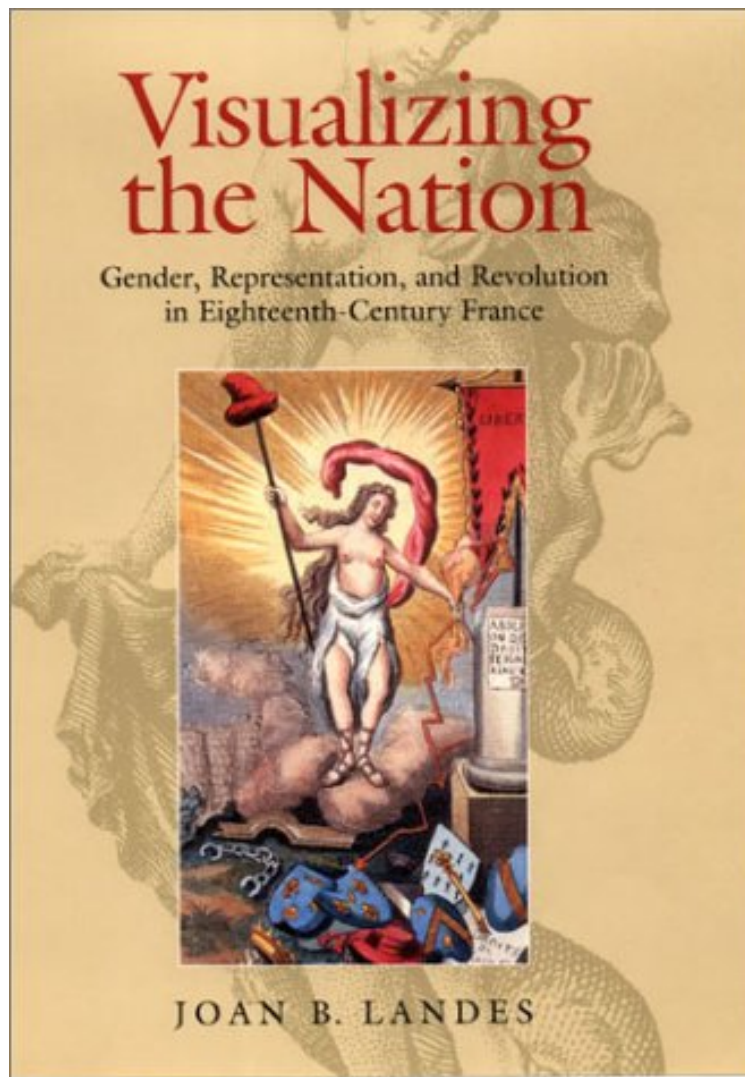


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Visualizing the Nation: Gender, Representation, and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century France

Joan B. Landes

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Popular images of women were everywhere in revolutionary France. Although women's political participation was curtailed, female allegories of liberty, justice, and the republic played a crucial role in the passage from old regime to modern society. In her lavishly illustrated and gracefully written book, Joan B. Landes explores this paradox within the workings of revolutionary visual culture and traces the interaction between pictorial and textual political arguments. Landes highlights the widespread circulation of images of the female body, notwithstanding the political leadership's suspicions of the dangers of feminine influence and the seductions of visual imagery. The use of caricatures and allegories contributed to the destruction of the masculinized images of hierarchic absolutism and to forging new roles for men and women in both the intimate and public arenas. Landes tells the fascinating story of how the depiction of the nation as a desirable female body worked to eroticize patriotism and to bind male subjects to the nation-state. Despite their political subordination, women too were invited to identify with the project of nationalism. Recent views of the French Revolution have emphasized linguistic concerns; in contrast, Landes stresses the role of visual cognition in fashioning ideas of nationalism and citizenship. Her book demonstrates as well that the image is often a site of contestation, as individual viewers may respond to it in unexpected, even subversive, ways.

"Clear, cogent, and convincing, *Visualizing the Nation* provides a compelling alternative to recent studies of this period that see the new French nation as bound together primarily through ties of man to man. Joan B. Landes reminds us that heterosexual desire was still a potent force and could be aroused by images of female vulnerability, beauty, and motherhood. Offering a first-rate synthesis in lucid, highly readable prose, this original book will satisfy the specialist while remaining accessible to a wider audience."--Mary D. Sheriff, University of North Carolina "While this book will certainly prove to be a genuine contribution to French Revolution scholarship, readers in other fields will find its examination of 'ways of seeing' to be highly useful and suggestive. A most intelligent and innovative book, *Visualizing the Nation* gathers and brings to fruition the growing literature on the body in Revolutionary politics."--Patrice Higonnet, Harvard University "Women were prevented from being politically active, but Landes finds that the depiction of France as a desirable female body worked to eroticize patriotism, bind male subjects to the emerging society, and invite women to identify with the project of nationalism."--Book News, November 2001 "Landes explores the ever-present paradoxes within the sad events that revolutionary French society experienced in the 18th century, capturing in the poignant images the tragic-comic reality. She traces the interconnections between pictorial and textual political arguments and concentrates on images of both women and men, in a deeply scholarly and erudite manner. . . . Her research is outstanding. . . . Highly recommended."--Choice, January 2002, Vol. 39, No. 5 "Joan Landes offers a challenging and provocative interpretation of how gender issues influenced political representations of the French nation. . . . from the revolutionary period (1789-1795). . . . This book offers a refreshing return to revolutionary iconography--one that explains the vitality of republican allegories and symbols during a hiatus in political power and a threatening interlude in the reconstruction of gender relations during the revolutionary epoch."--Barbara Day-Hickman, Temple University. H-France, April 2002 "Landes focuses on how revolutionary leaders used images to fashion gender and national identities for the revolutionary nation's new citizens."--Lisa Jane Graham, Haverford College, *Journal of Modern History* 75:3, September 2003 "Landes argues that visual images contain their own powerful discourse that is simply absent in regularly printed words. . . . this fascinating examination of political prints raises central questions for the study of gender and politics during the French Revolution."--Gary Kates, Pomona College, *American Historical*, February 2003 "From the Inside Flap" "Clear, cogent, and convincing, *Visualizing the Nation* provides a compelling alternative to recent studies of this period that see the new French nation as bound together primarily through ties of man to man. Joan B. Landes reminds us that heterosexual desire was still a potent force and could be aroused by images of female vulnerability, beauty, and motherhood. Offering a first-rate synthesis in lucid, highly readable prose, this original book will satisfy the specialist while remaining accessible to a wider audience."--Mary D. Sheriff, University of North Carolina "While this book will certainly prove to be a genuine contribution to French Revolution scholarship, readers in other fields will find its examination of 'ways of seeing' to be highly useful and suggestive. A most intelligent and innovative book, *Visualizing the Nation* gathers and brings to fruition the growing literature on the body in Revolutionary politics."--Patrice Higonnet, Harvard University

About the Author Joan B. Landes is Professor of Women's Studies and History at The Pennsylvania State University. She is author of *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution*, also from Cornell, and of *Feminism, the Public and the Private*.