JACQUES-LOUIS DAVID, SCATOLOGICAL DISCOURSE IN THE FRENCH REVOLUTION, AND THE ART OF CARICATURE

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David's political cartoons of the 1790s, generally considered apart from his paintings, are indeed related to each other and form a part of the artist's participation in the revolutionary process.

Moreover, David may serve as the paradigm of the principle that neoclassical imagery and political caricature share the same station in the development of modern art.

David's political cartoons of the 1790s are the most astonishing specimens of his entire visual practice. Rarely discussed in detail in the abundant literature devoted to the master, they reveal a side of his work and his artistic personality that appears to be quite at odds with his magisterial productions. The contrast between the serious purpose and the elevated themes of the painting on the one hand, and the vulgarity and fantasy of the cartoons on the other, makes us think of the work of two radically different mind-sets. I will argue in this essay, however, that far from being discontinuous in David's production or manifesting the marks of a schizoid personality, his monumental pictures and his modest caricatures are dialectically interrelated and critical to an understanding of his participation in the revolutionary process. Finally, I will advance the claim that neoclassical imagery and political caricature share the same station in the development of modern art.

The political cartoon and its progeny stand at the crossroads of neoclassicism and modern art. When, in eighteenth-century England, caricatured portraits were first introduced into political prints, the caricature became a social weapon unmasking and ridiculing the pretensions of the powerful. Its emergence in the second half of the 18th century fixed the modern political cartoon in a neoclassical mode, sharing with the art of the English Hogarth, Mortimer, Blake, and the French David (all of whom did caricatures and cartoons) strong outlines and a moralizing and didactic content expressed in allegorical terms. The pronounced topical allusions of most neoclassical painting which identifies the past in terms of the present, relate it to political caricature, which likewise exploits anachronism, metonymy, and emblematic devices to convey the idea that all epochs are basically equivalent. The simple propagandistic aims of political caricature and its generally chauvinistic intent are identical with the seemingly "high-minded" representations of neoclassicists.

This proposition requires clarification. Political caricature would seem to be inimical to neoclassicism at every point: where the former exaggerates and debunks, the latter moderates and idealizes; where one distorts, the other regularizes; where one grasps at the gross material conditions of ordinary life, the other seeks perfection through a controlled visual experience. But it is in precisely these polarities that we discover the dialectical tension between the caricatural delineation of political realities and the disguised neoclassical version. The first is aimed generally toward one's enemies, the second toward one's heroes. In this sense, neoclassicism may be seen in psychoanalytical terms as a sublimated expression of the Oedipal wish projection to be the mighty patriarch in place of the father, for example, the Socrates, the Belisarius (already blinded, i.e., castrated by the parent-emperor), and the elder Horatius to whom the sons submit. The Oedipal complex constitutes the beginnings of the forms of political and social authority, the regulation and control through the superego or conscience. On the other hand, the political caricature permits the displaced manifestation of the repressed aggressive desire to oust the father. The political enemy, or the subject of distortion, becomes a projection of the hated parent and through caricature can be struck down. Political caricature allows for the gratification of the desire to eliminate the rival parent, which in neoclassicism has been sublimated in behalf of a higher ideal. Thus neoclassicism can be understood as the imagined absence of the repressed enemy, while political caricature can be understood as the imagined absence of the parental prohibition. Both forms of represen-

The visual forms often reached different audiences. The painting was primarily destined for elite exhibitions and appealed to an upper-class spectator, while the caricature could be cheaply reproduced and made available to the wider community. Both the neoclassicist and the cartoonist based their narratives on the essentially medieval categories of Good and Evil, embodied in the images of the benevolent Father (God, the state) and the tyrannical Devil (Hell, despotism), but the objective embodiments of these categories varied according to that portion of the public targeted by the artist. Nevertheless, their appeal in both cases rested on a common set of moral assumptions held by their audiences.

Thus the borderline between neoclassicism and modern political caricature is a fluid one. Materially, both share two salient characteristics: clarity through emphasis on drawing and strong contours, and the allegorical depiction of simple ethical themes with an import that, for the present, is unmistakable. Caricatures have often been traced to medieval blockbooks and moralizing prints, and the political cartoon, more than any other graphic medium, has preserved this tradition. Gombrich has pointed out to what extent caricatures disclose the dominant role of the mythological imagination in our political thought. The allegorical personification of Good and Evil (under whatever guise) and a host of metaphorical and metonymic devices become the real substance of political persuasion, and therefore easily translated into the cartoonist's emblems. It is in this sense that political caricature relates to neoclassicism, which similarly conveys in allusive terms propagandistic material. The deeds and/or misdeeds of the historical past are exploited in the name of the present. Parodic iconography, like revolutionary neoclassicism, was sustained by its topicality. When bourgeois culture needed the support of, and pretended solidarity with, the popular classes, it employed caricature as the vehicle to manipulate their culture. But in pretending to know what best appealed to the popular classes, the bourgeois artist betrayed his or her entrenched biases.

The great revolutionary moment involved a long and persistent attack on the aristocratic character. The formula applied was not yet an indication of fundamental social revolution, but emphasized primarily the disappearance of symbols by which a certain class of people distinguished itself from the amorphous mass of all the rest. By 1790 it was no longer a question of the demolition of the nobility, but a question of suppressing counterrevolution at home and enemies abroad. The advocates of the revolution had already ground out hundreds of caricatures, attempting to prepare the public for the utopian world to emerge. Once the king was guillotined in January 1793, however, the whole propaganda apparatus had to be employed including the caricaturists who were called upon to ready French people for foreign invasion and the domestic counterrevolution of royalist sympathizers. A proclamation of the National Convention issued two days after the king's execution advised:

"Let us, through our union, avert the shame that domestic discord would bring upon our newborn republic. Let us, through our patriotism, avert those terrible shocks, those anarchical and disorderly movements which would soon overwhelm France with disturbances and grief, if our outside enemies, who are fomenting them, could profit therefrom..."

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The threat of the Revolution to royalists swelled and deepened outside France once the Republic was established. Governments made common cause with the émigrés in denouncing the Jacobins, who, after overthrowing the monarchy and guillotining the king, now set about coercing their compatriots into obedience. By March 1793, a coalition of Austria, Prussia, England, Holland, Spain, Portugal, the Papal States, Sardinia, and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies had declared war against the French Republic. The French now organized the Committee of Public Safety (Comité de Salut public) to deal with invasion from without and civil war which broke out in the Vendée near the end of March. The Committee of Public Safety also mobilized the fine arts and public education institutions to deal with "the agitation of factions within the country and the efforts of a leagued Europe against us."7

On the basis of a report drawn up by the Committee of Public Safety, the National Convention proclaimed a Levy-in-Mass (la levée en masse) in August 1793. It declared the intention of mobilizing all French resources—animate and inanimate—in behalf of the revolution. "All people are requisitioned, but all cannot go off to the battle or perform the same functions." Some will make weapons, others would use them; some would prepare food supplies for the troops, others would sacrifice their clothing and others would make uniforms. Jacobin sexism also entered into the formulation:

"Women, who at long last are to take their rightful place in the revolution and follow their true destiny, will forget their futile tasks: their delicate hands will work at making clothes for soldiers; they will make tents and they will extend their tender care to shelters where the defenders of the Patrie will receive the help that their wounds require. Children will make lint of old cloth. It is for them that we are fighting: children, those beings destined to gather all the fruits of the revolution, will raise their pure hands to the skies. And old men, performing their missions again, as of yore, will be guided to the public squares of the cities where they will kindle the courage of the young warriors and preach the doctrines of hate for kings and the unity of the Republic."

In mid-September the Committee drafted a ferocious Law of Suspects voted by the Convention. This law applied to all suspected persons whose remarks or writings revealed them to be "partisans of tyranny or federalism and the enemies of liberty," and those unable to "justify their means of existence and the performance of their civic duties."9

During the interval between the voting of the Levy-in-Mass and the draconian Law of Suspects, the Committee of Public Safety, presided over by Carnot, requested the "Deputy David to employ his talents and all means in his power to augment the number of caricatures which could arouse the public spirit and make it perceive precisely how atrocious and ridiculous are the enemies of Liberty and the Republic."10

David now went to work developing his own cartoon ideas and stimulating others to do so as well. By May of the following year, he submitted two designs and a list of expenses required to reproduce both black-and-white and colored versions. The Committee accepted the plan and on 29 floréal de l'an II decreed its execution, stipulating that the artist submit to the Committee five hundred copies of each version of the two cartoons (2,000 in all). The large printing indicates the great importance attached to these cartoons by the powerful Committee of Public Safety.

Both cartoons, dating from between 12 September 1793 and 18 May 1794, attack the English government.11 The first mentioned in Carnot's decree was entitled L'Armée royal cruche, "the Royal Army of Cocks," showing "an army of crows commanded by George III, who in turn is led by the nose by a turkey" (Fig. 1). The cartoon actually constitutes a treasure trove of verbal and visual puns entertaining in and of themselves, but it also carries a critical political message for the period. George III, depicted as a potbellied "pot" or pitcher or jug or "crackpot"—all terms contained in the French word cruche—steps out ahead of his troops also depicted as jugs with spidery legs. The crocked troops carry two standards, one of a pig's head surmounted by a royal crown and the other a combination of Jester and the Tower of London (perhaps a satiric allusion to the Tory government warning of a left-wing plot to take over the Tower in March 1793). The word cruche has a double meaning as in the English "jughead," referring to a blockhead or doltish person. To behave like a "crackpot" in France is to...
enwraps the pot. George is depicted as not only grossly stupid, but as a venal jackass blindly following a strutting turkey-cock.

The turkey, "Milor Dindon," who pulls George by a leash attached to his nose, is identified in the legend as the prime minister, Pitt. The French word for turkey, dindon, carries the same double sense as crap. The verb dindonnner literally means "to dupe," and is associated with several popular expressions which designate a pompous, condescending fool. The musical "dul-dulah" meter of the French term with the second syllable accented was exploited by Molière for his weak and dullish bourgeois character Georges Dandin (which reverses the nasal sounds of dindon). The word dandino itself had traditionally been used to designate a blockhead, and derived from dindan, the noise of a ringing bell. Other cartoons of this period, including one traditionally ascribed to David, actually identify the English king as "Georges Dandin" (Figs. 2 and 3). This would have been aptly applied since Molière's character was a farmer, and the English king was often referred to as "Farmer George" due to his spare-time activity at the Home Farm in Windsor. David thus plays ingeniously with the "Dindon-Dandin" apposition and their literary and verbal associations.

Bringing up the rear of the "potted" army is "Milor Oie," a goose wearing a Whig stovepipe hat who rides the back of an English citizen with a funnel-shaped trumpet extending from between his buttocks. My Lord Goose is identified as Charles James Fox, one of the chiefs of the Parliamentary opposition to George III's Tory party. His position at the "other end" of the troops refers as well to his seat on the opposing benches in the House of Commons. Riding his "English Trumpet," he observes the routing of the advance guard of the royal army by the sansculottes and "sounds the call to retreat from the rear out of prudence." As in the case of dindon and crap, oie, or "goose," also has a double meaning referring to a simpleton or nimby. Here the inane Goose-Fox emits an ineffectual warning in the form of a loud fart. Platulence in both French and English signifies both the expulsion of stomach gas and empty and pretentious speech. Since Fox had a reputation as an eloquent orator in behalf of the Whig opposition, the metaphor was an ingenious conceit.

Why David made the pro-Revolutionary Fox the "rear end" of the royal army requires some understanding of the English political situation in the years 1779-1784. Fox tried to maintain Whig support of the French Revolution in its early stages despite Pitt's impending suppression of civil liberties and the dissolution of party unity due to the rightward swing of alarmist Whigs like Burke. After Louis XVI's execution in January 1793, however, Fox came increasingly under the pressure of the conservatives who followed the government's push for the maintenance of law and order at home and resistance to the spread of French revolutionary ideas abroad. By December 1792, many moderate supporters deserted him because of his willingness to negotiate with the Jacobin government after the September Massacres which he himself deplored. The more violent and the more republican the Revolution became, the greater was the pressure to retreat to a more conservative position. His views became increasingly confused and ambivalent, and the following month he condemned the guillotining of the king "as a most revolting act of cruelty and injustice." By the time of Marie Antoinette's execution in August—which he thought "more disgusting and detestable than any other murder recorded in history"—he had been virtually reduced to merely "tooting his horn" from the rear.

David's Goose-Fox sounds the retreat in response to the blow sustained by the advance-guard of the royal army at the gate of the city they attempted to seize. From the top of the gate, four sansculottes squatting in a row with their buttocks bare (literally sans-sans culottes), unload on the English crooks with a salvo of shit. David's legend explains that this was occasioned by their "colic," here punning on the term which in both French and English refers to intestinal and abdominal disorders and the temperament accompanying them. The face of the sansculotte at the head of a row wears a subtle smile, reminding us that French toilet training of the period stressed that the expulsion of fecal matter produced plaisir. The English crooks collapse under the onslaught of the falling excrement, one of them even receiving it in his open mouth. The crooks and jugheads have been decreased to the level of poe de chambre. As they tumble to the ground and smash themselves, all sorts of distended, bloated, bloated creatures pour out and expose "the spirit that motivates them" to belligerence.

In the background stands a row of what David describes as "new
As Norman O. Brown noted in *Life Against Death*, psychoanalytic investigations of folkloric and literary allusions to the Devil persistently reveal their anal character. The culmination of the ritual of the Witches’ Sabbath was to kiss the Devil’s posterior or a facial mask attached to it. In the key ceremony of the Black Mass, the “sacred host” was prepared by kneading on the buttocks of the queen of the sabbath a mixture of feces, menstrual blood, urine, and various kinds of offal. Dante, whose Devil sports batlike wings, makes Lucifer’s anus the point of transition between Hell and Purgatory. Lucifer is unique in not only stressing the Devil’s anality but in attacking him with anality. In one instance the theologian routed him “with a fart,” while in other cases he threatens him with defecating in his face or stuffing him up his anus, “where he belongs.” Rabelaisian anality also takes this turn, as in the case of Panurge’s malodorous concoction of fecal matter which is so vile “that the devil could not have endured it.”

For both Luther and Rabelais the Devil is a projection and condensation of their anal fixation, which is dealt with by returning it to where it originated. The Devil in this sense is a component of the encoded process of the childhood environment. Excrement can then be flung in the face of the enemy, that is, the tyrannical father who is embodied in David’s cartoons in the figure of George III and the English government. The scatological material of the cartoons may be seen as an instance of “coprophilia” (the obsession with excrement) associated with psychosexual infantilism. The plentiful eighteenth-century neoclassical sculptor Franz Xavier Messerschmidt, who suffered from positive delusions due to constipation, was afflicted by the Devil. The Devil appeared in his delusions and when the old leader is discussed by no other devils in the Bible.

Inevitably, David and his colleagues blamed Pitt and the “imbecile George” for their irrational policies which subsidized espionage and civil war throughout the fledgling French republic and paid for the invasions of France’s enemies. The writer Lavatte noted that “poverty presently makes the English slaves, despite the fact that nature created them free.” And after briefly describing the composition of parliament and the role of the king, he concluded: “Such is the monstrous assemblage of powers that is called the English constitution.” In his address to the Jacobins on 20 January 1794, Lachevardière noted that in the eyes of republicans every king is guilty, but George and Pitt have gone so far beyond their ordinary powers, they have directed the laws of their country, and have so outraged nature and humanity, that the king has become “a monster in the eyes of the universe.”

David’s presentation of the emaciated, flayed Devil, with grotesque bat wings and Janus–Anus, derives from the old medieval representations of the Devil and its anal associations. He clearly took Jacques Callot’s second version of *The Temptation of St. Anthony* of 1635 as the model for his cartoon: in the foreground of the famous engraving of Hell the chimera armoured-plated beast with wheels engulfing barbed weapons and foul, sulphurous smoke from its mouth and anus inspired the George motif, while the horned beast with bat wings probably influenced the treatment of the Devil (Fig. 5). Callot’s curious creatures, toads, and serpents indulge in anal games and probably served as prototypes for the “venomous” creatures of *The Royal Crooked Army* as well.

Callot’s work in turn may owe something to Hieronymous Bosch’s *Hell*, the right panel of his triptych *The Garden of Earthly Delights*. Here the birdlike Satan, who wears a chamber pot on his head like a helmet, sits enthroned on a privy ingesting souls who pass through his anus into a dark pit. The numerous anal representations in the panel include crows flying out of an anus enveloped in fetid smoke, and a flute protruding from the posteriors of one of the damned—recalling the trumpet extending from the rear of the Yahoo ridden by Milord Goose.
and decoding his environment. The French terms for caricature are "charge" (noun) and "charger" (verb), meaning to charge or overcharge in the sense of exaggeration. By surcharging or overloading a singular trait or feature, the hidden character of the person or complex of persons is revealed. Caricature serves the purpose of unmasking people and situations, not simply through degrading them and stripping away their facade but in negating their self-perception and even sublimations. The disfiguration of a person in caricature could thus result in the discovery of a new truth.

The anal origins of the term "charger," to caricature, symbolizing the heaping of satiric dirt on the subject-victim, should be clear. The "overloading" of the drawing is at the same time a form of "décharger," that is, the expulsion of excrement upon the head of the victim as in the case of Swift's Yahoos. The caricaturist essentially eliminates unwanted subjects by discharging fecal matter at them. Enemies are seen as fallen and filthy, and as in the case of Luther and the Devil, the fight against them is expressed in the form of an anal counterattack.

The discharge in the form of a surcharge (charger) is a process of debunking, of exorcizing the Evil One by reducing him to a biological function generic to every living creature or besmearing him with the results of that process. Traditionally, the devil was a great illusionist and trickster and the job of the theologian was to unmask his multiple guises. David's merging of the devil with the "monstrous" British government translates the "punishments of hell" into everyday terms and points to the material and political origin of "evil." His dual attack on the political and religious emblems of the crown further serves to derogate the devil's supposed antithesis, the Church. The anticlerical Jacobins never ceased coupling the Church and the Throne, and their attempt to "de-Christianize" France had less to do with atheistic belief than with the desire to create a new religion suitable to the Republic.

If religion is sublimated anality, then the devil's anality is the negation of religion through the exposure of its origin. Analogously, the equation devil = shit is the negation of classicism; by exposing the disguised (sublimated) anality behind neoclassicism (rational state, organized religion, hierarchical authority) David reaffirmed the connections between political caricature and his "high art."

One of David's major sources for his cartoons was the English caricaturist, James Gillray. Although Gillray's vitriolic pen supported the Tories, his caricatures of George and Pitt were almost as savage as those of the Jacobins and of the parliamentary opposition. Nearly all of the French artists producing anti-British cartoons in 1793-1794 used Gillray's froglike depiction of the king's profile as the prototype for their image (Fig. 6). David was especially attracted to Gillray during the decade of the 1790s, and oddly enough, this admiration was mutual: the artist Landseer recalled that at an assembly of fellow English artists during the time of the French Revolution Gillray proposed a toast to David, "the first painter and patriot in Europe."

David based the figure of the devil in his Gouvernement Anglais on Gillray's caricatures of the 1790s. The English cartoonist's Lieutenant-Governor Gallstone Inspired by Electo or the Birth of Minerva, 1790. Etching.

Gillray portrays a pair of emaciated, ghoulish figures with long, bony arms close in physical type to David's image (Fig. 7). The skeletal frame of Electo is also winged and her hair consists of a tangled mass of slithering vipers. An even closer parallel may be found in Gillray's Sin, Death, and the Devil, depicting...
the struggle between Pitt and his Lord High Chancellor Thurlow, with Queen Charlotte throwing herself between them to shield Pitt from the fallen Thurlow's vengeance (Fig. 8). Pitt as King Death is a bony creature whose emaciated body is articulated similarly to the "flayed" devil in the David cartoon. In addition, he wears a crown on his head through which a serpent glides, and he wields a scepter which he grasps with both hands. The queen's hair, as the Alecto, is made up of a tangle of serpents and the figures are enveloped in infernal smoke, fire, and lightning.

It is certain that David knew this cartoon—one that particularly offended the royal family—because he used it again for his monumental Intervention of the Sabine Women in the late years of the decade (Fig. 9).26 The striking similarity between the central characters of the cartoon and the protagonists of the Sabines leaves no doubt that David employed Gillray's cartoon in formulating his composition. The assimilation of the cartoon to David's picture, in which the painter alludes to the factionalization of French political life, demonstrates the close affiliation of the political caricature and magisterial neoclassical productions.

David must also have been familiar with Gillray's abundant scatological references. These references extend from Pitt as a toadstool on the royal crown as dunghill (20 December 1791) to the king sitting on the toilet with a bad case of colic as he hears the news of the assassination of the king of Swedish ruler (11 April 1792) and even a nervous French king as he is separated from his wife and family (20 March 1793).28 But the most important for David's work was the 1798 cartoon entitled The French Invasion: or John Bull Bombarding the Bum-Boats which depicts George III as the map of England decimating on a sansculotte head developed out of the map of France and from whose mouth, like a giant harbor, a fleet of ships depart to invade the English coast (Fig. 10).29 The idea of releasing a barrage of excrement on the enemy may have been the point of departure for an appropriate Davian riposte.

Despite the traditional association of caricature and scatology, it is unlikely that the bourgeois David could have easily employed these references unless there had been a literary and ideological discourse of excremental metaphor at the time he produced his cartoons. The revolutionary rhetoric was distinctly antiaristocratic and became an instrument of attack on the old society. This society manifested itself through a privileged code of politesse and decorum, although its pornographic proclivities hinted at the pressures of excessive role-playing. The radical break with the past of feudal and aristocratic domination required a drastic transformation of speech, visual sign systems, dress codes, and body language. A discourse for the crowd was required to aid in encoding a new environment with an inclusive, nonprivileged space. The new discourse would derive from the street and even descend into the gutter where the mud could splash in all directions.

Scholars like myself investigating this material must, as Robert Darnton put it, dig "downward into intellectual history" and turn up "the dirt." Here the scholarly enterprise itself allows itself to come down from the summit and betray its own dynamic of anality. Darnton's delightful wordplay may be itself seen as a modern complement of what he calls the "Grub Street" intellectuals, those whom David's friend Henri Grégoire classified as the geniuses "dwelling in basements and in seventh-story garrets." The radical priest noted that "true genius is almost always sans-culotte."31 In a similar sense Darnton, like David and Grégoire, wanted to bring the Enlightenment "down to earth." Eighteenth-century authors were, after all, "men of flesh and blood, who wanted to fill their bellies, house their families, and make their way in the world." Many of the revolutionary pamphleteers and activists such as Carra, Gossard, and Fabre d'Englantine were marginalized by the academicians of the pre-Revolutionary epoch as "the excrement of literature." Their requests for government support were invariably refused in favor of those in good standing, i.e., whose writings promoted the regime and the ideology of the dominant elite.

The closed world of "high society" had to explode to make room for the "vile rabble" previously contained in the Grub Street ghetto. They had managed until then to survive by doing society's dirty work, bustling pornographic writings and titillating those in private who condemned them publicly. At the same time, the literary rabble vented their resentment against the cultural aristocracy who dominated the world of letters despotsically. As Darnton notes, it was "in the depths
of the intellectual underworld" that writers like Marat, Brissot, and Carra developed their revolutionary determination to stamp out the aristocratically polite worldview. Grub Street had to confront the privileged and exclusive academic bodies which monopolized the arts and letters and catered to polite society. Their smutty underworld libelles attacked the court, the church, the nobility, the academies, the Salons and every "respectable" institution of the Establishment including the monarchy itself. Like the political caricatures, they indicted the social order for its deviance, debauchery, and decadence, always stressing the connection between sexual and political corruption. Cartoons depicting Queen Marie-Antoinette in the arms of the Comte d'Artois, the Duchesse de Polignac, and even Lafayette constituted a graphic equivalent of the literary pornographers. They defamed and desacralized the sign system of social decorum and privilege, debunking the myths that legitimated it in the public mind. Their pornographic tirades and manifest tone of moral outrage succeeded in reaching the wider community which was more or less impervious to the rarefied abstractions of Enlightenment philosophy. The scatology of their pamphlets set the stage for the anti-elitist discourse of the revolutionary epoch.

The Revolution enfranchised the literary rabble and overthrew the old elite. David took an active role in this development by helping Marat and Lanjuinais to destroy the academies in 1793, including his own Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts. His work now assumed the propagandist forms of the crude Jacobinical journal Le Père Duchesne. The author of this journal, Hébert, belonged to the literary canaille before the Revolution and found his voice in the plainspoken and quasi-obscene language of the popular classes—especially the Parisian sansculottière. His newspaper enjoyed an enormous success from the time of its first appearance in November 1790.

The sobriquet "Père Duchesne" derived from a common figure of the popular imagination, but it became Hébert's notorious persona during the years 1790-1794. Hébert-Père Duchesne was identified in the mind of its large audience as coarse, candid, and jocular. He took as his model the "mud-slinging" texts of Rabelais, whom the Jacobins celebrated as the prophet of the Revolution for his desacralization of royal and clerical power. The journal's reports were deliberately couched in foul language to appeal to the crowd. Hébert was quite conscious of his use of language, at one point even praising the ghost of Marat in a dream for sharing his ability to "speak the language of the sans-culottes" (No. 254). He poured his unceasing venom on the nobility and wealthy commoners, joined the campaign to de-Christianize France, and from late 1792 violently abused the monarchy, preached war against monopolists, hoarders, and speculators, and systematically excoriated the Girondists—now including ex-Grub Street denizens such as Carra, Brissot, and Gorsas. He identified his persona with the poor and the sans-culottes, exploiting the economic problems to rally to his side the revolutionary cadres that inaugurated the Terror in September 1793. His appeal to the crowd threatened the Jacobin bourgeois leadership, and when the popular movement for which he fought lost steam in late 1799 he was seized on the very grounds he used to indict his enemies and galvanized on 24 March 1794.

But from June 1793 to February 1794 the mouthpiece of the sans-culottes movement contributed to the consolidation of the Revolutionary government and the organization of the dictatorship of public safety. This period coincides roughly with the commissioning of David's cartoons by the Committee of Public Safety and their execution. This period was dominated by the popular assimilation of social and class conflict in which Père Duchesne and the sans-culottes played a significant role. In the Year II, the customs, speech, costume and gestures of the ancien régime were no longer acceptable. Père Duchesne's obscenities were not only a leveling strategy but they also served to reprimand those who continued to maintain haughty airs and aristocratic appearances. Any gesture or sign that grated against the sense of equality could constitute grounds for arrest and worse. The sans-culottes, like the Grub Street boys, pitted themselves and their cultural expression against the pretended superiority of the elite. Eventually this extended to a condemnation of all "respectable people" who exploited the underclasses and lived off unearned profits.

The sans-culottes formed the cadre that enabled the most advanced faction of the radical bourgeoisie to subdue the aristocracy and moderate commoners. The Jacobins exploited the antagonism between the rich and the sans-culottes to rally the people to their side. Attacks against commercial monopoly and hoarding were among the stock themes of Père Duchesne. The journal castigated the wealthy and exalted the sans-culottes in this period, and it is also at this moment that David undertook the political cartoons which vaunted the sans-culottes and put down the English for analogous domestic abuses of the people.

I want to argue here that David's political caricatures are texts belonging to the same world of popular discourse as the Père Duchesne. The visual texts, no less than the written, carry the scatological metaphors which heap scorn (and more) on the counterrevolutionary forces at home and abroad. David swears in graphic language as colorful as the profanity of Hébert's journal. The repeated use of foutre throughout Père Duchesne is both an index of working-class identification (it was never used in polite society, and even the trial brief used only the letter "F" to designate Hébert's favorite word) and a metaphorical device to frame the messages the author transmits. Meaning "to fuck," "to be fucked" (foutu) or serving as a plain expletive, it also relates to common English terms "to screw," "to get screwed" and their endless adjectival variations. In both English and French the positive sexual signifier relates as well to a negative signified. Hébert's obsessionnal foutre (which eventually gets neutralized through repetition) broadly caricatures the revolutionary text in the way that David's metonymic devices and scatological metaphors caricature political life.

Père Duchesne employs the same metaphors as David including the "mirrored demon" (No. 35), the infestation of institutions with toads, lizards and other "venomous beasts" that require purification (Nos. 46, 176), soldiers getting passed off (No. 56), kings being led by the nose by unscrupulous politicians (No. 149), the stupid "didon" (Nos. 15, 99, 117, 128 [foutus dindons], 182, 183), and "Georges Dandin." He first uses the sobriquet Georges Dandin as early as No. 14, and it recurs with increasing frequency from 1792 to the end of the publication as

Père Duchesne attacks the English for trying to ruin French commerce, inciting the Girondins and the Vendeans to civil war, and hiring assassins to kill revolutionary leaders. He accuses Pitt and George III of sharpening the daggers to assassinate the French chieftains, a phrase he repeats often and which inspired another popular cartoon of the epoch entitled La Grande Aiguiseuse royale de poisgards anglais (The Great Royal Knife-Sharpening Establishment for English Daggers) (Fig. 2). Often attributed to David, it was designed by Dubois and shows an obese and panting George III (labeled “Georges Dandin”) crouching on all fours like a squirrel or chipmunk inside a wheel which drives the grinder’s stone on which a diabolical Pitt sharpens a blade. The French-looking man is surrounded by daggers and swords of money destined for assassins including one labeled “Cardai.” The legend reads: “The famous minister Pitt sharpening the daggers with which he intends to murder the defenders of the People’s Liberty. The fat Georges Dandin turning the wheel and panting from exhaustion.” Père Duchesne warns the sanscullotes that Georges Dandin is paying agents to vilify and even to destroy them, and that they alone provide the means to stop him (Nos. 246, 268). He admonishes them to follow the example of the republican armies standing up valiantly to the coalition of English, Prussian, and Austrian troops subsidized by Pitt and Georges Dandin and to war unceasingly against their domestic counterparts, “the royalists, moderates, aristocrats, and conspirators of every stamp.” He reminds them that the English murdered the sansculottes of Toulon and their Parisian brothers must avenge them in an open war in which “either France or England perishes.” David’s heroic sanscullotes gushing excrement on the royal army and Père Duchesne’s linkage between domestic and foreign struggle affirms their common perception of sansculotteism. They acknowledged that the popular movement made possible the formation of the Revolutionary government, thus quelling counterrevolution at home and the English-subsidized coalition abroad.

Above all, it is Père Duchesne’s scatological imagery and anality which links his “scribbling” to the Grub Street crowd and to David’s political caricatures. In one of his more endearing moments, he reduces the ill French king to basic human dimension by pleading with the court physicians to “cyst him, purge him, and heal him quickly” (No. 42). Later, referring to the king’s veto power during the early stages of the revolution, he rails against the “vile scoundrels who toady to Monsieur Veto to persuade him to shovel down the toilet (foutre à la chaise percée) the most salutary law ever written” (No. 99). He admonishes the lawmakers of the National Assembly “to purge France of all the excrements of despotism and aristocracy” (No. 153), while the “chronic indigestion” of the enemies of the people have made the Constituent Assembly “belch out and throw up these stinking excrements of the Club of 89 and the Feuillants,” I.e., constitutional royalists (No. 134). The city of Paris is constantly “aufus” (sweating) with “the excrement of the nobility” (No. 140). Given the right amount of troops and adequate provisions, the civil war in the Vendée could be suppressed and “all the excrements of royalty, aristocracy and the church will be swept away” (No. 252). The Girondins “ooze from the muck of the swamp . . . they are the vile excrements of royalism and Brissotism” (No. 330). When Père Duchesne pours verbal abuse on royal tyrants and emperors he is at his Rabelaisian best.

You believe yourself to be an all-powerful being because you rule over two or three kingdoms, so be it, fuckhead! A simple store merchant, a poor bluffer who possesses only a pig, is a thousand times more powerful than you. Yes, Père Duchesne at the head of the brave sans-culottes, even before he reaches the age of a puppy, will tread on the skull of all the kings, and will shit (fera caca) on all their thrones. (No. 117).

This is the language of David’s cartoons and the sanscullote discourse that the Committee of Public Safety wanted to incorporate into its public message during the critical period of September 1793.

Ironically, however, by the time David began finalizing his designs the danger posed by Hébert and his popular movement persuaded the Jacobins to terminate his career. Just two months before David submitted his cartoons to the Committee for approval, Hébert was guillotined on the basis of circumstantial evidence and hearsay. Among the jurors who declared him guilty was the artist Topino-Lebrun, David’s student. This violent end to the sanscullote mouthpiece and the deliberately propagandistic intent of the political caricatures helps clarify the wellsprings of David’s expression of anality.

The direct association of the sansculotte with excrement is not only the complement of the direct language of Père Duchesne. It carries a subtext as well of the bourgeois counterattack against the sanscullotes on the part of David and his Jacobin colleagues. The affiliation of the sanscullotes and muck is a put-down of the vile rabble that they now wanted to suppress. One clue to the breakup is the economic signification of the English Government, with its all-out warfare on taxation and controls. On this issue the sansculottes and the Jacobin bourgeoisie fundamentally differed. The sansculotte actually advocated taxation and controls, while the Revolutionary bourgeoisie favored economic freedom—an opposition which was instrumental in the Jacobins’ eventual expulsion as a snobby, sardonic class. Even so, the Jacobins defended freedom of enterprise; they insisted on fixed wages and prices rather than market fluctuations and heavy taxation of merchant capital. Hence they espoused a social ideal that contradicted economic growth. But the members of the Committee of Public Safety were mainly free traders, and rejected a controlled economy as a permanent policy. They resigned themselves temporarily to the situation only because they were unable to carry on the war without price-fixing. David’s anus-faced George III and his rectified-up excremental taxes is also a concealed critique of sanscullote economics.

I have argued for the close connections between these cartoons and the Jacobins’ perilous neoclassical productions. I want to conclude with a discussion of David’s painting of 1793 to 1794 to clarify my arguments. Shortly after Louis XVI’s execution, Père Duchesne wrote a mock funeral oration for his sanscullote audience, part of an ongoing subtext of his journal which condemned the very notion of monarchy. Using the language of Grub Street, he chronicled a lurid family history of cuckoldry, buggery, sadism, and corruption which justified the king’s punishment. He warned that it was now up to the republicans to finish their task:

[we must] purge France of all the fucking scoundrels (pouf-bouffes) who participated in the crimes of this tyrant. There remain a great number including his wife and his bugger of a race which still survive. Believe me, you will never be able to rest until they are destroyed. Little fish become large, so take guard, fucker, liberty hangs by a hair [itailles mine]. (No. 212).

Père Duchesne’s prophecy was fulfilled almost immediately after publication, for his next issue mourns the passing of Lepelletier de Saint-Fargeau, a deputy who voted for the king’s death. Lepelletier was stabbed by a former royal guard on the eve of Louis XVI’s execution, and died shortly afterwards. Père Duchesne called his assassin “one of the vilest of scoundrels,” and he now feared that this act would encourage the royalists to further assassinations. He praised Lepelletier as a “brave bugger whose only blemish was his nobility, but who overcame this handicap by enrolling in the life of the sans-culotte and dying in the service of liberty.” He also lavished his praise for the magnificent cortège that transported Lepelletier’s remains to the Pantheon, and contrasted the crowd’s reverence for the deputy with their disdain for the funeral of Louis XVI.

It was David who arranged the ceremonies for Lepelletier together with the musician Gossec. Lepelletier’s body was placed on public view, on the pedestal of Louis XVI’s statue which had been destroyed. The pedestal was flanked by steps bearing candelaabra and incense burners. A plaque on the pedestal quoted the martyr’s last words: “I am content to have spilled my blood for my country. I hope that it will serve to consolidate liberty and equality and expose their adversaries.” Père Duchesne’s call for self-sacrifice and all-out warfare on traitors who threatened the people were thematically expressed in the ceremonies organized by David.

David further decided to commemorate the event with a portrait of the martyr based on the public viewing of the corpse. In his speech to the National Convention declaring his intention, he imagined an aged patriarch explaining to his large family the motifs underlying his representation of freedom’s hero:

Do you see the sword hanging over his head by just a hair? Well, children, that shows how much courage Michel Lepelletier and
his noble companions needed to rout the evil tyrant who had oppressed us for so long, for, had they set a foot wrong, the hair would have been broken and they would all have been killed. David's portrait (now known only from a drawn copy by Devosge and miscellaneous fragments, the original having been destroyed) clearly abandoned topical realism to introduce the metaphorical sword suspended by a hair—a device borrowed from Père Duchesne (Fig. 11). The journalist used the phrase "la liberté ne tient qu'à un cheveu." Uttered in nearly identical contexts, David's representation of the text slips in the direction of the political caricature. The huge sword, dripping with blood, the pommel of which has been elaborated into the head of a Gallic cock, dominates the upper half of the image and pierces a card which reads "I voted for the tyrant's death." These metonymic devices transform the picture into a political tract as declamatory and propagandistic as the images of Père Duchesne and Gillray (Fig. 12).

The dripping blood, the gaping wound, and the suspended sword dangling over the nude torso do more: they create an agglomeration of motifs bordering on anal eroticism. The love of the martyr's body has been represented in the objectified form of a fetish together with the instrument of his martyrdom. The will to apotheosis is negated by the release of libidinous energy that has been displaced in the objects and the infantile fascination with bodily cavities and its secretions. Something similar occurred in the making of the Death of Marat, in which Marat's diseased body, gaping wound, and bloodstained instruments are almost perversely presented as objects of tender regard and saintliness. The de-Christianization of Jacobin imagery broke through the repressed anality, and allowed this material to come to the surface of cultural practice.

What happens in this period of crisis is the dissolution of the boundaries between high and low art. Under the pressures of the terror and the setbacks of utopian projections, the once heroic, idealized space is transgressed by the heretofore excluded other. Classic neoclassicism was marked by the absence of the enemy, but in the later stage the painting is noted for the metonymic presence of the adversary. David's Hector and Andromache is often juxtaposed with the Lepeltier and Marat to suggest continuity; when in fact they are a revolution apart. Save for Homeric allusions to the Trojan wars, the enemy other is absent from the earlier work and Hector is enbalmmed and puffed up to heroic dimensions. But in the later images the instruments of the protagonist's demise, representing the metaphorical presence of the enemy, are foregrounded in his traditionally exclusive space. Hence their greater degree of realism and regression. David's incorporation of texts vital to the narrative and the iconic rendering of objects like swords, knives, pens, inkwell, and trompe l'oeil wooden crate gave to his martyr portraits the vernacular language of Père Duchesne and the emblematic power of Gillray's cartoons (Fig. 13). I believe this is true as well of the Joseph Barra (Fig. 14). The ordinariness of the adolescent protagonist and propagandistic intent of the work forced David to seek a symbolic characterization. The painter came up with an androgynous being compressed into a national icon. The prostrate naked hero clutches his tricolored cockade to his breast with both hands as the last act of his young life. He wears an expression akin to rapture. What is most curious about the figure is its effeminate character; both the face and the figure resemble more a pubescent female than an adolescent male. Barra has been transformed into the fairytale Cinderella, the nascent version of Marianne, only to be seductively raped and murdered. David's manipulation of the historical facts and the picture's emblematic qualities again attest to the breakdown of the traditional categories.

David did several terrifying images of cruelty and mutilation in the years 1790-1794, including the Triumph of the French People, showing two ferocious sansculottes stabbing fallen kings, and a portrayal of the revolutionary General Dampierre in battle supporting his right leg severed below the knee. These images evoke the writings of David's contemporary, the Marquis de Sade, with the Barra in particular recalling the youthful victims of de Sade's The 120 Days of Sodom. An aristocratic denizen of Grub Street, de Sade became radicalized during his long imprisonment in the Bastille and at Charenton. In March 1790 the constituent assembly ordered the release of all prisoners held by lettre de cachet (a royal prerogative), and with his liberation de Sade enthusiastically embraced the Revolution in its early stages. He became secretary and speaker for the Section des Piques (formerly Vendôme), the section to which Robespierre belonged. It was in the latter function that he was chosen to compose a funeral oration for Lepeltier and Marat, which enjoyed such much success that it was printed and distributed at public expense. De Sade's writings have a strong affinity with Grub Street; his libel cases all belong to the upper classes and include princes, nobles, bishops, and wealthy commoners. They are evil doers and criminals who gained their wealth by exploiting the poor. And almost invariably they sodomize and are sodomized, and possess abundant coprophagous appetites (La Duclos, the storyteller of The 120 Days, recounts a hundred stories concerning excremental orgies). De Sade's sexual
character was essentially anal, and he openly acknowledged his coprophilia. He attempted to subvert the conventions of polite society with his scatology, his lasciviousness, and his overtly erotic behavior. He inundates his aristocratic characters and their victims with shit, vomit, and snuf. His sexual lexicon is as crude as that of Pére Duchesne, and he joins pornographic material to spheres of experience normally kept separated by sociomoral taboo. In the middle of his notorious *Philosophie in the Boudoir* (1785), he abruptly introduces a political tract entitled “Yet Another Effort, Frenchmen, If You Would Become Republicans,” which rages against religion and monarchy. Clerics, in his opinion, “should be treated as charlatans and jeered at, ridiculed, covered with filth in all the public squares and marketplaces in France’s largest cities.” Here de Sade joins the anality of the caricatural tradition with the revolutionary discourse central to David’s cartoons.

Ironically, the onset of the terror forced de Sade to recognize his humanity, while David discovered his anar-sadism. Unlike de Sade, David refused to authorize executions when the head of his section, and was exiled for his moderatism. It was while de Sade languished in prison that David produced his two cartoons and painted his image of *Barra*. This inversion of the two personalities under revolutionary pressures as well as their expression in high and low art constitutes the themes of Peter Weiss’s play *Marat/Sade*—or to give its full, explanatory title, *The Persecution and Assassination of Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade*. Contrasting the revolutionary idealism of Marat with the shrewder cynicism of de Sade, Weiss signals the dangers of infantile regression within an institutionalized surrogate for society. His own extensive use of scatological metaphor acknowledges the ideological discourse of de Sade and its indictment of a corrupt ruling class. At the play’s end, the stage directions call for Marat’s body to reproduce the David painting, with one arm slung over the edge of the bath, quill pen still in hand, and messages in the other. Weiss’s anar-sadism and anamorphosis to transmit its political message, strategies harvested from his researches into eighteenth-century political caricature and neoclassicism.

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3. This was the beginning of a widespread crackdown on the English presence in France: on 9 October the National Convention decreed the total prohibition of the selling or wearing of any English goods, and all subjects of Great Britain were to be placed under house arrest, and if absent all their belongings were to be confiscated for the benefit of the republic. See *Affaires d’Angleterre*, *The Universal Magazine*, vol. 85, October 1790, pp. 306-307.

4. For David, see *La caricature révolutionnaire, see The Despatch of Earl Gower, English Ambassador at Paris from June 1790 to August 1792*, Cambridge, 1985, p. 357.


24. The term *appareiller* carried sinister connotations for the sansculottes and one risked being put into this category; see O. Browning, ed. *The Despatches of Earl Gower, English Ambassador at Paris from June 1790 to August 1792*, Cambridge, 1985, p. 357.
