MONUMENTS ON PAPER: ICONOCLASM AND THE CRITIQUE OF AUTHORITY IN THE WORKS OF RADICAL FRENCH PRINTMAKERS (1871–1914)

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This dissertation attends to the acts and rhetoric of iconoclasm by organizing and analyzing the visual expressions of anti-monumentality in late nineteenth-century French revolutionary prints. These images testify to the creative and critical prolificacy of the concept of iconoclasm as utilized by the leftist visual imagination. The demolition of the Vendôme Column by the Paris Commune of 1871 functions as a paradigmatic event with the numerous communard caricatures and posters that heralded, explicated, and documented the Commune's anti-monumental inspirations. I weave my arguments across the dialogic space between monuments and popular culture, emphasizing the latter's capacity to unmask monuments as buttresses to hegemonic systems that perpetuate social and political injustices. The operative and opposing traits—e.g. immutability and transience, singularity and multiplicity— of two disparate registers of politicized aesthetics, of monumental structures and revolutionary prints, inform the methodology of this dissertation. Iconoclasm serves as the bridge that connects monuments and prints, first and foremost as an ethical-corrective intervention into politics, society, and history; and secondly as a revolutionary-aesthetic action that disrupts the structures of power by imagining anti-authoritarian ways of being and

remembering. The organizing term of the text, “monuments on paper” theorizes the capacity of print culture to enact counter-monumental functions, actively reconstituting and mobilizing the memory of the struggles that challenge the brick, stone, and bronze monuments together with the systems and injustices associated with them. Finally, this dissertation offers a historical echo to discussions in our present moment with its narrative of the political and aesthetic efforts that reveal the unsettling histories that monuments hide, in order to keep these often celebrated markers of culture from retiring into the depoliticized categories of aesthetic achievement, antiquarian appreciation, tourist attraction, and national heritage.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Asli Menevse's primary area of investigation is European visual culture during the 19th and early 20th centuries, with an emphasis on radical print culture.

Asli arrived in the discipline of Art History from an interdisciplinary background: a B.A. in Political Sciences and Sociology, and a M.A. in History with a concentration in the nineteenth-century Ottoman print culture. She then stepped into visual studies attending the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University where she received her second M.A. in Art History in 2013. Her methodology is informed by her interdisciplinary background, drawing from political theory, history, and philosophy, and the intersections of visual art with literature and politics.

Asli's research aims to complicate the notions of monument and iconoclasm through investigating the disparate moments and modalities of interplay between art and politics. Her area of interest covers nineteenth and twentieth-century Europe and contemporary Turkey. She is particularly concerned with the ways in which art and visual culture are employed in the mobilization of memory and history in the service of political ideologies.

Asli's related interests include the appropriation and adaptation of 'fine arts' into popular mediums, political caricatures, and representations of labor movements in mass culture.

To Nur and Ahmet

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The questions that this dissertation explores have their roots in the ideas and interests that were nourished by numerous people prior to my doctoral studies. I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Bratislav Pantelic in Sabanci University for introducing me to the discipline of Art History and for teaching me to see critically. In his courses I learned that I can rely on the guidance of visual material to seek after the social and political questions that occupied my thinking. I also want to thank Dr. Zeynep Yelce, who since the very beginning of my graduate studies has been an indispensable example of academic curiosity, friendship, and professionalism.

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I also would like to thank the Swann Foundation for giving me the funds and the opportunity to explore the rich collections of the Print and Photography Division of the Library of Congress. I especially want to thank the curator of graphic arts Martha H. Kennedy for her help and the staff of the P&P for the patience they have shown when I

asked for boxes upon boxes of prints and albums. I also want to thank the John W. Kluge Center staff for providing me with an ideal work environment during my stay in Washington D.C. The International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam was an exceptionally welcoming and researcher-friendly institution and it was truly a pleasure to conduct research there. I am grateful to their staff and volunteers who labor to create an accessible and friendly space for the memories of the past and present global social struggles. I also want to thank the numerous people at the Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris (BHVP), the Bibliothèque de l'Hôtel de Ville (BHdV), and the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Richelieu), the Documentation at the Musée D'Orsay, and the reference librarians of the Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art (INHA) who helped me and my research in myriad ways.

The Mellon Graduate Fellowship I received from Cornell's Society for the Humanities in 2018-19 gave me the time and a beautiful office space to really focus on my writing. I am grateful to the staff of the Society, Emily Louise Parsons and Kina Viola for providing me with everything I needed during my tenure as a fellow. Also, I would like to thank the scholars in my cohort whose comments on the earliest drafts of my first chapter sharpened the theoretical points of my project, and brought my work into conversation with the most recent scholarship across the humanities. I thank my co-graduate fellow Alley Edlebi at the Society for the long conversations and walks that made my fellowship year so much better; and Dr. Klaus Yamamoto-Hammering for his generous notes on my arguments and for being an inspiration with his commitment to the work of other scholars.

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INTRODUCTION

Expressed concisely, this dissertation is about monuments and iconoclasts. Yet concision risks misconception, as the acts, objects, ideas, or systems that I identify in this study as monumental or iconoclastic strain and burst open the boundaries of such classifications. For example, in the following pages I introduce my readers to monuments that made their audiences forget, and to iconoclasts who erected monuments to their fellow iconoclasts. My work seeks and takes advantage of such dialogic doublings and inversions between the two concepts, which I locate in two incongruous registers of politicized aesthetics: monumental structures and revolutionary prints. The operative and opposing traits—e.g. immutability and transience, singularity and multiplicity— of these two groups of objects inform my methodology. Iconoclasm serves as the bridge that connects the two, first and foremost as an ethical-corrective intervention into politics, society, and history; and secondly as a revolutionary-aesthetic action that disrupts the structures of power to imagine anti-authoritarian ways of being and remembering.

I start with the declaration of the Paris Commune in March 1871 and stop before World War I, and almost always remain in the French capital, with a few trips to factories and mines in North and Northeast France, and a quick detour to end-of-century Brussels. Conversely, the broad strokes of the previous paragraph intend to claim early on that the methodology and arguments offered by this study can be used to evaluate both past and present moments throughout global histories of capitalist modernity, whenever the systems and institutions of power are challenged by ephemeral yet penetrating expressions of dissent. In recent years we have witnessed several such

episodes, often culminating in iconoclastic confrontations between global popular movements and public monuments to the individuals and ideologies that have devised and benefited from oppressive and murderous political, economic, and cultural structures. These calls to and actions of iconoclasm have been carried out by the minority, the working class, and the postcolonial peoples who continue to be brutalized and exploited under the authorities that stand on the pedestals afforded by these systems. In the United States, their iconoclastic interrogation of contemporary politics and the violent mechanisms of history-making pulled down monuments dedicated to Confederate generals and Christopher Columbus; and in Europe and Africa the ongoing legacies of racism and capitalist-colonialist expansion were actively addressed with the destruction of statues that immortalized their notorious actors—such as King Leopold II, Cecil Rhodes, and Jean-Baptiste Colbert. Since this dissertation offers a critical reconsideration of the concepts of iconoclasm and monumentality, it can be read as a historical study that offers a theoretically informed analysis of the destructions brought upon the material vestiges of power and oppression not only for *then*, but also for *now*.

That being said, there are precise reasons for the geographic and historical boundaries I have set for this present inquiry. The destruction of the Parisian monument known as the Vendôme Column by the revolutionary Commune, and the vast number of texts and images produced about and around it in the Spring of 1871, provide an ideal conjuncture from which to launch an inquiry into the relationship between iconoclasm and political expression. The payoff is a working framework for analyzing radical democratic and authoritarian imaginations through the mediums of their aesthetic expressions. On the other hand, I end this inquiry in the early 1910s, because the

anarchist print artists, who were heirs not only to the Commune's physical but also its graphic iconoclasm and counter-monumentality, were most active during the three decades before the advent of the Great War. This period, especially from the late 1880s to the 1900s, could be deemed the golden age of anarchist visual culture, whose vanguard artists took the traditionally seditious medium of lithography to new political and aesthetic frontiers.

The collective efforts of these anarchist artists effectuate a response to Peter Kropotkin's address to the artists: "if you have understood your true mission and the interests of art itself, lend your pen, your brush, your burin at the service of revolution."[1] An art that could assist the anarchist revolution, he expounded, should "commemorate the titanic struggles of the peoples against their oppressors," tell the people "what is ugly about their present life," and show what life will look like "when freed from ineptitudes and ignominies of the present social order."[2] In other words, art in the service of political and social iconoclasts was to function like counter-monuments that would recall the past, educate the present, and inspire the future. The most militant and prolific medium of this revolutionary aesthetics was the printed image in the radical press. These graphic assaults in multitudes added to the allure of the anarchist periodicals which testified to the intellectual and ideological plurality of *fin-de-siècle* anarchism in France.[3] For example, Émile Pouget's weekly *Le Père Peinard* (1889–1902) was written entirely in working-class argot from the mouth of its namesake, a fictional shoemaker who denounced the social and political order and promoted propaganda by

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[1] Peter Kropotkin, *Paroles d'un Révolté* (Paris: C. Marpon et E. Flammarion, 1885), 66.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Luc Sante, "Introduction," in *Novels in Three Lines*, New York Review Books Classics (New York, NY: New York Review Books, 2007), xii–xiii.

deed with an incendiary directness.[4] From its sixty-second issue onwards, the journal featured a full-page visual to attract more readers, and published pamphlets and almanacs with ample illustrations. The other especially significant publication was *Les Temps Nouveaux* (1895–1914), which was a continuation of *La Rèvolte* (1879–94) and had a serious tone.[5] The editor of the journal, Jean Grave, was a lynchpin figure in international anarchism, who, from his office in Paris, could communicate with a vast network of radicals across the globe. His "print-based relational activism" brought together an international selection of texts, ideas, and literary and visual arts on the pages of his publications.[6] Grave was keenly aware of the advantages of the visual contributions by radical artists and established close connections with a great number of them. You will see several of these collaborations, between Grave's publications and anarchist printmakers, in the following chapters. But alongside these two anarchist publications, one that lacked an explicit radical commitment—*L'Assiette au Beurre* (1901–12)—was the favorite venue of artists who experimented with the capacity of the printed image as the primary medium of critical discourse. Therefore, a significant number of images in the second and third chapters come from this publication.

As opposed to most radical periodicals, where the images coexist side by side with news, translations of new literature, and excerpts of anarchist theory, *L'Assiette*

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[4] *Le Père Peinard* could be seen as a *fin-de-siècle* anarchist foil to Jacques Hébert's infamous *Le Père Duchesne* (1790–94) during the French Revolution, which similarly distills popular radicalism into a fictional character who directly addresses the *populo*.

[5] *La Révolte* was established in Geneva as *Le Révolté* by Kropotkin and other leading anarchists, including the geographer and exiled Communard Élisée Reclus. Grave took editorial leadership of the project in 1883 and moved it to Paris in 1885, changing its name in 1887. Laura Prins, "L'Art Pour l'Art or L'Art Pour Tous? The Tension between Artistic Autonomy and Social Engagement in Les Temps Nouveaux, 1896–1903," *International Journal for History, Culture and Modernity* 4 (December 31, 2016): 95.

[6] Constance Bantman, "Jean Grave and French Anarchism: A Relational Approach (1870s–1914)," *International Review of Social History* 62, no. 3 (December 2017): 452 and 454–55.

consisted almost exclusively of images with the limited intervention of titles and brief captions. In the absence of long texts to dictate the meaning and reception of their images, the graphic artists who contributed to this periodical productively expanded the expressive and analytical capacities attributed to their medium. Furthermore, the lack of a clear editorial direction afforded an additional freedom to artists who could conceive and execute an entire issue without outside intervention. These aspects were taken by some scholars as signs of a distinctly capitalist mass media, and *L'Assiette* as the predecessor to twentieth-century magazines owned by media conglomerates with no commitments and considerations except maximizing consumer demand.[7] In this articulation, both the images and their politics are configured as commodity. The absence of text should not be taken in itself as a strategy to heighten consumer fetishism—as, for example, collaborations with famous print artists and the publicity of special issues indeed suggest—because it assumes that the printed image has to submit to the written word in order to surpass its commodity status and enact considerable social and political agency. My approach first recognizes that an overwhelming majority of the images under discussion here were indeed mass produced for consumption. In fact, unlike their dialectic others in this dissertation (i.e. monuments) or paintings, sculptures, and fine art prints, the mass-produced printed image is special in that it does not mystify its relation to money. Therefore, we can regard the radical images in journals like *L'Assiette* as examples of *détournement*, wherein the revolutionary and anarchist-

[7] See the dissertation, Anne-Marie Bouchard, "Figurer la société mourante: culture esthétique et idéologique de la presse anarchiste illustrée en France, 1880-1914" (PhD diss. Université de Montréal, 2009), 330–32. A less explicit comment on *L'Assiette*'s profit drive can be found in Élisabeth Dixmier and Michel Dixmier, *L'Assiette au beurre: revue satirique illustrée, 1901–1912* (Paris : François Maspero, 1974), 22.

syndicalist artists appropriated an opportunity afforded by the intersections of art and the publication markets to advance their radical agendas to a vast public with maximum autonomy.

If we have not encountered them in social histories of the French press, the anarchist printed pictures often feature in supporting roles where the canonical celebrations of the artists' achievements in another medium—painting—take the center stage. There is a good number of scholarship which together offer great insights into the Neo-Impressionist painters' relation to anarchist ideas but treat their contributions to radical print culture as anecdotal or secondary.[8] In a similar vein, some studies focus more closely on the radical prints, which they present as laboratories of the twentieth-century avant-garde, where artists experimented for an upcoming artistic revolution.[9] In order to find scholarship that primarily focuses on radical graphic artists and anarchist print culture, we often need to look at French language exhibition catalogues and monographs, which feature artists who worked predominantly, if not exclusively, in the print medium.[10] Albeit often lacking in close formal analyses, these works offer indispensable cataloguing efforts and references to carefully gathered primary sources.

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[8] Just to name a few, John Gary Hutton, *Neo-Impressionism and the Search for Solid Ground: Art, Science, and Anarchism in Fin-de-Siècle France* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University, 1994); Robyn Roslak, *Neo-Impressionism and Anarchism in Fin-de-Siècle France: Painting, Politics and Landscape* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); Claire White, "Beyond the Leisure Principle: Luce and Neo-Impressionism," in *Work and Leisure in Late Nineteenth-Century French Literature and Visual Culture: Time, Politics and Class*, ed. Claire White, Palgrave Studies in Modern European Literature (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2014), 117–55; Richard Thomson, "Ruins, Rhetoric and Revolution: Paul Signac's Le Démolisseur and Anarchism in the 1890s," *Art History* 36, no. 2 (April 1, 2013): 366–91.

[9] Patricia Leighten, *The Liberation of Painting: Modernism and Anarchism in Avant-Guerre Paris* (Chicago, IL; London: University of Chicago Press, 2013); Patricia Leighten, "Anarchist Satire in Pre-World War I Paris: The Case of Frantisek Kupka," *SUB-STANCE* 46, no. 2 (2017): 50–70; Theresa Papanikolas, *Anarchism and the Advent of Paris Dada: Art and Criticism, 1914–1924* (Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2010); Allan Antliff, *Anarchy and Art: From the Paris Commune to the Fall of the Berlin Wall* (Vancouver, BC: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2007).

[10] Aline Dardel and Musée d'Orsay, *"Les Temps nouveaux," 1895–1914: un hebdomadaire anarchiste et la propagande par l'image* (Paris: Ministère de la culture et de la communication: Editions de la

The present dissertation significantly benefits from these works of art history, in addition to many others in the fields of political theory, social history, and critical philosophy. While this interdisciplinarity is a significant aspect, my work's main contribution is an expansive yet in-depth iconographical inquiry that pays critical attention to the political ontology of the print medium. In other words, I put the printed pictures at the center of all my efforts and draw my methodology from the objects of inquiry themselves. This ensures that I take full advantage of each printed image, and do *not* reduce them to attractive crutches for radical ideas, sketchbooks for avant-garde paintings, or illustrations to social histories. The chapters and subsections of this dissertation are organized by the monumental icons which emerge as surrogates for authority from this iconographic survey of radical print culture. Each chapter opens with an anecdote of iconoclasm that functions as a paradigm for the graphic examples of radical anti-monumentality that follow. More than mere ciphers, I maintain that the icons I identify were mobilized in these prints to produce and impart critical insights about the forms of authority that regulated the lives of their audiences in *fin-de-siècle* Paris and to organize the revolutionary call for their iconoclasm.

The first chapter is motivated by the following question: why was the Vendôme Column deemed intolerable by the laboring people of Paris in the Spring of 1871? In

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Réunion des Musées nationaux, 1987); Henry Poulaille, *Un crayon de combat* (Saint-Denis: Vent du ch'min, 1982); Fabienne Dumont, Marie-Hélène Jouzeau, and Joël Moris, *Jules Grandjouan: créateur de l'affiche politique illustrée en France* (Paris: Somogy, 2001); Michel Dixmier and Henri Viltard, *Jossot, caricatures. De la révolte à la fuite en Orient (1866–1951)* (Paris: Paris Bibliothèques Editions, 2011); Noémie Koechlin, ed., *Dessins et légendes de Grandjouan dans "L'Assiette au beurre"* (Paris: N. Koechlin, 2001); Michel Dixmier and Michel Cordillot, *L'art social à la Belle époque : Aristide Delannoy, Jules Grandjouan, Maximilien Luce, trois artistes engagé peintures, affiches, illustrations et dessins originaux tirés des collections de Michel Dixmier et de Louis Bretonnière*, 1 vols. (Auxerre: Adiamos 89, 2005).

addressing this question, the chapter both establishes the methodology of the dissertation and provides the reader with a key theoretical framework drawn from the historical encounter between the monumental and the ephemeral in the final days of the Commune. As the people and the monument—or in other words, the printed image and the state authority—encounter each other in this pivotal moment, they allow me to set the stage for the *fin-de-siècle* graphic artists who would perform similar encounters between the authority and the masses. Here, I theorize the reproducible and commodified heteroglossia of the printed image as a political aesthetics where one can sense the immanence of an anti-authoritarian radical democracy. Against the diversity, immediacy, and multitude of the mass-produced revolutionary prints, I regard the Vendôme Column as the paradigm of political authority. However, more than simply reiterating the famous Napoleonic monument's undeniable symbolic connection to political power, I build my argument by following the ontology of this victory monument, which I take seriously, as the revolutionary iconoclasts did, as an aesthetic lesson on the nature of authority. This lesson dictates a mode of phenomenological experience and reception, which not only fails, but backfires in the Spring of 1871. In identifying this, I contribute to the critical study of the spatial relations that underpin the encounters of the masses with authority in urban centers throughout the modern social and political history, and build on the theoretical observations of the Situationists. However, in attending to an act of iconoclasm directed at the monumental nexus of power in public spaces my narrative's critical offer is the foil of destruction to the studies of the 'production' of space. Finally, I also believe that its demolition by the laboring classes of Paris in the name of the Commune serves as proof of the centrality

of politics in working-class uprisings for the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century, which invites us to revise the economy-centric pronouncements of the *fin-de-siècle* and twentieth-century critics of the act who articulated that the Bank of France was the monument the Commune should have taken down instead.

The second chapter is organized around the construction and reception of the Sacré-Coeur Basilica in Montmartre. On the one hand, it follows the representations of this monument in radical visual culture, and on the other hand it approaches the problems of modern religious architecture through the question of mass politics. Here, the increasingly undeniable presence of the 'crowds' that populate the graphic representation of religious monuments in late nineteenth-century print culture functions as the lynchpin of my argument. Oscillating between the tamed and the dangerous multitude, epitomized by the religious congregation and the destructive excess of the rioting 'mob,' the inclusion of the people in the representational matrices framing famous Catholic buildings acknowledge the upper- and upper-middle-class fears that one could find in both conservative and liberal republican attitudes following the trauma of the Commune. This reading also contributes to the existing scholarship on the representations of the cathedrals and churches that populate the artworks of the period. My close study of radical prints show that in addition to the aesthetic and social values attributed to these structures of faith in the romantic, realist, and symbolist art and literature, in the anti-authoritarian visual culture they functioned as vertical indices that hinge the democratic excess of the unorganized masses. In attending to this confrontation between imposing religious structures and their pious or subversive visitors we arrive to a reevaluation of the history of secularism in France—especially in

terms of a central, public-facing, ideological state-building policy of the Third Republic. The comparison of radical anti-authoritarian images of religious power with anticlerical propaganda of the Third Republic shows how the image of the cleric as the face of reactionary danger against the Republic is replaced by the monument as the true body of authority in the works of leftist artists. In stressing the critical centrality of the 'social question' to the anarchist and revolutionary socialist images of religious power, this chapter complicates the common narratives of *laïcité* that delineate the history of secularization in France as a standoff between state and the Catholic Church. I show that the radical artists saw the official discourse of anticlericalism as another tool for political/economic mystification which they presented as mere smoke and mirrors, a counter-opium the bourgeois Republic offered to the laboring masses to keep them loyal to the political power and halt the impending social revolution.

As if testifying to the necessity and impossibility of its representation, the third and the final chapter identifies the monumental faces that the radical artists gave to capitalism at the threshold of the twentieth century. Enumerating the three most common forms that this hegemonic system assumed in print—the Golden Calf (idol), the Money Safe (the pedestal), and the Stock Exchange building of Paris (the temple)—the third chapter attends to the role of the mystical in anti-capitalist prints' arduous labor to awaken their audiences from the dreams and nightmares of capitalism. Identifying the radical use of the myth of the Golden Calf, determined as it were by its special status as an icon expecting its own destruction, the chapter opens with the fecund opposition I establish between the question of visibility and invisibility by the detour of creation and iconoclasm— or in other words, face-giving as the precondition of defacement.

Showing the revolutionary artists' labor as a dialectic between the generative hands of the worker and the destructive hands of the iconoclast, the last chapter provides an open-ended epilogue to the act of iconoclasm that determined the arguments of the first chapter. The second icon of this final chapter, dubbed as 'the Temple'—guides the reader into the abode of financial abstraction, the Paris Stock Exchange, to show how did the radical graphic artists give sensible form to the magic tricks of capital which erase the labor, make and unmake fortunes, and transform numbers into things, and things into numbers. The third and the final section of this chapter finds the enclosure and accumulation as the twin origins of capitalism which is epitomized in the ubiquitous icon of the Money Safe, whose steel belly hosts monstrous truths about the concrete realities of this elusive system. I contend through this final chapter that in their struggle to provide aesthetic representations of what is otherwise formless (i.e. capitalism), the radical prints contributed to critical theory's duty of disenchantment. By assigning monstrous rites and bloody processes to the mystical cult of capitalism, these visual efforts show a close kinship with the textual accounts of capitalism and its critical trial by Marx and others.

To reiterate again, the methodological frameworks that this dissertation offers to these concerns are not limited to the temporal and spatial confines of the project. The monuments—both those mentioned in this study and their numerous stone, bronze, and concrete kin across the world—continue to focus anti-authoritarian and anti-capitalist dissent. As we move through the chapters of this dissertation, I maintain that it is necessary not to approach these images as visual props for one or another version of political discourse already available in the public sphere in a 'higher' or 'more refined'

form. We need to, on the contrary, approach these artifacts as political discourse, with the power to both communicate and produce knowledge coming from an ethical and social obligation their creators felt towards their fellow human beings.

CHAPTER 1: THE COLUMN

Introduction: A Fall and A Method

> The colossus with feet of clay, fell to the enthusiastic applause of thirty thousand spectators.
> Together with it, the cult of great men fell […] the love for glory fell.
> Together with it, the sign of our indignity and our enslavement disappears.
> This is the belated proclamation of the respect for human life.
> Down onto the manure, the conquerors, the emperors, and the priests.
> Down onto the manure, all the assassins and the apostles of reaction;
> To the manure, the costumes of the past times;
> It is the dawn of the new world,
> The world of the workers freed from misery and ignorance.[11]

This is how the revolutionary newspaper *Le Salut Public* recorded the destruction of the Napoleonic victory monument known as the Vendôme Column by the Paris Commune on May 16, 1871 [Figure 1.1]. Written by a Communard journalist, this passionate account conveys to the reader that the revolutionary iconoclasm of the Commune was much more than a symbolic act of triumph exercised over the monuments of a fallen regime. Instead, it presents the destruction as the physical manifestation of a new social and political paradigm, which would transform the lives

[11] Gustave Maroteau, in *Le Salut Public*, no. 3 (May 18, 1871). Translated from the reproduction in Georges Jeanneret, *Paris Pendant la Commune Révolutionnaire de 71* (Neuchâtel: Impr. G. Guillaume fils, 1872), 166–67. Gustave Maroteau was twenty-one when he became the editor of this important revolutionary newspaper. He was hailed as the future of revolutionary journalism. After the Commune, he was exiled to New Caledonia where he died at the age of twenty-five from untreated tuberculosis.

of the monument's present and future audiences. In other words, the journalist sees the foundations of a new social contract in the rubble of the monument: one that rejects militarism and religious authority, and upholds respect for human life and common dignity. Significantly, this contract rests on a new conception of History, which would be written by the labor emancipated from poverty, instead of tyrants in old costumes.

Figure 1.1. *Colonne de la Grande Armée (d'Austerlitz)* at Place Vendôme. Also known as *The Vendôme Column*, Erected in 1810. (Wikimedia Commons/MBZT, 2011).

The destruction of the monument, then, was to make room for a new world, ushered in by the political lessons distilled in an Old Testament allegory: "The colossus with feet of clay, fell to the enthusiastic applause of thirty thousand spectators."[12] These

[12] French original: "Le colosse aux pieds d'argile est tombé aux applaudissements frénétiques de trente mille spectateurs." 'The clay feet' is a direct reference to the second chapter of the Book of Daniel (Dan. 2:31–33), in which Daniel interprets the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. The dream features the destruction of a colossal statue made of four different materials: a golden head, a silver torso, iron legs, and clay feet alluding to the finitude of earthly authority.

lessons—which were dressed by the journalist in the garb of an old parable and proclaimed in the modern medium of newspaper—would become integral to the late nineteenth-century revolutionary consciousness: the authority is a frail fiction hidden behind the monumental projections of permanence; the *people* are the real agents of the History which is recorded not on bronze and marble, but on printed paper; and destruction and construction are the two sides of revolutionary action.

In the days leading up to this historic moment, an impressive crowd gathered at the Place Vendôme and the neighboring streets. The National Guard raised a bed of manure and hay in the direction of the *Rue de la Paix*[13] to brace the fall of the monument. The store windows at the Place Vendôme—most filled with luxury goods, jewelry, and lace—were covered with newspaper and supports to safeguard them from the impact. On the day of destruction, the bands filled the square with revolutionary airs, such as *La Marseillaise* and *Chant du Depart*, that the crowd joyously sang along to. Several leaders of the Commune took their places on the balcony of the Ministry of Justice across from the monument. Others blended with the thousands of onlookers on the streets. The monument's demolition, a festival complete with flags, bands, marches, and a cheering crowd, was a subversion of the official celebrations that took place around it throughout the Second Empire.[14] A team of workers sawed the base of the column with whistle notches as if preparing to fell a large tree. As the time approached, the public

[13] Ironically, the old name of the street was *Rue Napoléon*, but was renamed after the peace treaty of 1814 (that forced Napoléon into exile in Elba) as *Rue de la Paix*, literally exchanging the soldier-emperor for 'Peace' [*Paix*].

[14] Henri Lamazou, an ecclesiastical hostage of the Commune and the future bishop of Amiens, noted the subversive character of the event: "the newspapers invited the Parisian population to this act of cowardly destruction as if it was a patriotic festival." Pierre-Henri Lamazou, *Le Renversement de La Colonne Vendôme : Épreuves d'un Chapitre Inédit de La 12e Édition Du Livre de M. l'abbé Lamazou Intitulé La Place Vendôme et La Roquette* (Paris: E. de Soye et Fils, 1873), 84.

and the band left the monument's vicinity for safety. The column was wrapped in steel cables leading to a large capstan. The whole square got quiet. At half past three in the afternoon, a bugle signaled the awaited moment, and the anticipating silence of the crowd was shattered with a disappointing crack from the capstan. Quickly, the workers searched for another, while others climbed the pedestal to further gouge the base of the column, easing the job for the next capstan. The music and the singing continued, sustaining the energy and enthusiasm. Shortly after five o'clock, the Column collapsed onto the manure to the cheer of thousands.[15] When the dust settled, onlookers rushed to the debris to grab souvenir pieces of the destroyed monument.[16] [Figure 1.2.]

Figure 1.2. Bruno Braquehais, The Communards around the fallen monument and on its empty pedestal, photograph on albumen paper, May 16, 1871. (National Library of Brazil).

[15] See Catulle Mendès, *Les 73 Journées de La Commune (du 18 Mars Au 29 Mai 1871)* (Paris: 1871), 284; Bernard Gagnebin, "Courbet et la colonne Vendôme: de l'utilisation du témoignage en histoire," *Mélanges d'histoire économique et sociale* (Genève: Impr. de la Tribune de Genève, 1963), 260.
[16] According to an anti-Communard account, the people sold these pieces of the monument for up to one hundred francs per piece. Edouard Moriac and Henri de Pène, *Paris Sous La Commune: 18 Mars Au 28 Mai. [Précédés Des] Commentaires d'un Blessé (Deuxième Édition)* (Paris, 1871), 307–8.

This moment of the people's victory over the monument and the politics it embodied did not last long. The Paris Commune was violently crushed in the following weeks by the French army acting under the orders of the conservative government at Versailles. Soon, the victors restored the monument to its place, to erase the Commune together with the memory of its iconoclastic political promise. However, images and texts on mass-produced pages erected countless (*counter*-)monuments on paper that could still make the Commune's anti-monumental politics *present*. This chapter retrieves and expands on the lessons Communards read in the solidity of the Vendôme Column and its fleeting debris. Its methodology is inferred from its objects of analyses: the bronze monument known as the Vendôme Column and its paper and mechanically reproducible counterparts—caricatures, engravings, photography—which commemorate its devastating reception by the Paris Commune. The ontological discrepancy between these two aesthetic regimes of recording human history—embodied in 'the monument' and 'the printed images'—becomes the organizing framework of my observations, which is then extended to the political and social epistemes that I see them dictate. That is to say, following the paper traces of the Commune's revolutionary iconoclasm, I reframe the relationship between the authority and the masses through the aesthetic means of authenticating their historical agencies. This methodology becomes the theoretical armature for the other chapters of this dissertation, which repeatedly finds the *colossus* and the *thousands* in the same pictorial frame. Therefore, if at times it feels to the reader that we abandon the singular work of art known as the Vendôme Column for an abstract 'monument,' I assure them that in this dissertation, the observations and arguments depart from, and return to, concrete

objects of analyses.

History and the Vendôme Column

Four years after 'the end' of the French Revolution by the coup d'état of the 18th Brumaire, the French Consulate under the increasingly expanding authority of the First Consul Napoléon Bonaparte issued an edict to place a monument "similar to that erected in honor of Trajan in Rome" at the Place Vendôme.[17] Instead of the linear narrative of battle embodied in its Roman inspiration, the monument of the Consulate was described as an allegory of political unity: individual sections representing the Departments of France cohered into a single, vertical form. Fittingly, its summit was to hold a statue of Charlemagne as the symbolic father of this unified political body.[18] Yet, before the bureaucrats and artists had a chance to bring the Carolingian Emperor into nineteenth-century Paris, the city had crowned a new, modern Emperor.

Almost a week after Napoléon Bonaparte declared himself the Emperor of France, the fine arts department of *L'Institut de France* asked for the revision of the project as a monument to the new sovereign.[19] The minister of the interior, Jean-Baptiste de Champagny, relayed the idea to Napoléon as the "unanimous sentiments of all [his] subjects."[20] Thus, the personal rule of Napoléon Bonaparte would be sanctified by a

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[17] Irène Delage, "La Colonne Vendôme, Heurs et Malheurs d'un Symbole Historique," in *Napoléon et Paris: Rêves d'une Capitale*, ed. Thierry Sarmant et al. (Paris: Paris-Musées; Musée Carnavalet, 2015), 263.

[18] Delage, "La Colonne Vendôme," 263. See also Jules-Antoine Castagnary, *Gustave Courbet et La Colonne Vendôme*: *Plaidoyer Pour Un Ami Mort* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1883), 9–10.

[19] It came as a letter to the executive committee on May 26, 1804. Delage, "La Colonne Vendôme," 263.

[20] "Que Votre Majesté me permette de lui dire qu'elle se rendrait aux sentiments unanimes de ses sujets, si elle consentait à ce que cette colonne, formée avec les canons pris à l'ennemi, servit à conte sacrer les souvenirs d'une campagne qui vient de marquer une époque si glorieuse à l'histoire de France ; et à ce que cette colonne, exécutée sur les proportions de la colonne Trajane, fût surmontée de la statue du prince qu'elle chérit." As reproduced in Alfred Normand and Charles Normand, "La Colonne Vendôme," *Bulletin de La Société Des Amis Des Monuments Parisiens* 11, nos. 37–38 (1897): 132.

monument which, while recording the Emperor for posterity, would enact the popular consensus (i.e. unanimous sentiments) over his self-granted authority. These political demands brought a series of alterations upon the original design. In its final conception, the monument is dedicated to Napoléon and his victory at the Battle of Austerlitz. The execution of the project took place between 1806 and 1810 under the administrative and artistic command of Vivant Denon.[21] The battle is represented as a narrative relief that wraps around the Column as a continuous band. At the apex of the structure Antoine-Denis Chaudet portrayed Napoléon as a Roman deity in a toga and with a laurel wreath, his right hand resting on the pommel of a sheathed sword and his left holding a globe topped with a winged victory. [Figure 1.3.] The final form and the political message of the Column collapse the temporal distance that separates it from its Roman prototype.[22]

[21] Delage, "La Colonne Vendôme," 264. A large team of sculptors under the direction of Francois-Joseph Bosio translated the design into bronze relief. After his service for the project, Bosio would become the preferred portrait sculptor of the Bonaparte family.

[22] The resemblance between the Napoleonic column and its Roman inspiration would be subject to criticism by political radicals. The Communard and anarchist Élie Reclus, for example, mocked its status as an artwork on the basis of authenticity: "it's a magnificent work of art," "proof that it is a counterfeit Trajan's column:" Élie Reclus, *La Commune de Paris, Au Jour Le Jour, 1871, 19 Mars–28 Mai* (Paris: Schleicher Frères, 1908), 315.

Figure 1.3. *Statue Colossale de Napoléon* by Antoine-Denis Chaudet, destroyed in 1815. Engraving by Ambroise Tardieu, 1822. (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

This anachronism is intentional. The Vendôme Column was among the first of many consecutive monumental efforts that would equate France with the Roman Empire, Paris with Rome, and Napoléon with the great Roman emperors.[23] [Figures 1.4. and 1.5.]

[23] On the column's cuboid pedestal is a Latin inscription etched onto a panel carried by two winged victories. It reads as follows: "Napoleon, the August Emperor, has dedicated this column to the honor of the Grand Army, a monument made of bronze, seized from the enemy during the German war in 1805, a war which under his leadership was finished in the space of three months." As translated in
Charles R. Mack, "Metaphorically Speaking: A Grand Tour Souvenir of the Vendome Column," *Southeastern College Art Conference Review* 16, no. 4 (January 1, 2014): 447.

Left, Figure 1.4. *Trajan's Column*, Marble, 113 AD. (Wikimedia Commons/Alvesgarpar, 2015).
Right, Figure 1.5. *The Vendôme Column*, Bronze on a hollow stone core, 1810. (Flickr/Guilhem Vellut, 2016).

As Chaudet's statue intimates, the homology breaches the political-theological limits of modernity and sanctifies Napoléon's personal rule as an imperial cult. Therefore, while seeming to commemorate a glorious moment from history, the Vendôme Column actually represents the apotheosis of the French Emperor as an author of History. Ironically, Chaudet's bronze deity could enjoy the apex of the Column for only four years. Having failed in his subsequent Russian campaign, the Emperor was exiled to the Island of Elba. On April 8, 1814, eight days after allied forces entered Paris,

the statue of Napoléon was removed and stored in the studio of the founder Jean-Baptiste Launay.[24] On May 3, 1814, Louis XVIII returned to Paris to claim the throne for the Bourbon Dynasty. The significance of the Column was revised as a patriotic monument and christened with a large Bourbon *fleur-de-lis* flag that replaced the imperial statue. [Figure 1.6.]

Figure 1.6. The Vendôme Column with the Bourbon *fleur-de-lis* flag. Engraving by Alexandre Dubois, 1814. (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

A few years later, Napoléon's statue was melted down to provide material for an equestrian statue of Henri IV at *Pont Neuf* (1818).[25] As his bronze effigy was absorbed into the likeness of the first Bourbon monarch, Napoléon's memory faded from the

[24] The bronze reliefs of the column were founded in the same studio less than a decade prior.
[25] Delage, "La Colonne Vendôme," 264.

monumental medium and re-appeared in popular prints, household objects, and street songs, effectively creating an underground market for Napoleonic grandeur in miniature.

Popular representations of Napoléon constituted a seditious counterculture against the return of Legitimist symbols. The apparent political danger of mass-media Bonapartism brought the *épinal* artist Jean Charles Pellerin to trial after the discovery of prints depicting Napoleonic wars in his printshop.[26] Pellerin's petition to sell images of Napoléon by claiming their subject matter "now belongs to history" was rejected by the minister of culture, who argued that "such art produced in mass and sold cheaply among lower classes in rural areas would be politically incendiary."[27] Thus, while the Vendôme Column could continue to represent a Napoleonic victory (albeit tamed under the shadow of a Bourbon flag), its mobile, colorful, and multiple counterparts were banned. Pellerin's prints, conceived with a populist sentimentalism borrowed from the visual repertoire of the First Empire, can hardly qualify as revolutionary. But his case illustrates that despite their ephemerality, prints can be a medium for history; due to their mobility, size, and rapid production and dissemination, they can easily produce counter-dominant strains of political and aesthetic remembrance; and finally, the authority regards popular images to be more politically powerful than grand monuments.

After the Revolution of 1830, Louis Philippe—the "Citizen-King"—recognized

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[26] Barbara Ann Day, "Political Dissent and Napoleonic Representations during the Restoration Monarchy," *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 19, no. 3 (1993): 409. Pellerin was not the only one who got into trouble for selling forbidden images of the Emperor and the Empire. Numerous peddlers of images were persecuted for selling them. Their omnipresence, coupled with the increasing availability of decorative objects with imperial symbols and/or the Emperor's visage, were a serious concern to the authorities in the final years of the Restoration: see pages 429–30 of the same article.
[27] Day, "Political Dissent," 410.

the political advantages of attaching the Napoleonic myth to his own rule. In the following decade, the memory of Napoléon returned to the visual culture of the state, and the new constitutional monarchy directed its attention to old Napoleonic sites, especially to the Place Vendôme. The king announced the imminent return of Napoléon to the apex of the Column with an official contest for a new statue. The sculptor Charles-Émile Seurre won the competition with a design quite different to Chaudet's immortal Emperor. Reminiscent of popular prints, Seurre depicted Napoléon as the *little corporal*. Clad in colonel's uniform, bicorn hat, and boots, with the cross of the *Légion d'Honneur* on his chest, the statue remembered 'Napoléon the soldier' despite the imperial ambition that gained him the pedestal-column. [Figure 1.7.]

Figure 1.7. Charles Émile Seurre, *Napoléon as 'petit caporal,'* 1833. The statue is currently in Les Invalides, Paris. Lithography by Julien, 1833. (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

Meanwhile, romantic poems and popular histories about his campaigns proliferated in the mass culture, often with illustrations by graphic artists who devoted their careers to depicting Napoléon on the battlefield.[28] The coalescence of the two public images of Napoléon (i.e. the young officer and the powerful ruler) was welcomed by the July Monarchy that was built on the paradox of the Citizen-King.[29] This political use of the Napoleonic legend fueled the campaign for the *retour des cendres*.[30] As widely publicized by the populist king and supported by Napoléon's biographer, the then minister of the interior Adolphe Thiers, the remains of the Emperor were brought from St. Helena and placed at Les Invalides in 1840 with an official ceremony. The return of Napoléon's remains and the restoration of the Place Vendôme as a site of political authority show how Louis Philippe exploited Napoléon's cult for his own political ends, on which Castagnary would reflect three decades later that "not even Bonapartists worked this well for Bonapartism."[31] Yet, we need to acknowledge the key difference between the Empire and the Citizen-King's constitutional monarchy: while Louis Philippe cultivated Bonapartism, he also transformed the transhistorical, semi-divine

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[28] Philippe de Carbonnières, "La Légende Napoléonienne à Paris et Le Retour Des Cendres," in *Napoléon et Paris: Rêves d'une Capitale*, ed. Thierry Sarmant et al. (Paris: Paris-Musées; Musée Carnavalet, 2015), 249.

[29] To celebrate the July Days in 1833, the town of Ceret inaugurated a column on the pedestal where a bust of Louis Philippe was placed, while a bust of Napoléon appeared at the summit. This celebration coincided with the inauguration of Seurre's statue of Napoléon on the Vendôme Column. In Paris, a prefect of the Seine addressed a crowd in commemoration of the July Days, emphasizing that the inauguration of Napoléon's statue "is not only a reparation on behalf of the memory of he who harnessed anarchy, endowed France with law, order, equality and power, but […] also signifies the restoration of the glory of our country." See "Interieur," *Le Moniteur Universel* (August 12, 1833), 5. See also Albert Boime, *Hollow Icons: The Politics of Sculpture in Nineteenth-Century France* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1987), 37.

[30] Literally "the return of the ashes." The term indicates the campaign to bring Napoléon Bonaparte's remains from St. Helena to Paris.

[31] For the author's account of the July Monarchy and the Vendôme Column, see Castagnary, *Gustave Courbet et La Colonne Vendôme*, 12–15.

Emperor into an exceptional but ultimately history-bound figure.

This officially—as well as popularly—tended soil of Bonapartism soon germinated another Bonaparte in flesh and blood. The familial affiliation between Louis Napoléon and his uncle was at the core of the Second Empire's legitimacy from the moment of the coup d'état of December 2, 1851. This privileged connection defined the aesthetic and symbolic self-fashioning of the new Emperor and his regime, and the imperial eagle, dynastic bee, and iconic insignia, "N," took over the country.[32] Consequently the revived imperial iconography expunged the *little corporal* from the visual repertoire of the political authority, and in 1863 Louis Napoléon ordered Seurre's statue to be replaced with a copy of Chaudet's original.[33] [Figure 1.8.]

[32] Laure Chabanne and Florian Meunier, "D'un Empire à l'autre: Napoléon Ier à Paris, du Retour Des Cendres à l'incendie des Tuileries," in *Napoléon et Paris: Rêves d'une Capitale*, ed. Thierry Sarmant et al. (Paris: Paris-Musées: Musée Carnavalet, 2015), 257.
[33] The copy was executed by the sculptor Augustin-Alexandre Dumont.

Figure 1.8. Augustin-Alexandre Dumont, *Napoleon as Caesar*, 1863. Based on Chaudet's destroyed original. This image depicts the statue in its current state after its major restoration in 1875. (Wikimedia Commons/Chabe01, 2017).

Ominously, the return of the Emperor in bronze coincided with his nephew's ill-fated imperial adventure in Mexico. As the Second Empire lost its luster, oppositional forces read the Column's visual regime of exaltation as political repression, militarist expansion, and an ultra-centralized political authority. The antagonism between the people of Paris and the imperial symbols peaked when Parisians found themselves defenseless against the Prussian invasion after Louis Napoléon's humiliating defeat at

the Battle of Sedan in September 1870. The Emperor had surrendered and was taken captive by Otto von Bismarck. As if to realize Marx's prophecy in reverse, when the imperial mantle finally fell *off* the shoulders of Louis Napoléon, Parisians turned their backs on the captured Emperor and turned their attention to the imperial column.[34]

Effectively left without a government after Louis Napoléon's abdication, oppositional members of parliament under the leadership of the republican Léon Gambetta marched to the Hôtel de Ville, proclaimed the Republic, and established the Government of National Defense on September 4, 1870. Two weeks later, Prussian armies besieged Paris. The Parisians who had the social and economic means escaped the city for the countryside. The remaining, majority working-class residents who found themselves at the mercy of the enemy and the impending hunger were seeing the abandoned city and its proud monuments under a new light. The militarist boast of the Vendôme Column amidst the client-less luxury boutiques rang particularly inconsonant in the starving city. Faced with an escalating resentment towards the monument, the provisional government tasked the artists with determining the imperial Column's aesthetic value. An affirmation of the monument as a work of art could neutralize its political identity and save it from destructive popular action. However, the famous artist and soon-to-be revolutionary Gustave Courbet publicly denied the Column any aesthetic merit.[35] The painter's verdict had an official weight. He passed it as the director of the new Republic's *Commission des Artistes*—an official organization specifically

[34] In the conclusion of his *18th Brumaire*, Marx had written: "But when the imperial mantle finally falls on the shoulders of Louis Bonaparte, the bronze statue of Napoleon will come crashing down from the top of the Vendôme Column." Karl Marx, *18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, 1852, https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1852/18th-brumaire/ch07.htm.

[35] The statement of Courbet was reproduced in *Le Figaro*, no. 275 (October 2, 1870): "la colonne Vendôme est un monument dénué de toute valeur artistique[…]"

created for the conservation (hence, for the identification) of the artistic patrimony during the siege.[36] But, Courbet's statement is not a pure judgment of aesthetics. It is an ethical judgment of politics *as* aesthetic: "[the Column] tends to perpetuate, *by its expression*, the ideas of war and conquest" and therefore is "antipathetic to the genius of modern civilization and to the universal fraternity."[37] The artist therefore denies aesthetic value as a shield for political artworks, by declaring form and message to be inseparable and one.

The Commission suggested the 'deconstruction' of the Column, which would entail carrying it piece by piece to the military museum of *Les Invalides* to become a memento of (past) militarism and a message of a bygone era.[38] This could have been an ideal solution for the provisional government, which wished to oversee the transformation of the symbolic regime of urban space from 'Imperial' to 'Republican.' As I have illustrated, however, Courbet's text hints at something much more radical, even though he shared it as a bureaucrat tasked by the government. Diagnosing the Column as a monumental collusion between political authority and art, Courbet's

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[36] The Commission became a self-organized artists' federation during the Commune. The bureaucratic history of this fascinating organization and its lasting legacy can be read in the fine study by Gonzalo J. Sanchez, *Organizing Independence: The Artists Federation of the Paris Commune and Its Legacy, 1871–1889* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1997).

[37] Translated from the French as it appeared in *Le Figaro*, no. 275 (October 2, 1870). "[la colonne Vendôme] tendant à perpétuer, par son expression, les idées de guerre et de conquête qui étaient dans la dynastie impériale mais que réprouve le sentiment d'une nation républicaine ; Attendu qu'il est, par cela même, antipathique au génie de la civilisation moderne et a l'union de fraternité universelle qui, désormais, doit prévaloir parmi les peuples […]" [italics mine.-A.M.] The editors of this royalist newspaper published Courbet's statement with their own conservative response. Framed with quadrants from Victor Hugo's *To the Column*, which I mention later in this chapter, his response recuperated its chauvinistic and romantic bravado as a salve for the wounds inflicted on the national pride by the recent Prussian siege.

[38] Castagnary, in his effort to prove that Courbet's aims were for 'conservation' rather than 'destruction,' engages with this proposal in detail. See Castagnary, *Gustave Courbet et La Colonne Vendôme*, 26. The Commission's proposition also brings to mind the discussions around the fate of Soviet monuments at the end of the twentieth century, while inviting questions about the different contexts of exhibition and their effect on the reception, as well as the efficacy and adequacy of such 'recontextualizations.'

statement delegitimizes the aesthetic celebrations of political power which rest on the glorification of violence and oppression.

The National Defense Government disbanded before acting on the suggested plan for the monument at the end of January 1871. A rushed national election in early February delivered an unexpectedly conservative National Assembly which had to convene in Bordeaux instead of Paris. Adolphe Thiers—who had already made his mark on national politics as a statesman of the July Monarchy and in previous years as a critic of Louis Napoléon, whom he endorsed in the 1848 elections—was elected as the Chief Executive of the new government. Thiers had risen to prominence in recent weeks as the leading negotiator with the Prussians. He was the one who relayed the devastating terms of the peace treaty to the National Assembly, which voted and accepted it on March 1. The news of the French surrender was received with great disappointment and anger by the residents of besieged Paris. The triumphant parade of the Prussians on the Champs-Élysées to which Thiers had agreed was taken as a symbol of the new, rural-conservative government's disregard for the suffering Paris and its working-class inhabitants. When he traveled to Paris in the days following the armistice to settle his government back at the capital, he did not find a welcoming city. The government had to leave a Paris stirring in revolutionary enthusiasm under the watchful eye of the Prussian troops, and decamped to Versailles. The fate of the Column had to wait for a couple more weeks.

The Column and the Commune

On March 18, 1871, the people of Paris had declared the city a Commune

independent of the government at Versailles. On April 12, 1871, the Paris Commune decided the Vendôme Column would be demolished, and immediately informed the public via newspapers and posters.[39]

The Paris Commune was not the first revolutionary group to have targeted the vestiges of a past regime. The French Revolution of 1789 famously offered a model for revolutionary destruction. On the other hand, we have seen that the apex of the Vendôme Column had endured physical (and semiotic) interventions brought about by a counter-revolution, a revolution, and a coup d'état. Yet all these regimes respected the monument's iconic presence as an emblem of national patrimony. This tall history of official appropriations was interrupted with Courbet's incriminating judgment of the Column during the provisional Government of National Defense. The artist was not alone in his loathing for the monument. During the siege and the Commune, the journals, broadsheets, and street performers of Paris joined an expanding multimedia objection—from poems and songs to caricatures—raised against the monument's

[39] I stress that there is no unified political and social collective behind my use of the terms "Commune" and "Communards." The assertions of this chapter only fully emerge if we consider their pluralism in contrast to the bourgeois nation state's aspirations for a unified and homogenous body politic. The Commune's political constitution was an amalgam of different leftist and revolutionary traditions. In the last years of the Second Empire, the International Workingmen's Association had taken root among the Parisian Left. Additionally, there were elements still drawing their political and moral convictions from the French revolutionary tradition. The Commune's political constitution also included supporters of Louis Blanc, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Louis Auguste Blanqui, and Jacobinism. On the other hand, while neither Marx nor Bakunin played a central role in the 1871 revolution, several important members of the Commune were ideologically closer to the latter than the former. Charles Rihs, *La Commune de Paris, 1871: Sa Structure et ses Doctrines* (Paris: Seuil, 1973), 19. In addition to this ideological pluralism, the Communards—from wage laborer to bourgeois intellectual—came from diverse class backgrounds. Communarde women such as Louise Michel and Paule Minck actively participated in the political discussions and armed struggle. Despite the vital role they played in the transformation of politics and daily life, the women in the Commune were excluded from suffrage. Hence the proletarian democracy of the Commune, at least in the sense of elections and offices, was a *male* democracy. However, their deeds and writings shaped the feminist movement within the French Left in the following decades: see Kathleen Jones and Françoise Vergès, "'Aux Citoyennes!': Women, Politics, and the Paris Commune of 1871," *History of European Ideas* 13, no. 6 (January 1, 1991): 711–32, and David Barry, "The Commune of 1871: The Great Venture in Female Citizenship," in *Women and Political Insurgency: France in the Mid-Nineteenth Century*, ed. David Barry (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1996), 105–54.

existence. One contemporary observer described this heteroglot assault as a "rumbling storm gathering against the Column."[40] Courbet's assessment—which in Spring 1871 was now the view of the founding member of the Commune's *Fédération des Artistes*—was in tune with these popular oppositions to the monument, regardless of their medium and style, proclaiming the reorganization of the relationship between art and politics.

Before we move onto these diverse objects of my analysis, let's take a close look at the official statement of the Commune, which, as a historical document, is often reduced to its final sentence, announcing the imminent demolition. Conversely, the inadequately analyzed justifications that the decree shares with the public compose a fascinating political statement that emerges from an acute judgment of the monument's ontology beyond its indexical connection to a long-dead sovereign. Without evoking the name of Napoléon even once, the Commune's decree grounds the monument in two provisions of political authority—permanence and violence:

> The Commune of Paris, considering that the imperial column in the Place Vendôme is a monument of barbarism, a symbol of brute force and false glory, an affirmation of militarism, a negation of international law, a permanent insult by the victors towards the vanquished, a perpetual threat to one of the three great principles of the French republic, fraternity, decrees: First and only article: the column in the Place Vendôme will be demolished.[41]

The classification of the Column as permanent and threatening gestures beyond the object's historical specificity as the commemoration of a particular battle. As such, it

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[40] Castagnary, *Gustave Courbet et La Colonne Vendôme*, 21–22.

[41] As translated and cited by John Milner, *Art, War, and Revolution in France, 1870–1871: Myth, Reportage, and Reality* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 154. Also see Kristin Ross, *The Emergence of Social Space: Rimbaud and the Paris Commune* (London: Verso, 2008), 5.

invites departures from the monument at the Place Vendôme in order to arrive at a whole class of aesthetic objects, which, while exalting the political power they are tasked with embodying, are also permanent falsifications and perpetual threats addressed to the people. Therefore, the Commune deduces a political-historical analysis that simultaneously emerges from and transcends the historical moment and the object of their decree, and can therefore teach something about the nature of the monuments and their patrons to the audiences outside their time and space—for example, to *us*.

This approximates the mechanism of Walter Benjamin's dialectical images, through which "the past comes together with the present in a constellation," [42] as "an image that emerges suddenly, […] flashing up in the *now of its recognizability*."[43] When the Commune encountered the Column anew in Paris under siege, they seized this fleeting moment. Let me illustrate this point a bit more. The decree is incremental of the attentions directed towards the Vendôme Column in the final quarter of 1870 and the first quarter of 1871. The experiences of the laboring Parisians during this period exposed the history and the political authority, which were embodied by the formal-aesthetic regime of the monument, as deceitful and violent. This recognition—which was grounded in an embodied, physical experience—critically reverses the political instruction that the Column dictates to its audiences. Almost as if turning the column upside down, this new regard perceives the spatial and temporal regimes of exaltation (i.e. the monuments) afforded to the political power as deserving of iconoclastic destruction because the political power they exalt is worthy of historical condemnation, and vice versa. As laudatory commemorations of power, in other words, the monuments

[42] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2002), (N3,1), 463.
[43] Benjamin, *Arcades*, (N 9, 7), 473. For more on 'dialectical image,' see (N4,1), 464.

become pillories through which people can identify those who sinned against them and their fellow human beings.[44]

Regardless of its self-aware bureaucratic tone, the language of the Commune's decision testifies to the closing of the gap between the political will and the experiences of the people. As I will illustrate, the claims that the Commune's official decree makes about the nature of the monument were available in (and inspired by) the popular forms of political expression produced around and about the Vendôme Column. Just like the decree, these popular, mass-produced expressions re-read and re-write the meaning of the monument. These new, politically and aesthetically productive receptions of the monument contradict those inherited from the past. They announce an incommensurability between the monument's history and the contingent moment of its reception by the revolutionary populace known as the Paris Commune, and state that the latter could only assimilate the former into its present as rubble.

The Monument of Barbarism and Brute Force

The first lesson the Commune recognized from the Vendôme Column was that it was inseparable from violence. The decree repeatedly delivers this point, referring to it as a "monument of barbarism" and a "symbol of brute force," which praises war, conquest, and the subjugation of the weak. As a matter of fact, the Column has an umbilical relation to violence beyond its semiotic and formal representation. The bronze for its repoussé reliefs was smelted from Austrian and Russian cannons captured on the

[44] We will see how this doubling and the reversal of the monument in pillory would be recorded in the caricatures. Ironically, this political subversion would save the column from destruction. Élie Reclus remarks upon those who suggested turning the column into a 'post of infamy.' Reclus, *La Commune de Paris, Au Jour Le Jour*, 316.

battlefield. In an act of ideological enchantment that only the political authority and its monuments could perform, the Column metamorphoses violence and destruction into history and glory.

Months before the Commune's decree, a zincograph print published during the siege had already exposed this monumental magic trick in the medium of caricature. [Figure 1.9.] The scene presents a grim landscape of burning cities and a wailing woman, both of which dissolve into the flat background due to the low contrast and granular impression characteristic of the cheap zincograph prints. However, this 'shortcoming' of the medium is congruent with the macabre subject matter: by creating a flat, heavy, and ominous purple-gray atmosphere, it invites ghastly apparitions. Against this background is Emperor Wilhelm I, reduced to a skeletal form, embellished with attributes of his office, and recognizable by his characteristic facial hair. He stands triumphantly atop a pedestal of skulls. A bird of prey sits at the boots of the German Emperor as decapitated, bat-winged heads circle around his emaciated effigy. Two of these creatures can be identified as Louis Napoléon and Otto von Bismarck, opponents on the battlefield but allies against the vanquished in all wars: the common people. The caption reads: "The statue to be erected in memory of the Victor!" For the artist, there is little distinction between the French monument at the Place Vendôme and this fictional Prussian monument. Both humiliate the defeated and celebrate the victor, carrying him to an apotheosis not just physically, but metaphorically, high above ever-increasing human debris. The caricature intimates a more radical message to those who attend to it further, where one not only finds wars and human toil under the surface of monuments, but an allegorical duplication of the monumental form that shows the

violence to be the foundation of authority.

Figure 1.9. Edmond Guillaume (?), *Statue à élever à la mémoire du vainqueur*, Zincograph, 1871.
(Cornell University Library/Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections).

Sporadic condemnations of the Vendôme Column for its glorification of violence and death appeared and vanished throughout the monument's existence. Between the Fall of 1870 and Spring of 1871 these earlier assaults, especially in the medium of poetry, were recuperated by the print culture. The most widely reproduced of these was Auguste Barbier's pointedly titled poem *L'Idole* (1833), which offers a powerful indictment of the Column both as a product and as a source of violence.

Barbier achieves this by bringing the monument to the same poetic frame as those who could recognize the death and suffering under its rhetoric of power and glory all along: "This bronze that mothers never look at / This bronze that rose under their tears so tall"[45] It is no coincidence that this four-decades-old poem was resurrected as the nation's children were once again dying to bring glory and historical fame to the faces of authority. The poem then undoes the authority's transformation of violence into exaltation, and as such contributes to the conversion of the Column into a reproachful lesson, which now teaches that Napoléon I, his nephew, Wilhelm I, and many who reigned before and after them depended on the perpetuation of wars, oppression, and suffering for the continuity of their rule.

After the suppression of the Commune by the new government, Paul Brandat, a member of the *Ligue Internationale et Permanente de la Paix*, appealed to Frédéric Passy using Barbier's powerful verse, to urge the future recipient of the first Nobel Peace Prize to take a position as the president of the pacifist league against the re-erection of the destroyed Column. Brandat's publicized letter merges the affective tone of the poem with evocations of horror, as he finds blood and bones at the foundation of all historical apotheoses granted by the monuments. He offers the legendary monument of Timur made of human remains and the commemorative tomb for the king of 'Dahomey'—allegedly composed of bricks molded with human blood—as the siblings

[45] It was written when the July Monarchy had started to integrate the monumental vestiges of the First Empire into its own aesthetic regime. The French original is: "Ce bronze que jamais ne regardent les mères, Ce bronze grandi sous leurs pleurs." For instance, Louis Ratisbonne, a republican man of letters who would not partake in the Commune, cited these verses to call for the demolition of the monument in the pages of the respectable *Le Journal des Débats* as early as September 1870. With its patriotic tone Ratisbonne's text stands apart in the history of the column's adversaries. He concludes that the monument "built with the blood of French boys" and "their mothers' tears" can serve the *patrie* if melted down and recast as cannons to defend it. Louis Ratisbonne, "Paris est dans l'attente…," *Journal Des Débats, Politiques et Littéraires*, September 28, 1870.

of the Vendôme Column, each elevating political authority on a pedestal of death and suffering. The Column, "the bronze" that "mothers never look at," the pacifist declares, is "an immense heap of human debris."[46]

The emphatic tone of Brandat's appeal almost renders the Vendôme Column a menace to humanity. This resonates with the Commune's characterization of the monument as "a perpetual threat" for its ideals.[47] For the sake of argument, let's leave the violent fate of the Commune aside and remember that the Vendôme Column is a stone and bronze structure standing in a public square. Strictly speaking, as a static and stable artwork, it cannot act over the lives of its audiences. But in lauding the political power through a military victory, the monument relays a capacity for violence to which the heirs to its throne and glory—i.e. the present political authority—must lay constant claim in order to produce and reproduce their legitimacy.

In a sense, the monuments are tasked with converting the deeds of the oppressive, active principle of political power into a permanent and transhistorical significance that is worthy of social consent. Henri Lefebvre describes this dilemma in the following way: "[t]o the degree that there are traces of violence and death, negativity and aggressiveness in social practice, the monumental work erases them and replaces

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[46] "Timour-Beg, un Napoléon de l'Asie, bâtit jadis un édifice avec des ossements humains […] [L]e roi de Dahomey, guerrier de profession, élevait, à la mémoire de son père, un gigantesque tombeau de briques pétries avec du sang humain. […] il est difficile d'établir une différence entre l'édifice du roi de Dahomey et: *Ce bronze que jamais ne regardent les mères / Ce bronze grandi sous les pleurs ;* qui n'est en somme, lui aussi, aux yeux de l'esprit, qu'un immense entassement de débris humains." Paul Brandat and Frédéric Passy, *La Colonne* (Brest: Imprimerie U. Piriou, 1871), 3.

[47] More than a century after the Communards and Paul Brandat deduced this lesson from the Vendôme Column, the art historian W. J. T. Mitchell articulated three kinds of violence related to public art: the artwork as the agent or the act of violence, doing violence to its audience; as the target of violence; or as the representation, imitation, or memory of a past violence. W. J. T. Mitchell, "The Violence of Public Art: Do the Right Thing," in *Art and the Public Sphere*, ed. W. J. T. Mitchell (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 37–38. One can offer the Vendôme Column as an archetypical example in all three categories. But here I identify a fourth category inspired by the Commune's decree: the promise/threat of future violence.

them with a tranquil power and certitude which can encompass violence and terror."[48] According to the decree of the Commune, that monumental erasure is barely a suspension of the violence, which instead remains under the surface of the monument as an implicit, constant threat. Elsewhere in *The Production of Space* Lefebvre argues that the monuments effect a 'consensus,' "rendering it practical and concrete," by which the "repressive element [is] metamorphosed into exaltation."[49] Reading the violent, repressive, and active element of the political on the frozen surface of the monument would then announce the end to the consensus. In other words, by voicing their dissent to what the monument makes concrete and permanent, the Commune first shattered the Column politically, before doing so physically. And as I have hinted thus far, they arrived at the terms of their opposition, which the opening quotation to this chapter enumerates, through attending to the monument's formal-semiotic mechanisms of exaltation and consent, which dialectically become the foundation of their condemnation of the monument and their dissent.

The Fragile Symbol of False Glory

This is a good time, if not a bit late, to return to the object and attend more closely to the mechanisms that were intended to effect exaltation and a consensus. The 'column' itself is a hollow stone core covered with bronze repoussé relief plates that constitute twenty-two ascending spirals, which together narrate seventy-six moments from Napoléon's campaign in one continuous sequence.[50] [Figure 1.10.]

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[48] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 143.
[49] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 220.
[50] The numbers are taken from Mack, "Metaphorically Speaking," 443. The design of the narrative band was entrusted to painter Pierre-Nolasque Bergeret. Alfred Normand and Charles Normand, "La Colonne Vendôme," *Bulletin de La Société Des Amis Des Monuments Parisiens* 11, nos. 37–38. (1897): 133.

Figure 1.10. Detail of the narrative band on the *Vendôme Column*. (Wikimedia Commons/MBZT, 2011).
It is possible to discern Napoléon Bonaparte on the top section, as the center-left figure.

Yet, the object makes the optical experience of this narrative impossible to its audiences. [See, Figure 1.1.] The eyes and the body start engaging the object at its base; the beholder's eye, yearning for more leaves the body behind and follows the Emperor and his army in a continuous ascent, struggling more and more to grab onto the raised points of the relief. The guiding presence of Napoléon leads the eye as high as it can follow his reappearing likeness, but it invariably falls back to the body's level, unable to keep up with the Emperor's literal and metaphorical ascent. The body takes several steps back to aid the eye, but as the narrative blurs with distance, all that the eye can register now is the free-standing sculpture of the Emperor at the top of a high Column.

The spatial movement of the Emperor I have described intends to capture two

registers of temporal movement that the monument embodies. The bronze relief that covers the Column narrates a battle from beginning to end, literally advancing the Emperor through repeating his likeness—almost like a proto-cinematic unfolding—within the duration of the event. This first register of temporal movement is diegetic, historical, and strictly linear. The second—and as the Commune realized, politically significant—register is extra-diegetic. This register transforms the Emperor's conquest of physical space through battles and victories into a conquest of time.[51] Napoléon's escape from the bronze reliefs with his free-standing sculpture is an escape from the historical time that the Grande Armée and the battlefield—and the column's onlookers, *us*—are still embedded in.

The disjunction between the contemporary uniforms of the soldiers on the narrative band and the triumphant Emperor in an ancient Roman toga underscores this extra-diegetic flight. The apex of the Column configures the Emperor—and by extension, political authority—outside time and above history. This authoritative position subordinates the narrative on the Column to Napoléon. In other words, according to this formal organization, the relationship between history and the Emperor is that of an *author* and his *opus*. Richard Sennett plays on the linguistic relationship between 'author' and 'authoritarian' to draw attention to the conflicting desires to create and repress at the core of authority.[52] We can read these desires in the unmistakably phallic form of the Column, which symbolically qualifies the political authority's ability

[51] We can also think of the imperialist ambitions in the nineteenth century that subjugated many non-Western and indigenous temporalities under its own notion of time. In the past few years several works on the subject have been published. For example, Mark Rifkin, *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017).
[52] Richard Sennett, *Authority* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980), 18.

to make (and shape) the posterity to which he then can lay claim and command.[53] Inevitably, there can be no room for others at the apex. The design of the Column spells out its political pedagogy: for everyone else, the participation in history-making necessitates submission to the author's design as labor consumed in its realization.

Élie Reclus, the famous anarchist and the director of the Bibliothèque Nationale during the Commune, was not exaggerating when he deduced from the monument that: "he [Napoléon] was reaching out to his apotheosis […] he did not deign himself to simply be the emperor of the French, he wanted to be, if not the God, at least the emperor of the whole world."[54] The Emperor's space atop the Vendôme Column, a privileged throne reserved for ancient gods and heroes, is effectively denied to those who rode with him into battle and those who suffered the consequences of his decisions. As Castagnary reflected a decade later on the re-erected Column, "[the soldiers] are there less for themselves than as escorts for the invincible Emperor":[55]

> So the idea of the monument is the apotheosis of Napoléon I. The colossal statue of the hero, detached above the rest, is what appears at first, imposes itself on the imagination. Our little soldiers, carried along in the course of the immense spiral, are indistinguishable to the spectators. Their only destination seems to be to serve as a support to their leader. It is they who lift him above the vulgar humanity, mount it to a higher space, where, transfigured to Caesar, crowned with the sovereign's

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[53] Here I am thinking of the feminist critique of male authority in literary creation, particularly Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980), 6: "his pen's power, like his penis's power, is not just the ability to generate life, but the power to create a posterity to which he lays claim."

[54] Reclus, *La Commune de Paris*, 317: "d'indiquer qu'il entrait dans son apothéose, et qu'il ne daignait pas rester simple empereur des Français, mais qu'il voulait être sinon Dieu, du moins empereur du monde entier."

[55] "A la vérité, elle donnait bien un souvenir à la grande armée, et par la, a la nation souveraine; mais quel hommage détourné! Regardez ce ruban de soldats qui s'enroule autour du fut dans la pâte ferme du bronze, vous sentez tout de suite qu'ils sont la moins pour eux-mêmes que pour faire cortège à l'invincible empereur." Castagnary, *Gustave Courbet et La Colonne Vendôme*, 8.

laurel, he shines inaccessible and triumphant.[56]

Castagnary's peeling of the monument's multi-layered regime of separation—between the sculpture and its base, the ruler and the people, the deity and humanity, the actor and the spectators—configures the Commune's destruction of the Column as not only the physical, but also the emblematic demolition of the spatial, temporal, and political separation between the sovereignty and the people.

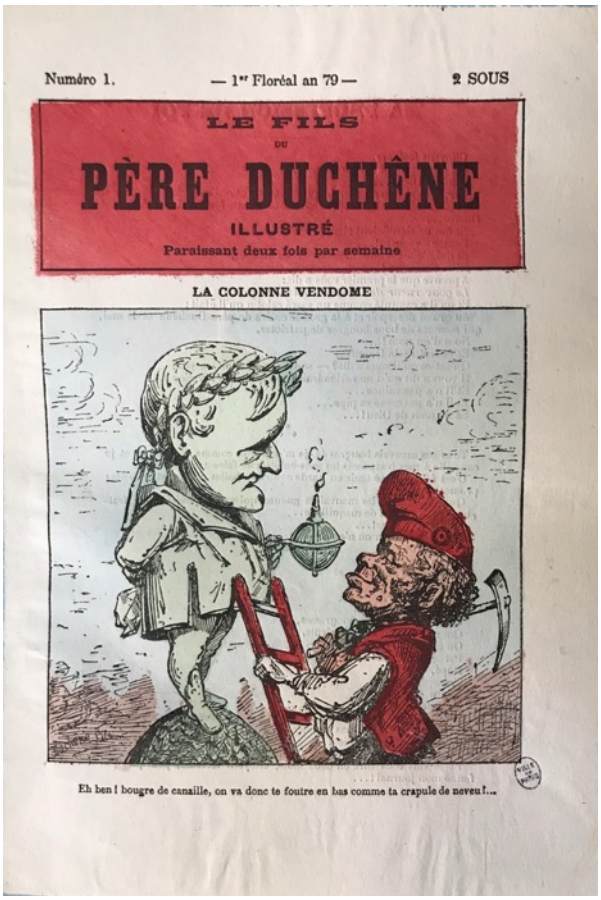

Figure 1.11. Duchêne Fils, "La Colonne Vendôme," Cover Page for *Le Fils du Père Duchêne* No. 1, 1 Floréal an 79 (April 21, 1871), Lithograph. (Library of Congress,

[56] "Ainsi la pensée du monument, c'est l'apothéose de Napoléon Ier. La statue colossale du héros, détachée sur le vide, est ce qui apparaît d'abord, s'impose à l'imagination. Nos petits soldats. Emportes dans le déroulement de la spirale immense, sont discernables aux spectateurs. Leur unique destination semble être de servir de support à leur chef. C'est eux qui le soulèvent au-dessus de l'humanité vulgaire, le montent dans la région supérieure, ou, transfigure en César, couronne du laurier souverain, inaccessible et triomphant, il resplendit." Ibid., 11.

Washington, DC/Prints & Photography Division).

This iconoclastic revolution was announced and rehearsed in the subversive idioms of popular satire before its realization. For example, the Commune's impertinent radical caricature journal *Le fils du Père Duchêne* achieved this by simply making the 'inaccessible' throne of authority 'accessible.'[57] [Figure 1.11.] In this joyfully insurgent image, the radical revolutionary character *Père Duchêne* reaches the level of Napoléon's statue by virtue of an impossibly tall ladder. The *Père* smiles self-assuredly with a suggestive pick-axe in his hand, as the caption pulls the Emperor right into the revolutionary present from his (a)historical throne: "Ah well! You scoundrel, you'll be screwed down there like that lousy nephew of yours!" Such inversions spread throughout popular culture with carnivalesque gaiety, as evidenced in a street song that appeared around the decree of the Commune:

> [The people] Rightly said: "It's only time!
> For over sixty years
> He stepped on our heads!
> When he goes down
> It will be us on his [head][58]!"

These popular inversions prepare for the obliteration of the distance between history and the people, and the people and politics. By bringing the Emperor-deity and

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[57] As I mention elsewhere in this chapter, the journals conceived after popular fictional characters named 'Duchêne' were claiming to belong to the lineage of Jacques Hébert's radical newspaper *Le Père Duchesne* (1790–94) of the Terror.

[58] "Mais l'peuple qu'est plus honnête, / Dit bien haut : 'Il n'est que temps ! / Depuis plus de soixante ans / Il nous marche sur la tête! / Lorsqu'il sera descendu / C'est nous qui serons dessus!'" [translation mine]. The same lyrics were introduced in the second issue of Lissagaray's radical newspaper as a new popular song [fr. *complainte*] from the streets: "La Nouvelle Ode à la Colonne" in *Le Tribun du Peuple*, no. 2, 27 Floréal, 79 (May 18, 1871). Maillard also included this poem/song in his 1874 anthology of popular pamphlets and posters under the Commune. See Firmin Maillard, [Entry no. 82], *Les publications de la rue pendant le Siège et la Commune: Satires-Canards-Complaintes-Chansons-Placards et Pamphlets* (Tusson: Éd. du Lérot, 1874), 29.

the people within the same representational frame, they subordinate his fate to the people's history as it unfolds in the revolutionary present. The authority's drive to achieve an apotheosis—to escape death and to author history—is not only frustrated, but dialectically predetermines the violent end of its monument: "that is why he was stomped on, and why he was spat on in the face!"[59] The bloody suppression of the Commune and the subsequent restoration of the Vendôme Column were intended to negate these subversive lessons on the accessibility and fragility of the artifice of authority and the efficacy of popular agency. Yet it must have been too late to erase all the lessons of this iconoclastic intervention into politics and history; perhaps as expressed in Reclus' hopeful projection, "the blow that broke the idol" was "deadly for the god."[60]

How was this monument embraced by its past audiences as the embodiment of their most sacred values and beliefs, while its formal regime was so clearly antipathic to any collective ideal? In other words, how does the Vendôme Column 'effect a consensus' as a national monument? The monument's aesthetics of veneration would mean little and would not constitute much of a threat if it failed to attract any devotion. The cultural and political history of the Place Vendôme demonstrates that the Column was the loci of both official and popular displays of reverence until 1870–71. Predictably, Louis Napoléon "used the Place Vendôme as the seat of a veritable cult,

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[59] Reclus, *La Commune de Paris*, 316–17.

[60] Reclus, *La Commune de Paris*, 316–17. "Idol" was a widespread epithet used for the column by its adversaries, before, during, and after the Commune. The anarchist hero of Lucien Descaves' pro-Commune novel justifies the demolition as destruction of an idol, as "[refusal] to immortalize the blind submission […] We break the idol together with those who have worshiped it or suffered for it […]." French original: "Nous nous refusons à immortaliser l'aveugle soumission […]. Nous brisons ensemble l'idole et ceux qui l'ont adorée ou soufferte." Lucien Descaves, *La Colonne* (Paris, P. V. Stock, 1901), 73.

with its altar, rituals, processions, all that a god needs,"[61] because his rule depended on the reproduction of the First Empire and its Emperor's political sanctity. As I have mentioned in passing, the July Monarchy cultivated the myth of Napoléon I and the significance of the Place Vendôme for its own political ends. Although this cultivation tried to *humanize* the Emperor—remember Seurre's replacement of Chaudet's Roman god with the *little corporal*—the deification of Napoléon I in mass culture was underway. By the 1830s, Victor Hugo had already crowned the Emperor as an Olympian deity "whose spirit an entire nation worshipped" in his poetic celebration of the Vendôme Column.[62] His veneration of the Emperor was so intense that the future republican and the staunch critic of despotism turned him into a poetic amalgam of Jupiter and Vulcan, a ruler-artist deity who both commands and shapes the hard matter of history according to his will.[63]

Throughout the Second Empire the Column was a proper pilgrimage site and commemorations around it approximated religious rituals.[64] This transference of sacredness from religion to politics would legitimize the violence exercised over the Communards, who after all were not only traitors, but also blasphemers, or even worse, the devil socially incarnate.[65] With popular devotion, however, the identity of the deity

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[61] Castagnary, *Gustave Courbet et La Colonne Vendôme*, 18.
[62] Victor Hugo, "À La Colonne (To the Column)," in *Selected Poems* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 33–37.
[63] Ibid.
[64] *Les Invalides*, the retirement home and hospital for veterans, and the location that hosts Napoléon's remains, was the other shrine of Napoléon's cult. At the turn of the century Descaves' *La Colonne* would symbolically express the two strong sentiments directed towards the monument—veneration and hatred—as represented by the ideologically blind veterans and the free-thinking Communard workers. I return to this novel throughout the chapter as the occasion arises.
[65] For example Lamazou identified the Commune as blasphemous to all the *sacreds* of the French people, against God, the fatherland, and society. Lamazou, *Le Renversement de La Colonne Vendôme*, 77. I will discuss the political, cultural, and social consequences of this conflation of the Commune with religious transgression in my next chapter, "The Basilica."

was sometimes blurred. Even though it carried the mask of Napoléon Bonaparte, it was often confounded with more abstract political constructs, such as the *State* and the *Nation*. These slippages in the popular devotion of the Column stem from the confounding of the 'army' with 'the people,' which began with the association of 'citizen' and 'soldier' during the Revolution.[66] Napoleonic legend mobilized this association further and fostered a cult of the *Grand Armée* alongside the Emperor's cult of personality. Napoleonic wars were therefore a *point d'honneur* for the small-holding peasants whose only point of access to the mysteries of political power and history-making had been the conscript army, through which they could claim a kinship with authority. As Marx writes at the threshold of the Second Empire: "[the arm were] they themselves transformed into heroes, […] the uniform was their own state costume; war was their poetry; the small holding, enlarged and rounded off in imagination, was their fatherland, and patriotism the ideal form of the sense of property."[67]

The Paris Commune was the antithesis to these mistaken ideals, especially to the ideological confounding of private property and chauvinistic pride. It is no coincidence that the socialist and anarchist revolutionaries of the Commune designated the Vendôme Column as an obstacle before the realization of the ideals laid down by the International Workingmen's Association; as the decree of the Commune expressed, it was a "negation of international law" and a "threat" to the ideal of "fraternity." As a national monument, the Column was conceived on the premise of the separation of the French from the rest; as a victory monument it articulated this distinction as military superiority.[68] For the

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[66] For a study on the subject, see Alan Forrest, *Napoleon's Men: The Soldiers of the Revolution and Empire* (London: Continuum, 2002).
[67] Marx, *18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, 1852.
[68] Two decades before the Commune, in the fourth volume of his *System of Positive Polity*, Auguste

internationalist and anarchist factions under the Commune, the destruction of this locus of chauvinistic expressions was the first step towards the historical abolition of the bourgeois nation state: it heralded the rise of the *Universal Republic*.[69] Anarchist theorist, geographer, and Communard Élisée Reclus evaluated the political and revolutionary significance of the monument's destruction through exactly this lens of proletarian internationalism.[70] In his famous text, which naturalizes the process of revolution through the concept of evolution, Reclus configures the destruction of the Vendôme Column as evidence that the Paris Commune transformed the ideals of the International into "a living reality;" "there has never in this century been a more impressive sign of the times," he writes, "than the toppling of the imperial column onto a pile of manure."[71] In other words, the fall of the Vendôme Column was taken as the replacement of the *vertical* and false identification with the authority by the *horizontal* fraternity of the international proletariat. Before I expand further on this critically productive contrast between the verticality of the monument and the horizontal expansion of the revolutionary crowd, I would like to attend to how this false identification with authority was produced and contested in the mass culture.

Comte had identified the imperial column as an obstacle for Paris to be the future capital of his positivist utopia. According to the philosopher, as "a noble pledge of a decidedly pacific policy," the future metropolis of Humanity "should purify itself of this monument of oppression." Comte had a different monument in mind that colored his positivism with a tint of chauvinism for the French Middle Ages: "For the parody of Trajan's column should be substituted a noble statue of Charlemagne, the incomparable founder of the Western Republic." Auguste Comte, *System of Positive Polity: Fourth Volume Containing Theory of the Future of the Man*, vol. 4, 4 vols. (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1877), 345.

[69] Reclus, *La Commune de Paris*, 315.

[70] Élisée Reclus had joined the National Guard in the early days of the Commune. He and his comrades were captured by the Versailles army after the failed sortie of the Commune forces on April 3, 1871.

[71] The toppling of the column was the victory of these new times, which he notes brought about the evolution of the International from a band of good people into a global revolutionary force. Translation as appeared in Élisée Reclus, *Anarchy, Geography, Modernity: Selected Writings of Elisée Reclus* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2013), 150–51. For French original, see Élisée Reclus, *L'Évolution, La Révolution et l'Idéal Anarchique* (Paris: P.-V. Stock, 1914), 251–52.

In my earlier account of the Vendôme Column's history up until the Paris Commune, I referenced the popular depictions of Napoléon and his monuments in *épinal* prints which contributed to the preservation and nourishment of the myth of Bonaparte and his army throughout the Restoration and beyond. This initially forced withdrawal of the Napoleonic history from official to private spheres—from monuments to memorabilia and clandestine prints—would support the populist claims of the Second Empire and contribute further to the Column's popular embrace as a symbol of national pride.[72] Instead of an aloof deity hovering over Paris, however, these popular representations framed Napoléon either as the nonpareil soldier of the Revolution or as the guardian of the people of rural and traditional France.[73] Ironically, the monument which embodied Napoléon I's imperial apotheosis became the most reproduced icon of this great Frenchman's union with the nation.

While *épinal* printmakers translated the Vendôme Column into an emblem of national pride on their colorful pages, *goguettes*—popular singers appearing in cabarets and streets—did the same by integrating them into their performances. Circulated through street songs, the military legends of the nation would leave *Les Invalides* and public squares to enter cafés and taverns frequented by lower-class audiences. *Ode to the Colonne*, performed by Paul-Émile Debraux at a *goguette* gathering in 1818,

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[72] A mask so useful that one can discern its continued service to populist authoritarianism and chauvinist hate from the revanchism of General Boulanger (1886–89) to Philippe Pétain's Vichy regime (1940–44).
[73] These representations were both the cause and the symptom of Marx's later diagnosis: "The Bonaparte dynasty represents not the revolutionary, but the conservative peasant; not the peasant who strikes out beyond the condition of his social existence, the small holding, but rather one who wants to consolidate his holding; not the countryfolk who in alliance with the towns want to overthrow the old order through their own energies, but on the contrary those who, in solid seclusion within this old order, want to see themselves and their small holdings saved and favored by the ghost of the Empire." Marx, *18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, 1852.

immediately became one of the most popular of the Napoleonic songs.[74] Its refrain, "Ah, one is proud to be French when one looks at the [Vendôme] Column,"[75] was multiplied across different media—turning the Column into a shrine of nationalist fervor. A colored engraving from the same period produces the famous refrain to serve as a caption for its depiction of the soldiers of the *Grand Armée* at the foot of the Vendôme Column. [Figure 1.12.]

Figure 1.12. Caroline Naudet, *Ah ! qu'on est fier d'être Français, quand on regarde la Colonne*, Color Engraving, 1819. (Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Department of

[74] The original French name of the song is "La Colonne." For the account of its first public performance, see Albert Cim, *Le Chansonnier Émile Debraux: Roi de La Goguette (1796–1831)* (Paris: Ernest Flammarion, 1910), 59–64. In addition to *La Colonne*, Debraux was the author of several incredibly popular songs around Napoléon's legend, including "T'en souviens-tu," "Comment l'oublier," and "La Redingote grise."

[75] The lyrics of the song varied across different versions during the early decades of the song, but these verses—"Ah ! qu'on est fier d'être Français / Quand on regarde la colonne !"—remained constant. For the lyrics of the whole song as it appeared in an end-of-century anthology, see Henri Avenel, *Chansons et Chansonniers* (Paris: C. Marpon and E. Flammarion, 1890), 99–100.

Prints and Photography).

The monument occupies the center of the composition and is flanked on both sides by the soldiers in their imperial uniforms, whose angular gestures and staged pathos give the inadvertent impression that they are the soldiers from the narrative band of the Column, who have come down to gaze at their own bronze reflections. The group on the right captures the dramatic interaction between two soldiers, one holding onto the white flag of the Restoration as the other points towards the Column, perhaps to underline their continued devotion for the nation albeit under different regimes, or conversely, to indict those who forget Napoléon's memory by declaring him to be inseparable from nation. Less ambiguously, the print realizes the monument's task of bringing the past into the future, as it includes a young cadet—considering his height, perhaps *too* young—captured in a moment of instruction by the soldier in an imperial sapper uniform. The famous refrain of the popular song hinges the historical instruction of the little cadet to the political instruction of the Column. Once again, the violent ambitions are presented as national glory, which is a precondition to having men proud enough to contribute to this 'glory' with their own lives.

It is easy to enumerate the possible reasons behind the absence of the Vendôme Column's upper half in the composition. In 1819, the apex was occupied by the white flag of the Monarchy, and reproducing Chaudet's fallen Emperor back at the zenith might had been politically risky, even if the print was intended for underground dissemination. On the other hand, the reason could be as banal as the size of the Column, which is already reduced here to accommodate the cubic pedestal and a few rows of the

relief band. Whatever the reason is, the Emperor is absent in this reproduction of his monument excepting as a soldier among others on the narrative band, recognizable by his bicorn hat. Such intentional or unintentional democratizations of the Column in the popular culture must have contributed to the monument's dissimulation that the *people as nation* can be an actor in the grand narrative of history and the recipient of the monument's promise of permanent glory.

In any case, the Column continued to attract old soldiers who could recognize their presence in this monument of glory, riding alongside the Emperor through a history-making ascension. Together with their proud descendants they were instrumental to the national devotion the Column cultivated in later decades. Every May 5 and August 15, the veterans, their families, and peasants traveled to Paris from provinces to visit the Column for the anniversary of Bonaparte's death and birth, respectively;[76] "[for them] Paris, deprived of its column […] was no more than a Mecca without Casbah [sic], a Jerusalem without Solomon's Temple."[77] Lucien Descaves based the fictional veterans of his *fin-de-siècle* anarchist novel *La Colonne* on this social and political type: "[they] were proud to be French, because their image drips from the Column, like tallow cooled down along an extinguished candle!"[78] Not a candle, but perhaps a deceptive mirror, the Column reflects back to those who want to see

[76] Under the First and Second Empire, August 15 was a national holiday known as "Saint-Napoléon" day. In 1804 Napoléon I had persuaded the Vatican to canonize an obscure martyr named Napoléon (Neopolis), and to make his day coincide with his birthday. Sudhir Hazareesingh, *The Saint-Napoleon: Celebrations of Sovereignty in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 3–4. Hazareesingh's brilliant book is an excellent source for studying the umbilical relation between mythmaking and nation-construction through the example of Saint-Napoléon celebrations in cities, but especially in provincial France.
[77] Reclus, *La Commune de Paris*, 315.
[78] [fr.] "ils étaient fiers d'être Français, parce que leur image dégouline de la Colonne, comme du suif refroidi le long d'une bougie éteinte!" Descaves, *La Colonne*, 75.

themselves in the grand narrative of history the grand image and design of one man, who nonetheless presents his glory as the collective values and history of an entire nation. Henri Lefebvre theorized this monumental reflection as follows: "Monumental space offered each member of a society an image of that membership" and "a 'recognition effect'" which "has far greater import than the 'mirror effect' of the psychoanalysts […]"[79] As illustrated by the Commune's counter-monumental discourse, what Lefebvre identifies as recognition often relies on a *misrecognition*.

An anonymous lithograph published around the time of the presidential elections of 1848 ridicules this *misrecognition* and its naïve subjects in order to delegitimize Louis Napoléon's soon-to-be-realized claim to power. Deliberately imitating the standard design of the previously discussed colored engraving, the composition presents a monumental column flanked by reverent visitors. [Figure 1.13.]

[79] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 220.

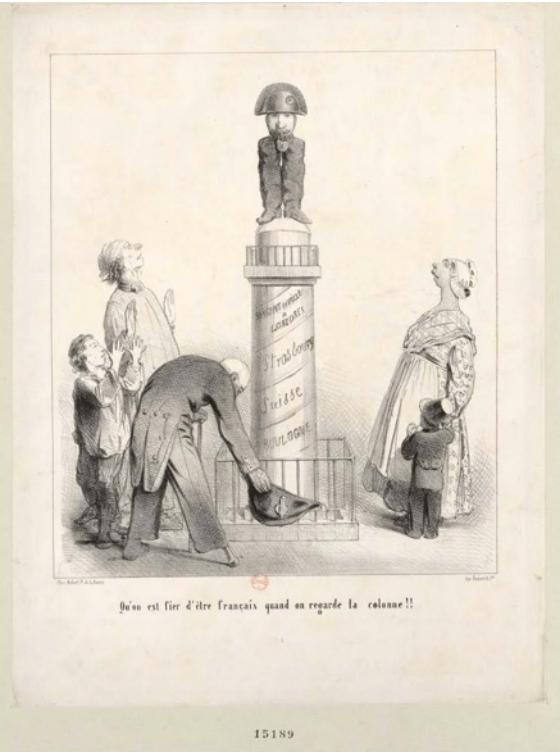

Figure 1.13. Unknown Artist, *Qu'on est fier d'être Français, quand on regarde la Colonne !!* Lithography, 1848. (Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Gallica).

The monument of this image is significantly shrunken—almost as tall as its visitors—and topped by an absurd effigy of Louis Napoléon. Instead of a military victory, this parody of the Vendôme Column is covered with bands that enumerate Louis Napoléon's failed coup d'état attempts and the places he fled to after them: Strasbourg and Boulogne-Sur-Mer, Switzerland, and London. The devotees of the monument equally suffer from caricature's purposeful debasement. The facial features and the gaping mouths of the rural couple who direct their gaze at the monument suggest intellectual ineptitude and gullibility. They are in utter reverence before the future Emperor, who is nothing but a pair of high boots, a bicorn hat, and a disembodied head whose lips are clasped tight with a padlock. Denying the imperial pretender a body and a voice, the caricaturist reduces him to the symbols of his uncle's militarism—which after all, just

like the Vendôme Column, are foundational to his claim to rule over the French people.

Despite its irreverent tone, this graphic monument brings together past, present, and future generations for political and historical instruction. The peasant woman on the right holds the hand of a child who is lost under a cadet hat. His presence suggests the dangerous indoctrination of posterity with myths of national glory. The child's future is foreshadowed in a figure which was intended to represent the First Empire's past: a veteran of the *Grand Armée* who bows respectfully before the ridiculous monument. His peg leg sticks out from the cuff of his trousers, and while reminiscent of the human cost of a past militarism, he also warns about the danger of the farce before him.[80] The inane devotion of this group represents the popular roots of authoritarianism, which Marx described soon after the declaration of the Second Empire as follows:

> They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented. Their representative must at the same time appear as their master, as an authority over them […] [their] political influence [thus] finds its final expression in the executive power which subordinates society to itself.[81]

The caricature only exaggerates what the Vendôme aesthetically dictates: willingly surrendering one's social and political agency to the dictates of an external authority. The only one who is aware of this political fatuousness is a *gavroche* cocking a snook at it. Expectedly, the face of this young dissident is the only one untouched by satirical degradation. The caption repeats the famous refrain to contaminate it with the effects of the visual derision. If we take Lefebvre's words that "monumental buildings mask the

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[80] Note that the only two figures we see from behind are the old veteran and the child-cadet.

[81] Marx, *18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, 1852. I would like to thank Klaus Yamamoto-Hammering for his input to the first draft of this chapter and for his suggestion that I work on this paragraph more closely. This section benefited from his kind feedback.

will to power and the arbitrariness of power beneath signs and surfaces which claim to express collective will and collective thought,"[82] such visual and textual attacks on the monument were fleeting instances of unmasking. These instances are needed to eventually reverse the structure of authoritarian politics that Marx sketches in his bitter assessment. The destruction of the monumental mask in the Place Vendôme illustrated this reversal, both enacting and symbolizing the triumph of the people as political and historical agents.

However, not everyone who opposed this symbolic overturn were rural conservatives or veterans of the *Grand Armée*. They did not even have to like Napoléon I or support militarism to regard the Column and the political structure it represented as inviolable. This association was often justified by the modern discourse of patrimony, which was solidified ideologically and bureaucratically by bourgeois politics throughout the nineteenth century. Merging the modern reverence for (national) History with the concept of the authenticity of Art, the objects of patrimony were endowed with a secular inviolability. Therefore, many well-to-do Parisians and intellectuals who detested the Second Empire could still declare the destruction of the Column as an unforgivable transgression. The cartoonist 'Cham' captured this political-cultural position in a somber design,[83] which presents a bourgeois father and his son before the fenced enclosure of the Column's pedestal. [Figure 1.14.]

[82] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 143.
[83] Unsympathetic to the Communards and a supporter of Adolphe Thiers' government, the famous caricaturist of *Le Charivari* often represented the Commune as a government of irredeemable fools.

Figure 1.14. Cham, "Actualités": "Papa, c'est la France qui a coulé la colonne?" in *Le Charivari*, March 22, 1871. Lithograph. (Library of Congress, Washington, DC/Prints & Photography Division).

The child inquires: "Daddy, is that France who cast the Column?" The father responds that it was reciprocal: by manufacturing the monument, the nation also assumed form. This inter-generational exchange has a didactic intent that at first resembles the instruction of the little cadet in the *epinal* print. [Figure 1.12.] The Column deserves respect, because it represents the nation and its history. However, Cham's patriotic instruction has the power not to destroy, but to destabilize the monument's regime of exaltation: if it is indeed the nation that forged the monument and the history it commemorates, they are also the creators of the political idol (Napoléon I) that its apex immortalizes.

The Singular and the Multitude

The incongruity the monument reproduces between its symbolic evocation of the nation and its direct adulation of the authority brings us back to Barbier's *L'Idole*. Towards its final stanzas, this fascinating poem assumes a much more radical tone. It tells us that the people always remember "those who lead to die" rather than those who marched to their deaths. Death is not the great equalizer, the inequality extends beyond the grave—while some escape death by historical apotheosis, the rest lie forgotten. But it is the labor of the masses behind every greatness in History; it is their work which creates the idols they adore. The devotees of the Column are akin to the stone-bearers in relation to the pyramids: their lack of political consciousness continues to craft pharaohs without recognizing themselves as the labor behind its wonders:

Pass, pass ye on! For you no statue high!
Your names shall vanish from the horde:
Their memory is for those who lead to die
Beneath the cannon and the sword;
Their love, for him, who on the humid field
By thousands lays to rot their bones;
For him, who bids them pyramids to build,—
And bear upon their backs the stones![84]

L'Idole asks people to reject the false patronage of colossal figures whose shadows hide the works and lives of the multitudes. The people should recognize their effort in crafting history as producers in times of peace, and not as (dispensable) actors in times of war.[85] This refusal of false kinship with the political authority and its glory would

[84] English translation taken from "The Poems of Auguste Barbier," *The Foreign Quarterly Review* 31 (1843): 85–88.
[85] During the Commune, these concerns were extended to the streets and squares named after wars and victories. Some proposed urban spaces be named after topographical markers or after individuals whose deeds had benefited the entirety of humanity. For example, the first issue of the revolutionary pamphlet *Les Lamentations de la Mère Duchêne* (April 30, 1871, 7) calls for the changing of street names that commemorate Bonapartism.

pave the way for real political participation. Therefore the destruction of the Column was a corrective, revolutionary counter-pedagogy, which brought about a popular revision of the famous *Ode to the Colonne*. *The New Ode to the Colonne* preached its iconoclastic political moral as follows:

> No longer carry on your back
> These good-for-nothing heroes
> Who cause you so much disappointment[…]
> And here in pulling [one]
> We take down all tyrants![86]

No longer subordinated to the myth of national glory, the monument of the new *Ode* becomes emblematic of all vertically conceived political systems—where 'tyrants' rise 'on the backs of the people.' This historical action is the first of a transformed humanity, which denies the history of *grands hommes* by performing their collective (iconoclastic) labor as freely associating individuals, and heralds the replacement of the permanent authority of the singular with the immediate authority of the multitudes.

This lesson calls for a closer look into the character of the objects which produce the authority's claim for singularity and timelessness. To appear endless, or as Sennett identifies, "the defiance of history […] of time," is a key drive of authority.[87] Despite Courbet's assertion that it lacks any 'aesthetic value;' as most monumental projections of authority the Vendôme Column is a work of art, which grants its subject the flight from historical specificity into the timeless sphere of aesthetic value. This function of

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[86] "La Nouvelle Ode à la Colonne" as reproduced in the Appendix of Robert Brécy, *La chanson de la Commune: chansons et poèmes inspirés par la Commune de 1871* (Paris: Editions Ouvrières, 1991), xii–xiii: "Morale: PEUPLE, apprends par cette histoire / A n'plus porter sur ton dos / Ces jean-foutres de héros / Qui t'causent tant de déboires… / Et voilà comme en tirant / On abat tous les tyrans !" Maillard also included this poem/song in his 1874 anthology of popular pamphlets and posters under the Commune. See Maillard, [Entry no. 82], *Les Publications de la Rue*, 29.
87 Sennett, *Authority*, 19.

the Column is noted as an accusation against the monument in the Commune's decree, with words such as 'permanence' and 'perpetual.' Once again, Barbier's *L'Idole* instructs us; and explains that it is the art and artists who assure this drive for eternity:

Thine image reascends the skies.
No longer now the robber of a crown—
The insolent usurper—he,
With cushions of a throne, unpitying, down
Who pressed the throat of Liberty—
[…]
Napoleon stands, unsullied by a stain!
Thanks to the flatterer's tuneful race—
The lying poets who ring praises vain—
Has Caesar 'mong the gods found place!

Several of the Column's defenders objected to the Commune's decision in the name of art and history, and completely avoided acknowledging the political character of the monument. As Maurice Agulhon observed, around the time of the Commune's decree a new language of visual representation of symbols outside the realm of politics took form: "…in this new language, Napoléon and the Column were no longer a political symbol; they had become works of art, to be preserved as such."[88] As we have already seen, Courbet framed his political-ethical indictment with references to the monument's artistic value (specifically, its lack of it)[89] because even though the political history of the monument became incongruous with the present moment it found itself in, it still had a claim to permanence as an authentic object of art.

Conversely, Marx turns to aesthetic categories and metaphors against the

[88] "[…] mais de là à démolir un des célèbres monuments de Paris! Ce n'était plus de la politique, c'était du vandalisme, de la barbarie […] Dans ce langage nouveau, Napoléon et sa colonne n'étaient plus un symbole politique, ils étaient devenus une œuvre d'art, à préserver comme telle." Maurice Agulhon, *Histoire vagabonde* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988), 304. As translated in Matt K. Matsuda, *The Memory of the Modern* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1996), 33.
[89] "Président de la commission de artistique" *Le Figaro*, no. 275 (October 2, 1870).

political authority in France. Written in 1851—from the first days of Louis Napoléon's coup—the language in Marx's *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* is overrun with theatrical terminology that reframes the bourgeois political history as a repetition of the same. In this famous text, Marx describes the political power's use of History as masking and unmasking, the recycling of costumes, the symbolic resurrection of the past as re-staging, and its language as an inflated, dramatic rhetoric.[90] But more importantly, by illegitimating the nineteenth-century bourgeois revolutions as "re-stagings" of the "original" revolution of 1789, or Louis Napoléon as a farcical return of his uncle (who was likewise re-staging the Roman Empire), Marx offers a modernist aesthetic category—authenticity—to judge the historical authority of the political phenomena.[91] Marx's distinction between the original and its repetitions foreshadows the aesthetic position of artistic modernism in the latter part of the nineteenth century, several years into Louis Napoléon's reign. Authenticity, as measured by singularity and originality, would be declared a paramount characteristic of art when repetition declared its triumph over the experience of modernity. As the naturalized rhythm of life, repetition defined the productive technologies and the experience of labor under them,

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[90] Marx, *18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, 1852. Marx's famous opening remark testifies to the theatricality of the rest of the text: "Hegel remarks somewhere that all great world-historic facts and personages appear, so to speak, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as *tragedy*, the second time as *farce*." But let us remember a second time the text's more obscure (yet, for the purposes of this text, incredibly relevant) closing sentence, which reads more like a prophecy than anything else: "But when the imperial mantle finally falls on the shoulders of Louis Bonaparte, the bronze statue of Napoleon will come crashing down from the top of the Vendôme Column."

[91] Most accounts of aesthetic modernism suggest that the movement begins two decades after Marx's penning of the text. Yet the concept of "authenticity," when approached as an aesthetic category—as allowed by Marx's use of the language of the theatrical arts, is immensely productive for understanding the terms of Marx's assault. It also hints at political power's exploitation of art and history for its own ends. The Marxist philosopher Walter Benjamin would theorize the relationship between aesthetic authenticity and authoritarian and fascist politics in his famous essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), 217-51. I refer to this essay in the following pages.

and as in the *returns* of fashion, it also dictated the consumption patterns. As an antithesis to this circadian rhythm of modern life, the singularity of the authentic objects of art separated them from the banal materiality of the everyday and the labor that produced it.

The iconoclastic call to replace the authority of the singular with that of the multitudes rejects the assumptions behind this separation. As the objects of this chapter testify, in modernity the historical deeds and expressions of the multitudes, as in the Paris Commune, are entrusted to the multiple and the ephemeral that the reproductive technologies generate in sheer quantities. Therefore, despite being of and about everyday life, these pages of printed paper have a claim to historical perpetuity. As such, their very existence challenges the qualitative categorization of past time as *historical* and *quotidian* with profound consequences. As we have seen, traditionally the creation of History is the political power's prerogative, and the masses experience it unfolding passively through the changes it brings to everyday life. Read through the lens of this assumption, Jean-Jacques Rousseau's writing on theater becomes a social and political allegory:

> For theatre gathers crowds only to dispossess them of the virtues that form a community. It takes the form of these exclusive entertainments […] which keep them fearful and immobile in silence and inaction.[92]

Rousseau's critique suggests that the medium of an aesthetic expression can dictate its audience's social and political positions outside the theater. When we apply this critique to Marx's metaphorical theater, what we have is the *theater of bourgeois politics*, which

[92] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Letter to D'Alembert and Writings for the Theater* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College/University Press of New England, 2004), 343.

instructs the people on their lack of agency in history's making, or worse, in its endless *re-staging*. It takes place before their eyes as if on a stage, rendering them fearful, mute, and passive. Jacques Rancière's works illustrate that this distinction between the spectator and spectacle is a central parable of political philosophy (to which politically engaged avant-garde art repeatedly returns), whose moral is: "one must destroy the passivity of those who attend a show, separated by the performance from their individual and collective potential" "[and transform them] into direct actors of this potential […]"[93] Rancière also remarks on the hopelessness of this ethical call, as it presupposes an irredeemable gap between the categories of the actor and the spectator, an "*a priori* distribution of the positions and capacities and incapacities attached to these positions."[94] Instead of reproducing these "embodied allegories of inequality,"[95] Rancière suggests that the "emancipation" of the audience is realized when we recognize that they are already "active."[96] The ephemera to which this chapter attends are records of these active, productive audiences of the Column, who frustrate the predetermined separations between history and everyday life, the stage and the seats. The numberless journals and printed images produced under the Commune testify that it produced, witnessed, commented on, and recorded its own history:

> Under the Commune, naturally, an infinite number of journals have sprung up. Try to count, if you absolutely must, the leaves in a forest, the grains of sand on the shores, the stars in the sky, but don't even try in a dream to enumerate the gazettes that have seen the light since that blessed day of March 10.[97]

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[93] Jacques Rancière, *Aisthesis: Scenes from the Aesthetic Regime of Art* (London: Verso Books, 2013), 16–17.
[94] Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator* (London: Verso, 2009), 12.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid., 13
[97] Mendès, *Les 73 Journées*, 230–31.

The countless voices that actively judge and counter-produce histories became the subject of an anti-Communard caricature that ridiculed a much-repeated contemporary observation: "the city had never been as peaceful as it was under the Commune." [Figure 1.15.] The scene tries to give visual form to the urban soundscape, specifically as a cacophony. Newspaper boys scream the names of the most popular titles of the 'infinite number' of journals and newspapers of the Commune, and a drum and bugle join in with their cries. Literalizing the names of these publications, such as *Le Réveil* and *Le Cri du Peuple*,[98] they wake people up from their slumber. Here, we see complete disregard for the distinction between the spectators and the spectacle; everyone is actively partaking in this loud performance as indicated by their open mouths, and even the woman in red, who covers her ears, joins in with this collective expression. Although the image depicts life under the Commune as a complete upheaval, it captures the revolutionary heteroglossia that demands its recognition as its social, cultural, and political emancipation.[99] Dissonant, heteroglot, and urban, what is intended as derision becomes a scene of radical democracy. The street becomes a theater where the everyday stages and spectates itself as history.

[98] In English, *The Awakening* and *The Voice of the People*.
[99] I revisited this image after receiving comments from Professor Laura L. Meixner. My current reading of this print greatly benefits from her brilliant and attentive observations about it.

Figure 1.15. Léonce Schérer. "Jamais Paris n'a été si tranquille que sous la Commune." *Souvenirs of the Commune*, No.11, Color Lithograph, 1871. (Library of Congress, Washington, DC/Prints & Photography Division).

These printed pictures without originals complicate Benjamin's statement that "the whole sphere of [artistic] authenticity is outside […] reproducibility."[100] But these quotidian objects dialectically attain authenticity through their capacity to embody

[100] Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," 220.

History. On the same page, Benjamin ties the authenticity of an object to its resilience to the passage of time: "This unique existence of the work of art determined the history to which it was subject throughout the time of its existence."[101] These supposedly transient objects are resilient *due to* their multiplicity. As fragments of a past era, their survival depends on numbers rather than a privileged status as "authentic." The unprecedented abundance of ephemera—pamphlets, placards, newspapers, caricatures, and photographs—from 1871 authenticate and commemorate the Commune's existence in the flow of history.

The dialectical nature of printed pages' historical authority could be extended to the temporalities around the destruction of the Vendôme Column, the time of the singular and that of the multiple, corresponding to Peter Osborne's useful distinction between a cosmological conception of time against the phenomenally lived, interruptive, and transient temporality of the revolutions.[102] The Commune's heteroglot, multimedia receptions of the Column and its destruction—recorded and reproduced in the diverse languages of satire and slang, history painting and political instruction—enact the transient and heterogenous temporality of the revolution against the homogenous and cosmological time embodied in the monument. While the "singularity" of the Column as an art object was mobilized to ensure that the history and authority it embodied would colonize the present and the future, the multiplicity of ephemera assures that they make a dialectical claim for monumentality.

These *monuments on paper* are not interested in conquering the present and the future, but in bringing the past to the present every time their voices are re-activated to

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[101] Ibid.
[102] Peter Osborne, *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde* (London: Verso, 1995), 115–16.

produce a critical image of the future. The Communard artists were aware of the printed picture's capacity to relay the monumentality of their aspirations and deeds to posterity. Dupendant's personification of the Commune as a living monument is an example of these mechanically reproduced testaments. [Figure 1.16.]

Figure 1.16. Dupendant (Alexandre Dupendant), *Ils ne la démoliront jamais!*, Color Lithograph, 1871.
(Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris, [BHVP]).

Although standing on a pedestal in a classicizing outfit—a short chiton and a Phrygian cap—this statue does not have the frozen grandeur of an ageless monument.

As a statement of the people's ongoing efforts at history-making, this monument is alive. Her arms crossed over her chest and one hand holding a dagger, she is observing the *Versaillais* politicians and military men that furiously attack her pedestal. Her miniscule enemies' efforts seem futile. But if needed, her foot at the edge of the pedestal indicates that she has the capacity to step down and take action. Indeed as a printed picture created in multiples for widespread circulation, Dupendant's monumental representation of the Commune has 'legs.' The caption repeats what the image already declares: "They will never demolish her!"

Even though the History declared Dupendant wrong, his print proved him right in a certain sense. The armies of Versailles crushed the Paris Commune, but the monument the graphic artist erected in its name has survived. Other artists mobilized the commemorative capacity of the printed picture to satisfy the needs of different types of revolutionary remembering. For example, some monuments on paper followed the Commune's critique of the monumental extolment to provide pillory-pedestals to the enemies of the people. The president of the Versailles government, Adolphe Thiers, is the favorite subject of such prints, which often depict him pursuing the Vendôme Column's summit. Not a print, but a sketch, intended to be the basis of a lithographic caricature by Paul Klenck, depicts the statesman amidst an attempt to climb an already broken Vendôme Column. Thiers' desire to reach higher is frustrated by "too much soap" applied to the broken monument. Cocking a snook, the worker in a blue smock owns the slapstick impediment he set between Thiers and his historical apotheosis. [Figure 1.17.]

Figure 1.17. Klenck (Paul Klenck), "Actualité: Trop de savon!" Pastel, pencil, and gouache, 1871.
(University of Houston Libraries/Special Collections).

In another monumental subversion, the artist Frondas grants the green-bronze effigy of Thiers the apex of a victory column of his own. A strap crowned with an emblem of the Gallic Rooster extends across the bare chest of the statesman. He teeters on a globe, holding out a pear with the face of Louis Philippe in his left hand. [Figure 1.18.] Through this latter detail, the caricature simultaneously commemorates its own history as a political medium and turns the history embodied in the Vendôme Column into a caricature. The pear is a direct reference to Charles Philipon's notorious equation of the Citizen-King with the fruit in 1831. As a lesson on ephemera's historical resilience, this irreverent association, which sent Philipon to prison four decades prior, features here as the definitive emblem of the July Monarchy and Orléanism due to a popular embrace

and recognizability that only a few monuments could achieve.[103] Although the head of the new (Third) Republic, Thiers was believed to be devising an Orléanist takeover. Therefore, in referring to the infamous lithograph of Philipon, Frondas denies historical authenticity to the rule of the statesman, and declare his apotheosis as a re-staging of the July Monarchy.

Figure 1.18. Frondas (Charles de Frondat), *Thiers I, Roi de Capitulards*, Color Lithograph, 1871. (Musée Carnavalet).

[103] For more on Philipon's trial and the influence of the caricature during the July Monarchy, see Elizabeth C. Childs, "Big Trouble: Daumier, Gargantua, and the Censorship of Political Caricature," *Art Journal* 51, no. 1 (1992): 26–37. For more on the iconography of *la poire*, see Elise K. Kenney et al., *The Pear: French Graphic Arts in the Golden Age of Caricature* (South Hadley, MA: Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, 1991).

The intertextuality of Frondas' monumental defamation is not limited to the pear-king. The other insignias of his rule are a white starched collar and an umbrella, which together unmask him as a bourgeois man acting the part of a sovereign. The narrative band of this imaginary Column spells out the not-so-glorious deeds of the despised statesman. The first one would strike a particular chord with the Communards: *Transnonain*. This name is reminiscent of his active role in the 'Massacre of rue Transnonain,' the 1834 murderous suppression of the Parisian episode of a workers' revolt that started in Lyon. While this evocation of the past reveals once more that 'violence' is the pedestal of political power, it also turns him into a warning sign for the future.

Figure 1.19. Moloch (A. H. Colomb), *A son Excellence Monsieur Thiers: Bravo Adolphe !* Color Lithograph, 1871. (Library of Congress, Washington, DC/Prints & Photography Division).

The Communard artists also relied on the ephemera's indirect claim to permanence to record the crimes Versailles perpetuated against them. In these prints, recording in the present becomes the first step of a future revolutionary action. For example, the caricaturist Moloch marked the violent defeat of the Paris Commune by the Versailles army in a confrontational composition. [Figure 1.19.] Unlike most 'caricatures' published in the satirical journals and newspapers, the horizontal orientation of the scene evokes the indexical authority of war photography, and perhaps even the tradition of history painting. The subjects of this account are the wounded and murdered citizens of the Paris Commune who together as men, women, and children identify Adolphe Thiers as the perpetrator. However, the address of their resolute gazes and their index fingers is the audience, *us*. Directly confronting the beholder, their appeal reaches beyond the moment of their defeat into the *presents* of their future audiences, searching for the moment when their anguish is avenged and their dreams are redeemed.

In other words, as if erecting a monument, Moloch imbued his print with a duty to record and remind. Writing at the moment of their defeat, Reclus similarly identified recording the present as the only revolutionary act left available to himself and his comrades. As the oppression and violence around him robbed him of his right to act and speak, he vowed to silently keep the History's balance sheet for the future:

> Let's recollect ourselves again […and] watch this saturnalia of the Reaction. Let's look at the mess we no longer have the right to interfere with…We will study these recent events, and those that will happen, and the writings and speeches of our enemies—they alone have the right to speak. *We will keep quiet, but*

we will keep record.[104]

This is exactly what Georges Pilotelle did after he fled to London to escape execution. An incendiary caricaturist, and a troublemaker for the Commune,[105] Pilotelle memorialized his friends and the defeated revolution in an etching album that he printed at his new home in London.[106] [Figure 1.20.]

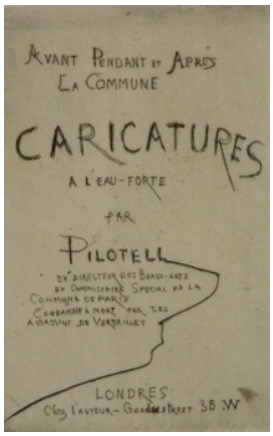

Figure 1.20. Georges Pilotell(e), Title Page of the Album, *Avant, Pendant, et Après La Commune*, Etching on handwoven paper, 1879. (Library of Congress, Washington, DC/Prints & Photography Division).

Some of the designs in the album are translations of the large propaganda lithographs he made during the Commune into small-scale etchings. But several of them seem to have been designed and executed from exile as an exercise in commemoration. Due to their small scale, they require intimate engagements with the scenes they represent. The result is an affecting straddling of public commemoration and private memory. Perhaps

[104] "Recueillons-nous encore une fois. […] dévisageons les saturnales de la réaction, regardons le gâchis auquel nous n'avons plus le droit de nous mêler. […] Nous allons étudier les événements récents, ceux qui vont se passer, dans les écrits et discours de nos ennemis—eux seuls ont le droit de parler. Nous nous tairons, mais nous enregistrerons." Reclus, *La Commune de Paris*, 390–91. [Italics mine.- A.M.]

[105] During his tenure as a 'special commissioner' of the Commune, his decisions and conduct caused some headaches for his comrades.

[106] These appeared as a limited collection for sale in London in 1879 with the title *Avant, Pendant, et Après La Commune*; the title page states that they were published by the artist himself in his London home. The size of the image I mention here is 8 x 12 centimeters.

the most expressive image in the album depicts the artist's close friend, Raoul Rigault, after he was killed by a Versailles bullet through his head. [Figure 1.21.] Pilotelle had encountered his friend's body while he was running away from the Versailles soldiers during the Bloody Week. A small note at the bottom-right of the image secures the authority of this humble monument as an eyewitness account, while the trace of the etching's chemical burn on the soft surface of the handwoven paper almost embodies its painful imprint on the memory. This visual record of Rigault's summary execution both documents and mourns, just like the artist's hand-written journal does:

> It was Raoul Rigault […] barefoot […] two small feet of wax…the soldiers had stolen his socks and boots […] his head was peaceful […] the bullet hole above the nose between his eyes […]he had not trimmed his beard. I stood there for a few moments looking at him, without thinking it would attract attention. It was almost five in the morning. [107]

[107] He never published his hand-written memoir "De la semaine sanglante à l'exil (1871–1872)," in which he recounts the experience of the Bloody Week and his escape to London. The manuscript is currently part of the Léon Centner Collection in the International Institute for Social History (IISH), Amsterdam. "C'était Raoul Rigault […] les pieds nuds [sic]. Deux petits pieds de cire. Les soldats avaient volés les chaussettes et les bottines vernies. La tête calme […] Avec un trou de bal au-dessus du nez entre les deux yeux […] Il avait fait tailler ne pas sa barbe. Je restais là quelques instants… sans songer que cela pouvait paraître suspect […] Il était à presque cinq heures." Georges Pilotelle, "De la semaine sanglante à l'exil (1871–1872)" (London, c. 1878), Léon Centner Collection 1847–1904 (1922), (IISG), Amsterdam.

Figure 1.21. Georges Pilotell(e), "Raoul Rigault" in the Album, *Avant, Pendant, et Après La Commune*
Etching on handwoven paper, 1879. (Library of Congress, Washington, DC/Prints & Photography Division).

Another death scene Pilotelle included in his album is allegorical, and shrouds the traumatic memory of his comrades' deaths with a defiant hope for the future. In this image, it is the personification of the Commune who dies with a stab wound to her breast. [Figure 1.22.]

Figure 1.22. Georges Pilotell(e), "Le Cadavre est à Terre et L'Idée est Debout" in the Album, *Avant, Pendant, et Après La Commune*, Etching on handwoven paper, 1879. (Library of Congress, Washington, DC/Prints & Photography Division).

The caption borrowed from a poem by Hugo, however, undoes her death before she collapses to the ground: the 'body' falls but 'the idea is standing.' Indeed, a proud banner behind her carries the Commune's ideals and achievements into the new dawn

rising in the distance: “The Paris Commune saved the Republic, decreed the sovereignty of labor, atheism, [and] the destruction of monuments perpetuating hatred between the people.” Pilotelle was not the only Communard artist who resisted the violent defeat of the Commune as marking the end of its existence. Such efforts of defiant commemoration can be counted in the thousands. But to give just two more examples, the artist and Communard Gaillard Fils remembered the Commune on its eleventh anniversary with a series of revolutionary prints; and the caricaturist Bar created a solemn monument on paper to Gustave Flourens, the life-long revolutionary and celebrated leader of the Commune who was captured and executed by Versailles officers in April 1871. For this commemorative print, Bar set aside the conventions of caricature for compositional symmetry and stability to create a monument to the fallen revolutionary, albeit on the ephemeral material of paper and under the “Actualités” section of a publication. [Figure 1.23.]

Figure 1.23. G. Bar, Portrait of Gustave Flourens, "Martyre de la Liberte," 1871. (Library of Congress, Washington DC/Prints & Photography Division)

These countless printed pages also commemorate their artists' efforts to counteract the political authority's history, which privileges the linear narratives from its single point of view. In such a history, the voices and acts of the fallen revolutionaries would be shrouded under the anonymity of a defeated enemy. The Vendôme Column's narrative band, which subsumes the diverse subject positions, and countless individual moments and experiences of a battle under the violent abstraction of the National History, is the paragon of such monumental narratives. In shattering the Column, the Commune also destroyed the episteme of History that its aesthetic form embodied. In his *Prison Notebooks*, Antonio Gramsci wrote that the history of the subaltern classes is "necessarily fragmented and episodic" against the unified and dominant history of the

ruling class, which corresponds to that of official history.[108] Although Gramsci sees the unification of multiple histories under a single narrative as possible by way of a "permanent victory" that breaks the structures of subordination, I would like to think that the shattering of the official history, i.e. the Vendôme Column, into pieces challenges the need for unified narratives. Ephemera confront the hermeneutic integrity of the History, shattering it into heteroglot image-episodes. In other words, the inverted monumentality that the objects of this dissertation instruct and represent not only stems from their representational regimes, but from the ontological and hermeneutical discrepancies between them and their bronze and stone counterparts.

Monuments For Sale

One critical difference between traditional monuments and their radical inversions is their relation to money. The former is one of the few things in capitalist modernity that can claim to exist outside the market.[109] Conversely, the monuments on paper were made to be sold. Their duration in public space was determined by their commodity status and followed the cyclical logic of the marketplace; periodicals, for instance, circulated at daily, weekly, or bi-weekly intervals. While these short-term circuits of production and consumption allude to the sense of 'repetition' that I have already discussed, the long-term temporality of mass-produced material presents an unpredictable alternation between "appearance" and "disappearance." They are

[108] Antonio Gramsci, Quintin Hoare, and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (New York, NY: International Publishers, 1972), 54–55.
[109] Of course, this claim conveniently excludes the process of the monument's creation and placement, which relied on material and labor (artistic and manual) sourced from the market. However, like cult objects in general, monuments need to obscure the labor that went into their creation in order to appear endless. I discuss the consequences of this 'erasure of the hand' in a section dedicated to 'the golden calf'—the biblical idol and symbolic monument of capitalism—in the final chapter of this dissertation.

products of their present, then they retreat from the streets and walls to private and public collections, to dusty cabinets and piles under beds. In order to re-appear, they escape censorship, confiscation, forgetting, weather damage, and more, and are present again, this time as the fragments of a past time. This latter re-appearance does not guarantee permanence. They might circulate back into the market, this time with an added 'age-value,' be part of an archive or a library, yet occupy an existential twilight zone if not demanded to be seen by any visitors. Although ensuring its many returns, this transience of the printed image starts with its preliminary nature as a mass-reproduced commodity.

Therefore, the graphic artists chose to extend the ephemerality of their artworks to the Vendôme Column by tainting it with the stain of the market. Several of these associate the monument with its ubiquitous counterpart in Paris: the advertisement column. Also known as the Morris column, this urban fixture had taken over bourgeois public space. [Figures 1.24. and 1.25.]

Left, Figure 1.24. Charles Marville, *Colonne Morris*, photograph on albumen paper, 1876. (State Library of Victoria).
Right, Figure 1.25. Charles Marville, *Urinoir*, photograph on albumen paper, c. 1865. (State Library of Victoria).

At first glance, the association might seem limited to the rhyming of the forms (i.e. column), but this visual cue also affords an ingenious way of undermining the despised monument. Morris columns, which were first introduced into the city in 1839, multiplied rapidly during the Second Empire in proportion to the advancement of commodity capitalism. As such, they offered a more truthful vertical emblem of the political authority that nurtured the capitalist expansion that created them. This association brought Courbet, the renowned opponent of the Vendôme Column, and a Morris column together on the cover of an issue of *Fils du Père Duchêne*. [Figure 1.26.] Citizen Courbet, whose allegiance to the Commune is marked by the red sash tied around his large belly in a spectacular bow, turns his iconoclastic attention to the

advertisement column. With an infantile imbalance conveyed by a head as large as his rotund body, the artist knocks over the capitalist urban furniture, which in return threatens to swallow a bourgeois bystander.

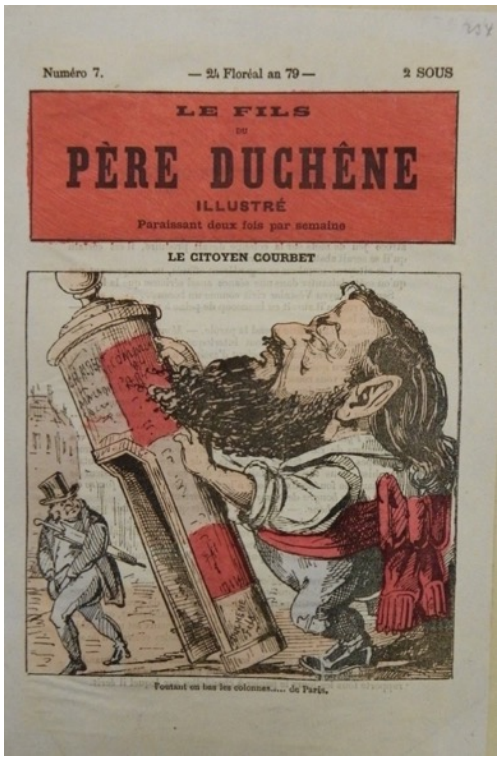

Figure 1.26. Duchêne Fils, "Le Citoyen Courbet," Cover Page for *Le Fils du Père Duchêne* No. 7, 24 Floréal an 79 (May 14, 1871), Color Lithograph. (Library of Congress, Washington, DC/Prints & Photography Division).

As were several of its kind, this advertisement column is also a public urinal and its entrance is the mouth that awaits its prey, who wears a top hat and a frock coat.[110] It is worth noting that the artist inscribed political history as everyday life on this Morris column by including a red poster that, amidst old advertisements, announces a decision by the Paris Commune.

A caricature by Faustin furthers the association of the imperial monument with

[110] This conflation of historical monument with banal street furniture had also permeated the texts of the Column's adversaries. It was regarded in Communard accounts as a "giant urinal." Gagnebin, "Courbet et la colonne Vendôme," 257.

the advertisement columns. Faustin, an opponent of personal rule, references in several of his caricatures in this period Hugo's devastating comparisons of Louis Napoléon to his legendary uncle in *Les Châtiments*.[111] Faustin similarly negates the nephew's dreams of imperial grandeur, and depicts the fallen Emperor precariously perched on "the only column on which he can lay claim:" a Morris Column covered with various commercial posters. [Figure 1.27.]

Figure 1.27. Faustin, *Le Châtiment !*: "La seule colonne à laquelle il puisse prétendre," Color Lithography, 1871. (Library of Congress, Washington, DC/Prints & Photography).

Adding insult to injury, the artist replaces the laurel wreath of the bronze Napoléon of the Vendôme with a Prussian *Pickelhaube*, and the sword with an anal syringe.[112] Yet,

[111] Faustin's large graphic output during the year of the siege and the Commune testifies to the artist's commitment to Republicanism and support for the Commune against the Versailles government, which he saw as a scheme to bring back the monarchy. Yet his post-Commune work aligns well with the anti-Commune sentiments of the Third Republic.
[112] Anal or clyster syringes were one of the most common forms of self-administered enema between the

the most radical replacement is that of the historical monument with the urban furniture of Haussmann's Paris. If the uncle claims a throne on an aesthetic regime of reminding, the nephew is the proud inheritor of a system that relies on forgetting. Conversely, Faustin delivers his satirical attack by 'laying claim' to the advertisement column. In the top-right section of the pillar, he includes his own 'business' amidst the posters that are selling imaginary products geared towards Parisians of 1871; for example, 'a completely edible shoe polish' that references the devastating food shortages throughout the siege. His business poster, on the other hand, declares him to be an 'image factory' with a 'steam engine.' This inclusion effectively acknowledges the ephemeral and commodity status of his own work as a graphic artist, who has to produce rapidly to seize and respond to the changing politics of the everyday. But more so, Faustin notes the complex status of the artists working for a market, who simultaneously occupy the position of the commodity, the capital, the labor, and the capitalist.

Another caricature undermined the Vendôme Column's monumental aspirations with an even more direct association with the market. [Figure 1.28.] The caption, "Immediately for Sale. Speak to Mr. and Mrs. of Scrap Metal Junkyard," degrades the monument to a commodity, or perhaps even more hurtfully, to an outdated commodity banished from the market. Its arrival at the junkyard announces the loss of its 'fetishistic' powers, completely stripped of its exchange and even its use value; it is

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seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. In addition to their medical use, they were also employed to stimulate sexual satisfaction. The anal syringe has a wide iconographic presence in the prints satirizing Louis Napoléon and Adolphe Thiers in 1870–71. Especially relevant to our discussion are the caricatures that transformed the Vendôme Column into a giant syringe, on top of which the ruler 'sits.' Reference to enemas in political satire is not limited to this moment but extends back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and can be found in both the British and French traditions. Finally, they are almost always associated with the ruling classes. For an analysis of scatological political satire around the iconography of the enema, see Laurinda S. Dixon, "Some Penetrating Insights: The Imagery of Enemas in Art," *Art Journal* 52, no. 3 (September 1, 1993): 28–35.

demoted back to its raw material. Under Louis Napoléon, the Second Empire assigned imperial—Napoleonic, rather—grandeur to the past.[113] But, modernity triumphantly claimed the future, albeit one that was limited to commodities and the material abundance promised by consumerism. As we have seen, the temporal logic of capitalist modernity prefers forgetting over remembrance, according to which the new is immediately old, and replaced by the newer.

Figure 1.28. W. Alexis, *La Colonne Vendôme*, Color Lithograph, 1871. (Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections/Cornell University Library).

Now old and out of fashion, Napoléon is sent to the ever-growing refuse heap of modernity, the eventual destination of all classes of matter in the capitalist

[113] At this point, we should mention that the globalization of a single time frame was connected to colonization, expansion, and global trade. Hence the two characteristics of modern time consciousness, the accuracy of calibration and the global reach of the system, were intimately related to imperial capitalism, being unified and all-pervasive. Russell West-Pavlov, *Temporalities* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 15.

marketplace—except *art*. The caricature hence joins in with those who deprived the monument of artistic merit. Moreover, it undoes the emblems that grant its subject the aura of historical authority. The dignity of the Roman toga is replaced by the comic informality of an Emperor in a nightshirt.[114] A night lamp accompanies the quotidian attire of the Emperor, replacing the orb and the victory, and his house slippers are too big for his minuscule feet. His bloated belly and even larger head destabilize him in a carnivalesque subversion, negating the stability and permanence associated with commemorative sculptures. Finally, the spider web that extends between the Emperor's exaggerated facial features and the lamp marks his defeat at the hands of time, underlining once again that he is *outdated*, not triumphantly *timeless*.

The print shows that despite its material permanence, the monument is ephemeral. Perhaps nothing could epitomize such push and pull between material durability and empirical transience as coinage and in 1871, the liquidation of national history and glory into currency was a genuine fear among nationalists and conservative men of letters. The fabricated stories about foreigners who offered a thousand francs to climb the condemned monument before its destruction or a million francs to buy the Column in its entirety ironically realized the fear of transforming the monument into a commodity.[115] But a more serious rumor claimed that the bronze monument was destined to be sent to the mint. For example, Charles Virmaître referred to an editorial published in *Le Père Duchêne* to argue that the Commune had intended to use the bronze from the Column to pay the National Guard. According to Virmaître, the idea of turning

[114] This transformation of toga into nightshirt was a widespread trope in political satire of the time, generating several images captioned "Le Napoléon en chemise"—some claiming that the emperor was feeling cold atop the column without his famous redingote.
[115] Lamazou, *Le Renversement de La Colonne*, 84.

the monument "sealed with the blood of France's children" into something as base as money was desecration.[116] The same argument is repeated in most anti-Commune literature, which all agreed that the sole reason behind the destruction of the Column was the financial gain to be had from its *body*. The biological metaphors multiplied as the blood and flesh of the 'nation's children' were declared to be the actual raw materials of the monument; this underlined further that the Commune's debasement of the Column into mere metal would be an unforgivable desecration.[117]

As a matter of fact, the first proposals for the reuse of the bronze dated back to the early days of the siege, months before the declaration of the Commune. Instead of money however, these calls proposed the conversion of the Column into the weapons that the besieged Paris desperately needed. For instance, on October 2, 1870, the Munitions Committee of the 6th Arrondissement proposed:

> […] the material needed for the cannons to be taken, first, from the column honoring Napoléon I at the Place Vendôme. Apart from the material advantage, this measure would be of immense moral advantage by ridding Republican France of an odious image, which outrageously evokes the execrable and accursed race [Bonapartes] that brought our homeland to the brink of ruin.[118]

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[116] Charles Virmaître, *La Commune à Paris, 1871* (Paris: A. Lacroix, Verboeckhoven et Cie, 1871), 123–24.

[117] For example, see *Les Monuments de Paris Après l'oeuvre de La Commune* (Paris: A. Laporte, 1871), 59. "Pourquoi démolir la colonne? se demandait-on de toutes parts. Pour en faire des pièces de deux sous […] C'était une piètre raison pour détruire […] un monument appartenant à la France, scellé du sang de tous ses enfants."

[118] From the French original as it appears in Castagnary, *Gustave Courbet et La Colonne Vendôme*, 21–22. A similar suggestion was made by the legislative assembly in 1792 with regard to royal and Catholic emblems in bronze. The decree suggested they be converted to "a kind of cannon [*bouce à feu*]," unless a decision made by the Commission des monuments would prefer their conservation because they "might be of interest to the arts." The aesthetic and historical-educational value of a monument could save it from destruction. André Chastel, "The Notion of Patrimony," in *Rethinking France : Legacies*, Les Lieux de Memoire, ed. Pierre Nora, trans. Nancy Turpin, vol. 3, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 9.

Prefiguring the Commune, these local proposals evidently grounded their practical reasoning in the monument's detrimental presence as a symbol of militarism and tyranny. Here what is proposed is the ethical conversion of an object that is damaging to the community into those that respond to the community's moral and physical needs. Ironically, of course, this act of communal good entails the transformation of an artwork into weapons.

The Commune's interest in the monetary use of the Column, either as scrap metal or as new coins, was similarly invested in the Column's reuse value for the community's benefit. However, they pushed the idea of exchanging the monument with something else to its logical extreme. What they contemplated was the conversion of the Vendôme Column into the "universal equivalent of all other commodities"—i.e., money. Marx warns that it is "because all commodities […] are realised human labour" that their values can be measured by money, that single, special commodity.[119] This equation of the Column with the labor-time grants a critical truth to the satirical transformations of the monument into advertisement columns. We have seen that the Vendôme Column claimed to embody a linear narrative from the grand history of imperial expansion and capitalist-industrial progress. This history, however, depended on the repetitive day-to-day movement of labor it successfully elided. By breaking it down into millions of coins, the Commune wanted to return a portion of their stolen time back to the hands of its worker-citizens. Perhaps for the first time, exchanging something into money would move it closer to the labor that created it.

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[119] Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, ed. Friedrich Engels, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling, vol.1: The Process of Capitalist Production, (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Company, 1932), 106.

The material disillusionment brought about by the physical destruction of the monument revealed such visions of ethical transformations to be impossible. Once it fell onto a bed of manure, the colossal Column could not measure up to tales of its fabrication from thousands of enemy cannons. Reclus wondered: "How come the bronze sheets are so thin? How was this fake Roman emperor that everyone thought so great, as small as that!"[120] Courbet was especially disillusioned with its empty core:

> Did you not then believe, like me and everybody else, that the column was a gigantic bronze pipe? They had boasted so much about the twelve hundred cannons from Austerlitz! Ah! Well yes! All in bronze! You saw it well when it was on the ground. The thickness of [the bronze] was not more than a fingernail […] Twelve hundred cannons for a nasty sheet of metal![121]

The *goguettiers*, meanwhile, captured the popular disappointment in verse, announcing that the Column did not even offer a reuse value:[122]

> But when we examine it
> This column of cannons
> It was only made of rubble
> This monument barely paid for itself
> The bronze, there was not much of it
> We all have been tricked!

These fragments chronicle a collective disillusionment with the monument's physical representation of solidity and strength. But they also record the touch of the iconoclast

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[120] Reclus, *La Commune de Paris*, 316–17.

[121] Maxime Vuillaume, *Mes cahiers rouges au temps de la Commune* (Paris: Société d'Éditions Littéraires et Artistiques, 1900), 250–52. "Est-ce que vous ne croyiez pas alors comme moi et comme tout le monde, que la colonne n'était qu'un gigantesque tuyau de bronze ? On nous avait tant vanté les douze cents canons d'Austerlitz ! Ah ! bien oui ! tout en bronze ! Vous l'avez bien vue, quand elle a été par terre. Il n'y en avait pas l'épaisseur d'un ongle. […] Douze cents canons pour une méchante feuille de métal !" Vuillaume's memoirs of the Commune also appeared as a feuilleton in *Le Chambard Socialiste*. This anecdote appeared in *Le Chambard Socialiste*, no. 22 (May 12, 1894).

[122] "Mais lorsque l'on examine / Cett' colonne de canons, / Ell' n'était fait' que d'moellons. / Ce monument n'payait que d'mine. / D'bronze il n'y avait pas beaucoup: / On nous avait monté l'coup!" For the rest of the lyrics, see Edouard Moriac and Henri de Pène, *Paris Sous La Commune*, 308–9.

as an experiential method of exposing political and social truths.[123] The transgressive iconoclasm of the Commune showed that the Column was only a thin sheet of metal encasing a cipher that together constituted the political authority, a recognition that echoes Michael Taussig's description of the State as a "hollow core, a meticulously shielded emptiness and magnificent deceit."[124]

This positive disillusionment, attained through an act of transgressive violence, summoned the memory of another from the past: the violence done to the king's royal body. The eyewitness accounts of the monument's destruction were unconsciously joined with the collective memory of the guillotines of 1793, and confounded the thin metal of Napoléon's effigy with the soft flesh of the fallen sovereign. Although the photographs taken directly after the event show the statue lying on its back, its face towards the sky, head and trunk intact, many accounts record the "beheading" of the Emperor's effigy by the impact of the fall.[125] [Figure 1.29.]

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[123] In the final chapter I return to this notion of iconoclasm as an experiential method of unmasking material illusions.
[124] Michael Taussig, "Maleficium: State Fetishism," in *Fetishism as Cultural Discourse*, ed. Emily S. Apter and William Pietz (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 240.
[125] Matsuda, *The Memory of the Modern*, 26–27.

Figure 1.29. Bruno Braquehais, Statue of Napoléon I after the Fall of the Vendôme Column, photograph on albumen paper, May 16, 1871. (National Library of Brazil).

Prosper Lissagaray, for example, reported the event as follows: "the head of Bonaparte rolls upon the ground," leaving behind a "purified pedestal"; another author, Maxime Vuillaume, wrote that "Caesar rests upon his back, decapitated. His head, crowned with laurels, has rolled like a pumpkin to the edge of the walkway."[126] The metaphors of corporal violence moved beyond the historical association with the guillotines. For example, Reclus gives us a whole scene of dismemberment: "In midair, […] the head of the convict was separated from its trunk, the arm of the murderer was cut, its hand that held the Victory was broken."[127] In his *fin-de-siècle* novel about the demolition,

[126] Ibid.
[127] Reclus, *La Commune de Paris*, 316–17.

Descaves compared the fallen monument to a dismembered Gargantua surrounded by Parisians ready to seize a piece of its spilled guts and its shattered skin.[128] These violent dismemberments of the (symbolic) body politic are more than revenge fantasies. They demonstrate the adjustments of memory needed to translate the meaning of what the eyes witnessed: the return of the political power to the people, piece by piece.[129]

A New Form of Politics: Politics as Everyone's Vocation

I noted earlier that the monument's physical qualities frustrate the attempts of embodied experience. The Column's size, presentation, and style demand a distanced recognition of political authority, reproducing the paradox of popular politics: supposedly knowable and visible, they are removed and hidden from public life. The famous Communard Paschal Grousset had described the Commune as "the direct access of the workers to the mysteries of power."[130] The destruction of the Column is the communicative medium of this collective revelation, dispelling the mysteries of the state mechanism through the shattering of its mask.

Based on a horizontal system of shared governance, the Paris Commune rejected the vertical organization of centralized authority.[131] The breakdown of the Column into

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[128] [fr.] "[…] la foule bourdonnait autour des vertèbres brisées de la Colonne, en flairait les tronçons, en ramassait des fragments, entrailles ou peau." Descaves, *La Colonne*, 429.

[129] The scene recalls the death of Pentheus at the hands of the maenads in Euripides' *Bacchae*: the women pull the ill-fated king down from the highest branches of a tall evergreen tree, and tear his body apart. This radical upturning of vertical, male authority, and the fall of Napoléon from the apex of a tall column, dramatically echo each other. Bonnie Honig offers a feminist reading of this ancient tragedy as a refusal of authority in the preface to her *A Feminist Theory of Refusal* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021), 1–13.

[130] "Enquête Sur La Commune 1re Partie," *La Revue Blanche*, March 15, 1897, 268. Translated into English in Mitchell Abidor, ed., "Inquiry on the Commune," in *Voices of the Paris Commune* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2015), 57.

[131] "se dota […] de structures administratives autonomes par lesquelles l'administration parisienne s'affranchit de l'autorité centraliste d'un préfet ou personnalisée d'un maire." Bertrand Tillier, *La Commune de Paris, révolution sans images? : politique et représentations dans la France républicaine (1871–1914)* (Seyssel: Champ vallon, 2004), 17.

countless pieces enacts this upending and dispersion of political authority. The political 'unity' the Commune desires replaces the singular and centralized forms of authority with communal association that is pluralistic, spontaneous, and voluntary.[132] Politics under the Commune, as practiced in the immediate dissemination of decisions via mass print, mirrors the rhythm of the quotidian, consolidating the gap between political acts and daily work. This transformation is the crux of Marx's comparison of the Second Empire and the Commune, the first "a State separate of and independent from society," and the second, "the reabsorption of the State power by the society."[133] The "spontaneous" temporality of new politics allowed the citizens to know and respond to the events that would re-shape their lives as they took place, as opposed to previous forms of politics in which the event would only be known retrospectively.[134]

In the first issue of a radical journal addressing the Parisian proletariat in the voice of an imaginary working-class heroine, Mother *Duchêne* declares that she saw '89, and its usurpation by the first despot [Napoléon], then came 1830 and 1848, which had been a farce, "a comedic machine with a loud tam-tam!," but no real revolutionary substance.[135] In other words, similar to Marx, the 'Mother' grants the Commune the historical authenticity they deny to bourgeois revolutions. This journal, *Les*

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[132] "The unity that has been imposed on us up to now by the Empire, by the monarchy and by parliamentary rule, is nothing more than despotic, unintelligent, arbitrary, or onerous centralization. Political unity, of the kind that Paris [the Commune] wants, is the voluntary association of all of the local initiatives, cooperation that is spontaneous and freed of all individual energies for the sake of a common goal and the wellbeing, freedom, and security of all. The communal revolution, begun by the initiative of the people on March 18, ushers in a new era of experimental, positive, and scientific politics." As quoted and translated in Seth Whidden, *Authority in Crisis in French Language, 1850-1880* (Farnham, Surrey England: Ashgate, 2014), 77.

[133] The Civil War in France (1871; Marxists Internet Archive, 2009), accessed June 6, 2016, https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1871/civil-war-france/drafts/ch01.htm#D1s3ii.

[134] Ross, *The Emergence of Social Space*, 42.

[135] "Les Lamentations de La Mère Duchêne," 1871, 8-PER-1927, Bibliothèque historique de la Ville de Paris, 2–3.

Lamentations de la Mère Duchêne, was one of the several Communard publications that associated themselves with Jacques Hébert's radical newspaper *Le Père Duchesne* (1790–94) of the Terror. Illustrated by the Communard artist Rosambeau, the title design depicts an elderly lower-class woman (she identifies as a *marchande de poissons*) with arms at her side and her mouth open in speech. She towers over smaller figures representing the army, the church, and the bourgeoisie who scatter in fear of her laments.[136] [Figure 1.30.]

Figure 1.30. Rosembeau, *Les Lamentations de la Mère Duchêne*, N. 1, April 30, 1871 (?), Engraving. (Bibliothèque historique de la Ville de Paris, [BHVP]).

This printed heroine of a Communard journal who sells fish, records history, and

[136] One might not think of the fish merchant as a traditionally revolutionary occupation. Yet one motivation behind the restructuring of the built environment of commerce activities by Haussmannization had been the 'domestication' of *les dames de les halles*, the outspoken market women who participated in economic and public life. For an article that recounts the bourgeois morality operative in the 'cleaning of *les halles*' from a feminist perspective, see Victoria E. Thompson, "Urban Renovation, Moral Regeneration: Domesticating the Halles in Second-Empire Paris," *French Historical Studies* 20, no. 1 (1997): 87–109.

imparts political wisdom embodies the Commune's revolutionary logic in a direct sense. Marx remarked that the Commune's existence proved that the economic emancipation of labor "presupposes political forms that are themselves emancipatory."[137] The negation of the capitalist regimentation of social and economic life first depended on the negation of the distance between politics and all the members of the society.

Before the Revolution, most Communards founded their human dignity on the mastery of trades, their *métiers*.[138] During the Commune many skilled workers and artisans interrupted their trades to assume different roles. As the Napoléon of the Place Vendôme enjoyed his final days atop the Column, the Commune appointed another Napoléon—Napoléon Gaillard—as the director of barricade constructions. Gaillard Père, as the Communards knew him, had been a successful shoemaker, but during the Commune he became an engineer and orator—despite an anti-Communard portrait series describing him as verbose and marginally talented [Figure 1.31.]—as well as an organizer, a commandant, and an artist.

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[137] Ross, *The Emergence of Social Space*, 20–25.

[138] French historian Alain Cottereau has a fascinating essay on the pride and political engagement of skilled workers at the end of the Second Empire, and the subversiveness of their non-conformity to bourgeois values. See Alain Cottereau, "Denis Poulot's Le Sublime—A Preliminary Study," in *Voices of the People: The Social Life of "La Sociale" at the End of the Second Empire*, ed. Adrian Rifkin and Roger Thomas (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1988), 97–177.

Figure 1.31. E.C. "Gaillard Père," in *La Commune*, Color Lithograph, 1871. (Cornell University/Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections).

Gaillard Père embodied Rancière's historical 'shoemaker' as a figure ever ready to frustrate social classifications.[139] His son, Gaillard Fils, had a similar social role as a radical print artist, who contributed to the politics of the Commune with his revolutionary prints and caricatures. [140] When Gaillard Père was sentenced to death after the Versailles victory, they both escaped to Switzerland and established a café whose walls were covered by Gaillard Fils' commemorative murals of the Commune.[141] The

[139] Rancière explores the ubiquity of the figure of the shoemaker in Western thought, and its role as disruptive of class distinctions: "Shoemaking remains at the very bottom of the trades. If we find shoemakers in the first rank where workers of any kind should not be, the reason is that they are the most numerous, the least busy with their work, and the least deluded about the glory of the artisan." Jacques Rancière, *The Philosopher and His Poor* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 187–88.
[140] Here it might be useful to remember Faustin's self-identification as the capitalist, the capital, the labor, and the commodity of his print business.
[141] Raymond Huard, "Napoléon Gaillard Chef Barricadier de La Commune, 1815–1900," in *La Barricade*, ed. Alain Corbin and Jean-Marie Mayeur, Online Edition, Histoire de La France Aux XIXe et XXe Siècles (Paris: Éditions de la Sorbonne, 2016), 311–22, available online at:

son wrote poems about revolutionary struggle and contributed political opinion pieces to the francophone newspaper. Their establishment became a hub for exiled revolutionaries, bringing together ex-Communards, Russian anarchists, British socialists, and many more.[142] Amidst his revolutionary activities in exile, Gaillard Père also published a treatise on his *métier* titled: *L'Art de la Chaussure*.[143]

The challenge of the Commune, as embodied in Gaillard Père, was in disrupting the well-defined borders separating *métiers* from each other, *métiers* from art, art from life, and life from politics. This was a direct challenge to one's economic activities being the sole definition of one's existence. Therefore, the criticisms against the Communards reproduced the eclipse of one's social and political ways of existing with the products of their labor. Rifkin notes that in his *73 Jours de la Commune*, the Parnassian poet Catulle Mendès links Gaillard Père and Courbet, writing it was "ridiculous" "for so good a shoemaker to quit his shop for politics as it was for so great a painter as Courbet to quit his brushes."[144] While Mendès denounces Courbet's participation in something as base as politics even though he could create sublime artworks, he also mourns the boots that Gaillard Père would never make, having sacrificed his craft for politics. Their participation in the Commune urges Mendès to equate the artisan and the fine artist, the oil paintings and the leather boots, through which he involuntarily admits that what

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http://books.openedition.org/psorbonne/1192. After the amnesty they returned to Paris and joined Paul Lafargue and Jules Guesde in the establishment of the *Parti Ouvrier Français* [POF].

[142] They returned to Paris after the amnesty and worked with Paul Lafargue in the establishment of the *Parti Ouvrier*.

[143] Eng. *The Art of the Shoe*. Full title: *L'Art de la Chaussure ou moyen pratique de chausser le pied humain d'après les règles de l'hygiène et de l'anatomie, par Gaillard père*. Published in Geneva in 1876, Gaillard Père's treatise celebrates his *métier* as an *art* and *science* and completely dismisses the rise of mass production in shoemaking. Huard, "Napoléon Gaillard," 311–22.

[144] As quoted and analyzed in Adrian Rifkin's excellent short essay, "Well Formed Phrases: Some Limits of Meaning in Political Print at the End of the Second Empire," *Oxford Art Journal* 8, no. 1 (1985): 20–28.

makes the two men's transgression equal is their resistance to accepting that politics as a vocation is denied to those who engage in productive labor.

As a vocation that shapes the present and the future of a collective, politics divides those who envision the design and those who labor in its execution; a moral that we have already discerned from the Vendôme Column's aesthetics of separation. This division is not specific to modernity.[145] The bourgeois nation-states only reproduce the ancient demarcation between *patricians* and *plebians*, where the former "pursue grand designs" and the latter "are bound to do."[146] The revolution of the Commune that makes ministers from cabinetmakers and cobblers disrupts this idea that one's occupation equals "a way of being for bodies and minds."[147]

As Kristin Ross argues, the Commune was "a revolt against [such] deep forms of social regimentation."[148] A passage from John Leighton's very hostile impressions of the Paris Commune communicates the loathsome fear the international ruling class experienced as they witnessed the violation of these forms. As Leighton saw it, Communards like Gaillard Père were engaging in things for which they had neither the capacity nor the right:

> You need not be so careful to keep your masks on; we have seen your faces. […] You, Napoléon Gaillard, though you are a shoemaker, you are not even a Simon. […] *Be mean, small, and ridiculous,—be yourselves; we shall all be a great deal more at our ease when you are despicable and we are despising you again*.[149]

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[145] Rancière traces it back to Plato's *Republic*. See the chapter entitled "Plato's Lie" in Rancière, *The Philosopher and His Poor*, 58–180.
[146] Rancière, *Aisthesis*, 46.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Ibid., 5
[149] John Leighton, *Paris under the Commune: Or, The Seventy-Three Days of the Second Siege: With Numerous Illustrations, Sketches Taken on the Spot, and Portraits (from the Original Photographs)*

It is striking that Leighton directly references "Simon the Shoemaker," the worker-philosopher and an associate of Socrates, who rejected Pericles' offers of patronage, claiming that dependence on political authority would be equal to losing his freedom to speak against it.[150] In other words, Simon sees the labor that Pericles wants to free him from as the condition of being a free political actor. By pronouncing Gaillard Père "not *even* a Simon," Leighton denies him any freedom outside his cobbler's shop. The Communard journalist Eugène Vermersch recognized the same impulse behind the excessive violence used in the Bloody Week. In his radical poem from exile, defiantly titled *Les Incendiaires*, he ventriloquized the ruling class before the disruption of social and political positions:[151]

> […] We must destroy this race
> Who would like to live like us!
> Let's cut these hands, sew these mouths,
> Proscribing these fierce men
> Who, even at the moment of death,
> Dream again, revenge […]

Indirectly evoking the question of political agency, the criminal charge of the phrase "to live like us" establishes social and political inequality as divinely ordained and absolute:

> […] We are the chosen ones, the masters!
> We are the predestined ones!
> And God submits to us all beings,
> Even before we were born!
> To us men and things!
> The golden sky! the smell of roses!
> The forest where the wind blows!
> And the light kiss of women
> In the tenderness of spring! […][152]

(London: Bradbury, Evans, 1871), 192. [Italics mine- A.M.]
[150] Robert Sobak, "Sokrates among the Shoemakers," *Hesperia* 84, no. 4 (2015): 701.
[151] Eugène Vermersch, *Les Incendiaires (1871)* (Paris: Les Temps Nouveaux, 1902), 9.
[152] Ibid.

Vermersch's social parody takes the defense of inequality to its logical end: some are destined to toil and suffering, others to leisure and beauty; rejecting one's fate is a moral and social offense. This was the conservative response to what Ross expands on as the "communal luxury:" the revolutionary imagination emerged from the Commune's experience and would inspire *fin-de-siècle* revolutionary thinking with dreams of emancipation expressed as a radical democratization of the production and experience of the beautiful as political act.[153] The realization of this dream depended on the workers' sovereignty over their own time.

A New Form of Politics: The Times of the Revolution

Ross' assessment of the Paris Commune, which follows Lefebvre's idea of "the right to the city,"[154] articulates the Commune as a primarily spatial event. She identifies the Commune's radical imagination as its denial of modernity's increasing separation of politics from society, asking, "What if politics were not a specialized set of activities?"[155] Ross thinks about politics and society spatially, yet the issue is a question of time; especially how one can make time for political participation and turn their social space into a political one. Hence, the radical challenge of Communard workers becomes

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[153] Kristin Ross, *Communal Luxury: The Political Imaginary of the Paris Commune* (London: Verso, 2015), esp. 39–67.

[154] For a class-informed argument for this location choice, see Avner Ben-Amos, "Monuments and Memory in French Nationalism," *History and Memory* 5, no. 2 (October 1, 1993): 65–66. According to Ben-Amos, this choice was informed by the class segregations of the city's physiognomy: "The choice of Place Vendôme testified to Napoleon's tendency to use the western, upper-class part of the city around his Tuileries Palace for erecting ostentatious symbols of his power, instead of the popular eastern part." Except for the interruption of the Commune, this section of the city has continually had an upper-middle class character. Today, the vicinity of the re-erected Column houses some of the most luxurious brands in the world. In this context, the Commune's appropriation of this space can be better understood through Ross' characterization: "occupation of enemy territory […] an example of what Situationists have called a *détournement*—Using the elements or terrain of the dominant social order to one's own ends." Ross, *The Emergence of Social Space*, 42.

[155] Ross, *The Emergence of Social Space*, 4–20.

a contestation against one's own *lack of time*, continuously shrinking in the face of time spent working.

When the workers of Paris interrupted their wage-earning jobs or set down the tools of their *métiers* to make time for political action, they were accused of trading their toil for undeserved rest and pleasure.[156] This was not the first time revolutionary action had been met with accusations of indolence. In his *Aisthesis*, Rancière explains how Rousseau's philosophical reading of *far niente*—to have nothing to do, or to be completely free to do whatever the heart desires—was blamed for the reign of revolutionary terror by the reactionaries.[157] An anti-Communard caricature attacked the Commune on these grounds, echoing the reactionary responses to *far niente*, to the desire to control one's time. [Figure 1.32.] The image presents Thiers with an hourglass in his pocket, to indicate a certain "running out of time" for a conciliation with the Commune. He hurriedly asks the personification of his adversaries their demands. Wrapping "herself" in fraudulent coyness, the Commune is a perversion of the "Republic." The red cap of liberty sits over a peculiar face, which, instead of a woman with delicate yet stern features, belongs to a bulky male Communard, smoking a pipe with a sly sneer. The cross-dressing revolution responds to Thiers with the sacrosanct cries of 1789, but quickly reveals the real demand of the sinister bunch she represents: "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity! To Drink Well, To Eat Well … *But No Work*!" There

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[156] This attack would reproduce itself in nineteenth-century France as accusations of laziness against the striking workers. Conversely, Michelle Perrot had argued that "going on strike" is actually the opposite of "doing nothing," and that the striker is actually "a man of action." As quoted in Marnin Young, *Realism in the Age of Impressionism: Painting and the Politics of Time* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015), 111. Or, referring to Rancière's earlier distinction, we can say a striking worker moves from a man who *does* to a man who *acts*.

[157] "*Far niente* is not laziness. It is the enjoyment of *otium*[…] Otium is specifically the time when one is expecting nothing*:* precisely the kind of time that is forbidden to the plebeian […]." Rancière, *Aisthesis*, 46.

is truth to this biased and morally questionable accusation. The dignity and the necessity of labor did not preclude the need for leisure and pleasure, which, as the Commune's working existence proved, was the marker of true emancipation.

Figure 1.32. Unknown Artist, Color Lithograph, 1871. (Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections/Cornell University Library).

This demand was spun out in the following decades, and can for example be found in Paul Lafargue's influential text, *The Right to Be Lazy* (1883). Subverting the supposedly labor-friendly refrain, the 'Right to Work,' the radical thinker demanded free time from labor against the ever-increasing usurpation of proletariats' time. Critically questioning the Capital's normalized drive for more production and more consumption, Lafargue

argues how it is toil, not leisure and pleasure, that is detrimental to humanity's progress.[158]

The Vendôme Column presented an image that was antithetical to this call for the restructuring of time and reevaluation of the idea of progress. As we have seen, the monument offered the orderly procession of the *Grande Armée* and the Emperor towards the latter's apotheosis as the sensible form of temporal progress. Against this linear historical time the monument presented, the lives of Parisians occupied plural temporalities—from the wage laborer to the artisan, from the housewife to the newspaper boy, the lives of the common people were diverse, and all contributed to the cacophonous rhythms of urban life in nineteenth-century Paris.

The historical teleology of the Column could not account for this quotidian inconsequentiality of daily life, but ephemera did. The journal of a Paris worker's club, *Le Proletaire*, was such a publication. Established in the early days of the Commune, the workers' newspaper published a poem that declared the Vendôme Column an insult to the workers who encountered its historical grandeur during a day of labor.[159] Signed by G. Barthélémy, several verses of the poem echo the previously discussed charges of barbarism and violence, dubbing the monument a "homicide ossuary […] raised by the blood of soldiers." But a particularly striking stanza recounts the reception of the monument by its working-class audience: "Whenever we passed through these rich neighborhoods / Near this monument, as worker-citizens, / We turned our heads away,

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[158] Paul Lafargue, *The Right to Be Lazy: Essays* (Chicago, IL: Charles H. Kerr & Company, 1907; Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2011).

[159] A total of four issues of this short-lived publication through May of 1871 provide invaluable insights into the enthusiastic participation of the Parisian proletariat in social and political questions, without holding actual office in the Commune. The poem in question is signed by a certain G. Barthélémy and appeared in the first issue of the *Le Proletaire*, published May 10, 1871.

blaming the history."[160] The poem reminds us that the monument speaks differently to the laborer than to the inhabitants of these affluent neighborhoods: while the former recognizes the defense of their toil and lack, the latter sees their own glorious reflection and right to prevail. The destruction of the monument silenced this insult addressed to the laborer, which in April 1871 the following lines printed on a single-sheet pamphlet made clear:

> Oh Well, you are going to fall, Vendôme Column
> Because the Commune of Paris
> Proclaimed yesterday the dignity of man!
> […]
> The victory palm now belongs to men who work
> And to those who walk together with us!"[161]

In the context of time-labor relationships in late nineteenth-century Paris, the monument's homogenous, authoritative, immortal embodiment of past time becomes an insult to the wage laborer who produced that time by handing over his life hour by hour, or to the army conscript who gave his in an instant.

Numerous artists who depicted the demolition of the Column preferred to focus on the pedestal, which, once the oppressive weight of the History was removed, was "left [to] possess its own symbolic potentialities."[162] The 'eyewitness' images which capture the people around and on the empty pedestal of the Column record this triumph of the quotidian over the historical. Dupendant's pen and watercolor sketch of this

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[160] "Toujours, quand nous passions dans ces riches quartiers / Près de ce monument, citoyens ouvriers, / Nous détournions la tête en accusant l'histoire." G. Barthélémy, "La Colonne Vendôme" in *Le Proletaire*, May 10, 1871.

[161] A. Burtal, "Feu La Colonne!" (April 1871) reproduced in the appendix of Brécy, *La chanson de la Commune*, xii.
"Eh! bien, tu vas tomber, ô colonne Vendôme, / Car la Commune de Paris / A proclamé hier la dignité de l'homme! / "La palme est désormais à l'homme qui travaille, / ceux qui marchent avec nous!"

[162] According to Dario Gamboni, when a statue is destroyed its pedestal assumes a new communicative potential waiting to be interpreted: Dario Gamboni, *The Destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism since the French Revolution* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997), 51.

moment of popular victory delivers the point. The artist presents a monochrome scene animated by the reds of flags and the sashes of the revolutionaries, and the dispersed blues of the National Guard uniforms. [Figure 1.33.]

Figure 1.33. Dupendant, *Colonne Vendôme et Courbet*, Pen, Pencil,Watercolor, 1871. (Bibliothèque historique de la Ville de Paris. [BHVP]).

The *past tense* of the inert matter of history is replaced with the *present* of the revolutionary change. Standing on a large piece of the shattered column is Courbet, who is caught in a dramatic gesture towards the people claiming the pedestal. Rather than dominating the scene as the author of the event, he merges with the rest of the bodies in shared enthusiasm for the future. If this were a snapshot, it would capture the moment

when one political imagination destroyed another. Catching one figure on the ladder on his ascent to the pedestal, the sketch communicates the fugitive moment of transition from the vertical, singular, and static *imaginaire* of authority to one that is horizontal, pluralistic, and active: from a single national itinerary to a realm of possibilities.

If the actors of the event are moved outside the frame, the pedestal emerges as a signifier with anxious and bleak connotations. As an eerie ruin devoid of the markers that testify to the presence of the political will that pulled it to the ground—except for a tattered flag drained of its colors and a flimsy empty ladder, which clash with the dark solidity of the pedestal—the space opened up by the fallen column conjures uncertainties in the absence of the temporal anchorage provided by the Column. [Figure 1.34.] The context of this monumental gesture is dissolved under the artist Jules Girardet's orange and white brushstrokes that devour time and space to betray the uneasiness before the shattering of political authority. The visual clues that record the vital performance of the populace and their revolutionary *present* are absent. The scene frightens the mind with its tomb-like stillness. The horizon is obscured, offering neither the memory of the past nor the promise of the future.

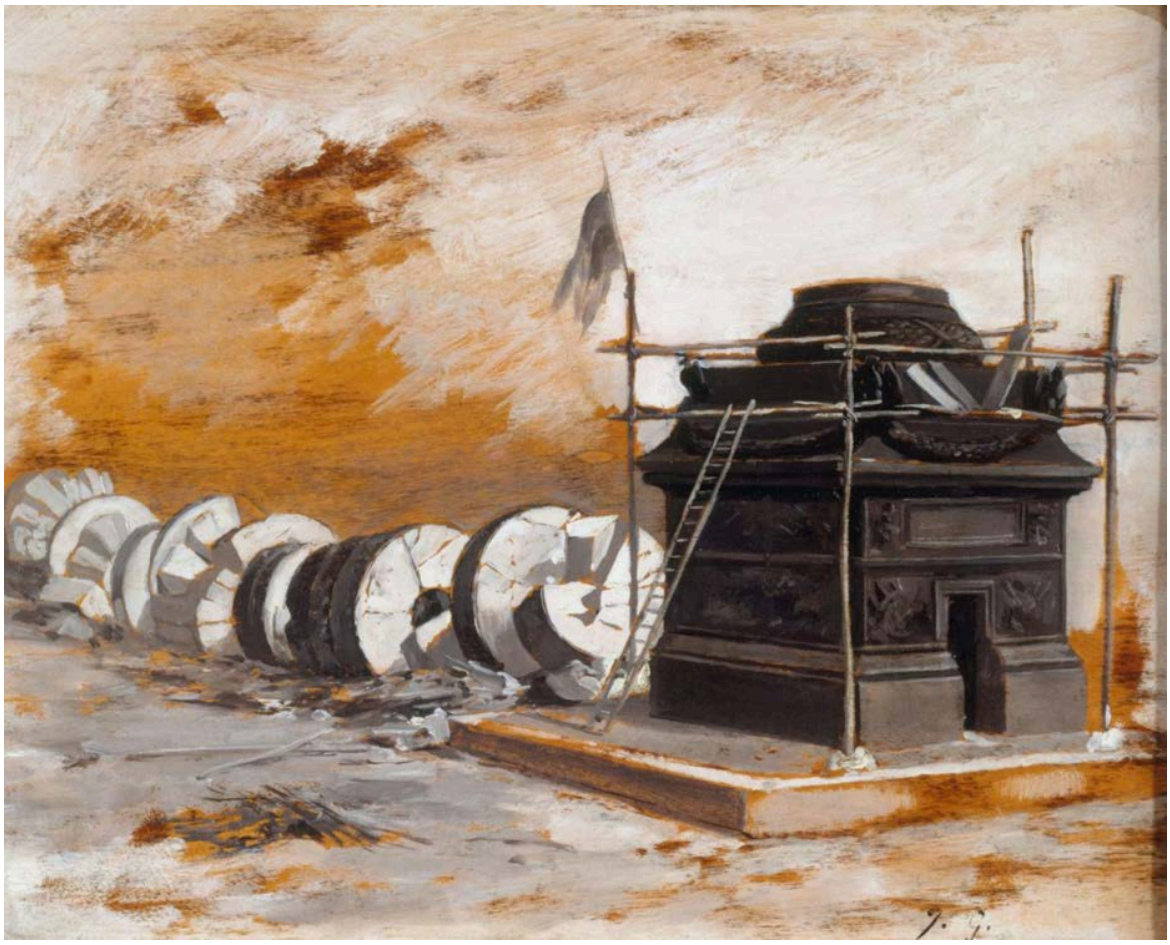

Figure 1.34. Jules Girardet, *La colonne Vendôme après sa chute le 16 Mai 1871*, Gouache on paper, 1871. (Musée Carnavalet).

This last image almost translates the feeling shared by the conservative and liberal bourgeois critics alike. These antagonistic audiences of the destruction did not link the opening up of a new temporal horizon with the destruction of a national monument. On the contrary, Bishop Pierre-Henri Lamazou saw the Commune's actions as a "revolt against history"[163] Mendès declared that the destruction of the column abolished history—making for a timeless present, an annihilated past, and an uncertain future.[164]

[163] Lamazou, *Le Renversement de La Colonne*, 79–80.
[164] Mendès, *Les 73 Journées*, 149–50: "It was not enough for you, to have destroyed the present and compromised the future, you still want to annihilate the past! An ominous youthful prank. But the Vendôme Column is France, yes, the France of yesteryear, the France that we no longer are, alas! It's

John Leighton joins them with his assessment of the Commune's verdict against the Vendôme Column as the elimination of time itself: "it was not sufficient to have destroyed the present, compromised the future; you wish now to obliterate the past!"[165]

However, the Communards identified their action's relation to time in contrary terms. According to them, the monument fixed the society's highest achievements to the days of Napoleonic glory. It was a monumental shackle for political struggle and social progress, pulling them back to the horrors of the battlefields and the tyranny of personal rule after every stride forward. The authority offered this hegemonic and unchanging repetition as progress, under which it hid the violent conquest of the days and nights of the multitudes.[166] In the face of the revolutionary rupture that affected the experience of an actual difference, this narrative of progress was seen for what it actually was: *a myth*. In order to completely dispel the influence of the myth, it was necessary to destroy the forms that gave it presence in the phenomenological world.

A caricature presents this monumental falsehood. [Figure 1.35.] Here, Louis Philippe, Louis Napoléon, and Adolphe Thiers are stacked on top of each other, mimicking the Column's verticality.

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really about Napoleon, all this, it's about our victorious, superb fathers moving across the world, planting the tricolored flag whose staff is made of a branch of the tree of liberty! […] Don't think that demolishing the Vendôme Column is just toppling over a bronze column with an emperor's statue on top; it's unearthing your fathers in order to slap the fleshless cheeks of their skeletons and to say to them: You were wrong to be brave, to be proud, to be grand! You were wrong to conquer cities, to win battles. You were wrong to make the world marvel at the vision of a dazzling France."

[165] Leighton, *Paris under the Commune*, 166.

[166] In Benjamin's articulation, what is commonly presented as progress is ultimately the overwhelming authority of the destructive forces of modernization. Walter Benjamin, "Theses on Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations* (New York, NY: Schocken Books, 2007), 253–64.

Figure 1.35. F. Mathis, *Une Page D'Histoire: Le Couronnement de L' édifice*, Color Lithograph, 1871. (Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris [BHVP]).

The wind brought by the personification of the Commune seems enough to disturb this weak edifice. Thiers drops a pear from his hand that connects him to Louis Philippe whose head constitutes the base of this unsteady vision, as the Gallic rooster of the bourgeois monarch picks a fight with the imperial eagle of Louis Napoléon. The structure presents history as a cyclical repetition that stacks one disappointment on top of another. Allegorical figures between them allude to the episodes of revolutionary

upheavals that, instead of taking this ridiculous monument down, provided it with more material. The caricaturist gave form to Marx's account of modern French history in his *18th Brumaire*: "A whole nation, which thought it had acquired an accelerated power of motion by means of a revolution, suddenly finds itself set back into a defunct epoch."[167] The Commune is not another step forward—or backward—in the victors' linear political history, but a destructive intervention in that historical-political structure.

Agreeing with the Commune, then, the artist revels in the authority's petrification of time in the form of a monument, configured as the farcical repetition of victories and defeats, of the victors and the vanquished, changing the names on the monuments, but leaving the unproductive, frozen repetition of oppression and exploitation. Therefore instead of 'annihilating' time and history; the destruction of the monument emancipates them from myth. For example, Élie Reclus identified the Column's demolition as "*mak[ing]* history" by getting rid of "its [history's] debris."[168] We see the same argument in the previously mentioned poem from *Le Proletaire*, which describes the popular support for the destruction of the Column as a rejection of the petrification of time around the memory of a military victory: "That's because we all want progress / Order, freedom, work and peace / In seeing this trophy / raised by the

[167] Marx, *18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, 1852.

[168] Élie Reclus associates the national patrimony with the traditional propertied classes. In cities like Venice, Florence, or Madrid, celebrated by the bourgeois moderates as "open-air archeology museums," the authority of the propertied classes was never truly challenged. During his office in the Commune, Reclus himself had suggested another way of dealing with the 'debris' of history. He proposed, according to his memoirs, the transformation of the Column into "a post of infamy" by breaking it in the middle and including a bronze plate with the memories of Napoleonic defeats, respectively Waterloo and Sedan. This 'corrective intervention' to the monument would assure that it would do its duty, *recalling history correctly*. His proposal was denied on the basis that "it is contrary to public morality to sadden the eyes of the honest man who passes by the exhibition of the criminal or the testimony of his crime." Reclus, *La Commune de Paris*, 315–16. [Italics mine- A.M.]

blood of heroes disappear / We say: The time of Waterloo has passed."[169] This identification of a commemorative object as an impediment to historical movement forward shares a discursive kinship with anarchist Communards' characterizations of authority in general, and political authority in particular, as a hindrance to human progress. In the following decades, the anarchist critique of authority would echo Communards' characterizations of the Vendôme Column. Élisée Reclus for example, would declare political authority "the enemy of all progress."[170]

The Column was not only a hinderance before the march to a revolutionary future, it also seemingly buried revolutionary memory under its imperial weight. The symbolic importance of the location of the Column made this metaphor tangible. The French Revolution had destroyed the equestrian statue of Louis XIV that stood at the Place Vendôme along with other monumental representations of the monarchy. Two decades later Napoléon's monument would appear on the spot opened up by the revolution to support his dynasty. In this sense, before the eyes of the most radical factions of the Commune, the Column was raised over the corpse of the French Revolution, and the people of Paris in the Spring of 1871 were set to resuscitate the Revolution.[171] It was a monument that stopped revolutions in their tracks—*just like the scaffolds of Robespierre*, according to Verlet—and "it weighs with all its weight on the humanity, hindering progress and obscuring the future;" it stood as a crime against history.[172]

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[169] "La Colonne," in *Le Proletaire*, issue 1.
[170] Reclus, *Anarchy, Geography, Modernity*, 145–46.
[171] "Elle a été élevée sur le cadavre de la Révolution […] le peuple de Paris a ressuscité de son souffle puissant la Révolution." Henri Verlet, published in *Le Cri du Peuple*, April 4, 1871.
[172] Ibid. "Il doit rejeter au creuset la masse de bronze qui, soixante ans durant, a pesé de tout son poids sur l'humanité, entravant le progrès, obstruant l'avenir."

Both the Communards and their enemies blamed each other for freezing the flow of time; as such, their understandings of the concept must have been fundamentally different. In the strategic slippages of the dominant discourse where the History subsumes all the temporal experiences of its subjects, the Vendôme Column was conflated with national history. This is why several republican men of letters protested against the Commune's decision to destroy the monument. The journalist Eugène Asse acted upon these historicist-nationalist reflexes when he challenged the Commune's decision by declaring that the destruction of the entire monument would be the abolition of the History and absolutely should not be permitted.[173] After the destruction of the monument, this association of the monument with history was taken to extremes in anti-Commune literature.

Destruction of the Commune, Restoration of the Column

As defenders of the Column were pleading on behalf of the Past, the revolutionary Parisians were acting for a future that they might never live to see.[174] On May 21, 1871, the Versailles army entered Paris and the seven-day massacre known as the Bloody Week [*la semaine sanglante*] started. Subsequent to their entry into the city,

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[173] "La Commune a décrété qu'elle serait abattue. Mais la Commune n'est pas la France, et elle ne peut porter la main sur un monument élevé à la gloire de la France, fait avec l'airain conquis par ses enfants sur tous les champs de bataille de l'Europe. Qu'à la statue césarienne, si intelligemment placée sur son faite par la second empire, on substitue celle du capitaine, comme le firent les vainqueurs de 1830, très-bien ; mais aller au delà, détruire le monument lui même élevé à la gloire des armées françaises, ce n'est pas seulement commettre un acte de lèse-nation, c'est commander à des mains françaises une œuvre prussienne, *c'est vouloir abolir l'histoire. On n'abolit pas l'histoire*" [Italics mine- A.M.]. *Le Monde Illustré*, April 22, 1871.

[174] Comparing the dead of the Commune to the "much-belauded Christian martyrs," Bax declares that: "The Christian died believing that the moment the tooth or claw of the panther tore open his throat was the moment of his transition to a new and endless personal existence of honour and glory. […] The Communist workman […] was willing to surrender himself completely for a future that meant the happiness of his class and a nobler life for humanity, but which he himself would never see." Ernest Belfort Bax, *A Short History of the Paris Commune* (London: Twentieth Century Press, 1895), 56.

Maréchal Patrice de Mac Mahon addressed the soldiers with a speech that tied the upcoming onslaught to the destruction of the Vendôme Column. In this speech, which was widely published later in national newspapers, the general of the *Versaillais* army and future president of the Third Republic compared the Communards to the coalition of Prussian, Russian, and Austrian forces that had captured the city in 1814 following Napoléon's defeat at the Battle of Leipzig.[175] According to the Maréchal, the Paris Commune was an enemy more wicked than the historical adversaries of the nation. The latter had respected the Vendôme Column while the Commune destroyed it—erroneously thinking they could negate the 'military virtues' of the French by destroying their glorious symbol.[176] Now deprived of the bronze testimony to their valor, he asked his soldiers to restore it in their hearts and prove it in their upcoming offense which, he declared, was destined to be "a new pledge of bravery, devotion, and patriotism."[177] Mac Mahon's address is the epitome of Reclus' assessment of the subsequent events: "in no modern revolution have the privileged been known to fight their own battles. They depend on armies of poor people, whom they indoctrinate with the so-called religion of the flag and drill in the so-called maintenance of order."[178] But there is

[175] This comparison of the Commune to the enemy armies of 1814 would become a theme in anti-Commune literature during the Third Republic. For example, Virmaître ultimately reminds us that in the 1814 defeat, the triumphant enemy army respected the Column, yet the Communards were an enemy without honor who destroyed the glorious monument. Virmaître, *La Commune à Paris*, 123–24.

[176] "Soldats, la colonne Vendôme vient de tomber. L'étranger l'avait respectée. La Commune de Paris l'a renversée. Des hommes qui se disent Français ont osé détruire sous les yeux des Allemands qui nous observent ce témoin des victoires de nos pères contre l'Europe coalisée. Espéraient-ils, les auteurs indignes de cet attentat à la gloire nationale, effacer la mémoire des vertus militaires dont ce monument était le glorieux symbole? Soldats! Si les souvenirs que la colonne nous rappelait ne sont plus gravés sur l'airain, ils resteront du moins vivants dans nos coeurs, et nous inspirant d'eux, nous saurons donner à la France un nouveau gage de bravoure, de devouement et le patriotism. Maréchal DE MAC MAHON, Duc de Magenta." As published in *Le Gaulois*, May 20, 1871. Also in "Souvenirs de La Commune-Pages d'Histoire," *Le Figaro, Numéro Exceptionnel*, September 30, 1877.

[177] Ibid.

[178] English translation as it appeared in Reclus, *Anarchy, Geography, Modernity*, 149.

another layer to the Maréchal's address. It classifies the Commune as the enemies of the state and the nation, which justifies the grounds for the purge of the working-class revolutionary elements from the body politic. As the next chapter of this dissertation illustrates, the Third Republic was built on this principle of exclusion and christened by the foundational violence of the Bloody Week.

In addition to the foreign enemy, the anti-Communard literature confound the Commune with the Reign of Terror. In some extreme instances the destruction of the Column was equated with the royal executions by the guillotine. This collapse of two moments of revolutionary violence, one against the political and corporeal bodies of the king, the other eight decades later against a victory monument, reaches a dramatic precision in Abbot Lamazou's account of the demolition. The abbot declared that the death of Louis XVI under the blade of the guillotine and the fall of the Vendôme Column under the Commune were "analogous" events; the crowd that gathered at Place de la Concorde in 1793 was the same as the crowd cheering the fall of the bronze emperor at the Place Vendôme in 1871.[179] The definitive association of the Commune with violence, however, was derived from the ravages brought about in the urban environment. After their long absence, the upper-class Parisians returned to a ruined city that they believed to be the work of the Commune. The fires that destroyed parts of the city during the barricade wars of the final week were the basis of this association. The figure of the *pétroleuse* embodied revolutionary destruction, which was often portrayed as a diabolical working-class woman resembling the nineteenth-century incarnation of the ancient furies. [Figure 1.36.] Numerous publications with titles like

[179] Lamazou, *Le Renversement de La Colonne*, 88–89.

L'Oeuvre de la Commune, i.e. Paris in ruins, relied on print, photography, and photomontage to perpetuate this myth.[180] Similar to their ideological others under the Commune, these ephemera tried to control the memory of history as it was unfolding; and shroud the social and political promises of the Spring of 1871 under fire, smoke, and blood.

After the Bloody Week the image of the Commune *as destruction* successfully legitimized the summary decisions of courts, death sentences, and deportations to penal colonies. In reality, except for strategic and symbolic locations, such as the Tuileries Palace and the Hôtel de Ville, the fires that swept the streets of Paris were caused by artillery. Yet, spectacular efforts of defamation created the long-lived classist and misogynist myth of the *pétroleuse* and, together with the mass-produced images of the ruins, transformed the Commune into a cautionary tale.

[180] For an example of this lucrative publishing craze, see Alfred d'Aunay and Alphonse Liébert, *Les Ruines de Paris et de Ses Environs, 1870–1871 / Cent Photographies Par A. Liébert ; Texte Par Alfred d' Aunay* (Paris, 1872).

Figure 1.36. Unknown Artist, "Un soldat voulant frapper avec son fusil une femme diabolisée" photographic reproduction, c. 1871. (Musée Carnavalet).

At its center was the savage energy and incendiary passion of the lower classes, who would burn a city with themselves in it before they would submit to the authority of a bourgeois government. In this scenario, the deliberate and politically communicative demolition of the Vendôme Column was flattened to epitomize the masses' irrational and dangerous capacity for destruction. This notion informs the representations of the popular crowds in the visual culture and literature of the following decades.[181]

[181] I return to this in the following chapter through a comparison between the dangerous masses and their pious and tamed "other": congregations and pilgrimage crowds.

Mending History

The simultaneity of the deliberations about the suppression of the Commune and the reconstruction of the Column speak to the eagerness of Versailles to close the revolutionary wound opened in bourgeois history. As Maréchal Mac Mahon initiated the second day of his final offensive on May 22, the National Assembly was preparing to discuss a bill on the fate of the Column. The first article of the bill was about the reconstruction of the Column, the second and the third included considerations about possible changes to the original form of the monument.[182] According to the second article, the restored monument would no longer function as the historical throne to Napoléon Bonaparte, but would be topped instead "with a statue representing France." The third article concerned the installment of a double inscription that would record the crime of the Commune and the new authority's capable determination to undo this crime. All three articles were immediately accepted and a commission was nominated to administer the process.[183]

When *Versaillais* soldiers seized the neighborhood from the National Guard a few days later, most of the Column's debris was still sprawled around the empty pedestal. The soldiers were ordered to carefully salvage the fragments and bring them to the *Palais de l'Industrie* for the restoration. However, the smaller pieces of rubble were lost, taken either as souvenirs or as artifacts to be sold on the black market.

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[182] Projet de loi : Art. 1er - La Colonne de la Place Vendôme sera reconstruite. Art. 2 - Elle sera surmontée d'une statue représentant la France. Art. 3 - Une inscription constatera la date de sa destruction et celle de son rétablissement. "Projet de loi," *Journal Officiel de La République Française*, no. 143 (May 23, 1871): 1109.

[183] "Ordre Du Jour Du Mardi 23 Mai 1871," *Journal Officiel de La République Française*, no. 143 (May 23, 1871): 1111. According to the announcements of May 25, the right-wing deputies Marquis René de Mortemart and Adrien de Montgolfier were appointed as the president and the secretary of this commission.

National newspapers called for the return of the missing pieces and solicited leads about their whereabouts. After all, it was the duty of all honest citizens to help the restoration of this national patrimony.[184] The sentiments of the Versailles government and the Assembly were shared by the Parisian upper classes, who had returned to a ravaged city. Noting the unsettling absence of that "gigantic exclamation mark in bronze set at the end of the sonorous phrase of the First Empire," Théophile Gautier prophesized that the Column would return back in a matter of a few months, optimistically overestimating the technological advancements which would leave onlookers wondering "if it had ever been destroyed."[185] Edouard d'Anglemont on the other hand rested his trust in God instead of technology. He heralded the imminent resurrection of the Column in a long poem, which was allegedly based on the divine revelation that showed him the restoration of the monument with God's intervention.[186]

However, the return of the monument depended neither on the technology nor on the God, but on the politicians. The destruction of several other monumental sites raised some questions about the primacy of the project: "Was it alright, amidst so many other ruins, [i.e., the Tuileries, the Hôtel de Ville, and some parts of the Louvre] still smoking, to focus on this project?"[187] The responses reaffirmed the special urgency of the Column's return: it was not the restoration of a monument but the "demonstration

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[184] *Le Figaro* Year 18, Series 3, no. 78 (May 30, 1871). "[…] nous ne saurions trop recommander aux personnes qui en ont recueilli des morceaux, si petits qu'ils soient de les apporter au Palais. C'est un devoir pour tous les honnêtes gens d'aider ainsi à rendre plus prompte et moins coûteuse, la réédification de ce monument national."

[185] Théophile Gautier, *Tableaux de Siége* (Paris: Charpentier et Compagnie, 1871), 318–22.

[186] Édouard d'Anglemont, *La Résurrection de La Colonne* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1872): "Mais qu'entends-je une voix haute, retentissante / Et qui trouve un écho magique dans nos cœurs, / Dit : Colonne, renais, fière et resplendissante; / Rouvre-toi, livre d'or de nos soldats vainqueurs ! / Regardez ! Les palans, les échelles s'élèvent ! / Le marteau bat l'enclume et la fournaise bout ! / Pour se vêtir d'airain les pierres se soulèvent, / Bientôt, trophée unique, on te verra débout !"

[187] "Annexe n. 291," *Journal Officiel de La République Française*, no. 177 (June 25, 1871): 1584–85.

of the indignant French honor in defense of its glories and memories" which required "erasing the trace of the [Commune's] crime."[188] However, the unanimity over the necessity of the restoration was not being translated into action.[189] The patchwork of Legitimist, Orléanist, bourgeois republican, and Bonapartist representatives in the conservative National Assembly diverged when it came down to the details of the (symbolic) mending of the sacred unity of authority and its political reflection, the nation. Even in its absence, the Column was a monumental locus around which these incompatible political positions were performing their grab for political power.

Specifically, the apex of the Column was the cause of the disagreements.[190] The Assembly first demanded that the restored column be topped by an allegory of France, a measure supported by the Chief of the Executive, Adolphe Thiers. The conflicting demands from Orléanists, and Bonapartists forced the Commission to reiterate in June 1871 that a statue of France was the only form capable of affecting a consensus, since each and every single one of them "regardless of origin and party affiliations are the sons, the servants, and the soldiers" of France.[191] With this patriotic and militarist declaration, the Commission announced that they would reject any further proposals from the representatives regarding this issue.[192]

The triumphal return of the Column took much longer than promised. The

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[188] Ibid.

189 A radical suggestion cast a shadow over this unanimity. The unnamed representatives in the Commission's response seemed to have offered to leave the empty pedestal and the debris of the Column in the middle of Paris as a witness of the past and a lesson for the future. The Commission's response as recorded here states that France had to stand tall before its foreign and domestic enemies, and identified the re-erection of the Column and the re-establishment of political authority over the rebellious city with national regeneration and the possibility of vengeance. Ibid.

[190] Ibid.

[191] Ibid.

[192] Ibid.

duration between the decision (May 1871) and the actual start of the restoration (Summer of 1873) testifies to the ideological and political instability that would define the first decades of the Third Republic. How could the restoration of the monument symbolically mend the tatters of the French State and Nation when the National Assembly continued to fight over the form of that very State and the character of that very Nation? While the partial elections of 1872 added a few extra republican seats, it also brought the leader of the Bonapartists, Eugène Rouher, to the parliament. Meanwhile, the monarchists, under the leadership of Orléanist Duc de Broglie, were scheming to remove Thiers for a decidedly monarchist president.

Two weeks after the death of their fallen Emperor in exile, on February 15, 1873 Bonapartist representatives took the floor to address the failure of the Assembly to realize the restoration. Among them was Joachim Murat, the grand-nephew of Napoléon Bonaparte's famous marshal and brother-in-law of the same name. Murat capitalized on the symbolic weight of his name and passionately exhorted Assembly members to put the restoration project onto the day's agenda.[193] A few weeks later, the director of the Commission for the Column's restoration, Jean Ernoul, presented a report to the Assembly. Though the report restated the goal of an expeditious reconstruction, it effortlessly overrode the initial bill: "The column of the Place Vendôme will be rebuilt *as it existed at the time of its destruction*."[194] The initial promise to erect a statue around which political factions, and by extension the nation, could unite was abandoned. A

[193] "Sèance du Samedi 15 Fèvrier 1873," *Journal Officiel de La République Française*, no. 46 (February 16, 1871): 1127.
[194] "Séance du Vendredi 21 Mars 1873," *Journal Officiel de La République Française*, no. 80 (March 22, 1873): 2000. Also re-published in "Bulletin du Jour," *Le Temps*, no. 4361 (March 23, 1873). [Italics mine-A.M.]

month later the Assembly allocated eighteen million francs to the Ministry of Public Works for the reconstruction of the buildings and monuments destroyed during the final days of the Commune. Four million francs of this budget was assigned to the reconstruction or restoration of the four sites with immense importance for the three dynasties that still struggled for political authority under a regime that carried the name *Republic*: the Tuileries, the Louvre, the Palais-Royale, and the Vendôme Column.[195] In May 1873 the Assembly gathered to discuss the Commission's report and reach a conclusion.[196] By an overwhelming majority of four hundred and eighty-six to sixty, the Assembly approved the restoration of the monument as proposed by the Commission.[197] Immediately, the pages of the conservative newspapers were filled with "readers' letters" which demanded the punishment of the treacherous deputies who voted against the restoration.[198]

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[195] "Annexe n. 1761, Séance du 2 Avril 1873," *Journal Officiel de La République Française*, no. 134 (May 16, 1873): 3141.

[196] In this long meeting, the motions of three politically disparate deputies were read. Two of these called for similar motions that could annul the Commission's recently announced roadmap for restoration. The first suggestion came from the republican deputy Henri-Alexandre Wallon, who called for the conservation of the Column's empty pedestal and the transfer of the relief fragments to the Versailles Palace. The second motion came from the legitimist deputy Baron [Léon] de Jouvenel, who proposed the gathering of the Column's debris around the empty pedestal and the installment of an inscription that would explain the causes of its destruction. The third motion carried the name of Joachim Murat, who asked for the placement of the July Monarchy's little corporal statue on top of the restored monument. His suggestion was penned before the announcement of the report's decision to restore the monument to its last form before destruction; quite satisfied with the new report's plan to revive the imperial statue, he withdrew his proposal. "Assemblée Nationale," *Journal Officiel de La République Française*, no. 148 (May 31, 1873): 3474.

[197] "Scrutin," *Journal Officiel de La République Française*, no. 148 (May 31, 1873): 3478. Having voted 'yes' in absentia, the republican deputy of Seine-et-Marne Paul Jozon withdrew his vote once he realized that it diverged from the initial plan. "M. Jozon, en presence de la modification apportée au projet primitif qu'il avait l'intention de voter, modification consistant à rétablir au sommet de la colonne la statue de l'empereur Napoleon 1er , s'est volontairement abstenu." "Ordre du jour du Jeudi 5 Juin," *Journal Officiel de La République Française*, no. 150 (June 2, 1873): 3516.

[198] *Le Figaro* published one such letter that claimed that the sixty deputies who voted against the re-erection of the Column expressed implicit approval of the Commune, which shared the same sentiments as the Prussian armies that entered Paris in 1814. The author of the letter stated that punishment for these deputies was a necessary measure as a warning to the present population and posterity alike. "Échos de Paris," *Le Figaro*, June 4, 1873 (Year 20, series 3, no. 155).

The project finally kicked off in the Summer of 1873 under the direction of the architect Alfred Normand.[199] Throughout the restoration, the Assembly received petitions from the public concerning the apex of the Column. A particularly interesting one came from a retired senior army officer who advised the Assembly against the restoration of the Emperor's statue, prophesizing it would revive the cult of personal rule.[200] The republican veteran's concerns were not unfounded. The monarchist Duc de Broglie had assumed the office of the prime minister in 1873 and Maréchal Mac Mahon replaced Thiers as the new president. On the other hand, organized under the name *Appel au Peuple*, the Bonapartist party was working to bring Napoléon III's son Prince Napoléon to Paris and restore the Empire.

The remainder of the revolutionary opposition in Paris found themselves under the rule of the conservative factions and their ideals: Catholicism, patriotism, bourgeois family, and respect for authority. Presented as an antidote to the moral and political transgressions of the Commune, this period assumed the name of "Moral Order." Castagnary notes a renewed energy in the retaliation against the remaining Communards and their sympathizers with the arrival of the "Moral Order."[201] For example, after the initial trial at the military court in 1871, Courbet had been sentenced to six months in prison and a penalty of five hundred francs; however when his case was re-opened in the civil courts of the 'Moral Order' the famous painter was sentenced to pay for the

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[199] The restoration started with the tragic death of a carpenter-worker, Louis Peignien, who fell from the scaffold erected for the restoration. *La Liberté*, August 7, 1873.

[200] "Résolutions," *Journal Officiel de La République Française*, no. 24 (January 25, 1874): 735. "Pétition n. 5828- Le sieur Couturier de Vienne, chef d'escadron d'état-major en retraite, à Paris, demande qu'au lieu de raviver la légende impériale en remplaçant la statue de Napoléon 1er sur la colonne Vendôme, on y mette la statue de la France." The suggestion of the retired officer was denied on the basis of the bill accepted on May 30, 1873, that established the conditions of the restoration as the complete reconstruction of the monument to the state it had held on the day of its destruction.

[201] Castagnary, *Gustave Courbet et La Colonne Vendôme*, 76–77.

total cost of the re-erection of the Column,[202] even when many Communards came forward to express that the demolition was a communal decision.[203]

Following the highly publicized re-trial of Courbet, the news about the Vendôme Column filled newspapers and informed readers of every step of the process—which bronze sheet was being repaired at the moment, or when the restoration of the stone drums would be finished. A newspaper article referred to the restoration of the narrative band as the "reinstallation of the precious annals of our history piece by piece."[204] To attract readers, *Le Monde Illustré* commissioned an artist to create a panorama-format diagram of the Column's history alongside its narrative band.[205] [Figure 1.37.] The poster states that it is a "strictly precise reproduction" of the restored band. As a twist afforded by its print medium, the daily publicity removed the epic narrative of imperial history from its unreachable and singular monumentality and offered it as the object of mass possession and intimate contemplation.

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[202] Castagnary claims that during the presidency of Adolphe Thiers, bringing claims to the courts regarding damage to monuments was almost non-existent. Ibid. Until then, the reconstruction of the monuments and buildings damaged during the Commune were to be restored at public expense, without mention of reparations from anyone involved.

[203] Indeed, the artist had only become an official member of the Commune after the supplementary elections on April 20, 1871: Castagnary, *Gustave Courbet et La Colonne*, 47–50. In a letter to the *London Times* on June 24, 1874, Félix Pyat had denied Courbet's participation in the decision and execution of the demolition. A letter to Castagnary from another former member of the Commission, Paschal Grousset, then living in London (April 7, 1878) confirms the information provided by Pyat and adds several items of interest. He testifies that "when the moment came for the Master of Ornans to answer this fantastic accusation, I did what anyone would have done in my place. I asked to speak and declared that Courbet had absolutely nothing to do with the toppling of the column […] All the reactionary newspapers ignored my protest, as though word had been passed among them." Ibid., 69–73.

[204] *Le Monde Illustré*, December 26, 1875, 403. "Enfin, la colonne Vendôme est bientôt débarrassée de ses échafaudages ; en même temps qu'on réinstallait, morceau par morceau, les précieuses annales de notre histoire […]."

[205] *Le Monde Illustré*, May 27, 1875, 203.

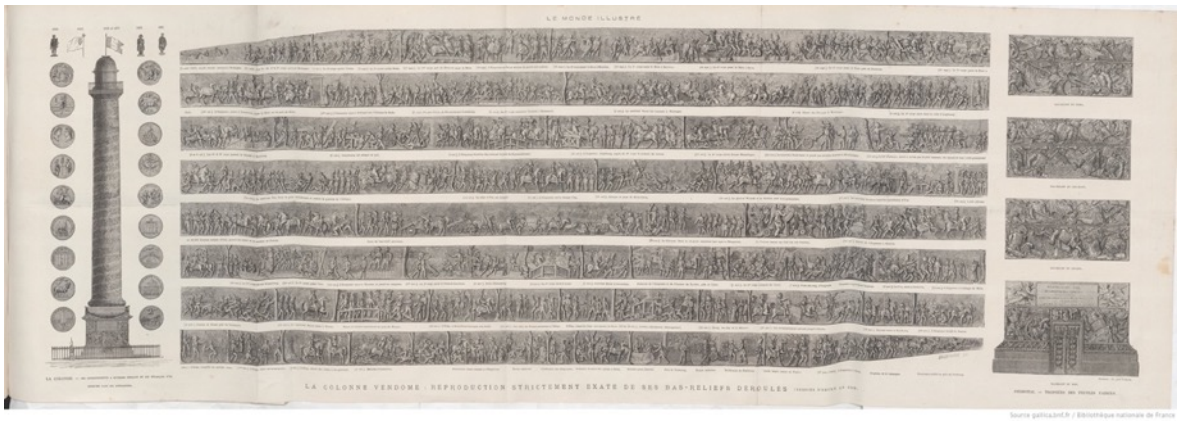

Figure 1.37. Henry de Hem, "La Colonne Vendôme Reproduction Strictement Exate de ses Bas-Reliefs Deroulés," in *Le Monde Illustré*, no. 937 (March 27, 1875).

The official order that initiated the return of Napoléon's effigy was announced as late as May 1875.[206] Indeed, the incentive for the statue's restoration seemed to lag behind the restoration of the Column's shaft. Finally, Henri Pennelli and the bronze founder A. Charnod repaired the mutilated statue of the Emperor—excepting the figure of the winged victory, which was never recovered and had to be reproduced. On December 27, 1875, the bronze emperor silently returned to the summit of the Column, missing the fanfare that accompanied all his previous arrivals.[207] Despite the mass media interest, no plans were made for an official inauguration ceremony. The newspapers recorded in their "letters from the readers" sections the concerns and objections of a public aware of this curious absence. On December 30 *La Liberté* published a long statement from Joachim Murat. The prominent Bonapartist's ancestral connection to the glorious history of the Column and the active role he played in the restoration had

[206] "Informations et Faits," *Journal Officiel de La République Française*, no. 121 (May 3, 1875): 3179. "La commande relative au rétablissement de la statue de l'empereur Napoléon sur la colonne Vendôme, telle qu'elle était avant la Commune, a été faite […]."
[207] *Le Monde Illustré*, January 8, 1876, 22. Technically the return of the statue to the Column's apex was finalized the next day on the 28th, when the workers bolted the feet of the statue to the Column.

designated Murat as the spokesperson of the monument. The text was framed as a response to a letter from a concerned patriot.[208] In a populist voice allowed by the premise of addressing a fellow patriot, Murat shared that his heart also desired a public ceremony attended by the leaders of the State. However, he recognized that an official event organized around the Column could inspire subversive demonstrations, so he had to accept the clandestine return of the Emperor to preclude them.[209] The rest of Murat's letter echoed the discourse of patrimony, and declared the object to be above contemporary politics. The famous politician argued that if the people seized the opportunity to express their opinions, "of whatever nature they might be," the "radiant sphere" of the bronze emperor would be tainted by the quotidian political conflicts.[210]

Murat offers the now familiar fiction that an object as embedded in imperialism, state authority, and capitalist expansion as the Vendôme Column can be disentangled from all of these to emerge as a quasi-religious object of social devotion. Murat's agreement not to have an inauguration ceremony might seem at odds with his political position, but it shows an understanding that the monument's authority depends on its "hovering above" popular politics and the everyday. Moreover, Murat seems to be aware that the monument cannot claim to be the embodiment of the collective will of the nation if its inauguration ceremony would only remind the people of the recent disintegration of that very collective and its ongoing fragmentation under competing ideologies.

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[208] *La Liberté*, December 30, 1875, np.
[209] Ibid.
[210] Ibid.

The Ghosts of the Empty Pedestal

In order to reclaim its monumental authority, the Vendôme Column had to efface the memory of its own destruction; it had to appear as if it were indestructible, as if the Commune had not destroyed the time and politics it embodied. However, many voices, like that of the famous poet of *L'Internationale* and the Commune Eugène Pottier, were determined to remember the Commune's destructive judgment of the monument:

The Commune brought you to ground,
But since then- they picked you up!
O bandit of the greatest kind,
If the future has to know
Your crimes and your withered name,
Come, convict, let them re-erect you
And, standing on this column,
Remain forever at pillory.[211]

With its destruction, the monument was christened as an object of revolutionary education, especially as a testament to the frailty of the state. This lesson is central to Descaves' *fin-de-siècle* anarchist novel dedicated to the memory of the Commune, *La Colonne* (1901). As its name indicates, the destruction of the Napoleonic monument functions as a potent metaphor for the political aspirations of the novel.[212] The Commune is allegorized as a clash between history and present, replayed through the

[211] Eugène Pottier, "À Napoléon 1er," in Robert Brécy, ed., *La chanson de la Commune*, 225–26: "La Commune te mit par terre, / Mais depuis — on t'a ramassé ! / Ô bandit de la grande espèce, / S'il faut que l'avenir connaisse / Tes forfaits et ton nom flétri, / Viens, forçat, qu'on te reboulonne, / Et, debout, sur cette colonne / Reste toujours au pilori."

[212] A special edition of the book was published with illustrations by Hermann-Paul, a regular contributor to *L'Assiette au Beurre* and *Les Temps Nouveaux*. Each one of the five hundred special editions was numbered, numbers 1–15 being printed on Imperial Japanese paper and 16–500 on vellum. A decade prior he had written the anti-militarist novel *Sous-Off* (1889), which landed him before the court for insulting the French Army.

conflict between the two main characters of the novel, a veteran of the Napoleonic wars (Prophete), and an anarchist industrial worker (Rabouille), over the meaning of the Vendôme Column. The monument and its destruction are directly tied to the question of the *future*, as the actors' struggle over the Column extends to their dispute over the education of a young child (Adrien).[213]

The re-assessment of the Commune as a violent clash with the history is a theme in Vermersch's previously mentioned epic poem: *Les Incendiaires*. This fittingly explosive piece of literature opens with a Paris consumed by fires. The Communards are "burning the history," together with its vestiges in public and private possessions—the palaces, paintings, white statues. The flames flutter over the city like "the banner of a people who take revenge at the moment of dying."[214] Written in exile after witnessing the carnage of the Bloody Week, Vermersch's poem is replete with powerful expressions of loss and promises of vengeance, remembering the human cost paid for the destruction of bourgeois history and property alongside their political authority.

When the anarchist journal and publishing house *Les Temps Nouveaux* revived the poem as part of a series of revolutionary pamphlets three decades later, it was not the memory of the fire, but the ghost of an empty pedestal that exemplified its celebration of revolutionary destruction. [Figure 1.38.] The cover lithograph by the

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[213] This is why Descaves' idealized anarchist hero explicitly focuses his attention on the monument rather than, for example, the expropriation of the Bank of France. This point was made in Mateo Pardo, "Norm and Structure in Lucien Descaves' 'La Colonne.'" (Ph.D. diss, Northwestern University, 1974), 180 and 188. Pardo critically assesses the efficacy of the act around which Descaves centers his anti-authoritarian and anti-militaristic novel. He writes: "there is an enormous disproportion between the disease and the remedy. Militarism is a global phenomenon; it affects the totality of national life. The demolition of the Vendôme Column is an isolated act."

[214] "Paris flambe à travers la nuit farouche et noire / Le ciel est plein de sang, on brûle de l'Histoire, / […] parmi les tourbillons de flammes / Qui flottent sur Paris comme les oriflammes / D'un peuple qui se venge au moment de mourir." Eugène Vermersch, *Les Incendiaires (1871)* (Paris: Les Temps Nouveaux, 1902), 4.

artist Hermann-Paul confronts the reader with the resolute presence of an absence. On the cover of this anarchist pamphlet series, the Vendôme Column's empty pedestal becomes the epitome of the *propaganda by deed*; the radical credo which called for disruptions to the social and political structures as necessary revolutionary practice. Yet, the horizon is obstructed by this souvenir of destruction, failing to provide a revolutionary dawn as the promise of a better future. Even when the flag of the revolution surpasses the pedestal to declare the counter-monumentality of the revolutionary memory, there is something amiss about the silent, tomb-like solidity of the pedestal.

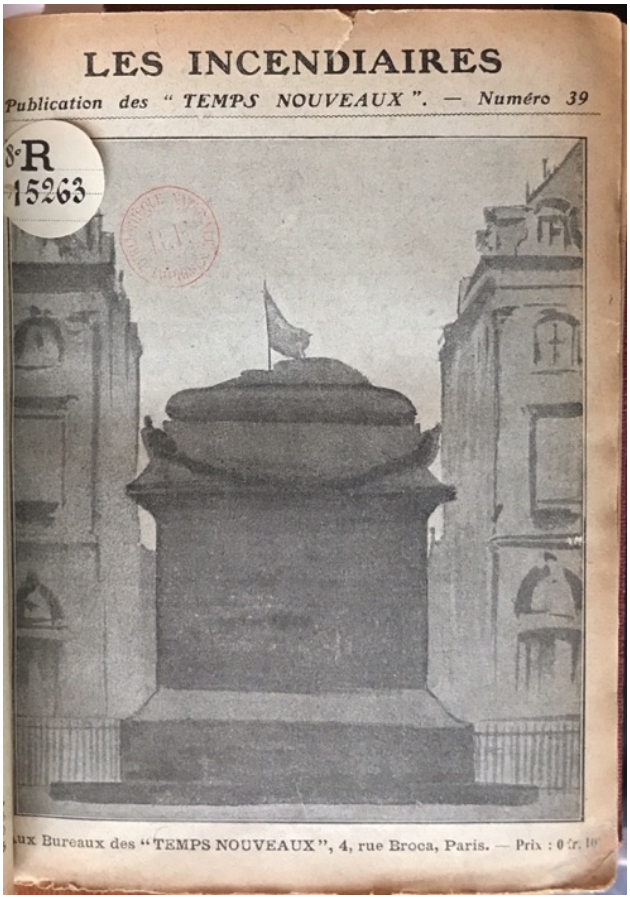

Figure 1.38. Hermann-Paul, Cover for Vermersch's *Les Incendiaires*, Lithograph, 1902. no. 39 from the Les Temps Nouveaux pamphlet series. (Bibliothèque Nationale de France)

Perhaps we can read this as an implicit and critical assessment of the afterlives of the Commune's iconoclastic memory. As determined believers in political action outside the confines of bourgeois politics, some anarchists watched warily as the inheritors of the Commune's legacy organized under parties and partook in elections that granted legitimacy to bourgeois politics, all with the purpose of seizing control of the state.[215]

In the latter decades of the Third Republic, when a supposedly popular regime reproduced more social and economic inequality, engaged in violent workers' suppressions, and epitomized political corruption and opportunism while pandering to patriotic and militarist bravado, the efficacy of the Commune's memory came under conflicting reassessments. For left-leaning republicans and parliamentary socialists, the Commune was the savior of the republican form against the danger of monarchy, an opinion which was reflected in the responses to the "Inquiry on the Commune" that the journal *La Revue Blanche* had conducted in 1897 among the participants of the Commune.[216] The anarchists, however, established a reverent but critical relation to the

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[215] Led by ex-Communard Edouard Vaillant, the Blanquist party joined the Marxist French Workers' Party of Jules Guesde and Paul Lafargue in 1902, which then merged with Jean Jaurès's moderate French Socialist Party in 1905 to become the French Section of the Workers' International.

[216] "Enquête Sur La Commune 1re Partie," *La Revue Blanche*, March 15, 1897, and "Enquête Sur La Commune 2me Partie," *La Revue Blanche*, April 1, 1897. The Communard leader, future science-fiction writer and parliamentarian, Paschal Grousset, explained that it was "[…] from our holocaust, from our pain, from the tears of our mothers, that the republican pact was solidified;" although the result, the Third Republic, turned out to be far different from the ones they had fought and died for: "The republic of our dreams was assuredly not the one we have. We wanted it to be democratic and social, not plutocratic." Louis Lucipia, Communard journalist and member of the First International, stated that the Commune saved the Republic: "If the Republic didn't die in 1871 it's because the people of Paris didn't hesitate to rise up." His colleague and friend Léo Meillet responded similarly: "It is generally admitted that in France it [the Commune] saved, if not the republic, at least the republican form." Brunel hailed the sacrifice of the Commune for having saved the republican form for the whole of Europe, which had been dominated by monarchies. Élisée Reclus, on the other hand, admits that in its bloody death the Commune saved the republican form, but, considering the Third Republic to be "far from any practice of liberty," makes the critical statement "that it would be childish to be grateful to the Commune for its having saved this vain word [i.e. Republic] for us." English translations are from Abidor, "Inquiry on the Commune," 50–116.

Commune's memory. They accepted the revolutionary episode's immense significance but denounced the failure of several of its heirs to recognize what they believed to be one of its most important lessons: "revolution and authority, be it republican or royalist, are antagonistic."[217] For example, when elsewhere he celebrated the demolition of the Vendôme Column as the destruction of the bourgeois nation state, Reclus argued that the Commune "maintain[ed] the whole state governing system while only changing the men […]"[218] It was not the Commune of the Committee of Public Safety but the *Commune-as-people* which allowed a glimpse into a truly emancipated future.[219]Jean Grave, the influential anarchist author and the publisher-editor of *Les Temps Nouveaux*, evaluated the legacy of the Commune as representative of the new generation of revolutionaries in a similar light. According to Grave, the Commune became "too parliamentary, financial, military, and administrative and not revolutionary enough;" had it succeeded it "would have become a government like the others. And We [the anarchists] would need another revolution to bring it down."[220] But he recognized that *fin-de-siècle* anarchism owed its existence to the Commune: "[v]anquished, it

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[217] The response of Gustave Lefrançais (1826–1901). English translation in Abidor, "Inquiry on the Commune," 88. Lefrançais was a member of the International and a member of the Commune. An anarchist, he supported the Bakuninists against the Marxists in the International.
[218] The response of Élisée Reclus in "Inquiry on the Commune," 78.
[219] The ideological and social diversity of the Commune culminated in the split between the "Majority" and "Minority" over the establishment of a Committee of Public Safety in the final days of the Commune. After long discussions, the Committee was established by forty-five votes to twenty-three. The majority, led by Félix Pyat, were largely composed of Blanquists and Jacobins, against a minority with anarchists and international socialists. When it was time to vote for the members of the new Committee of Public Safety, the minority refused to participate, and the members were elected by the 'majority' alone. Gaston Da Costa, a member of the Blanquist party, reported that they (the Blanquists) had wanted a military dictatorship and an offensive against Versailles from the onset and did not concern themselves with organization, administration, or socialism. "Inquiry on the Commune," 71–74. As a response, the members of the minority declared their retirement to their arrondissements, to organize the resistance against the approaching *Versaillais* army together with their constituents. Despite the ideological diversion, the minority's counter-manifesto finished with a declaration of unity: "we all, majority or minority, notwithstanding our divergences as to policy, pursue the same object, political liberty, and the emancipation of the workers." As translated in Bax, *A Short History of the Paris Commune*, 49.
[220] The response of Jean Grave in "Inquiry on the Commune," 65–67.

synthesized all proletarian aspirations, and gave momentum to the movement of ideas of which [the anarchists] of today are the product."[221] Denouncing especially the establishment of a Committee of Public Safety in the final days of the Commune, the anarchists maintained a strategic distinction between the two faces of the Commune: "the chiefs" and "the nameless crowd."[222] The latter is the actor who left "for the future […] an ideal, and [the will] to fight for that ideal," "in which there will be neither masters by birth, titles, or money, nor servants by origin, caste, or salary."[223]

The anarchist celebration of the achievements of "the Commune of Paris as people," against the names of the leaders who held office in its "government," resurrected the demolition of the Vendôme Column as a parable of the nature of authority in an issue of the anarchist journal *Le Père Peinard*, which commemorated the twentieth anniversary of the Commune (March 1891).[224] In this essay (probably) penned by its militant-anarchist editor Émile Pouget, the fictional proletariat archetype *Père Peinard* declares the destruction of the Column as a great idea doomed to failure, because its execution is entrusted to bureaucratic processes that harness mass passions instead of letting them loose on this embodiment of authority. The Column returned to the Place Vendôme in 1875 as a physical negation of the efficacy of the Commune's acts, rebuilt mostly with the same pieces. If the destruction had truly been entrusted to "the populo," the bourgeois Third Republic would not have been able to find even a single morsel of the detested monument to pick up.[225] Conversely, the very terms of

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[221] Ibid.
[222] The response of Élisée Reclus in "Inquiry on the Commune," 78.
[223] Ibid.
[224] *Le Père Peinard: Réflecs Hebdomadaire d'un Gniaff*, no. 104 (March 15, 1891).
[225] "La Colonne a été rebâtie, avec les mêmes morceaux!! Comment mieux prouver l'impuissance de ces gas-là, en tant que gouvernement? Y a pas mèche! Ce qu'ils ont fait et une merde de chien, c'est kif-kif. Oh la là! Penses-tu, qu'on les aurait retrouvés les morceaux, pour les récoler, si le populo avait été livré

Père Peinard's radical call for the authority's monumental dismemberment and dispersion depends on the long memory of the act that proved its destructibility.

Conclusion to Chapter 1

In this chapter, I read the destruction of the Vendôme Column through popular-aesthetic engagements with the monument and the idea of monumentality around and after the Paris Commune. Expressed in diverse media—but especially in printed pictures—these engagements pose radical questions and claims about the political power, the history, and the social order that the monument represents. These complex political and aesthetic critiques emerged from their authors' embodied receptions of the Vendôme Column in a specific historical and social context. However, the methods and arguments of their counter-monumental instruction speak to issues—such as the nature of authority or the ethics of public commemoration—that concern times and places beyond their own.

Their insistence on denying this public monument a historical-aesthetic authority that would spare it from the political and ethical challenges to its existence, for example, has a direct correlation in our century. Recent politically engaged activism—from the anti-colonial voice of #RhodesMustFall in South Africa against the monuments of the colonialist legacy to Black Lives Matter's opposition to Confederate monuments in the United States—demonstrates that monumental forms of violence and oppression still ask to be spared as 'history' and as 'art.' The opposition to their claims, on the other hand, remind us that these monuments exist to embody a consensus over the virtue of violent historical deeds and threaten as a model for present and future

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à lui-même?" Ibid.

political praxis. Like their historical predecessors, these confrontations are still expressed and recorded in transient and mass mediums of communication, from graffiti to Twitter feeds, from print posters to Instagram posts.

This brings us to one of the main concerns of this chapter, that is, the ontological discrepancy between monuments and their mass-produced, ephemeral opponents. According to Benjamin's much-repeated aphorism, when an era comes to an end, "history decays into images, not into stories."[226] The destruction of the Vendôme Column and proliferation of ephemera make this metaphor tangible. Against the narrative band of the Vendôme Column that accounts for events within a linear sequence of causality—an embodiment of progressive, teleological time—the multiple ephemera originate from the same moment, as the synchronic overlay of competing versions of the same event, undermining the Column's narrative logic. These objects open up different temporal trajectories, disrupting the dynamic between hegemonic and subaltern temporalities by subordinating the hegemonic discourse of the Column to its proliferous afterlives.[227] The radical displacement of authenticating powers, from fine art to mass culture, annuls the distinctions between high art and popular culture, the unique and the multiple, the venerable and the vernacular, which make artists and politicians of shoemakers. These ephemeral objects then destabilize the durable, historical, and authentic representations of Politics and History with the anti-authoritarian enactment of politics in the transient, quotidian, and mobile presence of the printed page in the public sphere.

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[226] Benjamin, *Arcades*, (N 11, 4), 476.
[227] Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," in *Illuminations* (New York, NY: Schocken Books, 2007), 71–72.

In other words, proving to be so much more than a heedless act of revenge exercised on the emblems of a detested regime, the destruction of the Vendôme Column establishes revolutionary iconoclasm as a paradigm for revolutionary action. As I illustrate in the following chapters, dramatic encounters between the monumental emblems of the authority and the revolutionary multitudes would remember and re-stage this instructive historical moment as a potent allegory in the works of the politically committed artists of *fin-de-siècle* Paris.

Although both the Column and the fictions of the modern state were mended, "just as after the death of Charles I and Louis XVI the royalties of England and France were restored," as Reclus optimistically remarked, the history showed "what the restorations are worth; the cracks can be filled, but the thrust of the soil will not fail to reopen them, the edifices can be rebuilt, but the first faith that had built them cannot be revived."[228] Or, in the words of Descaves' fictional anarchist worker from his novel *La Colonne*: "No matter how many times the Fallen Column is re-erected, the gesture of the Commune will remain on it, like a snuffer over a candle."[229] Indeed, the Vendôme Column did not recover its political and social importance. That privilege passed on to other monuments, which provided more suitable masks for the Third Republic. A notable example is Léopold Morice's Marianne at the *Place de la République* (1883).

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[228] Reclus, *L'évolution, La Révolution*, 252. "On l'a redressée depuis, de même qu'après la mort de Charles Ier et de Louis XVI on restaura les royautés d'Angleterre et de France, mais on sait ce que valent les restaurations; on peut recrépir les lézardes, mais la poussée du sol ne manquera pas de les rouvrir on peut rebâtir les édifices, mais on ne fait pas renaître la foi première qui les avait édifiés. Le passé ne se restaure, ni l'avenir ne s'évite. Il est vrai que tout un appareil de lois interdit l'Internationale. En Italie on l'a qualifiée ' d'association de Malfaiteurs ' et en France on a promulgué contre elles les ' lois scélérates ' […]."

[229] "Nous avons le devoir de faire le geste, de donner le signal auquel nos successeurs répondront, en achevant de ruiner, dans les esprits, la religion de la gloire militaire et de la conquête brutale, religion ébranlée par nous dans ses rites et ses représentations. On aura beau relever la Colonne abattue, le geste de la Commune restera sur elle, comme un éteignoir sur un cierge." Descaves, *La Colonne*, 405.

To this day, the population of Paris still gathers around this monumental allegory to express their disappointments and disillusionments with political practice. Proud in its isolated centrality, on the other hand, the Vendôme Column enjoys a decidedly different existence amidst a highly regulated space. No longer a symbol of imperial power, the effigy of the famous French Emperor is now a mascot for the high-luxury consumption that businesses around it offer to an elite international clientele. Nonetheless, the cracks on its bronze sheets carry physical remnants of the Commune's lesson and give materiality to the metaphorical interruption in the flow of history, making its scars visible to those who look closely. [Figure 1.39.] They forever challenge the uniform histories of power, giving symbolic form to the lateral spread and accumulation of the ephemera which create heterotopias, raising the surface of bourgeois history and state authority at the very moments that challenge their integrity.

Figure 1.39. Detail of the narrative band on the *Vendôme Column*, where cracks are visible. (Wikimedia Commons/MBZT, 2011).

CHAPTER 2: THE BASILICA

Introduction: Two Short Proposals, a Debate, and a Long History

On February 11, 2017, a Paris resident submitted a proposal on the 'participatory budget' of the Municipality's website, which approximates a virtual city hall where residents present projects for the attention of their fellow Parisians and the city's authorities. Signed by a certain '*Nathalie Lemel*,' the proposal called for the destruction of one of the most iconic monuments of the city: the Sacré-Coeur Basilica in Montmartre.[230] The alias the resident chose resurrects the memory of the Commune of 1871 and its revolutionary iconoclasm to haunt and shake a brick-and-mortar monument that generations of leftists have believed to be a monumental affront to the revolution. Nathalie Lemel was a bookbinder from Brest, who was introduced to revolutionary socialism upon her arrival in Paris. In the First International (1865), she was the union delegate for French bookbinders. During the Commune, she took part in Elisabeth Dmitrieff's Women's Union and served on its central committee. She fought at the barricades and cared for the wounded during the violent reconquest of the city by the forces of the Versailles government, and her close associate, friend, and fellow revolutionary bookbinder Eugène Varlin was killed in a summary execution by a firing squad steps away from the future gates of the Sacré-Coeur Basilica. Denouncing the

[230] Nathalie Lemel was deported to New Caledonia with her fellow Communarde Louise Michel and returned to Paris after the amnesty of 1880. In the remaining decades of her life, she continued to fight for women's rights and working-class freedom.
Eugène Kerbaul, *Nathalie Le Mel: une Bretonne Révolutionnaire et Féministe* (Pantin: Temps des Cerises, 2003). Carolyn J. Eichner, *Surmounting the Barricades: Women in the Paris Commune* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), 81–5.

religious monument as a "wart" that perpetually insults the memory of the Paris Commune, the twenty-first-century Lemel proposes both the 'total demolition' of the structure, and, staying true to the Commune's spirit, suggests the demolition be accompanied by a grand popular festival.[231] The official response of the municipality to this peculiar proposal is marked by the banal dispassion of bureaucracy: "The Sacré-Coeur is the property of the Archdiocese of Paris, therefore the City of Paris does not have jurisdiction to intervene with the structure."[232] A year later, the stubborn reincarnation of the Communarde appealed to her fellow citizens with yet another proposal that was considerate of the professed legal status of the monument: an *ocular* iconoclasm. By erecting a monumental mirror in front of the Basilica, the structure could be replaced by "the sky of the Commune" that it had obstructed for more than a century.[233] The proposal for the optical erasure of the monument was dismissed with a similar admission of a lack of authority, noting that the square where the monumental mirror would be deposed was "a 'classified zone' under the jurisdiction of the Police

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[231] Mairie de Paris, "'Raser le sacré-coeur'- Projet du 18ème arrondissement, Budget Participatif - Paris," accessed October 7, 2019, https://budgetparticipatif.paris.fr/bp/jsp/site/Portal.jsp?page=idee&campagne=D&idee=749. "Le Sacré-Coeur est une verrue versaillaise qui insulte la mémoire de La Commune de Paris. Le projet consiste en la démolition totale de la basilique lors d'une grande fête populaire." The short but explicit proposal attracted some attention. *La Liberté* turned the suggestion into a contest over the commemorative landscape of Paris with a counter-proposal that suggested the renaming of landmarks or the establishment of new ones that would commemorate the Paris Commune and the Communards. See Pierre Benetti, "Démolir le Sacré-Cœur ou honorer les morts de la Commune ?," *Libération*, February 28, 2017, https://www.liberation.fr/debats/2017/02/28/demolir-le-sacre-coeur-ou-honorer-les-morts-de-la-commune_1551465. Famous French mathematician Michèle Audin supported the proposal wholeheartedly in her blog based on her personal politics and her devoted historical interest in the history of the Commune. Michèle Audin, "Démolir le Sacré-Cœur?," *La Commune de Paris* (blog), March 2, 2017, https://macommunedeparis.com/2017/03/02/demolir-le-sacre-coeur/.

[3] Mairie de Paris, "'Raser le sacré-coeur' – Projet du 18ème arrondissement, Budget Participatif 2017 – Paris," accessed October 7, 2019, https://budgetparticipatif.paris.fr/bp/jsp/site/Portal.jsp?page=idee&campagne=D&idee=749.

[232] Ibid.

[233] Mairie de Paris, "'Le ciel de la commune' – Projet du 18ème arrondissement, Budget Participatif 2018 – Paris," accessed February 19, 2020, https://budgetparticipatif.paris.fr/bp/jsp/site/Portal.jsp?page=idee&campagne=E&idee=1193.

Prefecture."[234]

This anecdote from recent history is more than an amusing yet anachronistic interrogation of a famous monument's legitimacy, as guided by one individual's ideological position. After all, 'Lemel's proposal to destroy the second most visited monument in Paris attracted the highest number of supporters among all the participating projects.[235] The contempt that colors the language of the proposal—including the implicit aesthetic judgment in the metaphor of "wart" to denote the staple of picturesque postcards of tourist giftshops—is informed by a long conflict over the existence and meaning of this immense building that sits at the highest point of the city, where the people of Montmartre performed their sovereignty and instigated the Paris Commune on March 18, 1871. The resident who conjures the ghosts of the past revolutionaries to 'digitally' storm the famous Basilica renders the memory of the Commune *present*. But she also reminds us of the uneasy history of the famous monument, which is so easily consumed as a must-see landmark by the wandering gaze of the tourists.

This proposal is part of a genealogy of diverse efforts— from caricatures to songs, bombings to occupations, art installations to civic proposals—that remember and

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[234] Ibid.

[235] A comparative survey of all the proposals for 2017 underlines the remarkable popular support this specific project received. It was 'upvoted' by more than three hundred users and almost half of that number chose to 'join' the proposal as supporters. The second most popular proposal about the same arrondissement suggested the creation of a small park by the impasse *La Chapelle* and attracted twelve 'upvotes'. As the second most popular, the latter was adopted and the park was inaugurated in July 2019. Mairie de Paris, "Création d'un jardin public dans l'impasse de la Chapelle," *Site du Budget Participatif de la Mairie de Paris*, accessed February 19, 2020, https://budgetparticipatif.paris.fr/bp/jsp/site/Portal.jsp?document_id=3452&portlet_id=158.
According to the *Office du Tourisme et des Congrès de Paris* statistics, in 2017 the Sacré-Coeur Basilica was the second most visited site (with more than ten million visitors) after the Notre-Dame Cathedral (twelve million visitors). "Attendance of Cultural Sites in Paris 2017," *Statista*, accessed December 10, 2020, https://www.statista.com/statistics/991935/cultural-sites-attendance-paris-france/.

remind us of the Commune through condemning the Sacré-Coeur Basilica. This commemorative capacity is both inherent and accidental to the monument, which explicitly claims to remind the French of their sins against God, which led them to the devastating *l'année terrible* (1870–71), and to inspire repent. Yet many have regarded it as a monument of violence, celebrating the triumphant force that the reactionary authority exercised over the Paris Commune and the working-class population of the city. This discrepancy between the monument's claim and its reception by a portion of its audience maps onto the two opposing positions that dominate the literature on the Sacré-Coeur Basilica. These positions are defined according to the degree in which they discern the mark of this revolutionary episode in the conception and formal language of the famous temple. At one end of the spectrum are the scholars who recognize the political nature of the building but declare its conceptual independence from the experience of the Commune.[236] Several voices from the first camp place themselves explicitly against the others, whose assessments they criticize as "unjustified and repetitive," because they fixate on the Basilica as a symbol of the repression of the Commune that is often too idealized, and subordinate every other event that informed the building of the monument to "this symbolic, mystifying vision."[237] The second

[236] For example, analyzing the radical prints from the *fin-de-siècle* that attack the Sacré-Coeur of Montmartre, Michel Dixmier and his colleagues dismiss the Left's association of the Basilica with the suppression of the Commune as misinformed, because "the idea of the building predates the Commune." Michel Dixmier, Jacqueline Lalouette, and Didier Pasamonik, *La République et l'Église: Images d'une Querelle* (Paris: Éditions de La Martinière, 2005), 89. Probably following Dixmier et al., a scholarly blog on French anticlerical caricatures makes the same comment. Stephanie Williams, "French Anticlericalism in the Nineteenth Century," *Only Joking* (blog), accessed September 23, 2020, https://onlyjoking.hypotheses.org/65.

[237] This assessment is from the incredibly well-researched two-volume history of the Basilica by Father Jacques Benoist. Although it offers an exhaustive survey of the archival material, Benoist only accepts the statements of the Basilica's early patrons as the sole authority over the meaning of the monument. Every other document on the Basilica and its reception are treated according to their agreement with or deviation from these official voices. Even though he notes that in time "allusions to the events of March 18, 1871 multiplied," and the first sermon, the opening of the temporary chapel, and the organizations of

camp—loosely belonging to a tradition of leftist historiography—continues to stress that the Basilica was built specifically as the conservative authorities' monumental response to the experience of the Commune.[238] Therefore, it is at best a victory monument, at worst a monumental threat erected to loom over the working-class population. Raymond Jonas offers an outlier reading by suggesting that the meaning of the Sacré-Coeur "could not be confined to the history of Paris, much less that of the Commune," and takes the ideological origins of the monument back a century to trace the appearance and disappearance of the symbol of the Sacred Heart throughout French political history.[239] Finally, straddling the two camps is François Loyer's reading of the Basilica as a *lieu de mémoire,* which, due to its methodological concerns, is more sensitive to the historical contingency of memory and its changing receptions. Loyer reminds us that although conceived at the end of a civil war, the Sacré-Coeur is "more

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the first pilgrimages all implicitly referenced the Commune, he does not provide any critical explanation for this transformation of the monument's meaning. He regards these evocations of the Commune's memory in the official sources and acts as either misrepresentation or mere coincidence because "the ecclesiastical and lay leaders" of the project never called the Sacré-Coeur to be an expiation for the crimes of the Commune. As such, despite the immense plurality of the documents included in the project, the analyses read as an 'official' story of the Sacré-Coeur. Jacques Benoist, *Le Sacré-Cœur de Montmartre – de 1870 à Nos Jours*, vol. 1–2 (Paris: Editions Ouvrières, 1992), 837, 841–5, 856–61.

[238] Perhaps the most influential reading from this camp is David Harvey's analysis of the Basilica through the politics of urban space and memory. David Harvey, "Monument and Myth," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 69, no. 3 (1979): 362–81. Harvey repeats his conclusions in his book *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), 310–38. Following Harvey's description of the Basilica, Julian Brigstocke dubs the project a "spatial recuperation of transcendent authority." Julian Brigstocke, *The Life of the City: Space, Humour and the Experience of Truth in Fin de Siècle Montmartre* (London: Ashgate, 2014), 55. The historian Donny Gluckstein similarly sees the Basilica as directly related to the memory of the Commune, and reminds us that the revolution's relation to religion, especially the separation of Church and State on April 2, 1871, was used as justification for the brutality of the Bloody Week. Donny Gluckstein, *The Paris Commune: A Revolution in Democracy* (Haymarket Books, 2011), 26–27. Reminding us that the Basilica was installed at "the very center of Communard resistance," Munholland sees the Sacré-Coeur, as a monument, as recuperative of this radical realm of memory as "a site of expiation of the sins of the revolutionaries." John Kim Munholland, "Republican Order and Republican Tolerance in Fin-de-Siècle France: Montmartre as a Delinquent Community," in *Montmartre and the Making of Mass Culture*, ed. Gabriel P. Weisberg (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 16 and 34.

[239] Raymond Anthony Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart: An Epic Tale for Modern Times* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 2.

an edifice of reconquest than of reconciliation;" and even though it was seen as a threat to the secular Republic in the beginning, 'in time' "it has assumed *a contrario* perpetuation of Versailles' repression of the Commune," or in other words, "another 'wall of the Fédérés.'"[240]

The present chapter benefits from works that represent both sides of the debate and the outliers—but instead of focusing on locating or refuting the presence of the Commune's memory at the *conception* of the Basilica, I am interested in reaching conclusions through its representations in *fin-de-siècle* radical culture. Therefore, while I attend to the conservative primary sources from which we can discern the 'intentions' of its official and lay patrons, I am more invested in what the monument meant to the remainder of revolutionary Paris, from the laying of its first stone onward. In line with the methodological commitments reflected in the first chapter, I contextualize the political and social meanings attributed to the famous Roman Catholic temple by attending to the ways in which the form and the presence of the monument were described, amplified, distorted, and deconstructed in other media during the first four decades of its conception and construction (1871–1914). Finally, the objects of this chapter are not limited to the Sacré-Coeur Basilica. Using monumentality as an organizing axis, I offer an overview of the anti-religious iconography in France, from the Paris Commune to WWI. I believe that this monument-centric reorganization of a vast quantity of material allows us to see the ideological discrepancies between anarchist

[240] François Loyer, "Sacré Coeur of Montmartre," in *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire, Legacies*, vol. 3, (Chicago, IL; London: University Of Chicago Press, 2009), 421. Loyer is referring to the *Mur des Fédérés*—the wall at the Père Lachaise cemetery in front of which one hundred and forty-seven Communards were shot in the closing days of the war against the Versailles army. The Wall is the only officially recognized (1983) architectural marker of the Commune's memory.

and socialist oppositions to organized religion and the legal and political secularization program of the Third Republic, which are too often grouped together as a unified front against the threat of a Catholic restoration.

Finally, the reproductions of the Sacré-Coeur by the anarchist and socialist artists in mass media coexisted with the omnipresent but diverse representations of the most iconic type of religious architecture to which the hated Basilica bore little stylistic resemblance: the Gothic cathedral. If we are to analyze the monumental loci of the anti-religious, radical visual culture, we have to see how the domed silhouette of the Basilica fared against the hegemonic domination of the Gothic spires and the other architectural faces of the Roman Catholic Church. As this introduction might have hinted, I do not promise a straightforward narrative itinerary, as the story of the most hated architectural symbol of reactionary politics in the nineteenth century takes some necessary detours through the convoluted landscape of the competing secularisms of late nineteenth-century modernity.

Try to imagine experiencing the monument as a nineteenth-century pilgrim, instead of a twenty-first-century tourist. We climb the steep hill of Montmartre. The Basilica, sparingly detailed and seemingly monolithic, crushes us when gazed upon at its feet. [Figure 2.1.] We ascend the stairs and pass the threshold, submitting mind and body to the immense mass that our eyes have already weighed and confirmed. Moving through a dark narthex and a nave burdened by the massive rectangular pillars and colossal arches, we arrive before the apse covered in enamel *tesserae*. Glistening over the rest of the structural elements, they dissipate their solidity with their brilliant vibrations.[241] A

[241] After the long-awaited completion of the interior decoration of the Cathedral, the art-loving abbot Pierre Laligant published a book on the dazzling mosaics of Sacré-Coeur. In this highly enthusiastic

few steps further, and the deep blue and gold background of the mosaic turns the vault inside out, suspending the heavens right above the high altar. The interplay between the exterior and the interior of the Cathedral aesthetically produces the promise of atonement; it oppresses when engaged with from a distance and redeems and relieves once one submits oneself beneath its cupolas.[242] Formulated in the authoritative monumentality of Latin, two words talk to us from under the mosaic: GALLIA POENITENS [*France repents*]. [Figure 2.2.]

Left, Figure 2.1. Designed by Paul Abadie, the *Sacré-Coeur Basilica*, (1875–1923).

Right, Figure 2.2. Designed by Luc-Olivier Merson, executed under the direction of Henri-Marcel Magne, *The Choir Mosaic of Sacré-Coeur.* (Wikimedia Commons/Zairon, 2018).

But why does an entire country have to repent? The official story starts with a visitationist nun named Marguerite-Marie Alacoque, who is reported to have had

account we see that the author was aware of the spiritual effect of the dialectical relationship between the overwhelming weight of the architecture and the counter-impact of the weightlessness of the central decoration. Pierre (Abbé) Laligant, *Montmartre, La Mosaïque de La Voûte Du Choeur* (Paris: Orphelins-Apprentis D'auteuil, 1923), 5–6 and 24.

[242] Loyer, "Sacré Coeur of Montmartre," 439–40. Of course, Loyer reminds us that as a tourist destination in our present day the intensity of this dualistic religious vision is neither relevant nor accessible.

interactions with Jesus throughout the 1680s. Over the years, her visions became increasingly invested in national politics. "France was elect among nations" and the "French were a chosen people;" in order "to seal this alliance" between God and the French she relayed three divine demands addressed to the king of France (Louis XIV). The king had to consecrate France to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, build a chapel dedicated to the Sacred Heart, and add the image of the heart of Jesus to the royal banner.[243] The Sun King never acted on the demands—he probably was not even aware of them. Nonetheless, the Sacred Heart would grow over the years into a potent symbol to rally the masses in the name of the king and his God.[244]

Merging popular religiosity with national politics, Marguerite-Marie's visions tied the fates of the Catholic faith and France together with lasting consequences. As a new cult slowly nourished by the Jesuits, the Sacred Heart enjoyed its first widespread recognition in Marseille during the plague of 1720/2. The local religious authority identified the disease as an act of God in response to the sins of the city, and requested the inhabitants to repent and collectively consecrate themselves to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This religious episode became a political lesson that informed the Sacred Heart's future, as it not only confirmed the 'Divine Sovereignty,' but instructed the 'popular will' on how to appeal to it.[245] This lesson of Marseille was adopted by the legitimist reaction after 1789, this time to ward off 'the plague of Revolution.' During the counter-revolutionary War of Vendée, the reactionary insurgents stitched the emblem of the Sacred Heart to their chests and their banners. The icon of a popular uprising in the

[243] Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart*, 2.
[244] Ibid., 3.
[245] Ibid., 49.

name of God and the king against the "popular will," the Sacred Heart became an insignia that defined and mobilized one community against another.[246] The talisman of Marseille was now baptized in the blood of civil strife, and from that point on, "whenever Marianne went into combat, she encountered the Sacré-Coeur."[247]

After the revolution, it was widely believed in royalist circles that Louis XVI was the king who had finally listened to the demands of God communicated by Marguerite-Marie, and consecrated himself and France to the Sacred Heart.[248] This story of the martyred king's devotion securely bound the altar and the throne around the myth of the Sacred Heart, which heightened the transgression done to the king's body under the guillotine. In the post-revolutionary years, authors such as Chateaubriand—whose *A Historical, Political, and Moral Essay on Revolutions* and highly influential *The Genius of Christianity* effectively exalted pre-revolutionary history—presented the fortunes of the Church and the monarchy as interdependent. Arguing that there was a fundamental correlation between the religious faith of a nation, its character, and its form of government,[249] he declared that any deviation from one had devastating consequences for the others.

The political lesson of the Sacred Heart and this conservative romanticism were behind the ideological disposition that identified God's immanence in the catastrophic events of 1870–71. Alexandre Legentil—a respectable bourgeois man who had built his

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[246] Ibid., 48.
[247] Ibid., 3. Also, Raymond Jonas, "Sacred Tourism and Secular Pilgrimage: Montmartre and the Basilica of Sacré-Coeur," in *Montmartre and the Making of the Mass Culture*, ed. Gabriel P. Weisberg (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 96.
[248] Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart*, 100.
[249] Marie-Pierre Le Hir, *The National Habitus: Ways of Feeling French, 1789–1870* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2014), 83–4. It is important to note that the ideal monarchy he was referring to was not the absolute monarchy of Louis XIV, but that of the Middle Ages, where the locality mattered and aristocratic titles held their relative autonomy.

large fortune in the fabric trade—was convinced that the defeats of the French armies and the enemy siege that threatened Paris could only be explained as divine retributions for the sins of the nation. During the closing days of 1870, Legentil vowed to erect a church to the Sacred Heart after the war as a votive offering to appease the vengeful God. He sought sponsorship for his offering through the bishop of Poitiers, where he and his family had retreated from Paris for safety. Bishop Louis-Édouard Pie was not only a staunch critic of the French Revolution, but also a close advisor to the legitimist pretender, the Count of Chambord. The politically inclined bishop recognized the political potential of the votive church, and advised Legentil to ascribe a national scope to his Vow. This reframed the mistakes of the Second Empire as punishments for the French Revolution and its transgressions.[250] Soon, Legentil's private Vow had attracted affluent penitents, including his brother-in-law Hubert Rohault de Fleury.[251]

The events of *l'année terrible* were about to become cautionary tales that showed the consequences of rising against god-sanctioned authorities. Unsurprisingly, the subsequent episode of the Commune provided a spectacular story of sin and retribution to be added to this counter-revolutionary historiography. The Commune's name, location, and symbols, together with its senselessly violent demise, fueled the narratives that subordinated *l'année terrible* to the transgressions committed in 1789 and 1793. Furthermore, the Commune's execution of Archbishop Darboy had provided a martyr for the cause, while removing a considerable obstacle for supporters of the

[250] Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart*, 154–6.
[251] Hubert Rohault de Fleury would function as the chief promoter of the building after the death of Legentil in 1889. The son of a famous architect and an artist himself, his detailed accounts and drawings of the Sacré-Coeur would communicate the progress of construction to the pious for decades.

Vow.[252] In the months following the victory of the *Versaillais* armies against the Commune, a committee of laymen under the leadership of Legentil and de Fleury organized the 'Committee of the National Vow' [*Comité de l'oeuvre du Voeu national au Sacré-Coeur de Jésus*] to work tirelessly towards the fulfillment of the Vow.

Building a Monument for a Divided Nation

"Finally," the first official publication arm of the Committee announced, "the God sent the man" the Vow needed for its realization: the new archbishop of Paris, Joseph Hippolyte Guibert.[253] In a written declaration of his vehement endorsement of the Vow, the new archbishop referenced both the defeat to the Prussians and the Paris Commune, and warned that without a monument of national atonement which would function as a "sacred lightning rod" against God's anger, more disasters awaited France and its sinful capital.[254] Guibert would be instrumental not only in sanctioning the Sacred Heart's anti-revolutionary historiography; but also in the determination of the temple's role in mass politics through devising the conditions for it to acquire a national character via mass contributions, the support of the Assembly, and finally its conception as a site of mass pilgrimage.[255]

Paris, the capital of the nation and "the home and the seat of so many crimes and

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[252] Jonas reports that before the Commune, Legentil had sought the Archbishop's support to build a national church in Paris dedicated to the Sacred Heart, but Darboy had remained distanced from the idea and its motives. Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart*, 176.
[253] *Bulletin de l'Oeuvre Du Voeu National Au Sacré-Coeur de Jésus,* 1 (Libraire Adrien le Clere et Cie., 1873), 10.
[254] Archbishop Guibert's letter to the Committee of the National Vow (January 18, 1872). The letter in its entirety was reproduced in multiple publications of the Vow in the following years. One of its earliest mass appearances was in *Bulletin de l'Oeuvre*, 11–13.
[255] Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart*, 176.

hatred against religion," was the obvious choice for the monument of expiation.[256] In spite of some historical records that mention some discussions, exactly where in this reprehensible city the monument ought to be erected was equally certain.[257] According to the official mythos of the National Vow, the location of the Basilica was revealed to Archbishop Guibert by divine inspiration. The story was widely reproduced in the popular publications about the Sacré-Coeur, which follow the archbishop on a visit to Montmartre after he has assumed the seat of his martyred predecessor. On the Butte, an 'irresistible force' leads him to the grounds of the future Basilica, which he immediately recognizes as the location chosen by the Lord himself for the temple for his Sacred Heart.[258] These accounts strongly stress the consequences of going against God's authority, providing the events of 1870–71 as a demonstration.[259] Who could challenge the clear will of the Lord and offer a different location, since the cost of ignoring his wishes was so dearly paid in the recent tragedies?

The religious and political histories were rallied to envelop the myth and reality in a narrative about the spiritual primacy of Montmartre. The hill has a long-lasting claim for sanctity as the site of St. Denis's decapitation at the hands of the Romans, and is the 'natural martyrium' for the land's first Christians. The very earth of Montmartre

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[256] Émile Jonquet, *Montmartre: Autrefois et Aujourd'hui* (Paris: D. Dumoulin et Cie., 1890), 159–160.
[257] Initially Legentil suggested razing the almost-completed new Opera House by Garnier and building the new monument to the Sacred Heart on the foundations planned for that "scandalous monument of extravagance, indecency and bad taste." This would serve a double purpose, both by materializing the new France as repentant and pious, while effacing the memory of the Second Empire and its materialism. David Harvey points out that ironically, the Commune had toppled the Vendôme Column in a similar anti-monumental gesture. Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity*, 332. Although the comparison is indeed intriguing, as I showed in the first chapter, the destruction of the Vendôme Column cannot be reduced to a reaction against a detested ruler or his regime.
[258] *Guide Officiel Du Pèlerin*, 53.
[259] *Bulletin de l'Oeuvre*. 5–6.

is sacred: because on it "Christianity laid its first roots."[260] It is, one source declared, a hill "dearer than Mount Lebanon" to Jesus Christ.[261] On the other hand, it is a location inextricably intertwined with the memory of the revolutions. Montmartre is a land turned "upside down" by the revolutionaries, and desecrated with a name like Mount 'Marat;'[262] its soil is still "soaked in blood," branded with "death and fire;" the same earth that shelters the remains of the nation's pious ancestors is also a cradle for evil, as there exists "no other place with greater sins to atone [for]."[263] In the words of one of the leading champions of the Vow: "after having been such a saintly place, it became a place chosen by Satan," where he "accomplished the first act of that horrible saturnalia which caused so much ruination, and gave the church such glorious new martyrs."[264] The Commune's presence on the Butte was framed between two scenes of violence: the killing of Generals Lecomte and Clément Thomas at the beginning; and the execution of hostages, including Archbishop Darboy and other priests, at the courtyard of the La Roquette prison during the closing days of the Bloody Week, just a few miles away from the Butte.[265] In a collapse of history, 1871 became a repetition of 270 A.D., and the Commune was conflated with the 'pagans' who killed France's first Christians. A place that is simultaneously holy and damned, the choice of Montmartre as the location

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[260] Jonquet, *Montmartre*, 162.
[261] *Guide Officiel Du Pèlerin*, 6.
[262] Ibid.
[263] Jonquet, *Montmartre*, 162–3.
[264] As quoted in Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity*, 325.
[265] As an emblem of the divine contract between the King and God, the Sacred Heart added another link between the sixteen centuries that separated the first and the last martyrs. According to the legend, King Louis XVI had consecrated France to the Sacred Heart before his martyrdom under the guillotine. Hence, from the first martyrs of the third century to 1793 and finally to 1871, the Sacred Heart erased the material and political conditions behind recent events into a mythical history of martyrdom. As one of the most ambitious mosaic programs in modern history, the interior decoration of the Basilica gives form to this narrative.

for a Basilica to save the soul of France was overdetermined. While most of the popular publications announced the choice of Montmartre in such mythical terms, others occasionally betrayed the practical calculations of mortal men. Bracketed between the holy history of the Butte and the signs that proved it was chosen by God, a conservative publication from 1890 recounts the practical reasons as follows: it is central enough to be easily accessible, but far enough removed from the bustle of the city to claim the aura of a sacred site of pilgrimage; more importantly, it is a hilltop visible to all Paris, to always and forever remind the city of the love it must have for the Sacred Heart.[266]

The Sacré-Coeur Basilica was first and foremost conceived to be seen, then, to be visited. In the nineteenth century, the physical isolation of the medieval cathedrals such as Notre-Dame de Paris, through the destruction of the adjacent neighborhoods and the visual reproduction technologies—first print, then photography—that reframed them, prescribed new conditions of relationality for the religious monuments and their surroundings based on an ocular engagement. The antiquarian interest fueled this transformation of the spaces of devotion into objects of aesthetic consumption—through which they became *images of themselves*, illustrations of a certain moment of architectural history.[267] In his work on nineteenth-century receptions of the Hagia Sophia, Robert Nelson diagnoses this as a modern tendency that transforms the monumental architecture into a series of images, a practice of "turning sites into sights."[268] On the other hand, the 'sight-ness' quality is in a sense inherent to the large

[266] Jonquet, *Montmartre,* 159–61.
[267] Alain Erlande-Bradenburg, "The Notre Dame of Paris," in *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire, Legacies*, vol. 3, (Chicago, IL; London: University Of Chicago Press, 2009), 411.
[268] See especially chapter 4 in Robert S. Nelson, *Hagia Sophia, 1850–1950: Holy Wisdom Modern Monument* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 73–104.

structures of religious devotion that intend to project a reality *vaster than themselves*.[269] In *The Critique of Everyday Life,* Lefebvre describes 'the cathedral' as a monument that has a clear function, but is built as "an image of the world and a summary of life according to a certain vision" beyond the concerns of that function. Therefore, as a "symbolic representation," the Cathedral is not only active during the times of its 'use' but always actively 'present' at the heart of the everyday.[270]

Built in order to loom over the 'everyday' instead of becoming its 'heart,' the Sacré-Coeur's form and location present an acute understanding of the primacy of appearance for a legible symbolic representation. This 'obsession with appearance' attracted criticisms from the conservative Catholics, who accused the promoters of the project of ignoring the traditional orientation of churches (from East to West) and turning the monument's main façade to the South so that it would directly face the city.[271] Indeed, the leaders of the project were determined to provide a monumental image for the transcendent authority's domination over the transient and profane authority of the people. Guibert was particularly attentive to 'the dialogic potential' of the new monument and the city.[272] After his visit to the elevated site, the archbishop described the future Basilica as "a protest against the other monuments and works of art erected for the glorification of vice and ungodliness" that defined modern Paris.[273] The

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[269] Erlande-Bradenburg distinguishes between the medieval Notre-Dame as a cathedral and the modern Notre-Dame as a monument in these terms: "Notre Dame is no longer the projection of a vaster reality: it is satisfied today to be itself;" "[i]t is a memory of a history; although barely perceived, it testifies to one of the great moments of architecture." Erlande-Bradenburg, "The Notre Dame of Paris," 375 and 377.
[270] Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life* (London: Verso, 1991), 498.
[271] One publication even goes further to imply that the South to North orientation of the Basilica might bring to mind the involvement of the "Freemasons," who prefer to turn North for their "occult activities." *Voeu national de la France. L'Eglise du Sacré-Coeur à Montmartre sera-t-elle de notre style national ou sera-t-elle d'un style étranger ?: par un comité d'archéologues* (Paris: J. Féchoz, 1875), 38–47.
[272] Jonas, "Sacred Tourism and Secular Pilgrimage," 101.
[273] Archbishop Guibert's letter to the Committee of the National Vow (January 18, 1872) from its

power relation intended by the raised location also colored projections about its future reception. It would "rise up over the guilty city as an *amende honorable* performed at the very scene of the crime"—and would 'remind [French of] past mistakes,' 'ward off the dangers in the present,' and 'function as a cautionary lesson to future generations.'[274] In an address during the twenty-first Catholic Congress in Lille, Father Lemius of the National Vow described the spatial language of subordination in familiar Catholic symbolism, saying that when he looked at Montmartre and imagined the future Basilica he saw "the Sacred Heart standing on the consecrated summit to reign with love over Paris and France; France is on its knees, bows her head in penance, tears, and veneration."[275] This rhetorical image was the organizing dictum of the architectural project—*Gallia Poenitens*—which repeatedly appeared on vignettes in publications asking for donations to the construction, in commemorative medals, and on pilgrimage postcards. [Figures 2.3 and 2.4.]

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reproduction in *Bulletin de l'Oeuvre,* 13. Additionally, we can think of the immaculate whiteness of the Basilica that gives the gray-ochre Paris a comparative impurity. This aesthetic disaccord between the Basilica and its environment translates its patrons' desire to separate the profane world of the nineteenth-century French capital from the monument's otherworldly transcendence of the formal economy of the cityscape.

[274] *Bulletin de l'Oeuvre*. 8.

[275] *Guide Officiel Du Pèlerin*, 3–4.

Left, Figure 2.3. Anonymous, "Sacratissimo Cordi Jesu Christi Gallia Poenitens At Que [sic] Devota" vignette in *Voeu National au Sacré-Cœur* (Marseille: Imprimerie et Lithographie Catholique J. Chauffard, 1879).

Right, Figure 2.4. Engraved by Alphée Dubois after the design of Henri Michel Antoine, *Bronze Commemorative Medal* (to mark the beginning of the construction), 1875 (Petit Palais, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Paris).

The introduction of the 'National Vow' to public discourse enjoyed the most opportune political and social moment for support. The renewed courtship between the Catholic Church and the political authority marked the early years of the Third Republic. The deputies of the National Assembly attended pilgrimages alongside the leading bishops of the country and gathered together to listen to the powerful declarations of the Church's most militant representatives. One such speech was delivered by the bishop of Poitiers, who called for a 'moral order' to put an end to "the infringement of the 'Rights of God' by the 'Rights of Man.'"[276] In June 1873, a large retinue of deputies

[276] Jonas accounts for the particularly important 1873 pilgrimage at Chartres just three days after the fall of Thiers' government. At this moment, the Catholic-royalist triumph over political control of the country seemed absolutely inescapable. In this gathering Bishop Pie declared before a crowd that included one hundred and forty deputies from the National Assembly that "the hour of the Church has come" and that Christ will return to "not only the hearts and minds of men, but also to the institutions and public life." Raymond Jonas, "Monument as Ex-Voto, Monument as Historiosophy: The Basilica of Sacré-Coeur,"

joined thirty thousand pilgrims at Paray-le-Monial to publicly dedicate themselves to the cult of the Sacred Heart.[277] The excursions of the conservative politicians to where Marguerite-Marie had her visions continued in the following years, which Camille Pelletan bitterly named a modern 'crusade' that traded the cross of Constantine for the Sacred Heart to symbolize the marriage between political and religious authorities. This new emblem of a flaming red heart graced the tailored redingotes of the politicians not only on the road to Paray-le-Monial but also on the benches of the Assembly.[278]

A parliamentary committee that included several of those devout politicians came together to examine the proposal for the construction of a church dedicated to the Sacred Heart after Archbishop Guibert's letter to the government. Their July 11 report to the National Assembly strongly advised support for the idea, and outlined their justifications along the lines of the archbishop's letter, which framed the project as "a matter of public utility" and "national safety."[279] The Commune was also implicitly evoked in the Committee's report, which reminded readers that on May 16, 1871 (the very day the Vendôme Column was destroyed), the 'National Assembly' at Versailles had ordered public prayers to appeal to God, and had therefore set an example for the

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French Historical Studies 18, no. 2 (1993): 482–3.

[277] Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity*, 333.

[278] Camille Pelletan, *Le Théâtre de Versailles : L'Assemblée au jour le Jour, du 24 mai au 25 février* (Paris: Dentu, 1875), 58.

[279] Pelletan, *Le Théâtre de Versailles*, 58–9. The commission was dominated by the Right but it was not absolute. Perhaps underlying this once again was the non-monarchist members of the parliament's reluctance to challenge the openly legitimist connotations of the cult of the Sacred Heart. Its president was a liberal, Jean-Didier Baze, who found himself a public office after both 1830 and 1848. The other members of the commission were: Édouard Morisson de La Bassetière (ultra conservative legitimist deputy representing Vendée), Émile Keller (monarchist, one of the founders of 'Social Catholicism'), Comte de Maillé (monarchist), Louis Riondel (republican), August Warnier (republican), Martial Delpit (moderate right), Comte de Cornulier-Lucinière (legitimist), le Vicomte de Kermenguy (legitimist), Émile Lenoël (centrist), Amand Chaurand (legitimist), François Hamille (Bonapartist), Victor de Bonald (monarchist), Gabriel de Belcastel (monarchist, ultramontane), Arthur Legrand (Bonapartist). "Annexe n. 1864 (Séance Du 11 Juillet 1873)," *Journal Officiel de La République Française*, July 16, 1873, 1456.

political authority's submission to a power much greater than itself. While transforming the Commune into a metaphysical event, the report ironically asked the Assembly to exercise its mandate to recognize its own limitations. On the other hand, the report shows that the promoters of the project were prescient in soliciting for funds before securing the support of the political authority.[280] As part of their rationale for the decision, the commission referenced the money that had been slowly accruing in the coffers of the National Vow, which, they declared, attested to the nation's desire to revive itself from death and humiliation. They maintained that the Assembly did not have the mandate to stifle such a popular kindling of patriotic awakening, which was enough to muffle a portion of the challenges from moderates.[281] Even if they did not believe in the efficacy of the Sacred Heart, they could not afford to be unpatriotic after national tragedies. Pelletan also reports that the bourgeois deputies of the center right and the veteran republicans of 1830 voted alongside the conservatives with the fear of being associated with the radical Left, and that keeping the façade of a unified patriotic front was more important than upholding the Republic over reactionary ideologies.[282]

The National Assembly was presented with a sizable delegation for the laying of the first stone of the Basilica, in a ceremony hosted by Archbishop Guibert on June 16, 1875. In addition to the deputies, the ceremony attracted an array of elite names from politics and commerce, and included several army generals. The ceremony launched with an exclusive mass offered by Archbishop Guibert for the elite attendees

[280] The archbishop had asked Legentil and de Fleury to kick-start the public-facing aspects of the process before he appealed to the political authority.
[281] "Annexe n. 1864 (Séance Du 11 Juillet 1873)," July 16, 1873, 1456.
[282] Pelletan, *Le Théâtre de Versailles*, 59. As Harvey points out, this decision ran against the separation of Church and State. Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity*, 333.

in the modest St. Pierre Church of Montmartre.[283] Leaving the small, twelfth-century church that would be visually swallowed by the Basilica they were about to lay the first stone for, Guibert and his select congregation marched to the ceremonial ground in a solemn procession led by a military band. The spatial organization of the ceremonial ground reenacted the ideological disposition of the Moral Order in the early Third Republic. The clear distinction between the important guests of the archbishop and the rest of the participants could be seen in the pictorial depictions of the event. [Figure 2.5.] The shapeless mass of nuns, foot soldiers, and devotees to the left of the burrow for the foundational stone is counteracted by the hierarchical organization of the grand tribune, whose center-top is occupied by Archbishop Guibert, flanked by more than one hundred deputies to his right and a matching number of high-ranking clergymen, military officers, and members of the aristocracy to his left.[284] It is an exhibition of the return of rule and order to the rebel hill under the triumvirate of religion, the military, and conservative politics.

[283] V. M., "Pose de La Première Pierre," *Le Monde Illustré* 19, no. 950 (June 26, 1875): 398.
[284] This distinguished podium included the son—Prince Louis, Duke of Nemours—and the grandson—Prince Ferdinand, Duke of Alençon—of King Louis Philippe, who had recently returned to the country after their forced exile under Louis Napoléon. Ibid.

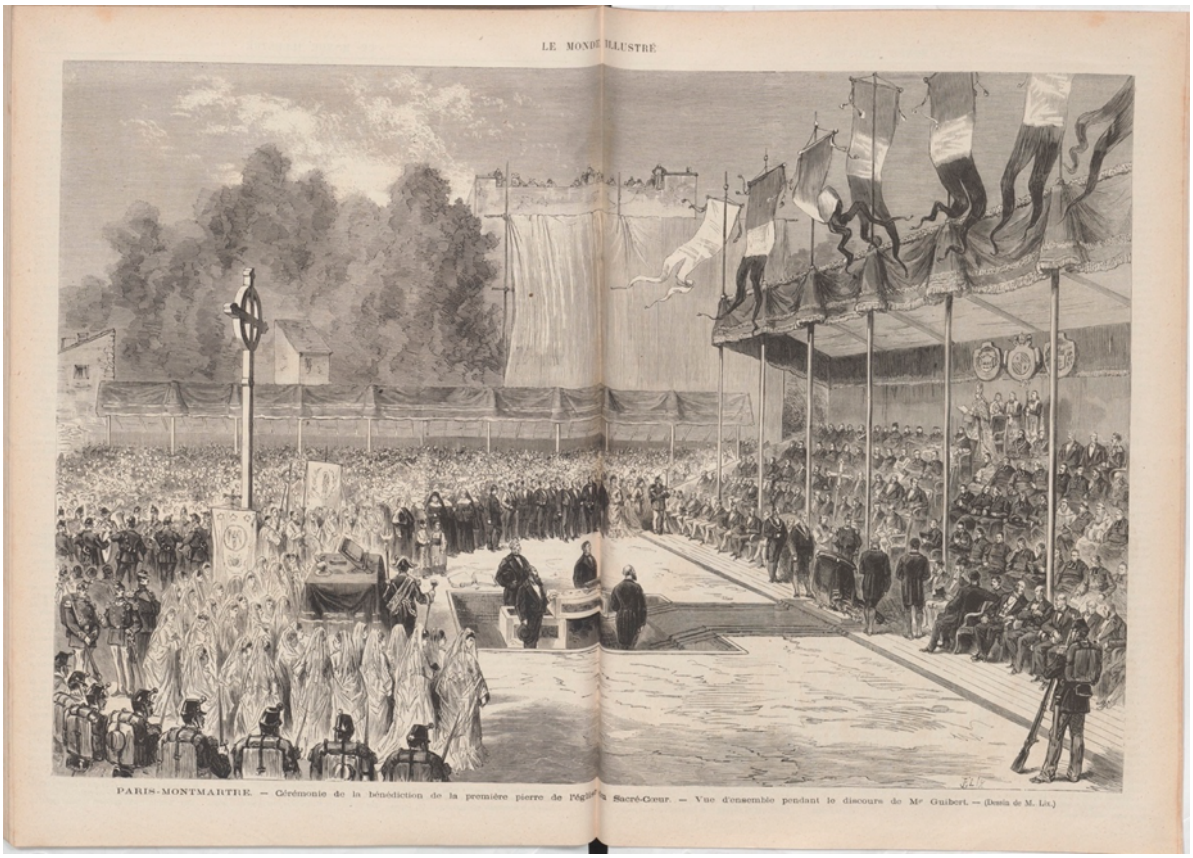

Figure 2.5. Frédéric Lix, "Cérémonie de la bénédiction de la première pierre de l'église du Sacré-Coeur," Engraving, Published in *Le Monde Illustré*, 19, no. 950 (June 26, 1875): 400–1. (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

The ceremony captures the French Right at a particularly victorious moment, when a monarchist restoration seemed as inevitable as the realization of the monument for which they had gathered to lay a foundation stone. But the completion of the Basilica dragged on, and the favorable political winds that had brought the Vow to the National Assembly changed direction. First, an election victory for the republicans forced Mac Mahon into resignation at the threshold of the 1880s, then the Bourbon pretender Count of Chambord died in 1883, each eroding the efforts and hopes of the royalists, the strongest supporters of the National Vow. As the republicans consolidated their hold, the threat of a monarchist restoration receded from the realm of possibilities. Yet, the

construction of the Sacré-Coeur persisted, excepting a few legal and aesthetic challenges that never reached fruition. Rather than reflecting the Republic's acceptance of the Sacred Heart, it reveals a strained relationship with the trauma of the Commune and its memory.[285]

The messy allusions to counter-revolutionary symbolism and the references to the uprising that took place on the very same location were clumsily eluded in the language of the law that granted the summit of Montmartre to the Sacré-Coeur. Instead, it utilized a seemingly sterile precept: 'public utility and safety.'[286] However, the high-profile promoters of the National Vow, especially Archbishop Guibert, instilled this legal-bureaucratic dictum with such a particular political and historical vision that it re-wrote the past century of France's history in the light of the Sacred Heart. In this new narrative, 1871 featured as a modern biblical "storm," a divine punishment sent by God to a nation that had gone astray.[287] Even at the end of the century, publications about the Basilica continued to dub that year as the 'thunder of God' since its disasters were "too great to be attributed to human agents."[288] Behind the practical neutrality of 'public

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[285] An article published in *Le Temps*—a moderate republican newspaper—in 1895 condemned a Breton priest's plans to build a commemorative monument to the counter-revolutionary martyrs of 1793–5 with a strange reference to the Commune of 1871. *Le Temps* conflates the planned monument to the reactionaries with the radical Left's attempts to keep the memory of the Commune alive, suggesting that they are equally unacceptable, as both camps glorify those who took up arms against a legitimate Republic. *Le Radical* challenged this equation as hypocritical, arguing that while indeed the Republic never allowed the death of the Commune to be commemorated in stone, it readily allowed monuments to the memory of the reactionary 'martyrs' and ideals, citing the Sacré-Coeur Basilica as the most visible example. Sigismond Lacroix, "Deux Monuments," *Le Radical* 15, no. 172 (June 21, 1895).

[286] When Cazenove de Pradines asked in an emotional speech for an addendum to the law to commit the Assembly to have a delegation present at the ceremony of the laying of the foundational stone as a gesture to underline the national character of the promised monument, it was rejected with the votes of these centrist deputies. This, according to Pelletan, revealed the hypocrisy of the opportunist moderates and center-right, whose decision to vote for the project was devoid of the sincerity of faith that reactionaries like Cazenove de Pradines showed. Pelletan, *Le Théâtre de Versailles*, 60–2.

[287] *Demandes et promesses du Sacré-Coeur à la France: le voeu national de la France et sa consécration officielle au Coeur de Jésus* (Toulouse: A. Loubens, 1893), 57.

[288] *Guide Officiel Du Pèlerin* 22–23, and 25–26.

utility' was the idea that the Basilica was going to be "the lightning rod," that deflected future storms.

The Third Republic granted validity to a claim that saw the recent catastrophes as the result of an 'original sin' that its historical and political existence relied on.[289] Jonas suggests considering the Sacré-Coeur as a 'historiosophy;' a totalitarian vision of history that 'reads' the past actions of the nation (e.g. its sins) to account for its present state, which reflects God's judgment of them.[290] I agree with this apt characterization, but would like to stress that there is a political-commemorative violence that we also need to acknowledge. The Basilica was intended to be a monument that commemorated political and social history as divine punishment—and an architectural talisman which promised to ward off future instances of divine wrath—and this paradoxically both recognizes and negates human agency in history. First, it presents us with a logical fallacy at the heart of the National Vow's appeal to collective responsibility and culpability, on which its entire discursive universe is based. War and defeat, resentments, deaths, and rebellion are removed from their contexts, the responsibilities of rulers and politicians are annulled, and recent history is reduced to the will of God. As a result, the elusive grace of a greater authority becomes the sole address of the grievances regarding the concrete social and political crisis. In this regard, the National

[289] According to Chateaubriand, the moral and institutional decline that paved the way for the Revolution and its great crime germinated in the waning years of the monarchy. Allowing the philosophers to attack God and the Church, furthermore, by siding with the American colonialists' fight against their King, pre-Revolutionary France had accumulated transgressions that aided its demise. The idea of expiation that was proposed after 1870–1 could be seen as a revival of this idea. François René de Chateaubriand, *Moral Essay on Revolutions* [1797] (London: Henry Colburn, 1815), 122. Albeit with some sections omitted from the 1815 English edition, in his *Moral Essay* Chateaubriand explicitly sees the anti-Catholic philosophers' seductions and the American Revolution as the immediate causes of the French Revolution. See Le Hir, *The National Habitus*, 85–86.
[290] Jonas, "Monument as Ex-Voto," 487.

Assembly's support for the temple is not only the product of a specific political conjunction, but a lesson in how the political authority evades accountability. Second, it erases the political agency of the Communards and the memory of their ideals and achievements.

The Sacré-Coeur's political discourse is thinly veiled as religious truth; the immensity and efficacy of God denies potency and permanence to the human actions that struggle to change the course of history. Remembering James Young's poetic diagnosis that "the monuments seem to remember everything but their own past,"[291] the Sacré-Coeur Basilica becomes a triumphal monument in the same vein as the Vendôme Column, marking the triumph of divine sovereignty over democratic imminence. However, as recounted by the Dominican friar and orator Jacques-Marie-Louis Monsabré, the Temple of the Sacred Heart was intended to bear witness to three other victories: "victory of penitence over sins;" "victory of divine love over divine justice;" and, conjuring the Paris Commune, "victory of brotherly love over class hatred."[292] It is fascinating that an emblem of religious and traditional France's perpetual fight with secular and revolutionary France was proposed in 1871 as the only suitable emblem of national unity after the devastating defeat against the Prussians and a civil war known as the Bloody Week. Even if the Sacré-Coeur was indeed intended to be a monument of unity, it was destined to be stillborn from its conception as a monument of social reconciliation. Stefan Jonsson tells us how artworks intended to represent social unity can also teach us "how a community encloses itself within a boundary to view itself as

[291] James Edward Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 14.
[292] As quoted in Jonquet, *Montmartre,* 156.

a unity."[293] The duty of the scholar is not to focus on those who made it into the representational frames, but to pay close attention to those who were left outside, and to the frame itself as a mechanism of exclusion. In its claim to represent the unity of national will in the wake of a civil war, Sacré-Coeur is such a frame that deserves our close attention.

Framing the Monument

Despite its claim to transcendence, the Sacré-Coeur is a modern monument whose identity, form, and location were determined by a historicist impulse, an acknowledgment of mass politics, and a culture of capitalist consumption. The Basilica was also a "publicity stunt" conceived in the age of advertisements.[294] It promoted a certain image of the nation, a philosophy of history, and a political and moral position distilled in the modern cult of the Sacred Heart. Finally, the Basilica was itself a commodity that the Committee of the National Vow was trying to sell to the French nation. The widely circulated visual representations of the Basilica were indispensable to producing and managing the public opinion of a highly contested monumental project and to reaching large numbers of contributors to the project. Therefore, the Committee produced a plethora of handouts, leaflets, newspaper articles, and posters that became the conceptual stones that slowly raised the Basilica in the space of French believers' minds, long before the physical process gave it a recognizable shape.

In December 1873, under the leadership of Rohault de Fleury, the Committee

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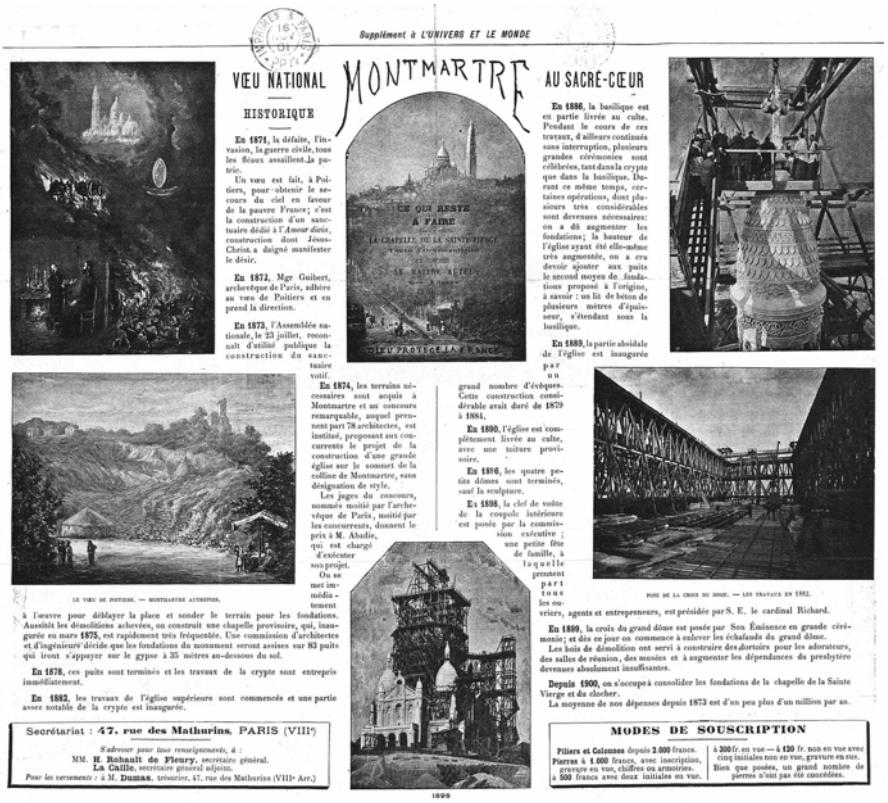
[293] Stefan Jonsson, *A Brief History of the Masses: Three Revolutions* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2008), 6.
[294] Gabriel P. Weisberg, "Montmartre's Lure: An Impact on Mass Culture," in *Montmartre and the Making of Mass Culture*, ed. Gabriel P. Weisberg (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 4.

launched the periodical *Bulletin de l'Oeuvre du Voeu National* to promote the project.[295] This publication was intended to function on two levels: first, to regularly inform subscribers about the progress as material proof of their contributions; and second, to solicit new contributors and widen the pool of donations. For the former purpose, the Committee also commissioned the photography studio *Maison Durandalle* to document the stages of the construction. However, as Claude Baillargeon's research illustrates, often the public did not see these photographs directly. Rohault de Fleury made hand-drawn copies and translated most of them into engravings and gillotypes in addition to creating his own 'views' of the Basilica. This intermedial intervention allowed him to turn the sterile construction photographs into lively scenes of collective devotion in an attractive amalgam of fantasy and reportage.[296] The Committee of the National Vow strove to have absolute control over the visual representations of the project and its framing in the mass media. The studio *Maison Durandalle* was prohibited from exhibiting or disseminating the photographs outside of the Committee's approval, and in the first decade of construction, the Committee was the sole source of images depicting the construction.[297]

In the 1890s, the Committee of the National Vow adopted photomechanical half-

[295] The periodical reached ten thousand copies by 1878 and remained a popular publication until its final issue in 1926. Claude Baillargeon, "Construction Photography and the Rhetoric of Fundraising: The Maison Durandelle Sacré-Coeur Commission," *Visual Resources* 27, no. 2 (June 1, 2011): 115.
[296] Ibid., 114–15. Selections from these illustrations, most of which were signed by de Fleury, were reissued in albums published in 1884, 1888, and 1894 for interested collectors and contributors.
[297] After 1884, the Committee started to distribute certain images of the construction to journals and newspapers, yet the source of these scenes remained under their control. Ibid. 120 and 125. Even after the easing of their circulation the question of who had the right to sell the photographs of the Basilica brought the owners of souvenir shops around the construction site against each other in a lawsuit. A certain Mrs. Soudinos sued several vendors for selling reproductions of photographs of the construction, arguing she was promised the monopoly over the peddling of the Basilica's images. "Hier Est Venu[...]," *La Lanterne de Boquillon* 24, no. 989 (April 24, 1892): 14–15.

tone reproduction which could convert photographic images directly to the printing plate, which also reduced the time and cost of producing promotional materials by allowing the simultaneous printing of text and image. Although the directness of photomechanical reproduction removed de Fleury's romanticizing touch, the interplay between documentation and imagination was reproduced in carefully thought-out visual and textual juxtapositions. These publicity prints were also distributed as 'supplements' to the popular conservative newspapers—such as *L'Univers* and *Le Monde*—whose readership was the target audience for the National Vow. For example, the first page of a two-page supplement from November 1901 gives a chronological overview of the events that led to the present day of the construction. Balancing out the almost mythologized history of the National Vow, the second half of the page reads like an informative list that marks the concrete moments of construction progress with a subtext of aesthetic and technical mastery. [Figure 2.6.]



Supplément à L'UNIVERS ET LE MONDE

VŒU NATIONAL

HISTORIQUE

MONTMARTRE

AU SACRÉ-CŒUR

Figure 2.6. Voeu National [Rohault de Fleury], *Supplément à L'Univers et Le Monde*, November 17, 1901. Photomechanical reproduction. (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

Perhaps conceived less to attract new subscribers than to preserve existing donors, this section offers accountability to the patrons.[298] Conversely, the second page of the supplement diverts its attention from the past (e.g., what has been done) to the future (e.g., what needs to be done). The final paragraph of the advertisement switches back to an affective tone and darkens the celebration of the work-so-far with a dramatic premonition of 'dark clouds' that overshadow the nation's bright future. The reader is warned that the votive church's promise to protect the nation from storms as a sacred

[298] The text touches upon all the significant architectural elements that had been realized year by year since the beginning of construction. The last sentence states that the average expense of construction since 1873 was more than one million francs per year. "Voeu National Au Sacré-Coeur," *Supplément à L'Univers et Le Monde*, November 1, 1901.

'lightning rod' can only be realized if the building is completed.[299] Until then, the very threat that underlined the decision of the National Assembly would continue to menace the nation.

As such, the supplement encapsulates the two façades of the *Voeu*'s publicized discourse. It oscillates between the metaphysical background of a sacred pact between a vengeful god and a penitent nation and the concrete foreground of an ongoing architectural program that offers artistic mastery and cutting-edge technology. This oscillation determines the layout of the page, conceived with a studied formal balance. The spine of the page is marked by two vertical images: one is the future view of the Hill once the project has been completed and the other a photograph of the building two years prior. The steps that will transform the latter into the former depends on the generosity and piety of the readers. This axis of future-and-now at the center of the broadsheet is flanked by four symmetrically placed scenes. The strict symmetry of the layout is common in popular examples of the nineteenth-century illustrated press. Yet here, the symmetrical organization has a function: to delineate the dual nature of the project. On the upper left corner, a dream-like scene represents Legentil and Rohault de Fleury under a glistening divine vision that presents the Basilica to them—exactly as it would be designed by Abadie years later. The devout men and the object of their inspiration are separated by a diagonal column with scenes of violence engulfed in smoke and fire. Directly across from this hazy looking glass that brings to view the metaphysical origins of the Basilica, we are offered the factual authority of a crisp photographic reproduction that captures the recent placement of the cross on the cupola

[299] "Voeu National Au Sacré-Coeur," Supplément à L'Univers et Le Monde, November 1, 1901.

of the central dome (1899). In addition to the breath of modernity inherent to the medium, the photograph inverts the painting across from it, and literally puts the men above the temple by virtue of modern scaffolding. Just below it is another photograph that distills a scene of the construction into a dynamic vector that broadens the picture plane into a rationally construed architectural space. This representation of rational order and technical expertise in return counteracts a conventionally picturesque representation of 'old Montmartre' before construction. Privileging 'nature,' the image erases the working-class neighborhood and its inhabitants, whose radical politics and profane credentials were antithetical to its new monumental neighbor.

Outside the Monumental Frame

Art, pleasure, and social and political radicalism constituted "the cultural ecology of Montmartre;" it was a home to iconoclastic aesthetics and the menacing *peuple*—both known for their irreverence to the Catholic Church and their proximity to anarchist activity in *fin-de-siècle* Paris.[300] The first two-and-a-half decades of construction were spent extending concrete roots through the unstable soil of the Butte and its dark caverns in search for solid ground.[301] For centuries the gypsum quarries of Montmartre had hollowed out the hill, making it impossible for the ground to carry the colossal weight of the National Vow. The solution to the problem increased the time and cost of the project greatly: eighty-three cement pillars as long as thirty-eight meters

[300] Richard D. Sonn, "Marginality and Transgression: Anarchy's Subversive Allure," in *Montmartre and the Making of Mass Culture*, ed. Gabriel P. Weisberg (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 120–1.

[301] It took another decade after this point for the campanile to be erected, and almost another full decade of additional work that included the intervening years of the Great War. After the end of the war another five years were needed for the interior decorations to be finalized. The Basilica was finally consecrated in 1923.

were constructed to reach a solid base, which connected this base to the foundation of the structure via a series of arches.[302] This physical challenge had a reciprocation in the collective fears of the ruling classes. Christopher Prendergast notes that in the nineteenth-century imagination 'the underground' provided a metaphorical backdrop for the contact between the 'laboring class' and the 'dangerous [criminal] class' where they devised subterranean insurrections to overturn the order above.[303] The adverse topography on which the Basilica was struggling to rise was also occupied by a hostile demography.

In the first decade of construction, the continued symbolic dominance of Montmartre's iconic 'windmills' mocked the sluggish pace of subterranean construction and was regarded by some locals as the victory of the district's profane spirit over the efforts that tried to submit it to religion.[304] Yet, the silhouette of Montmartre was forever altered once the white walls of the Basilica burgeoned above the ground between giant scaffolds. The locals saw this as an enemy invasion, waged not by guns and cannons, but by pillars and domes.[305] The ideological incommensurability between the Basilica and Montmartrois acquired a dramatic analogue in the formal clash between the

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[302] François Loyer, "Le Sacré-Coeur de Montmartre: L'Église Souffrante et L'Architecture Triomphante," *Le Débat*, no. 44 (1987): 146. According to an official publication from the Basilica from 1896, when Archbishop Guibert was informed about the challenge and the considerable rise in cost, he firmly insisted on Montmartre. *Guide Officiel Du Pèlerin*, 35. The fear of imminent collapse now took over the neighborhood around it. In 1882 a journalist reported that the construction was destabilizing the ground, as constant tremors shifted whole buildings and streets meters away from their original location. Mixing geology with allegory, the Basilica was posing an existential threat to the working-class neighborhood. Louis Lucipia, "N.D. de La Galette," *Le Radical* 2, no. 148 (May 28, 1882).

[303] Christopher Prendergast, *Paris and the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 82–83.

[304] Mystère, "Plats Du Jour," *Le Radical* 1, no. 83 (October 31, 1881). "Je viens de voir sur la butte Montmartre les fondements de L'Eglise du Sacré-Coeur. Décidément, ça ne marche pas! […] Et les trois moulins de la Galette alignés se profilaient sur le ciel en un gigantesque pied-de-nez."

[305] An article from 1891 describes the Basilica as a flag of conservative forces planted on the conquered enemy fortress (working-class Montmartre). Tony Révillon, "Le Sacré-Coeur," *Le Radical* 11, no. 158 (June 7, 1891).

monument and its surroundings. Loyer notes that in the French architectural tradition, public buildings—*except military fortifications*—are always conceived in dialogue with their locality, both in terms of the material agreement and the seamless integration into the general silhouette of the natural or built environment. However, the Basilica of Sacré-Coeur is "an artificial foreign body" that "totally rejects this osmosis of architecture and environment" since "it is not […] an architecture of integration, but rather of imposition."[306] The giant size of the monument visually crushes the traditional neighborhood that was spared from the destructive fervor of Haussmannization, and the 'immaculate whiteness' of the Basilica—owing to the special white travertine of Souppes-sur-Loing's quarries—"violently contrasts with the gray and ochre tones" of the Parisian neighborhoods marked by the distinct beige tones of the local limestone.[307]

A story referenced in *fin-de-siècle* sources expands the associations of the form of the Basilica with military fortifications and its message as a threat of violence. According to this narrative, recognizing the symbolic and the practical advantage of a military presence at the birthplace of the revolutionary Commune, the political authority intended to build a military fortress on the elevated location later claimed by the Sacred Heart. As reported by a Catholic source from 1890, when Archbishop Guibert shared his plans for Montmartre, the minister of war objected, citing the recent events that had transpired in Montmartre and the practical need for a fortress, to which the archbishop reportedly responded: "This fortress which you wish to erect […] will be useless for the purpose you have in mind […] Let me build my fortress, which will be well worth

[306] Loyer, "Sacré Coeur of Montmartre," 423–4; Loyer, "Le Sacré-Coeur de Montmartre," 145.
[307] The other Parisian monument that makes use of this distinctly white stone is the Napoleonic monument, *Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile.* (1806). Ibid.

yours."[308] If the conversation is factual, the leaders of the Third Republic must have been convinced that the religious monument could similarly function as an authoritative deterrent without the offensive presence of a military fortress.[309]

Figure 2.7. Théophile Alexandre Steinlen, "Nouvelle Bastille," appeared in "14 Juillet," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 15 (July 11, 1901). Color Lithograph. (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

[308] Jonquet, *Montmartre*, 163.

[309] The question of a possible fortress on the same location appears in the first report of the National Assembly's 1873 commission, chosen to discuss Guibert's proposal. However, according to the minutes of this meeting, the idea of a military fortress came from a politician "who is rather too preoccupied with what happened on that location on the day of March 18, 1871." Stressing that the military authority reserves the right to make the final comment on the matter, the commission notes that so far, the officials did not support the idea of this individual. "Annexe n. 1864 (Séance Du 11 Juillet 1873)," *Journal Officiel de La République Française*, July 16, 1873, 4756.

In his rather bitter coverage of Bastille Day (1901) for *L'Assiette,* Théophile Steinlen revives this story to identify the Sacré-Coeur as a structure that represents the combined forces of state and religious authorities. It is the 'new Bastille' to be destroyed in the next revolution. [Figure 2.7.] As he engraves the stain of his notorious association with the caption, Steinlen's crayon brings together a priest and a decorated army officer in a clandestine meeting at dark before the Basilica. According to Steinlen, the Sacré-Coeur is not a votive church atoning for the nation's sins. It is a fortress built on the enemy soil of Montmartre to mark its conquest by the authority.[310] It is a constant threat and 'a weapon' under the nose of those who might dare to imagine another Commune.[311]

The district's radical credentials as a zone of political, social, and aesthetic transgressions put it not only in conflict with the religious-conservative ideology, but also with the secular bourgeois Republic. Stranded between the two hostile authorities, Montmartrois turned to satirical but potentially subversive expressions of autonomy. As convincingly argued by Julian Brigstocke, bohemianism provided an alternative foundation to aesthetic production and social solidarity based on the "immanent authority" of the "embodied experience."[312] The owners of Montmartre's cabarets,

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[310] Steinlen was not the only one who referred to the monument as a fortress. The socialist-turned-anarchist journal *L'Attaque* also dubbed the Basilica as such. "En Plein Sacré Coeur"– *L'Attaque*: *Organe Socialiste Révolutionnaire*. – Year 1, no. 7 (August 8, 1888). The comparison also existed on the other side of the spectrum. The conservative journalist Georges Montorgueil (the pseudonym of Octave Lebesgue) describes the temple as "heavy and imposing like a fortress" in his guidebook to the city. Georges Montorgueil, *Paris Au Hasard* (Paris: Henri Beraldi, 1895), 303–4.

[311] As noted before, according to the author of the most comprehensive history of the Basilica, those who attack the Sacré-Coeur in the name of the Commune, including Steinlen, erroneously interpret the motivation behind the project. Benoist, *Le Sacré-Cœur de Montmartre*, 845–7.

[312] Brigstocke identifies the cultural politics in the late nineteenth century as a struggle not only against authority, but for a different conception of authority. Therefore, he diverges from other scholars of Montmartre by arguing that the avant-garde art production on the Butte was enacting a new aesthetics of authority— that not only makes "authoritative claims towards social, political economic change" but also by offering its way of being as an authoritative example for that transformation. In other words, the anarchism on the Butte was not only destructive—including the violent instances of the propaganda by deed—but also constructive, as they were experimenting to create a new, bottom-up, and non-hierarchical

especially Rudolph Salis of *Le Chat Noir,* packaged the district as a location independent of the city below.[313] Émile Goudeau joined Salis to offer an 'official' press organ for Montmartre, with a publication conceived for the latter's cabaret. This 'national' newspaper published parodies of the republican rallying motto, the 'Fatherland is in Danger!' to relay 'threats' from the jealous barbarians (rest of France) to their civilized nation of arts, science, intellect (Montmartre).[314] This dichotomy of the barbarian and the civilized consciously inverted the arguments of French colonization. In an imaginary interview with the head of the French Government, Léon Gambetta, the statesman's accusations of insurgency were met with an objection that configured the Butte's history as an indigenous people's struggle to maintain sovereignty against its colonizers—announcing to the statesman that Montmartre's aim was "to win independence, autochthony."[315] While these were intended to market the Butte's cultural and political differences to its bourgeois 'patrons,' the semi-joking evocations of autonomy implicitly conjured the ghost of the Commune while undermining the efficacy of its 'neighbors.'[316]

The fashionable bourgeoisie heading up to the Butte and passing through the working-class *quartiers* were also invested with the thrill of experiencing the social other, or in other words, encountering the 'social question' that preoccupied the public

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authority "against the traditional institutions of authority – including state, church, family, and the main institutions and monuments of the city itself." Brigstocke, *The Life of the City*, x, xii, and 23.

[313] Sonn, "Marginality and Transgression," 121.

[314] "Pas de Pyrenées, Plus de Bastilles," *Le Chat Noir* 1, no. 2 (January 21, 1882); "L'Assaut de Montmartre," *Le Chat Noir* 1, no. 12 (April 1, 1882).

[315] "Rebellion? You should know, ignorant traveller, that this is a just revindication of the rights of the first aboriginal people against its oppressor." Chanouard, "Il Faut Lutter," *Le Chat Noir*, (April 8, 1882.) As translated in Brigstocke, *The Life of the City*, 108. In the 1884 municipal elections a poster announced the Chat Noir's proprietor Salis' candidacy. His election promises for Montmartre included the "separation from the state." Ibid. 101–2.

[316] Ibid. 107–8. Munholland, "Republican Order and Republican Tolerance," 22.

discourse in person. Yet, according to Richard D. Sonn, rather than "encounter real toughs […w]hat they found [and searched for] in Montmartre was [its] representation;" and Montmartrois not only "market[ed] their otherness," but the pressure implied in the 'social question' could find itself a "safety valve" in the cabarets where dissent was performed before an audience that was often the object of that dissent.[317] On the other hand, the spectacular display of revolutionary Montmartre offered a perverse space for the Commune's memory. The veteran Communard 'Colonel' Maxime Lisbonne's *Taverne du Bagne* (Jailhouse Tavern) 'imprisoned' its patrons, and was decorated with Commune paraphernalia.[318] Lisbonne unapologetically brought the biggest fear and the most suppressed collective memory of the ruling class to them at the expense of their money. The largely bourgeois clientele had to confront "a particular reality, the traumatic beginnings of the Third Republic [… and] the experiential gulf between the conflict's victors and the vanquished."[319] Even in a commodified form, the memory of the Commune found a lively afterlife in the cabarets of Montmartre,[320] which, if nothing

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[317] Sonn, "Marginality and Transgression," 121 and 123.

[318] Maxime Lisbonne was a colorful member and a legendary colonel of the Commune. His audacious defiance of the *Versaillais* on the barricades created a fabled aura around his name. After the defeat, he was exiled to the penal colony of New Caledonia with numerous other Communards, including Louise Michel. He returned to Paris following the amnesty and started running a succession of cabarets, the most famous of which commodified his experience as a prisoner and political exile for the consumption of the bourgeoisie. According to Sonn, "[b]oth Lisbonne and Bruant capitalized on the *nostalgie de la boue* (nostalgia for sordidness), as the French called slumming, but whereas Bruant made his name by evoking the lower depths, Lisbonne was always overtly political." Among the visitors of his *Taverne du Bagne* was Paul Lafargue who amusingly wrote about it to Engels in a letter in 1885. Sonn, "Marginality and Transgression," 128; Richard D. Sonn, *Anarchism and Cultural Politics in Fin-de-Siècle France* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 66.

[319] Michael L. J. Wilson, "Portrait of the Artist as a Louis XIII Chair," in *Montmartre and the Making of Mass Culture*, ed. Gabriel P. Weisberg (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 198–9.

[320] Of course one needs to be wary of overemphasizing the revolutionary potency of Montmartre's increasingly more commercialized bohemian culture. In his insightful study of the conjunction of mass publicity, bohemian culture, radical politics, and bourgeois consumption in *fin-de-siècle* Montmartre, Lay warns that the commercial homogenization can exhaust the politically disruptive potential of lower-class cultural expression, causing them to "los[e] their fangs." Howard G. Lay, "Pictorial Acrobatics," in *Montmartre and the Making of Mass Culture*, ed. Gabriel P. Weisberg (New Brunswick, NJ and London:

else, added small asterisks to the end of the self-congratulatory history of 1871's victors.

A guidebook for *fin-de-siècle* Paris represents Montmartre as a zone of tension but also that of a contact. Arriving in Paris from all corners of the country, the pilgrims then embarked on an ascent to the Butte through temptations worthy of St. Anthony and under the hostile gaze of the locals. In competition with the Basilica's sacred allure, an attractive blend of avant-garde aesthetics, radical politics, and a vibrant entertainment economy nourished by working-class culture were drawing a different type of crowd to the Butte. The ostensibly divergent paths of the pious pilgrims and the tourists of pleasure crossed at the undiscriminating terminus of commodity consumption. Georges Montorgueil reports that a "floating population of pilgrims consumes wherever it goes, generating a permanent marketplace on the hillside" which, he notes, "tempers the hostility of the locals."[321] Although the businesses that served pious visitors were distinct from those that served the bourgeois slummers and the cabaret audiences, it is impossible to rule out encounters and overlaps. The pilgrims of the Sacred Heart were also experiencing the district as tourists, and as such they were "subject to the whims, appetites, desires, needs, anxieties, and longings of any other out-of-towner."[322] Some of the businesses of the Butte were ready to capitalize on this and paid for advertisement

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Rutgers University Press, 2001), 149–50. Similarly, Sonn demands caution and critical distance in assessing Montmartre's commodified entertainment culture and its capacity to truly challenge the social hierarchies. Sonn, *Anarchism and Cultural Politics*, 129–37.

[321] Montorgueil, *Paris Au Hasard*, 303–5.

[322] Jonas, "Sacred Tourism and Secular Pilgrimage," 111. Jonas also notes that "the most popular year for pilgrimage" was 1889, the year of the Universal Exposition that celebrated the centenary of the French Revolution. Ibid. 108–9. Taking a small question raised by Jonas in this essay a bit further, it would be fascinating to know what these pilgrims thought and felt when they visited the Exposition and marveled at the spectacles of science and process after hearing a sermon on the Butte about the sins of the revolution and the modern age. Both, in their own ways, were sites of pilgrimage and both generated their own narratives of time and legends about history. One wonders how compatible they were for a pilgrim who visited both sites, and which one, in 1889 France, was more compelling?

corners in the official guidebooks for the pilgrims. The devout details of the saga of the Sacred Heart and the National Vow were framed by pages that informed the pilgrims about myriad consumption opportunities, from the special hostel rates to the health benefits of a glass of absinthe they could have in this or that watering hole on the Butte.[323]

Nonetheless, the material advantages of the pilgrimages to the neighborhood did not prevent eruptions of hostility between the revolutionary locals and the anti-revolutionary instruction of the Basilica and its visitors. The key dates of construction were particularly rife with tensions. For example, around the June 1891 inauguration ceremony of the Basilica—which followed the twentieth anniversary of the Bloody Week—Montmartre's radical socialists held a public meeting at Rocher Suisse restaurant to discuss the role of religion in social and political life. Their meeting was interrupted by the pilgrims who had arrived in the neighborhood to attend the ceremonies, and who were then challenged to a fist fight by the local anarchists.[324] After repelling the provocateurs, the attendees of the meeting restated their ownership of the neighborhood by singing the *Carmagnole* on the streets while chanting, 'Down with the Sacred Heart!'[325] A significant hub of anarchist activity in the late nineteenth century, many Montmartrois were also militant atheists who shared Élisée Reclus' view that the "[c]onservatives are by no means wrong when they generalize that revolutionaries are 'enemies of religion'[…] Yes, […as] anarchists [we] reject the authority of dogma and

[323] For an example, see the advertisements at the beginning and end of the *Guide Officiel Du Pèlerin*. Montorgueil, though, reports that the pious souls who made the journey "don't dare to approach the seedy and irreligious cabarets of Montmartre." Montorgueil, *Paris Au Hasard*, 306.
[324] "Au Sacré-Coeur: L'Inauguration de la Basilique." *La Lanterne : Journal Politique Quotidien* 15, no. 5160 (June 7, 1891).
[325] Ibid.

the intrusion of the supernatural into our lives."[326] The local anarchists did not hesitate to regularly act on this conviction. For example, a young radical from the neighborhood interrupted a sermon in the Basilica that warned the good people against 'dangerous ideas' with the following loud accusation: "You're the ones spreading the dangerous ideas!" He was attacked and hastily apprehended by a group of believers and priests, and handed over to the police for arrest as he continuously called the names of the anarchist martyrs 'Ravachol' and 'Vaillant' between cries of "Long live anarchy! Death to the priests!"[327]

The artists of the Butte contributed to the anarchist expressions of hostility towards religious authority through hijacking and subverting the aesthetic and performative forms of Catholic devotion that surrounded them. The most pervasive and immediately popularized gestures of iconoclasm against the Basilica were produced and disseminated in the cabarets that every night momentarily tore down this "masterpiece of bourgeois bad taste" that insulted with its presence "the memory of the sacred Commune."[328] Almost all the famous performers of Montmartre had their counter-hymns dedicated to the Sacré-Coeur: Aristide Bruant wrote *V'là l'choléra qu'arrive!* where the Basilica features as a 'boutique' and a reactionary conspiracy, and commemorated the 'late-Montmartre' before its invasion by the Church in his *À Montmerte*; while Jules Jouy conjured "the memory of the last struggle / On the butte" in his *Su' La Butte* to pit the Commune against the Sacré-Coeur to claim Montmartre

[326] Élisée Reclus, *Anarchy, Geography, Modernity: Selected Writings of Elisée Reclus*, ed. John Clark and Camille Martin (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2013), 144.
[327] "Un Anarchiste Au Sacré-Coeur," *Le Radical* 17, no. 250 (September 7, 1897).
[328] Robert Brécy, *La chanson de la Commune: chansons et poèmes inspirés par la Commune de 1871* (Paris: Editions Ouvrières, 1991), 230.

forever for the revolution.[329] But it was Victory Meusy of *Le Chat Noir* who created the most (in)famous 'hymn' for the Basilica in 1882, which according to a songbook from 1902, was still incredibly popular decades later:[330]

We have two cathedrals,
One is a monument
Surpassing the roofs of the workshops,
So modest;
so close to the Lord
That not to disturb the sky
they made its spires subterranean
On the Hill,
facing
the struggle
between the chosen and the damned
The astounded seraphim
sing, as they blow their flutes:
O Sacred Heart of Jesus!
Sweet Jesus,
Who the fuck put you up there?[331]

As Howard Lay puts it, "disrespect was the order of the day in late nineteenth

[329] Aristide Bruant, "V'là l'choléra Qu'arrive," in *Dans La Rue : Chansons et Monologues.*, vol. 1 (Paris: Imprimerie Pairault, 1895), 73–77, Aristide Bruant, "À Montmerte," in *Dans La Rue : Chansons et Monologues.*, vol. 1 (Paris: Imprimerie Pairault, 1895), 165–71. Jules Jouy, *Su' la Butte. Chanson de Montmartre* (Paris: Maillard, n.d.). The lyrics in entirety with an English translation is published in Nicholas Hewitt, *Montmartre: A Cultural History* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017), 142–43.

[330] Léon de Bercy, *Montmartre et ses chansons: poètes et chansonniers* (H. Daragon, 1902), 36.

[331] Here, I share my translation for the first verse and the chorus from the French original as published in the journal of symbolist literature and arts, *La Plume.* Victor Meusy, "Ô Sacré-Coeur de Jésus [Sur La Butte]," *La Plume* 3, no. 61 (November 1, 1891): 368–69: [Nous avons deux cathédrales, / L'une un monument/ Dépassant le toit des halles/ Bien modestement;/ si près d l'Eternel / Qu'on fit ses tours souterraines/ Pour pas crever le ciel. / Sur la Butte,/ En butte / Aux luttes / Des élus et des damnés, / Les séraphins étonnés / Chant'nt en soufflant dans leurs flûtes :/ Ô Sacré-Cœur de Jésus !/ Doux Jésus, / Qui donc t'a fichu là-d'ssus?] The French original shows inconsistencies depending on the date and the publication in which it appears. In an earlier version published in Maxime Lisbonne's *L'Ami du Peuple,* an extra stanza associates the Montmartre cabarets with the social revolution: "In vain the pontiff / and his capuchins / Ordain that we appeal / to the Virgin and the saints / One morning leaving the dance / The surprised bourgeois / Will see the red flag / Floating over Paris. (C'est en vain que le Pontife / Et ses Capucins, / Ordonnant que l'on attire / La Vierge et les saints, / Un matin sortant d'un bouge, / Le bourgeois surpris, / Pourra voir le drapeau rouge / Flotter sur Paris.) Victor Meusy, "Ô Sacré-Coeur de Jésus [Sur La Butte]," *L'Ami Du Peuple*, December 4, 1884.

century Montmartre."[332] Such popular desacralization and assimilation of Catholic symbols and rituals were part of the radical appeal of *fin-de-siècle* Montmartre's modernism that mobilized the 'low' culture to destabilize the hierarchies. This iconoclastic spirit can also be seen as a radical anti-monumentalism that does not hesitate to question and take down even the most naturalized 'sacreds' of the nation and tradition. What is worth stressing here is that the destructive arm of this iconoclasm is commercialized culture—prints, performances, songs etc.—which have an ephemeral nature but are adopted, reproduced, and disseminated in the public sphere like the blows of a small pickaxe that are slowly chipping away the foundations of the Basilica's legitimacy while at the same time establishing the terms of its negative relation to the memory of the Commune.

The inauguration of the Sacré-Coeur's colossal bell—*La Savoyarde*—in 1895 gave an auditory dimension to the monumental invasion of the Butte.[333] The reverberations of the bell would bring the Sacré-Coeur inside the homes, workshops, and social spaces of the district, making the Basilica palpable even when it was not visible. A Montmartre local characterized the chimes as "a nocturnal din," a sound "more infernal than divine."[334] Another ironically asked the giant bell, whose "tocsins of intolerance and superstition dominate the city," to chime *louder* in order to reach the deaf ears of politicians and inspire them to save the city from this monstrosity.[335] This aural domination informed the cover Steinlen designed for a suite of waltzes by Paul

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[332] Lay, "Pictorial Acrobatics," 149.
[333] The elaborate celebrations around the arrival and the 'baptism' of *La Savoyarde* were read as reactionary provocations by the detractors of the Basilica. Victor Flachon, "Le Meeting de Montmartre," *La Lanterne : Journal Politique Quotidien* 19, no. 6788 (November 21, 1895).
[334] J. D., "Pour Le Sacré-Coeur," *Le Radical* 17, no. 178 (June 27, 1897).
[335] Jean de Montmartre, "Au Son de La Savoyarde," *Le Radical* 16, no. 60 (February 29, 1896).

Delmet composed for the Butte's cabarets. The artist gives a macabre parade of Montmartrois descending the hill at night. The ghastly white silhouette of the Sacré-Coeur and its scaffolds in the distance are dwarfed by the immediate dark solidity of Montmartre's famous windmills. [Figure 2.8.]

Figure 2.8. Théophile Alexandre Steinlen, "Montmartre: Suite de Valses sur les Motifs des Chansons de Paul Delmet par Edmond Missa," Lithography, 1897, (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

This architectural and sociological standoff between the temple and the windmills replays the clash between pleasure and piety that compete over the neighborhood's identity. A close examination of the crowd introduces terror to the

scene, as the procession is chased down by a choir of angels emerging from the white towers of the Basilica. Giving visual form to the deafening chimes of its giant bell, these heavenly silhouettes transform into vicious birds and attack the crowd as one woman at the forefront cowers in alarm. We know that the birds of prey were linked to the clergy in popular visual culture, but here, the symbolism acquires a sensory capacity through the sound of the cabarets promoted in the songbooks and their audiences being attacked by the Basilica.[336]

The members of the crowd carry large baskets and trunks that blur the line between a spontaneous flight and a planned exodus. The thrust of a tripartite demographic transformation brought upon Montmartre through the construction of the Basilica, the building projects that took over the hill throughout the 1890s, and the expansion of the clientele of the Butte's cabarets to more affluent residents of the city was a challenge to the neighborhood's radical legacy. For example, just a year after hosting the revolutionaries' meeting against the Sacré-Coeur, the neighborhood staple Rocher Suisse—where the locals had danced, dined, and listened to the fiery speeches of socialists and anarchists for decades—changed hands after its owner Father Daudens' death to become an establishment geared for the pilgrims.[337] Even if the economic activity in Montmartre "came to depend upon the Sacré-Coeur as much as the Sacré-Coeur depended upon it,"[338] this dependence was threatening to the fabric of leisure and consumption patterns that until then had given the Butte its distinctive identity.

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[336] On a different note, at the top-right corner of the composition these heavenly creatures assume forms that resemble the cornettes of the Sisters of Charity painted by Armand Gautier or the traditional headgear of devout Bretonne women that populate Paul Gauguin's or Émile Bernard's symbolist canvases.
[337] "Le Rocher Suisse," *Le Radical* 12, no. 157 (June 5, 1892).
[338] Jonas, "Sacred Tourism and Secular Pilgrimage," 111.

The derisive grins with mask-like features peak behind the shadows to suggest that this might not be a final scene of defeat for Montmartre. The symbolism of the crowd descending the Butte into Paris was still loaded with political connotations. The working-class *quartiers* of Montmartre and Belleville occupied hills that rose over Haussmann's bourgeois Paris; and the image of the masses descending down to the city would immediately evoke episodes of popular uprisings and tint this scene with a playful and implicit threat.[339] Even if the memory of the revolutionary crowd descending the Butte to flood the city had been challenged in the past few decades with the ascension of bourgeois consumers and the flocks of pilgrims, the neighborhood kept the revolutionary fervor alive. Steinlen's print gives us a portrait of Montmartre in the final decade of the century, where the sounds of cabarets mix with the calls of *La Savoyarde,* where displacement and nativity, pleasure and fear, revolution and devotion coexisted.

A Graphic Anticlericalism

The irreverent attitude of the Butte's inhabitants towards their new monumental neighbor fed on a long tradition of anti-religious satire, which had also established itself in the print medium for a considerable amount of time. Severing, alongside the king's head, the centuries-long tie between the political and the religious authorities, the French Revolution had cast an eternal shadow over the Catholic Church's claim to the moral

[339] Brigstocke quotes a short-lived local newspaper—*Le Mont-Aventin: Echo des Buttes Montmartre*—published in Montmartre during the first weeks of the Commune, which proclaimed the Butte the home of the Revolution. An article from this publication, which Brigstocke characterizes as simultaneously celebrating and parodying the language of 1789, turned Montmartre into 'Olympus,' and the Commune into "a violent outpouring of revolutionary energy" down from its "godly-heights" to the "mortal city below." This 'flood of revolution' coming downhill remained a common image of revolution for the following decades. Brigstocke, *The Life of the City*, 75–76.

salvation of the people in France. The histories of anticlerical graphic arts in France start with this privileged moment of assault on the Catholic Church's authority. Yet, as Isabelle Saint-Martin notes, using satirical images to undermine religion is almost "as old as the subject it mocks."[340] A considerable portion of this critical tradition was engrained in and inspired by the popular culture. However, the dominant view of the anti-religious visual culture of the *fin-de-siècle* subordinates the images to the well-documented history of the Third Republic's *laïcisation*, cataloguing diverse material according to the official areas of contestation between the Church and the state. This is a teleological narrative that starts with the Revolution, and treats varied images as checkpoints along a legal-political trajectory that leads to the pivotal Law of Separation in 1905.

Thomson's work on the 'religious' paintings from 1890s France illustrates that it is rather simplistic to demarcate a clean battle line between an "aggressively *laïque* Republic" and the "ancient edifice of the Church;" and assigns cultural artifacts to one of these two supposedly well-defined camps.[341] Both these positions held diverse and often competing aesthetic and ideological expressions. As the scholars of a comprehensive catalogue on the 'anticlerical graphics' of the Third Republic admit, the adjective 'anticlerical' is used indiscriminately for three groups of images from the late nineteenth century: first, those that uphold the *libre-pensée* tradition and its virulent secularism against the encroachment of religion on the temporal jurisdiction of the

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[340] Isabelle Saint-Martin, "La caricature anticléricale sous la IIIe République. À propos de : Dixmier Michel, Lalouette Jacqueline, Pasamonik Didier, La République et l'Église. Images d'une querelle, Paris, La Martinière, 2005, 151 p. (ill.) Doizy Guillaume et Lalaux Jean-Bernard, À bas la calotte. La caricature anticléricale et la Séparation des Églises et de l'État, Paris, Éditions Alternatives, 2005, 160 p. (ill.)," *Archives de sciences sociales des religions*, no. 134 (May 1, 2006): 113–20.
[341] Richard Thomson, *The Troubled Republic: Visual Culture and Social Debate in France, 1889–1900* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 118.

political authority; second, the vernacular visual and written traditions that express ridicule and hostility towards the members of the clergy; and finally, a radical position directed against all institutions, dogmas, and practices of religion(s).[342]

Traditionally, a great number of images categorized as anticlerical fall under two of these representational economies. The first one presents the eternal struggle between the forces of darkness and light, where the sun—or flame, torch, lamp, etc.—of progress and enlightenment are juxtaposed against shadows engendered by the symbols of religious dogma and members of the Church. The second group relies on less didactic and more popular systems of representations where the clerical bodies are favorite objects of satirical assault. The visual lexicon of this group is composed of diverse sources, including but not limited to folktales, Rabelais, the medieval bestiary, and protestant propaganda images from the sixteenth century. We can add a class of pamphlets from the French Revolution to these sources, since the physical iconoclasm during this period went hand in hand with an iconoclastic visual propaganda that desecrated the clerical body.[343] Under the sway of natural urges and excessive desires, and often transmuted into myriad beasts—pigs, donkeys, monkeys, and birds of prey—the clergy in these representations lose their assumed moral and intellectual superiority over their congregations. These strategies of the grotesque accent the rule of the lower stratum of the body, portray those under religious habits as gluttonous, greedy, lustful, and lazy; and prepare a popular base for the moral critique of the Church as a corrupt, parasitic, and oppressive institution. Excepting the few representatives of the *libre-*

[342] Dixmier, Lalouette, and Pasamonik, *La République et l'Église*, 6 and 9.
[343] Antoine de Baecque, *La Caricature Révolutionnaire* (Paris: Centre National des Lettres, 1988), see especially chapter 3, 88–127.

pensée tradition such as the *La Lanterne*, at the turn of the century the clerical body informed the names of the major satirical journals, such as the infamous *La Calotte* and its Belgian counterpart by Didier Dubucq, *Les Corbeaux*,[344] in which the rich tradition of scatological and sexual humor remained ubiquitous. As noted by Jacqueline Lalouette, in the final decades of the nineteenth century the first camp, which reflected the official anticlericalism and associated itself with the intellect, liberty, progress, and reason, later allied itself with the 'popular laughter' of the second camp.[345] Together, they constituted an expanded front in the Republic's cultural warfare against the Church. The third position, which is the focus of this present study, appeared in political and aesthetic avant-garde publications of the end of the century, and was dominated mostly—albeit not exclusively—by revolutionary socialist and anarchist artists.

In the waning years of the Empire, republican artists like Daumier adopted the anticlericalism and celebration of *libre-pensée* as an indirect way to attack the personal rule of Louis Napoléon, whose coup d'état of 1851 had enjoyed the support of all echelons of the Catholic Church. The radical artists continued to associate the two following the fall of the Empire, sealing the fate of the Church with the fallen Emperor. For example, Moloch depicts a group of panicked clergymen worshipping at the feet of a golden idol of Louis Napoléon after the Emperor was captured by the Prussians at the Battle of Sedan, as they pray to him to come and save them from the republican danger. [Figure 2.9.]

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[344] The *calotte* is the French name for the skullcap worn by the Catholic clergyman. *Les Courbeaux,* which translates as "The Crows," similarly referenced the black habits worn by the Catholic clergy.

[345] Jacqueline Lalouette, "Iconoclastie et Caricature Dans Le Combat Libre-Penseur et Anticlérical (1879–1914)," in *Usages de l'Image Au XIXe Siècle*, ed. Stéphane Michaud, Jean-Yves Mollier, and Nicole Savy (Paris: Éditions Créaphis, 1992), 51–61. See especially page 58. As Thomson notes, the anticlerical print culture influenced works in other mediums, such as Jehan Georges Vibert's highly finished canvases. Thomson, *The Troubled Republic*. 140–43.

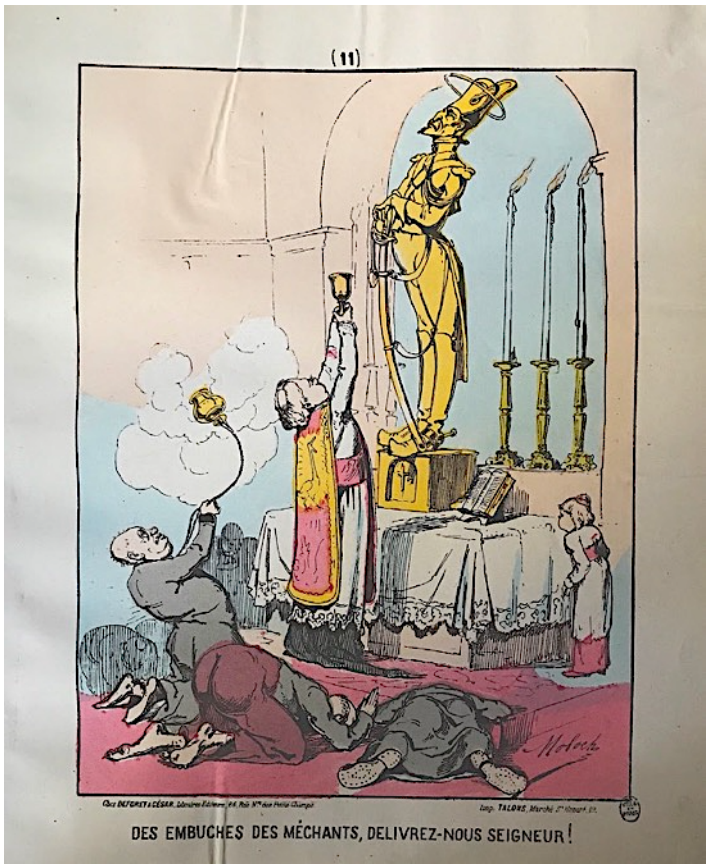

Figure 2.9. Moloch, "Des Embuches des Méchants…" 1871, Color Lithography. (Library of Congress, Washington, DC/Prints & Photography Division).

In the following months, criticism of the Church turned away from the fallen Emperor. Several Communard artists revived the revolutionary anticlericalism of the eighteenth century and reserved their acerbic assaults for the bodies of the clergy as the primary vessel of their anti-religious discourse. In addition to the images of intimate commemoration that we saw in the first chapter, the radical Communard artist Pilotelle's etching album also includes attacks on the adversaries of the Commune, in this case a bishop captured in profile. [Figure 2.10.]

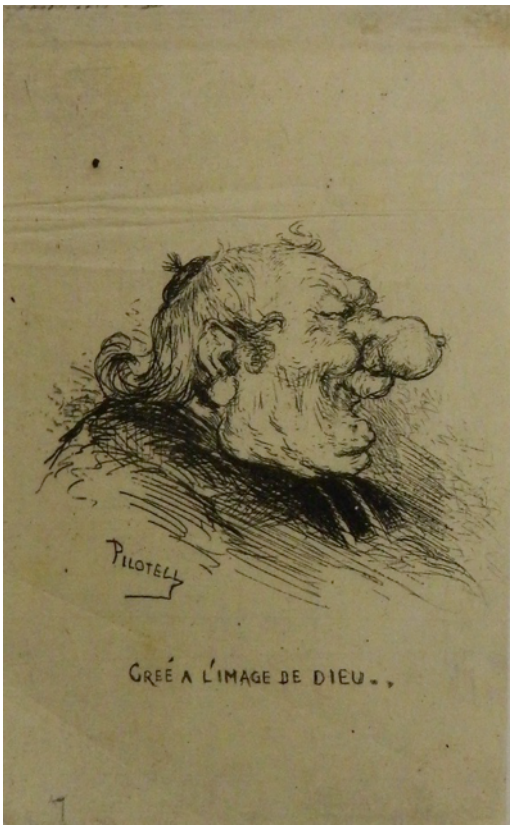

Figure 2.10. Georges Pilotell(e), "Crée a l'Image de Dieu," Etching on handwoven paper, 1879. (Library of Congress, Washington, DC/Prints & Photography Division).

The clergyman's bloated face, his saggy chin reminiscent of an amphibian's dewlap, and his deformed nose suffering from rhinophyma brought upon by alcoholism all communicate a moral decay manifested in flesh. This unsightly head—which carries a minuscule *calotte*—sits on an unfinished but clearly overfed body, on which the clerical collar is diminished to a bib. Yet what delivers the most painful punch is the caption of the caricature: "Crée à l'image de Dieu," which, while subverting the biblical doctrine that "God created man in His own image" [Genesis 1:27], extends the moral and physical decay to the biblical God and all its institutions. At the other end of this use of the body-as-narrative was the figure of the Communard—physically hardened by labor

and beautified by the sacrifice of oneself for the revolution. In a lithograph made during the Commune, the artist Alphonse Levy (under the alias he used for his revolutionary images, Saïd) lends the solemn dignity of a Christian martyr to a muscular and tattooed Communard 'saint' who emerges amidst the parting clouds in his rolled-sleeved worker's shirt and his brown apron. [Figure 2.11.] Directed at the heavens, his concerned gaze furrows his brow, whose troubled lines rhyme with the folds of the headband that soaks his sweat; their formal tangent weds the physical and intellectual labors of the revolutionary. The Christian iconography is further evoked by the gesture of resting his left arm devotedly on his chest, and his head, which emanates rays in every direction, affectionately placing a halo around his face that marks him as both the recipient and the source of divinity.

Figure 2.11. Saïd (Alphonse Lévy), “Au jour le jour…” 1871, Color Lithograph. (Musée Carnavalet).

Through this politicized aesthetics of the body, we can discern the footsteps of a new visual language that slowly incorporates the monuments of the institution in its anticlerical critique. A print by Dupendant can be taken as an example of this transition with its inclusion of religious architecture. [Figure 2.12.]

Figure 2.12. Dupendant, *Travail & Progrès/Ignorance & Superstition*, Color Lithograph, 1871. (Musée Carnavalet).

Before us, we have a composition that opposes two priests—one standing, one sitting—and a worker with his young son. Situated against a semi-articulated Gothic structure, the composition still enacts a comparison between the ecclesiastical and working-class

bodies. The archway that frames the priests opens up to spill chalices, statuettes, weapons, reliquaries, and gold but also creates a physical barrier that separates the two parties. The seated clergyman slumps over with hands resting on his belly and his gaze dangerously directed towards the young boy. The large smile and the extended arm of his colleague renders him into a warning sign. With a divided caption that evokes the *libre-pensée* tradition—work & progress vs. ignorance & superstition—the scene brings together the two dominant representational economies of anti-Christian graphic arts. What signals a possible diversion to a third route is the idle sledgehammer of the working-class father that reminds us of the precarious employment that the heyday of Haussmannization offered through the destruction of old Paris. His front-facing posture, bare chest, and rolled-up sleeves that expose his laboring arms indicate his ability and experience in taking down old edifices. The unity between the child's small hand and his father's arm enacts a mechanism where the promised movement of the raised sledgehammer is tied to the pull of the stack of books strapped to the boy's arm. Clearly Dupendant makes a case for secular education, but the sledgehammer against the church pillar becomes a suggestive asterisk that promises the arrival of a different anti-religious iconography, which informs the core of this section.

Attacking the Foundations

During the Third Republic, the anticlerical tradition experienced two distinct moments of upsurge, and these moments, to a certain extent, reflect the changes that were happening in the legal-political sphere. First, following the collapse of the Moral Order around 1880, the Republic and its institutions—which had appeared to be

transient in the past decade—could now stake their claim to permanence on political soil. This laying of a republican foundation had to face the cultural and social authority of the Catholic Church, which had historically—and recently during the Moral Order—proved to be the most able accomplice to any challenge to the Republic's existence and longevity. This political anticlericalism coincided with the loosening of the censorship laws that afforded the victorious political ideology an energetic ally in its war against the Church in numerous publications of political satire. This can be seen as an ideological alignment of the official policy of secularization with the popular traditions of anticlerical satire. The second episode of the upsurge came at the turn of the century when the political 'achievements' of the Third Republic were dominated by legal victories against the Church, leading to the Law of Separation in 1905.[346] Despite the political authority's hegemony in this history, not all graphic works of this second surge align with the dominant discourse and progress of secularism.

The artists to which I attend from this later period found creative—and often more seditious—ways to represent the grip of religious authority on the lives of the people than the conventional pictorial languages of anticlericalism. The preferred venue of these images and their creators, who straddled the intersection of the aesthetic and political avant-garde, was indisputably the famous *L'Assiette au Beurre.* There were of course collaborations with artists who fell back on the symbolic conventions of anticlericalism, even if their styles could be characterized as avant-garde. Yet, as noted by Élisabeth and Michel Dixmier, *L'Assiette* differed from its contemporaries by preferring artists who "went beyond republican anticlericalism" and "attack[ed] the

[346] Dixmier, Lalouette, and Pasamonik, *La République et l'Église*, 134.

foundations of religion."[347] The journal indeed entrusted its issues on the question of religion to the artists with professed anti-bourgeois and anti-state credentials. But unfortunately, the scholars who make this observation do not show in their assessment *how* this group of artists transgressed the defined borders of official anticlericalism. I intend to attend to this gap, by showing that the artists who "went beyond" evoked monumentality to concretize the "foundations" that they aimed to destroy. Secondly, I will show *how* they also found ways to show the limits of bourgeois anticlericalism and argue that the sacred and political authorities shared the same foundation of dogma and oppression.

As the Third Republic's program of secularization subsumed the once subversive visual culture of anticlericalism into its ideological arsenal, we see the emergence in the political and aesthetic avant-garde of a visual language that separates itself from bourgeois anticlericalism by stressing the hegemonic nature of transcendent authority. In these images, the legible symbolisms of the laboring and clerical bodies or the allegorical struggle between the light of reason and the shadows of dogma are replaced with a dramatic encounter between the singularity of a monumental edifice and the anonymity of the masses. This group of images constitutes my core examples from the 'third camp,' which I readily associated with a larger anti-authoritarian visual culture.

This move away from the clerical body to the monument was concurrent with

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[347] Élisabeth Dixmier and Michel Dixmier, *L'Assiette au beurre: revue satirique illustrée, 1901–1912* (François Maspero, 1974), 98. Earlier in the same publication the authors make the same point comparing the avant-garde publication to the republican anticlericalism of *La Calotte* or *Les Corbeaux*: *L'Assiette au Beurre* featured images that "[…] attack the very principle of religion. This is something quite different. Instead of traditional anticlericalism, we see atheist propaganda." Ibid., 83.

the prominence of architectural symbolism in nineteenth-century literature. Elizabeth Emery shows that these 'literary cathedrals,' constructed word by word by authors such as Zola and Huysmans, were seen as active agents that exerted power over the lives of their narrative's heroes and the towns they inhabited.[348] Emery explains this phenomenon by attending to the coincident popularity of Gothic religious edifices as a political symbol and the rise of the Symbolist movement that she reads in both the nineteenth-century novels and the graphic arts. I agree with Emery regarding the strategic part literature played in nineteenth-century debates over the meaning and nature of the religious edifices. But if we are to retrieve the revolutionary ambitions and the aesthetic inventions of the radical artists, first we need to focus our attention on the edifices after which they modeled their 'graphic cathedrals,' and then situate these paper edifices as participating in the central political and ideological debates of the late nineteenth century.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the complex antiquarian, republican, and revolutionary discourses generated around the Gothic cathedrals slowly traded their religious character for a secular or even communal identity. While these discourses allowed the medieval religious monuments to continue to occupy contradictory but privileged cultural and social positions, two structures stylistically distinct from the Gothic cathedral—St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, and especially the Sacré-Coeur in Montmartre—emerged as the monumental icons preferred by radical artists who wanted to unsettle the transcendent authority of religion. The increased iconographic presence of these two domed basilicas at the turn of the century testifies to a larger trend in the

[348] Elizabeth Emery, *Romancing the Cathedral: Gothic Architecture in Fin-de-Siècle French Culture* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2001).

radical graphic arts, which moves critical attention away from the *agents* to the *structures* of oppression. Here, I use the word 'structure' in a double sense: first in reference to religion as a social and political system, with histories and engrained practices that inform the experiences of those that live under it; and second, in reference to its architectural markers that embody and encompass those histories and practices. Surpassing the self-effacement inherent to the labor of the symbol—to represent something other than itself—the monuments that stand in for religious authority in the anti-authoritarian print culture allow room for a hermeneutical excess that fuel their political instruction. This excess is registered as an anomaly, a strangeness invested in the representation of the monument. Attention to this representational surplus shows that the labor of these graphic basilicas is not only symbolic, but revelatory, passing information about and judgment on the abstract *structures* they symbolize. This trend is particularly visible in the works of a group of radical artists who tried to save critiques of religious authority from the monopoly of bourgeois anticlericalism.

The Body of the Monument

Some artists achieved this by enduing the obviously inanimate, brick-and-mortar religious monuments with a capacity for action. Depicted with human or animal limbs, these representations restore the responsibility of the operations attributed to the human representatives of authority to the *authority* itself. The political pedagogy of this rhetoric of animism concretizes a drive for power, domination, and control. One such image was produced by the politically engaged young graphic artist Cesare Giri (known professionally as Giris), who had left his native Italy for the French capital at the turn

of the century. This image was one of many that together constitute a special issue of *L'Assiette*, titled *Pape et Papabili,* conceived for the occasion of the recent death of Pope Leo XIII.[349] Giris' nightmarish depiction of St. Peter's Basilica immediately parts ways from the others, which, despite their modernist pictorial styles, follow the convention of satirical attacks directed at those who represent the Church.[350] Their colorful punches thrown against scheming, corrupt, and gluttonous cardinals who are ready to murder each other for the seat of St. Peter stand in stark opposition to Giris' monochrome rendition of the monumental structure that resolutely occupies the center-spread of the issue. [Figure 2.13.] A small caption on the right edge of the image reads: "You are rock, and upon this rock I will build my church." [Matthew, 16:18] This gospel line is indeed a 'foundational stone,' upon which Catholicism's claim for the primacy of the See of Rome rests. The dark silhouette of Giris' St. Peter's Basilica rises over this statement, and faces us against a sky shadowed by the rigorous marks of the crayon, which barely allow the discernment of the menacing birds that occupy it.

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[349] Giris (Cesare Giris) et al., "Pape et Papabili," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 121 (July 25, 1903).

[350] Clearly the young artist's design made a positive impression, as just four months later *L'Assiette au Beurre* would entrust a whole issue on Papacy titled *Le Pape* to the political and creative vison of Giris. Although the issue was conceived around the Pope, Giris once again chose to monumentalize the inanimate markers of Rome's authority over polemical representations of the Pope as a fallible person. In this album he does not spare any symbols of the office, moving from papal ring and slipper to the famous tiara, from papal coffers to the throne. One particular image juxtaposes two columns, one topped with St. Mark the Evangelist's winged lion against the Capitoline Wolf nursing Romulus and Remus to use monuments that embodied the double nature of the See of Rome claiming dominion over both the religious and the profane. Ibid.

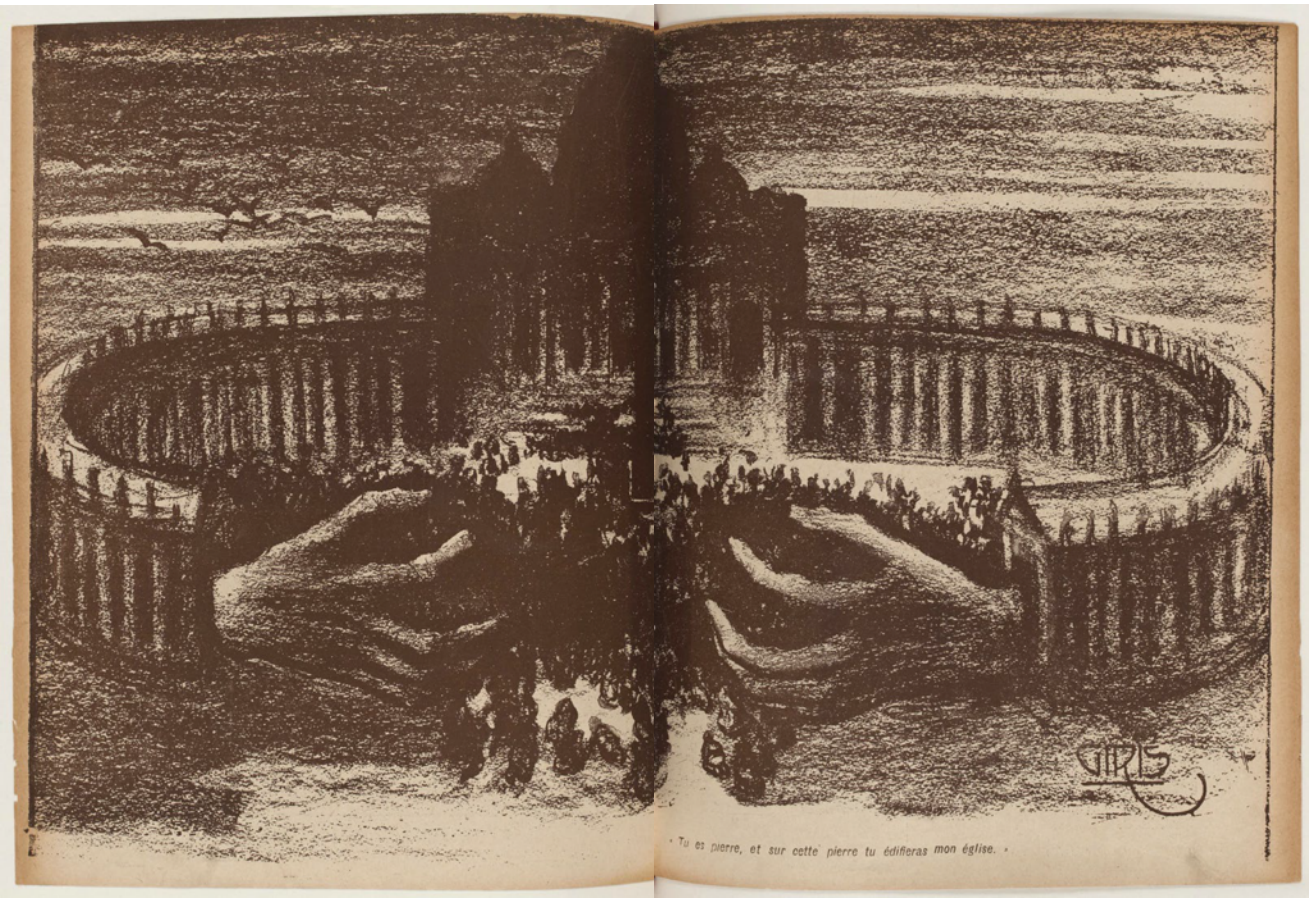

Figure 2.13. Cesare Giris, "Tu es pierre, et sur cette pierre…" in Giris et al., "Pape et Papabili," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 121 (July 25, 1903). (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

The alterity of this depiction is completed by the hands that grow at the ends of the iconic semicircular *Bernini* colonnade, which reach to capture multitudes in their bony clasp. The movement of the stone limbs—which no longer evoke the 'maternal arms of the Mother Church,' as their seventeenth-century creator had intended—imbue the hollow openings of the orderly façade with a monstrous appetite. The Vatican Obelisk that marks the center of the plaza is reduced to a nondescript black rod, barely able to remind viewers that the authority of the Church rose *not only* on the remains of St. Peter,

but also on the ruins of an imperial circus. The aesthetic mastery of its architecture and the potency of the religious myth on which the monumental pride of the famous Basilica rests merge under the granular gloom of Giris' lithographic crayon that portrays a single will to conquer and dominate.

Two years after the *Pape et Papabili*, Giris' compatriot Gabriele Galantara assumed responsibility for the creation of a thematic issue titled *Le Vatican.*[351] At that point, Galantara had already made a name for himself as a successful graphic artist with strong political commitments via the internationally popular anti-capitalist, anti-Catholic, and anti-militarist caricatures he published in Italian satirical journal he cofounded, *L'Asino.*[352] The popularity of the journal had led Vatican City to ban its circulation in 1901, and even prompted attempts to curtail its reach among international Catholic communities. *L'Assiette*'s decision to actively seek out collaboration with the most popular artist of Italian anticlericalism for its Vatican issue should be noted not only as a calculated impertinence, but also as an instance testifying to the solidarity and dialogue between international artists working against the Catholic Church.

Most of Galantara's anticlerical oeuvre in *L'Asino* is built on the irreverent lampooning of the Catholic clergy. However, the cover image he designed for *L'Assiette* focuses on St. Peter's Basilica and, excepting the stylistic differences between the artists, shares a strong conceptual resemblance with Giris' vision. [Figure 2.14.] Galantara transforms St. Peter's Basilica into a violent creature, half man, half building, which crushes under its weight a poor man as its 'hands' strangle its victim to grab the riches released from his gaping mouth. Galantara's design seems to straddle the

[351] Gabriele Galantara, "Le Vatican," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 242 (November 18, 1905).
[352] Dixmier, Lalouette, and Pasamonik, *La République et l'Église*, 44–46.

conventions of anticlerical caricature and the new graphic vocabulary of the politics of monumentality that Giris' image represents.

Figure 2.14. Gabriele Galantara, "Le Vatican," in *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 242 (November 18, 1905). (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

The clerical body as the vessel of political commentary is still discernible—but now subordinated to the nexus of its radical recognizability: the monumental 'face.' The famous façade of the Basilica is monstrous; its pediment is a nose, its windows glare like a couple of beady eyes, and its columns are deployed as large teeth carrying the blood oozing from the red letters that spell *Le Vatican.* Then again, the arms and the hands have neither the architectural rigidity nor the symbolic weight of the unsettling animism of Giris' colonnades of two years prior. Galantara's monumental arms are

more symbolic than iconic, caught in the collaborative activities of extraction and seizure. Their subject is not domination and control, but the traditional critique of clerical greed.

The first articulation of this iconography antedates Giris' grim view of St. Peter's Basilica, and was created by Galantara in 1902 for an issue of *L'Asino.* [Figure 2.15.]

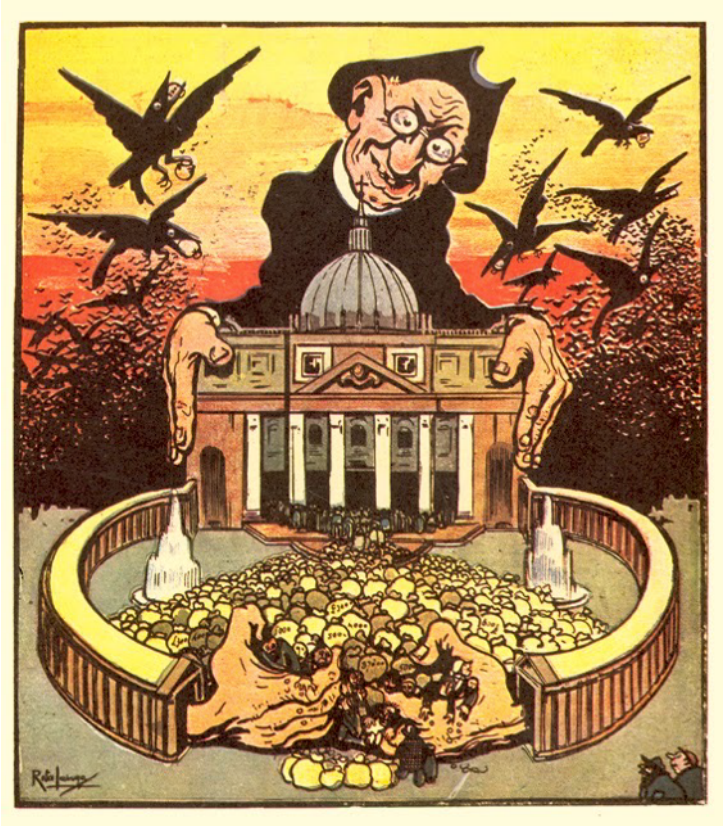

Figure 2.15. Gabriele Galantara, "Les Corbeaux," in *L' Asino,* Color Lithograph. 1902. (PrìncipiePrincípi.blogspot).

In this initial conception, the Basilica is cradled between the hands of a colossal priest whose presence guides the violent grab for wealth that takes place between the semicircular 'arms' of the architecture. The giant man of religion is surrounded by a flock of crows—a popular symbol for clergy—carrying money sacks in their beaks. The

body of the clergy and the hierarchical system of oppression that he serves are in contact but separate, perhaps excepting the formal dialogue between his giant hands and the hands that grow at the ends of the Bernini colonnade. It is clear that Giris' design for *L'Assiette* in 1903 was based on the young Italian artist's knowledge of his established compatriot's work in *L'Asino*. However, the stylistic abstraction of Giris makes no room for the playfulness of popular satire—note the safety of the two onlookers who peek in at the right-hand corner in Galantara's design—to create a graphic yet immediate confrontation with the religious authority's center of gravity: the foundation of its legitimacy.

As Galantara's vision of St. Peter's Basilica was circulating in Rome, a striking poster appeared on the walls of Paris with semiotics that similarly hinged on the contact between a clerical body and a domed monument. Deliberately dark and aggressively confrontational, this Parisian poster must have stood out among others trying to sell the passers-by the colorful commodities they featured. Yet, this one was also peddling something: a particular brand of republican anticlericalism as represented by the publication *La Lanterne.*[353] [Figure 2.16.] It features a large clerical figure who stares the viewer down from the domes of the Sacré-Coeur on which he has affixed himself with the might of his predatory claws. His green-tinted face is distorted in a monstrous scowl intensified by the dramatic lighting. The tail of his cassock shrouds the city in darkness as a swarm of crows rushes from the distance to expand its reach. A supernatural wind blows out his cape and transforms it into a pair of batwings. I have

[353] The artist of the poster, Eugène Ogé, was indeed an established *affichiste* whose light-hearted cartoonish advertisement posters had promoted mustard, cigarette papers, and chocolate to the Parisians for years.

already mentioned the attribution of animal qualities to men of power as a strategy of effective debasement. However, the bat-like features of the Sacré-Coeur's dark visitor do not restore him to the realm of the profane; on the contrary, they render him otherworldly.[354] Laloutte identifies two distinct emotional economies active in anticlerical images of the *fin-de-siècle*. The first one channels laughter to mock and debase the Church, and the second tries to enlist the audience onto its side by evoking repulsion and fear.[355] With the alarmist exclamation "Here is the Enemy!" that reproduces Léon Gambetta's famous cry from 1877,[356] Ogé's poster falls under the second category.

[354] There is no echo of the popular laughter that the anticlerical caricatures rested on, but it carries the echoes of a tradition of fear that associates animals such as snakes, goats, crows, and spiders with the devil. Laloutte mentions that the iconography of devil resurfaced in the Third Republic to describe the servants of god. Lalouette, "Iconoclastie et Caricature," 55.
[355] Laloutte shares this as a general impression, and admits that a systematic analysis and explanation of this division remains to be carried out. Ibid., 56.
[356] Uttered during an address to a conservative Chamber of Deputies in May 1877, Gambetta's "le cléricalisme. Voilà l'ennemi" became the rallying cry for official anticlericalism after the republicans secured power.

Figure 2.16. Eugène Ogé. "Voilà l'ennemi" poster for *La Lanterne, Journal Républicain Anti-clérical,* 1902. (Wikimedia Commons).

But a lot had changed since Gambetta's warning, which was uttered at the height of the Moral Order, when the Republic faced the danger of an impending monarchist restoration backed by the religious authority. Conceived at a time when the Republic was secure, Ogé's poster follows *La Lanterne*'s editorial policy, and blurs the line between anticlericalism and doom-mongering.[357] Perhaps due to its clear propagandistic tone, the visual mechanisms of the poster were seen as self-evident by scholars, and this, arguably the most popular 'illustration' of French anticlericalism, has not been analyzed

[357] As was its aim, the poster stirred the emotions of its audiences. Capitalizing on the mass interest the image received, *La Lanterne* offered productions of the poster for a modest price. Although it is impossible to say how successful it was in convincing the people to act against the clerical menace, it definitely received a strong reaction from the enemy camp. The posters were torn into pieces by angry passers-by, and the Catholic newspaper *La Croix* voiced its outrage in seeing a resemblance between the vampire-cleric of Ogé's poster and Cardinal Richard, Archbishop of Paris. Dixmier, Lalouette, and Pasamonik, *La République et l'Église*, 87.

alongside its politically more radical contemporaries.[358]

All these visual elements—the giant cleric, a domed temple, and the dark birds—are also present in Galantara's image for *L'Asino.* But Galantara's poster still functions at a satirical register. The offense of his giant clergy is greed, yet he is still a mortal with an aging body and bad eyesight. Although his lower body is hidden from view, the round plaza filled with sacks of coins gives him a gargantuan appetite. Conversely, the malevolence of Ogé's priest is not circumstantial but essential. He represents an evil that is not human, but absolute. This is also the dilemma of *La Lanterne*'s alarmism. It endows the enemy with a metaphysical force that nullifies the secular Republic's claim to represent an enlightened rationalism against the Church's myths and dogmas. A few years prior to this image, Henri Lavergne likened the dark scaffolds of the Basilica's construction to "a gigantic and pathetic Jesuit hat," which was waiting like a sinister 'mushroom' to spread its spores across Paris below, to propagate and take over the city.[359] But Lavergne's frightful vision had a brilliant end: the Dawn of the Revolution arrives resplendent between the white clouds of March (an allusion to the Commune's anniversary?) and expels the hostile fungi of reaction from the Parisian soil.[360] This was in line with the allegorical formula of the *libre-pensée* tradition which often delivered its anticlerical message as a struggle between light and darkness. Combative and self-assured, the representatives of this tradition always stressed the predetermined victory of science and progress. For instance, conceived at a time when the separation of the

[358] See Guillaume Doizy and Jean-Bernard Lalaux, *A bas la Calotte!: La Caricature Anticléricale et la Séparation des Églises et de l'État* (Paris : Alternatives, 2005), 31; and Dixmier, Lalouette, and Pasamonik, *La République et l'Église*, 87.
[359] Henri Lavergne, "A La Butte-Montmartre," *Le Radical* 15, no. 327 (November 23, 1895).
[360] Ibid.

Church and the State was still a distant ideal, a caricature by Daumier depicted a band of clergy incapable of exhausting the torch of *libre-pensée*. [Figure 2.17.]

Figure 2.17. Honoré Daumier, "Répétition générale du concile," in *Le Charivari*, Lithograph, (27 October 1869). (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

On the other hand, at the brink of its realization with the Law of Separation, *La Lanterne* magnified its adversary to a size and power that could occlude the sun.[361] In probably the only in-depth semiotic study of the famous poster, Pierre Fresnault-Deruelle establishes a kinship between Ogé's rhetoric and the 'conspiratorial' imagery that one usually identifies with extreme right-wing propaganda, which similarly projects the political and social ills onto a hyperbolic representation of an—often Jewish or Freemason—*Other*.[362] Hence, "capable of upsetting the natural order by converting the dawn into dusk," the vampire of clericalism justifies beating the drums of 1792: "The

[361] Pierre Fresnault-Deruelle, "L'Apothéose de Satan (Ou le Vampire Pantocrator)," *Communication langages* 201, no. 3 (November 6, 2019): 6–7.
[362] Ibid., 27.

Fatherland is [once again] in danger!"[363]

One might be tempted to see an affective agreement between Giris' dark basilica and Ogé's vampiric priest. Both step outside the tradition of carnivalesque debasement that locates the workings of the profane at the heart of the sacred. As such, they retain the power of religion, but invert its nature. However, Ogé trades the political export of Giris' juxtaposition between the monument and the masses for a supernatural force alighted on the Basilica that has lost its monumentality to serve as an elaborate perch.[364] His Medusa gaze targets the individual audience with a personalized emotional directness that should be seen as a predecessor to James Montgomery Flagg's "*I WANT YOU!*" In other words, while Giris' image is a revelatory identification of the authority with its histories and institutions, i.e. its monumentality, Ogé's republican anticlericalism points its finger—with a decontextualized battle cry, "*Voila L'Ennemi!*"—towards a transcendent evil as the culprit of the social and political ills its audience suffers from.

Cathedrals and Crowds

Conversely, the central spread of an issue Steinlen conceived and executed for *L'Assiette* is a striking example of the anti-authoritarian iconography that returns attention to the foundations of the religion by pitching a monument against the masses.[365] Known for his commercial posters and the sizable mark he left on the cultural

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[363] Ibid., 12. The political use of the Third Republic's constant call for an anticlerical battle will be analyzed in later sections.

[364] Alternatively, one can think of the monumental 'perch' as a pedestal, over which the representation of the real power triumphantly rests. Fresnault-Dereuelle notes this function by reminding us that the idea of 'ascension' was inherent to the devout architecture, which saw these structures as "pedestals of transcendence" on which "the divine was elevated." Fresnault-Deruelle, "L'Apothéose de Satan," 7.

[365] The occasion of the issue was the one-hundredth birthday of the late novelist and national hero Victor

portrait of *fin-de-siècle* Montmartre, Steinlen was closely involved in post-Commune anarchist and radical socialist milieus and contributed regularly to their publications, including but not limited to *La Feuille*, *Le Chambard Socialiste*, and *Le Père Peinard.* In this particular composition, Steinlen transforms the Romano-Byzantine Basilica that was rising in his neighborhood into a spider that traps the faceless multitudes under its web. [Figure 2.18.] Often analyzed in relation to Ogé's poster for *La Lanterne,* the divergent rhetoric of Steinlen's image is muted by scholarship that prefers the semantic directness of the other to speak on behalf of both, and presents them as interchangeable illustrations for republican anticlericalism.[366] Indeed, upon first glance there is a conceptual similarity between the wide 'wings' of Ogé's vampiric priest and the spider web that extends from the arachnid body of Steinlen's Basilica. Both reach back to the symbolic vernacular of medieval bestiaries that assigned moral characters to the animals. As Lalouette notes, the animals associated with the devil in the middle ages ironically became the markers of God's servants in the nineteenth century.[367] In this regard, both images show the seat of moral authority to have deviated from itself to the point of becoming its Other. But while the similarities between the two end here, their

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Hugo. Apart from the cover that depicts the apotheosized novelist despairing over a river of blood, all the images are devoid of Hugo's likeness. Instead, they depict scenes of human suffering and mass violence perpetuated by the authorities in a limited palette of black, white, and red. It is among the most impressive issues of *L'Assiette,* and testifies to the liberty the artists enjoyed while executing an issue completely entrusted to their aesthetic and conceptual visions. Théophile Alexandre Steinlen, "La Vision de Hugo," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 47 (February 26, 1902).

[366] For instance, in failing to distinguish between the literary basilica Zola portrays in his *Paris*, Ogé's vampire-nest temple, and Steinlen's prints that depict the Sacré-Coeur, Emery groups all of them together as expressions of republican anticlericalism. Elizabeth Emery, "The Power of the Pen: Émile Zola Takes on the Sacré-Cœur Basilica," in *The Documentary Impulse in French Literature*, ed. Buford Norman, vol. 28, French Literature Series (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001), 70–71. The catalog of 'anticlerical' caricatures edited under the direction of Michel Dixmier similarly connects the two images by presenting them in succession, with little commentary on Steinlen's design that can allow readers to discern their differences. Dixmier, Lalouette, and Pasamonik, *La République et l'Église*, 87–89.

[367] Lalouette, "Iconoclastie et Caricature," 55–56.

differences multiply with each critical glance cast at them.

Figure 2.18. Théophile Alexandre Steinlen, 'Sacré-Coeur' in "La Vision de Hugo," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 47 (February 26, 1902). (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

Steinlen's Sacré-Coeur is not a prop. On the contrary, it is the primary agent of the composition. The artist offers the structure as the monumental emblem of an ancient and hierarchical organization by activating its formal qualities within nineteenth-century political-architectural symbolism. Rising over the multitudes, the dome of the Sacré-Coeur doubles as the papal tiara, which is reminiscent of Zola's choice of the dome as a synecdoche of St. Peter's Basilica and its embodiment of authority in *Rome*: "that dome [...] reigning over the City as a giant king that nothing could shake."[368] In Steinlen's Parisian counterpart, the rounded insignia of the sovereign sits over a set of

[368] As quoted in Emery, *Romancing the Cathedral*, 67.

large eyes. In an article from 1888, revolutionary newspaper *L'Attaque* had described the Sacré-Coeur as an inherently violent structure, like a new 'Gibbet of Montfaucon,' with *eyes* threateningly fixed on the laboring city.[369] The analogy between the medieval gibbet and the expiatory Basilica in Montmartre is ripe for political commentary that prefigures Foucault's characterization of the public display of punishment as "a political ritual" that does not "re-establish justice," but instead "restores [the] sovereignty at its most spectacular."[370] Steinlen almost translates this sovereign capacity for punishment and discipline in his composition. Retaining the authoritative elevation of the temple's location, he shows the monument as an omnipresent expiation that is also omniscient; the reach of its gaze reflects the expanse of its web and disarms future transgressions.

The sovereign nature Steinlen and the other detractors ascribed to the Basilica was not accidental. In order to instigate popular enthusiasm and achieve a sustained flow of donations, but more importantly to give the monument a political character, in 1878 the Committee of the National Vow launched the *souscription des pierres* (the stone subscription) that promised the donors a material sense of ownership. The idea was a modern revival of a medieval practice, but the local scope of this historical predecessor was expanded to reach the national borders with the help of mass communication technologies.[371] In other words, modernity was rallied to turn the country into a large medieval town, enacting civic participation in the form of a pledge for national repentance. This ingenious marketing strategy offered families and

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[369] "En Plein Sacré Coeur" – *L'Attaque: Organe Socialiste Révolutionnaire.* – Year 1, no. 7 (August 8, 1888). A morbid structure sitting on a small hill, the Gibbet of Montfaucon was the main gallows of the French kings. Display of the executed bodies as a warning for the population was one of its primary functions.
[370] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 47–49.
[371] Jonas, "Sacred Tourism and Secular Pilgrimage," 106.

individuals the opportunity to sponsor a piece of the monument; if they paid the right price, that piece would carry the identity of its benefactor before the coveted gaze of generations of visitors.

Besides the obvious economic advantages, the donations provided a source of legitimacy for the project. The publications of the Basilica justified its "truly national character" by publicizing the contributions from all parishes, all towns, all dioceses of France, and from 'all classes' of the French nation.[372] In other words, even before its completion, the temple of the National Vow was promoted as erasing the deep divisions of French society, bringing together the urban and the rural, the upper and lower classes as a single congregation-nation. The Dominican priest and orator Jacques-Marie-Louis Monsabré[373] explicated this aim in his fiery treatise on the need for a national monument dedicated to the Sacred Heart: "Scattered all over France, we need a material sign of our union in shared repentance, hope, and understanding. The Temple of the Sacred Heart to be built in the very heart of our capital, will be this sign."[374] On the other hand, resting its foundations on the demands the Lord had relayed to sister Alacoque in the seventeenth century, the building of the Basilica was also presented as the renewal of the contract between the French nation and God, which the former had broken off before suffering the consequences of its decision.[375] The hymns from the songbooks for the

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[372] *Guide Officiel Du Pèlerin*, 46–47.

[373] Monsabré also coined the slogan of the Church of the National Vow that featured monumentally in the interior of the Basilica and more modestly on many commemorative objects created about it: "*Christo ejusque sacratissimo Cordi Gallia pœnitens et devota*." Ibid., 29.

[374] His treatise is reproduced in *Bulletin de l'Oeuvre*, 14–17, see especially page 17; it also appeared in Jonquet, *Montmartre*, 150–57.

[375] Jonas cites that the Catholic men of letters in the Third Republic evoked the language of covenant, articulating the French chosen people. This association between Israel and the French reached an extent that conflated the Merovingian king Clovis I with Old Testament Abraham. This 'pact of Clovis' also made its way into the official organ of National Vow. See "Le Drapeau du Sacré-Coeur," in *Bulletin du Voeu national au Sacré-Coeur de Jésus* [Bulletin], 23, n. 8 (April 15, 1898), 313, and "Venite Adoremus"

pilgrims of the Sacred Heart make this claim explicit, either by identifying the altar of the Basilica where the 'ancient contract' between God and the people will be renewed, or, more directly, by referring to the building as the 'Ark of the Covenant' itself.[376]

The address of the archbishop penned for the inauguration ceremony in 1891 masterfully and explicitly wove together the history and the present, the bible and contemporary politics. This double register was reflected in the cardinal's characterization of the construction project as both "Christian *and* patriotic,"[377] confessing that despite attempts to limit the Sacré-Coeur's symbolism to the realm of religion, it was by its very nature a political statement made in stone. For an attentive audience, the political and worldly export of the cardinal's official address must have been unmistakable. Organized around the idea of the disastrous consequences of secular arrogance, the cardinal offered submission to the Church as the only solution for political and social problems.[378] The monument that was argued to be bringing back the

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in *Bulletin* 9, (December 10, 1884), 947. As referenced in Jonas, "Monument as Ex-Voto, Monument as Historiosophy," 488 and 491.

[376] Laure Boulet, ed., "Le Temple Du Sacré-Coeur," and "La Consécration," in *Cantiques de Montmartre: Le Sacré-Coeur de Jésus* (Paris: Jules Vic, 1880), 47–49 and 50–51. The songbooks, such as the one these two are from, were ubiquitous in the giftshops of the Butte. For example, according to its title page, this one was sold at "Mme Soudinos' souvenir shop for thirty cents."

[377] Archbishop Cardinal Richard Guibert, "Lettre Pastorale de Son Éminence Le Cardinal Richard, Archevêque de Paris Pour Annoncer La Bénédiction de l'Église Du Voeu National Au Sacré-Coeur," in *Lettre de Notre Très Saint Père Le Pape Léon XIII à Son Eminence Le Cardinal Richard, Archevêque de Paris, à l'occasion de La Bénédiction de l'église Votive Du Sacré-Coeur; Lettre Pastorale de Son Éminence Le Cardinal Richard, Archevêque de Paris Pour Annoncer La Bénédiction de l'Église Du Voeu National Au Sacré-Coeur; Amende Honorable et Consécration de La France Au Sacré-Coeur de Jésus* (Paris: Imprimeur de l'Archevêché, 1891), 11.

[378] Ibid., 12–13. The Archbishop's speech was also published by the archdiocese under the moniker given to the National Vow: *Amende Honorable,* which referred to a pre-revolutionary ritual punishment of public humiliation whereby the offender would be dragged barefoot by the executioner with a rope around their neck to the church, where he would kneel and beg pardon from God and the King for his offense. Archidiocèse de Paris, "Amende Honorable et Consécration de La France Au Sacré-Coeur de Jésus," in *Lettre de Notre Très Saint Père Le Pape Léon XIII à Son Eminence Le Cardinal Richard, Archevêque de Paris, à l'occasion de La Bénédiction de l'église Votive Du Sacré-Coeur; Lettre Pastorale de Son Éminence Le Cardinal Richard, Archevêque de Paris Pour Annoncer La Bénédiction de l'Église Du Voeu National Au Sacré-Coeur; Amende Honorable et Consécration de La France Au Sacré-Coeur de Jésus* (Paris: Imprimeur de l'Archevêché, 1891), 20–23.

shattered national unity was once again utilized to draw a harsh distinction between the pious congregation, due to gather before the unfinished Basilica in a few days, and the rest of the population. The Sacré-Coeur as contract exclusively involved the French citizens who adhered to the Roman Catholic Church and recognized 1871 as the act of a transcendent and sovereign authority, revealing not only the dangerously narrow conception of national identity and belonging during the first decades of the Third Republic, but also how that belonging necessitated the erasure of the memory of democratic immanence.

These discourses on the social and metaphysical significance of the Basilica turned it into a double contract, bringing Hobbes and Moses under a single dome-crown with a shared understanding: there can be 'no peace without subjection.' In other words, first, as a social contract that would consolidate the French nation following a 'civil war,' where the individual contributions became 'signatures' to the new contract; and second, as a covenant between God and the French people, in which the latter communicated its penitence and devotion in return for the favor and the protection of the former.

Yet, Steinlen denies a national character to the monument alongside the fiction of a willing submission to authority. The spatial references to Montmartre and Paris, which we find in the poster for *La Lanterne,* are absent here. There are no red-tiled roofs, distant monuments, or even an isolated windmill—wherever the web reaches, there is a nondescript space filled with thousands of faceless bodies. As opposed to the republican anticlericalism that subordinates its discourse to national borders, Steinlen's abstracted landscape accrues an almost philosophical universalism. What organizes this

space is the web that effectuates the overarching administrative network of this gargantuan institution and its missions that fuel colonialism, recalling the longitude-latitude grids that cover the globe from one end to the other. Its absolute reach also gives tangible form to the invasive extent of religious authority over the myriad aspects of social, political, and private life.

Ironically, this damning representation by Steinlen was a reception justified by the political and stylistic choices made in the construction of the Sacré-Coeur. As I have shown, the design of the Basilica was determined by ambitions that dictated its characteristic qualities—"the monumentality of the proportions [and] the long-distance visibility of forms"[379]—which in turn inspired Steinlen's architectural monster. Finding merit in its identification as a mosque by its harshest nineteenth-century critics, François Loyer suggests that in addition to its Byzantine sources, Abadie's project can be seen as congruent with their successor—classical Ottoman architecture—and especially with "the mosques of the Golden Crescent [sic] which so powerfully reshaped the landscape of the Bosphorus [sic]."[380] If we leave aside Loyer's disorientation in Istanbul's topography, indeed the shared preoccupation with monumentality, the dialogic potency of their locations, their evocations of victory and dominance, and their explicit embeddedness in politics can effect a kinship between the *selâtin* mosques of Istanbul and the Sacré-Coeur of Paris beyond their domed silhouettes. The Sacré-Coeur monumentalized the sovereignty of a practical political theology. As such, the Basilica indeed communicates what Steinlen attributes to it: command and control.

Steinlen's sovereign basilica also echoes the architectural-political history

[379] Loyer, "Sacré Coeur of Montmartre," 424.
[380] Ibid.

Victor Hugo sketches in his *Notre-Dame of Paris*. According to Hugo's architectural historicism, the Romanesque was authoritarian, reflecting a drive for unity that was absolute and tyrannical. It was a barrel-vault cage that imprisoned the people, or worse, that *denied* the people: "In it you everywhere sense authority, unity, the impenetrable and the absolute […] everywhere the priest, never the man; everywhere the caste, never the people."[381] Hugo traces the origins of this "military, theocratic discipline" to the Byzantine Empire.[382] It is a significant coincidence that Steinlen's depiction of the Romano-Byzantine Basilica was published in an album dedicated to the memory of the famous novelist. Steinlen's ideological position would probably make him more sympathetic to the anarchist celebrations of the Gothic cathedrals as an emblem of communal spirit and labor than Hugo's association of them with the bourgeoisie's historical triumph over the 'military-theocratic' authority he associates with the Romanesque (and by extension, the Byzantine). Yet he would still share the novelist's secular reading of the religious architecture that would without a doubt classify the Sacré-Coeur with the 'tyrannical,' an inheritor of the "immutability, the horror of progress, [and] the preservation of traditional" against the popular movements' push for "progress, originality, opulence, [and] perpetual motion."[383]

The crowd in Steinlen's composition is unable to perform the historical role Hugo attributes to the popular masses. Rather than being agents of a revolutionary push that would replace the oppressive monument with democratic expression, they are surrendered to its hegemonic pull. The movement is strictly unidirectional and leads

[381] Victor Hugo, *Notre-Dame of Paris* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), 192–93.
[382] Ibid., 127.
[383] Ibid., 195.

their undistinguishable bodies into the architectural belly of the monument. While the web orders the pictorial space, the critical elevation of the monstrous cathedral organizes the crowd with its vertical authority. The compositional economy consciously dramatizes the domination of the singular over the multiple, and the *faciality* Steinlen affords to the monument heightens the *faceless* homogeneity of the crowd. Susanna Elm notes that Gustave Le Bon—"the controversial father of crowd psychology"—classifies the religious crowds as "*homogenous*," and explicitly excludes them from his work that focuses on their threatening others, the "*heterogenous*" crowds.[384] Steinlen presents us with the role of religious authority in the taming of the pathological excess and the destructive force that Le Bon attributes to the heterogenous crowds. Under the web of religious authority, the crowd in Steinlen's print is the 'homogenous crowd' *par excellence.*[385] Alarmingly pessimistic for a revolutionary artist, the taming of the multitude by the hegemonic web of the monument exhausts all routes to revolution.

Steinlen's allegorical commentary on the religious authority's power to attract and order the masses had a literal counterpart in the mass pilgrimages of the late nineteenth century. Despite the legal and political victories of official anticlericalism and the scientific and philosophical challenges to organized religion and its promises, the closing decades of the century witnessed an astounding rush to the sacred sites. Decidedly different to the medieval and pre-modern practices of pilgrimage by its scale and organization, the most popular destination of this sacred tourism industry was

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[384] Susanna Elm, "Captive Crowds: Pilgrims and Martyrs," in *Crowds*, ed. Jeffrey T. Schnapp and Matthew Tiews (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), 134.

[385] Gustave Le Bon's use of homogeneity and heterogeneity, anonymity and identity seem to be contradictory at times. For our discussion it is important to note that the psychological 'homogeneity' that the heterogenous crowd attains following an almost instantaneous contagion by a single emotion or idea should not be mistaken for the unthreatening and naturalized homogeneity of the religious crowd. Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1896), 164–70.

Lourdes.[386] Promoted as a site of miracles, Lourdes attracted flocks of believers who spent their earnings on donations, talismans, ex-votos, and souvenirs, in hope that the illnesses and troubles that afflicted them or their loved ones would be left behind alongside the testimonies to their generosity.

But the pilgrimages offered much more than mere financial gain. Elm situates modern pilgrimage at the tension(s) "between the crowd's ephemeral nature and the religion's archaism and *longue durée,* between the 'modernity' of mass mobilization and the ancient lure of the miraculous."[387] We can push Elm's observation a bit further and argue that the modern pilgrimage promises a recipe to defuse these tensions. It presents the ephemeral and shapeless crowd tamed under the eternal and singular transcendent authority by the modern tools of mobilization. I mentioned earlier that the Sacré-Coeur Basilica was conceived to attract a large number of pilgrims, and that all the key decisions about its plan and location were subordinated to this future function, which was initiated shortly after its first stone was laid. As early as March 1876—just before the Commune's fifth anniversary—Archbishop Guibert inaugurated a temporary chapel by the construction site to start the pilgrimages to the Butte. Within a year, tens of thousands of pilgrims from all corners of the country took the railroads built by the capitalist-industrial expansion to testify to God's hand in history and to repent "for the materialism and the decadent opulence of France."[388] Pleased with the volume of the pilgrimages to the Butte, Archbishop Guibert rhetorically asked: "how can one explain

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[386] Lourdes received more than thirty thousand pilgrims in 1870, and in two decades the number of its visitors multiplied fivefold to reach one hundred and fifty-four thousand in 1895. Maylis Curie, *The Representation of the Cathedral in French Visual Culture, 1870–1914* (Ph.D. diss, University of Edinburgh, 2006), 22–23.
[387] Elm, "Captive Crowds," 133.
[388] Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity*, 315.

the irresistible pull that brings pious crowds to a humble chapel that did not exist until a short time ago?" His answer was ready: it proves that the "Heart of the Lord" had made its home on this hill.[389]

The pilgrimages to the Sacré-Coeur fanned the flames of enthusiasm for construction, which, as a byproduct, brought a steady stream of donations. But more importantly, by providing an alternative image of the people in the age of mass politics, it also doubled as an exhibition of 'the numbers' for the conservative ideologies. Jonas mentions that "no one—not the trade unions, not the major political parties—could put more people in the streets of the Republic than the Catholic hierarchy."[390] Although the political history of France since the Revolution had been a cavalcade of personal rules twice interrupted by 'the people,' it was too late to return to a monarchist past when 'the people' was not a significant political variant. Furthermore, even as "a perverse version of popular sovereignty," the two decades of Louis Napoléon's Second Empire had made mass politics an irreversible reality of French politics.[391] It is impossible to dismiss the political agility that christened this location, which had once cradled the crowd that initiated the Commune, as a pilgrimage site of a national cult. The political and scientific assessments of the popular crowds after the Paris Commune testify to the observation that the "more the fourth estate approaches the institutions of power, the more phantasmic and monstrous [its representation] becomes."[392] The pilgrimage readily offered a didactic counter-representation with a favorable crowd where bodies gathered

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[389] *Guide Officiel Du Pèlerin*, 36–38.
[390] Jonas, "Sacred Tourism and Secular Pilgrimage," 101–2 and 104.
[391] Sheri Berman, *Democracy and Dictatorship in Europe: From the Ancien Régime to the Present Day* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019), 107–8. Berman reminds the reader that the constitution of the Second Empire "made the emperor responsible to the French People."
[392] Stefan Jonsson, "Society Degree Zero: Christ, Communism, and the Madness of Crowds in the Art of James Ensor," *Representations* 75, no. 1 (2001), 6.

to perform their submission to a higher authority.

As noted by Jason Frank, the transfer of authority from the individual body of the ruler to the anonymous and multitudinal 'people' caused "an aesthetic-political dilemma" of representation.[393] To the two-centuries-old question of "whether any representation could adequately and legitimately contain [the people]," Frank offers the 'living image of the people': "incarnations of the people's authority, sublime expressions of the vitality and significance of popular will," that one glimpses in crowds, assemblies, mass protests.[394] We can extend this analysis along with my assessments in the first chapter, and remember that the location of this stone-and-steel double contract was occupied by such a 'living image of people' in March of 1871. In other words, within an aesthetic-political economy: even if it did not explicitly reference it in its architectural discourse, the Basilica of the Sacré-Coeur attempted to give a spectacular form to the transcendent and sovereign authority (of Christ) and a social contract based on its recognition, by banishing the recent memory of the Commune as a 'living image of the people.'

In his short yet poignant commentary on the relationship between the Catholic Church and the crowds, Elias Canetti suggests that "[t]here has never been a state on earth capable of defending itself in so many ways against the crowd. Compared with the Church, all other rulers seem poor amateurs."[395] In the words of Canetti, historical

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[393] Jason Frank, "The Living Image of the People," *Theory & Event* 18, no. 1 (2015), n.p.

[394] Of course Frank here does not have in mind "nationalist torch light parades and state-orchestrated spectacles of domination." He is particularly thinking with the 'living image of people that is not the articulation of 'a unitary articulation of the sovereign will' but "a surplus of democratic immanence." Ibid. A conceptually and theoretically very similar argument can be found in *Crowds and Democracy: The Idea and Image of the Masses from Revolution to Fascism* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2013) by Stefan Jonsson, whose work here and elsewhere constitutes a vital part of my analysis of crowds in the next section of this chapter.

[395] Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power*, trans. Carol Stewart (New York, NY: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1984),

experience and its great age instilled the Catholic Church with a "suspicion of the crowd;" and the "whole substance of the faith" and "the practical forms of [the Church's] organization" depended on its conviction that saw "the open crowd as its main enemy."[396] The existence and power of the Catholic Church in post-Commune France was dependent on its ability to amass and rally tools that effectively ordered 'the open' crowd *into* a church.

This is the pilgrimage crowd heaped before the Sacré-Coeur in de Fleury's promotional print, which showcases his double role as one of the lay leaders of the project and a graphic artist of its official publications. [Figure 2.19.] The composition follows a dramatic diagonal that leads the eye from the bottom-right to the top-left corner of the scene, moving alongside the pilgrims through three stages of being: individual, crowd, and Basilica. The progression starts with a middle-class couple at the edge of the composition, whom de Fleury catches before they dissolve into the crowd. Dressed in the latest fashion, they are a testament to the commodified form of individual expression against the homogenous anonymity of the pilgrims. Conservatives like de Fleury dreamed of a nostalgic return to the past, when one's identity was defined by membership of one's family and church.[397] The potential tension between the conservative call for a submission to traditional social structures and the bourgeois celebration of individuality found a conciliation in the system of individualized donations to the construction, which was criticized by the Left as shameless self-promotion. At the threshold between the individual and the collective, the couple

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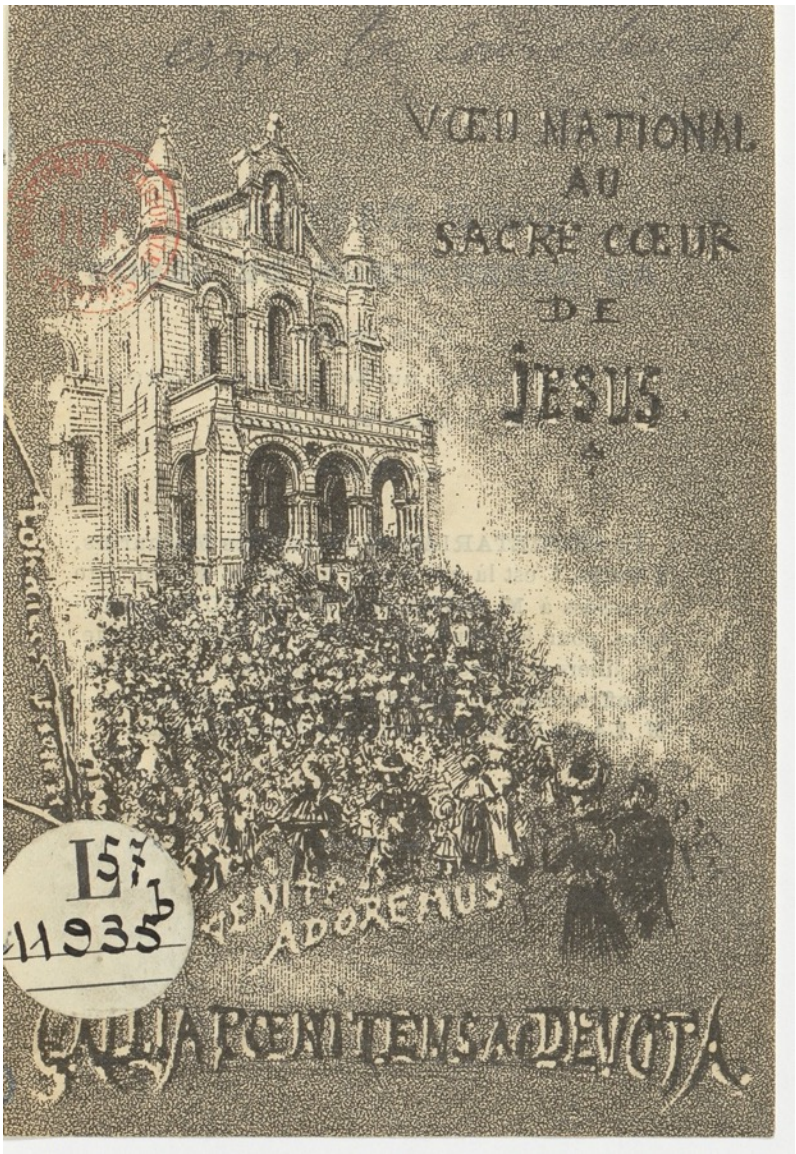
[396] Ibid., 154–55.
[397] Brigstocke, *The Life of the City*, 53.



consent to become part of a larger authority, and by extension, they both exercise their will and hand it over to the Basilica. The monument awaits to take them in—not unlike the arachnid belly of Steinlen's Basilica—to contain the threat of Canetti's 'open crowd' in the enclosed architectural unity of the monument that engenders a theological body politic.

Figure 2.19. Rohault de Fleury, Cover image for *Voeu national au Sacré-Coeur de Jésus* [Bulletin of 1897] (Bibliothèque nationale de France).

At this point, I suggest an excursion to *fin-de-siècle* Brussels to introduce an alternative political imagination that similarly enacts a confrontation between a religious monument and the masses, yet simultaneously confirms and frustrates the former's capacity to tame and control. The artwork that justifies our detour is the famous etching by James Ensor—*The Cathedral* (1886)—that the artist conceived when conservative forces consolidated their control over Belgian politics and society after the absolute victory of the Catholic party in the 1884 elections, which decisively crushed the liberals and their agenda of secularization for the next three decades. [Figure 2.20.] Kevin Salatino argues that the "precise message" of *The Cathedral* "remains elusive," stuck between contradictory projections which either see the print as "a denunciation of civil and ecclesiastical authority," or a yearning for "a purer Christian past before its corruption."[398] Susan Canning reconciles these readings and sees *The Cathedral* as a comment on "the authoritarian presence of the Catholic Church" which, though it once "symbolized the community in the middle ages, […] now overwhelms the masses assembled below it."[399] Yet, compared with its French counterparts and contextualized with anarchist texts of its time, the symbolic dialogue Ensor writes for the religious monument and the masses appears to be more complex.

Ensor's *Cathedral* depicts an ancient religious edifice that vertically dominates two-thirds of the picture plane and a swarming crowd at its foot that covers the lower third in a horizontal expansion. Here, the contrast between the monumental (authority)

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[398] Kevin Salatino, "Ensor in L.A. Cathedrals and Catharsis," in *Doctrinal Nourishment: Art and Anarchism in the Time of James Ensor*, by Theresa Papanikolas (Los Angeles, CA: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2009), 78.
[399] Susan M. Canning, "La Foule et Le Boulevard: James Ensor and the Street Politic of Everyday Life," in *Belgium, The Golden Decades: 1880–1914*, ed. Jane Block (New York, NY: P. Lang, 1997), 48 ff.

and the transient (the masses) does not have the rhetorical certainty Steinlen offers in his vision of oppression and control.[400] The Gothic temple of Ensor is not explicitly maleficent. It is domineering.

[400] Steinlen might have seen or read about Ensor's *The Cathedral.* It was an immensely popular print in Belgium and France, particularly celebrated by the symbolists and Belgian anarchists. In December 1898, the French art and literature magazine *La Plume* reproduced the image in an issue with a special dossier on James Ensor with essays by numerous French and Belgian men of letters—most of them prominent symbolists and art critics. A significant portion of these essays focused on the artist's graphic works, especially singling out *The Cathedral* as the best print of the era, executed with such a mastery of the medium that Rembrandt himself might not have achieved. Camille Lemonnier, "James Ensor, Peintre et Graveur," in *La Plume*, No. 232, December 15, 1898, 674; Christian Beck, "Réflexions sur la 'Cathédrale' de James Ensor" *La Plume*, No. 232, December 15, 1898, 707. In order to respond to the high demand, Ensor produced many reproductions until the original plate wore out from overuse. Ensor etched an almost exact plate in 1897 to continue reproducing the design. Salatino, "Ensor in L.A.," 80.

Figure 2.20. James Ensor, *The Cathedral,* 1886, Etching on Wove paper, State: I/III (first state of the first version). (Cleveland Museum of Art.)

Its height exceeds the limits of the pictorial plane, yet with a narrow base, it lacks a solid foundation to support its height. The top-heavy fantastical structure appears on the verge of experiencing a devastating crack along its slanting seams. What keeps it standing is an arrogance comparable to the Tower of Babel, which is undermined by a pervasive

sense of decay.[401] Unlike Steinlen's faceless masses, whose members are made of indiscriminate circular repetitions, Ensor's crowd turns away from the monument and towards the viewer, each with diverse features and expressions, exhibiting their distinctive—and, for some, outrageous—outfits. While Steinlen's *Sacré-Coeur* functions via an economy of threat, with its multitudes powerless under a hegemonic web without any escape routes, Ensor's carnival crowd carves its own exit by joyfully marching out of the picture space and into our world.

The incessant lines of the medium of etching connects the sacred building with the people in a material kinship, and establishes a delicate dialectic between the lofty and the base. As the carnival crowds contaminate *The Cathedral* with their baseness, in their comparable immensity, they claim a piece of the sublime. Writing a decade after the print was conceived, Ensor's contemporary and compatriot Christian Beck described *The Cathedral* as the unity of dualities. The impossible Gothic structure, he maintained, carries both the "absoluteness of the stone" and the lightness of a "lace," it presents an iron will determined to pierce the sky against the volatile energy of the crowd beating its foundations.[402] But it is not in a facile juxtaposition of the dualities that Ensor presents one to define the other. There is a 'fusion', a synthesis that makes the antithetical integral to each other.[403] As the crowd leaves the parvis of the structure, the whole temple risks coming undone, as if one pulled a loose thread hanging at the bottom

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[401] As discovered by Patrick Florizoone, this fantastic structure is a montage of three actual cathedrals—of Aachen, Vienna, and Antwerp—after the engravings of which the artist found and copied from old issues of *Le Magasin Pittoresque.* Patrick Florizoone, "Thèmes Historiques Du XIX Siècle et Sources Inconnues Dans l'oeuvre de James Ensor," in *Art Graphique d'Ensor En Confrontation*, by Patrick Florizoone and Norbert Hostyn (Ghent: Éditions Snoeck-Ducaju, 1999), 37–39. The discovery is noted in Salatino, "Ensor in L.A.," 77.
[402] Beck, "Réflexions sur la 'Cathédrale,'" 707–8.
[403] Ibid.

of lace fabric.

Or does it? A regiment of soldiers articulated through an almost mechanical repetition of identical lines separate the crowd and the monument. This is a zone of contact between order and disorder—between the outrageous display of the heterogeneity of the *people* and the uniformity of the army marching in ranks. The crowds in Ensor's oeuvre are regarded by some scholars as explicit references to the public demonstrations—that privileged unit of study for crowd psychology in the nineteenth century—that had overtaken the boulevards and public squares in 1880s Brussels.[404] The military presence supports an interpretation that does not offer an explanation for their disorderly gaiety. On the other hand, those who acknowledge the excessive energy of the "unruly and bizarrely dressed public," "spilling out of the picture plane into the viewer's space;" fall back to the stereotypes about the masses by decreeing that it is "a powerless and manipulated populace, whose carnival behavior smacks of bread and circus."[405] Identified both with the protesters resisting authority and the unthinking masses sedated by it, the crowd of *The Cathedral* is asked to occupy two contradictory political roles and consciousnesses.

A third reading is possible following Stefan Jonsson's advice against hasty analyses that sees the visual symbolism of the crowds as self-evident, especially if they depict the lower classes.[406] Jonsson applies his theoretical intervention to the art

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[404] Canning, "La Foule et Le Boulevard," 44. On August 15, 1886 Belgium witnessed one of the largest mass demonstrations in its history, with thousands taking over the streets to demand universal suffrage.
[405] Salatino, "Ensor in L.A.," 77.
[406] Little has changed within the past two decades since Stefan Jonsson agreed with the concern of Hanna Deinhard that "the analytical tools with which art historians approach visual representations of crowds are crude and primitive." But outside of the art historical discipline, scholars have been providing us with alternative ways of thinking about 'multitudes,' 'the masses,' and 'the crowds,' 'the audience,' that not only invite revisions to art historical methodologies, but also offer 'the image' of the collective as a tool to investigate assumptions about mass politics, social space, democracy, representation, and authority.

historical analyses of crowds on Ensor's monumental canvas, *Christ's Entry into Brussels in 1889* (1888). Attributing a radical democratic capacity to the crowd in the *Entry*, he argues that Ensor presents 'society degree zero,' caught in "the absence of any authority," without a "Lacanian big Other," that would impose "unity and identity on the members of the collective."[407] Whether it is the unthreatening homogeneity of a religious sect gathered around a shared belief, or a heterogenous crowd governed by a shared hallucination instilled by a leader—this absolute lack of an outside force that turns individuals into a crowd is inconceivable to Le Bon's garbled categories of human collectivity. In his racist, misogynist, and classist writings on mass psychology, he attributes a psychological 'homogeneity' to the heterogenous crowds, which is ephemeral and momentarily granted by a shared hallucination that contaminates and dissolves the individuals that constitute it.[408] In *The Cathedral*, the monologism attributed to the crowd is challenged by its proximity to its other. The literal homogeneity of the soldiers of authority presents the real 'erasure of the individual,' and appeals as a symptom of the collectives organized by a vertical relation of subordination. Those in the crowd remain defiantly individual, walking shoulder to shoulder, arguing with each other, pushing in different directions—they are a collective achieved by "horizontal relations of juxtaposition."[409] Strikingly, this heterogenous collective includes soldiers, whose faces acquire personality, and their uniforms the air

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Kristin Ross, *The Emergence of Social Space: Rimbaud and the Paris Commune* (London: Verso, 2008); Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator* (London: Verso, 2009.); Frank, "The Living Image of the People"; Stefan Jonsson, "The Invention of the Masses: The Crowd in French Culture from the Revolution to the Commune," in *Crowds*, ed. Jeffrey T. Schnapp and Matthew Tiews (Stanford,CA: Stanford University Press, 2006); Jonsson, *Crowds and Democracy*.

[407] Jonsson, "Society Degree Zero," 10.

[408] Le Bon, *The Crowd*, 2, 10, 12–13.

[409] Jonsson's diagnosis for the crowd of *The Entry* holds for *The Cathedral* as well. Jonsson, "Society Degree Zero," 12.

of a carnival costume, once they cross the threshold that separates the army ranks from the crowd. [Figures 2.21 and 2.22.]

Left, Figure 2.21. Detail from James Ensor, *The Cathedral,* 1886.
Right, Figure 2.22. Detail from Steinlen, 'Sacré-Coeur' in *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, (February 26, 1902).

Admittedly, in *The Cathedral* we still have a "Lacanian big Other." The fantastic structure functions as a decaying but still present anchor that renders the crowd under its shadow temporally dependent on it for its political meaning. If the *Entry* depicts history in the future tense—since Ensor's representation of 'the event' explicitly antedates it—perhaps we can see *The Cathedral* as history in the present tense. Despite their semantic relation to the Cathedral, the crowd is not deprived of the potential to arrive at Ensor's carnival future. Instead of dispersing in fear or assimilating under obedience, this motley crowd spills 'out of the pictorial frame,' eliding the shadow of the Cathedral and the regiments of the army that it shelters. In this regard, we can argue

that *The Cathedral* prefigures the radical assertion of the crowd's humanity and political capacity against religious and political authorities.

The anarchist poet Émile Verhaeren notes that "Ensor is often accused of trying to [effect] a sort of Commune with his art; to inscribe his aesthetic doctrine on the folds of a red banner."[410] Ensor's close relation to the socialist and anarchist circles of France and Belgium has been noted by scholars of the artist.[411] Ensor was quite familiar with Élisée Reclus' and Peter Kropotkin's theories of anarcho-communism and was a member of the avant-garde *Les XX* group, composed of artists and authors with radical sympathies.[412] Ensor's involvement in *Les XX* brought him into close contact with several critical names in Francophone anarchism, including Verhaeren, who at that point had a significant following in French artistic circles due to his efforts to connect the anti-authoritarian impulse of the aesthetic avant-garde with the international anarchist struggle. Verhaeren himself had written about these religious structures in a poem titled "Les Cathédrales" in his *Les Villes Tentaculaires*.[413]

Reading "Les Cathédrales" alongside Ensor's *Cathedral* reveals an agreement between the two artistic visions that subordinate the meaning of these religious monuments to the crowds that gather around them. Verhaeren's poem was published

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[410] Émile Verhaeren, *James Ensor* (Brussels: Libraire Nationale d'Art et d'Histoire, in association with G. Van Oest, 1908), 100. As translated and quoted in Theresa Papanikolas, "The Dystopian Line: James Ensor's 'Doctrinal Nourishment' in Context," in *Doctrinal Nourishment: Art and Anarchism in the Time of James Ensor* (Los Angeles, CA: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2009), 15.
[411] Canning, "La Foule et Le Boulevard," 44; Papanikolas, "The Dystopain Line," 11–17.
[412] Jane Block, *Les XX and Belgian Avant-Gardism, 1868–1894* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1984), XV; Papanikolas, "The Dystopian Line," 14–15.
[413] Émile Verhaeren, *Les Villes Tentaculaires* (Bruxelles: E. Deman, 1895), 23–28. The work can be described as a poetics for urban space, as most of the poems in this collection are titled after buildings and monuments—"The Stock-Exchange," "The Factory," "The Market," "A Statue," etc.— that organizes collective life and values in a modern city. Verhaeren's affective topology fills these material markers with experiences and emotions that in turn transform them into potent vessels of social critique. In other words, the creative labor of the anarchist poet closely approximates the works of the graphic artists that we have covered thus far.

less than a decade after Ensor's etching, and just like the composite cathedral of the artist, the poet's use of the plural form in the title draws attention to the symbolic and political burden of this class of monuments, instead of presenting a singular edifice. Verhaeren translates 'the materiality' of these buildings and the objects in them as a sensory symbolism, interrupting the darkness of the stones, the crushing height of the pillars, and the marks of the ages with the luxurious glimmer of the gold and crystal objects. The emotive stanzas that line by line build the poetic cathedral and its sensory abundance are shaken by a couplet dedicated to their visitors, repeated nine times at the center of the poem: "O these crowds these crowds, / And the misery and distress that crush them!" The repetition gives this obstinate refrain a corrosive power, bringing the masses like waves beating against the structure with their desires, disappointments, fears, and needs. This couplet alternates between flashing impressions of those that make the crowd: "Here are the poor of the bleak alleys […] Here are the worn-out bodies […] Here are the workers broken, by the six hammer blows of the days of the week." But the crowd is not a mere cavalcade of poverty and need, because "Here are the *armateurs* whose iron ships sway in the seas […] Here are the great bourgeois of divine right / who build upon God the house of their profits."[414] The faces and the bodies multiply and diverge—although not emitting the same satirical effect—and they approximate the unruly diversity and the raw presence of the crowd before Ensor's cathedral. However, they lack the *Cathedral-less* tomorrow promised by Ensor.

The force required to mark the copper and the corrosion that the acid exerted on the etching plate removes the decay Ensor identifies with the authority from the realm

[414] Ibid.

of metaphor into the physical world. On the other hand, the building of Ensor is not only diseased but also old. The bite of the acid inscribes both the act of deterioration and the passage of time onto the imaginary cathedral. The anarchist theorist Élisée Reclus evokes a very physical and almost organic image of rot and decay when describing the long-lasting institutions of authority: "[t]he longer any institution persists, the more formidable it becomes, for it finally rots the very soul on which it stands, and pollutes the atmosphere around it."[415] A decade later, in his critique of Catholicism, Léon Bazalgette, who was friends with several radical Belgian men of letters, including Verhaeren, would describe the Roman Catholic Church as an unsanitary building serving as a hotbed for social diseases, and the more it stood, the more it contaminated its surroundings with noxious emanations.[416]

Reclus describes the transformation of power into authority as the work of time, "each passing century" granting the ideas, structures, rituals, and failures "such a character of antiquity and even sanctity that rarely does anyone dare to challenge it."[417] What would eventually bring Ensor's ancient edifice crumbling down, according to Reclus' evolutionary theory, is the change that was slowly brewing around it. It is this increasing incongruence with the active principle of the change and the aged solidity of authority that would amass the revolution. The crowd in *The Cathedral* enacts this active principle. Jules du Jardin notes that, when the old masters like Breughel evoked the popular, they did so to deliver moral messages congruent with the teachings of

[415] Reclus, *Anarchy, Geography, Modernity*, 141.
[416] Bazalgette, *Le Problème de l'avenir Latin*, 192. Bazalgette was a friend of Belgian socialist-anarchist poet Verhaeren, who introduced him to Stefan Zweig which started a lifelong friendship between two men. A romantic socialist with anarchist leanings, Bazalgette also translated and championed Walt Whitman and Henri David Thoreau in France.
[417] Reclus, *Anarchy, Geography, Modernity*, 141–42.

Christianity. Ensor also draws his vocabulary from the popular, but to depict how "the morality of the past crumbles" under its sign.[418] Therefore, Jardin maintains, in the works of Ensor we are witnessing the dawn of a new social state which will be unlike any of the models we have at our disposal—he is the artist of 'becomings' who captures the birth of a new time with 'a chilling laughter' that "kills the faith in the hands of those who know how to use it."[419]

The Shape of the Nation

The dialectical relationship between the diverse crowd of Ensor and his invented Gothic edifice was part of a larger nineteenth-century aesthetic preoccupation with the medieval cathedral that transformed it into a potent cultural icon. Several studies in diverse fields of the humanities have attended to this phenomenon, which together chronicle the transformation of these religious edifices into secular monuments, political and social allegories, historical documents, and stone canvases onto which diverse ideologies of the nineteenth century were reflected. [420]

In France, the intellectual and bureaucratic foundations for the transformation of

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[418] Jules du Jardin, "A Propos de James Ensor," *La Plume*, No. 232, December 15, 1898, 718 and 722.
[419] Ibid., 723.
[420] Emery, *Romancing the Cathedral*; Curie, "The Representation of the Cathedral in French Visual Culture, 1870–1914," Stephanie Alice Moore Glaser, "Explorations of the Gothic Cathedral in Nineteenth-Century France" (Ph.D diss., Indiana, Indiana University, 2002); Elizabeth Emery and Laura Morowitz, *Consuming the Past: The Medieval Revival in Fin-de-Siècle France* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003); Michael Camille, *The Gargoyles of Notre-Dame: Medievalism and the Monsters of Modernity* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Ronald R. Bernier, *Monument, Moment, and Memory: Monet's Cathedral in Fin de Siècle France* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2007). In addition to dissertations and books, several articles and collection of essays were generated around the iconic mark of cathedrals in the nineteenth century, not only in French but also broader western cultural production. Kevin D. Murphy, "The Historic Building in the Modernized City: The Cathedrals of Paris and Rouen in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Urban History* 37, no. 2 (March 1, 2011): 278–96; Stephanie Glaser, ed., *The Idea of the Gothic Cathedral: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Meanings of the Medieval Edifice in the Modern Period* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2018).

the Gothic temples into secular symbols of a political imagination were first laid during the French Revolution. According to Françoise Choay, it was the purposeful revolutionary iconoclasm that prepared the conditions for the first attempts at the conservation of the religious Gothic structures as historical monuments,[421] with an aim to conserve them "in a dialectical movement that simultaneously assumes and transcends [their] original historical signification, by integrating [them] into a new semantic stratum."[422] And this new semantic stratum was achieved by the pushing aside of their intended function and a redefinition of their value as a historical, aesthetic, and national heritage.

Although the popular publications of the Restoration—such as the *Voyages Pittoresques et Romantiques dans l'Ancienne France* by Charles Nodier and Baron Taylor and Chateaubriand's *Genius of Christianity*—restored the Gothic in the minds of their readers with a Catholic-monarchist nostalgia aimed at erasing the Revolution for a narrative of an uninterrupted Christian monarchy,[423] the Revolution's secularization of the Gothic had an irrevocable renewal under the July Monarchy. Louis Philippe's minister of the interior, François Guizot, set up a program to wrestle the medieval monuments of France, on behalf of a bourgeois national identity, away from their associations with legitimism and Catholicism during the Restoration.[424] He established the position of Inspector General of Historic Monuments (1830), which

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[421] Françoise Choay, *The Invention of the Historic Monument*, 1st English Language ed. (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2001). 14–15.
[422] Ibid., 75.
[423] Viollet-le-Duc, the man behind the restoration of numerous Gothic buildings during the July Monarchy and the Second Empire, had contributed to this publication with drawings as a young artisan. Camille, *The Gargoyles of Notre-Dame*, 40–41.
[424] Not only as a bureaucrat, but also as a historian, Francois Guizot participated in the official invention of the Gothic as the national art of France.

Prosper Mérimée took over in 1834. Mérimée, with his friend and most trusted architect Viollet-le-Duc, held offices that would define the cultural meaning and the political importance of Gothic churches for generations of professionals.

Around the same time that Guizot was laying the institutional groundwork for historic monuments, Hugo had already captured the public imagination with his *Notre-Dame of Paris*.[425] Hugo presents three Notre-Dame(s) to his readers, just as he assumes three different literary voices. The first is as a novelist, who reconstructs the Cathedral in the fifteenth century according to the demands of his fictional narrative. The second and third appeal to the reader outside the boundaries of fiction, one as the authorial voice of a historian of thirteenth-century France, the other as the voice of a nineteenth-century polemicist. These latter two would repeatedly interrupt the former to reconfigure Notre-Dame Cathedral as an archetype of religious Gothic churches, which as I mentioned elsewhere, are privileged cultural species that manifest depositions about the French nation and the nature and progress of history according to Hugo's political-architectural taxonomy. Perhaps the prophecy of the fifteenth-century archdeacon of the fictional narrative, who "stretched out his right hand towards the printed book lying open on his table and his left hand towards Notre-Dame, and looked sadly from the book to the church," and said: 'this will kill that'"[426]—distills Hugo's media-based historicism at its

[425] Suzanne Nash attributes this concurrence of the novel and institutionalization to the dramatic effect that Hugo's book had on public opinion. Suzanne Nash, "Writing a Building: Hugo's Notre-Dame de Paris," *French Forum* 8, no. 2 (1983): 122. Similarly, Michael Camille states that the novel incited the July Monarchy to fund the Cathedral's restoration. Camille, *The Gargoyles of Notre-Dame*, 71. Before the publication of *Notre-Dame*, Hugo was already participating in polemical discussions around the nature and future of historic monuments. In his pamphlet "Guerre aux démolisseurs!" he criticized the state-sanctioned destruction of monuments for political ends. Nicola Minott-Ahl, "Nation/Building: Hugo's Notre-Dame de Paris and the Novelist as Post-Revolutionary Historian," *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas* 10, no. 2 (2012): 256.
[426] Hugo, *Notre-Dame*, 187.

best, which subordinates the recognizability of political and historical transformations to the changes in the medium of mass cultural expression.

The dictum of this vision, "[t]he book will kill the building,'"[427] also hinges on the assumption that the medium and styles representative of historical periods under 'theocracy, caste, unity, and dogma' are succeeded by those of an antithetical spirit, 'liberty, the people, man.'[428] The *Notre-Dame* is the story of a new, free, and popular medium of communication—Gothic Architecture—emerging at the same time as a new class—the bourgeoisie—steps onto the stage of history. Hugo reaches out to the thirteenth century so as to arrive at 1789, and continues his assertive association of thirteenth-century Gothic architecture with the visibly post-1789 rhetoric of liberty: "from now on, the cathedral itself, formerly so dogmatic an edifice, was invaded by the bourgeoisie, by the commons, by liberty […]."[429] Hugo, as Emery summarized, "portrayed the [Gothic] cathedral as an inherently French and democratic structure, a stable edifice able to support an endless variety of artistic and civil liberties."[430]

The strongest support for this characterization came from Viollet-le-Duc, the restorer of Notre-Dame the cathedral and the author of the highly influential treatises on architecture. With Hugo and Viollet-le-Duc, the dominant French view of the Gothic in the nineteenth century saw it as "an expression of national identity," which inadvertently drew "attention from space" to "form as a metaphor for historical development."[431] In

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[427] Ibid., 188. Most objects in this dissertation tried to literalize this task, to "kill" the stone edifices with "paper."
[428] Hugo, *Notre-Dame*, 191–94. In the former group, "you are conscious always of the priest and of nothing but the priest," while in the latter you are conscious of the merchant, the republican, the burgess.
[429] Ibid.
[430] Emery, *Romancing the Cathedral*, 19. For discussion of Hugo's book, see 13–20.
[431] Kevin D. Murphy, "The Gothic Cathedral and the Historiographies of Space," in *The Idea of the Gothic Cathedral: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Meanings of the Medieval Edifice in the Modern Period*, ed. Stephanie Glaser (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2018), 138.

his entry on "Architecture" from his famous *Dictionnaire Raisonné de l'Architecture Française du XIe au XVIe Siècle*, Viollet-le-Duc gave an expert's support to Hugo's romantic association of the Gothic with the rise of the bourgeoisie, by presenting the Gothic as the embodiment of the values associated with this class, but, rather than its taste for revolutions and freedom, with its rationality and economy.[432] The architect also maintained that the Gothic architecture was "intimately tied to [French] national history, to the achievements of the French mind, as well as to [French] national character […]."[433]

The final decades of the nineteenth century extended this narrative and presented the Gothic cathedral as an ideal image of the nation, "as a total work of art that establishes harmony in diversity."[434] Therefore, the Gothic provided a positive model of unity as an architectural metaphor for an organic community (nation) before that community was fragmented into antagonistic camps—working class and bourgeois, secular and Catholic—and warred with each other in the Third Republic. Indeed, reverence for the Gothic was one thing that the hostile political positions occupied by republicans and Catholic royalists did share, and these edifices in the works of *fin-de-siècle* authors became a symbol of the possible coexistence of hostile ideological

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[432] Viollet-le-Duc argues that "what emerged in the building of the edifices was the spirit of enterprise. It was necessary to put up a great deal in a short time with very little money." Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, "Architecture," in *The Foundations of Architecture: Selections from the Dictionnaire Raisonné* (New York, NY: G. Braziller, 1990), 80. As noted by Barry Bergdoll, the "theoretical apparatus of the Gothic Revival"—as led by men like Viollet-le-Duc, Didron, Lassus, and Hugo—"was defined in a largely secular, and in Viollet-le-Duc's case, even anticlerical, context." Barry Bergdoll, "The Ideal of the Gothic Cathedral in 1852," *The Bard Graduate Center Research Forum* (blog), accessed October 26, 2020, /research-forum/articles/195/the-ideal-of-the-gothic. The article was originally published with the same title in *A. W. N. Pugin: Master of Gothic Revival*, ed. Paul Atterbury (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press For The Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, 1995), 103–135.
[433] Viollet-le-Duc, "Architecture," 74.
[434] Emery, *Romancing the Cathedral*. 9.

positions.

The Sacré-Coeur, Inequality in Stone

A similar function was attributed to the Sacré-Coeur Basilica, which was promoted as a monument that would mend the nation back together after it had been torn between classes that violently faced each other on different sides of the barricade in the Summer of 1871. Why, then, instead of a monument that would evoke this symbolic edifice of social and political harmony, did the authorities build a Neo-Byzantine structure on the hill marked with the memory of civil strife? The monolithic homogeneity of the Sacré-Coeur's formal regime testifies to a political imagination that conceives unity as uniformity. This formal message is noted by historians of architecture. For example, Loyer describes Sacré-Coeur's architectural effect as a form without variety, whose "concern for unity is such that even a dialogue between materials is forbidden. […the] edifice is just a block: one form, one material, one proportion."[435] It is a monument that explicitly refrains from any allusions to diversity and multiplicity. Sacré-Coeur's aesthetic labor in mending the nation is to subordinate different parts to the whole in order to annul the memory and the possibility of fracture.

The competition for designing the monument was set in 1874 with a famous jury approved by the lay and ecclesiastical champions of the Church of the National Vow, including the archdiocese of Paris.[436] But to the surprise of many, almost none of the

[435] Loyer, "Sacré Coeur of Montmartre," 435–36.
[436] The committee was packed with famous architects and accomplished members of the Academy, including indisputably the most authoritative names in the profession, Henri Labrouste and Eugène Viollet-le-Duc. The originator of the National Vow, Alexandre Legentil, and Charles Rohault de Fleury (another celebrated architect and the father of the other initiator of the Vow, Hubert Rohault de Fleury), and the legitimist deputy and champion of the Comte de Chambord, Charles Chesnelong, were also part

competing designs resembled the ideal style for a national-Christian temple the majority of the French had in mind. For half a century, the professionals of architecture, connoisseurs, politicians, and novelists had been preaching that only the Gothic could embody a truly national spirit. But in 1874, everyone seemed to have turned their backs to this 'national style,' in favor of an older inspiration.[437] On July 28 the jury granted Paul Abadie's eclectic interpretation of Romano-Byzantine style the first prize.[438] The design was received with popular consternation and disappointment. Anonymous pamphlets reproached Abadie's church for being foreign, pagan, or a mosque.[439] While the Left reveled in the negative publicity, some Catholics called for a renewal of the competition. The committee of the competition was compelled to pen a report that would lay down the rationale behind the decision and provided an authoritative

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of the committee. Comité de l'Oeuvre du Voeu National du Sacré-Coeur, *Souvenir du concours de l'église du Sacré-Coeur: Juillet, 1874.* (Paris: Comité de l'oeuvre du voeu national du Sacré-Coeur, 1874), 3–4 and 6.

[437] M. J. Dumont, "Sacré-Coeur: Ciment d'Orgueil," *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, no. 299 (1995): 22–24. Dumont's article gives a great overview of the much-debated style of the Sacré-Coeur within the context of different schools of architecture and architectural history that were competing for domination in both the Academy and the prestigious building and restoration projects in the second half of the century.

[438] Paul Abadie had impressive credentials. He had served as a diocesan architect in southwestern France, and had experience with Romanesque and Byzantine-inspired architecture as the restorer of the Saint-Front de Périgueux (although it is one of the most contested restoration projects in French architectural history). He also worked with Viollet-le-Duc in the restoration of the Notre-Dame of Paris, and replaced him as the diocesan architect of Paris in 1872 after the legendary architect's resignation. Loyer relays Julien Guadet's claim that the jury knew which submission belonged to whom, and that they did not choose a project per se, but instead chose 'the man.' Loyer, "Sacré Coeur of Montmartre," 431.

[439] A particularly vicious attack was published by 'a committee of archeologists,' whose hatred for the winning design seemed to stem from a strong mixture of nationalism and a zealous religiosity rather than professional concerns. *Voeu national de la France. L'Eglise du Sacré-Coeur à Montmartre sera-t-elle de notre style national ou sera-t-elle d'un style étranger ?: par un comité d'archéologues* (Paris: J. Féchoz, 1875). The committee, on the other hand, relied on famous experts to stress that the design was definitely not a mosque. Édouard Didron, the stained glass artist and editor of *Annales Archéologiques*, clarified the issue by declaring that "there is nothing Turkish or Persian" about domes; the Muslims adopted St. Sophia's dome as a model for their temples, which was "no more Muslim than the dome of St. Peter's in Rome." As reproduced in the footnote of Jonquet, *Montmartre*, 199–200. Didron was also the nephew and the adopted son of famous art historian, bureaucrat, and champion of Gothic edifices Adolphe Napoléon Didron. The letter of support for Abadie's plan was originally published in *Le Monde* on June 30, 1874. The famous expert of ancient edifices also published a separate booklet expanding on the points of his letter as Édouard Didron, *Quelques Mots Sur l'Art Chrétien à Propos de l'Image Du Sacré-Cœur* (Paris: Libraire Archéologique de Didron, 1874).

promotion of Abadie's Basilica.[440] The report states that the jury "did not desire a church of traditional appearance and disposition," but an "exceptional creation" that could give form to 'the National Vow' and do justice to the monumentality demanded by its location.[441] The later supporters of the project expanded on the conditions of this desired monumentality, arguing that the design for the Basilica had to communicate "majesty, solidity, and unity" as a "symbol and affirmation of power, courage and determination."[442]

The Sacré-Coeur was designed to be a national monument through and through, as it fits the modernist conception of monuments as the translation of a collective's feelings and ideals. Yet, Loyer reminds us of the futility of the Sacré-Coeur's desire to be a synecdoche of the nation: "far from being the true heart of France [it] represents a France politically and socially fragmented."[443] The borders of the collective it represents are far more exclusive than what it aspires to create. Sacré-Coeur is the expression of a specific (i.e. conservative) will. It is a reckless confusion of political and economic dominance as moral superiority, which allow the economically and politically victorious part of the nation to denominate the other as an offense to God and the reason for their

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[440] Comité de l'Oeuvre, *Souvenir du concours*. The report on the committee and the competition was signed at the end with a single 'Duc'—likely Viollet-le-Duc, testifying to the extent of the famous architect's involvement with the decision. The authority of the famous architect must have been instrumental in warding off criticisms from the professionals at least. Ironically, the detractors to the committee's decision were citing his theories on the superiority of the Gothic from his *Dictionnaire Raisonnée* push against Abadie's Romano-Byzantine design. *Voeu national de la France. L'Eglise du Sacré-Coeur à Montmartre sera-t-elle de notre style national ou sera-t-elle d'un style étranger ?: par un comité d'archéologues* (Paris: J. Féchoz, 1875), 47–73.

[441] Comité de l'Oeuvre du Voeu National du Sacré-Coeur, *Souvenir du concours de l'église du Sacré-Coeur: Juillet, 1874.* (Paris: Comité de l'oeuvre du voeu national du Sacré-Coeur, 1874), 11.

[442] Jonquet, *Montmartre,* 200–3.

[443] Loyer, "Sacré Coeur of Montmartre," 421. Loyer provocatively maintains that "[h]ad tourism not taken over, the basilica would perhaps be abandoned today, an immense, empty, and closed building." According to him, coupled with its peculiar architecture, its location, and also the absolute "emptiness of its ideological meaning" allows it to be a pure object of tourism in present day. Ibid., 422.

collective misfortune. As a national monument sanctioned by the National Assembly and built with a national subscription to enact a unified nation, it tragically reminds us of what it tries to erase: both the monument and the Republic are built on the violence that one part of that nation has done to the other.

Therefore, as opposed to the positive portrayal of the Gothic in the nineteenth-century literature, the Sacré-Coeur in contemporary texts is a squandered vanity project erected by tone-deaf arrogance in a revolutionary and working-class district. This characterization is ironic, considering that as a national monument that inadvertently doubled as a monument to a war between social classes, the Sacré-Coeur was explicitly imbued with the mission to stop this history from repeating. In a letter sent to the *Bulletin* of the National Vow in 1875, the historian and paleographer Léon Gautier argues that it is of the utmost necessity for the new Basilica to banish poverty from its surroundings, and enthusiastically predicts that the new monument would create "a beautiful and lively worker's city" in the place of the poverty-stricken working-class district.[444] The Sacré-Coeur was tasked with illustrating the benefits of repentance and submission to the radicalized working classes. Official guidebooks for the Basilica continued to reproduce this abortive vision, while the violently suppressed workers' strikes and widespread anarchist attacks brought the question of class warfare once again to the fore, declaring "the true purpose of the Basilica of the National Vow is the reconciliation of the social classes."[445] Against the social and economic demands of the socialists in parliament and the organized labor under the large banner of the anarchist-led *Confédération Générale du Travail* (CGT), the official publications of the Basilica continued to argue that rising

[444] The letter is reproduced in *Guide Officiel Du Pèlerin*, 49–50.
[445] Ibid., 51.

on "the ground where […] Frenchmen massacred Frenchmen," the charity that spilled over from the Sacré-Coeur "can alone solve the formidable [social] question."[446]

The description of the Basilica and its environs in a popular guidebook of Paris paints a very different picture. The immediate perimeter of the Basilica is surrounded with "an army of beggars," who are "sordid, hapless, ragged and whining, dragging the vermin of their bodies without ablution."[447] Our guide reports that the priests preach "there is no equality, except before God" to a destitute congregation, yet the promise of equality rings hollow, as it is conducted in a space with walls that carry the names of the richest donors to the Basilica higher and louder than the others.[448] Instead of capturing the most miserable as they took refuge in faith, it is probable that the author of the guidebook is describing the 'Mass of the Destitute.' Throughout the 1890s, every Sunday morning thousands of inhabitants got in line in front of the crypt of the Sacré-Coeur to partake in the mass, which was mandatory in order to receive the fresh loaf of bread promised at the end. The Catholic newspaper *La France Illustrée* promoted it as a fight waged against two ills: 'moral and material privation,' which otherwise produces 'jealous, criminal men.' The newspaper maintained that by providing the 'bread of the gospel' together with bread, the charity of the Sacré-Coeur assured "protection for us [Catholic middle-class and upper-class citizens]; and decency for the wretched [them]," that the "godless politics which supposedly are humanist and involved in the fate of the proletarians and the destitute" could never achieve.[449]

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[446] Ibid.
[447] Montorgueil, *Paris Au Hasard*, 308–10.
[448] Ibid., 303–4 and 307.
[449] A. Margemont, "La Messe des Miséreux." *La France Illustrée Journal Littéraire, Scientifique et Religieux*, June 25, 1898.

While the conservatives offered faith and charity from the Sacred Heart as the remedy for the 'social question' and a deterrent for violent confrontations between the classes, anarchists rejected them as deceptions and self-serving paternalism that together affirmed the unjust hierarchies and power relations. The anarchist newspaper *Les Temps Nouveaux* made this clear in an article that directly undermined the claims and the motivations of Christian charity. According to this article, a wealthy donor named Madam Lafosse bequeathed money to buy communion dresses for orphans with the condition that during the ceremonies, a banner on the shoulder of the beneficiary should announce that they are wearing the "Endowment of Lafosse." As the radical newspaper maintained, it was the same as the desire for self-promotion, publicized piety, and the false image of social harmony that the Sacré-Coeur represented: "Damned are the donors of the Sacré-Coeur's stones! Damned are all the worshippers who perpetuate their precious names in gold letters, on blue or red backgrounds of the stained glass windows of modern churches!"[450] Clearly, *Les Temps Nouveaux* refers to the commemorative economy of the subscription system. As I have shown, this funding model was devised to give the Basilica a national and unified political character, but it was far from being democratic. The donors could 'purchase' a piece of the Basilica, which included pillars, columns, and building stones; and the prices varied according to the nature of the preferred structural element, its prominence, and the nature of the inscription it could carry, whether it was the donor's initials, name, or family coat of arms. For example, a small decorative column had a value that varied between one and five thousand francs, while a personalized pillar in a prominent location could reach up

[450] "Vanité, Bêtise, et Charité," *Les Temps Nouveaux* 9, no. 17 (August 22, 1903).

to one hundred thousand francs.[451] If one lacked the necessary resources, they still could inscribe their devotion *in* the monument by writing their wishes and names on parchment that would be sealed inside the building stones. In other words, while the devotion of the wealthy attained public visibility, those who could not afford the publicity had to rely on the omniscience of their Lord.[452]

Instead of precluding antagonisms between the social classes, the Sacré-Coeur was not only reminding residents of the violence done to the working-class inhabitants of the city just a few decades prior, but also heightening the visibility of social inequality. Inevitably, it became a monumental emblem that conjoined the resentments against the propertied classes with radical anti-religious expression. For example, the satirical character Boquillon introduced the National Vow's subscription system to his working-class readers in an incredibly entertaining text that draws attention to the hypocrisy of bourgeois piety and moral posturing.[453] Boquillon admits that he first

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[451] For the wealthiest, sponsoring the liturgical furniture—such as the altar, tabernacle, organs—was also an option. In addition, there were chapels promoted for collective donations that could bear the names of different professional associations, identities, and Catholic orders: the chapels of Jesuits and Ursulines; or the chapels of Catholic lawyers, soldiers, or mothers, and so on. Jonas, "Monument as Ex-Voto."498. In an ironic turn of events, despite the numerous stones that bore the names of the mid-range donors, the promises made to major donors to include their emblems and insignias on larger ornamental and architectonic elements were never realized. Baillargeon, "Construction Photography and the Rhetoric of Fundraising," 119. Baillargeon explains this absence as follows: "the institutional memory of these early commitments may have become muddled as the initial project leaders passed away."

[452] Despite the public visibility and discussions, when amassed, the individually humble contributions of the hundreds of thousands of pilgrims exceeded the donations of the rich contributors. The *chapelle provisoire* established in March 1876 to jumpstart the pilgrimage proved to be the most lucrative initiative of the National Vow. For a comparison of the numbers see Jonas, "Monument as Ex-Voto," 495.

[453] "Est-Ce Que Vous Aureriez Pas Par Hasard Trois Ou Quatre Sous Dedans Le Fondement de Vot' Poche [...]," *La Lanterne de Boquillon* 20, no. 745 (August 21, 1887): 1–8. The *La Lanterne de Boquillon* (1868–1926) was conceived as a direct address by a simple country soldier, Onésime Boquillon, to the working-class people. The character of Onésime Boquillon was created by Albert Humbert, who published over seven hundred issues of *La Lanterne de Boquillon* from 1868 until his death in 1886. Most texts mimicked a cursive handwriting which was intertwined with comical drawings (also created by Humbert) that 'illustrated' Boquillon's attacks. These appeals used the medium of common slang to combine insult with speaking truth to the loci of conservative power—especially the Church and the army. Boquillon spoke in his own peculiar dysorthographic argot, marked with self-referentiality and a carnivalesque lexical register—for example, 'Sacré-Coeur' is always spelled as *S'apré Queur* and

considered sparing three to four pennies to support the Sacré-Coeur's construction; but upon seeing the official booklet for tariffs, he realized that the Basilica's representatives would think his few honest pennies to be a joke and get his 'butt kicked' by the clergy.[454] In an ingenious expression of the commodification of faith, Boquillon asks if three hundred or five hundred francs will only get you your initials on a piece of stone, and one thousand francs your name on a pillar, what will five thousand francs get you in the economy of the Sacré-Coeur? Perhaps you can confess your love to your crush for the whole of Paris to see, or for five thousand more, you can inscribe the names of all family members, including your miserable mother-in-law? But what about those who can spare *even* more? Perhaps they can get their pretty bourgeois faces on a stained glass pane, attached to the bodies of whichever saint they prefer, though Boquillon humbly suggests St. Anthony, the patron saint of pigs. The program of 'chiseling' one's initial, name, or coat of arms onto the architectural elements of a prominent temple might have been intended to 'revive' the sincerity and fervor of devotion associated with medieval cathedrals, but, as noted by Dumont, doing so "in bourgeois France at the end of the nineteenth century" inescapably became one with vanity and self-promotion.[455] The Sacré-Coeur became a litmus test for upper-class morality and the radicals were not the

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'clergy' as *clérifacards.* "Ça Qu'est La Hô, Mes Pauvres Amis[…]," *La Lanterne de Boquillon* 24, no. 945 (June 21, 1891): 7-8. See also Guillaume Doizy, "La Lanterne de Boquillon, brûlot républicain, anticlérical et dysorthographique," *Caricature&Caricature: Actualité-Recherche sur L'Histoire de la Caricature Politique et du Dessin de Presse* (blog), August 9, 2011, http://www.caricaturesetcaricature.com/article-la-lanterne-de-boquillon-brulot-republicain-anticlerical-et-dysorthographique-83548453.html. Such fictional characters, which were popular in the revolutionary print culture—from *Le Père Duchesne* to *Le Père Peinard*—could be seen as inheritors of the long tradition of village fools and jesters, and their symbolic but socially vital truth-teller role.

[454] Actually, the Committee of the National Vow devised a system to encourage donations from those with meager means by offering them the *carte du Sacré-Coeur*, a rectangular card printed with more than a thousand tiny squares. Each time the owner of the card put aside ten centimes for the donation to the Basilica, they would cross out a square from this *carte du Sacré-Coeur*. Jonas, "Monument as Ex-Voto," 496–97.

[455] Dumont, "Sacré-Coeur: Ciment d'Orgueil," 22–24.

only ones who attacked the subscription system on these grounds. For example, the famous Catholic polemicist Léon Bloy declared: "The Sacré-Coeur basilica is more a work of vanity than a work of faith [...] everything must be paid for there [...] it is the heart of Jesus transformed into a boutique."[456] Against the social and political ideal the medieval Gothic cathedral allegorized, the Sacré-Coeur became a negative symbol of the triumphant bourgeoisie and its self-serving and commodified performance of piety.

Soon Hugo's architectural and political ideal found its ideological, aesthetic, and moral antithesis in Émile Zola's portrayal of the Sacré-Coeur Basilica in his *Paris* (1898). The novel is the last book of the author's *Three Cities* trilogy.[457] The protagonist of the narrative is an idealist priest named Pierre Froment, whose faith gradually deteriorates through visits to three iconic religious sites that correspond to the symbolic heart of each book.[458] At his first stop, the shameless greed and false promises of the pilgrimage industry in Lourdes erode his assumptions about the purity of faith; his visit to Rome testifies to the politics and corruption of the Church; and his final destination, the Sacré-Coeur in Paris embodies the dissonance between the wealth of the Church and the poverty of the people.[459] In Zola's account, the modern Basilica of Paris lacks the

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[456] As translated and quoted in Emery, *Romancing the Cathedral*, 29. We need to note that secular republicans and the Left were not the only ones who despised the new cathedral. For some Catholics, the primacy of 'money' as the public face of the project was debasing the faith.

[457] Zola's trilogy diverts from the fatalistic tone of his naturalist novels, especially the *Rougon-Macquart* series, with its desire to provide a social model for the future. As Emery notes, this shift, which came in the late years of the famous author's career, was a response to mounting criticism against the social pessimism of the naturalist school by the younger generation. *The Three Cities* therefore mark a shift in Zola's oeuvre from realism to the realm of symbolism and, to a certain extent, idealism. Emery, *Romancing the Cathedral*, 46–47.

[458] It is not unusual for the famous naturalist writer to use architectural landmarks as the organizing core of his narratives—after all *The Belly of Paris* (1873) centers around Les Halles, and *The Ladies' Paradise* (1883) around the first major department store of the city. But, as noted by scholars of literature, in *Paris* he treats the Sacré-Coeur Basilica with an emotional and symbolic intensity that goes beyond his handling of the landmarks in these earlier examples. Emery, "The Power of the Pen," 65–78; Prendergast, *Paris and the Nineteenth*, 49–50.

[459] Emery, *Romancing the* Cathedral, 48 ff.

diverse positive qualities the nineteenth-century authors celebrated as invaluable in medieval religious temples. Instead of embodying a unified people, it is a foreign and aggressive sovereign, "a figure of pure evil, a mythical force working to destroy the City [Paris]."[460]

In comparison to his extremely negative portrayal of the Sacré-Coeur, Zola offers the Gothic cathedral as an architectural symbol corresponding to the ideals of the characters in his other works. In his (accidentally) sentimental symbolist novella *The Dream* (1888), the "good [Gothic] cathedral" acts like a maternal presence under which the poor are protected and supported by an unsullied faith.[461] In *Germinal* (1885), the socialist labor organizer Pluchart's 'demonstration' of the International Workingmen's Association's future—starting with the Commune and building up to embrace all humanity—to the miners assumes the form of the same architectural form: "the immense cathedral of the world of the future."[462]

Emery writes that the Sacré-Coeur was such a negative example that to counter it, "the ideologically hostile romantic Catholicism and secular republicanism both turned the Gothic cathedral a positive example of the people's relation to faith."[463] Although at odds with Zola's secular republicanism, in the final book of his *Durtal* cycle, *The Cathedral* (1898), Joris-Karl Huysmans posits the Gothic cathedral as the

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[460] Emery, "The Power of the Pen," 66–67 and 71.
[461] Emery, *Romancing the Cathedral,* 61.
[462] Emile Zola, *Germinal*, trans. Leonard Tancock (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971), 241. Emery stresses that throughout *Germinal*, Zola conflates the revolutionary ideal with religious fervor. The pivotal meeting of the miners in the forest before the strike turns the space into a primitive cathedral and the young revolutionary miner Etienne Lantier into a preacher who moves the workers and their families into a "religious exaltation." According to Emery, Zola's choice of setting for this scene is influenced by Chateaubriand's association of the development of Gothic architecture with the communal memory of worship under the trees by early Christians. Emery, *Romancing the Cathedral*, 45–46.
[463] Ibid., 29.

creation of a naïve and sincere piety against the bourgeois vanity that erected the Sacré-Coeur.[464] The ideal that Huysmans offers against the modern Basilica is the Notre-Dame of Chartres, which is the author's aesthetic and spiritual inspiration for the novel. Observing the famous cathedral, the protagonist Durtal ventriloquizes Huysmans's sentiments:

> We build sanctuaries in another way nowadays. When I think of the Sacred Heart in Paris, that gloomy, ponderous erection raised by men who have written their names in red on every stone! How can God consent to dwell in a church of which the walls are blocks of vanity joined by a cement of pride; walls where you may read the names of well-known tradesmen exhibited in a good place, as if they were an advertisement? It would have been so easy to build a less magnificent and less hideous church, and not to lodge the Redeemer in a monument of sin![465]

Huysmans locates the 'soul' of the Gothic cathedrals in what Aloïs Riegl identified as the 'use value,'[466] and although he agrees with the superiority assigned to the Gothic, he challenges the nationalist and secular tradition that since the Revolution had celebrated these edifices for their age and art value. For Huysmans, this is a form of "monumental materialism," which saves the structures from physical destruction at the expense of a "spiritual Vandalism."[467] As the namesake hero of the Durtal cycle realizes at the end of the novel, what makes these ancient edifices valuable is the community that they create and sustain, that brings the architecture to life with their earnest worship. The romanticization of Gothic cathedrals and the 'naive' faith that they attract was at odds with the representation of the accounts of life in the communities around these

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[464] Ibid., 33.
[465] J.-K. Huysmans, *The Cathedral*, trans. Clara Bell (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1898), 181.
[466] Emery and Morowitz, *Consuming the Past*, 5.
[467] Emery, *Romancing the Cathedral,* 92. According to Kevin Murphy, these criticisms challenged what they saw in Hugo and Viollet-le-Duc's theories as 'readings' of the cathedral that flatten it into a text, ignoring the 'space' in which the community and its spirit live. Murphy, "The Gothic Cathedral and the Historiographies of Space," 135–36. Also see Emery, *Romancing the Cathedral*, 110.

impressive monuments. *Les Temps Nouveaux*'s report on the Notre-Dame of Chartres and its environs paints a bleak picture of poverty, exploitation, and extreme submission and passivity induced by religion. Under "the immense silhouette" of the famous cathedral "that dominates the city like a threatening specter," the inhabitants of the working-class district show no sign of revolt or any objections to the horrifying conditions of their existence.[468] The beautiful Gothic structure does assure a certain community—that of the people who drag their bodies to its gates every week—but according to *Les Temps Nouveaux*, theirs is the resigned passivity of the suffering masses which those like Huysmans mistake for communal piety.

Although the anarchist newspaper turned Huysmans' monumental ideal into an oppressive and threatening presence akin to Zola's portrayal of the Sacré-Coeur, this does not reflect the radical Left's judgment of these medieval edifices. As the fight between the two historical antagonists seemed to near an end with the republican victory in the 1880s and the series of laws that curtailed the moral and pedagogical hegemony of the Catholic Church, the revolutionary ideologies that were hostile to both secular bourgeois states and organized religion imbued Gothic edifices with a new significance. At the core of this new symbolism was the socialist and anarchist characterization of pre-industrial labor as communal and emancipatory. Challenging both conservative and bourgeois republican appropriations, they claimed the Gothic as their own. In the last installment of a series titled "The People and the Arts," published in the anarchist *Les Temps Nouveaux,* a certain L. De Saumanes argued that Gothic cathedrals were reflective of the pains, fears, and then-necessary superstitions of the artisans and

[468] "Chartres et Environs," *Les Temps Nouveaux* 10, no. 35 (December 31, 1904), n.p.

common people that labored in their creation. Architecture is therefore 'privileged' among all the plastic arts for its ability to communicate the expression and capacity of a collective that it aesthetically materializes. Architecture's 'current' state under bourgeois rule, he provocatively maintained, was "the proof of the incurable artistic incapacity of the bourgeoisie."[469] This was because this class "lacks ideals and dreams independent of making profit' and therefore 'cannot contribute something genuine to the human culture." Hence, the architecture the bourgeoisie preferred and implemented in the past century had been "an apish mimicry of the genuine styles [that] emerged from the creative and productive labor of the past peoples."[470]

As such, it was not the triumph of the bourgeoisie they read on the edifice, but the aesthetic and political capacity of the labor. This notion found its formulation and its most famous celebration in the works of the British champion of the Gothic, John Ruskin, who located the *soul* of the Gothic in the following *moral* elements: savageness, changefulness, naturalism, grotesqueness, rigidity, and redundance.[471] As such, while Hugo and Viollet-le-Duc presented the Gothic as the prefiguration of modern France, Ruskin offered it as a critique of modernity and modern working conditions, which were a form of 'mental slavery.' In "On the Nature of Gothic," Ruskin asks the reader to recognize the signs of human degradation in the order, restraint, and finished look of modern architecture, against the "old cathedral front, where you have smiled so often at

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[469] L. de Saumanes, "Le Peuple et L'Art IV," *Les Temps Nouveaux* 17, no. 50 (April 13, 1912): 3.
[470] Ibid.
[471] None of these 'moral' elements seems to be in agreement with the rational and economic essence of Viollet-le-Duc's notion of the Gothic. Several scholars draw attention to the form that Viollet-le-Duc has chosen to write in, the anti-narrative, rational form of the dictionary. Barry Bergdoll, citing Hubert Damisch, points to the agreement between the form and the argument in the dictionary, as the main aim of the *Dictionnaire* was to prove that medieval French architecture was both grounded in and representative of the principle of reason. Barry Bergdoll, "Introduction," in *The Foundations of Architecture: Selections from the Dictionnaire Raisonné* (New York, NY: G. Braziller, 1990), 1–30.

the fantastic ignorance of the old sculptors […] for they are signs of the life and liberty of every workman who struck the stone; a freedom of thought, and rank in scale of being, such as no laws, no charters, no charities can secure […].”[472]

This aestheticization of freedom, equality, and creativity attracted the anarchist Neo-Impressionist painters to the Gothic edifices. Despite their differences, Camille Pissarro’s views of Rouen Cathedral, the canvases of Maximilien Luce, which captured the Notre-Dame of Paris and the bustling modern life around it, and Signac’s series on the isolated majesty of Mont Saint-Michel have been analyzed in relation to anarchist ideas, the aesthetic theory of Neo-Impressionism, and the views of Ruskin, Peter Kropotkin, and to a limited extent William Morris on the medieval craft and guild organization as a liberated (and liberating) form of labor.[473] The celebration of medieval labor was informed by “the declassing of French artisans” under the pressures of fast-paced commercial and industrial capitalism.[474] In addition to the subjugation of once free labor under the dictates of the foreman and the boss, the capitalist mode of

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[472] John Ruskin, “On the Nature of Gothic,” in *Unto This Last and Other Writings* (Penguin, 2005), 85. Although this quote shows an agreement with Ruskin’s French counterparts, especially Hugo, regarding the association of the Gothic with freedom, the fundamental difference is that while Ruskin locates freedom as the principle of separation between modern and medieval labor, and frames a criticism of the present through a past example to which one aspires, Hugo’s celebration of freedom in the Gothic merges past and present, and is therefore used to provide historical legitimacy for his present (the France of republican ideals). At this point it might be useful to acknowledge that some writings of Viollet-le-Duc on the Gothic approximates Ruskin’s ideal of labor. However, as Camille’s research on the workbooks of the restoration revealed, “his restoration project at Notre-Dame was just another factory—for the mass production of the medieval.” Camille, *The Gargoyles of Notre-Dame*, 40–41.

[473] Neo-Impressionists’ explorations of medieval architecture as an allegory of anarchist utopia have been relatively well explored. See the final chapter of Robyn Roslak, *Neo-Impressionism and Anarchism in Fin-de-Siècle France: Painting, Politics and Landscape* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2007), 173–92; Maylis Curie, “The Anarchist Cathedral,” in *The Idea of the Gothic Cathedral*, ed. Stephanie Glaser (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2018), 149–70. Although he does not directly talk about the “Gothic Cathedrals,” Hutton mentions the influence of an idealized vision of middle ages in anarchist theories as a time of aesthetic harmony and communal labor in John Gary Hutton, *Neo-Impressionism and the Search for Solid Ground: Art, Science, and Anarchism in Fin-de-Siècle France* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University, 1994), 77–80.

[474] Roslak, *Neo-Impressionism and Anarchism,* 180–81.

production exhausted the creative impulse of labor by granting it an increasingly diminished time that could only allow a soulless imitation and repetition of the forms.[475]

The leftist attention to medieval monuments also reflected a desire to see the mark of communal achievements in the historical and aesthetic texture of the city, especially where many of the public buildings and monuments became markers of self-celebratory bourgeois individualism. The cooption of Gothic monuments by the anarchists was furthered with this assumption that, lacking a single architect or mastermind, they had been created by those who annulled the distinction between conception and execution; between intellectual and manual labors. It is not difficult to see how this vision of labor echoes our discussion of the Commune's radical reorganization of society in the first chapter. For example, in his decidedly secular reference to the medieval cathedrals, Kropotkin referred to them as 'communal houses' that reflected the collective genius of a community, instead of the efforts of "thousands of slaves" laboring to execute "one man's imagination."[476] A medieval cathedral, according to the famous anarchist, reflected the grandeur that could be achieved by cooperation, as each member of the community contributed "[their] part of stone, work, and decorative genius to *their* common monument."[477] In other words, what made a Gothic edifice an 'authentic' monument was this *sharedness*, which stemmed from its capacity to embody the will and labor of each and every member of the community. Therefore, Kropotkin noted, the Gothic cathedral was a "grand idea" to emerge from

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[475] Kropotkin made this point in his essay *The State and its Historic Role*: "If one considers the artistic finish and amount of decorative work the craftsman of that period put into not only the objects of art he produced, but also into the simplest of household utensils […] one realizes that he did not know what it meant to be hurried in his work or overworked as is the case in our time […]" As quoted and analyzed in Roslak, *Neo-Impressionism and Anarchism*, 180–81.
[476] Peter Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* (London: W. Heinemann, 1908), 211–12.
[477] The word "*their*" is italicized in the original text. Ibid., 212.

"the conception of brotherhood and unity"—that carried the radical lesson of "an audacity which could only be won by audacious struggles and victories."[478] Hence, it is not only an acceptable but a favorable monumentality (as opposed to, let's say, the Vendôme Column), because it not only reflects the authority in opposition to the people or for their subjugation, but it is the people, elating them and their capacities for sublime creation. There is something decidedly humanistic and anti-authoritarian in Kropotkin's positive use of 'audacity': a celebration of the defiance that creates spectacular towers of Babel reflecting the popular and the communal, carrying the mark of the hands, hearts, and minds that created them for posterity, and never ceasing to testify to their loving and knowing touch.

The radicals shared with conservative Catholics an attention to the 'use value' of these spaces. After the revolution, the people would claim the objects of their communal labor and sublime audacity back from the hands of authority. In his *Le Problème de l'Avenir Latin,* Léon Bazalgette foresees the future of religious edifices as being a 'house of the commune'; not a gloomy administrative building burdened with bureaucracy, but a place of leisure, upliftment, a center for moral and creative enrichment.[479] This utopian ideal was shared across the Channel. In his *News from Nowhere,* William Morris' time-traveler revolutionary attends a feast at an old church converted for communal purposes and decorated with beautiful objects, testifying to the artisanship of the healthy and content inhabitants of this socialist future.[480]

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[478] Ibid.
[479] Bazalgette, *Le Problème de l'Avenir Latin*, 193. Bazalgette also discusses the potential danger of this transformation, since these buildings would be marked with centuries of domination and superstition that reflect on their aesthetic economy.
[480] William Morris, *News from Nowhere: An Epoch of Rest, Being Some Chapters from a Utopian Romance* (Boston, MA: Roberts Brothers, 1891), 274–75.

But the Third Republic's calculated anticlericalism did not make these revolutionary futures less distant. The laws that aimed to curb the power and privileges of the Catholic Church far from satisfied the radical critics of religion.[481] They saw the progress of republican anticlericalism as a series of legal bargains between a political authority that they did not trust and a religious authority they detested. Calling for more rigorous combat with superstition and dogma, they demanded the seizing and appropriation of religious edifices for the people. Several projects, written and drawn, imagined the transformation of what they saw as bastions of oppression into theaters, houses of the people, and labor exchanges (*bourse du travail*).

In August 1904, Grandjouan published a special issue titled *Rupture du Concordat*, which anticipated not only the separation to come, but also envisioned the disappointments and banality that it harbored. Oscillating between the potential of a future in the absence of authority and the painfully accurate predictions about the upcoming period of squabbles and negotiations between the Church and the Republic, the album registers two futures—one distant and anarchist, the other immediate and republican. Among the former, one stands out with its utopian optimism. The anarchist artist's post-religious vision presents life around a Gothic structure after it is returned to its rightful owners, who then use it according to their needs.[482] [Figure 2.23.]

[481] Dixmier, Lalouette, and Pasamonik, *La République et l'Église*, 45–46.
[482] Ibid., 73.

Figure 2.23. Jules Grandjouan 'Les Biens de la Nation' in "Rupture de Concordat," *L'Assiette au Beurre*, No. 176. (August 13, 1904). (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

The caption describes it with a sober directness: "the inhabitants of the towns and villages will transform the church they built and which belongs to them." This is a transformation from *La Maison de Dieu* into *La Maison du Peuple*, which is inscribed over the structure's rose window in red letters. On either side of the window, the new functions of the building are announced: primary school, museum, and library. This repurposing alongside the ideals and needs of the post-revolutionary society is extended to the neighboring structures; the presbytery is transformed into a free clinic and a nursery, the courtyard of which hosts crawling babies, healthy children, and a woman breastfeeding. Similarly, the workshop [*ouvroir*] to the right of the foreground becomes

a mutual help station. Instead of greeting the viewer in imposing spatial isolation, the immense structure is subordinated to the festive community that occupies all corners of the picture space. This is not a crowd organized into a congregation. The Cathedral nourishes the plural needs and expectations of this gleefully diverse collective, which spills over from its portal adorned with red flowers. Its parvis is claimed by music, children's games, dancing, and friendly socialization—the building belongs to the people, whose joy and energy justify its existence.

While waiting for this future moment, the anarchists were practicing for it on humbler scales. For example, anarchists of Montmartre established spaces of community and mutual aid with "libraries, soup kitchens, and workers' centers, (Maison du Peuple)" to practice social solidarity.[483] These spaces lacked the monumental grandeur of their medieval ideal, yet their humility became a moral point when compared with the modern counterpart rising in their neighborhood. *Le Radical* announced fundraising for the "modest but valiant" *Maison du Peuple* in Montmartre by explicitly opposing it, formally and morally, to the "proud and insolent basilica of Sacré-Coeur."[484]

Unlike Kropotkin's medieval temples, according to the radical community that it neighbored, the new Basilica could not be *their* monument. Therefore, the fantasies of communal appropriation did not extend to the Sacré-Coeur. As an invader, its social rehabilitation often entailed its destruction. This was the conviction of the anarchist

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[483] Sonn, "Marginality and Transgression: Anarchy's Subversive Allure," 132.
[484] "La Maison Du Peuple," *Le Radical*, February 5, 1892, and "La Maison Du Peuple," *Le Radical*, May 19, 1892. *Le Radical* was a radical socialist newspaper established by Henri Maret, deputy of the radical Left in parliament (1881–86), as part of the post-Commune leftist press in Paris that claimed to carry the legacy of the revolutionary episode. While its contemporaries such as *La Lanterne* and Rochefort's *L'Intransigeant* became the media organs of Boulangism, *Le Radical* stayed loyal to its radical socialist origins.

brother Zola gave to the disillusioned priest of his novel, *Paris*. A chemist, a radical, and a Montmartrois, Guillaume distills the existential threats to the Sacré-Coeur in his person. When his brother Pierre finds out that the radical Guillaume has devised an explosion to destroy the Basilica,[485] he successfully convinces him to use his knowledge not to destroy but to challenge the rule of dogma through science.[486] The anarchist-scientist takes the advice, and Zola leads us to a happy ending that defuses the social and political threat of radicalism with promises of industry and family bliss.[487] The symbolism seems transparent enough. Zola offers an ideal within the limits of the bourgeois morals and politics that he inadvertently criticizes throughout his novel. Therefore, the didacticism of Zola is that of a perplexed teacher. As Emery notes, in *Paris* the novelist renders the Basilica the "symbol of every negative force" in society and therefore demands it "to be overthrown."[488] Conversely, the city it overlooks is represented as a fertile ground of arts and intellect, which needs to be sown and cultivated by science and industry. Zola's promotion of industry and progress against

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[485] The highly publicized anarchist bombings in 1892–94 that seized the imaginations of the City's well-to-do inhabitants clearly informed Zola's plot—which moves through plots of 'anarchist terror' that lead to this watershed moment. Febles showed how Zola repeatedly exploited the Left's radicalism for the plots or emotive capacities of his books while at the same time misrepresenting, flattening, and even erasing its practical and theoretical critiques of his contemporary society. Eduardo A. Febles, *Explosive Narratives: Terrorism and Anarchy in the Works of Emile Zola.* (Amsterdam; New York, NY: Rodopi, 2010).

[486] Guillaume Froment explains his motivation as follows: "it haunts and exasperates me, because I have long since condemned it.... As I have often said to you, one cannot imagine anything more preposterous than Paris, our great Paris, crowned and dominated by this temple raised to the glorification of the absurd […] The priests want Paris to repent and do penitence for its liberative work of truth and justice. But its only right course is to sweep away all that hampers and insults it in its march towards deliverance. And so may the temple fall with its deity of falsehood and servitude!" Émile Zola, *Paris*, trans. Ernest Alfred Vizetelly (London: Chatto and Windus, 1898), 453.

[487] As noted by Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, Zola extends his discrediting of the revolutionary upheavals as an instrument of democracy and progress from *The Debacle* to his *Paris*; and in suggesting science, industry, and family as substitutes, he removes the revolution from the public spaces of the city to enclose it in private space. Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, *Paris as Revolution: Writing the Nineteenth-Century City* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 206.

[488] Emery, *Romancing the Cathedral*, 69–71.

the ills of dogma (*including* the revolutionary dogma of Guillaume) absolves the existing social and political order through its monumental scapegoat. In the end, Zola's triumph of science and industry assumes the backward-looking wish-image of a golden corn field that represents the enlightened city.[489]

Steinlen's promotion poster for the novel was regarded by Emery as confirmation of Zola's idealism and republicanism, where "the future of France rises from the mist to reclaim the city for the republic," rendered in "muted yellow and gold tones" and "dreamy brushstrokes" that echo Zola's pastoral utopia for the future Paris.[490] [Figure 2.24.] I suggest a contrary interpretation.

Figure 2.24. Théophile Alexandre Steinlen, Promotion poster for Émile Zola's *Paris* (serialized in *Le Journal*, October 23, 1897–February 9, 1898) Color Lithograph, 1897. (centrenationaldugraphisme.fr).

[489] Zola, *Paris*, 488.
[490] Emery, "The Power of the Pen," 66–67 and 74.

In Steinlen's *Paris* there is absolutely no reference to the transformative power of science and knowledge, nor to the delivery of the pastoral utopia they promise. On the contrary, what we have is a violent foreground occupied by an amalgam of revolting bodies that is reminiscent of Michelangelo's *Hell* against the scaffolded silhouette of the Sacré-Coeur in the background. Filling the dramatic decline of the Butte with a crowd violently attacking one another, it is both a reminder of the past and a premonition of the future. Perhaps the golden light of the sun promises a new dawn from the right edge of the composition and washes over the scenes of revolt that dissolve in the columns of smoke. Yet the visual hinge of this dawn is neither the sign of industry nor a harmonious family; but the nude allegory of the Revolution on the top-left corner which emerges from the struggle that rolls down from the hill over to the city.

Two years later, the interplay between the Basilica and the crowd reappears for a poster Steinlen created for *Le Petit Sou* (1900). [Figure 2.25.] Here, the Basilica is liberated from its scaffolds to be unmasked by Steinlen as an architectural patchwork of oppression. The façade opens up to host an idol—the *Golden Calf* of capitalism—at the heart of this structure. As a pilgrimage site that blurred the line between modern tourism and devotion, a monument that before being erected had appeared on postcards as if for sale, its stones and columns auctioned as Morris Columns of bourgeois vanity, with a souvenir shop important enough to be part of its original plan, the Sacré-Coeur fit right into a world of commercialism. Gabriel Weisberg says that with its "souvenir shop" the monument succumbs to "the nature of the butte," "rather than the salvation its

appearance originally suggested."[491] 'Boutique,' as we have seen, was a popular insult to debase the religious structure through stressing its entanglements with money and commerce.[492]

Figure 2.25. Théophile Alexandre Steinlen, 'Promotion poster for *Le Petit Sou: Journal de Défense Sociale,*' Color Lithograph, 1900. [Cropped]

[491] Gabriel P. Weisberg, "Montmartre's Lure: An Impact on Mass Culture" in *Montmartre and the Making of Mass Culture*, ed. Gabriel P. Weisberg (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 5.
[492] "En Plein Sacré Coeur" – L'Attaque: Organe Socialiste Révolutionnaire. – Year 1, no. 7 (August 8, 1888). The famous cabaret performer Aristide Bruant also refers to the Basilica as a 'boutique' in a song. Bruant, "V'là l'choléra Qu'arrive," 73–77.

(centrenationaldugraphisme.fr).

The relation between money and religion is much older than the entertainment industry of *fin-de-siècle* Montmartre; as is the debasement of religious authority through revealing its interest in worldly possessions, which was also part of the history of Christianity—from Christ and 'the merchants of the temple' to the radical reformation and Tetzel's coffer for indulgences. Finding capitalist idolatry at the heart of the Basilica was not only a strong attack on the relationship between religion and consumption, but reflected the rapport between the Church and the powerful industrialists and financiers of the Republic. In the last week of June 1890, the recognizable names of French commerce and industry gathered to declare their devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and in return received a special mass and blessing from the archbishop.[493] As noted by a sarcastic reporter, the wealthiest men of the nation asked the God of the poor and meek to get even wealthier.[494]

In addition to lodging the bourgeoisie and finance capitalism in the heart of the Basilica, Steinlen surrounds it with a military fortification hosting cannons directed against the crowd that fills the space below it. Sharing the same dark gray color, this crowd of undistinguishable bodies achieve individuality (and color) at the orbit of the Basilica's monumental foil: the spirit of Revolution that rises in the immediate foreground. Citing Philip Dennis Cate and Susan Gill's scholarship, Sonn identifies the

[493] The news of the blessing appeared in the Catholic newspaper *La Croix* on June 29, 1890.
[494] The report maintains, "soon to be associated with the stock exchange and banking maneuvers, the said God is expected to quickly enrich his collaborators." "Sacré-Coeur et Commerce," *Le Radical* 10, no. 182 (July 1, 1890).

figure as a direct quotation from François Rude's accidentally revolutionary sculpture group, *La Marseillaise*, and the scene as a standoff between "the proponents of French Revolutionary values" and "the supporters of the Church and the army" during the Dreyfus affair.[495] Although the active figure of Marianne clearly resembles *La Marsaillaise*, the explicitly working-class attributions of the figures which the spirit of Revolution 'liberates' by the breaking of their chains demands that we read this scene as an allegory of social revolution. The presence of the canons and the fortification are there to inscribe sovereign political authority onto the monument by referencing its capacity for violence. It is no accident that Steinlen merges the equestrian statues of Joan of Arc and King Louis IX (saints who were also sanctified by the national history) outside the Basilica in a generic vision of an equestrian statue of a ruler.[496] Exceeding the limits of anticlericalism, Steinlen's Basilica becomes a composite monument, which nullifies the political authority's professed militant secularism against their shared enemy: the people. Inverting the Third Republic's populist assessment of the monument as the architectural symbol of the imminent threat to its existence, Steinlen unmasks the

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[495] Sonn, "Marginality and Transgression," 120–41. Philip Dennis Cate and Susan Gill, *Théophile-Alexandre Steinlen* (Salt Lake City, UT: Gibbs M. Smith, 1982), 125–27. The famous sculpture referenced here was created by Rude under the orders of the July Monarchy to adorn the façade of an imperial monument, the Arc de Triomphe. It was intended to celebrate French soldiers who fought in the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars and the figure that the scholars liken to Steinlen's *liberator* was intended as the spirit of war. However, the public interpreted Rude's allegory as a republican icon—potentially to the dismay of the July Monarchy. Maurice Agulhon, *Marianne into Battle: Republican Imagery and Symbolism in France, 1789–1880* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 45–46.

[496] Although the statues were part of the construction from the beginning, they were not placed in Steinlen's lifetime. Executed in bronze by Hippolyte Lefebvre, they were installed in 1927, four years after Steinlen's death. The inclusion of the warrior saints was denounced by some devout Catholics. One publication that strongly disapproved of Abadie's plan asked: "How can one say this is the house of God, when two equestrian statues in military attire perch before it, and prophesy that they not only harm the spiritual character of the edifice, but risk yet another divine retribution?" The authors argue that unlike the statues of Constantine and Charlemagne inside the Vatican's Basilica that wait as 'true sentries,' the equestrian statues of Sacré-Coeur are outside, threatening to attack at any time. *L'Eglise du Sacré-Coeur à Montmartre sera-t-elle de notre style national ou sera-t-elle d'un style étranger*? 66.

Basilica as the Republic.[497]

Capital, Basilica, and Republic

Steinlen returned to the same composition a few years later to help fund the publications of the anarchist *Les Temps Nouveaux*.[498] [Figure 2.26.]

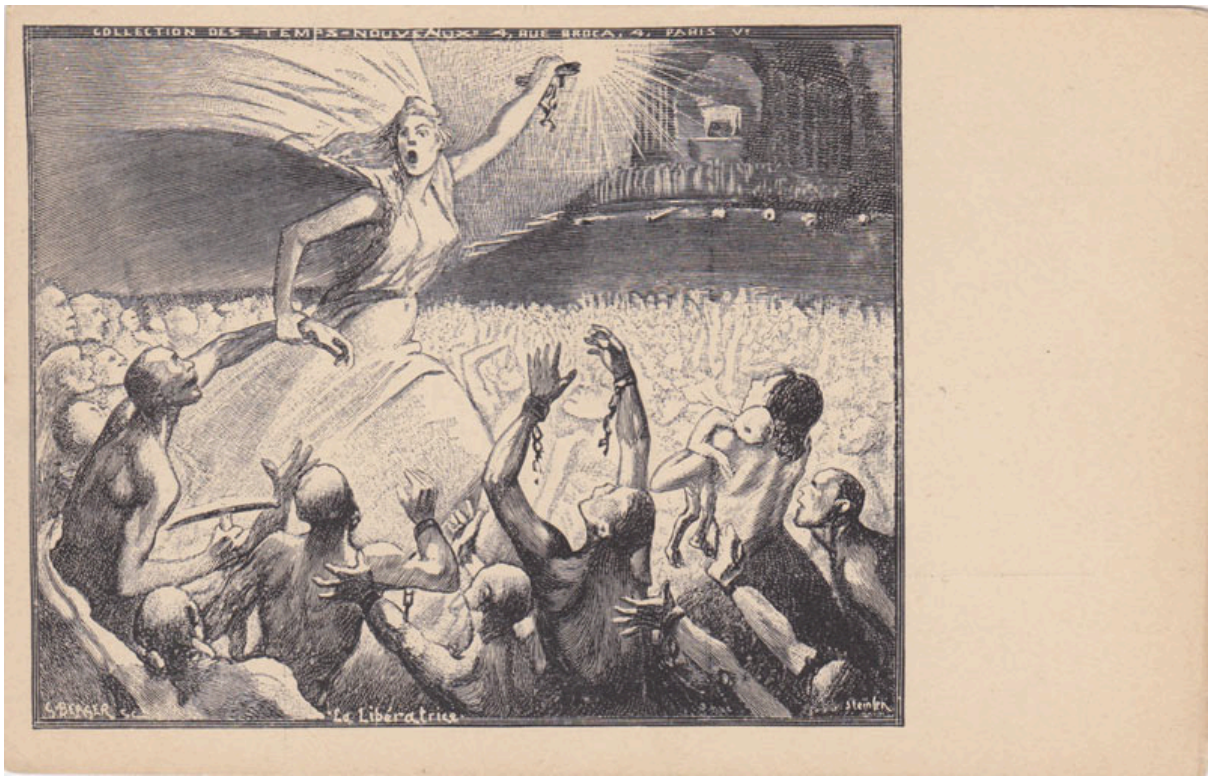

Figure 2.26. Théophile Alexandre Steinlen, *La Libératrice* Postcard produced for *Collection des Temps Nouveaux* 1902/4, Lithograph/Photomechanical Print. (Fédération Internationale des Centres d'Études et de Documentation

[497] For example, the public was reminded of the reactionary history of the Sacred Heart in July 1892 when an illuminated cross appeared on the scaffolding of the ongoing construction of the Sacré-Coeur de Montmartre just before the Bastille Day celebrations. Immediately the *Fédération française de la Libre-Pensée* declared it to be an explicit threat to the existence of the Republic, and formally demanded the public authorities to take forceful action against the perpetuators. "Avis Divers," *Le Radical* 12, no. 196 (July 14, 1892). The anticlerical newspaper *Le Radical*'s coverage of the Bastille Day celebrations on the Butte reported on "the hypocritical display of the clerics," composed of the contested illuminated cross flanked with papal colors, and the French flag against the large illuminated 'R.F.' (*République Française*) erected by the 'good republicans' in Montmartre. "La Soirée, Les Feux de Joie: À Montmartre," *Le Radical* 12, no. 198 (July 16, 1892).

[498] The image was also reproduced and sold by *Les Temps Nouveaux* as a postcard in the following years. The image used here is the postcard reproduction.

Libertaires/ficedl.info).

This time explicitly titled *La Libératrice*; this composition pushes the allegory of the revolution away from the immediate foreground to the midst of the crowd. Similar to the previous articulation, the monumental isolation of the cathedral-fortress is pitted against the dramatic allegory of revolt, which, due to the monochrome print and the direct lighting, gives her body a marble monumentality. The dramatic slope of the Butte, which dictates the compositional plane of the original design for the promotion of Zola's novel, is now leveled, and the sense of moral and social decline that it inscribed is therefore absent. Here, gathered on a vast plain before the elevated emblem of their misery, the only possible movement for the masses is presented as from the bottom up. Without any marker of the urban topography, we are no longer in Paris. In this version of the composition, the Basilica loses its recognizable silhouette and abandons all markers of the Christian faith. This is a new monument, a temple-fortress organized around the adoration and protection of the Golden Calf.

I will return to this image in the next chapter, but let me conclude by saying that Steinlen steps out of the theater of national politics—the social question pounding the foundations of the Third Republic—to arrive at the universal epic of the labor against the Golden Calf. Yet, precisely with its universality, the image speaks directly against the claims of the Third Republic. The Church is not a power outside and against the state; on the contrary, it is a single architectural machine of violent oppression. Just a couple of decades earlier, Bakunin had written that as long as religion reigns, the people are "a pliable instrument in the hands of all despotic powers leagued against the

emancipation of humanity."[499]

At the turn of the century, diverse reflections on the Catholic Church—from the work of French nationalist and antisemite Charles Maurras to Fyodor Dostoevsky's comparisons to Russian Orthodoxy—agreed on its origins as a continuation of the Roman Empire, and therefore as possessing an inherently political character.[500] Nietzsche used this double nature of the Church to judge its character: "[….] to turn the mills of the State's forces, [Christianity] has gradually become diseased to the very marrow, hypocritical and full of lies."[501] Foreshadowing the theorists of state authority, from Carl Schmitt to Alexander Kojève, who argued that modern political authority draws from theological conceptions of the divine and its claim for eternity,[502] anarchism identified the state at the end of the nineteenth century as "the altar of political religion."[503] At the moment of its supposed weakness, the radical critics could discern religion not only at the core of politics, but also in the sphere of avant-garde art. In his

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[499] Mikhail Bakunin, "Man Had to Look for God Within Himself," in *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin: Scientific Anarchism,* ed. Grigori Petrovitch Maximoff (London: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), 118–19.

[500] Carl Schmitt makes this observation in his *Roman Catholicism and Political Form* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 5, in which he declares "Catholicism is eminently political" to such an extent that if the "economic thinking" brings an end to the political (not just mere domination of the State by capital—but the destruction of the façade of the State and politics to reveal pure economic relations), the Church would remain as the only political form with a "stupendous monopoly. Ibid. 16 and 25. Of course Schmitt does not seem to think that the forces that would bring an end to the political apparatus might not allow the religious one to roam free.

[501] As quoted in Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*. (Oxford and Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 164. Kaufmann argues that according to Nietzsche, "[t]he State is the devil who tempts and intimidates man into animal conformity and thus keeps him from rising into the heaven of true humanity; the Church is the Antichrist who has perverted Christ's original call to man to break with father and mother and become perfect […]" Ibid. 176.

[502] In his 'metaphysical' analysis of the authority, Kojève shows how the temporal authority of the state presents itself 'outside of time' as the divine authority has done. Alexandre Kojève, *The Notion of Authority: (A Brief Presentation)*, E-Book (Verso, 2014) Macbook. 131–44. Carl Schmitt on the other hand argues that all the concepts of the modern state are secularized versions of their theological counterparts. Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 36–52.

[503] Mikhail Bakunin, "Open Letters to Swiss Comrades at the International," in *The Basic Bakunin: Writings 1869–1871*, ed. Robert M. Cutler (Prometheus Books, 1992), 176.

letters to his son Lucien, Camille Pissarro had famously denounced Paul Gauguin and his company for their preoccupation with the "mystical" and "religious" to succeed in a brutal art market.[504] The famous Neo-Impressionist's denunciation of his symbolist colleagues is well-known. But as Thomson notes, beyond an aesthetic and ideological criticism, what Pissarro diagnosed in the closing decade of the century was "a tectonic shift in class relations […] at a particular juncture, when two hitherto implacable enemies—the Catholic Church and the Third Republic—were edging towards rapprochement."[505] Indeed the artist saw this new 'trend' as an appeal to the bourgeois consumer, who responded to the "immense clamor of the disinherited masses" with a strategic falling back into superstition and religion.[506] What Pissarro read in the rising trends of a speculative art market was a central concern of the anarchists who changed their criticisms of the Catholic Church to expose the capitalist and statist limits of the official discourse of secularism.[507] For example, the journal *Le Chambard Socialiste* told the Third Republic to drop its famous battle cry—"Clericalism is your enemy"—to adopt an honest one that admitted to their alliance with the Church: "Socialism is your enemy."[508] Steinlen 'concretizes' this perceived unity between the loci of authority in a print that almost turns them into a comical reimagining of the famous fourth-century porphyry group of the *Four Tetrarchs*. [Figures 2.27 and 2.28.] Literally 'having each other's backs,' the church, judiciary, military, and political authorities brandish their

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[504] The artist's letters to his son Lucien in the Spring of 1891 were specifically preoccupied with the rise of religious subjects and mysticism in avant-garde circles. *Camille Pissarro: Letters to His Son Lucien*, ed. John Rewald and Lucien Pissarro (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1943), 161–64 and 169–71.
[505] Thomson, *The Troubled Republic*, 117.
[506] Letter from May 13, 1891 (Paris). Ibid. 169–71.
507 Meanwhile, the papal encyclicals *Ralliement* (1892) and *Rerum Novarum* (1891) fed the suspicions about an alliance between the political and religious authorities against the rising threat of a social revolution.
[508] "L'Ennemi," *Le Chambard Socialiste* 1, no. 2 (December 22, 1893).

arms against the people. Here, Steinlen repeats the teaching of his *La Liberatrice* in a satirical tone. Behind their marmoreal stillness, the profile and high top hat of a capitalist peek out to spell the motivation behind their unity.

Left, Figure 2.27. Théophile Alexandre Steinlen, 'Leur Bloc' in *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 137 (November 14, 1903). (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

Right, Figure 2.28. Four Tetrarchs, Porphyry sculpture group, 300 A.D. (Wikimedia Commons/Nino Barbieri, 2004).

Cross and School

From the 1880s onward, the Third Republic launched a series of measures to mold the next generation of French citizens. The aim was to replace the traditional domination of the Catholic Church as the arbiter of shared social and moral codes in an otherwise very diverse society, with persisting regionalisms and deep class divisions. Moreover, the republicans held Catholic education responsible for the conservative

victories in the elections that subjugated the Republic to the Moral Order.[509] Therefore, regardless of the intellectual and ideological differences that motivated their anticlericalism(s), all republicans recognized the Church as an obstacle before the transformation of the inhabitants of France into republican citizens.[510] When the republicans solidified their hold in the Assembly in the early 1880s, several pieces of legislation named after the minister of education Jules Ferry were passed to establish compulsory, secular, and free primary education across France. This was part of a larger republican device, and the schoolteachers were part of an army of the representatives—together with mayors and prefects—who planted the Republic into the provinces. In the words of Eugen Weber, the political authority was set to transform the *peasants into Frenchmen*.[511]

Although the expansion of secular schools challenged their monopoly on education, the Church and the congregations braced the republican charge by establishing private institutions and keeping the historical domination of the Jesuits in higher education more or less intact.[512] Teacher and journalist Gustave Téry's provocative work *Les Cordicoles* claimed that by the turn of the century, more than one

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[509] In the second half of the nineteenth century, Catholic dominance in French education had enjoyed an unbridled expansion owing to the Falloux Laws (1850–51) sanctioned by Louis Napoléon in the first years of the Second Empire. Ironically, the first president of the Third Republic, Adolphe Thiers, had vehemently supported Catholic involvement in education as the vice-president to the minister of education Alfred de Falloux, who was the architect of the law. William R. Keylor, "Anti-Clericalism and Educational Reform in the French Third Republic: A Retrospective Evaluation," *History of Education Quarterly* 21, no. 1 (1981): 96–97.

[510] James R. Lehning, *To Be a Citizen: The Political Culture of the Early French Third Republic* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 35–36.

[511] Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1976) also see James R. Lehning, *To Be a Citizen: The Political Culture of the Early French Third Republic* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 36.

[512] For a history of anti-Jesuit iconography around the question of education, see Philippe Rocher, "Des Corbeaux Au Service d'un Complot. La Caricature de l'Éducation Jésuite Au XIXe Siècle (1814–1914)," in *La Caricature Au Risque Des Autorités Politiques et Religieuses*, ed. Dominique Avon, Histoire (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2010), 35–57.

and a half million children were still in the 'hands' of the Jesuits and the devotees of the Sacred Heart, and were being indoctrinated into anti-republican sentiments.[513] According to Téry and his supporters, the Sacré-Coeur Basilica played a pivotal role in this system of indoctrination as a sacrificial altar to which the future generations of France were lured, like lambs.[514] In other words, regardless of the legal and electoral upper hand, the Republic and its future were still under an existential threat. However, the Third Republic had been chronically 'in danger' since its conception, and after the threat of a legitimist restoration was no longer a possibility, this notion of an impending reactionary threat was donned by the Third Republic as an ideological shield to divert legitimate criticisms against its institutions and practices: "if the Republic was perceived as continually threatened by the iniquitous forces of the clerico-monarchist right, then social criticism was a luxury."[515] That is to say, the constant sounding of the famous revolutionary alarm, 'La Republique en Danger!' smothered the cries for a just society.

Hence, *L'Assiette au Beurre*'s thematic issue around the question of education two decades after the passing of the Ferry laws is about more than just education.[516] It

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[513] Gustave Téry, *Les cordicoles* (E. Cornély, 1902).

[514] See anticlerical *La Lanterne*'s promotion of Téry's work, which explicitly ties the Sacré-Coeur Basilica to Catholic education—calling the temple a "school of hysteria, stupidity, and madness." Maurice Allard, "A Montmartre," ed. Aristide Briand, *La Lanterne : Journal Politique Quotidien* 24, no. 9016 (December 29, 1901).

[515] Keylor, "Anti-Clericalism and Educational Reform," 98 and 101–2.
Expectedly, when Jules Guesde's and Paul Lafargue's *Parti Ouvrier Français* initially adopted a warm attitude towards Social Catholicism in the name of solidarity, they were accused of clericalism and alliance with the Republic's enemies. POF ultimately revised its position both in the light of these attacks as well as their own disillusionments with Social Catholicism. For an account of the changing Guesdist attitudes towards Catholic labor organization see: Robert S. Stuart, "'A "De Profundis" for Christian Socialism': French Marxists and the Critique of Political Catholicism, 1882–1905," *French Historical Studies* 22, no. 2 (1999): 241–61. For more on the workers and Social Catholicism see this chapter's discussion of the *Notre Dame de l'Usine*.

[516] The issue was created collaboratively by Jules Grandjouan and Auguste Roubille, although the contributions of the former occupied the majority of the images and were decidedly more incendiary than the other's. Jules Grandjouan and Auguste Roubille, "La Liberté de l'Enseignement," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 155 (March 19, 1904).

is an incriminating assessment of the bourgeois Republic, with its claims to be the champion of reason and human progress against the Church's dogmas and oppression. The narrative of the album climaxes in the central spread created by Grandjouan. [Figure 2.29.] It features a semi-nude colossal personification of Liberty sprawling across two pages that enact a battlefield between the forces of religious and secularism.

Figure 2.29. Jules Grandjouan, 'La Liberté: Delivrée!!! (?)' in Jules Grandjouan and Auguste Roubille, "La Liberté de l'Enseignement," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 155 (March 19, 1904). (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

She is mid action, lifting herself up while the chains of religion that held her down crumble apart. Her broken shackles blend with the dark habits of the clerical mob dispersing to the left edge of the composition in panicked flight. The consequences of this awakening are beyond this retreat of bodies. Her liberated head destabilizes the

ground on which the religious authority stands, as the eclectic religious structure—a Gothic cathedral topped with the dome of the Sacré-Coeur—in the top corner topple over in defeat.

The straightforward visual narrative of secularism's victory on the left-hand side of the composition is followed by a decidedly more subtle, yet biting, political commentary on the right. Admittedly, one can easily digest the whole composition as the victory of the Third Republic's secular forces acting in unison for a common aim. More diverse than their clerical adversaries, we see the moderate, conservative-republican, socialist, bourgeois, Freemason, and proletariat all come together to deliver Liberty from religious oppression. However, the looming presence of the buildings that shelter this diverse crowd cast a shadow of doubt, and the title joins with the caption to scatter the clouds of ambiguity: "La Liberté…delivrée!!! (?)" The loud charge of the question mark in parenthesis directs our attention to the lower half of the colossal personification. The promise of deliverance is left unfulfilled. Rather than being liberated, the lower body of Liberty is still in chains and is now taken over by the parliamentary socialists and bourgeois politicians in their top hats. This is a crowd that emerges out of the bulging façades of the Stock Exchange building and the official edifices marked by fluttering tricolor flags. They swarm over the legs of Liberty like Lilliputians on Gulliver, as she gestures with her hand to halt their triumphal charge. The man who plants the red flag of the French socialist movement on her hip holds a prominent position. His bushy black beard and large belly allow us to identify him as Jean Jaurès, who a year later would be one of the drafters of the 1905 Law of Separation of the Church and state. Despite his effective advocacy for the working class and his

criticisms against the criminalization of the anarchists by the Republic, the anarchist-syndicalist Grandjouan portrays the democratic socialist Jaurès under a suspicious light. Indeed, his red flag is compromised by the placards and symbols that animate the crowd that charges after him, as a bourgeois *gentilhomme* with a white beard and a top hat—could he be the centrist President Émile Loubet?—caught amidst an action that resembles securing the shackles of Liberty rather than undoing them. As the crowd tightens the chains that tie down Liberty's lower body, one worker leaves them in his determined chase, with risen fist, after a monk.

The flags and placards that rise above the crowd further the graphic commentary of Grandjouan. The rule of the dogma has not ended; it has only changed its object of devotion. The red flag of socialism is 'French,' and backed up by "National Property" but the tricolors spelling 'GLOIRE!' and 'PATRIE' are just behind them. Another sign, 'Les Loges,' references the popular belief that the Third Republic was the rule of Masonic lodges.[517] Finally, the maxim of republican 'Civisme' makes a prominent appearance, reminding us that under the façade of bourgeois individualism was a state whose laws demanded absolute submission and devotion from its citizens. Gilbert Chaitin explains that the role of public education was to teach that an individual's identity, "his very being, [was dependent] on the Republic conceived as a transcendent Other who guarantees that identity and that being in return for sacrificial devotion."[518]

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[517] This belief was bordering on a potent myth at the end of the century, and it was not completely unjustified. Indeed, several prominent politicians and many parliament members in the Third Republic were Freemasons. But the belief in the degree of Freemasonry's involvement in politics widely varied: from the less alarming characterization of it as an inspiration for the 'republican spirit' to the conspiracy that Freemasonry was controlling everything in the political sphere as a "state within the state.' Vincent Borel, "La 'République maçonne'?," in *Serviteurs de l'État: Une histoire Politique de l'Administration Française, 1875–1945*, ed. Christophe Prochasson, Marc Olivier Baruch, and Vincent Duclert, *L'espace de l'histoire* (Paris: La Découverte, 2000), 155–65.

[518] Gilbert Chaitin, "'France Is My Mother': The Subject of Universal Education in the French Third

Grandjouan recognizes the hollowness of the secular Republic's promises for "universalism, freedom, and autonomy," which, instead of replacing dogma and superstition; created the rule of "nationalism, obedience, and dependence."[519] An atheist revolutionary who regarded both the anticlerical bourgeois state and the Catholic Church as enemies of the proletariat, Grandjouan reiterated his position in writing an article published in the revolutionary journal *La Guerre Sociale*:

> Stand back my comrade workers, and let the corpse of the Church stink and contaminate the bourgeoisie who cannot get rid of it. They soon will realize, albeit too late, that religion has been the strongest ally of Capital. By their own hands they pulled off one of the blinkers that blind the people. Tear off the other! First the Church, then the State![520]

As Grandjouan watches the traditional influence of the Church weaken, he recognizes that his ideal as a revolutionary anarchist is still far from realization. The bourgeois state stands strong as another cult waiting to be destroyed by the revolutionary workers. The state, in its hypocritical battle with the dogma, instated its own idols, its catechisms, its apostles thanks to the secular public education. Another image by the artist warns that France is "Still [with] the Idols," as it depicts a procession of a crowd that, despite their sobriety, share the same idols and slogans with the mob that partook in the chaotic battle in *La Liberté.* [Figure 2.30.] This is not a republican march to a battle with the Church, but a religious procession with gods (Kant, Voltaire, and Hugo), saints (Carnot, Jeanne D'Arc, Bayard, and Du Guesclin), and doctrines (Duty, Motherland) that constitute the

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Republic," *Nineteenth-Century Prose* 32, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 128–58.

[519] Ibid.

[520] Jules Grandjouan, "La Guerre Sociale," *La Guerre Sociale*, no. 18 (April 13–21, 1907). My translation, from the original quotation in French as it appeared in Dixmier and Dixmier, *L'Assiette au Beurre*, 296. A dedicated militant anarchist-communist, Grandjouan supported the message of his images with regular writing. He published numerous pieces in revolutionary publications such as *La Guerre Sociale,* and wrote the texts for the issues he prepared for *L'Assiette au Beurre*. He was also a researcher who brought together the statistical analysis and first-hand interviews with the workers for his booklet project for the CGT on labor conditions in different industrial sectors.

Republic's official 'religion.' [521] In other words, it gives form to Ansell's separation of 'anticlerical' from 'nonreligious': "For Republicans, anticlericalism was a sort of secular religion around which they became internally politicized."[522] Dressed in the strict fashion of their class, Grandjouan's bourgeois congregation presents a uniformity that is not much different from clerical habits. A stray dog leads this procession of top hats, tired formulae, and pale effigies of the *grands hommes*, and the whole scene becomes a parody of bourgeois critical thinking.

Figure 2.30. Jules Grandjouan, 'Toujours les Idoles' in Jules Grandjouan and Auguste Roubille, "La Liberté de l'Enseignement," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 155 (March 19, 1904). (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

[521] Staunchly anticlerical, the Republic was far from being 'nonreligious,' as for republicans "anticlericalism was a sort of secular religion around which they became internally politicized." Christopher K. Ansell, *Schism and Solidarity in Social Movements: The Politics of Labor in the French Third Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 49.
[522] Ibid.

The Sword and the Cross

One of the dearest idols for the Republic was the army, marked in our central image with the chauvinism spelled out in the tricolors and the obedience and devotion demanded by the placard *'Civisme*.' Yet, we missed one small but significant placard peeking out on the steps of the Stock Exchange building: "Vive l'Armée!" [Figure 2.31.]

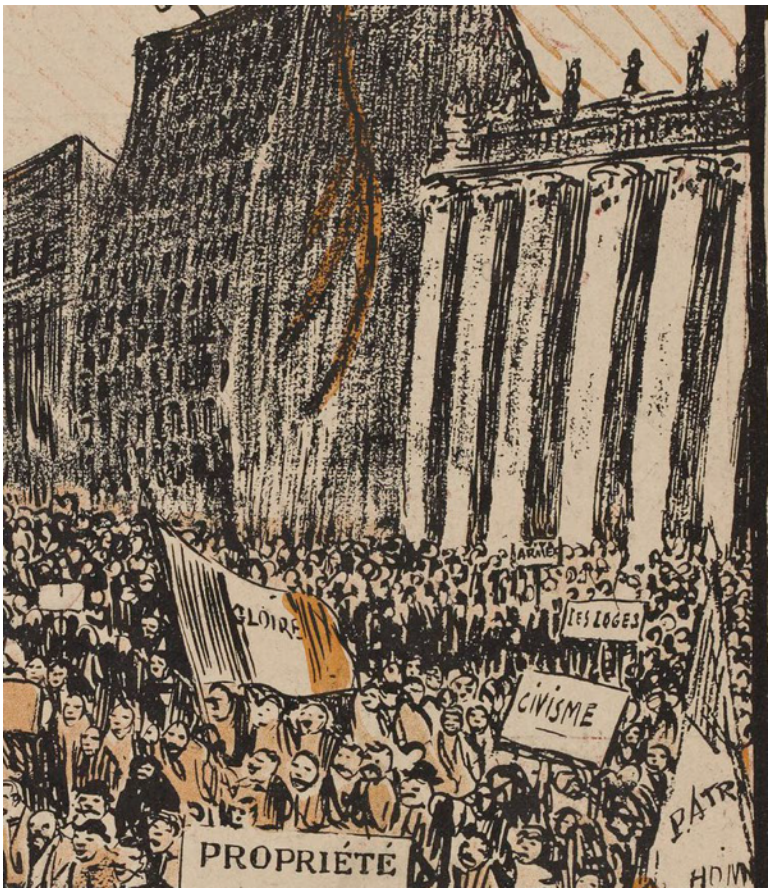

Figure 2.31. Detail from Jules Grandjouan, "La Liberté: Delivrée!!!" *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 155 (March 19, 1904).

The rhetoric of love and duty for the *Patrie* and the glorification of the military culminated around the ideal of *revanche*—a significant fuel for the popularity of

Boulanger during the final years of the 1880s. Built on the memory of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 and the promise to avenge the lost lives and territories, *revanche* was an official discourse that permeated the Republic's classrooms and nourished the sacrificial devotion demanded from the new generation of citizens who would walk in their millions to death in the Great War. During the tenure of the anticlerical colonialist Paul Bert, the Ministry of Public Education had implemented military training classes into boys' schools. Many anarchists saw the republican education as a straight line from the classroom to the barracks. On the last page of the same issue of *L'Assiette*, the artist offers two possible roads to the naked young boy we see flanked by an old nun in a habit and a hefty Marianne with her red cap of liberty. [Figure 2.32.]

Figure 2.32. Jules Grandjouan, 'Choisis…tu es libre…' in Jules Grandjouan and Auguste Roubille, "La Liberté de l'Enseignement," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 155 (March 19, 1904). (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

Gnarled with enmity, the comparably hideous faces of Catholicism and the Secular Republic turn to the small boy, pinching his ears to pull him onto their preferred life trajectory for him. Although the caption tells the boy that he is 'free to choose,' each road they offer is equally straight and predetermined, both lined up with factories and workers' housing—even if one leads to the Church, and the other to the barracks. For the anarchist artist it is a false premise of difference, the choice is between secular discipline and oppression or religious oppression and discipline. Both options of instruction indoctrinate children with obedience and respect for authority.

In their desire to mold docile subjects, the Church and the army were in agreement, despite their competition. But in another venue of operation they were just co-conspirators. The alliance of the *croix* and *glaives*, from the Napoleonic wars to the present, was a reality, but the colonialism and imperialist expansion laid bare the hollowness of republican anticlericalism for revolutionary socialists and anarchists.[523] On the pages of anarchist publications, the missionaries accompanied the crimes of imperialism, eagerly blessing the massacres perpetuated in the name of the French (or Belgian, Spanish…) state and nation. Gustave-Henri Jossot, who was always ready to lend his creativity in the service of anarchism and antimilitarism, conceived and executed an issue titled *Dressage* for *L'Assiette* where we follow page by page a life—literally from womb to tomb—and see how a person transforms into a perfect "brick for the wall of the barracks."[524] Born as a "petit révolté" who resisted even at his arrival to this earth, the rebel spirit of our graphic hero is gradually chiseled away by the religious and nationalist dogmas and the discipline that finds him at home, school, Church, and army. Once rendered completely docile, he becomes a soldier sent to massacre native peoples under the demands of imperialism.

[523] In the literature, the alliance is dubbed either as *croix et glaives* (the cross and the sword) or as *glaives et goupillon* (the sword and the aspergillum).
[524] Henri Gustave Jossot, "Dressage," *L'Assiette au Beurre* No. 144 (January 2, 1904).

Figure 2.33. Henri Gustave Jossot, 'Mûr pour la Caserne' in "Dressage" *L'Assiette au Beurre* No. 144 (January 2, 1904). (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

The complicity of the Church and the military is distilled in one of these scenes that bears the striking graphic directness characteristic of Jossot's talent. [Figure 2.33.] Our hero, now a young man sufficiently broken in and obedient, is presented to a military officer by a clergyman. As the personification of the Church greets the officer with an upright salutatory blessing of his left hand, the downward slant of his right index finger dictates the submissive angle of the young man's prostrated back, connecting the figures

by invisible puppeteer threads. The young man's eager tongue licking the boot of the officer rhymes with the tip of the white whip which returns the favor by threateningly touching his head.[525] Colonialism and militarism were holes in the thin veil of *laïcité* that hid the interdependence between the French state and the Catholic Church.

The Cross in the Factory

Christopher Ansell notes that anticlericalism was not only a pathway for republican 'state building' that allowed control of key institutions, it was also the 'cement' that kept an otherwise minacious labor movement attached to the republican camp.[526] Yet, the anticlericalism of the Third Republic and the radical Left's anti-religious stance had divergent motivations. Primarily for the Third Republic, the Catholic Church would cast a shadow over the Republic's temporal authority as long as it stood strong in social and political life. For the radical Left, by preaching obedience and docility under the pretext of patience, the religion granted free rein to the exploitation of labor by capital. The anarchist-syndicalist Grandjouan illustrated this latter position in a print he published in the 'anti-Christian' issue he created for *L'Assiette au Beurre.*[527] [Figure 2.34.] The almost square composition packs into a crammed pictorial space a large grinding mill and fifteen workers who put its large wheels in motion in a circular movement. This never-ending exertion marks the young and old bodies with tragic bends. The product of the toil is invisible. The only thing the mill's large wheels seem to be grinding is the life energies of the workers who are

[525] In the second half of the album we see that when his body is no longer exploitable for the profit of the nation, religion, and capital, he is discarded as human waste from the society. His descent into destitution leads to crime, after which the same institutions of power that have groomed him from his first day end his life on earth under the banal indifference of the guillotine's blade. Jossot, "Dressage".
[526] Ansell, *Schism and Solidarity in Social Movements*, 48–49.
[527] I further analyze the cover and the content of this album in the following section.

affixed to its shafts as draft animals to a tumbrel. All this unfolds under the self-content surveillance of Christ, whose hefty body stands in opposition to his historical appearance reproduced in a cartoon over the top border. Two banners of text unfold over and under the image, giving voice to this divine foreman: “offer your right cheek … offer your back to the shaft and your head to the choker;” and the famous lines from the Gospel of Matthew, which read here as a cruel joke: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Figure 2.34. Jules Grandjouan, ‘Tendez la joue droite’ in “Ecce Homo: Numéro Antichrétien” *L’Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 300 (December 29, 1906). (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

The idea of Christ as factory overseer is not just a hyperbolic metaphor. Albert de Mun, a member of parliament and an aristocrat who partook in the suppression of the Commune, was convinced that it was poverty which forced the working class of the country to the dangerous arms of the revolution. As early as 1871, he had launched the

organization of religious work associations, under the name *l'Oeuvre des Cercles Catholiques d'Ouvriers.* These explicitly aimed to erase the antagonism between classes. As a devout Catholic, royalist, and staunch enemy of democracy and revolution, de Mun's career exemplified the conservatives' overt response to 'the social question' and their covert defense against the threat of future Communes.[528]

The vision of de Mun and his followers was not oriented to a more equitable future, but was grounded on an idealized past consisting of the Christian corporations, paternalistic master-servant relationships, and supposedly peaceful class hierarchies of the Middle Ages. These efforts received an official encouragement with Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891), which called for religious responsibility against the increasing poverty. This encyclical was the Vatican's attempt to be a determinant factor in answering 'the social question' and counteracting the growing influence of radical Left ideologies among the working-class populations. It also assured the compatibility of faith with capital, by explicitly stressing the Church's respect for private property and capitalist accumulation. Such attempts to assimilate the proletariat into a Catholic workers' congregation included the dedication of a chapel in the Sacré-Coeur to *Jésus-Ouvrier* [the Worker-Jesus] by the *Cercles Catholiques*. The chapel was advertised as the expression of the true French workers against the members of their class who betrayed the nation and fell prey to the nefarious International Workingmen's Association and its instigations of anarchy and atheism.[529] In the following decades,

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[528] Alfred de Mun was also an active anti-Dreyfusard, and just like the conservative journals he contributed to in the final decades of his life, such as *La Croix* and *Le Gaulois*, he was also a very vocal anti-semite.

[529] Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity*, 335. Yet in a twist of fate, as Harvey recognized, the chapel of the workers was erected over the old Rue des Rosiers where the worker and revolutionary Communard Eugène Varlin was killed. Therefore the chapel to worker-Jesus forever stood over the ground where the leftist martyr was fallen.

Cercles Catholiques inspired and collaborated with other movements, such as Catholic mixed unions, the bosses' *Association Catholique des Patrons du Nord* and the new cult of the *Notre-Dame de l'Usine.*

By the 1880s, divided between Paul Lafargue and Jules Guesde's *Parti Ouvrier Français* (POF), radical republicans, non-POF socialists, and extra-parliamentary anarchists, the Left had to counter an increasingly well-organized Social Catholicism as they competed with each other to be the ideological locus for the working classes. Their common opponent often had the help of local clergy wherever they wanted to establish their influence, which allowed them to reach a large number of workers outside Paris. It was clear to the Left that Catholicism would regularly frustrate their efforts to create proletarian class solidarity by counterpoising a fate-based accord between "devout capitalists and pious workers."[530] In this period the official anticlericalism of the bourgeois Republic offered an uneasy alliance to the Left factions and the dilemma of choosing between a practical union with the anticlerical bourgeoisie or a principled solidarity with the Catholic workers.[531] However, the expanding control of the Catholic movements over workshops and factories urged even the POF, "the least anti-clerical faction of the French left," who many times supported the Social Catholics' criticisms of the bourgeois Republic, to speak against the practices of religious workplace organizations such as the *Notre-Dame de l'Usine* (Our Lady of the Factory).[532] Indeed

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[530] Robert S. Stuart, "'A "De Profundis" for Christian Socialism': French Marxists and the Critique of Political Catholicism, 1882-1905," *French Historical Studies* 22, no. 2 (1999): 243.
[531] Robert Stuart, "'Jesus the Sans-Culotte': Marxism and Religion during the French Fin de Siècle," *The Historical Journal* 42, no. 3 (1999): 707.
[532] Claude Willard, "Les Attaques Contre Notre-Dame de l'Usine," *Le Mouvement Social*, no. 57 (1966): 206. Under the leadership of Guesde and Lafargue, the POF early on regarded religious faith as a non-issue, as, according to them, the growing class consciousness would eventually banish religion. That is why they initially 'welcomed' the religious unions as vehicles that would hasten the process of revolution. In this regard, they were an exception among the *fin-de-siecle* Left, which shared a militant atheism

a POF-led investigation into *Notre-Dame de l'Usine* in 1892 revealed a close collaboration between local churches and business owners in the creation of a complex system of oppression and surveillance in northern regions such as the textile center of Lille.

What the Catholic organizations such as *Notre-Dame de l'Usine* offered for a business was the formidable combination of the factory and Church as "a single clerico-capitalist disciplinary device."[533] Their inclusion of chapels, confessionals, and crucifix in every workshop strategically confounded the work and the worship. Every workday started and ended with a collective prayer led by a priest, the young workers were forced to study catechism, the workers had to present 'a ticket' every month to prove they regularly went to confessional, and espionage was a crucial part of the whole system, officially entrusted to foremen in the workplace and to the visits from nuns at workers' homes. There were mandatory pilgrimages and even religious retreats to the convent of Notre-Dame du Haut-Mont. The workers had no choice, as refusal to participate in any of these religious practices constituted the necessary grounds for a boss to fire the worker.[534]

The revolutionary Left was careful about stressing that the *Notre-Dame de l'Usine* was a symptom of capitalist production and could not be reduced to the threat of Catholicism. It was a symptom, illustrating the extremes the workers' exploitation

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expressed by strong anti-Catholic rhetoric. Stuart, "Jesus the Sans-Culotte," 708–11. Both Willard and Stuart attribute the change in the POF's position both to their surprise at the reach of Catholic unions and as a necessary declaration of their anti-church credentials following criticism from the republicans. See the previous section on how the moderate and center-right republicans used anticlericalism to shut down criticisms of their regime.

[533] Stuart, "Jesus the Sans-Culotte," 722.

[534] Willard, "Les Attaques Contre Notre-Dame de l'Usine," 206–7.

and oppression could reach once it started to utilize the tools of organized religion.[535] Their warnings against the real culprit were justified. When the reports which enumerated the abuses the capitalists carried out under the disciplinary fist of the *Notre-Dame de l'Usine* arrived at the National Assembly, these staunchly anticlerical gentlemen chose a policy of appeasement.[536] Thanks to the Assembly's unwillingness to chastise even the most alarming labor oppression and the boost of Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum,* 'the Social Catholicism' of *Notre-Dame de l'Usine* and similar religious-capitalist cults would sustain their grip on the workers for more years to come. In his study of educational reform and anticlericalism in the Third Republic, William R. Keylor argues that the threat of a Catholic counter-revolution was in reality eclipsed by a more immediate challenge to the bourgeois Republic—"the fear of social revolution"—that the memories of the June days (1848) and Paris Commune (1871) rendered palpable.[537] In other words, despite the Third Republic's loud anticlericalism, the institutions of the Republic were complicit in the continued sway of the Church over the lower classes.

On the other hand, militant anarchism became increasingly invested in union organization through the mid-1890s, especially after the anti-anarchist *Lois Scélérates,*

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[535] *Le Socialiste* wrote, "[The *Notre Dame de l'Usine*] is not the work of a few Jesuits, but a natural result of capitalist exploitation." "Notre Dame de L'Usine," *Le Socialiste*, June 19, 1892, 1. Referenced in Willard, "Les Attaques Contre Notre-Dame de l'Usine," 207.

[536] Willard traces how the Assembly's initial decision in favor of 'firm action' against the perpetrators soon revealed itself to be a continued license to oppress and exploit. For example, a decision in October of the same year (1892) declared the factory to be an extension of the business owner's "house," concluding that the religious practices one dictated in his own house were outside the law's jurisdiction. Ibid., 208.

[537] According to Keylor, the two other threats that informed the Third Republic's social and political policies were the feeling of national inferiority and degeneracy after defeat by the Germans in 1870; and the persistence of strong regionalism that continued to undermine the narrative of national unity. Keylor, "Anti-Clericalism and Educational Reform," 99–100.

leading first to the establishment of the *Fédération des Bourses du Travail* (FBT) and later anarchism's ideological dominance in the labor movement with the *Confédération Générale du Travail* (CGT).[538] Offering their crayons to anarchist-syndicalism, artists such as Grandjouan and Aristide Delannoy brought the problems of labor to the pages of *L'Assiette*.[539] A decade later, when the POF united with the Blanquist *Parti Socialiste Révolutionnaire* to form the *Parti Socialiste de France*, Delannoy dedicated an issue to draw attention to the continued collaboration of unbridled capitalism with the religion.[540] Claiming a semi-reportage quality, the title page announces a look into the 'Pays Noir'—the coal producing-consuming industrial regions of Belgium and Northern France.[541] The subject of attention is the modern cult of Marian devotion, *Notre-Dame de l'Usine*, still effectively used to promote control and docility in the northern industrial centers.

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[538] Roslak notes that the anarchist-communists of the 1880s were often suspicious of syndicalism and its focus on corporate organization and wage earning. Roslak, *Neo-Impressionism and Anarchism*, 173–74.
[539] I analyze several of these examples of graphic syndicalism in the next chapter.
[540] Aristide Delannoy was an anarchist painter and illustrator, who regularly contributed to publications such as *Le Temps Nouveaux, La Guerre Sociale*, and *Les Hommes du Jour.* His radical politics led to several encounters with the law, and after at least one of them he was sentenced to one year in prison. His close friend and fellow anarchist artist Jules Grandjouan organized support for the imprisoned artist, including designing a poster of solidarity to call for artistic and political freedom of expression.
[541] Élisabeth and Michel Dixmier speculate about the exact location and the factory that Delannoy uses in his war against Social Catholicism. They suggest that Delannoy might be implicitly evoking one of the more famous Catholic bosses, Philibert Vrau and his factories in Lille. Known as the 'industrial Saint of Lille,' Vrau's notion of the "Christian factory" promoted a Catholic Socialism aimed more at sheltering the business from the dangers of real working-class organization rather than working towards workers' well-being and emancipation. Dixmier and Dixmier, *L'Assiette au beurre*, 87–88.

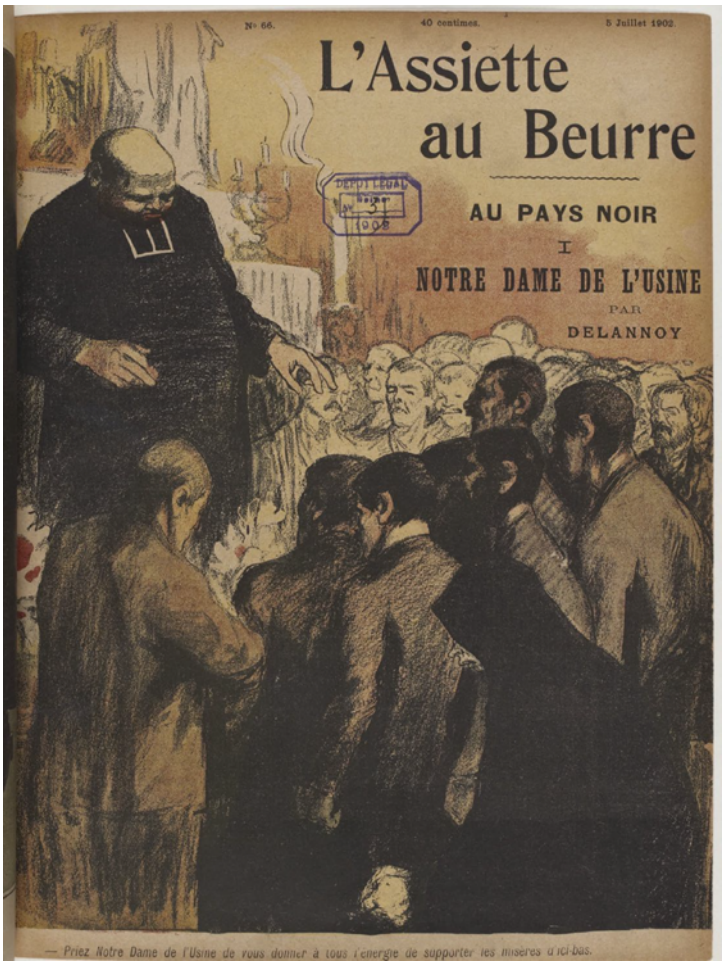

Figure 2.35. Aristide Delannoy, 'Priez Notre-Dame…' in "Au Pays Noir: Notre-Dame de l'Usine" *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 66 (July 2 1902). (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

Delannoy's cover image is straightforward. [Figure 2.35.] It follows the conventions of satirical criticisms of religion, inscribing its attacks on the body of the clergy. Raised above a large group of malnourished male workers with sunken cheeks, the large silhouette of the bald and overweight priest enacts a moral judgment on the Church. The face of the priest leaves its status as the primary marker of identification to his prominent large belly, which, bulging under his dark habit, orders the miserable crowd gathered in its orbit to receive the lazy blessing of his left hand. Behind, the lower half of a statue of the Virgin is visible on the altar, whose ghost-like appearance alludes

to her abuse as the inspiration for the paternalistic and exploitative cult of the *Notre-Dame de l'Usine.* The caption ventriloquizes the insult in the priest's blessing, "Pray to *Notre-Dame de l'Usine* to grant you all the energy to endure the miseries of this world." The dual grip of capital and the Church on the worker's lives was not limited to the workshops and the factory floor. The clergy blacklisted the parishioners, identified potential 'trouble-makers' for the bosses, and used 'charity' as a tool of discipline by reserving support for the most obedient and denying others who did not comply. In return, capital helped the Church to continue its control over the population by laying off those who did not follow the religious practices dictated to them by their local church or those who refused to submit their children to religious instruction.[542] The two powers were working in a mutually beneficial system under the permissive gaze of a political authority that was allegedly battling superstition and dogma. This sensible partnership between religion, capital, and the state against the laboring classes informed one of the illustrations for *L'Assiette*'s *Notre-Dame de l'Usine* issue. A worker presents to the resigned gazes of a working-class family a poster of the Virgin with the title *Notre-Dame de l'Usine,* with a brief directive: "This will hang over the president." [Figure 2.36.] The caption directs us to the only object visible in this barren interior other than the chairs the women occupy: a portrait of Émile Loubet, the president of the Republic. That same Republic is in an embittered battle with the Catholic Church and in three years will declare the Law of Separation of the Church and the state. However, the sacred ephemera does not intend to replace its secular other, as two gazes of authority can peacefully co-surveil the working-class interior.

[542] Stuart, "Jesus the Sans-Culotte," 722.

Figure 2.36. Aristide Delannoy, 'Ça fera pendant au président !' in "Au Pays Noir: Notre-Dame de l'Usine" *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 66 (July 2 1902). (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

Christ as an Anarchist, The Anarchist as Christ

Thomson notes that in the last decade of the nineteenth century, the two adversaries of the Third Republic—anarchism and Christianity—enjoyed a moment of

commensurability in the public imagination.[543] Once freed from the hierarchy and corruption of the Catholic Church, the teachings of Christ seemed to share with anarchism a radical idea of equality and a belief in a fundamental morality. Numerous literary and visual efforts in *fin-de-siècle* Paris collectively cultivated an iconography of a humanist revolutionary murdered by authority.[544] These works often depict Christ (and Christ-like figures) in modern settings, observing the scenes of poverty and excess; witnessing the perversion of his teachings and his sacrifice by the Catholic Church for power and profit; or acting like a revolutionary agitator.[545] [Figure 2.37.] Rather than a mere romantic device mixing the mythical and the modern, these images stress the *humanity* of Christ by recasting the gospel's assertion that *he* "remains present among us in the lives of the wretched of the earth"[546] under a secular-humanist light. These artists refused to discard Christ with the Catholic Church, and presented him as a still-functioning moral compass that could orient the modern individual in the direction of revolutionary politics.[547]

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[543] Thomson, *The Troubled Republic*, 166–67.

[544] The French radicals were not alone in resurrecting Christ for the service of social revolution. As I have already mentioned, Ensor brought Christ to the streets of Brussels in his monumental painting *Christ's Entry into Brussels in 1889* (1888); his close friend and supporter Eugène Demolder reimagined the stories from the gospels in a contemporary Flemish setting in his *Contes d'Yperdamme* (1891); and a colossal portrait of Christ beat Paul Signac's anarchist utopia *In the Time of Harmony* (1895–96) as the decorative statement of the Belgian socialists' *Maison du Peuple* in Brussels. However, we should be careful about the diverse roles the inclusion of the messiah plays in these different political and aesthetic contexts. As noted by Jonsson, Christ in Ensor's famous painting is not a sovereign symbol above all, but is on the same level as the other individuals represented on the canvas, at most "an allegory for the ethical substance of the popular collectivity itself." Jonsson, "Society Degree Zero," 22–23 and 25.

[545] There are some notable exceptions to the Left's appropriation of Christ as a figure of noble suffering and dignity. In addition to the radical anti-Christian images that are discussed in this chapter, some texts extended the anticlerical custom of erotic debasement to the figure of Christ. For example, in his lewd short story of Pope Pius IX's encounters with God and the members of the holy family in paradise, Paul Lafargue portrays Christ as a lazy little fat man with golden curls, covered in precious gems, luxurious textiles, and heavy make-up, and constantly surrounded by an entourage of young women. Paul Lafargue, *Pie IX Au Paradis* (Lille: Imprimerie du Parti Ouvrier, 1890).

[546] Ronald E. Osborn, *Humanism and the Death of God: Searching for the Good after Darwin, Marx, and Nietzsche* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 56.

[547] Strikingly, the trend that brought Christ to the modern world had an equivalent at the other end of the

Figure 2.37. Théophile Alexandre Steinlen, *Le Prophète*, Etching, 1902. (Bibliothèque de l'Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, INHA).

Such efforts were common in literature as well. The self-proclaimed anarchist poet Laurent Tailhade brought Jesus to the Paris of the *fin-de-siècle* in his poem *Résurrection*.[548] Tailhade braids life in 'the capital of modernity' together with the

ideological spectrum. Thomson suggests that Catholic artists who depicted Christ in nineteenth-century settings were responding in a way to the Church's call to carve out for the Catholic faith a place in the modern world—this goal is reflected in the Papal *Rerum Novarum,* and the establishment of Catholic banks and workers' 'unions.' Thomson, *The Troubled Republic*, 150–59.

[548] Laurent Tailhade's anarchism was usually extenuated as fashionable and individualist, rather than committed, revolutionary, and communist. In the literature on *fin-de-siècle* anarchism, the position of Tailhade is usually reduced to his infamous celebration of the anarchist August Vaillant after the bombing in the chamber of deputies: "what do the victims matter if the gesture is beautiful?" [*si le geste soit beau?*]. Ironically, he would be the victim of another anarchist attack in Foyot restaurant, after which he lost an eye. However, this did not make him reconsider his comment on the beauty of anarchist violence perpetuated to achieve a just society. Described by a scholar as "[a] dandy, an art collector, and an extravagant personality;" the poet was a regular in the bohemian milieus of Montmartre and the Latin Quartier. His pen definitely had the sharpness suitable for anarchist propaganda, which he used to viciously attack the institutions of authority and bourgeois society. The "only two groups," Ali Nematollahy writes, that escaped "Tailhade's furor" were "the poor and the anarchists." Ali Nematollahy, "Anarchist Dandies, Dilettantes and Aesthetes of the Fin De Siècle," *Dandies Anarchistes, Dilettantes et Esthètes de La Fin de Siècle* 48, no. 1 (January 1, 2009): 25–28.

gospel and biblical stories to pass a moral judgment on the abuses of authority. The savior arrives in Paris on the Orient Express and is greeted by "the purple cardinal, and the insolent judge / And the nuncio, and the president and the admiral," who lead him to the gates of the Cathedral, where the savior hears a disembodied warning that tells him not to enter these temples where his soul is long-banished; instead, the voice tells him to "join the poor, the insurgent, the suffering, the exiled, the anarchist!"[549]

If the moral compass of Christ was pointing to anarchists and socialists, its opposite end was directed at the Christians and the Catholic Church. It was a popular device to compare the idealist who died on a cross for his ideals to "the greedy souls, dry hearts, unbridled selfishness" that one found under "the pompous ceremonies in basilicas."[550] The judgment of these artists rings closer to Nietzsche's statement that "there was only one Christian, and he died on the cross."[551] The formal juxtapositions between the luxury and pomp that surrounded the seat of St. Peter and the evangelical poverty of Christ were common visual formulae.[552] [Figure 2.38.]

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[549] Laurent Tailhade, "Résurrection," in *Poèmes Aristophanesques*, 3rd ed. (Paris: Mercure de France, 1910), 89–93. Inspired by the Parisian adventures of Tailhade's Christ, the artist Hermann Vogel expanded its narrative into a visual-novella for *L'Assiette*, where Christ, disappointed and confused by the cathedral gift shops and the dinner parties of France's political and ecclesiastical leaders, leaves them to be with the people, with the drunkards and beggars of the streets—which ends with him getting arrested and brought before a modern-day Pilate. In other words, there is no room for Christ in Paris and its cathedrals at the end of the nineteenth century. Hermann Vogel, "Rédemption," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 105 (April 12, 1903).
[550] Georges Clemenceau, "Booz," Les Temps Nouveaux Supplément Litteraire 1, no. 15 (1897): 505–6.
[551] Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*, trans. H. L. Mencken (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1931), 111.
[552] Dixmier and Dixmier, *L'Assiette au beurre*, 84–85.

Figure 2.38. Cesare Giris, 'Le Patron / Le Ministre' in Giris et al., "Pape et Papabili," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 121 (July 25, 1903). (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

From 1901 onward, in the few years leading up to the watershed law on the Separation of the Churches and state (December 9, 1905), *L'Assiette* published multiple issues that opposed organized religion's insatiable appetite for power and wealth to 'the dream' of a visionary murdered by comparable powers almost two thousand years ago. The widely read works that historicized and humanized Christ, such as Ernest Renan's *Vie du Christ*, helped to justify coopting Christ as a secular hero for the poor and the disinherited.[553] These texts took the form of a restrained effort of iconoclasm, killing the God in Christ by stressing his humanity. One issue that centers around the role of false

[553] Ernest Renan, *Vie de Jésus* (Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1863).

belief and superstition in the management of the masses starts with a dedication to *the man*:

> To the memory of the admirable Man who first dared to speak to other Men about their conscience, their feeling of responsibility to others. He died for and because of this great dream, defeated by superstitions stronger than himself, but the example of his great courage remains with us. May the profiteers who tampered with his powerful word to carry on the work of Pharisees and the merchants of the Temple grow more and more despicable.[554]

The dedication is clear. If Christ did indeed descend from Tailhade's train into *fin-de-siècle* Paris, he would become a revolutionary and fight against the Church. This easy assimilation of Christ to the ranks of the political Left is no surprise. The 'God incarnate' is a "poor manual laborer from a defeated backwater of the Empire who was tortured to death by the political and religious authorities."[555] By extension, anarchists were selfless prophets who repeated his work and sacrifice. Steinlen was among those who consciously eroded the distinction between the evangelical savior and the militant revolutionaries of his present day. For example, he presented Charles Malato as Christ during the court hearing that accused the famous revolutionary of taking part in the assassination attempt against President Loubet and his royal visitor Alfonso XIII in the Summer of 1905. [Figure 2.39.] The composition presents a brigade of French judges facing the calmly smiling Malato in his long white coat. A soldier in Roman army uniform waits behind him amidst faint figures that connect the biblical past with the present. The strategic anachronism turns the riled judge in the middle into a modern Pilate who threateningly leans over Malato and asks: "You claim to want to reform the

[554] Henri Bellery-Desfontaines, "Grandes et Petites Superstitions, 10 Septembre 1904," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 180 (September 10, 1904).
[555] Osborn, *Humanism and the Death of God*, 6.

Society... Do you know where such ideas have led your predecessors?" The answer is lodged on the crucifix manifested on the railing that separates the illuminated serenity of this anarchist-prophet from his detractors.

Figure 2.39. Théophile Alexandre Steinlen, 'Le Procés Jésus-Malato' in "Les Éteignoirs de La Pensée" *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 244 (December 2, 1905). (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

This equation of the anarchist hero with Christ had reached its zenith following the execution of the first and most infamous propagandist by deed, Ravachol. On the pages of Zo d'Axa's *L'Endehors,* the anarchist poet Victor Barrucand declared the deceased revolutionary to be the modern equivalent of Jesus the Galilean; while Paul Adam published a eulogy in *Entretiens Politiques et Litteraires* in which he sanctified

Ravachol as the "renewer" of Christ's "essential sacrifice," and asked for the artists to immortalize this modern redeemer in triptychs and stained glass windows that would replace those of the Christian saints.[556] If not a monumental stained glass window or a majestic altarpiece, the anarchist-symbolist artist Charles Maurin responded to Adam's call, and created commemorative prints for Ravachol that clearly appropriated Christian iconography and the stylistic effects of stained glass windows. [Figure 2.40.] Published for the first time in the anarchist journal, *Le Père Peinard*, Maurin's bust-portrait eulogy for Ravachol captures the revolutionary in heroic defiance, standing bare-chested before a wheat field. The dawn of an anarchist future rises behind him, and the rectangular silhouette of the guillotine frames his beautiful head like an honorific halo.

[556] Victor Barrucand, "Ravachol's Laugh," in *Death to Bourgeois Society: The Propagandists of the Deed*, ed. and trans. Mitchell Abidor, Revolutinary Pocketbooks 4 (Oakland, CA: PM Press, n.d.), 36–38. Paul Adam, "Eulogy for Ravachol," in *Death to Bourgeois Society: The Propagandists of the Deed*, ed. and trans. Mitchell Abidor, Revolutinary Pocketbooks 4 (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2015), 30–33.

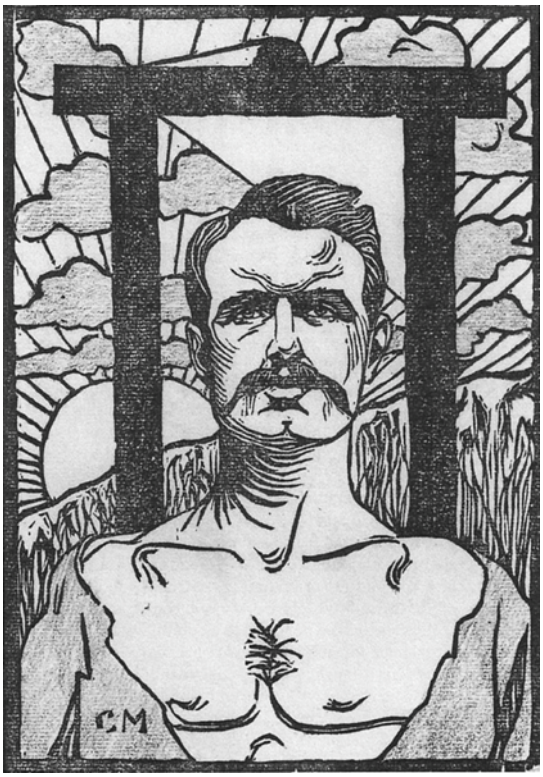

Figure 2.40. Charles Maurin, *Le Ravachol Symbolique,* Etching, 1893. (Wikimedia Commons).

A Radical Iconoclasm?

The humanist who fraternizes with the paupers of the Parisian streets was the dominant representation of Christ in the illustrated leftist press, yet there were definitely challenges to this narrative. The cover image the anarchist-syndicalist Grandjouan had designed for the three-hundredth issue of *L'Assiette au Beurr*e was perhaps one of the most iconoclastic of the thousands of anti-Christian images produced at the turn of century. Defeated, defiled, and dying, we are presented on the cover image of this issue with a scrawny Jesus trampled together with his cross under the foot of a towering worker. [Figure 2.41.]

Figure 2.41. Jules Grandjouan, 'ECCE HOMO' in"Ecce Homo: Numéro Antichrétien" *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 300 (December 29, 1906). (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

Diagonal strikes of red paint emanating from the worker further intensify the violence performed on the sacred body. The antisemitic features of the messiah—the side-locks framing his face, his elongated nose—remind us how easily and often the radical Left assimilated the hateful conventions of Catholic and nationalist antisemitism to its visual lexicon of social critique. Élisabeth and Michel Dixmier characterize the whole album as a failure, because Grandjouan allowed himself to be carried away by his anti-religious fury; the cover is vulgar and a low blow, lacking the usual rigor of the artist.[557] I agree with their observations on the acerbic fury of its tone, but I also think

[557] Dixmier and Dixmier, *L'Assiette au beurre*, 92.

that its explicit economy of debasement needs attentive unpacking and contextualization within the anarchist and radical intellectual discussions of its time. The following paragraphs aim to do this labor, to show that attending to the formal details and the historical-cultural context, the violently impertinent tone is revealed to be an informed dialogue with its times and contemporary ideas, and as such it might attempt to do a bit more than just offend.

The image trades the visual vernacular of anticlericalism for an iconoclastic defiance. It performs a confrontational violence aimed at the foundational symbols of the Christian faith: the cross and the body of Christ. As we have seen, *fin-de-siècle* anticlericalism was a combat fought in images and symbols, amassing an eclectic visual arsenal that included both the negative labor of anticlerical caricatures and the constitutive work of the new monuments and secular symbols for the Republic. Jacqueline Laloutte reminds us that most scholarly ink was spilled on this 'creation' of the arsenal, while the 'destruction' that constitutes the other façade of the battle was largely ignored.[558] According to Laloutte, this destruction took the form of a set of iconoclastic practices, both in the word's original material sense and more symbolically, through the destruction of the 'moral' authority of the Church.[559] The better documented instances of material iconoclasm include the removal of religious symbols—e.g. crucifixes from primary schools—from public spaces through legal and administrative initiatives in line with the Republic's anticlerical measures. But another, more popular and confrontational series of iconoclasms took place outside the official efforts. For example in August 1882, the miners in Montceau-les-Mines horrified the local

[558] Lalouette, "Iconoclastie et Caricature," 51.
[559] Ibid.

authorities and bosses for almost a whole week by destroying the crosses in the public spaces with revolutionary songs and "Long Live the Social Revolution" chants. The crowd even attempted to demolish with dynamite the colossal statue of the Virgin, that the mining company erected to be the "Notre Dame des Mines," and despite achieving a loud explosion, the hated statue prevailed.[560] Similar incidents were reported across the country—increasing in numbers with more public symbols of Catholicism attacked, more crucifixes destroyed, more tombs mutilated—which Laloutte describes as a rising desire "to put Christ to death a second time."[561] A poem published in *Les Temps Nouveaux* promised Christ exactly that: "The people will break your crosses, those deceitful crosses / […] You will die, in the hearts where the humble worship you / Your name will no longer move the lips of mortals."[562] "The Redeemer" was found guilty as "the patron saint of despots," "the shield of Evil, the protector of the Gentiles."[563]

In this context, the cover by Grandjouan is more than an isolated instance showcasing a radical artist's personal anti-religious fury. It was part of a rising anti-Christian sentiment that crossed the acceptable boundaries of republican anticlericalism, and by extension, the control of the hegemonic discourse of bourgeois secularism. It

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[560] "Troubles à Montceau-Les-Mines," *Le Petit Journal*, August 19, 1882. While the conservatives blamed republican anticlericalism for encouraging iconoclasm, others found a conspiracy involving the 'black' arm of the International behind the workers' actions. Le Sage, "A Travers La Politique," *Gil Blas*, August 20, 1882; Auguste Vacquerie, "Oui, Monseigneur," *Le Rappel*, October 23, 1882. But as the reports on the court hearings show, it was a collective reaction against the alliance between their oppressive and Catholic bosses, the local authority, and the clergy who together threatened the workers with unemployment if they failed to follow the rules and rituals of the Catholic Church. The miners testified to a series of incidents, including being forced to show devotion to the Sacred Heart and partake in pilgrimages to Paray-le-Monial. The tension between the miners and the authorities reached its peak after the miners gave civil burial to one of their friends known for his atheism. Taking the civil burial to be an anti-religious and anti-authority demonstration, the owner of the mine laid off a group of miners with the support of the local clergy. Ibid.
[561] Lalouette, "Iconoclastie et Caricature," 52.
[562] Théodore Jean, "Religions," *Les Temps Nouveaux Supplément Litteraire* 1, no. 19 (1896): 174.
[563] Ibid.

was iconoclastic, but also had a correspondence in the organized working-class movement that Grandjouan was actively engaged in and informed his fiery propaganda. Turning back to the image, we see on the background the silhouette of a decaying Gothic cathedral discernible atop a hill, whose lost monumentality is transferred onto the tall body of the worker. Although the building lacks the characteristic domes of the architectural icon of modern Catholicism in France, the short blouse of Christ that leaves his buttocks bare for further insult caustically includes an embroidered emblem of the Sacred Heart. The ideological position that informs the cover is elaborated in a short text—probably written by Grandjouan himself—on the next page of this explicitly titled '*numéro antichrétien*' of *L'Assiette au Beurre*.[564] Consciously challenging the sympathetic portrayals of Christ by his colleagues and comrades, including those that appeared in the previous issues of the present publication, Grandjouan writes: "Jesus and his disciples were not, as has been often claimed, big-hearted and poor vagabonds, carrying within them the revolt that was to liberate the world. On the contrary, they were greedy and practical merchants who respected social inequalities […]"[565] Before analyzing Grandjouan's statements further, we should acknowledge the legal rupture that separated the political context of his 'antichrétien' album for *L'Assiette* and his predecessors who built their criticisms on a heightened moral contrast between an oppressive and corrupt institution and the inculpable, poor messiah of the people.

In principle, the law of 1905 realized anticlerical republicans' long-awaited aspiration and was accordingly received by Catholics as the culmination of the series of

[564] Jules Grandjouan, "Ecce Homo: Numéro Antichrétien de Grandjouan," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 300 (December 29, 1906): 1466.
[565] Ibid.

legal assaults that had been directed at the Church since the 1880s. But the war had started almost a century ago, and 1905 seemed like the final battle that declared the defeat of the Church. Disagreements over the terms of this conclusion soon proved that the defeat was not as absolute as it initially seemed. The liberals who wanted to give the Church complete autonomy over their activities and the Gallicanists who were convinced by the need to bring the Church under the State's secular authority afforded a window for bargaining. Through a series of laws, the Catholic Church not only managed to retain its influence over the vital venues of social and political life, it even regained some of the territory it had lost over in past decades.[566] Hence, the secularization was achieved in theory without any genuine cultural and social transformation of the public sphere.[567] Therefore, the revolutionary Left's mistrust for republican anticlericalism was heightened even more after the Separation, drawing attention especially to the pitfalls of declaring the Separation without serious commitment to curtailing religious influence in working-class and rural communities. Moreover, now detached from state supervision, the Church of France was completely under the sway of the Vatican, announcing the triumph for the See of Rome.[568]

On the social level, the majority of France seemed to remain loyal to their traditional beliefs, most conservatives preferred to send their children to now-private Catholic schools, and even the fad of mass pilgrimages continued without losing their steam.[569] Soon, the radical Left realized that as long as the people continued to believe

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[566] Education is a case in point. After 1905 the new laws allowed the Church to circumvent these measures through the establishment of numerous private schools.
[567] For an account of the reasons behind the 'failure' of a complete divorce of the Church from politics, see Mathilde Guilbaud, "La loi de séparation de 1905 ou l'impossible rupture," *Revue d'Histoire du XIXe Siècle.,* no. 28 (June 1, 2004): 163–73.
[568] Dixmier and Dixmier, *L'Assiette au beurre*, 96–97.
[569] Noting that the popular nineteenth-century pilgrimage sites such as Lourdes could attract more than

in the myths and dogmas, the political and legal pruning of the Church's powers was futile. On the other hand, if the republicans succeeded in controlling the Church altogether, it would only supplement the political authority's arsenal with another useful tool of governance. This shift of the battleground from the confines of bourgeois republican politics to a categorical rejection of religion is the ideological impulse behind Grandjouan's daring album for *L'Assiette.* Indeed the second half of his text for the album made this point clear: "Religion has never been anything but a means of government, that is, an instrument of oppression," and the virtues promoted by religion, celebrated in both republican and certain leftist circles such as charity and acceptance, only bred cowardice, passivity, and slavery.[570] Hence, declared the artists: "dogma and Religion must disappear altogether."[571]

What we have here is a profound divergence from the officially sanctioned brand of secularism promoted by the institutions of the state. In his comprehensive study on the Separation of 1905, Jean Marie Mayeur writes that outside the liberal republican brand of separationism—which envisioned a legal and political distinction between the profane and the sacred to achieve a truly secular modern society—there was a fascinating but understudied militant current that wanted "the destruction of the Roman Catholic Church, or more accurately, the destruction of all Churches."[572] Created almost

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one million pilgrims as late as 1908, Maylis Curie goes as far as to describe the post-1905 atmosphere as "a spiritual and intellectual 'renaissance' in the church." Curie, "The Representation of the Cathedral in French Visual Culture, 1870–1914." 22–23.

[570] Here, Grandjouan closely echoes Bakunin's assessment of Christianity: "Christianity is precisely the religion par excellence, because it exhibits and manifests, to the fullest extent, the very nature and essence of every religious system, which is the impoverishment, enslavement, and annihilation of humanity for the benefit of divinity." Mikhail Bakunin, *God and the State* (New York, NY: Dover, 1970), 23.

[571] Grandjouan, "Ecce Homo," 1466.

[572] Jean Marie Mayeur, *La Séparation de l'Église et de l'État, 1905*, Collection Archives 20 (Paris: Julliard, 1966), 20–21.

on the first anniversary of the 1905 Law of Separation, Grandjouan's targets were not the temporally and spatially bound political institution and its representatives, but the transcendent authority claimed by the Religion. But what would remain when religion, dogma, and authority were abolished? The answer of the cover illustration is clear: *The Man*. This dynamic anti-Religion was also characterized by a commitment to the social question that it attached to its militant atheism; it received most of its support from socialism, revolutionary radicalism, and attracted considerable numbers of proletarian followers.[573] The bold red caption Grandjouan chose for his message "Ecce Homo" cracks open the famous pronouncement of Pontius Pilate for an inverse reading. The illustration declares, "Behold the Man," but the Man to be recognized is not the Son of God crowned with thorns, but the extolled body of the radicalized worker, trampling the Man-God to reclaim his own divinity. This idea was not unfamiliar among *fin-de-siècle* anarchists. Published twenty-four years before (1882) this illustration, Bakunin's *God and The State* had painted the inverse relationship between humanity and divine as follows:[574]

> [T]he religious heaven is nothing but a mirage in which man, exalted by ignorance and faith, discovers his own image, but enlarged and reversed—that is, divinized. […] As fast as [humankind] discovered, in the course of their historically progressive advance, either in themselves or in external nature, a power, a quality, or even any great defect whatever, they attributed them to their gods […] God once installed, he was naturally proclaimed the cause, reason, arbiter and absolute disposer of all things: the world thenceforth was nothing, God was all; and man, his real creator, after having unknowingly extracted him from the void, bowed down before him, worshipped him, and avowed himself his creature and his slave.[575]

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[573] Ibid. Elizabeth and Michel Dixmier identify Grandjouan as a representative of this revolutionary and atheist current. Dixmier and Dixmier, *L'Assiette au beurre*, 83–84.
[574] Large sections from Bakunin's writings were regularly published in the French anarchist press, especially in Jean Grave's *Les Temps Nouveaux* and its supplement. For example, see Michel Bakounine, "L'Église et L'État," *Les Temps Nouveaux Supplément Litteraire* 1, no. 13 (1895): 496.
[575] Bakunin, *God and the State*, 23–24.

This illusion, Bakunin maintains, attributes all positive qualities of humanity to this false image, leaving humanity with "falsehood, iniquity, evil, ugliness, impotence, and death" as God assumes the face of "truth, justice, goodness, beauty, power, and life."[576] In other words, the "man had to look for God within himself."[577]

Grandjouan's illustration for the cover turns the two antagonistic bodies into corrective narratives aimed at disenchanting the carnival mirror of religion. The idealized male worker as Humanity reclaims the "truth, justice, goodness, beauty, power, and life" usurped from him by the action of his overdetermined allegorical body, leaving the fallen god with humanity's age-long burden "of evil, ugliness, impotence and death." And this principle of 'action' is key to unlocking this image further. Inescapably, the big red caption calls the name 'Friedrich Nietzsche,' and I have already shown the philosopher's influence on the anti-Christianity of the French Left in my readings of Grandjouan's contemporaries. Although the philosopher's namesake book was not yet published, the appellative agreement is more than a coincidence. Indeed the third image of the album—which transplants divine judgment into the office of a (Jewish) merchant measuring '*bien*' against '*mal*' on a scale—carries the caption "Ah! il était bien juif celui-la" and is attributed by the artist to "Nietzche" [sic]. This dubious quotation and its facile reproduction of an antisemitic charge might discourage one to search further for an informed engagement with Nietzsche's complex criticism of Christianity. But in 1900 Nietzsche's works had made a significant impact on French

[576] Ibid., 24.
[577] Bakunin, "Man Had to Look for God Within Himself," 119.

intellectual and artistic circles.[578] Self-professed anarchist intellectuals, such as Laurent Tailhade and Camille Mauclair, though the latter's political commitment was rather questionable, were among the fans of the German philosopher. Jean Thorel, on the other hand, had declared Nietzsche to be one of the 'fathers of anarchism' alongside Bakunin and Stirner. But more significantly, Jean Grave, the influential editor and author of *Les Temps Nouveaux*, drew parallels between the anarchist project and Nietzsche's writings throughout the 1890s.[579] Years before the systemic translation of his books into French, the carefully selected but haphazardly translated and grossly decontextualized excerpts introduced the philosopher to a diverse readership in the pages of literary and political journals of competing political positions in the 1890s.[580] The result was a philosopher claimed as their own by both the ultra conservatives and the radical Left.[581] For example, in 1901, the French philosopher Jules de Gaultier (the author of *Le Bovarysme*) tried to explain the equally enthusiastic embrace of Nietzsche's writings by warring political camps,[582] remarking that between the philosopher's aversion to moral chants for equality, his celebration of *Césarisme*, and his assaults on the foundations of every

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[578] The discussions of national and cultural decadence and regeneration during the decades following the Franco-Prussian war had prepared an ideal intellectual atmosphere for the reception of the philosopher's work. During the final decade of the century, Nietzsche was "widely read and appropriated by French writers and thinkers to such an extent that by 1900 they could claim him as not German but 'French.'" Ali Nematollahy, "Nietzsche in France 1890–1914," *Philosophical Forum* 40, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 169 and 172.

[579] However, in his later years Grave grew more critical of the German philosopher, in whom he saw the mark of bourgeois individualism rather than communal anarchism. Christopher E. Forth, "Nietzsche, Decadence, and Regeneration in France, 1891–95," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 54, no. 1 (1993): 110–12.

[580] A "plethora of books, articles, and pamphlets began to appear on the work of the German philosopher" and the excerpts published in journals "gave the public a foretaste of Nietzsche's thought and paved the way for an enthusiastic reception" before the systemic translation of the philosopher's books by Henri Albert between 1898 and 1908. Nematollahy, "Nietzsche in France 1890–1914," 173.

[581] At the opposite end of the political spectrum, the ultra-conservative monarchists of *Action Française* was embracing the philosopher as a prophet showing that the answers to the ills of contemporary times lay with patriotism and the return of the cult of authority. Ibid., 174–75.

[582] Jules De Gaultier, "The Notion of Hierarchy in Nietzsche's Work (Revue Hebdomadaire, 1901)," trans. Erin Lamm, *Philosophical Forum* 40, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 229–44.

social institution with a desire to completely ruin them, the German philosopher was simultaneously attracting and damning both the conservatives and the revolutionaries.[583]

Nietzsche's writing indeed justifies socialistic and even anarchist-communist readings that find a revolutionary hero in the historical Christ. Then how can Nietzsche—whose identification of Church *as* Antichrist—be the inspiration for this anti-Christ cover? Yet, I maintain that the German philosopher's mark on Grandjouan's work for *L'Assiette* is conspicuous.[584] Ronald Osborn's warnings against commonplace and politically motivated readings of Nietzsche's contempt for the Church as an idealization of Christ and his 'genuine message' of revolt is useful here. Osborn writes that although "Nietzsche expresses admiration in places for the audacity of Christ's achievement […]" he also declared that "in the whole [New] Testament, there appears, but a solitary figure worthy of honor: Pilate, the Roman viceroy" who ordered the crucifixion of Jesus.[585] Through reproducing the infamous proclamation of the only New Testament figure 'worthy of honor,' Grandjouan sentences Christ to a second death which would bring about the birth of a new Man. Walter Kaufmann shows that one of the main tenets of Nietzsche's critique of religion is the dichotomy between 'faith' and 'action,' distilled in the Church's faith in Christ, which is utilized to extinguish action. That is to say, "instead of insisting that man leave father and mother and break with conformity," the Church demands that "man conform to the Church in matters of faith

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[583] Ibid.
[584] *Ecce Homo* would meet readers with this title two years after Grandjouan's album, in 1908.
[585] Osborn, *Humanism and the Death of God*, 148. The Nietzsche quotation is from Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*, trans. H.L. Mencken (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1931), 134.

and to the state in matters of action."[586] Grandjouan's active worker responds to the philosopher's call for action and domination via his destruction of the compassionate god who sacrificed himself for the weak and wretched, and in doing so, he embodies the Nietzschean *Übermensch*.[587] Although the end is compatible with Bakunin's disenchantment, the means are different. A recognition of the lie is not enough in itself, the proletarian hero has to produce himself in his violently intense action to shatter the illusion of faith which for so long has fettered him to a place of subordination with chains of passivity, obedience, and conformity. Yet dialectically, instead of finding a completely liberated anarchist future, one can also discern the footsteps of its *opposite*—which would arrive with the elevation of the body of the man and the supremacy of ceaseless action to the level of a deadly political cult.

As Conclusion: A Revolutionary Spirituality

In 1904, when the republican victory over the Church was imminent, František Kupka prepared an issue for *L'Assiette* on "Religions."[588] [Figure 2. 42.]

[586] Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (Oxford and Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 342–43 and 346.
[587] The radical socialists shared the same vision. In his lectures in Geneva Jean Jaurès claimed Nietzsche for the socialist cause and declared that the Overman (*Übermensch*) was "none other than the proletariat." Nematollahy, "Nietzsche in France 1890–1914," 178.
[588] Kupka, "Religions," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 163 (May 7, 1904).

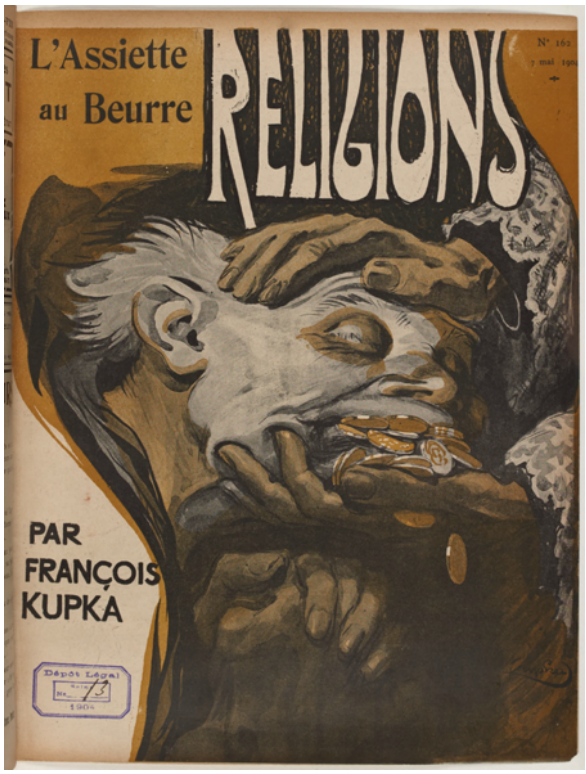

Figure 2.42. François Kupka, "Religions," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 163 (May 7, 1904). (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

With a wide geographical and historical sweep, Kupka represents different systems of faith—from Ancient Greek Paganism to Hinduism and Islam, from the beliefs of the indigenous nations of Americas to the revolutionary Cult of Reason—using his crayon to bring out the dogma, barbarism, and stupidity that he sees at the core of most of them.[589] In this chronicling of humanity's relation to the different configurations of the divine, the Catholic Church receives one of the most virulent blows as a religion associated with a perverse appetite for money, oppression, and inflicting pain.[590] [Figure

[589] The historical and geographical diversity of the religions represented in the journal must be influenced by Kupka's involvement with Élisée Reclus and his encyclopedic project for a history of humankind, *L'Homme et la Terre.*

[590] As noted by Dixmier et al., the subject of the cover image is the murderous greed of the Catholic Church. (Figure 2.42) Here we see the hands emerging from the lace-sleeved overcoat of a Catholic priest crack the skull of a man in prayer position in order to extract gold coins out of his mouth. Dixmier, Lalouette, and Pasamonik, *La République et l'Église*, 94–95.

2.43.]

Figure 2.43. François Kupka, 'Dieu du Vatican' in "Religions," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 163 (May 7, 1904). (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

In her study of the intersection between Kupka's anarchism and his graphic oeuvre, where she locates the artist's celebrated modernism, Patricia Leighten cites Bakunin, Kropotkin, and Reclus as the ideological sources behind the artist's strong rejection of all forms of organized religion, both in his personal life and in the album he prepared for *L'Assiette.*[591] Although the author notes that Kupka's anti-religious ideology did not equal a rationalist categorical rejection of all spirituality, since Kupka's

[591] Patricia Leighten, "Anarchist Satire in Pre-World War I Paris: The Case of Frantisek Kupka," *SUB-STANCE* 46, no. 2 (2017): 59–60.

involvement with naturism and Theosophy is the central motif of her essay, she also writes that in the album for *L'Assiette*, "Kupka accused all religions—from the Far East to Africa and North America—of superstition, corruption, and control."[592] Elsewhere Leighten remarks on the relationship between Kupka's attack on the religions and his critique of Western modernity in its barbaric form of colonial expansion. Analyzing the images that depict 'fetish' worship in Africa in relation to those that depict Christianity in the album, Leighten argues that "[what] Kupka attacks in his whole issue is superstition itself, in all religions, and the ways it serves various oppressive power structures; he thus adopts the familiar anarchist strategy of inversion, leveling 'savage' and 'civilized.'"[593]

In reality, in comparison to the fierce assaults he directs against Abrahamic religions and their various sects, Kupka's depictions of Indian and Japanese religious practices include calculated details of playful sympathy and even perhaps approval. A close look into the portrayals of the 'Eastern' religions in the album that Leighten omits from her analysis allows us to expand on her observations on Kupka's politics of religion. Kupka chooses a figure that embodies a destructive libidinal energy to represent the 'Gods of India,' which were, according to the caption, "the ancestors of all gods." Perhaps betraying his Theosophist background, Kupka's preferred deity is *Yamāntaka* from Tibetan tantra, who utilizes some of his thirty-two arms and sixteen legs to kill and torture tiny figures of British colonialists and Christian missionaries.

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[592] Ibid., 60.
[593] Patricia Leighten, "The White Peril and L'Art Nègre: Picasso, Primitivism, and Anticolonialism," *The Art Bulletin* 72, no. 4 (1990): 616. The same quotation appears also in Patricia Leighten, *The Liberation of Painting: Modernism and Anarchism in Avant-Guerre Paris* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 67–68.

[Figure 2. 44.]

Figure 2.44. François Kupka, 'Dieux Hindous' in "Religions," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 163 (May 7, 1904). (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica). [I added the white circles to draw attention to the Christian colonialists.]

The playful tone of this depiction of anti-colonialist violence differs from the severe

tone of Kupka's treatment of religious violence perpetuated by Judaism, Christianity, and Islam on the other pages of the album. The caption connects the Hindu pantheon to the elements and nature, and jokingly recognizes that since the British colonial presence, *Yamāntaka*'s *hands have been full* as the protector of the land and people.[594] When we mute our culturally conditioned immediate reaction to the 'violent' attributes of the deity, 'the destroyer of death' trampling the colonial authority and the Christian missionaries no longer appears as a scathing critique of religion.

On the other hand, the most—and perhaps the only—serene image in the album represents a nation's relation to religions rather than a religion per se. Titled 'The Japanese Gods', in this image Kupka presents a man perched on an ancient statue of Buddha, gazing calmly into the distance with a pair of binoculars. The caption explains: "The Japanese, after having embraced Buddhism, Shinto, and even Christianity, arrived today at the '*I don't care about them-ism*'"[595] [Figure 2.45.] But this is not a statement of resignation: facing opposite directions, the interplay between the man's lively blue kimono and the paleness of the ancient statue, the deity's closed eyes and the doubled potency of the man's active gaze tint the image with a positive light.[596]

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[594] "[…] il y en a autant qu'il y a d'éléments dans la nature. Les dieux hindous sont les ancêtres de tous les dieux connus. Que de choses a à faire Djigs-byed (Yamantaka), le protecteur du Thibet, depuis que les missionnaires et les Anglais y font leur fortune!"

[595] "Le Japonais, après avoir embrassé le bouddhisme, le sintoïsme [sic], et même le christianisme, en est aujourd'hui au je m'en foutisme."

[596] Perhaps it would be useful to remember that the image was created during the 1904–5 Russo-Japanese War. Although an anti-imperialist like Kupka would probably not approve the ambitions of Japanese imperialism, the war was overwhelmingly regarded as an Asian nation defeating the colossal Russian military power; and therefore welcomed by many as a decisive blow to the more immediately known and concerning expansionism of Tsar Nicholas II. *L'Assiette au Beurre* repeatedly devoted thematic issues to Russian imperialism and the oppressive regime of the Tsar—including his treatment of the Russian revolutionaries—to such an extent that it is possible to argue he was the most detested foreign ruler in the Left graphic press.

Figure 2.45. François Kupka, 'Dieux Japonais' in "Religions," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 163 (May 7, 1904). (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

The album seems to most consistently critique the evident sources associated with Western culture, namely Antiquity, the Judeo-Christian tradition, and Enlightenment Reason. Indeed, another image in the album depicts a procession of Jacobins and sans-Culottes carrying over their shoulders a personification of the Cult of Reason. [Figure 2. 46.] Pictured as a female nude on a throne who tramples a crucifix beneath her foot, she appears more like a new idol than an emblem of intellectual and political progress.

The caption gives a rather ambiguous reading of the scene, which recognizes the potential inherent in the idea before it was coopted into a dogma; a good idea, until it became the thing that it arrived to destroy: "It was a beautiful 'Reason' compared to this 'reason' here."[597]

Figure 2.46. François Kupka, 'Déesse de la Raison (10 brumaire, an II)' in "Religions," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 163 (May 7, 1904). (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

She had the duty of tackling superstition and dogma—but she became the one that justified the others, such as the tricolor flags that surround her. Although the Cult of Reason was short-lived in the revolutionary episode and was replaced by the Cult of

[597] "C'était une belle raison que cette raison-là."

Supreme Being, the unabated Enlightenment devotion to Reason still underlined the official anticlericalism of the Third Republic in Kupka's time. Even though republican history would regard the abolishment of the Catholic faith by the revolutionary Convention in November 1793 as a rupture, the symbolic economy of what followed is a story of continuity. For example, in Paris the Notre-Dame Cathedral was transformed into 'The Temple of Reason,' and a statue of Liberty replaced that of the Virgin.[598] This continuity can even explain the suppression of the Cult of Reason for that of the Supreme Being—implying that even if the "alliance between the throne and church" in this space was "brutally interrupted by the Revolution,"[599] the cathedral's role as the location for the marriage between political and metaphysical imaginations was more or less uninterrupted.[600]

In order to see the ideal spiritual terminus for the anarchist Kupka, we need to go to a different publication, the last illustration he made for Élisée Reclus' *L'Homme et La Terre* for the final chapter of the projected titled, "Affirmation du Progrès."[601] Following Reclus' footsteps, Kupka banishes the modernist myth of Progress dominant in his time from his anarchist utopia, giving us a scene devoid of any idols and emblems of authority, free of all material signs of technological and industrial advancement. This new humanity, at the end of their development, stand in an open field cleared of any

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[598] Erlande-Bradenburg, "The Notre Dame of Paris," 401–2.
[599] Ibid., 404.
[600] When the court migrated to Versailles and abandoned the traditional sites of monarchy in Paris, the Notre-Dame continued to function as a site which, with funerals, marriages, and blessings of the standards, continued to "mark the life of the monarchy." In other words, the Gothic temple was "the only place" in Paris which was "inhabited on rare occasions by the king." This continues with Napoléon's choice to designate the Notre-Dame as his coronation site. The Emperor's decision indicates both his attention to the continuations of the symbols of sovereignty, and his recognition of the edifice as a space where the political and religious authorities have historically been synthesized. Ibid., 398 and 403.
[601] Élisée Reclus, *L'Homme et La Terre*, vol. 6 (Paris: Librairie Universelle, 1905), 541.

monumental markers and religious symbols. They are finally free, in perfect harmony with the earth and as one with the cosmos. [602] [Figure 2.47.]

Figure 2.47. František Kupka, "Affirmation du Progrès" in Élisée Reclus, *L'Homme et La Terre*, vol. Tome 6 (Histoire Contemporaine) (Paris: Librairie Universelle, 1905), 541.

[602] Leighten connects the image to the later 'abstract' oeuvre of Kupka as follows: "incorporating the idea of an anarchist utopia with the Theosophical notion of universal harmony, [Kupka] depicts joyously reborn humanity in perfect freedom, their nudity a sign of their unity with nature and the spiraling heavens a sign of their unity with the cosmos. […] That generation of life on both microcosmic and macrocosmic levels was associated with circles and spirals for Kupka is evident in his work before 1905 […] and returns again in abstract form in his later works."
Leighten, *The Liberation of Painting*, 166–68.

CHAPTER 3: THE IDOL, THE TEMPLE, AND THE SHRINE

Introduction: An Iconoclast

On February 12, 1894, the young anarchist Émile Henry attacked the Parisian café *Terminus* with a bomb that killed one person and wounded around two dozen. The incident was part of a series of anarchist attacks that started in 1892. While their perpetrators received death sentences, new radicals emerged to avenge them with more explosives directed at the places and agents of political-legal power. Henry's bomb did not target specific representatives of authority, but the bourgeois patrons of a popular establishment.[603] The attack was immediately condemned by newspapers and the public as a senseless act of violence directed against civilians. However, in his defense before the court that would send him to the guillotine, Henry placed his action within an economy of violence already inherent to life under capitalism. [Figure 3.1.] He corrected those who claimed his target was innocent civilians, and cited the crimes committed in the name of Capital against the working people by the bourgeoisie;[604] he declared that his aim was to make "their golden calf tremble violently on its pedestal," before the arrival of "the final blow that will cast it down among filth and blood."[605]

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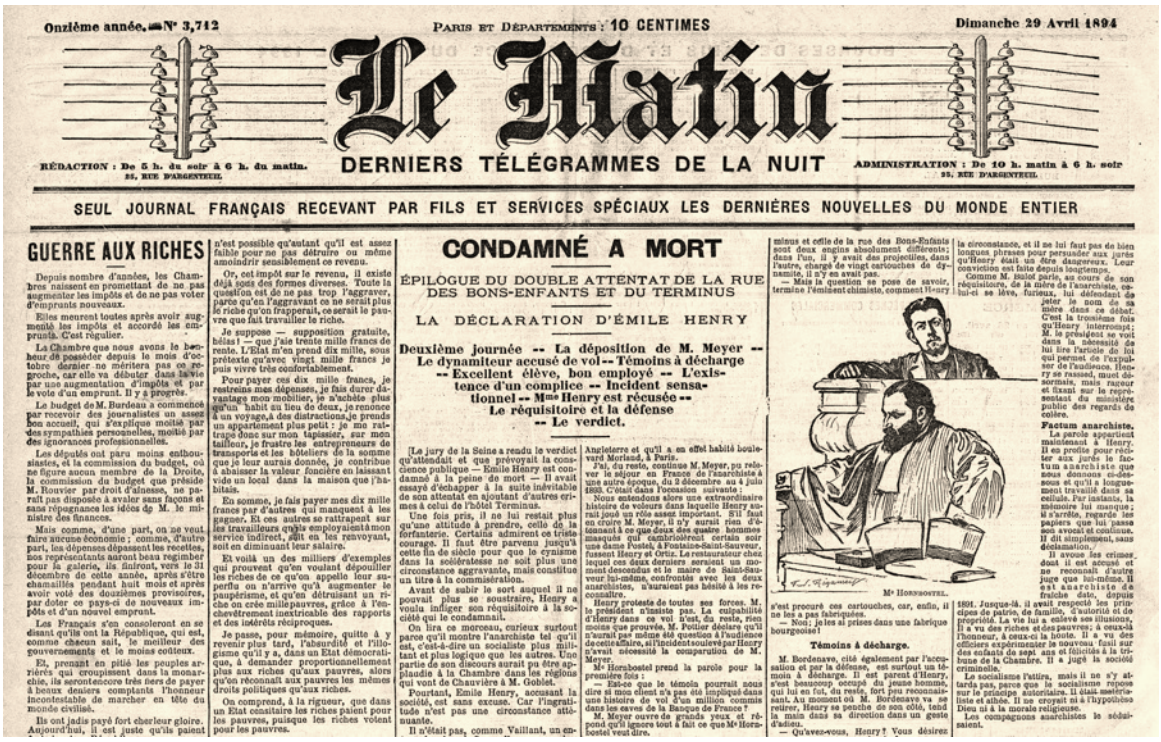
[603] Luc Sante, "Introduction," in *Novels in Three Lines,* (New York, NY: New York Review Books, 2007), xv. Sante notes the writer Octave Mirbeau's opposition to Henry's revolutionary method to illustrate that even the sympathizers of the movement were appalled by it: "A mortal enemy of anarchy could have acted no better than Émile Henry." As quoted and translated in ibid.

[604] For example, the young anarchist specifically refers to the recent miners' strike at Carmaux and its ultimate defeat by the violent alliance of bourgeois politics and capital, and evokes the execution of his comrade Ravachol. Émile Henry, "Déclaration d'Émile Henry," in *Causes Criminelles et Mondaines de 1894*, ed. Albert Bataille (Paris: E. Dentu, 1895), 83–92. For an English translation of the anarchist's statement, see Émile Henry, "Émile Henry's Defense Speech," in *Death to Bourgeois Society: The Propagandists of the Deed*, ed. Mitchell Abidor, Revolutionary Pocketbooks 4 (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2015), 73–82.

[605] "J'ai voulu montrer à la bourgeoisie que désormais il n'y aurait plus pour elle de joies complètes, que ses triomphes insolents seraient troublés, que son veau d'or tremblerait violemment sur son piédestal,



Onzième année. — N° 3,712 PARIS ET DÉPARTEMENTS : 10 CENTIMES Dimanche 29 Avril 1894

Le Matin

RÉDACTION : De 5 h. du soir à 6 h. du matin. 25, RUE D'ARGENTEUIL.

DERNIERS TÉLÉGRAMMES DE LA NUIT

ADMINISTRATION : De 10 h. matin à 6 h. soir 25, RUE D'ARGENTEUIL.

SEUL JOURNAL FRANÇAIS RECEVANT PAR FILS ET SERVICES SPÉCIAUX LES DERNIÈRES NOUVELLES DU MONDE ENTIER

GUERRE AUX RICHES

Depuis nombre d'années, les Chambres naissent en promettant de ne pas augmenter les impôts et de ne pas voter d'emprunts nouveaux.

Elles meurent toutes après avoir augmenté les impôts et accordé les emprunts. C'est régulier.

La Chambre que nous avons le bonheur de posséder depuis le mois d'octobre dernier ne méritera pas ce reproche, car elle va débuter dans la vie par une augmentation d'impôts et par le vote d'un emprunt. Il y a progrès.

Le budget de M. Burdeau a commencé par recevoir des journalistes un assez bon accueil, qui s'explique moitié par des sympathies personnelles, moitié par des ignorances professionnelles.

Les députés ont paru moins enthousiastes, et la commission du budget, où ne figure aucun membre de la Droite, la commission du budget que préside M. Rouvier par droit d'ancienneté, ne paraît pas disposée à avaler sans façons et sans répugnance les idées de M. le ministre des finances.

Mais comme, d'une part, on ne veut faire aucune économie ; comme, d'autre part, les dépenses dépassent les recettes, nos représentants auront beau regimber pour la galerie, ils finiront, vers le 31 décembre de cette année, après s'être chamaillés pendant huit mois et après avoir voté des douzièmes provisoires, par doter ce pays-ci de nouveaux impôts et d'un nouvel emprunt.

Les Français s'en consoleront en se disant qu'ils ont la République, qui est, comme chacun sait, le meilleur des gouvernements et le moins coûteux.

Et, prenant en pitié les peuples arriérés qui croupissent dans la monarchie, ils seront encore très fiers de payer à beaux deniers comptants l'honneur incontestable de marcher en tête du monde civilisé.

Ils ont jadis payé fort cher leur gloire. Aujourd'hui, il est juste qu'ils paient n'est possible qu'autant qu'il est assez faible pour ne pas détruire ou même amoindrir sensiblement ce revenu.

Or, cet impôt sur le revenu, il existe déjà sous des formes diverses. Toute la question est de ne pas trop l'aggraver, parce qu'en l'aggravant ce ne serait plus le riche qu'on frapperait, ce serait le pauvre que fait travailler le riche.

Je suppose — supposition gratuite, hélas ! — que j'aie trente mille francs de rente. L'Etat m'en prend dix mille, sous prétexte qu'avec vingt mille francs je puis vivre très confortablement.

Pour payer ces dix mille francs, je restreins mes dépenses, je fais durer davantage mon mobilier, je n'achète plus qu'un habit au lieu de deux, je renonce à un voyage, à des distractions, je prends un appartement plus petit ; je me rattrape donc sur mon tapissier, sur mon tailleur, je frustre les entrepreneurs de transports et les hôteliers de la somme que je leur aurais donnée, je contribue à abaisser la valeur foncière en laissant vide un local dans la maison que j'habitais.

En somme, je fais payer mes dix mille francs par d'autres qui manquent à les gagner. Et ces autres se rattrapent sur les travailleurs qu'ils employaient à mon service indirect, soit en les renvoyant, soit en diminuant leur salaire.

Et voilà un des milliers d'exemples qui prouvent qu'en voulant dépouiller les riches de ce qu'on appelle leur superflu on n'arrive qu'à augmenter le pauperisme, et qu'en détruisant un riche on crée mille pauvres, grâce à l'enchevêtrement inextricable des rapports et des intérêts réciproques.

Je passe, pour mémoire, quitte à y revenir plus tard, l'absurdité et l'illogisme qu'il y a, dans un Etat démocratique, à demander proportionnellement plus aux riches qu'aux pauvres, alors qu'on réconnaît aux pauvres les mêmes droits politiques qu'aux riches.

On comprend, à la rigueur, que dans un Etat constitaire les riches paient pour les pauvres, puisque les riches volent pour les pauvres.

CONDAMNÉ A MORT

ÉPILOGUE DU DOUBLE ATTENTAT DE LA RUE DES BONS-ENFANTS ET DU TERMINUS

LA DÉCLARATION D'ÉMILE HENRY

Deuxième journée -- La déposition de M. Meyer -- Le dynamiteur accusé de vol -- Témoins à décharge -- Excellent élève, bon employé -- L'existence d'un complice -- Incident sensationnel -- Me Henry est récusée -- Le réquisitoire et la défense -- Le verdict.

[Le jury de la Seine a rendu le verdict qu'attendait et que prévoyait la conscience publique — Emile Henry est condamné à la peine de mort — Il avait essayé d'échapper à la suite inévitable de son attentat en ajoutant d'autres crimes à celui de l'hôtel Terminus.

Une fois pris, il ne lui restait plus qu'une attitude à prendre, celle de la forfanterie. Certains admirent ce triste courage. Il faut être parvenu jusqu'à cette fin de siècle pour que le cynisme dans la scélératesse ne soit plus une circonstance aggravante, mais constitue un titre à la commisération.

Avant de subir le sort auquel il ne pouvait plus se soustraire, Henry a voulu infliger son réquisitoire à la société qui le condamnait.

On lira ce morceau, curieux surtout parce qu'il montre l'anarchiste tel qu'il est, c'est-à-dire un socialiste plus militant et plus logique que les autres. Une partie de son discours aurait pu être applaudie à la Chambre dans les régions qui vont de Chauvière à M. Goblet.

Pourtant, Emile Henry, accusant la société, est sans excuse. Car l'ingratitude n'est pas une circonstance atténuante.

Il n'était pas, comme Vaillant, un en-

Angleterre et qu'il a en effet habité boulevard Morland, à Paris.

Pal, du reste, continue M. Meyer, pu relever le séjour en France de l'anarchiste à une autre époque, du 3 décembre au 4 juin 1893. C'était dans l'occasion suivante :

Nous entendons alors une extraordinaire histoire de voleurs dans laquelle Henry aurait joué un rôle assez important. S'il faut en croire M. Meyer, il n'y aurait rien d'étonnant à ce que deux des quatre hommes masqués qui cambriolèrent certain soir une dame Postel, à Fontaine-Saint-Sauveur, fussent Henry et Ortiz. Le restaurateur chez lequel ces deux derniers seraient un moment descendus et le maire de Saint-Sauveur lui-même, confrontés avec les deux anarchistes, n'auraient pas hésité à les reconnaître.

Henry protesta de toutes ses forces. M. le président n'insiste pas. La culpabilité d'Henry dans ce vol n'est, du reste, rien moins que prouvée. M. Poitier déclare qu'il n'aurait par même été question à l'audience de cette affaire, si l'incident soulevé par Henry n'avait nécessité la comparution de M. Meyer.

Me Hornbostel prend la parole pour la première fois :

— Est-ce que le témoin pourrait nous dire si mon client n'a pas été impliqué dans une histoire de vol d'un million commis dans les caves de la Banque de France ?

M. Meyer ouvre de grands yeux et répond qu'il ignore tout à fait ce que Me Hornbostel veut dire.

minus et celle de la rue des Bons-Enfants sont deux engins absolument différents ; dans l'un, il y avait des projectiles, dans l'autre, chargé de vingt cartouches de dynamite, il n'y en avait pas.

— Mais la question se pose de savoir, termine l'éminent chimiste, comment Henry

Me Hornbostel.

s'est procuré ces cartouches, car, enfin, il ne les a pas fabriquées.

— Non ; je les ai prises dans une fabrique bourgeoise !

Témoins à décharge.

M. Bordenave, cité également par l'accusation et par la défense, est surtout un témoin à décharge. Il est parent d'Henry, s'est beaucoup occupé du jeune homme, qui lui en fut, du reste, fort peu reconnaissant. Au moment où M. Bordenave va se retirer, Henry se penche de son côté, tend la main dans sa direction dans un geste d'adieu.

— Qu'avez-vous, Henry ? Vous désirez

la circonstance, et il ne lui faut pas de bien longues phrases pour persuader aux jurés qu'Henry était un être dangereux. Leur conviction est faite depuis longtemps.

Comme M. Bulot parle, au cours de son réquisitoire, de la mère de l'anarchiste, celui-ci se lève, furieux, lui défendant de jeter le nom de sa mère dans ce débat. C'est la troisième fois qu'Henry interrompt ; M. le président se voit dans la nécessité de lui lire l'article du loi qui permet de l'expulser de l'audience. Henry se rassied, muet désormais, mais rageur et fixant sur le représentant du ministère public des regards de colère.

Factum anarchiste.

La parole appartient maintenant à Henry. Il en profite pour réciter aux jurés le factum anarchiste que nous donnons ci-dessous et qu'il a longuement travaillé dans sa cellule. Par instants, la mémoire lui manque ; il s'arrête, regarde les papiers que lui passe son avocat et continue. Il dit simplement, sans déclamation.

Il avoue les crimes dont il est accusé et ne reconnaît d'autre juge que lui-même. Il est anarchiste de fraîche date, depuis 1891. Jusque-là, il avait respecté les principes de patrie, de famille, d'autorité et de propriété. La vie lui a enlevé ses illusions. Il a vu des riches et des pauvres ; à ceux-là l'honneur, à ceux-ci la honte. Il a vu des officiers expérimenter le nouveau fusil sur des enfants de sept ans et félicités à la tribune de la Chambre. Il a jugé la société criminelle.

Le socialisme l'attire, mais il ne s'y attarda pas, parce que le socialisme repose sur le principe autoritaire. Il était matérialiste et athée. Il ne croyait ni à l'hypothèse Dieu ni à la morale religieuse.

Les compagnons anarchistes le séduisaient.

Figure 3.1. The Announcement of Émile Henry's Death Sentence, and the details of his defense alongside [Illustration by Frédéric Régamey Depicting Henry and his lawyer Nicolas Hornbostel] in *Le Matin* April 29, 1894. (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

Henry saw his act of violence as a form of iconoclasm that might not destroy but could undermine the object of attack. He hoped to disrupt the façade of immunity and immutability that naturalized capitalism and dissuaded any challenges to it as irrational and predestined to failure. As such, the revolutionary provides a foil to Bruno Latour's argument that catching the hands of the *idol-maker* during the act of fabrication is the precondition to recognizing the falsehood of an idol, in other words, to revealing the artifice as it is.[606] With his statement, though, the young anarchist presented the hands

jusqu'à la secousse définitive qui le jetterait bas dans la frange et le sang." Henry, "Déclaration d'Émile Henry," 87.

[606] Bruno Latour, "What Is Iconoclash? Or Is There a World Beyond the Image Wars?" in *Iconoclash: Beyond the Image Wars in Science, Religion, and Art*, ed. Bruno. Latour and Peter Weibel (Karlsruhe:

which acted to *un*-make, and framed his labor as that of an *iconoclast* who rendered the idol, its artificiality, and its fragility knowable for its future destruction.

Émile Henry was not the first, nor the last, to use religious metaphors to account for the omnipresence of capitalism in every material and social relation, its production of an absolute belief in its operations, and the inescapability of its spatial and temporal supremacy. This identification of capitalism with the supernatural pervades the literary and critical discourse of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[607] Marx describes capitalism as "the strange God" that once worked with "the old Gods of Europe," but eventually "kicked and chucked them all of a heap," to declare "surplus-value making as the sole end and aim of humanity."[608] Peter Kropotkin remarks that Adam Smith's doctrine of the market (i.e. 'the invisible hand') has become "an article of faith."[609] In his notes for an unfinished essay, Walter Benjamin tries to seize the peculiar nature of capitalism as "a purely cultic religion, perhaps the most extreme that ever existed," which creates a universe where "things have a meaning only in their relationship to the cult."[610] Following Benjamin's fragmentary observations, Giorgio Agamben identifies capitalism as "a religion founded entirely on faith […] whose adepts live *sola fide*."[611]

ZKM, 2002), 16.

[607] To begin with some uncritical examples, Balzac refers to money as "the pitiless goddess" and the capitalist speculation a "monster." Examples quoted in David Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), 55.

[608] Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, ed. Friedrich Engels, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling, vol. 1: The Process of Capitalist Production (Chicago, IL: Charles H. Kerr & Company, 1932), 826–27.

[609] Quoted in Ruth Kinna, "Fields of Vision: Kropotkin and Revolutionary Change," *SubStance* 36, no. 2 (2007): 71.

[610] Walter Benjamin, "Capitalism as Religion," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, ed. Michael William. Jennings and Marcus Paul Bullock, vol. 1 (1913–1926), 4 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 288.

[611] Giorgio Agamben, "Capitalism as Religion," in *Agamben and Radical Politics*, ed. Daniel McLoughlin, trans. Nicholas Heron (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), 18.

Although not presenting as absolute an identification as the latter two, Fredric Jameson ironically remarks that with its "interplay of dialectics"—"of the One and the Many," "of subject and object," "of the circumference whose center is everywhere"—and as *ens causa sui*, theology might have been a more suitable discipline to represent and study the capitalist totality.[612] Susan Buck-Morss notes that from Smith to Hegel and all the way to the late twentieth-century economists, attempts to envision capital often retreat into theological allegories (or those of the natural sublime, i.e. using the metaphor of the Big Bang to describe capitalist transformation in post-Soviet markets).[613] It is not only the critics of capitalism, but also its most devout believers who rely on such symbolic-theological language to talk about the "providence" of the markets, which they treat like "a sublime object, irradiated by a spectral agency" that directly maps onto the conception of "the will of God."[614]

These examples demonstrate that the dependence on theological concepts goes hand in hand with a problem of representation. As Marx illuminates, capitalism is more than just a certain mode of production. It brings with itself an absolute restructuring of human experience. It transforms and determines one's sense of self, capacity, and agency, and all possible social relations.[615] How can one account for this absolute invasion that

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[612] Fredric Jameson, *Representing Capital: A Commentary on Volume One* (London; New York, NY: Verso, 2011), 5. Though he maintains that "even theology of the Spinozan variety (notoriously atemporal) would find difficulty accommodating a totality so peculiar as capitalism […]."

[613] Susan Buck-Morss, "Envisioning Capital—Political Economy on Display," *Critical Inquiry* 21, no. 2 (January 1, 1995), 434–67. On the other hand, she warns that the failure to represent "the objective determinates of social life" or to veil them with mystifying, theologizing façades would dangerously benefit reactionary ideologies. Ibid., 466–67.

[614] The observation was made with reference to several market conservatives in Japhy Wilson, "Anamorphosis of Capital: Black Holes, Gothic Monsters, and the Will of God," in *Psychoanalysis and the Global*, ed. Ilan Kapoor (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2018), 175–76.

[615] Referenced in David McNally, *Monsters of the Market: Zombies, Vampires and Global Capitalism*, Historical Materialism Book Series (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2012), 15.

resists representation in its totality? How can something which relies on abstraction and elusiveness be captured, studied, and presented for cognition by others? As it is well-known, I am not the first one to ask such questions. Jameson famously goes after them in his *Representing Capital*, which grounds its theoretical interventions on the premise of the necessity of representation as "an essential operation in cognitive mapping and in ideological construction."[616] But more importantly, he maintains that because capitalism is so incomprehensible in its totality and benefits from the invisibility of its operations which renders it a transcendent mystery, even while knowing that all attempts will be necessarily fragmented, incomplete, and unsuccessful, "one must redouble one's efforts to express the inexpressible"—to represent the unrepresentable.[617]

This chapter revives and organizes such imperfect yet incisive attempts of anti-capitalist visual culture in the final decades of the nineteenth and the first decade of the twentieth centuries. My work joins in with the relatively recent scholarship that pays attention to the aesthetic efforts recording the symptoms of capitalism and those trying to give sensible form to its organization as critical sources from which to learn and draw theoretical and methodological insights.[618] The artists of the present chapter tried to make capitalism visible, to give a face to an increasingly more abstract financial system, to make its speculations, its exploits, and its transgressions perceptible. The prevalence and critical diversity of their efforts to represent capitalism also reflect on the dearth of such popular-aesthetic attempts to directly evoke the capitalist totality in our present.

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[616] Jameson, *Representing Capital*, 6.
[617] Ibid., 7.
[618] To name a few: McNally, *Monsters of the Market*; Eric Triantafillou, "To Make What Is Vertical Horizontal: Picturing Social Domination," *Journal of Visual Culture* 18, no. 3 (December 1, 2019): 265–88; Christian Lotz, "Representing Capital: Mimesis, Realism, and Contemporary Photography," in *The Social Ontology of Capitalism*, ed. Daniel Krier and Mark P. Worrell, Political Philosophy and Public Purpose (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2017), 173–93.

David McNally reminds us that the "insidiousness" of capitalism is this invisibility, that is, the ways in which "the monstrosity" of its operations are "normalised and naturalised via its colonisation of the essential fabric of everyday-life."[619]

Since Marx, critical theory has tried to resist this drive of capitalism and striven to render it available for cognition. I hope to illustrate how several images in this chapter show that the radical graphic artists of *fin-de-siècle* France themselves took on a similar task. More than mere illustrations of the symptoms of capitalism in the everyday or facile social allegories, I suggest that their efforts often reveal their potent—yet unrecognized by art history—capacity to tell their intended or accidental audiences something profound about the nature of the beast they try to describe. They often do so by rendering the normalized and invisibilized processes of capital strange, unnatural, and monstrously visible. I would like to remind readers that these attempts are not, and could not be, perfect representations. Yet, by their existence they embody the predicament which Eric Triantafillou formulated as follows: "the inherent insufficiency of [the] visual representation [of capitalism] coexists with the acknowledgement of its necessity in [anti-capitalist] praxis."[620]

I organize these efforts around three monumental emblems of graphic anti-capitalism that I suggest correspond to three religious allegories. The first is the 'idol' that lends a face to capital's mystical operations: the *Golden Calf*. Then, I move to the principal 'temple' of this deity—which nineteenth-century critics identified as the *Paris*

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[619] McNally, *Monsters of the Market*, 2. I have greatly benefitted from McNally's critical inquiry into what he calls 'a capitalist monsterology.' His objects of analysis include seventeenth- and eighteenth-century fears of dismemberment, the register of the fantastic in Marx's *Capital*, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, and the contemporary stories of vampirism and zombie laborers from the African subcontinent which together illustrate global history through a language of horror that betrays the violence of the capitalist economy. Ibid., 1–16.
[620] Triantafillou, "To Make What Is Vertical Horizontal," 284.

Bourse [Stock Exchange] building. Finally, I turn to the steel solidity of the *Money Safe* which, with its banal ubiquity in the public and private spaces of nineteenth-century modernity, offered countless 'shrines' to the spirit of capitalist accumulation.

The Idol

When the anarchist Émile Henry distilled the capitalist totality he was targeting into the symbolic body of the Golden Calf, he knew that his audience would immediately recognize the reference. In the turn-of-the-century visual and written media, the biblical idol was one of the most popular—and direct—allegories used to evoke the economic system. At first, the Golden Calf as a metaphor for capitalism feels rather *too* direct. Thanks to its emphatic bond with its raw material—the gold—we can immediately recognize the idol as a stand-in for greed. However, our recognition risks glossing over the fact that the Golden Calf is not only a metaphor, but a call for action. Let me explain this point further by attending to the representational complexity the icon presents. As noted by scholars of the Old Testament, the nature of the Golden Calf is riddled with ambiguity. The idol is simultaneously an artifice manufactured by hand and a self-produced mystery that appeared out of thin air; it is a transgression either as the false likeness of the true God, or as the true likeness of a false one; it is molten gold yet it burns down to char when thrown into fire.[621] Conversely, its destruction by Moses

[621] Samuel E. Loewenstamm, "The Making and Destruction of the Golden Calf," *Biblica* 48, no. 4 (1967): 481–90; Herbert Chanan Brichto, "The Worship of the Golden Calf: A Literary Analysis of a Fable on Idolatry," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 54 (1983): 1–44; David Frankel, "The Destruction of the Golden Calf: A New Solution," *Vetus Testamentum* 44, no. 3 (1994): 330–39. According to the biblical account, the Golden Calf is both an artifice manufactured by hands and a mystery self-produced out of thin air. Once questioned by Moses, Aaron denies his hand in the idol's creation: "So I said to them, 'Whoever has gold, rip it off.' They gave it to me and I hurled it into the fire and out came this calf!" (Exodus 32: 24) However, 'the biblical narrator' explicitly reports that (Exodus 32:4) Aaron 'made' a molten calf from the gold he received. Later, the creation of the Golden Calf is attributed to the collective labor of the Israelites (Exodus 32: 20). Victor Hurowitz, "THE GOLDEN CALF: Made by Man…or

is articulated with an emphatic certainty: "he took the calf the people had made and burned it in the fire; then he ground it to powder, scattered it on the water and made the Israelites drink it." [622] (Exodus 32: 20) It is such an overdetermined and ritualized demise that outside the pages of the Old Testament, the icon of the Golden Calf almost always recalls its own destruction. But why does Moses not just destroy the idol in the most direct way possible, as in the way he smashes the tablets he brings down from the Mountain after he sees the transgression of the Israelites? Why do the idolatrous have to consume it? Jan Assmann compares the ritualistic destruction of the Golden Calf to one of the worst transgressions one could commit in ancient Egypt: eating the sacred animal.[623] I think we should mention the power of the carnivalesque alchemy offered by the Golden Calf's destruction: the sacred turns into refuse, the gold turns into shit. The prophet does not simply destroy the idol, he engages with it in a perversive counter-ritual that does not discard the idol as false, but un-makes it. I suggest that most critical representations of the Golden Calf operate with the memory of this iconoclastic un-making in mind, which shares a critical affinity with the Commune's conversion of the Vendôme Column's apotheotic economy into one of debasement and infamy.

Latour regards the moment of iconoclasm as the height of an epistemological

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God?" *Bible Review* 20, no. 2 (April 2004): 28–47.

[622] The episode of destruction presents a series of resolutely 'tangible' scenes of destruction, "regardless of whether the different images employed were realistically compatible" to really stress the utter annihilation. Samuel E. Loewenstamm, "The Making and Destruction," 481. Frankel on the other hand argues against the common reading of Exodus, and suggests that it was not the Golden Calf, but the tablets that Moses brought down from the mountain that the prophet grinds down, mixes with water, and makes the Israelites consume as an emphatic image of the broken covenant. Frankel, "The Destruction of the Golden Calf," 330–39, especially see 335.

[623] Jan Assmann, "What Is Wrong with Images?" in *The Return of Religion and Other Myths: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art*, ed. Maria Hlavajova, Sven Lütticken, and Jill Winder (Utrecht: BAK, Basis voor Actuele Kunst, 2009), 22.

uncertainty: "[no one knows] if they are nothing[…]whether those idols can be smashed without any consequences…or whether they have to be destroyed because they are so powerful…"[624] I agree and work with this identification of iconoclasm as a moment of revelation, but I disagree with regard to the ambiguity of the idol's power. On the contrary, the iconoclast is someone who is so sure about the power of the idol that they render its destruction a social and moral necessity.[625] The foundational difference between the two positions of extreme engagement with a (re)presentation—between the idolator and the iconoclast—is not a question of belief in its power, but that the latter defines this power in the negative, as a detrimental force over the collective. This explains the almost always public and expressive nature of iconoclasms.[626] After the term proposed by W. J. T. Mitchell, Yvonne Sherwood identifies the Golden Calf as a "hypericon" due to its capacity to "encapsulate an entire episteme […] a particular assemblage of knowledge, aesthetics, ethics and politics."[627] Therefore, it is one of the few icons of the bible that retains its force in secular contexts. This capacity to communicate directly across time, space, and different spheres of inquiry stems from the emphatic power of the Golden Calf's destruction as a triumph over mystifications and falsehoods. It is no surprise that Assmann suggests reading the biblical episode as a defiance "against false representations," and a symbol of critical inquisition, that is

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[624] Latour, "What Is Iconoclash?" 19.

[625] In the words of David Freedberg, an iconoclast is someone who "responds so powerfully to the picture that he assaults it." David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 407.

[626] One can argue that what makes the calf powerful, dangerous, and worthy of destruction before the eyes of Moses is the people—the people who needed a man-made deity to transfer their energies and fates to, the people who were ready to believe in its power, a power that was real because they worshipped and celebrated it.

[627] Yvonne Sherwood, "The Hypericon of the Golden Calf," in *Figurations and Sensations of the Unseen in Judaism, Christianity and Islam: Contested Desires*, by Birgit Meyer and Terje Stordalen, Bloomsbury Studies in Material Religion (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), 57.

the "hallmark of enlightenment [and] rationality."[628]

With this critical impulse guiding their representations of Capitalism-as-Golden-Calf, the anti-capitalist artists took both the transcendent power and the artifice of this new cult seriously, and expanded on the ambiguities inherent to the biblical myth to account for capitalism's peculiar nature. In its original context, the creation of the Golden Calf was mystified so it appeared as simultaneously man-made and divine. As noted by Xavier Lafrance, the historical narratives that account for the rise of capitalism in France (and elsewhere) "take for granted the existence of capitalism without really considering its historical origins," and therefore they "are circular," representing capitalism as "emerging out of pre-existing, embryonic capitalist dynamics that were already gestating in the womb of feudalism or absolutism."[629] The impossible beginnings often effect impossible endings and vice versa. As Agamben notes, without a telos, capitalism "is essentiality in-finite," and "just as it cannot have a real end […] so capitalism knows no beginning, [and] is intimately an-archic."[630] Appearing to hold the temporal experience of humanity from both ends with its self-begetting beginnings and its never-endings, capitalism ceases to be a historically distinct system. Benjamin adds to this temporal hegemony a sense of 'permanence' that he finds at the foundation of 'capitalism as religion,' where it appears as if it never rests, and time under its rule is homogenized and indifferent, leaving no room to dream the *day after*.[631]

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[628] Assmann, "What Is Wrong with Images?" 17.
[629] Xavier Lafrance, *The Making of Capitalism in France: Class Structures, Economic Development, the State and the Formation of the French Working Class, 1750–1914*, Historical Materialism Series (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2020), 1. For a critical overview of the dominant literature see ibid., 1–4.
[630] Agamben, "Capitalism as Religion," 22–23. Agamben notes that because Capitalism "cannot have a real end," "it is incessantly in the grip of a crisis …always in the act of ending."
[631] Benjamin, "Capitalism as Religion," 288.

Exactly for this reason, I suggest putting front and center the iconoclastic episteme in the representation of capitalism via an icon inscribed with a call to its own destruction. The radical print artists in turn-of-the-century France employed this operative icon with a critical intent that was akin to the purpose Henry assigned to his destructive action. When they graphically produced Capitalism-as-Golden-Calf, these artists offered a tangible focal point to the capitalist sublime, whose powers and actions were scattered through all things and relations, but they did so while gesturing to the need and the possibility of its un-making. As such, the generative yet iconoclastic creative labor of the anti-capitalist printmakers unites the hands that make with the hands that un-make. The images of Capitalism-as-Golden-Calf embody the notion of 'iconoclash' which Latour uses to describe an act that requires further inquiry to determine "whether it is destructive or constructive."[632]

The ambiguity here does not stem from the seeming incongruity of the actions. As we already established in the first chapter, revolutionary iconoclasm destroys and generates, disenchants and dreams at the same time. I would like to expand a bit more on this dialectic of revolutionary iconoclasm. When the object of destruction is an *idol* whose 'magic' stems from its denial of the hands that produced it so as to appear a self-produced (and in the case of capitalism self-produced and re-produced) reality; in frustrating the idol's claims of authenticity and authority, the iconoclast not only produces the truth, but offers the hands as the source of that truth. Noted by scholars as a contradiction characteristic of the capitalist ideology, while capitalism reifies the proletariat into abstracted body parts, especially into 'hands,' it paradoxically hides

[632] Latour, "What Is Iconoclash?" 14.

these 'hands' as the source of wealth by attributing the operations that keep it in motion to the 'invisible' hand of the market.[633] Therefore, this first section can also be read as an implicit story of hands: the invisible hand of the market, the concealed hand of the labor, and the critical hand of the iconoclast.

The Cult of Misery and its Priests

Their experience under, in, and through capitalism led radical artists to mobilize the Golden Calf to account for this modern hegemonic system, which they sensed like an occult power over their lives. While he was producing the famous advertisement posters which are still among the most recognizable artifacts of nineteenth-century commodity culture, the committed revolutionary Steinlen split open the capitalist mystery as a death cult thriving on exploitation. [Figure 3.2.] The image appeared in *L'Écho de Paris*, which generally kept a centrist political position with occasional opinion pieces by radical intellectuals and politicians. Therefore, the scene was offered to a more conservative viewership than the propaganda images Steinlen regularly contributed to socialist and anarchist publications.[634] Without holding back from his political commitments, the artist re-configures the iconic pyramid of class domination[635]—capital at top, labor at the bottom—that often symbolizes the social totality as a morbid

[633] Although my argument, which sees the rhetoric of destruction motivated by a critical return of the labor (and hands) to the realm of visibility, offers an original angle, the relationship between the hidden hands of labor and the invisible hand of the market has already been noted as one of key contradictions of capital by other scholars. See McNally, *Monsters of the Market*, 111.
[634] The design must have reached its usual audience as well. Also, in the following weeks the anarchist periodical *Les Temps Nouveaux* published a reference to this issue of *L'Écho* in its section for reading suggestions, with a note that encourages all anarchists to "see" Steinlen's superb composition. "À Lire," *Les Temps Nouveaux* 1, no. 44 (February 29, 1896): 4.
[635] For a great critical essay on the iconography of 'the social pyramid' of domination, see Triantafillou's "To Make What Is Vertical Horizontal," 265–88.

religious procession.[636] Titled *Le Veau d'Or*, [the Golden Calf], the composition presents a crowd of working bodies sustaining the forward movement of the capital-procession. The structure of oppression that this economic system relies on is represented as a parade float on which the monstrous embodiments of military, judicial, and religious authorities are seated. Behind them, politics and finance stand shoulder to shoulder, holding in their hands the sacred objects of the cult. And finally, the idol rises atop a high pedestal, its head haloed by the full moon. On the left-hand side of the image we see the Golden Calf's emphatic opposite, a skeletal beast known as 'the Mad[dened] Cow' [*La Vache Enragée*], watching the procession with the personification of misery on its back.

[636] The biblical Golden Calf was designed to be mobile, as the Israelites asked Aaron for a deity "to go in front of them." (Exodus 32: 23) Unlike a stationary monument, an idol can be activated by a moving crowd like a banner of their collective identity or as a protective amulet, or even as an inanimate leader.

Figure 3.2. Théophile Alexandre Steinlen, "Le Veau d'Or" in *L'Écho de Paris*, n. 4285, (February 18, 1896). [Cropped]. (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

Associated with poverty, this beast, enraged by hunger and lack, was part of nineteenth-century slang and a known symbol in anarchist and socialist circles.[637] Steinlen's contemporary, the artist Louis Morin, described "the Golden Calf" as "the son of 'the Mad Cow,'" reminding us that the production of wealth relies on the

[637] Venita Datta, "A Bohemian Festival: La Fête de La Vache Enragée," *Journal of Contemporary History* 28, no. 2 (April 1, 1993): 195.

reproduction of misery.[638] The birds preying on the bodies of the workers give form to Marx's description of capital as a monster that feeds on the flesh and blood of labor. As McNally illustrates, from the eighteenth century onward a symbolic lexicon of monstrosity—which was immensely expanded by the careful language of horror employed by Marx himself—appeared in popular culture to account for the violent operations of capital.[639] In this composition, Steinlen presents capitalism as what it is, a "modern horror-story."[640]

In 1897, both the Golden Calf and the Mad Cow stepped out of Steinlen's print to the streets of Montmartre for a bohemian festival of arts dedicated to the latter.[641] Known as the parade of the Mad Cow, or simply as the *Vachalcade*, the event was intended to bring the people of the Butte together with the artists who made it their home. As Morin reports, the popular audience was not particularly on board with the self-satisfied aestheticism, lack of unity, and highly symbolic social commentaries of most of the presentations that participated in the two consecutive *Vachalcades*.[642] The artist mentions a few floats that actually attracted the interest and appreciation of the people.[643] In the second year of its realization (1897), popular sentiment favored "the Capitol Chariot," designed by Fernand Pelez, known as the artist of the poor and downtrodden."[644]

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[638] Louis Morin, *Carnavals Parisiens* (Paris: Montgredien et Cie., 1897), 78.
[639] McNally, *Monsters of the Market*, 13.
[640] Ibid.
[641] It was the famous graphic artist, bohemian, and notorious antisemite Adolphe Léon Willette who launched this new festival in 1896 with the intention of providing an antithesis to the 'Fattened Ox' [*Le Boeuf Gras*] of the Mardi Gras celebrations. He dedicated it to the poor of Montmartre. Laurent Bihl, "L'« Armée Du Chahut » : Les Deux Vachalcades de 1896 et 1897," *Sociétés & Représentations*, Figures animales, 27, no. 1 (June 29, 2009): 171.
[642] Morin, *Carnavals Parisiens*, 51.
[643] Ibid., 60.
[644] Ibid., 78–79. Fernand Pelez never knew much success, and in spite of the immense affective capacity

Figure 3.3. Louis Morin, Detail from the *Vachalcade* of 1897, in *Carnavals Parisiens* (Paris: Montgredien et Cie., 1897). 68. [Cropped to highlight Pelez's float among the others]. (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

We can discern a glimpse of Pelez's design in the background of Morin's cheerful representation of the 1897 *Vachalcade.* [Figure 3.3.] The stylistic opposition between the critical gothic lines of Steinlen's print and the pastel softness of Morin's illustration does not aid us in establishing the potential influence of the radical artist's macabre procession of 1896 on the conception of Pelez's mobile temple for the Golden Calf. Moreover, Morin erases the 'enslaved' who were reported to have pulled the exhibition

of his canvases (which, instead of romanticizing poverty, reflect the scars it opens in the human psyche) he was largely ignored by the art historical literature until the recent evaluation by the late Linda Nochlin in her *Misère: The Visual Representation of Misery in the 19th Century* (New York, NY: Thames and Hudson, 2018), 137–58.

along the streets.[645] The figures of finance, magistracy, and army are left out, together with the critique of authority in Steinlen's two-dimensional cortege. We have instead the "worshippers who flatten themselves in prostration" before the Golden Calf, and the bottom level is left to those who enjoy the blessings of the deity. However, the textual description of Pelez's float closely reproduces Steinlen's critical message: a tall, mobile temple pulled by the efforts of captive labor, with the golden idol standing at the apex. Morin judges the procession as "a transparent riddle;" a chariot of gold led by the "child beggars carrying the palms of martyrdom" and followed by "the old, miserably shuffling their aged bodies" to embody the devastating rule of money over the poor, from childhood to old age.

Six years later Steinlen brought the procession of the Golden Calf and its priests to the pages of *L'Assiette au Beurre*. [Figure 3.4.] Here, we again have a procession dedicated to the god of profit, but this time the forward movement of this political-economic totality is not explicitly tied to the labor of the enslaved masses. On the contrary, reduced to insect-like insignificance, the people are macerated under the invisible legs of an amalgam of sovereign beasts. Their ermine capes soak up the blood of the people, painting the composition red. It is difficult to tell if the swine, bear, amphibian, and beaked faces are masks that hide even uglier features, but it is clear that Steinlen traded their humanity in exchange for the precious insignias of their domination. McNally equates the "secularisation and politicisation" of "the discourse of monstrosity" with the rise of capitalism, as the monstrous defects were no longer

[645] "La Vachalcade," *Le Journal*, June 20, 1897. The newspaper reports both chained slaves pulling the float, and an army of beggars following it.

‘natural’ but ‘social’ in character.[646] Here, as an anti-authoritarian socialist, Steinlen depicts the ruling-class monsters, whose grotesqueness is the result of the violent crimes they commit under the rule of the Golden Calf. Together, they effectuate a single barrier of flesh, fur, crown, and scepter that lifts and guards the deity and its religion.

Figure 3.4. Théophile Alexandre Steinlen, [The Golden Calf—no caption] in *L’Assiette Au Beurre*, n. 47 (February 26, 1902). (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

One figure stands out, seated over the others with the papal crown resting on his

[646] McNally, *Monsters of the Market*, 46 and 61–62. McNally argues that these monsters of emergent capitalism are “human” in nature. Conversely, the animalistic mask-faces of Steinlen’s capitalist monsters can be read as a return to an earlier (perhaps) medieval conception of monstrosity. On the other hand, as monsters of capitalism, they are decidedly man-made, hence products of a secular, instead of a theological/supernatural, discourse. Finally, this secular monstrosity was deployed in two opposing directions, as both the popular and the ruling classes framed the Other as monstrous. For example, while the conservatives saw the popular body as diseased (and ready to undermine the integrity of the body politic), or likened its multiplicity to many-headed hydra, the popular classes saw the ruling class as immoral, blood-sucking, cannibalistic beasts.

skeletal features. Profiled against a solar eclipse that gives him a dark halo, the high priest of this destructive cult looks ahead with a chilling smile. Although more striking and violent, this articulation erases some statements made by the previous processions. Especially in the earlier articulation published in *L'Écho de Paris,* if the masses quit their posts, the movement of the procession would come to a halt. Here, however, the violence at first seems automated. The forward progress of this machine-edifice seems to lack an adequate representation of the objects of that violence. One might even say that Steinlen surrenders his earlier critique to mystification. However, as Marx showed, that mystification is inherent to the object of the critique. Only when an object is stripped of its history—that is, the memories of its creation and its use—can it appear in the market as a commodity.[647] This process is necessary to give capitalism its 'magic,' which entails hiding "the occult economy"—the "transactions between the human bodies and capital"[648]—that it rests on. The concealment that Steinlen resorts to, then, does not necessarily reproduce this mystification of production in the sphere of exchange. On the contrary, by giving his cover-up the appearance of a wave of blood, he uncovers something critical about this occult economy: its monstrosity. Expanding on the physical energy the masses provide for the macabre procession of capital in the first image, in this later articulation Steinlen reveals a ceaseless system of accumulation that feeds literally on the life and blood of the labor.

Steinlen is not alone in identifying the subordination of legal and political authorities to the cult of the Golden Calf. As the emblematic locus of an abstract economic system

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[647] Peter Stallybrass, "Marx's Coat," in *Border Fetishisms: Material Objects in Unstable Spaces*, ed. Patricia Spyer (London: Routledge, 1998), 187 and 195.
[648] McNally, *Monsters of the Market*, 113.

whose operations and effects are diffused into all social and political relations, symbols of capitalism appear in political criticism as the will that animates the modern state, dictating the operations that are often disguised under the pretext of national interest and patriotism. For example, the cover image of the sixth issue of *L'Assiette* presents an ape-king sitting on a throne and holding out a medal to attract and direct his subjects. [Figure 3.5.] Framed by a beautiful art nouveau border,[649] Paul Jouve's composition mobilizes Darwinian evolution to undermine the rhetoric of social and cultural progress flaunted by his contemporaries.

Figure 3.5. Paul Jouve, "Le Miroir Aux Alouettes," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 6 (May 9, 1901). (Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Gallica).

[649] A small note under the caption identifies the artist of the border as "Brunetta."

The bourgeois republic and its citizens are denied their modernity with this devolutionary vision, baring the unchanging imbalance between the rule and the ruled, played out by the colossal king with a full belly and the skeletal wave of primate arms. The latter crush each other in their race to reach the blessings of the political authority as embodied in a metal decoration at the end of a red ribbon. The caption distills the mindless yet deadly appeal of the object: a "mirror for larks."[650] The scene must have reminded many of the notorious *scandale des decorations* (1887), when it was exposed that under the organizational leadership of the president Jules Grévy's son-in-law Daniel Wilson, the politicians and army generals were peddling decorations and honors to those willing to pay for them—proving that as Capital rules over the rulers, the loftiest ideals of the nation are mere commodities. Therefore, despite the self-assured posturing of the ape-king, he himself is the subject of another sovereign: the Golden Calf. As proof of mass politics' submissive dependence on capital, Wilson's ingenious scheme was intended to fund his own political ambitions—namely, to occupy the highest office of the state.[651] Kropotkin preeminently ties the fate of capitalism to that of the modern state, arguing that the "naturally expansive force" of capitalism urges the political authority to harness it, and use it to stabilize and bolster its own powers.[652] Here, Jouve shows that the idol and the throne are one and the same. The identity of the next primate to occupy the seat is insignificant as long as they draw their authority from this

[650] Lark mirrors [miroir aux alouettes] were objects with reflective qualities (often a wooden base covered with glass or shiny metal pieces) used to attract small birds like larks for hunting. It evolved into a metaphor for schemes to deceive gullible people at their expense.
[651] An insightful believer of the power of media in mass politics, Daniel Wilson aimed to control his political image and influence via an extensive and therefore costly network of provincial newspapers. Selling honors would fund his dangerously vast network of regional press titles. Michael Palmer, "Daniel Wilson and the Decorations Scandal of 1887," *Modern & Contemporary France* 1, no. 2 (1993): 139–50.
[652] Kinna, "Fields of Vision," 70 and 72.

idolatrous insignia of sovereignty.

Kupka's title-page illustration for "The Modern State" chapter in Élisée Reclus' *L'Homme et La Terre* confounds the will of capitalism with that of the bourgeois state.[653] [Figure 3.6.] The image represents a "man of the state" on a haughty platform from which he orates and commands an out-of-frame crowd. Kupka reproduces several of the symbolic crutches of political power that we see in the official portraits of diverse sovereigns, from Louis XIV and Napoléon Bonaparte to Sultan Abdulmecid: the columns for stability, the floating drapery for divine blessing, and the lion heads for the capacity to use force. Instead of a crown and the ermine fur, however, this modern personification of the state authority is wearing the uniform of bourgeois respectability: a dark suit and a white shirt. This elegant façade hides and distracts from the circuit of exchange taking place behind the political spectacle. This image brings us to the dilemma of the anti-capitalist critique of modern states, as diagnosed in the brilliant essay by Philip Abrams, "Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State."[654] According to Abrams, the ambiguity of the critical (often Marxist) interrogations of politics in a capitalist society recognizes that the state is "an illusion," "a mere mask for class power," and treats it as "a real entity," "a substantial structure."[655] The state becomes a necessary "real-concrete object" to which "the coercive and ideological functions" that coordinate the class relationships can be attributed.[656] Abrams contends that "the state is not the reality which stands behind the mask of political practice. It is itself the mask

[653] Élisée Reclus, *L'Homme et La Terre*, vol. 6 (Histoire Contemporaine) (Paris: Librairie Universelle, 1905), 171–223.
[654] Philip Abrams, "Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State (1977)," Journal of Historical Sociology 1, no. 1 (1988): 58–89.
[655] Ibid., 69.
[656] Ibid., 70.

which prevents our seeing political practice as it is."[657]

Figure 3.6. František Kupka, "L'État Moderne" [Cropped] in Élisée Reclus, *L'Homme et La Terre*, vol. 6 (Histoire Contemporaine) (Paris: Librairie Universelle, 1905), 171.

By showing us the hands that exchange papers and gold under fugitive gazes, Kupka lays bare the real core of the state as deals and transactions that perpetuate class domination and the rule of the Golden Calf. Although the casual resting of the statesman's arm on the golden idol can be read as a lack of genuine devotion to the deity and a mere exploitation of its occult powers for his own interest, the formal rhyming between the metal beast's open mouth and that of the statesman, and the slanting angle of their snouts, equates these two beasts instead of subordinating one to the other.

[657] Ibid., 82.

The Devotees of the Golden Calf

Arguing for the complete subordination of politics to Capital, an anarchist pamphleteer identified the Third Republic's boastful rhetoric of secularism as mere smoke and mirrors, writing that "it is not the God of Christians sleeping in the depths of churches who puts obstacles in the way of the human evolution and liberation […] It is the Golden Calf, the God of Money, who lies at the depths of our masters' safe."[658] The center-spread of *L'Assiette au Beurre*'s decidedly secular Christmas issue (1901) was reserved this time for the devotees of this new cult. In a gold-hued scene we see upper-class Parisians, adorned in their most fashionable attires, flocking to a temple in the middle of a desert to offer their devotion to their new Lord. [Figure 3.7.] The artist Paul Balluriau positions this new god before a monumental money safe flanked by a golden calf and a golden ass. The latter complements the scene both as a clear symbol of debasement and as a common insult for bourgeois politicians in turn-of-the-century France. Every detail, including the columns that frame this vision, subvert the nativity scene that had reportedly taken place in a humble manger nineteen centuries prior. The caption speaks on behalf of the new deity, and declares that the chosen few among the believers kneeling before its power would receive its generosity.

[658] Sevérin, "À Propos de Réunions," *Les Temps Nouveaux* 5, no. 35 (December 23, 1899): 2–3.

Figure 3.7. Paul Balluriau, "Deus, ecce Deus" in *L'Assiette au Beurre*, n.39 (December 28, 1901). (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

In a single composition, the artist brings together the transgression of the Israelites, the nativity of Christ, and the elegant Parisian balls to represent the dawn of a new, but false, transcendent authority. Instead of the three magi who recognized the sacredness of Christ, this god attracts countless believers that fill the picture space from the immediate foreground to the horizon line. Remembering Agamben's assessment that capitalism is a religion whose devotees embody *sola fide*,[659] the power of the new god rests in this collective performance of reverence. As remarked by the anarchist pamphleteer: the "god [of Money] knows no skeptics and his faithful are legion."[660]

[659] Agamben, "Capitalism as Religion," 18.
[660] Sevérin, "À Propos de Réunions," 2–3.

An article from the anarchist *Les Temps Nouveaux* diagnosed the violent effects of this cult on the social fabric as follows: "The Money God has touched his creatures with his golden wand, and has transformed them into shrewd schemers and cold-blooded egoists. He has uprooted all the rich flora of altruism and solidarity, leaving only the weed of excessive individualism."[661] According to another observer, this devastating blow of the modern god to collective morality resurrects an animalistic savagery that human social evolution was believed to have suppressed in favor of a socially organized coexistence. Watching the traders on the floor of the Stock Exchange, this observer identifies a primal drive for destructive competition akin to a financial 'survival of the fittest:' "a sinister atmosphere[…]charged with animalities…brutal, and extravagantly violent."[662] Jouve distilled his contemporaries' declarations of social regression into a vertical composition depicting the Golden Calf atop a tall pedestal. [Figure 3.8.] The bottom half of the composition is filled with a violent crowd trampling one another in competition for the idol. The face of a contender reveals that the business decorum of dark suits and white shirts actually covers primates ready to destroy each other. Known for his masterful drawings of wildlife outside political print circles, here we see once again how Jouve used his interests in zoology to remember the stubborn presence of the primordial under the thin veneer of modernity.

[661] Simplice, "À Propos de La Cherté Des Vivres," *Les Temps Nouveaux* 17, no. 20 (September 16, 1911): 1–2.
[662] Gabriel Mourey, *1 heure : La Bourse: Les Minutes Parisiennes* (Paris: Libraire Paul Ollendorff, 1899), 19–31. Cited from the translation in Matt K. Matsuda, *The Memory of the Modern* (New York, NY; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 52–53.

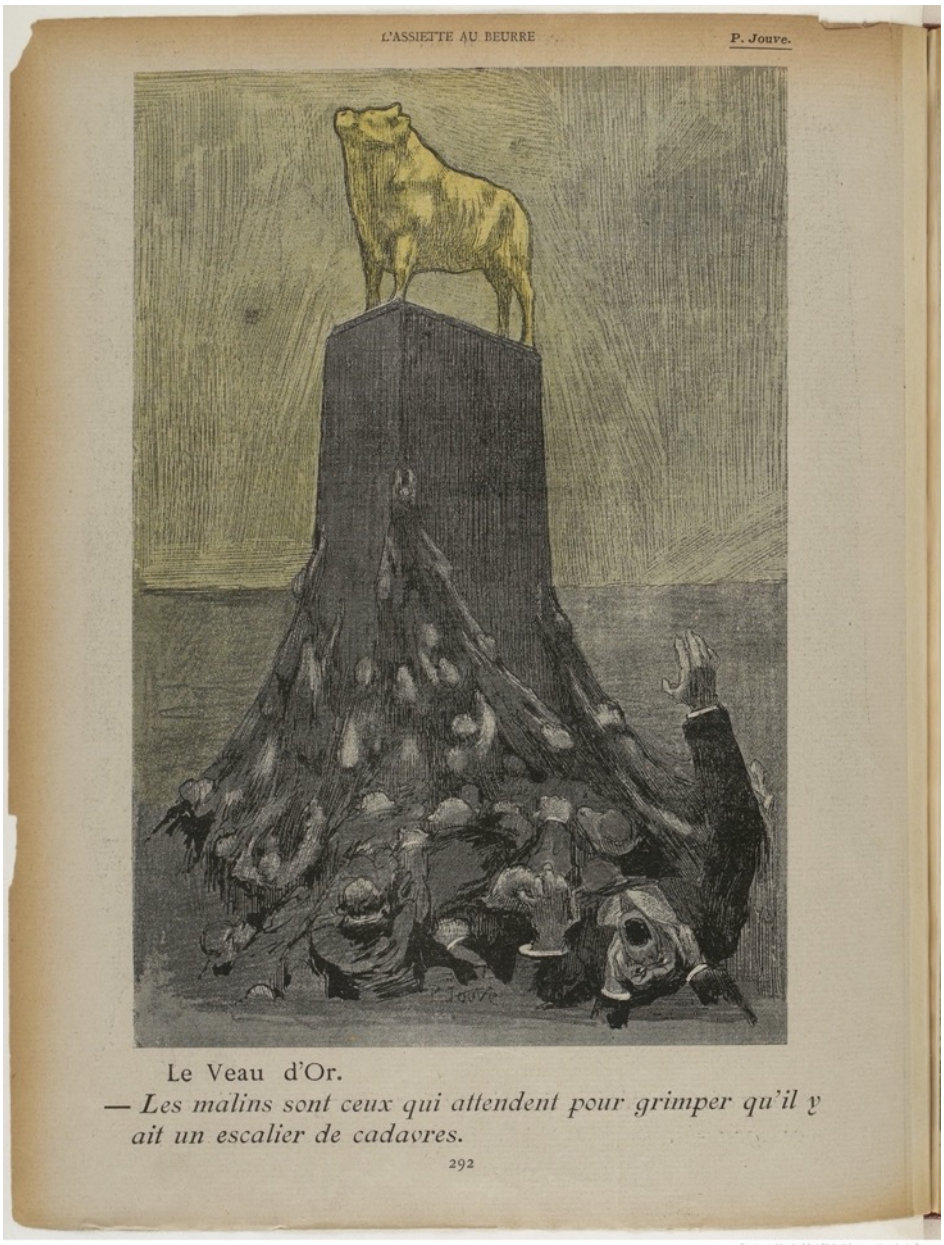

Figure 3.8. Paul Jouve, "Le Veau d'Or" in *L'Assiette au Beurre*, n.18. (August 1, 1901). (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

The caption alludes to the evolutionary advantage of cunning, stating that the "clever ones are those who wait until there is a staircase of corpses to climb." The image almost functions as a moralist commentary on the erosion of ethics under capitalism, which the same anarchist article had lamented as follows: "[The money] has established

everywhere the morality of profit […and] raised greed to the level of an institution […] it has penetrated so deeply into our morals, our social life, so strongly gangrened consciences."[663]

But this is a rather simplistic reading that attends only to the surface of this complex image and subordinates it to the authority of its short caption, especially considering that the author of the article also warns that "it is impossible to be fully oneself, to consolidate one's actions with one's intimate convictions in a society[…]dominated by money."[664] Upon closer inspection we can discern an almost organic animism in the lower half of the tall pedestal. This 'life' that Jouve introduces into the pedestal hints at one of the central perversions of capitalist exploitation: the conversion of living labor into dead commodity, which, in turn, attributes to the latter a life and power of its own. Instead of labor, however, here the pedestal seems to feed on the clash of bodies that act out capitalist competition. As Marx shows, far from being *free*, "the free competition of the capitalist" is dictated by "the inherent laws of the capitalist production" which he senses as an "external" and "coercive" power over his individual existence.[665] It is with this ordained violence of the competition that the dramatic structure grows taller, carrying the Golden Calf higher and farther from the reach of hands. The caption then reproduces the deception of the capitalist accumulation, while the image exposes it as a lie; instead of providing a route of access to the Golden Calf, the corpses fuel the idol's ascension. Therefore, the social devolution Jouve represents is not an ethical judgment on individual behavior and on personal greed. According to Marx, the social process of

[663] Sevérin, "À Propos de Réunions," 2–3.
[664] Ibid.
[665] Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, 297.

capital robs the humanity from laborers and capitalist alike. This image is a visual diagnostic of his statement that "the capitalist is only capital personified" and "[h]is soul is the soul of capital."[666] No longer possessing a free will of his own, "the objective basis of the [capital's] circulation […] is his [the capitalist's] subjective aim."[667] Regardless of how many bodies will pile up at its base, Capital's need for "the appropriation of ever more and more wealth in the abstract"[668] makes the pedestal grow infinitely higher and assures the perpetuity of this devastating competition.

Invitations to Iconoclasts

To stop this occult expansion, Maximilien Luce restated the radical call behind representations of this destructive idol: iconoclasm. For a postcard he illustrated to help fund Jean Grave's anarchist publications, the artist transformed the Golden Calf into a golden pig and erected it across from a worker who is ready to crush it with a sledgehammer. [Figure 3.9.] Ridiculed yet still recognizable, the idol is adorned with a sovereign's crown and perched on a pedestal that carries the 'twenty franc' gold coin.[669] Evincing the predetermined act of iconoclasm inherent to the icon at hand, Luce identifies the value-producing hands of the laborer also as the hands that would carry out the destruction prescribed by the revolution. The caption is both cautious and encouraging: "Be brave! It requires some nerve, for it is hard to kill!" However, physically not much taller than the worker and symbolically already undermined by its

[666] Ibid., 257.
[667] Ibid., 170.
[668] Ibid.
[669] Known as "the Napoléon," this was the most popular gold coin in Europe for more than a century after its issue by Napoléon Bonaparte in 1803 and was spread across the Europe as a common currency. Therefore, as an early emblem of global economics, most of these prints take this specific coin as the emblematic form of money.

transformation into a beast of debasement, the idol of capitalism does not offer much of a challenge to the heavy sledgehammer of the worker. When faced with the hands that are its life source—the labor—the idol of capitalism relinquishes its mystical powers to appear as a man-made absurdity.

Figure 3.9. Maximilien Luce, *"Hardi!"* Postcard produced for *Collection des Temps Nouveaux* Lithograph/Photomechanical Print. c. 1900. (Fédération Internationale des Centres d'Études et de Documentation Libertaires/ficedl.info).

Luce's illustration for the avant-garde literary and art periodical *La Plume*'s thematic issue on anarchism expands on his call for iconoclasm and presents it as the foundation of any revolutionary action. Conversely, it also illuminates the task as significantly more difficult than is suggested in the previous image. [Figure 3.10.] Bent by physical and psychological exhaustion, the malnourished body of a seated laborer occupies the immediate foreground of this composition. Luce literalizes the shackles that tie labor to money and political authority with the chains that secure the worker's ankles to a stone block reading "Capital and State." The tool of the worker's labor of

disenchantment—again, a sledgehammer—sits idle between his legs and is central to the discourse of the image. As Richard Thomson illustrates with his careful analysis of the political and aesthetic rhetoric of Paul Signac's *Demolisher* [Le Démolisseur], the sledgehammer was a loaded symbol in the anarchist aesthetics of turn-of-the-century Paris that embodied the dialectic of revolutionary destruction to bring about the world of tomorrow.[670] It is clear that Luce's composition dictates destruction as the first step of the revolution, but also as the precondition of the worker's liberation before he carries out the task at hand. He needs to free himself from the ideological shackles that tie him to capital and the state. Despite his exhausted body, Luce has given him the tool—and hence, the capacity—to carry out the emancipatory action that demands he use the producing hands of labor for productive destruction. Then, the monumental targets of his sledgehammer are waiting for him in the background: the Golden Calf (appearing as the god Mammon) sitting on its pedestal-throne, before the Paris Stock Exchange building. The artist explicitly identifies this structure as the Bastille of the upcoming revolution that has to be stormed and razed like its historical counterpart, which Luce resurrects like an ominous ghost at the edge of the composition. Despite the overdetermined tone of the iconoclastic episteme, Luce does not hide the fact that the

[670] Thomson draws attention to the overlap in the language Signac uses in a key text he published anonymously in the anarchist journal *La Révolte*, where he identified the revolutionary significance of Neo-Impressionists by "turning to the rhetoric of destruction" and writing: "[Neo-Impressionists are] pure aesthetes, revolutionaries by temperament," [who] can give "a solid blow of the pick to the old social edifice which is cracking up." As translated and quoted in Richard Thomson, "Ruins, Rhetoric and Revolution: Paul Signac's Le Démolisseur and Anarchism in the 1890s," *Art History* 36, no. 2 (April 2013): 375. It is also not a surprise that the art critic, journal editor, anarchist agitator, and the champion of Neo-Impressionists (and later, Nabis) Félix Fénéon knew Émile Henry personally—to the extent that he reportedly provided his mother's dress to Henry to disguise himself when he delivered another bomb to the police precinct at Rue des Bons-Enfants. Fénéon himself was arrested during the infamous 'Trial of the Thirty', where he was among a motley crew of defendants whom the Third Republic accused of anarchist terror. Indeed, a search of his office in the War Ministry (ironically, he worked in one of the most detested offices of the Third Republic) the police found bomb detonators and a vial of mercury. Luc Sante, "Introduction," in *Novels in Three Lines,* xvii and xix.

road to the destruction of these brick-and-mortar embodiments of oppression is paved with dead bodies, testifying to the adversaries' ever-ready capacity to use violence and bring death.

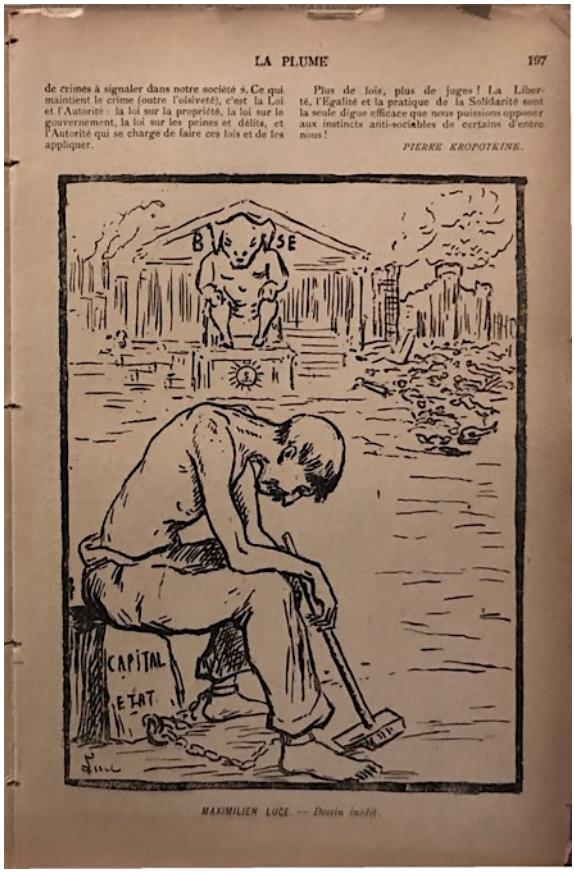

Figure 3.10. Maximilien Luce ,"Dessin Inédit [Bourse]," in *La Plume* n. 97 (May 1, 1893). [Special issue on Anarchism], Lithograph. (International Institute of Social History [IISG], Amsterdam).

In his popular title, *Moribund Society and Anarchy*, Jean Grave declared that "authority has but one excuse for existence;" the "bureaucracy, the family, the army, and the magistracy" serve only one purpose—"the defense of capital."[671] Therefore, he saw the work of the anarchists as being "to expose" the authority as the protector of

[671] Jean Grave, *Moribund Society and Anarchy*, trans. Voltairine De Cleyre (San Franciso, CA: A. Isaak, 1899), 5.

capitalist inequality, and therefore "to show" the emptiness of its principles which provided the basis for its institutions and its laws.[672] As we saw at the beginning of this section, Steinlen's representations of the biblical idol illustrate the famous anarchist's words, as he often presents the Golden Calf at the core of a compound system of domination and control in which the other institutions of authority are complicit.

I already remarked on this in my analysis of the artist's contribution to *Les Temps Nouveaux*'s fundraising efforts, when I introduced his critical composition, titled *La Libératrice*, in the second chapter.[673] [Figure 2.26] But, as a quick summary, let me repeat that we are looking at the allegory of social revolution as the act of rallying a crowd of wretched souls. Steinlen positions her and the crowd she inspires against a monumental target that is reminiscent of the Sacré-Coeur Basilica. Steinlen almost predicts Benjamin's observation that capitalism started parasitically living off the Christian religion, but took over its host to make its history a prelude to its own.[674] Freed from all references to Christianity, this fictional temple now exists solely for the protection and veneration of the Golden Calf that stands at the center of its open nave. At the foundations of this structure are cannons that threateningly face the crowd. Below the temple is a boundless space, which is sensible only due to the immense number of bodies it contains. The *liberator*, which gives the composition its name, grasps a worker by the wrist and pulls him up from an ocean of sufferers.

Art historian Pierre-Alain Mariaux offers a reading of this image as the *détournement*—or in other words, the hijacking—of a Christian theme. Known as

[672] Ibid.
[673] Please see the section titled, 'Capital, Basilica, and Republic' in the second chapter.
[674] Benjamin, "Capitalism as Religion," 289.

Anastasis, or the 'Harrowing of Hell,'[675] the religious episode Steinlen evokes narrates Christ's descent to the underworld in order to deliver Adam, the first man, from his bondage as "an exemplum of the salvation and redemption promised to all mankind."[676] In Steinlen's revolutionary misappropriation of Anastasis, the hell into which the liberator ascends is already here and now, where the idol of capitalism condemns labor to endless exploitation. The radical pedagogy of anarchist action is all over this scene: there is no paradise for the suffering in the afterlife. Those who suffer must ignite the revolutionary action here and now.[677] I agree with Mariaux's reading, but would like to add that the labor of creating a paradise on earth is specifically identified by Steinlen as iconoclasm. The worker that his liberator pulls out of an ocean of misery is indeed a new Adam, but the pickaxe he is holding is not a mere coincidence, it is the promise of a radically transformed humanity once it reclaims ownership of its vital energies in order to reject and destroy the idols that constitute its fragile hell.

The Problem of the Idol

An idol ultimately provides a tangible presence for a divinity whose powers and actions are scattered through all things and relations. Although useful, the Golden Calf is not perfect. As an iconic representation aimed at making what is invisible visible, it is another abstraction. Nonetheless, as an expansive symbol ready to absorb several theoretical observations about the nature and processes of capitalism, the Golden Calf offers a symbolic locus for the artists around which to express what is difficult to represent: exploitation, alienation, and the physical and psychic violence stemming

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[675] Pierre-Alain Mariaux, "Détournements Iconographiques Chez Théophile-Alexandre Steinlen: À Propos de La Libératrice," *Gazette Des Beaux-Arts* 121, no. 135 (June 1993): 231–40.
[676] Ibid., 236.
[677] Ibid., 237–38.

from an abstract system. Merging their avant-garde sensibilities with radical politics, the artists we have seen in this section strived to make capitalism epistemologically available for critique, and ultimately for iconoclastic destruction. However, in the absence of this critical impulse, the idol reproduces the same mechanisms of concealment and mystification that serve capitalism. These are often perfunctory associations of the icon with the desire for riches, and are frequently not interested in an anti-capitalist critique. A case in point is the centrist-populist periodical *Le Petit Journal*'s cover image to report the "Panama Scandal." Although I attend in a later section to this criminal financial affair that brought together speculative capitalism and parliamentary politics, this image provides a useful counter-example to my arguments thus far. [Figure 3.11]

Fashioned closely after the ancient representations of the Egyptian deity Montu,[678] the Golden Calf appears amidst worshipping stock traders in their dark suits as an exotic anachronism that has unnaturally appeared in the middle of Paris. Positioned between two Western architectural markers—the classicism of the Stock Exchange and the modernist monumentality of the Eiffel Tower—the Golden Calf of *Le Petit Journal* is a decidedly foreign idol. Its aberrant presence is supported by the dark clouds that gather above 'the capital of modernity' which part to allow a lightning bolt to pass exactly behind the idol. In this articulation, the Golden Calf does not represent the capitalist totality, but an alien and mystical force that compels the Frenchmen to worship it. There are no critical insights about the psychosis that seems to take over its devotees, nor about

[678] Although it was registered to the museum's inventory two decades after this print, a very similar statue of the deity can be found in the Louvre Museum's Egyptian Antiquities collection with the accession number, E 12922.

the idol's relation to the other two monuments, which we know to have a direct relationship to capitalist expansion. Similar to how capital hides behind the social processes of production, especially labor, so too, in giving capitalism a sensible face, does the Golden Calf risk a similar reification. In other words, if it does not serve a critical function, the idol reproduces the capitalist mystification, or even worse, it paves the way for the coopting of anti-capitalist symbols by the reactionary, especially the antisemitic, rhetoric of hate. Bringing us full circle to the necessity of iconoclasts, the representation of the Golden Calf in visual culture is only revolutionary if it inspires in the reader *not* the admonition of its worshippers, but a critical, iconoclastic impulse directed against the totality to which it gestures.

Figure 3.11. Henri Meyer, "Le Veau d'Or" in *Le Petit Journal* n. 110 (31 December

1892). (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

The Temple

In the final year of the nineteenth century, the poet, novelist, and art critic Gabriel Mourey named the Paris Stock Exchange the "Cathedral of the new age" and "the temple of the only truly flourishing and sincerely practiced religion."[679] Mourey's metaphors are part of the representational recourse to religious allegories that we have seen thus far. What Mourey offers further, however, is the architectural correlation of this allegory in the urban space. This correlation was established and reproduced by a vast and diverse literature on the architectural marker of capitalism's increasingly immaterial operations, the Stock Exchange building—or simply, the Bourse of Paris—in the second half of the nineteenth century. As Pierre-Joseph Proudhon maintained in one of the earliest and most famous examples of this genre: "[p]olitics has its palaces, religion its churches […] why should speculation have remained in the state of pure abstraction? The Stock Exchange is the temple of speculation."[680]

The association is so prevalent that it is an inescapable cliché reproduced countless times in diverse representational registers beyond the confines of a 'Stock Exchange literature.' Indeed one can encounter it in newspaper articles, radical booklets, novels, poetry, as well as caricatures and illustrations. According to Roger Bellet, the authors of Stock Exchange literature treated the Bourse as a mysterious key that could decode "a whole system of signs" about modern society, its inflictions, and its decadence.[681] Indeed, as early as the 1850s, Proudhon could write that "the crimes of

[679] Mourey, *La Bourse. Les Minutes Parisiennes*, 42.
[680] Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *Manuel du Spéculateur à la Bourse* (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1857), 22.
[681] Roger Bellet, "La Bourse et la littérature dans la seconde moitié du XIXe siècle Romantisme 13, no. 40 (1983): 57.

the Terror, the disgrace of the Directory, the arbitrariness of the Empire, the corruptions of the Legitimacy and the Bourgeois Monarchy" was nothing in comparison to "the calamities and the dissolution" society was to experience after it took "the Stock Exchange as its law, its philosophy, its politics, its morals, its homeland, and as its church."[682] I say Bellet's observation largely applies to the similarly ubiquitous visual references to the Stock Exchange in print culture. Fictional or nonfictional, textual or visual, these representations use the Stock Exchange to trace and define the concrete effects of speculation on society, politics, and individual morality. Notably, however, some of these visual examples pose more than "moral exorcisms" against the signs of modernity through this architectural cipher.[683] We need to remember that the Stock Exchange was dubbed across media as the 'temple' (alternatively, the 'church,' 'cathedral,' or the 'sanctuary') that modern society erected *for* capitalism. Although visual representations of the building often obscure the financial operations it hosts behind allegories that mystify, they nonetheless infer speculation to be a defining feature of the capitalist-divine, through which it expands and intensifies its control over the individual and global alike. Therefore, we should retrieve the anti-capitalist critique—whenever available—in what resembles moralist parables about modernity and modern society.

Strictly speaking, there is nothing too special about the form of the Paris Bourse, or as it is often called, after its architect, the Palais Brongniart. It is one of several examples testifying to the affinity between neoclassical architecture and the institutions

[682] Proudhon, "Préface de la Troisième Édition" in *Manuel du Spéculateur*, xi.
[683] Bellet, "La Bourse et la littérature," 53.

of finance that one can witness across urban centers in Europe and the United States.[684] As stock exchanges or banks in urban centers, these buildings were given colonnaded entrances, pediments, empty friezes, and monumental gates to convey a sense of stability and authority in the heyday of capitalism's global expansion. An early nineteenth-century structure dedicated to the integration and expansion of the markets, the Paris Stock Exchange carries the somber, colonnaded façade of a Roman temple, which to a certain extent explains the rhetorical leaps that so easily transform this place of finance into a space for its devotion. We have witnessed it, for example, in Luce's illustration for *La Plume* [Figure 3.10], where the artist placed the idol of capitalist devotion, the Golden Calf, at the entrance of the Stock Exchange.

Conversely, Claire Lemercier argues that the Palais Brongniart was not designed as the façade of capitalism, but as the architectural statement of Napoléon's (therefore political authority's) power and ability to command it.[685] Indeed, the Paris Bourse was built on the orders of the Emperor, who insisted the building reflect the glory of the Empire.[686] In the light of the French First Empire's formal reliance on ancient Rome's imperial aesthetic, which I mentioned in the first chapter, it is no surprise that the design to satisfy the Emperor's demands was a large Neo-Roman temple with a Corinthian colonnade. The first stone of the building was laid on March 24, 1808, with the Emperor's attendance. However, neither its architect Alexandre-Théodore Brongniart

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[684] Jonathan E. Schroeder, *Visual Consumption* (London: Routledge, 2005), 102 and 112.

[685] Claire Lemercier, "Les Bourses en France au xixe siècle, symboles d'un pouvoir commerçant?" *Histoire, Économie & Société*, no. 25/1 (2006): 52. Reminding us that the *bourse* in most French cities also functioned as a governmental building, she offers the decidedly more independent London stock exchange as a counter example. Ibid., 55.

[686] Lemercier shows that the desire for monumental proportions and imperial style was not shared by the merchants of the Chamber of Commerce, who, as the other patrons of the project, were concerned about the time and cost. Ibid., 54–56.

nor its imperial patron lived long enough to see the realization of the building. Once again, a monument intended to eternalize the imperial grandeur became witness to its thunderous but brief passing. Eight million francs and eighteen years later, the building was inaugurated on November 4, 1826, under the reign of Charles X.[687]

Although the intervening years and different architects altered the original design, the Paris Bourse retained its essential character as a neoclassical temple bearing the imperial amplitude. [Figure 3.12.] Since the second half of the nineteenth century, however, this classical grandeur had ceased to flatter the political authority for its command over a bourgeoning international system. On the contrary, it came to be seen as a temple to the adoration of what Proudhon describes as the "invisible sovereign" that rules over rulers from its "throne at the Stock-Exchange."[688] The classical majesty of the building did not universally impress. In the extra-diegetic 'bird's eye view' of the city in his *Notre-Dame of Paris,* Hugo derides the building as a neoclassical mask that could well be the face of "a law court, a museum, a barracks, a sepulchre, a temple […]"—almost all spaces of authority that similarly resort to historical and geometric command.[689] The functional ambiguity that Hugo ridicules is actually apt for a Stock Exchange building, because as the heart of international speculation it is a cipher—a non-place—that extends and claims all spaces of economic (and social, and political) activity.

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[687] As an example of the monumental continuity of authority despite the regime changes, three-quarters of the cost was covered by the 'state' and the rest came from stockbrokers and an additional tax on registered merchants. Ibid., 54. A few years after its completion in 1834, Victor Hugo bitterly gives a much higher figure—twenty million francs—as the cost of this building that he utterly despises. Victor Hugo, *Notre-Dame of Paris*, trans. John Sturrock (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978), 149.
[688] Quoted in Lemercier, "Les Bourses en France," 52.
[689] Hugo, *Notre-Dame of Paris*, 149–50.

Figure 3.12. *La Bourse* (Paris Stock Exchange) Pen, ink, and watercolor on paper, c. 1840. (Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica).

In the words of Proudhon, the Bourse simultaneously subsumes "the workshop, the farm, the store, the docks and the ports, the warehouses and the shops," in short "the earth and the ocean," which are "subject to it and pay tribute to it."[690] Despite its caustic tone, Hugo's account nevertheless admits to the architectural language of power and the mystical air associated with the omnipresence of its power and the invisibility of its operations.[691]

An Imperial Façade

In a noteworthy echo across time and space, a century later Lewis Mumford

[690] Proudhon, *Manuel du Spéculateur,* 23.
[691] "[…]it is a stock exchange in France just as it would have been a temple in Greece[…]we have the colonnade encircling the monument, beneath which, on days of high religious solemnity, the theory of stockbrokers and jobbers can be majestically expounded." Hugo, *Notre-Dame of Paris*, 150–51.

associated the neoclassical architecture in the United States with the expansion of monopolies and finance capitalism (the victory of trusts).[692] Looking at the monumental structures built at the turn of the century, he identified this "complete rehabilitation" of imperial Roman architecture as "the cloak and costume" of a different empire: the American enterprise.[693] Of course, the cultural and economic structures that informed the 'Gilded Age' of the United States and *fin-de-siècle* France are different, despite their shared experience of the globally integrated finance capitalism to which they contributed with violent imperialist ventures; and it is worth remembering that the Paris Bourse was designed at the beginning of the nineteenth century under the orders of an emperor.

Likewise, the emperors and empresses of American industry and finance used classical architecture to "impress and awe" "a populace that shares vicariously in [their] glories."[694] Mumford describes the imperial architecture as "an architecture of compensation: it provides grandiloquent stones for people who have been deprived of bread and sunlight."[695] It is no surprise that these colonnaded and symmetrical façades that lend dignity to oppression were imported to European colonies with a pace and flexibility of function that brings to mind Hugo's comments. This 'stately' classicism was often evoked without any regard to not only the function, but also the environment.[696] From schools to administrative buildings, the classical elements of

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[692] Lewis Mumford, *Sticks and Stones: A Study of American Architecture and Civilization* (New York, NY: Boni and Liveright, 1924), 124–26.
[693] Ibid., 133.
[694] Ibid., 134.
[695] Ibid., 147.
[696] Hugo for example complained about the flat roof of the Bourse, designed for a Mediterranean coastal city but which gathered immense heaps of snow that workers needed to shovel off every winter. Hugo, *Notre-Dame of Paris*, 151.

Western architecture also became the visible markers of its imperial expansion.

Obviously, there is an umbilical relation between colonial ventures and finance capitalism. Marx has diagnosed this in the international character of the capitalistic régime which brings "all peoples in the net of the world-market."[697] This observation was based both on the centralization of capital and the global expansion of the capitalistic mode of production. The tools of finance intensified this global clutching of capital while eliding the processes of production that it had depended on until then.[698] This association of the modern imperial expansion with its ancient counterpart was already part of the *fin-de-siècle* French Left's anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist discourse. For example, an article in *Le Radical* compares the royal parade on the occasion of Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee to the chariot processions of ancient Rome that likewise celebrated "the brutality" of "the triumphant force."[699] The author renounces this spectacle of global domination as the celebration of "the power of fierce competition," as the adoration of the 'Golden Calf.'[700] Each person attending to the parade is "traded, exploited, [or] tricked," each "hypnotized" into "accepting the monstrous inequality that this cult symbolizes."[701] The "spell" is the belief that the same process that exploits and consumes them can one day "knock [down] the wall" that stands between them and "the Temple of Wealth."[702]

This is what attracted Parisians of all classes to the Stock Exchange and the god of

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[697] Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, 836.
[698] The drive to reach and subsume all locations and peoples under its dominion can be discerned in the fact that in France the stock exchange buildings were the first to set up telegraph offices. Lemercier, "Les Bourses en France," 62.
[699] Un Parisien, "Bavardage," *Le Radical* 17, no. 179 (June 8, 1897): 2.
[700] Ibid.
[701] Ibid.
[702] Ibid.

speculation whose most grandiose promises were about the projects that were to take place thousands of miles from Paris. Czech graphic artist Václav Hradecký's vision of the Bourse evinces the relationship between French colonialism and speculative capitalism on the centerfold of an issue of *L'Assiette* dedicated to France's imperial ambitions. [Figure 3.13.] The artist locates the Palais Brongniart—complete with its Corinthian colonnades, its staircase swarmed by traders, and the French tricolor fluttering on its roof—looming over a North African desertscape in the aftermath of a battle.

Figure 3.13. Václav Hradecký, "MIRAGE!" in issue "Le Maroc," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 140 (December 5, 1903). (Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Gallica).

The scene is captioned "MIRAGE!" But instead of a sun- and heat-induced illusion, this

fugitive manifestation of the Parisian monument is a revelation whose only witness is a camel, standing next to the corpses of native men and a horse. The material proximity of the bodies pushes the colonialist violence to the foreground, and defines the capitalist abstraction through its concrete operations and violent consequences. Hradecký's critical assessment emerges from dialectical interplay between illusion and reality, the abstract and the concrete. The mirage the artist presents is the authentic truth. In its whiteness and classical grandeur, the Paris Bourse doubles as the sum total of all the neoclassical façades—from administrative buildings to museums—that cloak the violence of capitalist-imperialist expansion in the metropolitan centers and colonies alike. Its manifestation as a concrete mirage depends on the liquidation of indigenous lands and bodies. The diagonal line of dust that connects the farthest dead body to the building imply this colonialist transposal. Just as the sand makes the wind tangible as a column of dust, so the dead bodies reify the capitalist abstraction.

Faith and Deceit

In the early days of the Commune, Jules Vallès celebrated the working-class takeover of the city as a victory over 'the parasitic population' that had ruled the capital and France for the past decade. According to the journalist, this "parasitic" population "produce nothing but froth;" they "grab profits created by those who work" through shady banking schemes and stock market speculations; they command the rulers with this stolen wealth and turn "politics into a trade."[703] Vallès' criticism is directed at the Second Empire, but it also renders other forms of bourgeois regimes, and their populist

[703] Published in *Le Cri du Peuple*, Wednesday March 22, 1871. Here I quote the English translation by Mitchell Abidor in Jules Vallès, "Paris, Free City," in *Voices of the Paris Commune*, ed. Mitchell Abidor (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2015), 17–18.

or even democratic claims, as deceit. In capitalism, the fate of political, social, and economic realms is determined by nothing but Capital, real or fictitious.

Therefore, we can easily find the same diagnosis of the political power's submission to the sovereignty of capital in multiple anti-capitalist prints, some of which I have already shared in the previous section. This criticism likewise informs representations of the Bourse as both the temple of Capitalism, but also as the operational intersection of money and politics. In his absolutely fascinating thematic issue titled "The Money" [*L'Argent*], Kupka portrays the hideous spirit of Capitalism—*Mr. Money*—side by side with the Republic's *Marianne*. [Figure 3.14.] The gold-filled pocket of the loose bedroom robe of the former renders the nature of their meeting explicit.

Figure 3.14. François Kupka, "[Moi, Je m'en f...] in 'L'Argent,'" *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 41 (January 11, 1902). (Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Gallica).

The Republic is caught having a cup of tea in her undergarments prior to the service she is about to provide for Mr. Money. The Stock Exchange building provides a literal "bed" for this unholy union, marked by a Golden Calf statue the artist has placed by its neoclassical façade. The panicked distraction of the Republic by a gaggle of parrots repeating the slogans of the revolutionary Left—'Vive la Commune!'; 'Vive la Grève!'; 'Vive L'Anarchie!'—momentarily risks the fulfillment of their arrangement. Impervious to these rhetorical threats, however, Mr. Money assures the Republic of their incapacity with a directness that precludes shame: "Me, I don't give a f…"

The first decades of the Third Republic were marked by financial troubles that blurred the distinction between the fate of the regime and the business. Right around the time when France finally paid off the colossal war indemnity it owed to Prussia for the war of 1870–71, the international banking crisis of 1873 devastated the stock exchanges across Europe and North America and initiated the period known as 'the long depression' that would last into the 1890s. In 1882, France experienced its worst financial crash of the century following the fall of the Catholic bank, the Union Générale. This led to the collapse of the Lyon Exchange, and the Paris Bourse was pulled from the brink of devastation by the Bank of France, which had to bail out the nation's primary exchange market to avoid total financial ruin.[704] This was the culmination of increasingly more speculative stock trading that also encouraged, or at

[704] Paul Lagneau-Ymonet and Angelo Riva, "Trading Forward: The Paris Bourse in the Nineteenth Century," *Business History* 60, no. 2 (February 17, 2018): 262.

least turned a blind eye to, the informal and often illegal practices that constituted the large underbelly of the Bourse. While the Crash of 1882 illustrated the risks of financial speculation to the public, the scandal (1892–94) that erupted around the Panama Canal Company's bankruptcy laid bare the part played by the political power in the maintenance and perpetuation of capitalist expansion. For years the leading politicians and countless members of the Assembly had received money to sustain the positive faith of the public in the state of the company and the promising future of the canal project. In his address to the Chamber of Deputies as the head of the commission tasked to investigate the scandal, the socialist Jean Jaurès declared the Panama affair proof "that the power of money" is capable of "taking control of the organs of opinion" which erodes the distinction between business and fraud.[705] Speculation was an essential feature of high-profile infrastructure projects and the joint-stock companies established to finance them attracted a large volume of small investors who handed over their meager savings and pensions with the hopes of massive returns. In a certain sense the Bourse is indeed a temple that manufactures faith in its stories about inevitable profits divorced from labor and conditions of production. The Panama Scandal could have been a warning against the mystifications of finance capitalism which brought devastation to hundreds of thousands of small investors. Yet, the alchemical promise of speculative trading, which claims to turn paper into gold, continued to attract enthusiasts with limited means to the Palais Brongniart. Just a year or two after the scandal, Fernand Vandérem recognized in his compatriots a "furious mania to get rich," which pulled the

[705] Jean Jaurès, "On the Panama Scandal (February 8, 1893)," trans. Mitchell Abidor (marxists.org, 2010), https://www.marxists.org/archive/jaures/1893/panama-scandal.htm.

nation to the gates of the Bourse and "compels and condemns it to speculation."[706] This unremitting flock of small investors is the subject of Emmanuel Barcet's final image for *L'Assiette*'s special issue on the Stock Exchange. [Figure 3.15.]

Figure 3.15. Emmanuel Barcet, 'Le Miroir aux alouettes' in issue "*Bourse*" *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 80 (October 11, 1902). (Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Gallica).

Here, we find the neoclassical building turned into a giant lark mirror that attracts the gullible bird-investors to the trap of a seasoned speculator and a jabber, who are ready to hunt them down. The metaphor of the artist is straightforward. It reproduces in the language of caricature a popular lesson available in most literature on the Bourse, which

[706] Fernand Vandérem, "Notes et Impressions: La Fièvre de l'Or," *La Revue Bleue* 3, no. 20 (May 18, 1895): 635–37.

foretells the inevitable (and self-inflicted) ruination of those who enter into the building's orbit. However, with the effective centrality of the hunter-speculators, it misses an opportunity to communicate something more profound about the operations of this monumental 'lark mirror.' In the later sections of his assessment, Vandérem identifies this pull as a 'fever' that takes over all rich and poor Parisians and instills them with the illogical belief that at the Stock Exchange, there is a magical "abyss" where base metal "transforms into gold," "the smallest savings bubble up into fortunes."[707] Following Vandérem's and his contemporaries' penchant for medical metaphors to diagnose social afflictions, we can say that this fever could only take hold of a social body which carried the belief that capital can self-generate. Despite how Barcet portrays them, the hunter-speculators are under the sway of the same belief. At best, knowing that it will soon close in, they sacrifice others to 'the magical abyss,' calculating that the small and large savings of the believers it swallows will turn to them as riches.

Gambling (with Life)

Historians of the Paris Bourse delineate two spaces of financial activity: the closely regulated and restricted heart of the building—the *corbeille*—and the unregulated and extensive market operating outside and around the building's periphery—the *coulisse*. Although quite distinct in their legal status and reputations, these two spaces of economic activity were in reality co-dependent and constituted a single financial market.[708] Lemercier finds the latter responsible for the curious absence in the literature

[707] Ibid.
[708] Marnin Young, "Capital in the Nineteenth Century: Edgar Degas's Portraits at the Stock Exchange in 1879," *Nonsite* (online journal) no. 14 (December 15, 2014), https://nonsite.org/article/capital-in-the-nineteenth-century.

of the Bourse as a physical monument, as opposed to the literary and the visual pervasiveness of the Bourse as a symbolic locale that shapes social relations and characters.[709] We can see the latter in Émile Zola's *Money*, which opens up its first chapter, predictably titled 'The Temple of Mammon,' not in the Stock Exchange building but in a café frequented by the men of the Bourse.[710] The activities that are carried out in "the back stages" of the trading floor—cafés, staircases, sidewalks, carriages etc.—effectuate numerous "petites bourses" that with each multiplication blur the "monumental, political, and contained image of the large one."[711] In Zola's *Money*, even when we follow the anxiously scheming Saccard through all four corners of the building, our view of the monument is always fragmented and out of focus, jolting back and forth as Saccard's scattered attention moves between the characters of the Stock Exchange, a fleeting glimpse of the façade, the columns, the clock, the nervous buzzing of the black frock coats that gather under the peristyle, the carriages which carry the speculators in and out of the plaza, the schemers, the shopkeepers, and so on.[712] In other words, Zola presents the 'temple of Mammon' as an economic-social-sensory universe that spills out of the building into the sidewalks, cafés, the neighboring streets, and to the rest of the city and beyond. This expansive and sprawling Bourse is challenging to cognitive comprehension, as each social relation bears the trace of its corrupting touch. Conversely, the graphic artists are keen to hinge their critical comments on capitalist speculation to the Stock Exchange building—which is sometimes demarcated by a

[709] Lemercier, "Les Bourses en France," 51–66.
[710] Émile Zola, *Money*, trans. Ernest Alfred Vizetelly (London: Alan Sutton, 1991), 1.
[711] Lemercier, "Les Bourses en France," 57.
[712] Zola, *Money*, 1–26. The only place where the reader and Saccard glimpse the building in its entirety, only for short moment, is from the window of the Marxist revolutionary Sigismond's room. Ibid., 38.

series of columns, and occasionally with cropped scenes from its busy interior. At the turn of the century, however, the artists often provide the entire façade, directly facing the viewer in its geometrical severity. These do not reproduce the brick-and-mortar building situated in the 2nd arrondissement, but provide a shorthand icon that subordinates the physicality of the signifier (the Palais Brongniart) to the immateriality of the signified (speculative capitalism).

This dispersal and dematerialization of the Stock Exchange is inherent to the market, which by no means limits itself to spatial expansions and conquests. Recent scholarship proves that the Paris Bourse was "a primarily forward market," where unregulated and highly speculative forward trading constituted a considerable portion of its financial activities.[713] Associated with 'gambling,' this derivative instrument was legalized in 1885 as a response to the urgent need to stabilize the market following the devastating crash of 1882.[714] As the name indicates, 'forwards' literalize capital's claim to the future, as they operate under the authority of a value that is predicted but not yet realized. As the *coulisse* and *corbeille* merged in their shared drive to spend the present and integrate the future, the visual representations of the Bourse likewise consolidated what they regarded as the dual nature of speculation that oscillated between business and deceit, calculation and fortunetelling, chance and ruin in the emblematic activity that reconciled these dualities: *gambling.* Walter Benjamin identified the gambler as a nineteenth-century archetype who embodied the emphatic consumption of *time* as if it

[713] Lagneau-Ymonet and Riva, "Trading Forward," 258. Their study notes that the volumes traded in the Paris Bourse at the turn of the century were four times the French GDP—a magnitude for which forward trading was responsible. Ibid.
[714] Ibid.

were a narcotic.[715] The Bourse was a gambling house where time was killed, crushed, and devoured by capitalism and its speculators. Historian Matt Matsuda calls the Bourse "a temple of time" where the value moves further away from its origins with each transaction, hence constantly producing and reproducing the capitalist amnesia and devouring past, present, and future.[716] Therefore, Matsuda argues the daily press to be the medium of the Bourse's memory, as emblematic of a world that is "made and unmade every day."[717]

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[715] Walter Benjamin, "Paris, The Capital of Nineteenth Century (Exposé of 1935)," in *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin, 3rd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2002), 12. Buck-Morss notes that the gambler was one of the three social types that Benjamin classified according to their relation to time: "the gambler just killing time, the flâneur who 'charges time with power like a battery,' and 'finally, a third type: he charges time and gives its power out again in changed form: in that of expectation.'" The final figure is the revolutionary. Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 105.
[716] Matsuda, *The Memory of the Modern*, 55.
[717] Matsuda, *The Memory of the Modern*, 54–56. Matsuda's otherwise insightful observations reduce the technologies of mechanical reproduction to a symptom of capitalist modernity's memory affliction. He therefore ignores the ephemera's dialectic capacity to effectuate a democratic and accumulative memory, something which I intimated in the first chapter.

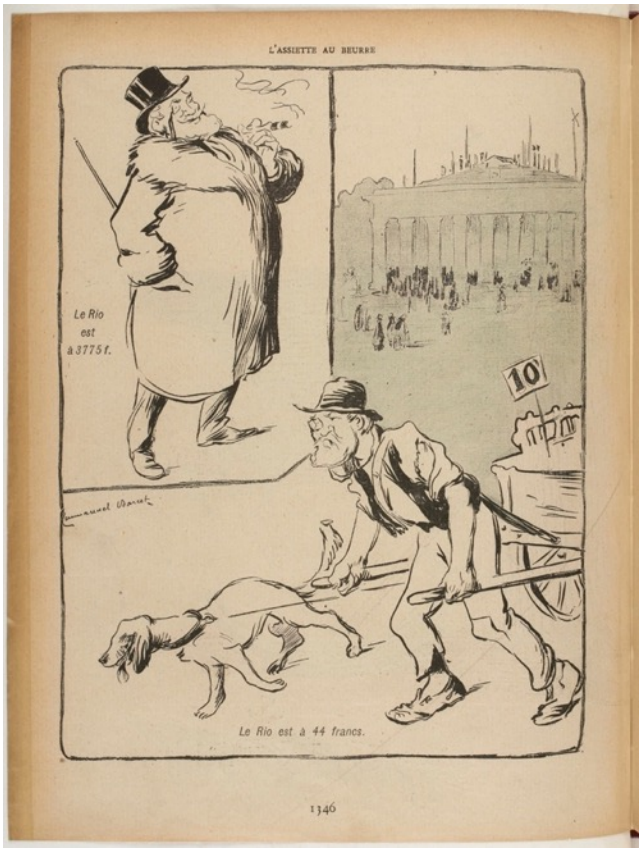

Figure 3.16. Emmanuel Barcet, 'Le Rio' in issue "*Bourse*" *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 80 (October 11, 1902). (Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Gallica).

The dizzying pace by which one could move from wealth to lack heightened the immateriality of economic operations, as fortunes built on stocks and securities could disappear without leaving behind a concrete proof of their passing. Barcet reproduces a literary cliché where the archetypical transition from 'rags to riches' is reversed to illustrate the capriciousness of fortune under the auspices of the Stock Exchange. [Figure 3.16.] In this straightforward image, a capitalist venture at a far corner of the globe can grant economic loyalty to a speculator in Paris when the price of its shares soars to thousands of francs. Just as easily, however, he can become a rag picker when

the price plummets. While testifying to the global integration of capital with the help of colonialism, such extreme ups and downs of financial fortune were considered inherent to a career in the Bourse.

Zola's contemptuous trader Saccard's disorienting journey from hunger and homelessness to the financial 'conquest' of millions and back down to ruination across the novels *The Kill* and *Money* epitomizes the moral failing, risk, and addiction associated with those who took speculation as an occupation. Although a believer, Saccard is not a fool. He knows that the fortunes he made in bonds and stocks were "falsehood and fiction" that "dwelt in safes."[718] Yet, like all true gamblers, even when he is at a loss, he still has "a feverish desire" to continue, thinking that this time he can "rise higher than he had ever risen before" and finally pass beyond "the lying finery of the façade" to achieve a "*solid edifice* of fortune, the *true* royalty of gold….*real* money bags…"[719] The gambling addict's awareness of the immateriality and artifice of speculative profit competes with the irrational faith in the game which (this time) can grant him the solidity of generational wealth and almost feudal social relations without entering the abode of labor. Diagnosing the same irrational relation to economics among the bourgeoisie, Lafargue argued that critical reasoning and calculation cannot thrive in modern bourgeois society, which is reduced to "a vast international gambling house" by its faith in the magic of the markets.[720] In both gambling and capitalism, the 'gamester' acts "ignorant of the reasons" that make (or un-make) their fortune, which they present

[718] Zola, *Money*, 7. Italics are mine- A.M.
[719] Ibid.
[720] Paul Lafargue, *Social and Philosophical Studies* (Chicago, IL: Charles H. Kerr & Company, 1906), 22–23.

as the will of "the Unknowable."[721] Therefore, far from being a person of reason, the modern capitalist is "an eminently superstitious individual" whose economic activities present a deeply religious disposition.[722]

Lucien Métivet allegorizes the association of financial investments with games of chance in a composition that turns the circuits of financial trading and its actors into a game set of magic tricks. [Figure 3.17.] Known as the boxes of 'escamotage,' at the turn of the century these popular sets consisted of various objects with which one could perform a predetermined set of tricks and illusions. In Métivet's rendition, the emblematic objects of games that oscillate between blind luck and deception—for example, the die and cups of the shell game—stand on a large rectangular box that is decorated with the concrete symbol of an increasingly dematerialized economy, the figure of *La Semeuse.* Designed by the sculptor Louis Oscar Roty, this allegorical representation of Marianne as a rural laborer (specifically, as a sower) graced the silver fifty-centime coins, starting in 1897. *La Semeuse* is both a recognizable face of the Third Republic and a complex emblem produced and consumed at the intersection of financial abstraction, art speculation, and the in/visibility of labor.[723] Displaced by Métivet on a popular toy associated with deception, this republican allegory of economy and material value (after all, it graced a silver coin) is further tainted with the instability and immateriality of financial speculation. The republican maxim, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," gracing the frieze of the modern temple accentuates the presence of the sower-Marianne, associating the tricks of the Bourse with that of the Third Republic.

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[721] Ibid.
[722] Ibid.
[723] Laura Anne Kalba, "Beautiful Money: Looking at La Semeuse in Fin-de-Siècle France," *The Art Bulletin* 102, no. 1 (January 2, 2020): 55–78.

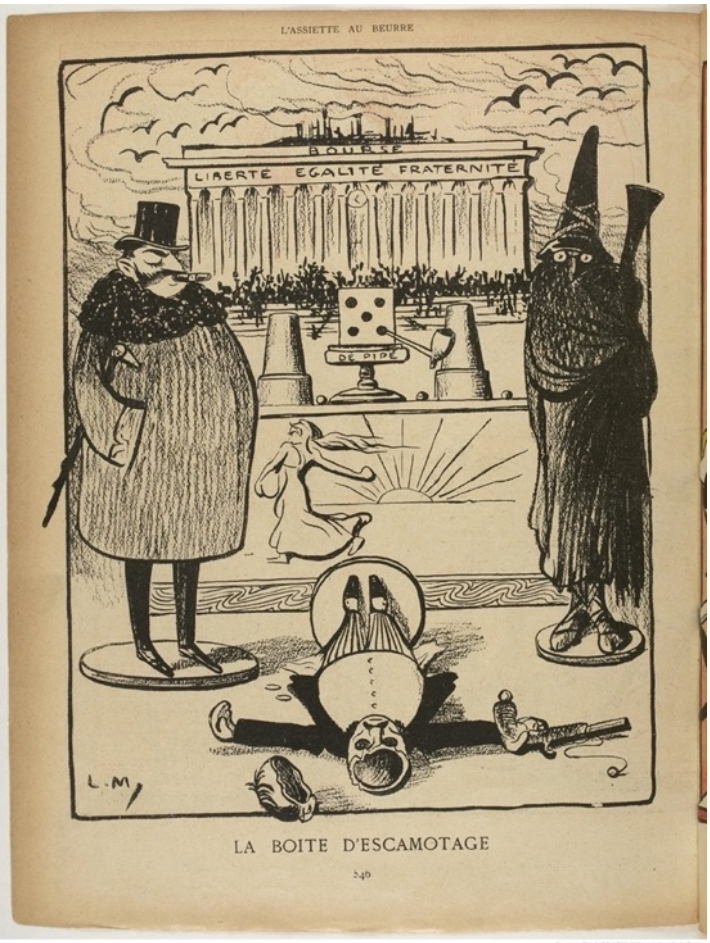

Figure 3.17. Lucien Métivet, 'La Boite D'Escamotage' in "Joujoux de Prefet," in *L'Assiette Au Beurre*,
no. 35 (November 30, 1901). (Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Gallica).

As Marnin Young notes, the more or less stable return of nineteenth-century capital investments gave way to a volatile and high-risk finance market whose "spectacular bankruptcies […] came to emblematize the fin-de-siècle French economy."[724] Behind each 'spectacular' loss were countless individual ruinations which provided late nineteenth-century European literature with the tragic figure of the victim of the Bourse, whose emblematic suicide encapsulated the destructive forces of finance capitalism.[725]

[724] Young, "Capital in the Nineteenth Century," n.p.
[725] Tamara S. Wagner, *Financial Speculation in Victorian Fiction: Plotting Money and the Novel Genre,*

Overturning the economy of accumulation into one of the expenditure of lives, writers like Vandérem were often straightforward about the options of those who lost their fortunes in the market: "to kill themselves"—either immediately by suicide or slowly "by ousting themselves" from good society and awaiting death in drawn-out misery.[726]

Upon first glance, Métivet's composition echoes the observations that the game is deadly for the player. Lying on its back, as its hollow skull is cracked open for us by its toy gun, the trader figurine is a social type that embodies tragic ruination and suicide. However, as a *thing* that is part of the game set, he was *lifeless* to start with. Equally object-like, the other toys standing over 'the broken' speculator represent the two extremes of the Bourse milieu. On the left is the successful businessman who attributes his fortune to his careful calculations and risk-taking; and on the right is the *coulissier* with its false prophecies and unregulated tricks. But make no mistake, their indifferent solidity over the split skull of the victim of speculation does not make them the active agents of his tragic fate. Indeed, while both figures—either by virtue of reason or by divination—claim to have an intimate knowledge of the temple's operations and their outcomes, they belong in the same toy box as the broken speculator. Like him, they are accessories of a game whose beings are subordinate to it. Rendered into things that act or break under the control of capitalism, they express capitalist reification as the inevitable result of the belief in the self-possessed magic of things and material processes.

The In/Visible Gods

1815–1901 (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2010), 42; Bellet, "La Bourse et la littérature," 56–57.

[726] Vandérem, " La Fièvre de l'Or," 637.

In Émile Goudeau's illustrated guidebook of Paris, our short visit to the Bourse is surprisingly devoid of the blatant antisemitism that the author exhibits in his other writings on the Stock Exchange and its visitors.[727] Instead of marking the frequenters of the Bourse with a religious or communal identity, the symbolist poet associates them this time with diverse botanical species that are at the mercy of the atmospheric conditions of finance. The guidebook has an explicit temporal register—likely influenced by the Impressionist canvases—which specifies the 'hours and seasons' of its representation of the different Parisian landmarks. For example, we arrive at the Bourse during the morning hours of a beautiful spring day, when the "Palace of Speculation" is asleep under a misleading serenity.[728] This tranquil scene is soon shattered by the busy traffic of carriages and omnibuses which, "like carts that bring flowers, cabbages, and turnips into the market," unload "all kinds of speculators" who densely plant themselves on the square as "stunted vine stocks," "splendid oaks", or "pale lilies."[729] When these "singular plants" migrate and disappear under the peristyle, "the pseudo-antique monument begins to rustle, like a forest before a hurricane."[730] Inside it, "the mad winds twist and turn their arms like branches;" "their hands shake and flutter as sad and useless leaves" in "the storm of figures and hurricane of telegraphs." Finally, there arrives the "execution in the Bourse," which cuts down the trees "struck by the lightning," and turns them into burnt logs to conclude "the loss of body and the soul" to the "turmoils of speculation."[731]

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[727] For an example, see Émile Goudeau, "Le Songe de Jacob," in *Montmartre et Ses Chansons: Poètes et Chansonniers*, by Léon de Bercy (Paris: H. Daragon, 1902), 68–69.
[728] Émile Goudeau, *Illustrations de Paysages Parisiens, Heures et Saisons* (Paris: Henri Beraldi, 1892), 23–26.
[729] Ibid., 24.
[730] Ibid.
[731] Ibid., 24–26. Auguste Lèpere executed a large vignette to accompany Goudeau's topsy-turvy fable of

There is an implicit horror to Goudeau's botanical allegory, where the market is transformed into a force of nature while the people once again metamorphose into things, this time logs for capitalist fire. Let's return to the temple metaphor and look at the descriptions of the religion practiced inside it, as witnessed by Mourey: "as savage, as bloody, as mysterious as the most barbaric cults, with strange rites, special language, sacrifices, categories of initiates, and college of priests."[732] What at first strikes us as rhetorical embellishment in texts like Mourey and Goudeau's actually relays some insights with their insistence on violent metaphors. We have in our hands an extensive organization that affects life as profoundly as the most ambitious cults; it is inherently violent, requires the destruction of life energies for its perpetuation, and is promoted and protected by a class of insiders who hide its processes under a cloud of mystification. Such first-hand accounts contribute to the fantastic symbolic economy of the Bourse, which translates the anxious energy and the sensory alertness that fill the trading floor to achieve a sense of control before the (arbitrary) judgment of an invisible power. One nineteenth-century essayist even went far enough to erase the distance of the metaphor, to heighten the vivacity of the cult that occupied it: "The Legend would have it that in the heaven of the Bourse [that is the Paris Stock Exchange] there exists mysterious gods, the 'masters' of the market, saying one word: 'let there be a fall!' and the quotations crumble, or 'let the recovery begin!' and the market rises."[733]

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finance capitalism. Capturing the Palais Brongniart and part of the square from an elevated angle, the image captures the turmoil of circulation in the carriage, pedestrian, and omnibus traffic at the gates of the monument. However, Lepère makes no reference to Goudeau's vegetal symbolism and the account of market violence that brings it to an end.

[732] Gabriel Mourey, *Les Minutes Parisiennes*, 19–31. English translation from Matsuda, *The Memory of the Modern*, 52–53.

[733] Georges d'Avenel, *Le Mécanisme de la Vie Moderne*, vol. 5, (Paris: Armand Colin, 1905), 65. As translated and quoted in Matsuda, *The Memory of the Modern* (New York, NY; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 52.

Hradecký gives a body to the violent power of the market by conjuring a sovereign-deity on the trading floor of the Stock Exchange. [Figure 3.18.] The image is from a fascinatingly dark issue of *L'Assiette* that looks into modern humanity's cruel, ignorant, and fearful—or in other words, *bestial*—essence.[734] We indeed sense a primordial fear in the terrorized victims of this monster, whose top hats and suits feel as anachronistic as the clock peeking out from under one of the arcades of this colosseum of finance. The caption delivers the imperial Roman reference home with an apothegm attributed to Horace: "when the kings go mad, the subjects receive the blows."

[734] Václav Hradecký, "'Le Vainqueur de La Bourse' in 'La Bête Victorieuse,'" *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 105 (April 4, 1903).

Figure 3.18. Václav Hradecký, "Le Vainqueur de La Bourse" in "La Bête Victorieuse," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 105 (April 4, 1903). (Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Gallica).

As tall as the vault of the central chamber of the Bourse, however, this king is more a monstrous deity than a crazed monarch. Its head carries a giant predator beak and two delirious eyes, all of which are sanctified by a coin-halo inscribed with the triumphant phrase of Julius Caesar: "Veni, Vidi, Vici." While the cowering and beseeching of its victims gives a sensuous reality to the blows of its raised club, the translucent cape that suggests the absence of a body situates the god of Money in the twilight zone of fantasy and reality, of materiality and abstraction.

As Peter Stallybrass notes, Marx's analysis of the commodity form exposed "immateriality" as "the defining feature of capitalism."[735] Hradecký's transparent deity presents the extreme of this capitalist dematerialization: *fictitious capital*. In the third volume of *Capital*, Marx elaborates on interest-bearing capital, where the profit appears as if independent of any social relation, as "money creating more money."[736] Together with interest-bearing capital, speculative trade illustrates this peak of capitalist fetishization that divorces profit from its origin, an illusion stemming from the circuit of financial capital—e.g. investment securities, interest, stocks—which, by hiding the processes of labor, makes money appear as a thing that can endlessly generate itself. The deity-monster of the Bourse emerges from the irrational belief that money can "expand its own value independently," and as such, it offers a visual counterpart to what Marx defines as the "mystification of capital in its most flagrant form."[737]

Hradecký's cover image for the same issue of *L'Assiette* proves that the artist had a critical understanding of this simultaneously abstract yet tangible, and self-producing, deity. In accordance with the thematic premise of the album, Hradecký returns to humanity's past to shed light onto its present. The cover image brings us inside a dark cave, where the warm, red light of a fire outside the picture frame is reflected on the naked flesh of a man contemplating the tricks of his shadow. [Figure 3.19] It is impossible to miss the artist's reference to Plato's Allegory of the Cave. In this modern version, however, there are no chains that condemn the man to darkness.

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[735] Stallybrass, "Marx's Coat," 184.
[736] Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, ed. Friedrich Engels, trans. Ernest Untermann, vol. 3: The Process of Capitalist Production as a Whole (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Company, 1909), 459.
[737] Ibid., 461.

Figure 3.19. Václav Hradecký, "La Bête Victorieuse," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 105 (April 4, 1903). (Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Gallica).

A curved line of metal coins that his shadow generates out of thin air dictates the confines of his imprisonment. The artist assumes the role of the philosopher who is aware of the shadow's artifice, but also knows that its power over the captive consciousness is concrete. Instead of facing the wall, Hradecký's prisoner has its back against it, unable to see the fictitious, shadowy origins of the shiny physical objects that entrance his gaze. I suggest bringing the inside of the cave and the trading floor of the Bourse together, where the forms of fictitious capital appear "as if they possess an inherent capacity to metamorphose into material assets" even though they are mere

promises regarding a different moment, often representations of 'future claims' on a not-yet-realized surplus value.[738] The artist turns Plato's allegory inside out to show how the seemingly immaterial magic of fictitious capital yields concrete effects—like the heavy club of the deity of the Bourse—on the body and the mind of humanity.

In the last century, the capitalist abstraction that Hradecký caught in its liminal state has long since reached its completion, such that it no longer needs neoclassical palaces to inhabit. Although the Palais Brongniart still carries the name 'Bourse,' it has been more than two decades since it last served as a venue for the financial market. Actually, the Paris Stock Exchange as such no longer exists, except as a constituent of the "European New Exchange Technology"—known as the *Euronext*—that integrated the markets of Amsterdam, Brussels, London, Milan, and several other European cities as a single, electronic trading platform. This despatialization not only grants a new degree of invisibility to the operations of global capitalism, but reminds us that it no longer requires a symbolic-architectural presence—wherein neoclassical temples had already lost their supremacy to the steel and glass abstraction of skyscrapers—to give form to its ambitions and claims.

The Shrine

The third, and last, icon of anti-capitalist critique to which I attend in this chapter is the Money Safe. In the radical iconography of the *fin-de-siècle*, this icon often does not feature as itself—i.e., an everyday object with a specific function. On the contrary, the radical prints often imbue the Safe with monstrosity, mobility, and monumentality, which grant the object an unsettling agency, as if its metal solidity is possessed by a

[738] McNally, *Monsters of the Market*, 152–53.

spirit. No longer a thing created by people for the use of people, the artists estrange this common nineteenth-century object from us, making it an abnormality that occupies not only banks, bureaux, and upper-class households, but also the factory gates, mountaintops, town squares, and battlefields. This un-familiarization of the commonplace must be attended to as a conscious visual strategy that the graphic arts offer to the service of critical inquiry. This section shows that by lodging the Money Safe with allegories that expand, transform, and animate it, the radical artists formulate penetrating questions about the capitalist occult and its mystified origins.

The social and political history that is petrified in the objecthood of the steel Money Safe provides a key to unlocking these images. As the seminal works of Peter Linebaugh illustrate, the history of capitalist modernity can be read as the triumph of private property, which is an expansive régime of enclosure that commands through locks (and keys):

> The control of space is the essence of private property […] yards, fences, railings and gates formed an outer perimeter; stair-wells, doors, rooms and closets an inner one; bureaux, chests, cabinets, cases desks and drawers protected the articles of private property themselves. Each space was controlled by locks, and access to each required a key.[739]

This régime of enclosure not only concerns property, but also those who transgress it,[740] as the intertwined histories of the legal institutions of confinement and capitalism testify.[741] In the context of nineteenth-century Paris, the transformation of the city under Haussmann offers a well-studied and critiqued example of this capitalist control of

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[739] Peter Linebaugh, *The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century,* 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 2003), 336.
[740] Peter Linebaugh, *Stop, Thief!: The Commons, Enclosures, and Resistance* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2014), 1–2.
[741] McNally, *Monsters of the Market*, 75–76.

urban space.[742] In addition to its infamous 'destruction' of Old Paris, which liquidated entire neighborhoods into speculative profit, Haussmann's plan reordered the urban space for the confinement of private property, divided with arteries opened for the circulation of commodities.[743] This organization pushed the working class to the edges of Paris, which re-staged the capitalist erasure of labor in the commodified heart of the city. As the first chapter suggested, the Paris Commune revolted against this organization of the social space *by* and *for* capital by those who possessed it.[744] The extremely severe 'punishments' they received were partly motivated by this violation of the spatial boundaries that separate, enclose, and encase property.

In the following decades, the artists who inherited the ideals of the Commune presented these ubiquitous objects as steel shrines to capitalism in the rooms and offices of judges, parliament members, priests, generals, traders, and industrialists, or in short, in spaces occupied by those who had been part of the unified front against past and future revolutionary actions in the name of capital and property. As an emblematic object of enclosure and separation, each Safe replicates in miniature the spatial origins of the cult of capitalism—i.e. the enclosures of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The Safe in Places

I use the metaphor 'shrine,' because the Safe is fundamentally a demarcated space dedicated to an elusive entity. As opposed to most icons of *fin-de-siècle* visual critique,

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[742] Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity*, especially see Introduction and Part II.

[743] This is the spatial contradiction of capitalist development. Capitalism professes freedom of movement while dictating its principle of enclosure. It builds throughfares and sea-lanes to move material, commodities, and labor, while erecting walls and putting up fences to confine them. Linebaugh, *Stop, Thief!*, 25.

[744] Kristin Ross, *The Emergence of Social Space: Rimbaud and the Paris Commune* (London: Verso, 2008). This is the central argument of Ross' very important work, but for a specific discussion of the relationship between urban space and social organization, see pages 39–42.

the safes we find in the official and private spaces of their devotees do not assume monumental proportions. The object holds its form or function in this often mundane encounters. But the presence of the Safe is never neutral in *fin-de-siècle* visual culture. When one of these steel shrines of property and accumulation features in such a composition by a radical artist, it is there to *act* upon the figures in its orbit. Often implied as an occult process of reversal, the object exerts power over the body and soul of its owners, whom it commands, corrupts, and even kills with its mere presence.

Figure 3.20. Eugène Cadel, 'L'Honneur' in "Les Fonctionnaires," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 71 (August 9, 1902), Color Lithograph. (Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Gallica).

For example, Eugène Cadel uses the Money Safe to question the morality of the Third Republic's civil officers in an issue of *L'Assiette* titled "Les Fonctionnaires." One of these officers is a judge, who authoritatively occupies the center of the composition with his voluminous red robe, standing between a money safe and the lifeless body of a man. [Figure 3.20.] His right hand is stretched over the door of the safe, with a tense strain conveying an aggressive gesture of possession. The skull on top of the safe might function as a *memento mori* to counteract the judge's obvious fondness of earthly riches. But here, it becomes an emblematic hinge that connects the violence of capitalist accumulation to the legal violence of the state. The anarchist press was diligent in reminding its audience that, as neither a symbol of radical egalitarianism nor a symbol of the revolutionary terror, the guillotine in *fin-de-siècle* France was the monumental icon of state violence. This power was famously exercised over revolutionaries like Ravachol and Émile Henry, who called for the destruction of the regime of private property and tireless accumulation that the Safe embodied. The association between capitalism and the guillotine took explicit form in publications of anarchist propaganda. For example, a full-page illustration from *Le Père Peinard* with the title "Litanies of a Depot-y" unites the capitalist accumulation with bourgeois politics. [Figure 3.21.]

Figure 3.21. Unsigned, [probably by Maximilien Luce], "Litanies Du Dépoté," *Le Père Peinard :Réflecs Hebdomadaire d'un Gniaff*, no. 158 (March 27, 1892). (International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam).

The association is furthered by the formal rhyming between the stout body of the bourgeois deputy and the steel repository of his wealth.[745] While the bottom three-quarters of the page is occupied by these two overfed figures, the top quarter stages a confrontation between the rising sun of anarchism and the political authority's apparatus of violence: army and guillotine. Before the dawn of revolution, the litanies of the depot-y are dedicated to the latter: "holy guillotine pray for us, holy guillotine deliver us."

[745] I will return to this strategic equation of the flesh and steel bellies of accumulation at the end of this section, but let's also keep in mind that these last two images identify state violence as a tool of capitalism, and therefore delegitimize both political and legal authorities as corrupt.

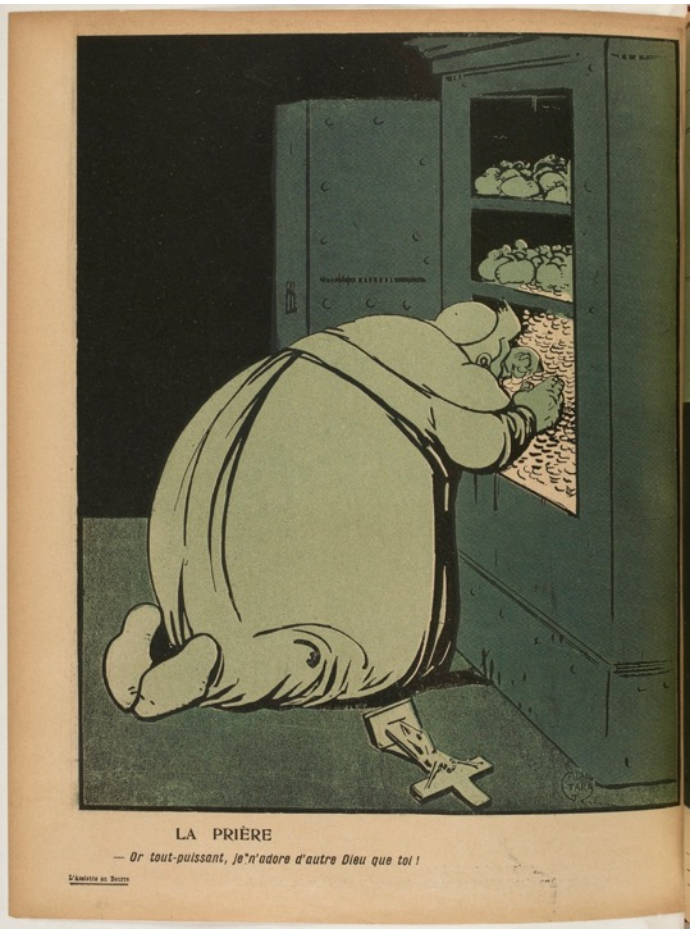

Figure 3.22. Gabriele Galantara, 'La Prière' in "Le Vatican," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 242 (November 18, 1905).(Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Gallica).

A page from the previously discussed anti-Catholic album by Galantara literalizes the steel shrine to argue that the cult of money vanquished the god of the Christians and conquered the Vatican. [Figure 3.22.] The scene portrays a cardinal on his knees before a full safe and an abandoned crucifix. The clergyman's body language confounds an obsessive attention to the wealth with the physical demands of worship. He is absolutely lost in his new faith. We witness again the correlation between the body of the devotee and the devoted, both stamped by a critique of excess.

The caption underscores the devotional character of the relationship between the shrine and the believer with a 'Prayer' to the 'all powerful gold;' professing it to be the 'only

god' to be adored. The reference to the story of the Golden Calf and the covenant is both unmistakable and expected.

Figure 3.23. Emmanuel Barcet, 'Les Victimes' in "Bourse," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 80 (October 11, 1902).(Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Gallica).

What happens when the elusive god of capitalism abandons one of its shrines without return? This is the subject of Barcet's portrayal of the devastating results of speculation. The subject reproduces the previously analyzed stereotype of the ruined investor whose already tragic tenor is dialed up with the inclusion of the wife and small children in the scene. [Figure 3.23.] The empty safe is rendered directly responsible for the suicide of the man, whose deflated body seems contaminated by the murderous

vacuity of the object—once again stressing the operational possession of the still object over the people who claim to own it.

The Safe and the Laboring Body

We have established what the lock of the Safe keeps inside, but only suggested in passing what it leaves on the outside. Nineteenth-century capitalism was a system of social and material exclusion, which Stallybrass describes as the separation of "the producers of the greatest multiplicity of things that the world had ever known" from that same "material plenitude."[746] As a diagnosis of this logic of separation, the radical artist Bernard Naudin portrayed the labor under capitalism as starved bodies heaped outside the solid dismissal of a large money safe. [Figure 3.24.] The life energies of these bodies were consumed to the point of exhaustion to fill the limitless void of the Safe, which forever denies them access to the riches that it endlessly accumulates. Naudin was a committed revolutionary, identified by Leighten, as "among the most radical" of *L'Assiette*'s artists, who consciously limited his aesthetic production to the realm of mass-produced prints.[747] His desired audience was the working people, and despite the bourgeois avant-garde credentials of *L'Assiette*, he and his comrades recognized the advantages of having a platform for their art that at the same time respected and supported their radical commitments.

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[746] Stallybrass, "Marx's Coat," 199.

[747] Patricia Leighten, "The World Turned Upside Down: Modernism and Anarchist Strategies of Inversion in L'assiette Au Beurre," *The Journal of Modern Periodical Studies* 4, no. 2 (2013): 139–40. Leighten remarks that Naudin was not alone in his decision: "Questions of medium and intended audience" were in the minds of many artists who produced at the intersections of politics and art. For example, modernist painters Kupka and Van Dongen made similar decisions around the same period. See also Patricia Leighten, "Anarchist Satire in Pre-World War I Paris: The Case of Frantisek Kupka," *SUB-STANCE* 46, no. 2 (2017): 50.

Figure 3.24. Bernard Naudin, "Ils sont morts […]" in "Les Métiers Qui Tuent," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 303 (January 19, 1907). (Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Gallica).

This image is from the final page of an explicitly syndicalist issue titled "The Professions that Kill," which Naudin realized in collaboration with two of his most politically committed colleagues—Aristide Delannoy and Jules Grandjouan.[748] These radical artists conceived the album as a visual account of the health hazards and occupational murders caused by capitalist control of the labor. The preface is penned by Léon and Maurice Bonneff, who were known at the time for their naturalistic novels on

[748] Jules Grandjouan, Aristide Delannoy, and Bernard Naudin, "Les Métiers Qui Tuent," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 303 (January 19, 1907).

the experiences of the working class. Albeit devoid of theatrical flourish, the introduction of the Bonneff Frères induces a gothic atmosphere which relays the violence of the capitalist mode of production, especially with its references to the new materials, workspace organization, and machines that devour working-class limbs and lives with a monstrous appetite.[749]

The album takes its corporeal politics very seriously. Unlike the allegorized body of the worker in most propaganda images, the bodies here emphasize the particularities they have acquired from labor, which bent, strained, aged, and destroyed them. On these pages the ceramic and glassworkers, miners, tanners, bricklayers, textile workers, and stone-breakers offer their distorted hands, dimmed eyes, wasted lungs, and broken backs to the audiences of the journal. These body-narratives support the authority of the general facts and figures that the captions provide. This is a noteworthy choice on behalf of the artists, who ground their critique of capitalism on the knowledge deduced by and from the body of the worker that capitalism renders invisible. In the realm of fine arts the body of the modern proletariat was evaded, together with direct references to urban and industrial labor.[750] It was often the mass medium of print and the radical print artists

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[749] Léon Bonneff and Maurice Bonneff, "Les Métiers Qui Tuent," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 303 (January 19, 1907).

[750] Alex Potts illustrates that while 'the social problem' or the 'worker question' "was central to the public and cultural life of the nineteenth century" the representations of labor—excepting that of rural labor—was largely missing in avant-garde art in the late nineteenth century. On the other hand, although the modern processes of production and labor were largely absent in nineteenth-century painting (other than a few paintings of striking workers and isolated exceptions such Adolph Menzel's monumental *The Iron Mill,* 1872–75), the new conditions of labor and the concerns with the social question transformed the depictions of rural labor, which itself was changing due to these new conditions. Alex Potts, "Social Theory and the Realist Impulse in Nineteenth-Century Art," *Nonsite* (Online Journal) no. 27 (February 11, 2019), https://nonsite.org/article/social-theory-and-the-realist-impulse-in-nineteenth-century-art. This started to change a bit towards the closing of the century, most probably due to the increasing centrality of the question of labor in parliamentary politics with the expansion of socialist and communist parties and syndicalism. During this time we have, for example, the anarchist post-impressionist Maximilien Luce's series of canvases that documented the industrial and urban laborers—from foundries to construction. However, his comrades, such as Camille Pissarro, preferred to celebrate labor before its

who made the suppressed actors and processes of production visually available. It is no coincidence that all three artists were associated with the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) and the anarchist-syndicalist publications and leaders that directed it until the end of WWI.

The statistics and reports gathered by this confederation of labor on the work conditions and health of their members were announced regularly in these publications and those of the trade unions associated with the CGT.[751] At first glance, Naudin's composition seems to allegorize rather than register and demonstrate the realities of labor. As the final image of an album that chronicles body-narratives from various professions that destroy the laboring body for profit, it seems to erect the steel monument of capitalist exploitation as a culminative coda. Perhaps it is a reminder of the need for the symbolic—and its propagandistic efficacy—in revolutionary visual culture, especially one that so perceptively builds on the veritable accounts of the material conditions of capitalist organization. But we can also argue that Naudin's final image is not a culmination, but a faithful continuation of the previous scenes. It renders the labor visible by evoking not its exploited capacities and distorted frame, but its exhaustion. With its rectangular solidity, the Safe functions as their tombstone, the inscription for which can be found in the caption: "They died, not for the defense of a

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transformation under capitalism and offered scenes of collective field work and small-town markets where the producer directly offered the fruits of their labor.

[751] The official organ of the Confederation was *La Voix du Peuple* (1900–18), published under the direction of *Le Père Peinard*'s experienced editor and famous anarchist intellectual and organizer, Émile Pouget. Artists such as Steinlen, Luce, and Grandjouan contributed to *La Voix* with illustrations. Even though they shared artists, *L'Assiette au Beurre* often evaded the censorship and legal retaliations that the official organ of the Confederation regularly suffered from. This also indicates that there was greater danger of an artist being fined or imprisoned for an image published in an explicitly revolutionary publication than in *L'Assiette.* Grandjouan's career in the 1900s provides a case in point. Michel Pigenet and Jean-Louis Robert, "Travailleurs, Syndiqués et Syndicats dans les Dessins de *La Voix du Peuple* (1900-1914)," *Sociétés & Représentations*, no. 10 (March 2000): 310–11.

cause, but, like beasts of burden, for the greater profit of their masters." The tone is reminiscent of Marx's description of labor in the market—which before the buyer-capitalist transforms from "the possessor of labor-power" into someone "who is bringing his own hide to market and has nothing to expect but—a hiding."[752]

More strikingly, however, Naudin's image echoes Marx's allegorical formulation of production as the domination of living labor by dead labor.[753] Capital and the machines are the 'dead labor' which "pumps dry" the 'living labor' to produce commodities and profit—or in other words, more 'dead labor.'[754] Naudin's image can therefore be seen not as a juxtaposition between antagonists—between labor and capital—but as an implicit doubling whereby the Safe is a mirror image of the pumped-dry bodies piled at its door. This violent doubling and inversion between the dead and the living takes us to what McNally identifies as a dark turn at the heart of the first volume of *Capital*, when Marx leaves the "heavenly sphere of exchange—'the exclusive realm of Freedom, Equality, Property and Bentham'" to lead the reader as a modern Virgil through 'the hell' known as the "hidden abode of production."[755] This change of direction depends on a "corporeal turn" in Marx's narrative which makes the labor visible with detailed descriptions of "the body in pain, the body possessed, and deformed by capital."[756] The anarchist-syndicalist artists and their printed exposés of capitalism should be seen as successors to this corporeal methodology, which infers its symbolic discourse and

[752] Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, 196.
[753] Ibid., 462.
[754] Ibid.
[755] McNally, *The Monsters of the Market*, 134. The transition happens at the end of Part II, which suddenly turns the focus onto the laboring body as a source of critical analyses. Similar to the artists of the aforementioned volume, Marx lists and elaborates the injuries and the diseases that he reads on this body as traces of capitalist accumulation. This corporal attention prepares for Part III, which centers on labor.
[756] Ibid., 135–36.

propagandist drive from a descent into the capitalist-hell of the conditions of labor.

A fascinating example is Grandjouan's syndicalist booklet on the labor conditions of the glass workers.[757] Created for the Glass Workers' Union [*Fédération nationale des travailleurs du verre*] under the CGT, it is simultaneously a beautiful visual object and great trade union propaganda.[758] The anarchist-syndicalist artist conceived and executed every aspect of this booklet—from interviews with the glass workers to the layout of the individual pages—which impressively merges the direct authority of statistical data, the affective capacity of personal accounts, and the ideological intensity of anti-capitalist symbolism. It would be possible to devote an entire chapter to this album, but for the purposes of our current discussion, I will only focus on two images to illustrate how the artist established the authority of the symbolic in the solidity of physical experience and material conditions of labor. The cover of the album gives us a cropped view of the industrial-scale glass production that the following pages will take apart, one aspect at a time. [Figure 3.25.] The texts, numbers, and testimonies would join the affective authority of the drawn-from-life illustrations to infer a regulatory discipline and the strict division of labor from an infernal chaos of fire, smoke, heat, and physical and mental suffering. In this first scene, Grandjouan introduces us to the glass workers in their diversity—men, women, the elderly, and children—suggesting the consistency of the toil that crushes the working classes from childhood to deathbed without exception. Like most images and pages in the album, the cover image is framed by allegorical marginalia.

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[757] The artist intended it as the first in a series of booklets about the physical, mental, and social conditions of the workers in the most exploitative industries, which he called the "the Modern Slaves" [*Les Esclaves Modernes*].
[758] Jules Grandjouan, *Les Esclaves Modernes: Les Verriers* (Paris: Collection Grandjouan, 1904).

Figure 3.25. Jules Grandjouan, *Les Esclaves Modernes: Les Verriers* (Paris: Collection Grandjouan, 1904).(Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Département des estampes et de la photographie).

The first symbolizes the suffocating reign of capital which takes the form of monstrous octopi that strangle the labor between their tentacles.[759] On the top border of the image a banner with the motto of proletarian internationalism—"Workers of the world, unite!"—intermingles with these serpentine appendages. At the bottom of the frame the artist gives us the protection and power that comes with heeding this call.

[759] Strikingly, the gender and age diversity inside the frame does not exist in this allegorical struggle of labor against the capital.

Once organized as a union, the workers can brandish their knives against the over-reaching and ever-expanding tentacles of capital.

The pages of the booklet are filled with the experiences of the laborers that substantiate the symbolic monstrosity of the tentacles. One particular page focuses on the endemic child labor that breaks young bodies and spirits with long hours of hazardous physical labor. [Figure 3.26.] The image at the bottom shows a very young child crouching before the molten glass, its white heat dramatically lighting his resigned face; and the top image catches two young glass workers within the circuit of production. Together they provide supportive snapshots to the interviews with the workers who relay their histories in the profession from childhood onward with anecdotes detailing the constant exposure to accidents and the impossibility of rest and retirement after a life spent in toil.

Left-hand marginalia allegorize 'the Bourgeois Republic's' role in these almost cradle-to-tomb narratives. Instead of providing her laboring citizens with social support and security, Marianne crushes them with boulders that represent the ubiquitous threats of unemployment, lockout, old age, accident, and hunger. The border design on the lower-right edge reminds us that this social and economic interment of labor is a prerequisite of capitalist social organization. Composed of a bourgeois statue and his tall pedestal-money safe, this monumental allegory of capital looks down on the worker who states that he cannot provide bread for his starving family.

Figure 3.26. Jules Grandjouan, *Les Esclaves Modernes: Les Verriers* (Paris: Collection Grandjouan, 1904). (Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Département des estampes et de la photographie).

Conceived as a shameless monument to capital, this allegorical scene illustrates that the laborers' descent into poverty and suffering fuels the capitalists' ascension. In his *Les Villes Tentaculaires* (1895) ['the Many-Tentacled Towns'] the anarchist poet Émile

Verhaeren had erected in verse a statue very similar to a 'Bourgeois.'[760] It is one of the four 'statue' poems from the book, each organized around a personification of power. Like the other three, the statue of 'Bourgeois' is imbued with politically and socially critical fantasies of animism. Standing in a town square, this imaginary monument of capitalism is described as authoritarian and criminally violent, determined to guard its pedestal—the Money Safe—at all costs.

Sometimes, the cost is so spectacularly horrifying that it is impossible to elide the consumption of the laboring bodies and lives needed for the perpetuation of the capitalist monument. Triggered by a coal dust explosion, the Courrières mine disaster killed at least 1099 miners and severely burnt and maimed hundreds of others on March 10, 1906 in Pas-de-Calais.[761] The anarchist weekly *Les Temps Nouveaux* reported the event as "Un Crime Capitaliste" with a first-hand investigation of the site by the revolutionary syndicalist Pierre Monatte. In his reportage, Monatte pushed against the framing of the event in the bourgeois press as a freak accident or a cruel act of fate, and asserted that it was a mass murder executed in cold blood with calculations of profit.[762] His report details signs of misconduct and relies on the accounts of the surviving miners which all point at the practices imposed by the mining company. In fact, less than a year earlier a worker-reporter of *Les Temps Nouveaux* had warned about the faulty practices and the incessant push for more extraction in Courrières for a series of exposés titled

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[760] Émile Verhaeren, "Une Statue," *Les Villes Tentaculaires*, 18th ed. (Paris: Mercure de France, 1920), 147–48. This poem for the bourgeoisie is succeeded by one dedicated to 'the Factories' and another after that to 'the Stock Exchange.' In the span of three poems, Verhaeren covers the several operations and realms of capital, including the often hidden space of production.
[761] "La Catastrophe de Courrières: Onze Cents Victimes," *Le Temps*, March 12, 1906. To date, it is the worst European mining accident.
[762] P. Monatie, "Un Crime Capitaliste," *Les Temps Nouveaux* 11, no. 46 (March 17, 1906): 1–2.

"Les Profits Capitalistes."[763] In the absence of sanctions that could curb the large company's profit drive, the disaster became unavoidable.

Like numerous journalists and syndicalist activists, Grandjouan and Delannoy traveled to Pas-de-Calais in order to see the site, talk to the remaining miners and the families of the victims, and produce some sketches. Their visit culminated in a special album that they produced for *L'Assiette* two weeks after the catastrophe.[764] Grandjouan's emphatic foreword for the project unequivocally blames the large mining company and its greedy shareholders, but more significantly, it identifies premature deaths as the provision of miners' lives. This is presented as a deadlock imposed by capitalism which demands the workers to choose between death by burning in a coal pit or by a bullet while protesting against the deadly conditions of their work.[765] Emphasizing the agreement between state violence and capitalist violence, a miner distills this impasse of labor as "either Courrières or Fourmies."[766]

The images in this special issue are organized in a more or less temporally linear narrative of the event and its aftermath. They rely on the facticity of reportage yet are infiltrated with some strange revelations. One of the earliest scenes portrays the arrival of the miners to the pits from neighboring villages. Otherwise a straightforward representation, the left-hand side of the composition is invaded by a money sack

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[763] Paul Delesalle, "Les Profits Capitalistes: Les Mines de Courrières," *Les Temps Nouveaux* 10, no. 8 (June 24, 1905): 2–3.

[764] The issue was offered to public as a "numéro exceptionnel." Two of the twenty-four pages bear the signature of the artist Ricardo Florés. However, in his foreword to the issue, Grandjouan does not mention Florés as part of his and Delannoy's trip to Pas-de-Calais. Jules Grandjouan, Aristide Delannoy, and Ricardo Florés, "Courrières," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 260 (March 24, 1906).

[765] Ibid.

[766] The latter referencing the infamous incident when the troops opened fire at the textile workers of Fourmies, who were peacefully protesting for the eight-hour workday on May Day in 1891. According to Grandjouan's account, the miner spells out his preference after the incident: "it is better to die in front of blossoming cherry trees than to suffocate in a coal pit." Ibid.

‘standing’ on a money-safe pedestal. [Figure 3.27.]

Figure 3.27. Jules Grandjouan “La Descente du Train Ouvrier” in Grandjouan and Delannoy, “Courrières,” *L’Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 260 (March 24, 1906). (Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Gallica).

An explicit allegory of dead labor dominating the living, it is animated with ‘hands’ ‘holding’ the rail of the barred barrier behind which it watches the procession of its ill-fated subjects. The miner at the forefront recognizes the omen that foretells the imminent interchange between the dead and the living with a concerned gaze. The Latin-

French caption underlines the master-slave relationship: "Hail Caesar! Those about to die salute you!" Instead of the abstract economy of worship that colors the representation of the Safe in the spaces of exchange, circulation, and accumulation, this design shows that in the realm of production capital is materially present and actively subjugating. Like a Roman emperor commanding the fates of gladiators, it not only determines the conditions of its subject's lives but also determines their breadth.

I would like to remind readers that these images are promoted on the cover of the album explicitly as "drawings and sketches from life."[767] But most of them, especially those by Grandjouan, move from the particular horrors of Courrières to arrive at the universal nightmares of the capitalist inferno. One such scene presents the miners who are lined up to pick gears before their final descent into the pits. A small text outside the top border claims that the miners knew about a festering fire in the pits and were reluctant to pick up their lamps.[768] [Figure 3.28.] The larger caption explains why they had no other option: "the company needs coal, and the kids need bread." It is impossible to miss the fact that one of the attendants monitoring this process is Death itself, represented as a skeleton camouflaged by a dress and the banal monotony of preparing and handing over the lamps to the miners. On a symbolic level, the image represents the murderous misconduct of the mining company, identifying the certainty of death and the necessity that nonetheless compelled the workers towards it. On a critical level, however, it literalizes the forceful rule of dead labor (capital) over the living.

[767] '[D]essins et croquis d'après nature.' Ibid.
[768] There had indeed been a fire four days ago in Pit No. 3. For the past month, the union delegate of the pit, Pierre Simon (aka Ricq), had been warning against the accumulation of coal dust in the air and the risk of explosion. "Un Récit Du Mineur Pierre Simon," *Le Journal*, March 16, 1906.

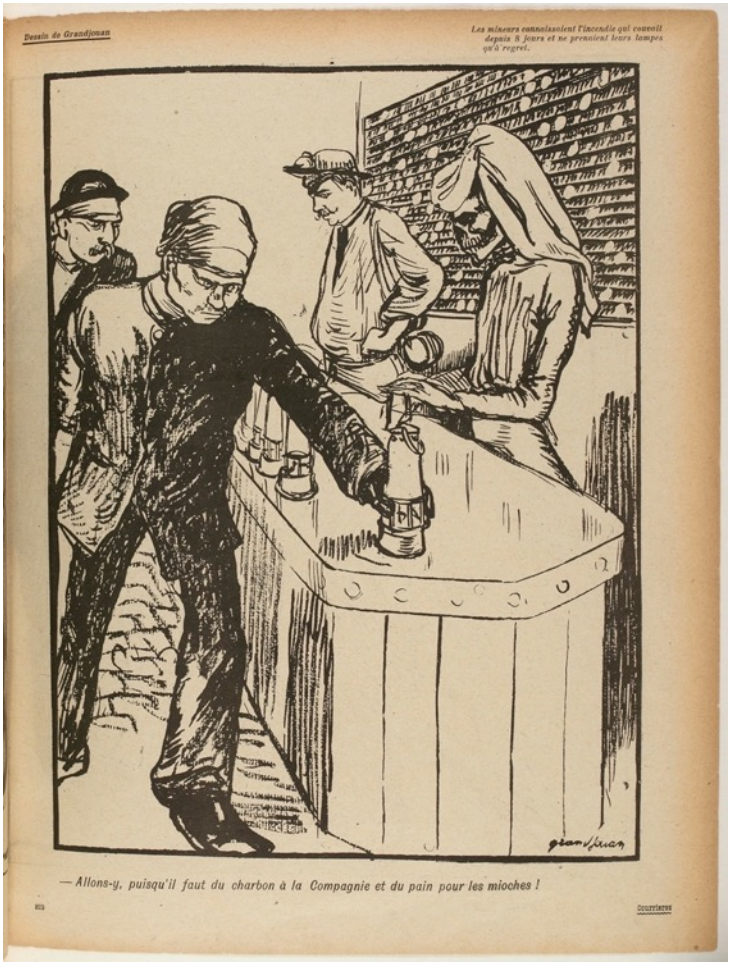

Figure 3.28. Jules Grandjouan "Allons-y…" in Grandjouan and Delannoy, "Courrières," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 260 (March 24, 1906). (Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Gallica).

The presence of the fantastical was a way for artists to communicate the reality of walking and sketching on a site where they had "under [their] feet" "more than fifteen hundred men, burned, crushed, asphyxiated, or [dead] of hunger" for the sake of

"extracting spectacular profits."[769] Catastrophic events like Courrières tear holes in the veil that hide the conditions of production from the consuming public. The scale and the ghastly details of the event forced the question of labor into all channels of public opinion: all newspapers and journals had to acknowledge the tragedy, and it was discussed in the chambers of government and the benches of parliament. For radical artists who were already paying attention to the inferno of labor, this was an opportunity to illustrate the 'true nature' of capitalism in which the fantastic images of monsters, ghouls, and animated money bags did not feature as allegories, but as the reality itself.

Figure 3.29. Postcard depicting Pit No. 3 in Courrières, c.1906 (genaenet.org: Carte postale – Courrières/uploaded by derville*)*.

Pit No. 3 entombed hundreds of miners and was at the center of the disaster that

[769] Ibid. Grandjouan gives a number much higher than the official 1099, which did not include the 'irregulars' who worked unregistered. On another note, thirteen men were saved alive a week after the publication of this issue, exactly twenty days after the explosion, and one final survivor resurfaced a few days after them.

affected a dozen pits and devastated a hundred-kilometer-long web of galleries. [Figure 3.29] The resemblance between the photographs of this structure and its fantastical rendition by the artist is uncanny. [Figure 3.30.]

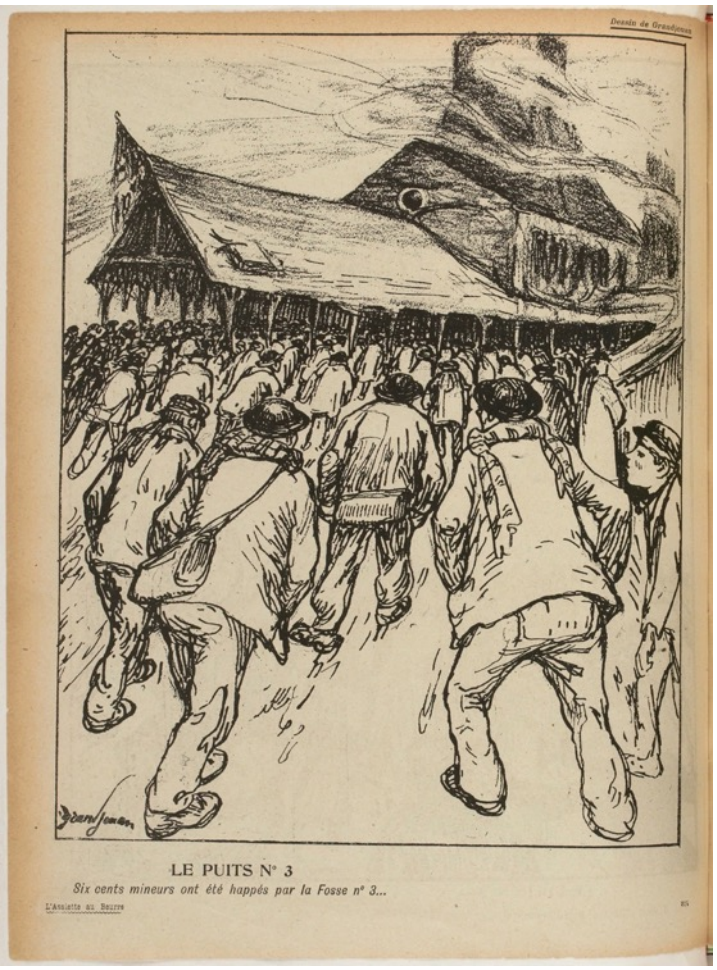

Figure 3.30. Jules Grandjouan, "Le Puits No. 3" in Grandjouan and Delannoy, "Courrières," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 260 (March 24, 1906). (Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Gallica).

In the latter, the triangular roof of the canopy becomes a snout, the poles imply predators' teeth, and the circular window above it suggests the single eye of this brick-and-metal cyclops. The army of miners walks right into this obvious trap. The curved

lines contract and expand the structure and grant it a monstrous animism. The caption reports the facts: "six hundred miners were swallowed by Pit. No 3."[770] The intentionally claustrophobic and violent reference to ingestion does not intend to de-familiarize the catastrophe as an extraordinary event. On the contrary, it offers a peek into the insatiable hunger of capitalist production, which Marx explains as follows:

> The means of production are at once changed into means for the absorption of the labour of others. It is now no longer the labourer that employes [sic] the means of production, but the means of production that employ the labourer. Instead of being consumed by him as material elements of his productive activity, they consume him as the ferment necessary to their own life-process...[771]

This is the "complete inversion of the relation between dead and living labour;" where the furnaces, workshops, and mines become the teeth of the capital which gnaw the labor to "feed"' its own 'life process.'[772] This is the capacity Grandjouan sees in Pit No. 3, once he looks at the structure through the holes of the myth of profit.[773]

Grandjouan waits for the final image of the album to deliver the most affective punch of his investigation into capitalist violence. The image represents the early survivors who, according to the witness accounts, ran towards the fields, burnt and blinded. [Figure 3.31.] Closely echoing these testimonies, we see a miner running mindlessly, his body tensed in pain with his blank, white gaze fixed on the heavens. The artist stresses the symbolic implications of loss of sight with a cursive reference to

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[770] The French verb 'happer,' which I translate as 'swallowing', might also designate 'forceful grabbing' and 'trapping'. All three possible meanings of the verb are operational in this image.
[771] Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, 339.
[772] Ibid.
[773] On the following page Grandjouan depicts Pit No. 3 from the opposite angle. This time recording the futile efforts after the incident, the building is rendered as a monumental sphinx. It digests its victims in mute indifference to the families who cry and convulse in despair.

Baudelaire;[774] and despite the limitations of the monochrome scale, he manages to relay the maddening pain of the scorched flesh. Once again Grandjouan uses his report on a specific moment to impart the consequences of the inversion of the relation between 'value' and the 'force that creates value' (i.e. labor). This miner descended to the pits as someone living, and emerged back, not dead perhaps, but as a vacant and damaged shell. Let's make no mistake, however. The monstrousness that infiltrates this final scene of reportage is not the mutilated body of the laborer, but the overweight capitalist who apathetically watches the scene with hands in his pockets. Casually resting on a steel safe, he *is* the money bag from the first scene of the miner's arrival—now having assumed a body and life after consuming the bodies and lives of the labor.

[774] The line is from the poem, *The Blind*: "What in the Skies can these men hope to find?" Charles Baudelaire, "The Blind," in *The Flowers of Evil*, trans. James McGowan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 189.

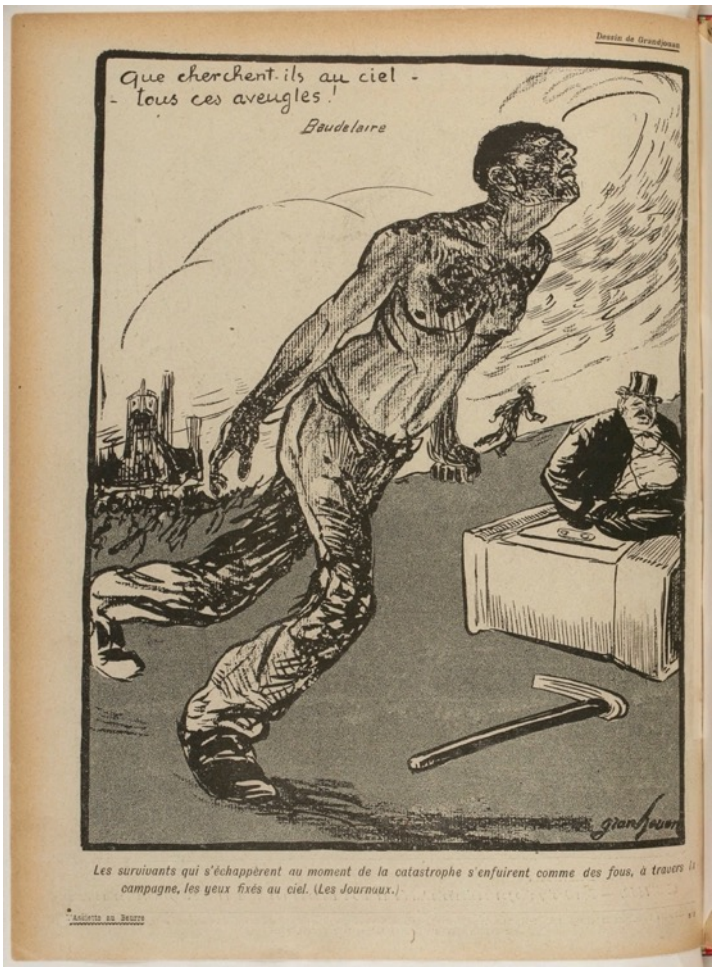

Figure 3.31. Jules Grandjouan, "Que cherchent-ils au ciel…" in Grandjouan and Delannoy, "Courrières," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 260 (March 24, 1906). (Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Gallica).

The commodification and consumption of human lives was not limited to the realm of capitalist production. The wars famously provided opportunities for grand profits and speculation, assuring people that, regardless of the outcome, capitalism would emerge victorious. Organized as a criticism of the hollow promises of the Second Hague Peace Conference (1907) *L'Assiette* brought together artists from European capitals for an Internationalist issue on the themes of "EUROPE" and "WAR."[775] Most images of this

[775] These artists included Naudin, Delannoy, and Grandjouan for Paris and Walter Crane representing

anti-war issue have an explicit anti-capitalist agenda such as Galantara's personification of capitalism before a 'money tree' that he waters with blood; or Walter Crane's heroic worker who resists the dragon of 'war' and 'finance' with the shield of the workers' "international fraternity." But once again it is Grandjouan who gives a monumental presence to capitalism as the engine of modern wars. [Figure 3.32.] The vertical scene mobilizes a massive Safe that crushes and devours children under its wheels. Its size and the terrifying solidity approximate the metal object to a marble sarcophagus which the collective energies of the rulers and politicians of Europe put into motion. The black of these men and their spectral armies stand in contrast to the bright red ink that outlines the children. This mass disintegration of the young bodies dyes the wheels of the giant Money Safe red, which imparts a commentary on child labor into the otherwise explicit anti-war allegory.

London. Most of the artists were actually based in the French capital, but were nonetheless associated with their hometowns on the front page—such as Kupka as Prague or Camara representing Lisbon—to underline the "artists' international" that the issue claimed to engender. Jules Grandjouan et al., "Europa: War, Guerre, Krieg, Guerra," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 324 (June 15, 1907). As introduction, the issue opened with the speech Paul d'Estournelles de Constant delivered in Westminster on the horrors of war and the need for European peace. Estournelles de Constant was a famous diplomat who devoted his career to improving international relations in Europe. He averted armed confrontations between France and Britain over their race for colonies, represented his country at both of the Hague Peace Conferences (1899 and 1907), and proposed what was an earlier articulation of the European Union. He was rewarded with the Nobel Peace Prize in 1909 (together with August Beernaert from Belgium).

Figure 3.32. Jules Grandjouan, "Quand nos enfants comprendront…" in Grandjouan et al., "Europa: War, Guerre, Krieg, Guerra," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 324 (June 15, 1907). (Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Gallica).

The artist resolutely identifies social revolution as the singular solution to halt this obliteration of posterity, which is represented as a bomb bearing the word 'social.' Holding in their hand this explosive promise of revolution, one child defiantly stands in the way of this forward-moving machinery of destruction. The caption declares in four European languages: "when our children realize."[776]

[776] Including the title of the issue, every caption in the album is produced in four languages (French, German, English, and Italian).

The Crowd and the Colossus

Grandjouan and other artists staged many more confrontations between the Safe and the social revolution. In the symbolic realm of their revolutionary landscapes, these images often expand the Money Safe to monstrous sizes and place it on dramatically high summits looking down on the masses. The composition of Grandjouan's 1906 publicity poster for the newspaper *La Révolution* relies on one such opposition. [Figure 3.33.] At this point in the dissertation, we can immediately discern the familiar visual device that configures revolutionary action as the multitudes' (people) active confrontation with an isolated and immutable monument (authority). But, as I stressed earlier in relation to the Golden Calf, it is always trickier to gather the expansive economic processes, networks of operations, and the paradigmatic social organization of capitalism under a single insignia, which always risks abandoning the critical labor for simplistic formulae.

In his exclusively red and black scene, Grandjouan effectuates a mountain completely swarmed by the crowd, actively advancing to the zenith. As per usual, the artist conflates the revolutionary working class with the working-class man, as all the discernible members of this impressive collective are male. Starting from the left-hand corner of the composition and extending up and into the top-right edge of the picture space, it is the diminishing red marks of their countless heads and bodies that communicate the dramatic incline of the mountain and the intensity of their effort. At the zenith, a tricolor flag with the initials RF [République Française] hangs precariously at the end of a broken pole affixed to the Money Safe's steel frame.

Figure 3.33. Jules Grandjouan, Large Publicity Poster [1240x850mm] for *La Révolution,* Lithography, 1906.(Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Département des Estampes et de la Photographie)

The poster is an example of loud and legible propaganda. Its colors and the suggestive title of the publication—*La Révolution*—were meant to be immediately striking. The composition assuredly leads the eye from a handful of laborers to the overwhelming power of organized labor, and finally to the target of their revolutionary iconoclasm. Yet, the image is not immune to the close reading that would complicate its graphic and ideological directness. Let's remember the publicity images for the Sacré-Coeur Basilica we saw in the previous chapter. Grandjouan's confounding of the laboring masses with the mountain they scale is similar to the ascending transformation

of the believers from pilgrim to congregation, and from congregation to Basilica. [See Figure 2.19] Here, the individual workers become the revolutionary working class through their organized movement which effectuates every inch of the delineated space, from the very bottom to the top of the hill. It is, then, not a straightforward march towards an enemy structure. The crowd is the mountain—which blends with the monumental object that it lifts higher and away with each upward and forward convulsion. They are the creators of the wealth that fills this steel coffer, and are responsible for its ascension. When there is such a relation between the iconoclastic agents and the icon, what does the revolutionary action intend to look like? Or in other words, does their efforts towards the Safe intend to destroy it or to claim ownership of it?

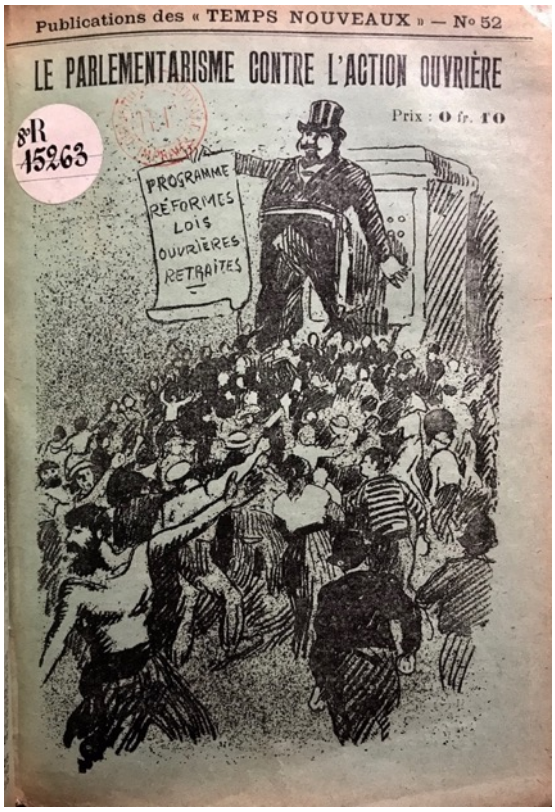

Figure 3.34. Unknown artist, Cover image for *La Parlementarisme Contre L'Action Ouvriere*, by André Girard and Marc Pierrot, no. 52 of *Les Temps Nouveaux* pamphlet

series. (1912).

We see the same dramatic juxtaposition of the masses and a monumental Money Safe on the cover of an anarchist booklet that warns the workers against the false promises of bourgeois politics. [Figure 3.34.] The upward ascent of an all-male working-class crowd leads the eye from an individual worker calling for action to the bourgeois politician who stands protectively before a monumental Money Safe. The size of this unsigned print and the depth of the picture space, however, only provide a modest hill for them to stand on. The politician himself is as unnaturally colossal as the steel emblem of capital's unnatural (and unlimited) accumulation.[777] It is possible to see this pot-bellied personification of political corruption draw out his monumentality from the Safe, which alternatively can be seen as a pedestal from which he has just ascended. In his other hand he is holding a list of the buzzwords which are life or death to his constituents but are emptied of any substance by the political discourse: program, reforms, laws, workers, pension. The workers need to defeat the bourgeois politics by recognizing it as a deception that stands between them and their second, more critical, target. However, we still do not know what its imminent seizure entails.

To answer that question, we need to look at the 1906 International Workers' Day (May Day) issue of *L'Assiette* that the editors predictably entrusted to the syndicalist Grandjouan. The artist conceived this special issue around the international labor movement's most central demand: the eight-hour-day. These scenes echo the temporal

[777] Aristotle separates the natural acquisition of goods for their use-value [oikonomia] from unnatural acquisition [chrematistics], which indicates a drive to collect beyond any limits. McNally uses Aristotle's classification and describes capitalist accumulation as "unnatural" since it strives for unlimited accumulation. But in a sense, it is supranatural, since it has to "accumulate an aspect of the commodity that is immaterial, invisible and intangible." McNally, *Monsters of the Market*, 122.

injustice that the Communards had diagnosed thirty-five years ago with the destruction of the Vendôme Column: the experience of time—psychological, physical, or historical—is class-specific. In addition to showing the incongruities between the experiences of the working and leisure classes, Grandjouan builds his visual argument for the eight-hour-day by attending to the numerous entanglements of labor with time, *including* labor-time's radical disruption by the strikes.[778] Conversely, while all these images are grounded in experience and the observation of labor in the present tense, they are framed by two allegorical scenes that open up the transformed temporality of a revolution-to-come. In these scenes—one immediately following the cover illustration, the other as the final image of the album—Grandjouan stages two confrontations between the Money Safe and the working-class crowd.

The first scene is a two-page spread that cheekily reproduces the authority's self-presentation *as* inaccessible to undermine its self-presentation *as* stable. [Figure 3.35.] No longer the solid pedestal of the Golden Calf, here the Safe assumes the position of a monument standing high above an expansive field of workers. Grandjouan conflates their anonymous bodies with the blossoming trees of spring, and associates the activities of labor with nature's processes of propagation and regeneration. This boundless organic capacity which occupies the left-hand side of the composition ascends through the center and right to culminate on a barren hilltop, where the metal idol's heavy frame precariously rises on an unusual pedestal.

[778] Jules Grandjouan, "1er Mai," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 265 (April 28, 1906).

Figure 3.35. Jules Grandjouan, " Marianne!" "1er Mai," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 265 (April 28, 1906). (Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Gallica).

Heightening the idol's unstable elevation, this unusual pedestal consists of the political, legal, and military authorities represented by their personifications which usually occupy the 'top' section of such monumental arrangements. This carnivalesque inversion reproduces capital's topsy-turvy world, where the political and legal authority try to uphold it even as they are pressed under its cold, metal authority. Grandjouan adds a Jesuit hat and bony hand peeking out from behind the Safe to inscribe the complicity of the Church and to complete his inverted representational system of the base and the superstructure. I still have not mentioned the most prominent of these satirical embodiments. Almost reduced to a single body part—his perfectly round belly—a bourgeois man stands high alongside the Safe. Albeit not sharing the burden with his

stately associates, the capitalist's broad chest carries the decorations of their appreciation. His elevation above the others is owing to a human 'pedestal,' whose identity is similarly reduced to body parts: a pair of bent legs and a rear. The mouth of Capital personified is open to appeal to (or to threaten) the blossoming field of labor below. Despite the stubborn bravado that his face and body perform, the fear the labor inspires in him is visible on the face of his female other cowering at his feet. This gendered emotional economy is counterbalanced on the other side of the Safe with the dread of the army general as he realizes that he has lost his footing. A lonely foot-soldier stands between the crowd and this composite monument. Although his body language speaks of hesitancy as he tries to warn Marianne, the embodiment of political authority, the composition and the color scheme grants him a footing—unlike his decorated commander—on the side of the proletariat.

The second scene, which is the final page of the album, represents the aftermath of the dramatic confrontation between labor and capital, the working masses and the monumental safe. The mountain that separated the workers from the wealth is leveled to an open field, which, despite the vertical format of the page, stresses the horizontal social relations with their swarm-like expansion into the horizon line. [Figure 3.36.]

Figure 3.36. Jules Grandjouan, " …l'Arbe de Mai" "1er Mai," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 265 (April 28, 1906). (Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Gallica).

The earth is as emancipated as those above it, boundless without any signs of enclosures, fences, or railing. The large cypress tree that bursts out of the battered frame of the Safe finally gives us some answers about the post-revolutionary fate of these emblems of capitalism. The three lines in cursive around the tree's sunlit crown prove the complex anti-capitalist critique that the seemingly direct iconography of the Money Safe

engenders:

> The roots of the beautiful tree of May
> will burst open the money safe
> where we have planted it!

The tree of May is an explicit allegory of the organized labor which breaks through the Money Safe that collects and confines the 'dead labor,' i.e. capital. It is no coincidence that Grandjouan chose the cypress tree, which is associated with both death and eternal life by the cultures around the Mediterranean basin. The association of the laborers with nature in bloom reaches full circle when the living labor reclaims their stolen life energies from "where [they] have planted it." Now devoid of capital—the surplus labor, the spirit—that would animate, enlarge, and monumentalize it, the Safe is disenchanted as *dead* metal.

The Belly of the Beast

As I mentioned at the beginning of this section and have illustrated thus far, the Safe often teeters between animation and stillness, simultaneously signifying a monstrous agency and a rigid monumentality. The correlations between the body of the capitalist and the Money Safe inadvertently deconstruct this ontological ambiguity by representing the two—one alive, the other lifeless—bellies of accumulation side by side. A direct example of this corporeal doubling between capital and the capitalist appears on the cover page of *L'Assiette's* fifty-fourth issue. [Figure 3.37.] Dedicated to the 'new money,' aka the *parvenus,* the magazine greets the viewer with an explicit conceptual rhyming of the well-fed nouveau riche and his large Money Safe. The affective affinity between the two depositories of labor immediately brings to mind Marx's identification

of the capitalist as "the capital personified."[779]

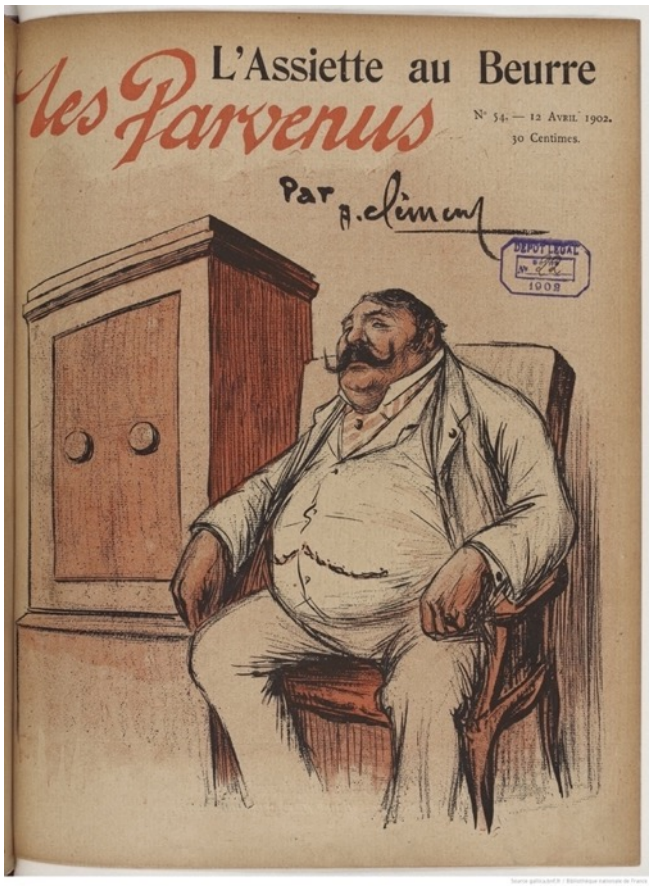

Figure 3.37. A. Clément, "Les Parvenus," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 54 (April 12, 1902). (Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Gallica).

But we can perhaps add a social layer to this critical association. McNally notes that the "bourgeois sense of self" presents itself as "enclosed" and "strictly demarcated from others," specifically against the openness and fluidity associated with the "popular body."[780] Indeed, the artist renders the *parvenu* in an arrangement and pose that imitates the oil painting portraits of the grand bourgeoisie.[781] A jab with the assumption that

[779] Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, 170.
[780] McNally, *Monsters of the Market*, 42. We can see the echo of this in the swarm-like expansion of the multitudes that destroy the steel enclosures of the capital.
[781] Looking at the cover of the *Parvenus*, I particularly see a mocking reference to the self-possessed air

those who buy their bourgeois respectability with newfound fortunes are often the most eager to perform it through costumes and gestures, the composition subordinates the personhood of this imposing man in an over-stretched three-piece suit to the steel Money Safe with slightly curved outlines.

The association of the Safe with human bodies, specifically those with very large bellies, finds a more explicit association with figures that conflate steel and flesh. For example, Grandjouan represents an assembly of rotund capitalists on a circular pedestal from which they order the prime minister Georges Clemenceau to sweep away the rebellious workers, and if not, to hand over his apron and broom to Alexandre Millerand.[782] [Figure 3.38.]

Figure 3.38. Detail from Jules Grandjouan, 'Les Capitalistes : Allons, Georges...' "La

of Louis-François Bertin in his famous oil painting portrait (1832) by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres.

[782] The future war minister, prime minister, and president Millerand started his political career as a socialist. However his willingness to work with the center and right-wing politicians, and the fact that he did not join the *Parti Socialiste*, but more famously his agreement to serve in the same cabinet as one of the leading perpetuators of the Commune's brutal massacre (Marquis de Galliffet) eroded his credentials for the radical Left. Here, the association of the two parliamentary leftists (Clemenceau and Millerand) with the capitalists reflect the anarchist-syndicalist Grandjouan's opinions about socialists who participate in bourgeois politics.

Confédération Générale Du Travail," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 331 (August 3, 1907). (Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Gallica).

In this example the tell-tale detail of the association between capital's two bodies is the 'keyhole' belly button of these well-fed figures. Such corporeal imaginings are possible because the Safe offers simultaneously the most direct and the most complex embodiment of capital. This grants it a pliability useful for critical inquiry, which stems from the function, form, and status of this popular nineteenth-century object. Let me expand a bit more. When it is a commodity in the market, the Safe is not a steel entity created by labor, but an "evacuated nonobject" taken over by the transcendental spirit of universal interchangeability, the exchange-value.[783] As Stallybrass points out, the punchline of Marx's concept of "commodity fetishism" is its inversion of the entire structure of the argument of fetishism.[784] The capitalist's relation to *value* indicates a greater irrationality than the so-called-primitives' worship of a material object, it suggests the adoration of the *immaterial*, the *invisible*, the *supra-sensible.*[785] It is this marker of universal interchangeability that animates dead matter with the spirit of capitalism:

> The form of wood, for instance, is altered, by making a table out of it. Yet, for all that the table continues to be that common, every-day thing, wood. But, so soon as it steps forth as a commodity, it is changed into something transcendent. It not only stands with its feet on the ground, but, in relation to all other commodities, it stands on its head, and evolves out of its wooden brain grotesque ideas [...][786]

[783] Stallybrass, "Marx's Coat," 187.
[784] Ibid., 184–45. I became aware of Stallybrass' fascinating article from its extensive treatment by McNally in *Monsters of the Market*, 126–32.
[785] Stallybrass, "Marx's Coat," 184. McNally, *Monsters of the Market*, 127–28.
[786] Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, 81–82.

As a physical object designed with a certain function, on the other hand, the Safe's use value is determined by its capacity to provide a secure space for the things *of* value. This re-configures it as a literally 'evacuated' object, a steel and opaque body that takes over the identity of the things that occupy its belly—gold, money, stock papers, promissory notes, etc. It is this indirect and direct association with value—i.e. the spirit of capitalism—that allows it to assume forms and processes that pull it back to the symbolic fecundity of *nonobjecthood.* Instead of a finite object, this Safe is a digesting site of capital's elusive movements as a body inscribed with its vast expansions (and periodical contractions). It is a *living* testimony to the perversions of capitalist reification—which turns peoples and relations into things, and imbues the things with a spirit. This is exactly what Kupka does in one of the most iconic issues of *L'Assiette au Beurre*. Titled *L'Argent* [The Money], this January 1902 album is not only a biting commentary on modern society—which has been suggested by scholars[787]—but a deeply perceptive critique of capitalism specifically reliant on the languages of the graphic medium.

The colossal and grotesque figure identified as "Monsieur Money" is the hinge that connects the thirteen fantastic scenes Kupka creates to unpack the horror story known as capitalism.[788] We are first introduced to Monsieur Money on the cover of the

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[787] Leighten, "Anarchist Satire," 50–70. Despite a few attempts at spearheading a careful analysis of Kupka's radical graphic legacy, I argue that this seminal work in the artist's graphic oeuvre has not been given the attention it deserves. The most comprehensive art historical analysis of the album is by Patricia Leighten, who follows the work of Mark Antliff to argue that the artist's devotion to Henri Bergson's vitalist philosophy and the question of social degeneration determined the subject and tone of this album. Although Leighten establishes that the anarchist avant-garde artists such as Kupka were anti-capitalists, with "positions resting firmly and often knowledgeably on Marx's critique of capital,"[787] her inquiry sidelines the artist's portrayal of 'Money' and the parallels between his visual critique and Marx's conclusions. Simmel is another point of reference Leighten uses to decipher the social critique of these images.

[788] There are actually fourteen compositions in the album, but the final one is not a critique of capital or

album. [Figure 3.39.] Lacking a neck and a delineated skull, the epicenter of his monstrous existence is the enlarged stomach filled with coins, whose golden hue underscores a significant weight. The unnatural beginnings of Monsieur Money are emphasized by the keyhole that delineates his belly button. The incarnation of capital crowns itself as the sovereign before a tiny worker who defiantly challenges his authority, literally from inside his palm. Unimpressed, the colossal Money stands knee-deep in blood, where unfortunate figures struggle to survive by grabbing on to the title-letters that spell out the sovereign beast's name: *L'Argent.*

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life under capitalism. It instead offers an allegorical-modernist vision where science (in the wish-image of Goddess Athena) has destroyed capitalism (the gorgon-money) and opened a golden doorway as a way out of capitalism's world of nightmares to the future of emancipated humanity. François Kupka, 'La Science Triomphant de l'Argent' in "L'Argent," L'Assiette Au Beurre, no. 41 (January 11, 1902).

Figure 3.39. François Kupka, "L'Argent," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 41 (January 11, 1902). (Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Gallica).

Scholars have noted that Kupka underlined the infernal tone of the scene with direct references to Dante's *Inferno* and to Eugène Delacroix's *Barque of Dante* (1822).[789] We can expand on this observation and argue that Kupka's cover image is a warning before our imminent descent into the hellish realms of Monsieur Money's sovereignty.

Kupka was not the first to give capitalism legs to show the reach of its absolute reign. In the early years of the Second Empire, for example, the famous *goguettier* and

[789] Leighten, "Anarchist Satire," 55.

future Communard Gustave Mathieu had written a song titled "Monsieur Capital."[790] In this popular song that he revived around the Commune, Mathieu ventriloquizes capitalism, declaring:

> I am force and power,
> the spirit, the honor, and the science;
> the value, the commodity, or its material,
> I reign under the name, Monsieur Capital[791]

In Mathieu's song the boasting of Capital recounts the realms that are under its unquestionable reign, as it not only rules over the labor, but entire armies, the emperor, and the pope are all subjected to its singular will, a will that boils everything down to its unceasing growth. In the following pages of the album, Kupka's fantastic Monsieur Money walks us through his political, legal, social, moral, and economic dominions. For the purpose of our discussion, however, I focus on a limited number of scenes that critically embody capitalism as a monstrous monumentality condensed into a fantastic belly and its processes. I mentioned that, with its hegemonic pervasiveness, it is impossible to have a vantage point *outside* capitalism from which one can capture a representation of it in its entirety. Therefore, we can only approach capitalism as an object of critical investigation from *inside*, by descending into the belly of the beast to see the operations of capital up close.

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[790] Gustave Mathieu, "Monsieur Capital [1852]," reproduced in Robert Brécy, *La chanson de la Commune: chansons et poèmes inspirés par la Commune de 1871* (Paris: Editions ouvrières, 1991), 28–29.
[791] Ibid., 29.

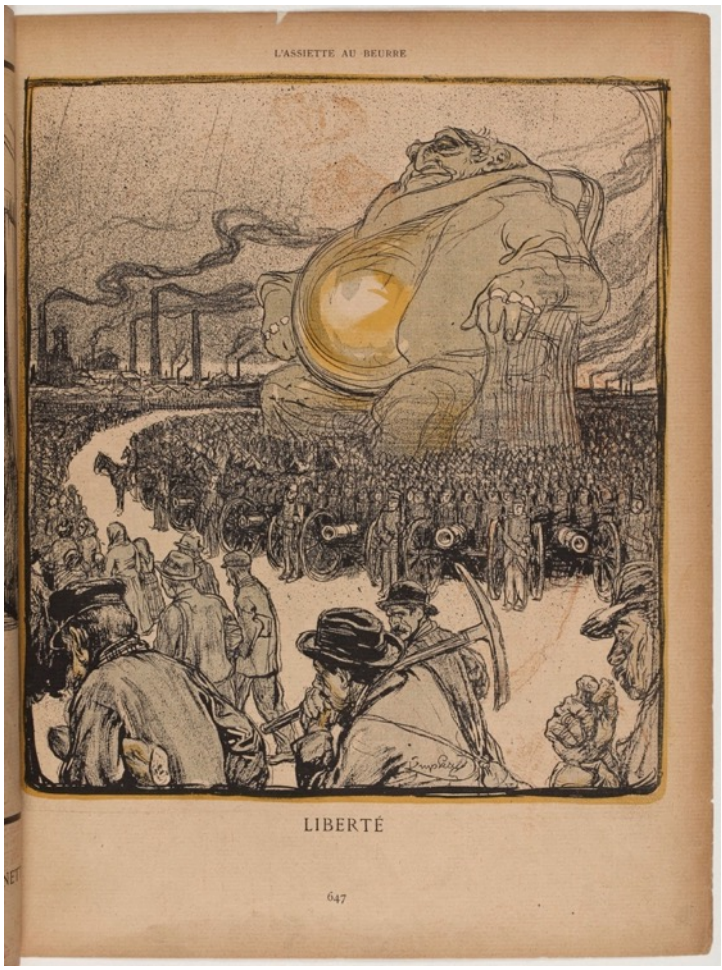

Figure 3.40. François Kupka, 'Liberté' in "L'Argent," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 41 (January 11, 1902). (Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Gallica).

Kupka's revelatory optics configure the 'Liberty' of the bourgeois Republic as the enslavement of men, women, and children for the aggrandizement of Money. [Figure 3.40.] The colossal personification of the Safe sits on a throne encircled by the military whose canons are directed at the drove of the workers miserably marching towards the factories in the background. Their threatening presence reminds us that the violence of the state is ever ready to protect this monumental tyrant from iconoclastic threats. In the representational economy of this image, however, they specifically ensure that the flow of labor-power into the factories, workshops, and mines to sustain the life-energy of

Monsieur Money will not be disturbed.[792]

The caption 'Liberty' requests that viewers consider the meaning of labor's freedom under capitalism. According to the vast liberties associated with the realm of exchange, the worker is a 'free' agent who sells the labor-power they possess as a commodity to whichever capitalist they prefer.[793] However, in a society where the laborer and the means of production are separated and where all natural and traditional processes of production are dissolved or precluded, the laborer *has no choice* but to sell their labor-power.

A good instructor, Kupka first inspires inquiry then offers elucidation. A subsequent scene titled "Fraternity" elucidates that it is necessity, not free will, that forces labor into an exchange with capital. [Figure 3.41.] In this image Kupka portrays Mr. Money on an elaborate chariot pulled by the immense efforts of scrawny bodies. The crushed body at the bottom-right corner spells out the fate of those who do not (or cannot) contribute to the chariot's progress. This symbolic configuration of capitalism as a vicious drive forward immediately brings to mind Steinlen's macabre procession for capital, where the Golden Calf and its powerful worshippers are likewise pulled by enslaved masses. [Figure 3.2]

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[792] It is not surprising that when Grandjouan closely quoted Kupka's design for an agitational illustration in the CGT's *La Voix du Peuple*, he represented the revolutionary labor organization: a gargantuan Monsieur Capital and the army that protectively surrounds him direct their guns at the workers, whom instead of obediently following the path to their toil, stop, and raise their fists behind a barricade. Jules Grandjouan, "La Barricade" in *La Voix du Peuple*, no. 417 (September 1908).

[793] Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingston (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1971), 90.

Figure 3.41. François Kupka, 'Fraternité' in "L'Argent," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 41 (January 11, 1902). (Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Gallica).

However, Mr. Money is not a rigid and immobile idol like the Golden Calf. He is alive and active. He disdainfully throws a yoke at the unemployed worker who reaches out to it as if it is a lifebuoy for him and his family.

Let's return to the previous scene, the 'Liberty,' with a renewed alertness to the bodies who drag themselves to factories and workshops. [3.40.] They 'chose' to hand over their life energies to Money because not doing so would sentence them to hunger, homelessness, social isolation, suffering, and death. But there are even worse deceptions

pictured here than the illusion of labor's freedom in the realm of exchange. Such is the alienation caused by contracting their life energies to capital, which appropriates them outside their will for the duration of the contract. Marx notes that the life of the laborer only exists during the short intervals between their utilization by capital—"at meals, on the public-house bench, in bed."[794] In other words, neither "an expression of freedom," nor a contract of life-subsistence, the exchange of labor with capital is "life-denying."[795]

It is possible to read the contrast between the trudging procession of labor and the authoritative monumentality of Monsieur Money purely as a straightforward commentary on oppression and alienation, where the capitalist's grotesque inflation corresponds to the exaggerations of graphic propaganda. But we can still inquire into this relation with capital and labor under Kupka's artistic guidance. Patricia Leighten notes in passing that the enthroned Money in this scene is an "echo of Daumier's *Gargantua*," as both offer grotesque embodiments of the nations' wealth.[796] [Figure 3.42.] This observation relies on Elizabeth Childs' Bakhtinian reading of the famous caricature, which illustrates how Daumier used a popular story of greed and gluttony to destabilize royal authority.[797]

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[794] Karl Marx, *Wage-Labor and Capital*, trans. J. L. Joynes (Chicago, IL: Charles H. Kerr, 1891), 18.
[795] McNally, *Monsters of the Market*, 146.
[796] Leighten, "Anarchist Satire," 55.
[797] Elizabeth Childs, "Big Trouble: Daumier, Gargantua, and the Censorship of Political Caricature," *Art Journal* 51, no. 1 (1992): 26–37.

Figure 3.42. Honoré Daumier, “Gargantua” published in La Caricature, December 16, 1831. Lithograph. (Wikimedia Commons).

Indeed, a quick comparison testifies to the formal similarities between these two fantastic figures of authority: the giant throne, the enormous belly, and the gold (or the labor of the subjects) as their sustenance. However, the formal clues of the carnivalesque subversion that allows a connection between the subversive humor of Rabelais’ Gargantua and Daumier’s Louis Philippe produce the opposite effect. As opposed to its historical predecessor, which encourages us to laugh in the face of authority, there is nothing humorous about Kupka’s money. Why can’t we laugh at Monsieur Money?

Kupka is our guide into a world ruled by Money, but he does not offer a

straightforward map because, as a phenomenon, capitalism does not follow a straightforward logic. His images demonstrate a creative and cognitive agility which is necessary to trace and mimic "a phenomenon that observes 'magical' transformations."[798] In his critical reading of *Capital*'s fantastic allegories, McNally argues that since the "capitalism constitutes an alienated, topsy-turvy world […where] capitalist inversions become normalized," Marx thus required "a dialectical language of doublings and reversals" and a "continual flow of metaphor" to follow its unnatural, wild, and violent operations.[799] I argue that when he encountered the same problem, Kupka likewise resorted to the power of strategic doublings and metaphors, but especially to the carnivalesque inversions that were readily available—such as corporeal distortions—in the traditions of the graphical satire. As opposed to his predecessors, however, his aim was not to destabilize this gargantuan sovereign with a belly laugh, but to be able to truthfully mirror his object of inquiry. As Guy Debord formulated, "in a world that *really* has been turned on its head, the truth is a moment of falsehood."[800]

Kupka's artifice intends to provide this elusive truth in a world turned upside down by capitalism. Therefore, the artist recalls his famous precedent with deadly serious intentions. In his rearticulation, we do not have an incapacitated ruler bound to his toilet, but a self-assured sovereign on a throne. As the rest of the album can testify, Money can walk, act, corrupt, and kill. While the July Monarchy's ministers use a comical ramp to feed their infantilized king with baskets full of taxes, Kupka provides a resolutely realistic rendition of Monsieur Money's meal. The humorous scatology of Daumier that

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[798] McNally, *Monsters of the Market*, 117–26.
[799] Ibid.
[800] The italics are part of the original. "Thesis #9," in Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (New York, NY: Zone Books, 2002), 14.

transforms the monarchy into a stomach that consumes taxes and defecates decorations and awards for his lackeys emerges as the horrifying reality of capitalist production. The throng of laborers are not there to produce sustenance for this dystopian Gargantua, they *are* the food.

The image is the most blatant portrayal of the capitalist inversion between the living and the dead labor we have seen so far. The sovereign-Safe's relation to the army of workers foretells what Lukács would formulate in the following decade as the reification which subjugates the worker to the 'second nature' they create.[801] The army of workers, whose bodies and souls are under complete control of Monsieur Argent, are *literally* his creators. They cannot request changes to the conditions in which their energies are appropriated and exploited as the presence of the army and its canons reminds them of the tragic fates of numerous labor protests and strikes over the previous century. As the workers follow their predetermined paths and enter factories, every commodity they produce will be exchanged to add more to the belly of the beast. The labor is compelled to sell itself piecemeal to the capital, diminishing every workday as each exchange of the commodities produced expands Mr. Money to an even more monstrous size.[802] In a world where creation assumes life to haunt and consume its creators, the subversions and reversals that are part and parcel of the humorous language of satire only inspire solemn reflection.

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[801] Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, 86. Marxist philosopher Georg Lukács uses the concept of 'second nature' to identify the man-made environment—of structures and commodities—which bears in itself the estrangement from the (first) Nature. Georg Lukács, *The Theory of The Novel*, trans. Anna Bostock (London: The Merlin Press, 1971), 62–64.

[802] McNally notes that Marx uses '*ungeheure Warensammlung*' to describe the capitalist accumulation of commodities, which can be translated both as immense and "monstrous" collection. McNally, *Monsters of the Market*, 121. Knowingly or unknowingly, Kupka gives body and legs to this monstrosity in his visual description of capitalism.

The presence of the workers are not mere props to illustrate the literal horrors of this monstrous belly's operations. They also recall Money's dependence on labor and warn against allegory's pitfalls of mystification. Monsieur Money is Marx's "automatic fetish" par excellence, the form of capital when it appears capable of endless self-generation.[803] It is "capital perfected," claiming to unite "the process of production" and "process of circulation" so that it no longer bears the "scars of its origin" (i.e. labor).[804] Therefore, it is necessary to inscribe labor into the album.

We need to keep this warning against mystification when we look at the page-spread the artist unassumingly captioned as a "Decorative Panel." This scene is perhaps the most allegorical representation of Money's absolute authority, the naturalization of its horrors, and its elision of its origins. [Figure 3.43.] The golden sphere of Money's belly occupies the center of the composition around which all individuals and their relations orbit. A racehorse and its jockey momentarily rise above this chaotic circuit, but as emblems of speculation, their advent from capital obliges their return to it. Kupka inscribes prostitution and entertainment; marriage and family; gambling and hard labor; art, faith, and commerce; addiction, starvation, and suicide indiscriminately onto a single plane of representation. Their coexistence reminds us of Simmel's observation that where money is conceived as the sole purpose, "countless things that are really ends in themselves are thereby degraded to mere means."[805]

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[803] Marx, *Capital*, vol. 3, 459–60.
[804] Ibid.
[805] Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money* (London; New York, NY: Routledge, 2011), 467.

Figure 3.43. François Kupka, 'L'Argent : *Panneau Décoratif*' in "L'Argent," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 41 (January 11, 1902). (Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Gallica).

It is possible to see this charcoal circuit as "a damning critique of bourgeois society" where every act and decision is motivated by the purpose of the "amassing of wealth."[806] What Kupka illustrates here, however, is more disturbing than a pure commentary on social and moral degeneration. Simmel warns that, simultaneously the sole purpose and the singular means, Money pulls "various elements of our existence" into its "all-embracing teleological nexus in which no element is either the first or the last."[807] Kupka does not offer the revolution of a decadent society around the orbit of capitalism, but its consumption and reproduction by the circuit of the capital. The texture of life is

[806] Leighten, "Anarchist Satire," 55–56.
[807] Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, 467.

so absolutely determined by Monsieur Money that all things and relations are not shaped *under* its power, but constantly dissolve *into* and are reconstituted *through* it—"just as nature is held together by the energy that gives life to everything,"[808] all-pervasive Money creates, animates, and rules a 'second nature' (including people and society) where everything comes from and returns to it. We are offered not a view of humanity assembled around a new artificial sun, but a view from *inside* Monsieur Money's belly, the place where we experience it as an absolute, seemingly endless, and self-reproducing entity.

I will conclude with another scene from *L'Argent* that will bring us back full circle to the scene of iconoclasm we started with three chapters prior. In this image, politics under capitalism resembles a game of seesaw between democracy and authoritarianism. [Figure 3.44.] But the game is rigged by Monsieur Money, who one day favors an emperor or a king, and another day the Republic. His complacency is distilled in a knowing smirk, which denies authenticity to any political change as long as he is standing. While the monarchy and Bonapartism struggle at the far end of the seesaw, the Republic at the closer end waves her liberty cap at us—the spectators—to entice our applause. This is an acute diagnosis of 'the aestheticization of politics,' decades prior to Walter Benjamin's famous essay. No longer the iconoclastic threat to the monumental embodiments of authority, the masses are reduced to a cheering crowd compressed in the bottom-right corner.

[808] Ibid.

Figure 3.44. François Kupka, 'Balançoires que tout ça' in "L'Argent," *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, no. 41 (January 11, 1902). (Bibliothèque Nationale de France/Gallica).

Completely unaware that it is their own externalized and appropriated labor that conspires against their social and political emancipation, they watch the politics as a performance independent of them. The composition precludes any routes for the people, a spatial and political separation assured by the broken shell of the Vendôme Column. The new social contract that Maroteau read in the debris of the destroyed monument is crushed under the colossal weight of Monsieur Money, who stands tall as the exclusive

monument of the age.

Unfortunately, he cannot be taken down by pickaxes or solid capstans. But Kupka and the graphic criticisms of radical artists like him brandished the print culture to counter the effects of the phantasmagoria of capitalism and its spectacularization of mass politics. This politicization of aesthetics can be seen as an iconoclastic optics that dispels the artifice to show that the artifice has become the sovereign reality. The authenticity of their fantastic metaphors and violent allegories offers the representation of labor necessary to realize what Benjamin described as "the adjustment of reality to the masses and of the masses to reality."[809] However, these images of and about capitalism were created at a time when reality was shifting. Very soon after their efforts, Money would cease to correspond to gold coins and banknotes. Created on such unstable ground, they still reached out to the iconic objects with material denotations that were inscribed with the changes, liquidity, and agency of this moment of rapid financialization. In two to three decades, the anomalies they recorded would culminate in the most spectacular crisis of capitalism to that date.

In other words, the unnatural in these images must be seen as an attempt to catch up with capitalist abstractions that indeed seemed contradictory to the laws of nature. This, however, should not mean a flight into the realm of abstraction like the object of their (our) inquiry. To take down the automatic fetish embodied in Monsieur Money requires a dialectic undertaking. The mystifications and abstractions of capitalism must be countered with a conscious aesthetics that insists on the corporeal (and environmental)

[809] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*. (New York: Schocken, 2007), 24.

that, while producing conceptual and theoretical interventions, stubbornly insists on the presence, the material reality of the things that are consumed and destroyed to provide the increasingly incomprehensible growth of Monsieur Money. A relentless quest for making the invisible visible is more urgent than ever to banish the fatal belief normalizing and ahistoricizing the myths of capitalism.

CONCLUSION

I will end with a reflection on the title of this dissertation: "Monuments on Paper." I chose the term because I believe it distills the dialectical nature of the objects of my study and the method I derive from my analyses of them. The representation of stable, immutable, and singular monuments on ephemeral and multiple printed papers engenders both a critical inversion inherent to this type of intermedial translation (from monument to printed paper), and uses its mechanisms of doublings and reversals as the vehicles for an immanent criticism that exposes the logic, structure, and operations of the monumental structures and systems.

The creators of these 'monuments on paper' produced not only social and political criticism, but also knowledge about the structures and processes of authority, and in doing so, they left behind ephemeral monuments that commemorated their voices and insights to be heard a century later by me and you. These artists'—and my—judgment of the monuments as authority could be regarded as perplexing by someone who had not read the three preceding chapters, who could claim that we eradicate the distance between the signified and the signifier, between the symbol and the object. I hope that at this point it has become clear to my readers that the dichotomy of monument and iconoclast is less of a literal axis and more of a symbolic coordinate system where I locate the ontological discrepancy of monuments and their printed likenesses to chart the political and the social epistemes that their creators wanted them to impart.

This dissertation exports most of its theoretical observations from what I found

was already available in these images, just buried below the surface. This approach bears the decisive influence of Marxist philosopher Walter Benjamin and his historical materialism. Susan Buck-Morss encapsulates this as a "dialectics of seeing," which the capacities I see and retrieve from the printed images closely echo: an "interpretive power" that can "make conceptual points concretely."[810] My study enacts this in a double sense: first by studying the mechanisms of the image that allow it to make what is abstract and complex available for cognition; and secondly by seeing what their labor for recognition demands from their audiences in return. Throughout three chapters I repeatedly show that the former takes the form of an elucidatory translation of monumentality and the latter a call for a social and political iconoclasm directed at the systems concretized in those monumental icons.

In a general sense we can think of these prints as enacting an aesthetics of resistance through a *serious parody* of the ruling classes' aesthetics of domination. While the objects that give names and structure to the chapters belong to the latter, not all of them are aesthetic objects explicitly conceived as expressions of domination. From the most direct of these monumental icons of authority and power—the Vendôme Column—to the most banal and indirect—the Money Safe—these forms on printed paper offer looking-glasses directed at the tell-tale subconscious of the ruling class. In other words, a significant labor of these prints is to reveal the elusive and oppressive by deconstructing and reconstructing the tangible clues of domination in a modern city.

This counter-monumental lens is therefore derived directly from the experiences of the artists and their audiences, which were the source and address of these images. In

[810] Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing*: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 6–7.

other words, this is why a popular medium is my guide in showing, for example, how caricatures and radical illustrations can shed light on the dark corners of authority. I hope that in the end the radical prints emerge as simultaneously quotidian and theoretical, popular and critical, inventive and dialogical, because their artists relied on the capacities of the print medium to institute a language, discourse, and audience to actualize change.

Unfortunately, that change did not arrive on the scale or in the timeframe that was needed. The internationalist, anarchist, and antimilitaristic images of this dissertation strived to demystify the spell of personal rule and chauvinism. They challenged the homogenization and taming of the laboring masses as devout congregations or conscript armies, and found novel ways to express their admonitions of the destructive cult of capitalism and its insatiable hunger for human lives. Their graphic exposés and calls for iconoclastic attack on the political, religious, and financial powers through their monumental icons were warnings before an impending disaster. Listening and learning from these images shows how critical their voices and warnings were and how painfully they fell short as they got louder and higher, like a wave that finally crashed at the threshold of a World War.

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