



FOUR

The Living Image of the People

JASON FRANK

THE TRANSITION FROM ROYAL to popular sovereignty during the Age of Democratic Revolutions (1776–1848) entailed not only the reorganization of institutions of governance and theories of political legitimacy but also a dramatic transformation in the iconography of political power and rule.<sup>1</sup> Monarchism, especially the absolutist form it took in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, had a well-developed visual regime of power that centered on the body of the king and that helped enact and sustain an external sovereign authority over beholden subjects. This form drew on and extended the medieval symbolism canonically examined by Ernst Kantorowicz in *The King's Two Bodies*, wherein the sacred and eternal *corpus mysticum* endowed the living mortal body of the king with political-theological vitality and significance.<sup>2</sup> The replacement of the personal and external rule of the king with the impersonal and immanent self-rule of the people posed representational difficulties not only of institutionalization and law but of visualization and form. Monarchical divine right and popular sovereignty were embedded within two different cosmologies, and the revolutionary emergence of the people as the legitimate ground of public authority—what Eric Santner, echoing both Kantorowicz and Sheldon Wolin, has described as “the epochal shift from the King’s Two Bodies to the People’s Two Bodies”—created the need for entirely “new images and mythologies of the collectivity.”<sup>3</sup> How to image and envision the people and their authorizing will is an aesthetic-political problem that haunts modern democratic theory, al-

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though it is usually overshadowed by democratic theory's preoccupation with the principles, norms, and procedures legitimizing democratic rule. It is a problem that recent studies of popular constituent power and the paradoxes of peoplehood have brought into view but not yet fully explored.<sup>4</sup>

Edmund Morgan states one of the problems of the people's image and form succinctly in his influential history of popular sovereignty in the Anglo-phone seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. "The sovereignty of the people," he writes,

is a much more complicated, one might say more fictional fiction[,] than the divine right of kings. A king, however dubious his divinity might seem, did not have to be imagined. He was a visible presence, wearing his crown and carrying his scepter. The people, on the other hand, are never visible as such. Before we ascribe sovereignty to the people, we have to imagine that there is such a thing, something we personify as though it were a single body, capable of thinking, of acting, of making decisions and carrying them out, something quite apart from government, and able to alter or remove a government at will, a collective entity more powerful and less fallible than a king or than any individual within it or than any group of individuals it singles out to govern it.<sup>5</sup>

While we might question whether the people must be personified in the way Morgan suggests in order to act (a point I return to below), he does helpfully draw attention to how the emergence of popular sovereignty in the Age of Democratic Revolutions relied on, elicited, sustained, and contested images of sovereign peoplehood. This essay examines some of the pressures of popular visualization that accompanied the victorious appearance of popular sovereignty at key moments of its emergence. I also look at how competing strategies of imaging popular will were implicated in different conceptions of popular agency and power. Images of peoplehood mediate the people's relationship to their own political empowerment—how they understand themselves to be a part of and act as a people. These images facilitate what Santner has described as "the metabolization of democratic authority" within the body politic.<sup>6</sup> I am particularly interested in the emergence of what I call "the living image of the people"—that is, the novel idea that collective assemblies, crowds, and mass protests were no longer understood merely as factious riots or seditious rebellions but instead as living incarnations of

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the people's authority, sublime expressions of the vitality and significance of popular will. In pursuing this argument, I do not intend to uncritically return to the hoary revolutionary myth of the direct expression of a unified and sacred popular voice, or its contemporary echoes in neo-Jacobin theories of popular will.<sup>7</sup> It is a mistake to see crowds, assemblies, and mobs as direct expressions of such sovereignty—they remain an image and potent political representation . . . but a living one. Understanding the historically specific mechanisms of their claims of popular representation helps make sense of the poetic condensations of such events, how, for example, a numerical minority of individuals physically gathered in a public space—whether it is called Tahrir, Zucotti, or Taksim—can be understood to speak and act on behalf of a superior but forever disembodied entity called the people. “In representation,” as Carl Schmitt provocatively writes of such moments, the “invisible” becomes publicly “visible,” and a “higher type of being comes into concrete appearance.”<sup>8</sup> Schmitt's Catholic symbolism called on such moments to secure the transcendental authority of the state; the people's living image exposes a gap in that authority: it does not express a unitary presence of popular will so much as a surplus of immanence.

Alongside most democratic theory, contemporary social science has typically neglected these questions as well, hoping to avoid what Jon Elster describes as the dangerous sins of organicism, holism, functionalism, and teleology.<sup>9</sup> Some social scientists and historians, however, such as Charles Tilly and William Sewell, have traced the dramatic transformation in the repertoires and understanding of crowd actions during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, wherein the charismatic and extralegal authority that had been located in the king's body is transmitted through the living image of the people to mass assemblies and collectivities and through them made visible to the people themselves.<sup>10</sup> Sewell, for example, argues that the French Revolution's “act of epoch-making cultural creativity occurred in a moment of ecstatic discovery: the taking of the Bastille, which had begun as an act of defense against the king's aggression, revealed itself in the days that followed as a concrete, unmediated, and sublime instance of the people expressing its sovereign will.”<sup>11</sup> The idea that popular assemblies and gatherings were manifestations of the people's voice assumes a distinctly modern and democratic form in this period, as does the related idea that this living manifestation is necessary for the people to apprehend themselves as a people, as a collective agent, a new heroic actor on the stage of history. A. V.

Lunacharsky, the “People’s Commissar for Education” in the wake of the Russian Revolution, once wrote, “in order for the masses to make themselves felt, they must outwardly manifest themselves, and this is possible only when, to use Robespierre’s phrase, they are their own spectacle.”<sup>12</sup> The people must see themselves assembled, in other words, in order to feel their power, and this declaration of the vitalizing power of popular self-regard resonated widely among radical republicans, democrats, and socialists in the Age of Democratic Revolutions. Despite the common association of the people’s living image with the fascist political aesthetics of mass assembly and state-orchestrated spectacles of domination—an association that works as a powerful obstacle to democratic theory’s investigation of these questions—Lunacharsky’s declaration continues to resonate in contemporary politics and deserves to be taken more seriously.<sup>13</sup> It challenges the familiar stories democratic theorists often tell themselves about the modern rejection of political aesthetics as antithetical to democratic politics.

Here are the basic outlines of that familiar story. The revolutionary rejection of monarchy during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries corresponded with a concomitant rejection of mystifying pomp and ritualized authority, which, as Catharine Macaulay wrote in her refutation of Edmund Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, “blinded the people with the splendor of dazzling images.”<sup>14</sup> The *ancien régime*, these republicans argued, relied for its authority on “the imposing glare of external magnificence to dazzle and so to awe the subjects into submission.”<sup>15</sup> This powerful association of royal sovereignty with an illegitimate theater of power has shaped the stories that democratic theorists—from Thomas Paine to Jürgen Habermas—often tell about the progressive movement from heteronomous royalism to autonomous democracy. According to Habermas’s influential formalization of this historical transformation, under feudal monarchies publicity and public representation were performances of authority on the part of the monarch and nobility: it was representation not *for* but rather *before* the people. Feudal authority’s multiple public performances—coronation ceremonies, military parades, public feasts and celebrations—depended on the reverential consumption of these performances by an essentially passive *publicum*.<sup>16</sup> The emerging democratic authority of public opinion in the eighteenth century, by contrast, privileged epistemic transparency and consensus over dazzling aesthetic display as the basis of legitimacy. “Spectacle,” in short, was replaced by “discourse.”<sup>17</sup> In a democracy, contemporary democratic theorists tell us,

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the people are a deliberative “public,” not a plebiscitary “audience.”<sup>18</sup> The democratic age was supposed to stop the nonsense, transform subjects bedazzled by the spectacles of power into free and equal ratio-critical citizens capable of deliberating over political power’s proper exercise and extent. Democracy, we are told, “has been disposed to eschew aesthetic devices as instruments of its politics.”<sup>19</sup>

These tales of democratic disenchantment obscure the persistence of political aesthetics during the Age of Democratic Revolutions while also condemning political aesthetics as necessarily antithetical to democratic norms.<sup>20</sup> Maurice Agulhon, one of the greatest historians of the images and symbols of popular sovereignty and revolution, urges readers to reconsider “a common assumption that, in effect, symbolic language and imagery is most strongly linked to the politics of traditional societies, and must necessarily be weaker when politics are self-consciously modern, rational, secular, and conducted by enlightened rulers and citizens.”<sup>21</sup> “For many men of the last century,” he continues, “part of the logic of liberalism, rationalism and secularism involved the elimination or reduction of figurative symbols, the ‘rattles’ of power, in favor of simple politics, with a language of reason and common sense—a relegation of the sacred and the mystical to private life, well hidden.”<sup>22</sup> Political theory has long been preoccupied with what Leo Strauss called the “theologico-political predicament,” but it has only rarely taken up the parallel problem of political iconography, liturgy, and form, considering such questions to be, in Richard Rorty’s words, no longer “salient” to the practical problems of our shared political life.<sup>23</sup> This essay—a brief historiographical survey with theoretical intent—offers a challenge to that logic and is part of a broader project to reexamine and reevaluate the interrelated terms of democracy’s historical and normative disavowal of political aesthetics and to restore an appreciation of political aesthetics—what the editors of this volume describe in the introduction as the scaffolding of popular sovereignty—to contemporary democratic theory.<sup>24</sup>

## I

The frontispiece to *Leviathan* is early modern political theory’s most iconic attempt to visualize the incorporation of the multitude’s dispersed power into the unified representation of the sovereign state; it is a visual conden-

sation of the central arguments of Thomas Hobbes's great work (figure 4.1). We know that Hobbes carefully directed Abraham Bosse's design of the frontispiece from exile in Paris and that Bosse drew on long-established visual repertoires of royal portraiture in its design, as well as on Giuseppe Arcimboldo's influential compositional innovations, which revealed bodies and forms to be assembled from other bodies and forms.<sup>25</sup> These aesthetic innovations were vital for depicting a key aspect of Hobbes's argument: namely, that as an actor and representative, the sovereign's body is composed of the body of all contracting subjects and, conversely, that these subjects only exist as a unified collectivity—a people, properly understood—insofar as they are represented and cohered—produced—through their recognition of the sovereign's authority over them. "A multitude of men," Hobbes writes, "are made One Person, when they are by one man, or one Person, Represented . . . for it is the Unity of the Representer, not the Unity of the Represented, that maketh the Person One. . . . Unity cannot otherwise be understood in Multitude."<sup>26</sup> The frontispiece dramatizes Hobbes's epic theoretical construction of a "mortal god," a "visible power to keep [contracting parties] in awe," and a unifying and productive representation through which the multitude is converted into a single authorizing people capable of acting as a people through the delegated acts of their sovereign representative.<sup>27</sup> "The sovereign," as Hobbes writes, "represents the entire body of the State, encloses in himself all strength and all virtue, and possesses a power like the head over each member of the body."<sup>28</sup> Before Hobbes's preface commands his audience to read themselves into subjection, his frontispiece performs sovereign power's reliance on its own visibility to command the direction of the subjects' gaze.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, it suggests that the direction of the gaze is importantly constitutive of *Leviathan's* entire theory of subjection. The dynamic interplay and circulation of gazes between sovereign, viewer, and enthralled subjects performs the *Leviathan's* visual magic of subjection—for there can be no "Peace without subjection"—wherein the sovereign power is produced by the very subjects who take shape through their shared visual orientation.<sup>30</sup>

However paradigmatically modern Hobbes's great text is taken to be, it remains deeply embedded within the iconography of power associated with royal sovereignty. The care that Hobbes bestowed on the frontispiece, not only of the *Leviathan* but also of earlier texts like *De Cive* and his translation of Thucydides's *History of the Peloponnesian War*, mirrors the care shown by Tudor and Stuart kings and queens in crafting their own public image and

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FIGURE 4.1 Frontispiece to Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* (London, 1651). Rare Book Collection, Cornell University Library, Ithaca, NY

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attending to the close relationship between popular visibility and political power. “Throughout the early modern period,” Kevin Sharpe writes, “image was central to the exercise of authority.”<sup>31</sup> We need only think of the preoccupation with the theatricality of power in Elizabethan drama—Prospero’s spellbinding spectacles—or in early modern political theory—Machiavelli’s glorious acts of public cruelty—to provisionally verify such a claim. One illuminating background context for understanding the political-aesthetic intervention of *Leviathan’s* frontispiece is what Sharpe calls the “image wars” of the English Civil War.<sup>32</sup> As republicans and parliamentarians struggled against the power of king and court during the 1640s, they also confronted a deeply ingrained iconography of rule that supported and sustained, mystified and sacralized, that power, an iconography that “centered on the royal body and the representation of the royal body as the site of sacred kingship.”<sup>33</sup> The sacred authority of the king as expressed in political rituals and religious ceremony, legal and theological doctrines, and literature and drama was organized around the visual appearance of the king’s body and personality. According to Sharpe, it was Henry VIII who more than any previous king had “made the person and personality of the monarch more important than ever and affective relations with subjects more important than administrative procedures in establishing royal authority.”<sup>34</sup> Elizabeth I continued Henry’s effort to rely on carefully crafted symbolism and personal image to represent the sanctity of majesty and to portray herself as representative of the entire nation. “We princes,” Elizabeth declared in 1586, “are set on stages in the sight and view of all the world.”<sup>35</sup> Elizabeth’s body became a “synecdoche for the body of the entire commonwealth,” David Howarth writes, and Elizabeth “knew as well as any Medici, Hapsburg, or Valois the truth of Vitruvius’ adage that royal spectacles had to be cast in such a way as to please the eye of the people.”<sup>36</sup>

In the years leading up to the English Civil War, Charles I more than his immediate predecessors continued Henry VIII’s and Elizabeth’s preoccupation with ritual and symbolism that worked to sanctify the royal body and cohere the nation (figure 4.2), but the veils of opulent majesty were also being stripped away in the political debates of these years, to the point that “the Civil War, still more the regicide, was made possible only by the long process of demystification which had rendered monarchy a human condition and the monarch a man.”<sup>37</sup> This corrosive process of demystification was



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a prominent theme in Shakespeare's royal tragedies. In *Richard II*, for example, Richard proclaims,

Not all the water in the rough rude sea  
Can wash the balm off from an anointed king;  
The breath of worldly men cannot depose  
The deputy elected by the Lord.

But he soon concludes:

Cover your heads and mock not flesh and blood  
With solemn reverence: throw away respect,  
Tradition, form and ceremonious duty,  
For you have but mistook me all this while:  
I live with bread like you, feel want,  
Taste grief, need friends: subjected thus,  
How can you say to me, I am a king?<sup>38</sup>

What can be more desacralizing of royal sovereignty, what de-coronation ceremony more visually astounding, than cutting off the head of the king? Even in death, however, the cultural authority of Charles's visual presence continued to resonate as he was converted by death into a martyr and Christ figure in widely disseminated books, prints, medals, and coins, which began circulating the day of his execution in the *Eikon Basilike* (Icon of the King), the purported account of his life and final days (figure 4.3). "With one stroke of the axe," as Cathy Gere writes in her essay in this volume, "the tyrant in the dock assumed a crown of thorns." While republicans and parliamentarians had won the Civil War politically and militarily, and made great inroads ideologically, they struggled against the persistence of a visual political culture that focused authority on the body of the king even in his death. "The execution of Charles I," Sharpe writes, "and still more the abolition of monarchy, necessitated not only a new constitution and government, but a different style and image, an entirely new form of visual representation, and, beyond that, a new aesthetic. When royal words and verbal forms such as proclamations and declarations might be appropriated and recast as texts of the republic, the visual images of authority, focusing as they had on the dynastic portrait, offered no obvious model for the commonwealth." Ac-

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FIGURE 4.2 *Charles I (1600-1649), in Three Positions*, by Sir Anthony Van Dyck. Oil on canvas, 1635. The Royal Collection, London

ording to Sharpe, “the failure of the English Commonwealth is related to this failure of its iconography of power.”<sup>39</sup>

There are many explanations for the Commonwealth’s failure to provide a resonant and authoritative counterimage of popular—or at least parliamentary—sovereignty, or to visualize a body politic no longer cohered by the physical and sacred body of the king. The first and perhaps most serious obstacle to the development of a republican iconography of popular rule in the wake of the English Civil War was the congenital Protestant iconoclasm that animated so much antiroyal sentiment in the 1640s, and that continued to characterize radical forms of republican politics in the following century. Milton’s *Eikonoklast*, a posthumous justification for the execution of Charles I and a pro-parliamentary response to the *Eikon Basilike*, offers the

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FIGURE 4.3 Allegorical frontispiece to *Eikon Basilike*, by William Marshall (London, 1649). Special Collections, Cambridge University Library, Cambridge

most elaborate articulation of the need to crush the monarchy by also destroying the fetishized images and icons that sustain it; it offers an important chapter in the tangled modern history of popular revolutions with iconoclastic discourse.<sup>40</sup> The utilitarian strain of English republicanism, and its war against the decadent and corrupt pomp and luxury of royalism, also played an important role in the ideological struggle of the Civil War. Parliament had revealingly passed legislation removing the royal arms from all public places, attempting to cleanse the public realm of the iconography of royal power, again setting precedents for popular revolutions to come. Republicans also worried, however, about the considerable difficulties of disen-

thralling an idolatrous people from the ingrained spectacles of royalty. In *The Case of Commonwealth*, the republican propagandist Marchamont Needham lamented that “our former education under monarchy” had “rendered the people admirers of the pomp of tyranny and thus enemies to that freedom which hath been so dearly purchased.”<sup>41</sup> Republicans worried that an “inconstant, irrational, and Image-doting rabble’s” craving for images and sensory enthrallment would undo the gains of freedom and weaken the authority of the Commonwealth. “Like a credulous and hapless herd,” Milton wrote, republicans were worried for a people “begott’n to servility, and enchanted with these popular institutes of Tyranny, subscrib’d with a new device of the Kings Picture at his praiera, hold out both thir eares with such delight and ravishment to be stigmatiz’d and board through in witness of thir own voluntary and beloved baseness.”<sup>42</sup>

In addition to the ideological oppositions and the iconoclasm of the republican revolutionaries was the basic compositional difficulty of developing an image of popular republicanism that would not fall back on the visual repertoires of royal majesty associated with the singularity of the king’s glorious body. Sharpe’s enormous study of the image wars of the 1640s identifies only two efforts to visually depict the newfound popular authority of the Commonwealth, one a heavenly depiction of shaking hands evoking the contractual authority said to underwrite and legitimate the Commonwealth, and the other a portrait of the sitting Parliament. He judges neither effort a success in visualizing a headless republic freed from the unifying corporeal representation of the king. The persistence of the centered and sanctified authority of the royal body is demonstrated not only by the popular and resonant royal iconography of the martyred king but also by how quickly this personalist iconography returned, albeit in a modified republican plain style, once the Commonwealth came to an end and Cromwell’s Protectorate was established. The iconography of Cromwell’s personal power demonstrated, in Sharpe’s words, “the failure of the republic to free itself of the cult of a single person.”<sup>43</sup> Dramaturgical and pictorial conventions were powerful obstacles to envisioning a collective historical agent, the anonymous or impersonal heroism of the people.

This returns us to Hobbes’s frontispiece. Political theorists have sometimes speculated about whether the face of the sovereign is modeled on Charles, Cromwell, or even Hobbes himself. The argument of *Leviathan*,

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after all, works to legitimate the rule of *any* power capable of maintaining order and securing peace, and by 1651 Hobbes's declared royalism was a lost cause. It is significant that Hobbes described *Leviathan* not only as a book that "fights on behalf of all kings" but also "all those who under whatever name bear the rights of kings."<sup>44</sup> However, the "image wars" context of the 1640s directs us away from the head of the sovereign and toward the body. Bosse, under Hobbes's direction, can be seen to be navigating the very visual dilemmas faced by the Commonwealth after the king's execution in 1649, but with greater compositional skill and aesthetic success. *Leviathan's* frontispiece can be understood as a transitional object in the iconographic movement from royal to popular sovereignty. The frontispiece coheres the body of the people in the body of the sovereign, but it does not break dramatically from the iconography that sacralizes the royal body in doing so. In giving the body form through the people it simultaneously coheres, in forming the body entirely of the unified mass of other bodies, it also breaks from the visual mechanisms of the traditional royal synecdoche. If the visual metaphor of the body politic had traditionally worked, as Bruno Latour writes, to "fasten poor assemblies of humans to the solid reality of nature," to simultaneously allow the political community to be seen as a unity and to naturalize that unity,<sup>45</sup> *Leviathan's* frontispiece makes an artificial assemblage of this metaphor—indeed, it dramatizes its artificiality—but without abandoning the inherited iconic political authority Sharpe and other historians have traced in their treatments of the aesthetics of royal power. The frontispiece reunifies the sovereign body riven by the Civil War, wherein, as Kantorowicz writes, Parliament, "in the name and by the authority of Charles I, King body politic," summoned "the armies which were to fight the same Charles I, king body natural."<sup>46</sup> If Charles I and his royalist supporters insisted on the inseparable identity of the mystical and corporeal body of the King, and Parliament divided the body politic against the king's mortal body, and pitted King against king, *Leviathan's* frontispiece visually demonstrated them to be necessarily interdependent, each a condition of the other's possibility, and it suggested that this unity could only be brought about through a theory of political representation that was also what Horst Brederkamp has called a "picture-theory of politics": "There has been no philosopher or theorist of state before or since," Brederkamp writes, "who so emphatically pursued visual strategies as core political theory."<sup>47</sup>

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## II

Visual strategies were central to monarchical authority, and Charles was not the only mid-seventeenth-century spokesman for the sanctity of the royal flesh. Across the Channel, where he and his court sat in exile, the Sun King was developing the most elaborate and visually opulent articulation of the absolutist ideal (figure 4.4).<sup>48</sup> “As we are to our people,” Louis proclaimed, so “our people are to us. The nation does not make a body in France; it resides entirely in the person of the king.”<sup>49</sup> Or more famously: “L’État c’est moi.” Robespierre would reverse this formulation’s trajectory of authorization at the end of the next century, even while maintaining Louis’s insistence on sanctified political embodiment, when he proclaimed on the floor of the National Convention: “I am neither the courtier, nor the moderator, nor the defender of the people: I am the people myself!”<sup>50</sup> The political theology of sacred kingship was more deeply established in seventeenth-century France than in England, and also more central to its discourses of democratic revolution after 1789. As Burke knew well, the revolutionary struggle against the ancien régime targeted this dense and interconnected network of ecclesiastical and civil authority, just as the counterrevolution sought to sustain or restore its shattered integrity. In his study of the Revolution’s reliance on the metaphors of the body politic, Antoine de Baecque argues that even more than in the English context, the “defeat of the body of the king represents a major caesura or gap in the French system of political representation”<sup>51</sup> just as the regicide marked the end of declared republican unity. The political theology centered on the ordering sovereign body of the king was destroyed with the beheading of Louis XVI, and the consequences reverberated in French political culture through the following centuries. The revolutionary emergence of the people was a more traumatic psychic event in France partly because it was portrayed as a necessary sacrifice enabling the political emergence of the autonomous French nation. “Louis must die because the *patrie* must live,” as Robespierre famously declared.<sup>52</sup> The sacrificial structure of revolutionary democracy in France has been analyzed by political theorists as diverse as Georges Bataille and Michael Walzer, René Girard and Hannah Arendt, with some theorists affirming its structural necessity in the transition to constitutional republicanism and others lamenting its mythic investments in a dangerous political theology.<sup>53</sup> It has

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been familiarly portrayed “as the ritualistic founding act of a new social order, attributing to Louis the unusual sacred status of a sacrificial victim who possesses the supernatural ability to purify and regenerate the nation through his own death,” as Susan Dunn writes in her study of the symbolism of regicide in French political thought over two centuries. “Regicide was regarded as the essential founding act and founding myth of the new French nation.”<sup>54</sup> The revolutionaries did not simply want to destroy the mortal body natural and preserve the immortal body politic—as the English Parliament had done its claim on behalf of the King against the king—but to destroy both simultaneously and replace it with an entirely new body politic of the independent and sovereign French people.

In his analysis of the trial and execution of Louis XVI, Michael Walzer examines the operation of this sacrificial logic in the trial and the broader public debate it engendered, and he defends the king’s execution as a necessary step in the political and symbolic transition from royal to popular sovereignty. “The monarchy is not a king,” as Saint Just would proclaim, “but is itself a crime.”<sup>55</sup> According to Walzer, the French people required the sublime spectacle of the king’s public beheading in order for the authorizing symbolism and political theology supporting the monarchy to be effectively shattered. “The ceremonies make the decisiveness,” he writes. “Without the public acting out of revolutionary principles, not merely in front of the nation, but in ways that involve and implicate the nation, those principles remain a party creed, the revolution no more than a seizure of power.”<sup>56</sup> Walzer’s argument is more than a contextualized reiteration of what Arendt once described as “the age-old yet still current notions of the dictating violence of all beginnings,” or the ancient idea that “whatever brotherhood human beings may be capable of has grown out of fratricide, whatever political organization men may have achieved has its origin in crime.”<sup>57</sup> It is not only founding violence or the breach in established law that Walzer emphasizes in his interpretation of the king’s trial but rather that the subsequent terrible spectacle of the regicide performed “the symbolic disenchantment of the realm as well as the establishment of a secular republic.”<sup>58</sup> The king was killed not only as a “justiciable individual,” in Walzer’s words, accused of a crime (treason) but also as a sanctified symbol of royal sovereignty. For Walzer’s provocatively extralegal political analysis, the spectacular beheading of Louis, the symbolic center of sacred kinship, was necessary for the more secure establishment of secular law in a republican



FIGURE 4.4 *Equestrian Portrait of Louis XIV (1638–1715) Crowned by Victory*, by Pierre Mignard. Oil on canvas, c. 1692. Chateau de Versailles, France

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constitutional regime. In order for the new scaffolding of popular sovereignty to be erected, the old scaffolding had to be spectacularly destroyed.

It is a compelling argument, but as the revolutionary language surrounding the king's execution makes clear, the public beheading of the king should not be understood as an instance of secular disenchantment, and to this extent the secularization thesis that frames Walzer's argument is misleading: the execution marked the transference of sacred sovereignty, not its overcoming, from the destroyed body of the king to the living body of the sovereign people.<sup>59</sup> The familiar narrative of democratic disenchantment obscures the emergence of another political theology with an alternative set of political institutions and laws, as well as an alternative scaffolding of competing liturgies and iconographies, now centered on the sublime authority of the people's sovereign will. As with the iconoclasm of the English Civil War, in order to clear the way for the emergence of this newly sanctified source of sovereign power, the revolutionaries set about destroying not only the body of the king but also the enchanted visual tokens of kingship. "The revolutionaries had to deface, disqualify, and dispel the effigy of the sovereign by all means," Dario Gamboni writes, "including the beheading of the actual king, in order to destroy the symbolic order of the ancient regime."<sup>60</sup> The revolutionaries did not only present the severed head of the king to the exuberant crowds at the Place de la Révolution (figure 4.5), they melted down the king's scepter and crown, pressed the metals, and disseminated them as republican coins. Nobody grasped the political importance of this radical revolutionary iconoclasm—this "conquering empire of light and reason" and its destruction of "pleasing illusions" and the "decent drapery of life"—more clearly than Burke in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, the book that more than any other set the stage for subsequent counterrevolutionary calls for political-theological restoration.<sup>61</sup>

As with the English Civil War, the iconoclasm of the French Revolution was generated by powerful ideological forces, although forces more indebted to republicanism and the *philosophes* of the French Enlightenment than to radical Protestantism. French republicans, like their English counterparts, as Joan Landes writes, "generally distrusted the seductive quality of the image which they linked to the spectacular ceremonial culture of the old regime."<sup>62</sup> In eighteenth-century France, the republican critique of royal pomp and splendor—what Barbara Stafford has called the "republican discourse



FIGURE 4.5 *Fin Tragique de Louis XVI, exécuté le 21 janvier 1793 sur la place Louis XV, dite place de la Révolution*. Signed in the plate, lower left and right: “Dessiné d’après nature par Fious / Gravé par Sarcifu.” Waddesdon, The Rothschild Collection (The National Trust)

of graphic despotism”<sup>63</sup>—was philosophically enhanced by empiricism, materialism, and the eighteenth-century conceptions of public opinion and deliberative discourse that Habermas makes so central to his story in *The Structural Transformation of the Bourgeois Public Sphere*. Condorcet, for example, had associated images with a more primitive and noncognitive form of human communication and writing with “higher processes of intellection.”<sup>64</sup> Images seduced the passions, texts enlightened the mind; images elicited enthusiastic mobs or idolatrous throngs, texts circulated among a deliberative ratio-critical public. Expressing this confident empirical realism, the republican moralist Jean-Baptiste Salaville demanded that “the people will have to free themselves of the old allegories, and be accustomed to seeing in a statue only stone, and in an image only canvas and colors.”<sup>65</sup>

While such iconoclasm animated the thinking of many French republicans, and some argued, in Lynn Hunt’s words, that “a people with access to print and public discussion needed no icons,”<sup>66</sup> there was arguably an even more pronounced effort to transform passive royal subjects into active republican citizens through an education of the senses that involved

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immersing citizens-to-be in a radically reformed visual culture, especially as the Revolution radicalized under the Convention from 1792 to 1794. Sophie Wahnich has written that “we might consider the entirety of revolutionary political work as aiming to consolidate the principles declared in 1789 and 1793, and to make them operate as unreflecting prejudices, in other words to take them out of the possible sphere of discussion.”<sup>67</sup> The Revolution, the Convention declared, “must create in man, as far as moral issues are concerned, a rapid instinct that will lead him to do good and avoid ill without the support of reasoning.”<sup>68</sup> While “ridiculous hieroglyphs of the blazon are no longer for us [revolutionaries] anything more than historical objects,” the Abbé Grégoire proclaimed in 1794, “when rebuilding a government anew, everything must be republicanized. The legislator who fails to recognize the importance of the language of signs would be remiss; should he omit any opportunity to impress the senses, to awaken republican ideas. This way the soul is penetrated by ever reproduced objects; and this composition, this set of principles, facts and emblems that ceaselessly retraces before the eyes of the citizen his rights and duties, shapes the republican mold that gives him national character and the bearing of a free man.”<sup>69</sup>

As many historians of revolutionary France have documented, the visual culture of Revolution was a crucial part of this enterprise, and revolutionary iconoclasm was always entangled, if not entirely superseded, by revolutionary iconophilia. The revolutionary “veneration of the image and the destruction of the image,” as Klaus Herding writes, “were very closely connected.”<sup>70</sup> “The Revolution,” Marie-Hélène Huet similarly concludes, “had a paradoxical relationship to images.”<sup>71</sup> Among the most important questions facing leaders of the Revolution’s projects of aesthetic and political reform, most notably Jacques-Louis David, was how to replace the mysticism of royal iconography, with its emphasis on the sacred flesh of the king and the cohering power of his body, with that of the people themselves, who had been proclaimed in Article 3 of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen “the source of all sovereignty”: “No body, no individual can exercise authority that does not explicitly proceed from it.” The transfer of sacred authority from the personified body of the king to the independent but impersonal and anonymous will of the people created an aesthetic-political dilemma for David and others. A central controversy and source of conflict was not only how to represent or institutionally embody that will but

whether any representation could adequately or legitimately contain it.<sup>72</sup> This mistrust of representation distinguishes French revolutionary experience from the English revolutions that came before it. “French Revolutionaries did not just seek another representation of authority, a replacement for the king,” as Lynn Hunt writes, “but rather came to question the very act of representation itself.” During the Revolution, and especially under the Convention, “representation in all of its forms came under scrutiny.”<sup>73</sup> François Furet first emphasized the extent to which the identity of the people was at “the heart of so many of the political contests in the vacuum opened up by the collapse of the *ancien régime*.” “Which group, which assembly, which meeting, which consensus is the depository of the people’s word?” Furet asks. “It is around this deadly question that the modalities of action and the distribution of power organize themselves.”<sup>74</sup> The revolutionary suspicion of representation, the radical Rousseauian preoccupation with the unrepresentability of popular will, is the central condition of what Huet calls the “discourse of the revolutionary sublime” and its contribution to revolutionary and sometimes quasi-mystical efforts to envision popular sovereignty.

Revolutionary struggles over the political and institutional representation of popular will and their aesthetic corollaries were more closely connected than most democratic theorists acknowledge, although this fact is widely recognized by historians of the Revolution. The Revolution, Furet writes, was a “political phenomenon that involved powerful new forms of political symbolization,” and the struggles over these symbols—visual and otherwise—was a key currency of revolutionary politics. In a wide-ranging interview, Claude Lefort and Pierre Rosanvallon pursue this issue through a discussion of the connections between the political and aesthetic representation of popular will. In his democratic theory Lefort influentially argued that popular will is fundamentally unrepresentable in its totality, that modern democracy is defined by the disembodiment of power and the “empty space” opened up by the killing of the king. “The Legitimacy of power” in a democracy, he writes, “is based on the people; but the image of popular sovereignty is linked to the image of an empty place, impossible to occupy, such that those who exercise public authority can never claim to appropriate it. Democracy combines these two apparently contradictory principles: on the one hand, power emanates from the people; on the other,

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it is the power of nobody. And democracy thrives on this contradiction. Whenever the latter risks being resolved or is resolved, democracy is either close to destruction or already destroyed.”<sup>75</sup> Rosanvallon notes that during the Revolution the question of the visual representation of the people was taken up with just this problem of “resolution.” “The painters and the engravers were not quite able to represent the people,” he argues, and “their artistic debates became entangled with debates among different political factions over who the people were and how their voice could be authoritatively represented.”<sup>76</sup>

Under the Convention these disputes temporarily subsided—and were dangerously “resolved”—as a relatively stable visual depiction of popular will emerged in the figure of a giant Hercules wielding his club. The Hercules had long been a heroic figure of French royal sovereignty—the “Hercule Gaulois” – and became especially predominant during the absolutist reign of Louis XIV.<sup>77</sup> The Hercules, as the municipal authorities of Valenciennes proclaimed in 1680, was the perfect figure to “express the image of . . . MAJESTY. He is the strongest and most celebrated of all the fabled Heroes, who will represent without exaggeration and with the greatest truth the most valorous and triumphant of all the Monarchs of the world.”<sup>78</sup> In this figure’s radical democratic redeployment under the Convention, Hercules not only embodied the massive power and unity of the popular will—in this image he was defined against the hydra of federalism (figure 4.6) and against the proliferation of intermediate institutions celebrated by such figures as Montesquieu—but also depicted the immediacy of popular will and its close relationship to necessity and force as represented in his giant club. Hercules is obviously not a figure of persuasion or deliberation but of instinctive virtue, courage, and force. Hercules is the figure of a mobilized radical democracy against the established procedures of liberal constitutionalism. In her reading of this symbolism, Lynn Hunt writes that the figure of Hercules was a “representation that strained against its own representative status . . . [a] diminishing point of representation.”<sup>79</sup>

David was a central figure in revolutionary debates over the visual depictions of popular will, and he was the leading proponent of the Convention’s adoption of the new Hercules iconography.<sup>80</sup> In a speech delivered before the Convention in 1793, David quite explicitly addressed the revolutionary transfer of sacrality from king to people and the dilemmas of depicting this political-theological transference in art:

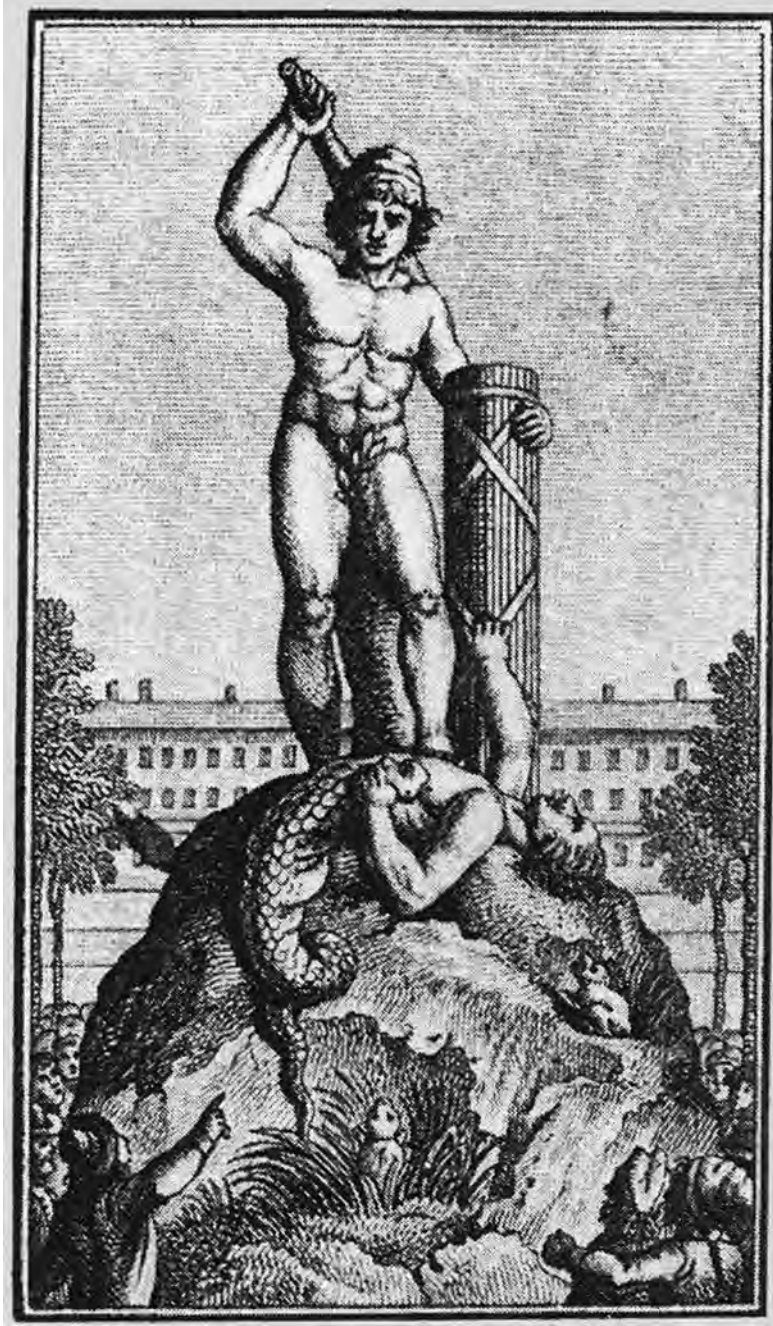


FIGURE 4.6 *The French People Overwhelming the Hydra of Federalism*, by Jacques-Louis David. Engraving, 1793. Musée Carnavalet, Paris. Photo by Lynn Hunt

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## STAGES

Kings, not being able entirely to usurp the place of divinity in the temples, occupied the porticoes; they had their proud effigies placed there, no doubt so that the adoration of the people would linger with them before reaching the sanctuary. Accustomed to invading everything, they dared to dispute vows and incense with God Himself. You have turned upside down these insolent usurpers; they lie at this instant stretched out on the earth that they befouled with their crimes, objects of derision now to the populace finally cured of superstition. Citizens, let us perpetuate this triumph of reason over prejudice; let a monument be raised in the heart of the commune of Paris, not far from that of the very church they made their pantheon! Let us transmit to our descendants the first trophy raised by the sovereign people to mark its immortal victory over tyrants; may the truncated debris of their faces, confusedly heaped together, form a lasting monument to the glory of the people, and to the downfall of tyrants. . . . What I propose is to place this monument assembled from the piled-up rubble of those figures on the square of Pont Neuf and to mount above it the image of the giant people, the French people.<sup>81</sup>

David's proposal to erect a statue of Hercules as the symbol of the people's sovereignty on the rubble of the destroyed royal effigies taken from the porticos of Notre Dame expresses a common revolutionary fantasy that the shards of shattered royal sovereignty might be reassembled as the scaffolding of a new sovereignty, and it contributed to larger debates, especially among the Jacobins, over how the people could come to see their own power and natural virtue made manifest so they could live up to their own inner truth and capacity. "The radicals called on the people to look at themselves," Hunt writes, "to recognize themselves as central figures, to make their 'terrible cry resound in the halls of the Convention as well as the streets of Paris.'"<sup>82</sup> As Marx would later write in *The Poverty of Philosophy*, the people had to be made at once "authors and actors of their own drama,"<sup>83</sup> and these spectacles of democratic self-regard were important aspects of the emergence of this new collective actor on the stage of political history.

The fact that the Hercules was first erected during the Festival of Regeneration on August 10, 1793 raises other issues about the representation of popular will as inaugurated by the Revolution's radical political culture of festival and popular assembly, and in particular the expansive efforts to give aesthetic form to the radicals' most cherished self-understanding: the belief in their own Promethean powers, their constituent capacity to make

the world anew, the central animating idea that, in Furet's words, "democratic politics had come to decide the fate of individuals and peoples," and that Rosanvallon calls "the radical project of a self-instituted society," a view of "politics as pure action, the unmediated expression of a directly perceptible will."<sup>84</sup> Rousseau's influence was everywhere in the debates over civic festivals and the great lawgiver's education of the popular will.<sup>85</sup> In his *Letter to D'Alembert*, Rousseau had contrasted the corrupt and alienated theatricality of the stage to the virtuous and authentic absorption of the peasant festival. In his *Government of Poland*, he had urged the Polish government to institute annual festivals commemorating the heroic sacrifice of the nation. And in the *Social Contract* the sovereign assemblies of the General Will are portrayed as sublime expressions of the people's inner virtue rather than spaces of political contention or common deliberation.<sup>86</sup> According to Mona Ozouf, in her study of the Revolution's festivals, "everyone dreamed of the revolutionary festival as a village festival without spectacle, enlarged to the dimensions of the entire nation."<sup>87</sup> The revolutionary festivals aimed for theatrical nontheatricality, an effort to make the people present to themselves, but purportedly without artifice and corrupting mediation, and through this revolutionary self-regard to instill into the senses and the heart of the people the civic myth and religion of their own popular constituent capacity. The people must see themselves assembled in order to feel their power, and Robespierre declared the "most magnificent of all spectacles is that of a great people assembled."<sup>88</sup> This spectacle of the people viewing themselves purportedly without mediation, without representation, was a powerful part of the resonant radical myth of the following century, the sublime myth of "revolutionary democracy."<sup>89</sup>

Michelet, the romantic worshiper of the sublime and rejuvenating vitality of popular will par excellence,<sup>90</sup> emphasized this heroically self-originating and constituent capacity in his *History of the French Revolution*, a book written during the revolutionary upheavals of 1848, when the discourse of the ineffable sublimity of the popular will reached its nineteenth-century apotheosis, partly due to the central political question of enfranchising the popular masses—which also raised the specter of "the social question"—but also due to the reappearance of a mobilized collective actor on the streets of Paris in February, May, and June. Looking back on the revolutionary festivals from the perspective of the upheavals of 1848, Michelet emphasized the radicals' effort to confront the intrinsic dangers of idolatry and reification

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in their representations of popular will. “It was objected,” Michelet writes, “that a fixed simulacrum might remind the people of the Virgin and create another idolatry. . . . So a mobile, live and animated image was preferred. This image, changing with every festival could not become the object of superstitious adoration.”<sup>91</sup> The Jacobins, in the words of Anaxagoras Chaumette, the elected president of the Commune and organizer of the Festival of Reason, aimed to replace “inanimate idols” of power with the “animated image” of the people through the sublime spectacle of orchestrated popular assemblies and festivals.<sup>92</sup>

The affirmation of the people’s living image was reiterated by radical republicans against post-Thermidor efforts to make depictions of the people more allegorical, emblematic, and abstract—most obviously exemplified in the figure of Marianne—so that the people would become equated not with a living, acting, regenerative power but with the abstracted offices of the state and its authorized seals and legal symbolism. After Thermidor, as de Baecque writes, “the Revolution came to prefer the easily controllable, reassuring representation of a principle: the gentle figure of liberty.”<sup>93</sup> This change in popular representation marked the transition from the people conceived as “actors of the narrative bound by their own adventure, to that of spectators of a body to be contemplated.”<sup>94</sup> Marianne is the paradigmatic postrevolutionary example of what Jeffrey Schnapp describes as the “emblematic” mode of representing the sovereign people, symbolic allegories that emphasize defining principles or virtues over agency, and which he opposes to the “oceanic” mode of representing popular will, always “associated with moments of collective infusion within the framework of the political sublime.”<sup>95</sup> In this transition we see alternative stagings for very different visions of democratic power.

The revolutionary fear of the people becoming a reification, a dead or inanimate idol, is reiterated in the “diffuse revolutionary populisms” of the nineteenth century and their commitment to the expressive and rejuvenating vitality of popular insurrection; Rosanvallon describes this discourse as the “poetry of the barricades.”<sup>96</sup> Looking back on the revolutionary century from the Third Republic, Gustave Le Bon proclaimed it the “age of the crowd” and associated its politics with a politics of images: “crowds being only capable of thinking in images are only to be impressed by images. It is only images that terrify or attract them and become motives of action.”<sup>97</sup>

Le Bon's reactionary view of the people's living image not only influenced the fascists, who mobilized it in their terrible seizures of power in the next century, but also the parliamentary democrats, who devised legal and procedural obstacles to what they conceived as the dangerous ascent of plebiscitary democracy.

Contemporary democratic theorists often seem to follow crowd theorists like Le Bon when they look back on the political catastrophes of the twentieth century and associate the politics of the people's living image with the new and dangerous styles of mass assembly and state-orchestrated spectacles of domination given fullest articulation in fascism. Such mass assemblies are understood as terrifying liturgies of a new "political religion," murderous efforts to reinvest the public realm with sublime significance.<sup>98</sup> In Lefort's words, the indeterminate "image of the people" associated with democracy's "empty space" is filled through the manifestation of this living image with the terrible visual fantasy of "the People-as-One."<sup>99</sup> In *On Revolution*, for example, Hannah Arendt portrays the French Revolution's crowds as the furthest thing from sublime instantiations of sovereign will; instead they are terrible manifestations of physical needs and compulsions that had hitherto remained hidden from the political space of appearances. "This multitude, appearing for the first time in broad daylight," Arendt writes, "was actually the multitude of the poor and the downtrodden, who every century before had hidden in darkness and in shame."<sup>100</sup> Arendt thought even less of the Revolution's festivals, which she described as "wretched and foredoomed substitutes for the constitution," substitutes that had moreover "failed utterly." The "ridiculousness of the enterprise," Arendt concludes, "was such that it must have been manifest to those who attended the initiating ceremonies as it was to later generations."<sup>101</sup>

Was the attempt to initiate and sustain a living image of the people so ridiculous—or worse, was it a grotesque anticipation of nationalist torchlight parades and state-orchestrated spectacles of domination? Many theorists of totalitarian democracy have thought so, but the revolutionary invocation of the people's living image should not be simply reduced to a dangerous effort to fill the empty space of power with the glorious body of the people or a wholesale rejection of political representation in the name of the direct expression of popular will. The living image of the people is not a unitary embodiment of the imminent "people-as-one" so much as the manifestation

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of the collective effort to burst the bounds of any formally authorized representation of sovereign voice. In these contexts, the assembled crowd inaugurates the people not as immanent presence but as surplus excrescence, revealing a surplus of democratic immanence and always less and more than the people in whose name they act.

In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson wrote that when we study the history of peoples we should not be primarily concerned with their “genuineness” or their “falsity” but rather with “the style in which they are imagined.”<sup>102</sup> A particular style of imagining peoplehood is an unavoidable part of democratic theory, but one democratic theorists rarely explicitly engage. Confronting these questions helps us understand not only how a people is historically represented—who is included, their qualities and characteristics, their capacities for action—but also how individuals come to experience and feel themselves as a part of this mobilized and empowered collectivity in the first place. The people need such mediation to act as a people, even if their acts will also transcend the bounds of these mediating conditions. “Modern revolutions,” Sheldon Wolin writes, “involved the vast masses of human beings in action, not just fictionally as in the myth of popular sovereignty. More precisely, modern revolutions created the idea of collective action thereby contesting the monopoly on action previously enjoyed by kings, military leaders, aristocrats and prelates.”<sup>103</sup> The living image of the people is an important part of the story of this transition in how we understand political action and collective political actors. Where the people’s will is sovereign, such assemblies make available to the senses the agency, equality, and collective capacities of the people. At its heart is the question of how people come to experience themselves as a part of a sovereign power, how that authority is, again in Santner’s terms, “metabolized.” With democracy the people replaced the monarch, and “sovereignty was dispersed from the king’s body to all bodies,” Santner writes. “Suddenly every body bore political weight.”<sup>104</sup>

As the crowds gathered in Tahrir Square in January and February 2011 they set up television monitors to watch themselves nightly on the evening news. It is not clear that this should be simply dismissed as ideological enthrallment to the spectacle, a revolution that must be televised. How we come to experience ourselves as free and equal parts of a collective entity capable of transformative action was a key question for theorists and actors of democracy at the time of its difficult emergence, and it is a problem left

unresolved by appeals to formal democratic procedures, electoral representation, or public opinion polling. The living image of the people haunts the theory and practice of democracy in ways that we have yet to fully engage and understand. A closer examination of its history and its theory may help us see more clearly that there is no people beyond the people's appearance and act—and that the formation of a people is always both a political and an aesthetic problem. This is a useful reminder in a time when democratic theory proceeds largely without consideration of the demos and our most influential theories of collective action are premised on the impossibility of a collective actor.

### Notes

I would like to thank Richard Bense, Jodi Dean, Kevin Duong, Stefanos Geroulanos, Bonnie Honig, Alex Livingston, Davide Panagia, Camille Robcis, Kam Shapiro, and Sid Tarrow for their helpful and provocative comments on an earlier draft of this essay. I could not fully address all of their questions here, but the essay was made better by my attempt to do so.

1. R. R. Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959).
2. Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957).
3. Eric Santner, *The Royal Remains: The People's Two Bodies and the Endgame of Sovereignty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), xviii; Jeffrey T. Schnapp, "Mob Porn," in *Crowds*, ed. Jeffrey T. Schnapp and Mathew Tiews (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 1–45. Clifford Geertz's classic work on the importance, and perhaps necessity, of "sacred centers" in cohering the symbolism of power, especially around the location of sovereignty, is directly relevant here. See his "Centers, Kings, and Charisma," in *Local Knowledge* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 121–46. I am grateful to Richard Bense for illuminating discussions of this issue.
4. See, e.g., Jason Frank, *Constituent Moments: Enacting the People in Postrevolutionary America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); Bonnie Honig, "Between Decision and Deliberation: Political Paradox in Democratic Theory," *American Political Science Review* 101, no. 1 (2006): 1–17; and Sofia Nässtrom, "The Legitimacy of the People," *Political Theory* 35, no. 5 (2007): 624–58.
5. Edmund Morgan, *Inventing the People: The Rise of Popular Sovereignty in England and America* (New York: Norton, 1989), 153.
6. Santner, *Royal Remains*, 34.
7. See, e.g., Peter Hallward, "The Will of the People: Notes Towards a Dialectical Voluntarism," *Journal of Radical Philosophy* 155 (May/June 2009): 17–29.

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8. Carl Schmitt, *Constitutional Theory*, trans. Jeffrey Seitzer (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 243.
9. Jon Elster, *Alexis de Tocqueville, The First Social Scientist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 4.
10. Charles Tilly, *Contentious Performances* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); William Sewell, "Historical Events as Transformation of Structures: Inventing Revolution at the Bastille," in *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 225–70.
11. Sewell, "Historical Events," 236.
12. From "On Popular Festivals," originally published in the journal *Theatre Courier*, 27 April–2 May 1920, and reprinted in Vladimir Tolstoy, Irina Bibikova, and Catherine Cooke, eds., *Street Art of the Revolution: Festivals and Celebrations in Russia, 1918–33* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1990), 124.
13. On the fascist political aesthetics of mass assembly see George L. Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses* (New York: Fertig, 1975); and Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi, *Fascist Spectacle: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini's Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).
14. Catharine Macaulay, *Observations on the Reflections of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke, on the Revolution in France* (1790; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 39.
15. John Barrell, *Imagining the King's Death: Figurative Treason, Fantasies of Regicide 1793–1796* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 15.
16. See Jürgen Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 8, 10.
17. Philip Rieff, "Aesthetic Functions in Modern Politics," *World Politics* 5, no. 4 (July 1953): 478–502, 480.
18. Nadia Urbinati, *Democracy Disfigured: Opinion, Truth, and the People* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 171–227, 184.
19. Rieff, "Aesthetic Functions in Modern Politics," 480.
20. Claude Lefort once insightfully noted "the unavoidable—and no doubt ontological—difficulty democracy has in reading its own story," and democracy's failure to come to terms with the staging of its own sovereignty is a notable symptom of that difficulty. Lefort, *Democracy and Political Theory*, trans. David Macey (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 213–55, 255.
21. Maurice Agulhon, "Politics, Images, and Symbols in Post-Revolutionary France," in *Rites of Power: Symbolism, Ritual, and Politics Since the Middle Ages*, ed. Sean Wilentz (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 177–205, 187.
22. *Ibid.*, 194.
23. Leo Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, trans. E. M. Sinclair (New York: Schocken, 1965), 1; Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). Rorty arguably returned to political theology in his later embrace of the civil religion of American exceptionalism in *Achieving Our Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth-Century America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

24. There has been a growing call to reevaluate the role of political aesthetics in democratic theory. See esp. the essays collected in Nikolas Kompridis, ed., *The Aesthetic Turn in Political Thought* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).
25. Horst Bredekamp, "Thomas Hobbes's Visual Strategies," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes's Leviathan*, ed. Patricia Springborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 29–60; Dario Gomboni, "Composing the Body Politic: Composite Images and Political Representation, 1651–2004," in *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy*, ed. Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 162–95; Noel Malcolm, "The Title Page of *Leviathan*, Seen in Curious Perspective," *Seventeenth Century* 13 (1998): 124–55; Christopher Pye, "The Sovereign, the Theater, and the Kingdome of Darknesse," *Representations* 8 (1984): 85–106.
26. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 114.
27. *Ibid.*, 88.
28. *Ibid.*, 122.
29. See Pye, "The Sovereign, the Theater, and the Kingdome of Darknesse."
30. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 119.
31. Kevin Sharpe, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy: Authority and Image in Sixteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), xxvi.
32. Kevin Sharpe, *Image Wars: Promoting Kings and Commonwealths in England, 1603–1660* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).
33. *Ibid.*, 230–66.
34. *Ibid.*, 1.
35. Cited in Stephen Greenblatt, "Invisible Bullets: Renaissance Authority and Its Subversion," *Glyph* 8 (1981): 57.
36. David Howarth, *Images of Rule: Art and Politics in the English Renaissance, 1485–1649* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 3.
37. Sharpe, *Image Wars*, 436.
38. William Shakespeare, *Richard II* (1595; New York: Penguin, 1969), 110.
39. Sharpe, *Image Wars*, 426.
40. See Alain Besançon, *The Forbidden Image: An Intellectual History of Iconoclasm*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), and Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957).
41. Quoted in Sharpe, *Image Wars*, 445.
42. John Milton, *Eikonoklastes* [1649], in *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, ed. Don M. Wolfe et al. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953–82), 3:601.
43. Sharpe, *Image Wars*, 430.
44. Quoted in Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, vol. 3, *Hobbes and Civil Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 16.
45. Latour, "From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik," in Latour and Weibel, *Making Things Public*, 14–41, 37.
46. Kantorowicz, *King's Two Bodies*, 21.
47. Bredekamp, "Thomas Hobbes's Visual Strategies," 30.

48. Jeffrey Merrick, "The Body Politics of French Absolutism," in *From the Royal to the Republican Body: Incorporating the Political in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century France*, ed. Sara E. Melzer and Kathryn Norberg (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 11–31.
49. Cited in Antoine de Baecque, *The Body Politic: Corporeal Metaphor in Revolutionary France, 1770–1800* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 90.
50. Quoted in David P. Jordan, "The Robespierre Problem," in *Robespierre*, ed. Colin Hayden and William Doyle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 17–34, 22.
51. Baecque, *Body Politic*, 29.
52. Maximilien Robespierre, speech of December 3, 1792, in *Regicide and Revolution: Speeches at the Trial of Louis XVI*, ed. Michael Walzer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 138.
53. See Jesse Goldhammer, *The Headless Republic: Sacrificial Violence in Modern French Thought* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).
54. Susan Dunn, *The Deaths of Louis XVI* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 4.
55. Quoted in Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, 65.
56. *Ibid.*, 88.
57. Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Penguin, 1965), 213, 20.
58. Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, 88.
59. On this point, see Dunn, *Deaths of Louis XVI*, 19.
60. Dario Gamboni, *The Destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism Since the French Revolution* (London: Reaktion, 1997), 167.
61. Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1791; Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett, 1987), 67.
62. Joan B. Landes, *Visualizing the Nation: Gender, Representation, and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 27.
63. Barbara Stafford, *Artful Science: Enlightenment Entertainment and the Eclipse of Visual Education* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 1.
64. Antoine-Nicholas de Condorcet, *Outlines of an Historical View of the Progress of the Human Mind* (1795; trans., Philadelphia, 1796), available at <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/condorcet-outlines-of-an-historical-view-of-the-progress-of-the-human-mind>.
65. Quoted in Landes, *Visualizing the Nation*, 28.
66. Lynn A. Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 91.
67. Sophie Wahnich, *In Defense of the Terror: Liberty or Death in the French Revolution* (New York: Verso, 2012), 76.
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