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## Violence and the Sacred in Nineteenth-Century France

*Caroline Ford*

In a trenchant analysis of postrevolutionary religious conflict, Claude Langlois argues that the sectarian violence associated with the sixteenth-century Wars of Religion, the revolt of the Camisards, and the French Revolution largely disappeared in France during the nineteenth century. He attributes this decline both to the civil peace inaugurated by the Concordat and to the gradual displacement of religious violence by political and social violence. As the articles in this forum attest, religious violence did change in important respects, but I would argue less for its disappearance than for its fundamental transformation. This transformation can be fully appreciated only by situating it in a longer history of religious violence, from the Wars of Religion to the Third Republic, and by assessing that violence not only in terms of its frequency but also in terms of its changing forms of expression.

In recent years historians have devoted a tremendous amount of attention to the subject of sixteenth-century religious "rites of violence."<sup>1</sup> There has, however, been a profound lack of consensus among

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<sup>1</sup> Recent works on the subject are discussed in Mack P. Holt, "Putting Religion back into the Wars of Religion," *French Historical Studies* 18 (1993): 524–51; they include Denis Crouzet, *Les Guerriers de Dieu: La Violence au temps des troubles de religion*, 2 vols. (Seysssel, 1990); Barbara B. Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross: Catholics and Huguenots in Sixteenth-Century Paris* (New York, 1991); Henry Heller, *Iron and Blood: Civil Wars in Sixteenth-Century France* (Montreal, 1991); and Denis Richet, *De la Réforme à la Révolution: Etudes sur la France moderne* (Paris, 1991). I use Natalie Zemon Davis, "The Rites of Violence," in *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, Calif., 1975)

them about how religious violence might be defined or distinguished from other forms of violence.<sup>2</sup> Natalie Zemon Davis has been one of the few historians who has attempted to define religious riot in any explicit sense in a pioneering article published in 1974. She described it “as any violent action, with words or weapons, undertaken against religious targets by people who were not acting *officially and formally* as agents of political and ecclesiastical authority.”<sup>3</sup> Although her definition centers less on motivations than on the targets of religious violence, it places the violent actions of her sixteenth-century subjects within a religious framework, without ignoring the social underpinnings of those actions. Thus Davis seeks to understand behavior dismissed by historians as the irrational actions of the “canaille” and shuns the view that this violence was a thinly veiled expression of political or social discontent.

In a powerful and pathbreaking work on violence during the Wars of Religion, Denis Crouzet identifies some of the distinguishing features of Catholic violence in the interrelated tendencies to dehumanize, demonize, and animalize the victim as enemy. As Davis and especially Crouzet show, Catholic violence recalled visions of the apocalypse. Mutilated nude bodies were drawn through muddy streets. Men’s and women’s faces were disfigured, their eyes torn out, their noses amputated. Many were disemboweled, and their entrails and genitalia were displayed in a Rabelaisian world gone awry. Violence was expressed in the form of rape, real and mock; dismemberment; necrophilia; mutilation of bodies, male and female, live or dead; and the public display of corpses.<sup>4</sup> Davis presents some more benign pictures of this violence as well, emphasizing, for example, parody and the realm of the comic, as manifested in men and women forced to ride backward on asses in a kind of public charivari.

Davis places these “rites of violence” in the context of a preexisting repertory of gestures observable in early modern Europe, arguing that they were “drawn from a store of punitive and purificatory traditions current in sixteenth-century France.”<sup>5</sup> She suggests that collective moral codes, which were also applied to the secular realm, often legiti-

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152–187; and Crouzet, *Guerriers de Dieu*, as the basis for my discussion of sixteenth-century religious violence because these two historians focus most directly on the subject of violence during the Wars of Religion.

<sup>2</sup> See Holt, “Putting Religion Back”; Henry Heller, “Putting History back into the Religious Wars: A Reply to Mack P. Holt,” *French Historical Studies* 19 (1996): 853–61; and Mack P. Holt, “Religion, Historical Method, and Historical Forces: A Rejoinder,” *French Historical Studies* 19 (1996): 863–73.

<sup>3</sup> Davis, “Rites of Violence,” 153.

<sup>4</sup> Crouzet, *Guerriers de Dieu*, 1:233–317.

<sup>5</sup> Davis, “Rites of Violence,” 186.

mized violent actions and that the crowd frequently acted in place of government, when established authorities failed to act. In many cases, violence broke out during traditional rituals, such as church services, and processions. The agents of religious riot, in her view, sought to reassert the fundamental values of community, just as food rioters could be seen as trying to recover a just moral economy. Drawing on the work of the anthropologist Mary Douglas, Davis suggests that the religious motivation behind rioting was to rid the community of contamination and to reestablish its moral boundaries.<sup>6</sup>

How do we understand the character of sixteenth-century religious violence and the way in which it was expressed, almost obsessively, in the mutilation of the human body? Crouzet does not fully share Davis's view that religious violence represented an attempt to purify the country and to reclaim it from the demonized heretic who polluted it. He also rejects the notion that such violence was shaped by the stock of ritual gestures to which rioters resorted in other circumstances as well. Crouzet goes farther than most historians in arguing that Catholic violence in the sixteenth century constituted a kind of "violence of God," carried out by believers whose actions were unconsciously structured by prophetic religious visions. Religious violence was word or imagination made deed, and the process by which one was transformed into the other explained the symbolic form that religious violence assumed. The act of desecrating the body by dragging it from place to place or burning it, a ritual enacted again and again during the Wars of Religion, was a kind of spectacle of damnation.

The world became a literal theater as well as a metaphor for hell, and acts of violence had a deep religious significance. The fact that the Orléanais draper Claude Cochon was made to eat human excrement before his execution was a punishment for gluttony; it was symbolic of his own impurity.<sup>7</sup> The mutilation of the genitalia of victims must be understood within the framework of Catholic beliefs regarding the alleged luxury, debauchery, and sensuality of the Huguenot. Catholic obsession with sexual organs during acts of violence reflected the representation of the enemy as fundamentally impure and lubricious. The very way in which Catholics disposed of the dead revealed the way in which Scripture was written on the human body. Some corpses were abandoned to the scavenging crow and dog, both believed to carry the souls of the dead to hell. Others were thrown into wells, which were

<sup>6</sup> Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London, 1966).

<sup>7</sup> Crouzet, *Guerriers de Dieu*, 1:285.

associated with darkness and the underworld, but many were burned as a rite of purification. In short, these rituals, for Crouzet, had less to do with community traditions than with an “eschatological anguish,” with a symbolic “acting out” of a religious unconscious: “The ritual rejected the heretic in a place at one and the same time symbolic of [its] origin and destination,” which was hell.<sup>8</sup>

Despite their differences, Davis and Crouzet argue that religious violence must be understood on its own terms. Its overriding goal was to restore the body social or, in the case of Crouzet, the body religious by exterminating heretical “vermin.” Thus the central purpose of sixteenth-century religious violence, for Davis, was purification; for Crouzet, it represented revelation, a means of identifying the monster fighting God.

While the Edict of Nantes brought much of the upheaval of the Wars of Religion to an end, the repression of Protestantism under Louis XIV and the revocation of the edict in 1685 inaugurated a new period of violence between Catholics and Protestants. The revolt of the Camisards in southern France pitted Protestants against Catholics once again and was not quelled for some time.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, religious conflicts persisted during much of the eighteenth century; the continuing disputes between the Protestant community, the state, and the Catholic community lasted until the promulgation of an edict of toleration in 1787, on the eve of the French Revolution. The Catholic community was not immune to internal conflict, as reflected in the rise of Jansenism. While there was little religious violence associated with the conflicts between the ecclesiastical establishment and the Jansenists, Jansenism served as a lightning rod for religious and political dissension of all kinds, which soon found expression in the Revolution.<sup>10</sup>

Few historians have linked interpretations of prerevolutionary religious violence with the religious and political violence of the Revolution, but during both the Wars of Religion and the Revolution violence occurred in the context of civil war and the rupture of political power embodied in organized institutions.<sup>11</sup> Colin Lucas argues that the rhetoric of revolutionary violence, which was fueled by popular vio-

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:288.

<sup>9</sup> For an overview of the historiography on the subject see Philippe Joutard, *La Légende des Camisards: Une Sensibilité au passé* (Paris, 1977). For accounts of this violence see Joutard, *Les Camisards* (Paris, 1976); and Grégoire Vidal, *Lettres et rapports sur la guerre des Camisards (1702–4)*, ed. Bernard Atger (Montpellier, 1988).

<sup>10</sup> For the popular agitation associated with Jansenism see B. Robert Kreiser, *Miracles, Convulsions, and Ecclesiastical Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Princeton, N.J., 1978).

<sup>11</sup> Alain Corbin does suggest, however, that “in some ways the Revolution simply repeated the Wars of Religion” (*The Village of Cannibals: Rage and Murder in France, 1870*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer [Cambridge, Mass., 1992], 89).

lence, “should be read as the instrument of revolutionary democracy’s identification of and struggle with its opposite.”<sup>12</sup> Like the violence of the sixteenth century, revolutionary violence ostensibly played a purifying role, ridding society of contagion and pollution, and it also assumed a distinctive corporal form in terms of mutilation and torture. The enemies of the revolution—aristocrats, priests, and émigrés—were demonized and animalized in public rhetoric, caricature, and print, as the Huguenots had been. While the language of purification and dehumanization was abundant in revolutionary discourse, it was justified in terms of the rights of the nation as a collective body.

As the articles in this forum suggest, religious violence during the nineteenth century differed considerably from that of the prerevolutionary and revolutionary periods. The first and central characteristic of nineteenth-century religious violence is that it ceased to take the form of sacrificial massacre and bodily mutilation, even though it did sometimes result in injury or death. Second, with the exception of the religious conflicts in the department of the Gard at the beginning of the nineteenth century, it ceased to be an expression of confessional conflicts between Catholics and Protestants.<sup>13</sup> Instead, religious riot in the nineteenth century frequently assumed the form of resistance to an anticlerical state or a political opponent. Generally, it included three actors: the state, the laity, and, increasingly, an organized left-wing labor movement. Third, it became regionalized, as is most observable in western France by the end of the nineteenth century, and feminized: Women were increasingly found at the center of the fray. Finally, the boundary between religious, social, and political violence was extremely porous in the postrevolutionary period.

While they represent different approaches to the subject, virtually all of the articles in this forum explore the symbolic dimensions of violence. Sheryl T. Kroen examines the symbolic significance of staged religious and political commemorations during the Restoration. Raymond A. Jonas looks at the meanings attached to the Sacred Heart during the Franco-Prussian War. Michel Lagrée examines the symbolic structures surrounding specific acts of religious violence during the early Third Republic. Claude Langlois surveys the phenomenon of religious violence and charts a process of religious pacification.

Much religious violence in nineteenth-century France stemmed, of

<sup>12</sup> Colin Lucas, “Revolutionary Violence, the People, and the Terror,” in *The Terror*, vol. 4 of *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture*, ed. Keith Michael Baker (Oxford, 1994), 59.

<sup>13</sup> See Gwynne Lewis, *The Second Vendée: The Continuity of Counter-revolution in the Department of the Gard, 1789–1815* (Oxford, 1978); and John M. Merriman, *The Margins of City Life: Explorations on the French Urban Frontier, 1815–1851* (New York, 1991), 156–76.

course, from the unresolved political and religious legacy of the Revolution, the Concordat notwithstanding. Lagrée emphasizes this point by arguing that the religious violence of the early Third Republic appeared on some level to replay the confrontations enacted during the Revolution. For contemporaries and for many historians, the Revolution was synonymous with violence. For example, Simon Schama claims that “in some depressingly unavoidable sense, violence *was* the Revolution itself.”<sup>14</sup> Similarly, François Furet and Mona Ozouf suggest that revolutionary violence, particularly the Terror, was an inevitable and inherent part of revolutionary political culture.<sup>15</sup> However one wishes to evaluate the nature of revolutionary violence, and there has been sharp debate regarding its meaning, the Revolution became a political and religious point of reference for most of the nineteenth century. Indeed, it was the Revolution that made the boundary between the political and the religious so porous.

The central aim of Kroen’s article is to highlight the divergent ways in which the church and the Restoration monarchy—too often regarded as steadfast allies—came to terms, in the sphere of the religious, with the violence of the Revolution. The monarchy essentially attempted to erase its memory, in the interests of political stability, in order to legitimize itself and destroyed objects that might recall that memory. The church tried to keep the horrors of revolutionary violence alive by staging mass demonstrations and missions. This led the state to bring the church and its members increasingly under its control, a process that began with Napoleon’s Concordat and was continued by the July Monarchy. The monarchy’s actions were couched in a language of purification, like the violent acts of the sixteenth century; however, real acts of religious violence, as opposed to the symbolic staging of rites of commemoration or *oubli*, tended to be perpetrated by anticlerical rioters rather than by the Catholic clergy or laity. This violence, expressed in demonstrations, provided the context for the passage of the law of sacrilege in 1825, which made the desecration of holy objects punishable by death. In short, during the Restoration religious riot assumed the form of a clerical/anticlerical rather than a confessional crusade, and this characteristic of religious violence was to persist into the nineteenth century.

Jonas reveals the way in which the clerical forces attempted during the Franco-Prussian War to promote the bodily symbol of the Sacred

<sup>14</sup> Cited in Lucas, “Revolutionary Violence,” 58.

<sup>15</sup> François Furet and Mona Ozouf, *Dictionnaire critique de la Révolution française* (Paris, 1988), 167–69.

Heart to mobilize crowds for violent ends, but for a variety of reasons this symbol, which was closely linked with the political right, the west, the Vendée, and the Revolution, never became a national symbol. It was not until the early Third Republic, with the passing of the anticlerical legislation of the 1880s and early 1900s that culminated in the separation of church and state in 1905, that crowds were mobilized with violent intent. But, once again, this violence took the form of resistance and was directed more toward symbolic objects. Rioters included, at one and the same time, anticlericals, the Catholic laity, and representatives of the state. Indeed, the articles in this forum show that religious violence from the Restoration on increasingly assumed the form of public resistance to state initiatives.

Lagrée is the only author in the forum to analyze the structure and meaning of specific acts of religious violence; he therefore allows us to compare Catholic religious violence over time. His account centers on violent disturbances during 1903, the year following the passage of a second wave of anticlerical legislation during the early Third Republic and the rise of the anticlerical government of Emile Combes. This violence exhibits several common features.

Although Lagrée cites violence that occurred in Dunkerque, Toulon, and Clermont-Ferrand, towns and cities in western France—Hennebont, Brest, Lambézellec, Morlaix, Tréguier, and Lamballe—appear to be the sites of some of the most violent confrontations between clerical and anticlerical forces; they stand at the center of his analysis. In short, his work suggests, as does the work of other historians, that many acts of religious violence came to be localized in certain highly devout regions, specifically in western France, where anticlerical passion also ran high.

Like Davis and Crouzet, Lagrée assesses the meaning of religious violence by examining the occasions for its occurrence, the social profile of those involved, and how it was played out in symbolic forms. He argues, like Davis, that religious violence was shaped by long-standing traditions and rituals, such as the processions surrounding the Fête-Dieu or Sacré-Coeur, as well as by the new spatial configuration of cities. In this sense, religious violence at the beginning of the twentieth century represented tradition within modernity. Elements of that tradition remained strong, such as the evocation of the charivari in parody and ribald speech. Placed within the context of the growing secularization of urban spaces, anticlerical protesters viewed the hierarchical structure and symbolic accoutrements—banners, candles, and dais—of processions as deliberate provocations. The obliteration of symbolic sites of religious memory by the reconfiguration of urban spaces also



made processions themselves open to the charge that they were inappropriate or archaic.

Lagrée suggests that the perpetrators and victims of religious violence had changed considerably since the sixteenth century. Just as Catholicism became increasingly “feminized” during the nineteenth century, so did the members of Catholic processions. Religious violence frequently resembled a kind of sexual war: Women and children stood on the side of the Catholic Church, along with their priests, and the anticlerical, often working-class protesters consisted almost entirely of men. As Olwen Hufton’s work on religious violence during the French Revolution shows, the gendered composition of the crowd undoubtedly helped to determine how far a violent confrontation might go and the form it took, although none of the articles here explores how the changing composition of the crowd might explain specific acts of violence.<sup>16</sup>

Although the rhetoric of religious violence involved animalizing and demonizing the enemy, the consequences were less dire during the nineteenth century. Lagrée cites an anticlerical newspaper from the Morbihan that refers to clerical “vermin” and “satyrs.” Such language fastened principally on the image of the lubricious priest and his relationship with his largely female flock, a theme amply explored in the political discourse and anticlerical literature of the nineteenth century, as Michelet’s famous *Le Prêtre, la femme et la famille* attests. Violent confrontations resulted in fewer deaths, and there is no evidence of the bodily mutilations prevalent in the sixteenth century.

Physical violence associated with religious unrest certainly did not disappear during the nineteenth century, but it changed. A number of historians have argued that by the end of the eighteenth century, bodily mutilations and public torture had begun to inspire horror and disgust, reflecting a more general intolerance for all forms of corporal violence. The French Revolution, a turning point in this regard, heralded new attitudes toward the body, and toward pain and suffering in particular.<sup>17</sup> These attitudes were embedded in a “humanitarian” discourse driven by abhorrence of public bloodshed and mob violence. They were demonstrated in the sweeping changes made in the justice system and an emerging public disgust at the sight of blood. Practices such as the branding of convicts were banned. The public display of criminals was abolished in 1848. The guillotine, itself introduced as a

<sup>16</sup> Olwen H. Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship in the French Revolution* (Toronto, 1992), 116–30.

<sup>17</sup> Corbin, *Village of Cannibals*, 87–101.

humane means of execution during the Revolution, was removed from central Paris during the July Monarchy.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, animal slaughter was subject to new restrictions and was increasingly hidden from public view. While it is clear that physical violence, to animals and to people, did not disappear during the nineteenth century, the general public did become “intolerant of the legibility [*lisibilité*] of public cruelty.”<sup>19</sup>

This intolerance is manifested in Corbin’s analysis of reactions to the brutal public torture and murder of the young nobleman Alain de Monéys in the Périgord during the Franco-Prussian War. Corbin argues that by 1870 certain forms of bodily violence not only had become unacceptable to the French public but had largely disappeared. If such a murder had occurred between the fourteenth century and 1795, “it would have stood out only for the relative mildness of the cruelty visited on the victim.”<sup>20</sup> By 1870 it was seen as a horrible vestige of barbarism. The so-called cannibals of Haute-faye, who had perpetrated the crime, caused the judge hearing their case to say, in a curious turn of phrase, that it was “tantamount . . . to a denial of the nineteenth century.”<sup>21</sup> Michel Foucault explores a similar shift in cultural mores in his study of the emergence of the modern French penal system. Indeed, he begins his account with the drawing and quartering of the regicide Damiens in 1757 to illustrate, in lurid detail, the way in which ultimately “the body as the major target of penal repression disappeared” in the nineteenth century.<sup>22</sup>

This fundamental shift in attitudes toward bodily pain and violence has been linked, variously, to the Enlightenment, to the ideologues, and, for Foucault, to profound changes in the ways in which power was constituted and exercised through new fields of knowledge.<sup>23</sup> Corbin, attributing the new sensibility to the secularization of everyday life, argues that sacrificial torture was shunned as a result and concludes that “once the connection between massacre and the sacred was severed, massacre became an offense to sensitive souls, an outrageous crime.”<sup>24</sup>

<sup>18</sup> The larger significance of this well-known transformation in the penal system has been explored by Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison* (Paris, 1975); idem, *Naissance de la clinique* (Paris, 1963).

<sup>19</sup> Corbin, *Village of Cannibals*, 96.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York, 1979), 8.

<sup>23</sup> See David Bakan, *Disease, Pain, and Sacrifice: Toward a Psychology of Suffering* (Chicago, 1968); Jean-Pierre Peter, “Silence et cris: La Médecine devant la douleur, ou l’histoire d’une éli-sion,” *Le Genre humain* 18 (1988): 177–94; and Daniel Teyssie, *De la vie dans les rapports du physique et du moral de l’homme de Cabanis* (Saint-Cloud, 1982).

<sup>24</sup> Corbin, *Village of Cannibals*, 91.

In short, the transformation of religious violence must be placed in the context of a change in attitude toward all forms of visible corporal violence. In a broader sense, however, it reflected processes of secularization, desacralization, and resacralization.

The articles in this forum and other recent work on religious violence in modern France suggest several avenues of future inquiry. First, historians need to think in terms of assessing the temporal and historical specificity of religious violence. According to Crouzet, violent “gestures can be the same in different situations,” but they may not have “the same motivations and meanings.”<sup>25</sup> It might be possible to establish a “structural anthropology of aggression” by analyzing the ways in which groups demonize or dehumanize an enemy, and this anthropology of aggression might be used to understand violence that occurred during the sixteenth century and the Third Reich. However, violence can and often does mean different things in different contexts, even when certain gestures and practices appear to be identical.<sup>26</sup> If violent gestures and acts share common traits, whose meanings can change through time, historians must account for these changes and unpack their symbolic meanings in specific historical contexts.

Second, if historians of sixteenth-century France have increasingly put religion back into interpretations of the Wars of Religion, perhaps historians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries might follow their example. Crouzet adeptly demonstrates the relationship between acts of religious violence and a religious imagination shaped by a specific understanding of the faith and Scripture among a sixteenth-century Catholic population. Historians of modern France might explore how changes in religious sensibilities contributed to changes in expressions of religious violence. Historians of religion have argued that the nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of new styles of devotion, associated with Ultramontanism and Marian piety, that coincided with an alleged feminization of the Catholic Church. These new forms of piety were, according to Ralph Gibson, manifested in the “decline of doctrines of the eternity of punishment and the materiality of hell-fire.”<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Crouzet, *Guerriers de Dieu*, 1:297. Such gestures can be observed in a variety of contexts, especially in the treatment of the enemy in foreign or domestic civil wars. See, for example, Barbara Donagan, “Atrocity, War Crime, and Treason in the English Civil War,” *American Historical Review* 99 (1994): 1137–66.

<sup>26</sup> For example, Elaine Pagels shows how “the figure of Satan becomes, among other things, a way of characterizing one’s actual enemies as the embodiment of transcendent forces” in early Christianity (*The Origin of Satan* [New York, 1995], 13). See also Nevitt Sanford and Craig Comstock, eds., *Sanctions for Evil* (San Francisco, 1971).

<sup>27</sup> Ralph Gibson, *A Social History of French Catholicism, 1789–1914* (London, 1989), 253. See also Gérard Cholvy and Yves-Marie Hilaire, vol. 1 of *Histoire religieuse de la France contemporaine 1800–1880* (Toulouse, 1985), 149–96.

The rigidity of the clergy on moral issues gradually softened with the rise of Liguorism. The *pastorale de la peur* was gradually deemphasized in favor of a *religion aimable*. Historians must ask themselves what role these devotional and doctrinal changes in French Catholicism played in the transformation of religious violence or, alternatively, in its decline during the nineteenth century. Jonas is the only author in this forum who explores some of the broader implications of such changes in, for example, Bishop Fournier's stress on the more "feminine" face of God and on gendered metaphors used to describe the Sacred Heart. Could one not argue that the changing symbolic valence of the Sacred Heart, its depiction as a maternal image, limited its utility as a symbol of violence? And to what extent might changes in religious sensibility also have contributed to new attitudes toward the human body?

Finally, historians must think more explicitly about the relationship between religious and political violence and how and why the boundary between the religious and the political became particularly porous from the French Revolution to the First World War. Langlois's interpretation of the great confrontations between clericals and anti-clericals during the early Third Republic as inherently political leads him to argue that religious violence gradually disappeared as religion became politicized and secularized. In his view, violence thus was displaced from the religious sphere onto the political and social spheres. Religious violence was undoubtedly displaced by political violence, but as religious conflict became politicized, political conflict became sacralized. Langlois himself alludes to the emergence of the great "secular political religions" of the twentieth century in his concluding remarks. Political movements drew on the tropes of and on a repertoire of violent gestures from religious conflicts. Indeed, Lagrée argues that the great working-class demonstrations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—in short, secular politics—borrowed from the "model" of the procession, which included banners, flags, clothing, and hymns that expressed a genuine messianism.

A great deal of work has been done in recent years on the "desacralization of the monarchy" during the eighteenth century, a phenomenon that allegedly contributed to the French Revolution.<sup>28</sup> Much less attention has been given to the ramifications of the postrevolutionary sacralization of the nation and its politics. Historians would do well to look more closely at the relationship between political violence and the sacred. There is no doubt that the Revolution represented a turning point in the process of sacralization. As Mona Ozouf has ar-

<sup>28</sup> See Roger Chartier, *Les Origines culturelles de la Révolution française* (Paris, 1990).

gued, the Revolution marked a “transfer of sacrality” onto political and social values, “thus defining a new legitimacy and a hitherto inviolate patrimony, in which the cult of mankind and the religion of the social bond, the bounty of industry, and the future of France would coexist.”<sup>29</sup> In short, a deeper understanding of sacralization, of how sacrality was transferred onto the political sphere, would do much to explain both the changing nature of religious violence and its displacement by new forms of political violence. In Jules Michelet’s famous dictum: “Religious or political, the two questions are deeply, inextricably intermingled at their roots. Confounded in the past, they will appear tomorrow as they really are, one and identical.”<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Cambridge, Mass., 1988), 282.

<sup>30</sup> Jules Michelet, *History of the French Revolution*, ed. Gordon Wright, trans. Charles Cocks (Chicago, 1967), 17.