

EDITOR'S REMARKS

With this issue of *ILWCH* we are introducing a new feature under the rubric "scholarly controversies." It consists of a lead article offering new departures in subject theory methodology or proposing a reexamination of accepted concepts and approaches. The controversial piece is accompanied by several commentaries, which evaluate its claims and directions. A "readers' column" in the following issue will present related comments from our readers (limited to 750 words).

In our first scholarly controversy, Jacques Rancière challenges us to reflect on artisans as a category in social history. A study of the memoir literature of militant workers in 19th-century France leads him to question the notion that worker militancy was to be found among those trades where professional identity and status were strongest. He concludes that the role of the skilled artisan and his culture as a seminal force in the development of the working-class and socialist movement is exaggerated and stems from later internal myth-making about the traditions of an earlier "authentic worker socialism." Rancière's main concern is to highlight the complexity of the term "artisan" and to reveal the ambiguities and contradictions of artisan socialism. At times, however, worker militants of any kind disappear from view, absorbed in Rancière's effort to demythologize the artisan. The critical comments of Christopher Johnson and William Sewell address this latter point and other formulations by Rancière, which threaten to throw out the (artisan) baby with the bath.

Readers' comments on this scholarly controversy should reach the *ILWCH* editorial office by February 1, 1984.

The preparation of this issue including our striking out in a new direction would not have been possible without the stalwart and unstinting contribution of two colleagues. Michael Hanagan has done an outstanding job as editor of the reports and correspondence section. But much beyond that responsibility, he has been a mainstay at each critical turn, sharing in every labor from the most scholarly to the most menial and with a profound dedication to the journal. Without Ileen DeVault this issue would never have seen the light of day. Her excellent editorial and scholarly judgement is apparent in every phase of our work and in the result. A special debt is owed to David H. Lake of Vassar College for his excellent translation of the difficult Rancière text.

Helmut Gruber, Guest Editor
Polytechnic Institute of New York

Eighteenth Century Life

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Guest Editor, James Leheny, University of Massachusetts

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Roy S. Wolper. . . *The Cutter Cut: Circumcision as Polemic in the Jew Bill Of 1753* (illustrated)

Jack Fruchtman, Jr. . . . *Joseph Priestley on Rhetoric and the Power of Political Discourse*

Draper Hill. . . *THE PRINCESS'S CURTSEY* by Richard Newton

Miriam Levin. . . *The Wedding of Art and Science in Late 18th-Century France: A Means of Building Social Solidarity* (illustrated)

James Leith. . . *Desacralization, Resacralization, and Architectural Planning during the French Revolution* (illustrated)

Richard Schwarzbach. . . *Review Essay: London and Literature in the Eighteenth Century*

PLUS miscellaneous notes and *Books Received*

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