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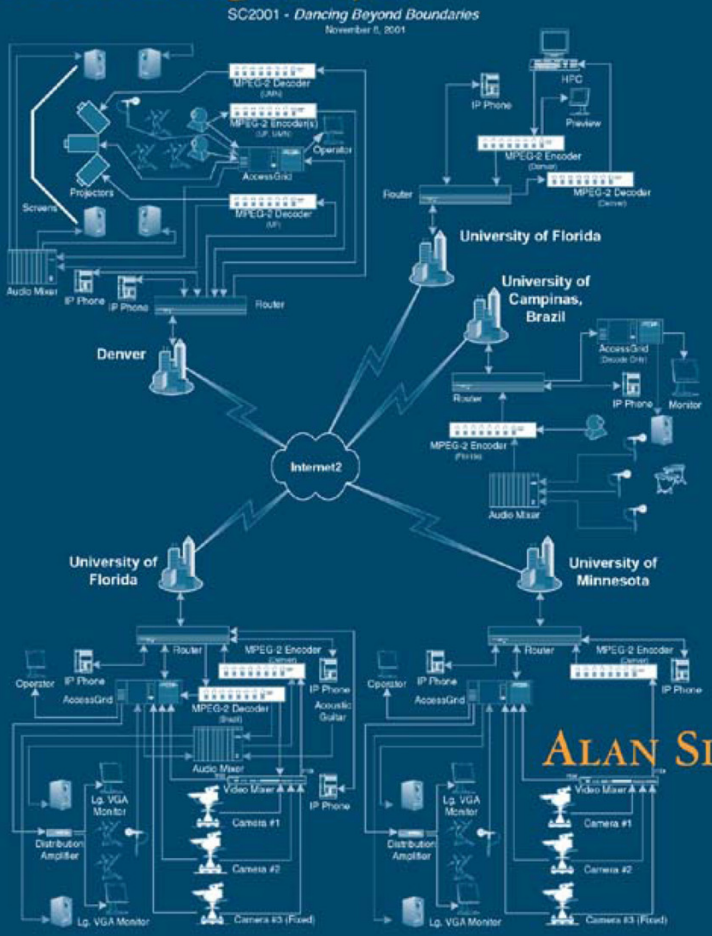
Representation and Identity from Versailles to the Present

The Performing Subject



ALAN SIKES

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The Performing Subject

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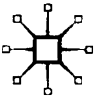

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1. The Performing Subject: Identity and Representation in the Modern and the Postmodern Eras

During my days as a doctoral student at the University of Minnesota, the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance collaborated with an international array of professional and educational institutions to premiere a groundbreaking performance piece called *Dancing beyond Boundaries*. Produced in conjunction with the 2001 SuperComputing Global Conference in Denver, the performance made use of the World Wide Web to link a multitude of artists and engineers working simultaneously in Colorado, Minnesota, Florida, and Brazil. The performance was spearheaded by the Digital Worlds Institute at the University of Florida at Gainesville and featured an original dance composition by Minneapolis choreographers Daniel Shapiro and Joanie Smith; dancers performed the composition in Denver, Gainesville, and Minneapolis to accompaniment provided by percussionist Mestre Boca in Sao Paolo. The audience at each site could watch both live performers and live transmissions of performers at other sites projected onto screens situated around each performance space. *Dancing beyond Boundaries* was also broadcast real time over the World Wide Web. Anyone with access to the Web could view the performance as it unfolded in virtual space; videos of the performance are still posted on the production Web site; one can view the videos at http://www.digitalworlds.ufl.edu/projects/dbb/

I begin with *Dancing beyond Boundaries* because I believe its extension of performance into the virtual realm suggests an ongoing transformation in the conception and execution of performance itself. The event challenges a traditional understanding of a performance as a discretely identifiable act set aside from other activities through its occurrence in a particular place and time. Noting the expanding horizon of performance now made possible by

new Internet technologies, Digital Worlds Institute director James Oliverio remarks that "*Dancing Beyond Boundaries* happened in four physical spaces, each with its own audience, plus the fifth 'space' of the Internet, where people around the world watched with a host of different perspectives. So where did this piece happen?" Oliverio rhetorically inquires, and then observes that "the piece really 'happened' in the interconnection between the four physical locations, and this connectivity added a large number of 'fifth' spaces as people experienced it over the Internet."[1] *Dancing beyond Boundaries* therefore resisted localization to a single space and, by extension, resisted temporalization within a single time frame. The event occurred on the World Wide Web, a venue that can simultaneously transmit and preserve the performance itself; given its continued existence on the Web, the performance is available for review, or even conceivably for revival, at any given moment.

Since *Dancing beyond Boundaries* resists containment within a single set of spatial and temporal parameters, it also resists reduction to a specific act set apart from other activities and thereby confounds traditional definitions of performance. And there are further insights to draw from the sort of digital dispersions that characterize the *Dancing beyond Boundaries* event. If the event challenges a conventional notion of performance as a discretely identifiable act, it also challenges a conventional notion of the performer as a discretely identifiable subject. While the performers themselves remained at specific spatial locations and within specific temporal frames, their presence in performance reached far beyond those locations and frames, stretching instead across the Access Grid or AG offered by the Digital Worlds Institute. "A key feature of this system," Oliverio maintains, "is the ability of each of the AG nodes to capture up to four video images simultaneously and transmit them to all of the other collaborating locations. This multicast capability not only enabled the artists to see and speak to each other, but to create original music and dance as fluidly as if all the performers were in the same physical space. Yet the participants were spread across North and South America," Oliverio adds, "and never graced the same stage except in the virtual studio."[2] The performers of *Dancing beyond Boundaries*, in other words, are no longer bound by immediate spatial and temporal coordinates; rather, their identities as performers are revealed in the AG, where their actions are made available to viewers across the traditional spatial and temporal borders of performance itself.

Thus with his invocation of a virtual studio in which neither the performance nor the performer are conceived as singular entities tied to discrete spatial and temporal coordinates, Oliverio not only suggests a critical redefinition of performance, but one of subjectivity as well. Such redefinitions

have already emerged as foci of a number of recent critical studies, many of which have examined the impact of a historical shift from the Modern to the Postmodern eras. Central to this shift is an increased skepticism regarding claims to the stability of political or economic values and the coherence of philosophical or aesthetic truths; of course, the rapid social and cultural changes associated with Modernity had already called these claims into question, but the generalized anxiety invoked by such changes often resulted in attempts to reassert regimes of value and truth by reinforcing them or reinventing them as necessary. The transition to Postmodernity is therefore frequently characterized as an attenuation of this anxiety, an acknowledgment of the impossibility of assigning fixed values and asserting absolute truths. Thus for Jean-François Lyotard the Postmodern condition is marked by an "incredulity toward metanarratives," the overarching explanatory mechanisms that grant legitimacy to every assertions of value; for Ihab Hassan this condition is marked on the one hand by systems of "indeterminacy" that render truth uncertain and on the other hand by appeals to "immanence" that define truth in relation to the inner workings of the systems themselves; and for Gianni Vattimo this condition is marked by a "tendency toward dissolution" that unravels the interlocking social and cultural values charged with ensuring the stability of Modernity itself.[3]

In its questioning of ostensibly immutable truths and values, the Postmodern theoretical turn has inspired new investigations into the status of both performance and subjectivity. Rather than a stable entity possessing fixed spiritual, mental, or physical qualities, the subject is now frequently conceived as the precipitate of variously mutable subject positions engendered within complex networks of power relations and discursive systems. And rather than an activity that merely reflects the qualities of a preexisting subject, performance is now likewise reconceived as a practice that participates in the actual production of the subject. My study builds on both these critical projects, but seeks to uncover the specific relations between performance and subjectivity posited by the projects themselves. My study also takes an explicitly historiographic view of these projects, for in seeking to understand Postmodern relations of subjectivity to performance I investigate them vis-à-vis their antecedents in the Modern era. By exploring the historical shifts in these relations on either side of the Modern/Postmodern divide, I hope to assess the critical traction of the new Postmodern configurations while always holding before me the critical power of the older Modern configurations as well. Such an assessment, of course, carries important ethical overtones, especially given the ways in which performance is now held to shape the very contours of subjectivity. Such ethical

considerations will in turn prompt me to examine my own relation to the performing subject, its emergence within the text that I write and that others will read. Committed to foregrounding my own status as a subject engaged in the performance of scholarly inquiry, the textual traces of my engagement appear, insistently, throughout my study.

Certainly the *Dancing beyond Boundaries* event outlined earlier provides useful insights into the emergent Postmodern relations of subjectivity to performance; the dispersion of both the performance itself and its participating subjects across the World Wide Web divests both of the stability and coherence once esteemed by Modernity, situating them instead within a milieu of contingency and fragmentation that now characterizes Postmodernity. Moreover, the Internet venue employed by the event calls attention to the particular intersections of subjectivity and performance produced in this Postmodern milieu, for the performance venue highlights crucial aspects of the subjectivities of its participants—their particular fields of artistic and technological expertise; their institutional, regional, and national affiliations; and their familiarity with various linguistic, musical, choreographic, and technical modes of communication. The proliferation of new performance venues on the World Wide Web will increasingly call attention to such aspects of subjectivity and will thereby prompt increasing inquiry into the shift from a Modern to a Postmodern relation of subjectivity to performance. A number of important questions will fuel this inquiry: How can one define the parameters of this relation as it now appears in the current cultural landscape? What are the historical contexts for this relationship? What are its ethical ramifications? And how do the social, political, economic, and technical conditions in which it emerges shape this relationship and, indeed, shape my analysis as well?

Such questions are further complicated—especially in reference to an event like *Dancing beyond Boundaries*—when set in critical relation to yet another term: representation. The word representation is invoked in a wide variety of contexts, but its uses generally imply a referential function; a representation designates an object other than itself. Frequently the representation in question bears some sort of likeness to its referent; while the representation may radically refract its referent and render it almost unrecognizable in the process, it must retain some degree of this likeness in order to fulfill its function. Such representations are frequently cast as secondary copies of their authentic or original referents, and indeed many critics have traditionally defined performance through reference to such secondary copies. One might then view *Dancing beyond Boundaries* as a complex representation of its referents, one that produces lifelike images of its participants

then presents them on the Internet with the aid of advanced new technologies. Yet I argue that these burgeoning technologies have begun to strain the traditional distinction between participant and image, thereby troubling the distinction between representation and referent. Such technologies challenge the very definition of performance as a variety of representation and issue a reminder that definitions of performance do change over time; though this conception has played a crucial role in the history of the West, a new assessment of its historical contingency could reveal much concerning the relation of subjectivity to performance at the current moment, a moment in which the term representation no longer carries its traditional currency.

The historical variation invested in definitions of performance—especially in definitions of theatrical performance—date at least to the fourth century BCE, when the earliest accounts of performance as *mimesis* begin to appear in the philosophical works of the ancient Greeks. In *Poetics* Aristotle argues that all forms of poetry, as well as arts like painting and singing, are based upon acts of imitation; indeed, according to Aristotle an imitative instinct at once educational and enjoyable is instilled in all individuals at birth: "Imitation comes naturally to human beings from childhood—and in this they differ from other animals in having a strong propensity to imitation and in learning their earliest lessons through imitation; so does the universal pleasure in imitation."[4] Given its role in both instruction and amusement, Aristotle argues that imitation inspires right action when utilized in proper fashion; he therefore accords imitation a prominent position in his famous definition of tragic poetry: "Tragedy is an imitation of an action that is admirable, complete, and possesses magnitude; in language made pleasurable, each of its species separated in different parts; performed by actors, not through narration; effecting through pity and fear the purification of such emotions."[5]

Yet in claiming that imitation serves a useful function Aristotle departs from the opinion of his mentor Plato. In the *Republic* Plato argues that imitation distracts individuals both from the contemplation of truth and the virtue that such contemplation inspires. In its singular focus on the visible aspects of the world, imitation draws attention away from the invisible principles that animate the world; such principles are accessible only to abstract reason, and so imitation cannot aid in their discovery: "Imitation really consorts with a part of us that is far from reason, and the result of their being friends and companions is neither sound nor true."[6] Theatrical imitation is particularly perilous in this respect, because the false images it produces arouse the passions, those reckless emotions that further distance individuals from rational thought. Given its tendency to lead people astray, Plato issues his famous edict that banishes imitation from his ideal state: "If you admit

the pleasure-giving Muse, whether in lyric or in epic poetry, pleasure and pain will always be kings in your city instead of law or the thing that everyone has always believed to be best, namely, reason."[7]

The debate over theatrical performance and its function as imitative representation is thus nearly as old as the history of Western performance itself—while Aristotle praises the utility of such representations, Plato warns that these representations are too easily confused with their referents. This debate highlights the unstable relation of representation to referent that haunts theatrical performance, or indeed any performance that claims to offer an accurate representation of its referent. This instability is often cited as the impetus for a rearticulation of performance that might sidestep the troubled relation of representation to referent. The advanced technologies used in *Dancing beyond Boundaries*, for instance, prompt a sea change in the conception of this relation. Of course, the expansion of performance into the realm of electronic media has already exerted profound effects upon the relation itself—film performance allowed a dissemination of representations far beyond the immediate domain of their referents, and television allowed such dissemination to occur in real time. Yet the highly interactive nature of an event like *Dancing beyond Boundaries* further intensifies the strain upon the relation of representation to referent. Given the degree to which participants could simultaneously transmit and receive images during the event, the images seem less like mere reflections of the participants and more like modes of encounter with one another—an extension of the participants themselves into the virtual terrain of the World Wide Web. One could in fact carry this point further and claim that in this case the constitution of the image is inseparable from the constitution of the subject. This very claim now undergirds a recent reconception of performance, one that counters the old view of performance as imitative copy with a new view of performance as generative process. This "performative" model posits not the constitution of an image of the subject, but instead the constitution of the subject itself through uptake and iteration of specific actions and attitudes—a range of subject positions that delimit the very contours of subjectivity. How might we rethink the relation of subjectivity to performance so that the subject is conceived not as "reflected" but as "effected" in the act of performance itself?

One may trace the genesis of the performativity model to the work of J. L. Austin, who in 1955 popularized the term "performative" in a series of lectures later published under the title *How to Do Things with Words*. In his text, Austin begins by noting a distinction between two types of utterance: "constatives," or utterances that relate concrete facts, and "performatives," or utterances that effect the very action to which they

refer; an example of the former would be: "I hope the home team wins the big game," and an example of the latter: "I bet you five dollars the home team wins the big game." Austin then proceeds to evaluate the power of the performative to accomplish its designated task according to what he calls the relative "felicity" or "infelicity" of the utterance in question. Crucially, a principal criterion for felicity is a close correspondence between the performative utterance and the actual thoughts or feelings of the speaking subject; this criterion, presupposing as it does a fundamental agency that accrues to the subject, seems especially important to Austin, for the existence of the sovereign subject figures crucially in his explication of performative utterances. Indeed, the efficacy of the performative seems wholly reliant upon the presumption of this sovereign subject, as Austin notes: "We said that the idea of a performative utterance was that it was to be the performance of an action. Actions can only be performed by persons, and obviously in our cases the utterer must be the performer."[8] Thus for Austin "the 'I' who is doing the action thus comes essentially into the picture. An advantage of the original first person singular present indicative active form . . . is that this implicit feature of the speech-situation is made explicit."[9]

The assumed existence of this sovereign subject subsequently forms the basis of Jacques Derrida's critique of Austin in his 1971 essay "Signature Event Context." Derrida challenges Austin's reliance upon subjective intention as the principal means for testing the legitimacy of performative utterances. According to Austin, the subject must really mean what he or she says for the performative to ring true; Austin therefore excludes from consideration all "nonserious" utterances—like those of an actor reciting lines upon the stage—because such "etiolated" modes of address do not reflect actual intentions of sovereign speaking subjects. According to Derrida, however, these modes are merely more transparent instances of the iterable foundation of any linguistic act. Language, in other words, is founded not on the original context of its inception but instead on its fundamental citationality, its ability to insert itself into any number of citational contexts. Thus rather than basing the felicity of the performative on subjective intention—on its fidelity, that is, to an original context—Derrida grounds its success in the citational function of language: "For, finally, is not what Austin excludes as anomalous, exceptional, 'nonserious,' that is, citation (on the stage, in a poem, or in a soliloquy) the determined modification of a general citationality without which there would not even be a 'successful' performative?"[10] By the end of the essay, Derrida argues that the subject itself emerges, alongside its linguistic acts, from the field of possible iterations. Inasmuch as this field—the field of writing, to invoke the term used by Derrida—predates

the subject, it provides the range of potential positions that the subject may reiterate, or indeed must reiterate, in order to appear within any subjective context: "We are . . . witnessing," Derrida claims, ". . . a more and more powerful historical unfolding of a general writing of which the system of speech, consciousness, meaning, presence, truth, etc. would only be an effect, to be analyzed as such."[11]

Derrida therefore reconceives performativity not as the operation of a sovereign subject but instead as the operation that actually brings that subject into being. His reconception also links performativity theory to the Postmodern turn in contemporary criticism, for in questioning the presupposed existence of the sovereign subject, he is aligned with other Postmodern thinkers who question the presupposed existence of various coherent truths and stable values. Finally, in establishing a link between Postmodernity and performativity, Derrida offers insight into the older link between an antecedent Modern era and earlier conceptions of performance now under contest. Here Modernity is associated with the conception of performance as a deployment of representation, one frequently held to reflect some deep seated truth regarding the identity of the human subject. By contrast, Postmodernity is associated with a growing incredulity toward this reflective function and champions not the revelation of identity through performance practices but the actual production of identity through performative acts. This new notion of Postmodern performativity may be more useful than its Modern forebear for analyzing an event like *Dancing beyond Boundaries*, for it allows us to rethink the subject not as a stable entity open to coherent reflection in performance, but as an entity fashioned in the performative flux of the World Wide Web; such a subject in flux would not possess a single essence or kernel of identity that precedes and preconditions its participation in the dance event; rather, it would exist as the confluence of iterative options offered by the event itself. This new notion of a subject constituted through the uptake and articulation of such options challenges earlier conceptions of the sovereign subject and suggests a major shift in relations between performance and subjectivity from the Modern to the Postmodern eras.

The writings of Michel Foucault offer a useful entry point into interrogations of this shift, for they have figured crucially in conceptualizing the break between the Modern and Postmodern eras. In his influential *Order of Things*, for instance, Foucault links the advent of the Modernity to significant changes in the relation of representation to referent, changes that he claims surface in the final decades of the eighteenth century. According to Foucault, the "Classical era" that preceded the Modern era displayed a relation of representation to reality quite distinct from the period that followed. During the Classical era, entrenched hierarchies of political, economic, religious, and

sexual privilege posited a model of representation conceived as a table or grid, one that could display a perfect reflection of reality itself.[12] By the end of the eighteenth century, however, these hierarchies faced massive upheavals in the form of calls for political liberalism, economic mobility, religious pluralism, and sexual equality. Such upheavals loosened the link between representation and reality; the referent flew from the clutches of a representation that would hereafter struggle in vain to capture it once again: "Withdrawn into their essence . . . things, in their fundamental truth, have now escaped the space of the table; instead of being no more than the constancy that distributes their representations always in accordance with the same forms, they turn in on themselves, posit their own volumes, and define for themselves an internal space which, to our representation, is on the exterior."[13]

Crucially, the shift to Modernity extended its influence not only over the world at large, but also over the individual subject. Given the uncertain relation of representation to referent, the Modern subject emerged as a troubled figure who struggled to fashion representations of its own reality with tools inevitably inadequate to the task. Foucault names this Modern subject "man" and claims that while human beings existed before the Modern era, "man" as he is currently conceived did not. Foucault characterizes Modern man as a subject frustrated by his failure to turn his gaze back upon himself; the "man" who seeks himself in representation can never grasp the full reality of the "man" he finds therein. Foucault therefore claims that man is a peculiar double entity—one always other to himself, always linked to an aspect of himself he cannot know. This unknown aspect, Foucault remarks, "is not lodged in man like a shriveled up nature or stratified history; it is, in relation to man, the Other: the Other that is not only a brother but a twin, born, not of man, nor in man, but beside him and at the same time, in an identical newness, in an unavoidable duality."[14] Thus man eternally seeks self-knowledge yet finds that full self-knowledge elusive, since representation is incapable of capturing the total reality of the self. For Foucault, the predicament of man is ultimately insoluble; the inadequacy of representation to its referent renders it incapable of revealing the hidden truth of the subject. Foucault argues, in fact, that the project of Modernity is wholly moribund and urges man to abandon the relentless pursuit of self that will never come to fruition:

> To all those who still wish to talk about man, about his reign or his liberation, to those who still ask themselves questions about what man is in his essence, to all those who wish to take him as their starting point in their attempts to reach the truth, to all those who, on the other hand, refer all knowledge back to the truths of man himself, to all those who refuse to formalize without anthropologizing,

> who refuse to mythologize without demystifying, who refuse to think without immediately thinking that it is man who is thinking, to all these warped and twisted forms of reflection we can answer only with a philosophical laugh—which means, to a certain extent, a silent one.[15]

I find great traction in the analysis of Modernity offered by Foucault—both his account of its early origin and his assessment of its current decline. Yet I wish to complicate his analysis by noting how the relation of representation to referent has displayed many different facets over the course of the Modern era. One way to approach these facets is by tracking the successive rise and fall of various Modern performance movements. A first aspect, for instance, may be found in the liberation of representation from referent; no longer beholden to the traditional links between former and latter, the subject is now charged with forging new links of its own devising. Thus in his 1827 Preface to *Cromwell*, Victor Hugo dismisses outmoded standards of Classical drama and its emphasis on idealized action; according to Hugo the new Romantic drama proves superior to the older Classical form because it "strives to do as nature does, to mingle in its creations, but without confounding them, light and darkness, the sublime and the ridiculous, in other words, the body and the soul, the animal and the intellectual."[16] For Hugo the Romantic spirit is the spirit of the new age, one that no longer unnaturally idealizes all aspects of life: "the *Modern* genius springs from the fruitful union of the grotesque type and the sublime—modern genius, so complex and varied in its forms, so inexhaustible in its creations, and in that respect diametrically opposed to the uniform simplicity of the ancients: let us show that that is the point from which we must start to establish the real, radical difference between the two literatures."[17]

Yet this first aspect will give rise to a second, one in which the uncertain correspondence of representation to referent requires the subject endlessly to refine the connections that it seeks to establish between them. Consider here the rejection of the Romantic tradition in the 1888 Preface to *Miss Julie* by August Strindberg. Snubbing the shallow characterizations inherited from Romanticism, Strindberg promotes a new Naturalist drama that attempts to unearth the complex motivations lurking behind everyday actions: "Usually an event in life—and this is a fairly new discovery—is the result of a whole series of more or less deep rooted causes. . . . I am proud to say that this complicated way of looking at things is in tune with the times."[18] For Strindberg, then, Naturalist drama provides a more accurate and penetrating form of art than its antecedents could offer, one that clearly captures the increasing chaos of contemporary life: "Since the persons in my

play are *Modern* characters, living in a transitional era more hectic and hysterical than the previous one at least, I have depicted them as more unstable, as torn and divided, a mixture of the old and the new."[19]

Again, however, this second aspect will give rise to a third, as a growing desire to reunite representation and referent captivates a subject despondent over the division that arises between them. In this case the 1917 Preface to *The Breasts of Tiresias* by Guillaume Apollinaire proves revealing, especially in its rejection of Naturalist attempts at the careful reproduction of everyday life; such attempts, Apollinaire maintains, sap the drama of its unique creative capacities. "In order to attempt, if not a renovation of the theatre, at least an original effort, I thought it necessary to come back to nature itself, but without copying it photographically," Apollinaire claims, adding that "when man wished to imitate walking, he created the wheel, which does not resemble a leg."[20] Apollinaire therefore abandons Naturalism and coins the term Surrealist to describe his play, thereby supplying the name for a movement that will use art not to replicate the surface features of daily existence, but to plumb the depths of dreams and release a new creative energy into waking life. Invoking the perceptual distortions that characterize not only the operations of the unconscious but also those of the new Surrealist movement, Apollinaire remarks that "In my opinion this art will be *Modern*, simple, swift-paced, with the short cuts or expansions that are needed to move the spectator."[21]

I will return to each of these facets of the Modern relation between representation and referent, giving each in turn a detailed examination in this text. For the moment, however, I merely wish to note that the work of Foucault allows a conception of Modern performance as a series of efforts to uncover the hidden truth of the subject. Yet in his remarks on the futility of this pursuit, Foucault enacts a turn from the Modern to the Postmodern era, one that for Foucault results in the death of Modern man himself. Indeed, this shift from Modernity to Postmodernity is indicated by a shift in methodology Foucault undertakes during the 1970s, a shift from the practice of "archaeology" to that of "genealogy." With archaeology, Foucault probed a variety of discursive formations to determine the rules that govern the appearance of truth statements, particularly those that pertained to the status of the subject. With genealogy, however, Foucault turned his attention to the constitution of the subject itself, here viewed as a precipitate of the discourses explored in the earlier archaeological efforts. Thus the genealogical project launched by Foucault in his later texts invokes the Postmodern conception of the subject as the product of various discursive formations; describing the work of genealogy, Foucault notes in his essay "The Subject

and Power" that "my objective . . . has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects."[22]

As revealed by the title of the essay, the operations of power figure fundamentally in the production of the subject within a given web of discursive practices. Foucault conceives power not as a force that acts upon a preexisting subject; on the contrary, power actively fashions the subject through its operations within discourse. This new perspective on power allows a view of the Modern subject through a later Postmodern lens; in this view the Modern subject appears at the behest of power, which demands the subject accede to specific discursive positions and then conceals that demand by insisting that the subject is indeed possessed of a hidden truth. "This form of power," Foucault maintains, "applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects."[23] Yet if the Modern subject is characterized by a blindness to its own production in the field of power, then the Postmodern subject is marked by new cognizance of this production. Such cognizance, however, also forces a recognition of the limits of subjective agency; forged in the field of power, the subject can never escape the limits on thought and action imposed by power. In response to this limitation, Foucault claims that subjection to power is the requisite condition for access to power itself; on the one hand the subject must submit to a given subject position, but on the other hand this submission enables the subject to rearticulate those positions along heretofore unanticipated lines. As Foucault notes:

> In itself the exercise of power is not violence, nor is it consent, which, implicitly, is renewable. It is a total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions; it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; in the extreme it constrains or forbids absolutely; it is nevertheless always a way of acting upon an acting subject or acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of acting.[24]

Yet despite his vision of the subject as a precipitate of power, one who lacks any intrinsic truth prior to its production by power, Foucault must posit the existence of another truth of sorts, a truth of power itself that lies behind or beneath the Postmodern play of subjectivity. This truth is no longer lodged within the secret heart of the subject, but appears instead as the precondition for its existence—a sine qua non of subjectivity that necessarily escapes the full apprehension of the subject itself. Significantly, this displacement of power beyond the proper purview of the subject has not

gone unnoticed by critics of Foucault. In his text *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, Jürgen Habermas argues that genealogy cannot produce a comprehensive concept of power because it cannot maintain a critical distance from its topic; much like the human subject, genealogy is also fashioned by operations of power that escape its full apprehension. Habermas notes three "aporias" in the genealogical analysis of power that render it incapable of distanced reflection. For Habermas, genealogy suffers first from a "presentism" that uses the scholarly arena to champion its new vision of power relations; since this vision now holds great currency in the academy, its promotion reinforces the very power relations that have come to characterize contemporary scholarship. Second, genealogy suffers from a "relativism" that levels all ethical differences between competing power formations; by detaching ethical considerations from the study of power itself, this leveling gesture obviates any attempts to conceive of its formations differently. Third, genealogy suffers from a "partisanship" that unmasks the operations of power only to construe them as virtually unassailable; just as these operations are rendered invulnerable to contest, therefore, so their analyses are rendered similarly unavailable to critique.[25] In positing the subject as a product of power, Foucault casts the truth of the subject as contingent upon the machinations of power itself; crucially, however, he does so only by founding this contingent truth of the subject upon a more fundamental truth of power, one that forever recedes beyond the horizon of genealogical analysis. Thus the Postmodern assertion of the constituted nature of the subject does not entirely evacuate the Modern demand for a concept of truth; for Foucault, at least, one version of this truth—the truth of power—is the lynchpin for his theory of subjectivity.

I have lingered on Foucault for some time not only because his writings demonstrate the critical differences between Modern and Postmodern modes of thought, but also because they set the terms for debates over the critical traction of Postmodern theory generally and Postmodern performativity specifically. Following Foucault, a Postmodern conception of the subject does not abandon the belief in some form of truth; in this the Postmodern era has inherited much from its Modern forebear. And yet the Postmodern era is a rather cynical successor, for it does reject the belief that this truth will ever prove fully available to our apprehension. Paradoxically, then, a lack of foundational truth is installed as the very foundation of Postmodern theory. Similarly, while performativity theory may explain the birth of the subject as an uptake and articulation of given subject positions, it cannot fully explain the conditions of such a birth, for these conditions will precede the performative constitution of all subjects—including those subjects who seek to theorize the conditions of performativity itself.

Like the genealogy of Foucault, then, performativity theory will always contain "aporias" that demarcate the limit of its knowledge, a limit I will call the "horizon of the intelligible." Just as the horizon shifts with every movement through a landscape, so the horizon of the intelligible shifts with every movement through the landscape of thought. Despite such shifts, however, the presence of the horizon itself remains a constant, and just as the horizon always obscures another vista from our field of vision, so the horizon of the intelligible always obscures the unthinkable from our field of thought. For Habermas, this horizon calls the entire performative project into question, but I am not convinced that it invalidates the knowledge produced by the project itself. It does seem, however, that theorists of performativity are obliged not only to acknowledge the horizon imposed upon their field of thought, but also to investigate whether this horizon is an inhibitor or an enabler of knowledge production. What claims can proceed from a knowledge that admits to a limit on its point of view? This question will figure centrally in the investigation that follows, but before turning to my own work, I want to examine the ways that two prominent critics wrestle with the limits imposed upon Postmodern pursuits, for their work illustrates the both the potential promise and pitfalls that these limits hold in store for performativity theory.

Feminist critic Judith Butler has been an important advocate of Postmodern approaches to reconceiving identity since the publication of her 1990 book *Gender Trouble*, in which she argues that a performative understanding of sexual identity would provide a powerful new tool for feminist analysis and activism. Butler boldly reconfigures the field of sexual politics with her inquiry into contemporary feminist theory; locating herself squarely within a feminist tradition, she nonetheless questions the status of "woman" as the pivotal figure within feminist criticism. Butler refutes the existence of a stable and coherent female subject as the foundation of feminist critique and maintains that attempts to represent such a subject in a politically progressive light only replicate the strategies of regressive and reactionary forces. Rather than positing a subject characterized by some elusive feminine essence, Butler claims that all subjects are fashioned through a coercive articulation of gendered subject positions—a procedure masked by techniques of normalization that uphold gender as an essential and abiding feature of identity. If gender is produced in the act of articulation, however, then it may be articulated differently, in ways that confound the demand for normalization. Central to this argument is the performative nature of gender itself—its attainment through a repetition of meaningfully gendered modes of behavior. "Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed,"

Butler remarks, "are performative in the sense that the essence or identity they otherwise purport to express are fabrications manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means."[26] For Butler, the insights offered by performativity theory also offer a new a new basis for feminist political action—not through an appeal to the essential category "woman," but through an active rearticulation of the category itself: "The task," Butler claims, "is not whether to repeat, but how to repeat or, indeed, to repeat and, through the radical proliferation of gender, to displace the very gender norms that enable the repetition itself."[27]

The work of Butler and other theorists of performativity sent something of a shock wave through cultural criticism of the 1990s and came to emblematize the Postmodern critical turn. Crucially, however, this turn was not without its critics; in his influential study *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Fredric Jameson links the Postmodern turn to shifts in capitalist economic structures that, while fostering new inquiry into identity categories like sex, actually discourage inquiry into the category of class. Jameson maintains that contemporary capitalism has virtually negated class identity through a near total subsumption of use value into exchange value. In the absence of any reference to an original or absolute value, resistance to the circuitry of exchange proves almost unthinkable; subjects fall into an endless circulation of identity positions—often outlined through a rhetoric of performativity—that offers no means to critique the conditions of circulation itself. According to Jameson, the class struggles of the past have been largely replaced by "new social movements" focused upon enfranchisement of various racial, ethnic, and sexual minorities; Jameson affirms the value of such movements, but he also observes that the multiple affiliations they foster tend to embed identity itself within the circuits of capital: "What someone once said about Washington, DC, that you only apparently met individuals there, who all eventually turned out to be lobbies in the end, is now true of the social life of advanced capitalism generally; except that everyone 'represents' several groups at once."[28] The fact that these new social groups regularly cut across class boundaries obfuscates traditional class positions, and as a result all members of such groups fall under the sway of capital, their identities validated solely by their inclusion in a performative regime of infinite exchange. Thus Jameson argues that performative models of political activity are confined to engagements with local struggles, rather than agitation for global changes in economic conditions; Jameson hopes for a return to calls for such changes, but asserts that critics should meanwhile "attend vigilantly to just such symptoms as the waning of the visibility of that global dimension, to the ideological resistance

to the concept of totality, and to that epistemological razor of Postmodern nominalism which shears away such apparent abstractions as the economic system and the social totality themselves . . . ."[29]

For Jameson, then, capitalist exchange forms the unmarked and unacknowledged milieu within which Postmodern identities are forged; as the conditions for the emergence of such identities, the system of exchange falls outside the parameters of Postmodern critique and thus delimits the current conceptual horizon of performativity theory. Yet if this theory is always characterized by such conceptual limits—in this case, the limits imposed by capitalism—then it may be possible to revise its operations through continual attention to the limits themselves; the ongoing recognition of conceptual borders would allow theorists of performativity not only to call such borders into question, but also to reconfigure them when they infringe upon particular theoretical pursuits. For her part, Butler frankly concedes that any performative conception of the subject must always confront its own conceptual horizons, but for Butler these horizons grant performativity theory its particular critical force. In *The Psychic Life of Power* Butler observes that any narrative of subject formation based upon the uptake of a specific subject position paradoxically posits the prior existence of the subject who performs the uptake itself, and so "the story by which subjection is told is inevitably circular, presupposing the very subject for which it seeks to give an account."[30] Rather than stumble on this paradox, however, Butler fits it squarely within her theory of subjectivity. Because this theory can never arrive at the founding moment of subjectivity, it produces a vision of the subject that is always partial, incomplete, and open to contest. Yet it is precisely the open-ended nature of this vision that allows the revisioning of subjectivity itself. Performativity theory must operate within the field of available identity categories; it must ascribe to the subject those positions already conceivable within contemporary culture. Yet in its repeated ascriptions it may also posit a radical rearticulation of the positions themselves. Indeed, Butler maintains, "without a repetition that risks life—in its current organization—how might we begin to imagine the contingency of that organization, and performatively reconfigure the contours of the conditions of life?"[31]

Butler, of course, often focuses her analytical efforts on performative reconfigurations of sexual identity, but in light of the remarks by Jameson I want to consider for a moment how such reconfigurations are inflected by class status. Consider the degree to which successful sexual reconfiguration depends upon successful entry into a circuitry of exchange; the "right" shoes and suits of clothing, the "right" prostheses and pleasure devices, the "right"

surgical alterations of the body—access to these goods and services depends on access to the regime of exchange, and such access is regularly restricted by class status. Yet if performativity theory cannot conceive the rearticulation of the subject without recourse to the circuitry of exchange, then perhaps it can query the ethical implications of the circuitry and its functioning. Which aspects of identity are open to reformulation within these circuits? What criteria are used to gauge the success of such efforts? And, perhaps most crucially, who is permitted access to the circuitry in the first place? To date, most theorists of performativity have not yet attended sufficiently to such questions, at least not in the opinions of their critics. Thus Terry Eagleton will decry the birth of Postmodern "cultural politics" that champion performative revaluations of disadvantaged subject positions without noting the degree to which economic status affects the success of such revaluations; Slavoj Zizek will claim that Postmodern modes of resistance devolve into endless rounds of "mocking parody and provocation" that perfomatively undermine privileged subjectivities only to ignore the economic bases that sustain such privilege; and Sue-Ellen Case will reject the Postmodern "fetish effect" that animates the performative tokens of identity only by virtue of the commodity status such tokens enjoy in the economic arena.[32]

But if performativity theory has thus far paid scant attention to the constitution of class identity, perhaps the malleability of the theory will allow it to attend more closely to class issues in the future. Consider how a performativity theorist newly attentive to class concerns might analyze the *Dancing beyond Boundaries* event that I detailed at the beginning of this chapter. In addition to noting how various aspects of identity are performatively produced through the event, this theorist would also note how such productions are influenced by the constraints frequently imposed by class difference. The many forms of artistic and scientific expertise exhibited in the performance require extensive training and education; active participation in the performance requires affiliation with a wide range of academic and professional institutions; and the multiple modes of communication employed in the performance require access to advanced technological equipment. I believe that such consideration of the constraints that class place on performative self fashioning could enhance the insights that performativity theory has to offer; this newly enhanced theory would provide a valuable new means to evaluate not only the success of various attempts at this self fashioning, but also the conditions of possibility under which such attempts may be made at all.

I have returned to the *Dancing beyond Boundaries* performance in order to indicate how it is precisely the bounded nature of Postmodern performativity theory that allows for an ongoing revision of the forms of knowledge this theory may produce. Here, for instance, a shift in the conceptual limits that typically characterize performativity theory enables a further shift in the conception of the *Dancing beyond Boundaries* event; the view of the event as a model instance of performative practices is complicated by recognition of the ways in which the event imposes constraints upon this practice as well. Crucially, however, this new vision of the event will never fully erase the horizon of the intelligible that delimits Postmodern knowledge; while this vision may introduce issues of class into that field and thereby reconfigure that horizon, the paradoxical nature of Postmodern knowledge production demands the existence of the horizon itself. Recall that this production is predicated upon a foundational antifoundationalism that establishes the domain of knowledge only by positing a sphere that lies beyond that domain. There, within this sphere beyond the proper purview of the field of knowledge, reside those concepts that must remain unremarked and unremarkable within any given configuration of the field itself.

Rather than lamenting the limits imposed on the field of knowledge, however, I plan to use them as the actual stimuli for knowledge production. In the text that follows I investigate a wide variety of texts and practices, all culled from a range of temporal and regional contexts. Each chapter offers a new constellation of these texts and practices designed to detail a different facet of the Modern relation of subjectivity to performance. Marked by a seemingly insuperable gap that divides representation from its referent, this relation poses a series of challenges to the subject who seeks to employ performance in the disclosure of its inmost essence. Of course, this Modern subject, one held to reveal itself in the arena of performance, differs markedly from its Postmodern successor, one held to produce itself in the act of performance. Yet I seek to exploit this difference by conjuring into the Postmodern field of knowledge a distinctly foreign figure: a Modern manifestation of the performing subject. This figure, by virtue of its very foreignness to that field, will gesture toward those aspects of itself that the field can never fully contain—an insistence upon a subjectivity grounded in essence, and a faith in a performance dedicated to its full disclosure. By showing how this figure from the past sits uneasily in the field of the present, I hope to shed light on both past and present relations of subjectivity to performance.

In order to narrow the focus of my investigations, I have opted to concentrate primarily on the role of performance and its fashioning of sex and class

identities in the Modern era. This particular vision of the era is produced through my own selection and arrangement of archival material; with it I intend neither to supercede the many excellent studies of the era that already exist nor to foreclose the composition of those yet to be written. I focus here on sex and class because I am eager for Postmodern performativity theory to explore how these identity categories inflect one another and because I think a first step in that direction involves examining how such categories were conceived during the preceding Modern era. Seen from a Postmodern vantage point, categories of sex and class continue to exert a tremendous influence to this very day; they remain, in other words, powerful legacies inherited from Modern conceptions of identity. And yet the essential qualities once held to accrue to such categories are largely banished from the Postmodern scene. This exile therefore problematizes the earlier legacies without obliterating them entirely, and I think it is precisely the problematic status of these legacies that will foster new modes of critical thinking about the categories of sex and class themselves. In my conclusion I will summarize my thoughts on such new Postmodern modes of inquiry, but first I present five chapters that examine earlier Modern attempts to define sex and class identities vis-à-vis a supposedly stable but ever elusive essence of being.

In chapters 2 and 3, I provide distinct but complementary accounts of the emergence of a Modern relation of subjectivity to performance. This new relation differs from its antecedent in its troubling of the ostensibly ironclad bond formerly held to link these two terms together. In chapter 2, I employ the distinction of "space" from "place" theorized by Michel de Certeau to explore how this earlier bond upheld class hierarchy during the reign of Louis XIV. Through the enactment of elaborate dance performances, the nobility transformed the fluid court space into an ordered hierarchical place, one in which each courtier held a specific station in the aristocratic pecking order. Crucially, however, such aristocratic practices proved open to appropriation by the bourgeoisie, as indicated by shifting attitudes within conduct manuals from the era; while early seventeenth-century manuals prescribe formalized etiquette for the nobility to demonstrate their good breeding and refinement, late seventeenth-century manuals warn the nobility that such formal etiquette has been overtaken by the bourgeoisie and now bespeaks the status of a parvenu. After noting such growing suspicions among the aristocracy, I explore how the work of the bourgeois playwright Molière suggests the deployment of a whole new form of legitimating practice. In *The Versailles Impromptu*, for instance, Molière curries favor from the king not on the basis of his ability to display a noble pedigree, but instead on the basis of an elusive quality like virtue, one that

resists efforts at formal display. With this innovation, then, Molière introduces a nascent fluidity of class structure into a court still gripped by rigid class hierarchy.

In chapter 3, I examine another challenge to the entrenched power structures of the era, but I focus not upon a class but a sexual hierarchy. I use the concept of *ritornello* or return elaborated by Gilles Deleuze to explore the function of the castrato singer in the production and maintenance of eighteenth-century sexual identity. As suggested by opera libretti from the period and by the *Memoirs* of Casanova, the castrato could figure both the male and the female sex with equal ease, thereby illustrating a *ritornello* of sexual difference as an ordered hierarchy of subjects invested with different degrees of an identical sexual energy. As his appearances on the London stage indicate, however, the castrato slowly became identified with a troubling instability within this sexual hierarchy; in the satires of Henry Fielding, for example, the castrato is linked to a volatility of sexual difference precipitated by shifting class relations that granted women as well as men a degree of economic clout. The waning popularity of the castrato thus marks an interruption in the ritornello of sexual difference, one precipitated by the volatility now increasingly apparent in the older paradigm. The hierarchical model defining male and female subjects in terms of a quantitative difference in sexual energy gives way to a binary model that defines these subjects in terms of a newly conceived qualitative difference, an absolute duality of male and female sexuality that the single figure of the castrato could no longer adequate.

The demise of the castrato evinces the establishment of a Modern relation of subjectivity to performance, one marked by the ongoing struggle to navigate the now severed links between these two terms. In chapters 4 through 6, I give accounts of three successive but interlocking moments from this struggle by exploring three tropes employed in Modern thought—tropes that now seem wracked by internal instabilities. Chapter 4 invokes the trope of liberation allied with the outbreak of the French Revolution; having rejected outmoded hierarchies of meaning and value, the subject celebrates its liberation from these hierarchies but also sets the stage for later crises, since this very rejection renders liberation itself a term impossible to define with conceptual clarity. During the Revolution the subject honored its newfound freedom in festival performance meant to foster new modes of political participation. Yet the political liberty first promised all subjects quickly encountered increasing restrictions; as revealed by successive Revolutionary constitutions, political participation by the citizenry was steadily curtailed over the course of the Revolution and then suppressed almost entirely upon the ascendance of Napoleon to the

imperial throne. Moreover, this struggle to isolate the spirit of Revolutionary liberty did not end with the Revolution itself; later histories of the Revolution often discern this liberty in festive moments from the Revolutionary era, but much like the Revolution itself these histories typically fail to offer the spirit of liberty any conceptual coherence. This failure, in fact, is already recognized by the young Geörg Büchner, whose Revolutionary drama *Danton's Death* suggests the inability of the subject to define itself in reference to any inherently liberatory quality; it is therefore with a brief glance at the work of Büchner that I conclude the chapter.

Chapter 5 explores a strategy designed to overcome the kind of difficulties Büchner notes in his drama. Unable to define itself on the basis of a personal quality like liberty, the subject turns to an interrogation of the object to offer itself definitional stability. The chapter details the effects of this turn by linking nineteenth-century anxieties over the act of vision to corollary anxieties over the relation of man to woman—a relation that casts the former as the subject who views and the latter as the object who is viewed by him. Tropologically speaking, vision offered the subject a notoriously unreliable means of examining the object, as evinced by the varied views of the hysterical woman that dominated the imagination of men. In his drama *Thérèse Raquin*, for instance, Emile Zola clings to a positivist insistence that the mysterious origins of hysteria are ultimately accessible to his vision. In contrast to Zola, however, Sigmund Freud employs the theory of unconscious impulses to explain hysteria and can therefore claim to unearth the secret of the hysteric only by implying that some secret of his own remains forever hidden from his vision. Though Freud never seemed entirely reconciled to the full implications of his theory, they are embedded in the works of his contemporaries. The works of the Symbolist writer Rachilde, for example, often portray woman as the troubling reflection of man, the image in which he continually seeks, and just as continually loses, the image of himself. I therefore conclude the chapter with a look at the ways in which Rachilde challenges the certainty of vision claimed by the likes of Zola and Freud.

Chapter 6 examines yet another strategy to mend the broken relation of subjectivity to performance. If a subject such as man finds an object such as woman every bit as inscrutable as himself, then a redefinition of the object is in order; rather than an individual, the object is recast as an item that can offer the subject new insights into the relation of self and other. The chapter invokes the Marxist trope of the "coming-to-be" of the proletariat to explore the notion that new twentieth-century technologies might offer such an item—a mediatized image of the masses that would act as a locus for their reconciliation with each other. The Frankfurt School critic Walter

Benjamin argued that new modes of mechanical reproduction would allow the masses to reinvent themselves by literally extending themselves into their image; meeting in the image, the masses could reinvent their relation to each other and abolish the divisions that plagued them. Unlike Benjamin, however, Theodor Adorno argued that the new modes of reproduction would merely enable the forces of capital to control the proletariat more effectively; the new modes would not disalienate the masses from their image but would increase their alienation exponentially. This increase reaches its limit point in the Peter Weir film *The Truman Show*, a vision of alienation so extreme that it actually transforms into its opposite. Within the film, the central figure Truman is utterly collapsed into his image—a collapse that registers not his reinvention but, on the contrary, his annihilation. Yet in the end Truman escapes his own mediatization, thereby recalling the claim of Adorno that even the most corrupted artwork holds the potential to inspire liberation; by fostering a transverse motion of thought, a continual movement of the subject through its own image of itself, the work of art can preserve hope for a future coming-to-be of the proletariat. This continual coming-to-be, unconstrained by a teleology of final revolution, recalls the endless articulations of subjectivity posited by Postmodern performativity theory; it therefore closes my investigation of the Modern era and prepares the way for my concluding remarks.

With *The Truman Show* my text comes full circle, for the film explores both the risks and rewards that might accrue to a performative understanding of subjectivity. In a brief conclusion I meditate upon these risks and rewards by examining the impact of performative thinking upon queer theory, a discipline that emerged in the 1980s as an effort to rethink the stability of sexual categories and submit them to performative rearticulation. In order to assess the efficacy of queer performativity in the present day, I examine its implications for an issue that is at press time a hot political topic and seems likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. I refer to the topic of same-sex marriage and the fight for its legalization in the United States. While in some ways the attempt to legalize same-sex marriage constitutes an attempt to queer the institution of marriage, in other ways it seems to reify the heterosexual privileges upon which the institution has been traditionally based, not only the privileges that obtain in the arena of sex, but also—and importantly for me—in the arena of class as well. I therefore close my study with a call for the proponents of queer theory to attend to the horizon of the intelligible that delimits the scope of any performative project.

2. Dancing with the Sun King: The Performance of Privilege in the Reign of Louis XIV

In 1653, the young Louis XIV, king of France, played a dual role in the *Ballet de la Nuit*, functioning simultaneously as both privileged performer and privileged spectator in the courtly performance. This *Ballet*—one of many *ballets de cour* given at the royal residences—mingled music, dance, verse, and visual spectacle to produce a potent image of the magnificence of the French court. Significantly, many members of the aristocracy joined their king in the *Ballets*. The courtiers surrounded their sovereign on the dance floor, while the monarch simultaneously danced alongside them and kept a watchful eye on them. Participation in the *Ballets* thus secured a bond between self and self-enactment that secured the noble qualities of the aristocracy through the production and reception of ritualized performance practices. Crucially, this bond was established by the authorizing presence of the king himself, who appeared in the *Ballets* as the embodiment of order, the organizing principle that assigned each member of the aristocracy a particular position within court hierarchy. In the *Ballet de la Nuit*, for instance, the king made his final entrance as the Rising Sun that dispelled the gloom of chaos by bathing the world with the ordering light of his gaze; a brief look at the text of this *Ballet* will show how the Sun King bathed his court in this light and thus secured the ordered structure of the court itself.

Ballet de la Nuit is divided into four parts, each set during a different segment of the night. Part One opens at nightfall, "from the sixth to the ninth hour of the evening."[1] Stage directions for the opening scene note how "the Sun retires and the Night advances bit by bit in a chariot drawn by owls and accompanied by the Twelve Hours, who answer to the prologue she recites."[2] A series of rustic characters—hunters, shepherds, bandits, beggars, and the like—appear next, their presence adding to the unruly atmosphere

associated with the encroaching darkness. In Part Two, however, the action shifts to the brightly lit and ordered court, where "the entertainments of the evening, from the ninth hour until midnight" are depicted.[3] There courtiers perform "The Marriage of Thetis, a *Ballet* within a *Ballet*," and Venus herself inaugurates the festivities. The goddess quickly turns her attention to the young king, showering him with praise even as she warns him that the pangs of love will surely accompany his passage into manhood: "Young Louis, the greatest of monarchs, someday you too will bear the marks of that god whose blows no one may avoid. Submit to his power, and forge a friendship between my son Eros and yourself."[4] The king responds by wooing the goddess of love, his forthright approach displaying a youthful authority that signals his supreme station in the courtly pecking order: "You triumph, mother of love, and your glory is without equal. Thus will the greatest king in the world pay court to you. How lofty and proud is his demeanor, and how far behind he leaves the kings of the past! You will live in brilliance, with the handsome train he will provide to follow you!"[5]

Part Three takes place "from midnight until the third hour before the day"[6] and returns the action to the dark world outside the court. The darkness is actually deepened by the advent of a lunar eclipse, and the gloom occasions the appearance of sinister figures like "a Sorceress and four old Witches, winged, who anoint themselves while dancing and are whisked away to a Sabbat meeting."[7] Part Three ends in a spectacular conflagration as a peasant home burns to the ground; the appearance of the fire foreshadows the appearance of the Sun in Part Four, which occurs "from the third hour after midnight to the sixth hour when the Sun arises."[8] Aurora, the Dawn, is herald for the great event: "Ever since I have opened the East, ever so pompous and proud, and ever with such a smiling air, I have never shone so in my career, nor preceded such a great light. Whose eyes in seeing it will not be dazzled? The Sun that follows me is the young Louis."[9] The king enters and assumes the magnanimous role of the organizing force of the cosmos; his final recitation reveals an almost sacrificial eagerness to act as the founding principle of a universal order: "Without doubt I belong to the World I serve; I exist not for myself but for the Universe. To it I owe the sunny beams that crown my head. It is my duty to regulate the time and the seasons, and Order will not suffer pleasure to keep me from my work."[10]

By appearing as the Sun, the ordering principle of the universe, Louis also appeared as the ordering principle of the court, an elite body of aristocrats who circled—much like the other heavenly bodies—around the central figure of *Le Roi Soleil*. This association of Louis with the sun was no accident, for the link between the two was understood to be ratified by divine

decree. Just as God occupied the center of the universe and the sun the center of the solar system, so Louis occupied the center of the court. Ruling as head of state by divine right, Louis served as the secular representative of God himself. This appeal to divine authority offered a powerful tool for securing the stability of the courtly hierarchy—a necessary measure to counter the threat of social upheaval that continued to haunt the French monarchy. Years of conflict among Catholics and Protestants divided the nobility during much of the sixteenth century, and a fragile peace was established only through the Edict of Nantes, a 1598 declaration by Henri IV that granted French Protestants a degree of religious freedom. Instability resurfaced during the reign of Louis XIII, as aristocrats rankled under the attempts of his minister Richelieu to centralize state power. Continued attempts by his successor Mazarin, minister during the early reign of Louis XIV, at last provoked the series of rebellions called the Frondes. The 1648 Fronde of the Parlements linked provincial and Parisian judicial bodies in a protest of state interference in local taxation and jurisprudence, while the 1649 Fronde of the Princes asserted ancient feudal privileges in defiance of the increasingly centralized state authority. The rebellious princes even occupied Paris for a time, but their revolt was suppressed by 1652 and royal forces regained control of the city.[11] Given this long history of conflict, lavish court spectacles like the *ballets de cour* figured centrally in attempts to promote social stability—namely by maintaining the stability of the court itself. Indeed, historians frequently cite such spectacles as proof that French performance of the era was riven by rigid class divisions. In his influential text *The French Stage and Playhouse in the Seventeenth Century*, T. E. Lawrenson charts a steady decline in the communal nature of theatre during the period in question. Unlike the communal civic spectacles of the Ancient and Medieval eras, Lawrenson argues that the French theatre of the seventeenth century increasingly splintered the social body. Certainly the introduction of perspective scenery and its corollary modifications to theatre architecture entailed the separation of performer from spectator, as Lawrenson notes: "Ensconced behind the panoply of a proscenium arch, the actor is normally, by convention, 'supposed' to be in a different place from his audience, or at least, he is not 'in the same place' in anything like the sense in which the expression can be understood in the ancient theatre."[12] More crucially, however, this division of performer from spectator becomes for Lawrenson an index of other divisions that come to characterize the social body; while recent decades have witnessed a number of theatrical experiments that sought to recapture the earlier communal quality of performance, Lawrenson claims that such experiments "assume the matter

to be one of aesthetics, of form, and while they do not altogether ignore the social nature of the problem they fail of necessity to cope with its most important aspect: the existence of profound social divisions."[13]

Thus for Lawrenson the proscenium arch that came to partition performer and spectator is closely linked to the class divisions that likewise came to partition the social body. Even the great *ballets de cour*, in which the nobility served as both performers and spectators, displayed a marked tendency toward stratification by class and rank. As early as 1581, while social upheaval still raged at court, the *Ballet Comique de la Reine* featured the demarcation of aristocratic rank as a crucial aspect of dance spectacle. The *Ballet* was commissioned by Queen Louise, wife of Henri III, to celebrate the nuptials of her sister; its creator, Balthasar de Beaujoyeulx, published a detailed account of the *Ballet* that attends to its careful stratification of the nobility. A fanciful retelling of the encounter between the wandering Odysseus and the sorceress Circe, the *Ballet* begins with the escape of the hero from the clutches of his enchantress captor. Almost at once Odysseus appeals to the king for aid; after requesting help from a number of the Gods, Odysseus asks the king to lend support to the Gods themselves. Here, of course, the sovereign serves as star spectator rather than star performer, yet he nonetheless maintains his position at the pinnacle of the court hierarchy: "Will you not, great King, help so many Gods? / You will, Henry, more valiant than Hercules / Or he who killed the murderous Chimera, / And for so many mortals and Gods held fast / In the Fairy's bonds, you will be divine, / And posterity, which will build you temples, / Will crown your temples with verdant laurel."[14]

After the introductions of its central characters, the narrative of the *Ballet* largely unfolds through a number of elaborate dances; a succession of dancing nymphs and satyrs, for instance, come to the aid of Odysseus, all played by the ladies and gentlemen of the court. At one point a giant fountain floated into the center of the performance hall, carrying in its lower basin the queen herself and eleven ladies-in-waiting dressed as Naiads. After completing their initial dance the Naiads are turned to statues by Circe, but are eventually restored to life through the intervention of the Gods; the Naiads then brought the night to a close with another dance, which ended with an explicit reference to the aristocratic pecking order. Beaujoyeulx reports that at the conclusion of the evening "the Queen, approaching the King her lord, took him by the hand and made him a present of a large gold medallion, having thereon a Dolphin swimming in the sea."[15] The presentation, widely perceived as a token of the future heir the queen would likewise offer the king, was followed by similar presentations made by all of the

ladies-in-waiting crucially, this series unfolded in order of aristocratic rank, as Beaujoyeulx notes: "Following the Queen's example, all the princesses, dames, and ladies, according to their rank and degree, took the princes, lords, and gentlemen who pleased them; and to each one they gave golden presents inscribed with their emblems—all nautical symbols, inasmuch as they represented the nymphs of the sea. . . ."[16]

Both the *Ballet Comique de la Reine* and the *Ballet de la Nuit* were held in the Salle du Petit Bourbon, a large hall in the Louvre that lacked a permanent proscenium arch and thus for Lawrenson preserved a vestige of the communal quality that characterized earlier performance events. Crucially, however, the 1581 *Ballet Comique* employed simultaneous settings dispersed throughout the hall that encouraged a commingling of performer and spectator; the 1653 *Ballet de la Nuit*, in contrast, introduced the scenographic innovations that separated performer and spectator from one another. Thus even as the king functioned as both ideal performer and ideal spectator in the *Ballet*, the production was already beginning to demonstrate the division of these functions that comes to characterize other performance practices of the era. Lawrenson argues that this division of performer from spectator dovetails with increasing efforts to enforce social divisions as well, and he is not alone in his assessment; historian Peter Arnott also emphasizes the social divisions embedded within the theatre of the period. Arnott explains such divisions by intertwining scenographic innovation with the decline of the Mystery Play, but his conclusions are similar to those of Lawrenson. Noting the effects of this decline, Arnott observes that "just as the organization of the theatre changed from amateur to professional and the subject matter of plays from sacred to secular, so the nature of stage settings could not avoid being influenced by the shift from outdoors to indoors, from large open spaces to small confined ones."[17] The demise of the Mystery Play hastened the division of performer and spectator by relegating dramatic action to the restricted area behind the proscenium arch; the link between this division and more widespread social divisions is seen in the partitioning of the auditorium that also accompanied the demise of the Mystery Play; Arnott further notes that "the interior dispositions of the theatres were influenced by the kind of audience they now housed. "Division into *loges* and *parterre*, as distinct from the great amorphous crowd-mass that watched the Mystery Plays, bespeaks an aristocratic-bourgeois society conscious of its own social differentiations. . . ."[18]

Like Lawrenson, Arnott makes a compelling argument, and indeed the evidence for an increased attention to social stratification in French performance of the seventeenth century is overwhelming. Certainly

many performance practices of the era sought to secure an aristocratic pecking order through the seamless wedding of self to self-enactment, and certainly many such practices succeeded spectacularly in this aim. Such success suggests a relation of subjectivity to performance quite unlike the one I outlined in the first chapter. There I described this later Modern relation as characterized by a fundamental inadequacy of representation to its referent, one that causes some aspect of subjectivity to traverse the horizon of the intelligible and escape the scene of performance. Yet in the earlier relation—one I would call a Premodern relation—a display of courtly status was widely viewed as commensurate with that status itself. Of course, this Premodern relation seems odd to our present sensibilities; dance training is no longer a sign of noble pedigree, and it stands to reason that anyone with a measure of time and a modicum of talent can learn to dance like an aristocrat. This changing attitude toward dance bears witness to other changes that occurred during the Modern era, for it links shifts in class relations to shifts in the link between self and self-enactment. Yet I believe that such shifts were already underway as early as the seventeenth century. The fact that performers of the period were seeking means to address the "profound social divisions" noted by Lawrenson suggests that such divisions were already under contest from some quarter. And Arnott alludes to emerging class tensions among spectators with the hyphenate term "aristocratic-bourgeois" that he uses to describe the society of the period. Arnott, unfortunately, never elaborates upon his use of the term, but still it attests to a certain ambiguity already lodged in the social stratifications of the era.

In this chapter I seek to complicate the vision of rigid social stratification in seventeenth-century French performance by exploring the initial inroads of the bourgeoisie into the domain of the aristocratic elite. I begin by noting how dance performance at court ratified an ostensibly transparent relation between self and self-enactment for the aristocracy; I identify three dance protocols that assured the noble subject a particular position in court hierarchy. The first is a protocol of dance training that established knowledge of the dance as a privileged domain of the nobility the second is a protocol of dance performance that employed this knowledge in a series of dances undertaken by the courtiers in order of their rank; and the third is a protocol of dance spectatorship that preserved the ranks of the nobility from encroachment by the bourgeoisie. In all cases, the king—both privileged performer and privileged spectator of the dance—offered assurance of the authority of such protocols. Yet this assurance proved increasingly difficult to maintain as the middle classes

learned to appropriate these protocols for themselves; I turn to conduct manuals from the latter half of the century to indicate the effects of this appropriation, and note that by the end of the century the aristocracy had begun to eschew formal displays of conduct as the province of the parvenu. Within this scenario of social instability, the playwright Molière—born bourgeois but destined to become a favorite of the king—occupies a similarly unstable position. I therefore conclude the chapter by noting how the work of Molière suggests the deployment of another form of authorizing strategy, one especially suited to the advancement of the bourgeoisie; this revised relation of self to self-enactment will presage the revolutionary upheavals that mark the genesis of the Modern era.

In his implicit rejection of performance protocols, Molière even implies that the presence of the king is no longer required to ratify the identities of his subjects; such an implication is radical indeed, for the sovereign presence within the arena of performance traditionally authorized all of the performances enacted therein by imposing rigid order upon a realm continually threatened by rivalry and dissent. In his influential study *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau offers a distinction between the terms "space" and "place" that proves useful in conceptualizing the organizing power that the monarch exercised upon the court. For de Certeau, "space" defines a location in terms of the dynamism of the entities within it. "Space," de Certeau maintains, "is composed of intersections of mobile elements. It is in a sense actuated by the ensemble of the movements deployed within it."[19] A certain fluidity therefore holds sway in space, for de Certeau observes that "space occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it, and make it function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs or contractual proximities."[20] In contrast, "place" defines a location in terms of the arrangement of the entities within it. "A place," maintains de Certeau, "is the order (of whatever kind) in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence."[21] A certain principle of order therefore governs place, for de Certeau remarks that "the law of the 'proper' rules the place: the elements taken into consideration are beside one another, each situated in its own 'proper' and distinct location."[22] De Certeau also posits the transformation of space into place and place into space; the chaotic elements of a space may undergo a stabilization that renders it a place, or conversely the fixed elements of a place may undergo a destabilization that renders it a space: "Between these two determinations" observes de Certeau, "there are passages

back and forth, such as the putting to death . . . of heroes who transgress frontiers and who, guilty of an offense against the law of the place, best provide its restoration with their tombs."[23]

I want to use this distinction of space from place as a means to grapple with the particular bond between self and self-enactment manifested at the French court. Consider how the desire for a transformation of space into place models the desire for a perfect equation between self and self-enactment. The members of the nobility, driven by conflicts and competitions, existed within a disordered space that threatened the very existence of the monarchy. Yet this disordered space was transformed into an ordered place through the imposition of a rigid court hierarchy, one that offered courtiers a perfect image of their ranking within the court itself. The maintenance of this social stratification required constant vigilance, for any delinkage of self from self-enactment could destabilize the ordered place and transform it to a disordered space once more. To minimize this threat, the king and courtiers relied on the application of rigorous protocols to the performances they undertook; these protocols, authorized by power of the king, preserved the status of the place and prevented its degeneration into a space. The various protocols linked to court dance readily submit to an analysis derived from the distinction of space and place; a closer look at these protocols will clarify the role that each assumed in defending the ordered place of the court against its possible reversion into a disordered space.

The protocols of dance training figured centrally in aristocratic education courtiers spent hours with dance masters rehearsing not only the dances currently in fashion at the court, but also the finer points of dance technique. Knowledge of dance was viewed as the domain of the elite, a genteel pursuit that offered evidence of cultivation and good taste. Indeed, in 1588, when Thoinot Arbeau published his *Orchésographie*, the nobility apparently had need of such evidence; appearing the same year that Henri IV acceded to the throne, this early dance manual attests to the brutal conflicts raging among the nobility by stressing the civilizing effects of dance. According to Arbeau, dance provides a valuable method for regulating the processes of courtship and marriage. "Dancing is practiced to reveal whether lovers are in good health and sound of limb, after which they are permitted to kiss their mistresses in order that they may touch and savor one another," Arbeau remarks; the fact that such couplings constitute the foundation of social stability leads him to continue by claiming that "from this standpoint, quite apart from the many other advantages to be derived from dancing, it becomes an essential in a well ordered society."[24]

Moreover, while Arbeau laments the fact that recent social disorders have manifested themselves in a degeneration of the dance, he also maintains hope for the return of dance to its former dignity: "Our predecessors danced *pavans, basse dances, branles* and *corantos*. The *basse dance* has been out of date some forty or fifty years, but I foresee that wise and dignified matrons will restore it to fashion as being a type of dance full of virtue and decorum."[25]

Arbeau, in fact, aims to contribute to the restoration of the dance by describing these earlier dances in detail; his initial remarks on the *basse dance*, for instance, offer insight into the complexity of dance training and the effort required to master dance techniques. Arbeau begins by explaining that the typical *basse dance* is divided into three sections; the first section is also called the *basse dance*, the second the *retour*, and the third the *tordion*. Each section consists of a specific sequence of movements, and Arbeau provides memoranda for all three sections. The memoranda for the first two sections designate each movement with letters of the alphabet. For the first memorandum, Arbeau explains that "the first movement is the *révérence*, indicated by a capital R, the second movement is the *branle*, indicated by a b. The third movement comprises two *simples*, indicated by ss. The fourth movement is the *double*, indicated by a d, and the fifth movement is the *reprise*, indicated by a small r."[26] The memorandum for the first section is then followed by one for the second, which uses the same alphabetical notation; Arbeau also notes that the letter c at the end of each memorandum "represents the *congé*, which you must take of the damsel."[27]

MEMORANDUM OF THE MOVEMENTS
FOR THE BASSE DANCE

R b ss d r d r b ss ddd r d
R b ss d r b c

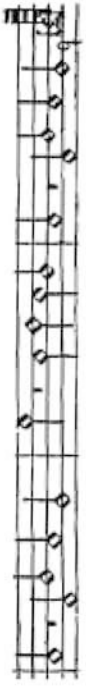
MEMORANDUM OF MOVEMENTS FOR
THE *RETOUR* OF THE BASSE DANCE

b d r b ss ddd r d r b c

For the final section or *tordion*, however, Arbeau introduces a more complicated memorandum, a form of tabulation that he uses for the remainder of his text. Arbeau writes the melody for a typical *tordion* on a staff that he arranges vertically rather than horizontally across the page and then beside

Movements to be made by the dancer in executing the Tordion which is danced immediately after the basse danse.

Melody of the Tordion
arranged in minims [73]



Pied en l'air gauche
Pied en l'air droit
Pied en l'air gauche
Pied en l'air droit
Saut moyen
Posture gauche
The reverse of the preceding
Pied en l'air droit
Pied en l'air gauche
Pied en l'air droit
Pied en l'air gauche
Saut moyen
Posture droite
As at the beginning
Pied en l'air gauche
Pied en l'air droit
Pied en l'air gauche
Pied en l'air droit
Saut moyen
Posture gauche

Melody of Tordion

Movements of Tordion
Reverse

Pied en l'air droit
Pied en l'air gauche
Pied en l'air droit
Pied en l'air gauche
Saut moyen
Posture droite

The movements *marque pied* and *marque talon* are made quite quietly and you could use them instead of *pieds en l'air*, thus:

Melody of Tordion Movements for the *five steps* of the Tordion

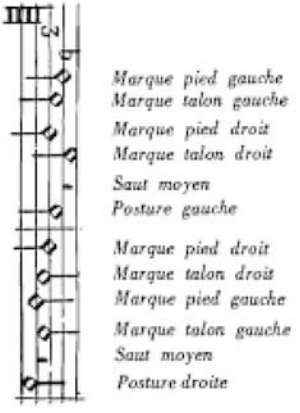


Figure 2.1 Tabulation of the *tordion*, to be danced after the *retour* of the *basse dance*. From Arbeau, *Orchésographie*.

each note of the melody he lists its corresponding movement. The *tordion*, for instance, is composed of alternating *pieds en l'air* punctuated by *sauts moyens* and reversals in *posture*, as shown on the tabulation that Arbeau conveniently provides.[28]

As the political policies of the court imposed an increasing sense of order upon the once disordered and disorderly aristocracy, the practice of dance likewise grew more important and the vocabulary of dance manuals grew more complex. In 1700 Raoul Auger Feuillet published his *Chorégraphie*, the first complete system of dance notation devised in France; while Feuillet references earlier dance manuals like the Arbeau text, he also claims that his own text offers a new approach to recording dance movements: "Many people before me have worked in different times to put dances down on paper by means of some sort of signs; but as their work remains instructive I have tried to advance mine far enough to render it useful to the public."[29] Certainly the new Feuillet notation

employs a much more complicated sign system than that found in the Arbeau manual, and the elegant figures offered by Feuillet clearly embody the formal grace and refinement ascribed to the nobility. Feuillet champions the ease and utility of his new notation claiming that his system will prove beneficial to both masters and students of the dance, he maintains that "of all the signs, characters, and figures that I could have invented, I have only employed in this work those that seemed to me the most proper and demonstrative, and I have attempted to explain clearly all that could be necessary to render them easily used."[30] All claims of clarity notwithstanding, however, the complexity of Feuillet notation requires both time and patience to comprehend—luxuries only afforded to a leisured class. Yet the study of dance proved useful in filling the leisure hours of the nobility—hours they could otherwise spend in pursuits that ran counter to the interests of the court. The notation therefore proved useful for maintaining order among the aristocracy and was ratified as an official knowledge available only to the elite.

A glance at even the most basic Feuillet notations provides evidence of its complexity. Figures 2.2 and 2.3 list the signs for the five opening foot positions, each designated by small circles with directional segments that indicate proper turnout figure 2.2 shows the "true" positions, "when the two feet have a uniform regularity, their toes turned equally without," while figure 2.3 shows the "false" positions, "when the toes point within, or if one points without, the other always points within."[31] Figure 2.4 displays several variations on the five basic steps, each noted by short lines with points at one end to indicate opening foot position and directional segments on the other end to indicate final turnout; the five steps rendered here "demonstrate all the different figures that the leg can make, which one calls *pas droit, pas ouvert, pas rond, pas tortillé*, and *pas battu*."[32] Figures 2.5 and 2.6 display the various marks that may be placed upon the step line, marks indicating different movements—such as "the *plié*, the *elevé*, the *sauté*, the *cabriollé*" and so on—that may be performed during the step itself.[33] Finally, figure 2.7 displays a series of steps arranged on a *chemin* or route, a guiding line that "serves two purposes: first, one may write the steps and positions upon it; second, one may use it to clarify the figure of the dances."[34] Taken together, such notations encoded a rarified body of dance knowledge reserved for the aristocracy; when embodied in performance, this knowledge provided the self with a self-enactment that guaranteed its privileged status.[35]

LA DANCE.

Des bonnes Poſitions.

LEs bonnes Poſitions ſont au nombre de cinq.

La premiere eſt lors que les deux pieds ſont joints enſemble, les deux talons l'un contre l'autre.

Premiere Poſition.

La deuxiéme, quand les deux pieds ſont ouverts ſur une même ligne, de la diſtance de la longueur du pied, entre les deux talons.

Seconde Poſition.

La troiſiéme, lorſque le talon d'un pied eſt emboëté contre la cheville de l'autre.

Troiſiéme Poſition.

La quatriéme, quand les deux pieds ſont l'un devant l'autre, éloignez de la diſtance de la longueur du pied entre les deux talons qui ſont ſur une même ligne.

Quatriéme Poſition.

La cinquiéme, lorſque les deux pieds ſont croiſez l'un ſur l'autre, de maniere que le talon d'un pied ſoit droit vis-à-vis la pointe de l'autre.

Cinquiéme Poſition.

Figure 2.2 The five "good" beginning foot positions. From Feuillet, *Chorégraphie*.

L'ART DE DECRIRE

Des fauſſes Poſitions.

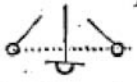
LEs fauſſes Poſitions ſont auſſi au nombre de cinq.

La premiere, eſt lorſque les deux pointes des pieds ſont tournées en dedans, en ſorte qu'elles ſe touchent, & que les talons ſoient ouverts ſur une même ligne.

Premiere Poſition.

La deuxiéme, quand les pieds ſont ouverts de la diſtance de la longueur du pied entre les deux pointes, qui ſont toutes deux tournées en dedans, & que les deux talons ſoient ſur une même ligne.

Seconde Poſition.



La troiſiéme, lorſque la pointe d'un pied eſt en dehors, & l'autre en dedans, en ſorte qu'ils ſoient paralleles l'un à l'autre.

Troiſiéme Poſition.

La quatriéme, quand les deux pointes des pieds ſont tournées en dedans, de maniere que la pointe d'un pied ſoit proche de la cheville de l'autre.

Quatriéme Poſition.

La cinquiéme fauſſe, s'écrit comme la cinquiéme bonne, & elles paroiſſent eſtre toutes deux la même choſe, cependant elles font un effet tout different l'une de l'autre; car au lieu qu'à la bonne les deux pointes des pieds ſont tournées en dehors, à la fauſſe elles ſont en dedans, ſe croiſant l'une ſur l'autre, en ſorte que le talon d'un pied ſoit droit vis-à-vis la pointe de l'autre, & on la diſtinguera d'avec la bonne par une petite barre entre les deux demy Poſitions.

Cinquiéme Poſition.

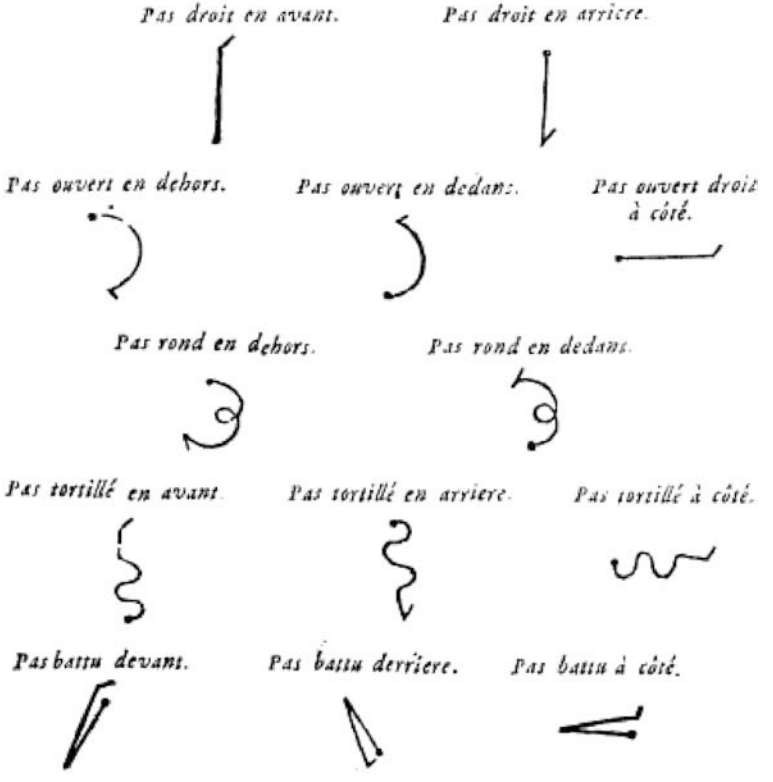
DE

Figure 2.3 The five "false" beginning foot positions. From Feuillet, *Chorégraphie*.

L'ART DE DE'CRIRE

On remarquera que le Pas qui eſt du côté droit dans l'exemple cy-devant ſe fait du pied droit, celuy qui eſt à gauche ſe fait du pied gauche.

Demonſtration de tous les Pas qui viennent d'être expliquez.



On ſe reſſouviendra que j'ay repreſenté le pied dans la demy Poſition à la page 6. par un o, & une petite queuë ſortante de l'o, au lieu qu'au Pas je le repreſente par un petit renvers joint à ſon extremité, comme il eſt démonſtré dans tous les Pas cy-deſſus.

Figure 2.4 Variations upon the five basic steps. From Feuillet, *Chorégraphie*.

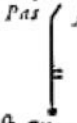
LA DANCE.

Les Pas peuvent être accompagnez des Signes ſuivans, comme Plié, Elevé, Sauté, Cabriollé, Tombé, Gliſſé, avoir le pied en l'Air, poſer la Pointe du pied, poſer le Talon, tourné un quart de Tour, tourné un demy Tour, tourné trois quarts de Tour, & tourné le Tour entier.

Le ſigne de Plier eſt quand ſur un Pas il y a un petit tiret panché du côté de la petite tête noire.

Le ſigne d'Elever, eſt quand ſur un Pas il y a un petit cran tout droit.

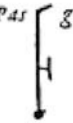
Le ſigne de Sauter, eſt lors qu'il y en a deux.



Le ſigne de Cabrioller, eſt quand il y en a trois.

Le ſigne de Tomber, eſt lors qu'au bout d'un cran il y a un petit tiret allant vers ce qui repreſente le pied.

Le ſigne Gliſſé, eſt quand au bout d'un cran il y a une petite barre en longueur du Pas.



B ij

Figure 2.5 The various signs placed upon the steps. From Feuillet, *Chorégraphie*.

L'ART DE DE'CRIRE

Le ſigne d'avoir le pied en l'air, eſt lorſque le pas eſt tranché.

Le pied en l'air.

Le ſigne de poſer la pointe du pied ſans que le corps y ſoit porté, eſt quand il y a un point directement au bout de ce qui repreſente la pointe du pied.

Poſer la pointe du pied ſans que le corps y ſoit porté.

Le ſigne de poſer le talon ſans que le corps y ſoit porté, eſt lors qu'il y a un point directement derriere ce qui repreſente le talon.

Poſer le talon ſans que le corps y ſoit porté.

Le ſigne de tourner un quart de tour, eſt repreſenté par un quart de cercle.

Tourné un quart de tour.

Le ſigne de tourner un demy tour, eſt repreſenté par un demy cercle.

Tourné un demy tour.

Le ſigne tourné trois quarts de tour, eſt repreſenté par trois quarts de cercle.

Tourné trois quarts de tour.

Le ſigne de tourner le tour entier, eſt repreſenté par un cercle entier.

Tourné un tour entier.

Figure 2.6 The various signs placed upon the steps. From Feuillet, *Chorégraphie*.

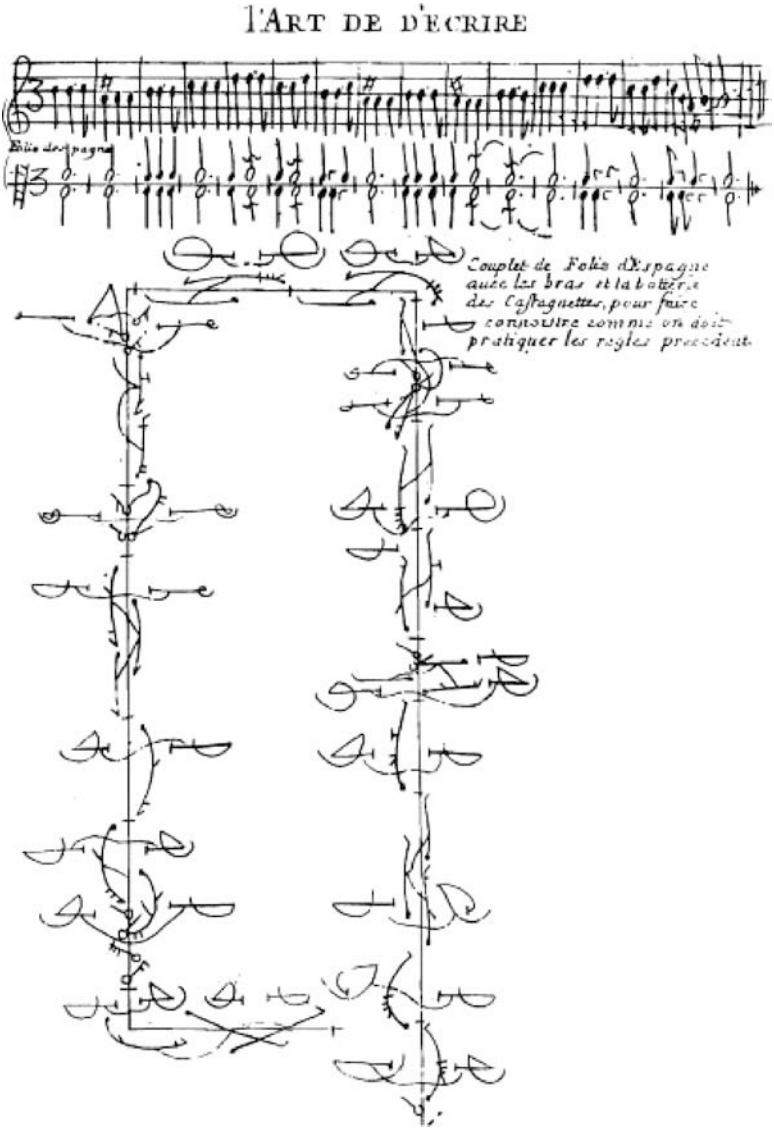


Figure 2.7 Dance notations placed upon a *chemin*. From Feuillet, *Chorégraphie*.

The dances encoded by Feuillet notation, however, relied upon the king to receive their stamp of legitimacy, and the active participation of the monarch at the many royal balls testifies to the absolute centrality of his presence during the proceedings. The model of dance decorum provided by the sovereign could cast the members of the aristocracy in either a distinguished or a disgraceful light; keen dancing skills were therefore essential to all members of the nobility, for the performance of courtiers alongside their king came to reflect their position and status within the court. A number of documents from the era attest to the significance of the royal presence at the balls; a few observations from the *Memoirs* of the Duc de Saint-Simon, a longtime fixture at the Court of Louis XIV, offer evidence of the central status of the king vis-à-vis the elaborate protocols of dance performance.

In one tale, Saint-Simon reports that the monarch—recently beset by family tragedies and misfortunes in war—announced a series of balls designed to breathe a new gaiety into the life at court. The sovereign therefore held several winter balls at his country home in Marly, each of which unfolded according to his personal specifications. Saint-Simon recalls, for instance, that "one day, the King wished that everybody, even the most aged, who were at Marly should go to the ball masqued; and, to avoid all distinction, he went there himself with a gauze robe above his habit." Regarding this royal masquerade, however, Saint-Simon also maintains that "such a slight disguise was for himself alone; everybody else was completely disguised."[36] Despite his pronouncement, then, the king remained visible and readily distinguished from all the other courtiers in attendance. While members of the nobility remove their masks from time to time in order to receive recognition from their monarch, the king himself is recognized at all times; he must, indeed, remain recognized in order to supply reciprocal recognition to the courtiers ranged around him. In a useful side note to his description of the balls at Marly, Saint-Simon also records an example of the sort of recognition provided by the monarch to his courtiers. After noting that "at all these balls the King made people dance who had long since passed the age for doing so," Saint-Simon adds that "as for the Comte de Brionne and the Chevalier de Sully, their dancing was so perfect that there is no age for them."[37] Clearly, fine deportment on the dance floor was an asset to an aristocrat of any age.

Saint-Simon also remarks, however, that the balls afforded the monarch occasion not only to honor graceful courtiers, but also to censure them for disgraceful actions; an unfortunate but amusing incident during another masked ball at Marly offers a case in point. Saint-Simon recalls that for this ball "dancers were wanting and Madame de Luxembourg on account of this

obtained an invitation, but with great difficulty, for she lived in such a fashion that no woman would see her." Saint-Simon adds that "Monsieur de Luxembourg was perhaps the only person in France who was ignorant of Madame de Luxembourg's conduct," then reports that M. le Prince, brother to the monarch, decided to take advantage of the masked ball to make sport of the guileless Luxembourg."[38] The Prince invited Luxembourg to dinner before the ball then outfitted his unsuspecting guest for the masquerade by presenting him with an outrageous headdress adorned with the stag horns of a cuckold. The good-natured Luxembourg suspected nothing, and during the ball took pride in the fact that the Prince himself had dressed him for the festivities. Having arrived before his wife, Luxembourg had taken several turns around the ballroom when Madame de Luxembourg entered and caught sight of her husband. Saint-Simon recalls that "his wife had heard nothing of this masquerading, and when she saw it, lost countenance, brazen as she was. Everybody stared at her and her husband, and seemed dying of laughter. M. le Prince looked at the scene from behind the King, and inwardly laughed at his malicious trick. This amusement lasted throughout the ball, and the King, self-contained as he usually was, laughed also."[39] Here the laughter of the sovereign not only exonerates the Prince of his practical joke, but also reproves Luxembourg for his naiveté and his wife for her immorality.

This authorizing power of the king was actually embodied by his location in the ballroom during the festivities. As Wendy Hilton remarks in *Dance of Court and Theatre*, formal dances of this era were generally directed toward the highest ranking person in attendance at the evening entertainments; this person, appropriately called The Presence, often inaugurated the proceedings by executing the initial dances of the evening and then retired to a dais or platform to occupy the most privileged position in the ballroom. Noting how dance performance reinforced the centrality of this position, Hilton remarks that "all ballroom, and most theatrical, dances began by moving in a straight line toward The Presence. Solo dancers stand on the centerline of the room; two persons must have the centerline between them. Dances finish by moving down the room and end up facing The Presence."[40] Any accidental reversal of direction during dance performance could result in disastrous consequences, for as Hilton remarks, "in losing sight of the front, dancers would find themselves not only finishing at the wrong end of the room, but with their backs turned to The Presence, an embarrassing breach of etiquette."[41] Of course at any ball hosted by the king the position of The Presence was occupied by the monarch himself, and the courtiers secured their noble

status through their appearance before the legitimizing power of the entire court structure.

But this appearance before the king did more than merely position the courtier relative to the layout of the ballroom, for the series of dances presented to the monarch unfolded in a strict order that also positioned the courtier at a specific station in court hierarchy. As Hilton notes, "ballroom procedure at its most formal followed the long-established pattern of a hierarchical society, a pattern Louis XIV exploited to its utmost: those of highest social rank danced first, followed by others in strict order of social precedence."[42] Royal balls generally began with a group dance called the "*branle*," which Hilton describes as "a dance performed in a linked line, the couples joining up in order of rank."[43] The sequence established by the *branle* set the stage for the principal dances of the evening, the "*dances à deux*" which "were performed in order of precedence by one couple at a time while the rest of the company watched."[44] Toward the end of the century, balls increasingly ended with another group dance, the "*contredanse*," performed as "a communal, less formal and complex dance introduced from England in the 1680's."[45] The dances performed at the royal balls thus enabled each courtier to secure a station in the stratified court structure; the preliminary *branle* laid the foundation for this structure, the *dances à deux* articulated the structure itself, and the final *contredanse* signaled the success of the articulation. With this sanctioned series of dance performances, the self produced its own self-enactment at its specific position within the court hierarchy.

The royal balls were not the only occasions for dance at court; the king was quite fond of *comèdies-ballets*—humorous plays with dance sequences between each act—and commissioned a number of them for his personal amusement. While professional dancers, not courtiers, typically assumed the roles in these productions, one *comèdie-ballet—Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* by Molière—is notable for attending to aristocratic self-enactment, including self-enactment through dance performance. Significantly, however, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* presents a curiously failed attempt at such performance, failed because it was undertaken not by a true aristocrat but by a parvenu pretender to aristocracy. A closer look at the text and its initial productions will shed light not only on such failures, but also on the anxieties that attended their appearance—anxieties that specific protocols of dance spectatorship sought to assuage.

Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme is the story of a wealthy but boorish merchant—Monsieur Jourdain—who constantly seeks entrance into the nobility. The first scene of the play, for instance, details his associations with a music master and a dance instructor, both eager for his patronage, who

advise him that participation in their respective fields not only comprises a crucial characteristic of the nobility, but even forms the prerequisite for their good government of the state; when the music master argues that "all the disorders, all the wars in the world, occur solely because people do not learn music," the dance instructor counters with the claim that "all the misfortunes of men, all the miserable reverses of which history is so full, the blunders of politicians and the mistakes of great captains, all these only arise through not knowing how to dance."[46] Yet despite the endless lessons he receives from his various tutors, Jourdain proves utterly incapable of instruction; indeed, his lack of aptitude is commensurate with his lack of noble breeding. Jourdain cannot even master the basic minuet, for the dance instructor must continually give him direction while keeping time for his pupil: "La, la, la, la, la. In time, if you please. La, la, la, la. The right leg. La, la, la. Do not move your shoulders so much. La, la, la, la, la; La, la, la, la, la. Both your arms look crippled. La, la, la, la, la. Lift up your head. Turn your toes outward. La, la, la. Hold yourself erect."[47]

As the play unfolds, Jourdain attempts to foist his desire for noble standing upon the other members of his family, all of whom deride his foolish efforts to overreach his lot in life. The central complication of the plot concerns Jourdain's daughter Lucile, who has made a love match with the honorable but altogether bourgeois Cleonte. Jourdain, however, wishes to wed his daughter to an aristocrat and refuses to permit a marriage between the lovers. The refusal is made all the more poignant by the fact that Cleonte embodies the native wisdom of those bourgeoisie who wish to remain in their rightful place; when Jourdain asks Cleonte if he is a member of the nobility, Cleonte responds without hesitation that he is not: "Rank is adopted unscrupulously, and the usage of today seems to authorize the theft. I must admit that my feelings on this matter are not so callous; my view is that all imposture is unworthy of an honest man, and that it smacks of cowardice to disguise the station in which it has pleased Heaven to cause us to be born . . . ."[48] The play ends happily, however, with a clever ruse designed to trick Jourdain into consenting to a marriage between the lovers. Cleonte, disguised as the son of the Great Turk, proclaims his passion for Lucile and during a final dance sequence invests Jourdain with the bogus title of *Mamamouchie* in exchange for the hand of his daughter. Even the lackey Clovielle marvels at the gullibility of the bourgeois Jourdain, closing the play by quipping "if a bigger fool can be found I will proclaim it from the housetops."[49]

Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme enjoyed its public premiere in November 1670 at the Palais Royal, a theatre ceded to the crown after the death of its

commissioner Richelieu. This royal theatre was loaned to Molière for public presentations and thereby became a locus for the kind of class mixing that clearly aroused considerable anxiety at the time. The fact that *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* draws such sharp distinctions between the classes demonstrates that mixed crowds like those of the Palais Royal troubled the social hierarchy. Particular classes of spectators were linked to particular areas of the auditorium—a fact that would tend to diminish the mixing of classes with one another. In his text *Paris Theatre Audiences of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, John Lough undertakes a detailed study of the Palais Royal and notes that prices for seats in the auditorium varied widely from one area to another—a key factor in determining seating patterns for the different classes in attendance. Lough identifies the different seating areas of the Palais Royal as the *parterre* or standing room before the stage, the *théâtre* or seats upon the stage, the *amphithéâtre* or elevated communal seating area, and the *loges, loges hautes*, and *loges du troisieme rang* or first, second, and third rows of private boxes. Next noting the price differences between the seating areas, Lough remarks that "at Molière's theatre in the season 1672–1673 the price of a seat on the stage or in the first row of boxes was 5 *livres* 10 *sous*, i.e. 110 *sous* as against 15 in the *parterre*. The *amphithéâtre* cost 3 *livres*, the *loges hautes* 1 *livre* 10 *sous*, and the *loges du troisieme rang* 1 *livre*."[50] Clearly a social hierarchy emerges from the allocation of variously priced seats to variously ranked classes of spectators. Yet while Lough remarks that "it is obvious that the more expensive seats were occupied by persons of rank or wealth," he also notes that affluent bourgeois at times took costly *loges*, while the nobility at times rubbed shoulders with commoners in the *parterre*. For a production like *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* at the Palais Royal, then, Lough admits that "we can establish no absolutely clear-cut line of demarcation between the different ranks of society and their place in the theatre."[51]

A curious counterpoint to this spectacle of class mixing, however, arises from the fact that *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* premiered at court a month before its first public performance. The private performance gave the nobility a chance to attend the play without mingling with the lower classes and offered the king an opportunity to endorse its message before it played to the mixed audiences of the Palais Royal. Louis, in fact, viewed most plays at court, shielded from the unruly crowds of the public theatres by his battery of courtiers. Lough notes that the king ceased to attend the public theatres during the 1660's but also observes that his withdrawal from public venues launched a golden era of performance at the court; this era, which lasted until the king entered a new phase of religious piety in the 1680's, witnessed

"the favor shown by *Le Roi Soleil* to Molière and Racine, the sumptuous fêtes of his years of splendor in which the drama played a prominent part, and the frequent performances of plays given by various Paris companies in the brilliant setting of the royal palaces and gardens."[52] Under the sponsorship of the sovereign, such private performances became occasions for the nobility to assert its absolute distinction from the bourgeoisie—often by maintaining the superior taste of the nobility in dramatic literature and performance. While Lough himself finds scant evidence that the predilections of the courtiers differed greatly from those of the lower classes—he observes that the lists of plays performed at court and those performed at the public theatres varied little from one another—he also remarks that writers from the period went to great lengths to praise the refined taste of the court and notes that pride in such refinement was a hallmark of the court itself: "No doubt there were among the courtiers of the time a certain number of people who qualified for the title of 'savants'; more numerous still were people who possessed a good general culture and the ability to appreciate intelligently good works of drama."[53] By attending and approving private performances like *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, the aristocracy kept its distance from the encroaching bourgeoisie; in the rarified arena of dance spectatorship, the self reflected upon its own self-enactment as the assurance of its own exclusive status.

The scene invoked by the private performance of *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* therefore appears as an attempt to preserve the elite position of the aristocracy in the face of an upstart bourgeoisie; the sight of courtiers confirming their own privilege while condemning the efforts of the unfortunate Jourdain reveals the intransigence of seventeenth-century class distinctions. The various protocols of dance performance noted earlier maintained such distinctions through a multifaceted imposition of social order: a protocol of dance training establishes dance as an elite knowledge of the aristocracy, a protocol of dance performance orders the aristocracy according to specific positions within court hierarchy, and a protocol of dance spectatorship protected the aristocracy from threats to their privileged status. Each protocol thus assisted the transformation of a potentially disordered space into a rigidly ordered place, one in which the self could produce self-enactments corresponding to its station in court structure. At all times, the king himself authorized the dance protocols that transformed space into place and sanctioned the relation of self to self-enactment. At times the ideal performer and at other times the ideal spectator, the king in fact tacitly fulfilled both roles at once; as spectator the monarch approved the aristocratic displays of courtly hierarchy, and as performer ratified these

displays through a series of gestures that signaled his approval to his courtiers. The king thus offered the example par excellence of a self seamlessly wedded to self-enactment, for his gestures offered perfect adequation of his acts of approval. Significantly, however, this seamless link came under increasing attack from the bourgeoisie as the seventeenth century drew to a close. Indeed, the idea that a bourgeois like Jourdain might gain access to an elite practice like dance seemed to drive a wedge between self and self-enactment, one that threatened to turn the ordered place of the court back to a disordered space of social upheaval.

In fact, evidence of a mounting preoccupation with this threat emerges during the latter half of the seventeenth century; increasing anxiety over the bourgeois usurpation of noble status appears, for instance, within the conduct manuals of the period, which like the dance also ratified specific practices—in this case the observation of formal etiquette—as hallmarks of aristocratic identity. In her study *Exclusive Conversations* Elizabeth Goldsmith interrogates a number of these conduct manuals, tracking their shifting attitudes toward the function of etiquette across the span of the seventeenth century. Goldsmith maintains that the early decades of the century saw a growing reliance on etiquette as evidence of aristocratic status, remarking that "by 1650 a more modern view of nobility, based upon birth but giving an entirely new emphasis to education, personal cultivation, and techniques of social interaction, had replaced a medieval code of valor."[54] The equation of etiquette with noble identity reached a zenith around the middle of the century, but by the final decades of the century suspicions began to surface regarding the use of conduct as a gauge of aristocratic status, due largely to the fact that ambitious members of the bourgeoisie "were learning to use codes of etiquette as a means of creating systems of privilege that undermined the traditional social hierarchy."[55] Taking a cue from Goldsmith, I turn to three such manuals, noting how the avowal of etiquette as an exclusive domain of the nobility gave way to its disavowal as a collection of ultimately empty words and gestures.

The use of conduct manuals to promote the establishment of aristocratic identity precedes the reign of Louis XIV; the 1630 publication of *L'Honneste Homme ou l'Art de Plaire à la Cour* by Nicolas Faret illustrates the early importance attached to etiquette as a demonstration of noble lineage and good breeding. The text, in fact, discourages the traditional association of nobility with military prowess and calls instead for refined conduct to serve as the sign of noble status—a timely suggestion during decades of tension between the court and the aristocracy. Referencing courtiers still obsessed with martial glory, Faret observes that "dance, music, and other

species of gallantry seem to them a kind of softness, and unless they are playing with a petard or firearm they do not believe themselves to be nobly occupied." Such sentiment, Faret claims, "together with any talk of pride and vanity must be avoided as the most dangerous reef upon which the good respect of men may wreck itself."[56] Rather than seeking opportunities for displays of bravado, the courtier should equip himself with the knowledge of proper conduct at court: "It suffices to say that those who wish to make themselves appreciated at the Louvre and in other fashionable assemblies must accompany all their actions with a great prudence," Faret cautions. "They must be well advised and adroit in all they do, and must not only put their efforts into acquiring for themselves the pleasures I have related to them, but must regulate the sequence and the order of their lives in such a way that the whole will correspond to each part."[57] By attending to etiquette, the *honneste homme* will find a place for himself among the company of his peers; the reciprocal recognition of proper conduct offers the assurance of a kindred nobility of spirit: "Oh, what pleasure a well made soul feels in encountering others of the same calibre! And how many other joys are imperfect compared to this, which is more pure and more sweet, since he knows, more clearly than anyone, that the contentment he feels is the greatest good in life!"[58]

The seeds sown by Faret take root in the 1671 text *Le Nouveau Traité de la Civilité qui se Pratique en France*; composed by Antoine de Courtin, the text marks the high point in the use of conduct as a measure of aristocratic status. Courtin defines *civilité* as a scientific practice, the adherence to a given set of behaviors deemed appropriate to the context at hand: "According to the ancients," Courtin notes, "civility is a science that teaches to dispose our words and actions in their proper and just places."[59] The very notion of *civilité* as a series of precepts to be learned raises the possibility that untoward individuals could likewise learn these precepts and thereby ape the actions of their superiors. Courtin is aware of this danger, for even as he argues that an inborn modesty forms an absolute prerequisite for civil behavior, he also admits that pretenders to *civilité* do in fact exist: "I am sensible, and it is every day's experience, that there are many persons who pass for civil, and well bred, who are really otherwise, concealing great vanity and self-love under a counterfeit modesty."[60] Courtin allays fears of mistaken identity, however, by adding that such pretenders to *civilité* are easily identified—by an authority above if not below: "As to the deceit or integrity of the heart, God himself judges afterwards, and for the most part He does it so effectually that He confounds those double dealers in their enterprises and lays them and their collusions so open (however formal and elaborate

they may be) that they are easily discovered."[61] After this rather anxious disclaimer, Courtin dispenses advice for every situation, tailoring his remarks to the ranks of the agents in question and prescribing suitable actions for all parties; the observation of *civilité*, in other words, not only secures membership within the aristocracy, but also a specific station in the aristocratic hierarchy. Note, for instance, "Chapter VI: When We Have an Audience with a Great Person, How We are to Deport," which contains the following detailed prescription for seating oneself before a superior:

> If he desires you to sit down, you may do it, but with hesitation and reluctance, which will be a great instance of your respect, and be sure to place yourself at the lower end, which is always next the door where you entered, as the upper end is always where his Lordship is pleased to dispose himself. You must, when you sit down, observe to take a worse seat than his Lordship; a chair with arms is the best, a back chair is the next, and a stool the worst of the three. When you sit down, do not place yourself cheek by jowl by his Lordship, but remove your chair something from him, that he may take notice of your attentions, for sitting sideways towards him is more respectful than to place yourself full in his face.[62]

Courtin therefore offers his readers detailed instructions for correct action in a variety of circumstances, the careful observance of which would designate the noble status of its followers. But just two decades later fears that the bourgeoisie might usurp the codes of *civilité* reached something of a crisis point; the degree of this distress is indicated by the 1693 publication of *Du Bon et du Mauvais Usage dans les Manières de S'Exprimer*, a book of "model conversations" by François de Callières that marked a retreat from the use of conduct as a means for securing noble privilege. By the end of the century, the bourgeoisie had appropriated many rules of conduct for themselves, thereby forcing the aristocracy to respond that no system of rules could adequately express their intrinsic nobility of soul; slavish attention to conduct became a hallmark of ill breeding, rather than a sign of noble birth. Thus the Callières text does not present precepts for polite conversation, but offers instead a series of dialogues by members of the nobility, who decry the recent bourgeois tendency to excessively formal speech. "I am convinced," maintains one Marquis, "that I can no longer suffer the impertinent speech of the court, which has become a relic there, to pass in great quantities from the mouths of men from the city and the provinces, from petty officers, and from other poor copyists of young courtiers, who split our skulls with it every day."[63] Such language, maintains a noble Lady, contains none of the value it displays upon its surface, but appears instead as "a form of false money which has been introduced into the commerce of

young men, but which is easily spotted, and no longer has any use for those who speak well."[64] The speakers in the Callières text therefore reject formal language and advocate a simpler *politesse* that demonstrates the ease involved in the display of true nobility: "Civility grows among us only to the extent that *politesse* is introduced within it, and it is this *politesse* that wisely establishes the proper manner for a note, or one supposes for all forms of subscription and formal correspondence, so that those to whom we write do not have cause to complain that we do not accord them all the honors that they may claim."[65]

The waning years of the seventeenth century thus witnessed intensifying anxiety over the power of sanctioned performance practices to secure an aristocratic pedigree; this anxiety cast new doubts upon the ostensibly iron-clad bond between self and self-enactment by suggesting that this bond may be falsified by members of the bourgeois class. Here the example of Molière himself is instructive; the playwright won great favor at court despite his lack of noble standing, and I believe his success is due in part to his ability to exploit class anxiety for his own ends. In his 1663 *Le Versailles Impromptu*, for instance, Molière reworks the relation of subjectivity to performance with his assertion that the full reality of the subject eludes representation; within the play Molière claims that the most intimate aspect of his own identity ultimately defies disclosure, but crucially he also posits this very defiance as proof of his own virtue—a quality all the more unassailable for its refusal to be reduced to mere display. Molière also succeeds in enlisting the king to ratify his new vision of identity, even though the text discreetly implies that such royal authorization may no longer carry any currency; if some aspect of self has indeed flown from the site of self-enactment, then perhaps not even the sovereign himself can restore it to its former secure position. Molière, in other words, threatens to transform the ordered place of the court into a disordered space once more; this transformation, seemingly irrevocable in the light of later history, presages even greater changes to come. A closer look at the *Impromptu* will shed more light on the way that Molière forecasts such changes in the production itself. Before examining the *Impromptu*, however, some brief remarks on its theatrical antecedents—*L'Ecole des Femmes* and its subsequent *Critique*—are first in order.

In the spring of 1663 Molière premiered his new play *L'Ecole des Femmes*, a production that delighted some spectators and scandalized others; perhaps foremost among the complaints of its detractors was the charge that the play satirized prominent members of society. In response to the charge, Molière composed a short afterpiece to the play entitled *La Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes*, which he added to the playbill in June

the same year. The *Critique* takes place in a fashionable drawing room of the day, where members of the aristocratic elite gather to discuss the latest play by Molière. Each character holds a different opinion of *L'Ecole des Femmes*; the prudish Climène and pedantic Lysidas attack the play, while the sensible Uranie and levelheaded Dorante act as the mouthpieces of Molière himself, defending the play against all future criticisms. On the charge that the play ridicules actual individuals, however, Dorante stumbles when he admits that comic figures, drawn as they are from models supplied by everyday life, risk implying a resemblance between real people and fictional characters: "Everyone insists that the likenesses resemble reality, and you haven't accomplished anything, unless you make your audience recognize the men of our own time."[66] Uranie, however, argues that fictional characters offer mere codifications of human action and therefore do not refer directly to actual individuals: "I shall be careful not to take offense at anything, or assume it regards me personally. That sort of satire hits at manners and customs, and only indirectly at individuals."[67] Through Uranie, therefore, Molière argues that comic characters may expose the faults or foibles of real people but can never convey the totality of their true natures.

Yet remarkably Molière seems to undermine his own argument at the end of the *Critique* when he suggests that actual individuals might in fact find truthful depictions of themselves upon the stage. As the play draws to a close, Uranie observes that the conversation of the evening could offer material for a comic script: "Our dispute is really funny. I think someone should make a little play of it. That wouldn't be bad as an afterpiece to *The School for Wives*."[68] Her sister Elise agrees, remarking "I should gladly contribute my own character," while a snobbish Marquis also in attendance adds "I shouldn't refuse mine, I'm sure."[69] Uranie also maintains that Molière himself should compose the play; addressing Dorante, Uranie remarks: "Since everyone would be so pleased, Chevalier, do make notes on everything and give them to your friend Molière, to make a play out of them."[70] At this point a servant enters to announce that dinner is served in the next room; the characters retire, and the play comes to an end. This sudden reversal in the text should not go unnoticed, however. At one moment Uranie argues that audiences should not regard comic figures as accurate depictions of real people, but at the next she hopes to find herself depicted in a play by Molière himself. While instances of such reversals abound in comic theatre, it seems that Molière poses a serious question with his contradictory assertions: are theatrical depictions ever commensurate with the true nature of actual individuals?

If Molière contradicts his own argument in the *Critique*, he carries the contradiction even further in *Le Versailles Impromptu*. Molière presented the *Impromptu* in October 1663 as part of a command performance for the monarch; significantly, Molière seized upon this opportunity to respond to vicious attacks on his character precipitated by the success of the *Critique*. The Hôtel de Bourgogne—rival company to the Molière troupe—had just staged *Le Portrait du Peinture*, a satire of the *Critique* that had attacked Molière on both personal and professional fronts. Molière deflects the attacks, however, through the use of a clever theatrical conceit. Within the context of the *Impromptu* Molière and his actors appear onstage as themselves, under the pretense that they are merely rehearsing the performance that the monarch has requested. Molière begins the play, in fact, by introducing the conceit, calling his actors to the stage and explaining that the king has commanded the performance on short notice: "Please, let's take our places," Molière remarks. "Since we're all in costume and the king won't come for two hours, let's use the time in rehearsing and figuring out how to put the show on."[71] Crucially, with this remark Molière not only casts himself and his actors as performers rehearsing their parts, but also insists the king is ostensibly absent from their rehearsal. The status of the king as silent witness is reinforced when the actors complain that they have not had sufficient time to learn their parts, thereby prompting Molière to speak of the sovereign as if he were not present for the proceedings at hand: "It's much better to do badly what he asks than not to do it on time; and if we have the distress of not succeeding as we should like, we have at least the merit of obeying his commands quickly."[72]

The conceit thereby established, Molière distributes roles to his actors and the rehearsal begins. Curiously, however, many of the figures in the new play under rehearsal bear a striking resemblance to the characters featured in the *Critique*. The play begins, in fact, with a debate between two Marquises over which of them served as the model for the Marquis of the *Critique*. The pair is soon joined by a chevalier named Dorante, a figure also intended as the model for the Dorante of the *Critique*. When asked which of the Marquises he believes Molière has ridiculed in his play, however, Dorante replies—rather surprisingly, given his own likeness to a Molière character—that Molière never depicts real people in his work: "That's just what I heard Molière complaining about the other day; he was talking to people who were making the same accusation that you are. He said nothing annoyed him so much as to be accused of aiming at some person in his types."[73] As the play continues, several courtly ladies appear with news that the Bourgogne is producing *Le Portrait du Peinture*. Thrilled by the prospect

of the production, the lady Elise—yet another model for a character in the *Critique*—claims that the scandalous portrayal of Molière in the *Portrait* is his just reward for ridiculing others in his own plays. Again Dorante argues that Molière never depicts actual individuals in his work; speaking of Boursault, the playwright of the *Portrait*, Dorante notes: "As for all the people whom the author has tried to stir up against Molière, on the ground that his portraits are too lifelike, not only is his criticism in bad taste, but it is ridiculous and misapplied. I had never realized that an author should be criticized for depicting men too truthfully."[74]

Yet the precise nature of these truthful depictions is far from clear. Molière contradicts himself, claiming not to depict "real" people in his plays even as he depicts figures like Dorante and Elise as the "real" models for his characters in the *Critique*. And of course Molière cannot resist taking a few potshots at his rivals at the Bourgogne, attacking actual individuals even as he claims never to do so. Here, however, Molière turns the contradiction to his advantage, seeking to confirm his own virtue by drawing a distinction between his own attacks and those that his rivals launch against him. At the beginning of the *Impromptu* Molière satirically coaches his fellow actors on the bombastic acting style characteristic of the Bourgogne: "Notice the way I stand," Molière notes while imitating the Bourgogne actors, "Observe that closely! And bellow the last line properly. That's what brings out the applause, that's what makes them roar."[75] Later Molière claims to welcome similar attacks upon his own style of acting, or even upon his style of writing. Significantly, however, Molière ultimately draws the line at attacks upon his private life—a reference to the fact that the *Portrait* implied he had recently married his own daughter. Molière, in other words, makes a distinction between professional and personal attacks; after giving other troupes free rein to ridicule his productions, he insists that "they should do me the favor of leaving the rest to me, and of refraining from touching on such subjects as, I hear, they are using to attack me."[76]

Despite his protests to the contrary, then, Molière tacitly admits that his plays do at times depict real people. Indeed, Molière embodies the contradiction between his words and deeds; he claims never to depict actual individuals but he simultaneously appears as himself in a play of his own devising. Yet even as Molière implicitly concedes to this contradiction, he also makes good use of his concession, for it grants him the moral high ground in his battle with the Bourgogne. While Molière may sometimes satirize real people in his plays, he insists that his satires do not touch upon the private lives of the people in question. Molière argues that displays of private life should be unavailable to depiction on the stage, but the conceit

that his play is merely a rehearsal allows him to detour this argument and make a very public display of his own private character. The fact that Molière will not launch personal attacks upon his rivals testifies to his virtue—here defined by his respect for his enemies and his refusal to impugn their character. Yet virtue is a quality often incommensurate with its own exhibition. Such exhibitions, after all, may prove false; the malicious image of Molière fostered by his rivals threatens to mask his virtuous character, and so by corollary a virtuous image may mask a malicious character as well. Thanks to the rehearsal conceit, however, Molière never trumpets his virtue in a "public" venue, but merely demonstrates its consequences in a "private" moment with his actors. Embedded in a performance at court, then, Molière introduces a relation of self to self-enactment quite different from the one that typically reigned at the court itself. Molière suggests that at least one aspect of the self—virtue, for instance—can never be fully contained within self-enactment; indeed, the refusal of such containment, evidenced through resistance to public displays of private character, testifies to the integrity of virtue itself.

Of course, in keeping with the tradition of the command performance, Molière still relies upon the king to approve of the production—an approval that, not coincidentally, also ratifies the virtuous behavior referenced within it. Molière therefore seems to employ a wholly new strategy for winning royal approval. Molière does not ask the king to recognize his place in the courtly pecking order, an order maintained through the proper display of self-enactment; instead, he asks the king to recognize a quality that exists independently of any place in the pecking order, a quality that actually eludes disclosure in self-enactment. In the final analysis, however, this new form of royal recognition, for all its radical implications, begs a couple of crucial questions: if the truth of the self ultimately exceeds self-enactment, then what value truly obtains from the recognition of the monarch? Would not the quality of discernment ascribed to the king, much like the quality of virtue ascribed to Molière, likewise resist full disclosure through official courtly displays? Recall that the king himself is enmeshed in the rehearsal conceit established by Molière; while the monarch is present throughout the production, he must behave as if he were absent. The sovereign, in fact, never truly "arrives" to witness the performance; at the end of the play he merely "sends word" that he has graciously granted Molière more rehearsal time. Thus the king can no longer authorize subject status through formal demonstrations of his approval; Molière has invalidated this task of the monarch by driving a wedge between the heretofore intimately linked royal personae of privileged performer and privileged

spectator. As spectator the king can privately approve of Molière, but as performer the king can make no public gesture of approval. Much like the virtue of Molière, the discernment of the king eludes display. And if such display is no longer forthcoming, then the role of the king as guarantor of social order is called into question. Perhaps the new authorizing strategy offered by Molière prefigures the eventual withdrawal of this royal guarantee altogether.

Or perhaps this withdrawal is itself prefigured by another: the retirement of Louis XIV from the *ballets de cour*. In 1669 Louis participated in his final *Ballet*.[77] By retiring from his dual role as privileged performer and privileged spectator, Louis widens the opening rift between these two positions that increasingly comes to characterize the era. But does this rift, as assumed by Lawrenson and Arnott, necessarily reinforce the social stratification that marks the period as well? In the *Impromptu*, at least, this rift actually seems to militate against such stratification, for with it Molière introduces a new relation of subjectivity to performance, one suited not to the nobility but instead to a bourgeois like himself. Rather than offering proof of noble pedigree, this new relation attests to qualities that ultimately defy overt display; a quality like virtue, for instance, cannot trumpet its own existence without risking transformation into arrogance. Real virtue, in other words, is no longer detectable in highly ritualized displays, but only in the traces of virtuous character discreetly embedded in even the most insignificant words and deeds. So the *Impromptu* forecasts both a shift in class relations and an attendant shift to a newly Modern relation of subjectivity to performance. For Molière, the early confluence of such shifts seems to work to his advantage, yet his work sets a precedent for struggles to come. As representation comes to seem increasingly inadequate to its referent, some aspect of the self will traverse the horizon of the intelligible, thereby inspiring future generations to its endless pursuit.

I have also inherited this love of the chase, as evinced by the questions that I still ask, at times despite myself, about the authenticity of performance: Do performers forge an intimate link to their material? Do they enjoy a genuine rapport with their audience? Do they offer an honest glimpse into their lives? Do they, in short, ever truly disclose themselves in their performances? The fact that these questions continue to hold such currency attests to an anxiety that performance can never truly tell me all I wish to know. Of course, the performances of the courtiers before their king were fraught with anxieties as well, but these, I believe, were worries of a rather different nature. According to the model offered by de Certeau, this difference hinges upon the question of a perfect transformation of space to

place. The maintenance of the court as an ordered place required constant labor to prevent its reversion to a chaotic space, but this labor was predicated upon the conceptual possibility of a perfect ordering, an absolute correspondence between self and self-enactment. Once the latter proves incommensurate to the former, however, this labor undergoes a radical shift; no longer an effort to uphold a regime of perfect order, it becomes instead a series of attempts to control the chaos that now intrudes, unexpectedly and unpredictably, into a regime always already off balance. The history of Modern performance is, in some respects, the history of this attempt. Yet perhaps the reign of *Le Roi Soleil*, so famous for its imposition of order, already bore witness to the chaotic disruptions of the era to come.

3. "Snip Snip Here, Snip Snip There, and a Couple of Tra-La-La's": The Rise and Fall of the Castrato Singer

The scene is set in London; the year is 1736. The castrato singer Farinelli, the greatest star of the international stage, pays an unexpected visit to Geörg Friedrich Handel, composer to the king and manager of the Royal Opera at Covent Garden. Wishing to end the longstanding feud that has smoldered between them for decades, Farinelli offers to return a recently stolen operatic score to the great composer. Handel is naturally suspicious of his old nemesis—the current star at the rival Opera of the Nobility—and wonders how his score fell into the hands of Farinelli:

"Where did you get that?" he inquires.

"It doesn't matter," replies Farinelli, who then adds "I'll sing it for you" as a gesture of goodwill. "It's time we made peace. We both had the mystery revealed to us. Music belongs to me just as it belongs to you."

"What music?" Handel asks imperiously, incredulously. "Good enough to squeeze cheap tears from females who swoon over your voice? Is that how you presume to move me?"

"With your music, I will," Farinelli responds.

Handel, however, seems apoplectic at the prospect; the high-pitched warblings of castrati are for him unnatural, artificial, monstrous: "A castrato's voice is an example of nature abused, rerouted from its goal in order to deceive. You've subverted your voice to virtuosity without soul, devoted only to artifice! Let it stay there! Give me back my score!"

"You know, Maestro, people say my singing has power over people," Farinelli replies, turning on his heel to walk away. "Don't turn my voice into an instrument of death."[1]

Thus unfolds one of the central antagonisms in the 1995 film *Farinelli*, an imaginative account of the life of the famous castrato, born Carlo Broschi at Naples in 1705. Significantly, this sudden departure of Farinelli, this turning away that first seems merely a menacing response to the deprecation of his castrated condition, seems on closer inspection resonant with his own sexual identity; Farinelli, the film suggests, has been forcibly turned away from his original sexual destiny. Indeed, the famed castrato appears throughout the film as a tortured figure obsessed with his lost manhood. Farinelli revels in the glorious voice secured for him by castration, but the sacrifice has proven too great a price to pay for vocal beauty. The beautiful voice, in fact, threatens a widespread turning away from proper sexual identity, for it not only signals the past castration of Farinelli but the future castration of others as well. Close to the conclusion of the film, Handel hides in the gallery of the Opera of the Nobility in order to hear his stolen composition performed by Farinelli. Overcome by the fact that such a glorious voice could stem from such an act of violence, Handel confronts Farinelli backstage between acts: "You have managed to turn me into what you have always been," he tells the singer. "You have castrated my imagination. Starting now I'll never compose another opera again. Never again. You are the first to know and the only one to blame." This castration of the imagination appears even more reminiscent of an emasculation during the final moments of the opera itself, as the composer listens to Farinelli sing his climactic aria. Handel begins to sweat; he tears at his collar, pulls off his periwig, staggers and finally swoons like an ecstatic female at the sublime beauty of the castrato voice.[2]

Given the horror of castration revealed by all the central characters of *Farinelli*, a viewer might legitimately wonder why this practice continued for centuries, especially if the castrated singers threatened to inflict a phantom castration on any man who gloried in the beauty of their voices. Yet the view of castration exhibited in *Farinelli* references a concept of sexual identity specific to our own day and age, one predicated upon a binary relation of male and female sexual positions. According to this two-sex model, male and female subjects each display specific and, if left inviolate, immutable sexual characteristics. The fact that, at least in popular parlance, men are from Mars while women are from Venus reveals the traction this model enjoys in our culture; apparently the divide between male and female subjects is so vast that rockets are required for them to visit one another. Unfortunately, however, this contemporary two-sex model frequently colors scholarship on castrati singers. For instance, in his still seminal 1956 text *The Castrati in Opera*, Angus Heriot reveals his anxiety over castration when

he asks "Why was so strange and cruel a practice thought worthwhile, and why should audiences of succeeding generations have preferred these half-men with voices as high as those of women, both to women themselves and to natural men?"[3] Heriot next answers his own question by listing a number of reasons for the longstanding production of castrati, including the preference of the period for high voices over bass and tenor registers, an early ascendance in sacred music due to a prohibition of women from the choirs of the Catholic Church, and later success in opera due to the reluctance—or in Rome the outright refusal—to allow female performers on the public stage. Heriot also gives reasons for the eventual cessation of castrato production, including a decline in the *opera seria* tailored to castrati and the disruption of the Italian conservatory system due to the Napoleonic invasion and its importation of a French distaste for castrati voices. Yet even as he attempts to offer legitimate historical bases for the appearance and disappearance of castrati, Heriot seems to have inherited the aversion to castrati that arose in tandem with their fall from grace: "Succeeding generations," Heriot maintains, "regarded their memory with derision and disgust, congratulating themselves on living in an era when such barbarities were no longer possible."[4]

More recently, Patrick Barbier has attempted to take a more dispassionate attitude toward the castrato phenomenon in his 1989 text *The World of the Castrati*. Indeed, in his Introduction Barbier urges readers to suspend judgment on castration given the radical difference between past and present imaginations of sex: "How can the 'modern' mind, moderately influenced by the nineteenth century, understand how a particular period dared to seek pure and 'gratuitous' Beauty through a mutilation so 'costly' to the individual who was subjected to it?"[5] Barbier then offers a detailed account of the lives of the castrati, including their early training, their roles in the Church and the Opera, and their place in European culture. Yet on the topic of castration and its relation to sexual difference Barbier falls into a familiarly anxious rhetoric. On the one hand Barbier hails the castrato as "a 'supernatural' being who belonged to both sexes without knowing the limits of either," yet on the other hand he associates the castrato with a Baroque aesthetics enchanted by "illusion, artifice, disguise, and vocal ambiguity."[6] Clearly a being described as supernatural proves excessive to the natural borders of sexual identity, and while the description may imply that the castrato transcends such borders and thereby accedes to a more privileged sphere, his connection to illusion and artifice throws such privilege into doubt. Indeed, Barbier closes his text with a comment that disregards his own earlier admonition to withhold judgment on castrati; clearly linking

castration to aberrant deviations from normal sexual identity, Barbier calls the era of the castrati "an adventure that lasted for three centuries, defying all laws of morality and reason to achieve the impossible union of angel and monster."[7]

In sharp contrast to these studies of castrati, however, recent explorations into the history of sexuality have troubled the ostensibly transhistorical nature of the two-sex model. A number of historians now maintain that our binary notion of sexual difference was preceded by one that posited a certain mutability of male and female sexual positions. In this earlier one-sex model, both men and women were held to share a common sexual essence, itself the source of all sexual attributes; while men claimed sexual superiority over women, their distinction was conceived as a greater degree of sexual perfection, not as a pedigree pertaining to a specific sexual essence. Yet the very mutability of the sexes implicitly casts claims of sexual superiority into question, for it suggested that men and women could take on the attributes of the other sex—a prospect that threatened to disrupt the sexual hierarchy of power. Indeed, perhaps an increasing disruption of this hierarchy spurred the shift from a one-sex to a two-sex model of sexual difference. If so, then the changing fortunes of the castrato mirrored the change from the older to the newer sexual model. As long as the one-sex regime held sway, castration could be conceived as a means to approximate the singularity of sex itself, and the castrato as a figure who displayed sex in both its male and its female manifestations. But with the shift to the two-sex regime, castration seemed a transgression of an immutable sexual divide, and the castrato an abject figure who could display neither sex with any efficacy.

Yet perhaps the fall of the castrato signaled more than just the shift from a one-sex to a two-sex model of sexual difference; it may have likewise signaled the shift from a Premodern to a Modern relation of subjectivity to performance. In the last chapter I described how the earlier Premodern relation was marked by an insistence upon a perfect adequation of representation to its referent. Already in the seventeenth century, however, Molière suggested that some aspect of the latter proves excessive to the former; this aspect traverses the horizon of the intelligible and forestalls a total revelation of subjectivity within the arena of performance. With this suggestion Molière forecast greater shifts to come, and it seems the disappearance of the castrato coincided with just such shifts. In the transition from the one-sex to the two-sex model, the castrato found himself out of a job. Indeed, the very existence of the castrato seemed to aggravate an anxiety that came to haunt the Modern era—a fear that the true nature of sexual difference would remain forever out of reach. After all, if scholars truly felt confident

in the stability of sexual difference, then they would not, like Heriot, need to issue anxious assurances that later generations viewed castrati "with derision and disgust," or, like Barbier, need to offer anxious confirmations that the production of castrati defied "all laws of morality and reason." Even today, when the mandate for binary sexual distinctions has been relaxed in certain circles, the assumption that performers will be clearly marked as one sex or the other seems proportional to the urge to determine the sex of ambiguously gendered performers for once and all. Yet in his heyday the castrato did not seem to provoke such an urge, and perhaps this explains his strangeness to our present sensibilities.

In this chapter I take this very strangeness as the starting point for my investigation of the castrato, for I seek to understand his shifting fortunes vis-à-vis the larger shifts that marked the years between his first and final stage appearances. I begin the chapter by outlining three distinct functions of the castrato within the one-sex model, each of which cast him as a privileged sexual subject. Appearing first in the sixteenth century choirs of the Italian Church, the castrato initially embodies the renunciation of sex that seeks to rid the believer of corrupt desire; here the clear high voice of the castrato signifies the celestial heights to which a subject purged of sin could hope to aspire. With the rise of opera in the seventeenth century, the castrato becomes a vehicle for the idealization of sex as the ennobling force of love; here music takes the form of ideal emotional expression and the castrato, a consummate musician, appeared as the chief exponent of amorous sentiment. Later still, the increasing popularity of the castrato reveals his role in an eroticization of sex that seeks to recuperate desire; here the unique allure of the castrato signifies his ability to inspire irresistible passion. Yet changing attitudes toward sexuality during the eighteenth century also changed the role of the castrato; far from offering a comforting vision of sex as a single vital energy, the castrato increasingly came to seem a threat to the stability of the sexual order. For evidence of this threat I turn to the reception of the castrato not in his native Italy but in England, where his perceived menace to political and economic security eventually sapped him of prestige and power. The English anxieties over the castrato indicate an urge to replace a failing one-sex model with a new two-sex model of sexual difference, a model that perforce renders the castrato a freakish figure, a mutilated man. This new view of the castrato eventually crosses the English Channel and makes its way to Italy itself, where it forecasts his ultimate downfall. The demise of the castrato therefore signals a crucial shift in regimes of sexual difference that in turn signals a transition to the Modern era.

The chapter therefore sets the stage for the appearance of the kind of castrato found in *Farinelli*: a subject with no fixed place in the two-sex model of sexual difference. In our own day the castrato does not fit comfortably within either the male or the female arenas of sexuality; the castrato is not a woman, but is never fully a man either. The castrato, indeed, seems to hover between these two arenas—turned away from both, the castrato is denied the right of return to either. Yet the castrato is not a product of the two-sex model, but of its one-sex antecedent, one in which such turnings and returnings did indeed seem possible. Within this earlier model, no manifestation of sex could fully escape the orbit of a single and all-encompassing sexual essence; while various aspects of castrato identity might be temporarily turned away from the realm of conventional sexual categories, they could always be redeemed and returned to their proper station. Borrowing from musical terminology, Gilles Deleuze refers to such turning and returning as an instance of a refrain or *ritornello*, within which every motion forward is also a motion back to the beginning. For Deleuze, the *ritornello* establishes parameters for thought itself; it simultaneously demarcates a territory for cognition while allowing egress and regress across its border. A closer look at the notion of the *ritornello* will offer the means for a closer look at the castrato as well.

In his essay "Music and *Ritornello*," Deleuze outlines three aspects of the *ritornello*, three concurrent practices that together describe its overall dynamics. The first aspect establishes the threshold for a space of order in the midst of chaos, a space that delineates an internal region for thought relative to the external realm outside its borders; Deleuze compares this aspect to a tune sung by a fearful child in the dark: "The song is a rough sketch of a calming and stabilizing, calm and stable, center in the heart of chaos."[8] The song "jumps from chaos to the beginnings of order in chaos," but as of yet it remains "always in danger of breaking apart at any moment."[9] The second aspect of the *ritornello* therefore secures the inner ordered space from outside chaotic forces by arranging the elements inside it; again Deleuze invokes a musical motif when he notes that "for sublime deeds like the foundation of a city or the fabrication of a golem, one draws a circle, or better yet walks in a circle as in a children's dance, combining rhythmic vowels and consonants that correspond to the interior forces of creation as to the differentiated parts of an organism."[10] The proper arrangement of the elements thus assumes paramount importance, for as Deleuze observes, "a mistake in speed, rhythm, or harmony would be catastrophic because it would bring back the forces of chaos, destroying both creator and creation."[11] The third aspect of the *ritornello* then allows cognitive crossings back and forth

between the ordered space and its chaotic complement; here the musical metaphor turns on variation and invention: "One ventures forth, hazards an improvisation."[12] Deleuze thus posits a continual movement from one space to the next, one that folds both regions into each other, for "to improvise is to join the world, or to meld with it. One ventures from home on the thread of a tune."[13]

The *ritornello* offers a useful means to conceive the various roles of the castrato within the one-sex model of sexual difference, for his different functions vis-à-vis this model may be mapped onto the different aspects of the *ritornello* itself. The castrato's initial renunciation of sex establishes a threshold of order by banishing the chaotic force of desire from the space of sexual identity; his idealization of sex arranges the elements within this ordered space by linking disparate subjects through their shared inheritance of love; and his eroticization of sex allows cognitive crossings from chaos to order by recuperating desire and granting it new legitimate status. I will examine each of these functions of the castrato in the pages that follow, using the concept of the *ritornello* to link them together within the one-sex model of sexual difference. Of course, with the transition from a one-sex to a two-sex model, the turnings and returnings of the *ritornello* are rendered incomplete at best. In the new regime of binary male and female sexed positions, a figure turned away from one sexual arena can never stage a completely successful return; this certainly proves the case with the castrato. Later in the chapter I will examine this shift to the two-sex model, along with its implications for the castrato. First, however, I turn to a few historians of sexuality for their remarks on the one-sex model; their observations on this earlier sexual regime offer a useful point of departure for my own observations on the castrato.

In his text *Making Sex*, Thomas Laqueur describes a past conception of sexual difference understood not as an oppositional binary between men and women but as a hierarchical disparity of attributes shared by men and women. Within this past conception, sex was viewed as a vital heat or energy exhibited by both male and female subjects; males possessed a greater degree of this sexual heat than their female counterparts and therefore qualified as the more advanced members of their species, but the fundamental qualities of this heat were the same for both men and women. Laqueur draws upon a variety of ancient medical and philosophical texts to support this one-sex model of sexual difference. He notes, for instance, that the Roman physician Galen held the male and female genitals to be mirror images of one another; writing in the second century, Galen insisted that the latter were simply inverted—or, in other words, less heated and less

perfect—versions of the former: "Think, please, of the external genitalia of the man turned in and extending inward between the rectum and the bladder. If this should happen, the scrotum would necessarily take the place of the uterus with the testes lying outside, next to it on either side."[14] Laqueur later turns to the work of Aristotle, forerunner to Galen by four and a half centuries, and finds there the roots of the model promoted by Galen himself. Granted, Aristotle demanded a distinction of male and female subjects insofar as they each embodied oppositional active and passive principles. Yet this oppositional tendency was troubled by an anatomical entelechy that hierarchically posited the female as an inferior version of the male. In terms of physiology the work of Aristotle seems to forecast the later work of Galen, for Aristotle also casts female sex organs as inverted versions of their male complements. Laqueur quotes Aristotle as noting that: "[t]he path along which semen passes in women is of the following nature: they possess a tube—like the penis of the male, but inside the body."[15] Such observations offered a potent rationale for the subordination of women to men, particularly when demonstrated by the different configurations of male and female anatomy. Yet despite such differences Laqueur insists that the sexual heat that animated the body was essentially identical for both men and women; the concept of heat upheld sexual hierarchy while it also assured that the particular qualities of both sexes proceeded from a common source.

Laqueur provides a forceful argument for the existence of a one-sex model that preceded our contemporary two-sex model of sexual identity. Yet other scholars like Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park have sought to complicate his account of this one-sex model by noting that his account tends to homogenize the shifts in conceptions of sexual identity that occurred over the course of centuries. In their article on hermaphrodites, for instance, the pair emphasizes not the similarities but the distinctions between Galenic and Aristotelian theories of sex and note that the intersections of these two theories spawned a wide variety of definitions of sexual difference. The pair further observes that these competing definitions existed in uneasy alliance with each other until the sixteenth century, when the Galenic theories enjoyed a surge in popularity over their older Aristotelian counterparts. "These new ideas did not wholly supplant the older eclectic tradition, with its clear Aristotelian cast, which remained vital well into the seventeenth century. But they did provide an alternative to them," the pair maintain.[16] Thus while Daston and Park agree that Galenic theories, with their unambiguous promotion of hierarchical over oppositional concepts of sexual difference, achieved dominance in the sixteenth century, they also attend to the complicated terrain of sixteenth

century sexual identity and insist that it was fashioned by the confluence of multiple—and at times competing—regimes of discourse and practice. Crucially, this complicated terrain is modeled by the castrato, who first appeared alongside the sixteenth century shift toward Galenic theories of sexual difference, but who also exhibited multiple facets of a sexual paradigm continually in flux. The castrato therefore offers an important complement to the one-sex model offered by Laqueur; while the emergence of the castrato supports the broad contours of this model, it also calls attention to the wide spectrum of variations that made their appearance within it.

Christian theology, swiftly ascending to prominence amid the ruins of Classical thought, inherited the earlier view of sex as driven by the presence of a heat or vital energy that inhered in the body. Church doctrine, however, recast this heat as desire, the mark of the fallen nature of humanity. Sexual desire engendered acts of procreation, the very acts that perpetuated the line of subjects born into sin, and the refusal to procreate was enjoined as a way to refuse the stain of sin upon the subject and thereby to transcend the Fall of Humanity. The early appearance of castrati in Church choirs suggests a link between the renunciation of sex and musical performance, one that offered a path to a transcendent religious state. In his essay on the social and economic conditions that led to the production of castrati, John Rosselli remarks that castrated male singers first emerged from the Church choirs of Ferrara during the middle of the sixteenth century; by the end of the century castrati were performing in the chapel choir of the Pope himself. The Vatican, never openly advocated production of castrati, but Rosselli argues that an alignment of castration with sexual abstinence is nonetheless consistent with the sexually ascetic heritage of the Church: "The tradition of Christian asceticism began to decline even in Southern Europe from about the mid eighteenth century; it is now virtually lost. But around 1600 it was still strong. Renunciation of sexual life could seem not just a possible but an ideal course."[17] Perhaps the first function of the castrato, then, was to model this ideal course, to figure a renunciation of sex, here conceived as the corrupting power of desire.

Certainly a tradition of sexual renunciation has long held a central place in Church doctrine; in his treatise *On Virginity*, for instance, the fourth-century C. E. theologian Gregory of Nyssa advocated abstention from sexual activity as a means to rid the body of the stain of original sin: "It is possible to remove yourself from any association with the life of passion, the carnal life, and even more, to be beyond sympathy with your own body, so as not to be subject to the life according to the flesh that accompanies a life in the flesh," Gregory remarks. "But this involves living for the soul alone and

imitating as far as possible the life of the incorporeal powers, for whom there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage."[18] For Gregory, the Fall of Humanity prompted not only the appearance of sexual desire, but also the recognition of sexual difference itself. Commenting upon the condition of Adam before the Fall, Gregory maintains that this first man was "liberated from the threat of death, looking freely upon the face of God, not yet judging the beautiful by taste and sight, but only enjoying the Lord and using the helpmate given to him for this purpose."[19] Adam did not recognize the sexual distinctions between himself and his helpmate Eve until after their Fall, because "he did not know her earlier, before he was driven out of paradise, and before she was condemned to the pains of childbirth for the sin that she committed."[20] Desire was born to effect a temporary union of the divided sexes, and procreation serves as a necessary means to perpetuate the species, immortality having been lost during the expulsion from Eden. By refusing desire and abstaining from procreation, however, both male and female individuals could return to an approximation of their prelapsarian innocence, once again rendering them vessels fit to contain their immortal souls.

The refusal of desire thus effected a restoration of the body in order to effect a concurrent restoration of the soul; once restored, male and female alike could rejoin the Divinity from which they had been separated and again assume their rightful place in the cosmic order. Crucially, this cosmic harmony was often described in terms of musical harmony, particularly in reference to "the music of the spheres." This term referenced an elaborate image of the heavens as a series of eight nested spheres enclosing the earth at their center; the outermost sphere contained the fixed stars, while each lower sphere held in turn Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, Mercury, the Sun, and—nearest to the earth itself—the Moon. The rotations of these eight spheres produced eight pure sounds, each corresponding to a single note in the octave scale; the outermost sphere of the stars produced the highest note, while the innermost sphere of the Moon produced the lowest. Cosmic music thus mirrored earthly music, and the mathematical regularity that characterized earthly harmonies metaphorized a similar regularity that governed the movements of the cosmos. Given the intimate relation between cosmic and earthly music, it comes as no surprise that the music of the spheres should function not only as a guide to the heavens, but also as a figure for human salvation; a closer look at this dual function will reveal a role within it for the castrato.

While the music of the spheres found its first articulations in the works of ancient writers like Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Ptolemy, the concept retained its currency long into the Christian era, fading only with the

concurrent fading of belief in a geocentric universe. The principal credit for carrying this ancient musical concept into the Medieval era must go to the early Christian writer Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius, whose sixth-century manuscript *Fundamentals of Music* begins by citing the music of the spheres as the basis for all of his subsequent inquiries. The links between cosmic and earthly music forged by Boethius in his opening remarks acquired the status of received wisdom over the next millennium and preserved the ancient connection between heavenly order and human salvation. Writing first on cosmic music, Boethius claims a musical foundation for all operations in the universe. Boethius observes, for example, that the movements of planetary bodies must make some sort of sound, for "how can it happen that so swift a heavenly machine moves on a mute or silent course?"[21] Furthermore, the sounds made by such movements must signify more than a mere cacophony of noise, for "some orbits are borne higher, others lower; and they all revolve with such equal energy that a fixed order of their courses is reckoned through their diverse inequalities. For that reason, a fixed sequence of modulation cannot be separated from this celestial revolution."[22] Turning to earthly manifestations of music, Boethius remarks that a musical nature is an essential component of the human subject, proof that the higher faculties of the subject are operative during imprisonment in the lower realm of earthly existence. In fact, high and low pitches correspond to higher and lower levels of existence, for "what unites the incorporeal nature of reason with the body if not a certain harmony and, as it were, a careful tuning of low and high pitches as if producing one consonance?"[23] Not only, then, does earthly music reproduce the harmony of the heavens, but the sweet high notes of such music reflect the heights attainable by the subject during its sojourn on the earth; by climbing the notes of the octave scale, the subject could climb toward the heights of heaven itself.[24]

That the music of the spheres became a longstanding image for salvation in the Christian era is amply demonstrated by its appearance in the fourteenth-century *Divine Comedy* of Dante Alighieri. In Canto XXVIII of the *Paradiso*, Dante locates his Pilgrim at the outermost of the eight traditional spheres of heaven; there the Pilgrim finds a ninth sphere added to the original formulation—the Empyrean sphere of divinity that overarches the visible universe. Poised at the threshold of this ninth sphere, the Pilgrim receives a vision of nine additional nested spheres circling a brilliant divine light. His guide Beatrice explains that the ideal spheres of this vision are an inverse image of the material spheres through which he has traveled; on the material plane the spheres most distant from the earth display their greater sanctity by virtue of their greater measure, but on the ideal plane these same

spheres seem smaller in proportion to their proximity to their divine source: ". . . if you will take your measurements / not by circumference but by the power / inherent in these beings that look like rings, / You will observe a marvelous congruence / of greater power to more, lesser to small / in every heaven with its Intelligence."[25] After hearing this explanation, the Pilgrim receives another vision of the spheres shedding great showers of glowing sparks—choirs of Angels singing the praises of God: "When she had spoken her last word, there came / showers of light from all the fiery rings, / like molten iron in fire spurting sparks, / . . . / I heard them sing Hosanna, choir on choir, / To that Fixed Point that holds each to his where / The place they were and will forever be."[26] Crucially, the Pilgrim further notes that in their songs the higher ranks of Angels assist the uplift of the lower orders toward the divine light: "And all of the angelic ranks gaze upward, / as downward they prevail upon the rest, / so while each draws the next, all draw toward God."[27] Given the correspondence that Dante offers between material and ideal spheres, it is possible to suggest a second correspondence between material and ideal ranks of singers, so that choirs of heavenly Angels are mirrored by choirs of earthly human subjects. Music would therefore operate on earth as it does in heaven; those with the highest positions in the choir—and, by extension, the highest voices as well—would draw those below them ever closer to their divine source.

Perhaps these three factors—a religious tradition of sexual renunciation, the existence of a musical bridge between heaven and earth, and a correlation between singing beings of physical and spiritual origins—delimit the field in which the castrato made his first appearance; certainly their confluence suggests a milieu well-suited for just such an appearance to occur. Consider, the following scenario: Faced with an earthly existence marked by sin, the fallen subject must renounce sex as a blot on its being; as Gregory of Nyssa remarks, the refusal of desire is required to restore the subject to its former state. This restoration, furthermore, offers the subject insight into its ultimate destination among the heavenly spheres; as Boethius notes, music provides a link between the earthly and the heavenly realms, and the high notes of the octave scale reflect the heights attainable by the subject in its purified state. Finally, the castrato links the religious rejection of sex with the musical salvation of the subject; Dante provides a vision of incorporeal Angels who sing the praises the God, and the castrato offers both male and female subjects a corporeal analogue of that vision on the earth. Within this scenario, then, the castrato can fulfill his first function as a figure for the renunciation of sex, a banishment of desire that promises the salvation of the subject.

The fact that the castrato offered this promise did not necessarily qualify him as a source of immediate identification for others; the castrato figured a rarified refusal of sex linked to the clergy, not an integration of sex into the life of the laity. Yet a shift of venue for the castrato—a move from the Church choir to the opera stage—also effected a shift in his function. While the performance of the castrato in the choir suggest a renunciation of sex, his performance on the stage suggest a movement toward its idealization; musical performance channeled sexual longing into the pursuit of virtue and transformed the corruption of desire into the virtuous force of love. By the mid-seventeenth century, the early opera performances held at the courts of the nobility had gained popularity throughout Italy. The castrato played a crucial role in the spread of opera; many talented castrati, while remaining active with the Church, were also increasingly retained by opera companies. Rosselli observes that by the beginning of the eighteenth century "opera was turning from an entertainment regularly performed only in a few places to an art form and a social focus common to many towns all over Northern and Central Italy, with extensions into Central Europe, Naples, and Spain. . . . In these conditions the high fees available to leading castrati from opera performances began to have their effect on career patterns."[28] Moreover, the castrati participated not only in popularizing the operatic form, but also in transforming operatic story lines and subject matter. While the opera of the seventeenth century abounded in sexual adventures pursued across all traditional gender borders, the opera of the early eighteenth century turned from salacious stories of illicit passion to honorable tales of virtuous love; ideally suited to the gender play of early opera, the castrati later found themselves cast as the exemplars of nobility as well. Thus along with their shift to the opera stage the castrato also experienced a shift in his function—an idealization of sex, here conceived as the ennobling force of love.[29]

Evidence for a new expressivity of singing specially tailored to this ennobling sentiment appears as early as 1628 with the *Discorso sopra la Musica* by Vincenzo Giustiniani. Written as an educational treatise on the current condition of music in the Italian states, the *Discorso* is poised at a crucial turning point in the function of musical performance. In the introduction to his text, for instance, Giustiniani still refers to music as a formal display of cosmic harmony, but adds that music, at least in its secular forms, can also express the feelings of individuals here on earth. Giustiniani claims that by "possessing the rules and the just proportions of numbers, joined with those of the voice or of sound and the knowledge of the effects which are caused by these in the souls of men . . . one may be able to apply skill

and experience to his own times, to human inclinations in general, and to the particular tastes of each person."[30] Giustiniani notes that new singing style emerged in the Italian courts around 1575 and remarks that the Dukes of Ferrara and Mantua "took the greatest delight in the art, especially in having many noble ladies and gentlemen learn to sing and play superbly, so that they spent entire days in some rooms, designed especially for this purpose and beautifully decorated with paintings."[31] Chief among the qualities of this new style was its capacity to convey human feeling; Giustiniani recalls that singers learned to modulate their voices to fit the emotional qualities of musical passages and notes that "they accompanied the music and the sentiment with appropriate facial expressions, glances and gestures, with no awkward movements of the mouth or hands or body that might not express the feeling of the song."[32] For Giustiniani, then, the new musical style offered the men and women of the Italian courts an innovative technique for the communication of sentiment, a new means to express the nobility of their souls.

Certainly this new expressive singing style, which revealed the virtue of the soul through the medium of the body, lent itself to the rise in popularity of opera, and the genre developed into a vehicle for the display of refined sentiments. Among these sentiments, one very frequently depicted sentiment was love, the attribute of sex ennobled as a bond of affection that link male and female subjects to one another. Many examples of this bond appear in the works of Pietro Metastasio, the most successful opera librettist of the first half of the eighteenth century. Metastasio is often credited with a number of operatic reforms designed to bring dignity to the genre, one of which was the portrayal of love not as a venal but as a virtuous pursuit. In the writings of Metastasio, love is depicted as an elevated emotion shared by pairs of lovers; often this emotion is linked to nobility of character, revealed when the pair must forego their love when a union would threaten their honor. Such tales generally end with the resolution of the conflict that divided the pair, closely followed by their marriage as a reward for their mutual constancy. Significantly, in these works a striking similarity often appears in the impassioned rhetoric employed by both the male and the female characters, a similarity that recalls their shared inheritance of sex as love. A quick glance at the libretto of the *Demetrio* by Metastasio will illustrate this point.

In *Demetrio*, this mutual love is manifested in the relationship between Demetrius, the rightful heir to the kingdom of Syria, and Cleonice, the daughter of the usurpingking Alexander. Demetrius, raised as the ward of the kindly counselor Phenicius, is unaware of his identity, having been told

by his guardian that he is named Alcestes and that he hails from a family of lowly shepherds. After reaching manhood, Alcestes entered the Syrian army, where he rose to fame and won the love of Cleonice. However, as the son of a shepherd is no match for a royal princess, their love has always remained a secret. As Act I opens, Cleonice faces a difficult decision; because her father was killed in the recent war against Crete, the princess must choose the next king of Syria by selecting one of her courtiers for a husband. Cleonice has delayed her decision for three months in the hope that Alcestes would return from the war, and by coincidence he arrives the very day she has at last determined to take a husband. When Cleonice intimates that Alcestes is her choice, the courtiers grumble that no mere shepherd should ascend the Syrian throne. Phenicius intervenes and wins Alcestes the endorsement of the court, but the gesture reminds Cleonice of her royal duty: "Heedless of the illustrious blood of so many, am I to place a young shepherd on the throne and make him the arbiter of the kingdom? How can I have such courage and such daring? It is unthinkable."[33]

In Act II, Alcestes learns of his rejection by Cleonice and demands an audience with the princess; Cleonice first refuses to see him, believing their separation will cause them less anguish if they to do not see one another. Upon hearing that Alcestes is close to death from grief, however, Cleonice resolves to explain her decision to her lover face-to-face. Alcestes begins by declaring the depth of his love; Cleonice admits her love for him as well, but argues that if she took him for a husband the resulting strife could tear the kingdom apart. Seeking to convince Alcestes of the wisdom of her decision, Cleonice claims that a mutual refusal to wed would bring honor to them both: "My dear Alcestes, let the maligners tell lies, but to others let our virtue serve as an example. Let the world regard with indulgence and admiration this noble act. Let the sad lot of two tender lovers, who of their own volition are ready to untie the knots of such a just and long lasting love, bring tears to many."[34] Relenting at last, Alcestes agrees to forego his claim to Cleonice: "Forgive me, noble soul, I pray you, forgive me. My queen, reign, live on, keep your decorum unblemished . . . . It makes me happy to learn perseverance and virtue from lips so dear."[35]

In Act III, Phenicius, who alone knows the true identity of Alcestes, urges Cleonice to recall her love for his young ward; in an impassioned aria, the counselor speaks of their mutual and reciprocal love for one another: "You must admit that you are cruel / If you deprive him of your love. / You must admit you live in him / just as, in turn, he lives in you."[36] So chastised, Cleonice resolves to relinquish her throne and live with Alcestes as the wife of a shepherd, but in a reversal of their earlier roles Alcestes implores her to

recall the importance of preserving their mutual honor: "Please, let us not forget the lesson we have learned from our tears and sorrow . . . . Posterity will not forget the story of our ardent affection, but it will be conjoined with that of our virtue, and if we are not permitted to live happily together until our dying hours, at least our names will survive together."[37] Cleonice agrees to fulfill her duty to the throne, and, anxious to supply the state with a wise ruler, decides to take Phenicius for her husband. The counselor uses this opportunity to reveal that Alcestes is in fact Demetrius, the rightful heir to the kingdom. His throne restored, the new king requests the hand of Cleonice, and the virtuous pair is finally rewarded for their devotion to duty. Free to express their love openly, the couple sings a duet to Apollo, the god of light and, not coincidentally, of music as well. Crucially, both Demetrius and Cleonice evoke the likeness between their love and the passion of the god himself:

Alcestes & Cleonice: Forever shine propitiously
Oh god of light!

Alcestes: Just as I am now in love,
You fell in love in shepherd's garb
On the Thessalian river bank.

Cleonice: As I am faithful so are you
In the fair habit you've preserved
Of being true to the laurel leaf.

Alcestes & Cleonice: Forever shine propitiously
Oh god of light![38]

The *Demetrio* premiered in Vienna in 1731, where Metastasio was employed as the court poet; in 1732 the opera was produced in Rome, but the change of venue was not the only change made for the Roman production. Both Alcestes and Cleonice were roles written for soprano voices—the high rank of noble opera characters was often mirrored by the high voices possessed by the performers. However, while women could appear upon the Viennese stage, a series of papal decrees banned women from Roman stages for most of the eighteenth century; in Rome, therefore, castrati played both Alcestes and Cleonice.[39] Such scenarios were quite common, not only in Rome itself but in any area under papal jurisdiction; while some castrati specialized in playing either male or female roles, others displayed an equal aptitude for portraying both men and women. Such aptitude suggests a new function for the castrato. The growing popularity of opera provides a site devoted not to the renunciation of sex but to its idealization; as Giustiniani observes, the development of a new singing style enables the subject to give

expression to just such sentiments. The vocal skills of the castrato then allow the depiction of love as an ennobling force that joins men and women to one another; as the libretti of Metastasio suggest, the castrato possesses a voice that can signify the very heights of love for both male and female subjects. Here, then, the castrato fulfills his second function by figuring an idealization of sex, a shared inheritance of love that attests to the virtue of the subject.

Yet even as the great operatic castrati increasingly embodied sex as the ennobling force of love, they retained their earlier association with tales of illicit passion; sex therefore reappears in its guise as desire, and the castrato serves as its exemplary vehicle. In a number of accounts from the period the castrato figures not only in the subtle idealization of love but also in its overt eroticization; musical performance recuperates the sexual appetite by asserting that the virtuous power of love is always underpinned by the base stirrings of desire. This role of the castrato as erotic icon sometimes collided with his other functions; the castrato often shared the social status of female performers, who were typically, if not always accurately, assumed to be prostitutes. In fact, evidence indicates that some castrati initially resisted a stage career due to such assumptions. Noting that the secular circumstances of opera frequently clashed with the Church careers of early castrati, Rosselli quotes a seventeenth-century diarist who explained the reluctance of three Neapolitan castrati to appear in opera with the remark that "every castrato singer was held to be infamous if he mixed in those companies in the public mercenary theatre." Rosselli further comments that "what the three objected to seems to have been not a 'mercenary' or paid performance but 'mixing in those companies,' particularly having to deal with women singers, some of whom were still very close to courtesan status."[40] Still, as opera increased in popularity so did tales of castrati opening themselves to sexual encounters with their admirers. Moreover, in some cases these encounters were justified through appeal to a libertine philosophy that viewed desire as an insistent passion to be assuaged; only the measured indulgence of such passion allows irrational obsession to give way to rational contemplation. The growing number of castrati who performed not only on the stage but also in the boudoir signals another function for the castrato—an eroticization of sex, here conceived as the irrepressible power of desire.

To illustrate this assertion, I turn next to a tale from the celebrated *Memoirs* of Giacomo Casanova, which are peppered with anecdotes concerning the sexual allure of the castrato. In 1744, while lodging in Ancona, Casanova encountered a beautiful young castrato named Bellino.

Shocked by his desire for the castrato—a desire he always claimed to deny himself—Casanova asks Bellino to provide proof of his castrated condition. Bellino, however, refuses his request and later, while escorting the singer to Rimini, Casanova threatens to gain this proof by force. Bellino reasons with Casanova, arguing that his threats suggest he lacks control of his passions. Casanova replies that even if Bellino were a castrato, the satisfaction of his desire would prove preferable to its continued constraint: "I think it less evil to allow nature an aberration that could be considered a mere entry into folly, than to render incurable a malady of spirit that reason would render merely fleeting."[41] Reason, in other words, actually demands the assuagement of desire, for passion must be purged before reason may be exercised; Casanova claims that "it is a poor philosopher who advises the use of reason when a passion in tumult impairs the faculties of his soul."[42] When the pair stop at an inn for the night, however, Bellino is overtaken by desire as well, for in order to lure Casanova to his bed he reveals himself as Thérèse, a woman posing as a castrato so that she can perform in the Papal States. Apparently Thérèse likewise requires the purgation of her passion before her reason can be reinstated: "It was she," Casanova maintains, "who first approached me the moment that I lay down. Without a word, our kisses mingled with each other, and I found myself in the midst of rapture without having had the time to seek it."[43] The tale therefore posits a passion that overcomes both male and female figures, yet also implies that the subsequent overcoming of this passion will afford them both a return to reason.

Perhaps more crucially, however, the tale also references the castrato as the very vehicle of desire itself. While the story revolves around the reciprocal desires of men and women for one another, it also locates the castrato at the pivot point of this reciprocal relation; the figure of Bellino that stands between Casanova and Thérèse is also the figure that facilitates their erotic interplay. The castrato thus offers a common ground upon which both male and female subjects may express their mutual passions, a ground upon which their desires are seen to share the same fundamental nature. Moreover, while the story suggests that desire is common to both men and women, it also suggests that the assuagement of this desire effects a common restoration of their reason. Of course, women were considered less rational creatures than men; just as women were thought to possess less sexual heat than men, so were they thought to possess a lesser capacity for reasoned reflection. Yet to the extent that the exercise of this capacity proved beneficial to both the sexes, a return to reason through the indulgence of desire seemed a wise course for both as well. A quick glance at a few other

anecdotes from Casanova will illustrate this assertion by noting the role of the castrato as the exemplary figure of desire in all its varied manifestations.

Two brief tales demonstrate the ability of the castrato to manifest the qualities of either sex, thereby enabling them to constitute the common ground of masculine and feminine desires. During his 1763 stay in London, Casanova attended Covent Garden and was received there by its premier performer, the famous castrato Tenducci; the singer surprised Casanova by introducing him to his wife, with whom he claimed to have two children. In fact, the assertion that Tenducci had married has a historical basis; while the Catholic Church forbade castrati to wed on grounds that they could not procreate, records indicate that Tenducci had married a Miss Dora Maunsell in a Protestant ceremony in Ireland. Though the actual paternity of their two children is a subject for speculation, Casanova accounts for their origin by noting that Tenducci "laughed at people who said a castrato could not procreate. Nature had made him a monster that he might remain a man; he was born *triorchis*, and as only two of the seminal glands had been destroyed the remaining one was sufficient to endow him with virility."[44] But if the meeting with Tenducci places the castrato in a typically masculine position, then an earlier encounter in Rome casts the castrato in a decidedly feminine role. In 1762 Casanova attended a dinner at the villa of the Earl of Lismore; the guest list, Casanova recalls, consisted of a crew of lascivious figures: several women of ill repute, three or four castrati who regularly played female roles, and a number of *abbes*, whom Casanova reports were the most dissolute individuals in attendance. After dinner, the evening devolved into an orgy, the romp opening with a most unusual game: "A castrato and a girl of almost equal height proposed to strip in an adjoining room and to lie on their backs in the bed with their faces covered. They challenged us all to guess which was which."[45] Casanova recalls that although the castrato and the girl were wholly indistinguishable from each other he eventually guessed their identities correctly and won fifty crowns as a result. The game ended with the *abbes* engaging both the girl and the castrato for various sexual acts; I add in fairness that Casanova claims to have exempted himself from these activities.

One last anecdote from the *Memoirs* provides yet another account of the capacity of the castrato to manifest either masculine or feminine sexual attributes; indeed, in the following tale the castrato appears to manifest both at once. During his 1762 stay in Rome, Casanova attended the opera one evening and was stunned by the allure of its star performer, a castrato famous for playing female roles: "The castrato had a fine voice," Casanova recalls, "but his chief attraction was his beauty. I had seen him in man's

clothes in the street, but though a fine looking fellow, he had not made any impression on me, for one could see at once that he was only half a man, but on stage in woman's dress the illusion was complete; he was ravishing."[46] Casanova offers a description of the castrato clothed as the prima donna: "he was enclosed in a carefully-made corset and looked like a nymph; and incredible though it may seem, his breast was as beautiful as any woman's; it was the monster's chiefest charm. However well one knew the fellow's neutral sex, as soon as one saw his breast one felt all aglow and quite madly amorous of him."[47] Up to this point in the account the "neutral sex" of the castrato seems to offer a blank slate upon which female dress could produce a perfect image of femininity. Casanova crucially adds, however, that the castrato retained a certain masculinity to his appearance; in fact, his blend of masculine and feminine attributes was the chief source of attraction for his admirers: "As he glanced toward the boxes, his black eyes, at once tender and modest, ravished the heart. He evidently wished to fan the flames of those who loved him as a man, and who probably would not have cared for him if he had been a woman."[48]

In this final tale, then, the castrato appears as a figure who not only displays the features of both sexes, but who presumably produces desire in both as well. Moreover, the castrato quite literally ravishes his adoring fans, dazzling their reason with the seeming paradox of two sexes embodied in a single figure. According to Casanova, it is this very paradox that incites desire, yet this same desire will lead to the solution of the paradox; once passion gives way to reflection, sex is revealed as a singular quality common to male and female alike. This scenario suggests yet another function for the castrato. The conception of desire as a foil to reason promotes neither the renunciation nor the idealization of sex, but its eroticization. The castrato is uniquely poised to embody the desire manifested by both male and female subjects; as the anecdotes of Casanova demonstrate, the castrato stimulates desire within both sexes but stimulates their reason as well, since satisfaction of the urges of the body provokes another urge for the return to rationality. As the embodiment of passion, the castrato fulfills a third function by figuring the eroticization of sex, a recuperation of desire that restores the reason of the subject.

Three different functions for the castrato, each corresponding to a different notion of the nature of sex; while some castrati fulfilled a distinctly sensual function for their admirers, others still fulfilled a resolutely ascetic function in the Church choirs. The activities of the castrato thus create a palimpsest of interrelated operations, each of which cast the castrato as an exemplary sexual subject, a figure for sex across a range of male and female

manifestations. In fact, the three functions of the castrato may be conceived as three aspects of a *ritornello*, one that maps the disparate facets of the one-sex model. First aspect of the *ritornello*: the renunciation of sex establishes a threshold of order. The stirrings of desire are banished to a realm of chaos beyond the borders of this newly ordered regime, thereby allowing subjects to rid themselves of passion and focus on the salvation of their souls. Second aspect of the *ritornello*: the idealization of sex arranges the elements of the ordered regime. The seemingly disparate sexes are aligned with one another by their common share in the ennobling force of love, thereby revealing sex as a source virtue instead of vice. Third aspect of the *ritornello*: the eroticization of sex allows a crossing from the realm of chaos back into the ordered regime. The base stirrings of desire once banished by divine decree are recuperated, thereby allowing subjects to exercise the divine gift of reason itself. The figure of the *ritornello* therefore illustrates how the one-sex model is able to resolve the apparent contradictions embedded within it. Chaotic elements turned away from the regime of order are ultimately returned to the regime and assigned their proper place again. Within the one-sex model, nothing escapes the orbit of a single, all-encompassing sexual essence. And as the exemplary sexual subject, the castrato can embody that essence in all its infinite variations.

Yet to call the castrato an exemplary subject is not to call him a subject to be emulated, at least not in any quotidian manner. The castrato occupied an important position, for he embodied the grand hierarchy of sexual difference. Most subjects, however, occupied only a particular position within this hierarchy, and so the castrato proved a vital but rarified subject—a figure through which a general conception of sex might be apprehended, rather than a figure after which individual sex might be fashioned. Yet as the eighteenth century progressed the castrato seemed less able to fulfill even the rarified function ascribed to him, for his assurance of sexual coherence gradually morphed into its exact opposite—a threat of sexual incoherence. As long as the castrato served as an emblem of sex in all its variations, his ability to figure both male and female sexed positions offered evidence of a unified sexual essence. Yet increasingly the fluidity of the one-sex model seemed to foster disruptions of the traditional sexual hierarchy; it seems no coincidence, therefore, that as such disruptions grew in both frequency and magnitude the old one-sex model would gradually cede its place to the new two-sex regime. Noting how shifts in the perceptions of sexual organs gibed with shifts in the perceptions of sexual identity, Laqueur maintains that "sometime in the eighteenth century, sex as we know it was invented. The reproductive organs went from being paradigmatic sites for displaying

hierarchy, resonant throughout the cosmos, to being a foundation for incommensurable difference."[49] Yet this shift from a one-sex to a two-sex model was linked to other shifts as well. The relation of subjectivity to performance also underwent great changes; as reality began to exceed the grasp of representation, no single depiction of sex could ever capture the full truth of sex itself. This change effectively rendered the function of the castrato obsolete, and so he was destined to disappear from the stage forever.

The shifts that precipitated the disappearance of the castrato occurred over many years, along a number of different valences, and in response to a number of economic and political pressures. To situate the castrato within all these shifting milieux, I shift my own focus to England, a site of several intersecting factors that contributed to the waning popularity of the castrato during the eighteenth century. Curiously, while Italy was the always the hub of castrato production, the Italians displayed a reticence either to champion castration openly or to condemn it outright—a reticence understandable in a land where the practice was officially banned and yet widely practiced. England, however, reacted to castration and its effects with a voluble mix of adulation and derision; it therefore offers a useful study of the attitudes that led to the fall of castrati from favor—attitudes that arose early in England but eventually emerged even in Italy itself. Certainly one factor that fostered a critique of the castrato in England was the nationalism that accompanied its status as a unified nation; unlike the fragmented states of Italy, England was a single state with a recently restored monarchy—a perfect situation for upsurges in nationalist sentiment. Given such sentiment, the importation of Italian opera was viewed in some circles as an unwelcome addition to the English stage. In his 1706 *Essay on Opera's After the Italian Manner*, John Dennis extols the native English drama as an expression of the natural strength of the English state; by contrast, the importation of Italian opera drains the vitality of the national stage, the national population, and indeed the nation itself. Dennis claims great faith in the ability of English subjects to protect their drama from foreign influence: "There is no man living who has either a higher esteem than myself for their natural and acquired endowments, or a greater veneration for their restless endeavors to promote the real good of their country in all other things."[50] Still, Dennis exhorts loyal English subjects to uphold the English stage and to "defend it against that deluge of mortal foes which have come pouring in from the Continent, to drive out the Muses, its old inhabitants, and seat themselves in their stead; that while the English arms are everywhere victorious abroad, the English arts may not be vanquished and oppressed at home by the invasion of foreign luxury."[51]

This rhetoric, with its contrast of English victory in foreign wars with English indulgence in foreign vices, holds crucial implications for the view of the castrato and his central position in the Italian opera, especially as Dennis casts the strength of the state in terms of a masculine vigor and the sapping of that strength in terms of a threatening feminization. Clearly, in such rhetoric a one-sex model still prevails, as male and female identities are still conceived as mutable, open to the gain or loss of a shared sexual energy. Yet here this energy offers not a stable definition for sex, but a threat that a given sexual subject—or the state personified as such a subject—could drift away from its proper sexual identity. In the Dennis essay, Italian opera appears as a sort of feminizing menace that could instigate just such drifting away. Dennis observes that English opera alternates musical passages with scenes that employ the spoken word; these spoken scenes foster the act of contemplation, thereby promoting a properly English and properly masculine pursuit of virtue. Italian opera, exclusively sung and therefore lacking a spur to contemplation, fosters a foreign and feminine delight in pleasure: "If the entertainment which we have from our operas is a mere sensual pleasure, which says nothing either to enlighten the understanding or to convert the will, it is impossible to conceive how it can either raise the passions to correct them, or infuse generous sentiments into the soul to exalt and confirm the reason, or to inspire public spirit and public virtue and elevated notions of liberty."[52] As the ambassador for Italian opera to the rest of Europe, the castrato was assigned principal responsibility for inciting the scandalous turn from manly virtue to womanish indulgence. Dennis, in fact, seems to regard the very term "castrato" as too indecorous for public use, but his position on the Italian fascination with castrati is clear in his description of Italian opera as a monstrosity: "When I affirm that an opera after the Italian manner is monstrous, I cannot think that I deal too severely with it; no not though I add that it is so prodigiously unnatural that it could take its beginning from no country but that which is renowned throughout the world for preferring monstrous abominable pleasures to those which are according to nature."[53]

Dennis therefore excoriates Italian opera for the feminizing threat it poses to the English nation, a threat embodied by the feminized figure of the castrato. Yet coupled with this anxiety over the emasculation of English state was an anxiety over the emasculation of English men, particularly within the economic arena. To the extent that English national identity was bound to its status as an economic juggernaut of Europe, it scarcely seems surprising that the masculine persona of the nation was allied to the masculine personae of individual economic agents; fears of feminization on a

national scale thus find their corollary in related fears of feminization as loss of individual economic clout. Again, the mutable nature of sexual identity under the one-sex model intensifies such fears, and again the castrato seems one of their principal embodiments. In her text *Natural Masques*, a study of gender in the writings of Henry Fielding, Jill Campbell places the operatic castrato at the junction of English economic and sexual anxieties. Campbell notes that the fluidity of exchange offered by the emergent capitalist economy granted a degree of financial clout to both the male and female members of the newly monied classes. This shared clout, however, challenged the assumed division of men and women into respective public and private spheres of activity. Interrogating a number of works by Fielding, Campbell identifies several satirical devices emblematic of the sexual ambiguity engendered by changing economic conditions. The castrato figures prominently among such devices, for "the satiric reactions to the disruption a castrato creates along the boundary between masculine and feminine identity reveal some of the larger systems of oppositions normally stabilized by alignment with gender terms."[54] Campbell argues that one of the principal oppositions disrupted by the castrato was the gendered opposition between admission to and exclusion from the economic arena; for Campbell, then, Fielding employs the sexual mutability of the castrato to reflect the mutability of male and female subjects within the newly open field of economic exchange.

Taking a cue from Campbell, I turn to a closer examination of two Fielding satires, both of which employ the castrato as a figure for the conflation of sexual and economic anxieties. The first, called *The Historical Register for the Year 1736*, folds a castrato into its critique of the breakdown of customary male and female behavior patterns. Fielding invokes a familiar comic convention by staging his satire as a rehearsal for a play that has yet to premiere; as indicated by the title, the play itself represents "the history of the year," designed, according to its ostensible author Mr. Medley, "to ridicule the vicious and foolish customs of the age. . . . I hope to expose the reigning follies in such a manner," Medley remarks, "that men shall laugh themselves out of them before they feel that they are touched."[55] From the very first scene, Fielding condemns the political leaders of the nation, who have forsaken their customary masculine role as guardians of the state in order to pursue personal gain. The scene discovers five incompetent Politicians who abandon preparations against the attacking Turks so that they may line their own pockets: "Hang foreign affairs," cries one Politician, "let us apply ourselves to money."[56] Here the lure of lucre supercedes the traditional value of good government; seeking a market item

not yet subject to taxation, one Politician proposes a tax on learning. "Learning, 'tis true, is a useless commodity," another replies, "but I think we had better lay it on ignorance; for learning being the property of but a very few, and those poor ones too, I am afraid we can get little among them; whereas ignorance will take in most of the great fortunes in the kingdom."[57]

The next scene reveals a Council of fashionable Ladies who hunger to accumulate goods just as the Politiciansin the previous scene hungered to accumulate wealth; this entry of both sexes into the field of financial exchange establishes a fluidity of sexual positions that threatens to upend all customary sexual behaviors. Significantly, in this scene a feminine fascination with spending hinges on a fascination with the castrato Farinelli, then a star attraction at the Opera of the Nobility. The performer immediately takes center stage within the conversation:

> All Ladies: Was you at the opera, madam, last night?
> 2 Lady: Who can miss an opera while Farinello stays?
> 3 Lady: Sure, he's the charmingest creature.
> 4 Lady: He's every thing in the world one could wish.
> 1 Lady: Almost every thing one could wish.[58]

Moments later one Lady mentions the purchase of some souvenir figures of Farinelli cast in wax, and the scene continues with a series of double entendres that link the wax dolls to wax dildoes. The other Ladies immediately clamor to purchase the dolls: "Oh Gemini! Who makes them?" one Lady asks, "I'll send and bespeak half a dozen to-morrow morning." Yet another cries "I'll have as many as I can cram into a coach with me."[59] Given the phallic association of the dolls, it comes as no surprise that this exercise of a new feminine spending power also takes the form of an appropriation of masculine authority. Still speaking of the wax figures, one Lady remarks "I am afraid my husband won't let me keep them, for he hates I should be fond of any thing but himself." In response to this concern another Lady archly replies "If my husband was to make any objection to my having 'em, I'd run away from him, and take the dear babies with me."[60] Thus Farinelli, in his form as a false phallus, figures the false masculine agency appropriated by these feminine subjects. Indeed, Medley himself warns that this overturning of sexual roles may have ill effects on future generations, noting that "if we go on to improve in luxury, effeminacy, and debauchery, as we have done lately, the next age, for aught I know, may be more like the children of squeaking Italians than hardy Britons."[61]

If the castrato found in *The Historical Register* figures a newly powerful female subject who challenges the economic agency of the male, then the castrato found in the second satire called *The Author's Farce* figures a newly powerless male subject in thrall to female financial authority. The satire concerns the financial woes of Mr. Luckless, a playwright whose sublime talents do not appeal to the taste of a coarse and fickle public; as the play opens, the penniless Luckless is threatened with eviction by his virago of a landlady, Mrs. Moneywood: "Never tell me, Mr. Luckless, of your play, and your play. I tell you, I must be paid. I would no more depend on a benefit night of an unacted play, than I would on a benefit ticket in an undrawn lottery."[62] Luckless is urged by his friend Witmore to abandon writing the highbrow literature that led him to penury and instead write inane material that will earn him income from the crass and tasteless masses: "If thou must write, write nonsense, write operas, write Hurlothrumbos, set up an oratory and preach nonsense, and you may meet with encouragement enough. Be profane, be scurrilous, be immodest. If you would receive applause, deserve to receive sentence at the Old Bailey, and if you would ride in a coach, deserve to ride in a cart."[63] Swayed at last by Witmore, Luckless writes a puppet show entitled *The Pleasures of the Town*. The performance of this silly farce—itself a satire on the boorishness of public taste—comprises the latter half of the play, and not surprisingly a castrato appears as one of its central characters.

The Pleasures of the Town follows the travails of a recently deceased Poet in the afterlife; denied entry into the Underworld by Charon for want of a crossing fee, the ferryman eventually conducts the Poet to the neighboring court of the goddess of Nonsense: "I'll e'en carry you over on her account," Charon remarks, "she pays for all her insolvent votaries."[64] Upon arrival at the court of Nonsense, the Poet discovers the goddess courted by a variety of suitors—Dr. Orator, Monsieur Pantomime, and Don Tragedio all vie for her affection, but Nonsense is wholly smitten by Signor Opera. The castrato delights the goddess with a song in praise of riches:

> But would you a wise man to action incite,
> Be riches proposed the reward of his pain:
> In riches is centered all human delight;
> No joy is on earth but what gold can obtain.
> If women, wine,
> Or grandeur fine,
> Be most your delight, all these riches can;
> Would you have men to flatter?
> To be rich is the matter;
> When you cry he is rich, you cry a great man.[65]

It is, of course, no accident that the castrato waxes lyrical on wealth and its power to purchase any joy. The castrato figures the castration of all men for whom destabilizing fluctuations of the market have undermined the stability of fixed values; Signor Opera panders to Nonsense just as Luckless must pander to the taste of his audiences. A heartbroken Nonsense later learns that her beloved Opera is already married to Mrs. Novel, but by the end of the play the goddess crowns the castrato her personal poet laureate: "Away each meek pretender flies. / Opera thou hast gained the prize. / Nonsense grateful still must own, / That thou best support'st her throne."[66] The castrato thus emerges as a pillar of the court of Nonsense; the economic subversion that so distresses Fielding is figured by the sexual subversion of the castrato.

Given the great political and economic shifts in eighteenth-century England—on the one hand a nascent nationalism anxious to counter the sexual subversion of the state, on the other hand an emergent capitalism that threatened a similar subversion of the individual—the one-sex model appears increasingly unable to supply a reassuring definition of sexual difference. While this model had long provided a useful view of sex as a single vital force distributed according to a gendered hierarchy, this view is impractical if the hierarchy itself is perceived as susceptible to overturning. The threat of such overturning offered a powerful impetus for replacing a one-sex model of a single sexual hierarchy with a two-sex model of binary sexual essences; in the rapidly changing political and economic landscape, a paradigm of sexual difference that firmly divided male from female might supply a more effective means of preserving masculine supremacy and feminine servitude. This transformation of sexual models also effected a transformation of the castrato, who morphed from a perfect emblem of a unified sexual energy to a distorted image of disparate sexual natures. Clearly the castrato, born male, could not truthfully depict the female sex. Yet in his departure from his natural sexual destiny, the castrato could not truthfully depict the male sex either. In England, therefore, the castrato increasingly appears as an abject figure, his glorious voice always purchased at too dear a price.

Certainly by the final years of the eighteenth century the castrato in England had come to resemble less an exemplary sexual emblem than a pathetically mutilated victim. Yet evidence suggests that this view of the castrato had also spread beyond the English border; while writers like Dennis and Fielding had long railed against the importation of castrati from Italy to England, the English musicologist Charles Burney found a similarly disparaging attitude toward castrati in Italy itself. In his 1771 text *The Present State of Music in France and Italy*, Burney notes the shame that Italians

apparently felt over the practice of castration—a shame that Burney believes accounts for their reticence to reveal the principal locations of castrati production: "I enquired throughout Italy at what place boys were chiefly qualified for singing by castration, but could get no certain intelligence. I was told at Milan that it was at Venice; at Venice, that it was at Bologna; but at Bologna the fact was denied, and I was sent to Florence; from Florence to Rome, and from Rome I was sent to Naples."[67] Tellingly, Burney immediately adds that "the operation is most certainly against the law in all these places, as well as against nature; and all the Italians are so much ashamed of it, that in every province they transfer it to some other."[68] Elaborating on his own view of castration, Burney suggests he would look more favorably on the practice if it resulted in consistent vocal skill, but reports that this is simply not the case. He claims that the Neapolitan physician Dr. Cirillo assured him that before castration boys are always "brought to a *Conservatorio* to be tried as to the probability of voice, then taken home by their parents for this barbarous purpose."[69] Yet Burney doubts the frequency of these hearings: "As to these previous trials of the voice, it is my opinion that the cruel operation is too frequently performed without trial, or at least without sufficient proofs of an improvable voice; otherwise such numbers could never be found in every great town throughout Italy, without any voice, or at least without one sufficient to compensate such a loss."[70]

In the presence of the famous Farinelli, now retired and living in Bologna, Burney tempers his rhetoric on castration; in fact, in his conversation with Burney it is Farinelli who voices disapproval of the practice. Farinelli feels castration is insufficiently recompensed by a fame that proves far too fleeting; when speaking of the work of his colleague, the composer Martini, Farinelli laments that "what he is doing will last, but the little I have done is already gone and forgotten."[71] Burney replies by assuring Farinelli that "in England there are still many who remembered his performance so well, that they could bear to hear no other singer; that the whole kingdom continued to resound his fame, and I was sure tradition would hand it down to the latest posterity."[72] Indeed, Burney waxes so lyrical on the genius of Farinelli that castration truly seems compensated by the magnificence of the voice it produces—at least in the case of Farinelli; Burney writes that "he possessed such powers as never met before, or since, in any one human being; powers that were irresistible, and which must have subdued every hearer; the learned and the ignorant, the friend and the foe."[73] Yet in the final analysis Burney admits that this brilliance is conjoined to an irretrievable loss; even for Farinelli castration effected a detour from the intentions of nature, as Burney implies when he describes the

castrato as a frustrated family man derailed from his paternal destiny: "He has a sister and two of her children with him, one of whom is an infant, of which he is dotingly fond, though it is cross, sickly, homely, and unamiable; yet this is a convincing proof, among others, to me that he was designed by nature for family attentions and domestic comforts."[74]

I have, of course, inherited a similar view of the castrato. Especially given our current standards of informed consent, I simply cannot condone the willful castration of a prepubescent boy. Yet even those who consent to such a procedure in adulthood offer some measure of the challenge once posed by the castrato of old. My familiarity with performers who depart from the binary model notwithstanding, I find I still ask questions about their sexual status: What is their sex? Have they undergone some sort of sexual transformation? What might their sex have been in the past? What might their sex be in the future? What truth, in short, can we discern about sex in performance? The Modern relation of subjectivity to performance lent these questions a new sense of urgency, for once representation proved incommensurate to its referent the quest for truthful answers to such inquiries became an endless pursuit indeed. The old one-sex model could promise to put these pursuits to rest, for the *ritornello* could eventually return all chaotic elements back to the ordered regime of sex itself. But the new two-sex model split this ordered regime apart. The new relation of subjectivity to performance rendered the *ritornello* no longer functional, for the elements proper to one sexual regime were forever barred entry into the other. From each regime some aspect of sex traversed the horizon of the intelligible and vanished from sight; with this disappearance, the castrato effectively lost his *raison d'être*, so he was destined to disappear as well.

The operatic castrato declined rapidly in popularity at the turn from the eighteenth to the nineteenth centuries, and the few castrati produced thereafter performed only in Italian Church choirs. The last castrato to sing in public, Alessandro Moreschi, retired from the Sistine Chapel choir in 1918, but by that point the castrati had long since relinquished their hold on the popular imagination. Of course, the disappearance of the castrato was accompanied by the appearance of new modes for conceiving sexual difference, and many of these modes were used to perpetuate the subjugation of women to men. As long as women were understood as less developed and therefore less perfect versions of men, their manifest inferiority provided the rationale for their subordinate status. Yet when the fluidity of this hierarchical model seemed to foster an increased blurring of sexual boundaries, the binary model gradually emerged to take its place. For a time it seemed as if men could base their privileged status upon the possession of a unique

masculine essence. Yet if men possessed a unique essence, then so did women, and with this knowledge women could launch an argument that separate just might mean equal. The history of Modern performance is peppered with attempts to plumb the new depths of sexual difference, but in them the castrato can play no part; reduced to a phantom of his former self, the castrato signified a sexual regime consigned to the obscurity of the past.

4. Liberty, Equality, Festivity: Citizen Action and the Libratory Legacy of the French Revolution

On July 20, 1789, the British agriculturalist Arthur Young entered the city of Strasbourg to find its inhabitants up in arms. Young, having toured France for three years to study its farming methods, was already acquainted with the rebellion fomenting in France. In Strasbourg, however, the spirit of rebellion had blossomed into open revolt; writing of his journey through France, Young recalls his perilous entrance into the city: "I arrived at a critical moment, which I thought would have broken my neck; a detachment of horse, with their trumpets on one side, a party of infantry, with their drums beating on the other, and a great mob hallooing, frightened my French mare."[1] Stopping for the night at a local inn, Young receives news from Paris: the French Guard had left its watch over the royal households; the Parisian provisional government had organized a civilian militia to maintain peace; the Bastille, a venerable citadel of royal power, had been stormed just six days earlier. Similar scenes had been staged in Strasbourg, it seems, for Young reports parallel clashes between local authorities and city inhabitants: "The troops that were near breaking my neck, are employed, to keep an eye on the people who shew signs of intended revolt. They have broken the windows of some magistrates who are no favorites; and a great mob of them is at this moment assembled demanding clamourously to have meat at 5∫. a pound."[2]

Despite the alarming nature of the spectacle, however, Young seems scarcely surprised to have stumbled upon such unrest, for he had already witnessed not only the misery of the French peasantry, but also the escalating hostility toward the royal regime and its ancillary seigneurial system that bled the peasants dry; such a combination, Young sensibly noted, was only too likely to precipitate explosive violence. Just days before, Young had met a poor peasant woman on the road; complaining of the excessive feudal

dues owed to local lords, the woman claimed that "her husband had but a morsel of land, one cow, and a poor little horse, yet they had a *franchar* (42 lbs.) of wheat and three chickens to pay as a quit-rent to one seigneur, and four *franchar* of oats, one chicken, and 1I. to pay to another, besides very heavy *tailles* and other taxes."[3] Young also notes that the woman had heard news of the recent attempts at reform in Paris; recalling her exact words, Young reports that "it was said, at present, that something was to be done by some great folks for such poor ones, but that she did not know who nor how, but God send us better, '*car les tailles et les droits nous ecrasent.*'"[4]

On his entry into Strasbourg, Young discovers that the hardships suffered by the French peasantry had finally tipped the nation into outright Revolution. Already familiar with the recent political struggles between the court and the newly declared National Assembly, Young correctly guesses that the national balance of power had decisively shifted and muses on the potential repercussions of this shift not only for France but for Europe as a whole: "Everything being now decided, and the kingdom absolutely in the hands of the Assembly, they have the power to make a new constitution, such as they think proper; and it will be a great spectacle for the world to view, in this enlightened age, the representatives of twenty five millions of people sitting on the construction of a new and better order and fabric of liberty, than Europe has yet offered."[5] Yet despite his clear sympathy for the people of France, Young remains loyal to his native England and offers a dire prediction for the French nation if it does not pursue an English model of political reform—a prediction that in retrospect seems exceedingly accurate: "It will now be seen, whether they copy the constitution of England, freed from its faults, or attempt, from theory, to frame something absolutely speculative: in the former case, they will prove a blessing to their country; in the latter they will probably involve it in inextricable confusions and civil wars, perhaps not in the present period but certainly at some future one."[6]

The sight that inspired such a prediction from Young—the sight of a poor mob attacking its wealthy oppressors—is an image of the French Revolution firmly installed within cultural memory. Yet this scene of the poor resisting the actions of the affluent is preceded by another scene, the scene of the impoverished woman on the road, who contrarily claims that the poor will benefit from the actions of the affluent. Of course, the affluent parties attacked by *sans-culottes* (the urban poor) in Strasbourg are primarily royalist supporters of the *ancien régime* (the old order), while those invoked by the peasant woman are members of the rising bourgeoisie. These two scenes therefore indicate the complexity of the relations that linked royalist and bourgeois, peasant and *sans-culottes*, during the Revolutionary period. From this web of relations no simple historical conclusions may be drawn: neither

clear links of unqualified alliance, nor clear lines of unequivocal antagonism, nor, above all, transparent insights into motives for political action. And yet history as a discipline was founded precisely upon the possibility of such insights. Young, in fact, appears as one of the first historical commentators on the Revolution, one of the first to attempt to isolate the essential nature of Revolutionary action. Young stands at the head of a line of Revolutionary historians, all of whom seek the true motivation for its outbreak, the guiding force behind its tortuous path, and the lingering fallout from its aftermath.

Like many historians who follow him, Young defines Revolutionary events in reference to the notion of liberty, newly conceived as a necessary condition for human happiness. By shedding shackles of hierarchical orders perceived as old and ossified, the subject of Revolution was widely credited with revitalizing a spirit of liberty long suppressed by the *ancien régime*. This rebirth of liberty transformed the subject into the Revolutionary citizen, and histories of the Revolution are often written as a series of efforts either to foster or to frustrate the freedom of the citizen subject. Some historical commentators—Burke in the eighteenth century, Taine in the nineteenth, Furet in the twentieth—have offered variant views of the Revolution: as an outbreak of anarchy posing as liberty, a quest for liberty blown off course, or a sequence of discrete events with no common reference to liberty at all.[7] Still, most historical narratives seek in the Revolution an urge to liberty that inspired successive political configurations, from the liberal democracies founded in the nineteenth century to the socialist and communist uprisings that later attempted to overturn them. Conceived as a desire for universal freedom, this urge to liberty is posited as the driving force of Revolutionary action—or, indeed, of all world historical events. Consider the words of Henri Lefebvre, perhaps the most influential twentieth-century historian of the Revolution. For Lefebvre, only the fulfillment of the libratory promise first offered by the Revolution will fully illuminate the operation of global historical forces. During the Revolution, Lefebvre claims,

> . . . much of the world lay outside European dominion; the great civilizations which had developed under Islam and those in India, China, and Japan had not yet opened to the European spirit. The greater part of contemporary humanity was unaware of the flame that had been kindled in a small area of the world, or else did not feel its heat. The unity of the world is beginning to be realized in our time; only when this is achieved will a truly universal history begin.[8]

Yet as the complex network of alliances and antagonisms noted by Young demonstrates, the conditions under which Revolutionary liberty could be demanded, to say nothing of realized, were at best troubled. Indeed, the concept

of liberty appears in different guises from one history of the Revolution to the next—a fact that is scarcely surprising, given that the documents from the Revolutionary period also harbor different definitions of the liberatory impulse. The instability of the term liberty appears linked to an instability in the relation of subjectivity to performance. While the citizen subject sought to secure its concept of liberty through various forms of public display, the increasing divorce of representation from its referent rendered the concept of liberty itself increasingly unstable. In the last chapter I argued that a similar instability played a role in the fall of the castrato from popular favor. Farinelli, so famous in youth, declined into obscurity in old age, in part because his castration no longer qualified him to offer an ordered vision of sexual identity. But the crumbling of such visions was a hallmark of the emerging Modern era. On the Revolutionary front, for instance, the citizen subject rejected the old hierarchies of power once held to enshrine an eternal and immutable social order. Yet after gleefully overturning the *ancien régime*, the subject sought to understand itself *vis-à-vis* the newfound liberty it had just won—a never-ending project, for once all hierarchies of meaning had been thrown down, even liberty itself proved difficult to define with certainty.

This definitional defiance did not go uncontested during the Modern era; both the original documents from the Revolutionary period and the later narratives of Revolutionary historians exhibit various efforts to grant liberty some sort of conceptual coherence. The legacy of all these efforts is of course my own, although my Postmodern perspective leads me to believe that arguments over the term are unlikely to end in the foreseeable future. A simple look at the daily headlines will confirm that debates still rage over the assurance or abrogation of various freedoms on the global, the national, and the local levels. While my Modern heritage compels me to affirm the importance of such debates—indeed, I feel that I could not do otherwise—my Postmodern sensibility dissuades me from understanding them as requisite steps toward a final and perfect flowering of liberty itself. On the contrary, I view these debates as a set of diverse and often oppositional discourses that keep the term liberty under perpetual contest by tugging it in different directions at once. Yet the fact remains that today, as in the Revolutionary period, this tug of war over the definition of liberty determines the fate of individuals around the world; I therefore hold that it is of crucial importance to examine the formulation of this contested term liberty during the Modern era, for it will cast crucial light upon our own formulation of the term in our current Postmodern moment.

In this chapter I explore the instability of liberty by juxtaposing contemporary documents of the Revolution with later historical accounts of

Revolutionary actions; in so doing I show how the project to produce a coherent vision of liberty, a project unfulfilled in the Revolutionary past, still frustrates historical inquiry in the present. Turning to the past, I note how contemporary documents demonstrate marked shifts in a series of performances designed to reveal the spirit of Revolutionary liberty. From the wealth of available documents I focus upon two varieties for investigation. The first are legal manuscripts that define performance through the pursuit of political rights like suffrage and eligibility for office; the second are journal articles that define performance through public participation in festive uprisings and celebrations. Crucially, both forms of documents characterize these Revolutionary performances as almost magical blends of typically oppositional qualities; at once impromptu and organized, individual and collective, the performances were cast as rare opportunities for a new flowering of freedom. Returning to later historical accounts, I note how shifting descriptions of these performances continually redefine Revolutionary liberty for subsequent generations. While early accounts frequently lionize the flowering of freedom during the Revolution, later accounts tend to trouble this rosy view. Yet even the later narratives implicitly locate such flowerings elsewhere, in events distinct from yet somehow linked to the Revolution itself; through recourse to such events, later historians seek to shelter the legacy of liberty from the abuses inflicted upon it by the Revolution. Woven together, these discourses culled from both the past and the present reveal a persistent, and persistently frustrated, urge to distill from the Revolution a stable vision of liberty as an authentic experience of the citizen subject. Crucially, however, while writers on the Revolution still seek this elusive vision, the inevitable frustrations of such a project were lamented more than a century and a half ago in the work of the young Geörg Büchner. With remarkable prescience, Büchner forecasts the failure of the Modern era to isolate the essence of liberty, and so it is with a coda on Büchner and his early drama *Danton's Death* that I end the chapter.

While the year 1789 generally marks the outbreak of the Revolution in France, the actual impetus for revolutionary action lay in the earlier events of 1788. A failed harvest that year sent food prices spiraling out of control just as the state levied new taxes upon all classes of subjects. While the lower tiers struggled just to buy bread, the nobility, angered by a tax burden they were unaccustomed to sharing, demanded a convocation of the Estates-General to debate the growing economic crisis. The three Estates, that comprised members of the aristocracy, the clergy, and the common people, met in local assemblies during the winter of 1789 in order to elect deputies for the convocation and to compose *cahiers du doleances* or lists of grievances

for discussion by their appointed representatives. The elections to the Estates-General entailed unprecedented access to suffrage rights; the *Regulation for Execution of the Letters of Convocation* stresses that "His majesty has desired that, from the extremities of his kingdom and from the most obscure settlements, every one be assured that his wishes and claims will reach Him."[9] The nearly universal male suffrage that attended the elections gave rise to a new conception of citizenship, one simultaneously individual and collective. On the one hand, the elections guaranteed the individual expression of a new urge to liberty, a demand for freedom from a system of inherited privilege or subordination. On the other hand, the elections harnessed this individual expression within a structure of sanctioned collective action. Spectacular new displays of citizenship also emerged from the elections—the gathering of eligible voters, the staging of formal debates, and the casting of official ballots staged citizenship through a new breed of political performance. At once affirming the individual and collective nature of the citizen body, these performances were increasingly perceived as a concrete embodiment of a new sense of liberty sweeping the nation.

The nationwide elections spurred other expressions of liberty as well, most notably the riotous celebrations like those encountered by Young in Strasbourg. In her 1988 study *Festivals and the French Revolution*, Mona Ozouf observes that the electoral assemblies emboldened the ranks of the lower classes and spawned a host of impromptu festive uprisings. Marching through the village or storming the local chateau, armed bands of commoners would demand the release of hoarded grain and an end to the burden of feudal dues. Commenting on the singular character of these spontaneous celebrations, Ozouf notes that "[i]n these first festivals . . . the fundamental feature, against which all others stand out, was a terrified joy, a mixture of fear and power."[10] Through such uprisings, the peasantry began to assert parity with the upper classes, an assertion that intimated the political sea change to come; Ozouf accordingly observes that the celebrations "were the occasions of scenes of fraternization between communities, whose avowed aim was security but from which also was born delight in the feeling, and display, of strength."[11] Ozouf therefore asserts that these festivities constituted a spontaneous demand for liberty, the first fruits of a truly revolutionary sentiment.

Ozouf also observes, however, that the peasant revolts, while arising from an impromptu celebration of liberty, quickly assumed a familiarly organized character. One activity frequently borrowed from other celebrations was the erection of a maypole. In its transfer from popular to Revolutionary festivals, however, the maypole acquired a very different

quality. "The maypole, traditional symbol of joyful unanimity, would this time be full of menace," Ozouf notes. "Apart from the fact that the setting up of the maypole was accompanied by scenes of violence, some seditious decoration was often attached to it. This might take the form of a sign bearing some slogan such as 'woe to him who pays his rent!'"[12] Yet despite their potential for violence, the threat posed by these uprisings was mitigated by their organized character: "The peasants waited until the day of the village fair before removing the pews from the church, and they did so to the accompaniment of music. They went off to decorate the mayor with the cockade, but they marched in procession. And if they tramped illegally over a meadow ready for cutting, they were led by the municipal drummer."[13] Thus for Ozouf the ritual elements of the uprisings lent a crucial coherence to their impromptu expressions of defiance; these uprisings, both spontaneous and organized, constituted a first form of festival performance—a demand for an all embracing and universal liberty.

Meanwhile, the delegates to the Estates-General were quickly embroiled in irreconcilable conflicts with one another. The deputies of the Third Estate, even after receiving double votes in deference to the vast size of the population they represented, were stymied by the deputies of the aristocracy and the clergy, who soon realized that their counterparts desired drastic political reform. Withdrawing from the Estates-General, the delegates of the Third Estate renamed themselves the National Assembly and on August 27, 1789 issued the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen*. In its first six articles, the document redefines the subject as citizen by issuing a new formula for citizenship itself. The first article emphasizes the individual liberty of each citizen by refuting all the arbitrary privileges attached to inherited titles: "Men are born and remain free and equal in rights; social distinctions may be based only on general usefulness."[14] The second article asserts that political associations secure such rights—defined as liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression—and the third article affirms the collective nature of the citizenry by guaranteeing access to these rights through the invocation of French identity: "The source of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation;" the *Declaration* notes, "no group, no individual may exercise authority not emanating expressly therefrom."[15] The fourth article describes liberty as the power to perform any action not injurious to others, the fifth restricts the sphere of law to the prohibition of injurious actions, and the sixth references citizenship in expressly political terms by ensuring access to political representation: "Law is the expression of the general will; all citizens have the right to concur personally, or through representatives, in its formation. . . ."[16] With the *Declaration*, then, the citizen

received a new articulation through participation in a new species of political performance.

This confluence of new species of political performance on the one hand and new species of festival performance on the other provided a host of opportunities for the appearance of the Revolutionary citizen subject. Indeed, these two varieties of performance mutually influenced one another, for their qualities were closely intertwined. The individual urge to liberty that was expressed through political activity erupted spontaneously, just like the impromptu gestures of freedom that initiated festive uprisings. Conversely, the collective structure that lent coherence to political action unfolded in an organized fashion, much like the ritualized elements that united the people in festive celebrations. The multiple performance events spawned by the Revolution thus offered occasion for a new definition of liberty; as the Revolution unfolded, however, these events also offered occasion for ongoing redefinitions of liberty that emerged in response to each phase of Revolutionary activity. Counterpoised against the Revolutionary history of successive conflicts and serial constitutions, therefore, is another history of performance, a history that rearticulates the citizen subject relative to the rearticulations of the Revolution itself. Designed to reveal a libratory spirit championed as the birthright of every citizen, performance proves ultimately incapable of stabilizing the concept of liberty during the volatile Revolutionary era.

The libratory urge that swept over France is often held to find concentrated expression in a single event: the storming of the Bastille on July 14, 1789. This attack, still commemorated annually on Bastille day, registers in the historical imagination as a radical display of libratory feeling—a performance of Revolutionary sentiment that reverberated across both the nation and the continent. Of course, at the time the storming of the citadel was not universally viewed as a libratory gesture; the royalist journal *L'Année Litteraire* (The Literary Year), which within mere months of the attack had its name changed to *L'Ami du Roi* (The Friend of the King), described the storming of the Bastille not as a display of liberty but of anarchy. In the issues following the attack, the usual contents of the journal—book extracts, travel narratives, notices of art exhibitions, and the like—are suddenly peppered with invectives against the National Assembly. One of the first issues, from October 1789, speaks directly about the fall of the fortress. Accusing the Assembly of ignoring tradition and seeking subversion of the *ancien régime*, the journal describes the Revolution as a wily courtesan that has seduced Paris with a feverish fear of royal authority: "Thus the people have persuaded themselves that the design of the court is to cut the throat

of every Parisian. The alarm sounds in every quarter; the people rush to arms, they overtake the Hôtel des Invalides, they storm the Bastille. . . ."[17] According to *L'Année Litteraire*, individuals should seek liberty within their proper stations in the social hierarchy; there all subjects share a moral freedom, even if they are distinguished by varying degrees of political power. The journal therefore champions the cause of the *ancien régime* by characterizing the spirit of liberty as a spirit of libertinism; the storming of the Bastille is granted a menacingly festive quality that will overturn the established order, and such disorder becomes the venue for an anarchic performance of liberation: "Everywhere the people are drunk with this new liberty; like a liquor too strong for their heads, it carries them to the greatest excesses. All laws are violated, all forms of justice are abolished; there is no longer a single authority, a single military discipline; a frightful anarchy, a thousand times worse than despotism, threatens the entire realm with destruction before it can make itself anew."[18]

Unlike the account provided by *L'Année Litteraire*, most later narratives describe the storming of the Bastille not as an anarchic act of violence but as a heroic gesture of liberation. Significantly, these later accounts mirror the journals of the Revolutionary period by assigning the attack a characteristically festive quality. Consider the account of the attack on the Bastille offered by nineteenth-century historian Jules Michelet in his *Histoire de la Révolution Française*, one of the first sympathetic studies of the Revolution to emerge from the first generation to inherit its legacy. Michelet heralds the attack as the signal event of Revolutionary action, an impromptu outburst of activity that emerged spontaneously from the will of the people: "No one proposed the attack," Michelet maintains. "But everyone believed, and everyone acted. All along the streets, the docks, the bridges, the boulevards, the crowd shouted to the crowd: 'To the Bastille! To the Bastille!' And in the alarm that sounded, everyone heard: 'To the Bastille!'"[19] Yet for Michelet this attack almost immediately assumed an organized character, becoming a ritual gesture that united the people with a common revolutionary sentiment. Speaking of the centrality of the attack in the history of France, Michelet notes that "the old men who have had the good and bad fortune to see all that has happened in this singular half century, into which all other centuries seem compressed, declare that all grand national events that followed under the Republic and the Empire nonetheless had a character partial and not unanimous, that only the 14 of July was the day of the entire people."[20]

Of course, Michelet admits that the storming of the Bastille pitted French subjects against one another. As testimony to the divisions made manifest by the attack, Michelet notes that after the fortress had fallen the

victorious crowd marched through the streets accompanied by the severed head of de Launey, Governor of the Bastille: "at the front, amid the roar that thundered from an unseen lightning, marched a meditative and religious young man; he carried, pierced and suspended upon his bayonet, an impious thing, triply damned, the settlement of the Bastille."[21] Almost at once, however, Michelet reunites the divided factions by foregrounding the festive elements that emerged during the aftermath of the attack. Upon their arrival at the Hôtel de Ville—the seat of the Paris Electors to the Estates General, then the de facto leaders of the city—the crowd convened a murderous tribunal that threatened to execute the captured guards of the Bastille. Michelet reports that the Electors won a reprieve for the guards by beginning an impromptu chant: "Grace for the young ones! Grace!" He next claims that "you would have then seen the dirtied faces, the hands blackened by gunpowder, washed by great tears, like gouts of rain falling from a storm. There was no longer a question of justice or of vengeance. The tribunal was shattered."[22] Michelet then concludes his narrative by citing an organized affirmation of fidelity to the nation. In a gesture common to all festive performances of the new libratory spirit, the crowds made the guards swear with them a loyalty oath; their unity once again established, the crowd saw the guards—their recent enemies, now their friends once more—safely back to their lodgings for the night.[23]

Thus in the account supplied by Michelet the storming of the Bastille emerges as the first truly national celebration of the Revolution; ending with an oath sworn by both the attackers and the defenders of the citadel, the account unites the populace under the banner of a newly reborn nation. Yet more recent accounts of the attack complicate the festive quality ascribed to it by Michelet. In his 1979 study *The Crowd in the French Revolution*, George Rudé notes several such complications. First, the attack on the fortress was not from the outset an impromptu event. News of royal attempts to muzzle the National Assembly had spawned insurrections across Paris, and many feared a retaliatory attack launched from the Bastille against heavily populated nearby neighborhoods. "It was believed," Rudé remarks, "that the fortress was heavily manned; its guns, which were that morning trained on the rue Saint-Antoine, could play havoc among the crowded tenements."[24] The storming of the Bastille was therefore partly spurred by the desire to capture the gunpowder hoarded within it—an action that would have conveniently armed the rebels while disarming the citadel itself. Moreover, the removal of the powder was first attempted not by a spontaneously gathered Parisian crowd, but by a small coterie of the Parisian elite. Rudé remarks that on the day of the attack the Electors of the

Hôtel de Ville tried three times to parley with de Launey; only after all these efforts were frustrated did a crowd rush the fortress in an impromptu display of force. "At this point," Rudé observes, "de Launey seems to have lost his head and threatened to blow up the fortress. He was, however, dissuaded by the garrison and, in desperation, gave orders for the main drawbridge to be lowered. So the Bastille fell."[25]

However, if the impromptu aspects of the attack did not supply its initial impetus, neither did its organized aspects unify the entirety of the people; surviving documentation suggests that most of the attackers issued not from a broad but instead from a rather narrow spectrum of the local population. Drawing on a roster of the "Heroes of the Bastille" officially endorsed by the National Assembly—one that lists not only the names and addresses of the attackers but also their occupation and military status—Rudé notes that six of every seven attackers were members of the Parisian Guard, a civilian militia constituted to maintain peace within the city. This fact sheds considerable light upon the demographics of the attacking crowd, for Rude notes that admittance to the Guard was restricted according to income. Observing that all Parisian districts were required to provide a fixed number of Guards, Rude remarks that "while each District drew up its own conditions of enrolment, in most cases property and residential qualifications—even employer certificates of good character—were imposed that virtually debarred a large part of the wage earning population; certainly all unemployed and vagrants were excluded."[26] Rudé thus refutes the popular image of the attack as a ritual of mass liberation, a nascent form of festival performance that asserted the unity of the people. Rather, the attack was engaged by members of a relatively prosperous and in most cases propertied class. Commenting on the frankly mythical notion of the attack as an organized action undertaken by the entire nation, Rudé maintains that "this is a legend that dies hard. Yet not only is there no evidence to support it, all the available evidence absolutely refutes it."[27]

According to Rudé then, the storming of the Bastille, rather than expanding the field of Revolutionary action, in fact restricted the potential players in the Revolutionary arena. Such an account of the attack therefore suggests a new definition of the citizen subject that supplants the definition supplied by the 1789 Declaration. This new definition, moreover, was made legally binding in the 1791 Constitution drafted by the National Assembly, which deftly curtailed the political guarantees offered by the earlier Declaration. The Preamble of the 1791 Constitution pays lip service to these guarantees by stating that "[t]he National Assembly, wishing to establish the French Constitution upon the principles it has recognized and

declared, abolishes irrevocably the institutions which were injurious to liberty and equality of rights."[28] Yet if the Constitution restricted royal power by establishing a duly elected legislative body, it also restricted suffrage to active citizens, now distinguished from their passive counterparts by their income level.[29] Moreover, active citizenship only guaranteed voting rights in primary elections; these primaries nominated a body of Electors who then chose the actual deputies to the Legislative Assembly. In order to qualify as an Elector the active citizen had to fulfill another condition; he either had to own property or reside as tenant upon property that provided him with considerable revenue.[30] Thus in opposition to the citizen of the 1789 Declaration, the citizen of the 1791 Constitution faced some significant curbs on his political agency. While ostensibly upholding the individual liberty of each citizen by affirming the collective nature of the citizenry, the Constitution deprived some individuals of political power by dividing the collective into active and passive components. By imposing this limit upon political representation, the 1791 Constitution effected a profound alteration to political performance.

This division of the populace into active and passive citizens reinforced the divisions already apparent during the storming of the Bastille; though at the time of the attack such divisions were only enforced by local statute, they were soon ratified by federal legislation. In fact, the National Assembly instituted similar divisions even before the 1791 Constitution by installing them within their plans for the first Festival of the Federation; designed to commemorate the first anniversary of the attack on the Bastille, the Festival ironically celebrated universal liberty by partitioning the populace from one another. The Festival called for representatives from all corners of the nation to meet in Paris on July 14, 1790; there the representatives would swear their allegiance to the new Federation, and in a show of support for the attenuation of his own authority the king himself would also swear an oath. The plans for the Festival are documented in the *Moniteur Universel*, a journal founded during the early days of the uprisings to cover Assembly activities; through its daily reports of legislative proceedings, the *Moniteur* became a principal conduit for the dissemination of official Assembly rhetoric. The stance of the Assembly on the Festival of Federation, for instance, is found in the report from the commission charged with the organization of the Festival. Noting the political potential of the celebration, the report maintains that "this festival, by reawakening glorious memories, by strengthening the ties of fraternity among all citizens, by rendering sensible to all eyes the patriotism that animates all the French, will persuade the enemies of the Revolution that it still exists, despite any vain efforts they would make to

destroy it. . . ."[31] Yet the report also recommends that all participants in the ceremony hold membership in either the military or the National Guard—the federal equivalent of the Parisian Guard that stormed the Bastille. Ostensibly the commission argues that the Guard will keep the ceremony on task: "The commission believes that the Assembly would desire to consecrate the constitutional principles through the participation of the National Guard, so that in its patriotic fervor public opinion will not drift from the point for a single instant."[32] Yet the same income requirements that once restricted entry into the Parisian Guard now restricted entry into the National Guard and thus, by corollary, into the Festival of the Federation; through such requirements, then, the Assembly enforced an early division of the citizenry later established by constitutional law.

Yet if participants in the Festival were carefully chosen on the basis of income level, then the particular symbology of the Festival worked to obscure this divisive choice. The actual oath taking ceremony was held at the Champ de Mars, an open field usually employed for military exercises. In its description of the Festival, the *Moniteur* notes that the Champ de Mars had been adorned with great entrance arches erected especially for the occasion and emblazoned with revolutionary slogans. The arches opened unto to a vast enclosure constructed to hold the event. One side of the enclosure comprised a grand covered gallery decorated with blue and gold draperies. "In the center of the gallery," notes the account, "was a pavilion designed for the king. Under the pavilion was placed the royal throne, and beside the throne rested a chair for the president of the National Assembly. Behind the throne was placed a platform for the queen, the dauphin, and the royal princesses. Along the length of the gallery ran a vast amphitheatre that held spectators with special invitations to the ceremony."[33] The other three sides of the enclosure comprised tiers designed to hold the less privileged spectators, while posts arranged within the enclosure itself marked the positions to be occupied by representatives of the military and the National Guard. Most significantly, however, the *Moniteur* reports that "the entire enclosure was dominated by the Altar of the Nation placed in its center and elevated by twenty five feet; one mounted the Altar by four staircases, each ending in a platform crowned by caskets holding burning incense."[34] This Altar, the single focal point of both the Champ de Mars and the activity staged within it, symbolized the unity of the nation and all its people—an image of concord that belied the division of the citizenry effected by the Festival itself.

The *Moniteur* continues its account by noting that on the morning of the Festival the civil and military representatives of the nation met at six a.m.

in the Boulevard du Temple; the various military orders carried the oriflamme or national flag, and each deputation of the National Guard carried the banner of its local *département*. By mid morning the representatives began the march to the ceremony grounds, stopping first at the Tuileries for the deputies of the National Assembly to join the procession. At last arriving at the Champ de Mars, the representatives moved to their assigned positions and saluted the royal cortege, which entered to the accompaniment of an artillery salvo. The banners of the deputations and the oriflamme of the military were carried to a great Altar of the Nation, where they were duly consecrated, and then the Bishop of Autun presided over a mass. The pivotal event of the ceremony followed the mass, when Lafayette, the head of the National Guard, mounted the Altar and pronounced the oath of the Federation. This oath was subsequently repeated by the civil and military representatives: "I swear to be faithful to the nation, to the law, to the king, and to uphold with all my power the constitution decreed by the Assembly and accepted by the king."[35] The President of the Assembly then rose and repeated the oath, and at last the king rose and pronounced an oath of his own: "I, king of the French, swear to the nation to employ all power delegated to me by the constitutional law of the state to maintain the constitution and to execute its laws."[36] The *Moniteur* maintains that a great cheer, augmented by cannon fire, erupted from the assembled populace as the oath taking ceremony drew to a close. This cheer, it is true, gave voice to the spectators gathered at the periphery of the action, yet this voice was raised only in adulation, not in the swearing of an oath; this cheer, in other words, also obfuscated the division of the citizenry enacted by the Festival itself.

The *Moniteur* describes the Festival of the Federation as a celebration of liberty enjoyed by the entire the nation; the journal thereby upholds the rhetoric of the National Assembly, a fact that scarcely seems surprising since the establishment of the journal had occurred in tandem with the establishment of the Assembly itself. "Witness the fulsome commentary about the ceremony that the journal offers its readers: On arriving at the Champ de Mars, what a sight meets the eye! What a sublime spectacle! Two hundred thousand men circling the Altar of the Fatherland; they await their brothers, their legislators, and their king to affirm the liberty already awakened by justice and faith in oaths. What religious sentiment dominates the multitude! For the people are sublime when they are drawn into the sentiment of their own grandeur."[37] The *Moniteur* does not mention the fact that the representatives of the nation involved in the oath taking ceremony are drawn largely from the bourgeois segments of the population. On the contrary, the journal ignores this fact,

invoking the spirit of liberty to support the ascendancy of the bourgeoisie while eliding the restrictions that such ascendancy imposes. This new ruling class therefore becomes the principal custodian of both a libratory sentiment and the performance of liberty designed to demonstrate the sentiment itself: "Such are the important events of this grand day, such are the sentiments that they engendered. One cannot doubt that all of France will respond to them, and that the deputies, when they return to their homes, will carry with them this spirit of love and peace, without which no human institution, however great, however reasonable it may be, can long endure."[38]

Yet if the *Moniteur* ignores the fact that the Festival of the Federation excluded large segments of the population, this observation is not lost on Ozouf, whose own account of the Festival highlights an attenuation of the libratory spirit she locates in the early peasant uprisings. For Ozouf, this attenuation appears most clearly in the many local celebrations that followed the national Festival. The return of local representatives to their native villages prompted municipal authorities to stage their own versions of the Paris Festival, yet these celebrations were marked neither by an impromptu action that set events in motion nor by an organized structure designed to unite the entire population. As in Paris, an oath taking ceremony formed the centerpiece of most local celebrations, yet also as in Paris, the newly institutionalized festivals undermined the promise of liberty offered by the oath itself. Clearly the local celebrations lacked the impromptu quality of the earlier peasant uprisings; the local authorities planned every detail of the festivities to discourage the eruption of disorderly conduct. Moreover, the celebrations scarcely suggest an organized attempt to foster participation in the festivities by the populace as a whole. Two groups of individuals, in fact, were carefully and systematically barred from the festivals. The first group, while never present, was regularly invoked: "The excluded party whose name was on everybody's lips was the aristocrat. Absent, distant, never seen, never caught, but at the heart of all the accounts, he had no other than a functional referent."[39] The second group, while often present, was just as often prohibited from participating in the celebrations. "The other excluded party, the one that is never mentioned, was the people," Ozouf notes, recalling the peasantry she credits with the first stirrings of Revolutionary sentiment. "Around the altar of the fatherland was a circle of soldiers, around it a circle of notables. Around it were the people: they attended as the oath was taken by the first two groups and sometimes were bold enough to demand that they themselves should take an oath. Nevertheless, they had to demand it."[40]

Thus for Ozouf the spirit of universal liberty seen in the peasant revolts is undermined by the unfolding of Revolutionary history. Materialized in actions both spontaneous and ritualized in nature, this ephemeral spirit fades from institutionalized festivals, which inevitably fail in their attempts to capture the qualities of the peasant uprisings. Noting how the reputation of the early uprisings languished in the shadow of the later festivals, Ozouf remarks that "these half-riotous, half-ceremonial gatherings were never graced with that name. Further, it was often against them, in an attempt to constrain their violence, that the first federative festivals were set up. But we must not forget them," Ozouf adds, for "they were the compost—a mixture of fear and gaiety—in which the Federation took root."[41] Clearly, Ozouf longs to preserve the libratory legacy of the Revolution, but to do so she must locate this legacy in the genesis of revolutionary activity—the early peasant revolts. Consigned to these initial uprisings, the libratory spirit of the Revolution is protected from the perversion into which Ozouf sees the Revolution rapidly descend. There, at the vanishing point of Revolutionary action, liberty is safely maintained as the initial impetus of all later festival performances.

Such a foundational impetus would require sequestration in the murky origins of the Revolution to survive the rocky course it later followed; the violence of the Revolution spawned an ongoing redefinition of the citizen subject, each definition ostensibly ratified by a new flowering of freedom. A failed attempt to smuggle the king from France precipitated the fall of the monarchy, the declaration of the republic, and the annulment of the 1791 Constitution; the Legislative Assembly of 1791 was disbanded and the new National Convention drafted the Constitution of 1793 that greatly expanded political participation by the citizenry. Dominated by the radical Jacobin faction, the Convention used the 1793 Constitution not only to abolish the division between active and passive citizens, but also to disband the elite body of Electors and allow the direct election of legislators by the voters: "No portion of the people may exercise the power of the entire people," maintains the Preface to the Constitution, "but every section of the sovereign assembled is to enjoy the right to express its will with complete liberty."[42] Yet threats to the new republic—subversion from within, invasion from without—prompted the suspension of the Constitution just months after its ratification; the Convention cancelled elections, declared itself in permanent session, and established a Reign of Terror. Led by Maximillien Robespierre, the architects of the Terror held power for a time, but fell during a purge of the Convention in the summer of 1794. The ascendant Girondin faction then drafted the 1795 Constitution,

which consolidated state authority in the Directory, a newly established five member Executive body. The new Constitution did not reinstate the division of active and passive citizens, but it did return to a primary system in which Electors filled the ranks of a new bicameral legislature; regarding the reinstatement of the Electors, the Preface to the Constitution pointedly remarks that "every citizen has an equal right to concur, directly or indirectly, in the formation of the law, in the nomination of the representatives of the people and the public functionaries."[43] Thus while both Constitutions asserted that the individual liberty of the citizen is manifested in the collective authority of the citizenry, both in truth subjected political representation to significant restraint and curtailed access to political performance.

This unstable relationship of the citizenry to its promised liberation is clearly revealed in the various civic festivals celebrated during the Reign of Terror. Consider, in this instance, the Festival of Reason, held on November 10, 1793—or 20 Brumaire, Year II according to the new Revolutionary calendar. Cast as another moment that embodied the liberty of the citizen subject, the Festival was principally organized by the Paris Commune or municipal government. The promoters of the Festival, intent on undermining the Catholic Church and its longstanding link to the monarchy, sought to replace the adoration of a divine power with devotion to a resolutely human faculty. Some members of the Convention feared a backlash among remaining adherents to the Church, but the Convention gave its grudging support to the Festival and the celebration proceeded as planned. Fortunately, the daily *Journal de Paris* provides a detailed account of the Festival, though its glowing tone clearly reflects the rigid censorship imposed during the Terror. The Festival took place within the Cathedral de Nôtre Dame, rededicated on this occasion as the Temple of Reason: "The citizens of Paris, after having removed all attributes of Catholicism, have substituted the emblems and the statue of Reason, and, by hymns to this goddess, have resanctified in republican fashion an edifice that charlatanism had dedicated to foolishness and superstition."[44] In the choir of the Cathedral volunteer builders erected an artificial hillock, upon which rested the Temple of Philosophy. The flame of Truth burned upon a rock, and the entire edifice was decorated with busts of sages past and present who had led the advance of Reason throughout the ages. During the Festival, two columns of girls dressed in white and crowned with oak leaves sang a hymn to a statue of Reason, actually personified by a performer from the Paris Opera; the *Journal* observes that "the statue of Reason was represented by a woman, young and beautiful like Reason itself, as both were in the springtime

of life. Her white drapery, half covered by a coat of celestial blue, her flowing hair, and the bonnet of liberty perched upon her head comprised all her attributes."[45]

While officially dedicated to Reason, the Festival firmly linked Reason itself to the spirit of liberty; the exercise of Reason forecasts the advent of liberty, and an invocation of the former offers an assurance of the latter. Yet the Festival crucially defined liberty in terms of an abstract human faculty rather than access to political action; while the radical leaders who promoted the Festival sought to secure the Revolution from the machinations of a reactionary Church, their actions also conveniently elided the suspension of political freedoms during the Terror. Just two months before the Festival, on September 17, the "Law of Suspects" broadened the definition of Revolutionary enemies and swept hundreds of individuals into trials for conspiracy or sedition. In December, only one month after the Festival, the Convention ceded sweeping powers to the principal instruments of the Terror, the Committees of General Security and Public Safety; the first oversaw the newly expanded Revolutionary Tribunal, while the second assumed the right to appoint or purge government officials. Sandwiched between these opening events of the Terror, the Festival of Reason offers a performance of liberty that references an ephemeral philosophical concept over participation in political affairs. Indeed, the primacy ascribed this ephemeral image of liberty is revealed by the hymn performed at the Festival, the opening stanzas of which invoke Liberty in the place of Reason herself:

> Descend, oh Liberty, daughter of Nature;
> The People have reconquered your immortal power:
> On the pompous debris of ancient imposture
> Their hands raise your altar anew.
>
> Come, conquerors of kings, Europe beholds you
> Come, your success triumphs over false gods
> You, holy Liberty, come inhabit this temple;
> Become the goddess of the French
>
> Your visage delights the most savage mountain,
> In the middle of the rocks the harvests are born;
> Embellished by your hands, the most violent shore
> Becomes as peaceful as if frozen in ice.[46]

Even Michelet, dedicated as he is to upholding the libratory heritage of the Revolution, concedes that the Terror deranged the libratory ideals first

Figure 4.1 The dedication of the Temple of Reason during the *Fête de la Raison*.

espoused by Revolutionary leaders. Yet in his account of the Festival of Reason, Michelet assigns the celebration the same festive qualities he used to characterize the fall of the Bastille—a gesture perhaps designed to rescue a libratory spirit from the Festival and its subsequent fallout. In an opening comment that frankly acknowledges the abuses of the Terror, Michelet observes that such abuses had already begun to loom large over the deputies to the Convention. The members of the Convention had planned to attend the Festival, but missed the celebration due to a bitter debate unfolding on the chamber floor; several delegates had already been purged and executed through the mechanics of Terror, and to stave off a further thinning of the ranks some members proposed that henceforth accused deputies receive hearings before the entire Convention. Defending the proposal, one deputy warned of a return to despotism should the measure fail: "Do you know what will happen? The Assembly, frozen, will fall into a shameful silence . . . and who will dare, after this death of the Assembly, to show greater courage than the Assembly itself? Everyone will fly from public office, everyone will shut themselves in their homes, and all will end in solitude."[47] The meeting threatened to fall into anarchy, when Michelet notes that the chamber was suddenly invaded by celebrants from the Festival of Reason;

since the Convention had failed to appear at the Festival, the celebrants had decided to bring the Festival to the Convention. It is at this moment, when the figure of Reason entered the chamber, that Michelet ascribes truly festive aspects to the events; the impromptu arrival of the celebrants results in an organized display of communal sentiment. "The President sat Reason beside him," Michelet maintains, "gave to her, in the name of the Assembly, a fraternal accolade, and everyone, united for a moment by her sweet regard, hoped for better days."[48] For Michelet, this hope, revealed in the fact that the Convention adjourned to witness the Festival repeated at Nôtre Dame, preserves the memory of liberty even through the days of Terror to come.

If the Festival of Reason reconfigured the relation of citizenry to liberty at the beginning of the Terror, then the Festival of the Supreme Being reconfigured this relation yet again during its closing days. Celebrated on June 8, 1794—or 20 Prairial, Year II by the Revolutionary calendar—the Festival of the Supreme Being also embodied the liberty of the citizen subject, yet reversed the earlier Festival of Reason by basing liberty not upon the exercise of a human faculty but instead upon the grace bestowed by a divine power. The Festival was led by Robespierre himself, by then president of the Convention, who sought to counter the atheism of the Festival of Reason with homage to the Supreme Being, the beneficent figurehead of a new government sanctioned religion. Again, the *Journal de Paris* offers an effusive account of the Festival, one that follows the official rhetoric of the Terror. In its announcement of the Festival, the Journal remarks that the proceedings will begin at the Tuileries, where a grandstand and lectern will be erected; speaking from the lectern, Robespierre will remind the assembled crowd of the solemn reason for the Festival and invite them to honor the author of nature. After his speech, musicians will perform a symphony while Robespierre, "armed with the flame of Truth, will descend from the lectern and approach a monument mounted on a circular dais that represents the monster of Atheism. From behind this monument, consigned to flames by the President, will appear another monument to Wisdom."[49] The *Journal* then notes that Robespierre will lead a procession to the Champ de Mars, where an artificial mountain will be built; elaborately terraced, the mountain will accommodate the deputies of the Convention at its summit and twenty-five hundred citizens positioned along its various stages according to age and sex. Once positioned on the mountain, the citizens will sing a hymn to the Supreme Being and end the Festival with a tumultuous display of religious devotion and patriotic fervor: "At this time, the young women will throw their flowers to the heavens and the adolescent men will draw their sabres and swear always to carry them into victory. The old men, ravished by this sight, will raise their hands over their head and give their paternal blessing."[50]

Figure 4.2 The artificial mountain erected for the *Fête de l'Être Suprême*.

Despite its marked difference from the Festival of Reason, the Festival of the Supreme Being likewise placed a premium on the invocation of liberty; the Supreme Being in its wisdom bestows liberty as a blessing to mortal beings, who display their own wisdom by singing the praises of their divine benefactor. The Festival of Reason defined liberty as a human faculty, while the Festival of the Supreme Being defined it as a divine gift. Yet regardless of this distinction, both festivals masked the suspension of political freedom through an abstraction of the notion of liberty itself. For his part, Robespierre had good reason for fostering abstraction, for the last months of the Terror had witnessed a further abrogation of freedom and sowed even greater dissent among the deputies to the Convention. On June 10, the Convention ratified the "Law of 22 Prairial" at the specific request of the Committee of Public Safety. This law, accelerated the judicial process by depriving the accused of legal counsel; the members of the Committee of General Security saw the law as an intrusion into their own sphere of influence, so they retaliated by sending 1300 people to the guillotine in just six weeks. Disgust over the excess of slaughter hastened the fall of Robespierre on July 27, or 9 Thermidor. Held only weeks before the closing moments of the Terror, the Festival of the Supreme Being proffers a performance of liberty based not upon political practice but instead upon theological speculation; again, the official hymn of

the Festival invokes this ethereal notion of liberty, quite divorced from any involvement in political affairs:

> Father of the universe, supreme intelligence;
> Benefactor unknown to blind mortals,
> You reveal your being to our recognition
> That alone elevates your altars.
>
> Your temple is on the mountains, in the air, on the waves;
> You have no past, you have no future;
> And without inhabiting it you fill the whole world,
> Which could not contain you.
>
> All emanates from you, grand and premiere cause;
> All is purified by your divine rays;
> Upon your immortal cult reposes morality,
> And upon these morals, Liberty.[51]

Michelet admits that in these final days of the Terror no event could nourish the libratory ideals he longs to uphold as the legacy of the Revolution; significantly, however, in his account of the Festival of the Supreme Being Michelet ascribes festive qualities not to the Festival itself but to the irrepressible spirit of liberty that somehow succeeds in piercing its false façade. Michelet describes Paris as festooned with flowers and filled with joy by the Festival—a mood that contrasts sharply with the fear of a Robespierre already haunted by the prospect of retribution. When the members of the Revolutionary Tribunal failed to appear on time for his address at the Tuileries, an anxious Robespierre delayed the proceedings until their arrival; this act angered the other deputies of the Convention, who viewed the delay as an insolence of royal proportions. The Festival continued as Robespierre set light to the effigy of Athiesm, behind which emerged the statue of Wisdom; Michelet ominously notes, however, that "unfortunately the statue appeared, like all who waited nearby, smoky and blackened, much to the satisfaction of the enemies of Robespierre."[52] Robespierre then led the procession to the Champ de Mars; there, Michelet remarks, the great mountain rumbled like a volcano when Robespierre ascended its summit while the other outraged deputies were forced to arrange themselves at his feet. At this point, however, an unknown figure perched upon the mountain gave voice to the sentiment rapidly rising against Robespierre: "The most violent *coup-de-théâtre* occurred when one of the delegates clearly stated, near Robespierre, in a manner to be heard by him, by the Convention, and by the crowd, his contempt for the tyrant. He uttered these very words: 'I despise him and I hate him.'"[53]

After the celebration Robespierre led another procession from the Champ de Mars, but according to Michelet this march was less a parade than a pursuit; again Michelet describes the scene in festive terms, for the celebrants, incited by the spontaneous remark of an unknown deputy, employ a ritual occasion to express their communal hatred of the tyrant. Thus while the Festival itself could not harbor the spirit of liberty so cherished by Michelet, festive actions did emerge from the celebration, actions that for Michelet attest that the spirit of liberty had survived the days of Terror.

Once again, however, more recent accounts of the fall of Robespierre refute the account of Michelet; Rudé, for instance, describes the fall as marked neither by wholly impromptu nor by wholly organized actions. Certainly the overthrow of Robespierre was not an impromptu event, for its stage had been set months before; a series of military victories had obviated the need for many tactics of the Terror, and a groundswell of executions had cost the leaders of the Terror many of their supporters in the Convention. Robespierre and his allies hoped that a last minute uprising by the *sans-culottes* would avert their fall from power, but no uprising materialized; the urban poor, former champions of Robespierre, had soured on his regime. Yet if the deputies schemed to end the Terror for its abuse of political power, the *sans-culottes* stayed off the streets for economic reasons. In September of 1793 the Convention had implemented the "Law of the Maximum," an attempt to curb inflation with radical price reductions accompanied by smaller, though still significant, wage reductions. Initially successful, the price controls were ultimately impossible to enforce, and prices began to rise once again by January of 1794. That summer the Paris Commune sought to enforce the wage reductions stipulated by the Maximum; published on July 23, 1794, the reductions were announced just days before the arrest of Robespierre. Such an effort to enforce wage reductions scarcely suggests an organized effort to unite the people in a common cause; as Rudé understatedly notes, "such a provocative measure was hardly calculated to make for social peace or to bind the workers more closely to the administration at a time of deep political crisis."[54] The *sans-culottes* therefore never protested the fall of Robespierre, but if they hoped that the regime change would restore the Revolutionary sentiment of earlier years, they were to be disappointed; the conservative faction that took power at the end of the Terror lifted market restrictions at once. Inflation rose sharply, but as Rudé observes, the new regime "owed it to its supporters—the large producers of town and countryside, the merchants, and shipbuilders, 'the hard-faced men who had done well out of the war'—to liberate the economy from the controls imposed by their predecessors."[55]

The fall of Robespierre therefore engendered no uprising—no insurrection that rekindled a genuinely liberatory urge. Yet despite this fact Rudé posits a moment in which this fall would offer impetus for future uprisings, events at once spontaneous and ritualized that would foster a spirit of universal liberty once more. For Rudé, the divergent economic interests revealed by the overthrow of Robespierre laid the foundation for later labor movements that could trace their lineage back to the *sans-culottes* and their frustrated political agenda. The industrialization of European nations accelerated these movements, which generally advocated sweeping economic change as a vital prerequisite for political liberty: "It would appear," Rudé observes, "that a new type of 'revolutionary crowd'—to use the term in its broadest possible sense—with new social objectives and new modes of expression was evolving in western Europe in the first part of the nineteenth century; with the advance of capitalist industry it was to spread rapidly elsewhere."[56] Thus for Rudé the specter of Revolution that haunted Europe throughout the nineteenth century effectively upheld the libratory legacy inherited from the Revolution; later revolutionary crowds would spawn new varieties of public protest, and their festival performances would echo those of this earlier period.

As the Revolutionary era drew to an end, the events that followed the fall of Robespierre brought further redefinitions of the citizen subject, each accompanied by further restrictions on the sphere of political activity. During its four years of existence the Directory proved a most unstable regime. The elections of 1797 installed a Royalist majority in the legislature, and the elections of 1799 produced an increased presence of Jacobins reminiscent of the days of Terror. In both instances a desperate Directory turned to Napoleon Bonaparte and the armed forces in his command; in 1797 Bonaparte merely deposed 214 elected deputies, but in 1799 he dissolved the Directory and had himself declared premiere Consul of the new government. Title 1 of the 1799 Constitution maintained that "The French Republic is one and indivisible," but the freedoms that it guaranteed were mightily attenuated.[57] Universal male suffrage was nominally retained, but voters merely determined membership in the first of a series of increasingly exclusive electoral lists; a hand picked Senate, appointed for life, selected legislative deputies from a final national list.[58] In 1802 a plebiscite named Bonaparte Consul for life and in 1804 another dissolved the Republic in his name: "The government of the Republic is conferred to an Emperor, who takes the title Emperor of the French," stated the Imperial Constitution.[59] In a further attenuation of freedom, the emperor Bonaparte replaced the electoral lists with a series of Electoral Colleges, all stacked with members of

his elite Legion of Honor. Thereafter the Colleges alone proposed candidates to renew the ranks of the Legislature and replace dead Senators.[60] Both Constitutions still claimed to defend the individual liberty of the citizen by asserting the collective authority of the citizenry, but in effect both virtually eliminated citizen access to political action. Clearly weary of political instability, the vast majority of citizens approved the successive plebiscites that granted Napoleon nearly absolute power. In this sense, citizens effectively voted to rescind their own access to political representation; the plebiscites appear as Revolutionary swan songs of political performance.

The establishment of the Bonapartist Empire marks the end of the Revolutionary era for most historians. During this era the call to liberty emerged in tandem with a growing volatility in the relation of subjectivity to performance. A succession of declarations and constitutions fostered new species of political performance, while a series of riotous insurrections and celebrations initiated new varieties of festival performance. Both types of performance, were linked in their efforts to effect the appearance of the citizen subject, newly liberated from the oppressive shackles of the past. The urge to liberation, however, not only toppled the ordered regimes that governed the political sphere, but also the ordered regimes that posited an ironclad link between reality and representation; the dissolution of this link, in turn, threw the very definition of liberty itself into radical crisis. Through each phase of the Revolution, the concept of liberty underwent continual revision; inasmuch as liberty proved a floating term untethered to any fixed foundation, its true essence proved impossible to contain in any Revolutionary practice. This elusive essence, in other words, traverses the horizon of the intelligible, and the ongoing efforts to recall it come to characterize not only the documents from the Revolutionary period itself but also the historical narratives that followed thereafter. Michelet, perhaps, sets the gold standard for such efforts, but later commentators like Ozouf and Rudé also take part in this preservation project; while Ozouf locates the essence of liberty in the obscure origins of the Revolution, Rudé seeks it in the radical movements that emerged from its aftermath. Yet the precise nature of this liberty is contested to this day, and debates over the definition of freedom are a flashpoint for the Modern era; while liberty is upheld as a fundamental human right, the constitutive instability of the term offers no firm ground upon which this may ever find its footing.

But before Lefebvre, before Ozouf or Rudé, even before Michelet, another writer had already abandoned the search for a stable vision of liberty within the debris of the Revolution. This was the young Georg Büchner, whose writings mourn the impossibility of discovering an authentic liberatory

moment in the experience of the Revolutionary subject.[61] Born in 1813 in the German state of Hesse, he died in1837 while exiled in Strasbourg. Büchner was not, in fact, a historian, but primarily a writer of prose fiction and drama. Yet his first play, the monumental 1835 drama *Danton's Death*, offers radical historical insight into the Revolution, one that refuses to locate a coherent vision of liberty within Revolutionary action. The play dramatizes the final days of conflict between Robespierre and Georges Danton, an early hero of the Revolution who ran afoul of its leaders by critiquing the excesses of the Terror. Noting that Danton looked askance at the economic controls imposed by the Terror, Robespierre claimed that Danton had grown wealthy from speculating on the Revolution and its wars. Danton was the new enemy of the Revolution, his luxury akin to that of the nobility before him; he and his cronies were carried to the scaffold on April 5, 1794. As depicted by Büchner, the final meeting between Robespierre and Danton reveals that the absolutist virtue Robespierre espouses will never result in liberty; such absolutism has no place in the agonism of the political field, for it has led the Republic into tyranny: "You and your virtue, Robespierre!" Danton exclaims. "You take no bribes, run up no debts, sleep with no women, always wear a clean coat, and never get drunk. Robespierre, you are abominably virtuous. . . . Is there nothing in you, not the merest whisper, that says to you, very softly and very secretly, 'You lie! You lie!'"[62] Yet when faced with his own execution, Danton realizes that if the virtue of Robespierre has led to tyranny, then his own vice has led to apathy—Danton cannot find the impetus to save himself from the guillotine, disillusioned as he is that liberty has proven herself the concubine of the "lawyer of Arras," Robespierre. "They say we made Liberty a whore," Lacroix remarks to Danton on the eve before their execution. "Which it always was!" Danton replies. "Liberty and whores are the most cosmopolitan things under the sun. Let her go and prostitute herself in virtuous marriage with the lawyer of Arras. But she'll be Clytemnestra to him. I give him six months before I drag him down with me.[63]

In fact, Robespierre followed Danton to the scaffold only three months later; much like the monstrous gods of Greek mythology, the Revolution mercilessly devours its own children. Yet if Büchner could find no liberation in the political machinations of the Revolution, he might have found it in the recent artistic ferment of his native Germany; another discourse of liberation had emerged there, though not in political channels.[64] In the new Romantic movement liberty was found through artistic activity rather than political activism, and as an immediate heir to Romanticism, Büchner might be expected to guide his

Revolutionary characters to the refuge offered by art. Yet throughout *Danton's Death* Büchner reveals a distrust of both Revolutionary and Romantic claims to liberty. If art could truly capture the turmoil of the Terror, then perhaps it could be of some benefit to Danton and his associates. Art, however, is not up to such a task; while art promises a liberatory escape from daily hardships into an ideal world of eternal truths, its promise only masks its failure to offer an authentic taste of freedom. Thus does Desmoulins, the day prior to his appearance before the Tribunal, attack the deluded consumers of bankrupt art: "Take any tiny insight, any fatuous notion or tinpot aphorism, dress it up, and paint it in bright colors and parade it about for three acts until it gets married or shoots itself, and they cry 'what idealism!'"[65] Later, on the eve of their execution, Danton and his colleagues again turn their thoughts to art and conclude it cannot even offer them the freedom of consolation in sorrow; at best, art merely registers the inability to enjoy liberty in this lifetime. "My friends," Philippeau argues, seeking to bring cheer to his companions, "stand a little above the earth and you lose sight of the mad bustle of the world to see the sweeping lines of God's great design. To his ear the clashes and cries that deafen us are a torrent of harmonies." Yet to this Danton replies that "we are the poor musicians and our bodies are our instruments. Are the hideous sounds torn from us only notes to drift up and up and dwindle and die as a sensual breath in heavenly ears?"[66]

The sublime harmony of history is discernible to divinity alone; to mere mortals history is a disjointed cacophony of sound, and no artfully composed tune leads to a realization of liberty. Unlike a history of the Revolution, *Danton's Death* is an avowedly artistic project, but as such it entertains a notion that many historians of the Revolution seem loathe to endorse: the idea that neither art nor politics can offer a lasting experience of liberation. In his play, Büchner signals the uncertainty embedded in the relation of subjectivity to performance. After the fall of old orders that insisted on an ironclad link between representation and its referent, performance offered the subject a way to forge new links specifically suited to the new era. But for Büchner, at least, this exhilarating opportunity ends in disappointment, for such links prove volatile, and even liberty itself seems bereft of stable definition. Others, of course, will continue to champion performance as a site for the subject to experience liberation, yet questions will dog their efforts, questions I still hear voiced to this day: Which subjects will enjoy the status to engage in such liberatory performance practices? Which freedoms are to be enshrined therein as inviolate, and which to be foresworn therein as spurious? Can performance, in sum, ever truly offer

us the kind of liberation that we seek? These questions will mark Modern performance as a locus of contest over visions of liberty. Throughout the era various genres, styles, and movements will rise and fall in rapid succession, and performance will become a battleground for future revolutions, both artistic and political in their nature.

5. Smoke and Mirrors: The Hysterical Woman from Zola to Freud

In his study *Techniques of the Observer*, Jonathan Crary argues that the popularization of the stereoscope in the middle of the nineteenth century provides rich insights into the conflicting conceptions of visuality common to that era. The stereoscope, a handheld device that gave two-dimensional figures the illusion of three-dimensional depth, achieved its effect by employing two identical copies of the same figure. The stereoscope focused the eyes of the viewer on the two figures independently of each other; the slight variation in viewing angles produced a disparity between the two-dimensional figures—the same disparity produced when the eyes focus upon a three-dimensional object—and when the eyes of the viewer reconciled this disparity the figure gained an illusory three-dimensional quality. Stressing the chimerical nature of the stereoscopic image, Crary quotes Sir David Brewster, whose work in optics contributed to the invention of the stereoscope, on the physiological function that produces this illusion of three-dimensionality or "relief." According to Brewster,

> relief is not obtained from a mere combination or superposition of two dissimilar pictures. The superposition is effected by turning each eye upon the object, but the relief is given by the play of the optic axes in uniting, in rapid succession, similar points of the two pictures. . . . Though the pictures apparently coalesce, the relief is given by the subsequent play of optic axes varying themselves successively upon, and unifying, the similar points in each picture that correspond to different distances from the observer.[1]

Thus the stereoscope seemed to offer a perfect image of its object—a correspondence between image and object so profound that the former seems to take on the depth and volume of the latter. Yet this image is actually a trick played on the eyes, a visual feint derived from the mechanics of vision itself.

This visual chicanery is further emphasized by the design of the original stereoscope, invented by Charles Wheatsone in the 1820s. The Wheatstone stereoscope actually positioned the two identical figures on either side of the face, far to the periphery of the visual field; mirrors inside the stereoscope caught the figures and then refocused them into the eyes of the viewer. The two peripheral figures coalesced into a single image right in the center of the visual field, an optical dislocation that challenged the ostensible correspondence between object and image. Far from producing a perfect image of the object, then, the stereoscope, by removing the object to the edge of vision, actually distanced the object from its image. Stressing the illusory quality of the image, Crary remarks that "there never really is a stereoscopic image. It is a conjuration, an effect of the observer's experience of the differential between two other images."[2]

Yet despite formal acknowledgement of the deceptive nature of the stereoscopic image, nineteenth-century accounts of the stereoscope are filled with wonder at its pictorial accuracy. The stunning novelty of the stereoscope apparently allowed viewers to suspend their awareness of its optical legerdemain—a suspension facilitated by later designs that placed the two pictures in front of the face in order to mimic traditional modes of perception. Crary therefore maintains that "the desired effect of the stereoscope was not simply likeness, but an immediate, apparent tangibility. . . . No other form of representation in the nineteenth century had so conflated the real with the optical."[3] As evidence of this conflation, Crary quotes German optical researcher Hermann von Helmholz as remarking that

> the stereoscopic photographs are so true to nature and so lifelike in their portrayal of material things, that after viewing such a picture and recognizing in it some object like a house, for instance, we get the impression, when we actually do see the object, that we have seen it before and are more or less familiar with it.[4]

A contradictory dynamic thus emerges from the images provided by the stereoscope. On the one hand, the stereoscope replicates the action of the eyes by copying the process that gives rise to all visual imagery: the eyes reconcile two disparate copies of an object in order to produce a single perfect image. On the other hand, however, the stereoscope suggests that such imagery hinges on a blindness inherent in vision: this single perfect image is fashioned through an optical oscillation that precedes perception of the image and hides the object through a visual sleight of hand. The stereoscope therefore reveals a lifelike image of the object, but it simultaneously occludes that object with the very image it produces.

The stereoscope, however, was not the only optical device that modeled the new relation between the sexes. Another was the magic lantern, the instrument used to produce the popular spectacles called phantasmagoria. In her essay "Phantasmagoria and the Metaphorics of Modern Reverie" Terry Castle charts both the development of the phantasmagoria from the earlier magic lantern and its widespread use as a source of entertainment throughout the nineteenth century. After noting that the first magic lantern was created by the seventeenth-century scholar Athanasius Kircher, Castle summarizes its operation and effects. "Kircher's device," Castle remarks,

> consisted of a lantern containing a candle and a concave mirror. A tube with a convex lens at each end was fitted into an opening in the side of the lantern, while a groove in the middle of the tube held an image painted on glass. When candle light was reflected by the concave mirror onto the first lens, the lens concentrated the light on the image on the glass slide. The second lens in turn magnified the illuminated image and projected it onto a wall or gauze screen.[5]

During the Napoleonic era, the Belgian entrepreneur Étienne-Gaspard Robertson employed the magic lantern to produce the first phantasmagoria in Paris. Spectacular meditations on death and the afterlife, the phantasmagoria presented viewers with ghostly images that seemed to appear from nowhere then disappear without a trace; Robertson even enhanced the spectral quality of the phantasmagoric images by projecting them onto smoke, causing them to flicker mysteriously in the slightest draft. The phantasmagoria caused a sensation; Castle quotes Robertson on the popularity of his entertainments, which quickly spawned imitations throughout Paris: "It took only a slightly metaphorical imagination to transform the Seine into the river Lethe; because the phantasmagoria were principally located on its banks, there was not one quai . . . which did not offer a little phantom at the end of a dark corridor or at the top of a tortuous staircase."[6]

The phantasmagoria leapt from France to England, where several technological advances increased their illusory power. By the middle of the century, the advances had rendered painted slides obsolete by enabling the projection of live human beings. These so-called catadioptrical phantasmagoria were often used in theatrical productions; the device allowed actors to hide in traps beneath the stage while their images were cast upon the stage; there they images mixed and mingled with other actors to spectacular effect. Castle quotes critic Thomas Frost on the impact of the new phantasmagoria, used with great success during an 1869 pageant: "The apparitions not only moved about the stage, looking as tangible as the actors who

passed through them, and from whose proffered embrace or threatened attack they vanished in an instant, but spoke or sang with voices of unmistakable reality."[7] For Castle, this confusion of illusion and reality figured a latent irrationalism that came to haunt an emerging rationalist view of cognition. Much like the ghostly phantasmagoria, ghosts themselves were increasingly understood as projections—inner thoughts launched by the mind into the outer world. Yet this rational reconception of specters granted thought itself a certain spectral quality; Castle therefore argues that the phantasmagoria undermined thought by linking its own ghostly imagery to its equally ghostly mental doubles:

> Ghosts were unreal, according to skeptics, in the sense that they were artificial—the product of certain internal mechanistic processes. The magic lantern was the obvious mechanical analogue of the human brain, in that it "made" illusory forms and projected them outward. But in another highly paradoxical sense, ghosts now seemed more real than ever before—in that they occupied, indeed preoccupied, the intimate space of the mind itself.[8]

The phantasmagoria therefore undercuts rationalist assurance regarding the accuracy of thought precisely by replicating the action of thought itself; much like the phantasmagoria, the mind is capable of producing a wholly convincing but wholly illusory image of any object. Miming the uncertainty inherent to thought, the phantasmagoria demonstrates how the cognitive conjuration that precedes projection of the image may actually mask the object it ostensibly brings into view. And thus the phantasmagoria exhibits the same contradictory dynamic as the stereoscope, for it too reveals a lifelike image of the object while it simultaneously occludes that object in the very act of image production.

The stereoscope and phantasmagoria are two optical devices that model image making in the nineteenth century—an interplay of smoke and mirrors that, significantly, impacts not only the status of the object viewed but also the status of the viewing subject. Certainly the effects of this interplay on the object itself seem clear enough. On the one hand, both devices promise a revelation of the object, a lifelike image offered to the vision of the subject. On the other hand, both devices suggest an occlusion of the object, which vanishes behind the very image that the subject longs to see. The effects of this interplay on the subject are perhaps subtler but nonetheless equally profound. On the one hand, both devices promise the subject an opportunity to reveal itself as an active agent of vision, to fashion its own image as the master of its visual field; the stereoscope grants the subject an

accurate perception of figures in its reflecting mirror, and the phantasmagoria enables an expert projection of these figures upon a screen of smoke. On the other hand, both devices suggest that the subject occludes an aspect of itself behind its image of mastery; the stereoscope masks the optical oscillation that allows the subject access to the figures in the reflecting mirror, and the phantasmagoria obscures the cognitive conjuration that casts these figures upon the screen of smoke. Yet to mollify such aggravations, both devices tended to turn the subject away from worry over its own imperfect image and back to the seemingly perfect image of the object; by maintaining relentless focus upon the object, the subject could displace the anxiety engendered by an inability to focus upon itself.

Significantly, both the stereoscope and the phantasmagoria took the nineteenth century by storm just as a new binary relation between the sexes established itself within the increasingly dominant bourgeois classes. In fact, the visual dynamic associated with these devices appears quite resonant with this new relation, one that cast man as the viewing subject and woman as the object being viewed. Of course, this binary formation instituted a crucial power differential between man and woman, but this power imbalance was frequently frustrated by the instability inherent in the binary relation itself. Consider, in this instance, the confusion engendered by nineteenth-century obsession with hysteria. A curious illness almost always linked to women, hysteria exhibited an enormous variety of apparently unrelated symptoms. The mysterious coughing fits and choking sensations, the inexplicable tics and contractures, the paralyses and anesthesias, the convulsions and catatonias—all appeared genuine, but none could be connected to a single medical cause. Hysteria thus provided evidence of the mysterious character of woman herself; behind the clear semblance of illness lurked a void from which all causal factors vanished from view. The task of man was to discern the secret of hysteria; endlessly pursued, the task obscured the fact that man could never discern his own secret with regard to the disease—his secret desire to find behind the perfect image of the hysteric a similarly perfect image of himself.[9]

Thus while the fixation upon hysteria reinforced the binary sexual relation and the power imbalance it maintained, it also hinted at the instability of this relation and offered opportunities to challenge the imbalance itself. The nineteenth century witnessed increasingly pitched debates over the definition of sexual difference, and the volatility that marked the relation of subjectivity to performance only facilitated such battles. The detachment of representation from its referent spurred ongoing and frequently oppositional attempts to overcome the disconnect and fix the true natures of man

and woman once and for all. In the previous chapter I noted how the overturning of old hierarchies during the Revolutionary period spawned multiple efforts to establish a stable definition of the liberated subject; the skepticism of Büchner toward such projects suggested just how infrequently they proved to be successful. Yet perhaps another strategy would yield better results. If the subject could not define itself in reference to an inherent quality like liberty, then maybe it could find definitional stability in its relation to an object; by achieving mastery over the object, the subject could also prove its mastery over itself. In the binary sexual relation, the efforts of the subject "man" to define himself vis-à-vis the object "woman" seem to follow just such logic. Yet much like the efforts to establish a stable concept of liberty, the attempts to establish a stable concept of the sexes likewise met with frustration and this conceptual uncertainty proved another hallmark of the Modern era.

This legacy of uncertainty is now my own, although my Postmodern outlook tends to cast it in a rather different light. During the Modern era, struggles over the relation of man to woman typically sought to clarify the nature of the binary sexual relation; the struggles I encounter in the present day, however, often involve a challenge to the conceptual coherence of the binary itself. Indeed, my own changing attitude toward this binary reflects larger changes from one era to the next. Growing up with a feminist mother and a forward-thinking father, the equality of men and women was a lesson I learned early in life. But in college I learned to question the definitional stability of the very terms man and woman, and the efforts to win equality for transgendered and intergendered individuals testify to the impact of this challenge in the present moment. Still, a nuanced assessment of such efforts must admit the continued centrality of the binary sexual division, which is often invoked in the very efforts to disrupt it—transgendered identities suggest a crossing from one pole of the binary to the other, and intergendered identities posit a liminal position delimited by the two poles that establish its parameters. While I therefore welcome the Postmodern challenge to the binary sexual relation, I also recognize that this very challenge is founded upon the bedrock laid down in the Modern era. Therefore in order to understand current debates around the nature of sexual difference, I believe that we must attend to the debates that arose in decades past.

In this chapter I examine the struggles to define the binary sexual formation that unfolded during the latter half of the nineteenth century; to do so I take as my focus the dynamics of smoke and mirrors that granted hysteria such spectacular visibility at that time. I begin with the vision of the hysteric offered by Emile Zola, a vision linked to his revelatory Naturalist

project. Zola maintained that the Naturalist author should act as a neutral medium for the disclosure of truth; hysteria, conceived as a physiological disorder open to truthful imaging in stage performance, therefore served as an ideal topic for Zola's revelatory writings. Zola's interest in hysteria was shared by many of his fellow Parisians, not least among them the physician Jean-Michel Charcot, whose clinical research into the illness won him widespread acclaim. Yet despite insisting upon the scientific nature of his work, Charcot's engagements with the hysteric raise crucial questions about the validity of his findings. The displays of hysteria Charcot evoked from patients during his famous Tuesday Lessons are marked by a fundamental ambiguity—do these displays offer a truthful image of hysteria, or do they merely offer Charcot the image of the illness that he wants to see? Charcot influenced an entire generation of investigators into hysteria, and I turn next to the work of his most famous pupil, Sigmund Freud. Like the Naturalist movement of Zola, the psychoanalytic movement of Freud was a revelatory project; true, Freud conceived hysteria as a psychological, not a physiological, illness, yet his postulation of unconscious drives ostensibly ensured this elusive illness was still susceptible to the disclosure of truth. Yet Freud's insistence that such drives impact everyone, patient and analyst alike, implied that any attempt to reveal the drives of the patient would occlude certain drives of the analyst. Freud can never fully ascertain the accuracy of the hysterical imagery produced by the performances in his consultation studio, for he can never know the extent to which the image of the hysteric is in fact a displaced image of himself. Freud never seemed reconciled to the full implications of his work, yet they are fully realized in the writings of some of his contemporaries. I conclude, therefore, with a glance at the work of Rachilde, a *fin-de-siècle* playwright and author whose writings explicitly disclose not only the hysterical mechanism of smoke and mirrors, but also the inherent instability of sexual identity during Modern era.

In his 1880 publication *Le Naturalisme au Théâtre*, Emile Zola heralds the dawning of a new movement in drama, one devoted to the scientific revelation of truth on the theatrical stage. Commenting on the scope of this new Naturalist movement—the final step in the struggle of art toward truth—Zola maintains that "despite the persistent affirmations of certain critics who wish not to derange their criticism, it is clear that drama, like all the arts, has before it a limitless domain, without barriers of any sort. The infirmity, the weakness of man is the only limitation of an art."[10] Compared to the new Naturalist style, the theatrical styles of centuries past were poorly suited to meet an increasing demand for truth in art. The tragedies of the seventeenth century, for instance, constrained as they were

by rigid rules of the Neoclassical ideal, could never reveal truth in all its rawness and immediacy. The Romantic revolution at the end of the eighteenth century swept away many Neoclassical restrictions, but in the final analysis the ecstasies of the Romantic heroes proved no better than the Neoclassical frigidity of their predecessors. In place of these outmoded styles, however, Zola champions Naturalist drama, a movement resonant with the scientific spirit of the nineteenth century: "A new world has sprung from the earth, and we have returned to it through a study of documents, through experience, knowing that to found it anew, we must recapture things at their beginnings, to know man and nature, to note that which exists."[11] Crucially, the Naturalist quest for knowledge relies heavily upon the power of vision. Accurate vision is vital to the discovery of truth, and thus Naturalism displays a fascination with perception that links the movement to the stereoscope; the Naturalist stage, like its stereoscopic counterpart, produces a stunningly truthful image of the world. This image of naked truth will initially offend audiences accustomed to viewing it cloaked in theatrical conventions, but Zola remarks that the reward of such Naturalist efforts will be the revelation of a crystal clear vision of humanity itself: "Behind the severity of our analyses, behind the portraits that shock and frighten today, we will witness the emergence of the grand figure of Humanity, healthy and splendid, rapt in its own incessant self-creation."[12]

Passionate in his convictions, Zola refutes critics who challenge his call for the eventual triumph of theatrical Naturalism. To Sarcey, who rejects the necessity of Naturalist innovation by arguing that the nineteenth century has witnessed the greatest display of theatrical genius since the days of Molière, Zola replies that contemporary authors have not yet harnessed the full potential of the age; until this potential is realized, "dramatic literature will remain in an inferior position; an author may have great talent, but it is completely wasted, for now we muddle in lies and infantilisms which can no longer be tolerated."[13] And to Lapommeraye, who rejects the Naturalist focus on everyday life by claiming that artists should concern themselves with eternal truths instead of quotidian details, Zola replies that in its full flowering the Naturalist movement will integrate the eternal and the quotidian: "Naturalism encompasses all, as good at five leagues as at five meters. It excludes nothing, it accepts all, it shows all."[14] Of all the responses made by Zola to his critics, however, perhaps the most pertinent is addressed to Fouquier, for it addresses the unique revelatory capacity of Naturalist drama. Fouquier observes that since artists through the ages have sought to reproduce the truth of nature, all artists are Naturalists, and their works therefore differ from each other merely in their modes of expression. Zola

concedes that artists have always wished to reproduce truth in their works, but he also maintains that the Naturalists are not content to wish; on the contrary, the Naturalists actually plan to effect the appearance of truth itself. Zola therefore proposes an objective revelation of truth in Naturalist drama; individual authorial expression will emerge from an artistic work, but this fact does not seriously obstruct the operation of the text: "Naturalist authors are those whose method of study grasps nature and humanity as closely as possible, while still allowing, it is well understood, the particular temperament of the observer to manifest itself in the work."[15]

One figure that appears particularly prominently in Zola's Naturalist project is the figure of the hysteric. The hysteric certainly enjoys a central role in many of Zola's fictional writings, often appearing as a character plagued by mysterious symptoms that hint at a hidden truth—one that generally awaits discovery by another character in the text. Hysteria emerges as a recurring theme in the *Rougon-Macquart* cycle of 20 novels penned by Zola over a period of 20 years. In the first novel, the 1873 *La Fortune des Rougons*, the central figure Adéläide Fouque, matriarch of both the Rougon and Macquart families, suffers from hysteria. Zola describes her condition as a physiological disorder, hereditary in nature and therefore transmissible to her descendents, who display a tremendous variety of maladies and irregularities: voluptuousness, drunkenness, madness, imbecility, debilitating nervous or violent temperaments, and a terrible restlessness that propels them into the political turmoil of the Second Empire. In his Preface to the novel, Zola maintains that his aim in the cycle is to explore the legacy of this deeply flawed family heredity: "I want to explain how a family, a small group of people, comport themselves in society, in their unfolding giving birth to ten or twenty figures who seem at first glance profoundly dissimilar, yet which analysis shows intimately tied one to another. Heredity has its laws, like gravity."[16] Here in the first novel, then, the seeds are sown for all the incidents in the novels to come; the secret behind the degeneration of the characters lies in the hysterical heritage of their matriarch. As Zola describes his characters: "Physiologically, they are the slow succession of accidents of the nerves and blood which declare themselves within a race, following a first organic lesion, and which determine, according to their milieux, the sentiments, the desires, the passions, all the human, natural, and instinctive manifestations of each individual. . . ."[17]

Significantly, in the last novel of the cycle, the 1893 *Le Medecin Pascal*, the title figure devotes his professional life to the study of his family history, tracing the origins of its troubles to the central hysterical figure from its past; through his meticulous efforts, Pascal exposes the secret that has

haunted his family for the past five generations. In a pivotal scene, Pascal shows his niece Clotilde the massive family tree he has designed, together with dossiers that detail the fate of each family member. He identifies the source of their family maladies as their inheritance from Adéläide Fouque, then traces the impact of her legacy upon each succeeding generation. "Yes," Pascal maintains, "our family might now suffice as an example to science, which hopes that it will some day be able to determine mathematically all the nervous and sanguineous accidents to which a race becomes liable after the first organic lesion. . . ."[18] Yet despite this hysterical legacy Pascal hopes future scions of the family will at last overcome their inheritance from the past: "The hope is there—in the constant modification and reconstitution of the race by the fresh blood that comes to it from without. Each marriage introduces new elements, good or bad, whose effect in any case is to prevent mathematical, progressive degeneration."[19] Thus by exposing the secret of hysteria buried in his family past, Pascal offers the promise of a brighter future; at the very least, he has disclosed the relation between this secret and the multitude of symptoms it has engendered. Moreover, through the character of Pascal, Zola himself seeks to disclose this relation to his readers, divulging the secret of hysteria with a stereoscopic use of the novel itself; the text, in other words, is the tool with which Zola reveals the image of the hysteric in all its depth and dimension.

Hysteria is also a principal theme in the 1871 drama *Thérèse Raquin*, which Zola adapted from his 1867 novel of the same name; here again, the text exhibits a stereoscopic quality that Zola exploits to reveal an accurate image of the hysteric. Thérèse, the title character, is a young married woman who, together with her lover Laurent, plots the death of her insipid husband Camille. The pair at last marry after pushing Camille into the Seine, but their secret weighs upon them and manifests itself in a variety of hysterical symptoms; later Camille's mother Madame Raquin learns their secret and succumbs to hysteria as well. Zola claims that the text functions in the Naturalist manner as a vehicle for scientific study, here a study of the homicidal impulse and its origin in the innate degeneracy of its central characters. According to Zola, an inherently bestial nature compels Thérèse and Laurent to commit the murder, while a pathologically cloying maternal instinct causes Madame Raquin to overreact to their crime. Patiently linking hysterical symptom to murderous secret, at last exposing the truth of degraded physiologies, Zola assumes the task of disclosing the inner truth that lurks behind its outer manifestations. Positing himself as an eager yet objective artisan of disclosure, Zola remarks in his Introduction to the novel that "while writing *Thérèse Raquin* I was lost to the world, completely

engrossed in my exact and meticulous copying of real life and my analysis of the human mechanism. . . ."[20] Zola therefore calls the novel "an example of the modern method, an application of the universal investigative tool which our century is using with such passion to lay bare secrets of the future."[21] However, while the novel clearly demonstrates the Naturalist strategies Zola employs, his efforts are even more apparent in the textually compressed and concretely tangible version of the story offered for the stage; at every turn Zola pulls back another veil of secrecy from his text, disclosing trace after trace of the murder until its truth is finally exposed. A closer look at the dramatic version of the text will reveal much concerning the revelatory project of Zola himself.

Act I opens in the dingy and oppressive Raquin sitting room; Laurent, a dabbler in the arts, is just putting the finishing touches on a portrait of Camille. When the portrait is complete, Camille and Madame Raquin crowd round to praise it, but Thérèse seems dispassionate and strangely silent. When left alone with Laurent, however, the formerly sullen Thérèse springs to life, flinging herself into the arms of her lover and inquiring why he has recently withheld his affections. "What worries me, Thérèse," Laurent replies, "is that you have revealed, in the depths of my being, a man I do not know. I find it is not natural to love as I love, and I fear it will lead us further than we wish."[22] Laurent's passion eventually overwhelms his fear, however, and he proposes a murderous scheme: "If you were widowed, perhaps . . ." Laurent begins. "Then we would marry," Thérèse replies, "we would fear nothing, we would realize our dream"[23] Laurent exits to fetch a frame for the portrait, and Camille returns to find Thérèse lost in thought; to lighten the mood, he suggests they take an outing by the Seine. Laurent enters with the frame and is invited to join the outing; casting a quick glance at Thérèse, he remarks that the day would only be complete with a boat ride on the river. Madame Raquin remarks that she would worry for their safety, and Thérèse adds that Camille fears the water and would not consent to a boat ride. Camille denies the charge, however: "That is not true! I am not afraid! We will take a boat. What the devil! You will finish by casting me as an imbecile."[24] The matter settled, Laurent hangs the portrait and the trio awaits the arrival of family friends—Grivet, Michaud, and the young Suzanne—for their regular Tuesday night game of dominoes. The portrait will remain hanging long after Camille himself has left the scene, an insistent trace of his former presence; Zola will later employ many such traces to disclose the dark secret of Camille's demise.

Act II takes place a year later, after the untimely drowning of Camille. Again the family friends assemble for their weekly dominoes, but the memory

of past evenings with Camille is too painful for Madame Raquin, who bursts into tears as the game begins. Morbidly inspired by her tears, Grivet and Michaud recount the drowning as it appeared in the newspaper: the overturning of the rowboat, Laurent's heroic rescue of Thérèse, his failed attempt to rescue Camille as well. Reminded of her gratitude to Laurent, Madame Raquin thanks him for his service to her family: "I pray each night for you," she claims, "I ask heaven to guard your precious life. Remember that my son is above, he hears me, and it is to him you owe your happiness. Each time you feel some joy, tell yourself that it is I prayed for it and Camille who executed it."[25] This invocation of Camille comforts Madame Raquin but disquiets Laurent; when she asks him to fetch a basket of knitting from her room, he returns empty handed and trembling as if he had just seen a ghost. "What! You, a man, afraid?" exclaims Suzanne, who fetches the basket for him. "If I meet your revenant," she teases, "I will bring him to you."[26] Laurent first denies his fear, but later admits his anxiety to Thérèse, who is haunted by fears of her own; when Thérèse to the floor below, Madame Raquin confides to her friends that her niece suffers terrible nightmares: "One night, I heard her making muffled cries, I came running . . . She did not recognize me, she stammered. . . ." "What did she say?" inquires Laurent. "I could not understand," Madame Raquin replies, "She called out to Camille. . . ."[27] Michaud, believing that Thérèse's symptoms stem from her widowed condition, argues that she marry again and proposes wedding her to Laurent. After a brief show of protest, the pair agree to marry, hiding their elation by claiming they will wed for the sake of Madame Raquin. With their marriage Thérèse and Laurent conceal their guilty secret behind the apparent innocence of their union. Its traces, however—the nightmares, the sleeplessness, the dread of Camille's return—will increase with time and will eventually prod their murderous secret into the light.

Act III takes place on the wedding night and opens with Madame Raquin and Suzanne preparing Thérèse to receive her new husband. Upon their exit Laurent enters and, sensing the apprehension of his bride, makes a show of celebration: "At last, we are alone, my Thérèse, far from others, free to love one another . . . Life is ours, this room is ours, and you are mine, dear wife, for I have won you, and you have long wished to give yourself to me."[28] Thérèse, however, senses in Laurent the same apprehension she feels herself: "You are more pale than I, Laurent, and your tongue trips over itself in saying these things. Do not pretend to be brave. Think of what we dare, in embracing one another."[29] Finding themselves unable to ignite their former passion, Thérèse suggests they fill the oppressive silence with conversation, but despite their efforts their every thought turns to Camille.

In a final effort to rekindle their ardor for one another, Laurent suggests they reenact one of their rendezvous from the past; initially supportive of the charade, Thérèse soon grows fearful once more and repulses Laurent's advances: "Please! . . . The sound of our kisses will call him," she warns, and Laurent suddenly starts with fear as the dead Camille seems to appear before his eyes: "He does not stir, he stares at us so long, so long. . . ." "But that is his portrait you see!" Thérèse replies.[30] Laurent, however, believes the portrait's eyes are following him around the room; he babbles uncontrollably, and when Madame Raquin enters to investigate the commotion she hears his terrible confession: "He is frightful . . . He is there, just as when we tossed him into the water."[31] Overcome with grief, Madame Raquin sinks into a chair and falls into a hysterical paralysis. Madame Raquin learns the dark secret of Camille's death, but this secret is concealed again as soon as it is disclosed. Yet Zola will tease traces of the secret from Madame Raquin herself, as the last act of the play will demonstrate.

Act IV takes place after some time has passed, Thérèse and Laurent having settled into a bitter and loveless marriage to each other. The act opens to reveal Suzanne, Grivet, and Michaud arriving to visit Madame Raquin; as the guests encircle her frozen body, Suzanne suddenly cries "Look, she is moving her fingers." "She is reviving, good God!" a terrified Thérèse whispers to Laurent. "Be strong," he responds, "the hands do not speak." Then Madame Raquin begins to trace their names on the dining table. "The hands do speak, Laurent!" Thérèse mutters.[32] The pair watch in horror as Madame Raquin spells "Thérèse and Laurent have . . ." on the tabletop. Before she can finish her message, however, her hands fall still once more. "What could she have wanted to say?" wonders Michaud. "That she is happy with the care Thérèse and Laurent give to her," replies Suzanne, a response that pleases everyone.[33] After their guests depart the couple begin to argue violently, and the quarrel soon escalates into a battle over which of them had a greater role in Camille's death. As the argument reaches a fever pitch, the pair attempt to murder one another; Thérèse spies Laurent pouring poison into her water glass just as he sees her raise a knife to stab him. Suddenly Thérèse shrieks when she sees Madame Raquin twist her lips into a smile at their attempted double murder: "She is going to speak, I tell you she is going to speak," Thérèse cries. The pair throw themselves at her feet: "Oh! Mercy! Do not deliver us to justice!" Thérèse pleads. "Deliver you! No, no . . ." replies Madame Raquin. "I began to write my accusation on this table, but I stopped myself; I thought human justice would be too prompt. I want to witness your slow expiation, here, in this room, where you stole all my happiness."[34] "The impunity is too heavy," exclaims Thérèse, devastated

by her guilt: "We judge ourselves and we condemn ourselves."[35] Thérèse, then Laurent, swallow the poison and fall dead as the play draws to a close. At last Madame Raquin discloses the secret concealed by her own hysterical symptoms; in revealing the hidden truth of Camille's death, Madame Raquin likewise reveals the hidden truth of the hysteric.[36]

With *Thérèse Raquin*, then, Zola fashions an exemplary Naturalist drama, one in which the unfolding action reveals the secret of hysteria with exacting accuracy. The theatre of Zola therefore acts as a sort of stereoscope, within which he produces a lifelike image of the hysteric. Just as the stereoscope promises the subject an accurate perception of the object depicted, so does Naturalism promise Zola an accurate perception of the hysteric herself. For Zola the image of the hysteric appears within the stereoscopic drama with crystalline clarity; here Zola registers as the viewing subject whose gaze discerns this image and the hysteric as the object viewed whose truth is discovered by the steady gaze that Zola trains on her. Crucially, this desire of the subject to learn the most intimate secrets of the object quickly linked the stereoscope to pornography; Crary notes that this desire, implicit to the stereoscope at its birth, grew in force as erotic images began to appear in the apparatus: "It is no coincidence that the stereoscope became increasingly synonymous with erotic and pornographic imagery in the course of the nineteenth century. The very effects of tangibility Wheatstone sought from the beginning quickly turned into a mass form of ocular possession."[37] And indeed, much like the pornographic gaze through the stereoscope, something salacious inheres in the gaze of Zola, for in his drama Zola longs to look beyond the surface symptoms of the hysteric and learn the dark secrets of her illness. Fixating first upon the ominous portrait of Camille, Zola then focuses in turn upon the terrifying nuptials of Thérèse and Laurent, upon the frozen visage of Madame Raquin, and finally upon the stirring hands and mouth that disclose the murderous truth once and for all.

Yet as the original design of the Wheatstone stereoscope suggests, the stereoscopic image never approaches the extremity of accuracy desired by the viewer. The two identical pictures that merge to form this image hover at the far edges of the visual field, and the basic blindness of vision hides the process that endows the image with its illusory intimacy. But is there a corollary blindness exhibited by Zola within the theatre? The dependence of Zola upon the same dramatic contrivances he critiques—the careful exposition of character background, the crises that lend suspense to each act, the recognitions and reversals that precipitate character downfall—suggests he suffers from a kind of blindness regarding the composition of his play and the constitution of his characters. Might this blindness prevent Zola from catching

sight of himself in the theatre, the site from which he confidently oversees the unfolding of his drama? From this vantage point Zola can summon the image of the hysteric to appear, but significantly he cannot summon this act of summoning itself. Zola, in other words, cannot see himself seeing, and his inability to do so denotes the blind spot in his visual field. If the search for the secret of the hysteric signifies Zola's desire to discover her truth within his field of vision, then what desire for self-seeing inheres in the blind spot of his vision? Does the comfortably clear image of the hysteric displace this discomfiting blindness to himself, this obstruction to clear vision that would surely frustrate even a coolly impartial agent like Zola?

Zola, however, was not the only man of his day to search for the secret of hysteria; the illness increasingly became a source of public fascination in nineteenth-century Paris. Perhaps more than any other figure of the era, Jean-Michel Charcot, neurological clinician and researcher at the Hôpital Salpêtrière, made hysteria a topic of continual conversation, not only in Paris but abroad as well. The Salpêtrière, a public hospital that primarily served female patients, housed a number of women with chronic and ill-defined neurological disorders. From his appointment in 1862 to his death in 1893, Charcot used Salpêtrière as a laboratory to develop specific diagnostic and therapeutic criteria for a host of neurological diseases. Charcot established an innovative medical practice that closely linked anatomical research to clinical treatment; Goetz, et al. note in their study on Charcot that "the development of the modern neurological examination evolved largely from Charcot's applications, and the generation after him incorporated his findings and his anatomo-clinical correlations into the development of a systematic semiology."[38] In his work at Salpêtrière, Charcot devised methods that enabled a thorough reclassification of his patients; through his efforts, patients suffering from illnesses like epilepsy or paralysis were definitively distinguished from their compatriots, including those who suffered from hysteria.

In fact, the study of his hysterical patients won Charcot more public recognition than any of his other endeavors. Charcot sought to explain the etiology of hysteria just as he sought to illuminate many other neurological disorders, yet from the beginning of his inquiries a sheen of the spectacular adhered to his work on hysteria. In 1887 Charcot inaugurated a series of public lectures on neurological diseases; known as the Tuesday Lessons, hysteria quickly became their most celebrated topic. Famously, the Lessons included displays of actual Salpêtrière residents, and hysterics proved especially spectacular on these occasions, for Charcot used them to narrate the four principal stages of a grand hysterical attack: a

first *epileptoid* phase that often mimicked a standard epileptic episode; *clownism*, or a phase of contorted and illogical movements, a phase of emotive gestures called the *attitudes passionelles*; and a final *delirium* or phase of compulsive babbling during which the hysteric sought to regain composure and self-control. Charcot wed his patients to their roles in the hysterical narrative by inciting their symptoms on cue. During the Lessons, Charcot located "hysterogenic points" on the bodies of his patients; varying degrees of pressure on these points could alternately incite or suppress attacks. According to Charcot, the unfolding of this hysterical spectacle held not only educational but remedial value, for after his patients experienced an attack they often enjoyed a temporary cessation of their other hysterical symptoms. Anticipating critics who might question his decision to offer treatments only on the occasion of the Lessons, Charcot remarked during one of the Lessons that "You may say to me, 'Isn't there something immoral about waiting and provoking such crises?' Surely not, if one can offer a treatment for a disorder that otherwise has no cure."[39]

Charcot supplemented the spectacular displays of the Tuesday Lessons with an extensive series of photographs that documented each stage of the hysterical attack. Between 1876 and 1880 photographer Paul Régnard produced a three volume *Iconographie Photographique de la Salpêtrière*; a *Nouvelle Iconographie* appeared in 1888 with photographs by Albert Londe. The practice of photography, still only decades old, promised portraits that captured even the most subtle characteristics of their sitters. Photography thus further wed patients to roles in the hysterical spectacle exhibited by Charcot; frozen in various stages of their attacks, the hysterics appear in the photographs as living testimonies to the accuracy of the narrative itself. In his text *Inventing Hysteria*, Georges Didi-Huberman attests to the photographic bond between patient and role by examining photographs of Augustine, a star of the Salpêtrière who exhibited all the classic stages of the grand hysterical attack. The photographs, which appeared in the second volume of the *Iconographie*, captured Augustine in each successive phase of her attacks, but linger particularly upon the third phase, the period of the *attitudes passionelles*, when she not only experienced hallucinations but also enacted them for the camera. Lost in her own private visions, Augustine provided proof of the link between hysterical patient and the hysterical role so central to Charcot and his teachings: "The most intimate and immediate 'vision' was played and actualized, like publicly raising the stakes of a spectacle of oneself, of the self—this is what made it possible for the snapshots to be taken. All the more so, as Augustine would often tetanize herself in the very act of the image that her 'vision' constituted."[40]

This wedding of patient to role, displayed in the Tuesday Lessons and documented in a wealth of photographs, offered Charcot ample evidence that hysteria stemmed from some deeply rooted organic cause. Yet Charcot was continually frustrated by the fact that hysteria exhibited no anatomical lesions or signs of illness. He nonetheless maintained that anatomy must play a role in the onset of the disorder. For years Charcot insisted that hereditary factors were involved in the onset of hysteria, and that science would one day discover the heretofore hidden lesion that supplied proof of its hereditary origins. In 1878 Charcot began experiments with hypnosis that eventually led him to revise his theories. In these experiments, Charcot found he could invoke and dispel hysterical symptoms in patients under hypnosis; significantly, the presence or absence of the symptoms often persisted even after the patients were awakened from their hypnotic state. Charcot subsequently reconceived hysteria as a sort of waking hypnosis, one in which symptoms arose from a powerful but unrecognized mental suggestion. Despite this reformulation, however, Charcot still sought an anatomical component to the disease, often speculating on the existence of a "dynamic lesion" that arose from suggestion and affected different neurological functions at different times. In one public lecture for instance, Charcot speculates on the origin of hysterical contractures and remarks that "the organic modification which produces permanent rigidity, whatever it may be, whatever seat it may occupy, is very slight and very fugitive, since its correlated symptoms may disappear suddenly and without transition."[41]

The dynamic lesion that Charcot sought therefore seemed to vanish without warning and leave behind no trace of its very existence. Yet the elusive nature of this lesion never dissuaded Charcot from pursuing it until the end of his life. Charcot, in other words, provided himself with a never ending quest; he sought the origins of hysteria in an anatomical anomaly that could not be identified by any scientific instruments of his era. Once again, this endless urge to pursue the hidden truth of hysteria may have masked another urge, one that Charcot never noted. Some of Charcot's contemporaries did hint at such an urge, for many argued that the hysterical symptoms of his patients were precipitated less by hypnotic suggestions from their past than by suggestions they received from Charcot himself. Goetz, et al. note that some British neurologists "raised the issue of results being distorted by 'expectant attention,' a process by which patients, though not consciously aware of simulating, somehow anticipated the results expected of them by the experimenters and presented symptoms or performed accordingly."[42] Charcot always dismissed this accusation; he would never admit that he induced his patients into a mere mime of their symptoms. Yet driven as he

was by a desire to discover the secret of hysteria, Charcot was perhaps driven as well by another desire, a covert urge to discover his own gestures within the frenzied gesticulations of his patients.

One of the many medical professionals who regularly attended the Tuesday Lectures, the young Austrian physician Sigmund Freud continued the inquiry into hysteria begun by Charcot and soon surpassed his instructor in authoritative statements on the illness. In the path-breaking psychoanalytic text, the 1895 *Studies in Hysteria*, Freud and his colleague Josef Breuer boldly reconceive hysteria not as a physiological but as a psychological illness, thereby revolutionizing both diagnostic and therapeutic approaches to the illness. On the diagnostic front, the pair argue that hysteria arises from the impact of sudden traumas, much like the illnesses called traumatic neuroses. Yet while the traumas in question are etched in the memories of those suffering from traumatic neuroses, they are somehow obscured from the memories of hysterics. Still, Freud and Breuer note a marked likeness between the disorders, remarking that "in traumatic neuroses the operative cause of the illness is not a trifling physical injury but the affect of fright—the psychical trauma" and adding that "in an analogous manner, our investigations reveal for many, if not for most, hysterical symptoms, precipitating causes which can only be described as psychic traumas."[43] On the therapeutic front, the pair claim that successful treatment of hysteria hinges upon the discovery of the traumatic event by the analyst and its subsequent recollection by the patient. Describing their program of treatment for hysterical patients, Freud and Breuer note that "the psychical process which originally took place must be repeated as vividly as possible; it must be brought back to its *status nascendi* and then given verbal utterance."[44] The results of this two-pronged program of diagnosis and therapy are rapid and radical, as the discovery of the hysterical secret eradicates the hysterical symptom. Crucially, the psychoanalytic process relies upon accurate vision to verify its efficacy, for visual proof of the relation between secret and symptom underpins the process itself. Psychoanalysis therefore displays a reliance on projection resonant with the phantasmagoria; the psychoanalytic encounter, much like its phantasmagoric counterpart, invokes a truthful image of the hysteric from the murky past and exposes it to the bright light of the present day. Indeed, it is just this procedure that banishes the illness once and for all, for at the moment of exposure "phenomena involving stimuli (spasms, neuralgias, and hallucinations) reappear once again with the fullest intensity and then vanish forever. Failures of function, such as paralyses and anaesthesias, vanish in the same way, though of course without the temporary intensification being discernable."[45]

Elaborating on the repressive function that hides traumatic events from memory, Freud and Breuer report that repression effectively bifurcates the consciousness of the patient, thereby separating everyday consciousness from its counterpart—a shadowy second consciousness that houses the repressed material. The pair maintain that "this splitting of consciousness which is so striking in the well known classical cases under the form of '*double conscience*' is present to a rudimentary degree in every form of hysteria. . . ."[46] In this early text Freud and Breuer call this second consciousness a "hypnoid consciousness," a term that Freud will later replace with the now familiar term "unconsciousness." Already, however, the pair outline the later paradigm of unconscious functioning with the claim that repressed material within the hypnoid consciousness seeks access to the everyday consciousness, thereby precipitating the hysterical attack: "During the attack, control over the whole of the somatic innervation passes over into the hypnoid consciousness. Normal consciousness, as well known observations show, is not always entirely repressed. It may even be aware of the motor phenomena of the attack, while the accompanying psychical events are outside its knowledge."[47] The task of the analyst is to probe the hypnoid consciousness through the signs it presents to the everyday consciousness, discerning beneath the visible attack the invisible event from which it arises. Moreover, after the analyst identifies the event the patient must identify it also; by verbalizing the event, the patient vanquishes the attack. Freud and Breuer thus propose an objective revelation of truth in the psychoanalytic process; the hysterical secret is no longer hidden by the obscurity of the symptom, but is instead discerned in the clarity of communication: "It will now be understood how the psychotherapeutic procedure that we have described in these pages has a curative effect. It brings to an end the operative force of the idea which was not abreacted in the first instance, by allowing its strangulated affect to find its way out through speech. . . ."[48]

The impact of the psychoanalytic project, particularly its postulation of the unconscious, carried enormous implications, some of which seem to have escaped the notice of Freud himself; a closer look at the "Autobiographical Study" penned by Freud in 1925 will offer evidence of just such omissions. In the "Study" Freud recalls that his early observations of hysterics had convinced him that painful or distressing events and ideas might be lost to conscious memory yet somehow retained in the storehouse of the unconscious. Extrapolating from this observation, Freud postulated that every conscious thought or action could be linked to corollary unconscious material, and therefore that every act of expression was simultaneously an act of obfuscation as well. Not surprisingly, perhaps, these

postulations on the unconscious functions were met with suspicion by medical professionals. Freud remarks that "psychoanalysis regarded everything mental as being in the first instance unconscious; the further quality of consciousness might also be present, or then again it might be absent. This provoked a denial from the philosophers, for whom 'conscious' and 'mental' were identical, and who protested that they could not conceive such an absurdity as the 'unconscious mental.'"[49] Freud responds by asserting that in positing the existence of the unconscious one "was only treating one's own mental life as one had always treated other people's. One did not hesitate to ascribe mental processes to other people, although one had no immediate consciousness of them and could only infer them from their words and actions. But what held good for other people must also be applicable to oneself."[50] With this response Freud deftly turns the tables on his critics, for in refusing to countenance the existence of unconscious impulses, the critics opened themselves to accusations that such impulses fueled their own rejoinders to Freud and his work.

Yet despite asserting the ubiquity of unconscious impulses, Freud seemingly neglects to note a crucial implication of the assertion itself: these impulses operate within every individual, patient and analyst alike. Freud maintains that the task of the analyst is to discover the secret drives of the patient, but he gives short shrift to the notion that this task may actually obscure the secret drives of the analyst. Freud cautions that the unconscious mind of the patient will resist attempts by the analyst to uncover its contents, which will appear only through allusions or even more obscure substitutive associations; the analyst must therefore derive the hidden truth of these contents from the telltale clues they offer for inquiry: "If the resistance is slight, the analyst will be able from the patient's allusions to infer the unconscious material itself; or if the resistance is stronger he will be able to recognize its character from the associations, as they seem to become more remote from the topic at hand, and will explain it to the patient."[51] Freud therefore claims for the analyst a perceptive power lacking in the patient, a claim reinforced by his remark that "the work of analysis involves an art of interpretation, the successful handling of which may require tact and practice but which is not hard to acquire."[52] So Freud proffers the possibility of a substantially accurate analysis, a full disclosure of the unconscious drives of the patient. Yet if such drives operate in both the patient and the analyst, then analysis will unearth the drives of the patient only by simultaneously burying certain drives of the analyst; these latter will underlie the analysis itself, casting an invisible yet undeniable influence over its outcome. Analysis therefore produces a phantasmagorical effect, providing depth and

dimension to the image of the hysteric while casting doubt upon the very process that renders this image intelligible; in revealing the truth of the patient, analysis always occludes a truth of the analyst.

This phantasmagorical dynamic, in which analysis reveals an accurate image only to the extent that occludes another image from view, colors the entire body of psychoanalytic writing; the publication of the famous "Dora" case in 1905 illustrates the impact of this dynamic on the legacy of psychoanalysis itself. Significantly, in this early analysis of a case of hysteria, Freud does not seem entirely aware of this dynamic at work, for he regards his documentation of the case solely as evidence of the revelatory potential of his project; aligning his analysis with the views expressed in his earlier work with Breuer, Freud notes in his "Prefatory Remarks" that he is "now proposing to substantiate those views by giving a detailed report of the history of a case and its treatment."[53] Yet Freud also acknowledges that his analysis is incomplete, as Dora terminated her treatment before the analytic process had come to its proper resolution. Freud accordingly laments the fragmentary nature of his text: "At that time, some of the problems of the case had not even been attacked, and others had only been imperfectly elucidated; whereas, if the work had been continued, we should no doubt have obtained the fullest enlightenment upon every particular of the case."[54] With this passage Freud admits that the fragmentary quality of the analysis precludes total disclosure of Dora's unconscious functions. Perhaps, however, this very quality provides the key to disclosing Freud's own unconscious operations; perhaps this fragmentation renders visible the interplay of revelation and occlusion inherent in the Dora case, an interplay that the postulation of unconscious impulses embeds in the analytic undertaking.

In his analysis of Dora, Freud traces his young patient's hysteria to several intertwined repressions, the nodes of which are linked to one another through a byzantine web of psychic connections. On the most immediately accessible levels of her unconscious, Freud claims that Dora had experienced a revival of her infantile love for her father, expressed through her jealous reaction to his affair with Frau K, a family friend. Freud notes that Dora's behavior "obviously went far beyond what would have been appropriate to filial concern," and maintains that "her affection for her father was a much stronger one than she knew or than she would have cared to admit: in fact, she was in love with him."[55] Yet on the very deepest levels of her unconscious, Freud claims that Dora was also in love with Frau K herself, drawing this conclusion from the fact that despite Frau K's affair with her father Dora bore the woman no ill will: "Indeed, I can say in general that I never heard her speak a harsh or angry word against the lady, although from

the point of view of her supervalent thought she should have regarded her as the prime author of her misfortune."[56] But of all the figures who make their appearance within this unconscious web, perhaps the one most crucial to Freud is Herr K, husband of Frau K. Herr K had recently made a sexual advance to Dora, who rebuffed him with a slap to his face. In his response to the incident, Freud claims that Dora held deeply conflicted feelings for Herr K: "On the one hand she was filled with regret at having rejected the man's proposal and with longing for his company and all the little signs of his affection; while on the other hand these feelings of tenderness and longing were combated by powerful forces, among which her pride was one of the most obvious."[57]

The conflicting feelings that Dora held for Herr K seemed to play the central role in her web of repressions, one that mediated her relation to both Frau K and her father. Indeed, Dora herself alludes to such a mediating role, for Freud remarks that "when she was feeling embittered she used to be overcome by the idea that she had been handed over to Herr K as the price for tolerating the relationship between her father and his wife. . . ."[58] Reflecting on this mediation, Freud finds multiple links between Herr K and the other two individuals that figure in Dora's obsessions. Regarding the superficial levels of Dora's unconscious, Freud links her affection for Herr K to her affection for her father, arguing that Dora had intensified an acceptable paternal love to mask her unacceptable love for Herr K; Freud maintains that Dora had been "obliged to summon up her infantile affection for her father and to exaggerate it, in order to protect herself against the feelings of love that were constantly pressing forward into her consciousness."[59] Regarding the more subterranean levels of Dora's unconscious, Freud links her rejection of Herr K to her affection for Frau K, arguing that the pride motivating this rejection ultimately refers to the more general rejection of men that precipitates her homosexual desires; in this regard, Freud maintains, Dora secretly believes that "'men are all so detestable I would rather not marry. That is my revenge.'"[60] For Freud, therefore, Herr K acts as the lynchpin upon which Dora's hysteria turns, the figure that connects all the other figures appearing within her web of repressions. More importantly, however, Herr K also offers the means for Freud to insert himself into this web, perhaps in ways Freud himself never quite noticed. This self-insertion would implicate Freud in a scenario that he claims to observe impartially, as an examination of the "transference" phenomenon demonstrates.

The Dora case contains one of Freud's earliest references to transference, here defined as "new editions or facsimiles of tendencies and phantasies which are aroused and made conscious during the progress of the analysis;

but they have this peculiarity, which is characteristic for their species, that they replace some earlier person by the person of the physician."[61] Freud argues that transference actually plays a crucial role in analysis; indeed, it "cannot be evaded, since use is made of it in setting up all the obstacles that make the material inaccessible to treatment, and since it is only after the transference is resolved that a patient arrives at a sense of conviction of the validity of the connections which have been constructed during the analysis."[62] Freud also admits, however, that in this case Dora's early termination of her treatment was the result of a transference of her feelings from Herr K to himself—an occurrence that he did not notice in time to put its effects to productive use. Freud remarks that Dora showed the same conflicted feelings toward him that she felt for Herr K: simultaneous urges of affection and rejection. He remarks that he should have asked Dora if he somehow reminded her of Herr K: " 'Have you noticed anything that leads you to suspect me of evil intentions similar (whether openly or in sublimated form) to Herr K's? Or have you been struck by anything about me or got to know anything about me which has caught your fancy, as happened previously with Herr K?' "[63] Freud further comments that if he had recognized the transference in a timely manner he very likely could have guided the analysis to a successful conclusion. In failing to identify the transference, however, Freud allowed Dora's urge to rejection to overcome her urge to affection; Dora terminated her treatments with Freud just as she rebuffed the advances of Herr K: "In this way the transference took me unawares, and, because of the unknown quantity in me which reminded Dora of Herr K, she took her revenge on me as she wanted to take revenge on him. . . ."[64]

With the Dora case, then, Freud proffers an exemplary psychoanalytic scenario, one in which transference reveals the secret of hysteria with exacting accuracy. The psychoanalytic studio of Freud therefore acts as a phantasmagoria, within which he produces a lifelike image of the hysteric. Just as the phantasmagoria offers the subject an expert projection of the object, so does psychoanalysis offer Freud an expert projection of the hysteric herself. According to Freud, the image of the hysteric emerges from the phantasmagorical scenario ready at last to disclose its hidden truth; here Freud posits himself the masterful viewing subject who discerns this image while relegating the hysteric to the position of the object viewed, her secret available only to the masterful gaze of Freud himself. And yet the image offered by the phantasmagoria is rendered suspect by the fact that the phantasmagoria itself undermines the certainty of thought—the same certainty held to ensure the truthfulness of the image. Again, Castle remarks upon the confusion created by the catadioptrical phantasmagoria, its ability to produce wholly false and

yet wholly convincing illusions; the phantasmagoria "conveyed exquisitely the notion of the *bouleversement de tous les sens*: that state of neurasthenic excitement in which images whirled chaotically before the inward eye, impressing on the seer an overwhelming sense of their vividness and spiritual truth."[65] Likewise, psychoanalysis can create similar confusion, for like the phantasmagoria its postulation of the unconscious renders thought uncertain, capable of mistaking cognitive fiction for concrete fact.

The advanced catadioptrical phantasmagoria discloses exquisite images of individuals but conceals the fact that such images may be merely the product of the imagination; just so does the theory of the unconscious imply that analysis also discloses only to the extent that it conceals. Freud's recognition of the transference phenomenon inevitably risks the possibility of reciprocal misrecognition. Perhaps Freud's insistence on a transference from Herr K to himself constitutes an unrealized insistence on his own centrality within the analytic scene; perhaps Dora's supposed unconscious preoccupation with Freud merely masks Freud's own unconscious preoccupation with himself. Freud sees the origin of Dora's hysteria in her unconscious transference of affect from Herr K to himself, but he cannot see the extent to which this sight may be driven by his own unconscious operations. Freud, that is, cannot see himself seeing, and he masks this blind spot in his visual field with a vision of Dora, or more precisely, with a vision of her hysteria. If this obsession with hysteria signifies the desire of Freud to see at last the hidden truth at the heart of the illness, then what desire for self-seeing is stymied by the blind spot in his visual field? Does the image of the hysteric displace this blindness, thereby giving Freud an alternate focus for his endlessly frustrated inquiries?

If the stereoscope cannot ensure perfect perception, if the phantasmagoria cannot supply perfect projection, then the clear vision they purportedly provide is exposed as a play of smoke and mirrors, one that links every revelation to a reciprocal occlusion. The quest for the secret of hysteria is clearly marked by this pattern of uncertainty, and this pattern in turn meshes well with the uncertainty that inheres in the relation of subjectivity to performance. Zola, Charcot, Freud: all three put the hysteric through interrogations designed to expose the origin of her illness, yet their disparate approaches and divergent conclusions confirm that this origin remains eternally elusive. Moreover, in their search for the secret of the illness, all three circle around a secret of their own they are loath to admit: the fact that the moment they train their gaze on the hysteric, they are blinded to the mechanism of their gaze. Some element of reality always eludes the scene of representation, thereby robbing the interrogators of a clear insight into themselves.

A crucial shift occurs in the transition from Zola to Freud, but this very shift suggests the volatile nature of their vision. Unlike Zola, who does not place himself on the Naturalist stage, Freud must place himself in the psychoanalytic studio. Yet Freud cannot simultaneously act as both the viewing subject and the object viewed. At least implicitly, then, psychoanalysis admits to the blind spot in vision in a way that Naturalism does not; Freud can never be sure his vision is wholly accurate, so the aspect of himself hidden by his blind spot traverses the horizon of the intelligible and disappears forever. This disappearance holds serious implications for the binary relation that casts man as the masterful viewing subject and the woman as the object viewed and mastered. And while Freud never seemed fully to face these implications, they were duly noted by at least a few of his contemporaries.

Consider, for instance, the works of novelist, playwright and *femme des lettres* Rachilde. Like her contemporaries Zola and Freud, Rachilde wrote extensively on the relation between the sexes; unlike them, however, Rachilde seemed keenly aware that this relation was dominated by a play of smoke and mirrors. Rachilde was born Marguerite Eymery in 1860, the daughter of a wealthy French family. The aspiring author moved to Paris in 1881, took the pseudonym under which she achieved her fame, and began work on a scandalous series of erotic novels. Rachilde reveled in her infamous reputation but complicated the persona it granted her by refusing to play either a fallen woman or a naïve virgin. In a critical study of Rachilde, Frazer Lively notes that upon publication of her first novel in 1884 the author "gained immediate notoriety. Her Tuesday salon became the place for young literary people to meet, and Symbolist poets called her the 'queen of decadents,' 'Mademoiselle Baudelaire,' and the 'Marquise de Sade.' She maintained an aura of personal innocence," Lively observes, "but respectable hostesses refused to receive her, in spite of her bourgeois background."[66] From the beginning of her career, then, Rachilde cultivated the mercurial reputation often ascribed to woman herself—the inherent instability that rendered her susceptible to maladies like hysteria. Certainly Rachilde fascinated her mostly male critics, for her seemingly hysterical character inspired endless speculation on the most intimate details of her life. Crucially, however, Rachilde turned such speculation to her advantage. The works of Rachilde frequently foreground the power granted to woman by the fascination her image invokes in man. Many of her writings, moreover, suggest that man holds a hysterical secret of his own—the fact that his obsession with the image of woman masks an inadmissable obsession with the image of himself.

In 1894, for instance, Rachilde premiered her short Symbolist drama *The Crystal Spider* at the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre; in this play the image of woman disappears to reveal the image of man lurking behind it—the very image that man cannot admit he truly longs to see. The play details a confessional conversation between a young man—known only as Terror-Stricken in the text—and his mother, who during the conversation attempts to learn the source of the mysterious anxiety that plagues her son. Assuming a new romance would soothe the fretful nerves of her son, the mother suggests the pair throw a party the next evening: "My dear, woman should be the sole preoccupation of man. Then love makes you beautiful! You will be able to question the mirror in your dressing room! . . ."[67] The very idea of woman, however, fills Terror-Stricken with dread; significantly, his unease with women is linked to an additional unease with mirrors: "Dear God! Women, young ladies, creatures who all have mirror reflections in the depths of their eyes. . . . Mother! Mother! Do you want to kill me?"[68] At last acquiescing to the demands of his mother, Terror-Stricken agrees to disclose the source of his fears. "Mother," the young man begins, "what do you see when you look at yourself?" "I see myself," replies his mother. "Ah! Have you never seen anything there except yourself? I pity you," Terror-Stricken remarks. "Now I have the impression that the inventor of the first mirror must have gone mad with fear in the presence of his own creation! So for you, a woman of intelligence, there's nothing in the mirror but the simplest things? In that atmosphere of the unknown, have you never seen a host of phantoms suddenly rise up?"[69]

Terror-Stricken then relates the story of a ghastly childhood trauma, one that turns upon the conflation of his own image with the monstrous image of another. While reading by a mirror one day, the young man saw a tiny spot in its depths grow into a spider that spread its legs over his reflection and seemed to engulf his image. He later learned that a workman, while drilling a hole in the other side of the wall, had pierced the mirror and thereby created the appearance of the frightful crystal spider. "From that day on," Terror-Stricken notes, "I have been inordinately preoccupied with mirrors, despite the nervous revulsion I felt for them."[70] The young man also confesses that women inspire him with a similar preoccupation and revulsion. Indeed, woman herself seems to act as a mirror, for within them both Terror-Stricken always finds an image of himself: "Sumptuously you install those relentless jailors in our quarters; for love of you we must endure them. And in return for our patience they strike us in the face with our own image, our own vileness, our own absurd gestures."[71] With growing frenzy, Terror-Stricken claims that his fascination with the mirror will surely result

in his demise, yet admits that he cannot forego the contemplation of his image: "There is the mirror to catch men, the one that lies in wait at the dangerous turn in their obscure existence, the one that will watch them die, forehead pressed against the glazed crystal of its enigma. . . ."[72] The short play ends abruptly, as Terror-Stricken hurls himself through a large mirror placed at the back of the set. If man is traditionally obsessed with the image of woman, then here Rachilde shows him obsessed with an image of himself. Yet for Terror-Stricken this obsession proves fatal, for it prompts him to search for the secret of himself lurking therein. The futility of this search is precisely that which Terror-Stricken cannot concede, that which ultimately sends him to his grave.

Long after Rachilde had ceased composing plays, her writings continued to champion the subversive power contained within the image of woman. In her 1928 publication *Why I Am Not a Feminist*, woman also recedes behind her image only to be replaced by an ephemeral image of man himself. On the surface an excoriating critique of the French feminism of the day, Rachilde nonetheless uses the text to find agency in the very talent for image manipulation that ostensibly renders women unfit for full enfranchisement.The invocation of such agency is never a stated goal of the text, which opens with a claim that women are naturally untrustworthy: "I have never had confidence in women;" Rachilde asserts, "the eternal feminine first deceived me beneath the guise of the maternal mask, and now I no longer have confidence even in myself."[73] Woman, according to Rachilde, relies instinctively upon deception and contradiction. As if to offer proof of her argument, Rachilde admits that throughout her life she has subversively sought the privileges that obtain by affecting masculine habits. Rachilde, in other words, testifies to the deceitful nature of woman by serving as the exception to her own rule; woman, Rachilde argues in reference to her own deceptive actions, is never to be trusted: "This tendency toward the allure of masculinity has not at all inspired in me the desire to take on rights that are not mine. . . . I love logic above all else, and if I consent to be an exception (one cannot do otherwise in some cases) I do not intend to confirm this exception by taking my own errors for new dogmas."[74]

Thus the masculine habits that Rachilde affected served her as a source of power—one that she admits to exploiting even as she condemns such exploitation by others. Rachilde has especially harsh words for the young women of her day who adopt masculine modes of dress and deportment: "We allow these little men to go about in their knickers—or nearly so—to go out on the town alone, to cut their hair as short as possible, to smoke as much as—or more than—their superior brothers, and to become more and

more athletic in the Greek fashion."[75] Yet Rachilde seems less scandalized by the actual adoption of masculine habits than by the trivial motives that most women possess for doing so. She reports that as a young woman she adopted male attire because its greater freedom and more modest cost allowed her to pursue a career in journalism. "In 1885," Rachilde recalls, "I went to the prefect of police to ask him—the simplest request in the world—for permission to dress as a man. I ignored the law, which no one is supposed to ignore; I wanted to be a reporter, I was very poor, and I did not need to account for my behavior to anyone."[76] Rachilde thus argues that her own motives for adopting masculine habits were a far cry from those of contemporary women; indeed, if their motive today "is to drink cocktails and smoke at dance halls, this does not seem so urgent. If it is to show that they are all half-men, well, you can hardly tell what they are."[77] Yet despite the menace that Rachilde ascribes to these half-men, her own actions seem much more menacing; surely a woman in a suit who pursues a career in journalism is more disruptive to sexual relations than a woman in knickers and bobbed hair who drinks cocktails in a dance hall. The image of Rachilde seems so disruptive because it seems so like the image of man; Rachilde not only got to drink cocktails, she also got to earn the money for them. Gazing at the image of Rachilde, man finds there an image of himself, the very image that he cannot admit he wants see.

Referring to such reactions, Lively notes that in her youth Rachilde was the darling of her literary circle; other Symbolist writers—all of them men—were entranced by her duplicitous sexual identity. Commenting on the chameleon quality that made Rachilde so famous, Lively observes that "during the 1880's her calling card read 'Rachilde, Man of Letters.' Many fellow Symbolists referred to her as 'brother writer' instead of 'Mademoiselle.' Yet men wrote love sonnets to her pale green eyes and her unconquerable virginity."[78] Perhaps this fascination with Rachilde arises from the fact that she forced her admirers to acknowledge that which they were loath to admit—the eternal recession of woman from her image, despite the best efforts of man to fix her to that image forever. Unlike the hysteric who prompts man to plumb her depths and disclose her truth, Rachilde suggests that this truth will always slip through his fingers. And this slippage casts the truth of man into doubt as well, for if he cannot discern the truth of the object known as woman, then he cannot confirm the truth of his status as subject either. Man recedes from his proper image just as surely as woman recedes from her own. In the work of Rachilde, the play of smoke and mirrors that models nineteenth-century vision likewise models nineteenth-century sexual relations. The stereoscope, the phantasmagoria—both inaugurate an interplay

of revelation and occlusion that recalls a similar interplay between the images of man and woman. Rachilde, in fact, forces man to face his troubled interplay with woman. As much as man seeks to reveal himself as viewing subject and woman as his complementary object viewed, Rachilde replies to his revelations by insisting upon the reciprocal occlusions that inhere in vision itself.[79]

Unlike other writers of her day, then, Rachilde seems to revel in the unreliable nature of vision; within her work no clear view of the binary sexual relation is possible, for this view is always marred by a play of smoke and mirrors. A fundamental instability governs the relation of man to woman, one precipitated by a similar instability that governs the relation of subjectivity to performance. Once representation has flown from its referent, all efforts to derive a stable conception of the sexes are haunted by a blind spot that corrupts clear vision. While the subject "man" attempts to define himself relative to the object "woman," he finds not only that the image of woman conceals as much as it discloses, but that his own image proves similarly suspect; man cannot see himself seeing, a fact that inevitably undermines his image of himself. The arena of performance will continue to operate as a vehicle for exploring the sexual subject. Not only will man continue his investigations but, increasingly, woman will conduct investigations of her own, seeking both the mysteries of man and the keys to her own sexual identity. And yet for every answer they seem to supply, these inquiries will inspire a host of intractable questions still asked to this very day. Can one sex really comprehend the elusive identity of the other? For that matter, can either sex really understand its own inmost sexual secret? Can performance, in other words, ever truly offer us sexual revelation? Such questions will haunt the spectrum of Modern performance, from the most staid Realism to the most avant-garde performance art, all of which bear witness to our ongoing obsession with the secrets of sexual difference.

6. Communism: Coming to a Screen Near You! Benjamin, Adorno, and the Politics of Mediatization

In the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Karl Marx offers one of the first formulations of his critique of capitalist economic systems. Employing the now familiar concept of alienation, Marx maintains that proletarian subjects under capitalism experience alienation in three distinct yet related forms. First, Marx notes that subjects are alienated from the objects that they manufacture. Marx claims that "the worker puts his life into the object, but now his life no longer belongs to him, but to the object. Hence, the greater this activity, the greater the worker's lack of objects."[1] Next, Marx maintains that subjects are alienated from their own natures. For Marx, the specific nature of the human beings is revealed in their labor to refashion the whole of nature, the capacity for which renders the human being what Marx calls a species or universal being. In their alienation from the object, then, subjects are also alienated from their nature; this alienation "tears from man his species life, his real species objectivity, and transforms his advantage over animals into the disadvantage that his inorganic body, nature, is taken from him."[2] Finally, Marx notes that subjects are alienated from one another. Marx claims that a shared essence of human nature should logically bond subjects into social units; unfortunately, "the proposition that man's species nature is estranged from him means that one man is estranged from the other, as each of them is from man's essential nature."[3]

For Marx, the resolution of all three forms of alienation will depend upon the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of a communist economic system; a communist revolution will simultaneously resolve the relations to the object, to nature, and to the other. Within this triple resolution, the relation to nature, the laboring nature of the human being, is sandwiched

between the relations of subject to object and self to other; the disalienation of labor, then, holds the key to subsequent disalienations of both the object and the other. By reclaiming the labor invested within the object, the subject may also reclaim the object itself, for as Marx observes all human faculties are instinctively attuned to the resolution of subject and object: "Each of the human relations to the world—seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling, thinking, being aware, sensing, wanting, acting, loving . . . are in their objective orientation, or their orientation to the object, the appropriation of that object."[4] Moreover, it is just this act of appropriation that can forge a social bond among individuals, one that allows them to recognize in their collective labor the resolution of self and other: "It is only when the objective world becomes everywhere for man in society the world of man's essential powers . . . that all objects become for him the objectification of himself."[5] Within the *Manuscripts*, then, Marx predicts that the reclamation of labor will effect a series of disalienating operations. The dialectical resolution of subject and object will lead to the dialectical resolution of self and other; this series of resolutions will effect the emergence of a new communist subject, and "socialist man" will acquire "the visible and irrefutable proof of his birth through himself, of his process of coming-to-be."[6]

This "process of coming-to-be" posited by Marx in the nineteenth century is elaborated in a number of twentieth-century aesthetic theories and artistic practices, many of them focused on new technologies of reproduction like those associated with moving pictures. On the one hand, the moving picture was widely held to reveal the immanence of the subject to the object—an object here conceived as the image captured on film itself. For Marx, all objects hold the potential to reveal this immanence, for in them the subject "duplicates himself not only, as in consciousness, intellectually, but also actively, in reality, and therefore he contemplates himself in a world that he has created."[7] Film, however, proved particularly useful at facilitating such contemplation, for the subject found in film an object that allowed the interrogation of the world with heretofore unimaginable immediacy. On the other hand, the moving picture was also widely held to effect the union of self and other—an other here conceived as the proletarian masses. For Marx, the final resolution of conflict between the working and the ruling classes will divulge the common interests shared by the constituents of all classes, for "the emancipation of society is expressed in the political form of the emancipation of the workers; not because their emancipation alone is at stake, but because the emancipation of the workers contains universal human emancipation."[8] Film, moreover, could promote the progress of this

emancipation, for the self could find in film a shared experience with the other that evinced their common cause in revolution.

The excitement over film emerged from the earlier excitement over photography, which promised similar sorts of disalienating effects. Such effects, however, were not always met with enthusiasm; indeed, at times the new technology could engender significant anxiety. In his 1864 tale "The Legend of the Daguerrotype," for instance, the writer Champfleury suggests that the immanence of subject to object offered by photography could evoke real consternation from portrait sitters. The fanciful story concerns Balandard, a provincial bourgeois who, during a trip to Paris, pays a visit to the salon of the daguerreotypist Carcassonne. Because he actually knows little about the photographic chemicals he employs, Carcassonne botches every portrait of Balandard. Each photographic plate reveals only a single feature of Balandard—first the nose, then the ears, the hair, and the eyes. Strangely, however, during each attempt Balandard feels the feature in question disappear from his body, only to see it reappear on the photographic plate. "Is it not dangerous," Balandard wonders, to expose oneself to this mysterious machine which, with its great somber eye, coldly regards the man seated before it?"[9] After 50 attempts, Carcassonne at last captures a perfect image of Balandard, but by then the Balandard had vanished entirely. "At last, after searching every corner of the salon, the fatal truth dawned on the ignorant daguerreotypist, who had used such powerful acids on his plates that the figure, the body, and the clothing of the unhappy bourgeois had been wholly devoured by them."[10]

The Champfleury story therefore illustrates the anxiety that attended the excitement over the new technology of photography. Some decades later, the 1922 *Wedding on the Eiffel Tower* by Jean Cocteau suggests that the union of self and other afforded by photography evokes similarly mixed emotions. The play prefigured the Surrealist movement, famous for reveling in dreamlike images that mingled the wonderful and the terrible; in this case the images arise from various new technologies, and photography plays a pivotal role in their creation. As the title indicates, the action unfolds on the first platform of the Eiffel Tower, where a pair of newlyweds are busily celebrating their nuptial feast; a photographer, accompanied by an oversized camera, is there to snap portraits of the wedding party. Today, however, the photographer is experiencing technical difficulties. "Believe it or not, my camera is out of order," the photographer reports to the Tower manager. "Usually when I say 'Now don't move, watch the birdie,' a little bird is what they see. This morning, I say to a lady: 'Watch the birdie,' and an ostrich steps out. I'm trying to find the ostrich to get it to go back into the camera."[11]

Other figures follow the ostrich from the camera: a lion, a fat little boy, a Trouville bathing beauty—all gate-crash the nuptial feast and mingle with the wedding guests. Yet at the end of the play, when the photographer at last succeeds in snapping a picture of the wedding party, the assembled characters disappear into the camera, which itself disappears by crossing the stage like a locomotive. The stage directions report that "the camera starts to move toward the left, followed by its bellows, like railroad coaches. Through various apertures one sees the wedding party waving handkerchiefs, and, beneath, fast walking."[12]

Yet by the time *The Wedding on the Eiffel Tower* premiered, the fascination inspired by photography was being quickly superceded by a new obsession with film—a technology that supplemented the photograph with electrifying additions like movement and montage. Indeed, the birth of the new medium seemed to presage the birth of a new civilization, and many Marxist activists hailed film as a crucial tool in the revolution to come. These Marxists, of course, tended to dismiss the anxiety that often accompanied the excitement over new technologies; after all, the bourgeois figures from the Champfleury and Cocteau texts are precisely the ones who should fear the new power of the film. Consider the words of Soviet Constructivist artist and theorist Alexei Gan, who insisted all art should serve the revolutionary purpose of creating a communist society. In his 1922 essay "The Cinematograph and Cinema," Gan notes that the new art of film has already superseded older art forms—a prelude, perhaps, to the new world that will likewise supersede the old. "Everything previously done in an amateurish fashion by the arts of painting, sound, and movement with the aim of organizing our emotions is now automatically done by the extended organs of society, by technology, and in this specific case, by cinema."[13] But in order to realize the revolutionary future, film must not merely produce images that tickle the emotional fancy. Film, in fact, serves a loftier purpose, for "it cannot serve only as a means of production in the sense of the mechanical multiplication of handicraft goods in one or another of their aspects. *It must involve self-production*."[14]

This reference to "self-production" echoes the "coming-to-be" espoused by Marx decades earlier, and with it Gan speaks for many Marxist artists and critics who thought that the cinema would play a vital role in the fashioning of a new communist subject. This hope invested in the power of moving pictures constituted a significant response to the uncertainty that marked the relation of subjectivity to performance; since representation had been sundered from its referent, an ongoing task for both art and criticism lay in finding a way to unite them once again. In the previous chapter

I argued that nineteenth-century inquiries into hysteria entailed a similar task. The subject man sought to discover the hysterical secret of the object woman and then fix that secret forever to her image; in defining the object, the subject could thereby define himself as well. But as the works of Rachilde suggest, the secret of woman is matched by a secret of man; woman, by implication, appears as a subject just like man, and both appear bereft of the means to understand each other. The search for such mutual understanding is yet another hallmark of the Modern era, and the impasse encountered by man and woman suggests yet another strategy may be needed to bring this search to its proper conclusion. Perhaps if the object were reconceived as something that all subjects held in common, then their mutual connection to the object would also offer them a mutual connection to each other. Many Marxists, it seemed, followed this logic, for they reasoned that such connections could be forged in film. This revolutionary art form would effect a double disalienation, for in reuniting subject and object, it would also reunite self and other.

The belief that moving pictures could truly accomplish such Herculean tasks reflected the broader faith in technological innovation espoused so often during the Modern era. Champions of technology argued that advances in industry, transport, and communication would supply new solutions to the most intractable difficulties, and while some commentators noted that these advances might engender problems of their own, the promise that technology would reshape the world was still widely hailed. This legacy of longing for systemic global change is of course my own as well, though my own Postmodern perspective leads me to view such revolutionary promises with suspicion. Certainly the political revolutions that new technologies like cinema were to inspire have not unfolded according to orthodox Marxist predictions, and the early optimism of many Marxists fares rather poorly in the face of later lessons learned. So while my Modern heritage renders me sympathetic to hopes for a future resolution of all social conflicts, my Postmodern sensibility informs me that such hopes are dim indeed, especially if technology is still supposed to play a central role in this resolution. And I am not alone in this assessment, for even during the struggles of the past century some Marxist thinkers refuted their colleagues by arguing not only that a total resolution of social conflicts did not seem immanent, but also that new technologies had actually proven effective at keeping these conflicts in place. Given the continued importance of addressing such conflicts in the present day, I hold that an exploration of these debates from the Modern era are crucial for conceiving revolutionary action in our own Postmodern moment.

In this chapter I examine one such debate over the function of film, a debate staged in the shadow of World War II by the Frankfurt School critics Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno. I begin with Benjamin, who argued that new techniques for mechanically reproducing art could enable a double disalienation of subject from object and self from other; by materializing the labor invested in both production and reception, reproducible art allows a literal extension of the subject into the object, thereby ratifying art as a site of mutual encounter between self and other. Turning to film, the medium Benjamin viewed as most conducive to such disalienating practices, I explore the work of early Soviet filmmakers Sergei Eisenstein and Dziga Vertov, both of whom employed film to spur the genesis of a revolutionary Soviet subject. Yet where Benjamin saw only an urge to revolution in reproducible art, Adorno also saw an opposing urge to complicity with the fascist politics then sweeping Europe. Adorno and his colleague Max Horkheimer diagnosed fascism as the logical outcome of capitalism, which has in its current phase launched a culture industry that suppresses the labor invested in reproducible art and thereby ensures the continued alienation of subject from object and self from other. This formulation of the culture industry still offers insight into the alienating effects of new media, effects now witnessed not only in film but also, and increasingly, in the genre of Reality TV. Yet a recent Hollywood film *The Truman Show*—just the type of commercial film Adorno and Horkheimer critiqued—offers a possible escape from this impasse of alienation. This film carries Reality TV to its limit by presenting a paradoxical collapse of subject into object, self into other. As I argue in closing, however, it is this paradoxical aspect of the film that can preserve hope for the coming-to-be of a revolutionary new sort of subject. This paradox and the cognitive struggle that it initiates will prefigure the turn to the Postmodern era, and so it is with a brief word on this turn that I conclude the chapter.

In his landmark 1936 essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Walter Benjamin suggests that new technologies of reproduction will facilitate the birth of the revolutionary subject, one newly empowered to overturn the very economic system responsible for such technological innovations. Benjamin argues that the advent of mechanical reproduction threatens the authenticity traditionally held to inhere in the singular work of art. Designating this authenticity with the term "aura," he notes that "even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be."[15] Benjamin asserts that the art world, sensing a threat to authenticity from new methods of mechanical reproduction,

responds by promoting an autonomous art that seeks to maintain the aura by disavowing familiar aesthetic conventions—the turn to abstraction within various visual art movements supply numerous examples of such autonomous art. Yet for Benjamin this response is merely a new form of fetishism that grants art an elitist impenetrability and reduces it to the status of a commodity. A fruitful paradox emerges here, however, for the very technologies that corrupt art also offer a basis for its renewal. Mechanical reproduction introduces a new set of aesthetic conventions that prove attractive to the masses, for reproducible art offers the proletariat a sense of freedom that counters the fetishism of autonomous art. This new freedom derives from the immediate relation that this art fosters between subject and object, one that invites an extension of the individual into the domain of art itself. In effecting this new immanence of subject to object, reproducible art reshapes both the production and the reception of the artwork, as Benjamin goes on to illustrate.

In the arena of production, Benjamin maintains that the new medium of film provides a perfect opportunity for proletarian subjects to effect their extension into artistic objects. Commercial films have yet to foster this relation, largely because such films tend to reduce commercial actors to fetish images of themselves. In contrast to commercial films, however, the new generation of Soviet filmmakers literally projects the proletariat into the cinematic image; referring specifically to film projects sponsored by the Soviet Union, Benjamin observes that "some of the players whom we meet in Russian films are not actors in our sense but people who portray themselves—and primarily in their own work process."[16] Such films therefore reveal not only the labor of the masses, but also the investment of that labor in the production of the films themselves; they thereby invite the direct extension of proletarian subjects into their objects of production. Similarly, in the arena of reception Benjamin maintains that film likewise offers an effective medium for such acts of extension. The rapid camera movements and montage effects frequently employed in film disrupt the sustained concentration required to fetishize an artwork; indeed, Benjamin claims the distractions generated by such techniques offer a direct experience of the artwork, for "the ability to master certain tasks in a state of distraction proves that their solution has become a matter of habit."[17] Benjamin, in other words, posits a labor of reception in distraction; the ease implied by distracted film viewing indicates the ease with which proletarian subjects effect an extension into their objects of reception: "The film, on the one hand, broadens our comprehension of the necessities which rule our lives; on the other hand, it assures us of an immense and unexpected field of action."[18]

For Benjamin, the changes wrought in the production and the reception of reproducible art hold a radical political promise. Clearly, one form taken by this promise is the closure of the distance between subject and object. In terms of both production and reception, the new means of reproduction allow an extension of the individual into the domain of the cinema and thereby reveal the immanence of the subject to the object. Significantly, however, this first form of promise gives rise to a second: a mending of the division of self from other. Here the new means of reproduction promote film as a site of encounter between self and other, who meet through their shared experience of the work of art. Again invoking the power of film, Benjamin notes its ability to forge bonds between individuals by offering them unprecedented mobility; Benjamin maintains that "our taverns and our metropolitan streets, our offices and furnished rooms, our railroad stations and our factories appeared to have us locked up hopelessly. Then came the film and burst this prison world asunder by the dynamite of the tenth of a second, so that now, in the midst of its far flung ruins and debris, we calmly and adventurously go traveling."[19] This travel through the space of the cinema facilitates a productive linkage between onscreen and offscreen figures; in this union of self and other, Benjamin posits the genesis of a communist subjectivity, the coming-to-be of a new world historical subject.

The revolutionary promise Benjamin championed in mechanically reproduced art—and especially in film—is clearly articulated in the work of the Soviet film directors that Benjamin admired so much. The techniques of renowned Soviet filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein, for instance, certainly strive to realize the revolutionary power of the new medium. In his 1924 essay "The Montage of Film Attractions," Eisenstein outlines the principles that form the basis of his activist aesthetic. Eisenstein begins his essay by defining his concept of the attraction: "An attraction is in our understanding any demonstrable fact—an action, an object, a phenomenon, a conscious combination, and so on—that is known and proven to exercise a definite effect on the attention and emotions of an audience. . . ."[20] Crucially, Eisenstein stresses the central relation between the performer and the spectator in the successful operation of the attraction. For Eisenstein, the model performer is specifically trained to establish an intimate relationship with the onscreen image, one in which the intentions of the performer are wholly embodied within the image itself. The image of the performer then incites the mimetic capacity of the spectators, who model their own actions after those of the performer and thereby establish their own intimate relationship with the image. Actors and spectators thus find themselves linked to one another through the montage of film attractions, the value of

which lies in its ability to link individuals to a common political sentiment; Eisenstein claims that "the attractional approach to the construction of all elements, from the film as a whole to the slightest movement of the performer is an assertion of the method of approach to the montage of effects that are useful to our class and of the precise recognition of the utilitarian goals of cinema in the Soviet Republic."[21] The montage of film attractions thus closes the distance between subject and object as it simultaneously mends the division between self and other; in this double disalienation, Eisenstein projects the development of the Soviet communist subject.

For Eisenstein, then, film can serve as a revolutionary tool that will facilitate an eventual resolution of subject and object, self and other. Yet the revolutionary power of film was even more thoroughly exploited by the Soviet documentary filmmaker Dziga Vertov, who sought to expedite the advent of such resolutions through a literal rearticulation of human vision.[22] In his pivotal 1923 essay "The Cine-Eye: A Revolution," Vertov champions a melding of the human eye with the apparatus of the camera itself, an operation that will hasten the coming-to-be of a new revolutionary subject. Vertov concedes that the still nascent medium of cinema has yet to realize the full potential of the camera: "The most thorough investigation does not reveal a single film, a single piece of research that is correctly designed to emancipate the camera, which has been pitifully enslaved to the imperfect and none-too-clever human eye."[23] Heretofore the camera has merely replicated the operation of the eye; the camera has offered images fit only for distanced contemplation, not for total integration into the experience of the individual. Vertov suggests filmmakers abandon replication and instead exploit the ability of the camera to improve upon human vision; the camera, Vertov notes, can accelerate or decelerate moving images, can juxtapose widely disparate phenomena, can record experiences unavailable to the naked eye: "The Cine-Eye lives and moves in time and space, it perceives and fixes its impressions in a completely different way than the human eye."[24] The Cine-Eye, in other word, detaches sensory awareness from the immediate sensory capacity of the body, extending the individual into the domain of cinema and closing the distance of subject from object. Moreover, the Cine-Eye establishes film as a site of encounter between self and other; through their mutual assumption of the Cine-Eye, self and other forge a link to one another that knits together the division between them. With its radical intervention into vision, Vertov claims that film fosters the development of a communist subjectivity: "We maintain that the Cine-Eye, with its new measure of time and space, is growing in strength and in its possibilities for self-assertion."[25]

In his 1929 silent film *Man With the Movie Camera*, Vertov seeks to embody his notion of the Cine-Eye in actual cinematic practice; the film, a literal whirl of imagery from daily life in and around Moscow, promotes a revolutionary use of cinema in the service of the new Soviet Union. The film begins with a series of titles—the only titles, in fact, that appear therein—that first announce the birth of a new species of cinema: "Attention viewers / This film is dedicated to experimentation in the cinematic communication of visual phenomena." The titles next forecast an immanence of the subject to the object by explaining that the new cinema will allow the direct access of the individual to the image; the cinema, that is, will eliminate all customary mediations and proceed "without the help of titles / (A film without titles) / Without the help of a scenario / (A film without a scenario) / Without the help of theatre / (A film without scenery, actors, etc)." Finally, the titles herald a union of self and other by claiming that the new cinema will foster a mode of communication that crosses all geographic and cultural boundaries: "This experimental work is directed towards the creation of a genuine, international, purely cinematic language, entirely distinct from the language of the theatre and literature." After the series of titles, the film itself begins, a rush of images culled from the Moscow streets. Yet as it depicts Muscovite life the film also foregrounds its own cinematic practices, the very practices that promote the innovative operations outlined earlier. Here it will prove helpful to examine just how the film, in attending to its own production and reception, strives toward such revolutionary maneuvers.[26]

One strategy Vertov employs to highlight cinematic production is the inclusion of shots of his associates actively laboring to fashion the film itself. A recurring motif, for instance, is the sight of cameraman Mikhail Kaufman actually capturing the city scenes that comprise the bulk of the film. In one sequence appearing early in the film, Kaufman is seen leaving his apartment, camera slung over his shoulder, and then climbing into a waiting automobile; later shots show him perched atop the automobile, recording the cityscape as the auto chugs down the streets of Moscow. In another remarkable sequence, Kaufman is again seen atop the automobile filming a horse-drawn carriage filled with passengers; this shot is then followed by the actual footage of the carriage that Kaufman has filmed. Such sequences materialize the production process itself, inserting Kaufman into the very film he strives to fabricate. Vertov employs a similar strategy to highlight cinematic reception by showing an audience cheerfully laboring to view the film. At the start of the film Vertov includes a series of shots inside an

auditorium: a curtained projection screen, rows of seats, a film projector with a technician loading a reel of film upon it. Viewers enter the auditorium, chatting among themselves while musicians take their places at the front of the house to offer accompaniment for the film about to be shown. In a crosscut, the conductor signals the musicians to begin playing just as the technician starts the projector. The film commences, and the viewers in the film are understood to be the viewers of the film as well. Near the end of the film Vertov retreats to the rear of the auditorium to show the viewers actively engaged in watching the film itself; assorted shots of trains and airplanes—recognizable from earlier moments in the film—are alternated with shots of the viewers recognizing the same trains and airplanes on the screen. In these sequences Vertov materializes the process of reception by installing an attentive audience into the film itself.

By revealing the labor involved in both the production and reception of the film, Vertov seeks to close the distance between subject and object; the extension of the individual into the domain of the cinema occurs during both production and reception, thereby attesting to a direct relation of the subject to the object. Moreover, the promotion of this relation allows the cinema to mend the division between self and other, for the film becomes a privileged site of their mutual encounter—even their mutual imbrication—with one another. A recurring image in the film is an extreme close-up of a camera lens that functions as such a site of imbrication. Several times this lens is shown superimposed not only with a reflection of a cameraman cranking his camera, but also with the eye of a viewer; here the lens invokes figures from either side of the cinematic apparatus, thereby offering them a common locus of encounter. A later image forecasts the development of the sound film, as a drum-shaped radio speaker receives a superimposition of both a man playing an accordion and a human ear; once again, figures from both sides of the apparatus meet at a site of mutual encounter. Finally, the rapid montage sequence that ends the film provides a dizzying synthesis of such figures, as Vertov juxtaposes images of his editor Maria Svilova with images of his viewers in the auditorium. These shots are then cross cut with yet more scenes culled from everyday life—trams, crowded streets, and a swinging clock pendulum; here self and other are literally melded together in the cinematized space of everyday existence. Through the power of cinema, then, Vertov promises the ultimate immanence of subject and object, the ultimate union of self and other; these dialectical resolutions, heralded by Marx as the inevitable triumph of disalienation, will culminate in the coming-to-be of the new communist subject.

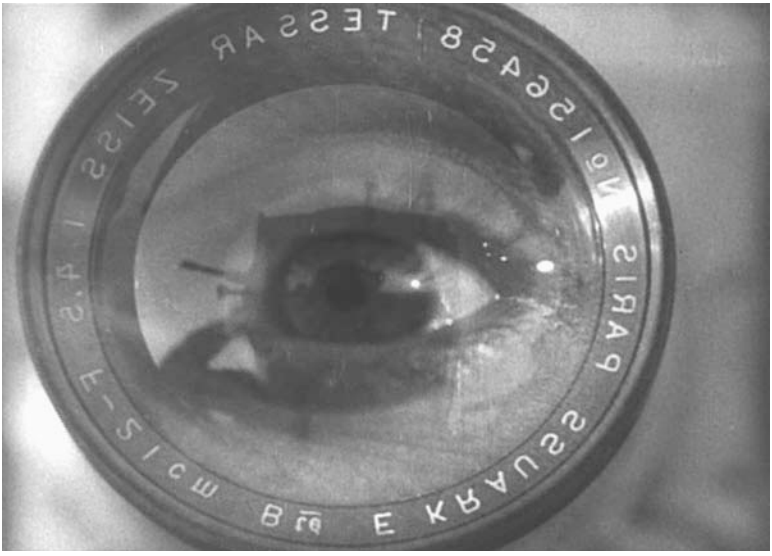


Figure 6.1 The cinema as a locus of encounter. Still image from *Man with a Movie Camera*.

In its vision of a new subject born of dialectical resolution, *Man with a Movie Camera* signals a commitment to an international revolution—a commitment still nominally espoused by the leaders of the Soviet Union in 1929.[27] When Benjamin composed the "Art" essay in 1936, however, the political situation was quite different in his native Germany. The nationalism of the Nazi regime had squelched the internationalist aims of the German Communist Party, and Benjamin—not only a Communist sympathizer but a Jew as well—wrote the "Art" essay while exiled in Paris. In his Prologue to the essay, Benjamin argues that nationalist fervor is fueled by a stifled rage at capitalist economic systems; fascist movements therefore labor to circumvent the potential political transformation inherent in mechanically reproduced art. Benjamin asserts that the concepts he introduces in his essay "are completely useless for the purposes of Fascism" but "useful for the formulation of revolutionary demands in the politics of art."[28] After offering such a formulation within the body of his essay, Benjamin returns to the topic of Fascism in his Epilogue, where he asserts that fascist leaders attempt to turn mechanically reproduced art to their own ends by providing the proletariat with artistic outlets designed to neutralize their urge to revolutionary activity: "The masses have a right to

change property relations; Fascism seeks to give them an expression while preserving property. The logical result of Fascism," Benjamin argues, "is the introduction of aesthetics into political life."[29] This aestheticization of politics will have dire effects, for Benjamin remarks that "all efforts to render politics aesthetic culminate in one thing: war. War and only war can set a goal for mass movements while respecting the traditional property system."[30] Forecasting the advent of World War II, Benjamin presciently adds that sanctioned forms of Fascist art are promoting an increase in nationalism, xenophobia, and militarism that will culminate in destruction on a heretofore unimaginable scale: "This is the situation of politics that Fascism is rendering aesthetic," he remarks in closing. "Communism responds by politicizing art."[31]

Thus in the "Art" essay Benjamin maintains that the revolutionary potential invested within mechanically reproduced art offers hope for an effective response to fascist movements burgeoning across Europe. But this hope was not shared by his colleague Theodor Adorno, who in a letter to Benjamin objected to the "Art" essay on methodological grounds; while Benjamin saw in reproducible art a promise of dialectical resolution that challenged the goals of fascism, Adorno argued that Benjamin had been insufficiently dialectical in his analysis of this promise. Adorno begins his letter by disagreeing with Benjamin over his view of autonomous art. Benjamin views such art as a form of fetishism, as its disavowal of familiar aesthetic conventions endows art with an elitist impenetrability and reduces the artwork to a commodity. Benjamin therefore claims that the rarified quality of autonomous art forestalls any outright challenge to the status quo. But Adorno refutes Benjamin by maintaining that the refusal of familiar aesthetic conventions causes autonomous art to spur cognition; for Adorno, this act of cognition counters the quiescence urged by the status quo: "Precisely the uttermost consistency in the pursuit of the technical laws of autonomous art changes this art and instead of rendering it into a taboo or fetish, brings it close to the state of freedom, of something that can be consciously made or produced."[32] Furthermore, Adorno also claims that this opposition of fetishism and freedom inheres not only in autonomous art but also in reproducible art. But if Benjamin notes only the urge toward fetishism displayed in autonomous art, he notes only the urge to freedom displayed in reproducible art. Benjamin maintains that mechanical reproduction introduces new aesthetic conventions that can incite fruitful political action. Yet Adorno replies that the aesthetic conventions offered by mechanical reproduction deaden cognition and so defuse political action. Commenting on the German film of the fascist era, Adorno observes that it

scarcely promotes penetrating speculation on current political affairs; on the contrary, the cinema generally fosters a narcotizing attitude toward the imagery it offers: "When I spent a day in the studios of Neubabelsberg two years ago," Adorno remarks, "what impressed me most was how little montage and all of the advanced techniques you emphasize are actually employed; rather, reality is everywhere constructed with an infantile mimetism and then photographed."[33] Thus while Adorno maintains that both reproducible and autonomous art display opposing tendencies—a progressive urge to revolutionary freedom and a regressive urge to fascist fetishism—he adds that fascism undermines the progressive urge by exploiting its regressive underside, thereby securing fascist seizures of power.

As testimony to the fascist promotion of this regressive tendency, consider *The Führer Gives a City to the Jews*, a now-infamous Nazi propaganda film produced at the concentration camp Terezín. Called Theresienstadt by the Germans, Terezín was a walled Czech garrison town used as a Jewish ghetto during World War II. The ghetto held over 141,000 inmates between 1939 and 1945, many of them prominent Western and Central European Jews who were told on leaving their homes that they were being transported to a luxurious relocation center on the eastern frontier of the Reich. The ghetto, of course, bore little resemblance to the resort village promised by the Nazis; at any time, German officials housed an average of 40,000 prisoners in a town initially designed for 7000 residents. Moreover, about 88,000 inmates were later shipped to extermination camps—most often Auschwitz. Yet the relocation center story proved valuable not only in gaining cooperation from affluent Jews who might otherwise have resisted transport, but also in refuting rumors of Nazi atrocities. To bolster the credibility of reports about Terezín, the Nazis produced the propaganda film in the ghetto during the fall of 1944. The film, however, had its genesis in the events of the year before. In 1943, the king of Denmark, concerned for the welfare of Danish Jews housed at Terezín, requested a Red Cross inspection of the ghetto. Nazis officials delayed the visit for nearly a year to prepare Terezín for the inspectors. Buildings along a planned inspection route were refurbished, and the town received a playground, a recreation field, and an outdoor pavilion for the municipal orchestra. An old sports hall was transformed into a community center with an auditorium, a synagogue, and a library. Even the cemetery was adorned with memorial monuments. The inmates, who often produced musical and dramatic performances for their own enjoyment, now had to perform facsimiles of their daily lives for the inspectors; prisoners simulated various activities to convince the visitors that they enjoyed peace and prosperity in Terezín. In *Ghetto Theresienstadt*,

camp survivor Zdenek Lederer attests to the disjunction between the lives of the prisoners and the replicas of daily life that they produced:

> All along the route orderlies well out of view ran ahead of the visitors and started off various embellishment devices as one starts off a jukebox by dropping a penny in its slot. Thus some handsome girls working in the fields just outside Theresienstadt shouldered their rakes at the appropriate moment and marched singing along the road; bakers in white overalls and gloves started loading loaves of bread; it was a mere coincidence that they did it just when the honored guests appeared. When the visitors arrived at the community center a performance of Verdi's *Requiem* was in full swing, while on the ground floor hall the children listened spellbound to a children's opera.[34]

Pleased by the success of the embellishment program for the Red Cross inspection, Nazi authorities initiated plans for a propaganda film that would immortalize their efforts. Lederer reports that SS General Günther, the head of Jewish Affairs in Prague, launched the film project in July of 1944. Dutch artist Josef Spier, himself an inmate of the ghetto, was tapped to pen a script for the film, and the Prague newsreel office assumed formal filmmaking responsibility. The prisoners reprised the roles they had played for the Red Cross visitors, again appearing as peacefully relocated settlers while the cameras captured their performances on film. Apparently the film was considered a crucial component of the Nazi propaganda campaign; at this point in the war a Nazi defeat seemed almost certain, and officials hoped the film could counter reports of a mass extermination of the Jews. The SS headquarters in Prague received regular reports on the progress of the film, which was rushed into completion in September on orders from Berlin; as evidence for the high-level interest in the film and its intended effects, Lederer reports that "Himmler himself had censored several scenes of the film."[35]

Today only fragments of the completed film are extant. The scattered remains have been gathered by the National Center for Jewish Film, which makes them available to researchers and archival institutions; the fragments are not widely available, presumably for fear of their misuse by Holocaust deniers. Such fear seems well founded, for a superficial view of the film will yield support for the progressive tendency Benjamin ascribed to cinema; indeed, in some sequences the revolution championed by Benjamin actually seems to have taken place—at least in Terezín. The film is filled with depictions of a society in perfect harmony with itself. The residents, for instance, all seem happily engaged in a number of communal work projects. Rows of barracks serve as shops for the assembly of a wide variety of goods, one of which appears to be leather valises; in an extended film sequence one man

cuts leather into pieces, others then apply fixative to the pieces, and at last a woman stitches the pieces together on a sewing machine. A German voiceover, translated into English subtitles, extols the efficient and integrated resident workforce: "Mutually beneficial work is performed by teams of one hundred. Groups are trained according to skills and then retrained as needed. Those willing to work are immediately fit into the labor force. Shops of pursemakers, tailors, seamstresses, stitchers, cobblers and other tradesmen operate, supervised by skilled personnel."[36]

Like the depiction of residents at work, the film depicts residents as similarly engaged in communal moments of play. At the end of the work day, for instance, laborers are seen leaving their shops and heading to a soccer game held in a large public courtyard. A crowd of spectators line the edges of the court and fill the arched galleries that line the courtyard walls. Soon the two teams enter the playing field, the referee leads their captains in a ritual handshake, and the game commences. The film sequence intersperses long shots of the game with close-ups of audience members; the cheers and applause of the spectators are clearly audible on the soundtrack. In an oblique reference to the admittedly cramped quarters of the camp, the German voiceover admits that "the two teams each have only seven men due to limited space. Nonetheless, enthusiastic fans watch a spirited game from beginning to end."[37] In scenes like these, the film provides ideal images of communal work and communal play that seem to realize the revolutionary new world imagined by Benjamin; indeed, a superficial view of the film would suggest that such scenes of communal bliss could even spur revolutionary action elsewhere around the globe.

Of course, such a view of the film would display the same error that Adorno found in the work of Benjamin—a reluctance to countenance the fact that film displays both regressive and progressive tendencies. The film was certainly intended to further the fascist ends that Adorno linked with cinema—the dissemination of propaganda in support of the Nazi regime. A close examination of the film, in fact, will disclose evidence of its regressive tendency. For instance, a sequence depicting a performance of *Brundibar*, the aforementioned opera for children, offers just such evidence. Composed in 1938 by Czech Jewish composer Hans Krása, the opera was staged by Krása and his colleagues during their imprisonment in Terezín and received over 50 performances between the autumns of 1943 and 1944. At first glance, the inclusion of the opera in the film seems to reinforce the image of Terezín as a happy and harmonious society, for the opera extols the benefits of just the type of communal action championed by other sequences in the film. The opera tells the story of two farm children who venture into town to obtain milk for their ailing mother. The penniless children have no means to purchase the milk,

however, and when they try to earn money by singing on a street corner they are chased away by the evil organ grinder Brundibar, who claims the corner for himself. The children are forced to sleep under the open sky, but fortunately they receive visits from a kindly dog, cat, and sparrow, who urge the children to rally the young people of the town to their aid. Working together, the children defeat Brundibar and join one another in a song of triumph—a finale that offers a valuable lesson on the power of communal activity:

> We've won a victory
> Over the tyrant mean,
> Sound trumpets, beat drums,
> And show us your esteem!
> We've won a victory,
> Since we were not fearful,
> Since we were not tearful,
> Because we marched along,
> Singing our happy song
> Bright, joyful and cheerful.[38]

The film sequence devoted to the opera alternates shots of children performing upon the stage with shots of other children viewing the performance intently from the auditorium. Much like the other sequences in the film, these shots lionize the virtues of both communal work and communal play; the smiling faces of the performers demonstrate the pleasure invested in their labor, while the intense gazes of the viewers suggest the labor invested in their pleasure. Yet at one point in this sequence an event occurs that briefly disrupts the tidy spectacle of communal activity. Here a young viewer turns away from the opera and momentarily gazes directly into the camera. Such a frank acknowledgement of the camera is rare in the surviving fragments, so the action of the child contrasts sharply with the rest of the sequence. This contrast, however, at last demonstrates a regressive tendency in the film. By all rights, this confrontation with the camera should not seem so shocking, for its inclusion ought to complement the other images in the film; just as many images suggest a communal relation of residents to their work and play, this gaze into the camera should suggest a similar relation to the apparatus that captures their work and play—the film apparatus itself. Moreover, this acknowledgement of the camera does not only draw the child into the film; indeed, the directness of his gaze invites the viewer to join him there as well. The confrontation should therefore link both residents and viewers to the film and thus, by corollary, to one another—a logical effect of the progressive tendency seemingly embedded within the film.

Figure 6.2 The cinema as a locus of alienation. Still image from *The Führer Gives a City to the Jews*.

In fact, however, this confrontation with the camera contrasts so sharply with the rest of the film that it registers as an inconsistency in the unspoken expectations established by the film itself. Recognized as such, the confrontation reveals the regressive tendency inherent within the film. Since the film promotes the camera as a mere recording device of camp life, it suppresses the labor invested in both cinematic production and cinematic reception. While the happy tenor of the film should suggest an eager engagement of residents in its production, the absence of any evidence to that effect calls this engagement into question; the gaze into the camera thus offers a rare nod to the conditions of production. Likewise, the seeming transparency of the film should foster an active engagement of viewers in its reception, yet the absence of any spur to critical thought calls this engagement into question; the gaze into the camera thus offers a rare incentive to investigate the conditions of reception. By seeking to render the labor of both production and reception invisible, the film seeks to deny both residents and viewers easy entry into the film, and in so doing it seeks to deny them easy access to each other. Yet this one acknowledgement of the camera briefly renders these invisible labors visible once more. The gaze into the camera found within this sequence insists upon inquiry into the reasons the

filmmakers sought not to join residents and viewers through the film but, on the contrary, to isolate them from one another—a solemn counterpoint to the joyous song of unity that plays beneath the sequence itself.

In order to foreground the propagandistic motives for the film, the compilers of the film fragments have inserted the caption "Staged Nazi Film" into the upper right hand corner of every frame. Certainly such efforts to spotlight the regressive tendency of the film are understandable, although Lederer suggests they may also represent something of an overkill. Lederer reports that the finished film received only a single screening, a private showing for some SS officers in Prague during the spring of 1945. He also notes that "some Czechs managed to see it on this occasion. They assert that as a piece of propaganda the film was utterly worthless, since the lies that it tried to convey to the public were too clumsy and obvious."[39] Perhaps this assertion of the Czech viewers registers the progressive tendency to revolution that accompanies the regressive tendency to fascism; perhaps the very transparency of the fascist aim implies that revolutionary action might still arise from the fallout of the film itself. Certainly this transparency challenges attempts to reduce the film to the status of a fetish—a series of narcotizing images that forestall cognition. As such, this transparency suggests a potential use of the film to foster freedom—an ongoing critical inquiry into the often unexamined status quo. Still, this potential can scarcely recommend reproducible art like film as an unproblematic vehicle of liberation, especially given the fate of the prisoners at Terezín.

Given the use of reproducible art by fascist regimes, Adorno championed an autonomous art that refused familiar aesthetic conventions; he insisted this refusal could spur cognition and thereby promote the urge to freedom over the opposing urge to fetishism. Yet in the present day the increasing demand for reproducible art threatens to render the fabrication of autonomous art nearly impossible. The changing conditions of contemporary culture favor a reconsideration of the relation that Adorno posited between reproducible and autonomous art. In fact, the writings of Adorno himself seem to support such a reconsideration. In his essay "On Tradition" Adorno identifies two opposing attitudes in twentieth-century art toward the artistic traditions of the past. While some artists align themselves with tradition in the name of eternal aesthetic values, others depart from tradition to join movements ostensibly devoted to total originality. For Adorno, both of these positions are problematic, for "to insist on the absolute absence of tradition is as naive as the obstinate insistence on it. Both are ignorant of the past that persists in their allegedly pure relation to objects; both are unaware of the dust and the debris that clouds their allegedly clear

vision."[40] Rather than subscribing to either position, then, Adorno insists that art must refute tradition as a useless relic of the past while simultaneously referencing that tradition as its source of inspiration in the present: "Only that which inexorably denies tradition," Adorno maintains, "may once again retrieve it."[41] Significantly, with these comments Adorno reflects specifically upon autonomous art, but I believe that they now apply to reproducible art as well; after all, in its appeal to popular taste, reproducible art is inevitably trapped between a call to conservatism and a rush to innovation. Perhaps, then, a simultaneous recuperation and rejection of tradition could invest reproducible art with the political potential Adorno ascribes to its autonomous counterpart. Of course, such a suggestion implies a thorough reconception of Adorno, but in light of his own comments on tradition I argue that the most effective way to honor his critical legacy is with an overturning of his critical precepts. But before undertaking such a task, I turn first to the remarks of Adorno himself on reproducible art and its tendency to promote fetishism over freedom.

As fascism consumed much of Europe during World War II, Adorno and his colleague Max Horkheimer found refuge in Los Angeles, where they composed their famous *Dialectic of Enlightenment* in 1944. In the text, the pair indict not only the fascist movements in Europe but also the capitalist economies that form their base; capitalism emerges as the terminus of a failed enlightenment project that proceeds not toward progress but toward ruin, thereby dashing hopes for any imminent birth of a revolutionary subject. Adorno and Horkheimer define enlightenment as the deployment of reason to seek individuation from an inchoate state of nature; through this deployment the movement of thought liberates individuals by granting them dominion over the natural world. "The system that enlightenment has in mind is the form of knowledge that copes most proficiently with the facts and supports the individual most effectively in the mastery of nature. Its principles are the principles of self-preservation."[42] Yet here a paradox emerges, as the very use of reason that liberates individuals also enslaves them; thought is frozen by its own systematizing practices, and individuals fall into mass identification—a return to the morass of nature. This mass identification in turn fosters regimes of domination, and inasmuch as current capitalist regimes represent the most advanced stages of enlightenment, they also employ the most advanced techniques to rob the masses of agency. Techniques of mechanical reproduction offer new aesthetic conventions that consign reproducible art to fetishism and transform it into a commodity palatable to the proletariat. True, a muted resistance to fetishism is still offered by autonomous art, which refuses familiar aesthetic conventions

and thereby preserves a promise of freedom. Yet capitalism thwarts this promise by establishing the supremacy of reproducible art, which blocks any immediate relation between subject and object and forestalls the extension of the individual into the work of art. Given this grim scenario, no impetus to revolutionary action seems possible in the foreseeable future.

In their excursus entitled "The Culture Industry," Adorno and Horkheimer expand upon their exploration of reproducible art and its use to support regimes of domination. The pair argue that the sphere of culture, which once granted the subject an arena to exercise its agency, is now transformed into a culture industry that uses techniques of reproduction to stamp the object with a fetish character. The culture industry therefore promotes a withdrawal of the subject from critical engagement with the object. Regarding cultural production, Adorno and Horkheimer maintain that the culture industry robs the proletariat of their labor by excluding them from any thoughtful participation in the fabrication of cultural commodities; such exclusion "has made the technology of the culture industry no more than the achievement of standardization and mass production, sacrificing whatever involved a distinction between the logic of work and that of the social system."[43] The withdrawal of the masses from active participation in production allows the culture industry to fabricate endless copies of the same fetish item, all differences appearing as mere variations on a common theme: "The same babies grin eternally out of the magazines," the pair observe, "the jazz machine will pound away forever."[44] Regarding cultural reception, Adorno and Horkheimer claim that the schematization of culture discourages the proletariat from the labor of deciphering cultural commodities; the withdrawal of the masses from active consideration of reception results in a stupefied fascination with the fetish that dulls the impulse to action: "Pleasure hardens into boredom because if it is to remain pleasure it must not demand any effort and therefore moves rigorously in the worn grooves of association. No independent thinking must be expected from the audience: the product prescribes every reaction. . . ."[45]

Thus in terms of both production and reception, the culture industry merely increases the distance of subject from object. Hollywood films are exemplary in this respect, for they not only sustain the distance between subject and object, but subsequently sustain the division between self and other. Rather than offering a site of encounter for self and other, these films prohibit any shared experience of the film itself. True, such films do foster a species of identification among individuals, yet this specious identification actually inhibits authentic contact with one another: "Once a member of the audience could see his own wedding in the one shown in the film. Now

the lucky actors on the screen are copies of the same category as every member of the public, but such equality only demonstrates the insurmountable separation of the human elements."[46] The cinema, in other words, seems to forge links between onscreen and offscreen individuals, but the apparent links do not truly connect individuals to one another; rather, they isolate individuals by threatening to efface their individuality. The cinema reduces both onscreen and offscreen figures to identical copies of each other, thereby rendering both sets of figures totally anonymous. Thus Hollywood films inhibit a union of self and other; signature commodities of the culture industry, these films prove potent obstacles to the genesis of communist subjectivity, the coming-to-be of a new world historical subject.

Although written more than 60 years ago, the critique of the culture industry launched by Adorno and Horkheimer is uncannily contemporary; the conditions they describe have only intensified since World War II, especially given the increasing infiltration of electronic media into every aspect of daily life. The most egregious examples of such infiltration, however, have appeared not upon the large screen but the small. The popularity of Reality TV, for instance, has simultaneously intensified the exposure of individuals to the television medium while isolating them even further from the medium itself. The current vogue for Reality TV was inspired by the initial success of *The Real World*, a now legendary program that premiered in 1992 on the cable network MTV; the famous tag line from the opening credits clearly announces the premise of the show itself: "This is the true story of seven strangers, picked to live in a house and have their lives taped to find out what happens when people stop being polite and start getting real."[47] The program promises to capture the lives of its cast with perfect clarity, to establish a direct relation between the cast members and their screen images on TV. This promise, moreover, implies a complementary promise to establish a matching relation between the images and their audience, who thereby gain direct access to the cast members themselves. Yet even the cast members are reluctant to accept such promises without reservation. "We had no idea how it was going to turn out," recalls original cast member Eric Nies on the mediatizing process that turned his daily life into television imagery. "No one told us how they were going to piece it all together. No one showed us how they were going to edit the interviews in with the live action."[48] For Nies, the false promises of the show fostered incredulity if not cynicism; Nies reports feeling isolated from his screen image, as did many of his audience members. Moreover, if both cast and audience are isolated from the image, they are also isolated from one another, for the image provides them no common ground of interaction.

Reality TV widens the distance between subject and object as it simultaneously amplifies the division between self and other; through this double alienation, Reality TV offers little hope for the media to engender a revolutionary new form of subject.

Despite its promises, then, Reality TV upholds the fears of Adorno and Horkheimer that media technology fosters the enslavement, rather than the emancipation, of the proletariat. Such fears, in turn, attest to the instability that continues to characterize the relation of subjectivity to performance. The culture industry supplies the masses with no point of entry into the imagery that it offers to their view. And because the mechanism of the culture industry discourages the masses from questioning their relationship to the image, the stream of narcotizing imagery flows on unabated. Reality, in other words, continues to fly from the referent, and the coexistence of both progressive and regressive tendencies within culture industry artifacts ensures that each step toward the disclosure of social conflicts is accompanied by another step away. The insights that might lead to a resolution of these conflicts traverse the horizon of the intelligible, and efforts to recall them seemed doomed to frustration. Yet if the artifacts of the culture industry display paradoxical urges toward both fetishism and freedom, then perhaps their value lies not in solving the puzzle of this paradox, but instead in wrestling with paradox itself. To find utility in paradox is to take a cue from Adorno, who during the darker days of the past century warned that the time was not ripe to attempt their final resolution. Of course, to champion struggle with the paradoxes embedded in reproducible rather than autonomous art is to risk a serious alteration to the theories of Adorno himself, but perhaps the ubiquity of reproducible art today makes this a risk worth taking. At any rate, however, the call of Adorno to seek an ongoing engagement with paradox marks a transition from the Modern to the Postmodern eras, so an exploration of an artwork that fosters this engagement seems a fit way to wrap up the present study.

The 1998 Peter Weir film *The Truman Show*—a film that, scarcely coincidentally, takes Reality TV as its focus—seems to carry the alienation of individual from image to its limit—a point so extreme that individual and image actually collapse into each other. Yet in straining toward this limit the film paradoxically holds hope for an escape from this collapse, one that may also hold hope for an eventual coming-to-be of a new revolutionary subject. The film revolves around the title figure Truman Burbank, a young man played by Jim Carrey who has unwittingly lived his entire life before a television audience. Truman's home, Seahaven Island, is actually a huge domed soundstage populated by thousands of actors; even Truman's family

and friends are performers who make daily appearances on the show and therefore in his life. Under the dome, Truman remains under constant surveillance from the cameras secretly installed in his home, in his car, even in the buttons on the clothing of his colleagues. Truman, in other words, has been entirely subsumed by the televisual medium—a situation the film presents as frankly untenable. Truman is depicted as the hapless victim of a media industry run amok, a depiction that emerges clearly during a talk show segment featuring an interview with show producer Christof, played by Ed Harris. When a caller accuses Christof of incarcerating Truman in his soundstage home, the producer replies that Truman "could leave at any time. If his was more than just a vague ambition, if he was absolutely determined to discover the truth, there's no way we could prevent him. I think what distresses you, really, caller, is that ultimately Truman prefers his 'cell' as you call it."[49] Yet as the film unfolds and Truman learns the truth of his condition, he also begins to resist his incarceration. The film, in other words, transforms Truman into a hero who refuses his subsumption by the media. This refusal carries a radical potential—indeed, one perhaps more radical than that suggested by the film itself.

By upholding Truman as its hero, the film calls for an unmasking of the threat posed by the media industry. Of course, the fact that this call is itself issued by the media industry renders it suspect. Hollywood films discourage inquiry into the labor involved in either their production or reception, so any insights into the machinations of the medium are nearly impossible to glean from them. Truman, in fact, embodies the state required for both the production and reception of the typical Hollywood film, for he is resolutely divided from his image; he has no idea that he is implicated in its production and no idea that he could engage in its reception. Yet paradoxically this withdrawal of Truman from his image coincides with his extension into the image. Truman is effectively one with his image, since every aspect of his life is also an aspect of his image; the same scenario that widens the distance of subject from object closes the distance as well. "While the world he inhabits is in some respects counterfeit," Christof notes in the opening sequence of the film, "there's nothing fake about Truman himself. No scripts; it isn't always Shakespeare, but it's genuine. It's a life."[50] And this first paradox gives way to a second. The conflation of Truman with his image denies him access to his audience but also provides a paradigmatic site of encounter for his audience. Truman is effectively one with his viewers, since everything he knows about himself is also known by his viewers; the same scenario that aggravates the division of self from other mends the division as well. "1.7 billion were there for his birth," announces a promotional spot for the show,

"220 countries tuned in for his first step. The world stood still for that stolen kiss. And as he grew so did the technology. An entire human life recorded on an intricate network of hidden cameras and broadcast live and unedited 24 hours a day seven days a week to an audience around the globe. . . . This is *The Truman Show*!"[51] These two paradoxes may preserve hope for the future emergence of a revolutionary new form of subjectivity—a hope itself paradoxically found in a Hollywood film.

Such hope is found in the possibility that an eventual unraveling of these paradoxes could actually effect a new immanence of subject and object, a new union of self and other. Of course, at the opening of the film Truman is unaware of this possibility; blind to his enslavement, he is also blind to his potential liberation. Yet by the end of the film Truman has acquired the agency to resist his bondage and pursue emancipation. Crucially for an engagement of the paradoxes found in the film, Truman acquires this agency through a jolt to his cognition that forces him to confront a paradox of his own. The inciting incident for this jolt occurs midway through the film, when the actor who once played Truman's father infiltrates the soundstage and confronts Truman on the street. Believing that his father is long dead, Truman must puzzle his way through this apparently impossible event; in so doing he begins to notice the bizarre behavior of other inhabitants of the island. Some residents circle his house each day for no apparent reason, constantly repeating the same mundane activities while other, more sinister figures keep him under constant surveillance. At last sensing something strange about Seahaven Island, Truman seeks escape by plane, bus, and automobile, but finds his way blocked at every turn: all flights are booked, all buses in disrepair, and all roads closed by a leak at the nuclear power plant. At last Truman boards a dinghy to cross the bay and escape to the outside world. Surviving the gale conjured from a computerized weather program, Truman sails toward the horizon until his boat crashes into the sky-blue wall of the giant dome. He abandons his dinghy and walks along the horizon until he discovers a door that opens onto a void, an unknown space that literally exceeds the boundaries of his cognition. Just as Truman starts to exit, however, Christof addresses him from a loudspeaker above:

"Truman," Christof calls to him.

"Who are you?" Truman inquires.

Christof, sounding very much like the voice of God in these final moments, responds: "I am the creator of a television show that gives hope and joy and inspiration to millions."

"Then who am I?"

"You're the star."

"Was nothing real?"

"You were real. That's what made you so good to watch. Listen, Truman. There's no more truth out there than there is in the world I created for you. Same lies, same deceit, but in my world you have nothing to fear. I know you better than you know yourself."

Truman says nothing, but simply stares into the sky, into the camera he now realizes is trained upon him. Growing impatient with his creation, Christof cries: "You can't leave Truman, you belong here, with me. Talk to me. Say something. Say something, Goddammit, you're on television, you're live to the whole world."

Truman replies with the same line he repeats to his next door neighbor upon leaving for work each morning: "In case I don't see you, good afternoon, good evening and good night.[52] Then he takes a bow and exits into the void—a potentially revolutionary maneuver that abruptly brings the film to an end.

I leave Truman—as does the film—at his moment of exit, poised to abandon the only world he has ever known. With the cameras still trained on him, Truman remains subsumed by the televisual medium. But now the cameras capture Truman in a way they never have before, for they capture the moment he finally recognizes his own enslavement to the medium itself. This moment gestures toward promises still unfulfilled: a final resolution of subject and object, self and other. This gesture, in turn, recalls the seemingly irreconcilable oppositions inherent in the film—or perhaps inherent in any artwork. Adorno maintains that every work of art contains both regressive and progressive urges, tendencies toward both fetishism and freedom. These two opposing tendencies converge in the figure of Truman, who, finding himself wholly fetishized, at last can conceive of himself as truly free. An analysis of the film may therefore pursue either regressive or progressive ends. On the one hand, the film portrays Truman as a hero who resists subsumption by the media; this rosy portrayal offers a vision of the future almost certainly false, one that merely strengthens the current regime of fetishism. In succumbing to the seduction of the fetish, the individual falls into a mass identity nearly impossible to resist: "Everything, even the human individual, is converted into the repeatable, replaceable process, into a mere example for the conceptual models of the system," claim Adorno and Horkheimer.[53] On the other hand, however, the film lingers for that last moment on Truman at the edge of the void; this moment implies that when Truman leaves his soundstage he enters a world that holds the possibility of freedom. Noting how

cognition—here manifest as philosophy—can provide a vision of freedom to the future—Adorno and Horkheimer maintain that "philosophy is not synthesis; it is not the fundamental or master science. It is the attempt to resist suggestion, the determination to hang onto intellectual and real freedom."[54] By spurring ongoing cognitive struggle with paradox, then, even a Hollywood film like *The Truman Show* may hold hope for an ultimate coming-to-be of a revolutionary form of subject.

Yet in closing it is crucial to consider the historical fallout of this cognitive struggle, one that here culminates in the exit of Truman through the soundstage door. This final moment of the film forecasts another moment yet to come, a final resolution of the paradoxes embodied by Truman himself. Such resolution is effected by an ongoing movement of thought, which Adorno championed as the only way to resist the lockstep mentality of the status quo. Of course, Adorno held that such resistance still serves the eventual establishment of a disalienated world. In such a world, the instability that plagues the relation of subjectivity to performance would disappear forever. Representation would at last be reconciled to its referent; the subject would rediscover its immanence to the object, and the self would thereby rediscover its union with the other. To this day performance is posited as a site where the subject can at least pose questions about such a world: Can performance offer the subject an intimate connection with its object? Can it forge truly profound bonds between self and other? Can performance, in sum, ever truly offer us the kind of regeneration that we seek? The skepticism of the present day colors current responses to such questions, but Adorno felt such skepticism too. Despite his hope for the fulfillment of the Marxist dream, Adorno admitted that today this hope appears eternally deferred; watching as capital penetrated every interstice of contemporary life, Adorno believed that eternal deferment was perhaps the only means to such preserve hope at all. An ongoing movement of thought, an eternal deferment of fulfillment—both of these conditions characterize the concept of the subject that began to take shape toward the end of the twentieth century. Indeed, this subject, if stripped of the teleological presumptions espoused by Marxist critics, closely resembles the performative subject, one that is fashioned in an endless uptake and articulation of subject positions. Adorno therefore offers a bridge from the Modern to the Postmodern eras, so it is to this era that I at last return in my conclusion.

Conclusion: Queer Horizons—Postmodern Performativity and Political Action

In the last chapter I left Truman Burbank poised on the edge of the void, ready to exit his soundstage home and enter a new world where cameras cannot endlessly capture his image. In stepping through the void, Truman insists that some aspect of himself will heretofore resist total subsumption into his image. Truman, in other words, insists upon the horizon of the intelligible, the gap between self and image that renders the latter perpetually incommensurate to the former. In this study I have suggested that the dawning of the Modern era occurred in tandem with the opening of this gap, but I have also suggested that the era was marked by efforts to close this gap again. In leaving this gap open, therefore, Truman signals a shift into the Postmodern era, one with profound implications for the relation of subjectivity to performance. If Modernity posited an autonomous subject who sought its own image in performance practices, then Postmodernity posits a subject-in-progress who seeks its own constitution in performative acts. Moreover, it is precisely the gap between subjectivity and performance that enables such ongoing constitution. Consider the case of Truman himself. Never an autonomous subject from the beginning, Truman was always inextricably linked to his performances for the camera. Indeed, even after his exit from the soundstage he will remain inseparable from such performances, for he will surely remain in the public eye for the rest of his life. But after his exit Truman can claim that some element of himself always escapes the ambit of performance. Thus while Truman himself will shift with his own shifting performances, no such shifts will ever prove fixed or final. In his flight from the soundstage, then, Truman at last becomes a subject-in-progress.

A Postmodern advocate of performativity will find much to cheer in this flight of Truman from his soundstage home. There no gap existed between

subjectivity and performance, so the identity of Truman was rigidly determined by the powers-that-be that controlled the soundstage itself. But there at the edge of the outside world, Truman discovers just such a gap, and therein he also discovers something like agency, the opportunity to take part in his own articulation of himself. And yet the celebration of this opportunity must be tinged with caution. In the outside world Truman will still be exposed to forces that constrain his capacity for action; while he may now confront those forces with his own efforts at self-fashioning, the constraints ranged against him will render all such efforts ultimately uncertain in their outcome. My conclusion, therefore, is a call to interrogate both the rewards and the risks attendant upon performative conceptions of identity. Within any given set of conditions, which aspects of identity are open to reformulation? What are the criteria for measuring the success of such attempts? And who is permitted to make the attempts in the first place? Such questions are of course vast in scope, and here I will address them only in one specific context. In the following brief analysis I will explore the implications of performative thinking for the discipline of queer theory and its possible approaches to the hot topic of legalized same-sex marriage in the United States. While my insights are perforce limited in their scope, I hope they will incite others to examine Postmodern conceptions of identity in a broader light and to interrogate the implications of performativity theory within a wider range of political circumstances.

The field of study now called queer theory emerged in the 1980's from a rich confluence of feminist, gay and lesbian, poststructuralist, and psychoanalytic modes of criticism. Radical at least in its initial aims, queer theory sought to expose the contingencies that inhere in naturalized notions of sex, gender, and desire. Their stability rendered suitably suspect, these notions were then submitted to rearticulations that disrupted typical assumptions about various forms of sexual identity. In fact, the very term queer theory suggests the drive to rearticulation characteristic of the discipline itself. In a series of texts that laid a great deal of the groundwork for queer theory, Judith Butler proposed replacing terms such as gay and lesbian—terms that connote identities predicated upon a fixed or stable sexual essence—with the term queer. For Butler and others, the critical reconfiguration of this term, long a derisive epithet, implies a corollary reconfiguration of identity itself. Writing in *Excitable Speech*, Butler noted that "the revaluation of terms such as 'queer' suggest that speech can be 'returned' to its speaker in a different form, that it can be cited against its originary purposes, and perform a reversal of effects."[1] Crucial to such a reversal is a performative understanding of identity, for if sexual identities are founded not upon a

fixed and stable essence but instead upon a reiteration of subject positions, then the contingency implied by reiteration suggests the potential for identities to be reiterated otherwise, in ways that challenge the privilege or abjection granted various sexual subjects. "Indeed," Butler famously maintained, "as we think about worlds that might one day become thinkable, sayable, legible, the opening up of the foreclosed and the saying of the unspeakable become part of the very 'offense' that must be committed in order to expand the domain of linguistic survival."[2]

Butler and other leaders of the queer theory movement have therefore argued that with a great deal of courage, a boldly subversive attitude, and a healthy dose of luck, the abject subject positions ascribed to sexual minorities could undergo a transformative resignification; in effect, the abjection that accrued to such positions was potentially open to exchange for a higher degree of social sanction. Significantly, however, these attempts at identity exchange take place within a much broader milieu of commodity exchange now produced and maintained by the circuitry of global capital. The fact that many recent social advances of queer subjects have occurred in the economic rather than the legislative realm attests to the central role of the capitalist economic system in the enfranchisement of sexual minorities. A number of corporations now view queer subcultures as new markets for their commodities; annual Pride Festivals are now dominated by commercial vendors who tout everything from home loans and mobile phones to barbecue sauce and breakfast cereal. Even queers themselves have become commodities for exchange, subjects circulated by corporate conglomerates throughout the network of global capital. A few years ago at the Minneapolis Pride Festival employees from Marshall Fields offered to snap free photos of attendees posed behind a twelve-foot-tall reproduction of an ornate gilt picture frame; with this gesture, Marshall Fields literally granted queer subjects visibility through their appearance within a corporate framing device. This paradigmatically performative act rendered queer subjects first and foremost queer consumers, valued commodities for companies eager to exploit an emergent target market.

I have noted already in my introduction that this complicity between performativity and capital gives me pause. I still find great utility in a theory of the performative articulation of the subject, but to the extent that this articulation depends upon access to the circuitry of economic exchange, I am dismayed by the fact that class differences can limit such access and thereby limit the performative articulation of subjectivity itself. I argue that such limitations call for a reformulation of queer theory, one that could attend to the intersecting operations of both class and sexuality. Such a

reformulation would require a significant shift in the current relation between class-based and sex-based politics, and the present political climate of the United States renders the prospect of this shift uncertain at best. Yet given the even greater uncertainty of the global political landscape—in which the role of unequal economic exchange as a precipitator of violence is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore—I maintain that a politics of sexuality bears an ethical imperative to attend to its intersections with a politics of class. Indeed, I believe that the future viability of queer theory may hinge upon its capacity to address these and other critical intersections with force and rigor.

To illustrate the critical dimensions provided by a queer theory newly attentive to issues of both sex and class, I want to examine the contemporary political fight over the legalization of same-sex marriage. This fight offers a fertile ground for queer analysis, since marriage itself operates in a performative fashion. The right to marry has traditionally extended only to couples composed of one man and one woman—a composition that, at least tacitly, supposedly identifies the couples as heterosexual. Yet recently the U.S. legal system has been rocked by efforts to win marriage rights for couples comprising two men or two women—a composition that, again tacitly, supposedly identifies the couples as homosexual. Such efforts have encountered fierce resistance, and the clashes have cast the legal arena as a field in which sexual identities are defined by access to the performative force ascribed to the utterance "I do." A first consideration for queer theorists, then, might involve the fallout of this force upon same-sex couples, and in fact queer critics Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick have already turned their attention to this topic. In their introduction to *Performativity and Performance*, the pair emphasize the performative nature of the marriage vow but also stress the ways in which limited access to this vow is marshaled to preserve the abject status of queer subjects. Particularly painful, the pair maintain, is the coercion felt by queers called to witness an act from which they are always excluded: "Any queer who's struggled to articulate to friends or family why we love them but just *don't want to be at their wedding*, knows from the inside the dynamic of compulsory witness that the marriage ceremony invokes."[3] Indeed, the pair maintain that it is perhaps the silent witness of queer subjects that gives marriage today its particular performative force: "The bare, negative, potent but undiscretionary . . . fact of our physical presence—maybe even *especially* the presence of those people whom the institution of marriage defines itself by excluding—ratifies and recruits the legitimacy of its privilege."[4]

Perhaps the recent drive to extend marriage rights to same-sex couples is, at least in part, an effort to relieve the suffering Parker and Sedgwick ascribe

to the queer subject. In this view, then, the struggle to extend marriage rights would constitute a queer struggle, one that seeks to redefine sexual identities by redefining the political structures that police them. Certainly this expansion of access to the performative power of marriage would offer queer subjects a new way to legitimize their relationships, and certainly this legitimation, while political in its provenance, would prove profoundly personal in its effects. Yet before queer subjects hail the prospect of same-sex marriage as a sort of wholesale leveling of difference between privilege and abjection, they may wish to consider the ways in which marriage as an institution affects the politics of both sex and class. A second consideration for queer theorists, then, might involve the ways in which the marital act—even if open to both same-sexed and opposite-sexed couples—still proves selective in the privileges it grants. A new queer analysis newly attentive to both sex-based and class-based politics could explore the economic implications of marriage itself: inheritance laws, taxation rates, and insurance availability all play crucial roles in the determination of economic status, and all are affected by marital status. Perhaps more importantly, however, this analysis could also explore the ways in which the links between economic and marital status work to the advantage of some and the disadvantage of others. In *Profit and Pleasure* Rosemary Hennessy notes that marriage affords the middle classes noticeable financial benefits but adds that "many tax and welfare regulations have made it more economical for the poor not to marry. For those earning minimum wages or living below poverty level, the risk is that even a working husband's earnings may mean that a family exceeds the level to qualify for social welfare programs."[5] And since marriage has typically perpetuated the class differences vital to the operation of capitalism, Hennessey is wary of efforts to extend traditional marriage to same-sex couples: "Gay marriages that redefine sexuality only in terms of rights for gays . . . leave unquestioned or even indirectly promote capitalism's historical stake in the relations among family, labor, and consumption."[6]

So if queer theorists wish to address critics like Hennessey and attend to both sex-based and class-based interests, then one way to begin would be for formulate other ways to queer the institution of marriage—not only by extending the performative power of marriage to same-sex couples, but also by inquiring into the privileges granted by that power regardless of the sort of couples allowed to wield it. Yet the surging interest in winning the right to same-sex marriage has largely marginalized discussion of the economic ramifications of shifts in marital status. To wrap up, then, I turn briefly to the efforts of Gay Shame—a radical organization based in San Francisco, a recent hot spot in the battle for same-sex marriage. The performative efforts

of Gay Shame to foreground the economic aspects of this battle illustrate both an attempt to intervene in the current marriage debate as well as the limits faced by such attempts at the present moment.

On February 12, 2004, San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom authorized city hall to begin granting marriage licenses to same sex-couples; gay and lesbian partners descended in droves on city hall, often waiting in line for hours or even days to get a license. By the time the California Supreme Court halted the proceedings in order to rule on the legitimacy of the licenses, more than 4000 same-sex couples had been married by the city of San Francisco. Certainly such acts of requesting and receiving marriage licenses constituted powerful performative gestures; at a time when the licenses carried very little legal weight, the mere sight of couples camping on street corners in order to get married significantly raised the stakes in the debate over same-sex marriage. Yet while gays and lesbians across the nation hailed events in San Francisco, the local group Gay Shame protested this performative revision of gay and lesbian identities. The Gay Shame website claims that its members "will not be satisfied with a commercialized gay identity that denies the intrinsic links between queer struggle and challenging power."[7] Clearly for Gay Shame, the pursuit of marriage rights fails to challenge power in any radical way, for it signifies a mainstreaming of gay and lesbian politics that disallows critique of the institutional bases of marriage itself: "Whatever happened to the time when being queer was an automatic challenge to the disgusting, oppressive, patriarchal institution of holy matrimony? Now it seems queers are so desperate to get their taste of straight privilege that they'll camp out in the rain with the hopes that the state will finally sanction their carnal coupling."[8]

The members of Gay Shame vent much of their fury against Mayor Newsom, who, they claim, decided to issue same-sex marriage licenses solely to court favor from affluent gay and lesbian voters. This charge of pandering to the gay and lesbian upper crust has dogged Newsom for some time. At the 2003 Pride Parade six activists from Gay Shame jumped a barricade and joined the procession just in front of then-candidate Newsom himself. The activists unfurled a banner that read "Queer Mutiny—Not Consumer Unity" and were promptly arrested and charged with three felony counts, including charges of threatening a public official; the police on hand reportedly thought that poles attached to other banners were about to be used as weapons. Yet while the legality of this action may be open to question, its status as a performative intervention seems more certain; rather than allowing Parade participants to overlook differences in the gay and lesbian community, it redefined the Parade itself as a site of struggle and internal dissent.

Significantly, however, Gay Shame did not attempt to stage an intervention into the 2004 Pride Parade, a fact that suggests its more recent protests against same-sex marriage largely fall upon deaf ears. Recently married same-sex partners dominated the 2004 Parade and apparently overshadowed more traditional aspects of the celebration. "Sunday's Pride Parade was the same treasure box of eye candy that it's been for decades," reported the *San Francisco Chronicle*. "All the standard stuff was out there—flogging demonstrations by S&M lovers, buff dancers grinding on a beer company float, chain-metal shirt vendors. Been there, done that," the report continued. "This year, married couples were the stars."[9] The married couples set the political agenda of the Parade as well. Many couples marched with oversized copies of their marriage licenses—a performative bid, perhaps, to equate the magnitude of the licenses with the magnitude of winning them legal recognition. Newsom, at this point the duly elected Mayor, received high praise for authorizing the licenses in the first place; the *Chronicle* observed that unlike his encounter with protesters the previous year, "Newsom was loudly cheered as the patron saint of gay marriages—he was one of the Parade's grand marshals—for his move to begin certifying marriages for gays and lesbians in February."[10]

Given the current popularity of same sex marriage initiatives among a wide range of gay and lesbian constituencies, the fact that Gay Shame did not agitate against such initiatives at the 2004 Pride Parade scarcely seems surprising. Unlike the resolutely performative act of joining the 2003 Parade—an act that established a queer subject position attentive to both class and sexual politics—the absence of such an act at the 2004 Parade forecasts future hurdles for groups like Gay Shame to overcome. And this situation prompts me to pose questions to queer theory on both the "micro" and the "macro" levels. On the micro level, regarding the issue of same-sex marriage, I would formulate the question as follows: Once we have exposed the ways in which the right to marry performatively authorizes certain types of subjects, do we expand the range of subjects who enjoy this right, or do we explore the ways in which this right, irrespective of those who enjoy it, grants privilege to some subjects while denying it to others? And on the macro level, regarding the future of queer theory as a discipline, I would formulate a similar, though of course broader question: Once we have exposed the performative power of various institutional structures, do we focus upon expanding the embrace of those structures, or upon exploring new ways to configure the structures themselves?

Multiple explorations of this sort are needed, and some are already underway; I am thinking here of queer approaches to the intersections of sex and

gender with a variety of other identity valences—with racial and ethnic identifications, with religious affiliation or the lack thereof, with geographical influences both local and global in their scope. Here, however, I will advocate renewed attention to the particularities of class, especially since many critics from the left level charges of inattention to class difference against all modes of Postmodern thought, including queer theorists who champion performative conceptions of identity. Yet against such critics I believe that Postmodern thinking is not fundamentally inimical to rigorous examinations of class difference; more, I maintain that Postmodern thinking could be employed in calls for economic equality, just as it has been deployed in calls for equality among differently sexed and gendered subject positions. Since a Postmodern understanding of identity views such subject positions as interlocking performative productions, it is uniquely equipped to consider the ways that various valences of identity mutually inform one another. The fact that many Postmodern critics have yet to examine the implications of class difference in their explorations of identity makes my call for them to do so all the more trenchant—or at least, this is my hope.

To be frank, these Postmodern critics might have much to gain by exploring the work of their Modern predecessors, some of whom did seek to interrogate both class and sexual identities simultaneously. Mary Wollestonecraft wrote in 1792 that the bourgeois revolution in France should inspire the emancipation of women in England; Friedrich Engels wrote in 1884 that only a proletarian revolution in the future could effect this emancipation once and for all.[11] Yet even these efforts were grounded in notions of specific and singular aspects of identity that subsumed their more ephemeral counterparts; for Wollestonecraft an originary biological essence stamped the individual with sexual difference, and for Engels a teleological drive to human fulfillment fueled the ongoing class struggle.[12] Yet as I have sought to suggest in this study, the conception of identity based on such fixed and stable qualities proved unstable and crisis-prone throughout the Modern era. This conception proves even more untenable in the Postmodern era, but perhaps a new vision of identity, one based not upon essence but instead upon performative production, might turn this instability to its advantage. An insistence on the contingency of identity implied by such performative production will not only allow new inquiry into the intersections of, say, sex and class, but will also allow further debate over other intersections of identity in the future.

I closed each of the preceding chapters with a series of crucial questions from the Modern era, questions regarding the relation of subjectivity to performance. That we are the heirs of this era is evinced by the fact that I still

hear these questions asked, in manifold forms, by pupils and peers alike: Does performance capture the truth of subjectivity? Does it allow the discernment of that truth therein? Does it offer an experience of liberation? Of revelation? Of regeneration? Our antecedents in the Modern era struggled to find definitive answers to these questions, and indeed some still engage in such struggles to this day. Yet I, a product of my own Postmodern era, find more lasting value in the questions themselves. Rather than seeking their closure with final answers, I want to keep these questions, like the horizon of the intelligible itself, always open to continued exploration.

Notes

1. THE PERFORMING SUBJECT: IDENTITY AND REPRESENTATION IN THE MODERN AND THE POSTMODERN ERAS

1. Oliverio, James, Andrew Quay, and Joella Walz. "Facilitating Real-time Intercontinental Collaboration with Emergent Grid Technologies: *Dancing Beyond Boundaries*." Digital Worlds Institute. http://www.digitalworlds.ufl.edu. 5.
2. Ibid., 2.
3. Lyotard, Jean-François. *The Postmodern Condition*. Trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi. (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1984). XXIV; Hassan, Ihab. "Toward a Concept of Postmodernism." In *Postmodernism: A Reader*. (New York, Columbia University Press). 153; Vattimo, Gianni. "The Structure of Artistic Revolutions." In *Postmodernism: A Reader*. (New York: Columbia University Press). 116.
4. Aristotle. *Poetics*. Trans. Malcolm Heath. (New York: Penguin, 1996). 6.
5. Ibid., 10.
6. Plato. *Republic*. Trans. C. M. A. Grube. Revised by C. D. C. Reeve. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992). 274.
7. Ibid., 278.
8. Austin, J. L. *How to Do Things with Words*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962). 60.
9. Ibid., 61.
10. Derrida, Jacques. "Signature Event Context." In *Margins of Philosophy*. Trans. Alan Bass. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982). 325. Derrida emphasizes the citationality of language from the outset of his essay. He begins by refuting the view of language as a communicative tool employed by a knowing subject for the purpose of transmitting individual thought; Derrida argues that this concept of language as filled with a "presence" of subjective intention is actually predicated upon the possibility of "absence," the absence of either the addressor or the addressee in a given linguistic exchange. For Derrida, the language employed in such an exchange would still carry its potential for functioning even in the absence of one or both partners within the interaction;

while the original intention of the interaction may be occluded by such an absence, the language employed could still be extracted from the scenario in question and grafted onto any number of subsequent linguistic scenarios. Language therefore arises not from an original context determined by subjective intention, but from a condition of fundamental citationality. Indeed, communication is for Derrida merely a byproduct of language, or indeed of semiosis more generally; the transmission of meaning occurs only within the larger matrix of iterable semiotic figures. Derrida refers to this matrix as "writing," not in its usual sense as visible marks that communicate meaning, but as the designator of the entire field of citable signs; "writing" thus allows a proliferation of communicative contexts ungrounded by any subjective intention:

> Every sign, linguistic or nonlinguistic, spoken or written, as a small or large unity, can be cited, put between quotation marks; thereby it can break with every given context, and engender infinitely new contexts in an absolutely nonsaturable fashion. This does not suppose that the mark is valid outside its context, but on the contrary that there are only contexts without a center of absolute anchoring. (320)

11. Ibid., 329.
12. Foucault begins *The Order of Things*. (New York: Vintage, 1973) not with a jump right into the thick of Modernity, but with an exploration of its two historical precedents—the "Renaissance" of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the "Classical era" of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In his analysis of the Renaissance, Foucault examines the production of knowledge at that time and makes the initially surprising claim that representation as it is currently understood did not exist during the Renaissance, for no clear distinction separated "things" from the "words" used to designate them. Rather, things and words were linked by a common essence of meaning—emanating from Divinity itself—that left its imprint or impression on their surfaces. Foucault refers to this mutual mark as "resemblance" to distinguish it from later notions of representation; the resemblance of these marks to one another maintained the link between things and words, thereby enabling cognition and communication:

    > There is no difference between the visible marks that God has stamped upon the surface of the earth, so that we may know its inner secrets, and the legible words that the Scriptures, or the sages of Antiquity, have set down in the books preserved for us by tradition. The relation to these texts is of the same nature as the relation to things; in both cases there are signs that must be discovered. (33)

    Around the beginning of the seventeenth century, Foucault notes a major shift in epistemology that marks the advent of the Classical era. It is in this era—the direct antecedent of Modernity—that a radical rupture between words and things shatters the intimacy they enjoyed during the Renaissance. No longer united by a common mark of resemblance, words and things now exist on either side of an unbridgeable gulf that significantly redefines their relation to

one another. During the Classical era, words represent the things they designate, but will no longer share the essence of meaning contained within the things themselves. Yet despite this separation, the relationship of words to things remains surprisingly stable, for an elaborate system of correspondences allows representations to reveal, completely and transparently, the nature of the reality that they make visible; words are no longer conjoined to the things they reference, but they will reflect the image of those things without distortion. Furthermore, this perfect linkage between the real and the representational enables a precise ordering of experience within structures of signification; at this point the table or taxonomy appears as the principal model of Classical thought—a representational mapping of the real that exactly mirrors the figure of the universe itself:

> . . . Since (the system) does not accord that which is signified a nature different from that accorded to the sign, meaning cannot be anything more than the totality of signs arranged in their progression; it will be given in the complete table of signs. But . . . the complete network of signs is linked together and articulated according to patterns proper to its meaning; the table of signs will be the image of the things. (67)

13. Ibid., 239.
14. Ibid., 326.
15. Ibid., 343.
16. Hugo, Victor. Preface to "*Cromwell*." In *Dramatic Theory and Criticism: Greeks to Grotowski*. Ed. Bernard Dukore. (New York: Holt, 1974). 684.
17. Ibid., 685. Emphasis mine.
18. Strindberg, August. Preface to "*Miss Julie*." In *Dramatic Theory and Criticism: Greeks to Grotowski*. Ed. Bernard Dukore. (New York: Holt, 1974). 566.
19. Ibid., 567. Emphasis mine.
20. Apollinaire, Guillaume. Preface to "*The Breasts of Tiresias*." In *Modern French Drama: The Avant-Garde, Dada, and Surrealism*. Eds. Michael Benedikt and George E. Wellworth. (New York: Dutton, 1964). 56.
21. Ibid., 59. Emphasis mine. With the invocation of Surrealism I should distinguish between Modernity understood as a historical era and Modernism understood as a group of artistic movements that emerged at a defining moment within that historical era. As Foucault suggests, Modernity is marked by the unstable relation between the representational and the real. For my purposes, Modernism is marked by an urge to overcome this instability—an urge exhibited, for instance, in the efforts to replace obsolete modes of representation seen in Italian Futurism, to smash inherited modes of representation witnessed in the efforts of Dadaism, or to synthesize conscious and unconscious modes of representation exhibited in Surrealism. Seen in this light, the artistic movements often grouped under the heading Modernism register both an increasing frustration with the Modern deployment of representation and a new hope that a revolution in the strategies of deployment will once again establish an organic link between representation and the real. The fading of this hope in the face of

continued frustrations would therefore constitute the condition for an emergent Postmodernity.

22. "The Subject and Power." In *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. Ed. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982). 208–226, 208.
23. Ibid., 212.
24. Ibid., 220.
25. Habermas, Jürgen. *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*. Trans. Frederick G. Lawrence. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996). 276–286.
26. Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. (New York: Routledge, 1990). 136.
27. Ibid., 148.
28. Jameson, Frederic. *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990). 322.
29. Ibid., 330.
30. Butler, Judith. *The Psychic Life of Power*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997). 11.
31. Ibid., 29.
32. Eagleton, Terry. *After Theory*. (New York: Basic Books, 2003). 46; Zizek, Slavoj. *Welcome to the Desert of the Real: Five Essays on September 11 and Related Dates*. (New York: Verso, 2002). 101; Case, Sue-Ellen. *The Domain-Matrix: Performing Lesbian at the end of Print Culture*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996). 174.

2. DANCING WITH THE SUN KING: THE PERFORMANCE OF PRIVILEGE IN THE REIGN OF LOUIS XIV

1. de Benserade, Isaac. *Le Ballet de la Nuit, Les Ouevres de Monsieur de Benserade: Tome II*. (Paris: Charles de Sercy, 1697). 14. All translations of de Benserade are my own.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 33.
4. Ibid., 34.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., 43.
7. Ibid., 51.
8. Ibid., 61.
9. Ibid., 68.
10. Ibid., 70.
11. The years of struggle between royalty and the nobility incited Louis to seek multiple means of ensuring the stability of the aristocratic hierarchy. In addition to

the sanctioned performances at court, for instance, Louis also undertook an investigation of the legitimacy of aristocratic titles. When assumed the reins of government in 1661—the year that Mazarin, the actual "power behind the throne" passed away—one of his first acts was to demand a massive survey of the noble classes. Jay M. Smith notes in his book *The Culture of Merit* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996) that "in each province, every family of dubious status had to submit proof to the local intendant that its 'nobility' had been formally recognized in 1560 or before. Families whose pretensions had begun only after that date would be declared *roturier* and placed back on the tax roles" (138). In 1669, Louis called for the creation of a series of catalogues that listed all aristocratic names and coats of arms; when completed, the volumes were deposited in the royal library, where they served as the official register of the French nobility.

12. Lawrenson, T. E. *The French Stage and Playhouse in the XVII Century*. (New York: AMS Press, 1986). 5.
13. Ibid., 7.
14. Beaujoyeulx, Balthasar de. *Ballet Comique de la Reine*. (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts, 1982). 9. Translations are mine.
15. Ibid., 64.
16. Ibid.
17. Arnott, Peter D. *An Introduction to the French Theatre*. (Totowa, NJ: Rowman, 1977). 22.
18. Ibid., 24.
19. de Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Trans. Steven Rendel. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). 117.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid., 118.
24. Arbeau, Thoinot. *Orchésographie*. Trans. Mary Stewart Evans. (New York: Dover, 1967). 12. The 1572 wedding of the future king Henri IV to Marguerite of Valois demonstrates the volatility of aristocratic marriage at the time—not only the crucial role marriage played in securing social stability, but also the dangers involved in undertaking the marital transaction. The Protestant Henri of Navarre was ostensibly betrothed to the Catholic Marguerite in order to facilitate a peace between warring religious factions, yet the wedding merely served as pretext for the infamous St. Bartholomew Day massacre. The mother of the bride, none other than the redoubtable Catherine de Medici, masterminded a plot to assassinate notable Protestants gathered for the wedding ceremony. The violence spread quickly, however—first to the streets of Paris and later to outlying provinces. Henri himself was forced to convert to Catholicism at the point of a sword; he later recanted, but converted again upon his accession to the French throne.

25. Ibid., 51.
26. Ibid., 53.
27. Ibid., 54.
28. Ibid. In her notes to the text, Mary Stewart Evans translates *basse dance* as "low dance," and describes it as a dance performed with feet kept close to the ground. She gives the following translations for the steps of the *basse dance*: a *révérence* is "a low bow, or in the case of a lady a curtsey"; a *branle* is "an oscillation or shaking movement"; and a *reprise* is a "resumption," or a side to side motion of the knees, feet, or toes (199). Arbeau describes *simples* as alternating right and left steps that bring the feet together between each step; *doubles* are similarly alternating steps that do not require the feet to come together (55–56). Arbeau also explains that a *congé* is a "taking leave," a bow and return to the starting point of the dance in order to begin the next section (53–54). Finally, a *pied en l'air* is a lifting of a foot off the floor; a *saut moyen* is a moderate leap off the ground, and a *posture* is a move in which "the dancer springs off both feet and places one in front of the other, each supporting the body equally" (89).
29. Feuillet, Raoul Auger, *Chorégraphie, ou L'art de Decrire la Dance*. (Bologna: Forni, 1970). III. Translations are mine.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., 6.
32. Ibid., 9.
33. Ibid., 11.
34. Ibid., 4.
35. A *pas droit* is a step with the right foot; a *pas ouvert* a wide or open step; a *pas rond* a step that makes a circle; a *pas tortillé* a step with a twist or wiggle; and a *pas battu* a step with a shuffle. Feuillet provides definitions for the following movements: a *plié* "is when one bends the knees"; an *elevé* "is when one stretches" or stands on tiptoe; a *sauté* "is when one jumps into the air"; and a *cabriollé* "is when while jumping, the legs beat one against the other" (2).
36. Saint-Simon, Duc de. *Memoirs of Louis XIV and the Regency, Vol. 1*. Trans. Bayle St. John. (Akron, OH: St. Dunstan Society, 1901). 348.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid., 173.
39. Ibid., 174.
40. Wendy Hilton. *Dance of Court and Theatre: The French Noble Style 1690–1725*. (Princeton: Princeton Book Company, 1981). 87.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid., 11.
43. Ibid., 14.
44. Ibid., 11.
45. Ibid., 14.
46. Molière. *The Citizen Turned Gentleman*. In *The Plays of Molière: Volume VII*. Trans. A. R. Waller. (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1926). 91.

47. Ibid., 98.
48. Ibid., 169.
49. Ibid., 223.
50. Lough, John. *Paris Theatre Audiences in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1957). 108.
51. Ibid., 107.
52. Ibid., 128.
53. Ibid., 132.
54. Goldsmith, Elizabeth. *Exclusive Conversations: The Art of Interaction in Seventeenth Century France*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988). 8.
55. Ibid.
56. Faret, Nicolas. *L'Honneste Homme ou l'Art de Plaire à la Cour*. (Paris: P.U.F., 1630). 15. Translations are mine.
57. Ibid., 46.
58. Ibid., 73.
59. de Courtin, Antoine. *The Rules of Civility or Certain Ways of Deportment Observed in France*. Anonymous English translation. (London: J. Martyn, 1671). 4.
60. Ibid., 8.
61. Ibid., 9.
62. Ibid., 58.
63. de Callières, François. *Du Bon et du Mauvais Usage dans les Manières de S'Exprimer*. (Paris: Claude Barbin, 1693). 5. Translations are mine.
64. Ibid., 8.
65. Ibid., 229.
66. Molière. *The Critique of the School for Wives*. In *Eight Plays by Molière*. Trans. Morris Bishop. (Mattituck, NY: Aeonian Press, 1986). 115.
67. Ibid., 113.
68. Ibid., 123.
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid.
71. Molière. *The Versailles Impromptu*. In *Eight Plays by Molière*. Trans. Morris Bishop. (Mattituck, NY: Aeonian Press, 1986). 128.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid., 139.
74. Ibid., 146.
75. Ibid., 132.
76. Ibid., 149.
77. Ibid. While the advancing age and increasing corpulence of the monarch likely contributed to his retirement from the *Ballets de Cour*, Arnott offers another possible explanation. Referring to an unfortunately uncredited anecdote, Arnott suggests that the king withdrew from the *Ballets* after the 1669 premiere of the Racine tragedy *Britannicus*. The emperor Nero

appeared as the villain of the tragedy, and Arnott argues that "there is some evidence that Louis XIV was aware of the parallels that might be drawn between the Roman tyrant and the Sun King. Contemporary gossip alleged that Louis, mindful of the fact that Nero had been a famous amateur theatrical performer, gave up dancing in the court ballets after *Britannicus* appeared" (80). Such court gossip, if it is to be trusted, offers evidence that even the monarch was anxious to close any rift between self and self-enactment.

3. "SNIP SNIP HERE, SNIP SNIP THERE, AND A COUPLE OF TRA-LA-LA'S": THE RISE AND FALL OF THE CASTRATO SINGER

1. *Farinelli*. Dir. Gerard Corbiau. Distributed by Sony Pictures Classics. 1995.
2. Ibid.
3. Heriot, Angus. *The Castrati in Opera*. (London: Secker and Warburg, 1956). 23.
4. Ibid., 21. For a full account of the appearance and disappearance of castrati, see the second chapter, "The Rise and Fall of the Castrati."
5. Barbier, Patrick. *The World of the Castrati*. Trans. Margaret Crosland. (London: Souvenir, 1996). 1–2.
6. Ibid., 137.
7. Ibid., 242.
8. Deleuze, Gilles. "Music and Ritornello." In *The Deleuze Reader*. Ed. Constantin V. Boundas. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993. 201–3). 201.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., 202.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Laqueur, Thomas. *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990). 26.
15. Ibid., 33.
16. Daston, Lorraine, and Katherine Park. "The Hermaphrodite and the Orders of Nature." GLQ 1. 4 (1995): 420– 438, 423.
17. Rosselli, John. "The Castrati as a Professional Group and a Social Phenomenon, 1550–1850." Acta *Musicologica* 60.2 (1988): 143–179. 150.
18. Gregory of Nyssa. "On Virginity." In *Saint Gregory of Nyssa: Ascetical Works*. Trans. Virginia Woods Callahan. (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press, 1967). 3–78, 27.
19. Ibid., 46.
20. Ibid.

21. Boethius, Anicius Manlius Severinus. *Fundamentals of Music*. Trans. Calvin M. Bower. Ed. Claude Palisca. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989). 9.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid., 10.
24. Unfortunately, the surviving text of *Fundamentals of Music* appears fragmentary; while Boethius promises to treat the music of the spheres in detail, this section is now lost. More detailed descriptions of this heavenly music do appear, however, in texts that predate the Christian era—texts Boethius cites as his principal sources. See, for instance, the vision of the warrior Er recounted in the *Republic* of Plato (Trans. C. M. A. Grube. Revised C. D. C. Reeve. [Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992]. 287–289) and the dream of Scipio contained in the *Republic* of Cicero (In *The Republic and The Laws*. Trans. Niall Rudd. [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998]. 86–94).
25. Alighieri, Dante. *The Divine Comedy. Volume III: Paradise*. Trans. Mark Musa. (New York: Penguin, 1984). 332.
26. Ibid., 333.
27. Ibid., 334.
28. Rosselli. "The Castrati as a Professional Group." 164.
29. For a detailed exploration of the shift from seventeenth- to eighteenth-century operatic treatments of sexuality, see Wendy Heller's "Reforming Achilles: Gender, Opera Seria and the Rhetoric of the Enlightened Hero." *Early Music* 26.4 (1998): 562+. Interestingly, Heller invokes the work of Laqueur to link the increasing idealization of sex in opera to the shift from a one-sex to a two-sex model of sexual difference. Heller emphasizes the gender play involved in the eroticism of seventeenth-century opera and offers it as evidence of the fluid sexual identity implied by the one-sex model: "In its early decades," Heller notes, "opera seems to have echoed the concerns of its audience by taking particular delight in playing with the transmutability of gender categories, of asking, and then answering in various intriguing ways, whether men and women can turn into each other. . . ." (562). She then argues that the idealization of heroic operatic figures—a process instituted by librettists like Pietro Metastasio—introduced characters more consistent with a nascent two-sex model, at least insofar as such characters conformed more closely to idealized visions of sexual difference—the ascription of courage and valor to men, for instance, or modesty and chastity to women. Heller cites the 1736 *Achille in Sciro* by Metastasio as a prime example of this shift to the two-sex model. In this retelling of a popular ancient myth, Achilles—masquerading as a woman in order to avoid involvement in the Trojan War—is overcome by his own manly valor at the sound of war trumpets and thereby betrays his true identity to his fellow soldier Ulysses. I am not wholly convinced by the arguments launched by Heller. Clearly, changing definitions of sexual difference may have contributed to changing characterizations in opera, but I am not certain that such changes were firmly in place by the first decades of the eighteenth century. Certainly differences between male and female operatic characters did not prevent

them from exhibiting a common conception of love as a mutually ennobling quality of both men and women. Moreover, Heller offers information on the *Achille in Sciro* that undermines assertions of a shift to the two-sex model. Heller notes that "the role of Achilles in the various settings of Metastasio's opera was assigned with equal frequency to both castratos and female sopranos" and speculates that the frequent casting of women as Achilles may attest to "the considerable discomfort that 18th-century audiences felt with cross-dressed men, even when played by castratos" (562). Yet while the discomfort with cross dressing may suggest an urge to divide men from women on the basis of a nascent two-sex model, the very fact that both women and castrati were employed in the portrayal of a male figure suggests that this model—one more likely to insist upon a sexual congruence of performer and character—was not yet firmly in place.

30. Giustiniani, Vincenzo. "Discorso sopra la Musica." Included with *Il Desiderio, or Concerning the Playing Together of Various Musical Instruments*. Ercole Bottrigari. (American Institute of Musicology, 1962). 68.
31. Ibid., 69.
32. Ibid.
33. Metastasio, Pietro. *Demetrio. Three Melodramas*. Trans. Joseph G. Fucilla. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1981). 82.
34. Ibid., 96.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid., 101.
37. Ibid., 102.
38. Ibid., 105.
39. Regarding the prohibition of female performers from the Roman stage, Heriot notes that the injunction against actresses—intermittently enforced until the late seventeenth century—was strictly imposed by Pope Innocent XI, called "Papa Minga" by his contemporaries "because 'minga' in the Milanese dialect means 'no' and this Pope, a Milanese, said no to everything" (25). Heriot gives a brief synopsis of the prohibition, reporting that

    > Papa Minga confirmed the ban on actresses, as far as his temporal dominions were concerned, in 1676, and, with a few backslidings early on, it continued in force until 1798. In that year the ephemeral Roman Republic was set up, and, filled with liberal and progressive ideas, went to the opposite extreme and banned castrati. This interdict in turn was lifted the following year, when Rome was occupied by the King of Naples, but women were not again forbidden the boards. (25–26)

    Heriot also remarks that not all regions under papal jurisdiction were equally affected by the ban, noting that "at Bologna—a city which retained a considerable degree of independence—and in the legations of Ferrara and the Romagna, women were allowed on the stage as elsewhere" (25).
40. Rosselli. "The Castrati as a Professional Group." 163.
41. Casanova, Giacomo. *Histoire de ma Vie*. 12 vols. (Wiesbaden: F. A. Brockhaus, 1960–1962). II. 18. Translations are mine.

42. Ibid., II. 18.
43. Ibid., II. 21.
44. Casanova, Giacomo. *History of My Life*. Trans. Willard R. Trask. 12 vols. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1966–1971). V. 407.
45. Ibid., IV. 265.
46. Ibid., IV. 271.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid., IV. 272.
49. Laqueur, Thomas. *Making Sex*. 149.
50. Dennis, John. "An Essay on the Opera's after the Italian Manner." In *The Critical Works of John Dennis*. Volume I: 1692–1711. Ed. Edward Niles Hooker. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1939). 385.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid., 388.
53. Ibid., 392. The one-sex model had already spawned similar anxieties in the history of English theatrical performance. Before female actors appeared on the English stage during the Restoration, the all-male performances staged by professional acting troupes frequently drew fire from Puritan critics precisely because of their tendency to trouble the borders of sexual difference. In *Still Harping on Daughters* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), Lisa Jardine notes how the cross-dressed boy players of the Tudor and Stuart periods threatened to upset the distinction between male and female subjects; discounting the standard argument that the male portrayal of female roles was a conventional and therefore nonthreatening performance practice, Jardine maintains that "the taking of female parts by boy players actually occasioned a good deal of contemporary comment and created considerable uneasiness, even amongst those who patronised and supported the theatres. . . . Sexuality, misdirected toward the boy masquerading in female dress, is stirred by attire and gesture; male prostitution and perverted sexual activity is the inevitable accompaniment of female impersonation" (9). Even more menacing than the effeminacy of the boy player, however, was the effeminacy that he could foster in the male members of his audience; Jardine quotes the 1599 *Overthrow of Stage-Playes* to the effect that the appearance of a womanish man on the stage could arouse a similarly womanish desire within the spectators:

    > Herewithall if amatorie pangs be expressed in most effectual sort: can wise men be perswaded that there is not wantonnesse in players partes, when experience sheweth (as wise men haue observed) that *men are made adulterers and enemies of all chastitie by coming to such playes*? That *senses are mooved, affections are delited, heartes though strong and constant are vanquished by such players*? That *an effeminate stage player, while he faineth love, imprinteth wounds of love*? (17) (Italics in original.)

    The anxieties expressed by Dennis are therefore hardly new. However, rapid changes in English economic and political structures seem to have intensified the anxieties to such an extent that a new regime of sexual difference was required. If so, then the appearance of female actors in England during the

Restoration accompanied the genesis of this new regime; the display of firm distinctions between male and female subjects on the stage may have indicated a growing need to articulate such distinctions in daily life as well.

54. Campbell, Jill. Natural Masques: Gender and Identity in Fielding's Plays and Novels. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995). 29.
55. Fielding, Henry. *The Historical Register for the Year 1736. Works of Henry Fielding*. Vol. 11: Plays and Poems 4. 242.
56. Ibid., 245.
57. Ibid., 246.
58. Ibid., 249.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid., 250.
61. Ibid., 249. I am indebted to Campbell for noting the link between wax figures and dildoes. See *Natural Masques*, 36.
62. Fielding, Henry. *The Author's Farce. Works of Henry Fielding*. Vol. 8: Plays and Poems 1. 197.
63. Ibid., 204.
64. Ibid., 231.
65. Ibid., 240.
66. Ibid., 252.
67. Burney, Charles. *The Present State of Music in France and Italy, or the Journal of a Tour through Those Countries, Undertaken to Collect Materials for a General History of Music*. (London: T. Becket, 1771). 312.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid., 313.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid., 205.
72. Ibid., 206.
73. Ibid., 217.
74. Ibid., 221.

4. LIBERTY, EQUALITY, FESTIVITY: CITIZEN ACTION AND THE LIBRATORY LEGACY OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

1. Young, Arthur. *Travels in France during the Years 1787, 1788, and 1789*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929). 206.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 197.
4. Ibid. An approximate English translation is "because the portions and privileges of the seigneurs are crushing us."
5. Ibid., 206.
6. Ibid.

7. For a concise view of the opinions of Burke, Taine, and Furet, see George Rudé, *The French Revolution*. (New York: Grove, 1988). 12–24.
8. Lefebvre, Georges. *The French Revolution*. Vol. I. Trans. Elizabeth Moss Evanson. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962). XVIII.
9. *Regulation for Execution of the Letters of Convocation. Documentary Survey of the French Revolution*. Ed. John Hall Stewart. (New York: Macmillan, 1951). 31. For further information on the elections to the Estates-General and its effects upon the peasantry, see P. M. Jones, *The Peasantry in the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). Drawing upon local voting records and copies of local *cahiers*, Jones maintains that the convocation of the Estates-General played a key role in the political awakening of the peasantry. Despite strong-arm tactics employed at times by local seigneurs against the assembled peasants, Jones remarks that the convocation nonetheless exerted a widespread and powerful effect on the peasantry: "All in all, the electoral regulations constituted an honest attempt to adapt existing institutions for the purpose of consulting public opinion on a scale never before imagined. In 1789 France went to the 'polls' in conditions tantamount to universal suffrage" (62).
10. Ozouf, Mona. *Festivals and the French Revolution*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988). 37.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., 39.
14. *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen. Documentary Survey of the French Revolution*. Ed. John Hall Stewart. (New York: Macmillan, 1951). 114.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. "*Lettre V: Assemblée Nationale*." *L'Année Litteraire*. (*Tome Sixième*. October, 1789). 483. Translations are mine.
18. Ibid., 484.
19. Michelet, Jules. *Histoire de la Révolution Française*. Vol. I. Ed. Gerard Walter. (Paris: Gallimard, 1952). 145. Translations are mine.
20. Ibid., 146.
21. Ibid., 158.
22. Ibid., 161–162.
23. Michelet notes that some of the most elite defenders of the Bastille were Swiss Guards; not native to France, the Swiss were widely thought more likely to hold their ground and shoot the French attackers than to turn traitor and join ranks with them. Michelet also reports, however, that after the fall of the Bastille even the Swiss Guards were granted a reprieve by the French crowds. In a show of magnanimity that Michelet doubtless considered proof of a universal urge to freedom, the National Guardsmen "cleaned up the Swiss, placed them in their proper ranks, conducted them to their barracks, lodged and fed them" (162).
24. Rudé, George. *The Crowd in the French Revolution*. (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1979). 54.

25. Ibid., 55.
26. Ibid., 52.
27. Ibid., 56.
28. "The Constitution of 1791." *Documentary Survey of the French Revolution*. Ed. John Hall Stewart. (New York: Macmillan, 1951). 231.
29. Ibid., 236. Title III, Chapter I, Section 2 of the Constitution specifies that in order to be an active citizen, it is necessary
    To have been born, or to become, a Frenchman;
    To be fully twenty-five years of age;
    To be domiciled in the city or canton for the period determined by law;
    To pay, in any part of the kingdom whatsoever, a direct tax equal at least to the value of three days' labor, and to present the receipt therefore;
    Not to be in a position of domesticity, that is to say, a servant for wages;
    To be inscribed on the roll of the National Guard in the municipality of his domicile;
    To have taken the civic oath.
30. Ibid., 236–237. Title III, Chapter I, Section 2 of the Constitution states that in order to qualify as an Elector the active citizen must meet the following requirements:
    In cities of more than 6000 inhabitants, that of being a proprietor or usufructuary of a property assessed on the tax rolls at a revenue equal to the local value of 200 days' labor, or of being a tenant of a dwelling assessed on said same rolls at a revenue equal to the value of 150 days' labor;
    In cities of fewer than 6000 inhabitants, that of being a proprietor or usufructuary of a property assessed on the tax rolls at a revenue equal to the local value of 150 days' labor, or of being a tenant of a dwelling assessed on said same rolls at a revenue equal to the value of 100 days' labor;
    And in rural districts, that of being a proprietor or usufructuary of a property assessed on the tax rolls at a revenue equal to the local value of 150 days' labor, or of being a farmer or *métayer* of properties assessed on said same rolls at the value of 400 days' labor.
31. "*Séance de Juin 7, 1790*." *Moniteur Universel*. (*Tome* IV. No. 159: 8 June 1790). 571. Translations are mine.
32. Ibid.
33. "Fête de la Federation." *Moniteur Universel*. (*Tome* V. No. 197: 16 July, 1790). 129. Translations are mine.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid., 130.
36. Ibid., 131.
37. Ibid., 130.
38. Ibid., 131.
39. Ozouf. *Festivals and the French Revolution*, 59.
40. Ibid., 60.
41. Ibid., 39.

42. "The Constitution of 1793." *Documentary Survey of the French Revolution*. Ed. John Hall Stewart. (New York: Macmillan, 1951). 457.
43. "The Constitution of the Year III, 1795." *Documentary Survey of the French Revolution*. Ed. John Hall Stewart. (New York: Macmillan, 1951). 573.
44. *"Convention Nationale: Séance du 20 Brumaire." Journal de Paris.* (November 11, 1793: 21 Brumaire, Year II). 1266. Translations are mine.
45. Ibid.
46. *"Convention Nationale: Suite de la Séance du 20 Brumaire." Journal de Paris*. (November 12, 1793: 22 Brumaire, Year II). 1269.
47. Michelet. *Histoire de la Révolution Française*. Vol. II. 647.
48. Ibid., 650.
49. *"Detail: Fête à l'Être Supréme." Journal de Paris*. (June 7, 1794: 19 Prairial, Year II). 2113. Translations are mine.
50. Ibid., 2114.
51. "*Hymne a l'Être Supreme*." *Journal de Paris.* (June 8, 1794: 20 Prairial, Year II). 2116. Translations are mine.
52. Michelet. *Histoire de la Révolution Française*. Vol. II. 870.
53. Ibid., 871.
54. Rudé. *The Crowd in the French Revolution*. 136.
55. Ibid., 143.
56. Ibid., 239.
57. "The Constitution of the Year VII, 1799." *Documentary Survey of the French Revolution*. Ed. John Hall Stewart. (New York: Macmillan, 1951). 768.
58. Ibid., 769. Title I of the 1799 Constitution specifies the following provisions for the formation of electoral lists:

    Article 7:

    The citizens of every communal *arrondisement* shall designate by vote those among them whom they believe to be most suited to administer public affairs. A list of trustworthy persons, containing the names of one-tenth of the number of citizens who have the right to cooperate therein, will result from such vote. The public functionaries of the *arrondissement* are to be selected from such first communal list.

    Article 8:

    Likewise the citizens included in the communal lists of a *département* shall designate one-tenth of their number. A second, or departmental, list, from which the public functionaries of the *département* are to be taken, will result from such a vote.

    Article 9:

    Likewise the citizens named in the departmental list shall designate one-tenth of their number. A third list, comprising the citizens of the *département* who are eligible for national public office, will result from such a vote.
59. "Senatus-Consulta , 20 Mai, , 1804: La Constitution Imperielle." *Receuil des Manifestes, Proclamations, Discours, Decrets, etc. de Napoleon Buonaparte.*

Extraits du Moniteur par Lewis Goldsmith, Notaire. Vol. III. (London: T. Harper le Jeune: 1811). 1. Translations are mine.

60. Ibid., 19. Translations are mine. Title XII of the Imperial Constitution specifies these provisions for the formation of the Legislative Body, the Senate, and the Electoral Colleges:

    Article 98:

    Every time that an Electoral College of a *département* meets for the formation of a list of candidates for the Legislative Body, the list of candidates for the Senate is renewed. Each renewal rends the former list null and void.

    Article 99:

    The Grand Officers, the Commanders, and the Officers of the Legion of Honor are members of the Electoral College of the *département* in which they have their domicile, or of one of one of the *départements* in the group of which they are members. The Legionnaires are members of the Electoral College of their *arrondisement*.

    Article 100:

    The members of the Legion of Honor are admitted to the Electoral College by the presentation of a certificate to that effect delivered to them by the Grand Elector.

61. Some of the cynicism exhibited by Büchner doubtless arose from his own early effort at revolutionary activity in his native Duchy of Hesse. During the summer of 1834 Büchner had collaborated with the radical pastor Ludwig Weidig in an attempt to spur the Hessian peasantry into rebellion. The result of joint efforts was *The Hessian Courier* (in *Büchner: The Complete Plays*. Ed. Michael Patterson. [Portsmouth, NH: Methuen, 1987]), a revolutionary pamphlet that urged the impoverished people to revolt against the state. Peasants constituted the majority of the Hessian population; they paid heavy taxes but had no voice in government affairs. In the aftermath of Napoleon the Ministers of Hesse had drafted a Constitution, but its legislators were chosen from the elite and could not, at any rate, draft new laws but could merely approve or deny the propositions of the Duke. Büchner therefore placed little stock in the Hessian Constitution, or indeed any of the constitutions adopted throughout Germany: "For what are these constitutions in Germany? Nothing but chaff from which the princes have threshed the grain for themselves. What are our Assemblies? Nothing but unwieldy carts which may be shoved once or twice in the way of the greed of our princes and ministers, but from which it will never be possible to build a fortress of German freedom" (238). Citing the worthlessness of the Hessian Constitution, Büchner sought to spur the peasantry into open rebellion; after all, Büchner argued, given their sorry economic state the peasants had little to lose: "In the Grand Duchy you pay six million gulden to a handful of people who have power over your lives and your property, and it is the same with the others in our devastated Germany. You are nothing, you have nothing! You have no rights. You have to give what your oppressors demand of you and bear what they place on your backs" (239). Unfortunately for Büchner and his allies, the terrified

Hessian peasants did not heed the call to revolt but instead submitted copies of the pamphlet to authorities; Büchner initially avoided prosecution, but was at last implicated in conspiracy against the government and forced to flee to Strasbourg in March of 1835, where he spent the remainder of his life.

62. Büchner, Georg. *Danton's Death. Büchner: The Complete Plays*. Ed. Michael Patterson. Trans. Howard Brenton. (Portsmouth, NH: Methuen, 1987). 28.
63. Ibid., 75.
64. In this context it is crucial to remember that early commentators on Romanticism in Germany defined the new movement in reference to the political situation unfolding in France. Consider, in this instance, the writings of Germaine de Stäel, who correlates differences between Classical and Romantic literature with differences between the French and German political climate. Daughter of the prime minister at the close of the *ançien regime*, supporter of the Revolution until its turn to Terror, exiled enemy of Napoleon in the days of Empire—de Stäel never lacks comment on the French political situation, and her pointed views color her opinion of German politics as well. In *Considérations sur la Révolution Française* (Ed. Jacques Godechot. [Paris: Tallandier, 1983]) de Stäel laments that the Napoleonic invasion of Germany brought not republican enlightenment but imperial despotism. Bypassing the more complex question of whether or not the disparate German states could have nurtured revolutionary sentiment, de Stäel instead bitterly inquires "Why was Germany submitted to French influence? This influence carried to Germany no new light, and did not establish there any liberal institutions, only contributions and conscriptions even greater than all those imposed by its old masters" (402). If, however, the Napoleonic era failed to bring political liberation to Germany, it also failed to foster artistic liberation in France; the tenets of Classicism, already well established in France, enjoyed a resurgence during the Empire that effectively barred the innovations of the Romantic movement. Thus in her famous text *On Germany* (Selections in *Politics, Literature, and National Character*. Ed. and Trans. Morroe Berger. [New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2000]) de Stäel argues that while the French national character fosters political freedom, its German counterpart fosters artistic freedom; indeed, it is precisely their lack of a united political sphere that renders the German people inclined to artistic activity. Germany, claims de Stäel, "had no common center of enlightenment and public spirit; it was not a solid nation, for the separate elements were not tied together. This division, fatal to her political influence, was nevertheless very favorable to all efforts of talent and the imagination. In respect to literary and metaphysical ideas, there was a sort of mild and peaceful anarchy that permitted each person to develop fully his own way of looking at things" (277). In retrospect, then, one might ask how the generic expectations of Romanticism were shaped by the political outlook of de Stäel herself. If de Stäel conceived the German states as lacking the political sophistication of her own troubled but nonetheless unified France, did she counter this view by regarding Germany as aesthetically more sophisticated than France itself? Translations from *Considérations* text are mine.

65. *Danton's Death*. 40.
66. Ibid., 76.

5. SMOKE AND MIRRORS: THE HYSTERICAL WOMAN FROM ZOLA TO FREUD

1. Crary, Jonathan. *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990). 120.
2. Ibid., 121.
3. Ibid., 124.
4. Ibid.
5. Castle, Terry. "Phantasmagoria and the Metaphorics of Modern Reverie." In *The Horror Reader*. Ed. Ken Gelder. (New York: Routledge, 2000). 33.
6. Ibid., 34.
7. Ibid., 35.
8. Ibid., 45.
9. This notion that hysterics, and indeed women in general, bear a heavy burden in their role as displaced image of man has been elaborated by many feminist theorists, particularly those working in a psychoanalytic tradition. For instance, in her 1970 text "The Blind Spot in an Old Dream of Symmetry." In *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Trans. Gillian C. Gill. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985, Luce Irigaray launches a stinging indictment against both Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan, arguing that their work perpetuates a cultural, political, and representational system in which woman may never appear as anything other than the image of man. Irigaray begins her argument by claiming that Freud cannot conceive of a specifically feminine desire, as he always characterizes that desire as a mere inferior version of its masculine counterpart. Irigaray quotes Freud from his 1932 "Femininity" essay, in which he argues that due to the likeness of girls to boys during the earliest stages of sexuality "the little girl is therefore a little man," then adds that the later emergence of the castration complex would force woman into the position of "a little man who would have no other desire than to be, or to remain, a man" (26). Thus Freud describes feminine difference from masculinity only in terms of its sameness to masculinity. Irigaray claims that the masculine desire to establish sexual difference actually conceals a desire to return to the "self-same," to resume the early specular relation to the maternal imago theorized by Lacan in his notion of the Mirror Stage: "The 'differentiation' into two sexes derives from the *a priori* assumption of the same, since the little man that the little girl is must become a man minus certain attributes whose paradigm is morphological: attributes capable of determining, of assuring, the reproduction-specularization of the same" (27). Given this psychoanalytic legacy, Irigaray claims that woman perforce functions as a mere image of man, a function that forecloses any possibility of a specifically feminine subjectivity. Lacking subjectivity, woman would seem to lack desire as well, and yet a foreclosed feminine desire makes a clandestine appearance in the hysterical

symptom; the image of woman precipitated by such symptoms must be tamed by man in order to bring it back in line with the masculine model: "Hysteria is stigmatized as a place where fantasies, ghosts, and shadows fester and must be unmasked, interpreted, brought back to the reality of a repetition, a reproduction, a representation that is congruent to, consistent with, the original" (60).

10. *Le Naturalisme au Théâtre. Les Oeuvres Completes*. Vol. 42. (Paris: François Bernouard, 1927). 12. Translations are mine.
11. Ibid., 17.
12. Ibid., 48.
13. Ibid., 142.
14. Ibid., 152.
15. Ibid., 149.
16. Zola, Emile. *La Fortune des Rougons. Les Oeuvres Completes*. Vol. 2. (Paris: François Bernouard, 1927). 7. Translations are mine.
17. Ibid., 8.
18. Zola, Emile. *Le Medecin Pascal. Les Oeuvres Completes*. Vol. 22. Paris: François Bernouard, 1928. 123. Translations are mine.
19. Ibid., 127.
20. Zola, Emile. *Thérèse Raquin*. Novel. Trans. Andrew Rothwell. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992). 2.
21. Ibid., 5.
22. Zola, Emile. *Thérèse Raquin*. Drama. *Les Oeuvres Completes*. Vol. 38. (Paris: François Bernouard, 1927). 59.
23. Ibid., 61.
24. Ibid., 65.
25. Ibid., 81.
26. Ibid., 84.
27. Ibid., 87.
28. Ibid., 101.
29. Ibid., 102.
30. Ibid., 106.
31. Ibid., 107.
32. Ibid., 119.
33. Ibid., 121.
34. Ibid., 129.
35. Ibid., 130.
36. I should note that in the earlier novel version of *Thérèse Raquin*, Zola does not depict Madame Raquin as falling into sudden paralysis upon hearing of Camille's murder. Instead, she succumbs to a slow paralysis—the result of a decline into old age—long before she overhears the fateful news: "It was not long before a new fear presented itself. Madame Raquin was gradually becoming paralyzed, and they could foresee the day when she would be fixed immovably in her chair, physically helpless and unaware of her surroundings" (144). When the pair finally let slip their confession, Madame Raquin experiences a sudden shock then returns to her former state: "A horrifying contortion passed

across her face and she shuddered so much that Thérèse thought she was about to jump up and scream; then she fell back, ramrod stiff in her chair" (160). Zola invents the fall into hysterical paralysis for the stage, a fall rendered even more characteristically hysterical by the fact that she overcomes her malady only through the climactic revelation of her secret; in the novel Thérèse and Laurent merely drop dead at the feet of the paralytic: "And for more than twelve hours, until around noon the following day, Madame Raquin, stiff and silent, contemplated them there at her feet, feasting her eyes and annihilating them with the hatred in her gaze" (205). While this is speculation on my part, I assume Zola made the changes for the stage to exploit heightened revelatory power of the theatre. The textual compression and visual spectacle of the theatre only increase the urge toward disclosure of the hysterical secret; the strange stiffenings and untimely utterances of the hysteric make for good theatre, after all.

37. Crary. *Techniques of the Observer*. 127.
38. Goetz, Christopher, Michael Bonduelle, and Toby Gelfant. *Charcot: Constructing Neurology*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). 137.
39. Charcot, Jean-Michel. *Charcot, the Clinician: The Tuesday Lessons*. Ed. and trans Christopher Goetz. (New York: Raven, 1987). 103.
40. Didi-Huberman, Georges. *Invention of Hysteria: Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of the Salpêtrière*. Trans. Alisa Hartz. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003). 137.
41. Charcot, Jean-Michel. *Lectures on the Diseases of the Nervous System*. Trans. George Sigerson. Vol. I. (London: New Sydenham Society, 1877). 294.
42. Goetz, et al. *Charcot, the Clinician*. 200.
43. Freud, Sigmund, and Josef Breuer. *Studies in Hysteria. The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud. Translated from the German under the General Editorship of James Strachey, in Collaboration with Anna Freud, Assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson*. Vol. 2. (London: Hogarth Press, 1966). 5.
44. Ibid., 6.
45. Ibid., 7.
46. Ibid., 12.
47. Ibid., 16.
48. Ibid.
49. Freud, Sigmund. "An Autobiographical Study." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud. Translated from the German under the General Editorship of James Strachey, in Collaboration with Anna Freud, Assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson*. Vol. 20. (London: Hogarth Press, 1966). 31.
50. Ibid., 32.
51. Ibid., 41.
52. Ibid.
53. Freud, Sigmund. *Dora: An Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*. Ed. Philip Rieff. (New York: Touchstone, 1997). 1.
54. Ibid., 6.
55. Ibid., 48.
56. Ibid., 54.

57. Ibid., 51.
58. Ibid., 27.
59. Ibid., 51.
60. Ibid., 110.
61. Ibid., 106.
62. Ibid., 107.
63. Ibid., 109.
64. Ibid.
65. Castle. "Phantasmagoria." 40.
66. Rachilde. Madame la Mort and other Plays. Ed. and trans. Frazier Lively and Kiki Gounaridou. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998. 7.
67. Rachilde. *The Crystal Spider. Doubles, Demons, and Dreamers: An International Collection of Symbolist Drama*. Ed. and trans. Daniel Gerould. (Baltimore: PAJ Publications, 1985). 70.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid., 71.
70. Ibid., 73.
71. Ibid., 74.
72. Ibid.
73. Rachilde. *Pourquoi Je Ne Suis Pas Féministe*. (Paris: *Éditions de France*, 1928). 6. Translations are mine.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid., 58.
76. Ibid., 65.
77. Ibid., 70.
78. Rachilde. Madame la Mort and other Plays. 7.
79. Against the antifeminist rhetoric of Rachilde, Elin Diamond has more recently turned the figure of the hysteric to feminist ends. In *Unmaking Mimesis* (New York: Routledge, 1997) Diamond links the double nature of the hysteric to the double nature of the mimetic faculty and so theorizes a distinctly feminist mode of representation. Noting that Freud ultimately concluded most cases of female hysteria spring from an unconscious refusal of castration, Diamond argues that the hysteric sidesteps the demand either to objectify or identify with the maternal imago and thereby enters a state in which she is at once like and unlike her object of desire. For Diamond, this doubled state recalls the doubled nature of the mimetic project, which implies a difference between imitating subject and imitated object even as it produces a sameness between subject and object in the act of imitation. Later, Diamond extends her observations on mimesis to an analysis of the role of hysterics in the realist plays of Henrik Ibsen and his contemporaries. Diamond remarks that Elizabeth Robins, the first actress to portray Hedda Gabler on the English stage, recorded in her memoirs the observation of a female friend that "Hedda is all of us," and argues this statement recalls the tension between sameness and difference that inheres in both hysteria and mimesis: "Hedda is the imago of plenitude," Diamond maintains, "extending beyond me and other individuals; we meet in Hedda, discover ourselves in Hedda" (31). For

Diamond this hysterical vision of mimesis offers a feminist intervention into normative theatrical mimesis, a troubling of the binary opposition between subject and object too often reduced to that of male and female. While Diamond's project differs from my own, our work shares crucial resonances; I am indebted to her meditations on the relation between male and female, subject and object, and I take this opportunity to acknowledge that debt.

6. COMMUNISM: COMING TO A SCREEN NEAR YOU! BENJAMIN, ADORNO, AND THE POLITICS OF MEDIATIZATION

1. Marx, Karl. "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844." In *The Marx-Engels Reader*. Ed. Robert C. Tucker. Trans. Martin Milligan. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978). 71.
2. Ibid., 77.
3. Ibid., 78.
4. Ibid., 87.
5. Ibid., 88.
6. Ibid., 92.
7. Ibid., 76.
8. Ibid., 80.
9. Champfleury. "La Légende du Daguerréotype." In *Les Bons Contes Font les Bons Amis*. (Paris: Bonaventure et Ducessois, 1864). 61. Translations are mine.
10. Ibid., 63.
11. Cocteau, Jean. "The Wedding on the Eiffel Tower." In *Modern French Theatre: The Avant-Garde, Dada, and Surrealism*. Ed. Michael Benedikt and George C. Wellworth. Trans. Michael Benedikt. (New York: Dutton, 1966). 102.
12. Ibid., 115.
13. Gan, Alexei. "The Cinematograph and Cinema." In *The Film Factory: Russian and Soviet Cinema in Documents 1896–1939*. Ed. Richard Taylor and Ian Christie. Trans Richard Taylor. (London: Routledge, 1988.) 67.
14. Ibid. Note: Italics in original.
15. Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." In *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*. Ed. Hannah Arendt. Trans. Harry Zohn. (New York: Schocken, 1968). 220.
16. Ibid., 232.
17. Ibid., 240.
18. Ibid., 236.
19. Ibid., 236.
20. Eisenstein, Sergei. "The Montage of Film Attractions." In *S. M. Eisenstein: Selected Works*. Vol. 1. Ed. and trans. Richard Taylor. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988). 40.
21. Ibid., 58.

22. In fact, the radical theories of Vertov incited Eisenstein to level charges of formalism against his work. For Eisenstein, the political impulses embodied in the films of Vertov were far too abstract to spur his audience to revolutionary action. While Vertov sought to employ cinema in a total rearticulation of human vision, Eisenstein concentrated on the use of cinema as an ideological tool. In his 1925 essay "The Problem of the Materialist Approach to Form." In *S. M. Eisenstein: Selected Works*. Vol. 1 Eisenstein claimed that the films of Vertov led audiences not into action but into indolence:

    > The *Cine-Eye* is not just a symbol of vision: it is also a symbol of *contemplation*. But we need *not contemplation but action*.
    >
    > *It is not a "Cine-Eye" that we need but a "Cine-Fist*."
    >
    > Soviet cinema must cut through to the skull! It is not "through the combined vision of millions of eyes that we shall fight the bourgeois world" (Vertov): we'd rapidly give them a million black eyes!
    >
    > We must cut with our cine-fist through to skulls, cut through to final victory and now, under threat of an influx of "real life" and philistinism into the Revolution we must cut through as never before!
    >
    > Make way for the cine-fist! (64).

    Eisenstein's charges are well-taken; Vertov's theories are complex and require a total rethinking of the relation between the human individual and film technology—a difficult task, perhaps, for an aesthetically uninitiated and largely illiterate Russian proletariat. Yet Vertov offers a more radical articulation of the transformative impact of the cinema than the more-famous Eisenstein, and it is for this reason that I focus here upon the work of Vertov over that of Eisenstein.
23. Vertov, Dziga. "The Cine-Eye: A Revolution." In *Utopias: Russian Modernist Texts 1905–1940*. Ed. Catriona Kelly. Trans. Richard Taylor. (New York: Penguin, 1999). 83.
24. Ibid., 84.
25. Ibid.
26. *Man with the Movie Camera*. Dir. Dziga Vertov. Distributed by Kino Video. 1929.
27. Graham Roberts notes in *Forward Soviet: History and Non-Fiction Film in the USSR* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 1999) that the death of Lenin in 1924 and the subsequent rise of Stalin and Stalinization provoked a defensive stance toward the security of the nation that effected a reciprocal weakening of the internationalist rhetoric espoused in earlier years. Further, this call for increased vigilance in the defense of the Soviet Union operated in tandem with a "proletarianization" of representational practices that sought to unite the masses through easily accessible and immediately intelligible appeals to revolutionary activity. Roberts maintains that "the Stalinist conception of propaganda was to contain no element of raising the consciousness and intellectual sophistication of the masses. . . . Instead, it was necessary only to aim at the lowest common denominator, to preach at a simplistic level, not to stimulate anything other than unquestioning obedience to the party line" (109). Such an increased drive

toward easy accessibility spelled the doom of the visual experiments of filmmakers like Eisenstein and Vertov, especially after the 1929 consolidation of the Soviet film industry under the umbrella agency Soyuzkino. Eisenstein managed to revive his film career in the late 1930's after a period of penitence for his earlier "formalist" experiments. Vertov, however, seemed either unwilling or unable to toe the new party line. Roberts notes that "Vertov's whole career up to this point could be seen as subversive to the new Party orthodoxy. In the new 'proletarian' hegemony the filmmakers of a pre-1930 vintage were seen as 'intellectuals,' possibly too 'internationalist,' and maybe even as a Jewish elite" (103). As a result, *Man with the Movie Camera* was poorly received by Party officials "It is ironic," Roberts remarks, "that this, the most accomplished of the films discussed in this volume, is the most divorced from the political and historical reality it purports to represent" (86).

28. Benjamin. "The Work of Art." 218.
29. Ibid., 241.
30. Ibid., 242.
31. Ibid.
32. Adorno, Theodor. "Letter to Walter Benjamin." In *Aesthetics and Politics*. Ed. and trans. Ronald T. Taylor . (London: NLB, 1977). 122.
33. Ibid., 124.
34. Lederer, Zdenek. *Ghetto Theresienstadt* . (New York: Fertig, 1983). 118.
35. Ibid., 121.
36. *The Führer Gives a City to the Jews* (*Der Fuehrer Schenkt den Juden Eine Stadt*). Distributed by the National Center for Jewish Film. 1991.
37. Ibid.
38. Krása, Hans. *Brundibar: An Opera for Children in Two Acts*. Piano and Vocal Score Libretto by Adolf Hoffmeister. Ed. Blanka Cervinkova. Trans. Joza Karas. (Prague: Tempo, 1993). 73. The finale to *Brundibar* also included the following additional lyrics, written especially for the Terezín performance:

    He who loves justice,
    Stands by it and fears nothing,
    Who wants the tyrant's end,
    Join us hand in hand
    And be our welcome friend! (74)

    The lyrics "He who loves justice / Stands by it and fears nothing" were used only in the Terezín performances; they replaced earlier lines by Hoffmeister "He who loves his dad / mother and native land." I have retained the lyrics used in Terezín, which are found on page 6 of the score.
39. Lederer. *Ghetto Theresienstadt*. 121.
40. Adorno, Theodor. "On Tradition." *Telos: A Quarterly Journal of Critical Thought*. 94 (1993–1994): 78.
41. Ibid., 82.
42. Adorno, Theodor, and Max Horkheimer. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Trans. John Cumming. (New York: Continuum, 1995). 83.

43. Ibid., 121.
44. Ibid., 148.
45. Ibid., 137.
46. Ibid., 145.
47. Solomon, James, and Alan Carter. *The Real Real World: The Ultimate Insider's Guide*. (New York: Pocket Books, 1997). 1.
48. Ibid., 247.
49. *The Truman Show*. Dir. Peter Weir. Distributed by Paramount Home Video. 1999.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.
53. Adorno and Horkheimer. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. 84.
54. Ibid., 243.

CONCLUSION: QUEER HORIZONS—POSTMODERN PERFORMATIVITY AND POLITICAL ACTION

1. Butler, Judith. *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*. (New York: Routledge, 1997). 14.
2. Ibid., 41.
3. Parker, Andrew, and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, eds. *Performativity and Performance* . (New York: Routledge, 1995). 10.
4. Ibid., 11.
5. Hennessey, Rosemary: *Profit and Pleasure: Sexual Identities in Late Capitalism*. (New York: Routledge, 2000). 63.
6. Ibid., 67.
7. Gay Shame. "Statement of Purpose." Website for Gay Shame Organization. http://www.gayshamesf.org/home.htm.
8. Gay Shame. "Gay Shame Opposes Marriage in Any Form." Website for Gay Shame Organization. http://www.gayshamesf.org/home.htm.
9. Garofoli, Joe. "Newlyweds Rule the Day at Pride Parade." San Francisco Chronicle (June 28, 2004): A1.
10. Ibid.
11. See Wollstonecraft. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Ed. Carol H. Poston. (New York: Norton, 1975). For her comments on the French Revolution and its relation to female emancipation, see chapter 3. See also Engels. *On the Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State, The Marx-Engels Reader*. Ed. Robert C. Tucker. (New York: Norton, 1978). For his comments on the relation of sex to class inequality, consult page 744.
12. See Wollstonecraft chapter 13; see Engels page 750.

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