We are IntechOpen, the world's leading publisher of Open Access books Built by scientists, for scientists

6,900
Open access books available

185,000
International authors and editors

200M
Downloads

Our authors are among the

154
Countries delivered to

TOP 1%
most cited scientists

12.2%
Contributors from top 500 universities



WEB OF SCIENCE™

Selection of our books indexed in the Book Citation Index in Web of Science™ Core Collection (BKCI)

Interested in publishing with us?
Contact book.department@intechopen.com

Numbers displayed above are based on latest data collected.
For more information visit www.intechopen.com



4

The Significance of Intermediality in the Immortalization of the French Republican Nation (1789-1799)

Montserrat Martínez García
Complutense University of Madrid, Spain

De Barra, de Viala le sort nous fait envie
Ils sont morts, mais ils ont vaincu.
Le lâche accablé d'ans n'a point connu la vie:
Qui meurt pour le peuple a vécu.
Vous êtes vaillants, nous le sommes
Guidez-nous contre les tyrans
Les républicains sont des hommes,
Les esclaves sont des enfants.
Le Chant du Départ 1794 (Dauban 1869: 428)

1. Introduction

Never before 1789 had the political education of a great nation like France been ruled by writers and artists (painters, sculptors, musicians, engravers and architects), the ones who probably gave the Revolution its peculiar attributes, besides infusing an unrivalled vigor into this event (B. de Huszar 1960: 1-18). The intellectual elite grew in Western Europe after the Reformation and countless generations of rational thinking culminated in France´s radical political ideas during the 18th century, marking nineteenth-century politics. This social category, a class apart, was devoted to mental activity, culture and the preservation of the current order (Seton-Watson 1960: 41-50), at the same time that legitimately held power and authority through six distinct strategies: backing of beliefs and specific principles, naturalization and universalisation of a selective credo, disapproval of opposed ideas, exclusion of alternative lines of thought, and finally, the masking of reality to adjust it to the dominant interests (Eagleton 1997: 24).

These minorities, or national prophets according to Hans Khon, were decisive in fixing inclusion and exclusion criteria within the community in order to restrict the access to power and decision making, subjugate the majority and interpret the national history with bias (Kohn 1946).

Consequently, intellectuals were the driving force capable of fostering the nation reconstruction and redefinition. This fact entailed two points: firstly, the nation State was

always articulated, thought and imagined in consonance with discourse, and secondly, the rapport between politics and intellectuals uncovered one of the mainstays of nationalism, namely, the understanding of the nation as a cultural and political entity. If before the French Revolution, the State as a political unity had remained totally disconnected from the nation as a cultural wholeness, their fusion opened a singular stage in the history of nation States (Cobban 1994: 245-50).

The success of this intellectual middle class undertaking depended on the masses cooperation, which explains why people were invited to partake of this historical project and why this invitation was written in the intelligible language that typifyed the populist nature of nationalism (Nairn 1994: 70-76). For example, writers became the public opinion leaders and began to play the role usually reserved for politicians. During the French Revolution, the abundant circulation of pamphlets and documents attempted to anger people against the king. In this sense, *L´Ami du peuple*, edited by Marat, was one of the most important newspapers inciting to rebellion and to Louis XVI´s overthrow.

In sum, the artistic achievements of intellectuals were an unmistakable struggle to protect and systematize the cultural continuity of the nation as well as to legitimate all national discourses, whether literary, historical or critical. Thereby, the narrative of the nation began to be told and retold through national histories, literature, popular culture, that is to say, through a kind of art interested in providing stories, images, symbols and rituals that could portray identity as primordial, essential, unified and unchangeable (Valdés 2002: 71).

The relevance of this paper rests on its timelessness. Although at first sight, its scope might be quite restrictive, since its topic is limited to France and to a very concrete time range (between 1789 and 1799), in truth its reading will prove the contrary. Not only does the paper help to understand the foundations of nationalism and nation construction, given that France was a pioneer in this subject matter and a model for many other countries, but also to deepen into the current working of those nationalisms still functioning thanks to their drawing inspiration from the French prototype.

2. Delimiting the focus of the paper

A firm and stable culture invariably relies on an alliance among the divergent discourses that run through it and that guarantee the projection of this ideological structure on people. This means that the more a topic is repeated, the more effective and convincing becomes, since we cannot overlook the fact that persuasion is a forceful component in the cohesion of any culture. Generally speaking, this continuum among the various social spheres emanates from a cluster of formats, namely, different materials portraying events or/and people, whose thematic affinity makes them being the primary vehicle of the political apparatus, whether it is a well-established political system or a budding one. Under these circumstances, the French Revolution is admittedly a case to be taken into account. It set the groundwork for a fresh start that benefited from the crumbling and staggering monarchical landscape, and, as expected, its votaries built an intricate and thick network through the recurrence of a topic from dissimilar artistic devices such as paintings, engravings, caricatures, drawings, busts, theater plays, songs and music, festivals, coins, newspaper articles and sculptures. The intermediality of all these aesthetic expressions, as a motto

superimposed on a standard, conveyed just one and very simple message, that of the making of the French Republican nation during the period ranging from 1789 to 1799, that is to say, the French revolutionary years. Throughout this paper, we will pay particular regard to this subject and to the way French artists resorted to the body, both male and female, as a core concept encapsulating the republican citizen by drawing upon political strategies fraught with mental and emotional manipulation.

3. What is intermediality and how can we apply it to France?

Now that the main concern of this paper has been stated, our business will be first to cast some light on what we mean by "Intermediality" and on what this term implies. The *Oxford Dictionary* informs us that the Latin prefix "inter" stands basically for two meanings: on the one hand, "between and among", while on the other "mutually and reciprocally". In turn, "Mediality" can be decoded "as designating the interaction of technology, society, and cultural factors through which institutionalized media of communication […] produce, transform and circulate symbols in everyday life" (Friesen and Hug 2009: 69). As a consequence, the merging of "inter" and "mediality", namely, the fact of being between or among shared media "stresses the idea of a message perpetually crossing the boundaries separating media; a message that *is, i. e. exists,* only *as* and *through* an incessant movement, never attaining an ultimate shape, and living as many lives as the number of the media crossed" (Punzi 2007: 10). When broaching the subject of intermediality, we are making a step forward in dealing with relational properties as well as a shift from separate media to partially or totally interconnected media systems. This suggests that intermediality highlights "textual relations as a dialogic process taking place between different expressive media, rather than as a set of static references to textual artifacts" (Langford 2009: 10).

Although there was a resurgence of interest in media and the mediatic questions thanks to Sanders Peirce´s (1839-1914) work on proto-semiotic theory and to Ernst Cassirer´s (1874-1945) study on the mediality of culture and human knowledge in his *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (1953), it was Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980) who gave prominence to the current relevance of media with his claiming that "the medium is the message" (Friesen and Hug 2009: 63). Yet, even if intermediality is quite a new term in the contemporary panorama of criticism, it is a linguistic tag whose semantic field has not yet been thoroughly ascertained, despite the work done on this issue since 1997 by, among others, the "Centre de Recherche sur l´Intermédialité" (Montréal University) and the "Center for Philosophy and Arts" (Rotterdam University) (Punzi 2007**:** 10). Within this trend, the term *information literacy* has been recently driven to the forefront to encompass all textual analysis and to process any sign system transmitting any kind of information (Semali and Pailliotet 1999: 5).

As one might expect with all new terminology, intermediality is not a sudden concept but one whose history goes back to the dawn of Western thought. As a matter of fact, if Aristotle (384 BC-382 BC) was one of the first philosophers to consider the expression of diverse media in his *Poetics* (335 BC), his legacy was carried on afterwards by Horace (65 BC-8 BC) in his *Ars Poetica* (20-14 BC), in which he stated the close relationship between poetry and painting through his maxim *ut pictura poesis*, and by Augustine´s (354-430) *Confessions* (5th century) with his discussion of mediality of the biblical Word in Book 11. Examples spring up in abundance. Suffice it to mention that during the 15th and the 18th centuries, emblems became expressive of the blending between pictorial and verbal signs working conjointly in the same artifact.

It is to be noticed that each one of these communicative channels gave rise to a unified whole in which, curiously enough, the bonds among the constituents were not linear, straight and excluding but concomitant, unhierarchical and convergent. This was tantamount to admitting that the logic governing this system was polycentric and that the French art under survey could not by any means be compartmentalized but regarded as a flowing system, crossed by multifarious streams of information. Simply put, French art produced at that time a series of works which depended for their meaning on one another and on the historical context within which they were anchored. Failing to grasp the implications of references, whatever their nature, entailed missing the turning point in a work of art (Schmidt 2009: 64), but also the fit response to those issues in conjunction with knowledge, power, identity and politics, since the continuous fluctuation from one medium into another alluded to validations of being French.

This interweaving gains prominence when unveiling the underlying powerline operating beneath the surface. As an introductory note to bear in mind while reading the paper, it is imperative to point out that all French creations derived from two main sources: one of them was a historical subtext coming from either a distant historical period, such as the Roman Republic, or from the contemporary one with which they were intimately connected, whereas the other source was a pre-text, namely, a previous work of art from which the new aesthetic piece drew its meaning. Thus, French intermediality grew in complexity because of its scope expansion and its roots deepening into a horizontal as well as a vertical axis. This proves that all sorts of formats are constructions and to some extent, constructs, entailing transactions of meaning, given that readers, percipients, audiences, writers or artists do not ascribe interpretations in isolation. On the contrary, they bridge past and present understandings and recover background from other visual, verbal or plastic texts just to underscore the synergistic, interdependent and dynamic qualities of these processes (Semali and Pailliotet 1999: 6).

Granted that intermediality caters for a methodology to delve into the interstices and interfaces of cultural production and ideology, it will be used to read and to provide insights into the printed, visual, musical and plastic representations prevalent in revolutionary France. In sum, we will be engaged in an assorted display of performances (literary, musical, visual, pictorial) to show their behaving at the "borderlines of art" (Chapel and Kattenbelt 2006: 13) and to determine to what extent they conspired to concoct a plan of political action.

4. The Foundations of the French Republican Nation and national art

Plainly stated, the target of the newly born Republic was the construction of a renewed society whose foundations had to rest upon a groundbreaking basis. The inspirational source which informed that longed-for sense of dissolution and cleavage with respect to the previous age stemmed from the Roman Republic, with which politicians drew a straight line. For the French institutional frame, the Roman Republic stood for a paradigm, given that it had begun with the overthrow of the Roman monarchy roughly in 508 BC, and had lasted almost five hundred years until its substitution by the imperial government. Most importantly, this Republic embodied all the set of principles and values deemed to be essential for the French nation and citizenship. That is how one of the most enthralling but disquieting journeys back in time began.

As abovementioned, the architects of this building were the artists. Throughout this period there were two figures whose influence was so outstanding that not only did they shape and triumph over the revolutionary scene, but also they set the tone for all contemporary and future creativeness. Amazingly enough, one of them was dead and exercised his power unconsciously, whereas the other one was alive and managed deliberately his cunning empire. We are referring to Voltaire (1694-1778) and Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825) respectively, on whom the emphasis of this essay is partly (although not only) put because they were the first in using a series of recurrent motifs that rapidly spread all over the social scenario.

5. Voltaire´s drama and Jacques-Louis David´s painting as architects of the French Republican Nation

The springboard from which the republican enterprise was launched was Voltaire´s theatre play *Brutus,* that although dated from 1730, it became the symbol *par excellence* of the Revolution. And the reason for this fact was deeply ingrained in David´s *Brutus* (1789) that recovered the quintessence of Voltaire´s drama both to strengthen the ideological ends and to foster the model of male virtue. Jacques-Louis David´s paintings, particularly *The Oath of the Horatti* (1785) and *Brutus* (1789), were transformed into the icons of the Revolution and these works earned him status as the semi-official painter of the Jacobins, as well as a relevant member of the Convention, the Committee of Public Safety and the Art Committee. All this demonstrates that visual arts, drama and public celebrations and happenings were esteemed by the radicals as vehicles for public education in France.

David consecrated himself to illustrate Greek and Roman historical deeds since they exemplified, in the light of Revolution, the noble virtues of patriotism and the revolutionary ideal, the right of citizens to master their own destiny. One of the best samples of this type of art derived from *Brutus*, which was conceived in 1788 and prefigured, through the pictorial technique, the chasm between male and female identities, idiosyncratic of the revolutionary period. When David exhibited the painting in 1789 and 1791, critics realized that the work was divided into two parts: a dark one, in which Brutus remained alone, with his emotions under control, and another one, riddled with colour and light, in which the womanly figures of his wife, daughters and maids were crying before the dead bodies of the sacrificed sons for the Republic. Thereby, two thematic sides, one infused with rationality, the other with emotionality, respectively. The treason of Brutus´ sons to the Republic was not merely an antagonism between father and son, but also a clash between traditional responsibilities, characteristic of the family, and new demands coming from the State. Brutus´ dilemma on his patriarchal duty as his sons´ guardian and his totally new republican engagement with the state maintenance is solved through his sons´ sacrifice and through a coalition between the father´s and the State´s patriarchal body, appraised as an abstract principle identified with the State.

As far as *The Oath of the Horatii* is concerned, in which David painted three brothers swearing faithfulness to their father, it echoed the same ideological procedure as *Brutus.* This work brought Rome to the fore once again, in particular Tulius Hostilius´ kingship (672-640 BC), during which the nearby kingdoms of Rome and Alba were at war. The three Horatii brothers (coming from Rome and ultimately winners), and the three Curati brothers (coming from Alba) fought for their corresponding cities. However, one of the sisters of the

Curati, Sabina, was married to one of the Horatii, whereas one of the sisters of the Horatii, Camila, was engaged to one of the Curati.

David knew how to capture this drama and how to display the most supreme Roman virtue, that of putting loyalty to the State above personal concerns in spite of women´s lamentations and affective bonds. In this intertwining of victory and misfortune, David juxtaposed the portrayal of family and the fatherly authority with that of the State, while transposing the political domain into the private one, and relegating women to a secondary position, that of domesticity. David´s inherent statement is crystal clear: the family is the kernel of the State and each individual must play their role for the good of the nation; while men promise publicly to keep their words, women are mere spectators (Landes 1988: 154-58).

The full significance of these paintings comes afloat when appreciated with regard to the historical circumstances of the era, that is, when we learn that at that time, the National Convention abolished the old laws governing the social and political life in an effort to replace them with a new legislation subduing fathers and rulers´ absolute power to the supreme authority of the State. According to this ideology, this political skeleton definitely abrogated the patriarchy to substitute it for a more democratic entity. As Carol Duncan contends in "Fallen Fathers: Images of Authority in Pre-Revolutionary French Art", the French Revolution was primarily concerned with annihilating the monarchy together with fathers and kings´ supremacy as embodiments of inviolable rights, a measure foreshadowed in the arts since the outset of the 18th century. If for many years, artists exhibited paintings on and off about dethroned kings and outraged fathers, during the second half of the century, painters became very fond of portraying old people, symbols of the patriarchal authority and as such, revered in the western artistic tradition, to discredit them through their sons and servants´ disobedience. And this tendency escalated during the French Revolution (Duncan 1981: 186-202).

Albeit the Directory´s arrival (1795-1799) meant for David his temporary imprisonment and subsequent ostracization, and in 1798 and for the last time, the Council of Five Hundred commissioned a Brutus statue that was located in the Palais Bourbon. If from that date on, both Brutus and David´s reputation declined, the truth is that Brutus´ *leitmotiv* stirred up a thorough revolution that reached its zenith in 1793 and 1794, leaving its indelible mark in paintings, sculptures and graphic arts between 1795 and 1796. The loyalty to this Roman politician was so unshakable that his bust constantly presided over the Jacobin meetings and the revolutionary court rooms. Therefore, Brutus became the heart of the French nation since all events, all discussions and all political decisions were approved or invalidated taking as a model Brutus´ behaviour as well as Voltaire´s *Brutus.*

If David´s *The Oath of the Horatii* and *Brutus* came to life as soon as 1785 and 1789, and forged the guiding tenets and the spirit of the Republic, paradoxically the unconscious precursor was born at the end of the previous century.

One of the most extraordinary events occurred on 17 and 19 November 1790 in Paris at the National Theatre, the days in which Voltaire´s *Brutus*, published in 1730, was performed. During the second performance, David located a bust of Brutus coming from Rome on one side of the stage, and a bust of Voltaire by the sculptor Houdon (1741-1828) on the other, to pay them homage. From that moment on, David, Voltaire and the figure of Brutus formed a

triad, depictive of the French Revolution. The painter David was in charge of arranging the national tribute to Voltaire in 1791 during which certain passages of *Brutus* were read aloud, making of this play a cornerstone of the Revolution. Radicals retrieved Voltaire´s writings for their political project and drew from them, specifically from *Brutus* (1730) and from *La Henriade* (1728), the revolutionary slogans for mass mobilization. The last representation of *Brutus* took place in 1799 (Herbert 1972).

Voltaire´s literary rebirth during revolutionary and radical nationalism is really striking under the prism of his cosmopolitism and ongoing attacks to any nationalist declaration. His dramas were so admired that if in 1778 the clergy had refused to give him burial in Paris due to his criticism to religious intolerance, in 1791 his remains were taken into the city and interred with the ostentation of an emperor.

As an aside, we must remark that the contribution of theatre to the promotion of the political scheme was colossal, since it sparked a shared participation in feelings and emotions of belonging to the same nation. More precisely, theatre performances, due to the simultaneous physical presence of both performers and spectators in the same mental space, opened a new stream of communication between the audience and the actors, whose pattern of behaviour fostered people´s involvement while celebrating collective participation in the nascent social organization (Chappel and Kattenbelt 2006: 24). By reference to this, all kind of performing acts, such as *fêtes,* festivals, carnivals, parades or even music were communal means of inscribing and empowering the new kind of identity (Parker 1990: 38-39).

One could even go farther as to suggest that 1790 and 1791 were landmark years, as far as Voltaire´s magnetism was concerned, in which the brotherhood between arts and politics came extraordinarily into play. In effect, the success of *Brutus* performance in November 1790 guaranteed Voltaire´s apotheosis on 11 July 1791 and his pressing immortalization in different sorts of drawings to exalt the republican heritage. As if by magic, manifold renderings of the event appeared: *The Sarcophagus Transporting the Remains of Voltaire to the Panthéon on 11 July 1791* (anonymous aquatint, 1791), *The Transportation of Voltaire´s Last Remains to the Pantheón* (watercolour or etching, 1791) by François Lagrenée the younger (1739-1821), *The Burial of Voltaire´s Last Remains in the Panthéon* (oil on paper, 1791) by Pierre-Antoine de Machy (1723-1807), *The Triumph of Voltaire* (engraving and etching, 1791) by Antoine Duplessis (1725-1802), *Translation des manes de Voltaire, le 11 juillet 1791* (anonymous popular engraving) or *The Triumph of Voltaire, 11th July 1791* (etching, 1795) by Pierre-Gabriel Berthaul (1748-1819) after Jean-Louis Prieur´s (1732/6-1795) engraving, *The Triumphal Procession of Voltaire on 11 July 1791* (1791). All these paintings emphasized the pageantry of the procession in emulation of classical models: participants were clothed in togas and tunics and bore military standards while Voltaire´s carriage was drawn by horses. In fact, these painters strove to equal the intention behind Jacques Cellerier´s (1742-1814) spectacular display, responsible for stage-managing the ceremony.

6. Following Voltaire and David´s steps, or how other forms of art contributed to nation building

In essence, the interplay between politics and the pictorial tradition shrewdly showed to what extent visual devices could conspire to serve several purposes: firstly, to typify the National Assembly´s deputies as the restorers of the Roman republican legacy and to state

that the triumphal funerary procession was the paradigm of a new era; secondly, to confirm that the Revolution fell heavily upon the Enlightenment and consequently, that its promises had been fulfilled; and thirdly, to manifest that the cortege had been for the glorification of a mere bourgeois, an ordinary man whose literary achievements had been acknowledged. Accordingly, Voltaire´s exequies put an end to the sovereignty of Absolute Monarchy while warmly welcomed the reputed democratic cult of the Great Man, subject which had already been approached by the Abbé de Saint-Pierre (1658-1743) in *Discours sur les différences des grands hommes* (1739). Nonetheless, it is to be remembered that this sort of men veneration was not equivalent to individualism and respect for those ideas that could deviate from the political paradigm. On the contrary, the nature of the Revolution, materialized in the Declaration of the Rights of Men and Citizen, pretended to champion the entrance into a new world in which all those principles were thriving, when actually the infallibility assertion of the General Will, theorized by Rousseau, and of the Reason of State, in parallel with the whole submission to them, gave way to the recasting of the *Ancien Régime* and the reinterpretation of the Divine Right of Kings disguised in republican clothing (Strenski 2002: 56). Well equipped formulas arose, but all of them were borrowed from the past.

This crusade against Absolutism prevailed over the arts. For example, let us take a look at the satirical print *Le Faux Pas*, an anonymous colored etching that dated from July 1791 and that spread extensively in the autumn of 1791. The title of this caricature alluded to Louis XVI´s false step or failed attempt to escape Paris on 21 June 1791; after his failure, Fame is proclaiming with an out of tune fanfare under the inscription "the day of 21 June" that Louis XVI´s heyday has vanished while she is contributing to it by kicking the royal bust off its column. Conversely, a sweet music heralds the onset of a more tolerant government, that of Voltaire, who, placed on a pedestal and enclosed by a halo of stars, is finally admitted into the Panthéon as an immortal being. A similar process occurred with another of the most mighty and persuasive epitomes of the Revolution, the statue of Hercules, the anti-prototype of monarchy and emblem of the power of the masses, although it enjoyed a relatively short life on the revolutionary arena since it was modeled in 1793 and by 1795 it had already disappeared.

If undeniably the indestructibility of a society lies on its legitimacy, this latter notion springs in turn from a cultural framework or a sort of master fiction that allows it to define itself and to diffuse hegemony. Furthermore, this cultural fiction revolves around a central point from which it draws inspiration while concurrently nourishing in citizens a sense of rootedness and community. If under the Old Regime, monarchy and the king´s body acted as supports of a hierarchical order, the French Revolution not only defied this Regime´s political authority, but it called into question its cultural foundations, thoroughly undermining the established social structure and giving birth to an emptiness in its place. Once again, it was the painter David who in 1793 propounded to the Convention the statue-making of Hercules both to encapsulate the French nation and the new Republic (Hunt 1983: 95-117). After all, we cannot ignore that sculptures took an active part, as all the rest of artistic expressions did, in the political program of the hour. Notice for example that due to their strong didacticism, sculptures were regarded by Quatremère de Quincy (1755–1849), arts administrator and writer on art during the Revolution, as agents of Christian moral instruction. Similarly, it was about increasing the didactic effect of art on masses.

Nonetheless, scrutinizing Hercules´ previous uses as a social symbol is rather a bewildering practice, to say the least. Hercules, the ancient Greek hero who symbolized strength and power, was first adopted by the Old Regime to represent the sovereignty of the Bourbon monarchs. Contrary to expectations, during the Revolution, this same Hercules was revamped to adjust to the incipient revolutionary credo and its promising moral system. In this respect, Hercules´ first appearance during the festival commemorating the National Assembly´s victory over federalism on August 10 1793 was a turning point in encouraging the French Republic scheme: Hercules´ sway just mirrored the rule of the French people, the superiority of the nation and the opening of a new age resulting in liberty over oppression. As all was designed with a concrete political goal in mind, the ground behind Hercules´ choosing was found in the fact that he was an acclaimed mythological figure, reminiscent of the republican and democratic ideals prevalent in the classical age, which had been used by the monarchy in subsequent centuries and therefore could be easily recognizable in people´s minds (Reichardt and Kohle 2008: 13-16, 27-28).

Even though the so-called new Hercules seemed to break with former traditions, ultimately they fuelled each other. As his monarchical counterpart, Hercules was an absolutist allegory and panegyric of the ruler´s might and violence, which in this case was not Louis XVI but the sovereign people who had dethroned him in 1792. This was the drive underlying Guillaume Boichot´s (1735-1814) sculpture, *The Power of the Emblem of Hercules* (1795), who tried to parallel Jean Valdor´s (1606-1673) engraving, *The Gallic Hercules* (1649), in which he had depicted Louis XIV as a seated Hercules. Two years before Boichot´s sculpture, in 1793, the newspaper *Révolutions de Paris* widely disseminated an etching called *The People Eats the King* in which the colossal figure of a plebeian Hercules, with the cap of liberty, safeguarded the Republic walls while beating a little king before throwing him onto an expiatory altar, full of flames.

If Hercules statue first appeared in 1793, it was preceded by another statue that bore enormous implications for the constitution of the new Republic. During the second stage of the Revolution (the Legislative Assembly, 1791-1792), particularly in 1792, the image of an ideal citizen called Marianne came forth, strongly affecting the course of daily life through her steadfast and notorious presence: she was everywhere, in newspaper drawings, coins, public sculptures or paintings to name but a few formats, to cry out for a bright beginning, exemplified in the national collectivity. Marianne´s most outstanding body part was her full and naked breasts, symbol of women´s nursing and nurturing powers, attainable to all people, since at her core she personified the motherland and the lap in which those heroes dying for the fatherland could sleep forever. More significantly, she stood for as a political metaphor joining human beings in their multiplicity, thanks to the permanent values she transmitted, "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity", that in the long run helped to construct a gradual adherence and attachment to the French Republic. Yet, as the Republic radicalized with the Convention (1792-1795), the cult of Reason was introduced and women were expelled from the public sphere since their growing political involvement meant a threat to the monopoly of men, it was required to leave room for Hercules statue, the male warrior whose violence illustrated the irrationality of the Reign of Terror (1793-1794). Additionally, the movement from Marianne to Hercules was just the evolution from domesticity to militarism, from a certain tolerance to a high handed submissiveness.

7. The role of the body, gender matters and emotions in revolutionary politics

Once we have journeyed through some of the dissimilar modes upon which the French nation was built, we will explore the importance of gender matters in the reinforcement of revolutionary politics so as to grasp an overall perspective and thereby, to unravel many of its deep-seated causes. Our starting argument is that the ideological program of the French Revolution focused on the coalition between gender and discourse, hinting at the correspondence between women and mother in their reproductive functions and men and father as guardians of the nation by fighting at war. In this vein, one of the bastions of nationalism hinged on the body and consequently, on the somatic construction of the nation. The close identification between the two facets of the body, the private and the public one, justified the way in which corporeity was transformed into a key political resource in Western culture. The body became the icon of social and State order and acted as a vehicle through which power and authority were enforced, State sovereignty redefined and middle-class culture and politics outlined.

According to Dorinda Outram, the French Revolution occasioned an abrupt metamorphosis in the identification with individual bodies that ended up affecting the arrangement and evolution of nineteenth-century public space. And this was the corollary of the middle-class cultural and political triumph over monarchy and aristocracy, which confirmed the necessity of producing new practices and new political symbols. It was not a question of merely discarding overnight monarchical institutions but of ratifying the new politics within an appropriate communal and confident context, constantly examined and exposed to the critical eye. Undoubtedly, this was an arduous task, notably when the social circle had been dominated by the king´s political body for so many centuries. However, the inadequacy to found enduring government organs stemmed in turn from the backwardness of the French Industrialization that paralyzed both the national economy and the establishment of the modern State. Even if the Revolution was unable to give form, accurately speaking, to the State in itself, it was successful enough in defining the limits of the French public setting, which immediately was provided with an overflow of middle-class discourses (Outram 1989). And definitely the flowering of these discourses went hand in hand with political propaganda, namely, popular art in its heterogeneous manifestations as caricatures, engravings or cartoons; in sum, print images quickly understandable by the masses to which the middle class recurred to carve a place for itself. In 1792 Jacques-Marie Boyer-Brun, a royal journalist and vitriolic polemicist, published a book entitled *Histoire des caricatures de la révolte des Francais* in which he stated the hidden maneuvering of pictorial publicity: "It has been observed that in all revolutions, caricatures have been used to mobilize the people, and no one could deny that that procedure is as treacherous as its effects are swift and terrible" (quoted in Reichardt and Kohle 2008: 35). This printmaking indoctrination, called the new malady, broadcasted the ideology of liberty and equality while replacing the propagandist role of religion, propaganda fide. In 1792, French radicals began to enlist Reason´s "apostles" to accomplish an ambitious political agenda that demanded the comprehensive regeneration of the French nation and the corresponding birth of a new man, the republican citizen (Hunt 1980: 11-13). However contradictory this may seem, the Revolution preserved the Old Regime´s pattern in two ways: on the one hand, it endeavoured to distribute the monarch´s body features through the new political body, and on the other, it ascribed the value system to renowned individuals following the Old Regime´s example, that of associating public and heroic dignity with monarchy and

aristocracy. And this was a measure geared to bring politics to the fore to orchestrate revolution and to fuel mass mobilizations.

The revolutionary discourse was distinguished thanks to the invocation of absolute and opposed terms such as vice/virtue, aristocracy/people, private/ public sphere, and through corporal images infused with a moral and historical meaning. But this seems unintelligible without disclosing two factors: firstly, the influence of man in his double nature, public and brave, based on the body exclusion of women, and secondly, the honorableness of the middle-class that grew out of the removal of the bodies of the lower classes. And in fact, this process was not anything new since the French nobility had been securing its prestige through the spread of literary images confronting the aristocratic superiority with folk inferiority. Consequently, middle-class legitimation grabbed hold of the Old Regime´s tactics. The middle class became the point of reference and attracted people´s attention, while controlling the bodies of the rest of the social classes through a constant visual examination. From this viewpoint, cultural politics and cultural medicine alike with its insistence on health and cleanliness were the effect of the body desacralization, of the attempt to erase any theological conviction from it and simultaneously, to pervade bodies with the political doctrine and the interest in citizens as products, commodities and agents of social agreement. It is important to heed that this desacralization historically happened when the revolutionary order deprived the Catholic Church of her conspicuous position within the State, seized her properties and transformed her into a State organ through the 1790 Civil Constitution of the Clergy.

To summarize, during the Revolution the archetype of the national citizen that tended to dominate the European scenario emerged in all those countries in which the construction of national identity was evolving: it was a sort of individual, willing to give their life, emotions and particular interests to their fatherland, always loyal to the national precepts and all the time involved in political and public affairs. Among the most supreme national responsibilities, life offered to the country stood out as a synonym of a citizen´s foremost virtue, that of freedom and boldness. As we have seen, the teaching of this idea could be traced back to Brutus and to the Romans, whose behaviour was a paradigm of masculinity and citizenship, although to tell the whole truth the communication between nation and male and heroic virtues was forged through what could be termed the eroticism of death, which was presented in a fascinating way. Alexander Potts approaches this subject matter in "Beautiful Bodies and Dying Heroes: Images of Ideal Manhood in the French Revolution" where he accounts for the tensions and clashes between the voluptuous aesthetic that surrounded the marble statues of the old masters and the male fantasies about a public and chivalrous life, perceptible in the Greek and Roman Republic. This symbiosis between desire and duty played a crucial role during the radical Jacobin phase of the French Revolution, to which the painter David and the German historian J.J. Winckelman (1717-1768), both fundamentalists of the cult to antiquity, contributed. Whereas the former blended the ideal of classical beauty with a radical republicanism, the latter spent the decade, covering the years between 1750 and 1760, writing on the enticing vision of Greek beauty which, according to him, was connected with the political liberty of Greek States. Hence, revolutionary politicians bombarded people with this brotherhood between the classical aesthetic and the politics of freedom. Not coincidentally, two of their most straightforward instances flew from two French insurgents, whose tragic histories made them national heroes and earned them a prominent place in art.

David´s *The Death of Bara* (1794), produced in the climax of the Jacobin veneration for martyrs, meant the consummation of a well-matured and carefully devised myth for currying the favor with the mob and moving them into action. This myth originated with the newspaper reading before the Convention on December 1793 of Joseph Bara´s (1779-1793) death, a young republican soldier who had died in a fight against the royalists. His demise was seized on as a propaganda opportunity by Robespierre who skillfully distorted the facts to adjust them to the political ideology, turning him into a figure that revolted against the tyranny of the Old Regime at the cost of death. Days afterwards, in a discourse delivered before the Convention, Robespierre transformed Bara´s death into an exemplar drama of virtue and sacrifice, showing that the boy had fallen crying "Long live the Republic!" instead of "Long live the King!" The following months witnessed how David widened the scope of this verbal and visual rhetoric with the official commemoration of Bara together with another young soldier, Viala (1780-1793), who paradoxically had expired before Bara, in July 1793, but whose memory was not invoked by Robespierre until April or May 1794. Regardless of this brief omission, both Bara and Viala were proposed to be admitted into the Panthéon, and though the ritual was postponed and finally cancelled, that did not prevent Claude-François de Payan (1766-1794) from publishing a *Précis historique sur Agricole Viala* (1794). Both Bara´s and Viala´s rising popularity was reinforced by the organizing of a civic festival in their honour. Hence, French society embarked on a permanent attempt to exalt Viala: an engraving of his face was omnipresent in all primary schools, Pierre-Michel Alix (1762-1817) composed a Viala´s head-and-shoulders portrait, and Louis Emmanuel Jadin (1768-1853) wrote the play *Agricole Viala, or The young hero of the Durance,* which was performed in Paris on 1 July 1794. But not only that, in 1794, Étienne Nicolas Méhul (1763-1817) and Marie-Joseph Chénier (1764-1811) released *The Chant du Départ* or *Song of Departure,* a revolutionary and war song that converted into the national anthem of the First Empire (1804-1815) and gave even more protagonism to Bara and Viala, mentioned in the fourth stanza. Last but not least, in 1795 a ship was named after Viala.

Bara´s and Viala´s pictorial portrayal combined the contradiction between the body as a focal point of desire and pleasure with the republican citizen´s ideal subjectivity, suited to a new kind of symbolism and a new kind of mass medium, that of men subjected to the nation´s will with which the male audience was supposed to identify. In *History of the Art of Antiquity* (1764), Winckelmann put forward two reading categories on the male body that had a determinant influence on the meanings imputed by revolutionary politicians to the naked bodies during the 1790´s in the French Neoclassical Art: on the one hand, beauty seen through the spectacle of death as an expression of violence, and on the other, the grandeur of beauty through youngsters´ anatomy. This trend was a sign of the way French liberty was altered and discredited into a distressing and destructive space in which art was politicized and politics conflated with manipulation. From this angle, Bara´s and Viala´s bodies were not just beautiful in their youth, but also graceful and statuesque in their degraded natures, shorn of life. This blending of beauty and violence, or to express it otherwise, the encounter between prowess and mortality, one of the chief features of radical Jacobinism, was divulged by the Committee of Public Safety on 12 July 1794 through the locution "Qu´il est beau de mourir pour la Patrie" or "Sweet and honorable it is, to die for the fatherland!". This message, apart from a range of others, was part and parcel of the revolutionary blueprint, nurtured by the middle class as an effort to assert itself in power (Potts 1990: 1-21).

8. The relevance of pedagogy to national identity

On the face of it, the consolidation of the middle-class power, besides the revolutionary strategy, was by necessity inextricably linked to the rehabilitation of pedagogy, an organic relationship whose existence had already been acknowledged by Rousseau (1712-1778) in *Émile* (1762) and in *The Social Contract* (1762). More accurately still, he considered the latter to be an appendix to the former, since his treatise on education contained the most important principles of his system, hinting at the fact that education and politics were wheels of the same machinery, a commonplace disposition during the Enlightenment and a point on which most philosophers agreed. Curiously enough, Rousseau´s pedagogy and by extension that of the Enlightenment and of the entire age overwhelmingly favored the invasion of the private psychic space, while never appearing to do so, together with an intimidating socialization, since the anthropological and self-assertive beliefs current at that time viewed children as passive entities apt to be modified in perfect accordance with the political mechanism. In fact, by 1755 in his *Discourse on Political Economy* Rousseau had plainly ensured that "the most absolute form of authority is that which penetrates *the inner man*, and has as much influence on his will as on his actions" (1999: 13-14). No wonder then that one of the most recurrent metaphors of the period was the image of the person as wax or as clay in the hands of the potter. As De La Fare claimed in *Le Gouverneur, ou Essai sur l´Education* (1768): "leurs jeunes coeurs étaient entre mes mains une cire molle et flexible que je pétriffais, pour ainsi dire, à mon gré…" (1768: 4). Nor is this likely to surprise that most theoreticians fastened themselves on this pedagogical thinking, and that it was a constant in their writings: from Helvétius (1715-1771) in *De l´ Homme* (1773), through the Treatises of d´Holbach (1723-1789), Condorcet (1743-1794) or Bentham (1748-1832) to Philipon de la Madeleine (1734-1818) in *Vues patriotiques sur l´Education du Peuple tant des villes que des campagnes…* (1783). It is worth remarking that the pressing need to conserve power triggered off a whole doctrine concerned with conditioning the inner self of human beings, but surreptitiously, that is, unbeknownst to people. This cryptic script chanted hopeful and optimistic songs while indeed in practice talked about deliberately negating human will, freedom, responsibility, dignity and the like, so recurrently that it became the official view during the French Revolution. This sort of delirium was appreciated in the usual terminology; words such as *passive agent, generous egoism* and *compulsory volunteer* may seem preposterous although a penetrating gaze is definitely distressing. Accordingly, the Directory issued a decree in which people were encouraged to participate actively in public celebrations. However, the language was so menacing that enthusiasm sounded almost like a threat, granted that it was supposed to be obligatory. Although many thinkers raised their voices against this apparent injustice after sharply observing its latent malevolence, they failed to escape from it. This was the case of Mme. de Staël (1766-1817) whose double posture made her ostensibly approve of free will when at heart she gave inadvertently more strength to the manipulative line of reasoning. Yet, if de Staël harshly vituperated against these linguistic traps, Robespierre (1758-1794) and La Révellière (1753-1824) openly resorted to this oratory to arouse their fellow men. The worst of it was that this ideological engineering was legitimate in the eyes of politicians and lawmakers, since it was motivated by good intentions and done for the best of reasons (Martin 2003: 200).

The conscious struggle to construct a new society from scratch meant that politicians knew perfectly well what they were doing. Indeed, they were fully conscious that emotions were an inalienable condition for the success of the Revolution. This is what Gustave Le Bon

argues in *The Psychology of Revolution* where he declares that despite the rational origins of any social and political upheaval, any cataclysm is only unchained when its arguments have been transformed into sentiments and are ripe for galvanizing the crowd. The unique vehicle that can give man the power to act comes from the energy of affective and mystic factors in charge of sustaining political and religious beliefs. Furthermore, this kind of beliefs constitutes an act of faith unfolded in unconsciousness over which reason has no command and all effort is thwarted. This explains why this act of faith, which can be equated with an absolute truth, becomes inevitably intolerant and why in the name of conviction people are eager to sacrifice all, even their life. Though all great revolutions start from the top and the elite is the point of departure, revolutionaries were acquainted with the fact that the multitude was the agent that would make the disorder progress. In order to reach this goal, they strove to erect the multitude into a mystic entity on which all powers, virtues and adulation were conferred (Le Bon 2007: 12-40).

9. Conclusion

As a way of summarizing, we would like to conclude by saying that in that constructive process, art proved to be, owing to its powerful realism, ideally suited to the development of contemporaneous events, and especially to the sense of rupture with the past. Artists became highly politicized and resorted to media artifacts to reconstitute a new social order and a new citizen concept by the systematic and regular arrangement of events, celebrations, festivals, and by fostering popular journalism, republican clubs and a myriad of artistic vehicles in an attempt to interlace a tight ideological web. This network was ruled by a sort of language consecrated to fix the proper boundaries of the new social and political fabric. As we have seen throughout this paper, intermediality can be pointed up as a brand new type of symbolism attuned to the people, as well as a new mass medium for the time. The brotherhood among words, images, or sounds helped people pass through the national experience and project themselves into the future, immortalizing France meanwhile.

As shown throughout this paper, intermediality proves to be a very useful resource in the hands of politicians, at any time in history, to arrange and give form to the social body. This comprehensive strategy explains to what extent all of us are immersed in a culture that is delimited and circumscribed by discourses that fix for people beforehand what they are supposed to think, feel or how to react to specific forms of art. Liberation and independence from ideological structures only comes afloat when we become more self aware of their *modus operandi* and are able to develop in turn a plan of action to transcend them. (For more information on the concept of intermediality, please see Tötösy, López-Varela, Saussy, and Mieszkowski 2011).

10. References

B. de Huszar, George, ed. *The Intellectuals*. USA: Free Press, 1960.

Chapple, Freda and Chiel Kattenbelt, eds. *Intermediality in theatre and performance.* Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006.

---. "Key issues in Intermediality in Theatre and Performance". *Intermediality in Theatre and Performance.* Ed. Freda Chapple and Chiel Kattenbelt. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006. 11-26.

Cobban, Alfred. "The Rise of the Nation-State System". *Nationalism.* Ed. Anthony D. Smith y John Hutchinson. London: Oxford University Press, 1994. 245-50.

Dauban, Charles Aimé. *Paris en 1794 et en 1795.* Paris: Henri Plon, 1869.

De La Fare. *Le Gouverneur, ou Essai sur l´Education* Paris: Desaint, 1768.

Duncan, Carol. "Fallen Fathers: Images of Authority in Pre-Revolutionary French Art". *Art History* 4.2 (1981): 186-202.

Eagleton, Terry. *Ideología: una introducción.* 1995. Barcelona: Paidós, 1997. 1-100.

Friesen, Norm and Theo Hug. "The Mediatic Turn: Exploring Concepts for Media Pedagogy". *Mediatization.* Ed. Friesen Norm and Theo Hug. New York: Peter Lang, 2009. 63-84.

Hedling, Erik and Ulla Britta Lagerroth, eds. *Cultural Functions of Intermedial Exploration.* Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002.

Herbert, Robert L. *David, Voltaire, Brutus and the French Revolution: an Essay in Art and Politics.* London: Penguin, 1972.

Hunt, Lynn. "Engraving the Republic: Prints and Progaganda in the French Revolution". *History Today* 30.10 (1980): 11-17.

---. "Hercules and the Radical Image in the French Revolution". *Representation* 2 (1983): 95-117.

Kohn, Hans. *Prophets and Peoples: Studies in Nineteenth Century Nationalism.* New York: Collier Books, 1946.

Landes, Joan B. *Visualizing the nation: Gender, Representation, and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century France.* London: Cornell University Press, 2001.

Langford, Rachael, ed. *Textual Intersections.* Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009.

---. "Introduction: Intertextual, Intermedial, Intersections". *Textual Intersections.* Ed. Rachael Langford. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009. 9-16.

Le Bon, Gustave. *The Psychology of Revolution.* USA: Nuvision Publications, 2007.

---. *Psychology des Foules.* Middlesex: The Echo Library, 2008.

Lundby, Knut. *Mediatization.* New York: Peter Lang, 2009.

Martin, Xavier D. *Human Nature and the French Revolution.* Trans. Patrick Corcoran. New York: Berghahn Books, 2003.

Martínez García, Montserrat. Ph. D. *La subversión de la nación en la novela histórica de Walter Scott: relectura de Waverley, Old Mortality y The Heart of Midlothian en clave postmoderna//The Subversion of the nation in Walter Scott´s Historical Novel: re-reading of Waverley, Old Mortality and The Heart of Midlothian from a Postmodernist Perspective// Colección Digital de Tesis de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid. 2010. (*http://eprints.ucm.es/). *ISBN:* 978-84-693-4789-8.

---. "Anti-Nationalism in Scott's Old Mortality". CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture. 12. 1. March 2010. Indiana: Purdue University Press (http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol12/iss1/). ISSN: 1481-4374.

Nairn, Tom. "The Maladies of Development". *Nationalism.* Ed. A. D. Smith and John Hutchinson. London: Oxford University Press, 1994. 70-76.

Outram, Dorinda. *The Body and the French Revolution: Sex, Class and Political Culture.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.

Parker, Noël. *Portrayals of Revolution.* United States: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990.

Potts, Alexander. "Beautiful Bodies and Dying Heroes: Images of Ideal Manhood in the French Revolution". *History Workshop* 30 (1990): 1-21.

Punzi, Maddalena P. *Literary Intermediality.* Germany: Peter Lang, 2007.

---. "Literary Intermediality: An Introduction". *Literary Intermediality.* Ed. Maddalena P. Punzi. Germany: Peter Lang, 2007. 7-26.

Reichardt, Rolf and Hubertus Kohle. *Visualizing the Revolution.* UK: Reaktion Books, 2008.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Discourse on Political Economy and the Social Contract.* Trans and ed. Christopher Betts. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Semali, Ladislaus M. and Ann Watts Pailliotet, eds. *Intermediality.* USA: Westview Press, 1999.

---. "Introduction: What is Intermediality and Why Study it in U.S. Classrooms?" *Intermediality.* Ed. Ladislaus M. Semali and Ann Watts Pailliotet. USA: Westview Press, 1999. 1-30.

Schmidt, Ricarda. "How to Get Past Your Editor: E.T.A Hoffmann´s *Don Juan* as a Palimpsest". *Textual Intersections.* Ed. Rachael Langford. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009. 63-78.

Seton-Watson, Hugh. "The Russian Intellectuals". *The Intellectuals.* Ed. George B. de Huszar. USA: Free Press, 1960. 41-50.

Smith, A. D. and John Hutchinson, eds. *Nationalism.* London: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Staël, Madame de. *Des circonstances actuelles*. 1906. Geneve: Librairie Droz, 1979.

Strenski, Ivan. *Contesting Sacrifice*: *Religion, Nationalism and Social Thought in France.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

The New Oxford Dictionary of English. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Tötösy de Zepetnek, Steven; López-Varela Azcárate, Asunción; Saussy, Haun and Mieszkowski, Jan (Eds.) Thematic Issue: New Perspectives on Material Culture and Intermedial Practice. CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture Journal 13.3 (September 2011) http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol13/iss3/

Valdés, Mario J. "Rethinking the History of Literary History". *Rethinking Literary History: A Dialogue on Theory*. Ed. Linda Hutcheon and Mario Valdés. London: Oxford University Press, 2002. 63-115.

Wagner, Peter, ed. *Icons, Texts and Iconotexts.* Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1996.

---. "Introduction: Ekphrasis, Iconotexts, and Intermediality—the State(s) of the Art(s)". *Icons, Texts and Iconotexts.* Ed. Peter Wagner. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1996. 1-42.

Wolf, Werner. "Towards a Functional Analysis of Intermediality: The Case of Twentieth-Century Musicalized Fiction". *Cultural Functions of Intermedial Exploration.* Ed. Erik Hedling and Ulla Britta Lagerroth. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002. 15-34.

© 2012 The Author(s). Licensee IntechOpen. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

IntechOpen

IntechOpen