

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910823985903321
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Titolo	The melodramatic thread : spectacle and political culture in modern France / / James R. Lehning
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Bloomington, : Indiana University Press, c2007
ISBN	1-282-07845-3 9786612078453 0-253-11701-1
Edizione	[1st ed.]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (193 p.)
Collana	Interdisciplinary studies in history
Disciplina	792.0944
Soggetti	Theater - France - History - 19th century Theater - France - History - 20th century France Politics and government 19th century France Politics and government 20th century France History Revolution, 1789-1799 Theater and the revolution
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (p. [159]-174) and index.
Nota di contenuto	Cover; Contents; Acknowledgments; 1. Introduction; 2. Varieties of Performance in Nineteenth-Century Paris; 3. Boulevard Spectacles of the Third Republic; 4. Spectacles of Light and Darkness between the World Wars; 5. Commercial Spectacles in Postwar Paris; 6. Conclusion; Notes; Selected Bibliography; Index;
Sommario/riassunto	Traces the "melodramatic thread" that runs through modern French political culture