
H-France Review Vol. 16 (January 2016), No. 6

Response to Sarah Cohen Review of Elizabeth Amann, *Dandyism in the Age of Revolution: The Art of the Cut*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2015. 228 pp. Figures, notes, and index. \$45.00 U.S. (cl.) ISBN: 978-0-226-18725-9

Response by Elizabeth Amann, Universiteit Gent.

I would like to begin by thanking Sarah R. Cohen for her thoughtful and even-handed discussion of my book and for the many flattering things she says about my work. I am also grateful to the editors of H-France for giving me the opportunity to address several of the interesting points and questions that she raises in her review.

As Professor Cohen rightly points out, my study focuses primarily on textual or discursive representations of a series of social types. The degree to which these characters were fictional or real is often difficult to determine and varies considerably from one figure to another. The *currutaco*, which appeared in Spain in 1795, for example, seems to be almost entirely imaginary; the type is the product of a playful exchange in the press, which was then taken up in literary and satirical texts. The *jeunes gens* of the Thermidorian reaction, in contrast, can be traced to specific individuals. In his seminal study, *La jeunesse dorée*, the historian François Gendron identifies the age, profession and social status of the many of the activists associated with this label. In my book, I was attempting to do something slightly different, namely, explore how the *jeunes gens* and other dandy figures of the 1790s functioned in the political *imaginaire* of the period: how they were represented in text and image and the ways in which ideological meaning was projected upon them.

A second point I would like to clarify concerns the figure of the *incroyable*, a type that emerged in late 1796 and which was, like the *currutaco*, primarily fictional. As I show in the book, many representations of the *jeunes gens* and the *incroyables* were reactions against the politicization of dress during the Terror. They were an attempt to reclaim the insignificance of fashion, which had been over-interpreted in Year II. I do not argue, however, that this “resulted in an absence of any kind of meaning” or that “fashion ... cannot have any significance on its own.” Indeed, as I observe in chapter three, there is a paradox at the heart of *incroyable* literature: the *incroyable*'s dress, in pointing to its own pointlessness, was still making a point. The meaning of his clothes may be that clothes are meaningless, but that does not cease to be a meaning.

Perhaps the most interesting question raised in the review, however, is that of gender. Professor Cohen is right to observe that the male figures generally eclipse the women characters in my study. There are historical reasons for this. During most of the eighteenth century, male and female dress generally functioned in similar ways, as indicators of the class and social status of the wearer. In the early years of the Revolution, dress began to take on new political meanings but both men and women participated in this new sartorial culture, wearing accessories such as the tricolour cockade. During the Terror, however, women's use of such signs became increasingly a subject of controversy, and gradually their political involvement was curtailed. From this point on, male and female fashion began to diverge in function: men's attire became associated with the public sphere and ideological positions whereas

women's clothes were expected to reflect the domestic ideals of self-sacrifice and maternal devotion promoted by the Republic. Although these restrictive gender codes were relaxed during the Thermidorian period and Directory, in which women began to wear more daring (and at times indecent) styles, the association of female dress with the private and male dress with the public sphere would persist. This "division of labour" is clear in many of the Thermidorian plays discussed in chapter two of my study and in the contrast between the treatment of the male and female types of the Directory. Whereas the *merveilleuses* tend to feature in satires of social mores, the *incroyables* and *collets noirs* frequently appear in political commentaries. It is noteworthy, indeed, that whereas the male dandies of the eighteenth century (the *petit-mâitre* in France, the *petimetre* in Spain) usually had female counterparts (the *petite-maitresse* and *petimetra*) that were equally prominent in the literature, the *muscadins*, *jeunes gens* and *crops* of the revolutionary period do not. Although it might be tempting to attribute this (as Professor Cohen hints) to a "homosocial" current in dandy culture of the time, it seems to me that it has more to do with the exclusion of women from the political sphere. In any event, I very much agree with Professor Cohen that one cannot separate gender and politics in considering this subject.

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ISSN 1553-9172