

But the number of citizens actually involved in political organizations, actually holding political office, is fairly small, and the willingness of ordinary men and women to devote time and energy to politics is fairly minimal. Democratic citizenship in its contemporary form does not seem to encourage high levels of involvement or devotion. Hence the periodic reappearance of ancient citizenship in ideological dress, the expression of a hand-wringing sense that something vital has been lost. Indeed, the primacy of politics has been lost and with it the exhilarating sense of civic or urban camaraderie bred in the Greek and Roman cities (never really shared by their rural members). But "lost" is a strange verb here, for this sort of thing has never been "found" in a fully modern setting – except perhaps in those parties and movements that championed the expansion of democratic citizenship. The labor movement, the civil rights movement, the feminist movement, have all generated in their time a sense of solidarity and an everyday militancy among large numbers of men and women. But these are not, probably cannot be, stable achievements; they don't outlast the movement's success, even its partial success. Citizenship is unlikely to be the primary identity or the consuming passion of men and women living in complex and highly differentiated societies, where politics competes for time and attention with class, ethnicity, religion, and family, and where these latter four do not draw people together but rather separate and divide them. Separation and division make for the primacy of the private realm.

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## LE CITOYEN/LA CITOYENNE

### Activity, passivity and the revolutionary conception of citizenship

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Cette personne publique . . . prenoit autrefois le nom de *Cité*, et prend maintenant celui de *République* ou de *corps politique*, lequel est appelé par ses membres *Etat* quand il est passif, *Souverain* quand il est actif, *Puissance* en le comparant à ses semblables. A l'égard des associés ils prennent collectivement le nom de *peuple* et s'appellent en particulier *Citoyens* comme participants à l'autorité souveraine, et *Sujets* comme soumis aux loix de l'Etat.<sup>1</sup>

This familiar passage from Rousseau's *Du contrat social* specified the core definition of the term "citoyen" in eighteenth-century discourse. As compared to the term "sujet," which implied subjection not only to the laws of the state but to the person of the monarch, "citoyen" implied an active participation in public affairs, and above all an active participation in the formation of laws. But the term was not always used so precisely as in Rousseau's definition. As Rousseau himself complained, "ces termes se confondent souvent et se prennent l'un pour l'autre."<sup>2</sup> Citoyen was commonly used much more broadly, to indicate any inhabitant of a state, a nation, or a city.

The distinction between a broad and a narrow definition of the term was recognized by Lanjuinais, reporting for the Committee on Legislation of the National Convention during its discussion of the Constitution of 1793.

L'idée générale que réveille le mot de citoyen est celle de membre de la cité, de la société civile, de la nation.

Dans un sens rigoureux il signifie seulement ceux qui sont admis à exercer les droits politiques, à voter dans les assemblées du peuple, ceux qui peuvent élire et être élus aux emplois publics; en un mot, les *membres du souverain*.

Ainsi les enfants, les insensés, les mineurs, les femmes, les condamnés à peine afflictive ou infamante, jusqu'à leur réhabilitation, ne seraient pas des citoyens.

Mais dans l'usage on applique cette expression à tous ceux qui sont du corps social, c'est-à-dire qui ne sont ni étrangers, ni morts civilement; soit qu'ils aient ou non des droits politiques; enfin à tous ceux qui jouissent de la plénitude des droits civils, dont la personne et les biens sont gouvernés en tout par les lois générales du pays. Voilà les citoyens dans le langage le plus ordinaire.

Les publicistes et même les législateurs confondent souvent ces deux significations très différentes; et de là l'obscurité, l'incohérence apparente de certaines propositions.<sup>3</sup>

The centrality of the term *citoyen* in the discourse of the French Revolution arose from what Lanjuinais called its "sens rigoureux"—that is to say, its core Rousseauian meaning. Indeed, one could characterize the aim of the revolutionaries, from Sieyès and Mirabeau to Robespierre and Saint-Just, as the transformation of "sujets" into "citoyens." Rather than passive subjects of an absolute monarch, the French were to become active participants in the public life of the nation. The law was no longer to result from the arbitrary will of the king, but, as the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen put it, to be "l'expression de la volonté générale. Tous les citoyens ont droit de concourir personnellement, ou par leurs représentants à sa formation." From the very beginning of the Revolution, and even more prominently after the overthrow of the monarchy and the foundation of the republic, "citoyen" became a central symbol of the Revolution.<sup>4</sup>

As contemporary literary theorists have made us acutely aware, all of language is characterized by multiple meanings. But this common fate of all words is probably compounded for terms possessing extraordinary symbolic power. Because "citoyen" was a term to conjure with, there was no way it could be confined to its "sens rigoureux." The potency of the term, the powerful positive associations that it called up, meant that the orators, publicists, and politicians of the Revolution could not resist using it in an extended sense whenever such use would benefit their cause. The inevitable consequence was that the term "citoyen" was packed with multiple, ambiguous and contradictory meanings, and that it became a focus of passionate political struggles. In this paper I propose to explore some of the contradictions that beset this term during the French Revolution by examining two of its usages: the designation of certain inhabitants of France as "citoyens passifs" in the

Constitution of 1791, and the adoption of "citoyen" and "citoyenne" as universal terms of address in 1792.

### Le citoyen passif

The term "citoyen passif" is a curious usage. It is in fact an oxymoron, since the adjective "passif" openly contradicts the "sens rigoureux" of "citoyen." The term "citoyen passif" was, as far as I know, first used by the Abbé Sieyès in his *Reconnaissance et exposition raisonnée des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen*, composed at the request of the Comité de Constitution, presented to the committee on July 20 and 21, and published at its request immediately thereafter.<sup>5</sup> This text consists of a draft declaration in thirty-two articles, preceded by sixteen pages of "exposition raisonnée," which set forth the principles—derived from a social contract theory that is a mélange of Locke and Rousseau—on which the declaration was based.

In his *exposition raisonnée*, Sieyès distinguished two sorts of rights:

... les droits naturels et civils sont ceux *pour* le maintien desquels la société est formée; et les droits politiques, ceux *par* lesquels la société se forme. Il vaut mieux, pour la clarté du langage, appeler les premiers, droits *passifs*, et les seconds, droits *actifs*.<sup>6</sup>

From this distinction of active and passive rights flowed a distinction between active and passive citizens.

Tous les habitants d'un pays doivent y jouir des droits de citoyen *passif*: tous ont droit à la protection de leur personne, de leur propriété, de leur liberté, etc; mais tous n'ont pas droit à prendre une part active dans la formation des pouvoirs publics; tous ne sont pas citoyens *actifs*. Les femmes, du moins dans l'état actuel, les enfants, les étrangers, ceux, encore, qui ne contribueroient en rien à fournir l'établissement public, ne doivent point influencer activement sur la chose publique. Tous peuvent jouir des avantages de la société, mais ceux-là seuls qui contribuent à l'établissement public, sont comme les vrais actionnaires de la grande entreprise sociale. Eux seuls sont les véritables citoyens actifs, les véritables membres de l'association.<sup>7</sup>

The distinction between active and passive citizens did not appear in Sieyès' draft of a declaration, but it is implied in his article XXVI:

La loi ne peut être que l'expression de la volonté générale. Chez un grand peuple, elle doit être l'ouvrage d'un corps de représentans

choisis pour un temps court, médiatement ou immédiatement par tous les citoyens qui ont à la chose publique, intérêt avec capacité. Ces deux qualités ont besoin d'être positivement et clairement déterminées par la constitution.<sup>8</sup>

In other words, the exact criteria for the distinction between "citoyens actifs" and "citoyens passifs" must be set by the Constituent Assembly.

What should these criteria be? Sieyès lists four criteria in his *exposition raisonnée*: to be "actifs," citizens must be male, adult, French nationals and must make some contribution to public expenses—that is, be taxpayers. He elaborates an overlapping but slightly different list in *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers état?*

Dans tous les pays la loi a fixé des caractères certains, sans lesquels on ne peut être ni électeur ni éligible. Ainsi, par exemple, la loi doit déterminer un âge au-dessous duquel on sera inhabile à représenter ses concitoyens. Ainsi les femmes sont partout, bien ou mal, éloignées de ces sortes de procurations. Il est constant qu'un vagabond, un mendiant, ne peuvent être chargés de la confiance politique des peuples. Un domestique et tout ce qui est dans la dépendance d'un maître, un étranger non-naturalisé seroient-ils admis à figurer parmi les représentants de la nation?<sup>9</sup>

If we combine the criteria from the two texts, the characteristics barring one from active citizenship would be non-French nationality, female sex, insufficient age, employment as a domestic servant, lack of gainful employment, or lack of financial contribution to the state. The problem with foreigners is not so much that they are actually passive as that their loyalties to the nation are uncertain. Therefore their properties and persons are to be protected by the law, but they cannot be trusted to participate in its formation. But the remaining categories of passive citizens were regarded as in some sense genuinely *passive*. Women and children were, of course, conventionally judged to be passive by nature. Their weakness and natural deference to adult males made them dependents of the male head of the household, who alone could be said to possess an active and independent will. Domestic servants were comparable, except that they were passive not by nature but by contract. As Sieyès notes, they are "dépendants d'un maître"; as is the case with women and children, their wills are not their own. Domestics, women, and children were to be passive in the public sphere because they were already passive in the private domestic sphere. But the remaining cases—beggars, vagabonds, and those who made no financial contribution to the state—clearly were passive in a different sense; they were not to be made active citizens even if they were French adult male heads of families. Their passivity in the public sphere was also derived from an imputed passivity in

the private sphere, but this passivity was neither natural nor familial: it was *economic*.

Beggars and vagabonds are, essentially, those without regular employment. Neither plays an active role in the production of wealth. Beggars receive their means of subsistence as passive supplicants, dependent on the productive activity of other categories of the population. Vagabonds are, of course, a less clearly definable category, but are also assumed to consume more than they produce—living by a combination of begging, crime, and fitful stints of desultory work. The passivity of those who do not pay taxes is not only economic in character. Sieyès likens taxpayers to "actionnaires de la grande entreprise sociale." Although the analogy is taken from the realm of economic activity ("actionnaires" are stockholders in a joint-stock company), it draws attention not to the role of taxpayers and nontaxpayers in production, but to their participation or nonparticipation in supporting the activities of the state. Only those should have a right to make laws who pay to support the state that guarantees the laws. But at the same time, both Sieyès and his readers are aware that payment of taxes is also a rough measure of income, so that the category of those who do not pay taxes is composed of those who produce so little that they are a net drain on society. Like beggars and vagabonds, nontaxpayers are the very poor, whose relation to the economy is passive rather than active.

Active citizens, Sieyès seems to be arguing, are those adult males who make an active contribution to the private and public maintenance of society and who are not disqualified by foreign nationality or voluntary servitude. On the face of it, this would imply a very broad, although certainly not universal, suffrage. But there are also significant indications that Sieyès is thinking of a rather more restricted body of active citizens. In the article of his draft declaration that deals with suffrage qualifications, he states that the legislature should be chosen "par tous les citoyens qui ont à la chose publique, intérêt avec capacité." This departs somewhat from the text of the *exposition raisonnée*. To have "intérêt à la chose publique" implies that one be a taxpayer, that is, have a financial interest in the state, but it could also imply having a significant financial or proprietary stake in *society*. If so, it might imply a level of wealth considerably above that of the poorest taxpayers. To have "capacité à la chose publique" implies at a minimum having an active and independent will (ruling out women, children, and domestic servants), but it could imply considerably more—the intellectual capacity, education, and leisure necessary to ponder properly the public good.

Here Sieyès' intentions are not entirely clear. Although he believed passionately in equality of "droits passifs"—that is, in equality before the law—he was not a strong advocate of equal political rights and was actively hostile to any attempt to legislate economic equality. In his *exposition raisonnée*, he stresses the distinction between an equality of natural *rights* and a natural inequality of *means*.

Il existe, il est vrai, de grandes inégalités de moyens parmi les hommes. La nature fait des forts et des foibles; elle départit aux uns une intelligence qu'elle refuse aux autres. Il suit qu'il y aura entr'eux inégalité de travail, inégalité de produit, inégalité de consommation ou de jouissance; mais il ne suit pas qu'il puisse y avoir inégalité de droits.<sup>10</sup>

This distinction also finds its way into his draft declaration, where article XVI states:

Si les hommes ne sont pas égaux en *moyens*, c'est-à-dire en richesses, en esprit, en force, etc. il ne suit pas qu'ils ne soient pas tous égaux en *droits*. Devant la loi, tout homme en vaut un autre, elle les protège tous sans distinctions.<sup>11</sup>

Inequality of means is in the nature of things, but equality of rights must be guaranteed.

This absolute equality of rights, however, extends only to the "droits passifs"—protection of the person, property, and liberty. These are natural rights, the rights "pour le maintien desquels la société est formée." But active or political rights are reserved to the "citoyens actifs." Natural inequalities in *moyens*, which give rise to inequalities in labor, product, consumption—and, of course, in property—have no influence on the distribution of the "droits passifs." But, although Sieyès does not explicitly make the connection, they are certainly reflected in the distribution of "droits actifs." The "foibles"—children, women, beggars, the poor more generally—are destined to be "citoyens passifs," whereas the "forts"—intelligent, hardworking, prosperous adult males—are destined to be "citoyens actifs." But where, precisely, should the line between "forts" and "foibles" be drawn? Which inhabitants of France have the necessary combination of "intérêt" and "capacité"? Is every French adult male taxpayer, no matter how poor and ignorant, qualified to exercise the rights of the "citoyen actif"?

It should be noted that Sieyès has a very low opinion of the intelligence and virtue of the poor. It was undoubtedly his distrust of the poor that induced him to specify in his draft declaration that equality extended only to rights and not to means, and that the choice of representatives should be restricted to those who combined "intérêt" and "capacité." But the full force of his disdain for the poor emerges most clearly in certain of his unpublished notes, dating from the 1770s and 1780s, which have recently been collected by Roberto Zapperi. In one of these Sieyès remarks

... Une grande nation est nécessairement composée de *deux peuples*, les producteurs et les instruments humains de la production, les gens intelligents et les ouvriers qui n'ont que la force passive; les citoyens

éduqués et les auxiliaires à qui on ne laisse ni le temps ni les moyens de recevoir l'éducation . . .<sup>12</sup>

Here it is the intelligent and educated who are producers, while the ignorant are a distinct people of passive auxiliaries, mere "instruments humains de la production" utilized by the active producers like any other tool. This text not only indicates the depth of his contempt, but suggests that the line between the active and the passive excludes from the adult male population not merely a fringe element of lazy or disabled persons, but a large proportion—perhaps all—of those ignorant but laborious peasants and workers who made up the mass of the population in eighteenth-century France.

Were the "citoyens actifs" in fact to be composed only of an educated, prosperous, propertied elite? More than this one obscure text points to such a conclusion. In *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers état?* Sieyès sketches out a portrait of what he calls the "classes disponibles," this time not to act as an electorate, but to serve as representatives.

... j'appelle avec tout le monde classes disponibles celles où une sorte d'aisance permet aux hommes de recevoir une éducation libérale, de cultiver leur raison, enfin de s'intéresser aux affaires publiques. Ces classes-là n'ont pas d'autre intérêt que celui du reste du peuple. Voyez si elles ne contiennent pas assez de citoyens instruits, honnêtes, dignes à tous égards d'être de bons représentants de la nation.<sup>13</sup>

To be entrusted with making laws, a citizen must not just be a taxpayer, or even just perform what Sieyès would regard as an active part in production (that is, be the owner or manager of some enterprise). Rather, he should be sufficiently prosperous to have obtained a liberal education and to have interested himself in public affairs. A *full* citizen, this suggests, one capable of actually participating personally in the formation of the law, must be a person of considerable means.

What, then, did Sieyès intend by his distinction between "citoyens actifs" and "citoyens passifs"? Were the "citoyens actifs" to include all adult male citizens who were not a positive burden on the public and who paid even the smallest measure of taxes? Or were they to include only those who performed some sort of directing role in the process of production? Or were they to be made up only of the well-educated and well-to-do? Or was there to be some sort of sliding scale of citizenship, with more demanding criteria for representatives than for voters? Sieyès' text is in fact so ambiguous, open-ended, and occasionally contradictory that his intentions are unclear. The uncertainties are multiple. He denies that the natural (and therefore legitimate) inequality of means justifies any inequality in rights. But he states elsewhere in the same text that only passive rights are guaranteed to all, whereas only a portion of all citizens may exercise active rights. He then goes on to distinguish

between active and passive citizens in ways that imply that active rights are based at least in part on superior means. Making things even more confused, he fails to mention active and passive rights or active and passive citizens in the text of the declaration, but introduces in its place two new terms—"intérêt" and "capacité"—that have implications neither defined nor discussed in the *exposition raisonnée*. Notions of activity and passivity are fundamental in Sieyès' conceptions of society. But their precise bearing on a proposed constitutional distinction between active and passive citizens remains unclear.

Yet one thing is clear in spite of all the terminological ambiguities: only "citoyens actifs" would be citizens in Rousseau's sense. Indeed, Sieyès himself comes very close to saying so when he remarks that

ceux-là seuls qui contribuent à l'établissement public, sont comme les vrais actionnaires de la grande entreprise sociale. Eux seuls sont les véritables citoyens actifs, les véritables membres de l'association.<sup>14</sup>

If only the "citoyens actifs" are "véritables membres de l'association," then what are "citoyens passifs?" In Rousseau's terms, the answer would be clear: "citoyens actifs" are "citoyens" *tout court*: "citoyens passifs" are not "citoyens" at all, but rather "*sujets*."

However, using the term "sujet" rather than "citoyen passif" would have been highly problematic for Sieyès, for both intellectual and political reasons. To begin with, "sujet" would not have been "le mot juste." No less than "citoyen," it had associations reaching far beyond its narrow Rousseauian definition. A "sujet" certainly was a person "soumis aux lois de l'Etat," but the term implied a submission to the person of the monarch as well as to the laws. Moreover, "sujet" did not imply a *uniform* submission to the laws, but rather the highly variegated relations to the state, the law, and the person of the king that characterized the corporate order of the old regime. Surely part of the reason Sieyès chose the term "citoyen" and avoided "sujet" is that it implied a uniform relation to the state—a condition of equal submission to the law. Thus, from Sieyès' point of view, persons who had the full protection of the law but did not have the suffrage were more accurately designated "citoyens passifs" than "sujets."

But it is also true that designating such persons as "sujets" would have been a political disaster. Such a designation would have made it clear that they were to be subjected to a sovereign over whom they exercised no control—no longer a monarch, but a collective sovereign composed of "citoyens actifs." A revolution made on behalf of civil equality could not openly announce that a majority of the nation's inhabitants and at least a sizeable minority of its adult male inhabitants were in fact to become "sujets" of a restricted body of citizens—in other words, of an *aristocracy*. The term "citoyen," by contrast, created a (literally) nominal equality; even when modified by the oxymoronic adjective "passif," it was much more serviceable than "sujet."

This was because it tended to obscure the political subjection of the majority—probably not only from Sieyès' intended audience, but from Sieyès himself.

I believe that this extended analysis of the distinction between "citoyens actifs" and "citoyens passifs" in the writings of Sieyès is worth pondering for two reasons: first, because for all its ambiguities, the distinction was written into the Constitution of 1791; and, second, because I believe that Sieyès' reasoning—even his confusions and uncertainties—were symptomatic of a wide range of opinion in the National Assembly and in political society more generally. The definitions of active citizens in the Constitution of 1791 bear this out, since they reproduce very closely Sieyès' criteria. "Citoyens actifs" were males twenty-five or over who were not domestic servants, had been domiciled for a specified length of time in their commune (thus excluding vagabonds and plenty of perfectly solid migrants as well), had taken the civic oath, had paid a "contribution directe" equal to the value of at least three days of labor, and were neither bankrupts nor under accusation in the courts. Only "citoyens actifs" had the right to sit in primary assemblies, which chose electors who in turn elected representatives to the National Legislative Assembly.<sup>15</sup> The Constitution uses the term "citoyen actif," but avoids using the uncomfortable "citoyen passif." In spite of this silence, it was clear to all that those members of the French nation who did not qualify as "citoyens actifs" could only be "citoyens passifs," and the term was used abundantly in the debates of the National Assembly. The "citoyens passifs" were "citoyens" only in the sense that their rights and their property were given equal protection of the laws. In Rousseau's terms they were not citizens at all, but *sujets*; they were "soumis aux lois de l'Etat" but did not participate "à l'autorité souveraine."

The Constitution of 1791 not only distinguished between active and passive citizens, but also introduced distinctions among the active citizens. All active citizens had the right to vote for the electors who chose the representatives in the National Legislative Assembly, but further qualifications were imposed on electors. To serve as an elector, a man had not only to be an active citizen, but also to be the proprietor or the usufructory of a sizeable property. The constitution, in short, erected a graduated scale of citizenship, with the extent of political rights dependent on personal wealth.

The distinction between active and passive citizens was one of the most politically explosive features of the Constitution of 1791. The distinction became an object of Sans-Culotte rage in 1792. But this distinction, and the graduated scale of citizenship with which it was associated, was already controversial during the debates on the constitution. The initial scheme of the National Assembly had envisaged not three but four stages of citizenship: passive citizens, who had protection of the laws but no political rights; active citizens, who could vote for electors; those active citizens who were capable of serving as electors; and those who were also eligible to serve in the legislature.

A citizen's place in this hierarchy was to be determined by the amount of taxes paid: the equivalent of three days' labor to qualify as an active citizen, the equivalent of ten days' labor to qualify as an elector, and a "marc d'argent" to qualify as a legislator. This system was subjected to withering attacks from the left of the National Assembly, especially from Robespierre. In the end the requirement of the marc d'argent was suppressed so that any active citizen could in principle serve as a legislator. But this was accompanied by a raising of the property qualifications for electors. Although it modified the details, the Assembly opted for the graduated citizenship proposed by the constitutional committee rather than for the universal manhood citizenship advocated by Robespierre.

Robespierre's attack on the distinction between active and passive citizens is nevertheless important, because it exposed, with characteristic lucidity, the contradictions of the committee's scheme. The committee's proposal was, he maintained, contrary to the first, third, and sixth articles of the *Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen*. The law could not be the expression of the general will "lorsque le plus grand nombre de ceux pour qui elle est faite ne peuvent concourir, en aucune manière à sa formation." Men were not equal in rights "lorsque les uns jouissant exclusivement de la faculté de pouvoir être élu membres du corps législatif, . . . les autres de celle de les nommer seulement, les autres restent privés en même tems de tous ces droits." Men were not admissible to all public employments with no distinctions other than their virtues and talents "lorsque l'impuissance d'acquitter la contribution exigée les écarte de tous les emplois publics, quels que soient leurs vertus et leurs talents." Finally,

la nation est-elle souveraine, quand le plus grand nombre des individus qui la composent est dépouillé des droits politiques qui constituent la souveraineté? Non; et cependant vous venez de voir que ces mêmes décrets [those restricting citizenship rights] les ravissent à la plus grande partie des Français. Que seroit donc votre déclaration des droits, si ces décrets pouvoient subsister? Une vaine formule. Que seroit la nation? Esclave; car la liberté consiste à obéir aux loix qu'on s'est données, et la servitude à être contraint de se soumettre à une volonté étrangère. Que seroit votre constitution? Une véritable aristocratie! La plus insupportable de toutes; celle des Riches.<sup>16</sup>

In fact, passive citizens would not to be citizens at all, but *subjects* of an aristocracy of wealth. "Permettez même, que je puisse être fier quelquefois d'une honorable pauvreté, et ne cherchez point à m'humilier, par l'orgueilleuse prétention de vous réserver la qualité de souverain, pour ne me laisser que celle de sujet."<sup>17</sup> The majority of the Assembly was in fact stripping the poorer inhabitants of France of their citizenship rights.

Robespierre's recognition of the linguistic means by which this spoliation was being achieved was particularly acute. The majority of the Assembly, he intimated, was quite aware of what it was doing, but covered its designs with a subtle misuse of language. The terms "citoyen actif" and "citoyen passif," were invented to mask the Assembly's spoliation of the poor. But to the discerning and virtuous observer, the language in fact revealed the Assembly's designs.

Les partisans du système que j'attaque ont eux-mêmes senti cette vérité, puisque, n'osant contester la qualité de citoyen à ceux qu'ils condamnoient à l'exhérédation politique, ils se sont bornés à éluder le principe de légalité qu'elle suppose nécessairement, par la distinction de citoyens actifs et de citoyens passifs. Comptant sur la facilité avec laquelle on gouverne les hommes par les mots, ils ont essayé de nous donner le change en publiant, par cette expression nouvelle, la violation la plus manifeste des droits de l'homme.

Mais qui peut être assez stupide pour ne pas appercevoir que ce mot ne peut ni changer les principes, ni résoudre la difficulté; puisque déclarer que tels citoyens ne seront point actifs, ou dire qu'ils n'exerceront plus les droits politiques attachés au titre de citoyen, c'est exactement la même chose dans l'idiome de ces subtils politiques . . . je ne cesserai de réclamer contre cette locution insidieuse et barbare qui souillera à-la-fois notre code et notre langue, si nous ne nous hâtons de l'effacer de l'une et de l'autre . . .<sup>18</sup>

Robespierre lost the argument in the Constituent Assembly, but the events of the summer of 1792 in fact obliterated this "insidious and barbarous locution" from French political language. In the weeks preceding the revolution of August 10, many of the Parisian sections—which were of course primary electoral assemblies composed by definition only of active citizens—invited passive citizens to join their deliberations, thereby defying the Constitution's definitions. Soon the insurrection of August 10—largely the handiwork of these enlarged sections—overturned the Constitution of 1791 and thereby nullified the concept of "citoyen passif" once and for all.

### Le citoyen/la citoyenne

One striking linguistic feature of the summer and autumn of 1792 was the rise of the terms "citoyen" and "citoyenne" as universal forms of address.<sup>19</sup> This usage arose out of the fevered political conjuncture of the time. The term "citoyen" called forth precisely the sort of obsessive patriotism that swept over Paris and parts of the provinces as the new revolutionary French state fought for its existence against the Austrian and Prussian armies and against its real and imagined domestic enemies. As distrust of the King

and the "aristocratic conspiracy" mounted, and as the republican movement swelled, the egalitarian designation "citoyen" and "citoyenne" began to replace the "aristocratic" designations "monsieur" and "madame." By the time the insurrection of August 10 had overthrown the monarchy and the National Convention had declared the establishment of a republic, "citoyen" and "citoyenne" had become quasi-official terms of address.<sup>20</sup>

On September 23, 1792, two days after the declaration of the French Republic, Charlier rose in the Convention to demand that "citoyen" become the official designation of all Frenchmen.

Citoyens, lorsque la Révolution est complètement faite dans les choses, il faut aussi la faire dans les mots. Le titre de *citoyen* doit seul se trouver dans tous les actes émanés de vous. Le mot *Monsieur* et *Sieur*, dérivé de *monseigneur*, ne doit plus être une qualification en usage. J'en demande la suppression dans toutes les actes de l'état civil . . .<sup>21</sup>

The Convention, which had been discussing another matter at the time of Charlier's intervention, ruled him out of order and continued with the interrupted debate. As far as I know, the term "citoyen" never received the imprimatur of the Convention as the only allowable form of address.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, its use became essentially universal in republican speech and in official documents.

Old regime society had recognized a hierarchy of forms of address—ranging downwards from "sire," "altesse," "excellence," and "monseigneur" to "monsieur" and "madame," to the plainer "le sieur" and "la dame," and finally to simple proper names with no distinguishing appellations (or, in legal documents, the bald designation "le nommé"). Initially, revolutionary language tended toward the general use of "Monsieur" and "Madame."<sup>23</sup> But to the republican sensibility taking shape in 1792, these terms were tainted by their aristocratic derivation and associations. "Monsieur" and "Madame" not only implied the existence of social distinctions but also smacked of fawning and artificial courtly manners. "Monsieur," when used in public discourse, thus seemed to carry private vanities into public life. "Citoyen," by contrast, implied virtue and devotion to the public good. To use Althusser's terminology, it "interpellated" Frenchmen as active participants in the sovereign will. The term "citoyen" reminded them, as it designated them, that they were active and equal members of the sovereign and that as members of the sovereign they were always to place public duty above private satisfactions. The use of "citoyen" as a replacement for "Monsieur" was of course an extension of the term beyond its "sens rigoureux," since it was used not only to designate Frenchmen in their role as members of the sovereign, but also in their private roles in civil society. Indeed, this was one of its major attractions. Unlike "Monsieur," which threatened to contaminate public life with private vanities,

"citoyen" was calculated to infuse even private life with salutary public virtues.

But the use of "citoyen" as a universal term of address also had its contradictions and ambiguities. The term "citoyen" clearly had been adopted with French *men* in mind. Yet precisely because the designation was to be universal, to substitute for quotidian usages of "Monsieur" and "Madame" and to apply to all inhabitants of France, it had to have both a masculine form—*le citoyen*—and a feminine form—*la citoyenne*. The term "citoyen" triumphed because it interpellated males as active members of the sovereign who were to think about the public good even in private life. By contrast, the term "citoyenne" was only an afterthought—a kind of unintentional consequence of the adoption of "citoyen." Like "citoyen passif," it was an oxymoron: *citoyen* implied activity and membership in the sovereign, but the feminine ending implied passivity and exclusion from the public sphere. And like "citoyen passif," it indicated a vulnerable point in the revolutionary project of its creators. The danger of the locution "citoyenne" was, of course, that day after day, in all the routines of social life, it unintentionally interpellated women as active members of the sovereign, as rightful coparticipants in the political life of the nation. It is therefore hardly surprising that some women answered the call.

By the spring of 1793, women were frequently admitted to the popular societies that were constituted by the Sans-Culottes. In July of 1793 the "Société de l'Harmonie Sociale des Sans-Culottes des deux sexes" stated explicitly that "les citoyennes seront admises sans distinction à partager les travaux patriotiques de la Société."<sup>24</sup> But the most spectacular case was the "Société (or club) des citoyennes républicaines révolutionnaires," a popular society made up exclusively of women, whose career has been ably chronicled in several recent works.<sup>25</sup> The *Citoyennes républicaines révolutionnaires* took the universalist implication of the term "citoyenne" literally. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about them as a woman's club is that they did not particularly concern themselves with "women's issues," but discussed and acted on the issues that dominated (male) politics in the same way as men's political clubs did. Nor did they shy away from physical danger. They played a significant role in the insurrection of May 31 to June 2, which purged the Girondins from the Convention—among other things, standing guard at the doors of the Convention and refusing entry to Girondin deputies.<sup>26</sup> This commitment to militant political action was explicitly written into their *règlement*, whose first article stated that the Society's purpose was to join in the armed defense of "la Patrie."<sup>27</sup>

But even for these extraordinarily active and politicized women, the duties of the "citoyenne" were potentially contradictory. This can be seen with particular clarity in an address delivered at a meeting of the *Société des citoyennes républicaines révolutionnaires* by a member of a delegation of "citoyennes" from the Section des Droits de l'homme, which was presenting



to the Society a standard to be carried in public demonstrations, ceremonies, and insurrections. In her address, the orator insisted that political activity is the proper duty of the "citoyenne".

Vous avez rompu un des anneaux de la chaîne des préjugés, il n'existe plus pour vous celui qui, reléguant les femmes dans la sphere étroite de leurs ménages, faisoit de la moitié des individus des êtres passifs et isolés.

Vous voulez tenir votre place dans l'ordre social, la neutralité vous offense, vous humilie. C'est en vain que l'on prétendoit vous distraire des grands intérêts de la Patrie, ils ont remué vos âmes, et désormais vous concurrez à l'utilité commune.

... Et pourquoi les femmes douées de la faculté de sentir, et d'exprimer leurs pensées, verroientelles prononcer leur exclusion aux affaires publiques? ...

Que ce guidon dirige vos pas partout où l'égoïsme et l'insouciance enlève des Citoyens à la Patrie, portez dans vos députations cet emblème expressif de l'Égalité; que l'oeil de ses ennemis en soit souvent frappé. Sous son ombre bienfaisante, venez toutes vous ranger dans les cérémonies publiques; qu'au premier signal du danger, cet étendard révolutionnaire se mêle aux drapeaux tricolores, qu'il mène à la victoire des républicaines dévouées, qui dépouillent la foiblesse de leur sexe devant les périls éminents de la Patrie ...<sup>28</sup>

Republican "citoyennes" must not be passive or neutral; they must send deputations, participate in ceremonies, and join insurrectionary movements when the nation is in peril. "Citoyennes," in all these respects, apparently should be indistinguishable from "citoyens."

Yet even this call to vigilant activism casts women as the weaker sex. More surprisingly, this militant orator, elsewhere in her speech, seems to characterize the differences between the sexes in a way that normally valorized women's exclusion from political affairs.

... La déclaration des droits est commune à l'un et à l'autre des sexes et la différence consiste dans les devoirs; il en est des publics, il en est de privés. Les hommes sont particulièrement appelés à remplir les premiers, la nature elle-même indiqua la préférence; elle a reparti chez eux une constitution robuste, la force des organes, tous les moyens capables de soutenir des travaux pénibles: qu'aux armées, qu'au sénat, que dans les assemblées publiques, ils occupent préférentiellement les places, la raison, les convenances le veulent, il faut y céder.

Les femmes au contraire ont pour premières obligations, des devoirs privés, les douces fonctions d'épouses et de mères leur sont confiées, mille objets de détails qu'elles entraînent consomment une forte partie de leurs temps, leurs loisirs sont moins fréquents ...<sup>29</sup>

Men and women differ by nature. Men are stronger and women bear children; as a consequence, men are "particulièrement appelés" to fulfill "devoirs publics" and women to fulfill "devoirs privés." All of this is a quite conventional reading of the commands of nature—except that this female orator makes no claim that men possess superior intellectual capacities or an exclusive claim to political rights.

How is this relegation of women to the "douces fonctions d'épouses et de mères" to be reconciled with women's active participation in the public sphere? The orator goes on as follows:

... néanmoins il est possible de concilier, ce qu'exige impérieusement la nature, ce que commande l'amour du bien public. Après avoir vaqué à des occupations indispensables, il est encore des instans, et les femmes citoyennes qui les consacrent dans les Sociétés fraternelles, à la surveillance, à l'instruction ont la douce satisfaction de se voir doublement utiles.<sup>30</sup>

This is, of course, not entirely satisfactory. It implies that women who are also wives and mothers will have precious little chance for political activity—the "mille objets de détails" of their naturally decreed "douces fonctions" will leave them only "des instans" and it is only these rare moments that can be consecrated "à la surveillance, à l'instruction." Hence, only those rare women who remained unmarried—like Claire Lacombe and Pauline Léon, the most prominent leaders of the *Société des citoyennes républicaines révolutionnaires*—could hope to devote themselves to public affairs with a zeal comparable to that of men. But avoiding marriage and motherhood could hardly be the proper answer, since the functions of wives and mothers are "exigences impérieuses" of nature. It follows that "citoyennes" could be at best part-time patriots, active in political life only on those occasions when their "premiers obligations" as wives and mothers allowed them sufficient leisure. The sacrifice of private duties and interests to the public good that was implied by the term "citoyen" was impossible to the "citoyenne"—unless she violated the commands of nature and remained unmarried.

The orator from the Section des Droits de l'homme was thus in the uncomfortable position of at once accepting the conventional gender definitions that justified women's exclusion from politics and urging women to continue their seemingly "manly" activism—in other words, of attempting to hold together the passivity and the activity that were simultaneously called forth when women were interpellated by the oxymoron "citoyennes." The orator struggled to avoid this contradiction—for example by characterizing the Society's members as "épouses des Sans-Culottes" (thereby denying the implication that serious political activism would be limited to unmarried women) and by advancing the dubious claim (in view of her stated assumptions) that the Society's militant activism could be pursued purely in wives' and mothers'



moments of leisure. She also developed an alternative characterization of the Society and its work in terms more consonant with existing gender-role definitions—as a school where mothers could gain the political knowledge necessary to raise their children as good republicans. “. . . La Liberté trouve ici une école nouvelle; mères, épouses, enfans y viennent s'instruire, s'exciter mutuellement à la pratique des vertus sociales.”<sup>31</sup> But none of these devices could free her discourse from its fundamental trap: as long as “citoyennes” accepted “what nature imperiously requires” of females—as this was understood in the late eighteenth century—their claims to membership in the sovereign were bound to remain precarious.

Just how precarious was demonstrated in October of 1793, when the Convention moved to suppress the *Société des citoyennes républicaines révolutionnaires*. The pretext for the dissolution of the Society was a disturbance touched off when the *citoyennes républicaines révolutionnaires* attempted to force market women to wear the *bonnet rouge*. But the Convention went beyond the particular issue to consider the general question of whether “citoyennes” should be allowed to exercise political rights and to form political associations—that is, whether the “sens rigoureux” of “citoyen” had any application to women. Amar, reporting for the Committee of General Security, answered unhesitatingly in the negative. It is symptomatic of Amar’s and the Jacobins’ position that nowhere in his long disquisition about women’s role in politics does he utter the term “citoyenne”; women are always referred to as “femmes.” His arguments are based on conventional notions about the differences between the sexes—notions similar to those put forth by the orator from the Section des Droits de l’homme, although his version of conventional notions is far more misogynist and the conclusions he draws from them are radically different.

Amar declared that women lack “la force morale et physique” required to exercise political rights—that is to “faire prendre des résolutions relatives à l’intérêt de l’Etat.” “Gouverner, c’est régir la chose publique par des lois dont la confection exige des connaissances étendues, une application et un dévouement sans bornes, une impassibilité sévère et l’abnégation de soi-même . . .” Women, he went on, are not “susceptible de ces soins et des qualités qu’ils exigent.”<sup>32</sup> Not capable of governing, neither should they form political associations.

Le but des associations populaires est celui-ci: dévoiler les manoeuvres des ennemis de la chose publique, surveiller et les citoyens comme individus, et les fonctionnaires publics, même le corps législatif; exiter le zèle des uns et des autres par l’exemple des vertus républicaines; s’éclairer par des discussions publiques et approfondies sur le défaut ou la réformation des lois politiques. Les femmes peuvent-elles se dévouer à ces utiles et pénibles fonctions? Non, parce qu’elles seraient obligées d’y sacrifier des soins plus importants

auxquels la nature les appelle. Les fonctions privées auxquelles sont destinées les femmes par la nature même tiennent à l’ordre général de la société; cet ordre social résulte de la différence qu’il y a entre l’homme et la femme. Chaque sexe est appelé à un genre d’occupation qui lui est propre; son action est circonscrite dans ce cercle qu’il ne peut franchir, car la nature, qui a posé ces limites à l’homme, commande imperieusement, et ne reçoit aucune loi.<sup>33</sup>

Here we have the familiar imperious commands of nature that assign women to the home and family—but with the difference that the limits commanded by nature are now absolute.

Amar also gives a much starker and more elaborate account of the difference between the sexes than that set forth by the female orator from the Section des Droits de l’homme.

L’homme est fort, robuste, né avec une grande énergie, de l’audace et du courage; il brave les périls, l’intempérie des saisons par sa constitution; il résiste à tous les éléments, il est propre aux arts, aux travaux pénibles; et comme il est presque exclusivement destiné à l’agriculture, au commerce, à la navigation, aux voyages, à la guerre, à tout ce qui exige de la force, de l’intelligence, de la capacité, de même il paraît seul propre aux méditations profondes et sérieuses qui exigent une grand contention d’esprit et de longues études qu’il n’est pas donné aux femmes de suivre.<sup>34</sup>

For Amar, men are not only stronger, but more courageous, more intelligent, and more capable of profound and serious meditation than women. Hence, the domestic sphere is not only the “first duty” but the sole duty of women.

Quel est le caractère propre à la femme? Les moeurs et la nature même lui ont assigné ses fonctions: commencer l’éducation des hommes, préparer l’esprit et le coeur des enfants aux vertus publiques, les diriger de bonne heure vers le bien, élever leur âme et les instruire dans le culte politique de la liberté: telles sont leurs fonctions, après les soins du ménage; la femme est naturellement destinée à faire aimer la vertu. Quand elles auront rempli tous ces devoirs, elles auront bien mérité de la patrie.<sup>35</sup>

Amar admits that in order for women to raise their children with a love of liberty, they must be allowed to instruct themselves about politics; for this reason

. . . elles peuvent assister aux délibérations des Sociétés populaires; mais, faites pour adoucir les moeurs de l’homme, doivent-elles prendre

une part active à des discussions dont la chaleur est incompatible avec la douceur et la modération qui font le charme de leur sexe?

Nous devons dire que cette question tient essentiellement aux moeurs, et sans les moeurs point de république . . . Voulez-vous que, dans la république française on les voit venir au barreau, à la tribune, aux assemblées politiques comme les hommes, abandonnant et la retenue, source de toutes les vertus de ce sexe, et le soin de leur famille?

Elles ont plus d'un autre moyen de rendre des services à la patrie; elles peuvent éclairer leurs époux, leur communiquer des réflexions précieuses, fruit du calme d'une vie sédentaire, employer à fortifier en eux l'amour de la patrie par tout ce que l'amour privé leur donne d'empire; et l'homme, éclairé par des discussions familières et paisibles au milieu de son ménage, rapportera dans la société les idées utiles que lui aura données une femme honnête.

. . . Ajoutons que les femmes sont disposées, par leur organisation, à une exaltation qui serait funeste dans les affaires publiques, et que les intérêts de l'Etat seraient bientôt sacrifiés à tout ce que la vivacité des passions peut produire d'égarement et de désordre. Livrées à la chaleur des débats publics, elles enculqueraient à leurs enfants, non l'amour de la patrie, mais des haines et les préventions.<sup>36</sup>

The conclusion was clear to Amar: "Nous croyons donc qu'une femme ne doit pas sortir de sa famille pour s'immiscer dans les affaires du gouvernement";<sup>37</sup> "il n'est pas possible que les femmes exercent les droits politiques."<sup>38</sup>

The rhetoric of Amar's speech is superheated—indeed, downright hysterical. Unquestionably, his (and the Jacobins') hostility to the *Société des citoyennes républicaines révolutionnaires* arose in part out of the threat that its existence posed to his own manhood. The spectacle of women successfully exercising the public virtues that the Jacobins regarded as innately masculine implicitly cast doubt on both the Jacobins' gender identities and their political ideologies. But however hysterical this text, it nevertheless contains a certain logic—a logic to which we must attend if we are to understand the Jacobins' denial of citizens' rights to women.

Amar's opposition to the participation of women in politics was partly based on a belief that such participation produced disorder in the public realm. Like most of his contemporaries, he assumed that women are by nature more emotional than men. This quality of women's "organisation" is beneficial so long as women remain within the domestic sphere, which they infuse with love and tenderness. But when they enter the public sphere, their emotions carry them away and produce "égarement" and "désordre." Hence, for the good of the republic, women must be denied the right to participate in politics. But the fact that the presence of women introduces disorder into the public sphere is not Amar's weightiest argument against women's political

participation. Far more important, in Amar's eyes, is the nefarious effect of such participation on the *domestic* sphere. Although the disorders which the *Société des citoyennes républicaines révolutionnaires* had caused in the markets of Paris were regrettable, Amar's primary complaint against the Society was that its activities threatened "l'ordre général de la société."

To see what Amar meant by this threat to the general social order, we must consider the role of gender in the Jacobins' overall conception of politics and society.<sup>39</sup> Gender is hardly a trivial concern for the Jacobins. In this speech, Amar claims that sexual difference *constitutes* social order; that social order "résulte de la différence qu'il y a entre l'homme et la femme." Although Amar obviously regards males as superior to females, he sees social order and the stability of the republic as resulting not solely from the knowledge, the good judgment, and the strength of men, but from a proper balance between masculine and feminine virtues. There were reasons for this balance to seem precarious in the Year II. The "République une et indivisible" assumed and demanded of the "citoyen" a particularly intense and masculine form of virtue—what Amar characterizes as "une impassibilité sévère et l'abnégation de soi-même." The "citoyen" was to sacrifice all private satisfactions for public well-being; to be ready to risk his life in the wars or in popular insurrections; to be unbendingly stern with himself, his fellow citizens, and his governors; to suppress all sympathetic feelings for those who revealed themselves to be enemies of the republic—that is, systematically to value stern justice over tender mercy. This "virilization" of the citizen was to characterize the republic at all times, but it was particularly—and necessarily—exaggerated in an era of revolution. Only this heroically virile form of citizenship could ward off the dangers that beset the republic during the Year II.

Yet the unrelenting sternness required of the "citoyen" was potentially dangerous and exhausting. It had to be balanced by the feminine virtues—mercy, gentleness, affection, intimacy, sweetness, charm, and love. In the eyes of Amar, the real danger represented by the *Société des citoyennes républicaines révolutionnaires* was that it would turn "citoyennes" into heartless and virilized caricatures of "citoyens," who would abandon the sweet feminine virtues of domestic life. Should this happen, "citoyens" would be deprived of the domestic tranquility, intimacy, and affection that are a condition of their ability to act virtuously in the public sphere. Women's part in a republic is to soften and educate the hearts of males, both of sons as they are growing up and of husbands when they are heads of households. "La femme," according to Amar, "est naturellement destinée à faire aimer la vertu"; women are "faite pour adoucir les moeurs de l'homme" and to "préparer l'esprit et le coeur des enfants aux vertus publiques." If women should abandon the feminine virtues of the home, men's morals would be hardened to the point of destructiveness and children's hearts would no longer be capable of virtuous feeling. If women take an active part in "des discussions dont la chaleur

est incompatible avec la douceur et la moderation qui font le charme de leur sexe," the results will be catastrophic. Exposed to the heat of public debate, women's more emotional nature will be moved to "exaltation," "égarement," and "désordre," rather than the "douceur," "modération," and "paix" that result from confinement to the "calme d'une vie sédentaire" in the natural sphere of the home. Women who were active in political affairs would be incapable of calming and enlightening their husbands in "discussions familiares et paisibles"; they would teach their children "non l'amour de la patrie, mais des haines et les préventions." Thus, the continued participation of women in politics threatened not merely occasional disorders such as those that had recently taken place in the Parisian markets, but a destruction of the moral balance of society and consequently of the republic as well.

This is what Amar meant when he said that the question of women's participation in politics "tient essentiellement aux moeurs, et sans les moeurs point de république." The woman, in Amar's vision, was the guardian and repository of "moeurs." Public virtue, which the Jacobins coded as masculine, was the essence of the republic, but public virtue was impossible to sustain without private "moeurs," which the Jacobins coded as feminine. In the Jacobins' eyes, women's participation in politics threatened to denature women, which would destroy private "moeurs," which in turn would undermine public virtue. Outlawing popular societies of women therefore was necessary to the preservation of the republic. Consequently, after brief debate, the Convention decreed that "Les clubs et les Sociétés populaires de femmes, sous quelque dénomination que ce soit, sont défendus."<sup>40</sup> After 9 Brumaire Year II, "citoyennes" of the most radically democratic republic the world had ever known were deprived of the last of their active political rights—the right to associate to discuss public affairs. The oxymoronic term "citoyenne" had been deprived of its "sens rigoureux" and reduced to a de facto synonym for "sujet."

### Conclusion

The history of contradictory usages of the term "citoyen" in the French Revolution is also a history of the revolutionaries' hesitations in establishing a democratic state and society. From the beginning, the revolutionaries wished to establish a state in which subjects of the king would be transformed into true citizens—with the liberty to devote themselves to the public good and the power to enact public laws. It was the centrality of this goal that made the term "citoyen" such a powerful symbol in revolutionary discourse. But symbolic power breeds symbolic contradiction. In the political struggles of the revolution, the usage of "citoyen" was stretched to fit varying political ends—stretched so far that it came to be employed in self-contradictory locutions. These oxymoronic locutions—"le citoyen passif" and "la citoyenne"—are particularly interesting because they became points of political contention, both over the meaning of words and over the direction of the

Revolution. Linguistic quarrels about the meaning of "citoyen" reveal the limits of the revolutionary visions, first of the patriot party of 1789 and then of the Jacobins of the Year II.

The notion of "le citoyen passif" epitomizes the limited democratic vision of the Revolution's first generation of leaders. Stirred by a Rousseuian passion for the public good and the wish to establish a just and rational constitution, Sieyès and his collaborators were only reluctant democrats. They envisaged a political order in which public service would be performed by an enlightened and public-spirited elite on behalf of the Nation. It was the intervention of the masses that brought them to power in the summer of 1789, but they distrusted the masses nonetheless. The constitution they wrote between the summer of 1789 and the summer of 1791 embodied precisely this contradiction between elitism and popular power—and nowhere more blatantly than in its consignment of most of the population to the ranks of "citoyens passifs." At one level, the employment of the oxymoron "citoyen passif" was an attempt to cover the real status of "sujet" with the term "citoyen." At another level, the term was an attempt to wish away the potentially menacing activism of the rural and urban poor by designating them hopefully as passive. But the effect of the Constituent Assembly's oxymoron was to enflame rather than to "passify". The term's blatant self-contradiction made it seem an "insidious and barbarous locution" and the distinction between active and passive citizens provided a choice target for radically democratic republican activists in 1792.

With the republican victory in August 1792, "le citoyen" became a figure of mythic proportions. All were now to be citizens and all citizens were to be eternally vigilant. One means of signifying the emergence of a universally active citizenship was to impose the terminology of citizenship in the interactions of daily life, replacing "Monsieur" by "citoyen" and "Madame" by "citoyenne" as obligatory forms of address. But, as we have seen, this new democratic usage of "le citoyen/la citoyenne" had its own contradictions, contradictions that revealed the limits of the Jacobin concept of democracy. Interpellated as "citoyennes," a minority of women began to act as if they too were expected to conform to the model of the republican "citoyen." But in Jacobin ideology, the stern and vigilant model of the citizen was in fact predicated on a soft, loving, totally domestic model of the "citoyenne"—on a "citoyenne" that preserved nothing of the meaning of the term except the feminine ending. The Jacobin vision of radical democracy was tied to a conception of gender difference that relegated women more insistently than ever to a narrow domestic sphere. The Ninth Brumaire of the Jacobins removed the ambiguous linguistic promise of democratic participation that had been inadvertently encoded in "la citoyenne" from the republican tradition for a century and a half. In matters of citizenship, the constraints of patriarchy turned out to be far more durable than those of class, both during the Revolution itself and in the post-revolutionary republican tradition.

## Notes

- 1 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Du contrat social," in *Oeuvres complètes* (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade: Paris, 1964), 3:361-2.
- 2 *Ibid.*, p. 362.
- 3 *Archives parlementaires de 1787 à 1799*, (1st ser., Paris, 1903), 63:562.
- 4 The career of the term citoyen during the revolution is well chronicled in Ferdinand Brunot, *Histoire de la langue française des origines à nos jours*, Vol. 9, *La Révolution et l'Empire*. Part 2, *Les événements, les institutions et la langue* (Paris, 1967), pp. 682-9.
- 5 Published as *Préliminaire de la constitution: Reconnaissance et exposition raisonnée des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen*. Par M. l'Abbé Siéyes (Versailles, July 1789). This work is included in Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyès, *Ecrits politiques*, ed. Roberto Zapperi, (Paris, 1985), pp. 189-206.
- 6 Sieyès, *Préliminaire*, p. 13.
- 7 *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.
- 8 *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.
- 9 Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyès, *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers état?*, ed. by Roberto Zapperi (Genève, 1970), p. 139.
- 10 Sieyès, *Préliminaire*, pp. 3-4.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 19.
- 12 Sieyès, *Ecrits politiques*, p. 75.
- 13 Sieyès, *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers état?*, pp. 143-4.
- 14 Sieyès, *Préliminaires*, p. 14.
- 15 *Les Constitutions de la France depuis 1789*, ed. Jacques Godechot (Paris, 1970), pp. 40-41.
- 16 Maximilien Robespierre, *Oeuvres*, vol. 7, *Discours (2e Partie) Janvier-Septembre 1791*, ed. Marc Bouloiseau, Georges Lefebvre, and Albert Soboul (Paris, 1952), pp. 161-2.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 165.
- 18 *Ibid.*, pp. 162-3.
- 19 Brunot cites a letter of May 24, 1792, by Pétion, the mayor of Paris, to the inhabitants of the city, as containing the first official usage of the term "citoyens" to address the generality of the population. *Histoire de la langue française*, 9(ii): 683.
- 20 *Ibid.*, pp. 682-4.
- 21 *Archives parlementaires*, 52:102.
- 22 Here I am relying on Brunot, *Histoire de la langue française*, vol. 9, part 2.
- 23 For example, until the session of September 24, 1792, the procès verbal of the Parisian Jacobin club used M. and MM. before the names of speakers whose contributions were being noted. At the beginning of that session, Chabot demanded that the *procès verbal* henceforth "ne serve plus que de la date l'an I de la République." He then went on to argue that the *procès verbal* should avoid not only "Monsieur," but even "le citoyen tel," and "n'employer à l'avenir que le nom seul de la personne." This practice—based on the concern that even "le citoyen" would become a term of distinction—was adopted by the club and conformed to thenceforth in the *procès verbal* (F. A. Aulard, *La Société des Jacobins: Recueil de documents pour l'histoire du Club des Jacobins de Paris*, (Paris, 1982), 4:328-9.
- 24 Paule-Marie Duhet, *Les femmes et la Révolution, 1789-1794* (Paris, 1971), p. 130.
- 25 Marie Cerati, *Le Club des citoyennes républicaines révolutionnaires* (Paris, 1966); Duhet, *Les Femmes*, pp. 127-60; and Darline Gay Levy, Harriet Branson Applewhite, Mary Durham Johnson, *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1795* (Urbana, Ill., 1979), pp. 144-220.

- 26 Levy, Applewhite, and Johnson, *Women in Revolutionary Paris*, p. 145.
- 27 *Ibid.*, p. 161.
- 28 *Discours prononcé à la société des citoyennes républicaines révolutionnaires par les citoyennes de la section des Droits de l'Homme* (Paris, n.d.: Bibl. Nat. Lb<sup>40</sup> 2411), pp. 3-6.
- 29 *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.
- 30 *Ibid.*, p. 5. The locution "les femmes citoyennes" is intriguing. In principle, "les femmes" is redundant, since "les citoyennes" necessarily implies women. But because "les femmes" means "wives" as well as "women," "les femmes citoyennes" may be read either as "citizen women" or as "citizen wives." This double entendre (whether intentionally or inadvertently we cannot say) captures the orator's intended mix of private wifely and motherly duties supplemented by public duties.
- 31 *Ibid.*, p. 3. It is true that this *Société*, like most *sociétés populaires* of the era, engaged in much correspondence and political discussion that could be characterized as political education. But one suspects that the orator chose to highlight that aspect of its activities because it fit with the "natural" function of women as the educators of their children.
- 32 *Archives parlementaires*, 78:50.
- 33 *Ibid.*, p. 50.
- 34 *Ibid.*, p. 50.
- 35 *Ibid.*, p. 50.
- 36 *Ibid.*, p. 50-51.
- 37 *Ibid.*, p. 50.
- 38 *Ibid.*, p. 51.
- 39 A theoretical argument for the type of interpretive strategy used here may be found in Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91 (Dec. 1986), pp. 1053-75. Indeed, much of my substantive interpretation of Amar's speech grows out of conversations with Joan Scott.
- 40 *Archives parlementaires*, 78:49.