History, Memory, and Instantaneity in Edgar Degas's *Place de la Concorde*

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> It will be a long time before we agree on the true sense of the word: "democracy"!—Gustave Courbet to the Government of National Defense (October 5, 1870)[1]

In the years following France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 and 1871 and the trauma of the Paris Commune uprising in the latter year, some caricatures of the annual Paris Salon exhibitions ventured into more artistically and ideologically uncharted terrain than the paintings they purportedly satirized. The caricatures offered candid imagery for a nation still marked by the losses of war and civil unrest—images in which such formal innovations as cropping and unexpected viewpoints were mobilized for their political resonance. With their asymmetrical compositions and abrupt shifts in point of view, these caricatures provided a cogent homology to the profound sociopolitical instabilities of the young Third Republic that had recently replaced the Second Empire, one unmatched by any other medium except perhaps photography. Take, as exemplary, the following two caricatures by Amédée-Charles-Henri, comte de Noé, alias Cham. The first—drawn in response to the 1872 Salon—shows the usual visitors in front of two unusual paintings (Fig. 1). Their narratives drastically cut off by their frames, the fictional paintings give a glimpse of four feet running, while the full bodies are already well beyond their visual fields. The caricature's caption clarifies that the paintings are in fact two "portraits" of fleeing Communards, members of the short-lived, largely working-class, radical city council of Paris that found itself in armed conflict with the barely established Third Republic, which sent the Versaillais army to rout it.

In the second caricature, dating to 1875, Cham dreamed up another exceptional portrait. It shows an elected member of the French National Assembly, hand under his jacket in Napoleonic manner, pushed all the way to the right of the image and against the frame, leaving the left half of his portrait empty (Fig. 2). The deputy's political leanings are made spatial and literal: "Portrait of a deputy, who ordered the painter to place him well to the right." These images of Cham's are pictorial fantasies in which the formal terms of his new compositional positioning and cropping gain unexpected sociopolitical reference: fragmentation evoking the specter of the Commune's brutal suppression; a painting's lateral dimensions speaking in the cadences of post-1870 parliamentary partisanship. Conjuring up fictional Salon paintings fully attuned to the political conditions of their moment, the caricatures delineate a concrete figurative language responsive to the implicit hierarchies of form and space.

By the mid-1870s, the disintegration of form and narrative, the loss of a logical relation between the picture's center and its peripheries, along with an apparent lack of compositional structure, had turned into modernist painting's most eloquent pictorial signs: they were meant to signal painting's newfound celebration of vision, its quickness and flux. Edgar Degas's *Place de la Concorde* (*Viscount Lepic and His Daughters Crossing the Place de la Concorde*), painted about 1875, has rightly been seen as exemplifying such epistemic shifts better than almost any other painting of its time (Fig. 3).[2] Its formal innovations demand explanation, for the painting is marked by an empty middle ground, figures ostensibly cropped at random and pushed to the sides, and a helter-skelter directionality—"disjunctive and centrifugal," as Linda Nochlin put it.[3] The painting is not a typical image of modern life and Parisian topography, such as the illustration of the overcrowded Place de la Concorde in one of the major guidebooks produced for the 1867 Exposition Universelle (Fig. 4). Indeed, it excludes much of the hustle and bustle on the square in favor of a carefully controlled, apparently haphazard meeting of a few figures, a dog, and a carriage, meticulously placed into—or against—the surrounding cityscape. All that play with form occurs largely within one family unit, held together not by emotional bonds but by pictorial maneuverings such as the meeting of an umbrella and a young girl's hat.

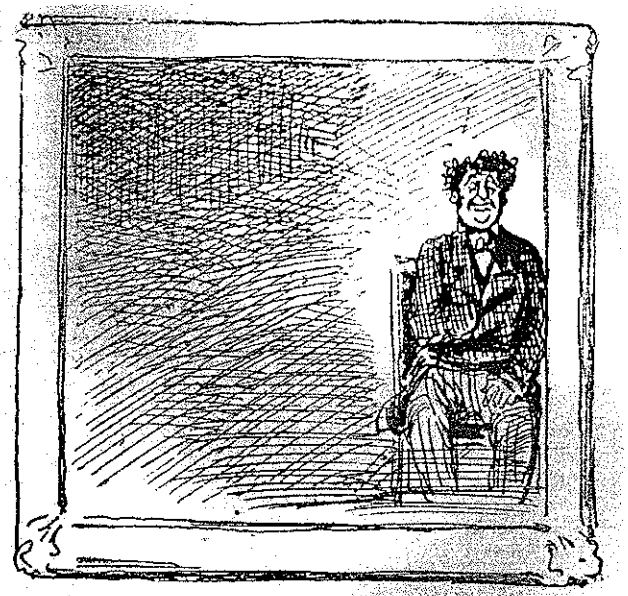
An unexpected common ground can be discerned between caricature and Impressionist painting, which evidently share so much in terms of compositional preoccupations, yet so little—if we trust the secondary literature on Degas's well-known, if understudied painting—in terms of content in the pictorial imaginary of the early Third Republic.[4] What makes the comparison so rich is the fact that Degas's *Place de la Concorde* seems to draw from the operations of popular illustration more than other Impressionist paintings—in its willingness to make the politics of form a visible, rather than suppressed, text—even if it does so only obliquely, through placement, overlap, and erasure. As was first noted by Kirk Varnedoe, the black top hat of Viscount Ludovic-Napoléon Lepic (he is the artist, friend, and lifelong Bonapartist sympathizer whom Degas chose as model for the smoking man on the right) covers James Pradier's late 1830s sculpture of the city Strasbourg, so recently lost to the Prussians, along with Alsace and Lorraine (Fig. 18).[5] The statue functioned as *the* site of national mourning for Parisians during the Siege of Strasbourg in September 1870, the long and difficult Siege of Paris that winter, and especially after the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine by the newly founded German Kaiserreich in the spring of 1871. It was permanently overwhelmed with wreaths, garlands, and flags, in a gesture uncannily echoing Degas's placement of Lepic's hat (Fig. 5).

Yet it has escaped observation how profoundly the hat marries other elements in the painting with similar political resonances: the accentuations of right and left; the tricolor bowtie of the figure on the left; Lepic's red chest decoration that looks like the ribbon of the Légion d'Honneur. In the

EXPOSITION DE 1872.

Portraits en pied de plusieurs membres de la Commune au moment de l'entrée des troupes de Versailles.

1 Cham [Amédée-Charles-Henri, comte de Noé], *Exposition of 1872,* from *Douze années comiques, 1868–1879,* Paris, 1880, 123, lithograph, 3½ × 3½ in. (9 × 9 cm) (artwork in the public domain)

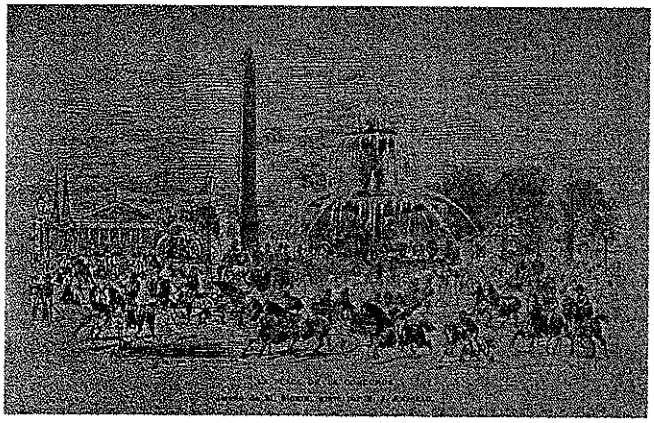


EXPOSITION DE 1875.

Portrait d'un député ayant exigé que le peintre le fasse siégeant bien à droite.

2 Cham, *Exposition of 1875,* from *Douze années comiques, 1868–1879,* 217, lithograph, 3½ × 3½ in. (9 × 9 cm) (artwork in the public domain)

3 Edgar Degas, *Place de la Concorde* (*Viscount Lepic and His Daughters Crossing the Place de la Concorde*), ca. 1875, oil on canvas, 30⅞ × 46¼ in. (78.4 × 117.5 cm). The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, ZK-1399 (artwork in the public domain, photograph © The State Hermitage Museum, photograph by Vladimir Terebenin, Leonard Kheifets, and Yuri Molodkovets)



4 J. Ansseau, after Morin, *Place de la Concorde,* from *Paris guide, par les principaux écrivains et artistes de la France,* pt. 2, vol. 1, *La vie,* Paris, 1867, 1392–93, lithograph, 4½ × 6⅞ in. (11.5 × 17.5 cm) (artwork in the public domain)

5 *Strasbourg Decorated (Place de la Concorde),* September–October 1870, albumen print. Location unknown (artwork in the public domain; from André Guerin, *1871: La Commune* [Paris: Hachette, 1966], 21)

largely muted monochrome of the painting, these small elements of bright color (almost the only such instances in the entire work) stand out dramatically; they are meant to be noticed. The composition and sartorial choices are key to a full sociohistoric reading of the painting. While some recent art historians interpret the overlap as offering a haunted collective amnesia, a form of escapism, from the war and the Commune,[6] others explicitly deny any political connotations to the meeting between hat and statue (for instance, Mari Kálmán Meller: "To draw any historical inferences from this configuration is, I believe, misguided").[7] Reading Degas's highly staged compositional devices from the viewpoint of its audience in about 1875, however, uncovers a range of new meanings for the painting.

The overlap of hat and statue should not be understood as a means of forgetting, displacing, or erasing history but rather as an index of the then current state of the Third Republic's political turmoil, inconclusive and contested as it was. Conservative Legitimists of the Bourbon monarchy reigned over its first years, with a republican majority only eventually consolidating its power as the decade drew to a close. Hollis Clayson has convincingly described *Place de la Concorde* as a group portrait suffused with Lepic and Degas's mid-1870s wartime nostalgia, seeing the haphazard encounter with the statue as representing a moment when lost social bonds formed during the recent national crisis could be recuperated.[8] In addition, I propose, the painting is an assessment of the contemporary—read circa 1875—unstable political landscape of the early Third Republic, making its pictorial fragmentation resonant with political fragmentation, and vice versa.[9]

Place de la Concorde emerges as a test case of the pictorial ambiguities of political reference more broadly in Impressionist painting, an attempt to determine if surface effects could be more than merely superficial. Interpreting the overlap between hat and sculpture will help to bring into focus some of the most fundamental tensions of Impressionist painting—between form and content, instantaneity and history, sensation and memory, presence and absence, accident and will—and challenge the widely held superiority of the first term in each dyad. In concealing *Strasbourg* so deliberately behind the viscount's hat, Degas can be seen to entertain the possibility that the instabilities of modern, Haussmannized Paris—and the ways modern painting had begun to stage them—could allegorize the distinctive political life that set them in motion. He envisioned that the seemingly random qualities of vision and contemporaneity could have a specific sociopolitical charge yet lose none of their modernist contingency—or, to put the case more concretely, he sought to test whether the temporalities of Impressionist painting could be made coterminous with the temporalities of history. Here, the "reluctant" Impressionist and "odd man out" made perhaps one of his most concerted "realist" efforts: to find forms, compositions, groupings that are at once responsive socioculturally—image interventions within the ideological formations of modernity—and alive to the new experimental principles of Impressionistic picture making.[10]

Even a cursory look at the art criticism of the early 1870s reveals that the political factions and categorizations of the early Third Republic were omnipresent as aesthetic terminologies as well. In his 1873 address "Aux peintres et sculpteurs," art critic Paul Alexis remarked, "The artists of republican leaning loudly accuse the current arts administration of attempting to discredit the Republic. The others, proud of their skepticism and political indifference, do they not go so far as to miss the Empire and M. de Niewerkerque [*sic*]?"[11]

That the conflation between Count Nieuwerkerke and the Empire was this complete by 1873, or that the early Republic's arts administration is assumed to have such complete leverage over the fate of the Republic itself, are noteworthy rhetorical constructions. They speak to the ways in which art could not escape politics, nor politics the realm of image production.

Place de la Concorde, too, offers forms that demonstrate a bond between—if not conflation of—art and the political. In the painting, Degas extended his contemporary urban typologies (of dancers, jockeys, prostitutes) to the political types of his day. He shows us the Bonapartist Lepic—calling the painting his "tableau Lepic" in 1898[12]—and a figure on the left sporting the aforementioned tricolor around his neck, and therefore likely of more republican leaning. Viewers of the time, even those who would not have recognized any specific individuals, could have been able to find meaning in their specific accoutrements and their particular positions and directions in a space as loaded with post-Revolutionary history as the Place de la Concorde. Placed in the context of the partisan contestations over *The City of Strasbourg,* the state of the early Third Republic, and the concept of Frenchness after the Battle of Sedan, which decided the outcome of the war, Degas's painting becomes an analysis of both the representation of politics and the politics of representation. And to the academic genres destabilized by Degas in *Place de la Concorde*—group portrait, cityscape, urban genre scene, painting of modern life?—we can add the rather unusual category, for the avant-garde, of history painting. "[Degas] is an observer, perhaps even a historian," art critic Paul Mantz claimed in 1877, identifying the right tension to describe Degas's complex historical archaeology of the present.[13]

Impressionism, about 1875

We know that Degas was deeply involved in the Franco-Prussian War and the defense of Paris—he joined the national guard—as well as the post-1870 reconstruction efforts. He visited the northeastern battle sites before leaving for New Orleans in 1872 and also read voraciously about the war, the Commune, and the French army in the early 1870s—so much so that Nochlin referred to him as "a violent nationalist and uncritical supporter of the army."[14] Even a cursory glance at the texts we know he consulted (he listed them on two pages of one of his notebooks) testifies to the correctness of her characterization.[15] The books he singled out are an odd mix, hard to classify. They included what are rather straightforward accounts of the French and Prussian armies and their military strategy, generally written by prominent military officials, such as Alexandre Lambert's *Précis comparé de la guerre franco-allemande* (1872), or General Louis Aurelle de Paladines's *Campagne de 1870–1871* (1872).[16] Drawing on statistics and maps of the battle sites, these authors prided themselves on their particularly "neutral" stocktaking of the French army's failures. Degas also consulted, to get both sides of the story, we must assume, Helmuth Graf von Moltke's *L'armée allemande* of 1871 (published anonymously in France) and Gesner Rafina's brief, "impartial" 1871 account of the Commune.[17] Mixed in among this list, we find a book insisting much less on its impartiality, Louis Veuillot's *Paris pendant les deux sièges* of 1871, a devoutly Catholic account by a prominent 1870s Legitimist.[18]

Degas's political interests and the limited concrete pictorial signs we have of his commitment to the experiences of 1870–71 do not necessarily amount to a systematic pictorialization of the historic moment and its legacy, a coming to terms with events through the medium of painting. But it is enough evidence to posit that when Degas painted a detail like the overlap between hat and statue or a bowtie striped in blue, white, and red, he knew what he was doing, even if he may not have been fully in control of the message. Degas is, of course, a notoriously difficult artist to characterize politically through his art, especially during the earlier parts of his career. The past few decades of scholarship on the painter have uncovered the deep connections between vision and ideology that underwrite his practice, especially in his representation of women. We have learned that in Degas's work, sight follows hierarchies of meaning and social formation, a fact we have economically termed "the politics of vision."[19] What the "political" in Degas refers to has been harder to pin down: nationalist he was certainly, but beyond that we have little evidence before his explicit turn toward anti-Semitism and the right more broadly at the time of the Dreyfus affair and the decade or so leading up to it.[20] How much of such belief systems is actually evident in his paintings is another matter altogether. In 1871, he is known to have sympathized with the Communards, yet the numerous caricatures of Otto von Bismarck and Napoléon III that Degas drew around the same time are hard to read because they travel in the realm of irony. They mostly evince a painter's critical relation toward the Second Empire, and certainly toward Prussia.[21]

It is not possible to answer the question of Degas's politics once and for all; the evidence is not available to do so conclusively. Instead, I am interested in a moment in Degas's career, the mid-1870s, when his painting took the most literal definition of the political—republican party politics—as its key thematic, when the "politics of vision" could perhaps better be termed the "party politics of vision." *Place de la Concorde,* it becomes clear, was responsive to the new conditions of party politics in the early Third Republic. However, Degas did not start his eccentric croppings when he painted Lepic's urban portrait in 1875. This technique emerged several years earlier, about 1870–71—the time of the Franco-Prussian War—when, repeatedly painting the orchestra of the Opéra, he cut off dancers' legs and instruments in the pit to highly surprising effects. Therefore, such compositional devices are deeply tied to the dislocations of war, and they successively accrued sociocultural signification through the early and middle years of the 1870s, resulting in the expressly political pictorial choices Degas made in 1875.

The time gap between the events of 1870–71 and the composition of the painting in 1875 seems crucial, perhaps even necessary, to the meaning of *Place de la Concorde,* which itself trades in an aesthetic of intervals and absences. The loss of the war and the upheavals of the Commune remained topical for France—and for both its high art and popular culture—for decades to come.[22] In the mid- and late 1870s, the collective recuperation of these events intersected in unprecedented and productive ways with the trajectory of early modernist and Impressionist painting. During the ear-

lier part of the 1870s, Impressionist artists largely shied away from subjects of national and social history other than that of bourgeois leisure, likely for conceptual incompatibilities between style and content, as Paul Tucker and others have argued.[23] By 1874, explicit political and patriotic references became more frequent in avant-garde art, as when Camille Pissarro included a cover from the periodical *L'Éclipse* in his *Portrait of Paul Cézanne* of that year, showing then president Adolphe Thiers paying off France's war debt to the Germans, or when both Claude Monet and Édouard Manet painted the streets of Paris during the newly instituted Fête de la Paix of June 30, 1878, decked in tricolors.[24] In this context, *Place de la Concorde* becomes a little less an exceptional Impressionist painting.

Despite the unusual status of *Place de la Concorde* in Degas's oeuvre—he hardly painted another urban street scene, let alone one with such allusive political content—the making of the painting coincides remarkably with the efforts by other Impressionist painters to elevate Impressionism to the level of more ambitious painting after their first group exhibition of 1874: grander scale, more carefully crafted compositional arrangements, featuring subjects of greater social and historical import and complexity. Degas's *Place de la Concorde* has often been compared with Gustave Caillebotte's *A Paris Street, Rain,* painted shortly after and shown at the Impressionist exhibition of 1877 (Fig. 6).[25] In a pictorial gesture remarkably similar to the erasure performed by Lepic's hat, Caillebotte shows us a bourgeois couple whose umbrella handle covers the figure of a female domestic worker, whose umbrella, in turn, conceals the head of a housepainter. An entire Parisian social hierarchy is here presented, in eclipse, parallel to class struggle and domination. In Caillebotte's work, we thus find another moment in which modern painting demonstrated that the pictorial signs of vision and flux can be dense with social meaning. About 1875 Monet, too, painted one of his very rare scenes of urban labor, *Men Unloading Coal along the Seine.*[26] And, in addition to *Place de la Concorde,* Degas himself selected gloomier, even slightly more pessimistic topics than ever before: roughly at the time of his urban genre scene, he was at work sketching the sober and unresponsive faces in *L'absinthe,* a painting more socially critical than most other Impressionist paintings. Although *L'absinthe*'s connection to the radical café culture and collectivity of the Commune awaits further study, the two paintings may be twinned explorations into the political inheritances of 1870–71 onto the social fabric of the mid-1870s.[27]

This new and greater emphasis on explicitly sociopolitical content within the Impressionist paradigm about 1875 cannot be completely coincidental; it likely stemmed from the critical reception of the first Impressionist exhibition. After all, Degas began *Place de la Concorde* shortly after the close of the first Impressionist group show. To be sure, his artistic collaborations with Lepic were at their most intense during these years, but another, equally crucial, reason emerges. Several critics complained that the Impressionists had taken modern painting too far into the realm of the accidental, fleeting, and subjective, and therefore let languish the more sociohistorical content at the heart of Gustave Courbet's work and some of Manet's. Philippe Burty, for one, in his review of the first Impressionist exhibition claimed the group

6 Gustave Caillebotte, *A Paris Street, Rain,* 1877, oil on canvas, 83½ × 108¾ in. (212.2 × 276.2 cm). The Art Institute of Chicago (artwork in the public domain; photograph by Erich Lessing, provided by Art Resource, NY)

"depend[ed] upon elements of interest strictly aesthetic, and not social or human" in their art—a remark that certainly must have resonated among the group, even when voiced in a generally enthusiastic tone.[28] *Place de la Concorde,* like the other Impressionist works painted about 1875, seems out to rectify this claim, to reconnect the aesthetic—"lightness of coloring, boldness of masses, blunt naturalness of impression," to use Burty's words once more—with the "social." The painting indeed presents a particularly ambitious image of modern life, in which the modernist pictorial maneuvers pinpointed by Burty respond to, even embody, the current historical and political situation, staging, remembering, and erasing *l'année terrible* five years after the fact.

Degas's effort in this direction proved an especially topical and timely response to the political conditions of the immediate years after 1874, when the contradictions of the early Third Republic came to a political boiling point, just before the republicans took fuller control of France's electoral government. Such shifts in political alignments are well-known facts of the early formation of the Third Republic. About 1875 in particular, France's National Assembly was riddled with contradictions, dominated as it was, after Thiers's fall in 1873, by right-wing, clerical Monarchists.[29] The Bonapartists also enjoyed a brief political recovery and had major electoral victories in 1874 and 1875. Only later in February 1875 was a new republican constitution and a two-chamber parliament (a directly elected Chamber of Deputies and an indirectly elected Senate) put into place; the following year, a majority of republican representatives were elected after more than six years of Legitimist domination. All serious claims to sovereign power by the Legitimist, Orléanist, and Bonapartist parties slowly died down over the following years, aided by the 16 May 1877 constitutional crisis that confirmed the parliamentary system.

History here moved faster than the practices and markets of painting, and Degas was faced with a pictorial problem concerning the different temporalities of painting and his-

7 Degas, *Ludovic Lepic and His Daughters,* ca. 1870–71, oil on canvas, 25¾ × 31⅞ in. (65.5 × 81 cm). Foundation E. G. Bührle Collection, Zurich (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by the Bührle Collection)

tory. When the Impressionist exhibitions of 1876 and 1877 opened, the fragile state of politics, on which *Place de la Concorde*'s forms were so tenuously based, had already solidified into a more stable political landscape. The painting's odd and irreconcilable mixing of official and intimate knowledge—between the widely shared cultural meanings accrued on the square and the highly particular encounters with that knowledge offered by the figures in it—made it in some sense not a public picture. These may be the reasons why Degas never chose to exhibit the painting. The time during which he painted *Place de la Concorde* was somewhere between too close and too far from the events of 1870–71 and the republican stabilization of France after 1877. As an anonymous reviewer, a certain "Y.," testified in his assessment of the Salon of 1875 for the journal *La Vie Parisienne*:

> *Military Painting.* To some further good days. It sets farms ablaze, it attacks guardhouses, it passes through breaches, it fires aimlessly in vineyards, it makes regiments march down boulevards. But despite all, one senses that such themes are slowly waning. The heroic soldier gone, the war turns on the everyman. . . . There is some fretfulness and indifference among those who speak of war in painting. Some exert themselves, others think of other matters. Individual memories of 1870 have replaced the general sentiments toward the army. . . . For all that, the dreary events of 1870 do not attract that many painters; the impressions are still too recent to be rendered with an effect of definiteness and forcefulness.[30]

This is a sensitive account of the temporal contradictions of the moment in which Degas produced his painting. Certain historical specificities were starting to be misremembered and forgotten by chroniclers and the public at large, certain narratives were starting to dominate official and unofficial accounts of the events over others. Life and posterity were modeling history to the advantages of their present, and with that, the urgency to understand the events of the past as past was slowly fading. Yet, while these sublimations occurred, a lingering suspicion prevailed: that it was also too soon to grapple with the full implications of recent history, that a critical distance remained unattainable. To be sure, such a simultaneous avoidance and deferral of taking stock constituted perhaps one of the most effective and necessary collective coping mechanisms, worth turning into ambitious modern art.

The stark contrast between Degas's earlier portrait of Lepic and his daughters, painted about 1870–71, and *Place de la Concorde,* showing the same three figures half a decade later, underscores how powerfully a new social imperative had intruded on Impressionism's favored themes. In the earlier version, Lepic holds his younger daughter Jeanine in his arm and has placed the older one, Eylau, on a balustrade in front of him, focusing intently on her, who, in turn, makes eye contact with the viewer (Fig. 7). This earlier portrait is overall a more traditional image of close familial ties and parental pride. Degas even placed all three at equal height within the picture space and aligned them visually through the horizontal lines of the shutters behind them, thus strengthening their bond formally. That Lepic resembles a puppeteer only reinforces the unity between the three figures—and the unanimity they exemplify—that appeared to mark this family at this time despite the absence of the Viscountess Joséphine Lepic.

This unifying bond between them is not in evidence in the painting of 1875, and *Place de la Concorde* is much less a father's ideal image of his family. In the latter painting, the

Lepics have been lifted from their private garden enclave, which provided their earlier backdrop, and set into the public realm. In the 1875 painting, the absence of the viscountess makes some sense, adding to the painting's general theme of fragmentation, since her presence would have tended to unify the family. Her participation in the scene would immediately have turned the painting into a family portrait in the more traditional sense, threatening to overturn any other sociohistorical content and overshadowing the painting's hidden political allusions. Moreover, as a disenfranchised female member of the public sphere, she perhaps would have registered as inappropriately placed on the square to begin with. There, altogether different forces seem to pull at what come across as the Lepics' endangered kinship structures, forces (of a historic and site-specific kind) over which Viscount Lepic, in this composition, appears to have less control than in the earlier portrait.

In *Place de la Concorde*—as in many other instances in his oeuvre—Degas allowed his representation of the "accidental" in urban life to flower with a full complement of theatrics. "Instantaneousness is photography, nothing more," he wrote to the Danish artist Lorenz Frölich in November 1872, implying that in his work, signs of the momentary were neither mechanical nor random.[31] The painting creates the appearance of chance and spontaneity, but it is a highly artificial one, displaying "a world made, not found."[32] Any sociohistorical investigation into the painting's innovations, then, is not intended to eclipse previous interpretations of the work that emphasize its compositional willfulness in relation to photography. I embrace Varnedoe's and Max Imdahl's accounts that see Degas's primary concern here with forging a comparison to contemporary photographic practices and their structures of temporality, if only to deny and surpass the other medium's technical possibilities (the "snapshot" did not emerge as an aesthetic and technological option until the 1880s).[33] Varnedoe insisted rightly that Degas's compositions were different from 1870s cityscape photographs, that they invented rather than copied their daring viewpoints. Nonetheless, Imdahl's and Varnedoe's persuasive readings fail to connect *Place de la Concorde*'s stage-set randomness to the painting's concrete allusions to biographical, urban, and sociopolitical history; they do not tease out the painting's formal innovations in relation to the historical specificities of time and place that underlie and amplify them. While the photograph in the 1870s was still at a disadvantage vis-à-vis painting as regards the subjects that shutter speed could capture, no such hierarchy characterizes the popular prints and caricatures of the time. Instead, like the operations Degas selected for his own pictorial vocabulary, both formally and semantically, caricature, too, found meaning in displacement.

On the Place de la Concorde

Place de la Concorde stages stark contrasts between figures and ground. The protagonists' legs are cut off, leaving the impression that the depicted space almost overlaps with that of the viewer. The middle ground is taken up by the empty and monochrome square. A carriage enters from the top left, closer to the buildings and park in the top quarter of the canvas than to the main characters. In a painting with such a high horizon line, these three layers of the composition partly cover one another by necessity, concealing some information and opening other parts completely to the viewer's gaze (such as the empty center). The objects that happen to meet on canvas and are fixed into "involuntary" proximity reciprocally lend one another meaning made more permanent through the act of painting than they would be in the "real life" of the square. The scene gains its visual force through a series of ellipses, gaps, and palimpsests, always already staging—through its very compositional structure—an urban archaeology sensitive to the layers of space and time.

The figures in the painting (their accoutrements and positions) are central to Degas's urban archaeology, and so is their portrayal against a carefully selected and cropped slice of Parisian urban texture. Viscount Lepic's top hat calls forth, in one small and nonchalant gesture, the history of political legitimation and partisan conflict that marked the square up to that time. Placing the figures on the Place de la Concorde allowed Degas to mobilize the layers of contested French history assembled here since the mid-eighteenth century. Why choose this space if its historical and political resonances were unintended or unwelcome?

All regimes since Louis XV, after whom the square was first named, had an ideological stake in the prominent space and perceptibly transformed it.[34] The square was renamed from Place Louis XV to Place de la Révolution (1792) to Place de la Concorde (1795) to Place Louis XV (1814) to Place Louis XVI (1826) to Place de la Charte (July 1830) to, again and for good, Place de la Concorde (fall 1830). Even if the majority of public executions during the Revolutionary years did not occur on the square, certainly the most spectacular ones did. We also know that some members of the De Gas family were guillotined there in the 1790s. The Place de la Concorde received its current architectural form during the July Monarchy, when the Luxor Obelisk was erected in the center (1836) and the square remodeled by the architect Jacques-Ignace Hittorff, who designed the fountains, new street lighting, and pavement, as well as the sculptural program consisting of eight city allegories encircling the square. It was the site chosen for the extensive festivals of both the Second Republic and the Second Empire, including the first celebrations of the Fête Nationale of August 15 (Napoléon I's birthday) in 1852; it was equally host to two of the Commune's most impressive barricades at the entrances to the Rues Royale and de Rivoli. The square therefore represented an important site for Parisian urban ceremony, from official festivities to more haphazard "street theater."

That Degas's *Place de la Concorde* celebrates change and movement to the degree that it does puts it fully in line with this history of spatial transformation—and the concomitant political contestation and saturation—that established the square's then current form. Degas's pictorial cropping, overlapping, even blocking from view become semantically and historically eloquent in relation to the urban architectural conflicts they mimic, recuperate, even commemorate. Despite the wide emptiness that Lepic and his daughters cross, the square is never neutral or meaningless as a backdrop; to Parisians of the time, the history of its transformation is as present in the painting as the figures themselves.

In an 1873 essay, undoubtedly spurred by the recent patriotic devotion to the statue *The City of Strasbourg,* Charles Coligny testified to the layered nature of the square's contested political sedimentations:

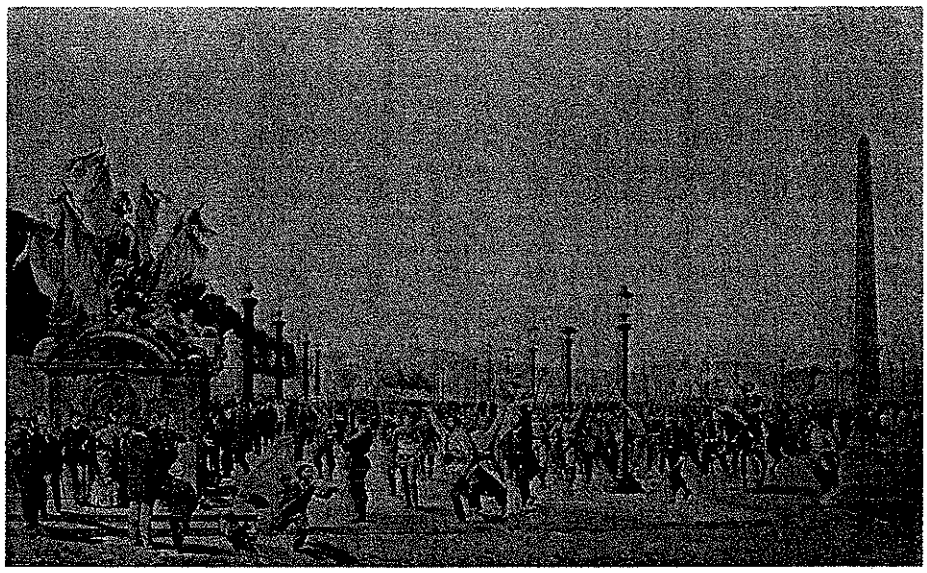
> And of those [inconstancies of fortune], the Place de la Concorde has seen many since it has been called Place de la Révolution! First of all, it was here that one of the grandest events of modern times was accomplished: a king died on the scaffold. Our generation has not striven to perpetuate this memory right there; in fact, that great *souvenir* lies almost buried in the small Rue d'Anjou. We have had the absolutely Parisian idea not to place a funerary monument on the brilliant Place de la Concorde, which became instead Place Louis XVI after having been Place Louis XV. . . . The sculptural assembly of large cities seems like an Areopagus that judges Paris. We could call them convened in the capital of the kingdom, the empire, or the republic, for one or the other grand national proceeding. But perhaps their popular genius is associated with the fact that they stand in the middle of this Place de la Concorde which has so often been the *place de la discorde*?[35]

That the partisan nature of the square's decorative transformations were so readily understood and the site so forcefully politicized and nationalized—its past made perpetually present—at the time of Degas's painting shows how ubiquitous such knowledge had become. The square's history had to be confronted by anyone entering it, and especially by anyone selecting carefully among its elements and urban practices for an ambitious painting. For Coligny, moreover, the square's history was marked by willful displacements and selective memorialization, as in the fact that the site at which the king's execution was to be mourned in Restoration France—the Chapelle Expiatoire—was erected in the Rue d'Anjou, quite a stretch north from the square. For Degas, as for Coligny, elements edited out of view, as well as the events not visibly memorialized (or momentarily eclipsed), continue to haunt what was present and visible in the square's 1870s shape.

Setting the city allegories around the square and the obelisk in its center, as Todd Porterfield has demonstrated, was by no means happenstance.[36] In the face of the previous rapid transformation of the square, the monument was chosen because it deliberately associated the center of Paris with an apparent sign of cultural longevity and universality rather than with regime change. At the moment when the square received its current form, the obelisk's projected ability to function as an urban signifier of cultural stability was achieved by switching from a domestic to a colonial message. When Degas erased *Strasbourg* behind Lepic's hat, he echoed the contradictions between monumentality and ephemerality, between cultural permanence and fluctuation, already thematized within the square's decorative program. In Degas's detail, reversing the previous trajectory from constant ideological shifts to what was considered a stable historic universalism, the "durability" of *Strasbourg*'s stone stands eclipsed once more by contemporary life.

The square after the 1830s offered an urban decoration less marred by competing regimes and their need for aesthetic legitimation and more affirming of France's imperial power and geographic order. The decoration can be seen as an attempt by the July Monarchy to channel Parisian revolutionary fervor into nationalistic passion, to replace political partisanship with patriotic unity. As Maurice Agulhon has argued, it was at this point that the square's "symbolic geography" was "neutralized."[37] It may at first appear that Degas tried to translate this "neutrality" into pictorial terms, making the unpopulated pavement itself over into a blank slate for his figures' movements. In this view, it was painted merely as backdrop, as accidental rather than constitutive to the meaning of the image. But the literal presence that the square possesses in the painting—manifest through rather vivid brushwork—belies such logic. By presenting the square as dramatically empty, yet central to the scene, Degas underscored the city's desperate attempts at naturalizing the square's new "apolitical" condition as but a rhetorical fiction. Degas materialized what had been made absent, converting the square's newfound "neutrality" back over into an active social site.

Much of the square's history is deliberately placed out of view in Degas's painting. It "shows" us only the sculptures *Lille* and a small portion of *Strasbourg,* a segment of the Hôtel de la Marine, and the long wall that borders the Tuileries Gardens.[38] This is hardly a representative portrait of the square, erasing not just *Strasbourg* but also the obelisk, as well as the Hittorff fountains. The fact that the painting pushes the obelisk just out of its angle of vision stands out as particularly meaningful in this context. By not including the obelisk, Degas eclipsed the square's central site so that the discursive focus of political "neutrality" it embodied could not commingle with the encounters he depicted instead. Other contemporaneous renderings of the Place de la Concorde provide a more representative picture of the expansiveness of the square. In Jacques Guiaud and Jules Didier's widely known *Ovations to the City of Strasbourg (the Day of September 10)* (part of a larger pictorial cycle of wartime scenes known as the Binant series), the viewer takes in large swaths of the square looking south, from *Strasbourg* (Fig. 8).[39] Guiaud and Didier's painting furnishes more contextual detail, more of an extensive topographical encyclopedia, than Degas chose to paint. This fact makes his chosen segment of space (and its exclusions) all the more replete with signification, precisely because Degas speaks in such a carefully controlled pictorial terminology. The encounter between the Lepic family and the square therefore becomes immediately more condensed and significant than if it were placed against a wider frame. What we see in Degas is, after all, a highly edited version of the cultural and historical information then "remembered" on the square. When compared with a painting like Guiaud and Didier's, Degas's *Place de la Concorde* hones in on its particular frame, spotlighting Lepic's encounter. The meanings of *Strasbourg*'s eclipse are allowed to resonate more powerfully on the square than heretofore acknowledged, not only because the detail of the overlap is included in the painting but also because almost all the other urban signifiers are not.



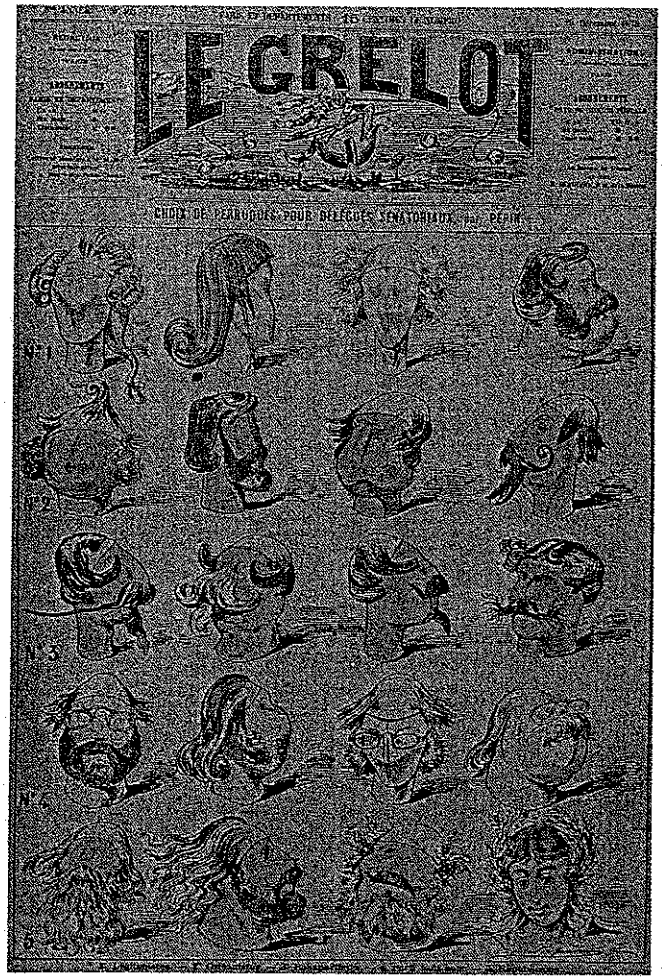
8 Jacques Guiaud and Jules Didier, *Ovations to the Statue of the City of Strasbourg (the Day of September 10)*, Binant series no. 2, ca. 1871, oil on canvas. Location unknown (artwork in the public domain; from Armand Dayot, *L'Invasion, le Siège, la Commune* [Paris: Ernest Flammarion, 1901], 16)

On Left and Right in Painting

That the urban flux in Degas's scene has such tangible political resonances brings unexpected focus to the painting's details, lending the composition greater order and stability than scholars have heretofore assumed. By now, it should be clear that the pictorial terms used to describe Degas's painting—order, center, (extreme/far) left and right—are not only spatial but also, by the early and mid-1870s, saturated with the rhetorical divisions that mark representational government. As Marcel Gauchet has argued in his essay "Right and Left," space became one of the fundamental ordering principles of the modern democratic landscape in France during the Revolution and, especially, the Restoration, when *the* Left and *the* Right were established as political positions made concrete by the architectural arrangement of the Chamber of Deputies.[40] "Left" and "right" came into heavier circulation during the period of the late Second Empire's liberalization and especially the 1869 legislative elections.[41] Like the Cham caricatures seen above, Degas's painting signals an awareness of the politics of space and the spatiality of politics of his moment.

The painting's visual politics of disorientation are indicative of a social environment in which party contestation had become a comprehensive symbolic practice, a perpetual and anxious competition among contradictory signs and messages (not that politics is ever anything but). Yet during the rise of the first abiding republican parliamentary regime in France in the 1870s, the entrenchment of political typologies and sign systems promised a certain stability to a political process that threatened to prove less predictable than imperial or monarchical rule. Take a pamphlet published in 1875, *An Electoral Battle: The Revenge of the Polls; A History of Nowhere and Everywhere.*[42] Written by Bonapartist sympathizer Paul de Cassagnac, it covers a fictitious election for the Chamber of Deputies, offering a unique perspective on "how the Bonapartist mind envisioned the course and outcome of the imminent contest in an ideal district."[43] For the ideal district was populated with ideal political party representatives who come together for public debate: the Orléanist "Philippe Hottard," the Legitimist "Comte Dieudonné de Chevrefeuille," the Republican "Gracchus Latripe" (who had shared a shirt with the National Assembly deputy and later minister Léon Gambetta), and finally the Bonapartist "Napoléon Vannois" (the son of a soldier who had died loyally the day after the first emperor's death). In Cassagnac's prediction, Vannois won by a substantial margin, even if the actual elections in February 1876 did not quite have such a "happy" ending for the Bonapartists. Regardless, the four major political parties now had their spokesmen, with specific and easily identifiable names, catchphrases, and sartorial habits, which helped demarcate their ideological territories. The caricaturist Pépin for *Le Grelot* of December 29, 1878, even went so far as to demonstrate the range of wigs that went unmistakably in tandem with a delegate's political leaning (Fig. 9). Through such stereotypes explicit enough to guide even an illiterate through the political process, a modern parliamentary democracy gradually took root.

That the political types (Legitimists, Bonapartists, Orléanists, Republicans) were omnipresent social facts by the mid-1870s is one of the key structuring devices of *Place de la Concorde* and its operations of meaning. A careful analysis of its figures—their placements within the composition, their dress codes, and the actions and inadvertent erasures they perform within the scene—reveals the true extent to which the painting participated in the 1870s French political symbolic. Who are the main figures, and what meanings did their presence import into the painting? Viscount Ludovic-Napoléon Lepic, an archaeologist, painter, and accomplished graphic artist, exhibited both at the Salon and the Impressionist exhibitions, which he helped organize with Degas. The two had likely met in the late 1850s or early 1860s; the exact circumstances of their meeting are unknown. Lepic was also son of one of Napoléon III's aides-de-camp, and his high Bonapartist aspirations marked his artistic production. At the time of Degas's painting, he had just inherited the family's fortune after his father's death in 1875. Lepic's paternal grandfather, Louis Lepic, had been made baron and commander of the Légion d'Honneur by Napoléon Bonaparte



9 Pépin, *Selection of Wigs for Senatorial Delegates,* cover of *Le Grelot,* December 29, 1878, lithograph, 19 × 13½ in. (48.3 × 34.3 cm) (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, University of Connecticut Libraries, Storrs)

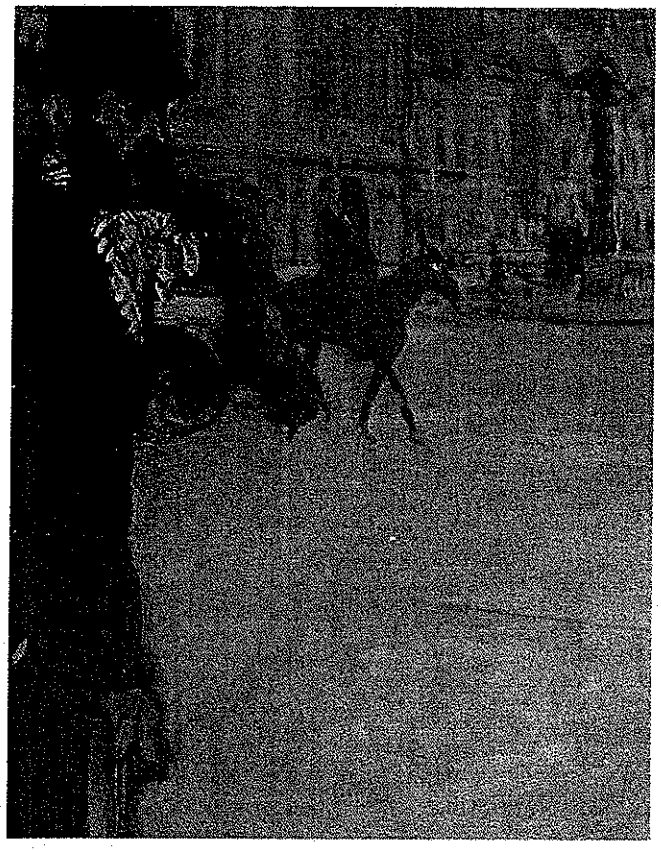
and received the hereditary title of *comte* from Louis XVIII. Lepic himself remained, as Harvey Buchanan's research has confirmed, loyal to the family's political commitment even though he chose an artistic and not a military career.[44] There are many signs that he was an unreconstructed Bonapartist throughout his life. Modestly naming his second daughter, born in 1869 (she is at the right of the canvas), Jeanine-Colette-Madeleine, he named his first daughter, born in 1868, in a grand gesture worthy of a Bonaparte, Eylau-Eugénie-Hortense, honoring the Battle of Eylau, Empress Eugénie, and Hortense Bonaparte, Empress Joséphine's daughter.

Lepic was a recognizable public figure in the Second Empire's court culture, treated as such in the press. In his studio, he displayed a flag that he had found on the Sedan battlefield under a heap of French bodies, as well as a watch and a cameo given to his grandfather by Bonaparte. In the art world, he was known by his title: Frédéric Bazille wrote to his father in March 1863, "I recently met the Vicomte Lepic, son of the emperor's aide-de-camp."[45] Lepic himself listed his contributions to the 1863 Salon under "Vicomte Lepic, Palais du Louvre."[46] Aspects of Lepic's art throughout his career testified to his political allegiance: in the Salon of 1880, he exhibited a painting called *The Return,* showing, in rough seas, the ship that returned the body of the prince imperial to England from his military mission in Africa, where he had been killed in battle in 1879. In his 1889 obituary, Lepic was expressly remembered as a "Bonapartist."[47]

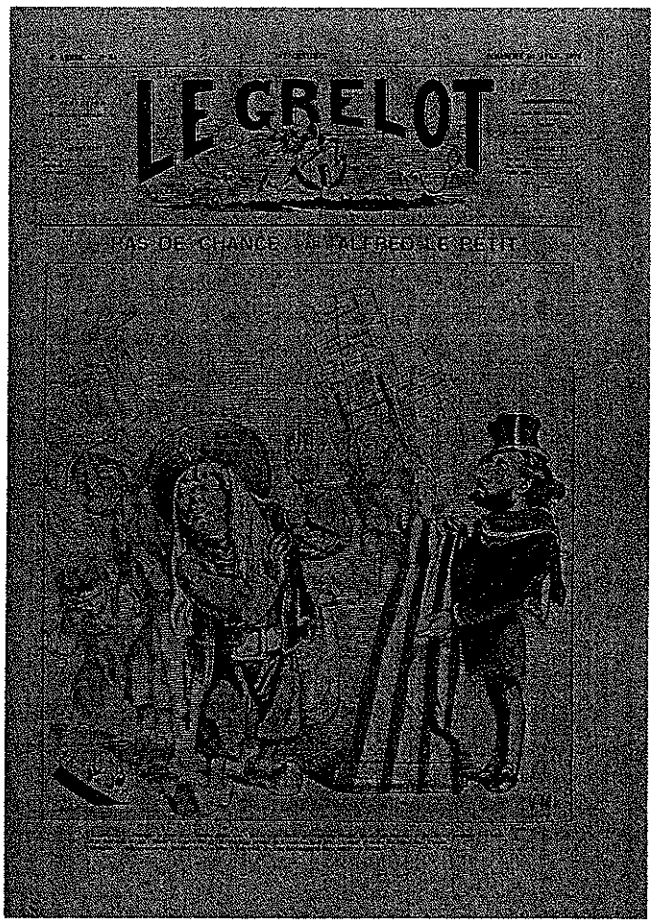
It is significant for the painting, as a portrait, that Lepic bears no signs of his artistic achievements—no brush or palette, no etching tools—and he has left the studio for a loaded encounter in the public sphere. He is given other meaningful attributes instead. For there is no other depiction of Lepic by Degas in which he wears what is perhaps a red handkerchief in his pocket, although the red brushstrokes resemble more the ribbon of the Légion d'Honneur. Unlike his father and grandfather, however, Lepic never received such an honor; its appearance in the painting speaks more generally to the Lepic family's dynastic politics.[48] Through the ambiguity of the red emblem, Degas registered the meanings such decor would attach to its wearer. Founded by Napoléon in 1802 as a merit-based order, the Légion d'Honneur was among the quintessential Napoleonic institutions of nineteenth-century France and understood as such by the public.[49] Courbet famously refused to become a knight of the legion in a public letter, citing his ideological differences from the institution, which he conceived as a holdover of aristocratic privilege in the guise of meritocracy.[50] The red, then, makes Lepic's politics a visible, material fact, specifying the figure's ideological leanings even if the viewer did not recognize Lepic himself.

That Lepic—or any Bonapartist—had a very specific interest in the events of 1870–71 and recent historical revisionism is not hard to glean from the traces of his political sympathies that he left in the public realm. The same holds true for the figure on the left of the painting, wearing the tricolor (Fig. 10). Degas cropped this character most daringly, pressing him against the very left side of the canvas, forming a stark verticality emphasized by the straight line of his walking stick. Because a good stretch of canvas separates him from the Lepics, he reads as a counterfigure to them. Even though we cannot be certain who the model for this figure was, the tricolor necktie speaks loudly as a sartorial sign of political credentials. Striped in blue, white, and red, it is a daring fashion statement—a surface play with the theatrics of patriotism—almost overpowering the figure's facial features and standing out in his otherwise black attire. "Wearing" the tricolor offers a sartorial index of the political times, marking the fact that politics itself seemed now, after the fall of the Empire and at the dawn of a democratic representational government, to have become nothing but an elaborate rhetorical play with power, as oriented to the surfaces of political reality as fashion itself.

At the time Degas painted *Place de la Concorde,* such a necktie would have quickly and unmistakably established the figure's republican affiliation. Gambetta, for instance, was often portrayed as an extremely savvy player of the new political landscape, "wearing" and "selling" his brand of moderate republicanism, inaugurating a range of republican sartorial signs. Images of Gambetta showing him sporting tricolor accessories abound during the 1870s; the character on the left in Degas's painting has adopted, perhaps copied, the



10 Degas, detail of *Place de la Concorde,* showing the figure on the left (artwork in the public domain; photograph © The State Hermitage Museum, photograph by Vladimir Terebenin, Leonard Kheifets, and Yuri Molodkovets)



11 Alfred Le Petit, *Not a Chance,* cover of *Le Grelot,* April 21, 1872, lithograph, 19 × 13½ in. (48.3 × 34.3 cm) (artwork in the public domain)

politician's dress. The three-year span between the following two images illustrates the lasting effects of this trope for the decade of the 1870s. A caricature by Alfred Le Petit of 1872, the time of Gambetta's republican "promotional tour" in Brittany, is particularly instructive (Fig. 11).[51] Here, he is portrayed trying to sell Bretons cloth striped in white and revolutionary red, while the locals (bearing fleurs-de-lis and rosaries) insist it would come out completely white with the first wash. Gambetta himself—the political traveling salesman—wears his striped fabric around the neck, while his companion, the politician and writer Eugène Spuller, carries boxes containing "anti-Bonapartist pills" and "*radical* cure of constitutional illnesses." A further example by Le Petit dating to 1875, and thus to the time of Degas's painting, pictures Gambetta as a scarecrow with a tricolor around his neck (Fig. 12). The caricature leaves uncertain whether Gambetta's features or the presence of the flag is meant to function as the greater repellent.

The figure with the tricolor necktie seems appropriately placed at the left of the image, having the full square ahead of him, while Lepic faces right, poised to disappear out of view in just a few steps. The distance between them therefore can be taken as ideological as much as formal.[52] The painting's spatialities are too closely mapped to coincide with the figures' ideological identities for that fact not to register within the painting—even if Degas did not, and could not, fully control the range of political meanings here mobilized. Indeed, "right" and "left," as signifying practices of the 1870s, were hard to stabilize semantically at the time, and that very metaphoric elasticity—along with the potential to make these pictorial terms speak in those of the realm of politics—had the power to fascinate Degas as well as his contemporaries. In several passages discussing politics, Degas's friend the author and playwright Ludovic Halévy voiced his disillusionment with such metaphoric constructions and their effects on the real:

> We see [the political spectrum] splintering into factions and subfactions, cliques and subcliques: left, right, extreme left, extreme right, center right, center left, etc. We are evidently attentive to the excessively threadbare morals that the friction of revolution produces over the long run. Nothing has changed in France, there are just two provinces fewer, or six parties more.[53]

That "France" could be summed up this succinctly, and the Empire and the Third Republic become this synonymous, speaks to the ways in which left and right had already been naturalized within the discourses on the construction of Frenchness. It is also telling, however, that Halévy considered the main "difference" brought about by the events of 1870 to

lie precisely in the new, and more nuanced, spatial subdivisions in party politics.

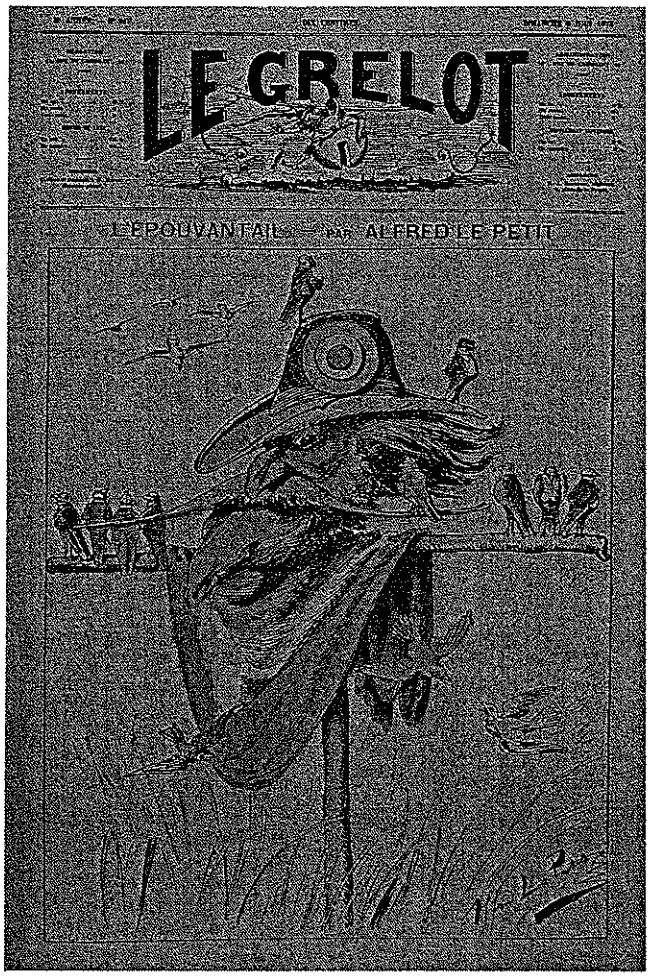
Place de la Concorde is a picture partaking in this complicated state of affairs during the early Third Republic, in which the realm of the political is in the process of establishing and naturalizing new forms of representation for itself. In the early 1870s, the volatility of electoral representation after nearly twenty years of imperial hegemony left its traces on all aspects of life, political and otherwise.[54] As Gauchet again has emphasized:

> This shows that the development [of "right" and "left"] of which I speak has been a long time coming. But the whole complexion of the matter changes when what was once a flash in a single mind becomes an integral part of a belief system and shared mentality. The discovery then ceases to be a mere exercise of intelligence marginal to reality to become a force capable of transforming practice; it begins the long, slow process of changing attitudes, behaviors, and expectations, ultimately perhaps giving rise to a new way of relating to politics.[55]

Restructuring the everyday itself and the expectations toward modern politics, a party system—party formation, election, and governance—had to be learned and become the entrenched form of the French citizenry's political self-representation.

Halévy is one figure in Degas's intellectual and artistic circle who understood the new political conditions of the early Third Republic particularly well.[56] Albert Kostenevich has suggested that he served as the model for the figure on the left of *Place de la Concorde,* and there is indeed some resemblance.[57] Even if the latter did not pose for the painting, Degas would certainly have known Halévy's writing and political opinions, and they are brought forth here to pinpoint a political position in clear opposition to Lepic's. Halévy voiced with frequency the central facets of democratic contradiction—often in accordance with the spatial metaphors of left and right—and he is therefore an appropriate further guide to the ideological layers of the painting.

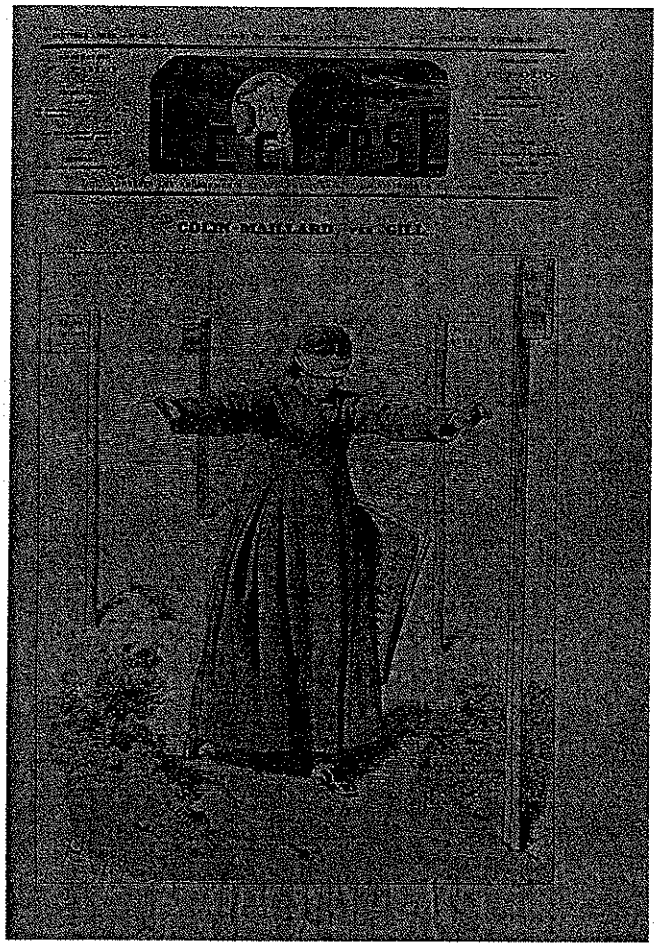
Lepic's and Halévy's backgrounds and belief systems could not have been more different. Halévy, whom Degas had met as a student at the Lycée Louis-le-Grand, was clearly more flexible in his political alignments, "by and large non-partisan and non-ideological."[58] One thing we can safely say about the man, who is probably best known today for his opera libretti such as that for *Carmen,* is that he was an ardent nationalist and believer in French superiority, objected fiercely to universal suffrage, and wavered between Orléanism and moderate republicanism. He was also much more of a political realist and cynic than Lepic, often representing himself as politically disillusioned and indifferent (in an 1867 diary entry, he claimed, "I hold the profoundest political indifference. . . . Convictions? . . . Absent, completely absent. Just as much to the right as to the left").[59] Judging by his voluminous writings and memoirs on the war, siege, and the Commune, Halévy was one of the most astute chroniclers of these events, publishing many of his observations just months after they occurred in *Le Temps* and *La Vie Parisienne.*[60] Although he had been a private secretary to the Second Empire statesman the duke of Morny in the early 1860s, he was extremely critical of Napoléon III's regime. Indeed, anti-Bonapartism seems the one political attitude to which Halévy firmly subscribed: "France has never had more pitiful governance, never, never has she been as weak with pretensions of strength," Halévy wrote to his collaborator Henri Meilhac on September 18, 1870.[61]



12 Le Petit, *The Scarecrow,* cover of *Le Grelot,* June 6, 1875, lithograph, 19 × 13½ in. (48.3 × 34.3 cm) (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, University of Connecticut Libraries, Storrs)

Yet Halévy was never the most fervent of republicans, or as strong a supporter of Gambetta's republican nationalism, as his posthumously published recollections of three dinners with Gambetta in 1881 testify. In fact, he described Gambetta, looking back at the Second Empire from a post-Sedan vantage point, as "the young lawyer who had to govern France dictatorially after the fall of the Empire."[62] Some of his notes of his evenings with Gambetta are worth quoting at length as well, precisely for their political pragmatism and skepticism:

> Even though I was hardly a Bonapartist, I still wished to see this pitiable regime last. I told myself: "Please make this last, because if it does not, it will end very badly." And that thought did not fail me. . . . Even today, I am not a republican in the making or of tomorrow; I am simply a repub-



13 André Gill [Louis-Alexandre Gosset de Guînes], *Colin-Maillard (Blindman's Buff)*, cover of *L'Éclipse*, February 14, 1875, lithograph, 19½ × 13⅜ in. (49.6 × 34.1 cm) (artwork in the public domain)

> lican of resignation. . . . She unsettles me enormously, this Republic; but in the end, I repeat my prayer in the same terms as I did during the Empire: "Please make this last, because if it does not, it will end very badly, and much worse even than the Empire did, because we will not be able to resort to the Republic in order to replace the Republic."[63]

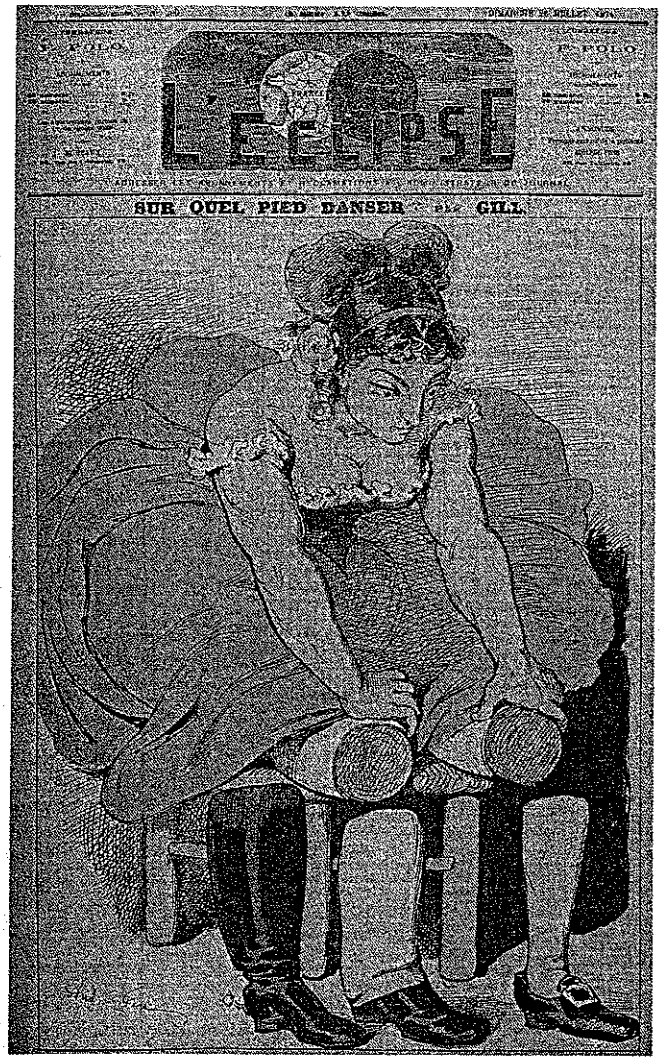
An interesting self-analysis, this, "I am simply a republican of resignation." It is not that Halévy changed his political affiliations fluidly with regime change, necessarily following the powers of the moment. Rather, he apparently resigned himself to supporting a moderate republican cause in general, with no great passion and only after other options had become exhausted, wishing for the complete avoidance of the violence and destruction that necessarily accompanied regime change. We could perhaps call Halévy a believer in realpolitik, marked by a pronounced cynicism toward ideological purity, seeing national and international power dynamics as a game in which nothing fundamental ever changes, no matter the current regime: "the discharged of September 1870 and the discharged of February 1871, waiting—with equal impatience and equal eagerness—the reestablishment of him, Emperor or President, who will give them back their posts. Politics is about to become a mere business, a métier, a speculation."[64] Evincing no great faith in political power, Halévy fell back on indifference and sarcasm as the only viable response to these conditions.

In *Place de la Concorde*, then, Lepic plays the past-tense figure of political loss—in part because he adhered to a now obsolete way of doing politics, believing in the possible coherence of political ideology, like Bonapartism's attempts to make France over fully in its image. In that, Lepic belonged fully to France's old political order. The figure on the left, in contrast, represents a character of the present, like Halévy, and of the unpredictable nature of politics in the modern French state, a moment wherein the Republic is more like a vacuum, an unoccupied space, than a coherent and stable set of ideological parameters—an open field of contestation in which the forces of politics play out, rather than come to rest. This figure is after all the only one in the painting with a direct and unobstructed view of *Strasbourg*. By contrast, the viewer happens not to be able to see the monument and Lepic turns away from it, once more stressing how intimately place, vision, knowledge, and ideology are here made one: provided/denied, accepted/refused, that is, on the grounds of position and viewpoint.

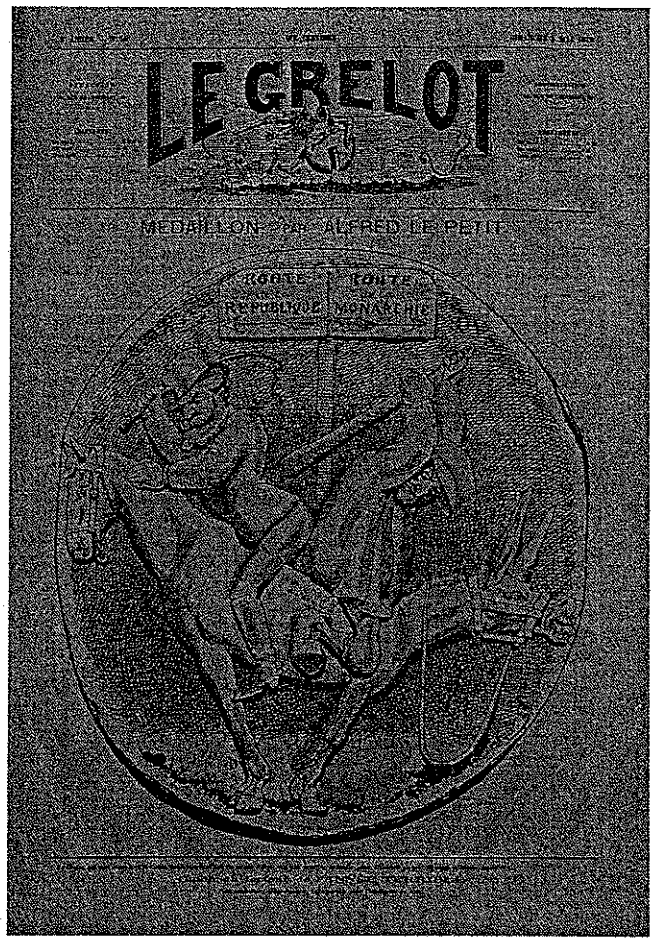
The visual culture of the years 1870 to 1876 and beyond, flooding everyday life with "the ideological breadth, creativity and potency of nineteenth century French republicanism," played its key role in the process by which the early Third Republic created its political symbolic.[65] After two decades of imperial press censorship, it invented and reengineered a whole new and ingenious body of formal correlations to the early Third Republic's electoral terrain in which flux, instability, and opposition became problems as much for satirical representation as they were for the realm of politics itself. *Place de la Concorde*'s formal features resonate with some of the major political metaphors of the moment. The result is a painting that poses itself problems not dissimilar from those faced by the realm of popular illustration: How can the current state of politics be given form? How can its contested and fluctuating constellations be made over into representations no less complex and anxious?

Degas's solutions in *Place de la Concorde* demonstrate proximity to the visual innovations of the period's popular press; certainly, Degas knew well how *not* to avoid them.[66] He made his art speak in the same contentious—and inconclusive—pictorial cadences as did the early Third Republic itself. Now, perhaps, some of the painting's curious visual effects come into clearer focus: that the association of its figures looks so haphazard; that the scene's ground, the square, is pulled up too much into the vertical and therefore stops any easy access to the space; that it thwarts so utterly our usual spatial parameters and expectations. The empty monochrome that covers so much of the canvas is after all very indistinct, and nobody belongs to or is fully situated on the square. In *Place de la Concorde*, that is, the figures'—and the viewers'—disorientation has become programmatic.

These visual features, like the figures' seeming lack of direction, can be correlated productively to images from the popular press. Take, for instance, the cover of *L'Éclipse* of February 14, 1875, by André Gill (Louis-Alexandre Gosset de



14 Gill, *On Which Foot to Dance?* cover of *L'Éclipse,* July 26, 1874, lithograph, 19½ × 13⅜ in. (49.6 × 34.1 cm) (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by the Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Pennsylvania Libraries)



15 Le Petit, *Medallion,* cover of *Le Grelot,* May 5, 1872, lithograph, 19 × 13½ in. (48.3 × 34.3 cm) (artwork in the public domain)

Guînes), showing a female allegory of France, blindfolded to play blindman's buff, with four different political directions around her (Fig. 13). She is headed, roughly, toward the "road of the Republic," but it is clear that, groping her way, she will not reach any destination directly or immediately. And finally, there are plenty of representations employing (and literalizing) unusually "cropped" elements, like Gill's title for *L'Éclipse* of July 26, 1874, with a legless ballerina made to choose which new feet—imperial, monarchical, or republican—to dance on in the next act (Fig. 14). The existence of such images gave no better proof that Halévy's perception—"Politics is about to become a mere business, a métier, a speculation"—had become a commonplace, signaling politics' utter descent into spectacle in the early Third Republic. The appeal of this popular imagery made readily apparent that its fragmentations and croppings detected, replicated, perhaps even soothed a state of unease—over that "insecure Republic"—as felt by a large swath of the French population at this time.

Another of the painting's key visual tropes requires explication. As has often been pointed out, the figures in Degas's painting are walking in directly "opposite" directions. Lepic (minus his wife and their youngest daughter, Marcelle, born in 1874) accompanies his other two daughters, but they are facing left while he is facing right.[67] The metaphor of forces pulling in opposing directions—a central device that literalizes the divergence in ideology at work in the party system—was perhaps the most common and often repeated visual trope of the period. For example, Le Petit, for the cover of *Le Grelot* of May 5, 1872, invented a medal featuring a double-headed horse/donkey, pulling in one direction toward a republic and in the other toward monarchy (Fig. 15). In *Place de la Concorde,* Degas echoes these visuals for his portrayal of the Lepic family, and thus allows at least for the suspicion on the contemporary viewer's part that the opposing directions are more than happenstance. If we agree that Degas deliberately constructed his imagery of urban flux, then we must also allow for the possibility that the visual tropes and metaphors he borrowed to achieve his ends came with a range of socio-political meanings not fully aestheticized and ideologically neutralized in their move from popular image to painting.

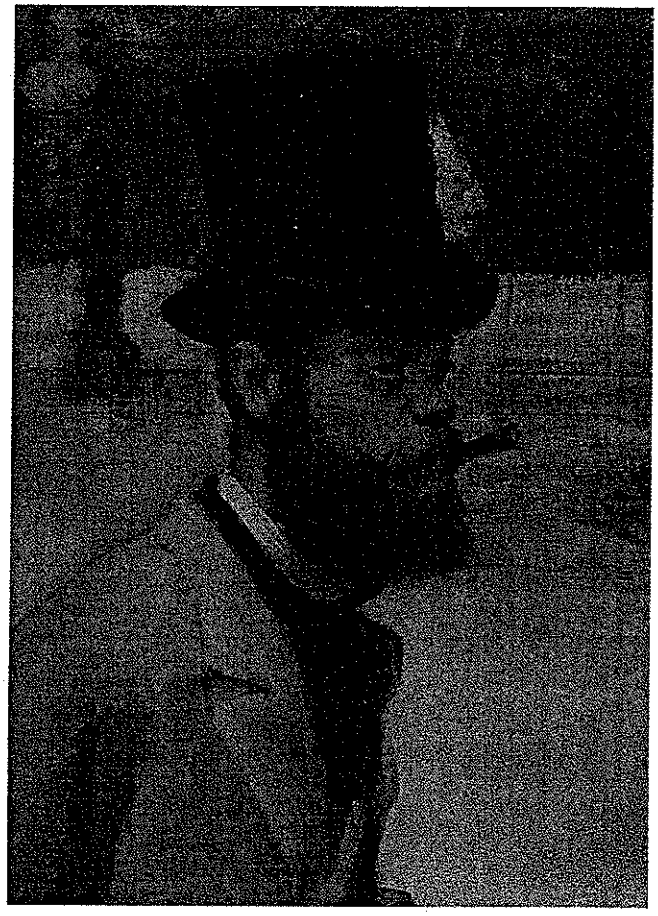
Strasbourg Eclipsed

We have come full circle, returning to the caricature with which I started, to Cham's deputy who had "ordered the painter to place him well to the right." The political party of the Bonapartists, so tenuously based on both Caesarism and an authoritarian form (or false pretense) of "democracy," had in the postwar years shifted at times equally far to the right. The party had at one point, in 1873, formed a coalition with the Legitimists and Orléanists to oust Adolphe Thiers and put the Monarchists Patrice de MacMahon and the duke of Broglie into power, only to betray that decision a short time later, moving toward the center to side with the republican wing of the assembly and oust the Monarchists.[68] Bonapartism, to say the least, walked a line too indistinctive to find concrete representative terms after 1870. A member of the Bonapartist party was particularly hard to place on canvas, eluding easy ideological transparency, rendering Cham's flat-footed gesturing all the more necessary.

The meeting of Lepic, as a Bonapartist sympathizer, with Pradier's *Strasbourg* is undoubtedly as ideologically charged. Degas's *Place de la Concorde* was painted during a time that Bonapartist fervor enjoyed a brief resurgence in France and is visibly marked by it. Bonapartism as a political movement and party had a set of particularly difficult challenges to overcome in the immediate postwar years. Above all, it had to cleanse itself of the suspicion that Napoléon III was at the root of the disastrous loss against Prussia. "To write the history of Bonapartism is to show the true absence of all principles and of all morals in that party; it is to write the history of [that party's] contradictions and inconsistencies. . . . The Bonapartists . . . do not serve a general cause, they serve only their personal interests," wrote Paul Beurdeley in his fiercely anti-Bonapartist tract of 1875, *Petite histoire du parti bonapartiste*.[69] Only gradually was the party able to convince broader segments of the public to reconvert to its cause and pose a serious, if brief, challenge to the new parliamentary regime.

Degas's overlap of Lepic's hat with the *Strasbourg* statue in such a fleeting yet staged encounter speaks deeply to the prospects of Bonapartism after the war (Fig. 16). The chance encounter evokes the party's political assumptions pictorially, establishing a particularly timely visual metaphor for Bonapartism itself, as embodied by a figure like Lepic. Nonetheless, the viscount's air of historical immunity and social privilege, his "splendid, assumed indifference" do not jell with current political reality.[70] As a member of a Bonapartist family, embodying Bonapartism's hopes, successes, and failing fortunes after the Second Empire collapsed, there was much in recent history for him to care about. His ambivalent pose toward *Strasbourg* seems a fitting testimony to recent events, neither acknowledging nor avoiding the loss of Strasbourg and the war.

When Degas painted Lepic's hat blocking *Strasbourg*, he did not simply test the formal ways in which the former related to the latter, for the sculpture functions like an attribute or locale in more traditional portraits, promising access to the sitter's status and allegiances. Degas, of course, was keenly aware of the mechanisms through which site created identity in portraiture, and the relation he set up here is not unlike the one he constructed for *Henri Rouart in Front of His Factory*

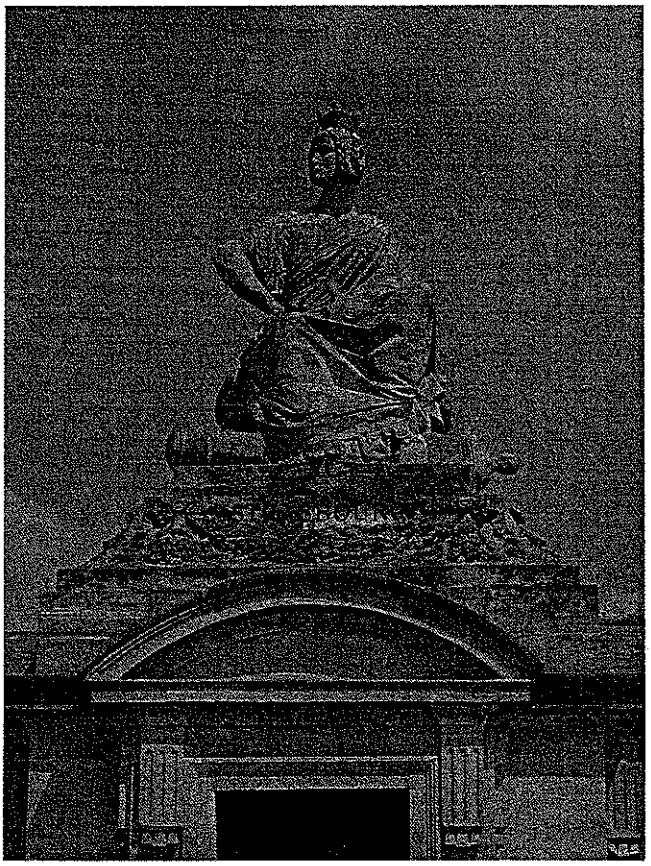


16 Degas, detail of *Place de la Concorde*, showing the head of Lepic (artwork in the public domain; photograph © The State Hermitage Museum, photograph by Vladimir Terebenin, Leonard Kheifets, and Yuri Molodkovets)

at nearly the same time (Fig. 17). In this portrait, a factory owned by the mechanical engineer and artistic amateur—and partly hidden by his large black hat—adds to the image of a self-made, upper-middle-class industrialist. In much the same way, Lepic, momentarily and inadvertently, stakes proprietary claims to the meanings and cultural practices then associated with *Strasbourg*.

Even if Pradier's sculpture of *Strasbourg*, one of the key sites of Parisian patriotism in about 1870, lies largely hidden behind Lepic's top hat, its history continues to resonate throughout the scene. Its temporary erasure in the painting points even more expressly to the meanings and historical events so awkwardly and incompletely eclipsed by Lepic. The monumental stone sculpture was part of Hittorff's ambitious scheme for the square adopted in 1835, when the execution of eight city allegories—*Lille, Lyon, Brest, Bordeaux, Marseille, Nantes, Rennes,* and *Strasbourg*—was handed over to four sculptors, and James Pradier was commissioned to execute *Lille* and *Strasbourg*, to be placed side by side on the north-eastern edge of the square.[71] The eight allegories concluded a long history of sculptural production (and destruction) that ran parallel to the history of the larger decorative transformation of the square.[72] The equestrian bronze sculpture of Louis XV was destroyed during the Revolution in 1792 and a

17 Degas, *Henri Rouart in Front of His Factory*, ca. 1875, oil on canvas, 25⅝ × 19¾ in. (65.1 × 50.2 cm). Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, acquired through the generosity of the Sarah Mellon Scaife Family (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by the Carnegie Museum)



18 Jean-Jacques [James] Pradier, *The City of Strasbourg*, 1836–38, limestone, height 98⅜ in. (250 cm), Place de la Concorde, Paris (photograph by the author)

bronze-colored plaster allegory of Liberty by François Lemot (in a radical reversal of the hierarchies of public sculptural material) was erected on the former's pedestal. An ephemeral monument from its inception, it was destroyed during the Consulate. While the Directory had plans for a "Monument à la Concorde" (Monument to Reconciliation), a "Colonne nationale" (National Column) in the center was projected for the year 1800, but neither was actualized. The Restoration saw the placement of another sculpture of Louis XV here while awaiting the creation of an impressive Place Louis XVI with a large standing sculpture of that king in his coronation robes (by Jean-Pierre Cortot), whose plaster model was destroyed in the foundry during the July upheavals of 1830.[73]

The pictorial gesture of a hat over *Strasbourg*—replacing the permanence of stone with the transience of bourgeois male fashion—points to this history of sculptural antagonism on the square. The passing hat confronts the statue's ostensible durability with the temporal and historical contingency that conditioned its making. Degas's seemingly incidental gesture serves to stage a confrontation between the political resonance of stasis and flux. On the one hand, the pictorial detail can be read as fully covering over the square's sculptural history, blending it entirely into the here and now. On the other, in favoring the accidental and the unforeseen, the overlap throws the commemorative value of monumental sculpture at least momentarily into doubt. In lending the spontaneity of modernist painting superiority over its sculptural analogy, Degas underscores painting as the most contemporary, flexible, and, thus, modern form of collective engagement.

Pradier's *Strasbourg* became the test case for such a counternarrative of public sculpture in the years of the Franco-Prussian conflict (Fig. 18).[74] Degas's detail explicitly references the central commemorative role the statue played during and after the Siege of Strasbourg, exemplifying, as Clayson has shown, "the revivification and reinvention of the everyday in Paris under siege."[75] *Strasbourg* stands out as one of the more assertive of the eight city allegories—a trait that served it well when it became the Parisian site for patriotic mourning as the Prussian army besieged Strasbourg. Resting on a cannon, right arm akimbo, the figure of Strasbourg stands out as a proud and aggressive city allegory, an image perfectly suited to the nationalistic fear and zeal of wartime. Paris hardly had another site quite like it.

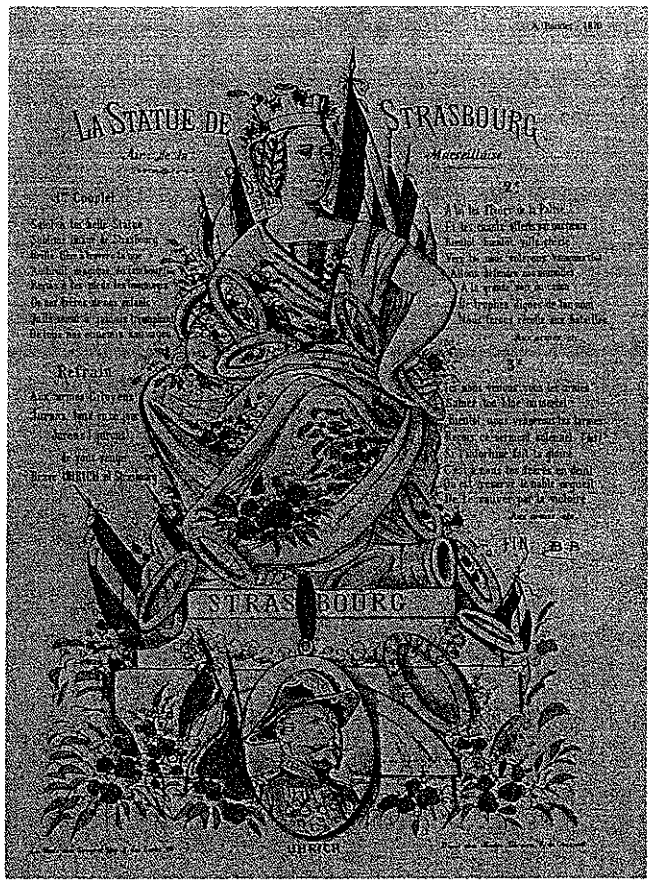
As can be seen in countless photographs, paintings, and illustrations in the popular press of the period, the sculpture was overwhelmed with wreaths and flags—both tricolor and black—though the evidence differs in determining the degree of accumulation of such "matter" at the sculpture, ranging from a few flags to her almost complete disappearance

under their mass (Fig. 5).[76] "The statue of Strasbourg, literally covered in flowers, flags, banners, wreaths, resembles under that yellow and tricolor mass a patriotic catafalque," Jules Claretie recalled in his diary of the Siege of Paris.[77] Clearly, *Strasbourg* played a pivotal compensatory role for Parisians during the time of Prussian aggression and beyond. This expression of patriotism was as varied and diverse, even if carefully orchestrated to affirm continuity, as Claretie's list indicated: in addition to the wreaths and flags placed there in the hundreds, there was also an inscription book.

When exactly the patriotic fervor at *Strasbourg* began, and when it ebbed, or even perhaps ended, is difficult to establish with precision today. The earliest demonstrations leading up to Strasbourg's surrender on September 28, 1870, explicitly honored General Jean-Jacques Uhrich, charged with Strasbourg's defense and celebrated as a national hero for withstanding the attacks by his Prussian counterpart, General August von Werner, as long as his army did.[78] Just as the inscription book answered the need for an orderly form of textual engagement at the site—to avoid any unruly direct scribbling on the sculpture and its pedestal—so, too, the voices gathered around *Strasbourg* received formal release in song: one A. Baudet composed a hymn in 1870 entitled "The Statue of Strasbourg," to be sung to the tune of the "Marseillaise" (Fig. 19). Its refrain marked Uhrich as the hero of the moment: "Let us all swear today. Swear! Swear! To avenge you, heroic Uhrich and Strasbourg." The nationalistic symbolism of the song is hardly veiled and needs little comment, especially given its melody. In the third stanza of his "Marseillaise"/Strasbourg hymn, Baudet explicitly mentioned *Strasbourg*'s material permanence as the necessary ground for the countless ephemeral gestures accruing on it: "Here we come armed to salute your immortal block of stone." *Strasbourg* is useful as a site for the expressions of a unified "nation" not just iconographically but also materially, the durability of its stone the guarantor of the continuity of the French state under foreign attack.

Uhrich's image appeared at the site of *Strasbourg* in September in other forms as well. As a creation of the July Monarchy, *Strasbourg* resisted its complete usurpation into the 1870 present: "One does not fully know whether they are Greek goddesses or French cities: I do not read clearly on their faces the traits of our nation," Coligny complained in 1873, testifying to the fact that *Strasbourg* was as much of the past as of the moment.[79] It is curious even if little surprising that the ministry of public instruction therefore placed another—more easily legible—sculpture in front of *Strasbourg* to drive home the message: Gustave Deloye's *À Strasbourg*, showing Uhrich with sword in hand in a protective stance over an allegory of the recently lost city. Deloye's work, likely made of plaster, was of course much smaller, but for several weeks it held a prime place and was itself decorated with wreaths.

We cannot be sure how long it lasted in front of Pradier's *Strasbourg*, but a few contemporary documents point explicitly to Deloye's work as a meaningful addition to the site. A *carte-de-visite* photograph of the sculpture, taken and marketed by Michel Berthaud's studio, was sent by Deloye himself to "Monsieur le Ministre de l'Instruction publique" of the Government of National Defense, the Third Republic's first government (the post was held by Jules Simon in September



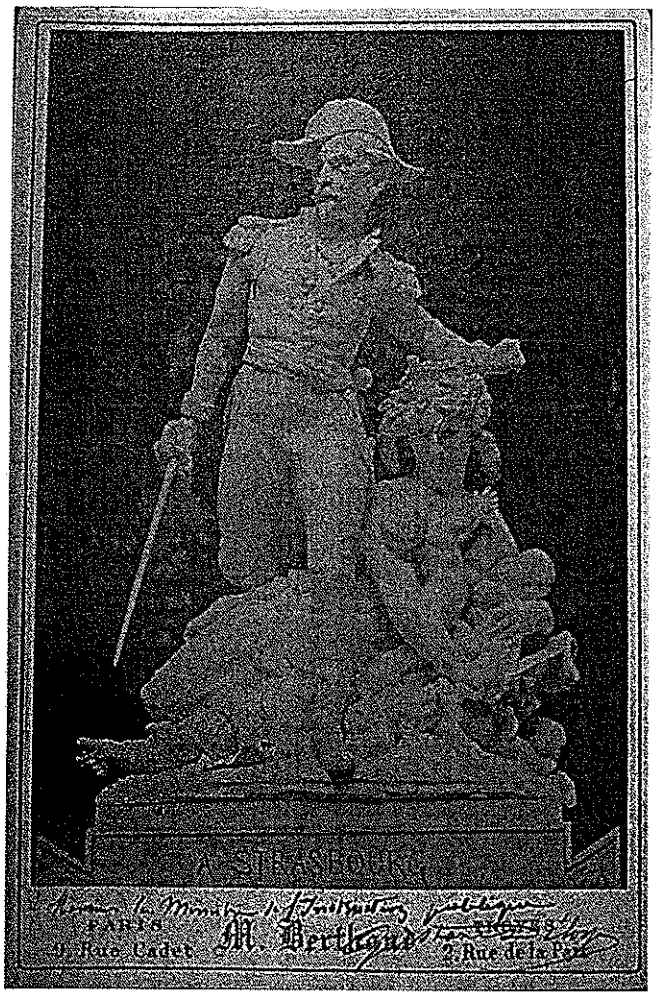
19 A. Baudet, "The Statue of Strasbourg" (Tune of the "Marseillaise"), 1870, lithograph, published by Grognel, Paris (artwork in the public domain; from Paul Ducatel, *Histoire de la Commune et du Siège de Paris* [Paris: Jean Grassin, 1973], 32–33)

1870), presumably in relation to the display on the square (Fig. 20).[80] Alfred Darcel, in his 1871 account of the state of art during the siege, described Deloye's sculpture:

> This group by M. Deloye, meant to symbolize the defense of Strasbourg by General Uhrich, was exhibited during the Siege [of Strasbourg] on the Place de la Concorde, in front of the statue of *Strasbourg*, and shared with her the somewhat emphatic venerations rendered to the heroic and unfortunate city by nearly all the battalions of the national guard.[81]

Darcel stresses that Deloye's work was meant to "symbolize" the defense of Strasbourg in front of Pradier's monument, as if the latter did not supply enough symbolic reference by itself. Deloye's sculpture at Pradier's *Strasbourg* therefore served not just to double the message but also to render the site completely relevant to, and fully coterminous with, the events of 1870.

In 1870, the Government of National Defense made other efforts to that same end. On October 2, only days after the fall of the city of Strasbourg, its members officially decided to cast *Strasbourg* in bronze and to place her, materially transformed, at the same spot she already occupied: "Art. 1.—The statue of



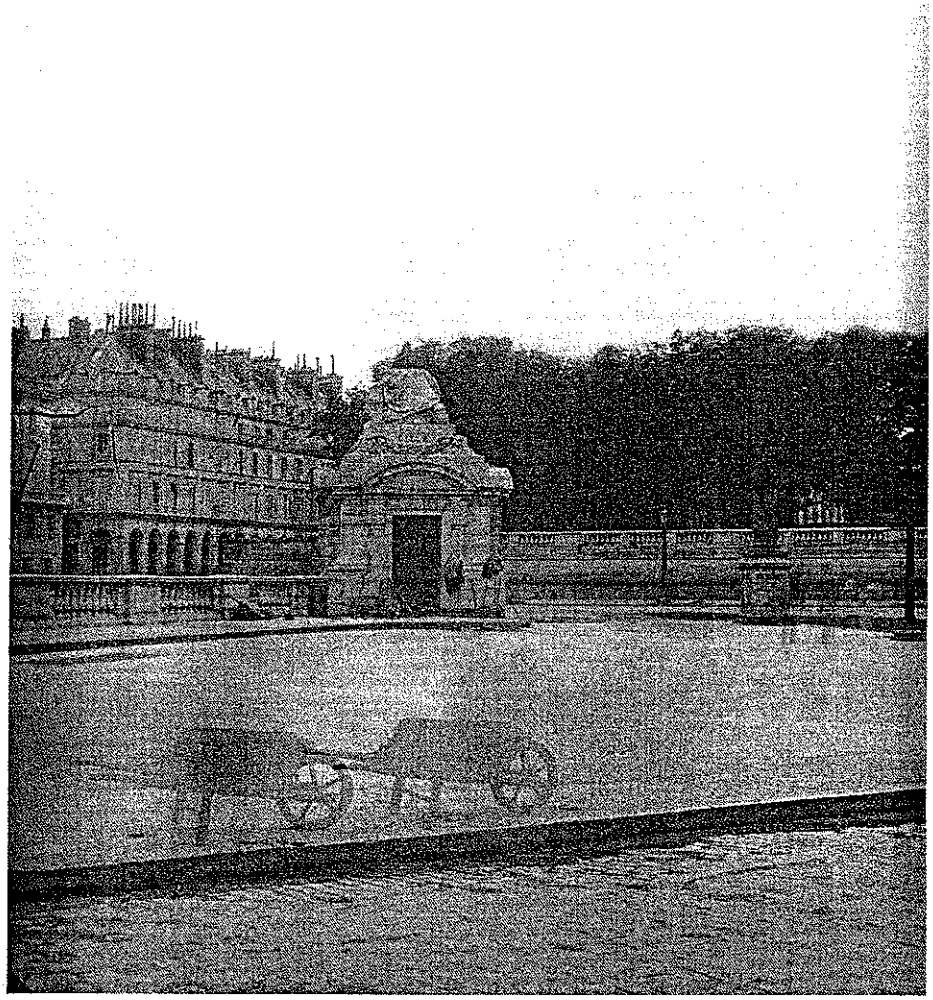
20 Michel Berthaud, *Gustave Deloye's "À Strasbourg,"* 1870, albumen print. Archives Nationales, Paris (artwork in the public domain)

the city of Strasbourg which stands at the present moment on the place de la Concorde will be cast in bronze and kept at the same spot, with an inscription commemorating all facts of the resistance of the Département de l'Est."[82] Signed by the newly appointed officials of the young Third Republic Gambetta, Simon, and Jules Favre, among others, the decree was never actualized (it had been overseen by Pradier's student the sculptor Antoine Etex), yet it appeared later in the pages of the periodical *L'Autographe* as a curiosity of historic value from the early days of the Republic. Courbet famously opposed the plan and published a letter addressed to the Government of National Defense in *Le Réveil* on October 5, questioning any indexical relation between memory and sculptural materiality: "That is exactly what I was afraid of: a bronze statue! It will recall, you say, the glory of Strasbourg unalterably? Is history so forgetful, then, and have we lost forever the memory of the heart?"[83] It should be emphasized that the difference the officials envisioned—certainly not a cheap one for a young regime with many other financial obligations—offered nothing but a material transformation from stone to bronze. A plaque with the facts of the struggle of resistance attached to the sculpture's guardhouse, as Courbet suggested, clearly would not have sufficed.

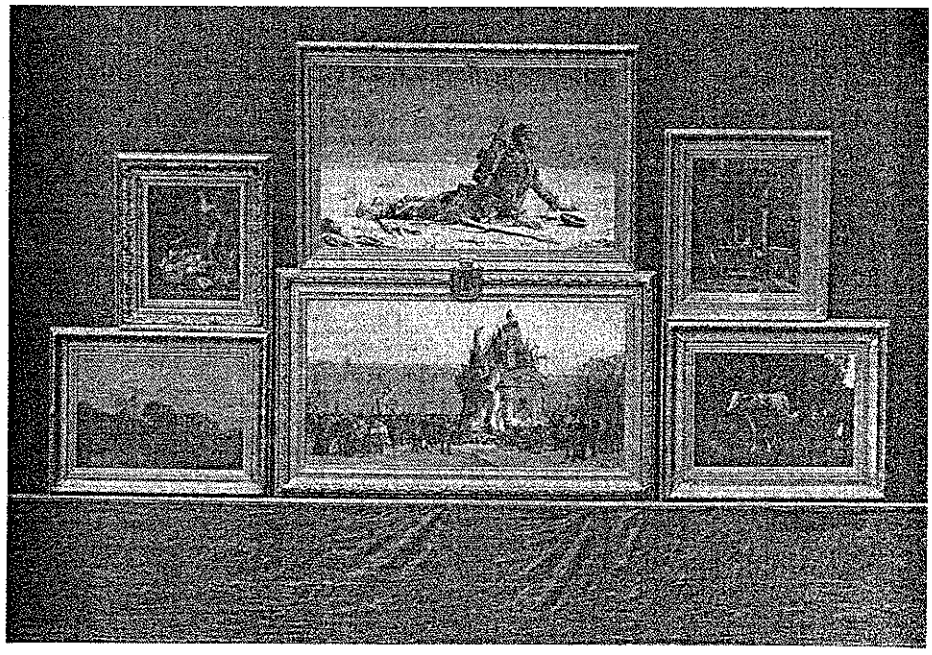
Not unlike the addition of Deloye's sculpture, the recasting of *Strasbourg* would have furthered major shifts in the symbolic order of the site. The tinkering with the metaphoric quality of sculptural material seemed urgent business for the government officials at the Hôtel de Ville months before it burned during the Commune—urgent, because the French state, especially after Sedan, needed to shore up its own image of perpetual internal and external strength. Bronze would signify not merely greater material value but also greater steadfastness and resistance to brute force (in 1864, *Lille* had proven vulnerable when a teenager vandalized her by breaking off an arm and the nose).[84] History vindicated Gambetta and his colleagues. During the 1871 civil war clashes on the square, *Lille* was decapitated, as we can see in Hippolyte Blancard's haunting photograph of the street "cleanup" after the Commune—a blow bronze perhaps would have withstood (Fig. 21).[85]

Moreover, the recasting of *Strasbourg* would have served other ideological purposes. First and foremost, it would have transformed *Strasbourg* into a contemporary object, created in 1870, not the 1830s. The sculpture's signs of age—and thus its historic difference—would immediately have disappeared. In remaking *Strasbourg* in the here and now, the Government of National Defense would have been able to control at least her image, if not her fortifications. And by "remaking" her for Paris, she would continue to be part of France, even if her material difference would set her apart from her sister cities. To affirm her repeatedly in and for the moment, then, became a form of protection. The continual effort to make the Siege of Strasbourg present on the square itself—through bronze recasting, or Deloye's allegory—went hand in hand, finally, with the wreaths, flags, and songs. Patriotism was an active, not a contemplative sentiment, generating a sense of national solidarity through dynamic individual interaction with history itself.

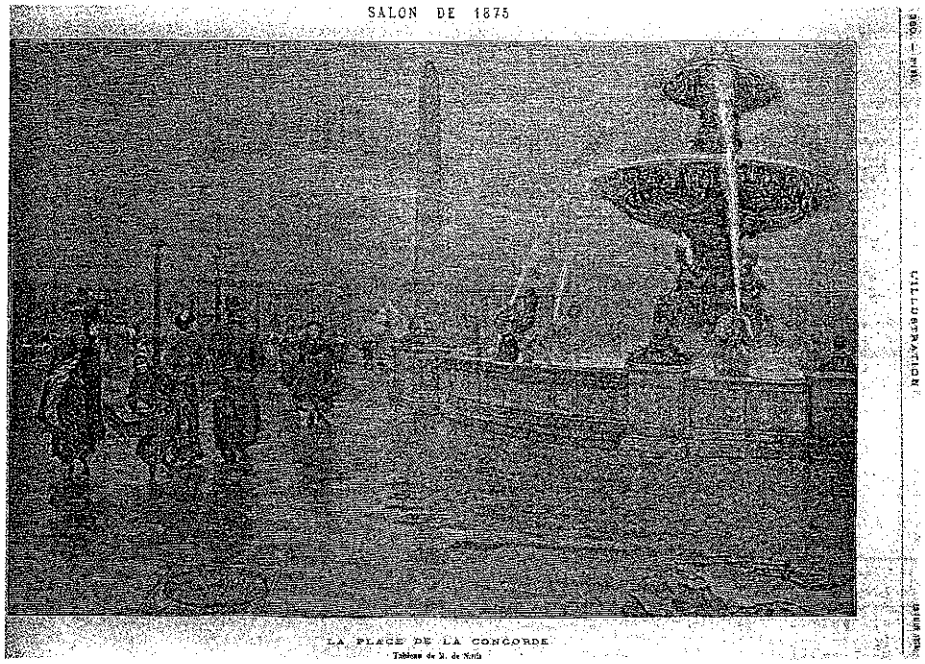
By placing Lepic's hat over the statue, Degas paralleled these other commemorative strategies, for *Strasbourg* incorporated their resonances into his painting, even if he did not show them explicitly. Had the painting been displayed in public, the comparison would have been unavoidable for a Parisian audience, notably because Degas's was not the only painting focusing on this site in the 1870s. Indeed, the crowds at the statue were considered an appropriate topic for Salon painting, as proved by Pierre Van Elven's *Homage Rendered to the Statue of Strasbourg, Place de la Concorde, during the Siege of Paris,* a painting captured in a photograph in the *Albums Michelez,* which archived some of the paintings exhibited at the Salon of 1872 (Fig. 22).[86] In Van Elven's painting, a large crowd has gathered. *Strasbourg* is pushed all the way into the center of the pictorial field, which signals this as a painting out to document a highly particular memorial practice, not the full view of the square. Degas's limited view of the site—and his focus on *Lille* and *Strasbourg*—is comparable to Van Elven's. Nonetheless, the two paintings stage entirely different versions of the commemorative practices surrounding the sculpture: the hundreds of small gestures portrayed by Van Elven are condensed, in Degas's work, into *Strasbourg*'s encounter with a single top hat.



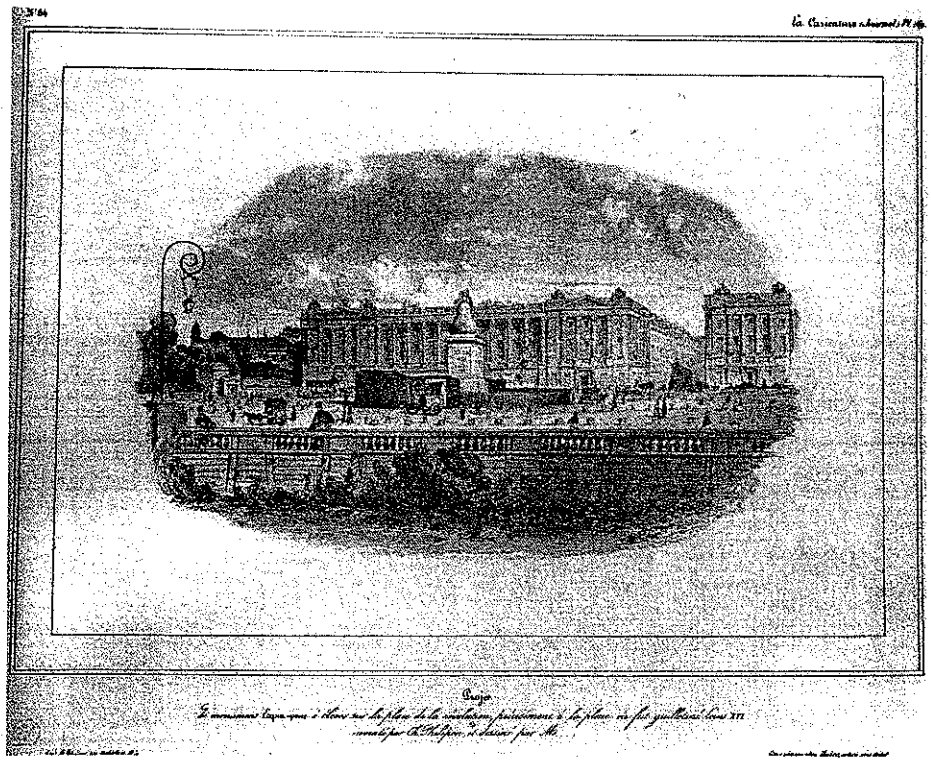
21 Hippolyte Blancard, *Place de la Concorde: Statue of the City of Lille Decapitated during Combat,* 1871, modern print from original glass negative. Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris (artwork in the public domain)



22 Sheet no. 15 of the *Albums Michelez,* 1872, albumen print; in the center: Pierre Van Elven, *Homage Rendered to the Statue of Strasbourg, Place de la Concorde, during the Siege of Paris, 1872,* oil on canvas, location unknown. Musée d'Orsay, Paris, Documentation (artwork in the public domain)

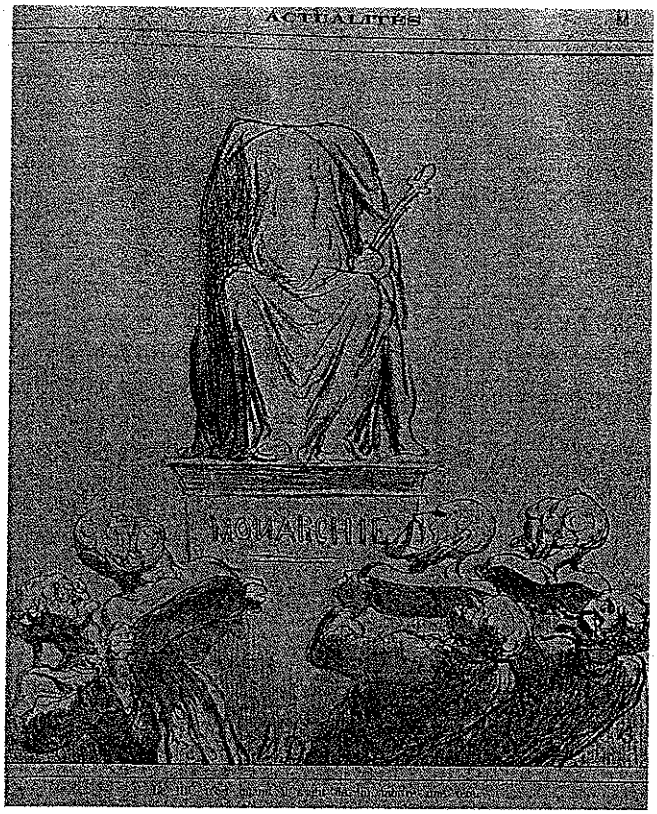


23 After Giuseppe de Nittis, *Place de la Concorde,* from *L'Illustration,* June 12, 1875, 380, lithograph, 10⅞ × 14½ in. (27.5 × 37 cm) (artwork in the public domain)

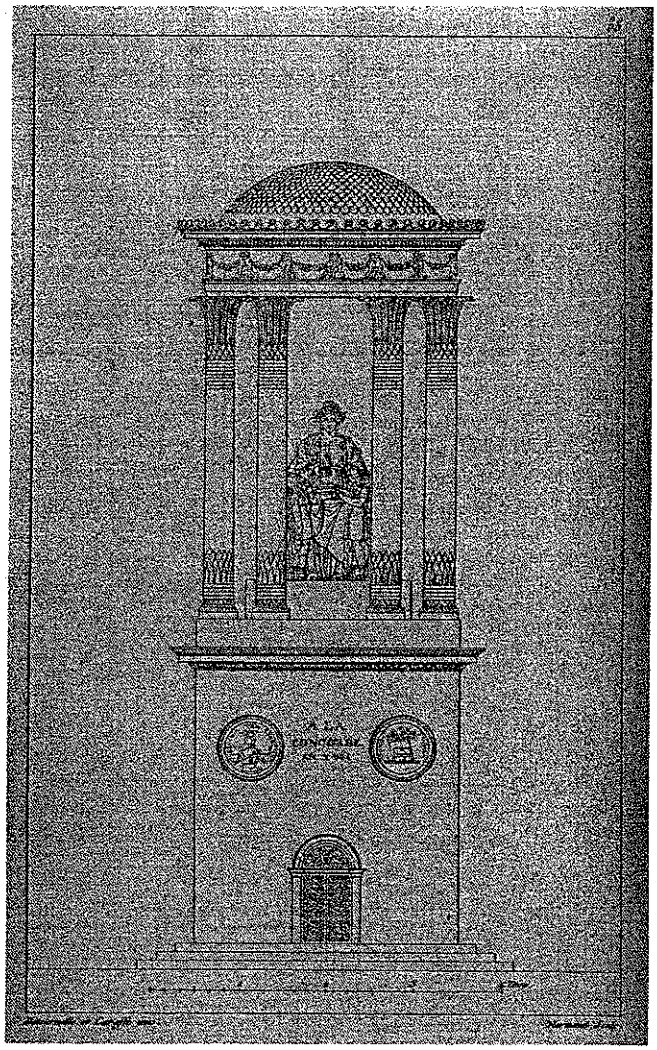


24 Charles Philipon, *Project: The Expia-Pear [Expia-poire] Monument, to Be Erected on the Place de la Révolution, Precisely on the Spot Where Louis XVI Was Guillotined,* from *La Caricature,* July 7, 1832, pl. 169, lithograph, 10¼ × 12½ in. (26 × 32 cm) (artwork in the public domain)

In Degas's painting, it is hard to establish with certainty what little information about Pradier's *Strasbourg* we are given. We cannot even be certain whether the small, imprecise dots of light paint to the right of Lepic's hat are meant to describe one side of the statue or of the ornamentation attached to her. Not to depict *Strasbourg* was Degas's drastic pictorial decision, and a constitutive one for the composition at large. Yet he did paint *Strasbourg,* if only obliquely, and did not turn away entirely from her, even though that option would have been open to him. To that end, another painting of the square, exhibited at the Salon of 1875, is relevant: Giuseppe de Nittis's *Place de la Concorde,* which shows us the hustle and bustle on the square in wintertime (Fig. 23).[87] The painting perhaps spurred Degas to paint the same site but edit his view in radically different, and less historically evasive terms. De Nittis had strikingly cut the right edge of his canvas



25 Honoré Daumier, *The Rub Is When One Has to Give Him a Head,* from *Le Charivari,* "Actualités," no. 56, March 25, 1872, lithograph, 9¾ × 8⅞ in. (24.5 × 22.5 cm) (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University)



26 Détournelle and Caraffe, *Idea of a Monument, Destined for the Place de la Concorde,* ca. 1796, from C. P. Landon, *A Collection of Etchings, from the Most Celebrated Ancient and Modern Productions in Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, of the Italian and French Schools,* London, 1821, pl. 38, lithograph, 8 × 4½ in. (20.3 × 11.4 cm) (artwork in the public domain)

so that *Strasbourg* remained outside of view. If Degas was interested mainly in a scene of contemporary urban life, as was De Nittis, he could have avoided the monument altogether, too. Instead, Degas chose a perspective that cut down the middle between Van Elven's and De Nittis's two compositional options. Degas included the square's patriotic emblem in his frame of vision, only to make its symbolic function visible as absence.

Degas's painting remains a portrait, in the expanded sense, of Viscount Lepic and his family and their specific encounter with history. His representation of the square completely excludes the masses to focus our attention on one encounter with the statue, one singular happenstance, one point of view. In constructing the legacy of the sieges and the war, he thus could be accused of allowing the socially privileged the upper hand. The viscount's top hat is an awkward placeholder, though, countermanding the devotion of the masses in favor of the bored disaffection of aristocratic privilege. It seems almost as if "history" was forced onto Lepic, and while he may not have sought out a confrontation with the past, from the viewer's perspective he is inevitably scheduled for one. Lepic, even if his look and posture suggest the suspension of history's vicissitudes in aristocratic privilege, constituted a figure marked by loss. A lifetime would not have been enough to live up to the name Eylau-Eugénie-Hortense after Sedan. The fortuitous covering of *Strasbourg* speaks to the inevitability of Lepic's belonging to the wrong side of France's political future. This fact could perhaps explain why he is in the painting to begin with and why Degas positioned him in such a precarious date with history itself.

Fluctuating, deeply unstable, and momentary, the overlap between hat and statue appears internally conflicted as to its own meanings. It signals all and nothing, presence and absence, at the same time, presenting a solution to the crisis in representation that is the history of the Place de la Concorde itself: perhaps, through artistic sleight of hand, finally achieving the "concord" that is the promise of the square's etymology. All the while, Degas's covering of the statue avoids direct confrontation and visibility, and therefore also an explicit mode of historical critique. Prior to Degas's painting, several options that had proven useful utopian solutions to the square's decorative challenges would have been available in that regard. There is Charles Philipon's *Project: The Expia-Pear* [*Expia-poire*] *Monument* of 1832, featuring a large sculpture of

a pear—his satirical spoof on Louis-Philippe's head—towering over the square (Fig. 24).[88] In this monument, the Place de la Concorde's tumultuous history is evoked in the sharp terms of opposition, enshrining the Restoration's attempts to appease the "crimes" of the Revolution through a counterimage to the July Monarchy. Some decades later, Honoré Daumier provided an image of a statue more obviously, and visibly, in need of completion—both materially and semantically—in his *Le Charivari* caricature of March 25, 1872, *The Rub Is When One Has to Give Him a Head* (Fig. 25). He showed a headless allegory of the monarch awaiting a Bourbon, Orléanist, or Napoleonic head, thereby envisioning a monument to indecision, capable of accommodating any and every ideological stance.

Finally, Détournelle and Caraffe's *Idea of a Monument, Destined for the Place de la Concorde* of about 1796 offers perhaps the most poignant and appropriate monument for the square (Fig. 26). In this proposal dating from the Directory, the damaged pedestal to Louis XV's toppled equestrian effigy remains intact. It is now visible through the entrance gates of an elaborate architectural frame in whose second story sits a personification of Concord, "protecting and uniting two children."[89] Porterfield has eloquently summed up the project's message of neutrality: "The old pedestal is preserved, but not to prove the triumph of a new ideology antithetical either to monarchy or republic. Rather, the monument attempts to make an object lesson of the destructive past."[90] In choosing to place Lepic's hat over *Strasbourg*, Degas embraced the ideas foundational to these three different historical proposals. Here is Lepic, the Bonapartist, now clearly replacing *Strasbourg*; here is an invisible monument behind his hat with an unknown present and future; here is a new and fleeting moment of an utterly different and modern antimonumentality. The power of Degas's overlap lies precisely in the fact that it is all three options at once.

In *Place de la Concorde*, Degas set forth simultaneously a monument and a proposal for a monument, creating a painting about political reality as much as political fantasy. What it suggests to us is that the "political"—or the "ideological"—is always and necessarily an unstable game in the beholder's eye, much like the overlap of hat and statue, making sense one moment, another not. In lieu of the endless processions of public mourning at *Strasbourg* and at the risk of eclipsing one memorializing practice for another, Degas furnished a single point of view dense with the political realities of his moment—a phenomenology of place and appearance that deliberately enlisted Impressionism's flux to representing political instability. Degas turned a mere moment, a single skewed angle of vision, into a weighted expression of nationalism, and in so doing redirected the possibilities for mourning away from the actual monument itself and its empty rehearsals of national piety. Not in action, but in perception—and not in a worship of monumentality, but in its undoing through the theater of vision—that is where politics now seems to reside. The political has become, under the conditions of parliamentary democracy, a stage set whose anxious signs live in a state of constant reordering and whose tenuousness can never be mistaken for the real. We have been vouchsafed an exceptional and singular perspective onto the scene, one that shows how powerfully history has here been "produced" for us. In this angle of vision, in this instance, a moment in urban life acquires political form, yet this, too, lasts but an instant, too tenuous for a firm political base. *Place de la Concorde* is a painting composed of chance encounters and happenstances, and the "political" cannot appear in any more fundamental or essentialist form than through the ambiguities of that fragmentation. At the same time, the painting turns modern "politics" and "history" impressionistic, positing individual perspective and experience as the true and only knowable forms of historical necessity and force.

Degas's painting demands a sociospecific reading of its pictorial terms—terms, like emptiness, randomness, and fragmentation of form, that in early modernist painting have too often been taken to signify the separation of art from the real. What Degas laid bare in this experimental portrait is that changing "points of view" can easily morph from incident to ideology. *Place de la Concorde* is a painting in which a specific point of view is literalized, cleaved from vision's often essentialist claims, made explicitly historical, contextual, and contingent. An "impression" emerges here in particularly strong cognitive terms as social and political meaning drawn from a point of view. The theme of mid-1870s party politics allowed Degas to make this point—always nascent in an Impressionist painting and at times overtly staged—with special cogency. His is a visual imaginary responsive both to the quickness of the senses and the political conditions of modern life after 1870—one that augments Impressionism's ventures into the realm of light and shadow with the deeper shadows of political instability and loss.

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Notes

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1. Gustave Courbet, *Letters* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 392–93.
2. Much regarding the painting must by necessity remain speculative, given the fact that we know nothing about the commission, if there was one, and about the motives for selecting the figures and the space. It is generally agreed that Degas painted it in 1875 (perhaps finishing it in 1876). Viscount Lepic owned the painting for the rest of his life, and the Galerie Durand-Ruel bought it at the sale of the "atelier de Le Pic" at the Hôtel Drouot on March 20, 1897. In the sales catalog, the painting is listed as by Giuseppe de Nittis, "Nittis (De): # 84—*La Place de la Concorde*"; *Tableaux anciens et modernes . . . de l'atelier de Le Pic,* Hôtel

Drouot, Paris, March 20, 1897, 11. Durand-Ruel sold the painting to the Berlin collector Otto Gerstenberg in 1911. See the section of previously unpublished Degas correspondence to Durand-Ruel, ed. Caroline Durand-Ruel Godfroy, "Lettres de Degas conservées dans les archives Durand-Ruel," in *Degas inédit: Actes du Colloque Degas; Musée d'Orsay, 18–21 avril 1988* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1989), 433–509, at 472. I thank Durand-Ruel Godfroy for providing me with the correct date of the Lepic sale. Despite its size and complexity (it measures an impressive 31 by 46 in., or 78 by 117 cm), the artist never showed the painting at an exhibition during his lifetime. Therefore, we have hardly any accounts of the painting written before 1900.

3. Linda Nochlin, "Impressionist Portraits and the Construction of Modern Identity," in *Renoir's Portraits: Impressions of an Age*, ed. Colin B. Bailey, exh. cat. (New Haven: Yale University Press in association with National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 1997), 53–75, at 53.

4. For a summary of the art historical literature on the painting, long presumed lost during World War II but recovered from storage in Russia in the 1990s, see Albert Kostenevich, *Impressionist Treasures Revealed: Impressionist Masterpieces and Other Important French Paintings Preserved by the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995), 68–79; and Andrea Frey, *Der Stadtraum in der französischen Malerei, 1860–1900* (Berlin: Reimer, 1999), 134–46.

5. T. J. Clark mentioned in 1984 that Kirk Varnedoe had made this point "in lectures": Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), 281.

6. These interpretations are elegantly summed up in Hollis Clayson, *Paris in Despair: Art and Everyday Life under Siege (1870–71)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 335–36; and Albert Boime, *Art and the French Commune: Imagining Paris after War and Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 102–7. The most detailed account of the painting's staging of Haussmannization and urban processes of modernization is Peter Brix Søndergaard, "Blikkets modernisering: Edgar Degas' *Vicomte Lepic/Place de la Concorde*," in *Synsvinkler på kunsthistorien*, ed. André Wang Hansen (Århus: Århus Universitetsforlag, 1991), 108–45.

7. Mari Kálmán Meller, "Degas's 'Place de la Concorde: Vicomte Lepic and His Daughters,' " *Burlington Magazine* 145, no. 1201 (April 2003): 273–81, at 281.

8. Clayson, *Paris in Despair*, 329–42.

9. On Degas's relation to the politics and culture of the early Third Republic, see June Hargrove, "Degas's *Little 14-Year-Old Dancer*: Madonna of the Third Republic?" *Sculpture Journal* 2 (1998): 97–105.

10. Even though I term many of Degas's pictorial maneuvers in this essay "Impressionist," I do not intend to contradict the productive discussions about the painter's stylistic complexity: Carol Armstrong, *Odd Man Out: Readings of the Work and Reputation of Edgar Degas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

11. Paul Alexis, "Paris qui travaille," pt. 3, "Aux peintres et sculpteurs," *L'Avenir National*, no. 2865 (May 5, 1873): 2: "Des artistes, républicains d'opinion, accusent hautement l'administration actuelle des Beaux-Arts de vouloir déconsidérer la République. D'autres, se piquant de scepticisme et d'indifférence politique, ne vont-ils pas jusqu'à regretter l'Empire et M. de Niewerkerque [*sic*]?" Compare Stephen S. Eisenman, "The Intransigent Artist or How the Impressionists Got Their Name," in *The New Painting: Impressionism, 1874–1886*, ed. Charles Moffett, exh. cat. (San Francisco: Fine Arts Museums, 1986), 51–59.

12. Durand-Ruel Godfroy, "Lettres de Degas," 472.

13. Paul Mantz, "L'exposition des peintres impressionnistes," *Le Temps*, April 22, 1877, 3: "C'est un observateur, un historien peut-être."

14. Linda Nochlin, "Degas and the Dreyfus Affair: A Portrait of the Artist as an Anti-Semite," in *The Politics of Vision: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1989), 141–69, at 156. Philip Nord called Degas "more nationalist than republican," in *Impressionists and Politics: Art and Democracy in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 2000), 44.

15. Edgar Degas, *The Notebooks of Edgar Degas*, ed. Theodore Reff, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), vol. 1, 121.

16. Alexandre Lambert, *Précis comparé de la guerre franco-allemande: Exposé des opérations des deux armées* (Paris: E. Lachaud, 1872); Louis Aurelle de Paladines, *Campagne de 1870–1871: La première armée de la Loire* (Paris: Henri Plon, 1872); and Lieutenant-Colonel Des Moutis, *Mémoires sur l'armée de Chanzy: Le 49e régiment des mobiles de l'Orne, 1870–1871* (Alençon: E. de Broise, 1872).

17. [Helmuth Graf von Moltke], *L'armée allemande: Son organisation, son armement, sa manière de combattre, par un général prussien* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1871); Wilhelm Friedrich Rüstow, *Guerre des frontières du Rhin, 1870–1871* (Paris: J. Dumaine, 1871); and Gesner Rafina, *Une mission secrète à Paris pendant la Commune: Rapports adressés au gouvernement* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1871).

18. Louis Veuillot, *Paris pendant les deux sièges*, 2 vols. (Paris: Victor Palmé, 1871).

19. Richard Kendall and Griselda Pollock, eds., *Dealing with Degas: Representations of Women and the Politics of Vision* (New York: Universe, 1992).

20. Nochlin, "Degas and the Dreyfus Affair," 149. In a letter to Charles W. Deschamps, director of the Durand-Ruel London branch, Degas wrote in defense of the former Communard sculptor Jules Dalou on August 22, 1875; Theodore Reff, "Some Unpublished Letters of Degas," *Art Bulletin* 50, no. 1 (March 1968): 87–94, at 89.

21. See Degas, *The Notebooks*, vol. 1, 108–9, 117–19, 131; and Theodore Reff, *Degas: The Artist's Mind* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art/Harper and Row, 1976), 75.

22. Richard Thomson, *The Troubled Republic: Visual Culture and Social Debate in France, 1889–1900* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 169–222.

23. Paul Tucker, "The First Impressionist Exhibition in Context," in Moffett, *The New Painting*, 93–117; Jane Mayo Roos, *Early Impressionism and the French State (1866–1874)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and John House, *Impressionism: Paint and Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

24. Camille Pissarro, *Portrait of Paul Cézanne*, 1874, oil on canvas, 28¾ by 23½ in. (73 by 59.7 cm), private collection, on loan to the National Gallery, London; see Theodore Reff, "Pissarro's Portrait of Cézanne," *Burlington Magazine* 109, no. 776 (November 1967): 627–33. Claude Monet, *Rue Montorgeuil: Fête du 30 juin 1878*, 1878, oil on canvas, 31½ by 19⅛ in. (80 by 48.5 cm), Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Édouard Manet, *Rue Mosnier Decked in Flags (Fête de la Paix, 30 juin 1878)*, 1878, oil on canvas, 25⅝ by 31⅞ in. (65 by 81 cm), the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. See Jane Mayo Roos, "Within the 'Zone of Silence': Monet and Manet in 1878," *Art History* 11, no. 3 (September 1988): 372–407; and idem, " 'Faire Vrai Laisser Dire': Nationalism, Community, and Manet's Late Paintings," in *Nationalism and French Visual Culture, 1870–1914*, Studies in the History of Art, 68, ed. June Hargrove and Neil McWilliam (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 129–51.

25. Kirk Varnedoe, *Gustave Caillebotte* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 88–95.

26. Claude Monet, *Men Unloading Coal along the Seine*, ca. 1875, oil on canvas, 21½ by 25¾ in. (55 by 66 cm), Musée d'Orsay; see James H. Rubin, *Impressionism and the Modern Landscape: Productivity, Technology, and Urbanization from Manet to Van Gogh* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 88–89.

27. Degas, *L'absinthe*, 1875–76, oil on canvas, 36¼ by 26¾ in. (92 by 68 cm), Musée d'Orsay; see W. Scott Haine, *The World of the Paris Café: Sociability among the French Working Classes, 1789–1914* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 219–25.

28. Philippe Burty, "The Paris Exhibitions: *Les Impressionnistes*," *Academy*, May 30, 1874, 616.

29. Robert R. Locke, *French Legitimists and the Politics of Moral Order in the Early Third Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974). For a contemporary republican assessment of the early Third Republic's party contestation, see Albert Delpit, *Les prétendants: Les Bourbons, les d'Orléans, l'Empire, la Commune, la République* (Paris: E. Lachaud, 1872); compare Amédée de Margerie's royalist stance in *L'urgence*, vol. 1, *La crise*, vol. 2, *L'issue de la crise* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1874).

30. Y., "À tort et à travers le Salon de 1875," *La Vie Parisienne*, May 22, 1875, 284: "*La peinture de caporal.* À encore de beaux jours. Elle flambe les fermes, elle surprend les postes, elle passe par les brèches, elle tiraille dans les vignes, elle fait défiler les régiments sur les boulevards. Malgré tout, on sent que ça s'en va un peu. Le grand soldat disparaît, la guerre tourne aux bonshommes. . . . Il y a du chagrin ou de l'indifférence chez ceux qui parlent guerre en peinture. Les uns s'efforcent, les autres pensent à autre chose. Le souvenir individuel de 1870 remplace le sentiment général de l'armée. . . . Néanmoins, ces tristes choses de 1870 n'attirent pas beaucoup les peintres; l'impression est trop récente pour être rendue avec un accent définitif et une allure forte."

31. Edgar Degas, *Letters*, ed. Marcel Guerin (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1947), 22.

32. Kirk Varnedoe, *A Fine Disregard: What Makes Modern Art Modern* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1990), 53.

33. Max Imdahl, "Die Momentfotografie und 'Le Comte Lepic' von Edgar Degas," in *Festschrift für Gert von der Osten*, ed. Horst Keller (Cologne: DuMont Schauberg, 1970), 228–34; Kirk Varnedoe, "The Artifice of Candor: Impressionism and Photography Reconsidered," *Art in America* 68, no. 1 (January 1980): 66–78; and idem, "The Ideology of Time: Degas and Photography," *Art in America* 68, no. 6 (June 1980): 96–110.

34. Jean-Marie Bruson et al., eds., *De la place Louis XV à la place de la Con-*

corde, exh. cat. (Paris: Musée Carnavalet; Alençon: Imprimerie Alençonnaise, 1982). Period publications include Victor Cochinat, "Place de la Concorde," *Le Journal Illustré,* no. 17 (June 5, 1864): 131–33; and Christian Hutzelmann, *Der Konkordienplatz zu Paris und seine Geschichte* (Fürth: Schmittner, 1889).

35. Charles Coligny, "Les villes de France à la place de la Concorde," *L'Artiste,* 8th ser., 23 (April 1873): 103–12, at 111: "Que la place de la Concorde en a vu passer depuis qu'elle s'est appelée la place de la Révolution! D'abord c'est là que s'accomplit un des plus grands événements des temps modernes: un roi y meurt sur l'échafaud. Notre génération n'a pas voulu chercher à en perpétuer là le souvenir; et ce grand souvenir, on l'a comme enfoui dans la petite rue d'Anjou. On a eu l'idée toute parisienne de ne pas poser un monument funéraire sur la brillante place de la Concorde, qui fût devenue ainsi une place Louis XVI après avoir été une place Louis XV. . . . Cette assemblée plastique de grandes villes semble comme un aréopage qui jugerait Paris. On les dirait convoquées dans la capitale du royaume, de l'empire ou de la république, pour quelque grand acte national. Mais leur génie populaire était-il d'être au milieu de cette place de la Concorde, qui fut si souvent la place de la discorde?"

36. Todd Porterfield, *The Allure of Empire: Art in the Service of French Imperialism, 1798–1836* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 13–41.

37. Maurice Agulhon, "Paris: A Traversal from East to West," in *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past,* ed. Pierre Nora, 3 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), vol. 2, 522–53, at 535.

38. Degas studied the background architecture carefully, as the single surviving preparatory drawing for the painting attests; Degas, *The Notebooks,* vol. 1, 124.

39. Clayson, *Paris in Despair,* 18–47.

40. Marcel Gauchet, "Right and Left," in Nora, *Realms of Memory,* vol. 1, 240–98.

41. Ibid., 254; and Jean Dubois, *Le vocabulaire politique et social en France de 1869 à 1872: À travers les oeuvres des écrivains, les revues et les journaux* (Paris: Larousse, 1962), 116–17, 242, 311.

42. Paul de Cassagnac, *Bataille électorale: La revanche du scrutin; Histoire de nulle part et de partout* (Paris: E. Lachaud, 1875).

43. John Rothney, *Bonapartism after Sedan* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1969), 158–60.

44. On Lepic's life and artistic career, see Harvey Buchanan, on whose research I rely throughout: "Edgar Degas and Ludovic Lepic: An Impressionist Friendship," *Cleveland Studies in the History of Art* 2 (1997): 32–121; and Jean Guy Bertauld, "Ludovic Napoléon Lepic, un ami de Edgar Degas: Peintre, graveur, archéologue," *Association des Amis de la Maison Fournaise: Bulletin,* no. 9 (1999–2000): 5–18.

45. Frédéric Bazille, *Correspondance,* ed. Didier Vatoune (Montpellier: Presses du Languedoc, 1992), 48.

46. See Buchanan, "Edgar Degas and Ludovic Lepic," 38. With the fall of the Empire in 1870, Lepic had to leave his prestigious studio, and his father sold the family's collection of antique furniture at the Hôtel Drouot on April 23–24, 1872. Thierry Zimmer, "Ludovic-Napoléon Lepic, 1839–1889," 3 vols. (PhD diss., Université de Paris IV, Sorbonne, 1995), vol. 1, 75.

47. Alberty, "Le Cte Lepic," *L'Événement,* October 31, 1889, quoted in Bertauld, "Ludovic Napoléon Lepic," 16.

48. Although some scholars have suggested that Lepic was indeed a member of the Legion (Kostenevich, *Impressionist Treasures Revealed,* 70), the Légion d'Honneur's list of former members includes Lepic's grandfather Louis, his father, Louis-Joseph, as well as Joachim Hyppolite Lepic and Charles Lepic. Christine Minjollet at the archives of the Légion d'Honneur has confirmed that Ludovic Lepic was never a member himself; I thank her for her assistance.

49. Jean Tulard, François Monnier, and Olivier Échappé, eds., *La Légion d'honneur: Deux siècles d'histoire; Actes du colloque du bicentenaire, Paris 2002* (Paris: Perrin, 2004), 75–90.

50. Courbet, *Letters,* 378–81.

51. Odile Schmitz, ed., *Hommage à Léon Gambetta,* exh. cat. (Paris: Musée du Luxembourg; Alençon: Imprimerie Alençonnaise, 1982), 85; and J. P. T. Bury, *Gambetta and the Making of the Third Republic* (London: Longman, 1973).

52. Robert L. Herbert, *Impressionism: Art, Leisure and Parisian Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 35.

53. Ludovic Halévy, *Notes et souvenirs, 1871–1872* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1889), 275: "Nous la voyons s'émietter en groupes et sous-groupes, coteries et sous-coteries: gauche, droite, extrême gauche, extrême droite, centre droit, centre gauche, etc. Nous sommes évidemment atteints de cette usure morale que produit à la longue le frottement des révolutions. Rien n'est changé en France, il n'y a que deux provinces de moins et cinq ou six partis de plus."

54. Rainer Hudemann, *Fraktionsbildung im französischen Parlament: Zur Entwicklung des Parteiensystems in der frühen Dritten Republik (1871–1875)* (Munich: Artemis, 1979); Sanford Elwitt, *The Making of the Third Republic: Class and Politics in France, 1868–1884* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1975); Jérôme Grévy, *La république des opportunistes, 1870–1885* (Paris: Perrin, 1998); and James R. Lehning, *To Be a Citizen: The Political Culture of the Early Third Republic* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001), 1–13, who calls the period the "insecure republic."

55. Gauchet, "Right and Left," 292.

56. Henri Loyrette, ed., *Entre le théâtre et l'histoire: La famille Halévy (1760–1960)* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux; Arthème Fayard, 1996), 136–93. On Degas's friendship with Halévy, see Jean-Pierre Halévy's introduction to *Degas parle,* by Daniel Halévy (1960; Paris: Fallois, 1995), 7–25.

57. Kostenevich, *Impressionist Treasures Revealed,* 71–72. The attribution is doubted in Meller, "Degas's 'Place de la Concorde,' " 277. We have several monotypes by Degas in his series of unpublished illustrations for Halévy's *Famille Cardinal,* likely executed shortly after the *Place de la Concorde,* in which the artist placed a portrait of Halévy similarly at the left edge of his images; Eugenia Parry Janis, *Degas Monotypes: Essay, Catalogue & Checklist,* exh. cat. (Cambridge, Mass.: Fogg Art Museum; Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1968), 199–200. The largely unpublished correspondence of Ludovic Halévy, including letters by Degas, at the Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France, MSS. 4483, 272–364, is unhelpful in clarifying this matter.

58. Eric C. Hansen, *Ludovic Halévy: A Study of Frivolity and Fatalism in Nineteenth-Century France* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1987), 155–210, at 190.

59. Ludovic Halévy, *Carnets,* ed. Daniel Halévy, 2 vols. (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1935), vol. 1, 150: "[J]'emporte la plus profonde indifférence politique. . . . Quant aux convictions . . . absentes, complètement absentes. Aussi bien à droite qu'à gauche."

60. Ludovic Halévy, *L'invasion: Souvenir et récits* (Paris: Michel Lévy, 1872).

61. Jean-Pierre Halévy, "Ludovic Halévy par lui-même," in Loyrette, *Entre le théâtre et l'histoire,* 146.

62. Halévy, *Notes et souvenirs,* 227: "Le jeune avocat qui devait gouverner dictatorialement la France après la chute de l'Empire."

63. Ludovic Halévy, *Trois dîners avec Gambetta,* ed. Daniel Halévy (Paris: Les Amis des Cahiers Verts, 1929), 19–20: "Bien que fort peu bonapartiste, je souhaitais de voir durer ce pitoyable gouvernement. Je me disais: 'Faites que cela dure, car si cela ne dure pas, cela finira bien mal.' Et cela n'a pas manqué. . . . De même aujourd'hui, je ne suis républicain ni de la veille ni du lendemain; je suis un républicain de résignation. . . . Elle m'inquiète énormément, la République; mais enfin je répète dans les mêmes termes ma prière de l'Empire: 'Faites que cela dure, car, si cela ne dure pas, cela finira bien mal, et plus mal même que l'Empire, car il n'y aura pas même la ressource de la République à mettre à la place de la République."

64. Halévy, *Notes et souvenirs,* 223–24: "les destitutés de septembre 1870 et les destitués de février 1871, attendent, avec une égale impatience et une égale avidité, la restauration de celui, Empereur ou Président, qui leur rendra leurs places. La politique est en train de devenir une affaire, un métier, une spéculation."

65. Sudhir Hazareesingh, *Intellectual Founders of the Republic: Five Studies in Nineteenth-Century French Republican Political Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 281.

66. Joel Isaacson, "Impressionism and Journalistic Illustration," *Arts Magazine* 56, no. 10 (June 1982): 95–115.

67. As an infrared analysis has shown, Degas changed Eylau's posture, making her coat more vertical, and thus her turn away from her father more decisive. Kostenevich, *Impressionist Treasures Revealed,* 79.

68. Rothney, *Bonapartism after Sedan,* 104–57.

69. Paul Beurdeley, *Petite histoire du parti bonapartiste* (Paris: Librarie du Suffrage Universel, 1875), 4, 26: "Écrire l'histoire du bonapartisme, c'est montrer l'absence de tout principe et de toute moralité dans ce parti; c'est écrire l'histoire de ses contradictions et de ses inconséquences. . . . Les bonapartistes . . . ne servent pas une cause, ils servent leurs intérêts personnels." For a contemporary Bonapartist explanation of the party's renewed electoral success in the mid-1870s, see Albert Duruy, *Comment les empires reviennent* (Paris: E. Lachaud, 1875), 5–17. On Bonapartism as a political strategy, see Karl Hammer and Peter Claus Hartmann, eds., *Der Bonapartismus: Historisches Phänomen und politischer Mythos* (Munich: Artemis, 1977).

70. Jean Sutherland Boggs, *Portraits by Degas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), 47.

71. Jacques de Caso and Claude Lapaire, eds., *Statues de chair: Sculptures de James Pradier,* exh. cat. (Geneva: Musée d'Art et d'Histoire; Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1985), 183–86.

72. June Hargrove, *Les statues de Paris: La représentation des grands hommes dans les rues et sur les places de Paris* (Antwerp: Mercator; Paris: Albin Michel, 1989), 15–83.

73. Suzanne Damiron, "Projets pour l'embellissement en 1829 de la place Louis XVI, actuellement place de la Concorde," *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'Art Français,* 1961, 159–62.

74. After Maurice Agulhon's seminal publication of "La 'statuomanie' et l'histoire," *Ethnologie Française* 8 (1978): 145–72, there has been much interest in the period's war memorials: Michael Dorsch, "Strong Women, Fallen Men: French Commemorative Sculpture following the Franco-Prussian War, 1870–1880" (PhD diss., New York University, 2001); June Hargrove, "Qui Vive? France! War Monuments from the Defense to the Revanche," in Hargrove and McWilliam, *Nationalism and French Visual Culture,* 55–81; and François Igersheim, *L'Alsace et ses historiens, 1680–1914: La fabrique des monuments* (Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 2006).

75. Clayson, *Paris in Despair,* 332.

76. See also the photographs and prints showing the statue between 1870 and 1900 at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Cabinet des Estampes et de la Photographie, inv. nos. Va277/78C86965, Va277a/72A24907, Va277c/72A24908.

77. Jules Claretie, *Paris assiégé: Tableaux et souvenirs, Septembre 1870–Janvier 1871* (Paris: Alphonse Lemerre, 1871), 24: "La statue de Strasbourg, littéralement couverte de fleurs, de drapeaux, d'inscriptions, de couronnes, ressemble, sous cet amas jaune et tricolor, à un patriotique catafalque." Compare Théophile Gautier's description in "Une nouvelle madone: La statue de Strasbourg; Septembre 1870," in *Tableaux de Siège: Paris, 1870–1871* (Paris: Charpentier, 1871), 2: "Sur sa couronne de créneaux, on a posé des couronnes de fleurs. Elles disparaît presque sous l'entassement des bouquets et des *ex-voto* patriotiques."

78. See the illustration of the decorated statue entitled *Honneur au brave général Uhrich,* in "Paris en ce moment," *La Vie Parisienne,* September 10, 1870, 728.

79. Coligny, "Les villes de France," 107: "On ne sait trop si ce sont des déesses grecques ou des cités françaises: je ne lis pas parfaitement sur leur visage les traits de notre nation."

80. My sincere thanks to June Hargrove, who first identified Deloye's sculpture and provided me with Berthaud's photograph in the Archives Nationales, Paris. I would also like to thank Hollis Clayson for her help in identifying the sculpture, as well as Anna Promey-Fallot.

81. Alfred Darcel, "Les musées, les arts et les artistes pendant le Siège de Paris," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 4 (November 1, 1871): 414–29, at 416.

82. *L'Autographe* 51 (August 17, 1872): 1: "Art. 1.—La Statue de la Ville de Strasbourg qui se trouve actuellement sur la place de la Concorde sera coulée en bronze et maintenue sur le même emplacement, avec inscription commemorative des toutes faits de la résistance du Département de l'Est."

83. Courbet, *Letters,* 392–93.

84. *Le Moniteur Universel,* October 22, 1864, 1251.

85. Jean Baronnet, ed., *Regard d'un Parisien sur la Commune: Photographies inédits de la Bibliothèque historique de la Ville de Paris* (Paris: Gallimard, 2006), 120; and Andrew Eschelbacher, "Environment of Memory: Paris and Post-Commune Angst," *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 8, no. 2 (Autumn 2009), http://19thc-artworldwide.org/index.php?option=com_content.

86. On the *Albums Michelez,* see Dominique Lobstein, "1872: Un Salon désarmé?" *48/14: La Revue du Musée d'Orsay,* no. 10 (Spring 2000): 84–93.

87. The painting was frequently reproduced that year and is today at the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul. On de Nittis, see Caroline Virginia Walter Goldberg, "Giuseppe de Nittis: An Italian Perspective on the Parisian Cityscape, 1867–1884" (PhD diss., New York University, 1995); and Caroline Igra, "Monuments to Prior Glory: The Foreign Perspective on Post-Commune Paris," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 62, no. 4 (1999): 512–26.

88. Beatrice Farwell, *The Charged Image: French Lithographic Caricature, 1816–1848,* exh. cat. (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1989), 124–25.

89. C. P. Landon, *A Collection of Etchings, from the Most Celebrated Ancient and Modern Productions in Painting, Sculpture and Architecture of the Italian and French Schools, from Originals Preserved in the Louvre, Paris* (London: W. T. Gilling, 1821), 81.

90. Porterfield, *The Allure of Empire,* 33–34.