercevant les cadavres sanglans portés par des licteurs, tandis que Brutus tâche de se dérober à cet affreux spectacle." [Anonymous], "Observations sur les peintures et sculptures exposées au salon du Louvre," Année Littéraire, Tome VI, Lettre II (1979): 29.

[16] Denis Diderot, Oeuvres, edition critique et annotée présentée par John Lough et Jacques Proust (Paris: Hermann, c. 1976) Vol. XIV, 415.

[17] Germer and Kohle, "From the Theatrical to the Aesthetic Hero," 175.

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But what makes a meaning "significant?" In 1789 as in 1998, the historic task of the critic would be to grasp those meanings that are "significant," and to reject or ignore altogether those that supposedly are not. Yet that observation only postpones the question: why are certain meanings "significant," and others not? Why do the critics grasp at certain meanings to the possible exclusion of others? Only by understanding the historical limits on the verbalization of these meanings can we hope to understand what the Brutus was about. From Roger Fry's "significant form" to semiotic theory, there is a tenacious habit in Art History of assuming that the job is done when the relationship of signs had been analyzed, without first questioning how the signs have been foregrounded to begin with; perhaps, as we shall see, those signs that have been shoved back into the background - like David's basket - have their own rationale.

In 1789 as in any other period, there were unspoken assumptions from which the critics could argue whether the rules for representing the protagonist - the main agent of the story - had been followed. Like any grammar, these rules presented a ganglion of intertwined meanings which the critics had to disentangle for themselves: what was shown, and how it was shown, were matters of expectation, not fact. Thus the Chevalier de Jaucourt, describing the rules for "Poetic Composition" (in opposition to "Picturesque Composition"): "The protagonists must be placed with discernment, and dressed appropriately, commensurate with their dignity and importance."[18]

[18] "Il faut que les personnages soient placés avec discernement & vétus avec décence, par rapport à leur dignité, comme à l' importance dont ils sont." Chevalier de Jaucourt, "Poétique, Composition," in Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers, ed. Denis Diderot, Jean Lerond d' Alembert, et al., Vol. XII (Paris, 1751-1777), 849.

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Dignity and importance, placement, dress and the category of "Poetic Composition" were three aspects of a painting whose relationships were closely intertwined in the Brutus.

Shadows were another such item, and the rules for the proper placement of shadows had preoccupied the Royal Academy throughout the later part of the eighteenth century. In 1753 the engraver, critic and occasional de facto Director of the Academy Charles-Nicolas Cochin suggested that the darker shadows should not be in the foreground of a painting, while admitting that in any painter's practice the reverse was often the case.[19] Viewers of the Brutus, especially educated viewers, were ready to tolerate a deviation from the rules in the disposition of shadows throughout the painting.

They were, in this instance, less comfortable with the fact that the shadows were placed on the protagonist himself: according to David's old teacher, Michel-François Dandré-Bardon, the artist should highlight the brow and chest of the sitter, and David's Brutus clearly violated that rule.[20]

And yet, it seems odd that the Brutus was singled out. At the same Salon of 1789 an anonymous critic for the staid Mercure de France was quite taken by

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[19] Charles-Nicolas Cochin, Dissertation. Sur l' effet de la Lumiere dans les Ombres, relativement á la peinture [1753], reprinted in Recueil de quelques pièces concernant les arts (Paris: Jombert, 1757; reprinted Geneva: Minkoff 1972), 186, 206; Michael Baxandall, Shadows and Enlightenment (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 104, quotes only the first section, and not Cochin's admission that his principle was not followed by artists; see also J. J. L. Whiteley, "Light and Shade in French Neo-Classicism," Burlington Magazine CXVII, (December 1975): 768-773.

[20] Michel-François Dandré-Bardon, Traité de peinture, suivi d' un essai sur la sculpture, pour servir d' introduction à à une histoire universelle relative à ces beaux arts (Paris Saillant 1765. repr. Geneva: Minkoff 1972), I, 40-41; on the appropriateness of placing the protagonist in the foreground, see Algarotti, Essai sur la peinture (1769), 136, quoted Puttfarken, "Brutus and Theories of Pictorial Unity in France," 296.

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Adélaïde Labille-Guiard's portrait of the late Princess Louise-Elizabeth, precisely because of the shadow that cut across her face [**Illustration 2**], and compared if to the earlier Self-Portrait by Elizabeth-Vigée-Lebrun. However, the more philosophical critic for Grimm's Correspondance found the former somewhat affected [**Illustration 3**].[21] Both women had successfully transgressed the academic rule that light should fall across the protagonist's brow and chest, and even Pierre himself had given a fine example of the main protagonist in shadows in a series of etchings produced in 1756 [**Illustration 4**].

Apparently what intrigued the critics about the Brutus was a particular set of conjunctures: the use of shadows for the particular character of the protagonist in the particular context of history painting. Labille-Guiard and Vigée-Lebrun had both painted portraits, and portraits of women at that. In the case of Labille-Guiard the subject was deceased, so that the shadows could be seen as a symbol of mourning. Doubtless the fact that both artists were women allowed the critics to assign them to a more relaxed, and implicitly, a less exalted category of painting, while relegating the whole issue to the realm of a minor feminine style - a petite manière.[22] Likewise, the protagonist of Pierre's etching was a lower-class character. One was not supposed to do in history painting what one could do in portraits, let alone in original etchings, because the social functions of each were

[21] [Anonymous], "Exposition des peintures et gravures de MM. de l' Académie royale, au Salon du Louvre, 25 aout au 8 octobre 1789," Mercure de France 1789 43, 24, oct. 1789, 84-85; this is supposedly the self-portrait of which one version is presently in the National Gallery of Art, London; [Anonymous], "Salon de 1789," in Correspondance littéraire, philosophique et critique XV, 526.

[22] [Anonymous], "Suite des Observations sur les peintures et sculptures exposées au salon du Louvre. Second Extrait," Année Littéraire Tome VI, Lettre X (1789): 228.

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rigidly defined. Such breaches of convenance (appropriateness), were assiduously pursued by critics of the Old Regime, in art and in literature.[23]

Shadows seemed inappropriate in David's painting - at least to "Pierre" - because of the implications of the figure of Brutus as a reference to royalty. In the last years of the Old Regime the thought of placing royalty in shadow was so unpleasant that at Court ceremonials Queen Marie-Antoinette would arrange her ladies-in-waiting against the light so that her own complexion would shine in contrast.[24] Four years after the Brutus David himself was very clear as to whom the figure of Brutus had implicated:

> There was a similarity between the behavior of Brutus and that which Louis XVI should have had toward his brother and others among his relatives who were also conspiring against their country's freedom.[25]

In April of 1793 David, who had five months earlier condemned Louis XVI for his crimes and was eager to forget any past connections with the Crown, had no particular reason to benefit from this explanation.[26] The Brutus is indeed a lesson

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[23] Jean Locquin, "La Lutte des critiques d' art contre les portraitistes au XVIIIe siecle Archives de l' Art francais VII (1913): 309-320; Michel Delon, "L' Esthétique du tableau et la crise de la représentation classique à la fin du XVIIIe siècle," in La Lettre et la Figure. La Littérature et les arts visuels à l' époque moderne, ed. Wolfgang Drost & Géraldi Leroy (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1989), 27.

[24] Arthur Conte et Olivier Orban, Le Premier Janvier 1789 (Paris: Olivier Orban, 1988), 131.

[25] "Il y avait de l'analogie entre la conduite de Brutus et celle qu' aurait dû tenir Louis XVI à l'égard de son frère et de ses autres parents qui conspiraient aussi contre la liberté de leur pays." Jacques-Louis David, autograph manuscript (Paris, Ecole des Beaux-Arts, ms. 323, d. 3), reprinted in Jean-Georges Wille [Johann Georg Will], Mémoires et journal de J. G. Wille, graveur du Roi, ed. G. Duplessis (Paris: 1857), Vol II, 380 and in Philippe Bordes, Le Serment du Jeu de Paume de Jacques-Louis David (Paris: Editions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1983), 175.

[26] This passage was, in fact, suppressed when it was published in Jean-Joseph Sue, "Rapport sur les tableaux de David, lu à la séance publique du 5 mai," Journal du Lycée des Arts 3, 13 mai 1793, 9-11; reprinted in L' Esprit des journaux francais et étrangers 22, VIII (août 1793): 275-280; see Bordes, *op. cit.*, 174.

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of morals, but it is as much a lesson for one particular individual as a lesson for a particular class: it is an adhortatio ad principem as well an exemplum: an address to the Ruler and a model for its audience.[27] Though it does not represent the King the Brutus nevertheless fulfills the promise of its description in the Salon catalog: "this painting is for the King." The two audiences, the implied royal beneficiary and the very real audience of the Salon, are not necessarily incompatible.

Nevertheless, it has been assumed that the Brutus makes no compromise at all; that it signifies a total break with the past; that the rules it broke were, as well, the rules of the Academy and the State. Therefore, the argument continues, its audience's confusion over the structure of the painting was a sign of the work's avant-garde status, its transcendence of accepted conventions in art and in politics, its "antistyle."

Even so, that argument is not incompatible with the concept of an adhortatio: it can be argued, and has been argued, that the audience's split appreciation of the Brutus marks a historic "transfer of sacrality":

> David's painting in the last decades of the Old Regime aimed at producing in the spectator an emotion, an enthusiasm, a loss of self, which brought something of religious experience into aesthetic experience.[28]

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[27] Klaus Herding, "'The Painter's Studio': Focus of World Events, Site of Reconciliation," in Courbet: To Venture Independence, transl. John William Gabriel (New Haven: Yale University Press: 1991), 57; originally published as Klaus Herding, "Das Atelier des Malers - Treffpunkt der Welt und Ort der Versohnung," in Realismus als Widerspruch: Die Wirklichkeit in Courbets Malerei (Frankfurt am Main 1979, rev. ed., 1984), 223-47.

[28] "La peinture de David en ces dernières décades de l' Ancien Régime vise à produire sur le spectateur une émotion, un enthousiasme, une perte de soi, qui transportent sur l' expérience esthétique quelque chose de l' expérience religieuse." Roger Chartier, Les Origines culturelles de la Révolution Française (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1991), 208-209. English version: Cultural Origins of the French Revolution, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 172. On the transference of sacrality, see "Réforme

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The sense of incomprehensible mystery once associated with religion and royalty would have become, in the Brutus, attached to a work of art. Painting's imperviousness to rational critique would then be a feature it carried over from its previous objects, a type of secular credo quia absurdum. A few years later, a similar type of transference of sacrality could be used to serve the Revolutionary State, in the enormous mass festivals organized by David and others.[29] The question, then, is whether David's use of shadows to shift the focus of the painting away from the figure of Brutus and towards the painting as a whole would merely suggest the withholding of allegiance from Royalty, as I believe, or whether it also marks the transfer of the aura previously attached to Royalty away from Royalty itself and towards the work of art.[30]

However, this last interpretation is problematic in its evidence, and problematic in its logic. For while there is today a widely held belief that artworks in themselves can persuade or transport the spectator without using rational or rhetorical means, there is remarkably little evidence that this view was shared by the salon-goers of 1789, and considerable evidence that the critics of 1789 did not find such an "antistyle" in the Brutus, or in any other work at the Salon.

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catholique, déchristianisations et transfert de sacralité," in Chartier, *op. cit.*, 133-137; English version, *op. cit.*, 110.

[29] Mona Ozouf, Festivals and the French Revolution, transl. Alan Sheridan (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), 262-82; Mona Ozouf, La Fête Révolutionnaire. 1789-1799 (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), 322-340.

[30] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" [1936], reprinted in Illuminations: Essays and Reflections (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968), 217-252.

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It is all too easy to misread what "sublime" meant to French critics of the eighteenth century. Although the word comes from the title of the great classical work attributed to Longinus (1st to 3rd century CE), it was popularized by the French neo-classicist Nicolas Boileau in his translation of 1694, from whence it passed into English literature. It is Boileau's rationalist reading, not Burke's, that the critics were following: Kant, and the Kantian sublime, were almost entirely unknown in France prior to the French Revolution.[31] For instance, the anonymous critic for the Journal de Paris was enthusiastic about the Brutus: though he found its overall concept "sublime," its logic and organization, in contrast, were convincing because of their rational organization. French critics drew a clear distinction between the noun and the adjectival form of the word sublime, with the noun somewhat closer to the Romantic interpretation. Burke's essay on the Sublime was first published in France at about the same time as Jaucourt's, and the two, opposite interpretations are not totally incompatible.[32]

This "Sublime, " for one, was not beyond rational analysis; not "inexpressible:" the same critic who had praised the Brutus drew up a systematic catalog of the defects of Peyron's Death of Socrates one paragraph later [**Illustration 5**]. The comparison was not unexpected, because Peyron and David were seen as rivals, and their two paintings, the Brutus and the Socrates, were the

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[31] See for instance F. Picavet's Introduction to his translation of the Critique of Pure Reason; Immanuel Kant, Critique de la Raison pratique, transl. F. Picavet, 5th ed. (Paris: Alcan, 1921).

[32] Julius Brody, Boileau and Longinus (Geneva: E. Droz, 1958); Gerald F. Else, "Sublime," in Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, ed. Alex Preminger (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 819-20; Chevalier de Jaucourt, "Sublime," in Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers XV (Paris, c. 1765), 566-570; Roland Mortier, "Diderot entre les 'têtes froides' et les 'enthousiastes,' in Le Coeur et la Raison. Recueil d' études sur le dix-huitème siècle, préface de René Pomeau (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation/Paris: Universita, 1990), 206-07.

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same size. What the critic found to be defects in Peyron's work were, point by point, the same elements that could be found in the Brutus: the painting was dark; the protagonist stared out at the viewer; the various figures were isolated; all of this suggested, regrettably, that "M. Peyron is more concerned with picturesque form than with the meaning of his topic."[33] If one followed Jaucourt's separation of Poetic and Picturesque Composition, then Peyron had tried for the former and fallen into the latter. David's Brutus was not immune from this criticism, either: an anonymous critic who has been identified variously as Louis-Carrogis Carmontelle or Louis-Henri-François Lefébure followed the same criteria to suggest that Peyron's organization was superior to David's and that "the painting of M. Peyron is the work of a deep philosophe, and the painting of M. David is the work of a great intellectual worker."[34] In other terms, the idea conveyed by the Brutus as a whole might be "sublime," literally beyond rational analysis; the means by which this idea was conveyed were not. The Journal de Paris, that most philosophe of publications, was following an argument that paralleled some of the ideas of the philosophe Diderot, as popularized in the Encyclopédie, that enormous compendium of techniques and philosophical clarifications edited jointly by Denis Diderot and Jean d' Alembert from 1751 on. Contrasts of light and dark (clair-obscur), were justified by the needs of narrative and genre, not by striving after poetic effect or the "picturesque."[35] Conversely, the critic for the conservative, anti-philosophe Année Littéraire sent

[33] "[...]M. Peyron s' occupe plus des formes pittoresques que du fond des sujests." [Anonymous], "ARTS. Suite des Observations sur le Salon de 1789," Journal de Paris 312, supplément, 8 novembre 1789, 1451.

[34] "Le tableau de M. Peyron est l' ouvrage d' un Philosophe profond, et le tableau de M. David est l' ouvrage d' un grand raisonneur." [Lefébure or Carmontelle], Vérités agréables, 15-16.

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packing side-by-side all of the paintings that abused the accepted use of shadows: the means were simply not appropriate in either case.[36] For all the critics, the only question was whether David had been successful or not. Affect was an effect.

It was widely expected of David's work, and of history painting in general, that the artist would proceed rationally, and this expectation prevailed across the political spectrum. In 1785, for instance, a critic who may have been the pre-Revolutionary radical pamphleteer Antoine-Joseph Gorsas put the matter bluntly in his evaluation of David's Horatii:

> If M. David has divided his groups without thinking, then I give thanks to chance; if he did so intentionally, I recognize the student of M. Vien, who does nothing without intentions, and of whom all intentions are wise.[37]

Far from being a radical drawing inspiration from "the People," Gorsas was following an old art-critical tradition: "enthusiasm" was something handed down from the distant, unmoved artist. Conversely, for Gorsas as well as his more overtly aristocratic predecessors, the ideal viewer was one for whom the ability to understand or feel the painting was a gift of nature (or of class) that only a few

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[35] Denis Diderot, Essai sur la peinture [1765], in Oeuvres Complètes Vol. X (Paris: Garnier, 1876), 474; see also Suzanne Guerlac, "The Tableau and authority in Diderot's aesthetics," Studies on Voltaire and the eighteenth century 219 (1983): 189.

[36] [Anonymous], "Suite des Observations sur les peintures et sculptures exposées au salon du Louvre. Second Extrait," Année Littéraire Tome VI, Lettre X, [1789] (Geneva: Slatkine Reprint, 1968): 228; [Anonymous], "Observations sur les peintures et sculptures exposées au salon du Louvre," 19-34; L' Année littéraire, edited by the Abbé Royou, was a leader in the reaction against the philosophes.

[37] "Si M. David a divisé sans réflexion ses groupes, j' en rends grâces au hasard; s' il l' a fait avec intention, je reconnois l' élève de M. Vien, qui ne fait rien sans motifs, et dont tous les motifs sont sages." [Antoine-Joseph Gorsas], Troisième promenade de Critès au Salon (A Londres: 1785), 37; Crow, Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris, 216, cites this passage *in extenso*, with the disturbing exception of the second half of the sentence I have quoted.

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might aspire to. Gorsas professed to pity the man who did not appreciate David, and who saw only:

> [...] these small errors in detail which are absorbed by the eye of the man of genius, who does not and should not see in the admirable picture of the student of M. Vien anything but its truly dramatic emotion, nobility of form, appropriateness of style, purity of intention and finally enthusiasm so fitting for returning the Grand Manner to its true purpose in the French school of painting.[38]

The "eye" mentioned is the eye of the beholder, not of the painter. The "Grand Manner," of course, is History Painting. "Genius" (le génie), here means innate aptitude, or taste, not "genius," as we understand the term.

Here, too, the concept of "genius" as innate aptitude had a long history in French art criticism, in 1747, La Font de Saint Yenne began his call for a renewal of History Painting with a quote from a colleague, which dealt with the potential audience, not the potential artist:

> Such a work [e.g. a succesful painting] would instruct by degrees, and unconsciously would put those viewers who had some génie, in a state where they would not hazard opinions as odd as those I have sometimes heard.[39]

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[38] "Dans ce cas-là, on auroit pu plaindre un homme assez mal organisé, & d' un esprit assez étroit pour calculer mesquinement des petits défauts de détail qui s' absorbent à l' oeil de l' homme de génie, qui ne voit & ne doit voir dans l' admirable tableau de l' éleve de M. Vien, que cette émotion vraiment dramatique, ce goût de style, cette noblesse de formes, cette pureté d' intention, cet enthousiasme enfin, si propre à ramener dans l' école Françoise le grand genre de l' histoire à son véritable but." [Gorsas], *op. cit.*, 38

[39] "Un pareil Ouvrage instruiroit par degrés, & insensiblement mettroit les Spectateurs qui ont quelque génie, en état de ne pas hazarder des jugemens aussi bizarres que ceux que j' ai quelquefois entendus. " "Extrait d' une lettre de BONNEVAL au sieur DE LA TOUR, imprimée dans le Mercure d' Octobre dernier, *pag.* 137;" quoted in La Font de Saint Yenne, Réflexions sur quelques causes de l' état présent de la France avec un examen des principaux ouvrages exposés au Louvre le mois d' aoust 1746 (La Haye: Neaulme, 1747), A iij-iiij.

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For the radical Gorsas in 1785 as for the not-so-radical Lafont in 1747 (quoting a critic for the stolid Mercure de France), and finally, for the philosophe Diderot in 1763, the effects of "dramatic emotion," "nobility of form," "purity of intention" and "enthusiasm" were indeed a matter of "appropriateness of style." Such effects were appropriate to history painting, whereas they might have been misplaced in a portrait or an etching.[40]

Between the "loss of self" now associated with either the Burkean or the Kantian sublime, and the deliberate denial of sacrality, there is an apparent gap: the Kantian and Burkean sublime ask their audience to suspend judgment altogether, the sublime of the French critic implies that some members of the audience can reconstitute the procedures of the artist, while others only gape; the one suggests that awe is an essence emanating from the work; the other sees awe as an effect deliberately produced by the painter.[41] The Brutus involves a transfer of sacrality away from the Royal presence - a dimming, as it were, of the image of authority. Whether it suggests that sacrality is invested in the painting itself, or in the artist, or in any other aspect of the painting, is far more problematic. Perhaps the withdrawal of sacrality from the Royal presence was a precondition for the investment of this sacrality elsewhere, for the benefit of another type of society;

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[40] Lafont de Saint Yenne, *op. cit*, 8; Denis Diderot, Salon of 1763; see also Dowley, 'D'Angiviller's Grands Hommes and the Significant Moment,' Art Bulletin, 261-62.

[41] Fried, Absorption and Theatricality, 136-138, 145-160; Crow, Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris, 210-254; both are cited in reference to this argument in Chartier, Les Origines culturelles de la Révolution Francaise, 208-209; Hunt, Politics, Culture ad Class, 21, 23, 40.

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but it seems as if only the first step is accomplished in the Brutus.[42] Perhaps the Brutus was the means of empowering a critical audience, but only a portion of that audience was to be empowered: those who had "genius." That "genius" itself might, in fact, be a function of class, was an assumption more often implied than stated.

One cannot claim that the glass is half empty while denying that it is half full. There was something of the "revolutionary" in David's Brutus, to the extent that it took a figure of authority and shoved it into the sidelines of its narrative. However, there was something of the reactionary as well, in that it had begun by adopting that figure; and there was a little bit of both, in that the audience that was asked to reject a certain type of authority was now thrown back on an authority of a different kind, the authority of aesthetic judgment.

In 1789 the Brutus was disturbing, at least to some; it did represent a transfer of authority, though not necessarily of the mystical sacrality associated with artistic aura. But it was a transfer away from something recognizable, not a transfer toward something unrecognizable. Knowing what that something recognizable was, depends on understanding the social context within which David operated in the years before the French Revolution. David might eventually have turned into a revolutionary, but like the rest us he was walking into the future with his eyes on the past.

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[42] Chartier, *op. cit.*, 132 distorts Michel de Certeau's original point that this effect marks a transition from a religious system to an economically or politically oriented ethics; see Michel de Certau, The Writing of History, transl. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 147-205.

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CHAPTER TWO

Another cliché: in the late eighteenth century the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture stood on one side as the pillar of reaction in politics and conservatism in art; on the other stood David, an innovator in art and therefore an innovator in politics. Finally, somewhere in the background hovered "the public," politically impotent and artistically voiceless, awaiting its savior. Mention that the Academy was the State and the State was the Monarchy; that David was middle class, that the public was middle class, and all the elements move into position on either side of the net of History. The situation, of course, was far more complex.

In a widely discussed argument, the noted historian Hugh Trevor-Roper once proposed that:

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> Social crises are caused not by the clear-cut opposition of mutually exclusive interests but by the tug-of-war of opposite interests *within one body*. Figuratively, they are to be represented not by a clean split, but by an untidy inward crumbling: the result of complex pressures on a complex body.[43]

This characterization certainly seems to apply to the institutions of the Old Regime in general, and to the Royal Academy of Painting in particular: conflict in late eighteenth-century France was more commonly horizontal than vertical, based less on linear top-down social struggles than on competing interests between corporations with conflicting rights and prerogatives. Under these conditions royal authority was not seen as the enemy of civil society but as a final arbiter and last appeal in the unceasing conflicts that pitted corporate and individual interests against one another. Royal protection was a cover from which various coteries could take aim at one another with some degree of impunity: the price of protection was assent to the King's role. This state of affairs continued into 1789 when the financial situation proved insoluble and the Crown, unable to be everything for everybody, collapsed.[44]

As early as 1912, in a seminal work, Jean Locquin proposed a similar argument concerning the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture. Locquin is commonly quoted in support of the thesis that the Academy represented the State, and was intransigent in its exlusiveness. Yet it would be a gross anachronism to

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[43] Hugh R. Trevor-Roper, "Trevor-Roper's 'General Crisis' Symposium, II, I," reprinted in Crisis in Europe, 1560-1660, ed. Trevor Aston (New York: Anchor Books, 1967), 122.

[44] Régine Robin, "La nature de l' Etat à la fin de l' Ancien Régime," Dialectiques 1-2, (mai, 1973): 44; Gilbert Shapiro, "Consensus and Conflict at the Onset of the Revolution," American Journal of Sociology 91 (1985): 28-53; Annie Becq, Genèse de l' Esthétique française moderne. De la Raison classique à l' Imagination créatrice; 1680-1814 Vol. II (Pisa: Pacini Editore, 1984): 490-492; Denis Richet, "Autour des origines ideologiques lointaines de la Revolution francaise: élites et despotisme," Annales E.S.C. Vol.XXIV

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impute to him the belief that "the state is an organ of domination of a definite class which cannot be reconciled with its antipode."[45] This last quote is Lenin's, and the idea behind this quote only became widespread among historians of the French Revolution in the nineteen-twenties, after the Bolshevik triumph and the foundation of the French Communist Party at Tours in 1920. Locquin was an active Socialist politician, a member of the Second International who eventually was elected Député for the S.F.I.O. (Section française de l' Internationale ouvrière): this organization held that the institutions of the State could be used as instruments of mediation, which, not surprisingly, is what Locquin proposed in 1912, and what we will now argue.

In the second half of the eighteenth century the centers of authority were increasingly played against one another. The greater the threat to an individual or corporation, the stronger the appeal of placing oneself under royal authority: Voltaire, for instance, once had a controversial book printed inside the Louvre, which was a royal possession and therefore beyond the jurisdiction of the police.[46] Another example, previously noted, is the Réveillon Uprising, in which the cries of Vive le Roi! were meant to place the participants under the protection of a

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(Janvier-Février 1969): 1-23; Lucas, "Nobles, Bourgeois and the Origins of the French Revolution."

[45] Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, State and Revolution (1917); discussed in William G. Rosenberg and Marilyn B Young, Transforming Russia and China: Revolutionary Struggle in the Twentieth Century (New York and Oxford Oxford University Press, 1982), 97; see also Jean Jaurès, Histoire Socialiste de la Révolution Française Vol. I [1904], édition revue et annotée par Albert Soboul. Préface par Ernest Labrousse (Paris: Editions Sociales, 1968), 62-63; Jean Locquin, La peinture d 'histoire en France de 1747 à 1785, xii.

[46] William Hanley, "The Policing of Thought in Eighteenth-Century France," Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century 183 (1980): 267.

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supposedly deluded, but well-meaning, King; another yet, is the example of peasants burning castles "under Royal orders" during the Great Fear of August, 1789.[47] A fourth, perhaps, is the tendency of the Academy to search for ideologies of compromise with Royal authority whenever it came under duress, either from political pressures or from outside competition. The Brutus reflects, in part, such a compromise: an open appeal to royal authority, if ultimately an ambivalent one. There was no royal road to revolution. Or perhaps, more accurately, all roads were, in part, royal.[48]

What were the threats that would have led the Academy, and David in particular, to close ranks in support of the King? Our knowledge of the field of painting outside the Academy in the eighteenth century is surprisingly fragmented: while the past thirty years have seen the development of a strong and comprehensive approach to private patronage of art in the seventeenth century and the nineteenth, the Age of Enlightenment has been, unaccountably, overlooked in favor of a somewhat overvalued attention to the Academy and royal patronage.[49]

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[47] Georges Lefebvre, La Grande Peur de 1789 (Paris: SEDES, 1932), 112.

[48] "We are concerned here, less with a royal maecenate with an aristocratic tone, with as its purpose the ostentation of power, than with the concerted project of using and controlling the power that art constitutes." ("Il s' agit ici, moins d' un mécénat royal à tonalité aristocratique, ayant pour fin l' ostentation de sa puissance, que du projet concerté d' utiliser et de contrôler la force que constitue l'art"). Becq, Genèse de l' Esthétique francaise moderne, 495.

[49] Francis Haskell, Patrons and Painters: A Study in the Relation between Italian Art and Society in the Age of the Baroque, revised and enlarged edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980); Harrison White and Cynthia A. White, Canvases and Careers. Institutional Change in the French Painting World (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1965), 5-12, gives a succinct but extremely challenging overview of the dynamics of Academy and private sector in the last years of the Old Regime; a large number of detailed studies of the private market for art have begun to appear over the past seven years, suggesting that this field is, at last, receiving the attention it deserves. The most complete overviews, however, are primarily concerned with the first half of the century; see Pierre Casselle, Le Commerce des estampes à Paris dans la seconde moitie du dix-huitieme siecle (Thesis, Paris, Ecole Nationale des Chartes, 1976); Jean Chatelus, Peindre a Paris au XVIIIe siecle (Nîmes : Editions J. Chambon, 1991), and Peinture et groupes sociaux: les gouts artistiques des

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By contrast, there is a long, rich, and evolving tradition of scholarship covering the social history of literary production, and the absence of a cogent, overall analysis in their own field has led art historians to look there for a comprehensive view, with interesting results but inevitable distortions.

Literary historians and philosophers have argued that in the Old Regime literature provided an "underground" in which an open civil society was nurtured - the first cogent opposition to absolutism.[50] It has been suggested, justifiably, that a similar environment developed in the realm of art criticism. However, the suggestions needs some clarification: the relationship of art criticism to the social realm in which art was produced cannot simply be transferred, pari passu, from the relationship of literature to its own social nexus - nor from the underground to the Academy. For instance, when Gorsas, the underground activist par excellence,

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marchands parisiens (1726-1759) (Paris: [n. p.], 1972); Andrew McClellan, Inventing the Louvre: Art, Politics, and the Origins of the Modern Museum in 18th-Century Paris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), and "Watteau's Dealer: Gersaint and the Marketing of Art in Eighteenth-Century Paris," Art Bulletin Vol. LXXVIII, no. 3 (September 1996): 439-453; John Goodman, "Altar against Altar: The Colisée, Vauxhall Utopianism and Symbolic Politics in Paris (1769-77)," Art History XV, no. 4 (December 1992): 434-69. Hervé Guenot, "Musées et Lycées parisiens (1780-1830), Dix-hutième siècle 18, (1986): 249-267; Neil McWilliam, "The Salon in Context," Chapter 1 in A Bibliography of Salon Criticism in Paris from the Ancien Régime to the Restoration, 11-39; Louis Antoine Olivier, Curieux, Amateurs and Connoisseurs: Laymen and the Fine Arts in the Ancien Régime (Ph.D.dissertation, Johns Hopkins, 1976); Krzysztof Pomian, Collectionneurs, amateurs et curieux. Paris, Venise: XVI-XVIIIe siecles (Paris: Gallimard, 1987); English version: Collectors and Curiosities: Paris and Venice, 1500-1800, trans. E. Wiles-Portier (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990); "Marchands, connaisseurs, et curieux à Paris au XVIIIe. siècle," Revue de l' Art no. 43 (1979): 23-36; Katie Scott, "Hierarchy, Liberty and Order: Languages of Art and Institutional Conflict in Paris (1766-1776)," Oxford Art Journal Vol 12, no. 2 (1989): 59-70; on the concept of field, see Pierre Bourdieu, Outline of a theory of practice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Richard Harker, Cheleen Mahar and Chris Wilkes, "The Basic Theoretical Position, " in An Introduction to the Work of Pierre Bourdieu, ed. Cheleen Mahar and Chris Wilkes (New York: Saint Martin's Press, 1990), 8-10.

[50] Robert Darnton, The Literary Underground of the Old Régime (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982); Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, Chartier, Les Origines culturelles de la Révolution Francaise, 196-198; Crow, Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris.

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wrote art criticism, it was with an acute sense of his call to educate the public in the realm of art; his role as a political agitator might shine through his inflammatory style, but the content of his writing on art faithfully mirrored the legitimate critics around him.

Whatever the contradictions and ambiguities within the field of writing, they were not the same ambiguities that affected the field of painting. To take one speculative example: around mid-century the production and distribution of newsletters was tightly controlled, so that the elaborate network for collecting and distributing clandestine newsletters (nouvelles à la main), brought forth at times a fairly autonomous "Republic of Letters" integrating a whole social hierarchy of literary masters, literate servants and illiterate messengers into an independent, economically viable enterprise of production and distribution - at least until censorship collapsed in the late seventeen-eighties. In the field of letters the hierarchy of literary skills happened to correspond, roughly, to a hierarchy of tasks, from the educated and skilled belle-lettrist to the manually skilled servant who copied the correspondence to the local shopkeeper who functioned as a drop-off to the mere, untutored carriers, the ones most likely to be arrested in the periodic police sweeps. In the cottage industry of nouvelles, there was no clear break between the producer and the consumer, so that news passed from writer to reader to reader with relative effortlessness. As in the twentieth-century American trade in marijuana or the Russian samizdat publications of the nineteen-seventies, self-interest, distribution system and ideology were so closely intertwined as to be indistinguishable. Similarly, in the eighteenth century underground even the police

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profited. Efficiency was the stepchild of the profit-motive: "Jeremy Bentham was unthinkable without Adam Smith."[51]

However, Adam Smith without Jeremy Bentham is a distinct possibility: a supposedly open market can exist without necessarily meeting the self-interest of all parties involved, and in the eighteenth century the system for the production and consumption of painting was even less homogeneous, and even wider in terms of audience, than the system for the production of literature. By mid-century, judging by a sampling of wills, the average merchant household held ten paintings and five prints; half of wage-earning families owned at least one print, which was four times more than were likely to own a book. There were several thousand serious collectors of art. [52] Whether it was a republic or a kingdom, the field of painting was well-populated.

This "vast consumer's market"[53] was served by an equally vast network of dealers. In Paris this network extended along both sides of the Seine, along the Quai du Louvre on one side, and by the arches of what is now the Institut on the

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[51] Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, 6; see also Robert S. Tate, Jr., Petit de Bachaumont: his circle and the 'Mémoires secrets", Studies on Voltaire and the eighteenth century LXV (Geneve: Institut Voltaire, 1968): 129-160; this hypothesis is fleshed out in Robert Darnton, Chapter I, "Forbidden Literature and the Literary Market, " in The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Revolutionary France (New York: W. W. Norton & Company), 3-82; certain authors, e.g. Petit de Bachaumont, or Moufle d' Angerville, straddled the world of published books and handwritten gossip; see also Darnton, The Literary Underground of the Old Régime; "The Encyclopedia Wars of pre-Revolutionary France," American Historical Review 78, 5 (December 1973): 1331-1352; "Reading, Writing, and Publishing in Eighteenth-Century France: A Case Study in the Sociology of Literature," Daedalus: Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences Vol. C (1971): 214-56, etc..

[52] Pierre Goubert and Daniel Roche, Les Français et l' Ancien Régime Vol. II: Culture et Société (Paris: Armand Colin, 1984), 278.

[53] "ce vaste marché de consommation." Goubert et Roche, 272; Oddly, Richard Wrigley, The Origins of French Art Criticism: from the Ancien Régime to the Restoration, 38 concludes that "outside of the Académie Royale, opportunities to exhibit work were rare and ephemeral."

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other. This latter location remained an informal market for art into the eighteen-thirties and beyond: the present shops on the Rue Mazarine, and the stalls in front of the Institut, maintain that tradition to our day.[54] Picture dealers (Tremblin, Bacot, and most famously, Gersaint), also concentrated around the Pont Notre-Dame, but the Rue Saint-Jacques was a center for prints. In the provinces there was a well-knit network dominated by a few large dealers: J. Cuisenier, M. Grivel, C. Lamballais.[55]

Production, and the production of producers, was assured in Paris and the provinces by a loose hierarchy of drawing schools. Some were little more than fly-by-night enterprises; others were well-established local academies with two hundred students or more, that recruited candidates for some thirty-odd provincial academies, which in turn, might send a few promising students up to Paris and the Royal Academy.[56] In Paris itself, the Académie de Saint-Luc offered free education to students and direct access to markets for its faculty (David himself received his early training there). In most cases, these schools taught art as a craft, so that the same fund of technical knowledge assured some form of continuity within a social group that ran from the lowly carriage painter to the sophisticated academic.[57]

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[54] David A. Flanary, Champfleury. The Realist Writer as Art Critic (Ann Arbor: UMI Research, 1980), 22.

[55] Goubert et Roche, 272-4; Wrigley, 22-23; Casselle, 199; Médéric-Louis-Elie Moreau de Saint-Méry, A Civilization that Perished. The Last Years of White Colonial Rule in Haiti, trans., abbreviated and ed. Ivor D. Spencer (Lanham: University Press of America, 1985), 254.

[56] Daniel Roche, Le Siècle des lumières en Province. Académies et académiciens provinciaux 1680-1789 (Paris, Mouton, 1978), *passim*. Darnton, The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Revolutionary France, 46, describes an attempt by a speculator in underground books in Montpellier to stave off bankruptcy by opening an "academy of painting and sculpture."

[57] Katie Scott, "Hierarchy, Liberty and Order: Languages of Art and Institutional Conflict in Paris," 59.

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In this complex world, sporadic temporary public exhibitions of paintings or crafts were only the visible tip of a large iceberg. Fairs like that at Saint Germain were outlets for workshops, so that the traditional relationship of teacher to student flowed seamlessly into the relationship of master and apprentice.[58] Even artists who showed out of their own studios might expect some kind of notice in the Feuille nécéssaire. A few such shows were clearly of sufficient interest to be reviewed, and occasionally well-reviewed.[59] The yearly exhibition at the Place Dauphine was of particular interest: it was part of a centuries-old tradition of exhibiting paintings and tapestries on special feast-days; and from 1766 on it was seen as a venue for the numerous women artists who were, for the most part, excluded from the Salon.[60]They provided the most visible competition to the Salon, but they were only part of a wider threat. Churches, auctions, and princely collections also provided popular venues for the development of a rich visual culture.[61]

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[58] Reed Benhamou, Public and private art education in France 1648-1793, Studies on Voltaire and the eighteenth century vol. 308 (Oxford: The Voltaire Foundation, 1993): 1-183; Goubert et Roche, *op. cit.*, 273; Jules Marie-Joseph Guiffrey, Notes et documents inédits sur les expositions du dix-huitième siècle, recueillis et mis en ordre (Paris: J. Baur, 1873); Histoire de l' Académie de Saint Luc (Paris: E. Champion, 1915); "La Maîtrise des peintres à Saint-Germain des Prez," Nouvelles archives de l' art francais XXII (1876): 93-123; Daniel & Guy Wildenstein, Documents complémentaires au Catalogue de l' oeuvre de Louis David (Paris: Fondation Wildenstein, 1973), 4, 9.

[59] E. g., Denis Diderot, Salons, second edition, ed. Jean Seznec and Jean Adhémar, Vol. III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 3, 4, 53-54, covering Vincent's studio shows (also discussed in the Avant-Coureur for July 20, and November 16, 1766); though it might be interesting to attempt to trace a trend towards greater or lesser permissiveness towards this free market throughout the eighteenth century, I am not convinced that there is enough data to provide a statistically valid conclusion.

[60] [Anonymous], "Mlles La Ville-Leroux exposent place Dauphine," Journal de Paris June 1, 1788, 66; E. Bellier de la Chavignerie, "Notes pour servir à l' histoire de l' Exposition de la Jeunesse," Revue universelle des Arts XIX (1864): 38-72; Wildenstein, *op. cit.*, 25, 202.

[61] A similar interpretation can be found in Thomas Gaehtgens, "The Tradition of Antiacademism in Eighteenth-Century French Art," in The French Academy. Classicism and its Antagonists, ed. June Hargrove (Newark: University of Delaware Press 1990), 21.

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In art as in society, the economic imperative was at odds with the cultural: just as those individuals with the highest status were not necessarily the most succesful economically, so, too, those styles that were most privileged were not necessarily the most popular. This must be borne in mind when we read the pronouncements of the Academy and the critics operating in its wake: when Cochin in 1779, or d' Angiviller in 1790, claimed that without the state the fine arts would "go to the Devil," neither meant an economic collapse; rather, they suggested that the power of the Academy - royal power - was thwarted by popular taste and threatened by the economic dynamism of the marketplace. [62]

In the realm of painting the Royal Academy, like the Académie Francaise nowadays, was entrusted with setting standards of taste. In other terms, the Academy justified its existence by monopolizing as best it could the right to set the standards by which art would be judged, and eventually perhaps, bought. Until the 1770s at least the "world of producers" was organized indirectly, by organizing the world of consumers. Once again, it was Diderot who got to the bottom of this when he suggested, in 1767, that without the Salon the arts would do very well indeed - financially, at least. The problem, according to Diderot, did not lie with the artist's financial survival; it lay with the viewer's moral - we might say, ideological - well-being. The Academy operated against the grain of a recalcitrant market, and the task of the Salon, its critics, its clients and its participants was to bring the

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[62] "Correspondance du Comte d' Angiviller avec Pierre," 299; Charles-Nicolas Cochin, Discours sur l' enseignement des beaux arts [1779], quoted in Rémy Saisselin, "Quatremère de Quincy and the Internal Contradictions of Bourgeois Aesthetics," Marxist Perspectives (Spring 1980): 100.

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instruments of production and the instruments of consumption into alignment.[63] As Goubert put it:

> What organized the world of the producers of art was a manner of mixing with their practice those hegemonic representations which made artists into men of power, knowledge and culture, along with the practices of commercial networking stimulated by demand.[64]

"Taste" and "quality" may or may not have been on the side of the Academy; "money" most certainly was not. As d' Angiviller put it in an unconsciously humorous remark: "One cause of the lack of success of many artists who have given brilliant promise in their youth, is the excessive ease of finding work."[65]

If the world of letters was a "republic" then painting, as the Academy might have wanted it, was a monarchy. For the benefit of the Academy the Crown provided legitimacy, economic protection and occasional political coercion against competitors. For the benefit of the Crown the Academy, in exchange, developed a discourse which allowed progressive intellectuals like Diderot to find common ground with the Crown. In the Salon artists, viewers and critics came together for a public ritual that assured the authority of the Academy in matters of taste. But it was a double preeminence: the Academy, like all corporations, hitched its power to

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[63] Denis Diderot, "Salon of 1767," Salons Vol. III, Second edition, ed. Seznec and Adhémar, 52-53; see also the revealing quote from d' Angiviller in White and White, Canvases and Careers, 12.

[64] "Ce qui organise le monde des producteurs artistiques c' est une façon de mêler à la vie les représentations dominantes, qui font des artistes des hommes de pouvoir, de savoir et de culture, avec des pratiques de commerce social et stimulés par la demande." Goubert, 273; see also Daniel Roche, Le siècle des lumières en Province. Académies et académiciens provinciaux 1680-1789 Vol. I (Paris, Mouton, 1978), 181.

[65] "Une des causes du peu de réussite de beaucoup d' artistes qui ont donné dans leur jeunesse des espérance brilliantes est la trop grande facilité de se procurer beaucoup d' ouvrages." "Letter XXXIII," Angiviller to Le Noir, 16 may 1777, in Guiffrey, Notes et documents inédits sur les expositions du dix-huitième siècle, 35; see also Pomian,

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the ostentation of royal patronage: "their function was not to define an ideology, either bourgeois or noble, but to participate in a controlling, utopian discourse."[66]

This discourse was overwhelmingly, though not at all exclusively, devoted to two, interconnected tasks: the creation of an imaginaire, a shared conceptualization of an audience, and the creation of an artistic content to justify the creation of that image. Art criticism in the late eighteenth century seems so obsessed with the size of the audience, the reaction of the audience, the virtues of the audience or, most often, the innate evil of the audience, that all too often one is tempted to take for a reality what is, for the most part, an ideological convenience: the Salon audience that was so often described by eighteenth century writers was more imaginary than real. On the other hand, the critics' habit of dismissing all independent shows as overly commercial, corrupt, or inadequate is too easily taken as an indication of the aesthetic superiority of the Academy. More prosaically, it reflected a need to protect and isolate a privileged turf.[67]

The mutual benefit derived by the Crown and the Academy depended on a third party, the viewers. For the Crown and its critical supporters had learned to control the audience of the Salon by defining the behavior expected of it when

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Collectionneurs, amateurs et curieux, 34; Thomas E. Crow, "The Critique of Enlightenment in Eighteenth Century Art," Art Criticism Vol. 3, no. 1 (1986): 46-59.

[66] "Leur fonction n' est pas d' assumer la définition d' une idéologie nobiliaire ou bourgeoise, mais de participer à une pensée gestionnaire et utopique." Daniel Roche, Les Républicains des Lettres. Gens de culture et Lumières au XVIIIe. siècle (Paris: Fayard, 1988), 15; see also 158, 164-166.

[67] "Cause or consequence, this official preference for history painting corresponds to that of all [sic] French writers, theoreticians and critics." Antoine Schnapper, "The Debut of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture, " in The French Academy. Classicism and its Antagonists, 34; this writer will assume consequence: theoreticians and critics saw their function as falling in line with the official doctrine; see also Wrigley, *op. cit.*, 24; Pomian, *op. cit.*, 34.

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confronted with the symbols and emanations of royal authority: the difference between a crowd and an audience, as Diderot noted, was the difference between savagery and civilization.[68] Through the image of the Salon audience - a physical, quantifiable audience, unlike the shadowy citizens of the "Republic of Letters" - the philosophes could vaunt the ideals of democratic sociability and the exercise of a democracy of taste. Taste, le sentiment, le génie, wealth: these were all matters of natural selection - of predestination: of what Lafont called le goût naturel.[69]

As Jürgen Habermas argues, the eighteenth century inaugurated a difficult transition in the concept of "publicness" (Öffentlichkeit), from the presentation of the symbolic presence of the monarch to the symbolic inclusion of the public.[70] When the Salons first emerged as a regular event after 1737, they developed at the historic crossroads of two ways of defining the audience. On one side, there was the ceremonial of democratic public attendance, in which the audience for the Salon might stand in for the voice of universal, equalizing taste and reason. On the other side there was a tradition of Baroque ostentation - the word, after all, means at once "to impress" and "to make visible." The symbolic royal presence was an emanation of prestige by which the audience was systematically "bewitched" into a "ritual submission." [71] The audience at the Salon was called upon to "register" the

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[68] Denis Diderot, "Paradoxe du Comédien," in Oeuvres Esthétiques (Paris: Garnier, 1968), 230; quoted in Guerlac, *op. cit.*, 193; Thomas E. Kaiser, 'Rhetoric in the Service of the King: The Abbé Dubos and the Concept of Public Judgment," Eighteenth-Century Studies Vol. 23 No. 2 (Winter 1989-90): 182-199; see also Roger Chartier, Les Origines culturelles de la Révolution Française, 196.

[69] La Font de Saint Yenne, Réflexions sur quelques causes de l' état présent de la peinture en France, 4.

[70] Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, 2-14.

[71] Jean Starobinski, The invention of liberty, 1700-1789, trans. Bernard C. Swift (Geneva: Skira; New York: Rizzoli, 1987), 14; original version: "une entreprise d' éblouissement qui captive et envoûte ses témoins, qui les fait participer à un rite de soumission. " L' Invention de la liberté (1700-1789) (Geneva: Skira, 1964), 14; this

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royal presence, very much as the Parliaments were called upon to register royal decisions, while the critics were called upon to register the presence of a public and the value of certain rules of taste and behavior.[72]

Not surprisingly, this type of symbolic performance was extremely unstable, and allusions to the royal presence in works of art or literature were handled gingerly throughout the eighteenth century, because the message could so easily backfire. In 1725 the first performance of Voltaire's play Mariamne turned into a debacle when a spectator cried out La reine boit! at the moment when the heroine, Mariamne, Queen of Judah, drank a cup of poison on-stage. "The Queen drinks!" refers to carnivalesque celebrations around the mock queen of Epiphany; the unknown heckler had managed to suggest at once that Voltaire's placement of a death on stage ran against the conventions of the French theater, and that this violation of good taste was also a violation of the respect due a royal figure.[73] In 1785 Philibert-Louis Debucourt's Un Trait de bienfaisance du Roi was withdrawn from the Salon, not because it was unflattering - it was in fact a fawning panegyric - but because it was about the King, and therefore exposed him to public scrutiny **[Illustration 6]**. Conversely, in 1781 a print with a similar subject, Jean-Charles Le Vasseur's Bienfaisance du Roi, was shown at the independently run exhibition of the Salon de la Correspondance - an environment far less concerned with this type of etiquette **[Illustration 7]**. Even so, the precautions taken to avoid any possible

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procedure, according to Beck, *op. cit.*, 498, is already discussed in La Font de Saint Yenne, *op. cit.*.

[72] Crow, Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris, 4 sqq.

[73] Jeffrey S. Ravel, "*La Reine Boit!* Print, Performance and Theater Publics in France, 1724-1725," Eighteenth-Century Studies vol. 29, no. 4 (1996): 391-411; Voltaire, "Discours sur la Tragédie. A Milord Bolingbroke," in Oeuvres Complètes Tome II (Paris: Baudouin Frères, 1828), 344.

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lèse-majesté were extensive: never was a floating signifier so carefully restricted. The long-winded inscription at the bottom of the print describes the various allegorical figures, explains the medallions of heroes from Antiquity around the main scene, and announces that these figures were the "beneficient rulers that our King takes as inspiration." Both the organizer of the show and the writer of the inscription felt the need to emphasize that the scene of Louis XVI rewarding a heroic sailor was an exemplum for the audience, not the King.[74]

Yet the very suggestion that a representation of the King was a representation to the King was fraught with peril. David himself seems to have been acutely aware of the problem; according to Boime, he attempted to remove all possible suggestions of a royal presence from one of his earlier works, the Bélisaire of 1781.[75]

That the invocation of the King's presence and the desire for the audience's participation in the ritual of this invocation were somewhat incompatible, seems now more evident than the fact that the two coexisted for half a century. That devices would be developed to unite the two seems, in retrospect, inevitable.

The idea of moral instruction offered one such device. In 1754 the critic La Font de Saint Yenne called for a French School of Painting to develop along the lines of ancient Roman society, by offering itself as a "school of virtue" for the

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[74] Claude Mammès Pahin de la Blancherie, Nouvelles de la République des Lettres et des Arts 14, 19 Décembre 1781, 111; quoted in William Olander, "Pour Transmetttre à la Postérité. French Painting and Revolution 1774-1795" (Ph.D. dissertation. Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1983), 27-28, and 513, notes 49-53; Emile Delignières, Catalogue raisonné de l' oeuvre de Jean-Charles Le Vasseur d' Abbéville, 134 (Abbeville: P. Briez, 1865), 56-7.

[75] Boime, "Marmontel's Bélisaire and the Pre-revolutionary Progressivism of David," 88-9; Thomas E. Crow, Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris, 198-200.

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instruction of the public at large.[76] At first this suggestion enraged the artists of the Academy, who saw their role as primarily aimed at fulfilling royal commissions. No doubt they sensed a veiled criticism of the sensuality of the nobility, as well.[77] Nevertheless, La Font's proposal was not at all aimed at the Monarchy itself; rather, it suggested an alliance between a supposedly virtuous monarchy and a wishfully virtuous people. To cap it off, La Font proposed that the Royal Palace, the Louvre, be turned into a museum: at once a monument to art, to the French Nation, and to the Monarchy.[78]

Eventually, the Academy must have begun to see the advantages of La Font's plan for "Regeneration." In 1764 Charles-Nicolas Cochin proposed, with a certain tactlessness, a series of morally uplifting messages for the King's apartments at Choisy. The project was scuttled by the King, doubtless because, as another eighteenth-century monarch was to put it, "I don't need anyone's advice to do what is right!"[79] Nevertheless, between La Font and Cochin the possibility emerged of a school of painting that would simultaneously teach virtue to the people in the presence of the king while addressing the King in the approving, though silent, presence of the people. The exemplum virtutis might provide a symbolic arena for this union of a purely consensual presence on one side and

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[76] "Une école de moeurs." La Font de Saint-Yenne, Sentimens sur quelques ouvrages de peintures, sculpture et gravure ecrits a un particulier en Province, ([n. p.], 1754; Genève: Slatkine Reprint, 1970), 51; see also Locquin, La peinture d' histoire en France, 163 sqq.

[77] Crow 1985, 11.

[78] La Font de Saint Yenne, Réflexions sur quelques causes de l' état présent de la France, 31-44.

[79] Geoffrey Bruun, The Enlightened Despots (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1929; reprinted 1947), 27.

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symbolic publicness on the other, "that reciprocity of feelings that makes the happiness and the glory of kingdoms."[80]

These two apparently conflicting needs were held together by a third intellectual current that was central to the ideology of eighteenth-century France: that somewhat flexible concept known as Jansenism. From the sixteenth century on, the cause of Protestantism was etymologically and politically linked to resistance: resistance to the twinned authorities of royalty and Divine Revelation. In France this resistance was taken up by the nominally Catholic tendencies of Richerism and, most famously, Jansenism.[81] By mid-century Jansenism was widespread among large sectors of the lower clergy and among the Parisian elites. It provided the philosophical underpinnings for a budding political discourse that placed itself outside the limits of revealed authority, Royal, Christian, and aesthetic. La Font and his circle have occasionally been placed within that discourse.[82]

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[80] "Cette réciprocité de sentimens qui font le bonheur & la gloire des Empires." [Anonymous], "Lettre XVI. Observations sur les Peintures & Sculptures exposées au Salon du Louvre, Premier Extrait," Année Littéraire Tome VI (1785): 290.

[81] The most recent work by the major proponent of the "Jansenist" theory is Dale Van Kley, The Religious Origins of the French Revolution: From Calvin to the Civil Constitution (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996); see also Doyle, Origins of the French Revolution, 32, 72-3; Bertaud, Initiation à la Révolution Française, 15; Darnton, Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France, 61, 87; John D. Woodbridge, Revolt in Pre-Revolutionary France: The Prince de Conti's Conspiracy against Louis XV, 1755-1757 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995); Jansénisme et politique, textes choisis et interprétés par Réné Taveneaux (Paris: Armand Colin, 1965); Marcel Gauchet, "La Question du jansénisme dans l ' historiographie de la Revolution," in Jansenisme et Revolution: Actes du colloque de Versailles tenu au Palais des congres les 13 et 14 octobre 1989, ed. Catherine Maire (Paris: Bibliothèque Mazarine 1990), 15-23; Dale Van Kley, "Du parti janséniste au parti patriote (1770-1775), in Jansenisme et Revolution, 115-130.

[82] On the connections between Pidansat, Bachaumont and La Font de Saint-Yenne and their possible interrelatedness with Jansenist and Parliamentarian opposition, see Crow, Painting and Public Life, 118-126.

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In 1752-1757 the Jansenist cause was taken up first by the Parliament of Paris, and then by the King's cousin, the Prince de Conti, in a Byzantine bid for power, and from that time on, much of the political culture of opposition took on a Jansenist cast. However, neither Jansenism nor its adherents can be classified as pro- or anti- revolutionary - the philosophes, for one, despised them as religious fanatics.[83]

Like many Christian movements of the Early Modern period, Jansenism called for salvation through individual initiative rather than through accepted order, while insisting that individual salvation lay beyond the capacities of the individual. In other terms, it attempted to reconcile the idea of predestination with the belief in free will: only God can save us, yet we are free to work towards salvation by recognizing and following God's will. The alert reader will have noted strong similarities between these theories and the aesthetic theories of Panofsky: just as the artist must consciously or unconsciously identify the "intrinsic meaning" of the work and become a vehicle for it, so too, the good Jansenist was to identify God's designs for his soul, and achieve them.

By the last quarter of the century the Academy had discovered in Jansenist theory the means for bringing progressive philosophic content in line with the rituals of royal power and ideological control. On the one hand, Jansenism substituted an ethic of moral accountability for one of blind obedience and replaced the metaphysical sacrality of the Revealed Truth with an ethic of individual appreciation. On the other, it called an audience into being while withholding an

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[83] Dale Van Kley, "Du parti janseniste au parti patriote," 115, 127; Taveneaux, *op. cit.*, 45-48; Woodbridge, *op. cit.*, 179; Diane Kelder, Aspects of "Official" Painting and

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active role from it. Like the "Delectation" which signaled to the elect the dominance of divine love, the enjoyment of art was a matter of feeling, not reason; the ideal audience was as powerless in front of the newly empowered cultural machine as it was before the image of royal authority.[84] In one stroke Jansenism handed the supplicant, the viewer or the consumer responsibility for salvation, while withdrawing the means. Like "Taste," salvation was something that everybody could have, even if only a few fortunates actually had it.

Similar issues had been raised at the turn of the eighteenth century by the Abbé Jean-Baptiste Dubos; and though it is often noted that Du Bos established the theory of the primacy of the spectator's "sentiment" in matters of judgment, one should not forget that the ability to make correct judgments was not given to all. Public opinion was not interchangeable with common sense. Du Bos, a staunch defender of absolute monarchy, was willing to give with one hand what he took away with the other: the viewer was in a position to stand in judgment, but the ability to make the correct judgment was a privilege granted to only a few. Once again, the Jansenist theory of predestined grace and free will meshed happily with the concept of an audience.

It was the exemplum virtutis that best provided a common ground for the various competing cultural and political forces at play within the Academy. As an anonymous critic explained in 1785, "Within the sanctuary of art, painting traces, for the instruction of people and kings, the traits of clemency, of generosity, of

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Philosophic Art, 1789-1799 (Ph.D. dissertation, Bryn Mawr, 1966; New York : Garland Publications, 1976), 10-11.

[84] Moshe Barasch, Theories of Art from Plato to Winckelmann (New York: NYU Press, 1985), 325.

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courage."[85] The sentence begs the question, which of these, the king or the people, required which virtues? Regardless of the philosophical ideas that might wander in, the roles assigned by the exemplum virtutis remained, with only bare modification, the roles of the absolutist state: the definition of the audience being addressed could include both the King's presence and that of a receptive audience.

However, the continuity between La Font's proposals, Jansenist ethics, and Modernist practices of art should not blind us to the intended meanings of each: neither La Font nor the Jansenists were endowed with a bourgeois consciousness before the fact. Both happened to encourage approaches to perception which, in the short run at least, allowed the Monarchy to survive, and with it the Academy. Through the tactics of the school of virtue the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture could impose its dominance through traditions of deference (préseance), of cooptation and, in the last instance, of actual repression.[86] By the same token, these tactics kept alive the possibility and the threat that the field of painting might become the site upon which a struggle around the definition of royal authority would be engaged, if conditions proved favorable. As has been noted elsewhere, the apparent contradictions in La Font's argument actually mirror the deeper contradictions within the Monarchical system itself.[87] Likewise, the roots of David's

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[85] "C' est dans le sanctuaire des arts que la Peinture retrace, pour l' instruction des Peuples et des Rois, les traits de clémence, de genérosité, de courage." [Anonymous], "Lettre XVI. Observations sur les Peintures & Sculptures exposées au Salon du Louvre. Premier Extrait" (1785), 288-9.

[86] Roche, Le siècle des lumières en Province, 72, 146, 181.

[87] "[Chez Lafont] la coexistence évidente du sentiment national et de la fidélité à la monarchie ne ressortit pas à une contradiction individuelle, mais reflète la contradiction fondamentale de la monarchie féodalo-absolutiste." Becq, Genèse de l' Esthétique française moderne, 498, referring to R. Desné, "l' éveil du sentiment national et la critique d' art: La Font de Saint-Yenne précurseur de Diderot," La Pensée (Mai-Juin 1957).

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revolutionary message are to be found among the arcane, and apparently irrelevant aesthetic disputes that divided the intellectual elites in the last years of the Old Regime.

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CHAPTER THREE

Looking back at the Brutus in 1793, David himself wrote: "This painting is perhaps the most deeply and philosophically thought."[88] Likewise, a number of critics have also noted that the Brutus is nearly an illustration of philosophical thought.[89] Etienne Delécluze, who had studied with David as a very young man and eventually wrote the first full biography of the artist, called him "the first French [painter] to try to put into practice the theories developed by the intellectuals of his time."[90] And yet, the question raised by Tocqueville and others remains: how did the political tensions of the last fifteen years of the Old Regime affect David and the intellectuals around him?

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[88] "Ce tableau est peut-être le plus profondément et le plus philosophiquement pensé." Jacques-Louis David, autograph manuscript, Paris, Ecole des Beaux-Arts, ms. 323, d. 3, reprinted in Jean-Georges Wille [Johann Georg Will], Mémoires et journal de J. G. Wille, graveur du Roi , ed. G. Duplessis (Paris: 1857) Vol II, 380 and in Bordes, Le Serment du Jeu de Paume de Jacques-Louis David, 175.

[89] E. g., [Anonymous], Lettres analytiques, critiques et philosophiques, sur les tableaux du Sallon, 15-16; Charles Blanc, Louis David, Histoire des peintres français, vol. 2 (Paris: Cauville Frères, 1845), 176.

[90] "Le premier Français qui ait tenté de mettre en pratique les théories exposés par les savants de son temps." Etienne-Jean Delécluze, David. Son école & son temps [Paris: Didier 1855], reprinted with introduction and preface by Jean-Pierre Mouilleseaux (Paris: Macula, 1983), 128.

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The year 1774 marks at once the death of Louis XV, the accession of Louis XVI, and a few months later, the rise to power of a new, reformist coalition under the Comptroller-General Turgot. The same day that Turgot came to power, Count Charles-Claude de Flahaut de la Billarderie d' Angiviller was appointed Directeur-Général des Batiments du Roi, that is, overseer of the Royal Arts program and of the Academy. [91]

Turgot's regime lasted only twenty months, but it set the pace for a spiraling crisis. In retrospect, the conflicts that pitted the various succeeding ministries and their supporters against one another are less important than what they had in common: Turgot's was only the first of a series of "progressive" administrations that succeeded each other over the next fifteen years, each committed to reform, each thwarted by immense inequalities in rights and obligations; each, finally, applying to the King to cut the knot, so that paradoxically, increasing demands for political and economic reform were increasingly connected with demands for a reassertion of autocratic royal authority.

With hindsight, these appeals had a darker side: amidst the general confusion caused by a headless monarchy, a fiscal crisis and financial desperation, there was an increasing tendency for decisions to be made unilaterally at the lower levels of administration, so that those adversely affected then had to lobby the King to get decisions reversed - occasionally with violence, as with the Réveillon Affair.

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[91] Locquin, La peinture d 'histoire en France xii, 19-20, 47, 50; Van Kley, "Du parti janséniste au parti patriote," 115-6; James A Leith, The Idea of Art as Propaganda in France, 1750-1799 (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1965), 70-94.

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The King was less the ultimate arbiter than the arbiter of last resort. Power was up for grabs.[92]

In the last fifteen years of the Old Regime, increased social pressures at all levels - economic, political, ideological - provoked a desperate struggle for authority. This held true in the field of painting, as well. The Academy had never had an economic monopoly on art, even if it held something of an ideological stranglehold. In the last years of the Old Regime even that seemed imperiled as a growing number of institutions started bidding for aesthetic legitimacy.

In 1776, for instance, an ambitious program was initiated for a kind of cultural mall at the center of Paris, the Colysée. The initiators placed themselves under royal patronage, but their plan was scuttled nonetheless.[93] Meanwhile, there was an exponential growth of cultural associations: of musées and lycées. The Luxembourg was closed to visitors starting in 1779, but the Palais Royal, the residence of the Duc d' Orléans, continued to host the Salon des Arts and the Musée.[94] Between 1782 and 1786, Pahin de la Blancherie's Salon de la Correspondance générale pour les Sciences et les arts financed a periodical, a society with an international membership, and finally, a series of exhibitions in 1782-1783.[95] The society counted a surprisingly large number of artists for an

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[92] John Hardman, French Politics, 1774-1789. From the Accession of Louis XVI to the Fall of the Bastille (London: Longman, 1995), 243-44.

[93] Goodman, "Altar against Altar," 434-69; Louis XVI, King of France, Déclaration du Roi en faveur de l' Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture, donné à Versailles le 15 mars 1777 (Paris De l' Imprimerie Royale, 1777).

[94] Jacques Godechot, La Prise de la Bastille (Paris: Gallimard, 1965), 81; Andrew L. McClellan, "The Musée du Louvre as Revolutionary Metaphor During the Terror," Art Bulletin LXX number 2 (June 1988): 300-01; Dena Goodman, The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 233.

[95] Hervé Guenot, "Les Lecteurs des *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres et des Arts* (1782-1786)," in La Diffusion et la lecture des journaux de langue française sous

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intellectual association - including Jean-Baptiste Restout, who was to become a leading reformer of the Academy in 1789.

Certain works presented at the Salon de la Correspondance seem like direct challenges to the Academy. For instance, Robert Guillaume Dardel's small-scale model for a Monument to Descartes, Descartes perçant les ténèbres de l' ignorance [**Illustration 8**], follows the prescriptions of d' Angiviller's program to sponsor a series of statues representing the Great Men of French History - with the notable difference that Descartes is a rationalist hero, whereas the models proposed by the State were more typically the Maréchal de Tourville, who led his fleet to certain defeat rather than disobey the King's order (the statue by Houdon had been exhibited at the Salon in the previous year). Stylistically, Dardel's work suggests a very different sensibility, as well. The interest in psychological and historical accuracy promoted by d' Angiviller is here replaced by a fascination with allegory which anticipates the art of the Revolution, and specifically, Dardel's own work of 1793. The final version of Dardel's Descartes was eventually acquired, not by the State, but by a private association, the Société des amis des arts.[96]

Competition of another sort threatened the Academy from within and without: competition across the lines of gender. In the last years of the Old Regime the annual show at the Place Dauphine began to be seen as an important venue for

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l'Ancien Régime, Actes du Colloque International, Nimègue 3-5 Juin 1787 (Amsterdam: APA - Holland University Press, 1987), 73-88; Hervé Guenot, "Musées et Lycées parisiens (1780-1830)," Dix-huitème Siècle no. 18 (1986): 249-267; Claude-Mammès Pahin de la Blancherie, Essai d' un tableau historique des peintres de l' Ecole française depuis Jean Cousin en 1500 jusqu' en 1783 inclusivement (Paris: 1783).

[96] Stanislas Lami, Dictionnaire des sculpteurs de l'ecole francaise au dix-huitième siècle (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1910), 249-251; Wallace Collection Catalogues. Sculpture, ed. J. G. Mann (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1931), 24.

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women artists, who were barely tolerated in the Academy; in 1789 the dealer Pierre Lebrun opened his showroom to the group for two days, and by 1790 the show ran for eight days; Because they worked in the less glamorous but more profitable areas of portrait painting and decoration, because on occasion they benefited from patronage and Royal protection, women artists represented a threat to the Old Boys of the Academy that was at once psychological and very tangible.[97]

The Academy reacted to these threats with flexibility and with harshness, with efficiency and in a self-destructive manner, depending on each case. No doubt the cause of women artists was strengthened by the Academy's grudging decision to admit two more women as members in 1783: Vigée-Lebrun and Labille-Guiard. No doubt, also, the Place Dauphine show was strengthened by the Academy's decision. Pierre Lebrun was married to Vigée-Lebrun, and to exacerbate the situation, Vigée-Lebrun was exempted from the rule that forbade members from engaging in "commerce." In either case, the Academy was now confronted with the additional problem of accommodating a network of women artists - teachers and students - that reached directly from the Academy into the marketplace.[98]

The Academy went on the offensive: it attempted to reform its own educational arm; it set up its own booth on the Pont Neuf, with Royal financing; it

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[97] Jean-François Heim, Claire Béraud, Philippe Heim, Les Salons de Peinture de la Révolution Française 1789-1799 (Paris C.A.C. Sarl, 1989), 15; [Pierre Le Brun], Avertissement de Mr. Lebrun, marchand de Tableaux [Paris, 1789]; [Anonymous], "Exposition des tableaux, dessins, etc., des élèves et amateurs de la peinture depuis le jeudi 18 jusqu' au dimanche 21 juin 1789 dans la salle construite par Lebrun, rue de Cléry" (Paris: 1789); a wide-ranging analysis is provided in Mary D. Sheriff, The Exceptional Woman: Elisabeth Vigee-Lebrun and the Cultural Politics of Art (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996), 83-90.

[98] Suellen Diaconoff, "Ambition, Politics and Professionalism: Two Women Painters," in Eighteenth-Century Women and the Arts, ed. Frederick M. Keener and Susan E. Lorsch (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 201-208; Sheriff, The Exceptional Woman: Elisabeth Vigee-Lebrun and the Cultural Politics of Art, 74-75.

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responded to the growing demand for a National Museum in the Louvre by placing Pierre as Director of the projected institution.[99] Taking advantage of Turgot's ban on various guilds on March 12, 1776 it moved to maintain the suppression of the Académie de Saint Luc and the Colysée, while obtaining additional privileges for itself as a bastion of the liberal arts, not a mere school for craftsmen. Most of the other associations were reinstated after Turgot's fall, but the Académie de Saint Luc was reduced in status and was forbidden to teach despite the continuous agitation of its members. At any rate there were already deep divisions between craftspeople and fine artists within that institution, which the Royal Academy, and Cochin in particular, were bent on exploiting. These attempted demonstrations of force would eventually come back to haunt the Academy, as if the defensive bullying in which it had engaged in its last years had been the norm under the Old Regime.[100]

And - finally - as early as 1774, d' Angiviller and Pierre initiated a massive program of Royal support for the "school of virtue," both in painting and in sculpture; the project was delayed until 1782, when the Crown committed itself to a massive investment of funds. La Font's original project had finally come to fruition. The question is whether it was too little, too late.[101]

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[99] "Correspondance du Comte d' Angiviller avec Pierre," 808, 21; Becq, Genèse de l' Esthétique française moderne, 495.

[100] Scott, "Hierarchy, Liberty and Order: Languages of Art and Institutional Conflict in Paris," 70; Goodman, "Altar against Altar, 434-69; Sébastien-Roch de Chamfort, Rapport sur les Académies [1789], reprinted in Oeuvres Complètes Vol. I (Paris: Colnet 1808), 160 sqq.

[101] Pierre-Samuel Du Pont de Nemours, Lettres sur les Salons de 1773, 1777 et 1779 addressées par Du Pont de Nemours a la Margravine Caroline-Louise de Bade, ed. Karl Olsen, Gaston Brière and Maurice Tourneux, Archives de l' art francais, nouvelle periode II (1908): 66, mentions an annual budget of 24,000 francs, supposedly reserved for commissions in history painting. McLellan, Inventing the Louvre, 58, gives the total sum as 13 million livres over six years.

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By the seventeen-eighties one hears distinctly a "scurrying inside the walls" of the Academy.[102] It was a sound familiar to all of the institutions of the Old Regime. One junior member (agréé) was found to have copied from another member's painting in an unauthorized print; the police were brought in to confiscate prints that showed nudity, with the embarrassing result that several academics were caught in the net; and two of the three winners of the prestigious Prix de Rome in 1784 were found to have accepted private patronage. In October of 1787 Cochin was still dreaming of reviving a police regulation that banned the distribution of anonymous pamphlets: he suspected that certain academics had been sniping at one another. Cochin's request seems rather naive in view of the fact that the number of pamphlets had increased hundredfold since the measure had last been used, in 1765. By 1787 anonymous pamphlets were quite beyond the control of the police, and in any case the matter was under the jurisdiction of the Parliament of Paris, which was deriving immense value from its image as a defender of free speech.[103]

This crisis affected the production of art within the Academy as well, and the letters passing back and forth between d' Angiviller and Pierre are full of telling concerns: paintings are turned in late; royal commissions are rushed, their execution is sloppy. There is a clear sense in d' Angiviller's mind that without the financial encouragement of the Crown, the painters of the Academy would desert in mass: "I believe I have to continue with this encouragement; considering our present morals,

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[102] "La débandade dans les murs." Furet, Penser la Révolution Française, 42.

[103] William McAllister Johnson, "La gravure d' histoire en France au xviiie siecle (II)," Revue de l' Art numéro 100 (1993): 15; "Correspondance du Comte d' Angiviller avec Pierre," 245, 736; Guiffrey, Notes et documents inédits sur les expositions du dix-huitième siècle, 93, 96-98.

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I fear that without it the next exhibitions will present us only with easel paintings."[104] Long before the French Revolution, the "Grand Manner" was losing ground to portraiture and other "minor" styles. The problem for d' Angiviller was not that without the Academy the arts would "go to the devil."[105] Rather, it was that the Academy would go to ruin if its artists deserted it. As things stood, the lure of private patronage was proving irresistible.

David's case was no different. By the mid-eighties he was developing two very distinct genres, the heroic style patronized by the Academy, and a distinct style of portraiture -- and financially, portraiture was by far the more rewarding of the two. In 1789 he was promised 6,000 _livres_ for the _Brutus_, which were not fully paid by the government until 1791. In 1789 he also received 7,000 _livres_ for his portrait of Lavoisier - a large-scale portrait, but conceptually far less demanding than the _Brutus_. True, David was said to have received considerably more than his original asking price of 6,000 _livres_ for the small-scale heroic painting of _Socrates_, but this was a private commission. In the case of both the _Socrates_ and the _Lavoisier_ there may have been a symbolic aspect to these sums, as if private patrons were making a point of matching or besting the State.[106]

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[104] "Je pense devoir leur continuer cet encouragement sans lequel il est à craindre que, vû nos moeurs actuelles, les expositions prochaînes ne nous présentent plus que des tableaux de chevalet." d' Angiviller to Pierre, February 10, 1788, in "Correspondance du Comte d' Angiviller avec Pierre," 709, 225-226; see also Guiffrey, *op. cit.*, 67, 80, 87-89, 128-129.

[105] d' Angiviller to Vien, February 18, 1790, "Correspondance du Comte d' Angiviller avec Pierre," 777, 276.

[106] Ministère de la Culture, de la Communication, des Grands Travaux et du Bicentenaire. _Jacques-Louis David. 1748-1825_, Catalogue, Musée du Louvre, département des peintures. Paris; Musée national du château, Versailles, 26 octobre 1989 - 12 février 1990 (Paris: Editions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1989), 194, 192.

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For all that, there is precious little to suggest that David was ready to desert the Academy. In the last decades of the Old Regime he was a rising star, and there is nothing to suggest that he was ready to compromise his career. Unlike Restout, Greuze, or Vernet, he never showed at the Salon de la Correspondance, nor did he join Pahin's group. If the radical Gorsas and the somewhat radical Lefébure (or Carmontelle) endorsed David's work in 1785, it should be remembered that the favor was never returned. In any case, Gorsas was as hostile to Lefébure as he was friendly to David, so it is difficult to draw the lines of contention strictly along issues of political affiliation, and impossible to read the grand positions of the future through the petty political bickering of the Old Regime. As for David's own politics, they were as fierce as anyone else's in those last years; but David's politics were, for the most part, conducted from within the Academy, not from outside the established order.

In the last years of the Old Regime there were at least two levels to the "Enlightenment:" one was a cultural "underground" on the fringes of good society, filled with petty resentments, poverty and backbiting; the other was made up of the successors and followers of Diderot, Voltaire, and d' Alembert: legitimate, well-fed, installed in positions of power and prestige, filled with petty resentments, honors, and backbiting. The two had little in common socially, though they shared the same philosophical rhetoric.[107] The social distinctions between the two groups were

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[107] This aspect has been extensively researched in Darnton, "Trends in Radical Propaganda on the Eve of the French Revolution. 1782-1788; "The Encyclopedia Wars of pre-Revolutionary France;" Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France; "The High Enlightenment and the Low Life of Literature in Pre-Revolutionary France," Past and Present 51, (1971): 79-103; reprinted in French Society and the Revolution, ed. Douglas

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probably more important to David, as to anyone else in the Old Regime, than those political lines that seem all important in retrospect. Although much effort has been expended in proving or disproving that David belonged to the "underground" in spirit and philosophy, it might be equally fruitful to suggest that David's ideas and theories were part and parcel of his social position; that for these he was indebted to his colleagues and peers, the successful members of the Loyal Philosophical Opposition - a group usually more Loyal than Oppositional, depending on how the winds were blowing. It would be far more unusual - downright suicidal, in fact - if David had sought intellectual support among a popular audience whose opinion, according to the prevailing philosophy, simply did not matter, when the other branches of the Academy offered protection, friendship, and encouragement. Status, not economic interest, provides a clue to David's politics.[108]

David knew well where his interests lay, and the group that he favored can be identified with some certainty. For instance, reviewing the Salon of 1773, Pierre-Samuel Du Pont de Nemours complained about the Royal commission for a series of paintings to decorate the Invalides. The commission had been given out inappropriately - it should have been administered by the various academies: the Académie française for the subject, the Académie des Inscriptions for the costumes, and of course, the Academy of Painting for the choice of artists.[109] Du Pont himself is best-known as a member of the physiocrats, the theorists of a

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Johnson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 153-87; The Literary Underground of the Old Régime; etc..

[108] Boime, "Marmontel's Bélisaire and the Pre-revolutionary Progressivism of David," 81-101, draws similar parallels, notably between Marmontel and David; see also Becq, Genèse de l' Esthétique française moderne, 752; David's social background is similar to that evoked in Colin Lucas, "Nobles, Bourgeois and the Origins of the French Revolution."

[109] Du Pont de Nemours, Lettres sur les Salons de 1773, 1777 et 1779, 14.

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laissez-faire market economics who were closely allied with Turgot and later, with Necker. However, the group that Du Pont put forward in his review can be made to include a broad range of intellectuals - gens de lettres, well established, relatively progressive, philosophe, perhaps, but only in the least threatening sense. The Académie Francaise, for instance, had been dominated by the philosophes since 1746 (Jean Lerond d' Alembert, co-editor of the Encyclopédie, was admitted in 1754). The Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres was more conservative in its allegiance.

Du Pont's list is, for all intents and purposes, a list of the literati and thinkers with whom David can be associated: those he would have most likely met and spoken to as a near-equal, those he would have most to benefit from, those whose ideas and theories seem most consciously addressed in the Brutus.

There is some fragmentary evidence that David was indeed playing politics in those years - though not necessarily on the side of the "underground." We have already referred to Cochin's complaint to d' Angiviller concerning an anonymous pamphlet that might have been written by a member of the Academy. Cochin's letter specifically denied that David was the author -- who excuses, accuses, to quote a French proverb.[110] Vigée-Lebrun later noted that David had acquired and prominently displayed in his studio "some fat book written against M. de Calonne," the short-lived Minister of Finances whose attempts at reform provoked a near-uprising among the privileged parliamentarians. This book may have been an underground attack by Nicolas Bergasse, M. de Calonne tout entier, which managed

[110] Guiffrey, Notes et documents inédits sur les expositions du dix-huitième siècle, Letter XCV, 96-7 (October, 1787).

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to drag the ex-police lieutenant, Le Noir, the art critic Daudet de Jaussan, and Pierre Caron de Beaumarchais, the author of Marriage of Figaro, into a sordid tale of seduction, l' Affaire Kornmann.[111] Calonne's attempts to divert some of Turgot's reforms had provoked a wide reaction from privileged parliamentarians, who counterattacked in February 1787. Their tactic was to force Calonne into a denunciation of the philosophes, which brought the Académie française down on his head. Much of the journalistic campaign against Calonne was thought to be masterminded by a number of Academics, among them Suard and the abbé Morellet, a physiocrat who later became an informal adviser to Calonne's successor Loménie de Brienne. As far as his actual policies went, Brienne had little to recommend him above Calonne, except that he had been very close to the Académie, a friend and correspondent of d' Alembert.[112] Vigée-Lebrun suspected that the book was left open at a page in which she herself was defamed - she was widely accused of having slept with Calonne in return for favors. But why would David have gone out of his way to offend a colleague with whom he had been on good terms, unless the wider political issue had forced them apart to begin with? David might well have left a book like that lying around to impress any number of visitors who were at once acquaintances, colleagues, and men of influence: to set himself at one with the enemies of Calonne was politically far more astute than to set himself at odds with a trusted and powerful friend like Vigée-Lebrun.

[111] Crow, Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris, 233 sqq; Correspondance littéraire, philosophique et critique, 120; Elisabeth Louise Vigée-Lebrun, Souvenirs de Madame Vigée-Lebrun Vol. II (Paris:Bibliothèque Charpentier, 1867), 266; the passage is also quoted in Wildenstein, Documents complémentaires au Catalogue de l' oeuvre de Louis David, 24.

[112] Vovelle, La Chute de la monarchie, 95; Doyle, Origins of the French Revolution, 51-52.

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At about the same time, David appears to have fallen out of favor with d' Angiviller and Pierre. The standard explanation is, that as a heroic radical (of the brush or otherwise), David was paying the price for his audacity. While the above interpretation fits well with the David legend, more likely the setback reflects d' Angiviller's close personal friendship with Calonne.[113] In the last years of the Old Regime every rising talent ran the risk of stepping on a few beribboned toes, and every ambition thwarted inevitably raised cries of "despotism" or "arbitrariness." The omnipresent call for justice was all the more common as it usually masked a personal resentment.[114]

"Every History painter must be a philosophe, otherwise he deserts the principles of his craft."[115] The grand abstract principles illustrated in the Brutus can be traced: Michel Sedaine, Trudaine de Montigny, Trudaine de la Sablière, André Morellet, Jean-François Marmontel are barely remembered today, but in 1787 they were the literary successors of Diderot and Voltaire. David crossed paths with these men weekly, if not daily. He must have listened to them at the weekly salons - the social gatherings that were a major channel for the dissemination of ideas in the eighteenth century. According to one witness David actually did ask for advice from them for the composition of the Horatii, and it would be odd if he had not done the same for the Brutus, a work in which his intellectual debt is far more discernible.[116]

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[113] Crow, *op. cit.*, 233; Hardman, French Politics, 1774-1789, 86, 178.

[114] See for instance, Scott, "Hierarchy, Liberty and Order, " 60.

[115] "Tout peintre d' Histoire doit être philosophe, ou autrement il s' éloigne des principes de son art." [Anonymous], Lettres analytiques, critiques et philosophiques, sur les tableaux du Sallon, 8.

[116] A. Péron, "Examen du tableau du serment des Horaces," Annales de la Société libre des beaux-arts t. IX (1839), 28-9.

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Sedaine was perhaps the closest to him. David had been taken in by this minor playwright and major wit, and lived with him from 1769 until 1774. Through Sedaine he was introduced to a wide range of influences, including the aging Diderot; but Sedaine also frequented the Salon of the Trudaine family, in which David began to appear around 1786.[117] That same year Sedaine was admitted to the Académie française, replacing Watelet, the author of a standard text on painting. Trudaine de Montigny, whose son Trudaine de la Sablière commissioned David to paint the Death of Socrates, was a "constant companion" of the Abbé Morellet. Morellet's niece was married to Marmontel, ex-secretary to the Bâtiments, Perpetual Secretary of the Académie francaise since 1783, and the author of Bélisaire, the book David illustrated in his canvas of 1781.[118] Morellet, in turn, was elected to the Académie francaise in 1785.[119]

The point, of course, is not simply whom David knew, but what he shared with those he knew: the intellectual tide in which he swam. Immediately beyond the circle of his associates, there were other intellectuals whose ideas provided the major topics of discussion in the salons. One of these, a member of this same group, though often at odds with it, was Jacob-Nicolas Moreau, a member of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belle-Lettres. Moreau was appointed Royal Historiographer in 1774, which made him a de facto authority on the subject of the

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[117] Bordes, Le Serment du Jeu de Paume de Jacques-Louis David, 21.

[118] Boime, "Marmontel's Bélisaire and the Pre-revolutionary Progressivism of David," Crow, Painting and Public Life, 230, Becq, Genèse de l' Esthétique francaise moderne, 543-4.

[119] Robert Darnton, "An Exemplary Literary Career," in Andre Morellet (1727-1819) in the Republic of Letters and the French Revolution, ed. Jeffrey Merrick and Dorothy Medlin (New York: Peter Lange 1995), 15.

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adhortatio ad principem - precisely the type of work that David's Brutus attempted to become.

The theory behind the adhortatio, or "address to the ruler," was commonly discussed in books on statecraft, but Moreau extended its application to the rhetorical techniques of Royal propaganda - precisely those techniques that the Academy of Painting was charged with inserting into the field of painting. According to Moreau,

> [One] addressed the prince as if in the hearing of a public to which it was necessary to appeal indirectly, without in any way conferring a political authority upon that public. In this way the political existence of the public was simultaneously acknowledged in practice and denied in principle.[120]

Moreau's theoretical pronouncements on the manner of containing the audience for the Royal presence are tellingly similar to the imperatives of Salon critics in the Old Regime: here too, the audience was called upon to see, without the painting acknowledging in any way its presence. Likewise, David's painting shows us Brutus staring out into space, facing the viewer without acknowledging him; and the use of darkness in the foreground emphasizes the effect of a "fourth wall" through which the viewer stares. This form of "theatricality" should not be read as an adaptation of practices in the theater: in 1789 the idea of placing an audience in darkness was only beginning to be applied to theatrical performances,

[120] Keith Michael Baker, "Political representations of the past," in Inventing the French Revolution. Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 55; see also Fried, Absorption and Theatricality.

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just as the idea of dispensing altogether with the audience was only beginning to develop in the works of David and others.[121]

Another, more distant group in the Académie des Inscriptions et Belle-Lettres included La Curne de Sainte Palaye and Court de Gébelin, scholars who, alongside the now better-known Condillac, pursued the study of "primitive" cultures and language. Condillac in particular popularized the belief that the human body in itself can convey objective meanings. For Condillac, natural signs were born of natural reactions like pain or joy - a theory that still survives as the so-called "owow" theory of language.[122] These ideas derived in turn from Locke, the English sensualist philosopher, and Bishop Warburton, the English mystic who argued that human actions (specifically the actions of the Old Testament Hebrews), were the objective language of God. Warburton's Divine Legation of Moses appeared in French translation in 1744, and was immediately taken up by the philosophes. This fascination with the origins of language and culture ultimately led to a renewed interest in archeological accuracy among the members of the Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, so much so that Moreau eventually complained that his colleagues were more interested in Roman History than in French.[123] Surely these studies encouraged David in his own attempts at archeological accuracy.

The idea that all forms of cultural expression could be traced back to a single originary form - a body gesture, perhaps, or a human emotion - reinforced the

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[121] Michelle Goupil, "Lavoisier et le spectacle," in Théâtre et spectacles hier et aujourd'hui, Actes du 115° Congrès National des Sociétés Savantes (Avignon, 1990), Section d' histoire moderne et contemporaine (Paris: Editions du CTHS, 1991): 199-208.

[122] Jacques Derrida, "Scribble (pouvoir/écrire)," Introduction to William Warburton, The Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated Book IV (Paris: Aubin, 1977), 7-43.

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suggestion that all the arts were ultimately derived from the same matrix. This idea must have been particularly gratifying to David, because it suggested that artists shared a common ground with members of the other academies, at a time when "pure" intellectuals and writers were considered socially superior to mere painters. David had been introduced to these ideas through the Roman circles of Mengs and other followers of Winckelmann, but there is ample evidence, as we shall see, that they were most fully developed in the Brutus, "the most philosophical" of his work; and there is every indication that David's thoughts over the design of the Brutus were developed while listening to "the acid, dry squeaks of Morellet" and the "fat, heavy reasoning of our friend Marmontel."[124]

The point, however, is not simply whom, or what David knew, but also how he used it. For this intellectual commitment raised unresolvable conflicts in his painted work, as David himself would eventually acknowledge.[125] Ultimately, the composition of the Brutus was not based on "natural" rules, as Crow suggests, but on an idealized system couched in assumptions about the ability of each viewer to organize perceptions. The theories of Morellet, Moreau and others had a very practical bearing on the political situation of the last years of the Old Regime: they were attempts to resolve the problem of exacerbated social relations.

This very social aspect can be found, for instance, in a very arcane question of painterly technique: David's handling of the asyndeton in the Brutus. "Asyndeton" was the term used by Longinus for the practice of making connections

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[123] Baker, "The ideological arsenal of Moreau," in Inventing the French Revolution, 82.

[124] Diderot, Correspondance, X 67, "A Galiani," juin 1770, quoted in Roland Mortier, "Diderot entre les 'têtes froides' et les 'enthousiastes,'" in Le Coeur et la Raison, 206-07.

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between separate elements of a work of art, or not making them.[126] As noted above, it is a common assertion that David's breaking up of composition is a radical turn towards Modernism. In fact here, too, David was looking backward as well as forward. By mid-century, French aesthetic theory had begun to abandon the neo-Aristotelian emphasis on unity, most notably the unity of action that was called for on the stage. For aesthetic theory had begun to crack under the pressure of a problem it would not resolve until Kant: the question of the unity of the arts, their dependence on a necessarily subjective viewer, and their relationship to an absolute truth.

In 1748 the Abbé Charles Batteux, Professor of Greek and Latin at the Collège de France, noted a problem in the Aristotelian theory of imitation: since the order of languages varied, their relationship to the truth they depicted could not be equally accurate in all cultures. Thus words, and by extension all systems of signs, followed an order imposed by society which was at odds with the order of nature - the "true," ontological sequence of things and events in time and space.[127] Batteux, in fact, was following up on Augustine's classic discussion of the Tower of Babel: signs were themselves a sign of human corruption because their ordering did not match the natural order of the things they described. One might be tempted to read a Jansenist influence here, since Augustine was the great authority behind much of Jansenist thought. The major, crucial difference, however, is that

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[125] Delécluze, David. Son école & son temps, 120.

[126] Longinus, ΠΕΡΙ ΥΠΣΟΣ, XX. Longinus on the Sublime, ed. W. Rhys Roberts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907), XX, 43-4; Julius Brody, Boileau and Longinus (Geneva: E. Droz, 1958); Barasch, Modern Theories of Art, 1. From Winckelmann to Baudelaire, 129.

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Augustine and his Jansenist followers saw language's divergence from truth as the inevitable result of a historical corruption: the story of Babel symbolized the sinfulness of Humanity after the Fall, and all languages deviated from truth exactly as their speakers deviated from acknowledging God. For Batteux and later, for the philosophes, the order from which languages seemed to depart was an order of nature; we might call this order "scientific truth," since most of us still cling fondly to the Enlightenment belief that human actions are at once moral and efficient to the extent that they follow certain Laws of Nature: we still believe, with Vico, that we "become all things by understanding them."[128] At any rate, for the philosophes redemption was possible from within all cultures inasmuch as every culture had its own, limited grasp on a common truth. Through Batteux and the Abbé Dubos before him the theory of cultural relativism, which fascinated the theoreticians of the eighteenth century, was grafted onto the practice of artistic production.[129]

The same questions were raised and debated repeatedly by Diderot, and through Diderot they were widely disseminated in the pages of the Encyclopédie.[130] Since Diderot and his contemporaries agreed that the allover meaning of the work -

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[127] Abbé Charles Batteux, Lettres sur la phrase francaise comparée avec la phrase latine (Paris, 1748); Dictionaire des Philosophes, ed. Denis Huisman (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1984), 234.

[128] See note 29, Ch I, above.

[129] Henry Vyverberg, Human Nature, cultural diversity and the French Enlightenment. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); Reading and wisdom: the De Doctrina Christiana of Augustine in the Middle Ages, ed. E. D. English (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1995).

[130] Abbé Charles Batteux, Les Beaux-Arts réduits à un meme principe (Paris: Durand, 1746); see also Jacques Chouillet, L' esthétique des lumières (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1974), 57-59; 6; La Formation des Idées Esthetiques de Diderot. 1745-1763 (Paris. Armand Colin, 1973), 210, "Introduction, Lettre sur les Sourds et Muets, du Beau," in Denis Diderot, Oeuvres, Edition critique et annotée présentée par John Lough et Jacques Proust, Vol VI, (Paris: Hermann, 1976), 136; Paul Oskar Kristeller, "The Modern System of the Arts," in Renaissance Thought and the Arts (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 200; first published in Journal of the History of Ideas Vol XII, No. 4 (1951): 465-527.

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l' idéal in Diderot's terminology - was conveyed through the sum of its parts, much of their practical criticism of art was devoted to reconstituting the steps through which l' idéal was conveyed. The term l' idéal (in the narrow sense of the painter's overall conception of the subject), was probably coined by Diderot to refer to its minute execution, le faire.[131] The Encyclopédie contains dozens of entries from various hands dealing with the problem of defining how much unity the tangible work of art needed to have in order to convey idealized beauty - le beau idéal:[132] should the various parts be proportionate? the texture similar throughout? the work organized around a dominant figure with subordinate figures surrounding it around it? In other terms, what was the relationship of the beauty of parts to the beauty of the whole - the beau d' élection to le beau idéal?[133] The ideological and epistemological stakes of this problem had been laid out at the outset by Jean Lerond d' Alembert, Diderot's co-editor on the Encyclopédie:

> The space in which we could not distinguish figures, would be no more than a distant, dark canvas, where everything escaped us, because it was impossible to distinguish anything.[134]

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[131] In his Salon of 1765, according to Joan Ungersma Halperin, Félix Fénéon (Ann Arbor: UMI Research, 1980), 87.

[132] Landois, "Accord," Vol I, 78; Diderot, "Composition," Vol III, 772-774; Watelet, "Effet," Vol. V, 406-407; "Ensemble," Vol V, 713-714; [unsigned], "Harmonie," Vol VIII, 51-52; Jaucourt, "Invention," Vol. VIII, 849; Marmontel, "Fiction," Vol. VI, 679-683; Watelet, "Groupe," Vol. VIII, 970; Jaucourt, "Ordonnance," Vol. XI, 594-595; "Pittoresque, Composition," Vol XII, 664; "Poétique, Composition," Vol. XII, 849.

[133] Denis Diderot, Recherches philosophiques sur l' origine et la nature du beau, republished as the article "Beau" in the Encyclopédie; see Becq, Genèse de l' Esthétique française moderne, 532 sqq. for an extensive discussion.

[134] "Par cette nouvelle considération nous ne voyons plus les corps que comme des parties figurées & étendues de l' espace; point de vue le plus général & le plus abstrait sous lequel nous puissions les envisager. Car l' étendue où nous ne distinguerions point de parties figurées, ne seroit qu' un tableau lointain & obscur, où tout nous échapperoit, parce qu' il nous seroit impossible d' y rien discerner." "Discours préliminaire des editeurs," in Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers" Vol. I, x.

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In other terms, without our habits of perception - naturally or culturally determined - we would be unable to draw distinctions between the separate parts of experience and therefore we would be incapable of moral choice. Lectio, after all, means exactly that: to choose.

In the Encyclopédie there is a clear demarcation between the more conservative critics, who held a hard line on the duty of an artist to cling to unity in the composition, and those who felt that the artist should be granted greater liberty in the search for the ideal. On the conservative side stood the Chevalier de Jaucourt, a straightforward Aristotelian whose acknowledged authority was the Abbé du Bos. On the opposite side stood Marmontel. In 1787, Marmontel published his Eléments de Littérature, a collection of writings that had previously appeared in the Encyclopédie, augmented with new entries and rounded out by an introduction. The work was widely circulated throughout Europe, and it cemented Marmontel's reputation as an authority on aesthetics. As one of the first, standard summaries of eighteenth-century literature commented, Marmontel, instead of concentrating on the rhetorical aspects, "which emphasized the external forms of ...the arts, had sought instead the connection between the various movements of language and the corresponding movements of the soul."[135] The means to truth, according to Marmontel, were not in discovery, but in combination: genius was the ability to choose, and to arrange. Interestingly, these same theories were picked up and amplified at the same time by David's friend the poet André Chénier.[136]

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[135] Prosper Brugière de Barante, De la littérature française pendant le XVIIIe siècle (Paris, L. Colin, 1809), 210-211.

[136] Jean-François Marmontel, Eléments de Littérature, in Oeuvres complètes. Nouvelle édition précédée d' un éloge par l' abbé Morellet, Vols. XII-XIV (Paris: Verdière,

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In his Brutus, likewise, David attempted to bend the visual organization of the painting to rules that were not based on the "external forms" of painting, but on the deeper truths of the philosophes; and his choice of allies was as much a form of social calculation as an intellectual commitment. David's famous statement that he despised the painter's craft as mud has often been taken as a denunciation of Academicism in general.[137] Mostly it was a denunciation of one particular aspect - the aspect that assimilated painters to mechanics and threw them down into the ranks of the workers. "Mud," after all, can serve as a metaphor for "lower class," as in the expression nostalgie de la boue. By taking up the intellectual acrobatics of the philosophes David was able to join their coterie.

The majority of the critics who reviewed the Brutus in 1789 were well aware of these arcane technical issues, as evidenced in their vocabulary. The anonymous Lettre des graveurs de Paris borrowed from the Encyclopédie to refer, somewhat doubtfully, to the "liaison" of the various figures in the Brutus - a term borrowed from Diderot.[138] Grimm's Correspondance Littéraire added:

> Whatever care one may admire in the least details, there is not one of these details that can distract our imagination, because there is not one that is not necessary to the theme; everything seems to depend on the natural development of the main idea.[139]

1818-1820); see the extensive discussion in Roland Mortier, L' Originalité, nouvelle catégorie esthétique au siècle des Lumières (Geneva: Droz, 1982), 173.

[137] Jules David, Le Peintre Louis David, 1748-1825, 57.

[138] "Cette ligne de liaison qui serpente et enchaîne les différentes parties de la composition." Denis Diderot, Salon of 1767, in Salons, Second edition, ed. Jean Seznec and Jean Adhémar (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 52; [Anonymous], "Lettre des graveurs de Paris," 495.

[139] "Quelque soin qu' on puisse admirer dans les moindres détails, il n' est aucun de ces détails qui puisse distraire l'imagination, parce qu' il n' en est point qui ne soit nécéssaire au sujet; tout paraît tenir au dévelopement naturel de l' idée principale." [Anonymous], "Salon de 1789," Correspondance littéraire, philosophique et critique, 536.

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Another phrase from Grimm's Correspondance is picked up word for word in the Journal de Paris:

> A few people have observed that there are in this painting two separate scenes that produce the greatest fault one can find in a work of this type. *Like them I saw two separate scenes on the canvas, but I saw only one action without equivocation and with a unique focus* [intérêt].[140]

The similarity between the two passages reinforces the suggestion that the Correspondance Littéraire, which included Diderot's Salons, was far more widely read than has usually been assumed. The writers for the Correspondance and the Journal both pointedly used the term intérêt, a term which was given scant attention in the Encyclopédie, but was heavily promoted in Marmontel's Eléments de Littérature , which in turn borrowed and amplified substantially on Marmontel's own contributions to the Encyclopédie.[141] Conversely, Count Mende-Maupas, "member of several academies," argued that:

> "it is absurd to gather beautiful details which could not have any relationship, and to believe, after this attempt, that one has reached perfection.[142]

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[140] "Quelques personnes observent qu' il existe dans ce tableau deux scènes séparées qui produisent le plus grand défaut qu' il soit possible de reprocher au plan d' un ouvrage de ce genre. J' ai remarqué comme elles deux scènes séparées sur la toile, mais *je n' ai vu qu' une action sans équivoque et un intérêt unique.*" [Anonymous], "ARTS. Suite des Observations sur le Salon de 1789," 1450; Thomas Crow, "Introduction," in Denis Diderot, Diderot on Art, Vol I. Salon of 1765 and Notes on Painting, ed. John Goodman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), xii repeats the widely held belief that Grimm's Correspondance was read by a tiny minority, but see, e.g., Diderot's own admission in Denis Diderot, Paradoxe sur le Comédien, in Oeuvres Complètes, ed. Jane Marsh Dieckmann, Jean Varloot et al., Vol. XX (Paris: Hermann, 1995), 86, 87.

[141] [Anonymous], "Intérêt," Encyclopédie, Vol. VIII, 819; "Invention," Vol VIII. 849; (unsigned). Compare these to Jean-François Marmontel, "Intérêt," and "Invention," in Eléments de Littérature, in Oeuvres complètes Vol. XIV (Paris: Verdière, 1818-1820), 149 and 176.

[142] "Il est donc absurde de réunir des beautés de détail qui ne sauraient avoir aucune relation entre' elles, et de croire, d' après cette recherche, avoir atteint la perfection." [Mende-Maupas, Chevalier J.J.O. de], Remarques sur les ouvrages exposés au Salon par le C. de M. M. de plusieurs académies, etc. (Paris: Knapen Fils, 1789), 15.

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Mende-Maupas' comment echoes the Chevalier de Jaucourt, in the Encyclopédie: "The rules of painting are as inimical to split action as those of poetic drama."[143] Jaucourt rejected the attempt to make painting an analog of theater; although Mende-Maupas had not yet seen David's Brutus when he wrote these lines, he knew enough about contemporary discussions to know what he didn't like.

The organization of the Brutus strives for what Dr. Johnson once called a "rationality that corresponds to 'the nature of things and the structure of the human mind.'"[144] In part, David's visual argument is based on the absence of a rhetorical device like the "line" that Pierre regretted: instead, David attempted a grammatical system based on apprehended reality, and the reality of the human body in particular. In effect, the organization of the painting was an attempt at an objective form of syntactical structure - a grammar of pure reason.

In pursuit of this, David consistently pushed to its extreme the traditional rhetoric of composition - the "craft" of ordering a painting. For in 1789 the critics and the theoreticians of art expected the artist to present an implied line that led from the lower right or left of the painting into the background, moving the viewer from one image to the next, as if unfolding the theme of the story. The viewer's own movement of apprehension as her eyes coursed over the painting would

[143] "Les règles de la Peinture sont autant ennemies de la duplicité d' action que celles de la poésie dramatique." Chevalier de Jaucourt, "Ordonnance, " Encyclopédie XI, 594b; see also Becq, Genèse de l' Esthétique française moderne, 534.

[144] Samuel Johnson, quoted in Timothy B. Reiss, "Power, Poetry, and the Resemblance to Nature," in Mimesis: from Mirror to Method, Augustine to Descartes, ed. John D. Lyons and Stephen Nichols (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1982), 225.

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impose a sequence in time over a sequence in space - and the unfolding of action over time was considered a fundamental criterion of history painting.[145] It was this line of progression that Pierre had failed to detect in David's composition.

The line exists, but it has shifted from a purely visual organization to something more complex: an organization which depends in part on imagined aural and temporal cues. First, there are the figures dispersed over the whole surface of the canvas, and each figure displays a series of imagined actions that unfold simultaneously: Brutus looking up, his younger daughter slipping down into the arms of his wife, his wife whose skirts swing across her moving legs; especially the elder daughter, whose hands move across her face in a gesture that parallels the imaginary progression of the bodies of her brothers upstage. For some viewers, truth overwhelmed rhetoric: that which was represented (sounds, action, movement, genre), threatened to overwhelm how it was presented, so that the whole painting seemed to resolve itself into a series of distinct figures performing meaningless gestures. For others viewers, however, as the Journal de Paris noted approvingly: "David has created the action that he represents."[146]

It would be tempting to stop here and to argue that David's Brutus represents a triumph of "absorption" over "theatricality," of "visuality" over "narrative," of the descriptive over the prescriptive, of nature over skill, or again, "a kind of tension between making sense (a matter of the coherence of the law), and

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[145] Michel Foucault, Les mots et les choses (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), 229-233, argues that between 1775 and 1825 the episteme moved form the tabular (i.e. visual) to the genetic/developmental (i.e, concerned with time).

[146] [Anonymous] "ARTS. Suite des Observations sur le Salon de 1789," 1451.

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imagining the real - between poiesis and mimesis."[147] In other terms, David would have managed somehow to create a self-sustaining work, one that did not depend on the viewer's subjectivity to convey its meaning; a work which Michael Fried, in a reference to Wallace Stevens, would call "the supreme fiction of the viewer's non-existence."[148] After analyzing the aesthetic theories of David's friends and contemporaries, we would be justified in assuming that such a work was, indeed, intended; but intentions, once again, are not effects. Merely to describe David's intentions (or at least the intellectual pretentions of his social group), is to duplicate their blindness without overcoming it in ourselves.

The crux of the problem lay in the givens of painting itself. For whatever objectivity one might invest in the individual figures themselves, their organization - their syntax, if you will - remained dependent on the viewer's contribution, which was necessary to make up for the limitations of the medium. The viewer was somehow supposed to supply the missing spatial or temporal dimensions.[149] One critic argued that under such conditions, there could be no such thing as an "Ideal": "What is called incorrectly beau idéal is therefore only an assemblage of various beauties perceived in various objects, and what one might call beau d' élection."[150] The beau d' élection was quite literally meant: a beauty that came only from the

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[147] Reiss, "Power, Poetry, and the Resemblance to Nature," 241.

[148] Fried, Absorption and Theatricality, 232; see also Bryson, Tradition and Desire.

[149] Wendy Steiner, The Colors of Rhetoric. Problems in the Relation between Modern Literature and Painting (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); W. J. T. Mitchell, "Spatial Form in Literature," Critical Inquiry 6 (Spring 1980): 539-67; Pierre Bourdieu & Y. Delsaut, "Pour une sociologie de la perception," Actes 40 (1981): 3-9.

[150] "Ce que l' on nomme improprement beau idéal n' est donc que la réunion de diverses beautés aperçues dans différents objets et l' on pourrait l' appeler le beau d' élection." J.-F. Blondel, L' Homme du monde éclairé par les arts II (Amsterdam-Paris: Monory, 1774), 219.

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viewer's choice (lectio, in Latin). Another critic, the German artist Anton Mengs, argued that the intellectual action of "reducing multiplicity to unity" could satisfy reason but not the senses.[151] In the Brutus, also, many critics sensed a kind of emotional stalemate, as if the viewer's interest had been sacrificed to the intellectual rigors of the project, the beau idéal to the beau d' élection.

The now commonplace idea that the work of art is "an autonomous organism...beside nature on equal terms and...devoid of any connection with it," may or may not be true.[152] For David and his colleagues, its truth was at once so dubious and so necessary that they spent considerable energy on the unavoidable task of rationalizing away the viewer's contribution to the meaning of the artwork. Diderot, for one, was well aware of the historical subjectivity inherent in viewer's responses; yet he attempted to draw a line between the objectivity of the actions depicted, which he thought was inherent to the relations within the painting, and the ability to perceive these actions, which was "taste, in general."[153] And Marmontel might have been taking Diderot's argument to its logical conclusion (one of his most conspicuous foibles), when he suggested, in his Elements of Literature, that the participant in a great work of art was led to surrender to emotion - willfully.[154] As Gorsas and his fellow critics believed, the rational judgement of the artist created a kind of irrational sensation in the viewer - but it was sensation to which the viewer himself had to consent.

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[151] Hanns Gross, Rome in the Age of Enlightenment (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 328.

[152] Wilhelm Worringer, Abstraction and Empathy. A Contribution to the Psychology of Style, transl. Michael Bullock (Cleveland: World Publishing, 1948), 3.

[153] Reiss, "Power, Poetry, and the Resemblance to Nature," 241-43; see also Becq, Genèse de l' Esthétique française moderne, 541.

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The corollary of this argument - one is tempted to say: the original impulse behind it - was the rather mundane perception that some viewers might not understand the work, while others would "get it right." Sensus communis - the common, universal, rational sense, the universal faculty of judgment whose existence was a fundamental tenet of Enlightened thought - was evidently not universally shared. This problem had already risen in seventeenth-century discussions of ideal languages: the lectio idealis, the perfect selection that would unite élection and idéal - presupposed an ideal individual who turned out, after all, to be scarce in the real world.[155]

The continuity of this theme from the old religious theories of the Jansenists down to the "publicness" of the bourgeois sphere, is striking. Just as the Christian was to surrender his soul to the delectatio of Divine Love, a "delight" which he could not truly understand, so too, the public was invited to willingly surrender its judgment to the painting, in the same way that it surrendered its resistance by its presence at the Royal Salon; in the same way, also, that it surrendered its political will to the wiser will of its rulers: consciously, wisely, but out of an imperfect knowledge. And its ignorance was both the cause and the justification for this surrender; both the justification:

> There is enough light to illuminate the elect and enough darkness to teach them humility; There is enough darkness to confound the sinners, and enough light to convict them without excuse.[156]

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[154] Article "Beau," Eléments de Littérature, in Oeuvres, XII, 343; quoted Becq, *op. cit.*, 689.

[155] Erik Iversen, The Myth of Egypt and its Hieroglyphs in European Tradition (Copenhagen: Gad, 1961), 68; The term was used by the influential seventeenth-century theoretician Athanasius Kircher.

[156] "Il y a assez de clarté pour éclairer les élus et assez d' obscurité pour les humilier. Il y a assez d' obscurité pour aveugler les réprouvés et assez de clarté pour les

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and the cause:

> the strong exhilaration
> Of what we feel from what we think, of thought [...]
> an elixir, an excitation, a pure power.[157]

The simultaneous and contradictory demands of scientific objectivity on one hand, and the subjectivity of the audience on the other, have never been quite resolved in Modernist culture. In 1789 this contradiction was pushed to an extreme, because one side of the equation - the audience itself - was so radically and rapidly redefining itself. The impossible demand for an objectivity that was contradictory because it made the viewer non-existent - that was, after all, its purpose - would soon run up against the inevitable historical conflict it was meant to resolve. And this problem could be resolved in two distinct ways: one, by ignoring the viewer altogether, the other, by creating somehow that ideal viewer that society lacked. Though our generation has prefered the former solution, the generation of 1789 was to prefer, memorably, the latter.

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condamner et les rendre inexcusables." Blaise Pascal, Pensées 578, ed. Léon Brunschwigg, t. 3 (Paris: Hachette, 1904; reprint: Kraus, Nendeln/Lichtenstein 1977), 23; the quote is a commentary on Augustine, The City of God, XI, 22.

[157] Wallace Stevens, "Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction," The Palm at the End of the Mind. Selected Poems, ed. Holly Stevens (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), 209.

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SECTION TWO

Formal greatness, greatness regardless of its content, is in general the fetish of the modern concept of history. The pathos of justice accompanied by ascetic severity, the demand for general happiness along with hostility to carefree pleasure, justice embracing rich and poor with the same love, vacillation between partisanship for the upper and lower class, rhetorical spite against the benefactors of his own policy, and real blows against the masses that are to help him to victory - all these peculiarities of the leader follow from his historical function in the bourgeois world. - Max Horckheimer.[1]

[1] "Egoism and the Freedom Movement: On the Anthropology of the Bourgeois Era," Telos 54 (Winter 1982-83): 20; originally published as "Egoismus und Freiheitsbewegung," Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung 5, 2 (1936): 161-231.

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If the structure of David's Brutus was defined by the social context of eighteenth-century culture, its content, in turn, was defined and limited at once by the open and changing field of interpretations available to viewer and artist. Like the contradictions in David's social status, the contradictions in the content of the Brutus may be ultimately traceable to deeper economic or social rifts; they are traceable, in the first instance, to social and political contradictions derived from the requirements of artistic theory, as described above, and the ambivalence of artistic practice, as described below.[2]

There was, as we have seen, a great deal of confusion over the style and the content of the Brutus. This confusion was certainly not a cause of Revolution; perhaps it was a barometer of the gathering storm, a "prodromal sign."[3] Stress indicators, however, are more useful for the dispassionate observer than the participant; for David and his entourage the Brutus functioned as an intelligible

[2] Pierre Bourdieu, "Le Champ intéllectuel: un monde à part," in Choses Dites (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1987), 167-177.

[3] "Indications to the very keen diagnostician that a disease is on its way." Skocpol, States and social revolutions, 38.

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elaboration of political concerns, a *site* for ideological confrontation, a visual stage upon which an insoluble political conflict was acted out. It has been argued recently that the actions of French deputies of 1789 derived less from predetermined positions than from reactions to an evolving situation.[4] This observation seems simple enough, but it is part of a wider intellectual movement that now threatens to upend the old reliance on pre-determined ideologies, or even on individual or mass psychology in the historiography of the French Revolution, because it suggests that class, status, heredity, or whatever predispositions the actors may have, are less important than the actors' immediate responses to an imperfectly understood and ever-changing social situation. In a similar way, David's Brutus is not the mirror of a pre-set agenda; instead it registers his reactions to an evolving situation.[5]

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[4] Timothy Tackett, Becoming a Revolutionary: The Deputies of the French National Assembly and the Emergence of a Revolutionary Culture (1789-1790) (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); see also Giddens, Central Problems in Social Theory.

[5] Michael Baxandall, Patterns of Intention. On the Historical Explanation of Pictures (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 39 issues a similar call for interpreting pictures as "process," then denies the aleatory (67); see also Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence," in Signs, transl. and ed. Richard C. McCleary (Evanston, ILL.: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 39-41.

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CHAPTER FOUR

As in politics, so in art. Judging from the preliminary work on the Brutus, David remained a staunch supporter of Royal authority at least until 1789. He was in good company. In the last years of the Old Regime a broad spectrum of opinion consistently called for "Enlightened Despotism" to restore the imperiled fiscal balance of the Kingdom. Even the philosophes and other "progressive" elements of the upper status groups called for a King who ruled alone, even if he ruled according to natural law: the "paternal, legal despot."[6] This position was especially popular among the physiocrats, but it was accepted across a wide swath of intellectual opinion:

[6] "Despote patrimonial et légal." Le Mercier de la Rivière, L' ordre naturel et essentiel des sociétés politiques [1767], quoted in H. M. Scott, "Introduction: The Problem of Enlightened Absolutism," in Enlightened absolutism: reform and reformers in later eighteenth-century Europe, ed. H.M. Scott (Ann Arbor : University of Michigan Press, 1990), 5; see also Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, The origins of physiocracy : economic revolution and social order in eighteenth-century France (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976).

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> In the middle of what has been described as the 'democratic revolution,' an entire generation of gifted social critics and publicists [...] all but unanimously demand[ed] the royal imposition of their various programs of reform. In the theoretical and polemical literature of the time, the 'absolute' monarchy was criticized for its failure to exercise absolute power. To Frenchmen of the ancien régime, it was the monarchy that represented what was modern and progressive; and political 'liberties' that appeared anachronistic.[7]

Truth to nature provided the rationale in politics as in aesthetic theory: only a monarch could fully implement the laws, but the laws themselves were the laws of nature. Monarchy, according to the classifications established earlier in the century by Montesquieu, was the rule of one individual according to the law; despotism, the perversion of monarchy, was the tendency of the monarch to resist or deny the law according to her private interests.

Like the aesthetic approach, political theory based on truth to nature had a certain logical weakness to it: "nature" could be whatever one wished it to be. For instance, when Catherine the Great asked the physiocrat Mercier de la Rivière what was the best way to govern, he replied:

> There is only one, Madame. It is to be just, that is, to maintain order and to enforce the laws. - But on what basis should the laws of an empire repose? - On one alone, Madame, the nature of things and men.[8]

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[7] Edward Whiting Fox, History in geographic perspective: the other France (New York: Norton, 1972), 90; quoted Skocpol, States and social revolutions, 168; on the "despotisme légal" of the physiocrats see Daniel Mornet, Les origines intellectuelles de la Révolution francaise 1715-1787 (Paris: Armand Colin, 1933), 126; Doyle, Origins of the French Revolution, 87, 89-92.

[8] Thiebault, Souvenirs de vingt ans de séjours à Berlin, 2nd ed., III, 167-68; quoted in Geoffrey Bruun, The Enlightened Despots (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1929; reprinted 1947), 27.

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This fragile, unstable distinction between monarchy and tyranny was to be maintained well past the collapse of the Old Regime. And though David made the distinction a central part of his Brutus, his choice, as we shall see, was more of a short-term reaction to events than a carefully planned statement.

When exactly David began the preliminary work for the Brutus is unclear, in part because the whole question of David's drawings, their attribution and chronology, seems so problematic at this point in time. The drawings attributed rightly or wrongly to David are of two kinds. The first category comprises the large number of works whose provenance is unclear and whose attribution must remain dubious.[9] In the second category are those that are known to have been in his in estate when it was auctioned off, on April 17, 1826. David's son Jules David attempted to authenticate those works that he believed were his father's by signing each one with his joined initials. However, the collection did not sell well and a number of works were returned, after which they may have been tampered with by less scrupulous members of the family.[10]

In either case, it is not at all certain that the problems of attribution can be solved either through stylistic consistency, or through provenance: for David's workshop was an intensely collaborative experience, a blend of exchanges with students, informal competitions, even collaborations, in which the very idea of a single hand disappeared. In David's rationalist milieu stylistic variations were

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[9] Steven Alan Nash, The drawings of Jacques-Louis David: selected problems (PhD Dissertation, Stamford University, 1972), 3, mentions the existence of numerous forgeries.

[10] Arlette Sérullaz, Dessins de Jacques-Louis David, 1748-1825, Musée du Louvre. Inventaire général des dessins, Ecole française (Paris: Editions de la Réunion des musées *nationaux*, 1991), 23.

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consciously pursued as conventional devices, not seen as unconscious and spontaneous expressions of personality (David's student Wicar is a notorious example of this eclectic approach to style).[11] Thus, neither the quality of a drawing attributed to David, nor its style can be used to confirm an attribution to his studio.

Beyond the problem of attribution, there is the problem of function. When dealing with the preparatory drawings for the Brutus one cannot assume a linear progression from "least finished" to "most finished." Themes were taken up and dropped, perhaps to be reinserted later, as David's thought shifted. Student contributions - forensic exercises, really - were discussed, discarded, and taken up again.[12] It is tempting, of course, to find the most direct line between two points; but Occam's Law works better in idealistic philosophy than in material practice. What follows is a tentative analysis, founded more on a projected consistency of artistic goals than on the rigid application of general rules.

David's commitment to truth and nature has already been described; his fascination with the theme of the natural monarch is preeminent in his Brutus; but David's final interpretation, like David's own political views, underwent some important changes in the years 1786-89.

The most indicative example of David's respect for royalty and royal patronage is the so-called Thaw drawing [**Illustration #9**], which may well be his

[11] Thomas Crow, Emulation. Making Artists for Revolutionary France (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); Delécluze, David. Son école & son temps; Richard J. Campbell and Victor Carlson, Visions of antiquity. Neoclassical figure drawings, exhibition catalog, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Institute of Art, 1993); Nash, *op. cit.*, 185 argues that there is tremendous unevenness in quality, without following through to the logical next step, but see 110-11 on David's use of collaborators.

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earliest attempt to deal with the story of Brutus. The Thaw Drawing can be safely attributed to David's studio, if not his hand - it was among the drawings authenticated and sold by Jules David in 1826.[13] The narrative concerns a more common treatment of the Brutus theme, the scene in which the Consul impassively watches the execution of his sons.

In 1786 the architect A.-F. Peyre was negotiating with a German princeling, the Elector of Trèves, for the commissioning of a series of paintings for his palace at Coblentz. In a recently discovered letter, dated August 8, Peyre commented: "I have proposed to M. David to do Brutus condemning his sons. He would accept willingly, but not for less than ten thousand *livres*, which I decided H. R. Electoral Majesty would not approve."[14]

Bordes has suggested that the Thaw drawing might have been produced at that time or earlier, despite the fact that negotiations clearly got nowhere. Undeniably, the Thaw Drawing is very different from the Brutus of 1789 in terms of style and intellectual thrust. Even the theme is different, since it represents (apparently), the far more standard scene of Brutus assisting at his son's execution.

The Thaw Drawing is one of two drawings in which David developed a complex composition very early in the process, then abandoned it in favor of a

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[12] Nash, 76.

[13] "Execution des fils de Brutus, no. 38 de la vente du 17 avril 1826," Jules David, Le Peintre Louis David, 1748-1825, 655. Ministère de la Culture, de la Communication, des Grands Travaux et du Bicentenaire, Jacques-Louis David, 1748-1825, 202.

[14] "Proposé à M. David de faire celui de Brutus condamnant ses fils. Il s' en chargerait volontiers mais il ne le ferait pas à moins de dix mille livres, à quoi j' ai pensé que S. A. S. Eléctorale ne consentirait pas." quoted Philippe Bordes, La Mort de Brutus de Pierre-Narcisse Guérin (Vizille: Musée de la Révolution française, 1986), 30.

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different narrative. The other, supposedly intended for the Oath of the Horatii, is the Mort de Camille of 1785 [**Illustration #10**]. Both show a complex ordering of overlapping rectangles forming a series of receding planes, and it was not uncommon for David to simplify his original arrangement, even when he kept the same narrative.[15]

The standard practice in composition was to give a rough outline of the figure's placement - architecturally and otherwise - then to move on to figure studies. This was the procedure recommended by François Dandré-Bardon, David's old teacher; eventually, David would radically simplify the planar arrangement, though retaining its overall concept. In the Thaw Drawing the group of figures at the right is developed as a unit, consistent with David's interest in separate groupings that are then, more or less successfully, integrated into an architectural whole.[16]

Whether by David, or his workshop, or neither, the work bears a striking stylistic analogy: its complex articulation of planes of action are in a Mannerist style, somewhat similar to that of Francesco Primaticcio, who had designed an extensive cycle of scenes from Antiquity to decorate the Gallery of Ulysses in the French Royal Palace at Fontainebleau [**Illustration #11**]. The Gallery was destroyed in 1738, but Primaticcio's complex system of superimposed planes reappeared in

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[15] Péron, "Examen du tableau du serment des Horaces;" Nash, 76-7.

[16] Christian Michel, "L' enseignement à l' école des élèves protégés," in Daniel Rabreau et Bruno Tollon, Le progrès des arts reunis, 1763-1815: mythe culturel des origines de la Revolution a la fin de l'Empire? actes du Colloque international d'histoire de l'art, Bordeaux-Toulouse, 22-26 mai 1989. Bordeaux: CERCAM, Université Michel de Montaigne (Toulouse: Université de Toulouse Le Mirail, 1992), 83-90.

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the late eighteenth century in the works of a number of contemporaries of David - Garnier, Guyon-Lethiers, etc. [**Illustration #12**]. Moreover, the figure walking up the back stairs in Primaticcio's Ulysses is strikingly reminiscent of the figure of Xanthippe in David's own Socrates of 1787. Whether by David, or a colleague, or a student, this interest in Primaticcio suggests an effort to return to a style closely associated with the grand tradition of royal patronage: a large-scale painting that might blend with the other commissions also planned for the palace at Coblentz. The Thaw Drawing begs us to consider whether the subsequent change in the style of the Brutus represents as well a change in its didactic purpose.

At any rate, David may have come to the concept behind his Brutus by indirect means: the earliest reference to his royal commission for 1789 does not mention Brutus at all, but Coriolanus. For the Salon of 1787 David had originally proposed two ideas for Royal commissions: "Coriolanus, having taken refuge with the Volscians, decides to avenge himself on his country, but is dissuaded by his mother, wife and children," and "Regulus, about to depart for certain death in Carthage, is delayed by the pleas of his mother, wife and children." The proposals were put off, but in 1787 David was given the commission for the Coriolanus, with delivery expected for the Salon of 1789.[17]

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[17] Sells points out that an earlier reference to this commission in the correspondence of d' Angivillier cannot be traced to its manuscript source; see Fernand Enguerand, Inventaire des tableaux commandés et achetés par la Direction des Batiments du Roi 1709-1792 (Paris: E. Leroux, 1901), 138, Herbert, David, Voltaire, Brutus and the French Revolution, 18; Sells, "The Literature of Art. Some Recent Research on Jacques-Louis David," 812; likewise, the reference in Jules David, Le Peintre Louis David, 1748-1825, 53 (d' Angiviller to Pierre, February 10, 1788), is missing in the same text as reproduced in "Correspondance du Comte d' Angiviller avec Pierre," #709, 225-226.

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By the end of 1787 the Mémoires Secrets, the underground gossip sheet started by Petit de Bachaumont, mentioned that David had abandoned Coriolanus for Brutus.[18] One very likely reason for dropping Coriolanus was that first the Parliament, then the Duke of Orleans had been punished with exile for their opposition to the Crown's claim of absolute authority: and the parallels between Orléans and Coriolanus were too close for comfort.[19]

However, there is a conceptual continuity between the stories of Brutus, Coriolanus, and Regulus, which makes it difficult to say which one of these figures David depicted in his earliest drawings for the Brutus. All three heroes were, in one way or another, torn between loyalty to family and loyalty to the state: Coriolanus, the Roman general, had deserted to the enemy until his mother and children came begging him to return; Regulus had promised his Carthaginian captors to return and face execution, which he did, putting loyalty to his word above the pleas of his family. Among those sketches bearing David's initials, two can easily be identified as the first in which he dealt with either of these stories: both have the formal and conceptual tentativeness of primi pensieri. The first sketch shows a figure seated at a table, with his grieving family in the background [**Illustration #13**]. A slightly later sketch shows David's pentimento as he switched the right arm of the figure to the raised position, as it would appear in the final version [**Illustration #14**]. Yet this second image still seems closer to the story of Regulus than to Brutus or

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[18] Louis Petit de Bachaumont, Pidansat de Mairobert, Moufle d' Argenville, et al., Mémoires secrets pour servir à l' histoire de la République des Lettres en France, depuis 1762 jusqu' à nos jours Vol. XXXVI (London 1780-1789), 374.

[19] The Parliament was exiled on August 20, Orléans, very briefly, on November 11, 1787.

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Coriolanus: the brooding, static quality of the composition recalls a death watch more than an passionate exchange.

The figure of Brutus' wife provides a similar continuity between the stories of Regulus, Coriolanus and Brutus, though for reasons more iconographic than narrative. The figure derives from a model that was frequently copied in Antiquity, the torso from the East Front of the Parthenon now prosaically known as Figure G [**Illustration #15**]. This figure had become available in France at mid-century through the writings of Julien-David Le Roy, and it was not uncommonly quoted in contemporary works.[20] Most likely, however, David borrowed his image from several Roman variations on these themes, which he had seen and studied in Rome and Naples [**Illustration #16**]. He had already borrowed the head of Brutus itself from the bust of Brutus, also in the Conservatori [**Illustration #17**]. David, like most artists of his generation, tended to side with Piranesi over Winckelmann in ascribing superiority to Roman over Greek culture.

At any rate, David's intentions are more than the sum of his sources. The figure he had borrowed was usually thought to represent Niobe, the mythological mother whose children were killed by Apollo, and who became the symbol for

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[20] Julien-David Le Roy, Les Ruines des plus beaux monuments de la Grèce (Paris 1758; second edition, 1770); see Angelos Delivorrias, "The Sculptures of the Parthenon," in The Parthenon and Its Impact in Modern Times, ed. Panayotis Tournikiotis (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1996), 102-107; Fani Mallouchou-Tufano, "The Parthenon from Cyriacus of Ancona to Frédéric Boissonas: Description, Research and Depiction," in Tournikiotis, *op. cit.*, 171-72.

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familial grief. The story, obviously, could apply as well to Coriolanus or to Regulus as to Brutus, and it provided another type of a continuity in David's thought.[21]

In his brief of 1764 Charles Cochin had suggested for the Royal Château at Choisy a series of paintings illustrating a variety of virtues for the decorations: Mercy, Justice, and so forth. In 1785 David initiated began work on the first of the great paintings of his artistic maturity with a series devoted to various abstract virtues. The Horatii, the Socrates, and perhaps the projected Regulus, illustrate the abstract virtue of self-sacrifice for one's country. Paris et Helène, the pendant to Socrates which was not shown until 1789, shows the young Trojan prince hiding from battle; this scene is depicted in Book Six of the Iliad, and the spectator could easily place himself in the position of Hector, who comes to criticize Paris for his avoidance of his duty to the State, as opposed to Socrates, who dies to obey the Law [**Illustration #18**]. Regulus and Coriolanus might well have been planned as new pendants to the story of Paris and Helen, since they raise positive examples of the same theme: obedience to the state, against or in tandem with, love of family.

The story of Brutus, however, marked a major shift in David's choice of themes: only with the Brutus did David directly tackle the major issue of the administration of justice; and for the first time (including his Belisarius of 1781), the only subject this could address was the Monarch himself.[22] The conflict imagined by David was no longer between the individual and the state, but between absolute,

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[21] Nash, The drawings of Jacques-Louis David, 73-74 finds several similar drawings by David that corroborate this suggestion.

[22] Boime, "Marmontel's Bélisaire and the Pre-revolutionary Progressivism of David," 81-101.

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autocratic power and the limits of nature. This was an interpretation of the Brutus narrative which had been evolving for decades.

In the eighteenth century the story of Brutus was well known through several classical authors: Plutarch's Life of Publicola (Book V), the Roman Antiquities of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, (6.89), Livy's Roman History, (Books I and II), and finally the Civil Wars of Appianus (3.23), which had been translated from the Greek by J. Schweighaeuser as recently as 1785. Plutarch and Livy were especially popular among eighteenth-century Frenchmen with a smattering of Latin: by 1775 their stories were being popularized in a basic classroom reader, Charles-François Lhomond's De Viris Illustribus Urbis Romae, still a common textbook in the French lycées. For those who could read only French there were a number of popular adaptations, notably the Histoire Romaine of Fathers Catrou and Rouillé. For anyone attempting to trace the source of David's Brutus, there is an embarassment of riches.

In its basics, the story ran as follows: Brutus, having overthrown the tyranny of the Tarquins, installed a new government in Rome, with himself as a consul, or co-ruler. When, however, his sons were discovered to be plotting to overthrow the new government and bring back the Tarquins, Brutus had no choice but to condemn his own sons to death in order to preserve respect for the laws that he himself had written. As with the iconography of the wife of Brutus, so with the meaning of the story of Brutus: the problem is not to identify David's sources, since Brutus was too common a literary reference to be traced to one single quote, but to determine what use David intended to make of his sources. That question is considerably more

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difficult, since the story is a moving target: Brutus simply did not have the same resonance in 1787 that it had in 1785 - let alone in 1789.

When in 1747 La Font de Saint Yenne suggested the story of "Brutus the first consul" as one of a number of themes likely to foster a "school for morals," he did not specify which aspect of the story was inspirational, or why.[23] However, French historians of the eighteenth century usually singled out Brutus as the man who had overthrown the tyranny of the Tarquins in revenge for the rape of Lucretia. The major exception was Rollin's Histoire Romaine, Book II, which went over the issue of the execution and Brutus' reactions in great, albeit criticizing, detail.[24] Eighteenth-century writers, who were profoundly indifferent to the virtues of republics, tended to emphasize the tyrannical aspect of the Tarquins as examples of bad monarchs - despots - whereas Brutus was praised for reestablishing government in its rightful tracks, not for diverting it. Conversely, the execution of the sons of Brutus was seen as a flaw in his character: it showed to what levels of cruelty the strict obedience to rigid, written, republican laws might lead.[25] The story of Brutus condemning his own sons to death contained an implicit warning about the risks of certain types of government: it was republicanism that had forced Brutus to act against the natural laws of paternal love

[23] La Font de Saint Yenne, Réflexions sur quelques causes de l' état présent de la peinture en France, 69.

[24] C. Volpihac-Auger, "Histoires d' une révolution. La chute de la monarchie romaine chez quelques historiens du xviiie siècle," in Éclectisme et cohérences des Lumières, Mélanges offerts à Jean Ehrard (Paris: Librairies Nizet, 1992), 386-396.

[25] *Ibid.*, 391; see, however, the interesting examples quoted in Harold T. Parker, The Cult of Antiquity and the French Revolutionaries. A study in the development of the revolutionary spirit (Chicago: University of Chicago Presss, 1937), 32-33.

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A similar suggestion is implied in Voltaire's very early play of Brutus: the execution is given the central place, but the play, it should be remembered, is a Cornelian tragedy of duty in which a single son's willingness to die for his country takes precedence over his father's obligation to condemn him; the emotional centerpiece of the play is the speech in which Titus encourages his father to condemn him as an example. The father himself remains a cypher - the ruler as an unmoveable, unexplainable force of nature. For Voltaire absolute obedience to the monarch was an issue for his subjects, not for the monarch himself. As a character, Voltaire's Brutus remains in the shadows, whereas David casts him in shadows only to highlight his conflict.[26]

The philosophes had little more sympathy for popular sovereignty, and when they took up the theme it was with such a slight shift in emphasis that the change is hard to detect after two hundred years. Vertot, writing in the Encyclopédie, suggested that in the post-Tarquin period Rome was threatened by upstart aristocrats, not by lowly rabble.[27] When in 1770, during the wedding celebrations of Marie Antoinette and the future Louis XVI, some three hundred pedestrians were killed in a crush caused by the carriages of the aristocracy, the philosophe Delisle de Sales published a Letter from Brutus which suggested that the blame lay with those "who crush the people with their horses and arrogance" - meaning the

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[26] Voltaire, Brutus, in Oeuvres, I (Paris: Baudouin Frères, 1828), 352-423; Roland Mortier, "Voltaire et le peuple," in Le Coeur et la Raison. Recueil d' études sur le dix-huitème siècle, 89-103.

[27] "Rois de Rome," Encyclopédie XIV, 327.

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aristocracy, not the King. The Letter was duly published, and reviewed by Diderot, who thought that the reference to Brutus was misplaced in such a trivial work.[28]

Only with Rousseau did the personality of Brutus himself, exemplified by the agonizing decision to condemn his own sons, take center stage. In 1761 Rousseau published a series of topics for etchings, which included the story of Brutus.[29] Yet despite Rousseau's political ambivalence, he had no illusions about the seat of power: the only conflict imaginable was that between absolute monarchy and despotism. The difference is that Rousseau came down firmly against despotism for its arbitrariness, not its cruelty. A good monarch was one who applied the laws evenly, instead of allowing personal sentiment to override his duty. When he condemned his sons, said Rousseau, "Brutus was virtuous."[30] In the last years of the Old Regime it was the integrity of Brutus that was lauded, not his republicanism.[31]

Rousseau's interpretation was monarchical, but prescriptive: obeying the laws was what a good ruler did, even - and especially - an absolute ruler. What those rules were to be, as Mercier had pointed out to Catherine of Russia, was the great unanswered question. Not for the last time in French political culture, abstractions had the very practical purpose of postponing divisive choices.

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[28] Delisles de Sales, Lettre de Brutus sur les chars anciens et modernes (London, 1771), 7; quoted in Michel Delon, "La *Lettre de Brutus* de Delisle de Sales," Denis Diderot, Oeuvres Complètes, Vol. XX, ed. Jane Marsh Dieckmann, Jean Varloot et al., 537.

[29] "Sujet d' estampes afin de compléter le Recueil d' estampes pour la Nouvelle Héloïse." The actual prints were engraved by Gravelot.

[30] "Brutus fut vertueux." Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Emile, in Oeuvres Complètes Vol. IV (Paris; Pléiade, 1964), 1652.

[31] Harold T. Parker, The Cult of Antiquity and the French Revolutionaries, 32.

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In those last, fervent years of the Old Regime, the story of Brutus executing his sons was kept before the public consciousness by the renewed popularity of Machiavelli's Discourses on the First Decade of Livy, which was newly translated in 1782. According to the Renaissance writer there was no choice for Brutus but to kill his own sons if liberty were to be preserved. Where Rousseau gave a moral affirmation Machiavelli found reason of state: killing one' own sons for the public good was not so much morally right as politically wise.[32] To repeat David's later evaluation, "There was a similarity between the behavior of Brutus and that which Louis XVI should have had toward his brother and others among his relatives."[33] Voltaire's Brutus, Vertot's article in the Encyclopedia, and Machiavelli's Discourses had prepared educated readers to argue that the King must be firm if the aristocracy were to be reined in. In the years 1787-1789, marked by a nobiliar uprising, anyone might have recognized the parallels.[34]

If royal authority was the answer, then what was the question? The arbitrariness of justice became in the last years of the Old Regime the great unifying political issue of all levels of society. The philosophes had joined the fray in 1766 with the publication of Cesare Beccaria's On Crimes and Punishments, one of the most influential books of the Enlightenment. The Italian jurist and his book were

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[32] Niccolò Machiavelli, Discourses on the First Decade of Titus Livius Book III, Chapter 3: "In Order to Maintain Newly gained Liberty, Brutus' Sons must be Killed," in The Chief Works and Others, transl. Allan Gilbert, Volume I (Durham: Duke University Press, 1965), 424; Jean Marie Goulemot, "Emploi du mot révolution dans les traductions françaises du XVIIIe siècle des Discours de Nicolas Macchiavelli," in Cahiers de Lexicologie 3 (1968): 75-83, quoted Baker, "Toward a revolutionary lexicon," in Inventing the French Revolution, 205.

[33] See above, note 25, Ch. I, above.

[34] Baker, "The ideological arsenal of Moreau," in Inventing the French Revolution, 80; Doyle, The Ancien Régime, 2.

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enthusiastically received in France - the work was translated by David's future friend, the Abbé Morellet, and occasioned intense discussions among Diderot, Marmontel, and others.[35] At any rate, Beccaria's concerns meshed with those of the French philosophical establishment as a whole. Voltaire, for instance, devoted a considerable amount of his late life's energy to redressing the judicial system, notably through his propagandizing around L' Affaire Calas. In the realignment of philosophes and Parliamentarians around their opposition to Calonne, the Parliaments seized on the issue of judicial reform, and on May 3 1788 the Paris Parliament issued a reaffirmation of the fundamental laws of the kingdom, including a brief against arbritrary justice.[36] Finally, those fine barometers of popular opinion, the Cahiers de Doléance, the registers of complaints that were collected in 1787 in preparation for the Assembly of the Estates General of 1789, show that the issue of justice was a predominant concern among the population at large. On the side of the nobility the Comte de Lally-Tollendal had long sought to exonerate his father, executed for treason in 1766; and by 1789 his skill and reputation as an advocate for reform of the criminal justice system had put him in the forefront of the representatives to the Estates General.[37]

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[35] Cesare Beccaria, Traité des delits et des peines; traduit de l' italien, d' après la troisième édition [translated by Andre Morellet] (Paris:, n.p., 1766). Original version: Dei delitti e delle pene (Livorno, 1764); A new translation by Brissot de Warville, with commentaries by Voltaire, was published in 1782; see Marcello Maestro, Cesare Beccaria and the Origins of Penal Reform (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1973), esp 36-38. On the reception given to Beccaria by the philosophes see Georges Dulac, "Diderot et Beccaria en 1765-1766," Diderot, Oeuvres Complètes Vol. XX, ed. Jane Marsh Dieckmann, Jean Varloot et al., 397-404.

[36] Bertaud, Initiation à la Révolution Française, 30.

[37] George Taylor, "Les Cahiers de 1789 sont-ils révolutionnaires?", Annales E.S.C. (nov. dec 1973, no. 6); A. Dupront, "Cahiers de doléances et mentalités collectives," in

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Likewise, David's Brutus takes sides on several issues that were at the forefront of the demand for reform; one was the demand that the corpse of a criminal be returned to his family; another was, that the family not be punished for the crime. These two elements of the story figure prominently in David's conception despite the fact that they were historically inaccurate.[38]

A third issue is so precisely articulated in the Brutus that one can almost trace it to its origin among the philosophes. In his left hand, Brutus holds a scroll, which describes the crimes of his sons. Now Beccaria had specifically rejected the belief that a monarch should sit in judgment, and in 1766, Morellet, the translator of Beccaria, sent the Italian author a series of comments on the French version of Beccaria's book, the Traité des delits et des peines. Twenty years later these comments were published as Diderot's, but they are almost certainly by Marmontel, who disliked Beccaria's work. In particular, Marmontel argued that the ruler could be trusted as a judge because he was simply the enforcer of the general rule, and his sentence was based on the facts of the case alone: in our terminology, a judge was a member of the executive branch of government.[39] Reviewing the Brutus in 1789, the anonymous critic for the philosophe Correspondance Littéraire noted that Brutus "still holds in his hand the decree of the Senate which had deferred to him

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Actes du 89e Congrès national des Sociétés savantes tome I, Paris, 1964; both discussed in Furet, Penser la Révolution Francaise, 73-74.

[38] [Anonymous], Lettres analytiques, critiques et philosophiques, sur les tableaux du Sallon, 57.

[39] Georges Dulac, "Diderot et Beccaria en 1765-1766. notes et commentaires;" [Marmontel] "Notes sur le *Traité des délits et des peines*," in Denis Diderot, Oeuvres Complètes Vol. XX, eds. Jane Marsh Dieckmann, Jean Varloot et al., 400, 421-22.

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the sentencing of his sons."[40] Since the scroll in fact contains a fragmentary description of the crime, the critic rightly infered that such a description, transmitted from the Senate to the Consul, was the equivalent of a jury's verdict communicated to the sentencing judge [**Illustration #19**]. Without a sense of the strict legal limits that Brutus the legislator had previously imposed on his actions as an executive the story loses much of its poignancy. These arguments were so common in late eighteenth century culture that in 1784, in the Marriage of Figaro, Beaumarchais had won a reputation by mercilessly lampooning the fantasy that one might be at once a ruler and an impartial judge.

If a concern for justice was shared by many people of widely differing political positions, almost every one of those positions, in turn, could be united under one call -- which Gouverneur Morris, reporting from Paris in 1789, sarcastically described as "the general position of those who wish the King to be everything."[41] We have noted the influence of Jacob-Nicolas Moreau as a propagandist, but Moreau was a theorist of royal power as well; and as a theorist he called for the King to reassert his authority through the administration of justice - an absolute monarch bound by laws that were yet to be defined, except, of course, as the laws of nature."[42] For Moreau the legislative and the executive were one, and he proposed the representation of this unity as the centerpiece of Royal

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[40] "Il tient encore à la main le décret du Sénat qui lui avait déféré le jugement de ses deux fils." [Anonymous], "Suite du Salon de 1789," in Correspondance littéraire, philosophique et critique par Grimm, Diderot, Raynal, Meister, etc. Vol XV, 535.

[41] Gouverneur Morris, "Friday, April 24 1789," in A Diary of the French Revolution, ed. Beatrix Cary Davenport (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1939), 52.

[42] Baker, "The ideological arsenal of Moreau," in Inventing the French Revolution, 77; François Furet, Interpreting the French Revolution, 38.

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propaganda: "Everything consists in making the king speak as legislator."[43] That was clearly David's intention, at least at the inception of the Brutus.

King, Legislator, Father: David, like Moreau, like Bossuet in the seventeenth century, like Bodin in the sixteenth, suggested that the relationship of the King to his subjects was, in its primary form, the relationship of a father to his sons.[44] And Brutus is exactly that: a father to his sons, a legislator to his subjects. The "psychological" aspect of this work is firmly rooted in political practicalities: one cannot simply read the Brutus as a mere illustration of a "family romance."[45]

By 1787, moreover, the analogy of King and Father had begun to lose its appeal - it seems to have gone uncontested only in rural areas.[46] It is impossible to tell how far it was disputed, though there are telling signs. As early as 1766, Joly de Fleury claimed that the real distinction between a monarch and a despot was that between a paterfamilias and slave owner; by then, however, both the Jansenists and Rousseau were arguing that there was no similarity whatsoever: a father was connected by blood, a monarch by mutual assent, not by natural ties. And by 1776 the younger Mirabeau (who had good personal reasons to dislike his own father), could dismiss the concept of the paternal authority of the monarch as

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[43] Baker, *op. cit.*, 62-63.

[44] Notably Bossuet's Politique tirée des propres paroles de l' Ecriture Sainte (1709) and Moreau's Les Devoirs du prince réduits à un seul principe (1775); see Jeffrey Merrick, "Fathers and kings: patriarchalism and absolutism in eighteenth-century French politics," Studies on Voltaire and the eighteenth century #323 (Oxford: The Voltaire Foundation 1993): 281.

[45] Lynn Avery Hunt, The Family Romance of the French Revolution (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 37-39.

[46] Vovelle, La Chute de la monarchie, 113-4, quoting Régine Robin, La Société Francaise en 1789, 2nde partie.

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a "chimera."[47] Finally, the fragility of Moreau's theory was demonstrated spectacularly and disastrously in a public exchange between Louis XVI and his cousin, the Duke of Orléans, on November 19, 1787. When the King, sitting in public session, attempted to overrule the Parlement, the Duke objected: "Sire, this is illegal." "Yes it is legal," replied Louis XVI, "because I wish it."[48] At the very moment when David was turning to the theme of Brutus, the absolutist position that he espoused was falling into disfavor: Louis XVI's peremptory action backfired miserably.

David's thinking was by no means at the forefront of political thought in the last years of the Old Regime: initially at least, his Address to the Ruler followed contemporary beliefs that were, if anything, more conservative than those of the not-so-radical philosophes. On the other hand, David skillfully manipulated the dominant themes of political discourse in the last years of the Old Regime: Justice, Reason, Will.[49] However, rather than a deeply felt, coherent plea for one particular view of Justice, or Monarchy, David was making gestures towards various political positions. Instead of placeing Will - the reins of power - in the hands of one personage, he reduced the figure of Brutus to a form of impotence; rather than presenting an image of Reason, he turned to a vision of terror. As the conflicts

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[47] Honoré-Gabriel Riqueti, comte de Mirabeau, Essai sur le despotisme (Londres 1776), 104; quoted Merrick 295-301.

[48] Vovelle, *op. cit.*, 96-7.

[49] Baker, "Political representations of the past," in Inventing the French Revolution, 35.

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inherent in his position sharpened, he was bound to alter further the relationships between these positions, weakening one and strengthening the other.

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CHAPTER FIVE

"Reason without passion would be almost a king without subjects."[50] If the Brutus has come today to be misread as passion without reason, it is partly because in his finished version David gradually shifted the focus of his painting away from the foreground - the realm of Royalty, Reason and Justice - to the background, with its display of emotions and irrationality.

So the critics of 1789 had it right after all. A close examination of the Brutus reveals several superimposed and somewhat contradictory positions that David brought into the work between its inception and its completion: meanings brought in by political events, and which David struggled to control.

This is not to say that the events of 1789 caused David to paint the Brutus, or that the events of 1789 were caused by him: this would be like suggesting that the signified is caused by the signifier, or vice-versa. Rather, as an artist active in a

[50] "La raison, sans les passions, serait presque un roi sans sujets." Denis Diderot, "Essai sur les règnes de Claude et de Néron," quoted in Roland Mortier, "Introduction," in Le Coeur et la Raison. Recueil d' "etudes sur le dix-huitème siècle, v.

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certain historical context, he was in the unenviable position of repeatedly facing a canvas whose meaning continuously changed under the accelerating pressure of events. To read the Brutus against the light of a revolutionary situation is to read its production and reception against the interlocking set of conjunctures which channeled and limited its ways of communicating. The same can be said of the royal officials who attempted to steer the course of cultural production, and of the viewers and critics attempting to come to terms with David's works. Their problem with these conjunctures was not to create "new" meanings, but to negotiate meanings already present, at the risk of producing meanings best forgotten in retrospect. In political terms, each of these actors was no different from a demonstrator negotiating the strategies of affirmation and survival: do I turn left or right? do I throw a stone at a cop, or run? And what are the consequences of each, for myself and for my cause? In semiotic terms, each participant was like a speaker who must work through an inherited repertory of signs, using an already given grammatical system, in order to get his meaning across. That the meaning produced is never quite the meaning intended, is no new insight. People make history, but it is not, ultimately, a history of their own choosing.

David, as we have seen, was attempting to bend his own grammatical system to his needs - if by grammatical system one means the organization of the painting. He was also attempting, with equal desperation, to adapt his own inherited repertory of signs to the new political situation:

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> Indeed, one of the most remarkable aspects of the events of 1789 is the way in which quite traditional forms of social action could suddenly take on different meanings in a redefined political situation. Unless we recognize the nature of the discourse (or discourses) that defined the situation in which the French found themselves in 1789, we cannot grasp the meanings of the "social" events that occurred within that situation.[51]

By the beginning of 1789 David was working with the givens of Royal Authority, Justice and Will, but his position had already been marginalized by events. As early as January of 1789, the Swiss journalist Mallet du Pan wrote: "King, despotism, and constitution have become only secondary questions. Now it is war between the Third Estate and the other two orders."[52] By February, the Abbé Sieyes had published his hugely influential pamphlet, What is the Third Estate?, in which he argued that sovereignty resided in the nation, not the ruler. At this point Rousseau's political writings - especially the Social Contract - resurfaced in the public consciousness, though his cultural writings had never lost their popularity.[53] The topic of discussion was now popular sovereignty, not the rights of an autocrat.

This new topic threatened to put David, and indeed the whole field of painting, in an impossible quandary. Three centuries of culture had made the depiction of individual heroism a sine-qua-non of ethical instruction. Over the next five years the pressure of events was to shift power away from individual heroes to groups of middle-class representatives or lower-class demonstrators, while the field

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[51] Baker, "Introduction," in Inventing the French Revolution, 5.

[52] Georges Lefebvre, La Révolution francaise, 6e. édition (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968),125; Doyle, Origins of the French Revolution, 147.

[53] Durand Echeverria, "The Pre-revolutionary Influence of Rousseau's *Contrat social*," Journal of the History of Ideas XXXIII, 4 (October-Dececember 1972): 543-560; Raymond Trousson, Rousseau et sa fortune littéraire (Bordeaux: Ducros, 1971), 61.

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of painting struggled to keep up through allegory, complex historical narratives without a central figure, and so forth. Demachy's Fête de l' Etre Suprême of 1794 is one of the few works that successfully tackle the problem of showing the People as the real hero of History [**Illustration #20**]: under a vast summer sky the various groups of participants are barely distinguishable as groups, let alone as individuals. As for David, we need be neither surprised nor censorious if in 1789 he was unable to move beyond the concept of individual heroism and the critique of heroism in the Brutus.[54]

The public image of the King was to shift repeatedly over the following months. By spring, Louis XVI had become the "despot" to some, as he resisted the Estates General; on July 17, when he came to Paris to capitulate to the bourgeoisie, he was, briefly, the Good Father; by September, when the Brutus first appeared, he seemed somewhat overtaken by events, though by October the fear of an aristocratic plot had revived, and Louis was again the only force that stood between the people and the bloodthirsty counterrevolutionaries; this last figure provoked more anxiety than affection.[55] The concept of the Hero-King had begun to move into the shadows.

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[54] On group vs. "hero" narratives, see Douglas Foley, Learning Capitalist Culture. Deep in the Heart of Tejas (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1990), 5; see also [Anonymous], Le plaisir prolongé, le retour du Salon chez soi et celui de l' abeille danssa ruche, par Pithou (Paris, l' auteur et Febre, 1791), 28.

[55] Doyle, The Ancien Régime, 2; Georges Lefebvre, La Grande Peur de 1789 (Paris: SEDES, 1932), 163.

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However, the problem of fixing the shadows in David's Brutus did not arise until the end of April, 1789: since the painting of shadows was part of the final execution of the painting, the issue had little bearing on the preliminary sketches.

Shadows do appear, however, in a fully developed oil sketch now in Stockholm [**Illustration #21**], and in another drawing, now at the Getty Library. [**Illustration #22**]. However, the second drawing cannot in all fairness be attributed to David alone, and even less to the sequence preceding the execution of the Brutus. For one thing, its technique is uneven, elegant in the figures of the women, pathetically weak, almost grotesque in the cockeyed face of Brutus, which suggests at the least that it is by more than one hand; for another, it shows the lictors carrying Phrygian bonnets at the ends of pikes. The Phrygian bonnet had been used in Antiquity to distinguish a freed slave. It was used as a symbol during the American Revolution. In France in 1789, however, if it was used at all, it was not with a consistent intent: David himself had placed a Phrygian cap on his Phrygian Prince Paris of Troy in his Paris et Hélène. The use of the Phrygian bonnet to suggest the People did not enter the French political repertory until 1791, with the revolt of Chateauvieux Regiment, the event that split David from his less committed friends like Chénier. At any rate, the Phrygian cap seems to have been added to the drawing after the fact: the lines of the wall behind it show through.[56] The Getty Drawing, then, appears to be an attempt by an anonymous artist - perhaps a student of David - to rewrite David's political commitment retroactively, perhaps by using an original drawing by the Master. The fact that the drawing is

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[56] similar observation in Bordes, La Mort de Brutus de Pierre-Narcisse Guérin, 41-2

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signed "L. David faciebat 1787," makes its content even more anachronistic, and its attribution so much the more doubtful.[57]

There is no reason, however, to doubt the authenticity of the Stockholm drawing, or its importance. Stylistically it has all the freedom of an oil sketch, meant to indicate the relative balance of light and shade over the surface of the painting. In the case of the Brutus this was a difficult undertaking because the balance of colors is extremely delicate, and easily thrown off in a less sophisticated copy like the version presently in the Hartford Athenaeum.

However, there are a few noteworthy differences between the sketch and the finished painting. First, the old woman on the far right - usually identified as an old nurse, though Grimm's Correspondance thought she represented the mother of Brutus - appears in the same position, but the drapery covering her face was not added until an elegant squared-up drawing that precedes the finished work [**Illustration #23**]. It was not at all rare for an artist to work up the body before draping it fully.[58] The major, crucial difference between the oil sketch and the finished work, however, lies the two heads that the lictors parade on the top of pikes. This passage must be the one that David's anonymous biographer referred to

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[57] As suggested in Ministère de la Culture, de la Communication, des Grands Travaux et du Bicentenaire, Jacques-Louis David. 1748-1825, 205 #90; see Elisabeth Liris, "Autour des vignettes revolutionnaires: (la symbolique du bonnet phrygien)," in Michel Vovelle, ed., Les Images de la Revolution Francaise (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne 1988): 307-316; Gérard, Histoire des Jacobins (Paris: A. Somogy, 1946), 241-45, 366 n. 31-36; Louis de Combes, "Archéologie du Bonnet Rouge," in Episodes et Curiosités Révolutionaires, nouvelle edition (n. d.), 117-144.

[58] [Anonymous], "Suite du Salon de 1789," Correspondance littéraire, philosophique et critique XV, 536; the conclusions drawn by Schnapper in Ministère de la Culture, de la Communication, des Grands Travaux et du Bicentenaire, Jacques-Louis David. 1748-1825, 198, seem excessive.

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in 1824, apparently following conversations with David himself shortly before the artist's death: "[David had originally] presented the heads separated from their bodies by the lictors; the horrible events of 1789 decided him to hide them, as one sees today."[59]

English-speaking readers are apt to forget that the practice of exhibiting the heads of traitors, which had an ancient genealogy in England and Scotland, was quite foreign to French sensibilities: French mobs were more likely to parade the busts of their heroes than the heads of their foes.[60]

On July 14, however, after the Fall of the Bastille, its Governor, Bernard de Launay, was butchered by the crowd, and his head cut off by a cook with a penknife and a particular grudge (de Launay had just kicked him in the groin). Only after this did an unknown participant with a penchant for symbolic gestures, and perhaps some knowledge of English practices, explain to the crowd that "The Nation requires that his head be shown to the public, so that it may know his guilt."[61] De Launay's head was then paraded through the streets on a pike, next to that of Jacques de Flesselles, Provost of Merchants. No doubt the horror this evoked was due in part to the reversal of symbolism: from parading the bust of a

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[59] "[David avait] présenté les têtes séparées du corps par les licteurs. Les événement affreux de 1789 le décidèrent à les cacher, telles qu'on les voit aujourd'hui." [Anonymous], Notice sur la vie et les ouvrages de M J.-L. David (Paris: Dondey-Dupré 1824), 35; repeated almost word for word in A. Th... [Aimé Thome de Gamond], Vie de Louis David, suivie d' une liste de ses ouvrages (Paris: J. Tastu 1826), 31; see also Rosenblum, Transformations in late Eighteenth-Century Art, 76-8; Ettlinger, "Jacques Louis David and Roman Virtue," 115-19; Honour, David, Voltaire, Brutus and the French Revolution, 197.

[60] Charles Tilly, The Contentious French (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 51-54.

[61] Quoted in Jacques Godechot, The Taking of the Bastille, 244.

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political leader in triumph, to parading the actual head in derision, it seemed as if it was the very idea of relations between the leaders and the led that was being stood on its head.

In addition, the event represented a major shift in the semiotics of execution: before July 14 decapitation had been considered a privilege of noble wrongdoers, while hoi polloi had to content themselves with mere hanging. Decapitation by the people enforced the image of their sovereignty while suggesting equality before death: by 1789 a certain Doctor Guillotin had begun to develop the instruments for achieving this equality. Finally, there was the issue of bodily damage: the events around the death of de Launay were only the first of the numerous acts of violence, imagined or truthful, that were to mingle sexual vulnerability and violence: women disemboweled, men castrated, etc..

The Stockholm sketch could not have been executed before "the horrible events of 1789," for the simple reason that only on July 14, 1789 did the concept of parading severed heads have any meaning whatsoever for the French public and for David. If David underwent another change of political intent, it was after July 14, not before.

What was David's attitude after July 14? The Stockholm Drawing suggests several possibilities. On one level, the meaning of Brutus remained the same as that suggested by earlier, monarchist writers like Catrou and Rouillé: republics could only breed violence and anarchy, rigid laws could only run against nature, forcing a father to punish his own sons. A number of reviewers at the Salon in September eventually interpreted the Brutus in this manner - for instance, the anonymous but

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sympathetic critic for the Mercure de France, who may have been the middle-of-the road Royalist Mallet du Pan. The Mercure had passed to the Anglomanes, noble proponents of a Constitutional Monarchy in the English fashion (Lally-Tollendal was one of their leaders), and Mallet du Pan, one of their principal contributors, already had some experience as an art critic. This anonymous critic emphasized and praised the dimming of Royal authority. His praise for the darkness enveloping the figure of Brutus masked a combination of sympathy, wishful thinking, and nostalgia. In either case, the interpretation given was made to fit into the Anglomanes' desire for limitations to be imposed on royal power. For this critic the story of King Brutus was a tragedy , but inevitable within his own context: the dimming of royal power represented a rising of constitutional rights.[62] Conversely, Mende-Maupas saw in the Brutus a tragedy of "republican arrogance" (morgue républicaine). The critic praised the Brutus for describing Republicanism as a subversion of nature. The limits imposed by a constitution were limits imposed on human nature and fatherly affection.[63]

However, the presence of the severed heads in the Stockholm Study tilts this interpretation towards something far more radical: it gives legitimacy to popular executions by associating the promenading of heads (connoting the Parisian mob),

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[62] [Anonymous], "Exposition des peintures et gravures de MM. de l' Académie royale, au Salon du Louvre, 25 aout au 8 Octobre 1789," in Mercure de France, 1789, 81-92; P. H. Beik, "Mallet du Pan," in Samuel F. Scott and Barry Rothaus, Historical Dictionary of the French Revolution, 1789-1799 Vol II (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984), 624.

[63] [Chevalier J.J.O. de Mende-Maupas], Supplément sur les ouvrages exposes au Salon, 44. Michel Régis' conclusion that "Bref, le Brutus est subversif," misreads this passage as a reference to David's republicanism, not that of Brutus; "L' art des Salons," in Aux Armes et aux Arts: les arts de la révolution 1789-1799, ed. Philippe Bordes et Régis Michel (Paris: A Biro, 1988), 15,.

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with the judicially mandated execution ordered by Brutus as the legitimate representative of the People. In the week after July 14, amidst the triumph of the King's return to Paris to accept the tricolor and bless the new municipal government, many members of the middle class fleetingly wondered if decapitations by the mob could be justified as the expression of the People's Will: apparently David was one of them. As we have seen, for the Anglomanes Brutus cast into shadows was prescriptive, not descriptive, an affirmation of Royal powerlessness, not a regret. The severed heads in the painting took this argument one step further, by suggesting that it was the Popular Will that Brutus was forced to carry out.

However, the phase of bourgeois optimism lasted only a week or so. On July 22 1789, Jean-Louis Foulon and Bertier de Sauvigny, who had assisted the King in replacing the popular minister Necker, were similarly dispatched by a mob and similarly paraded, on the suspicion that they had been planning a counter-revolution.[64] At this point, public opinion (that is, liberal upper- and middle-class opinion and the reforming coalition in the National Assembly) began to splinter. Lally-Tollendal denounced the attacks while others, notably Barnave, remained supportive of the "People's Will."[65]

These debates were as much political as ethical; and they were not in any way clear-cut from a tactical point of view. Intentions, as Mende-Maupas

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[64] Bordes, Le Serment du Jeu de Paume de Jacques-Louis David, 28, n. 69, 98, and planche 8; Louis Hautecoeur, Louis David, 112-113; Morris, A Diary of the French Revolution, 58; Crow's suggestion (Emulation, 119-120), that David had a part in two drawings depicting the severed heads does not appear to be based on very solid arguments; nevertheless, there is an apparent similarity between one of these heads - paraded without its face - and one of the heads depicted in David's Stockholm drawing.

[65] Lefebvre, The Coming of the French Revolution, 119.

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demonstrated, could be read backwards into anticipated results. For some, like Barnave, the "People's Will" was a useful threat against backsliding reformers; for the Parisian bourgeoisie the provocation to violence could provide a useful excuse to form their own militias; others, however, suspected that the events might have been masterminded by reactionaries "to prepare us to accept a massacre through the horror of these sights." [66] Anarchy might provide the reactionaries with an excellent excuse to call in the Royal troops and wipe out the opposition as a whole.

It is impossible to determine from the Brutus where exactly David stood on these issues - assuming that he was in that blessed minority that stood in one place to begin with, while the situation was changing day to day. Most likely, to quote once more the Bard of Hartford, he was "of three minds,/Like a tree/In which there are three blackbirds."[67]

Some time after that date David's friend the architect Charles de Wailly worked up his entry for a competition to redesign the Salon Carré, the room in the Louvre in which the exhibitions of the Salon were held. Wailly's project had been turned down in favor of another plan, but Wailly's entry is a witty conceit, an imaginary view of the Salon of 1789 as it would have looked if his own project had been adopted. Wailly may have used the same idea for a narrow mezzanine in the Salon of what is now the Theâtre de l' Odéon. The drawing shows David's Brutus

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[66] "Pour préparer le massacre par l' horreur du spectacle," Camille Desmoulins, Révolutions de France et des royaumes, 86 (after July 17 1791); quoted in Louis Blanc, Histoire de la Révolution francaise Vol. V (Paris: Langlois-Leclerq, 1853), 481; see also Lefebvre, La Grande Peur de 1789, 148-9, 164, 167.

[67] Stevens, "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird," in The Palm at the End of the Mind. Selected Poems, 20.

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prominently displayed at the center of the composition [**Illustration #24**]. The composition is in all its essentials similar to the oil drawing - minus the heads. The nurse is shown as she appears in the sketch, that is, with her head uncovered, which suggests, again, that Wailly was following the oil sketch, not the finished painting.[68]

Apparently, after July 22 David decided to suppress the heads in order to de-emphasize the similarities between the events of early Rome and those of 1789 France. Or, to rephrase the point: the parallel between the Lictors and the People was acceptable as long as it was symbolic, not practical. One might regret, in retrospect, the "People's Will" as an inevitable part of the taking of the Bastille. Once public executions became an ongoing political factor with possibly unforeseeable ramifications, David, like many others, was not willing to encourage them.

By July 14, 1789 the topic of David's painting shifted away from the issue of despotism to issues of gender and class: the politics of David's Brutus were withdrawn from the figure of Brutus himself, and transferred to the more cryptic figures of the women, putting Brutus in the shadows, as it were, and highlighting the background, in which his daughters, his wife and the older woman are the main protagonists.

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[68] Jacques Wilhelm, "Un projet de Charles de Wailly pour l'aménagement du salon du Louvre," Bulletin du Musée Carnavalet (June 1963): 5-10

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It has been often noted that the French Revolution marks a powerful shift away from a strongly feminized society, in which values traditionally associated with femininity were valued among the upper classes, to a more masculine ethos, prizing the supposedly male virtues of firmness, bravery, rationality.[69] David's work in the years 1785-1799 is a particular interesting example of this shift.

Just as in his earlier Horatii, David's composition for the Brutus contrasts the two different planes of reason and feeling; and as in the Horatii, gender provided the instrumental concept that allowed David to shift his focus and to transfer his political commitment away from the now-outmoded defense of royalty.

In addition, David 's focus on issues of gender may have served to move the visual and affective focus of the painting towards the unfolding action in the background. This is not to say that expressions of class should be understood to have a fixed, originary, and causal position in relation to gender, or vice-versa. In the eighteenth century as today, issues of gender and issues of social position could be used for tactical purposes, either political or personal, or both at once, and David was using them both in the Brutus.[70]

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[69] Madelyn Gutwirth, The Twilight of the Goddesses: Women and Representation in the French Revolutionary Era (Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press,1992); Elisabeth Roudinesco, Théroigne de Méricourt; une femme mélancholique sous la Révolution (Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1989); English version: Theroigne de Mericourt: A Melancholic Woman During the French Revolution, transl. Martin Thom (New York: Verso, 1991); Antoine de Baecque, Le Corps de l 'Histoire. Metaphores et Politique (1770-1800) (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1993).

[70] Cf. Marcuse's point that in the Modern era such categories as class "tend to become descriptive, deceptive, or operational terms." Herbert Marcuse, One Dimensional Man: studies in the ideology of advanced industrial society (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), xlvi; for some of the recent thinking on gender in French history, see for example Judith G. Coffin, The Politics of Women's Work: the Paris Garment Trades, 1750-1915 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Genevieve Fraisse, Muse de la raison: la democratie

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At any rate, the seamless continuum between class and gender was strengthened by the classical garb in which the story was set: David was neither the first nor the last among those who used Classicism "to hide from themselves the content of their struggles."[71] For instance, when in 1755, the actress Mlle. Clairon appeared on stage without the customary panier (hoop), this affront to préséance was justified by Diderot as a suitably ennobled means of expressing passions and by implication, sexuality. Marmontel addressed directly the iimplications of class and sexuality when he described Clairon's déshabillé (state of undress), as the "mere dress of a slave, her hair flying."[72] Already Montesquieu had joined conceptually the harem slave, the revolution, and unbridled sexuality; and Rousseau referred directly to the stories of Brutus and Coriolanus as means of conveying female power without the unavoidable bathos of contemporary reference:

> Through a woman [Lucretia and Brutus] Rome acquired freedom; [...] through a woman [Coriolanus] Rome under siege was saved from an exile. Gallant Frenchmen, what would you say if you saw that procession so ridiculous to your mocking eyes? Form a procession of

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exclusive et la difference des sexes (Paris: Alinea, 1989); Margaret Darrow, "French Noblewomen and the New Domesticity, 1750-1850," Feminist Studies, vol. 5, no. 1 (Spring 1979): 41-65.

[71] Karl Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte [1852] (New York: International Publishers, 1964), 16.

[72] Denis Diderot, De la Poésie Dramatique, in Oeuvres Esthétiques, ed. P. Verniere (Paris, Garnier, 1966), 267; also in Diderot's Writings on the Theater, F. C. Green, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936), 191-192, reprinted in Alois Maria Nagler, A Source Book in Theatrical History (New York: Dover Press, 1959), 301; "en simple habit d' esclave, échevelée..." Jean-François Marmontel, Mémoires, ed. John Renwick, Vol. I, livre 5 (Clermont-Ferrand: G. de Bussac, 1972), 141.

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> beautiful Frenchwomen, I know of none so indecent; but compose it of Roman women, you will have all have the eyes of Volscians and the heart of Coriolanus.[73]

To mask the "indecency" of passion - either the indecency of female desire, or the indecency of lower-class affect - under the mask of classical reference, was a strategy that David found readily at hand.

By 1782 the useful confusion of female passion and political disturbance had found its correlative in the person of Marie Antoinette. The infamous Affaire du Collier, in which a small fortune had been squandered in an odd scheme involving a putative lover of the Queen, brutally shifted the common image of the Queen from a symbol of domesticity to one of sexual and fiscal incontinence. For it should not be forgotten that in the eighteenth century the word "incontinence" meant at once the squandering of vital fluids and the squandering of financial trust. In early Modern Europe the pollution of class was quite straightforwardly associated with the pollution of sexuality: a woman who "ruined" herself also "ruined" her family.

The image of pollution through sexuality might have seemed all the more threatening to David because his own career was threatened by upward-climbing women, in the form of the newly-empowered women artists who had begun to enter the Academy: his friend Mme. Vigée-Lebrun, Labille-Guiard, the women of the

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[73] "Par une femme Rome acquit la liberté; [...] par les femmes Rome assiégée fut sauvée des mains d' un proscrit. Galants François, qu' eussiez-vous dit en voyant passer cette procession si ridicule à vos yeux moqueurs? ...Formez ce cortège de belles Dames françoises; je n' en connois pas de plus indécent; mais composez-le de Romaines; vous aurez tous les yeux des Volsques et le coeur de Coriolan." Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Emile ou de l' Education, Livre V, in Oeuvres Complètes II, 742; see also the curious reference to "Brutus en panier" in Rousseau, La Nouvelle Héloïse, in Oeuvres Complètes II, 254; on Montesquieu, see Diana J. Schaub, Ch. 3, "Venus in the Cloister," in Erotic Liberalism. Women and Revolution in Montesquieu's 'Persian Letters" (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1995), 41-54.

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Place Dauphine. Then there was a humiliating incident in which d' Angiviller requested that David desist from teaching three women in his studio at the Louvre, with the implication that such practices might end up exposing the women to corruption and David to censure. The suggestion was clearly upsetting to David.[74] Meanwhile, his own marriage was beginning to unravel - he separated from his wife shortly after the completion of the Brutus. Despite all this, and because of this, David seems to have gone out of his way not to exclude women artists from his studio: an unusually large number of female students has been recorded for David. And yet, for good or bad, the stress of his own relations was carried over into his painting: *perhaps David was more controlling than misogynistic.*

This was by no means only a personal matter. In the last decade of the Old Regime the analogy of women to lower-class activity and disturbance had been considerably reinforced by repeated riots over the grain supplies. Women, who were usually in charge of buying bread, played a prominent part in these actions.

From early on the figure of a collapsing girl appears in David's sketches - supposedly the younger of the two daughters of Brutus. The daughters of Brutus are not mentioned In the traditional narrative, but the daughters and wife of Coriolanus play a prominent role in his story. Most likely, then, David had simply adapted these figures from his original design. David's drawing for the younger daughter of Brutus went through several mutations: he showed her alternatively

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[74] Jules-Marie Joseph Guiffrey, ed., "Louis David. Lettres et documents divers," Nouvelles Archives de l' Art Français Vol. 3, 2e serie (Paris: J. Baur, 1874-75): 396-97; also quoted in Wildenstein, Documents complémentaires au Catalogue de l' oeuvre de Louis David, 23, 24.

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clinging to her mother, or falling to her knees, fainting or grasping as David tried out various expressions of her emotions [**Illustrations #25, #26, #27**]. But on June 14, 1789, David wrote to his friend and pupil Wicar, then living in Florence. Wicar had acquired a reputation as an expert on Roman sculpture with the publication of several books on the antiquities of Florence, the first published in 1785 and another just coming out in 1789.[75] David enclosed a drawing of the fainting girl and added:

> sketch for me on this [*illegible*] head a coiffure in the position I indicate. It seems to me that you will probably find it among the Bacchanals. One often sees certain Bacchants with these poses. However, no matter, so long as you send me a disheveled coiffure of a young girl, a period coiffure. Don't try to make a finished drawing, I will not take advantage of you that much. Besides, I only need enough lines to distinguish well all the masses of the hair.[76]

The rough sketch sent by David [**Illustration #28**], is a radical change from the previous designs, the first known draft of the posture which is taken up in the Stockholm drawing and later, in the finished version of Brutus. The general shape of the coiffure in the oil sketch lies somewhere between the rough sketch and the finished painting, though in the sketch it is somewhat smudged. Apparently Wicar was not very helpful, or else David was pressed for time; Wicar does not seem to have contributed much, and if he did, we have no record of it.

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[75] Jean-Baptiste Joseph Wicar, La Gallerie de Florence (Paris, 1785); Tableaux, statues, bas-reliefs et camées de la galerie de Florence et du palais Pitti, dessinés par Vicar, peintre... avec les explications par Mongez, membre de l' Institut de France Tome I (A Paris. Chez Lacombe, 1789); see also the review by Quatremère de Quincy, Mercure de France, 19 Sept. 1789, 62-68.

[76] "Vous me feriez un plaisir de me croquer sur ce [ici?] tête pour la coiffure et dans la position que je vais vous marquer. Il me semble que vous trouveriez plutôt cela dans les Bacchanales. On y voit souvent de ces Bacchantes avec ces espèces d' attitude; d' ailleurs, n' importe, pourvu que vous m' envoyiez une coiffure échevelée d' une jeune fille, une coiffure de style." quoted in Jules David, Le Peintre Louis David, 1748-1825, 56 and facsimile following 622.

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At any rate, David himself was being less than candid with his friend. The posture of his fainting girl is a quote from the well-known Bacchant attributed to Callimachos, of which a partial copy survives in the Palazzo degli Conservatori, in Rome: the posture of the legs and the whole outline of one arm are identical, although the torso has been twisted in the opposite direction **[Illustrations #29 & #30]**. However, the head of the Bacchant in the Conservatori is damaged, so that the details of the hair cannot be made out clearly. By June 14, then, David had already decided to use the image of a Bacchant for the fainting girl, and in a fit of allegorizing scruples he sent his friend on an archeological wild-goose chase - which Wicar, most likely, saw through.

Why was the reference to Bacchants so important? By the Spring of 1789 the scene of mass agitation was dominated by the figure of the enragées, working-class women driven to fury by continuing food shortages. It was a commonplace to equate these women with the Bacchants, the ecstatic, man-killing female figures of Classical Antiquity.[77]

The "adequation of Revolution and Woman" had a supportive aspect as well as a condemnatory one.[78] Roland Barthes coined the term "Féminaire" to describe the assigning of eroticized feminine traits to various aspects of the political process of the French Revolution.[79] On July 23, 1789, Nicolas (soon to be Gracchus)

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[77] Annette Rosa, Citoyennes. Les Femmes et la Révolution Française (Paris: Messidor, 1988), 22.

[78] "Adéquation de la Révolution et de la Femme." Roudinesco, Théroigne de Méricourt; une femme mélancholique sous la Révolution, 127.

[79] Roland Barthes, Michelet par lui-même (Paris: Gallimard, 1965), 129-138.

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Babeuf wrote back to his wife in Picardy, to report on the executions of Bertier and Foulon, which he had witnessed the previous day:

> Oh, how painful I found all this joy! I was at the same time satisfied and vexed, I said so much the better! and so much the worse! I can understand the people taking the law into its own hands...but how can it fail today to be cruel?[80]

The expression "painful joy" was a common coded reference to female orgasm in the early Modern period. Babeuf was in large, if not necessarily good, company when he equated the mixture of joy and pain, exaltation and degradation with female sexuality. The step to assimilating these displays with moral exaltation and degradation, with enthusiasm or terror before the People's actions, was frequently taken in the years of the French Revolution, once more underscoring the analogy between female "incontinence" and political action.[81] Babeuf, like David, like many others, was attracted to that aspect of gendering which Elizabeth Roudinesco calls "Warrior feminism" (Féminisme guerrier), in which women's roles were redefined either as negations or duplications of male warrior roles: "The Classical amazon is the symbol par excellence of a belief in the phallic woman. She is, in fact, the delirious version of this belief."[82]

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[80] quoted in Gérard Walter, La Révolution Française (Paris: Albin Michel, 1967), 82-86.

[81] A similar use of sexuality can be found in the writings of Mme. de Staël; see Linda Orr, "Outspoken Women and the Rightful Daughter of the Revolution: Madame de Staël's 'Considérations sur la Révolution Française,'" in Rebel Daughters: Women of the French Revolution, ed. Sara E. Melzer and Leslie W. Rabine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 123.

[82] "En un mot, l' amazone antique est le symbole par excellence de la croyance au phallicisme de la femme. Elle est même la version délirante de cette croyance." Roudinesco, Théroigne de Méricourt: une femme mélancholique sous la Révolution, 106; see also 58, 111.

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In this sense at least, Babeuf and David were precursors. By 1791 a popular newspaper was calling for lower-class women to take on a role already outlined in the Brutus: "As one paints the Bacchants with disheveled hair, arm yourselves with anything to repulse the enemy," adding that in contrast the "bourgeois women of 1789 could not bear the sight of severed heads."[83]

In these scattered references one finds striking and repeated parallels to David's thinking on the women of the Brutus: strong evidence that David's line of associative thinking followed lines similar to those of Babeuf and countless others. Is the younger daughter fainting with horror, or is she a Bacchant, her clothing disordered, her hair disheveled, in the throes of destructive ecstasy? Is she hiding from the hideous sight, or fascinated by it? A little bit of both, one would imagine. Is the elder daughter, whose hands are placed in front of her face, another one of those "bourgeois women of 1789 [who] could not bear the sight of severed heads?" One critic in 1791 found this passage particularly confusing.[84]

Are these two young women, in sum, the unacknowledged actors of this scene, or its passive observers? Now that decapitations had become associated with popular justice, was this the People's Will or mob hysteria? As Babeuf put it, "I

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[83] "comme on peint les bacchantes échevelées,...faites armes de tout pour repousser l' esclave...," Révolutions de Paris. Feb 5, 1791; quoted in Roudinesco, *op. cit.*, 101.

[84] [Anonymous], La Béquille de Voltaire au Salon, Seconde et dernière Promenade contenant par ordre de numeros l' explication et la critique la plus complete de tous les ouvrages de peinture, sculpture, etc., et meme de ceux sans numeros qui ne sont pas dans le catalogue du Salon, parcequ' ils ont ete apportes depuis l' ouverture (A Paris, Chez Bignon, L' An Troisème de la Liberté [1791]), 7.

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can understand the people taking the law into its own hands...but how can it fail today to be cruel?"

As we have seen, these questions were inevitable to any observer of David's milieu. Yet David does not propose an answer in the figures of the women: the fact that the figures are so much within the accepted discourse around political violence would insure that they might be mentioned in passing, but not discussed. At any rate, David eventually tried to put a final closure on the political interpretation of the Brutus, but the meaning of the painting runs even deeper than this.

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CHAPTER SIX

As every revolutionary knows, the "Revolutionary Moment" is raging torrent in which each actor is hard put to shift with the current, hour by hour. Therefore, it seems quite useless to look for evidence of David's political commitment of August 1789 in his drafts or 1787, 1788, or early in 1789.[85] David did eventually take sides in his Brutus, and when he did he provoked a minor scandal. But the evidence is subtle, and it does not appear until the final, finished product.

The Royal Salon of Painting was scheduled to open on August 25 and to close on October 8. By August, however, there were signs that the strain of a swiftly changing political situation was starting to affect even the precincts of the Academy.

On August 10, Charles-Etienne-Gabriel Cuvillier, who was acting Director General in the absence of d' Angiviller, wrote a note to Vien, David's teacher and

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[85] see 18 sqq., above.

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mentor, who had taken over the position of First Painter of the King and Director of the Academy after the death of Pierre. Cuvillier's missive is one of those magnificent exercises in innuendo and suggestion that are the glory of eighteenth-century French literature; its reading is made even more difficult by the fact that it clearly supplements direct regular meetings between Cuvillier and Vien.[86]

Cuvillier's main concern - and clearly d' Angiviller's as well - was that the Salon go ahead as planned, without involving the spectators or the institution itself in the ongoing troubles - on any one side. It was therefore imperative that the artists show their work as usual; and imperative, also, that certain works not be shown if they had the potential to create trouble. These included works which might accidentally cause trouble, because of the new readings one might apply to them from present events. Among the latter were David's portrait of Lavoisier and his wife, which had acquired new importance because of Lavoisier's recent political activities; and David's Paris and Helen, which seemed safe so long as one dropped the name of the owner, the Comte d' Artois, who had just fled for the border. Other works should be kept out of the Salon because they were openly political - such as the portrait of Count Lally-Tollendal by Jean-Baptiste Robin, which had already been withdrawn from the Salon in 1787, and which, it was hoped, the Count himself would see the wisdom of withholding. To this last reference Cuvillier added: "It is in this regard that I am comforted, as much as I could be, by learning that Monsieur David's painting is still far from finished."

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[86] "Correspondance du Comte d' Angiviller avec Pierre," #763, 263-5.

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Apparently, David's tactlessness was not of the type from which he could be dissuaded. Within two days the discussions between Cuvillier and Vien concerning David had been leaked to G. Feydel, publisher of L 'Observateur, a minor scandal sheet which was taking advantage of the new freedoms of the press to bait the academies, and d' Angiviller in particular.[87] It was quite apparent, however, that Feydel knew little about the details of the affair: the journalist suggested that the issue revolved around the cruelty of Brutus, and reminded his viewers of the censorship of Debucourt's Un Trait de bienfaisance du Roi in 1785, inferring that once again, the Crown had become too touchy about reference to royalty - in this case, in the figure of Brutus. Cuvillier replied the following day, in the now-familiar style of the bureaucrat who tells only the truth, but only as much of the truth as will be useless to his adversary. The Brutus was not, he insisted, about the cruelty of the King.

The exchange gives a refreshing view of the new balance of power between government bureaucrats and a rogue press, but it gives us very little of use - apart from suggesting that there was pressure on David to withdraw the Brutus and that Feydel had got wind of it. The most interesting piece of information to come out of this exchange is Feydel's explanation that Vien had tried to get to David through Mme. David. The suggestion is redolent of the intimate atmosphere of the Academy in the Old Regime, in which artists would meet to celebrate the birthday of the Director and artist's wives could be counted on to patch things up. It also suggests,

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[87] Bordes, Le Serment du Jeu de Paume de Jacques-Louis David, 135.

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however, that a woman might have been seen as better messenger to handle the particularly delicate issue of the Brutus and its politics than a man.[88]

Whether the attempt to censor the Brutus had any repercussions is not clear. The Salon opened as planned, and a few days later an anonymous author of offered that:

> Brutus is not in the Salon
> And we know why:
> It's the painter's habit.
> He wants us to be jaded
> By the masterpieces on view
> Before offering up his work.[89]

Apart from the implication that David did not dare to have his work reviewed alongside the other artists, the statement seems forced. It was indeed the painter's habit not to turn in works on time - but again, he was by no means the only artist who did so.[90]

Though we do not know if there was any popular reaction to the absence of David's painting, we can infer that there was some concern in official circles: the critic's affirmation sounds like an exercise in damage control. Like so much else that concerns audience reactions in eighteenth-century Salon criticism, the author is offering us an imputation masquerading as a description. David, at any rate, was

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[88] Wille, Mémoires et journal de J. G. Wille, graveur du Roi, 209.

[89] "Brutus n' est pas dans le Salon/Et nous en savons la raison:/Du peintre c' est l' usage./Il veut que nous soyons blasés/Sur les chefs-d'oeuvre exposés/Pour offrir son ouvrage." [Anonymous], Pensées d' un prisonnier de la Bastille sur les tableaux exposés au Sallon du Louvre en 1789 [n.p., n.d.], 11.

[90] See, for instance, "Correspondance du Comte d' Angiviller avec Pierre," 100-101, and Guiffrey, Notes et documents inédits sur les expositions du dix-huitième siècle LXIX (27 june 1785), 94, concerning late deliveries by Ménageot and Renou respectively.

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loyal enough to the Academy - or sufficiently dependent on it, or vulnerable enough to a possible humiliation - that he eventually did show his work, some time before September 17. But he was disloyal enough, it appears, that Cuvillier had wished he wouldn't show at all.

What was it that Cuvillier was concerned about, and how did he intend to deal with it? There is a small clue hidden in the post-scriptum to his letter of August 10:

> P. S - Will you permit me to make the personal observation that it will perhaps be well to arrange the pictures so that the little ones will not be within reach of certain hands?

From its inception, the Salon had been intended to assume control over its audience. In the upcoming struggle to define how the Brutus would be seen, Cuvillier had seized once more on the all-important question of access: the physical disposition of the Salon complemented the symbolic organization of space within each painting.[91] To control the one was, in part, to control the other.

At any rate, events were to begin to provide Cuvillier with the means to resolve his differences with David and others. With the organization of the militia and the election of Jean-Sylvain Bailly as Mayor of Paris on July 23 the stage was set for a complex interplay of competing powers as the newly formed local sections, the centralized power at the Mayoralty (Hotel de Ville), and royal authority under its various guises vied for physical and symbolic control over the City of

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[91] Pierre Bourdieu, "Espace social et pouvoir symbolique," in Choses Dites, 147-166.

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Paris.[92] Sites of contestation became sites in the physical sense of the word, in a pattern which is still an important part of Parisian political struggle.

It was inevitable that the Palace of the Louvre would be drawn into this process. The Louvre, of course, was royal property, under the protection of the King. Bachaumont and La Font de Saint Yenne's earlier efforts to turn the building into a museum as a form of affirmation of the solidarity of royal patronage and national prestige had begun to bear fruit. The Salon was a symbol of this cooperation, and there would be no worse symbol of the unraveling of this cooperation than if the Louvre in general, and the Salon in particular, passed to one camp or the other.[93] Conversely, the Salon of 1789 provided a logical target for a series of moves on either side to assert authority - both real and symbolic - over the enormous rambling structure.

The first rumblings came from the local assembly, when the deputies of the section of Saint-Germain l' Auxerrois decided to turn over some of the art depository rooms to the soldiers of the militia. Cuvillier and Vien turned to the Marquis de Lafayette, commander of the Parisian Militia, who had an obvious interest in unifying the troops under a central command, and might therefore be expected to overrule the local assembly.[94]

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[92] Michelet, Histoire de la Révolution francaise, 705; Sigismond Lacroix, Actes de la Commune de Paris pendant la Révolution I (Paris, 1894), I, 423-5 and 436.

[93] Yveline Cantarel-Besson, La naissance du musée du Louvre - la politique muséologique sous la Révolution d' après les archives des musées nationaux (Paris, 1981); Andrew McClellan, Inventing the Louvre: Art, Politics, and the Origins of the Modern Museum in 18th-Century Paris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Louis Petit de Bachaumont, Essai sur la peinture, la sculpture et l' architecture [s.l. 1751], 83-84.

[94] "Correspondance du Comte d' Angiviller avec Pierre," #761, 262, #762, 263.

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This simply brought the camel's nose under the tent. Bailly and Lafayette saw an opportunity to rest control of the locale away from the King and turn power over to the Municipality. A loyal servant of the King, d' Angiviller could not allow this prerogative to slip away.[95] Unfortunately, it was widely believed that the National Assembly had abolished traditional privileged bodies - the jurandes - during the emotional night of August 4.[96] As a jurande itself, the Academy was not in good position to assert authority over anything. The matter was quickly coming to a head because soldiers of the Royal Swiss Regiment, which was under the King's command, were traditionally assigned the guard of the Salon, along with elderly volunteers from the Invalides. The fact that the Swiss Guards drew extra pay and the invalids extra rations of wine, made the issue more fractious still.[97]

By August 7, a few days before the letter of Cuvillier expressing his concern over David's Brutus, the problem over the guard had apparently been resolved.[98] The watch over the Salon would, indeed, be given over to the Militia, but the Militia of the Louvre, in turn, would be composed of students of the Academy, who in turn had been nominated for the task by the "Gentlemen of the Saint-Germain District," that is, the District of Saint-Germain l' Auxerrois, the local district. By August the

[95] *Ibid*, #767, 269, #769, 274.

[96] Lacroix, Actes de la Commune de Paris pendant la Révolution I, 270.

[97] Guiffrey, Notes et documents inédits sur les expositions du dix-huitième siècle, XCIII, 92 (1787); traditionally the Suisses were paid 350 louis; the six invalides got tips for wine.

[98] "Correspondance du Comte d' Angiviller avec Pierre," #761, 262.

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local districts had begun to organize their own independent units of the Gardes Nationales.[99]

D' Angiviller was probably bent on exploiting the tensions between the Parisian districts and the Mayor's office. Whatever its own legal status, the Academy would have some control over its own students; and perhaps the students would mishandle their duties sufficiently that the Swiss Guards would have to be brought in again.

Once again, d' Angiviller's plans backfired. On August 12 the students met as a group, and when d' Angiviller's tried to wrest their functions away from "this interesting section of the National Militia" and replace them again by the Swiss Guards, he found that the students had already organized independently.[100] "Spontaneous" bodies were the fashion that summer, after the Estates General had spontaneously merged to form the National Assembly at Versailles.[101] The students now had more legitimacy in the eyes of the Municipality than the Academy itself. Angiviller then turned to Bailly - who ironically was the son of a keeper of the royal paintings; but on September 6 Bailly brushed aside the suggestion that students be replaced.[102] The Swiss Guards were the same regiment that would be massacred

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[99] Kates, The Cercle Social, the Girondins, and the French Revolution, 47.

[100] "Cette intéréssante partie de la Milice nationale." "Correspondance du Comte d' Angiviller avec Pierre," #766, 267; Wille, Mémoires et journal de J. G. Wille, graveur du Roi, 214.

[101] For the procès-verbal of the Commune for August 31, 1789, on the legitimacy of non-elected spontaneous bodies, see Lacroix, Actes de la Commune de Paris pendant la Révolution, I, 423-5.

[102] Guiffrey, Notes et documents inédits sur les expositions du dix-huitième siècle XCVIII, 99, XCIX, 100; " "Correspondance du Comte d' Angiviller avec Pierre," #768, 270.

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by the Parisian Militia three years later, in a last stand in defense of the Monarchy. The events that were to be played out at the Tuileries on August 10, 1792 were already being rehearsed unawares during the Salon of 1789.

These maneuvers were symbolic, of course; but they were to be crucial to the interpretation of the Brutus. It is evident from Cuvillier's letter of August 10, that keeping "certain hands" at a distance from the paintings was a way of controlling the approach to the works. It is possible, too, that the meaning to be found in the Brutus would be dependent on how closely one approached the painting. It is likely, as well, that David finished his painting in full consciousness of these facts, and fully prepared to use them.

What had changed in David's painting since the oil sketch of July 14-22? On the left side of the painting the heads on pikes have disappeared. At the center of the painting, however, a basket has been placed on a table [**Illustration #31**]. In the basket there are two spherical balls of yarn; one remains in the basket, another has rolled down onto the red tablecloth. The basket is of woven rushes, like the traditional executioner's basket. To quote again the anonymous biographer: "[David had] presented the heads separated from their bodies by the lictors; the horrible events of 1789 decided him to hide them, as one sees them today."[103]

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[103] "[David avait] 'présenté les têtes séparées du corps par les licteurs. Les événement affreux de 1789 le décidèrent à les cacher, telles qu'on les voit aujourd'hui." [Anonymous], Notice sur la vie et les ouvrages de M J.-L. David, 35; see note 59, above.

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The allusion to the presence of the "hidden" heads is so oblique that unless one were aware of the shift one would read it simply as a grammatical slip, from "as one sees" (telles qu'on le voit) to "as one sees them" (telles qu' on les voit). The pronoun les has no clear antecedent; These grammatical lapses in the agreement of the antecedent are as common in French as in English. Here, the lapse suggests that thirty-five years after the fact, David remembered that the heads were still visible in his painting, if only in disguise. David had, in fact, deliberately reintroduced the symbolism of the heads - but in such a way that it would not be obvious to the casual observer.

For at that point in 1789 David was prepared to move beyond the reference to populist bloodshed. In the basket there is a powerful mix of symbols - sexual, political, and both at once. The white band which flows out of the basket is, in this context, inevitably reminiscent of the white blindfold which was the prerogative of the nobility when suffering execution. The two blades that emerge from the basket are patterned after a Roman sewing scissors, but the apposition to the two balls of yarn strengthens the reference to castration which was already present in the imagery of the Bacchants.

The basket - or panier - presents a more subtle, perhaps unconscious set of references; and though they should be mentioned with caution, they must be mentioned, nonetheless. The word panier itself was - and still is - a common vulgar expression for the vulva.[104] It may seem perverse to argue that the panier could

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[104] This suggestion comes from Mary Sheriff. In the late eighteenth century the expression seems to have been somewhat more of an elegant aphorism than a crude expression; see for example J.-A Roucher, Les Mois (Paris: Imprimerie Quillau, 1779), 179. .

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refer to the item of clothing that disassociated a classical actress from the raw sexuality of the déshabillé, then to turn around and associate that same word with raw sexuality. Nevertheless, is it not possible that David, consciously or not, was using the association of the term to flip upside-down the more proper, more classicizing interpretation of the Bacchants? This is the procedure known as "condensation" in classical psychoanalytic theory.[105]

Moreover, if the figures of the four women transform the meaning of the basket, the reverse is also true. On the right, the four women are organized into three age groups: two young women, a matron, an elderly woman. The basket contains yarn, embroidery and needle, a pair of scissors. In the lore of Antiquity the three Fates were women of varying ages: the youngest spun the thread of life, the second wove it, and the eldest cut it. The meaning would have been accessible to anyone who had seen a comedy with ballet, Le Destin et les Parques ("Destiny and the Fates") which had played on May 5th 1789 at the Comédie Italienne.[106] David himself was an avid theater-goer, but the comparison of the enragées to the fates that decided the fate of politicians eventually became a stock-in-trade for cartoonists, as seen, for instance, in a royalist cartoon of late 1791 in which three Fates/Enragées preside over the destiny of Jérôme Pétion as Mayor of Paris **[Illustration #32]**.

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[105] Sigmund Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams [1899], transl. and ed. James Strachey (New York: Basic Books, n. d.), 339, etc.

[106] Mercure de France, June 13, 1789, 89-90; David himself had used the same topic of the Fates in a drawing shown at the Salon of 1783, the Death of the Hero (Frise dans le genre antique).

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Finally: the color of this area of the painting is red, white, and blue. On July 15, 1789, for the first time, the red-and-blue of the City of Paris was joined to the Royal white to produce the cockade of the bourgeois Militia, the inspiration for the French flag as we now know it.[107] Although the invention is attributed to Lafayette on July 14, the tricolor very quickly became associated with the Third Estate - while a popular song from late July explained that the red of the cockade represented "lovely womankind."[108] With the image of the basket David reintroduced the close connection between the terrifying activities of the lower classes and the no-less terrifying activities of women.

Another, hitherto unnoticed aspect of the painting might have been considerably more disturbing to Cuvillier: the white cloth is embroidered with a row of fleur-de-lis which are played against the blue of the yarn, the red of the cloth. Paris et Hélène was shown next to the Brutus in 1789, and the fleur-de-lis pattern which Helen wears on her petticoat might have been set next to the similar pattern on the basket in order to drive home to the viewer of 1789 the difference between princes who give in to their womenfolk, and consuls who don't.[109] From the model of Coriolanus nobly giving in to women, to Brutus overshadowed by overactive women, David's apprenticeship in revolutionary gendering had made speedy progress.

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[107] Lefebvre, The Coming of the Revolution, 117; La Grande Peur de 1789, 125, 106.

[108] Chronicle of the French Revolution (London: Chronicle Communications 1989), 122.

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Yet the opposition David lays out within the painting as a whole is still between weak monarchs as a whole, and overly powerful women as a group. Gender overrules class. Only by early October does one sense in David something like the wish to differentiate along lines of class instead of gender.

On October 5th the mob, led by a group of Parisian women, took Versailles - again, with double decapitations. This was the event that definitely separated the constitutional monarchists in the English Manner from the partisans of a National Assembly - Lally-Tollendal resigned shortly thereafter, and went into exile, while Mallet du Pan gravitated towards the thankless role of Royal propagandist. On October 6 the writer Filippo Mazzei was present at a dinner at the house of the Countess of Albany where, he wrote many years later:

> The famous painter David declared that it was a great disgrace this offal [Marie-Antoinette] hadn't been strangled or cut to pieces by those fishwives, because as long as she lived there would be no peace in this kingdom.[110]

Three weeks after the public unveiling of the Brutus David had come to believe that it was the Queen who should be subject to mob justice if the King and the Kingdom were to survive. His outburst was certainly tactless (the Countess of Albany was the wife of the Stuart Pretender), but it shows once more David's habit

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[109] This detail has been identified by Irma Jaffe; see Yvonne Korshak, "Paris and Helen by Jacques-Louis David: Choice and Judgment on the Eve of the French Revolution," Art Bulletin vol. LXIX no. 1, (March 1987): 106.

[110] Il famoso pittore David disse: "E' stato una gran disgrazia che quella carogna non sia strangolata, o fatta in pezzi da quelle donnaccie. Perché fintantoché sará viva, non ci sará quiete nel regno." Filippo Mazzei, Memorie della Vita e delle Peregrinazioni del Fiorentino Filippo Mazzei (Milan: Aquarone, 1970), 360-361; quoted in Bordes, Le Serment du Jeu de Paume de Jacques-Louis David, 28-9. I have translated "donnaccie" (literally, "great big women"), by "fishwives" because the most likely French equivalent is "poissardes." My thanks to Diane Kelder for underlining the class implications of the Italian term.

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of reading ideological issues in terms of gender; and it was hardly radical, since it still gave legitimacy to the concept of kingship. The most one could say is that by October 6 David was able to sort the issues out again, so that issues of gender did not totally conceal the very genuine differences of class: the difference between Marie-Antoinette and the enragées, at last, had been made clear, whereas the two tended to combine in David's basket.

In the elaboration of David's Brutus we have witnessed a breakdown of political loyalties, and a breakdown in the effects of the natural language of gesture that David and Marmontel had sought. Just as these two enterprises were deeply connected, so, too, David's basket reveals a new political imperative, and a new way of effecting it.

David's basket is not, properly speaking, an allegory, but a hieroglyph - that is, a visual sign that attempts to convey an objective view of reality, as if the whole enterprise of the painting could be resolved within a few square inches. Here, also, David was following an intellectual tradition that began with Renaissance Neo-Platonists (notably Bruno, Pomponazzi, Gianno Laskaris). The problem, once again, was to find a natural alphabet that would represent the real truthfully. By the seventeenth century this search was considerably advanced by the rationalist thought of Descartes and Leibniz; it was diverted, perhaps, by the belief that such a language could be found in the hieroglyphs of ancient Egypt.[111] The idealized

[111] Erik Iversen, The Myth of Egypt and its Hieroglyphs in European Tradition (Copenhagen: Gad, 1961); Liselotte Dieckmann, Hieroglyphics: The History of a Literary

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hieroglyph held out the hope that the order of representation (spoken or visual), might be reduced to a single image or "hieroglyph," which, like Leibniz's monads, would provide the objective value lacking in human expression. Instead of a succession of images, the various levels of understanding could be reconciled through a single image, which did not unfold over time, but was immediately present to the observer.

One can readily understand that this idealized hieroglyph or "emblem" offered a solution to the problem of objectivity in language raised by Batteux. The fact that Latin, unlike French, is an inflected language and therefore less dependent on sequence, made the association of truthfulness with Classicism even more logical. Even Diderot devoted a considerable amount of energy to the elucidation of this problem.[112]

Symbol (Saint Louis: Washington University Press, 1970); Rudolph Wittkower, "Hieroglyphics I: The Conceptual Impact of Egypt from the Fifteenth Century Onward," "Hieroglyphics II: Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Philological Concerns," in Selected Lectures of Rudolph Wittkower. The Impact of Non-European Civilizations on the Art of the West, ed. Donald Martin Reynolds (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); A. D. Wright, The Counter-Reformation. Catholic Europe and the Non-Christian World (New York: Saint Martin's Press, 1982), 90, 138-9, 184; John D. Lyons, "Introduction," Mimesis: from Mirror to Method, Augustine to Descartes edited by John D. Lyons and Stephens G. Nichols Jr. (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1982), 11; . W. J. T. Mitchell, Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 29.

[112] Johann Joachim Winckelmann, Versuch einer Allegorie besonders für die Kunst (Dresden 1766); French version: Essai sur l' Allégorie (Paris: An VI [1799]; reprint: New York: Garland, 1976); see also Sylvain Auroux, La sémiotique des Encyclopédistes. Essai d'épistémologie historique des sciences du language (Paris: Payot, 1979); James Doolittle, "Hieroglyph and Emblem in Diderot's Lettre sur les Sourds et Muets," in Diderot Studies II, ed. Otis E. Fellows and Norman L. Torrey (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1952), 148-167; Madeleine V. David, Le débat sur les écritures et l'hiéroglyphe aux xviie et xviiie siecles (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., Bibliothèque Générale de l' Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, VIe Section, 1965).

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David, who had followed the latest philosophical trends in dispersing the meaning of his composition over the whole canvas, now turned back to those same trends in order to save himself from his political quandary, by placing the "deeper" meaning of the work at the very center - substituting one individual meaning for the elusive meaning of the painting as a whole.

"However, the understanding of the poetic emblem is not given to all," as Diderot coyly suggested.[113] The enormous advantage of the hieroglyph was, that it encapsulated in a few square inches the logistics of awareness and ignorance, pleasure and pain, salvation and damnation. Sensus communis, like grace, was the apanage of a privileged few - and the privilege could be helped along. The hieroglyph of the Basket ultimately encapsulates the entire problem of David's relationship with his audience.

Once again, David could draw on a long theoretical tradition to justify his actions. Longinus, the Greek author whose influence was paramount in eighteenth century France, had already suggested that the artist should know how to dissimulate his message when addressing a tyrant; in a somewhat cryptic passage, he added that a painter should hide his meaning through a clever use of light and dark. Those two great theoretical contestants of German aesthetic theory, Lessing and Winckelmann, had likewise squared off over this issue.[114]

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[113] "Mais l' intelligence de l' emblême poétique n' est pas donnée à tout le monde." Diderot, Lettre sur les sourds et muets, in Oeuvres complètes, ed. Assézat-Tourneux, I, 374; discussed in Doolittle, "Hieroglyph and Emblem in Diderot's Lettre sur les Sourds et Muets," 148-167.

[114] Longinus, ΠΕΡΙ ΥΠΣΟΣ, XVII; Carpenter, Longinus on the Sublime, 41; cf. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Laocoon. An Essay upon the Limits of Painting and Poetry, transl.

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However, David had another type of "tyrant" in mind. By August 31, 1789 Vien was writing directly to d' Angiviller: a barrier had been erected around the pictures at the Salon. Obviously, this was meant to protect the paintings from "certain hands" - or is it "certain minds?" [115]

To reconstruct the effect this barrier might have had on David's painting, one must go to the Louvre, where the Brutus now hangs, and approach it slowly. From about fifteen feet, one can make out the basket clearly, but the colors are quite delicate, so the symbolism of the red-white-and blue does not register. If one does not know of the fleur-de-lis pattern one cannot notice the hieroglyph, even at ten feet. Once one knows about it, the meaning of the basket unfolds to the startled viewer like a venomous flower. To repeat Pascal's statement, "There is enough light to illuminate the elect and enough darkness to teach them humility; there is enough darkness to confound the sinners, and enough light to convict them without excuse."

The hieroglyph of the basket is the logical, if extreme, result of a consistent pattern in David's painting. Between 1785 and 1799, David repeatedly tried to tailor his works for a shifting and many-faced audience: the "subtext of suspicion and even contempt" which has been detected in his Belisarius of 1782 did not

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Ellen Frothingham (New York: Noonday Press), 95; Barbara Maria Stafford, "Beauty of the Invisible: Winckelman and the Aesthetics of Imperceptibility," Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte 43, 1 (1980): 65-78.

[115] August 31, Vien to d' Angiviller, in "Correspondance du Comte d' Angiviller avec Pierre," #766, 267.

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disappear overnight.[116] However, as a rule David worked in several styles at once: middle-class portraiture and royalist history painting; then, during the Revolution, portraiture, history painting, caricature, and the organization of festivals. What makes the Brutus unique is that here several audiences are being addressed in a mutually contradictory fashion: the story in the foreground (the "official" story), is set before the popular audience, and proposes the King as a model (the issue of discussion between Feydel and Cuvillier), though in fact David remained on safe ideological ground, with only the use of shadows to betray his political ambivalence. The story in the middle distance proposes a classicizing allegory on the ambiguity of political action: David's original, deliberate insertion of contemporary references, and one that would have been available to an educated middle-class audience, though not necessarily an audience of intimates. Finally, for the reading of the basket David called on another potential audience: those more familiar with the workings of hieroglyphs, those able to read the technical virtuosity of this particular passage, and most of all, those in the know. It is interesting that for this area David worked in the style of Chardin - the genre of still-life, of course; the style most apt to dry speedily, so that it might be added almost at the last minute; and finally, the style most appropriate for an antithesis to the "elevated" style of the adhortatio:

> But on the whole the social meanings of such displacements [from one genre to another] are tied to the fact that each unit can set in

[116] "And one has to doubt the ultimate success of a public iconography that carries a subtext of suspicion and even contempt for its actual audience." Crow, Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris, 208; see also Renate Holub, Antonio Gramsci. Beyond Marxism and Postmodernism (London: Routledge), 1992, 96.

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> motion several codes at once. The story of the disjunction between these movements might energize a history of art by returning the evolution of tastes and forms to their social consumption.[117]

It is very probable that previous critics of the Brutus have been unable to identify the meaning of the basket because of its confusion of social codes: the sentimental, almost vulgar references implied by the basket where quite simply unthinkable in a work commisioned for the King and painted according to the Grand Manner of history painting.

However, the Brutus is more than a disjunction: it approaches what Adorno called a "constellation," a series of tightly packed logical contradictions which cannot be resolved by the society that produces them - for instance, the figure of the Virgin Mary in the thirteenth century, according to the great, classic analysis by Henry Adams.[118] It is well worth noting that David, too, uses the "féminaire" as a unifying concept to hold together unresolvable conflicts. By October he was ready to resolve the issue into its new, constituent but clearly contradictory parts: the Bad Woman (Marie Antoinette), and the Good Women (the People).

Paul de Man once argued that the bridge between the objective viewer proposed by Locke, du Bos and others, and the transcendental subject of Kant, is the "transcendental object" suggested in the work of Diderot, Condillac and others:

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[117] "Mais au total les significations sociales de ces déplacements sont liées au fait que chaque ensemble peut mettre en branle plusieurs codes à la fois. C' est l'étude historique du décalage de ces stimulations qui pourrait animer une histoire de l' art, restituant l' évolution des goûts et des formes dans leur consommation sociale." Becq, Genèse de l' Esthétique française moderne, 277.

[118] Susan Buck-Morss, The Origin of Negative Dialectics. Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin and the Frankfurt Institute (New York and London:The Free Press, 1977), 90 sqq, 115. Henry Adams, Mont Saint-Michel and Chartres [1904] (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

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the sign which is in itself an objective referent.[119] In plain terms, the basket unites - or rather, fails to unite - the idealized faculty to judge with the very real, fractured demands of the audience, until that day when the audience is nothing but the idealized audience of Pure Judgment - the transcendental subject. David's friend Morellet might have agreed: "It is true, then, that in poetry nothing is beautiful except through the relationship of the details with the whole, and of the whole with ourselves."[120]

Tellingly, one recent critic has suggested that the still-life of the basket represented "to David's era the nearest equivalent of abstract pattern in our own day;" another argues that "one great gap occupies the center of the Brutus;" a third allows that the basket is a charming domestic touch.[121] All are quite correct, as far as they go: the first, in suggesting that the basket, like "abstraction," allows us to point to an ineffable "otherness;" the second, in a bow to Jacques Lacan, for whom the "gap" represents at once femaleness, and that which is unknowable within a phallocentric culture; the third, again, in accepting and then dismissing the unknowable mysteries of femininity. All are correct, with the proviso that the "abstraction" represented by the basket is not metaphysical, but heuristic.

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[119] Paul de Man, "The Epistemology of Metaphor," Critical Inquiry 5 (Autumn, 1978), 13-30; reprinted in Language and Politics, ed. Michael Shapiro (New York: NYU Press, 1984), 195-214.

[120] "Il est donc vrai qu' en poésie rien n' est beau que par les rapports des détails avec l' ensemble, et de l' ensemble avec nous-mêmes." Marmontel, Essai sur le goût, in Oeuvres complètes XII, 340; quoted Beck, Genèse de l' Esthétique française moderne, 544.

[121] Herbert, David, Voltaire, Brutus and the French Revolution: an essay in art and politics, 46; Crow, "The Oath of the Horatii in 1785: Painting and Pre-Revolutionary Radicalism in France," 464; Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris, 252; Emulation. Making Artists for Revolutionary France, 80-81; Antoine Schnapper, David (New York: Alpine Fine Arts, 1982), 94.

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The sociologist Claude Bourdieu has outlined the strategies for enforcing class distinctions among contemporary French audiences for art: for Bourdieu recognition and misrecognition are class-based strategies that allow the viewer to "understand" or "not understand" such fundamental categories as "abstraction" or "gender." David's Brutus anticipates these strategies; perhaps it helps to inaugurate them.[122]

But what is the social and historical dimension within which David attempted to transcend the contradictions in the Brutus? To return to our original questions - how did David's politics operate? And to what purpose?

It has been popular of late to argue that the Revolution was a cultural event rather than an economic realignment or a political accident.[123] In the case of the Brutus, however, David was concerned at once with dividing social groups and uniting them: the hieroglyph and its placement were meant to reinforce or to reconfigure pre-existing relationships among social groups. Historians of the French Revolution have begun to describe its political culture as an "archaeological site of overlapping discourses and superimposed practices, [...] overlapping and contradicting fields of discourse within one text."[124] In that sense the Brutus is of its time.

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[122] Pierre Bourdieu, "Repères," in Choses Dites, 54; La Distinction. Critique sociale du jugement (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1979); English version: Distinction: a Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984).

[123] See above, 21 sqq.

[124] Baker, "Introduction," in Inventing the French Revolution. Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century, 10; Pierre Bourdieu, "Le champ intéllectuel: un monde à part," in Choses Dites, 172.

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This is not to say that David's art was a mere reflection of social configurations: the field of aesthetic theory has its own, individual contradictions borne out of its own definitions of unity and plurality - and in that sense it is more than a mere reflection of a broader social movement. Moreover, David's Brutus may be more reactive than proactive, but it is active all the same. As an attempt to recognize and reorganize a confused and confusing situation, it is a part of the social nexus, not its mirror-image. Whether the Revolution was a manifestation of "class struggle" or not, the Brutus itself is an exemplar of struggle around issues of class, gender and status.

Traditional Sociology likes to read group violence as a reaction to a wider societal disruptions. In this reading the Réveillon Uprising would be evidence of a "breakdown in the social conscience."[125] Wöllflin's Art History, which developed at the same time as the classical Sociology of Emile Durkheim, might be twisted to suggest that the formal confusion in the Brutus is evidence of a breakdown in the cultural fabric. In some readings, the "revolution" of Modernism would then be a permanent sense of disruption: the dislocations attendant on the Heroic Age of Capital would be mirrored in the formal dislocations of art. In other terms, the David's Brutus would have had the historic purpose of revealing the true meaning of disruption as an aesthetic, not a social activity.[126]

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[125] Emile Durkheim, Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse (Paris: Alcan, 1912); see Raymond Boudon, A Critical Dictionary of Sociology Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 326.

[126] E.g., Marshall Berman, All that is solid melts into air: the experience of modernity (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982); Crow, Painters and Public Life.

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However, our evidence suggests stronger parallels with the "Solidarity" Theory proposed by Charles Tilly: social strife would be the product of pressure groups or classes uniting for more-or-less short-term gain.[127] It is, therefore, neither "unconscious" in the sense of following a wider People's Will, nor fully conscious, either, inasmuch as the participants could hardly be expected to predict fully the results of their actions.

In the Réveillon Affair the participants were constrained and yet empowered on all sides by various traditions for attributing blame, for displaying resentment, for claiming protection: "repertories for action"[128] out of a long history of popular unrest. At the same time, they were faced with new conjunctures, new situations which required them to retool somewhat ill-fitting and outworn labels and strategies into more efficient ones.[129] Out of this blind groping emerged, as if by accident, a powerful tool for political action - the mass demonstration. The Réveillon Affair was only the first of many with a similar impact; but it was the last that had a pure working-class component. Subsequent rioters were united less by a common social

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[127] Charles Tilly, Louise Tilly and Richard Tilly, The Rebellious Century, 1830-1930 (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1975), 4-6.

[128] "A repertory of rules, or of what sociologists consider, at best, a 'role', i.e., a predetermined set of discourses and actions appropriate to a particular 'stage-part'." Pierre Bourdieu, Outline of a theory of practice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 2. (Original French publication, 1972); Charles Tilly, The Contentious French (Cambridge: Bellknap Press, 1986), 8, 394; on the semi-autonomy of strategies, see Bourdieu, *op. cit.*, 171 and discussion in Harker, Mahar and Wilkes, "The Basic Theoretical Position," in An Introduction to the Work of Pierre Bourdieu, 16.

[129] "Conjuncture - implying the coming together of separately determined and not consciously coordinated (or deliberately revolutionary) processes and group efforts." Theda Skocpol, States and social revolutions, 44, n. 298; Skocpol adds that conjuncture may also acts as a constraint on action; see also Michel Vovelle, Idéologies et mentalités (Paris: Editions la Découverte, 1985), 98.

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standing than by a common goal: they had attained a consciousness of the new uses of the tool of the mass demonstration.

Doubtless, also, a variety of similar strategies had evolved out of the "rebellious cultures" of the literary and artistic underground; some were fruitless, others extremely fruitful, in the developing social struggle. [130] Likewise, finally, similar strategies were developed in the well-educated circles of the late Enlightenment, and these strategies, in turn, informed the content and form of David's Brutus. Whether these strategies bore fruit or not, and whether it was the fruit expected - whether, that is, the Revolution was caused by the Enlightenment - is a question so often asked and so rarely answered that one should admit, at last, that it has been improperly phrased from the outset. David, like so many others, was casting his bread upon the waters.

[130] Mornet, Les origines intellectuelles de la Révolution française 1715-1787, 30.

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SECTION THREE

The topic was "Whether Inspiration or Imitation had contributed more to the Fine Arts?" You can see that by separating the two and putting the question that way one can argue back and forth for a hundred years. - Goethe, 1786.[1]

Those two bogeys of social theory, individual agency and historical or cultural determinism are once more brought onto the wrestling mat for the diversion of the public. - Anthony Giddens, 1979.[2]

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[1] "Der Präsident [der Akademie] hatte die Frage aufgegeben, ob *Erfindung oder Nachahmung den schönen Künsten mehr Vorteil gebracht habe?* Du siehst daß wenn man die beiden trennt und so fragt, man hundert Jahre hinüber und herüber reden kann." Johann Wolfgang Goethe, "22 September 1786," Tagebuch der Italienischen Reise, in Sämtliche Werke Vol. 3.1, ed. Norbert Miller and Hartmut Reinhardt (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1985), 76.

[2] Central Problems in Social Theory, 45.

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Did the Brutus influence the course of revolution? And was that David's doing? The problem is as old as aesthetics. In Plato's Ion the protagonist describes how he recites poems: he is seized by a divine enthusiasm over which he has no control, and his listeners, in turn, are moved by his enthusiasm.[3] We Moderns would be tempted to see this dialogue as a justification of the superhuman nature of art, or at least of its irrational aspects. Ion, however, is a pompous fool; he has no idea what he is trying to do, and the effect of his words is quite beyond his control. Plato suggests that in art there is no clear connection between individual will and practical results. In the same way, discussions of the effects of art still oscillate between the belief in a wider inspiration over which the artist has no control, and in a willed production that owes nothing to inspiration, historical determinism, the Gods, class loyalty, or whatever.

David's Brutus has not escaped these discussions: and the story of its reception has been made to shade imperceptibly into the wider story of cultural determinism in the French Revolution. Yet it is precisely these discussions that need a new critique, before we can understand the extent of David's influence, and the myth of David's power.

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[3] Plato, ΙΩΝ. English version: Plato, Ion, trans. W.R.M Lamb, in Works VII, ed. G. P. Goold (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925), 409-447.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

French theorists of the Old Regime showed remarkably little interest in the social role of the artist - let alone the social role of any one individual artist. This may confuse those scholars who are more familiar with a Protestant tradition that stresses the role of free will and individuality in human affairs. In Catholic France, however, will and individuality were two distinct entities: what I do did not necessarily reveal who I am. The belief in the visibility of Divine Grace, which has been so influential in Anglo-Saxon cultures, has never had as strong a hold in France.[4]

However, French thinkers of the eighteenth century were greatly concerned with the role of art itself in the social regeneration of society. Once again, this was a discussion in which religion gradually shaded into politics, with art itself running a

[4] Van Kley, The Religious Origins of the French Revolution: From Calvin to the Civil Constitution; Adrian Rifkin, "The words art, the artist's status: technique and affectivity in France, 1789-98," Oxford Art Journal 14, no. 2, (1991): 73-82; Henry Vyverberg, Historical Pessimism in French Enlightenment (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

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distant third. Could art overcome the limits of historical circumstance? The question was tantamount to asking, could humanity overcome the weight of Original Sin?

Discussions of culture were introduced into this argument very early on. In the late seventeenth century the Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes pitted the defenders of Classicism against the proponents of Modern innovation. Some twenty years later, the quarrel picked up again when Mme. Dacier, translator of Homer, argued that contemporary decadence was at once the cause and result of the decadence of art. The quarrel lasted well into mid-century, and there are echoes of it in the art criticism of La Font de Saint Yenne. David himself must have had a whiff of it, since his famous remark that Roman Classicism had "unsealed his eyes" was an obvious reference to La Fontaine's line in defense of the "Ancients:" "Horace, luckily, unsealed my eyes."[5]

In 1736 Voltaire took up the cudgel for the Modern position, arguing in Le Mondain that the arts - especially the luxury arts - could not help but improve society as a whole.[6] However, Voltaire's argument was against religious repression, and his angle was primarily hedonistic: this was a good time to be alive. The arguments of Dacier and others were primarily aesthetic: Imitation was superior to Inspiration. The discrepancy is only apparent: both arguments were concerned with

[5] "Horace, par bonheur, me déssila les yeux." Jean de La Fontaine, "A Monseigneur l' Evêque de Soissons en lui donnant un Quintilien de la traduction d' Oratio Toscanella" ("Epitre à Huet") [1687], in Oeuvres Complètes, edited by Pierre Clarac (Paris: Gallimard/La Pléiade, 1958), 648; Anne Dacier, Causes de la corruption du goût (Paris: Rigaud, 1714); discussed in Roland Mortier, "L' idée de décadence littéraire au XVIIIe siècle," in Le Coeur et la Raison. Recueil d' "etudes sur le dix-huitème siècle, 53-67; La Font de Saint Yenne, Réflexions sur quelques causes de l' état présent de la peinture en France, 47; Hautecoeur, Louis David, 46.

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an underlying political issue: "can we improve upon the past, or are we bound to repeat it?"

A great deal has been written to argue whether or not eighteenth century thinkers were "optimists" or "pessimists," that is, whether they "felt good" about the future. The issue is simpler than that: what divided the thinkers of the eighteenth century was not so much the question whether society was improving or not, it was whether society could be improved to begin with. Was humanity born to labor against a Fall from Cultural Grace which it could not redeem, or was it capable of improvement, after all?[7]

In the second half of the century the most popular, or infamous, contribution to this debate - at any rate, the most influential - was undoubtedly Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Discours sur les Sciences et les Arts of 1750.[8] Against Voltaire, Rousseau argued that "science and the arts" - meaning the whole of cultural, intellectual and industrial enterprises - could not regenerate society; at best they might mitigate its innate viciousness. Rousseau's ideas in turn were echoed in Johann Joachim Winckelmann's Reflections on the Imitation of Greek Painting and Sculpture, which asserted, with Rousseau, that the fine arts were historically

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[6] Voltaire, le Mondain (1736); discussed in Vyverberg, Historical Pessimism in French Enlightenment, 170-188.

[7] *see* Vyverberg, *op. cit.*, and discussion in Roland Mortier, "L' idée de décadence littéraire au XVIIIe siècle," 53.

[8] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discours sur les Sciences et les Arts;" full title: Discours qui a remporté le prix à l' Academie de Dijon En l' année 1750. Sur cette Question proposée par la même Académie: Si le rétablissement des Sciences et des Arts a contribué à épurer les moeurs (Dijon, 1750), in Oeuvres Complètes III, 1-30; for an extended bibliography on Rousseau's influence on the concept of regeneration through the arts, see Edouard Pommier, L' Art de la Liberté Doctrines et débats de la Révolution Française (Paris: Gallimard, 1991), 69.

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determined and implied, with comparable pessimism, that regeneration in art or society was unlikely: "Art claims liberty: in vain would nature produce her noblest offspring in a country where rigid laws would choke her progressive growth."[9]

Of course, neither Winckelmann nor Rousseau nor Voltaire, nor the many epigones who pursued this argument on their own were ready to deny the persuasive powers of art. All agreed implicitly or explicitly with Aristotle's emphasis on its moral effects in the political education of Athenian citizens.[10] All, that is, believed in the perfectibility of Humanity. However, the salient, widely accepted argument, which the comparison with Aristotle and Greek culture underscored, was that in the present political situation the influence of the fine arts could not be positive. If Rousseau's First Discourse provoked a gnashing of intellectual teeth among the philosophes that was because he underscored the fundamental flaw in their position: how far could one go in welding an optimistic belief in the perfectibility of Humanity in general to the pessimistic critique of the present political situation?

With Rousseau the doctrine of Original Sin which Voltaire had earlier rejected was taken back, and turned against the dominant political order. By 1762 Rousseau's Du Contrat Social had further extended the point by suggesting that

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[9] Johann Joachim Winckelmann, Writings on Art, ed. and trans. David Irwin (New York: Phaidon Press, 1972), 64-5; Gedanken über die Nachahmung der grieschischen Werke in der Malerey und Bildhauerkunst (Dresden: 1755); a French translation, or rather, an enthusiastic review with extensive selections, appeared the following year in France; see Johann Joachim Winckelmann, "Réflexions sur l' imitation des ouvrages des Grecs en fait de peinture et de sculpture," ed. and trans. Elie Fréron, Journal étranger (janvier 1756): 104-163; Becq, Genèse de l' Esthétique française moderne, 520.

[10] Aristotle, ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΩΝ Θ, III, 10-12 (1338a-b), Politique, tome. III, 2e. partie, ed. Jean Aubonnet (Paris: Les Belles Lettres: 1989), 33.

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political regeneration, too, was both imperative and impossible: a corrupt society could not regenerate itself - could not, in effect, pull itself up by its own moral bootstraps.[11]

The term régénération has been called "one of the master-words of aesthetic thought at the end of the eighteenth century."[12] It might easily have been called a master-word of late eighteenth-century intellectual life as a whole. And while Du Contrat social was little read or openly discussed until the last years of the Old Regime, the concept of regeneration through "the arts" spread widely as one aspect of a broad intellectual discussion of regeneration in general. Art, to the extent that it escaped reason, might indeed provide that mysterious force that would allow society to regenerate itself.

It was in part a question of terminology; for the answer to the problem of regeneration could revolve around one's definition of the term les arts. The social system of art was in rapid linguistic flux, and expressions like les arts, l' artiste, or le génie were as likely to refer respectively to manufacturing, skilled workers, or individual aptitude, as to Art, the Artist, or Genius, as we now understand the terms.[13] Most likely this confusion was not the unavoidable result of linguistic

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[11] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Du Contrat social; ou, Principes du droit politique (1762), in Oeuvres Complètes vol. III, 347-470.

[12] "un des maîtres-mots de la pensée esthétique de la fin du XVIIIe siècle." Becq, Genèse de l' Esthétique française moderne, 550; see also Jean Starobinski, "Le recours aux principes et l' idée de régénération dans l' esthétique de la fin du XVIIIe siècle, " Lettere italiane XX, no. 1 (Gennaio-Marzo1969): 3-13; Pommier, "Conclusion," L' Art de la Liberté Doctrines et débats de la Révolution Française, 467.

[13] Otis E. Fellows, "The Theme of Genius in Diderot's 'Neveu de Rameau," Diderot Studies II (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1952), 169-170; Mortier, L' Originalité, nouvelle catégorie esthétique au siècle des Lumières, 158; Rifkin, "The words art, the artist's status: technique and affectivity in France, 1789-98," 81.

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circumstance; it was, at least on occasion, *tactical*. Modifiers like les arts d' agrément or les beaux-arts were available when needed to indicate the arts of humanistic leisure or the fine arts, but they could also be ignored in the interest of building cultural coalitions between the intellectual elites and the manufacturing sector of the economy.[14]

Du Pont de Nemours, Turgotian, philosophe, art critic and economist, was only the most visible of these proponents of a coalition between arts and industries.[15] The greatest monument to that tactic is the Encyclopédie. In the introduction d' Alembert chose to defend Painting and Sculpture from Rousseau's attacks on luxury by associating the "fine arts" with the various forms of industry, not by placing them above craft or industry and among the more obviously decadent luxury trades. Alone among the contributors to the Encyclopédie, the Chevalier the Jaucourt timidly reiterated the traditional Aristotelian view that painting was useful because it made us like virtue. Of course, this meant that painting could as easily make us enjoy vice; Jaucourt simply reinforced Rousseau's point without answering it.[16]

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[14] See the witty discussion in Ferdinand Brunot, Tome VI, Première Partie, Section III, Livre Premier, Chapitre Premier: "Observations Préalables," in Histoire de la langue francaise des origines à nos jours, nouvelle édition (Paris: Armand Colin 1966), 679-683; see also Philip E. J. Robinson, Chapter 3, in Jean Jacques Rousseau's Doctrine of the Arts (Berne: Peter Lang, 1984), 64-88, for a discussion of Rousseau's first Discours and *ibid*, 64, for Diderot's definition of the term "art."

[15] Renato Galliani, Rousseau, le luxe et l' idéologie nobiliaire: Etude socio-historique, Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century #268 (Oxford, Voltaire Foundation, 1989).

[16] Jean Lerond d' Alembert, "Discours préliminaire des editeurs," in Encyclopédie I, xiii, xxxiii; Chevalier de Jaucourt, "Article Peinture," *ibid*, XII, 267-268.

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For, as Rousseau cleverly pointed out, it was easy to argue that the arts *could* improve society, but there was nothing as yet to prove that they actually *did*.[17] Regeneration in the arts, if it were to occur at all, would have to occur against all possible odds, because it would originate in an already regenerated society - and a regenerated society, by the implicit terms of the discussion, was unimaginable.

The correlative was that regeneration, like Divine Grace, would have to be "spontaneous." Many of the future activists in the French Revolution were deeply involved with this question: Bergasse, Brissot, Marat, Gorsas, Volney.[18] Many among them knew Jacques-Louis David through the circle of Mme. de Genlis, the governess of the children of the Duke of Orléans. In their discussions Palingenesis, the spontaneous generation of life, mixed happily with the vitalist quackery promoted by Anton Mesmer.[19] It is interesting, in this context, to note an apparent reference to Mesmer himself in David's Socrates: the Athenian philosopher, at the moment of death, points to the heavens with the same gesture associated with Mesmer's "magical fluid" in a contemporary satirical print [**Illustrations #33 & #34**].

[17] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Sur la Réponse qui a été faite à son Discours ("Lettre à Stanislas"), in Oeuvres Complètes III, 40-41.

[18] Norman Hampson, Will & Circumstance. Montesquieu, Rousseau and the French Revolution (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), is a useful overview of the positions of Carra, Brissot, Marat, Volney, Bergasse and others, but worthless for its interpretations.

[19] Darnton, Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France, 120; Jean Starobinski, "Le recours aux principes et l' idée de régénération dans l' esthétique de la fin du XVIIIe siècle," in Lettere italiane XX, no. 1 (Gennaio-Marzo, 1969), 3-13; Durand Echeverria, "The Pre-revolutionary Influence of Rousseau's Contrat Social," Journal of the History of Ideas vol XXXIII, no. 4 (October-December 1972): 543-560; Raymond Trousson, Rousseau et sa fortune littéraire, 10-13, 35-39, 61.

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The concept of "spontaneity" was at bottom a palliative, but it was difficult to make do without it. In his Introduction to the Encyclopédie d' Alembert was one step away from suggesting that the society being regenerated was the same society that was doing the regenerating - a tautology if there ever was. A similar fudging can be found in a review of the 1785 Salon written by either Louis-François-Henri Lefébure or Louis Carrogis Carmontelle.[20] Les arts, the critic suggested, were economically useful because they were the occupation of twenty-four million people, or ninety-six percent of the estimated population of France: obviously the critic was not thinking of artists at all in our sense of the word, but of manual laborers, or perhaps simply laborious classes. All of these "artists" labored for the remaining wealthy million, and if they ever ceased to do so, the system might well collapse. Like d' Alembert, Lefébure conflated into one term all the forms of culture and production; unlike d' Alembert, but like Rousseau, he suggested that they were all involved in the perpetuation of a corrupt system. The main difference was that Lefébure's argument was primarily economic, whereas Rousseau had already rejected the economic argument in favor of the ideological in his responses to the critics of the Discours sur les Sciences et les Arts. Long before Marx, the economic imperative was discussed as a possible engine of human progress, along with the cultural, the political, the social; economics, in fact, took on the status of a

[20] [Louis-François-Henri Lefébure or Louis Carrogis Carmontelle], Le Frondeur ou dialogue sur le Sallon par l' auteur du Coup de patte et du Triumvirat (Paris [?]1785), 4; discussed in Crow, "Jacques-Louis David's 'Oath of the Horatii': Painting and Pre-Revolutionary Radicalism in France," 3-4; "The Oath of the Horatii in 1785: Painting and Pre-Revolutionary Radicalism in France," 424-425.

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minor fad in the last fifteen years of the Old Regime.[21] Lefébure's discussion cannot and should not be misread as an apologia for artists as the "unacknowledged legislators of the world."[22]

If the individual artist played a part in these discussions, it was a tangential one. From the beginning of the Querelle des Anciens et Modernes it was understood that an individual could compensate, to a certain extent, for historical decadence, just as the individual could compensate, through good works, for the State of Sin into which she was born.

By mid-century, however, another term was introduced into discussions around the Discours sur les Sciences et les Arts. Diderot's initial response to Rousseau's work, which appeared in the Encyclopédie, was to place the burden of agency in the arts on an irrational category called "genius," with the aside that genius itself was spontaneously produced - it escaped the curse of cultural determination. Here Diderot anticipates Kant's view of artists as the "Darlings of Nature." Yet if Diderot was willing to grant to "genius" the ability to act in relative freedom, even to anticipate change, he did not grant it the ability to cause change.[23] And a few years later he retreated further from this position when he suggested that genius itself was caused by social circumstance: "When will we see

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[21] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Sur la Réponse qui a été faite à son Discours ("Lettre à Stanislas," 1751) in Oeuvres Complètes III, 35-57; "Septembre 1773," Correspondance littéraire, philosophique et critique X, 267.

[22] Percy Bysshe Shelley, A Defense of Poetry, in The Norton Anthology of English Literature II (revised edition), ed. M. H. Abrams et al. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1968), 500. The work was begun in 1821, was never completed, and was printed eight years after the author's death, which suggests that Shelley might have had some difficulty with this concept.

[23] Diderot, "Génie," in Encyclopédie II, 584.

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poets born? It will be after times of disaster and great misfortune." "Genius" for Diderot was a kind of cultural mutation brought into play by the collapse of historical progress; it was associated with catastrophe, not improvement - this belief was shared, also, by Marmontel.[24] The concept of "Genius" was a necessary escape from a conceptual dead-end, and significantly, Diderot described it with an analogy borrowed from current scientific theories about the "spontaneous" generation of insect life from manure: "Genius is of all time; but men who bear it within themselves remain passive unless extraordinary events warm the mass, and make them appear."[25]

Yet neither David, nor any artist, nor, for that matter, the practice of oil painting, nor even what we today would call "the Arts," could be seen as a potential regenerator of society as a whole. For Diderot as for Voltaire, Rousseau, d' Alembert, Lefébure and so many others, the individual will was endlessly frustrated by social pressures. Genius was the ability to resist a dystopic History - it was not the ability to change it.[26] The one exception, as Diderot pointed out, with some embarassment, was the King, "he who instituted the Salon, " who alone could change History, alone could improve the arts, and thus, presumably, was the lone possessor of génie: "The genius of one man can bring artists to perfection.

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[24] "Quand verra-t-on naître des poètes? Ce sera après les temps de désastres et de grands malheurs." Denis Diderot, "XVIII. Des moeurs," in De la Poésie Dramatique [1758] in Oeuvres Complètes X, ed. Jacques Proust, 402; see also Vyverberg, Historical Pessimism in French Enlightenment, 124.

[25] "Le génie est de tous les temps; mais les hommes qui le portent en eux demeurent engourdis, à moins que des événements extraordinaires n' échauffent la masse, et ne les fassent paraître." Diderot, *ibid.*.

[26] See the sensitive overview of this problem in Lefebvre, La Révolution francaise, 79.

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Why did the ancients have such great painters and sculptors? It's because rewards and honors awakened talent."[27]

One should not be misled by the word "revolution," a term used with disconcerting frequency from mid-century on. Until 1777 there was no question of a *political* response to the imagined ailments of society, but rather of a social or cultural adjustment. Faith in miracles was a convenient evasion of the hard questions that arose in the last years of the Old Regime; the vitalist philosophies of Mesmer and others compensated for the imagined powerlessness of the individual and of society with a mock-scientific belief in the spontaneous actions of nature. Coincidentally or not, they offer striking parallels with the Machist philosophy that appealed to many progressive Russians just before the Bolsheviks seized power in 1917.[28]

The events of 1789 changed the whole dynamics of this question. At the same time that David was finishing the Brutus, confrontations between Social Determinism and Individual Will began to turn up in the work of critics and artists. These problems were being slowly, inevitably, drawn into the spinning orbit of political dialogue.

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[27] "Celui qui institua le Salon." "C' est le génie d' un seul qui perfectionne les artistes. Pourquoi les anciens eurent-ils de si grands peintres et de si grands sculpteurs? C' est que les récompenses et les honneurs éveillèrent les talents..." Denis Diderot, Salon de 1763, in Oeuvres Complètes, ed. Jean Assézat, X, 160, 159; see also Mortier, "Diderot, ou l' originalité révélatrice," Chapitre VII, in L' Originalité, nouvelle catégorie esthétique au siècle des Lumières, 153-171.

[28] Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, Materialism and Empiriocriticism [1908] (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1972), 9-29.

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At the Salon of 1789 the painter Carle Vernet implicitly repudiated Rousseau's position with a work entitled The Triumph of Aemilius Paullus [**Illustration #35**]. Rousseau's Discours sur les Sciences et les Arts was particularly admired for its "Prosopopeia of Fabritius," an imaginary speech through which Rousseau discussed the Life of the Roman general Aemilius Paullus in the well-known retelling by Plutarch.[29] Rousseau had used Fabritius to criticize the decadence introduced into Roman society by those Greek artworks which Aemilius Paullus brought back in triumph. In an obvious rejoinder to Rousseau, Vernet showed the same triumph, yet the foreground preserves implicit references to past Roman virtues. For instance, the figure in the foreground with his hand in a brazier simultaneously refers to the incense burners mentioned in Plutarch's narrative, and to the heroic Roman Muscius Scaevola, who had stuck his hand in fire to prove his bravery [**Illustration #36**]. In the background, other citizens are climbing to a temple that bears a striking resemblance to a then-unfinished Parisian church, Soufflot's Sainte Geneviève [**Illustrations #37 & 38**]. Far from suggesting an inevitable decadence, Vernet proposed a moral equivalence between wealthy present and virtuous past. He was by no means alone.[30]

And in his review of the Salon of 1789 one critic - perhaps again Lefébure - suggested that Artists themselves - with a capital A - might, because of their

[29] Plutarch, ΑΙΜΙΛΙΟΣ ΠΑΥΛΟΣ XXVIII, 1, XXXII, 32-34; Lives III, transl. Bernadotte Perrin, Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann, New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1918), 105.

[30] A similar position was taken by Camille Desmoulins; see Parker, The Cult of Antiquity and the French Revolutionaries, 72-79; see also La Font de Saint-Yenne's affirmation of public splendor and private humility, quoted in Bordes, La Mort de Brutus, 18.

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"genius," create political change, regardless of their actual economic impact on society:

> Despite common belief, I have always doubted that civil wars should be accountable for the rare geniuses one inevitably sees shining after them [...]such revolutions were prepared by the great feelings of the Artists themselves.[31]

The argument was a direct response to Diderot's statement, quoted above, that it wasn't the artist that caused the revolution, it was the revolution that caused the artist. At the same time the critic implicitly acknowledged the widespread awareness of Diderot's position. Finally, Lefébure's corrected his own comment from ten years earlier, that it was a free people that made free artists - not the other way around.[32]

Lefébure's attempt to justify the claims of art as a source of regeneration echoes the theories of the dissident artists who, in the Fall of 1789, were attempting to reform the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture. Jacques-Louis David has been placed among them, though his elder, Jean-Bernard Restout, played an important and more consistent role. Restout had opposed the Academy for years, and he eventually became President of the Commune des Arts, the artists'

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[31] "J' ai toujours douté, malgré l' opinion commune, qu' il fallut attribuer aux guerres civiles les rares génies qu' on a vu constamment briller après elles.[...] ce sont les grands sentiments des Artistes eux-mêmes qui ont préparé ces révolutions." [Louis-François Lefébure or Louis Carrogis Carmontelle], Vérités agréables ou le salon vu en beau par l' auteur du Coup de patte (Paris: 1789), 3; discussed in Crow, Painting and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris, 3; "The Oath of the Horatii in 1785: Painting and Pre-Revolutionary Radicalism in France," 424-425.

[32] [Louis Carrogis de Carmontelle or Louis-François Lefébure], Le Coup de Patte sur le Sallon de 1779. Dialogue précédé et suivi de réflexions sur la peinture ("A Athènes et se trouve à Paris chez Caileau," 1779), 7-9.

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group that briefly supplanted the Academy itself before being dissolved in its turn late in 1793.[33]

Restout's strategy has been described as the theory of "two geniuses:" the Genius of Liberty had been imprisoned until 1789; so, too, the Genius of Art. Now that Liberty was set free to spread her wings, so, too, artists should be allowed to develop, free of the chains that held them back: "Nothing stops them now; let them now take flight."[34] The regeneration that had occurred, at last, must be allowed in turn to regenerate the arts.[35] The arts continued to be seen as an effect, not a cause, of social determination.

For the benefit of the artists, the old argument that the arts could only be free in a free society was now turned upside-down. The painters of the Royal Academy were most vulnerable to Rousseau's criticism that they had prostituted themselves, and many were eager to move from apologetics to self-justification and on to self-promotion. To speak of regeneration meant implicitly to reaffirm one's belief in the Revolution as a regenerative process. To speak of Regeneration in the Arts was to legitimate one's profession by identifying one's own regeneration, present or anticipated, with the Regeneration of the Nation which had been nostalgically described, though not anticipated, by Rousseau, Diderot and their

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[33] Jules David, Le peintre Louis David, 63 sqq..

[34] "Rien ne les arrête à présent, qu' ils prennent enfin leur essor." [Louis-François Lefébure or Louis Carrogis Carmontelle], Vérités agréables ou le salon vu en beau par l' auteur du Coup de patte, 4.

[35] Edouard Pommier, "Introduction," in Le progrès des arts reunis, 1763-1815: mythe culturel des origines de la Revolution a la fin de l'Empire?, 5.

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epigones. That the procedure to regenerate the arts was identical with Restout's proposals for reforming the Academy needs little elaboration.[36]

Restout's use of the word régénération has been characterized as talismanic, and indeed, there were religious overtones in this new faith.[37] In the religious terminology that accompanied the Jansenist and Protestant influences in so much of eighteenth-century political thought, the New Dispensation was also a revelation of a pre-existent Divine Grace. For these would-be representatives of the People the Circumstantial Thesis provided a justification for the political actions of the present and perhaps, also, for the not-so justifiable politics of the past. The theory of the "two geniuses" suggested that men like David - and by extension, many others - had worked in a secret sympathy with the People, even if they had not caused the regeneration. Would-be leaders of all stripes had every reason to suggest that they had anticipated the Revolution whose coattails they were riding.

David and his followers quickly converted to the new theology of regeneration. Some time in the Summer of 1790 the artist began an ambitious project to commemorate the Tennis Court Oath [**Illustration #39**]. At that point he was deeply involved with the dissident academics. Also about the same time, the poet André Chénier abandoned a manuscript "On the causes of perfection and decadence in the arts" which was, by his own admission, heavily indebted to Rousseau. The title is not Chénier's and the surviving passages are more concerned with decadence, suggesting that Chénier was having some difficulty overcoming

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[36] Lacroix, Actes de la Commune de Paris pendant la Révolution, première série Vol. VII, 598-641.

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Rousseau's doubts about the viability of regeneration, then found his argument overrun by events. In its place Chénier began an Ode to the Tennis Court Oath, dedicated to his friend David. In line with Restout, Chénier suggested that David, even when working for the King, had secretly been inspired by "Invisible Liberty."[38]

By September 1790 David had joined the exclusive Club des Jacobins and was working behind the scenes to garner support for his project. On October 1790 his friend Edmond-Louis Dubois-Crancé proposed that a subscription be opened to defray the costs of painting and engraving a memorial to the Oath, and that the project be put before the Convention: "Let us tell them: we have chosen, to give life to our thought on canvas, the author of Brutus and the Horatii, that patriotic Frenchman whose genius preceded the Revolution."[39]

The word "preceded" (a devancé) is highly ambiguous: it suggests that David's genius was similar to the genius of Liberty, without drawing any causal connections between the two. It would still require a major change before the rhetoric of regeneration could pass from the suggestion that David had worked

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[37] Pommier, *op.cit.*, 8, uses the term "quasi magique."

[38] André Chénier, Essai sur les causes et les effets de la perfection et de la décadence des lettres et des arts [unfinished work], and Le Jeu de Paume [1791], in Oeuvres Complètes ed. Gérard Walter (Paris: Pléiade, 1958), 167-178, 168; see also the commentary by Gérard Walter, *ibid.*, n.1, 945.

[39] "Disons-leur: nous avons choisi pour animer notre pensée sur la toile, l' auteur de Brutus et des Horaces, ce Français patriote, dont le génie a devancé la Révolution." Edmond-Louis Dubois-Crancé, Speech of October 28, 1790, Prospectus d' une souscription civique proposée aux Amis de la Constitution, pour l' éxécution d' un tableau de 30 pieds sur 20, représentant le serment fait à Versailles dans un Jeu de Paume, par les députés des communes, le 20 juin 1789 (Paris, 1790); quoted in Alphonse Aulard, La Société des Jacobins,Vol I (Paris: Librairie Jouaust, 1889-1897), 330-335, and in Jules David, Le peintre Louis David; 90. discussed in Bordes, Le Serment du Jeu de Paume de Jacques-Louis David, 46-48; Bordes, *op. cit.*, 148 suggests that David may have written the original draft for this speech.

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ahead of the regeneration of France, to the idea that David, or any other artist, might have contributed to that regeneration. Before discussions of Regeneration through the Arts could become intellectually and logically grounded, the concept of Regeneration itself had to take on a new meaning. The critic had proposed a logical sequence; it was left to others to work out the system or "constellation" that would validate his argument, and to work out that system within an evolving social and political framework that might, at times, stymie the attempt, or move it forward. In the same way, a "rebellion" like the Réveillon Uprising could speedily be redefined as a "revolution," given the right circumstances. To draw another parallel, the concept of abstraction in art was well understood by the early nineteenth century; it was not applied in practice until certain criteria - aesthetic and social at once - had been set in place to distinguish an abstract painting from an equally abstract pattern in a carpet.[40]

A year after the appearance of the Brutus, it was inconceivable that anyone would imagine that this painting, or any other, had brought about social change. David and his supporters were all too willing to put themselves forward as an artistic *vanguard*, a group whose creations before 1789 had mirrored the political and social developments of the future. They did not as yet see themselves as an *avant-garde*, a group that had earlier created the conditions for the present

[40] Documentation in Joseph Masheck, "The Carpet Paradigm: Critical Prolegomena to a Theory of Flatness," in Arts Magazine Vol. 51, no. 1 (September 1976): 82-109.

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regeneration. In 1789 at least they did not see themselves as a group that was actively engaged in creating any future at all.[41]

[41] Margaret A. Rose, Marx's lost aesthetic : Karl Marx and the visual arts. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 1; similar distinctions in Neil McWilliam, Dreams of Happiness: Social Art and the French Left 1830-1850 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), 21-24.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

Unlikely as it may be that David's Brutus actually effected political change in 1790, it is equally unlikely that the men and women of 1790 expected it to create political change in the future. By then, however, they might more plausibly have argued that David's Brutus had once effected change. By the winter and spring of 1790-1791, the common assumption was that the regeneration of France, if it had occurred at all, was already over. Only a few, marginal groups saw a need to push on towards a more egalitarian society.

Dubois-Crancé's speech has been called "the first recorded instance of any specifically political meaning being read into David's work."[42] That, of course, depends on what is meant by "specifically political." The expression would have been a bit of an oxymoron in 1790, as it implies that stable meanings would somehow be attached to an artwork, once and for all. In actuality the reverse process was at work. As we have seen in the earlier case of Vernet, political meanings were derived from situations, narratives or artworks by defining a common ground from which or towards which one could then diverge or converge.

[42] Hugh Honour, Neo-Classicism, 75.

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Meanings were not placed in works of art like eggs in a carton; people read meanings out of them, and the interpretation of a single, unchanged artwork in its turn could change with remarkable speed.

Far more than the Salon or the club, the theater was the main arena for this charged symbolic struggle. Performances allowed spectators to underline the dialogue's relevance to contemporary events by applauding or whistling down the appropriate passages from the relative safety of the hall. Until very recently it was a tradition for working- and lower-middle-class French theatergoers to bring a copy of a play to the performance, which occasionally made a production look like a communal explication de texte; and as late as the nineteen-sixties the conservative French press accused some popular theaters of fomenting unrest by selling playbooks at the door.[43] The same process seems to have occured among the middle- and upper-middle class spectators of 1791, and the plays of Voltaire were particularly congenial to this type of sniping because they were hugely popular with French audiences across the whole political spectrum. Even his Brutus was praised by the reactionary press and performed by reactionary troupes. After all, Brutus himself had been an autocrat, and a legitimate one; Voltaire himself had been a partisan of absolute monarchy, and had backed the Chancellor Maupeou against the

[43] Author's personal experience; see also André Simon, "Le Festival d' Avignon et la politique," Théâtre et spectacles hier et aujourd'hui, Actes du 115e Congrès National des Sociétés Savantes (Avignon, 1990). Section d' histoire moderne et contemporaine (Paris: Editions du CTHS, 1991), 433.

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Parliaments. The King, as even the patriots insisted, was a legitimate leader, not a "despot" - though there was an occasional threatening edge to their affirmation.[44]

In 1791 David's own Brutus played a cameo role in Voltaire's play, thanks in part to Charles Villette. Villette was the adoptive son-in-law and heir-presumptive of Voltaire, whose canonization he actively pursued in the first years of the Revolution. Paradoxically, Villette was the first to call for a popular festival to celebrate the anniversary of the Fall of the Bastille - something closer to Rousseau than to Voltaire. In the Fall of 1790 he was promoting another grand festival to accompany the re-burial of Voltaire in the new "Temple of the Nation," the Pantheon, formerly the Church of Sainte Geneviève. David's role in the planning of the ceremony is contested, but he probably contributed some designs. As a co-editor and contributor to the weekly Chronique de Paris, Villette was in a good position to publicize his project.[45] Moreover, Voltaire's life as a forerunner of the Revolution had been publicized by a number of plays glorifying his actions.[46]

The "Voltaire Lobby" scored a major success in November of 1790 when the actor-shareholders of the Théâtre de la Nation agreed to perform Brutus. The

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[44] Roger Barny, "Le théâtre de Voltaire dans la révolution française (août 1789 - septembre 1793)," Théâtre et spectacles hier et aujourd'hui, 171-198; K. N. McKee, "Voltaire's Brutus during the French Revolution," Modern Language Notes 56 (1941): 46-65.

[45] Michaud, Jr., "VILLETTE (Charles, Marquis de)," in Biographie universelle, ed. Michaud, XLIII, 515-516; Charles-Michel de Villette, Lettres choisies sur la les événements principaux de la Révolution (Paris: Clousier, 1792), 111-112 .

[46] e.g. Le Chevalier de la Barre, by Benoît Joseph Marsollier, at the Théatre Italien, and Jean Calas our l' Ecole des Juges, by Marie-Joseph Chénier, at the Théâtre Français; both were performed in July of 1790; The Théâtre de la Nation performed Jean Calas, by Jean-Louis Laya, in November of 1790 - another play glorifying Voltaire's defense of the beleaguered Protestant family.

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Théâtre de la Nation was a spin-off from the Comédie-française and a somewhat conservative institution catering to a well-off audience, though, like every other institution, it was divided by complex internal quarrels in which patriotism and personality were mingled. Villette initiated an aggressive campaign for the Brutus, explaining away Voltaire's more conservative views, calling patriots to the performance, reminding prospective audience members which parts were relevant to the present political situation, and why. Meanwhile, the reactionary press provided its own relevant subtexts - for instance, the speech by Brutus admitting that some nations were less suited to freedom than others; or again, the lengthy speech in which the character of Messala argued that a constitutional government was worse than absolute monarchy:

> Rome has changed her chains; under the yoke of the great
> She has exchanged one king for a hundred tyrants.[47]

One can well imagine the enthusiasm with which the Royalists in the audience greeted this passage. Indeed, the first performance seems to have attracted as many Royalists as Patriots, until the whole audience dissolved into a mutual love-fest, with Royalists and Patriots joining in a chorus of Vive le roi! Vive la Nation! At the end of the play, a bust of Voltaire was brought on stage, and two soldiers volunteered to hold it up through the second half of the performance, a romantic comedy: presumably the bust needed propping on the raked stage. The

[47] "Rome a changé de fers; et, sous le joug des grands,/Pour un roi qu' elle avait, a trouvé cent tyrans." Voltaire, Brutus, Acte I, Scène IV, in Oeuvres Complètes, 364; see also Acte I, Scène II, 358.

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Chronique proclaimed the first performance a "triumph," though perhaps it was closer to a draw.

The second performance, on the nineteenth, was considerably more agitated. The bust of Voltaire was placed on stage at the outset, flanked by a bust of Brutus that belonged to David. The artist was a close friend of Talma, one of the actors, and had been instrumental in the hiring of Lesueur, the stage designer for this production. However, the Royalist contingent was in full force, and halfway through the play the actor playing Brutus panicked, fled the stage, and locked himself in his dressing-room. According to one account, calm was not restored until the satirist Rivarol, the editor of the Royalist Actes des Apôtres, had been knocked unconscious.[48] As the curtain fell on the last scene the actor playing Brutus, now back on stage, slouched in his chair in the position of David's painting, while the body of the son of Brutus, executed for treason, was carried along the back of the stage.

It has been argued from this evidence that David's Brutus was "in essential harmony with Voltaire."[49] Whichever version of Voltaire one has is mind, or whichever interpretation of David's Brutus one agrees with, there were substantial differences in narrative, in tone, and in interpretation between the two.

Differences in narrative: the daughters and wife of Brutus, who play a prominent role in David's painting, do not appear in Voltaire's play, and obviously

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[48] Noëlle Guibert and Jacqueline Razgonnikoff, Le journal de la Comédie-francaise 1787-1799. La Comédie aux trois couleurs (Paris: Sides 1989), 125-127.

[49] Herbert, David, Voltaire, Brutus and the French Revolution, 78.

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they were not shown in the final tableau. In Voltaire's version Brutus has only one son left, and obviously only one body was carried on stage during the performance of October 19. Voltaire's Brutus is far more stoic, his reaction to the death of his son is one of renewed energy and refusal to mourn, far at odds with David's brooding figure, and one wonders if the insertion of David's figure did not end up softening, rather than heightening, the cold Cornelian heroism of Voltaire's hero. Moreover, the final scene is extremely brief, and in a regular performance the body of young Titus would be brought in no more than thirty seconds after his final speech and exit. This would have been a ludicrous violation of the rules of vraisemblance or verisimilitude, that prized aspect of French classicizing tragedy. In the 1791 production the interval was extended by an intervening ceremony, and by the expedient of putting Rivarol to sleep, but fortunately for the great satirist this experiment was not taken up on a regular basis.[50]

However, the performance of that night left the play and the painting alike uncomfortably splayed between different types of performance and different classes of spectators. The tableau vivant (or staged painting) that occured at the end of the performance was a blatant violation of the laws of bienséance, or propriety within high tragedy, which forbade the showing of gore on stage. In his preface to the Brutus Voltaire had deplored this restriction in the French theater, but the tableau introduced an element of melodrama that must have disgusted the classicizing thespians of the Théâtre de la Nation.

[50] Herbert, *op. cit.*, 78 claims that "subsequent editions of the play made this tableau vivant a regular epilogue." I have been unable to confirm this.

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Conversely, this relaxation of the rules must have delighted its more revolutionary-minded interpreters. In his preface to the Brutus Voltaire had argued that French audiences were too frivolous to appreciate the sight of a dead son being brought on-stage before his father's eyes. The explicit violation introduced by David's conceit stretched the apparent meaning of the play, while suggesting that it was returning Voltaire's work to its intended meaning.[51] Thus what united the audience of 1790 with both David and Voltaire was a form of self-justification in reverse. Any members of the audience who cared to read Voltaire's preface in their own copy of Brutus could have found in their own enthusiastic appreciation a proof that the new society was, indeed, regenerated - at least sufficiently regenerated to truly appreciate Voltaire.[52]

To present the Brutus as a "triumph" was not to redeem Voltaire or David, it was to prove that the regenerated Nation was now worthy of them. Conversely, the tableau vivant, with its flouting of upper-class conventions, could give the middle-class audience the illusion that they now were one with the people - those workers and proletarians who were still excluded from the theater both from lack of interest and because admission to the Théâtre de la Nation was prohibitively expensive.

[51] Voltaire, "Discours sur la Tragédie," in Oeuvres Complètes, 347; see also Denis Diderot, "Avis à un jeune poète qui se proposait de faire une tragédie de 'Régulus,'" [1765] in Oeuvres Complètes, ed. Jane Marsh Dieckmann et al., XIII, 436-444; De la Poésie Dramatique XVIII, "Des moeurs," *op. cit.*, X, 402; Jean François de la Harpe, Commentaire sur le Théâtre de Voltaire (Paris: Maradan, 1814), 64-65.

[52] John Pappas, "Voltaire et le Drame bourgeois," Diderot Studies XX (1981): 235-36.

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By 1790, then, the political meaning of the Brutus was like the proverbial first puff of marijuana: one had to believe it before one could get high.[53] Likewise, by honoring the bust of Brutus the organizers of the festivity were suggesting that, indeed, "Brutus was virtuous" - an interpretation that is not at all obvious in Voltaire's play. In the frantic scramble to legitimize or delegitimize the new political tendencies a theme like the Brutus was merely a pretext for thrashing out predetermined political allegiances, a site for what Furet has called "the competition of discourses for the appropriation of legitimacy. [...] Victory was in the hands of those who were capable of occupying and keeping that symbolic position."[54]

As for the argument that David was "creating" the future: the position of progressive Frenchmen and women that Fall of 1790 was that the present was in perfect continuity with the past. Regeneration had occurred; it had been anticipated by Voltaire, by Rousseau, even, perhaps, by that interesting M. David. For the patriots, the Revolution was complete; for the "blacks," the extreme supporters of Absolutist Monarchy, the Revolution was an aberration in need of correction. Only for a tiny minority of radical politicians did the Revolution need to go forward, and if some among that minority were present that evening at the performance of Voltaire's Brutus, they were not among those heard from.

By the fall of 1790, then, David's Brutus was an actor in a theodicy of Regeneration: the Revolution was the Revelation of the workings of "Invisible

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[53] Similar conclusion in Barny, "Le théâtre de Voltaire dans la révolution française," 194.

[54] Furet, Interpreting the French Revolution, 48, 49; Marvin Carlson, The Theater of the French Revolution (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963), 54-5, also sees the outcome of the struggle as a draw, not a "triumph."

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Liberty," and the capacity to recognize its virtues was a proof that Regeneration had indeed occurred. For the spectators at the Théâtre de la Nation it was a question of bringing pre-formed opinions to bear on whatever cultural text was at hand.

A year later, however, when David's Brutus was next presented to its public, it was under such fundamentally altered historical circumstances that its new critical interpretation cannot be understood apart from them.

On June 20, 1791 Louis XVI denounced the Revolution and fled for the border. He was recaptured at Varennes and brought back to Paris four days later, and for the first time there was widespread sentiment (at least among the elites and the educated) in favor of the abolition of the Monarchy. Despite all this the National Convention clung to its support for a constitutional monarchy in the face of betrayal on one side and resentment on the other. Then on July 17 a peaceful group of republican petitioners was gunned down on the Champ de Mars by government troops, and the social harmony so desperately sought by Villette and others began to disintegrate. Now the "patriots" were on the side of change and the conservatives - or at any rate the Constitutional Monarchists - on the side of the status quo. The ideology of consensus and social harmony, which until then had been shared by all but the "blacks" now served to divide the center from the left. It was inevitable that the new patterns would affect the criticism of art.

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As for David himself, on July 17 and for a time at least his shifting political allegiances were clear: his name was found on the petition at the Champ de Mars beside the signatures of a few other Jacobins.[55] By then, however, the Jacobin Club had split apart, and a conservative majority deserted to the newly formed Club des Feuillants while a small minority, David among them, joined the republican side. The following days saw a quick reordering of political allegiances as the Convention, dominated by the Feuillants, briefly toyed with the idea of closing the Jacobin Club, threatened a few republican leaders with arrest, and imposed emergency laws against "provocation."[56] These measures were mostly symbolic as far as the Jacobin republicans were concerned, but they were vigorously pursued against the more populist members of the Club des Cordeliers, notably Marat and Danton. The Champ de Mars Massacre, it has been argued, was a coup d' état. In the following weeks the victors moved to consolidate their position by attempting to divide their opponents on the left from their opponents on the far left.

David himself belonged to the former group, not the latter. In late September the new National Legislative Assembly was elected, with the popular elements excluded by a high poll tax and the somewhat wealthier republicans a powerless

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[55] The petition was destroyed in 1871. Michelet, who had read it, described it as containing the names of "a few Jacobins, like...David." ("quelques Jacobins comme...David"); Michelet, Histoire de la Révolution francaise, I, 703; see also Histoire Parlementaire de la Révolution française, ou journal des assemblées nationales depuis 1789 jusqu' en 1815, ed. Philippe Joseph Benjamin Buchez et P.-C. Roux (Paris, Paulin, 1834), XI, 112-116, for a description of the manuscript; unfortunately, the authors, like Michelet, were attempting to prove that the petition was a spontaneous turnout, and like Michelet they downplayed the presence of influential figures; see however Kates, The Cercle Social, the Girondins, and the French Revolution, 166-172.

[56] "Decret concernant la provocation à la désobeissance à la loi et les insultes à la force publique," 18 Juillet 1791, reprinted in Buchez and Roux, Histoire Parlementaire de la

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minority. David ran as a representative from Paris and was defeated. In other terms, he chose to cast himself as the "loyal opposition:" opposed, but ready to compromise.[57]

And the Feuillants were ready to oblige. On September 17 the Assembly passed a decree giving 100,000 livres for support to artists, of which 70,000 was to go to history painting. The power to distribute this money was taken away from the Royal Academy and vested in the newly formed Committee for Public Instruction (Comité d' Instruction Publique), a group that was to become one of the most powerful legislative bodies of the Revolution.[58]

And there were those ready to reach out to David. On September 21 David's old friend, the newly-elected Claude-Emile Pastoret, addressed the Electoral Assembly of Paris. In a nod to his new colleague the architect and critic Quatremère de Quincy, Pastoret emphasized the importance of using the arts to shore up "public liberty" and alluded briefly to their mutual friend David, "whose genius always seemed to foresee the revolution."[59]

Révolution francaise XXVIII, 404; discussion in preceding pages; see also Michelet, *op. cit.*, 711-717.

[57] In November of 1790 David was chosen by the Commune de Paris to create an inventory of the national artistic patrimony; on June 19 and 20th, 1791 he sought a mandate of good citizenship from his local section; on August 27, he was chosen as an elector to the Section du Louvre; in the following weeks he was active as an inspector of elections; see Wildenstein, Documents complémentaires au Catalogue de l' oeuvre de Louis David, 279, 305.

[58] [Anonymous], Lettres analytiques, critiques et philosophiques, sur les tableaux du Sallon (Paris, L' an troisième de la liberté, 1791), 48; see also Procès-Verbaux du Comité d' Instruction Publique de la Convention Nationale, ed. and annotated James Guillaume, Vol. I (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1899).

[59] "...Dont le génie sembla toujours prévoir la révolution." quoted in Etienne Charavay, Assemblée éléctorale de Paris, 26 aout 1791-12 aout 1792 (Paris: Cerf, 1890),

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However, Pastoret's praise was more restrained than Dubois-Crancé's of the previous year: David had no longer "preceded" (devancer) the Revolution, he had merely "foreseen" it (prévoir). In other terms, he had been a passive mirror of future events, without participating in them, even on the level of personal empathy. From anticipation to foresight, the hyperbole of regeneration had taken a cautious step backward: an artist could still visualize the future, but he was now powerless to replicate it in his actions, let alone helping to bring it into being.

There was more than flattery involved. On September 28, 1791 Pastoret and Quatremère joined the Comité d' Instruction Publique, seizing control of the 100,000 livres committed to the arts. That same day the Presiding Chair of the Constituent Assembly, Bertrand Barère, introduced a motion that "whereas June 20 1789 is the moment that insured for France a free constitution," David's Tennis Court Oath, which commemorated that date, was to be sponsored and acquired by the State.[60] Barère, perhaps the most skillful parliamentarian produced by the Revolution, had killed three birds with one stone: he had associated the restrictive, elitist Constitution of 1791 with the progressivist enthusiasm of 1789; he had smoothed the feathers, as he hoped, of the various politicians who were to be prominently displayed in the painting, notably the Jacobin leaders Grégoire and Robespierre; and he had bought off David. This was not the last time, since David was commissioned a year later to paint Louis XVI's son, the Dauphin. At any rate

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258-259; see the differing interpretation of this speech in Bordes, Le Serment du Jeu de Paume de Jacques-Louis David, 53.

[60] "Séance du 28 Septembre 1791," Réimpression de l' Ancien Moniteur, IX, no. 272 (Paris: Plon 1861), 795. Additional discussion in Bordes, Le Serment du Jeu de Paume de Jacques-Louis David. 53-54 and 107-08, note 183.

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the 100.000 livres never materialized, and both paintings were eventually abandoned.[61]

Meanwhile, the Salon had opened on September 12, 1791, with David exhibiting the Horatii, the Socrates and the Brutus, along with a preparatory drawing for the Tennis Court Oath and a portrait. For the first time, one senses a genuine popularity for David - though the critics, as usual, were more interested in providing their own interpretations of the painting than in explaining this upsurge of interest.

Significantly, the Horatii and the Tennis Court Oath were placed side-by-side in the Salon, so that the similarity of the two gestures - the Romans' and the Frenchmen's - brought inevitable comparisons between the present and the past.[62] And a similar type of comparison was drawn for the Brutus, with the same ideological implications: was France regenerated? Had the country degenerated? Or was there still a need for further political movement?

For instance, on October 13 Charles Villette wrote in the Chronique de Paris:

> One likes to see, next to such masterpieces, the humble attempts of a student who pays careful attention to the rules and promises great energy. Tyrants must tremble before this painting of Brutus, the last

[61] Bordes, Le Serment du Jeu de Paume de Jacques-Louis David, 78-81.

[62] [Anonymous], Le plaisir prolongé. Le retour du Salon chez soi et celui de l' abeille dans sa ruche par Pithou, 28.

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excess of republican virtue. Only the famous David, his thoughts led onward by burning patriotism long before the Revolution, could interpret the Tennis Oath Court with such heat. A bare locale without decoration, these empty walls, bring back the austerity of the Latium, and one might imagine this motion has been taken, not in Versailles but on the Capitoline..."[63]

Villette's statement has occasionally been taken for an enthusiastic endorsement of David by another republican firebrand.[64] In fact, Villette had explicitly spelled out his political opinions a week earlier in the Chronique, and he repeated them by following his review of the Salon with an encomium for Marie-Antoinette.[65] Like Pastoret, Villette had taken sides with the Constitutional Monarchists, and like Pastoret he was willing to bring in the more "respectable" republicans, or more pragmatically speaking, to split them off from the Cordeliers. Like Barère, like other critics, he denounced the Marquis d' Angiviller, just recently retired as Royal Superintendent of Buildings and de-facto overseer of the Academy.

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[63] "On aime à voir, à côté de ces chef-d'oeuvres d' un maître, les modestes essais d' un élève qui présente une grande correction, et promet une grande énergie. Il faut que les tyrans frémissent devant ce tableau de Brutus, dernier excès de la vertu républicaine. Il n' y avait que le célèbre David dont le patriotisme brulant dirigeait les pensées longtems avant la révolution qui put nous rendre avec autant de chaleur le serment du jeu de paulme, et l' on croirait que cette motion fut jurée, non pas à Versailles, mais au Capitole." Charles Villette, "Le Sallon. 13 Octobre 1791," in Lettres Choisies sur les principaux Evènemens de la Révolution (A Paris: Clousier/Girod et Tessier, 1792), 238. Only the second sentence is given in Herbert, Voltaire, Brutus and the French Revolution, 68 and Régis Michel, "L' art des Salons," in Aux Armes et aux Arts: les arts de la révolution 1789-1799, ed. Bordes and Michel, 28; partially quoted in René Verbraeken, Jacques-Louis David jugé par ses contemporains et par la postérité, Preface by Louis Hautecoeur (Paris: Léonce Laget, 1973), 94, and in Bordes, Le Serment du Jeu de Paume de Jacques-Louis David, 72; Olander, "Appendix A," Pour Transmetttre à la Postérité. French Painting and Revolution 1774-1795, 192 ascribes the whole sentence to the Oath drawing.

[64] see the references cited above.

[65] Villette, "20 Octobre 1791," in Lettres Choisies, 246-248; *ibid*, "5 Octobre 1791," 231-233.

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In a Constitutional Monarchy, an administrator must be answerable to the People; instead d' Angiviller had fled for the border. [66]

In this light, Villette's first sentence (which is frequently omitted in recent discussions), seems thoroughly belittling, not only because David had been over forty when he painted the Brutus, but because the expression "careful attention to the rules" (une grande correction), is straight out of the discourse of Academic administrators.[67]

At the same time, and paradoxically, Villette found time to criticize David and the Tennis Court Oath for lack of spontaneity, suggesting that the artist's heart did not quite beat as one with the new France. Spontaneous, unexplainable enthusiasm was a category that allowed a number of critics of the Salon to claim for David the ability to inspire the viewer to noble actions. The argument comes from Aristotle, though it was very much debated in the last years of the Old Regime. [68] Villette, like other critics in 1791, was beginning to reject the kind of theory that allowed an unmoved mover to place himself above a deeply moved audience: "if you want to make me cry, you must first suffer yourself."[69]

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[66] "Séance du 28 Septembre 1791," in Réimpression de l' Ancien Moniteur, IX no. 272, 795; [Anonymous], Lettres analitiques, critiques et philosophiques, sur les tableaux du Sallon, 17.

[67] see for instance Wend Graf Kalnein and Michael Levey, Art and Architecture of the Eighteenth Century in France (Hammondsworth: Pelican, 1972), 103.

[68] Aristotle, ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΟΝ Θ, V, 16 (1340a); Politique, tome. III, 2e. partie, ed. Jean Aubonnet. (Paris: Les Belles Lettres), 39.

[69] "*Si vis me flere, dolendum est primum ipsi tibi.*/Pour m' arracher des pleurs, il faut que vous pleuriez." Villette, *ibid*. The tag is from Horace, Ars Poetica, 100-102.

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In Villette's description there is an interesting verbal mingling of the Brutus and the Tennis Court Oath. The same sentence at mid-point could grammatically apply to both, as if both were part of a logical continuum: Villette's phrasing suggests that the same spirit that presided over Early Rome now should inspire - or more accurately, restrain - Modern France. One critic has called David's Jeu de Paume "profoundly retrospective."[70] Retrospective it was, in 1791 - for those who wished it to be. Villette suggested that David, who had shown these qualities of (republican) enthusiasm in the Brutus, had barely sustained them in the Tennis Court Oath and might no longer sustain them in the future. What Villette implicitly endorsed in David's work was the tone of rigid neoclassical restraint and repression of the Brutus. As in the performance of November 19, 1790 the sadomasochistic aspects of the story were now being held up as a picture of a desirable authoritarian utopia.[71]

However, not all the critics of the Salon were as optimistic as Villette, Pastoret or Quatremère - or perhaps not as self-deluded. One anonymous writer wrote a lengthy, perceptive, and highly critical evaluation of the Salon of 1791, the Lettres analitiques, critiques et philosophiques. The author strongly opposed the Constitutionalist's policies toward the arts, and particularly the efforts of Quatremère to restrict access to the Salon and the Academy; he also displayed strong enthusiasm for Robespierre. Perhaps this explains why he devoted several

[70] "Profondément rétrospective." Bordes, Le Serment du Jeu de Paume de Jacques-Louis David, 67.

[71] Bordes, La Mort de Brutus de Pierre-Narcisse Guérin, 71 suggests that the authoritarian aspect of the Brutus story appealed primarily to the Jacobins, which leads him

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pages to an unsparing inventory of David's classical sources for the Brutus, which suggests that for this critic at least the Classical style had a strong whiff of repression. David's wild borrowings from classical statuary in the Brutus and the Tennis Court Oath were a calculated appeal to a theory that falsely claimed to find parallels between the virtues of Rome and those of France; to suggest that David could spontaneously do for France what Phidias had done for Greece was simply drawing out a syllogism: "M. David [...] cannot be seen as a man of genius, but a man of much wit, finesse and skill."[72] David was a follower both in art and politics, the deliberate toy of all-too-deliberate thinkers like Quatremère, who is mentioned further on: "No, he [David] can't think, but he has around him people who can."[73]

In 1791 even more than in 1789, the criticism of David's Brutus could be traceable to political positions. The role of art, according to the majority of the critics at the Salon, was to inspire with enthusiasm and encourage the viewer to some kind of action. To back David's work was, potentially, to back his actions past or future - or to criticize them. However, by the fall of 1791 the nature of this action was problematic: should David be calling the people to arms? pacifying them? or was the whole question irrelevant?

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to see a form of implied resistance to this aspect in Guérin's work of 1793, though not earlier.

[72] [Anonymous], Lettres analitiques, critiques et philosophiques, sur les tableaux du Sallon, 3, 52.

[73] "Non, il ne sait pas penser, mais il a toujours autour de lui des gens qui le savent." *op. cit.*, 58.

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As in 1789, it was a war of indirect allusions and analogies: the critics could not call for further revolution, which was a violation of the laws against political provocation, so they turned quite naturally to aesthetics. On a superficial level the difference of opinion between Villette and the anonymous critic was a prolongation of the Baroque dispute over the relative superiority of Imagination and Imitation. But Imagination and Imitation, after all, are two traditional critical categories that shade imperceptibly into the more politically charged areas of inspiration, motivation, agency. Only Imagination could allow the artist to hoist his conception up by its own bootstraps, as a kind of personal version of the "Common Will."

The implied political question was first, whether art could inspire to action, and beyond that, whether action was needed to begin with. Villette thought art could inspire, and that it should - in the direction of pacification. The anonymous critic thought it couldn't, and shouldn't. And while the Constitutionalist Villette could fall back on "enthusiasm" as a mark of genius, only to deny it to David, the anonymous critic dismissed the concept altogether. David held no particular claims on the inspiring devotions of "Invisible Liberty." Finally, the critic for the radical Cercle Social thought that it was possible to inspire the people - but not for David. The future belonged to the People, not to middle-class artists and trimmers.[74]

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[74] [Anonymous], Essai sur la méthode à employer pour juger les ouvrages des beaux-arts du dessin, et principalement ceux qui sont exposés au salon du Louvre (Paris: Imprimerie du cercle social, 1790 [sic]), 7-8; quoted and discussed in Bordes, Le Serment du Jeu de Paume de Jacques-Louis David, 73-74 and 15, note 270; Bordes' dismissal of the Cercle Social as "a band of mystical revolutionaries influenced by mesmerism" who criticized David out of "bad faith and envy" is a harsh judgment on a very influential group that included such "mystics" as Condorcet and Tom Paine. ("un groupe de révolutionnaires mystiques influencés par le mesmérisme...il faut...se demander si ce ne sont pas en fait la mauvaise foi et la jalousie qui s' expriment ainsi.") *ibid.*, 73-4.

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But there was clearly no consensus around David himself: he was a radical to the Feuillants and a trimmer to the Jacobins. To complicate things further, the Feuillants clearly felt they could recuperate him, and the Jacobins of July 1791 were no longer the Jacobins of 1790; nor, for that matter were they yet the Jacobins they were to become in 1793, after David had rejoined their fold. While the Feuillants were hopelessly floundering around for a consensus the Jacobins under Robespierre were ruthlessly purging their ranks of waverers through the voting system known as the scrutin épuratoire. One might have a reputation as a republican while still being viewed with suspicion by the Robespierrists; nevertheless, David's experience at the Champ de Mars must have eventually played a role in his acceptance: such experiences weighed heavily in the round of accusations and defenses that were an important feature of Jacobin politics.[75]

Over the next eleven months the policy of the Constitutional Monarchists was one of patronizing leniency and pacification toward the left, and of finger-crossing optimism toward the Monarchy. The Feuillants shared a naive belief in the good faith of the King and Queen and the hesitant expectation that the republicans could be controlled through constitutional means, rhetorical gestures and public largesse, while the unruly populace would be pacified through displays of force and reason. Ironically, the public position of the King and the Constitutional Monarchists now agreed with Rousseau's more pessimistic position:[76]

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[75] Bordes, Le Serment du Jeu de Paume de Jacques-Louis David, 76; Olander, Pour Transmetttre à la Postérité. French Painting and Revolution 1774-1795, 185 sqq.

[76] see Bertaud, Initiation à la Révolution Francaise, 132-133; a cursory survey of the "Conservative Rousseau" is given in Raymond Trousson, Rousseau et sa fortune littéraire (Bordeaux: Ducros, 1971), 68-71; see Edouard Pommier, L' Art de la Liberté. Doctrines et

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> Let us therefore leave Science and the Arts to soften somehow the cruelty of the men they have corrupted; let us aim at a wise diversion, and try to lead their passions off course.[77]

In the discussions in the Assembly, that Fall of 1791, Rousseau's pessimism worked as a subtle disparagement of the idea that further regeneration was either desirable or possible. The role of the arts was to calm the people, not to inspire them.

This was not the last of the tactical errors made by the Feuillants. In the following year, while they consolidated their political position their cultural policies eroded their popular support. Even at the Salon of 1791, they had not grasped that the system of symbolic legitimization had changed. For instance, the word "tyrant" used by Villette in his 1791 review could hardly have kept the studiedly neutral connotations of 1790. The meaning of austere Classicism had doubtless changed as well: just as Villette reveled in austere overtones of David's neoclassical conceit, Classicism in general had begun to reveal its repressive, pessimistic overtones. Likewise, the rhetoric of Regeneration had remained nominally the same, but its political uses had been turned upside down: the future belonged to the radicals.

If there is a lasting aesthetic monument to that transitory political position, it is surely Quatremère de Quincy's Considérations sur les arts du Dessin en France.[78]

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débats de la Révolution Française (Paris: Gallimard, 1991), 62-72 and esp. 69 for Quatremère's debt to Rousseau; see also Renato Galliani, Rousseau, le luxe et l' idéologie nobiliaire: Etude socio-historique, Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century #268 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1989).

[77] "Laissons donc les sciences et les arts adoucir en quelque sorte la férocité des hommes qu' ils ont corrompus; cherchons à faire une diversion sage, et tâchons de donner le change à leurs passions." Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Sur la Réponse qui a été faite à son Discours ("Lettre à Stanislas"), in Oeuvres Complètes III, 56.

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Quatremère, an old friend of David, had just been elected to the Legislative Assembly and played a major role in the cultural politics of the Feuillants. In the Spring of 1792 he rose to the challenge of providing the necessary calming influence for the preservation of "public liberty," and on May 12 he addressed the Assembly to recommend Government backing of the public festivities scheduled for June 3. Quatremère's speech is a concise statement of Feuillant policy in the arts:

> A stout-hearted assembly can stir up storms or calm them, impel to obedience and enforce respect for Law. [Your decree] is a call to order...The organization and intention of this ceremony are: to bring our citizens back to respect for Law.[79]

From the "austerity of the Latium" that Villette had hoped to discover in David, to the "grave and silent" procession that Quatremère recommended, the Feuillants' insistence on the restraining role of art held firm, even on the level of style.[80]

Ominously and prophetically, the anonymous critic of the 1791 Salon had already suggested that David's Feuillant manipulators might well end up being

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[78] Antoine-Chrysostôme Quatremère de Quincy, Considérations sur les arts du Dessin en France, suivies d' un plan d' académie, ou école publique, et d' un système d' encouragements (Paris: Desenne, 1791).

[79] "Une assemblee génereuse peut exciter les orages et les calmer, commander l' obeissance et forcer le respect de la loi. [Vôtre decret est] un rappel à l' ordre....Le plan et le motif de cette cérémonie devant être de rappeler au citoyen le respect de la loi." Antoine-Chrysostôme Quatremère de Quincy, "Rapport et Projet de décret sur les honneurs à accorder à la mémoire de Jacques-Guillaume Simonneau, Maire d' Etampes, par M. Quatremère. Séance du 13 May 1792," in Réimpression de l' Ancien Moniteur no.134, 539-41; Guillaume, ed., Procès-Verbaux du Comité d' Instruction Publique de la Convention Nationale I, 284-85; discussed in Dowd, Pageant-Master of the Republic. Jacques-Louis David and the French Revolution, 69-70.

[80] "cette grave et silencieuse cérémonie." Guillaume, Procès-Verbaux du Comité d' Instruction Publique, 285.

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sucked out and thrown away like so many philosophizing oranges.[81] This, indeed, turned out to be the case: on August 10, 1792 the Monarchy collapsed, and the Legislative Assembly along with it. Within a year Pastoret was in hiding; Chénier was picked up at Pastoret's home and eventually executed; Quatremère went into hiding, was caught, and spent thirteen months in jail. Villette rejoined the radicals in time to vote for the King's death in January 1793, but changed his mind again, and died shortly thereafter, an object of ridicule. Dubois-Crancé deserted the Jacobins on July 18, 1791 but returned in September, as did Barère. Dubois-Crancé survived the purges of the Terror with some help from David, who in turn was saved by Barère when Robespierre and his followers were overthrown on 9 Thermidor, 1794.

By the end of 1791, for the more conservatively inclined liberals, the Revolution was a field for retrospection and regression, not renewed advances -- advances and revolutions which they had every reason to fear. The message they discovered in David's Brutus was one of lugubrious duty and Neoclassical restraint. This was not the last time that David's conscience was to be cut to suit the fashion of the times. In this case, though, others were all too willing to do the cutting for him.

[81] see note 73, above.

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CHAPTER NINE

David's political role in the years 1793 -1794 makes for an exciting narrative. The actions and artworks of the "Pageant-Master of the Republic" and the "Dictator of the Arts;" the commissions to glorify Marat and other revolutionary heroes; the massive popular festivities designed by David; the "vast plan of regeneration" developed by Barère and others for educating the public though monuments, theater, pamphlets, newspapers, engravings and songs, have all been described elsewhere.[82] All have been presented, for the most part, as self-explanatory events, but their wider context seems to add some nuances. True, David held important political powers, but those powers were not unlimited. Like all of his colleagues, he was vulnerable to some of the deadliest accusations: abuse of power, self-interest, personal corruption.[83] In addition, the discourse of art, like its practice, was bounded by other political groups, either competing or supportive as their fortunes changed.

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[82] Aux Armes et aux Arts: les arts de la révolution 1789-1799, ed. Bordes and Michel; Dowd, Pageant-Master of the Republic. Jacques-Louis David and the French Revolution; Leith, The Idea of Art as Propaganda in France, 1750-1799; Olander, "Pour Transmetttre à la Postérité. French Painting and Revolution 1774-1795;" Barère's speech is reprinted in "Séance du 12 Germinal an II (1er Avril 1794), Réimpression 172, 775.

[83] Suggested, e.g., in Dowd, Pageant-Master of the Republic, and picked up in Lefebvre, La Révolution française, 366, 413, 561.

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When discussing the Brutus in particular, the temptation to be drawn into this vibrant narrative must be firmly resisted. The fantasy that the Brutus helped to initiate the revolution was far more evident in the years after 1792 than the Brutus itself. In turn, even that particular fantasy seems, in retrospect, to be little more than a minor daydream. True, the idea that "Invisible Liberty" had inspired David was widely - perhaps wildly - popular among the coterie of sympathizers and students now occupying various rungs of an emerging artistic bureaucracy. True, the rhetoric of genius and enthusiasm was still present, as it had been in 1791. True, also, the Convention was "bombarded with appeals to employ the fine arts."[84] But the oft-quoted revolutionary rhetoric of artistic heroism did not happen in a void: it reflected particular ideological tensions; it was by no means uncontested; and it did not necessarily translate into action.[85]

Least obvious is the role of David's Brutus in all this. After 1789, David had kept the painting until final payment; after final payment in 1791 he kept it further, under the pretext that it needed repairs. Not until the Government put its foot down, in 1799, did the work take its place in the Luxembourg Museum, where it was available to the public.

[84] Leith, *op. cit.,* 119; see also Pommier, Ch. IV, "Le discours des artistes," in L' Art de la Liberté Doctrines et débats de la Révolution Francaise, 167-168.

[85] Similar conclusions in Lina Propeck, "Monnaies, sceaux: deux aspects de David sous la Révolution," in Ministère de la Culture, de la Communication, des Grands Travaux et du Bicentenaire, Jacques-Louis David. 1748-1825, 34; The contrary view, of a non-contestatory, "totalitarian" Terror, is shared by Furet and Hunt; see Hunt, Politics, culture and class in the French Revolution, 47.

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During those years interest in David's Brutus seems to have been very sparse.[86] While there are numerous references to Brutus in revolutionary place-names or given names, in the sculpture that adorned the Convention's chambers and even the oaths of radicals, there is remarkably little evidence that these references owed anything to David, rather than to Plutarch, Livy, or some other source. It is not always clear, in fact, whether the Brutus in question is Marcus Junius Brutus, the killer of Caesar, or Lucius Junius Brutus, the hero of David's painting.[87] And again, the suspicion arises that the confusion had its advantages: it introduced a figure who might be taken at once for a paragon of bureaucratic objectivity or a model of unquenchable hatred for tyranny, a mixture of Jacobin efficiency on the side of the revolutionary bureaucracy and of sans-culotte ruthlessness on the side of the revolutionary masses. Yet none of this has much bearing on our painting. For the claim that David's Brutus "was reproduced or imitated repeatedly during the Revolution," it would be nice to see some evidence.[88] The evidence for a "triumph of David's Brutus" in the years 1793 and 1794 seems singularly sparse.

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[86] The principal references are Fr. J. L. Meyer, Fragmente aus Paris im IVtem Jahr der französischen Republik V. II, (Hamburg, 1797), 222-225; T. C. Bruun-Neergaard, Sur la situation des Beaux-Arts en France ou Lettres d' un Danois a un ami (Paris, an IX [1798]), 88. According to Bordes, 19, David's own description of the attempt to censure the Brutus in 1789 was deleted from Sue, "Rapport sur les tableaux de David, lu à la séance publique du 5 mai," 11, 275-280.

[87] Thoroughly discussed in Bordes, La Mort de Brutus de Pierre-Narcisse Guérin, esp. 53 and 71; a number of references are given in Parker, The Cult of Antiquity and the French Revolutionaries, 139-144, etc.; see also Bertaud, Initiation à la Révolution Française, 252; Roudinesco, Théroigne de Méricourt; une femme mélancolique sous la Révolution, 31.

[88] J.A. Leith, "David, Jacques-Louis," in Historical Dictionary of the French Revolution, 1789-1799, ed. Scott and Rothaus, I, 293; Herbert, *op. cit.*, reproduces a number of images of Brutus that were popular during the French Revolution. Only two could be argued to refer directly to David's work rather than the Capitoline bust which is the

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And yet, because the myth of this influence is so deeply entrenched, it is necessary to ask why. Ghosts may have more power than realities. François Furet's highly influential analysis of the French Revolution has been rightly criticized for his emphasis on "political success stories: influential political theorists, lawmakers, leaders of Parisian clubs, and the like."[89] Despite the common notion that the Terror was a time of unrelieved brutality, even then interaction among leaders and led was a complex one, especially in the realm of cultural politics. Political clout and cultural domination were not interchangeable categories. The failures and limits of David's projects, the resistance they encountered, the extent to which they actually belonged to David, or to other artists, or to a spontaneous and collective movement, the inability of David, Barère and others to put their rhetoric into practice, are precisely those issues that are most in need of review: even in the depths of tyranny, there may be contestation - subtle, indirect, perhaps, but precisely for that reason more worthy to be brought back to the light of day.

However, we are concerned with David's influence. On September 16, 1792 he joined Robespierre and other Jacobins as a representative to the National Convention. In October he joined the Committee on Public Instruction and the Commission on Monuments.[90] By late 1793 the Jacobins - technically the Montagne, as that particular tendency was called - had seized control of the

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original inspiration. Of these two, one is by David himself, the other, by Laurent Ardouin, was a government commission and most likely would have required David's approval; see Bordes, La Mort de Brutus, 72.

[89] Bryant T. Ragan, Jr., and Elizabeth A. Williams, "Introduction," in Re-creating Authority in Revolutionary France, ed. Ragan and Williams, with a foreword by Lynn Hunt (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 3.

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Convention and held Paris and the provinces in a tightening grip. David was at the height of political power, a member of several committees, including the powerful Committee on General Security (Comité de sûreté génerale), the second most effective executive committee in the Convention.

Like political power itself, the theory of artistic agency was tossed back and forth amidst a complex jostling for legitimacy among such semi-official groups as the Société populaire et républicaine des arts (successor to the Commune des Arts). To this group one might have added the Paris Commune and the Cercle Social, before those groups were eliminated as political forces.[91] Then there were the various commissions and subcommittees within the Convention itself, and finally, the Convention as a whole, which acted as a final arbiter for the innumerable reports that were presented before it.[92]

Education, however, was the ideological umbrella under which "the Arts" could be placed in the service of the Revolution. The Feuillant Constitution of 1791 called for the reform of primary and secondary education, and the Committee for

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[90] Wildenstein, Documents complémentaires au Catalogue de l' oeuvre de Louis David, 375, 378.

[91] Both institutions were crucial in setting a revolutionary educational policy, but the available documentation is sparser and often overlooked. Lacroix, Actes de la Commune de Paris pendant la Révolution Iere Série, July 25 1789-October 8, 1790, 2eme Série (October 9, 1790-August 10 1792 (Paris: L. Cerf, 1894-98, 1914) is incomplete; see also Kates, The Cercle Social, the Girondins, and the French Revolution.

[92] This material is scattered through various reports, e.g. Henri Lapauze, Procès-verbaux de la Commune Générale des Arts de peinture, sculpture, architecture et gravure et de la société populaire et républicaine des arts (18 juillet 1783 - tridi de la 1ere décade du 2e mois de l' an II) et de la Société populaire et républicaine des arts (3 nivôse an II - 28 floréal an III (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1903); James Guillaume, ed. and annot., Procès-Verbaux du Comité d' Instruction Publique de la Convention Nationale, 7 vols (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1891-1907); Louis Tuetey, Procès-verbaux de la Commission temporaire des Arts, 2 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1912-1918); Procès-verbaux de la

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Public Instruction was established for that purpose. But from its inception this Committee was drawn into questions of artistic preservation, and by late 1793 and through 1794 the activities of David and his artist friends were conducted for the most part under its protection.[93] At last the fine arts were brought into the fold of revolutionary legitimacy under the old Aristotelian theory that they were simply another form of civic improvement: the arts of pleasure (arts d' agrément), had no useful economic or strategic impact, but they might be argued to have an influence on the moral formation of the citizenry (we have seen parallel arguments developing around the National Endowment for the Arts in the past few years). In fact, Fine Art shared the stage with a dozen sections: public instruction, moral education, physical education, the education of women, the care of orphans, vocational schools, teaching, national festivities, prizes and competitions, retirement benefits, librarianship. The indefatigable Abbé Grégoire used the Committee to pursue such various interests as costumes, place names, and dialects. Once more, the linguistic confusion over the term "Arts" allowed the reintegration of the Fine Arts into the fabric of revolutionary culture.[94]

This was not an ideological luxury, for the resistance to the Fine Arts was considerable, even within the Montagne. The Fine Arts, as Rousseau had suggested, were the playthings of indolence and the toys of perversion, "ces

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Commission des Monuments, 2 vols. (Paris: Charavay, 1902-1903); Aux armes et aux arts! Journal de la Société républicaine des arts, ed. Athanase Détournelle (Paris, an II [1794]).

[93] See, for instance, the motion passed by the Commune des Arts on September 19, 1793, acknowledging "that the arts are one of the essential branches of public instruction." Lapauze, Procès-verbaux de la Commune Générale des Arts, 129.

[94] A. Letellier, "Le Comité de l' Instruction Publique en 1793," La Révolution Francaise. Revue Historique III (Juillet-Décembre 1882): 36-40.

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hochets du délire," as one Montagnard called them.[95] As another Montagnard put it, "Most artists have centuries of groveling and fawning to overcome."[96] In the middle of foreign and domestic invasions, political turmoil and an escalating Terror there was little patience for paintings: inter arma silent artes, "the arts are silent among the weapons of war."[97] Even public education was thought to be too elitist, and several proposals for reforming the national schooling system were defeated in the Convention. Yet another plan was proposed by Lepelletier de Saint-Fargeau before his assassination in January 1793. It called for the education of young French males and females in separate communal barracks after the manner of Spartan warriors; it was adopted by the Convention in August of 1793, but was obviously impractical, was widely criticized, and was never implemented.[98]

Education in technical skills, les arts utiles, was also a topic of intense concern in the Convention; it fell in part under the purview of the Committee on

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[95] Speech by Varon, 3 prairial an II (22 mai 1794), Réimpression de l' ancien Moniteur no. 243, 523.

[96] "La plupart des artistes français ont des siècles de bassesse et d' adulation à effacer." Thibaudeau, 21 floréal, 10 may 94, quoted in Ugo van de Sandt, "Institutions et Concours," in Aux Armes et aux Arts: les arts de la révolution 1789-1799, ed. Philippe Bordes et Régis Michel, 154.

[97] "The arts are quiet among weapons." Description des Ouvrages de Peinture, Sculpture, Architecture et Gravure, Exposés au Sallon du Louvre, (Paris An II [1793]), 2; the tag is an ironic variant - unconsciously ironic, one assumes - on Cicero's quote, "silent leges inter armas," "the laws are silent when surrounded by brute force." (Pro Milone, X; see also Academica, I, 2; De Legibus, III, 39).

[98] Dominique Julia, "Instruction Publique/Education Nationale," in Albert Soboul, Dictionnaire Historique de la Révolution Française (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1989), 578.

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Public Instruction, though other groups also claimed an interest - for instance, the Convention's Commission on Agriculture and the Arts (Commission d' Agriculture et des Arts), which busied itself with agricultural technology. Nevertheless, the same suspicion greeted the useful arts, or at least the term itself: the decree actually passed on April 15, 1794, "On the means of spreading education" explicitly excluded all forms of education in "the arts" from financial support, except for such arts as the treatment of venereal diseases and the teaching of oriental languages.[99]

Behind these maneuvers lay a deeper ideological contest. First of all, there was the problem of the type of influence the arts were to have. Through all of these discussions one senses an attempt to draw a fine line between the arts that would actually improve the physical well-being of the citizenry, those that would preserve their contentment, or pacify them, and worst of all, those that would divert them from their innate goodness. It is a line that runs through the discussions on education, on the preservation of the arts of the past, and on the fine arts themselves.

To suggest that the Fine Arts were capable of regenerating society was to beg a few questions: how could the same arts that had been the playthings of decadence suddenly become the inspirers of a new citizenry? How would they break with their past?

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[99] "Decret - moyens de propager l' instruction. Article XIV," Moniteur, séance du 24 germinal, an II (15 Avril 1794), in Réimpression (XX), 215; see comments by Boissy d' Anglas in Guillaume, Procès-Verbaux du Comité d' Instruction Publique de la Convention Nationale, 4, 185.

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Perhaps the fine arts could be improved, even if they could not improve society. On August 8, 1793, the National Convention voted to suppress all academies. The Abbé Grégoire, reporting for the Committee on Public Instruction, tried to spare the Academy of Painting and Sculpture and offered to discriminate between arts d' agréments and arts de plaisir, or between the good, regenerated Fine Arts and the bad, degenerate Fine Arts of the Old Regime.[100]

However, calls for the regeneration of style could not by themselves absolve the artists from the suspicion of being potential pillars of reaction. For how could the same artists who claimed to have soared above the corruption of the Old Regime be sure all of a sudden of marching in a perfect lockstep with the new one? And how could one regenerate what had already been regenerated? The problem raised by Rousseau was now turned upside down. For if a decadent society could only produce decadent art in the sense of Fine Art, art d' agrément, would a regenerated society not spontaneously produce regenerated art in the sense of virtuous, useful arts? In either case, what was the use of artists in the old manner, if the production of art was to be spontaneous?

Moreover, in the last year of Jacobin dominance the thought of moral persuasion or improvement itself became suspect, and persuasion through the arts doubly so. For the stalwart populists of the Montagne, to suggest that the People needed education was to suggest that their regeneration was incomplete. The very

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[100] Henri Grégoire, Rapport et projet de décret, présenté au nom du Comité d' instruction publique, à la séance du 8 août (Paris, no date); Guillaume, Procès-Verbaux du Comité d' Instruction Publique 2, 249-256, esp. 253; quoted in Pommier, L' Art de la Liberté, 182; see also the speech by Antoine Thibaudau, 21 floréal, an II, Moniteur, no. 232, 22 floréal an II (11 mai 1794), in Réimpression, 434.

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existence of a class of artists suggested there was a need to regenerate or educate. Rousseau's reputation actually underwent a decline in 1791-1794, among those activists who disparaged him for not believing in Regeneration as a historic possibility - in effect, for doubting the People as the embodiment of the Common Will.[101]

This question was never fully resolved. In April of 1794, three months before the fall of Robespierre, one of the leaders of the Montagne, Jacques Billaud-Varenne, addressed the Convention on the need for a national educational program. Billaud-Varenne' speech was clearly meant to cap the discussions initiated by Barère and others on the need for regeneration in the arts and elsewhere, and while his program included newspapers, festivities, songs, "even public monuments" in the effort to regenerate, painting was left off the list. To justify his program, Billaud-Varenne explained that "one must, so to speak, recreate the people one wants to return to freedom." The comment brings to mind Bertoldt Brecht's quip that perhaps the Government should dissolve the People and choose itself another.[102] At any rate, the speech was greeted by wild applause, but the motion passed in its support was, once again, purely symbolic. If the National Convention was indeed "bombarded with appeals to employ the fine arts," then the National Convention, like the French Army at Valmy, held its ground under a withering fire.

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[101] Volney, "Caractères de la Loi Naturelle," Chapter I of La loi naturelle ou Catéchisme du Citoyen Français, 452-453; Jourdan, "Le culte de Rousseau sous la Révolution: la statue et panthéonisation du Citoyen de Genève," 70.

[102] "Il faut pour ainsi dire recréer le peuple qu' on veut rendre à la liberté."Jacques Billaud-Varenne, "Séance du 1er floréal, an II," Réimpression de l' Ancien Moniteur Vol. 20, no. 212, 2 floréal an II (21 avril 1794), 263-64; Bertolt Brecht. "Die Lösung" (1953), reprinted in Ausgewählte Gedichte (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1971), 71.

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Ultimately, the problem of regeneration through the arts runs along a faultline that cuts through the depth and breadth of Jacobin ideology. For the warning of the anonymous critic of 1791 ran deep: David, indeed, had ended up by sucking out his old friend's theories like so many oranges, but it was not simply the political power of the Feuillants that he and his Jacobin friends had wrested away, it was also their aesthetic conflicts that they seized upon, debated and perpetuated.[103] Almost by definition the art they envisaged could not avoid operating from the top down; could not be a spontaneous production of society as a whole; could not break with its past, either in content or in style.

This necessity of breaking with the past haunts the revolutionary paintings of 1793 and 1794, which continually veer away from historicizing and classical allusions without necessarily being naturalistic in our sense of the term; the Marat is the most obvious example, though Regnault's Liberty or Death and David's Barra offer more complex examples in which the archaic or primitive is treated as an antihistorical category, i. e., a type that requires no reference back to historical models or historical knowledge [**Illustrations #40, #41, and #42**]. Likewise, in the field of criticism David and his supporters fell back on the old arguments of Montesquieu and Winckelmann: the arts were subservient to the ambient culture, with the difference that now, it was claimed, regenerated society would produce a better artist, painting side-by side with the victorious People; French art, once

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[103] See 212, above.

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again, would become for France what Greek art had been for the Greeks: "the same God inspires us."[104]

Just as the paintings of David and his colleagues are full of explicit answers to the implicit contradictions between Imitation and Regeneration, so too their speeches repeatedly negotiated the contradictions of historical determinism and individual will. In either case, the artist was expected to perform the acrobatic feat of hoisting himself up to the level of virtuous art through his own willpower while remaining in total harmony with the new culture. Artists had to show themselves worthy of Liberty through their activity, while demonstrating an innate, therefore passive intuition of the principles of Freedom; only then would they be in perfect harmony with the People. In a speech of November 15, 1793 David brought these various strands together:

> The arts must, therefore, contribute to public instruction, but while regenerating themselves. The genius of art must be worthy of the people that enlighten it.[....] This Committee believes that at a time when the arts are to be regenerated along with morals, to abandon to artists alone the judgment of productions of genius would be leaving them in the rut of routine into which they dragged themselves before the tyranny they flattered. It is up to great souls that have a feeling for the true, the great that comes from the study of nature, to give a new thrust to the arts [...] Therefore the man blessed with an exquisite taste without education, the philosopher, the poet, the scientist...are those most able to represent the taste and wisdom of a whole people.[105]

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[104] "Le même Dieu nous inspire." Jacques Lebrun, "Discours à la Société populaire et républicaine des arts," 16 ventôse an II (24 Mars 1794), Aux armes et aux arts! Journal de la Société républicaine des arts, 191; quoted Pommier, L' Art de la Liberté, 194.

[105] "Votre Comité a pensé qu' abandonner aux artistes seuls le jugement des productions du génie ce serait les laisser dans l' ornière de la routine où ils se se sont traînés devant le despotisme qu' ils encensaient. C' est aux âmes fortes, qui ont le sentiment du vrai, du grand que donne l' étude de la nature à donner une impulsion nouvelle aux arts.[...]Ainsi l' homme doué d' un sens exquis sans culture, le philosophe le poète le savant [...] sont les juges les plus capables de représenter le goût et les lumières d' un peuple

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On its surface the speech is about politics: David was bowing to pressure from the Convention to democratize the Jury for the Salon of 1793, and his speech explained why he was replacing the old jury of artists with another, more representative group. On a deeper level, his speech attempted a definition of the concept of an intellectual elite, one closer to the modern intéllectuel than to the pre-Revolutionary philosophes: in any case, the new jury was still composed largely of artists, architects, thinkers and the like.[106]

However, on the level of logic, David's argument was dizzying: artistic freedom consisted in being intuitively in step with the culture at large, represented by a disparate group of the uneducated, the educated and explicitly, the artists themselves. Art and les arts were indistinguishable; likewise, artists were now the consumers of art (the jury), and the consumers of art were also its producers, those who gave art "a new thrust." In more abstract terms, David's speech invented an imaginary viewer/producer - "always already" regenerated - to regenerate the producer/viewer. The Good Artist was the Good Citizen who instinctively and spontaneously saw the Common Will and translated that Will into action. If Kant's "transcendental subject" had not already been invented, David might have claimed the honor.[107]

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entier." Citoyen David, "Rapport du 25 Brumaire An II," in Procès-Verbaux du Comité d' Instruction Publique de la Convention Nationale, ed. James Guillaume, Tome deuxième, 831.

[106] Approximately fifty out of sixty, if one includes architects, actors, writers, etc. The list included Boullée, Vicq d' Azir, Topino-Lebrun, Fragonard, Talma, Jacques Lebrun.

[107] Theodor W. Adorno, "Subject-Object," in The Essential Frankfurt School Reader ed. Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhart (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 500-520.

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David's position shows close parallels with Robespierre's political ethics: both were variants on the old Jansenist and Protestant debates about free will and predestination. For Robespierre, for Rousseau and it seems, for David as well, free will was the ability to act, or refuse to act, on a God-given intuition of the good. Those who denied that intuition were thrown back on their own deviousness, those who followed it were spontaneously in touch with the Common Will.

Jacobin art, like Jacobin morality, followed closely this dynamic, swinging back and forth between a dystopic uncovering of hidden Evil and an eerie, trance-like contemplation of transparent Good. As Billaud-Varenne described it in his speech on regeneration and education: "Vices are like poisonous plants: they have to be sought to be found; whereas the healthy, life-giving productions bloom everywhere beneath our steps."[108]

For once, who I am did, too, translate into what I do. Who the People were, was what their representatives did. Plot and Circumstance were moral categories. The rageful denunciations of Augustin Cochin and other reactionaries share this viewpoint as much as the unthinking defenses of the Left: both are the intellectual children of the Revolution.[109]

Even so, not all revolutionaries shared this belief in the innate integrity of their leaders. In 1793 the radical writer Sylvain Maréchal testily wrote to David:

[108] "Les vices sont comme les plantes vénéneuses: il faut les chercher exprès pour en trouver; au lieu que les productions salutaires et vivifiantes croissent de tous côtés sous nos pas." Billaud-Varenne, "Séance du 1er floréal, an II," 267.

[109] see Hunt, Politics, culture and class in the French Revolution, 39 quoting Furet.

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> Do you know what an aristocrat is. It's for instance an artist (even one who painted the Horatii, Brutus, Socrates), who once put his talent in a king's pay. I was a patriot before you. More than you I am a republican, because I am so in full consciousness.[110]

Like the anonymous author of the Lettres analitiques before him, like others (Sébastien Mercier and Volney come to mind), Maréchal was highly suspicious of grand, disculpatory theodicies and the kind of grand-guignolesque posturing that accompanied them.[111] Most of all, he was suspicious of the complimentary claims of intuition and circumstance. The efforts of David and his supporters to patch over the contradictions of their own ideology could not conceal the authoritarian and manipulative drift of the Terror. In that sense at least the Jacobins of 1794 were the Jacobins of 1791, after all.

David himself seems not to have abandoned his new-found faith. Even after Robespierre fell and David was brought up on charges of collaboration the artist, with his head in the balance, still clung to the Jacobin line of justification: "From now on, I will give my oath - and I believe I have been true to it throughout this unhappy occurrence - I will trust in principles, not in men."[112]

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[110] "Sais tu ce que c' est qu' un aristocrate. C' est par exemple un artiste (eut-il peint les Horaces, Brutus, Socrate), qui a mis jadis son talent aux gages d' un roi. J' étais patriote avant toi. Plus que toi je suis républicain, car je le suis avec connaissance de cause." Notes et documents inédits sur les expositions du dix-huitième siècle, ed. Guiffrey, ed., 406; see also "Louis David. Lettres et documents divers," ed. Guiffrey, 372.

[111] See for instance, Mercier's speech of June 18 1793, reprinted in Réimpression de l' Ancien Moniteur XVI, 689.

[112] "Dorénavant, j' en fais le serment, et j' ai cru le remplir encore dans cette malheureuse circonstance, je ne m' attacherai plus aux hommes, mais seulement aux principes." "Séance du 13 thermidor, An II, a sept heures du soir," Réimpression de l' Ancien Moniteur XXI, 376. The argument that David's post-Thermidorian art is politically consistent with his earlier works has been made in David Wisner, "L' iconographie revolutionnaire dans l' oeuvre post-thermidorienne de J.-L. David 1794-1802," Ministère de l' éducation nationale, Autour des Mentalités et des pratiques politiques de la Revolution

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Once more, David was suggesting, he would pattern his actions against the envisioned ideal of a Common Will he had been charged to represent as a member of the Convention - the Common Will which he supposedly had anticipated in the Brutus. Robespierre, while claiming to be in perfect accord with this Common Will, had, according to David's newly sharpened perception, been manipulating others for base, self-interested motives. In others terms Robespierre, not David, had fallen back into the camp of the plotters. David's basic premiss stayed the same: circumstance was the intuition of the Good Guys; plotting was the symptom of the Bad.

After Robespierre's overthrow and execution on 9 and 10 Thermidor (July 27-28, 1794), David withdrew from politics, and the rhetoric of regeneration split into divergent theories among the newly competing political groups. Sylvain Maréchal joined the radical followers of Gracchus Babeuf, usually considered the first ancestors of Communism, and it was most likely Maréchal who spelled out the Babouvist theory of the arts contained in the Manifesto of Equals of 1796. The Manifesto was an explicit return to Rousseau: les arts, once again, were understood to be the whole of cultural, intellectual and industrial enterprises, and all had the potential to corrupt because all were in one way or another dependent on a system of economic exploitation. The solution, according to the Manifesto, was to preserve only those "arts" that would serve the People within a society that put the People

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Française. Actes du 112e Congrès National des sociétés savantes (Paris: Editions du CTHS, 1987), 275-290.

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first: "Let all the arts perish, if need be, so that we may have true equality."[113] Babouvist theories were a conscious attempt to return to the Jacobin spirit while attempting to purge it of its authoritarian and centralizing drift. The Babouvists were a marginal group, and were quickly crushed; yet their theories were to have a deep influence on the socialist artists of the eighteen-thirties.[114]

The Government that followed Robespierre had another agenda: it pursued the Jacobin practice of restricting political rights on one side while promoting populist and revolutionary rhetoric on the other. Time and again the People were "dissolved," as the elites of the Thermidorian Reaction and the Directoire annulled elections that did not favor them, repressed popular movements on the Right and Left, and fostered an arts policy that was meant to control rather than to inspire.

On October 8 1794, less than three months after the fall of Robespierre, the Abbé Grégoire presented a report before the National Convention "concerning the encouragement, pensions and rewards to be given to scientists, literary people and artists." The title itself suggests a new definition of the intellectual elites: the grouping of these three types of "thinkers" as a single profession would have made little sense before the Revolution. More important, Grégoire's report marks a radical

[113] "Périssent, s' il le faut, tous les arts, pourvu qu' il nous reste l' égalité réelle!" [Sylvain Maréchal], Manifeste des Egaux, in Filippo Michele Buonarroti, Conspiration pour l' égalité dite de Babeuf, suivie du procès auquel elle donna lieu, et des pieces justificative (Bruxelles, 1828); facsimile with preface by Georges Lefebvre, Vol. 2, Septième piece (Paris, Editions sociales 1957), 95. Additional propositions for the Arts can be found in Vol. I, 206, "Arts et Métiers," and 210-211, "Avantages des arts et des sciences. Maux qui en découlent." The reference to Rousseau is on p. 211; there is also an acknowledged debt to Condorcet and the Cercle Social on p. 94.

[114] Madeleine Rousseau, "Filippo Buonarroti et les artistes francais sous la monarchie de juillet," Revue des études italiennes t. 3 (1938): 159-169.

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resolution of earlier contradictions in the theory of Regeneration through the Arts. The arts had played their part in the Revolution, they "lit the fuse to blast the Bastille." The arts were allied to political domination - a good thing, according to Grégoire. The arts d' agrément were useful in the hands of the Government - that is, useful as means of control and appeasement.[115] Grégoire himself has recently been interred in the Panthéon - both the theoretician and the exemplar of this approach. Once more, in effect, the Government has rewarded itself for its devotion to itself, under the eyes of the admiring multitude.

During the Directoire, and for the first time, the State had a theory for controlling popular demands, the will to apply it, and the means to do so. And this theory was based on the assumption that the Government and its artistic representatives were the same Revolution that the people were assumed to demand and the rulers were assured to provide. As the titular head of the Government announced in 1799 at the reopening of the Institute, the State sponsored institution that was to house the various reconstituted academies and the reunited academics, "The revolution was the fruit of their sleepless nights; they predicted it, they began it, they will have the glory of completing it."[116]

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[115] "Ils ont allumé la mèche pour foudroyer la Bastille." Henri Grégoire, Rapport sur les encouragements, récompenses et pensions à accorder aux savant, aux gens de lettres et aux artistes (Paris: 17 vendémiaire an III [8 octobre 1794]); partially quoted in Procès-Verbaux du Comité d' Instruction Publique de la Convention Nationale, ed. Guillaume, IV, 766-767; quoted in Pommier, L' Art de la Liberté, 233.

[116] "La révolution fut le fruit de leurs longues veilles, ils la prédirent, ils la commencèrent, ils auront la gloire de l'achever." Louis I. F. Letourneur, président du Directoire, "Séance publique de l' Institut, 15 germinal an IV (4 avril 1796)," Institut de France, Archives, 3 Ai, 68; quoted Pommier, *op. cit.*, 259.

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The sentence was meant to apply to political rulers as much as to intellectuals and artists.

With the waning of the Revolution, at last, came the process that allowed artists to be assigned to the role of "unacknowledged legislators." Yet it was an incomplete process, all the same.

For the promotion of a cultural elite was subservient to the control and direction of that new phenomenon, mass culture. The image of Equality and Fraternity was a far more effective manifestation of the imagined unity of the People with their Government than the image of an artistic vanguard - especially one that might include David. Sixty years after the fact David's student Etienne Delécluze remembered with outrage the public festivities with classical temples, and the naked young men bathing together on the banks of the Seine in a parody of Antique games. What infuriated Delécluze was not the exposed bodies themselves, but the implicit egalitarianism of naked flesh - the Saturnalia of Democracy.[117]

For the culture of Modern France did not, and still does not now, emphasize the intuitive harmony of the artist with the Common Will so much as the intuitive harmony of the viewer with the aesthetic experience.[118] The year 1795 saw the first French publication of Friedrich Schiller's On the Aesthetic Education of Humanity, in which art itself, rather than the artist, is proposed as a means to lead the People forward by suggesting a utopian realm of the spirit, "for it is through

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[117] Delécluze, David. Son école & son temps, 429-430.

[118] Bourdieu, La Distinction. Critique sociale du jugement.

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Beauty that we come to Freedom."[119] With Schiller, and coincidentally, with the Directoire, the idea first appears that aesthetic pleasure in itself is at once a virtuous act and a revolutionary activity. It is a thought that would have sent Voltaire and Rousseau spinning in their graves - and for once, in the same direction.

The final Restoration of the Monarchy in 1815 brought the problem of intention and responsibility for the French Revolution into a focus sharper than it had ever been before. There were precious few Frenchmen alive in 1815 who could not have been classified as either victims or beneficiaries of the Revolution; many could have counted themselves as both. The gigantic national process of coming to terms with the past took in David as well, along with his works.

At first, under Louis XVIII, there were attempts at compromise. Casimir Delavigne, the most widely-read poet of the Restoration, built his reputation on such calls for national solidarity; his second Méssénienne, written in 1815, suggested that David and his school might foster reconciliation by replacing the art treasures France had lost to its enemies.[120] After 1818, however, attempts at compromise gradually broke down. Nevertheless, the Director of the Louvre, the wily Comte de Forbin, an ex-student of David, continued to negotiate with the

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[119] "Weil es die Schönheit ist, durch welche man zu der Freiheit wandert." Schiller, Friedrich,"Zweiter Brief," Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen [Leipzig, 1795] (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1965), 7; Oeuvres de Schiller, ed. Ad. Régnier (Paris 1795), vol VIII: Esthétique. On the importance of Schiller for mass education, see Giancarlo Buonfino, La politica culturale operaia: Da Marx e Lasalle alla rivoluzione di Novembre, 1859-1919 (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1975).

[120] Casimir Delavigne, "II. La Dévastation du Musée et des Monuments," Méssénienes Livre I, in Oeuvres Complètes, Tome V (Paris: Didier, 1855), 28-29.

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exiled artist to acquire the Sabines and the Leonidas, with the approval of Louis XVIII, while strictly controlling the exhibition of David's work or the mention of his name, in order to avoid provoking either side. In 1818 David's Brutus was removed from the state-owned Luxembourg Galleries: it did not reappear until the Revolution of 1848.[121]

In the following years David and his paintings were consistently used as a screen for justifying or condemning the political intentions which the painter himself was thought to embody.[122] His banishment in 1816 offered a rallying cause for all those shades of opinion, from Constitutional Monarchist to Republican, who were willing to see a positive balance to the Revolution even as they might deplore one or another of its excesses. Until David's death in 1825, and despite his own seeming indifference, the movement to pardon him represented a safe, if hardly covert, attempt to pardon the Revolution as a whole.[123] For the reactionary conservatives and unforgiving royalists of the Restoration David, like all of the regicides, was a conniving monster; for his supporters David, like the Revolution itself, had been well-intentioned, if occasionally mistaken, or led astray. Like the Revolution itself, David's participation had been a crime of circumstance, not of malice. The same

[121] Pierre Angrand, Le comte de Forbin et le Louvre en 1819 (Paris et Lausanne: Bibliotheque des Arts, 1972), 110-123, 173.

[122] Nina Athanassoglou, "Under the Sign of Leonidas: the Political and Ideological Fortune of David's *Leonidas at Thermopylae* under the Restoration," The Art Bulletin LXIII, no. 4 (December, 1981): 633-649.

[123] Delécluze, David. Son école et son temps, 373-74 and 496-7, note 15, correcting certain errors in Wildenstein, Documents complémentaires au Catalogue de l' oeuvre de Louis David, #1769; Rabbe, "Notice sur Jacques-Louis David," 1221.

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thesis that he had once used to justify his actions could now be used by others to excuse them.[124]

To exonerate David meant putting some distance between the actions of the artist and those of the politician. David had been part of a movement; he had not caused it; least of all had his art caused a regeneration. At most, David's paintings had been a vehicle for the Neo-classical style that had first developed in the decorative arts and in fashion. From 1824 to 1855 there is an amazing consistency in this view among authors whose political allegiances were wildly divergent.

As for the Brutus: was it a furtively revolutionary work or another instance of David's meretricious mentality? The answer would depend, of course, on the politics of the critic. David's liberal supporters defended the achievements of the Revolution by emphasizing the continuity of its culture with that of the previous generation. There had been no duplicity in David's career and behavior before the Revolution; there was little of malice in his behavior during the Revolution. David's actions were spontaneous, heartfelt, if naive responses to his environment, and there was nothing that was consciously revolutionary about the Brutus. The Circumstantial Thesis was in the air.

David's pre-revolutionary subservience to the Crown was thus seen as an unfortunate but inevitable price of the times. Few, if any, saw anything to blame in

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[124] A Th... [Aimé Thome de Gamond], Vie de Louis David, suivie d' une liste de ses ouvrages, 1-2, 64; Paillot de Montabert and Parisot, "David, (Jacques-Louis)," 193; A. Rabbe, *op. cit.*, 1218-19. Delécluze, *op. cit.*, XIX-XXI, 10, 410; similar sentiments in Coupin de la Couperie, Siret, Chesneau, Renouvier, etc., are discussed in Delécluze, *op. cit.*, 467, n. 134 and Verbraeken, Jacques-Louis David jugé par ses contemporains et par la postérité, 163.

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that, even if many found David's dependency distasteful. As the left-liberal Charles Blanc explained, "It is to David's own glory that he did not stand apart from the impulse given by the philosophy of the time." [125]

For the liberal critics of the nineteenth century, the Revolution was a theodicy, and its divine purpose was the triumph of Free Enterprise. Among artists and critics of art the Revolution was seen as the event that had freed artists from dependency on State patronage. David, who in 1793 had backed the abolition of the Academy, who from 1799 had run a hugely successful, independent exhibition of his Sabines, charging admission; David, who refused to rejoin the Academy when it was reorganized under Napoleon I, and whose works were, for the most part, shown independently through the first half of the nineteenth century, now appeared as the champion of Revolutionary Free Enterprise against the tyranny of the State.[126]

The theme of continuity with the past, rather than of promise for the future; the affectation of tolerance for republicanism even under a Monarchy; the suggestion that one could be a loyal citizen despite political differences; and finally, the belief that culture could be used to unify and heal - all of these make the liberal defense of David a near-repetition of the Feuillant position. In 1816 Quatremère de Quincy, the main theoretician of Feuillant cultural policy, was returned to a

[125] Blanc, Louis David, 176.

[126] Marie-Claude Chaudonneret, "Le Mythe de la Révolution," Aux Armes et aux Arts: les arts de la révolution 1789-1799, ed. Bordes and Michel, 328; Wildenstein, Documents complémentaires au Catalogue de l' oeuvre de Louis David, 513 sqq.. For interesting insights on the association of revolutionary activity with free enterprise in the arts in the years before 1848, see A. Tabarant, La vie artistique au temps de Baudelaire (Paris: Mercure de France, c. 1963), 62, 66, 148, etc..

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prominent post as Sécrétaire Perpétuel of the Academy of Fine Arts. He died in 1839, his chest covered with honors and his ideas with cobwebs.

By mid-century the Circumstantial Thesis had outworn itself. The supposed gains of the Revolution had become more broadly accepted (whatever each faction imagined these gains to have been). Discussions of David's style, or of his political shifts, usually fell under the heading of "the commonplace of [David's] lack of character,"[127] suggesting that David had been dragged into the revolutionary fray as easily as he had been dragged into the King's service. Whether David's lack of character resided in his giving in to the political or giving in to the Classical style was a matter of politics and taste; nevertheless, it united critics and historians of widely divergent political opinions, and continued to do so well into the twentieth century.

In fact, this was not simply a shift away from Circumstance; it was a shift towards a new emphasis: artistic personality was gradually displacing cultural determinism as the initial cause of artistic and political activity. In 1846, reviewing an exhibition sponsored by the independent Association des Artistes, Charles Baudelaire anticipated the future of David criticism with a dazzling analogy: "David,

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[127] Jean-Pierre Mouilleseaux, "Préface," in Delécluze, David. Son école & son temps, xii.

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that cold star...never ceased to be the heroic, the inflexible David, the despotic seer."[128]

The implicit assimilation of David to his friend Robespierre, the calculating dictator, the "Incorruptible," is verbal genius. Violence, like art, like Revolution, or like character, now had no cause or reason for being, no need for explanation: it was Revolution for Revolution's Sake, or perhaps Art for the Hell of It. On a superficial level, Baudelaire's description was a passionate defense of David's integrity; but because Baudelaire took up the cudgel on the terrain of artistic temperament rather than politics or style, he completed the process by which individual psychology became the final resting-place for all the unresolved problems of agency. To the question of the autonomy of the individual as an agent of history Baudelaire provided the answer of the autonomy of the artist, transforming David the "Raphaël of Sans-Culottes" into David the Incorruptible of Painting.

Like violence, art could now dispense with the problems of political agency. That this question has only reemerged in the past thirty years suggests, indeed, that it is part and parcel of the history of Modernism - the Modernism we are now at last in the process of putting behind us.

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[128] "David, cet astre froid... ne cessa jamais d'être l' héroïque, l' inflexible David, le révélateur despote." "Ingres," Le Portefeuille, 12 août 1855; reprinted in Exposition Universelle. 1855. Beaux-Arts, in Oeuvre Complètes Vol. 2, ed. Claude Pichois (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), 583-84.

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CONCLUSION

> *The various accounts [...] show a line of reason, purpose, and order that were never there. The mythology of "history" is usually so pleasant for the ego of the subject that he accepts it in a "modest" silence, an affirmation of the validity of the mythology. After a while he begins to believe it.* - Saul Alinsky. [1]

[1] Saul D. Alinsky, Rules for Radicals. A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals (New York: Vintage Books, 1971), 168.

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On February 8, 1962, some twenty thousand demonstrators assembled at a short distance from the site on which the Réveillon riots had taken place in 1789. The demonstration, gathered to protest right-wing violence, was illegal but non-violent. Without provocation the police charged into the crowd, forcing some of them down the steps of the Charonne Metro station entrance and against the locked gates. As the bodies piled up at the bottom of the staircase the police tore cast iron gratings from the base of trees and hurled them down. Eight demonstrators were killed, three women, four men and a boy of sixteen, their faces and bodies crushed against the iron bars.

There are times when the State seems so distant from the people it claims to represent that one goes through the same succession of emotions associated with the death of a loved one: denial, rage, grief, acceptance. In May 1968, it was rage. All of a sudden, to cries of "De Gaulle, Assassin!" an entire nation rose up. It was a rage with a purpose, if not a goal.

On May 15, 1968 I attended a meeting at the University of Paris, Censier Campus. I was there as the coordinator for a group of young actors from the Théatre National Populaire, a large, State-owned theater now occupied by its workers. The plan under discussion was to occupy the Odéon Theater and turn it into a Theater for the People. I thought it was foolish and divisive, and I went up to

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a union representative and told him so. "Don't worry," he told me, "I'm going to make a few nihilist proposals, and that should keep them arguing all night." I went home. The Odéon was occupied the same night.[2]

On the sixteenth I went to the liberated Odéon and came in through the stage door. When I reached the stage I found myself in a crowd of actors, many well-known, most sitting on the apron. Daniel Cohn-Bendit was apostrophizing them for the benefit of the audience in front of him. This was not the first time I had seen Cohn-Bendit in action. I had been physically close to him on May thirteenth, when a mass demonstration meant to cap and end the student protests turned into the beginnings of a worker's revolution, with the occupation of factories and workplaces. What I admired about Cohn-Bendit was his ability to accept and use an event, to go with its flow. In that sense, he was indeed one of those students from the Nanterre Campus who saw May '68 as a gigantic experiment in applied Political Science. What I accept about him now, is that, like all of us, he had no idea where his actions led. None of us did. What I now dislike, is that he was ready to assume that the answer could be found in strategies, not tactics: in grand theories, not in minute questions of practice. Cohn-Bendit followed his heart with more assurance than his head. Because he thought too far, he thought in clichés.

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[2] According to Jacques Baynac, Mai retrouvé (Paris: Laffont, 1978), 130, the Odéon was taken over by a group from the Sorbonne, which is not impossible, and only adds to the irony: possibly while the Censier group was debating, another group decided to act. Baynac was one of the main coordinators at Censier; but see Jean-Louis Barrault, Souvenirs pour demain (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1972), 354, and Patrick Ravignant, La Prise de l' Odéon (Paris, 1968), 31, quoted in Frederick Brown, Theater and Revolution (NY, Viking Press, 1980), 444-448.

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Whatever Cohn-Bendit said that night at the Odéon had been better said by David two centuries earlier: "To abandon to artists alone the judgment of productions of genius would be leaving them in the rut of routine into which they dragged themselves before the tyranny they flattered." Or, to repeat the words of the Montagnard Thibaudeau in 1794, "Most artists have centuries of groveling and fawning to overcome."[3] The Odéon would become a People's Theater, for the People. As it had for Billaud-Varenne, artistic freedom now meant the freedom to be intuitively and openly aligned with a revolutionary culture that did not as yet exist. The idea of a theater was to be thrown up in the air, and somehow come down renewed.

But a theater does not rise in the air and fall back again. There are not only centuries of groveling to erase, but centuries of theatrical technique and practice. There is a chain of command backstage, and certain roles, reactionary or not, are implicitly understood and followed. Louis Althusser's complaint that the students had not invited workers into the spaces they occupied is rather comical. In the case of the Odéon, if the maintenance workers had left the place would probably have gone up in flames.[4]

In the following weeks I returned to the Odéon a few times. There was always something going on in the smaller meeting rooms: discussions of new

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[3] See note 96, Chapter 9, above..

[4] Keith A. Reader, The May 1968 Events in France. Reproductions and Interpretations (New York: Saint Martin's Press, 1993), 67-68.

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revolutionary music, or new revolutionary theater, or whatever. None of it had any practical application, it was like trying to pilot a plane by reading the blueprints. Some might object that the model for a new culture was there all along, it had been proposed by avant-garde groups like the Living Theater, but the Living Theater, like all of the American Avant-Garde, had long ago been discredited as a politically valid model, and despite its subsequent legend it played no part in the events of 1968.[5]

In the main auditorium of the Odéon, however, it was something else: an endless political talk fest, as if each of us (well, some of us), had taken on the difficult task of reinventing ourselves in an orgy of spontaneity. The same, of course, was going on everywhere, at the Sorbonne, in factories, on the street, between the student hitchhiker and the middle-class shop owner on his last gallon of gas. Perhaps it is no accident that the person who has written most sensitively about this aspect of May was a priest, Michel de Certeau. This "taking of the word" was the closest France had ever been to an American revival meeting.[6]

I don't mean to disparage the process. A civil society shattered by the insidious, unending psychic and physical violence of the State was joyfully, giddily

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[5] The Action-Image of Society. On Cultural Politicization, ed. Alfred Willener, transl. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970), 88. Barrault's vengeful account of the events ignores the large gulf that separated the Living Theater and its few adherents from the more politicized students. Despite Barrault's claim (355), I do not recall seeing or hearing of Julian Beck's presence at Censier, or at the Odéon at any given time. I believe his presence would have been noticed and mentioned, to say the least. Conversely, a number of the Living Theater's French camp followers had wandered in, endeavoring to look and dress like their heroes.

[6] De Certeau, "Le pouvoir de parler," in La prise de parole et autres écrits politiques, 58-77; see also the comments by the Bishop of Arras noting that the events "came to a

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rebuilding itself. What interests me, however, is one particular aspect of this process: the interaction of culture with politics, the mythology of agency and power.

An enormous amount of interpretation of the events of May has been offered by followers of Jacques Lacan, and by Lacan himself. It was Lacan who suggested that for the demonstrators of 68, cobblestones and teargas "fulfilled the role of object a," meaning that they performed the same function that is performed in analysis by the belief in an omnipotent otherness, a "not-self" from which meaning must be wrenched, internalized, made one's own.[7] Perhaps the correlate to this is so obvious that Lacan never bothered to fill in the blanks: that the complement to "object a," in analysis and in politics, is the "subject A," le sujet supposé savoir, the Other as all-knowing, e.g., the analyst in the process of transference, who reconstitutes the words of the analysand to her; who in transference is made to hold the key to the unconscious, political or otherwise.[8]

This concept of the sujet supposé savoir may provide a link for conceptualizing and summarizing the thread we have followed so far, from the wished-for audience of the Old Regime Salon to the wished-for citizen of the French Revolution and beyond, to the narrative of Modernity which envelops them both. I

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close at Whitsun, the time of speaking in tongues," in Reader, The May 1968 Events in France, 55.

[7] Elisabeth Roudinesco, Jacques Lacan & Co. A History of Psychoanalysis in France, 1925-1985, transl. Jeffrey Mehlman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 455; originally published as Vol. 2 of La bataille de cent ans: Histoire de la psychanalyse en France (Paris: Seuil, 1986).

[8] Roudinesco, Jacques Lacan & Co., 255; Jacques Lacan, "Le savoir et la vérité," in Le Séminaire, Livre XX: Encore (Paris: Seuil, 1975), 83-94.

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am not proposing a psychological explanation for the events of May, or for those of 1789. Like Lacan, and like the various participants who found Lacanian theory helpful, I want to clarify the political and social mechanism through which people explained to themselves these events.[9] For Lacan, also, Capital A, Grand A, l' Autre, the Other, le sujet supposé savoir, is on the whole a conceptual device - a delusion, a convention. For our purposes, it is used here as a historicized concept. Whether there really is an "unconscious," or whether transference is a biological or a cultural effect, is not relevant here. That History, then Art, should take on that role, is. For Lacan was providing a sociological, not a psychological understanding of art when he suggested that painting does not, ever, represent: it presents representation from within a social formation.[10]

In the first criticism of David's Brutus one sees an attempt to install a certain relationship between the audience and its art, which would either displace or complement the relationship of the People to its Ruler. But to do this required the promotion of the artwork as an Absolute Authority, an objet petit a. Diderot once again, at the very beginning of his Notes on Painting:

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[9] For instance, Pierre Dubois, Renaud Delong, Grèves revendicatives ou grèves politiques? (Paris: Anthropos, 1971), and Serge July, Alan Geismar and Erlyne Morane, Vers la guerre civile (Paris: Editions Premières, 1969), discussed in Reader, The May 1968 Events in France, 70, 59-60, make intensive use of Lacanian terminology.

[10] Jacques Lacan, "Qu'est-ce qu'un tableau?" in Le Séminaire, Livre XI: Les quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse (Paris: Seuil, 1975),102; see also "Du Baroque," in Le Séminaire, Livre XX: Encore, 95-106; on the Lacanian *imaginaire*, see Roudinesco, Jacques Lacan and Co., 255.

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> Nature does nothing that is not correct. Every form, whether beautiful or ugly, has its cause...If causes and effects were readily apparent to us, we'd have only to represent beings just as they are. The more perfect an imitation, the more analogous to its causes, the more it would satisfy us.[11]

This reads almost like a recipe for the Brutus and David's attempt to reconstitute the moral causes and effects of bodies moving across the surface of a canvas.

The first critics of the Brutus were well aware of the theoretical possibility, even the necessity, to propose the artwork as a revelation, but they were quite certain that the actual audience did not possess the means for that reading. That extraordinary moment fantasized in Hegel's Aesthetic when the symbol, in the presence of the congregants, suddenly becomes identical to its meaning, "the objective universality of the content and its fusion with the immediately sensuous element," had not yet occurred, though as for Hegel, it was associated in the minds of many with Classical art and Classical civilization.[12]

A similar anxiety informs discussions of regeneration before and during the Revolution. For Rousseau the correct reading of art, the lectio idealis, was possible only in a perfect society: only then, in the absolute identity of viewer with artist,

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[11] "La nature ne fait rien d' incorrect. Toute forme, belle ou laide, a sa cause. [...]Si les causes et les effets nous étaient évidents, nous n' aurions rien de mieux à faire que de représenter les êtres tels qu' ils sont. Plus l' imitation serait parfaite et analogue aux causes, plus nous serions satisfaits." Denis Diderot, Essai sur la peinture [1765], in Oeuvres Complètes Vol. X, (Paris: Garnier, 1876), 460, 461; translation from Denis Diderot, Notes on Painting, Diderot on Art, Vol . I, ed. and trans. John Goodman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 191-192.

[12] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Aesthetics. Lectures on the Fine Arts, Intro. & transl. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 86; original version: Vorlesungen über die Aesthetik, Berlin, 1835-1838; see also Jacques Derrida, Of Grammatology (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 25.

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could the truth be apprehended. Thus the problem was returned to politics: in the Social Contract Rousseau put forward the Ruler or the State as le sujet supposé savoir, the incarnation of the Common Will; with the Jacobins, the followers of Rousseau, it became at once the prerogative and the obligation of the State to provide the people with their own, truthful image - to "represent" them. The justification of the State was, precisely, that it was the Common Will, and its task in the realm of culture was to re-present that Will which founded its own existence. In return the State demanded of the people the "reverse identification" of the self with the greater Will, subject and object in a tight, mirror relationship.[13]

In contemporary theory, likewise, and in the same fashion, the actual dynamics of audience and art has been turned on its head, so that the Revelation fashioned by historical forces becomes the justification for these forces. Habermas, who originally presented the development of the Public Sphere as a historically determined concept, now argues that "publicness" is a form of objectivity, a real way of understanding the world and running the Republic. Hunt, in her latest work, has turned back to Hannah Arendt to suggest that the Revolution did not invent certain concepts, such as Rights, and Justice - it discovered their eternal essence. For it was Arendt who attempted to reestablish the "lost treasure of modern revolutions" - a phrase which, from an eighteenth-century point of view, has a curiously pornocratic ring.[14] Likewise, Crow argued that the Brutus actually returns

[13] Bertaud, Initiation à la Révolution Française, 218-219.

[14] Lynn Hunt, "Human Rights and the French Revolution," lecture given at the Center for Studies on Social Change, Committee on Historical Studies, New School for Social Research, February 24, 1995; Hannah Arendt, On Revolution (New York: Basic

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to the bourgeoisie its own, objective image. The viewers and critics of 1789 were, in the aggregate, the sujet supposé savoir, and the painting itself the ineffable objet petit a. All of this depends, of course, on the assumption that the sujet supposé savoir really does know everything about the patient, that History will inevitably sort things out for us; that the painting hides a transcendent knowledge.[15] In this type of reading art takes on the functions of Michelet's "people," the Marxist's class consciousness, Cochin's sociétés de pensée, Hunt and Furet's "democratic sociability," Kant's regulative ideas, Michel Foucault's episteme, or, of course, Panofsky's "intrinsic meaning": it serves the function of providing David's Brutus with a political will in all ways identical with an unexplained and unprovable "general will, [which] lies beyond the tangible, actual, will of the greatest number:" History as the sujet supposé savoir. Lacan sarcastically called such attempts "revolutionary," because in twisting the fantasized relationship of dependency into an inevitability they turned the process of liberation or self-awareness backwards: they were phallic regressions; as the Gaullist Raymond Aron explained after the French people, in the Summer of 1968, had voted overwhelmingly to keep Charles de Gaulle in power, "in no other modern country, I believe, has society shown itself so incapable of surviving on its own, without the State."[16]

Books, 1963), 1, 3, 18-19; Martin Jay, "Habermas and Modernism," in Habermas and Modernity, ed. Richard J. Bernstein (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1985), 125-139.

[15] Jacques Lacan, "Qu'est-ce qu'un tableau?," in Le Séminaire, Livre XI: Les quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse, 98; "Le savoir et la vérité," in Le Séminaire. Livre XX: Encore, 89. Thanks to Solange Faladé for confirming this interpretation.

[16] Jacques Lacan, "L'amour et le signifiant," in Le Séminaire, Livre XX: Encore, 41; note the reference to Kant's "copernican revolution;" Raymond Aron, La Révolution introuvable (Paris: Fayard, 1968), 145; quoted Reader, The May 1968 Events in France, 78-79.

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Which brings us back to the question of agency. For the paradigm of ultimate meanings only makes sense if one assumes that the results of an action can be assigned to specific intentions - that is, if from the Left or the Right, one assumes a wider intelligence at work, either Althusser's ISA (Ideological State Apparatus), controlling all aspects of life under Capitalism, the episteme defining one's every action in a particular direction, the relationship of signified to signifier, David's unerring intuition of the future.[17] The man in Panofsky's paradigm may or many not know what he really is saying; he may be the victim of a Plot to make him take off his hat, or Circumstances may have taught him to take off his hat. In either case one is meant to assume that there is a "meaning" conveyed by his gesture, whether his own or that of a set of plotters, or of History itself.

More: the paradigm ultimately leads to the strange assumption of omnipotence that one finds in so much of Art History, and of History tout court, as if the meaning were using the man to get its message across - as if the effects were somehow, proof of an intent. In the case of the analyst and her patient, the analyst has the ability and the imperative to thwart the patient's narcissistic projections, and Lacan was famous for frustrating his patient's needs in this manner. In the case of a painting, or of History, there is no such possibility: all the mysterious actions of History, all the odd aspects of paintings, must have an intention. This confusion of agency with intention has affected much of the current

[17] Louis Althusser, "Idéologie et appareils idéologiques d' Etat," La Pensée, juin 1970; English version: "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in Lenin and Philosophy and other essays, trans. Ben Brewster (London: New Left Books, 1971); Jonathan Crary, Techniques of the Observer: on vision and modernity in the nineteenth century (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990).

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"post-Marxist" research into the French Revolution; and it bears an uncanny resemblance to the bad old "specular" Marxism of the past, in which actions were always the transparent incarnation of the actor's class allegiance. The great Marxist historians of the French Revolution - Soboul, Mathiez, Lefebvre, Rudé - rarely allowed themselves to fall into that trap.[18] Like Death in Bergman's film of The Seventh Seal, History may have a goal, even if it has no purpose. Human beings have a purpose, even when they have no goal.[19]

Clearly, David intended to make a political statement of the Brutus: an examination of David's basket would be enough to close for ever the old discussion over the politics of this work, if intentions were enough to begin with. But intentions, as we have noted, are not enough, either in uprisings or in artworks. They may contribute, but they do not cause. Certain intentions misfired when recorded in a painting; certain meanings developed out of changing historical circumstance, undermining or confirming the artist's intention; several contradictory intentions overlapped over time, as the artist's own opinions changed, or over space, as several arguments collided on the same canvas.

If the people of 1789 did not quite realize what they were getting themselves into, neither were they helpless toys of History or dupes of some

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[18] Rudé, "La composition sociale des Insurrections parisiennes de 1789 à 1791," 279-81; "The Motives of Popular Insurrection in Paris during the French Revolution," esp. 57 sqq, and the reply in Lefebvre, "A propos des récents articles de George Rudé," 289-291.

[19] Goal: what I will eventually achieve; purpose: the reason that I do what I do; intention: what I wish to achieve; agency: the means by which I achieve what I wish to achieve.

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all-powerful secret society. The Réveillon uprising was not the sinister plot that so many contemporaries imagined, but it marked an important test of the power of the Parisian working class. Likewise, if the writings and artworks of an educated minority did not cause revolutionary change, they contributed to it in the same indirect, haphazard, and contradictory fashion found among the Réveillon rioters. No doubt these educated classes had a better grasp of the political situation than your sans-culotte moyen sensuel; certainly they were better able to publicize it; but to say that the French Revolution happened because of them is to overlook the enormous and ongoing labor of strategizing needed to meet the short-term challenge of changing conjuncture, rather than attaining some mythic, predetermined goal. Contrariwise, to argue that the Middle Classes did not cause the French Revolution is not necessarily to suggest that any other class did.[20]

In either case, to say that the various actors in these small social struggles acted as they did because of the French Revolution is to get it backwards. Educated or not, the participants in the French Revolution found themselves repeatedly acting out their intentions in a social arena in which each of them had very limited control over the ultimate results.[21] That certain intentions might have misfired when applied in a painting; that certain meanings might have developed out of circumstance, not intention; that several contradictory intentions might overlap over time, as the painting developed, or over space, as several arguments collided on one canvas; that the constraints of genre, of style, forced artist and activist into other

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[20] Hobsbawm, Echoes of the Marseillaise, 25, 64.

[21] Skocpol, States and social revolutions, 291.

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constraints and avenues, is no new insight; but it is an insight that needs to be systematically applied, because it cannot coexist with certain assumptions of Art and Art History.

For both the Circumstantial Theory, like the Plot Theory, are at bottom founded on either an irrational fear of, or irrational trust in, omnipotence - omnipotence of a class for Liberal and Marxist historians, omnipotence of a cultural concept in the case of Hunt, omnipotence of one or several malicious conspirators for right-wing theorists; and in the case of art historians, omnipotence of the great artist, the great art, or the great art scene. Perhaps one might draw a connection between some of these approaches and the Cultural Imaginary of the past thirty years, in which one's engagement within a particular academic or cultural discipline is proclaimed as a political activity in itself, with the parallel implication that the practice of Art as a strictly autonomous and self-sufficient discipline can, through some mysterious agency, "revolutionize" society as a whole. There is a direct line that leads from the keen sense of political powerlessness described by Rousseau in 1762, to the hallucinatory fantasies of power proposed by Modernist art criticism:

> For a newborn people to enjoy the healthy principles of politics and follow the basic rules of Statehood, effect would have to be cause, the spirit created by the institution would preside at the birth of the institution itself, and men would have to be before laws what they would become through them. [22]

[22] "Pour qu' un peuple naissant pût goûter les saines maximes de la politique et suivre les règles fondamentales de la raison d' Etat, il faudrait que l' effet pût devenir la cause, que l' esprit social qui doit être l' ouvrage de l' institution présidât à l' institution même; et que les hommes fussent avant les lois ce qu' ils doivent devenir par elles." Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Du Contrat social II, 7 [1762] (Paris: Garnier Flammarion 1966), 79.

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> [Morris]"Louis' breakthrough [is] one in which *painting itself* broke through to its own future."[23]

The first quote follows an explicit discussion of the inevitable need for a ruler - the ruler as sujet supposé savoir. The second still begs the question: how can we be asked to believe that *painting itself* is a sentient being, and an omnipotent one at that?

One of Diderot's strangest and most successful works is a pornographic novel, Les Bijoux indiscrets, in which the hero has acquired the ability to make women's vulvas speak against the wishes of their owners, as if their subconscious were lodged between their legs. David's basket - his panier - is for him, and for his audience, l' objet petit a.[24] But that, of course, is not "the" meaning of the work - a meaning that served, more or less consciously, to organize David's thought, and might, if we are not careful, seem sufficient to organize ours. For to undertake a politically meaningful work of art one would have to abandon the very principle of Hermeneutics; to abandon the search for ultimate meanings in favor of an understanding of the structuring of meanings. It is this structuration, not its idealized shadow that explains, duplicates, and allows for political action.[25]

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[23] Michael Fried, Morris Louis 1912-1962, exhibition catalogue (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1967), 11; quoted and discussed in Irving Sandler, American Art of the 1960s (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), 50.

[24] Denis Diderot, Les Bijoux Indiscrets [1748], in Oeuvres Romanesques (Paris: Garnier, 1962), 1-233.

[25] Paul Ricoeur et Claude Lévy-Strauss, "Structure et herméneutique," Esprit, 1963.

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On June 7, 1968 I went to a large demonstration at the Gare Saint Lazare. The police had begun to evict workers from occupied buildings and factories, and the flashpoint was Flins, a company town some twenty miles from Paris, where pitched battles were taking place in the fields and streets, complete with armored cars and armed officers.[26]

In front of the Gare Saint Lazare someone gave a powerful speech. All students supported the workers of Flins, but the trains were not running, it was impossible to get there, it was a trap. I went on to the station platform. The trains were running, only the ticket takers were off the job. I was on my way back to the demonstration when I ran into Diop, my Senegalese friend. We took the train to Flins. Of course, we were arrested the next day, packed into a crowded, stifling cell, subjected to the usual threats and minor acts of brutality, and then brought back to Paris. Diop was released, and I never saw him again. I later learned he had become deeply involved with immigrant's rights, before dying in his thirties.

As for myself, I suppose I was a bit of a prize, since the Government had been claiming all along that the May events were caused by the same types who had once been accused of causing the French Revolution: Jews, foreigners, artists, intellectuals. At the Beaujon prison I was told to turn in all of my possessions. The young cop who was searching me found my copy of Artaud. Book in hand, he walked over to his commanding officer: "Commandant, it's his book, see? It's okay for him to keep a book, right?"

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[26] "Document 232," Alain Schnapp et Pierre Vidal-Naquet, Journal de la Commune Etudiante. Textes et Documents Novembre 1967-Juin 1968 (Paris: Seuil, 1988), 518-519.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

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[#1] Jacques-Louis David. Brutus. Oil on canvas, 1789. Louvre, Paris. "J. Brutus, premier consul, de retour en sa maison, après avoir condamné ses deux fils qui s' étaient unis aux Tarquins et avaient conspiré contre la liberté romaine. Des licteurs rapportent leurs cours pour qu' on leur donne la sépulture." ("J. Brutus, first consul, back in his house, having condemned to death his two sons who had joined the Tarquins and conspired against the freedom of Rome. Lictors are returning heir bodies for burial").

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[#2] Adélaïde Labille-Guiard. Portrait de feûe Madame Louise-Elisabeth de France, Infante d' Espagne, Duchesse de Parme, avec son fils âgé de deux ans. Oil on canvas, Salon of 1789. Musée national du Château, Versailles.

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[#3] Elizabeth Vigée-Lebrun. Self-Portrait. Oil on canvas, after 1783. National Gallery of Art, London.

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[#4] Jean-Baptiste Marie Pierre. Figures du petit peuple à Rome. Number 9 of a series. Etching, 1756. Collection of the author.

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[#5] Jean-François-Pierre Peyron. The Death of Socrates. Oil on canvas. Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen.

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[#6] P. -L. Debucourt. Un Trait de Bienfaisance du Roi,. Oil on canvas, 1785. Versailles: Musée national du Chateau.

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[#7] Jean-Charles Le Vasseur, after J.-L Le Barbier le jeune. Bienfaisance du Roi. Engraving ,1780 (Salon de la Correspondance, 1781). Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. "Le roi, au milieu des seigneurs de sa cour, environné de ses gardes et d' un peuple considérable, honore Boussart que la ville de Dieppe lui présente, prosternée à ses pieds, du titre de brave homme; l' écusson de cette ville et la courone murale les caractérisent; elle tient les fastes de son histoire où elle va graver les paroles du roi. A côté de ce brave homme, dont l' attitude exprime la reconnaisance et le respect, se trouve la vertu héroique qui prend, pour le couronner des mains de l' Amour de la Patrie la couronne civique qui fait ici allusion à la pension et aux bienfaits dont le roi l' a comblé; dans le fond du palais, l' on apperçoit les médaillons des princes bienfaisans, tels que Titus et Henri IV que le roi prend pour modèles, et l' on voit sous celui de Henri IV la place qui lui est réservée; la Renommée s' élève sur un nuage et va publier les bienfaits du roi à l' univers."

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[#8] Robert Guillaume Dardel. Descartes perçant les ténèbres de l' ignorance. Terra cotta model. Wallace Collection, London.

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[#9] Jacques-Louis David (attributed). Brutus witnessing the execution of his sons. Lead with ink in parts, grey wash. Thaw Collection. New York.

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[#10] Jacques-Louis David. (Death of Camille) The Elder Horatius defending his Son. Black chalk, ink and wash on paper. Louvre, Paris.

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[#11] Francesco Primaticcio. Ulysses Shooting through the Rings. red chalk heightened with white, traces of squaring in red chalk, on pink prepared paper. circa 1570. Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

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[#12] Etienne-Barthélémy Garnier. Consternation de Priam. Oil on canvas. Salon of 1793. Musée des Ursulines, Mâcon.

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[#13] Jacques-Louis David. Brutus and Members of his Household. Drawing in black chalk, 1787-1788. Musée Bonnat, Bayonne.

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[#14] Jacques-Louis David. Brutus. Figure Drawing. Black chalk, 1787-1788. Musée Bonnat, Bayonne.

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[#15] School of Phidias. Figure G., from the East Pediment of the Parthenon. Athens, late fifth century BCE. British Museum, London.

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[#16] Chiaramonte Niobid. Roman copy after a Greek original. Museo Gregoriano, Vatican.

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[#17] Lucius Junius Brutus. Bronze, c. 200 AD. Palazzo degli Conservatori, Rome.

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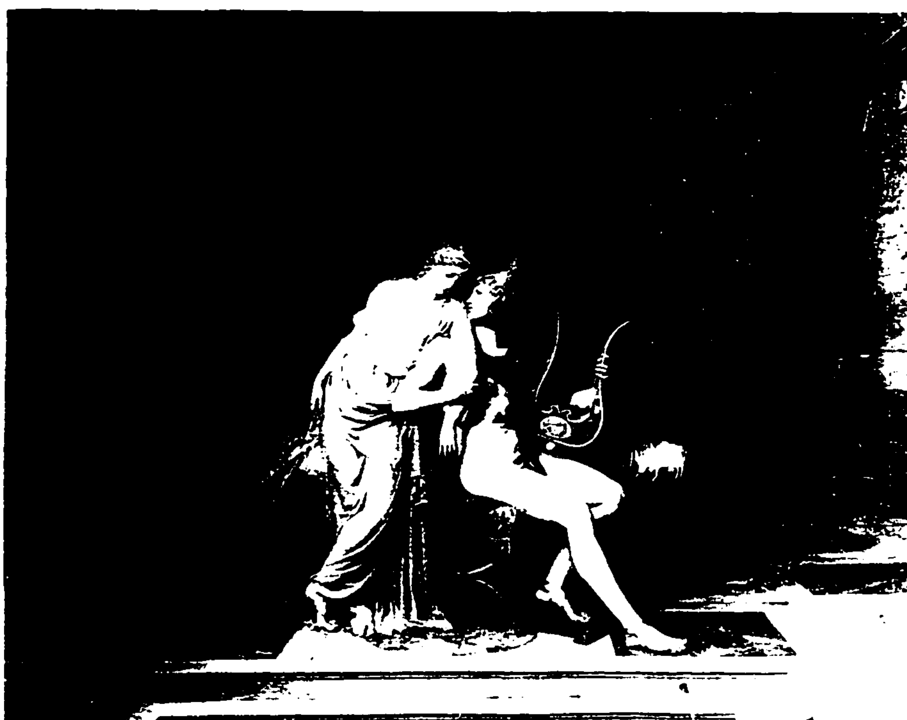
[#18] Jacques-Louis David. Les Amours de Paris et Hélène. Oil on canvas; signed and dated 1788. Louvre Paris.



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[#19] Jacques-Louis David. Brutus. Detail: The Scroll in Brutus' hand.

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[#20] P.-A. Demachy. Fête de l' Etre Suprême. Oil on canvas, 1794. Musée Carnavalet, Paris.

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[#21] Jacques-Louis David. Study for Brutus Oil on paper pasted to canvas, 1789. Nationalmuseum, Stockholm.

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[#22] Attributed to Jacques-Louis David. Brutus. Compositional Drawing. Pen and wash on paper. Signed and dated lower left: "L. David faciebat 1787." J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu.

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[#23] Jacques-Louis David. Weeping Servant. Black and White Chalks, 1789. Musée des Beaux-Arts Tours.

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[#24] Charles de Wailly. Projet pour le salon du Muséum. 1789. Musée Carnavalet, Paris.

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[#25] Jacques-Louis David. Three Women. Black chalk. Louvre, Paris.

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[#26] Jacques-Louis David. Compositional Study for Brutus. Brown chalk, c. 1788. Robert Lehman Collection, New York.

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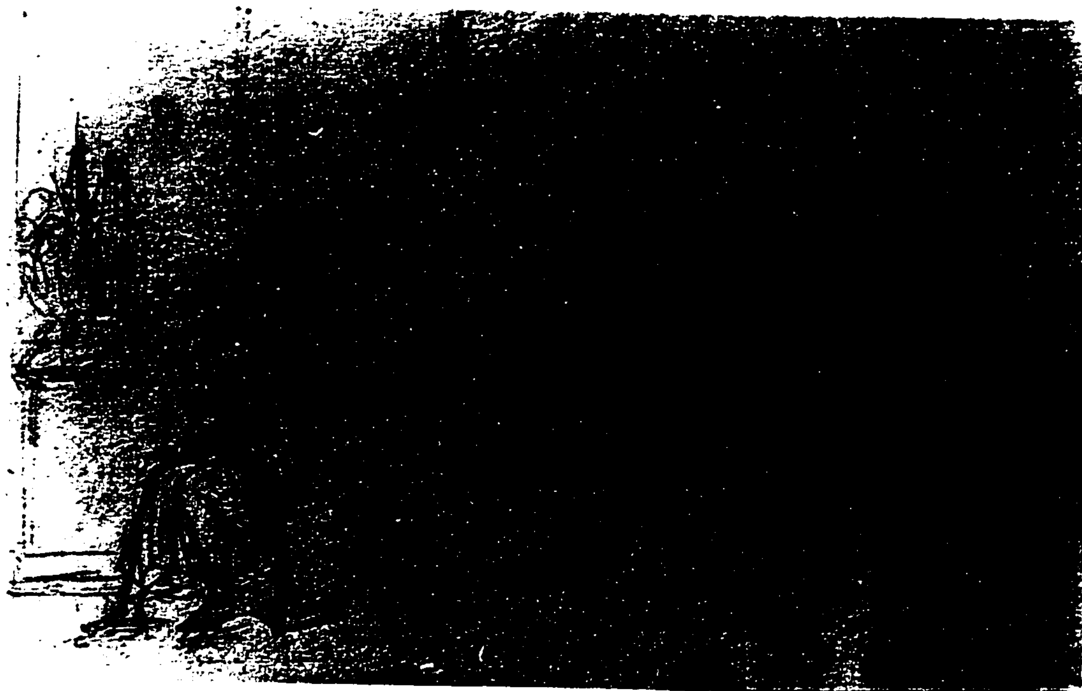
[#27] Jacques-Louis David. Compositional Study for Brutus, 1788-1789. Black chalk. Musée Bonnat, Bayonne.



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[#28] Jacques-Louis David. Fainting Daughter. Black crayon, fragment of a larger sheet, 1789. Fondation Custodia, Paris.

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[#29] After Callimachos. Bacchae. Roman copy. Palazzo degli Conservatori, Rome.

[#30] Jacques-Louis David. Brutus, closeup: The Fainting Daughter.

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[#31] Jacques-Louis David. Brutus, closeup: The Basket.

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[#32] [Anonymous]. Les Parques Nationalles. Engraving, November 1791. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

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[#33] Jacques-Louis David. Death of Socrates. Oil on canvas, 1787. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

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[#34] [Anonymous]. Le doigt magique. Engraving, c. 1785. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

LE DOIGT MAGIQUE
OU LE MAGNETISME ANIMAL

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[#35] Carle Vernet, Le Triomphe de Paul-Emile (The Triumph of Aemilius Paulus). Oil on canvas, Salon of 1789. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

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[#36] Carle Vernet. Le Triomphe de Paul-Emile. Detail: "Muscius Scaevola."

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[#37] Carle Vernet. Le Triomphe de Paul-Emile. Detail: Roman Temple.

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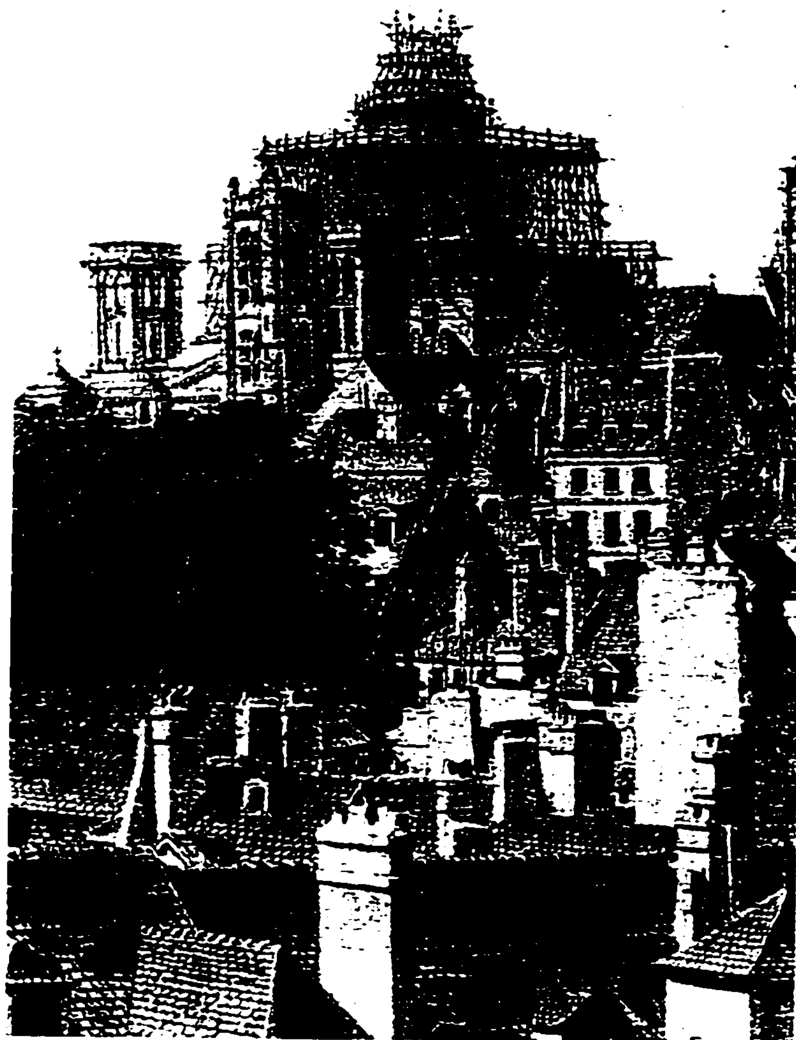
[#38] Anonymous. Sainte Geneviève under Construction. Engraving, circa 1787. Musée Carnavalet, Paris.



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[#39] Jacques-Louis David. Serment du Jeu de Paume. Pen and Brown Ink on Paper, 1791. Louvre, Paris.

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[#40] Jacques-Louis David. Marat à son dernier soupir. Oil on canvas. Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts, Bruxelles.

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[#41] Jean-Baptiste Regnault. La Liberté ou la Mort. Oil on Canvas, 1795. Kunsthalle, Hamburg.

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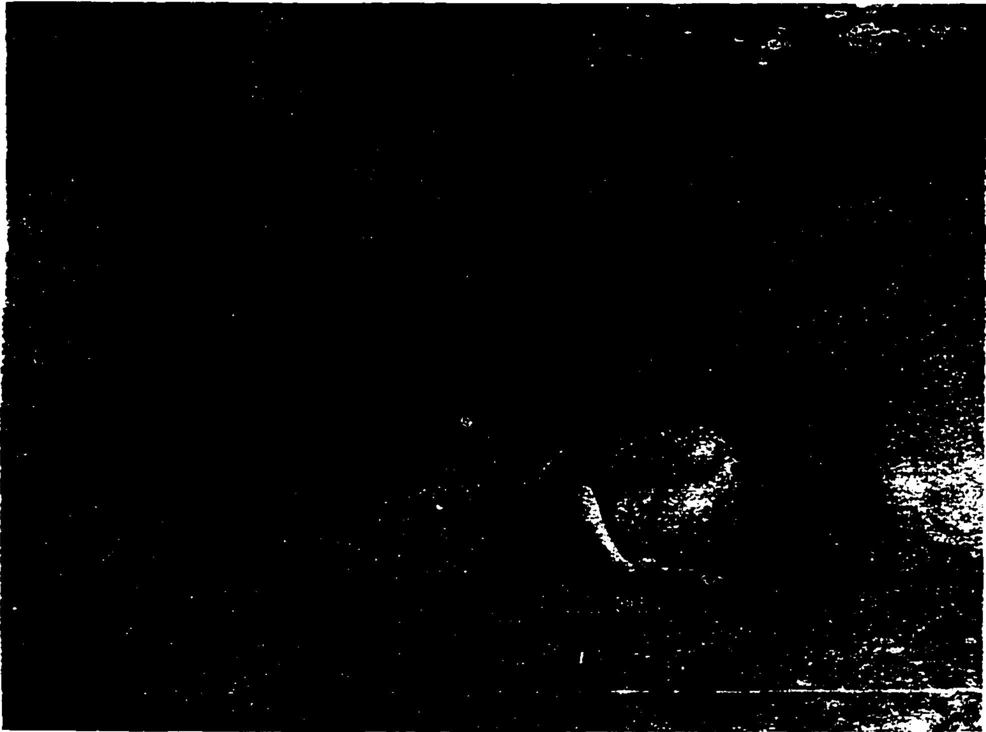
[#42] Jacques-Louis David. Mort de Joseph Barra (Death of Barra). Oil on canvas, 1794. Musée Calvet. Avignon.



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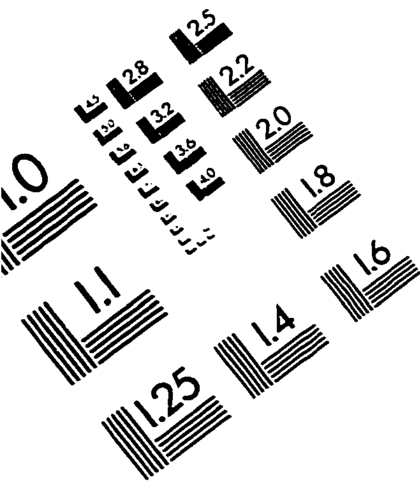

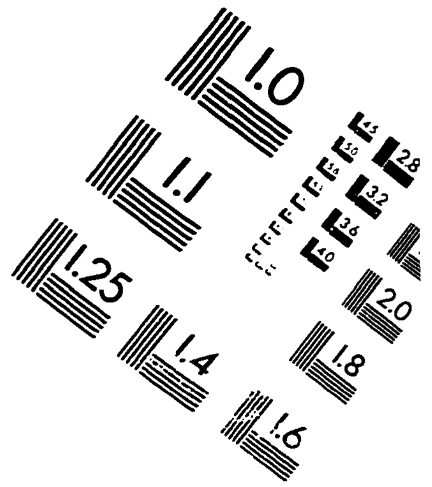

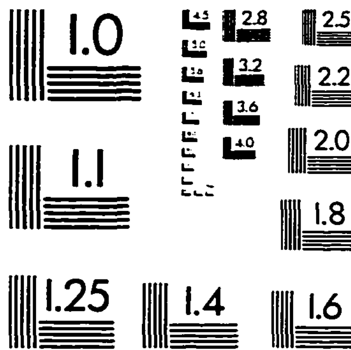

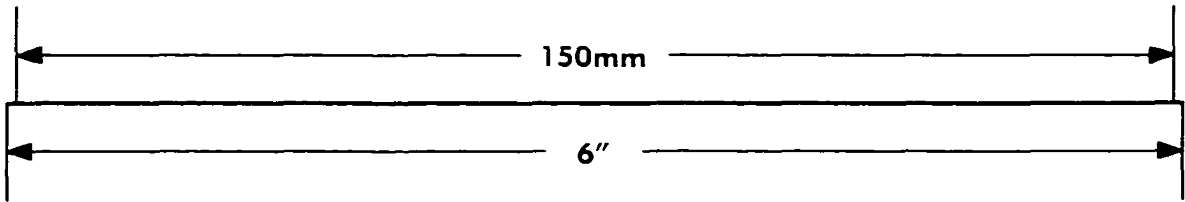

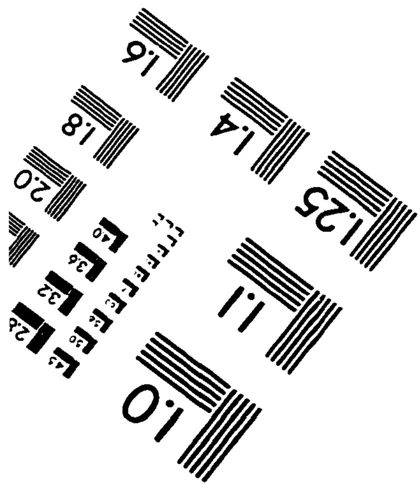

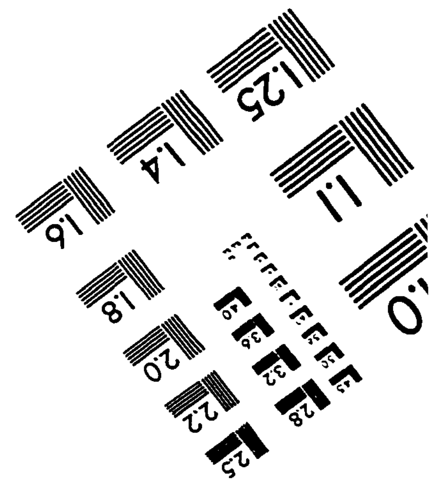

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