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Natalie Scholtz et Christina Schroer, eds., *Représentation et Pouvoir: La Politique symbolique en France (1789-1830)*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2007. 300 pp. Preface, introduction, and plates. 20€ (pb). ISSN 978-2-7535-0447-9.

Review by Rebecca K. McCoy, Lebanon Valley College.

Since the 1980s, historians have turned increasingly to the disciplines of cultural anthropology, literary criticism, and art history for the theories and models that have shaped the “new cultural history.” Pioneering works by Lynn Hunt and Roger Chartier demonstrated how these theories might be used to move beyond a social history that explored social divisions, to a cultural history focused on understanding meaning and how people in past societies constructed it symbolically.[1] The essays in this collection provide an overview of recent research on representation and power during a seminal moment, the revolutionary era from 1789 to 1830. In this period, revolutionaries sought to create a new political culture and establish new sources of political legitimacy. For each successive regime, the key problem was to establish recognition of its power within a pluralistic context. The authors explore how each regime used symbols to communicate a vision of power, normative values, and citizenship. Yet as Chartier points out, the creator of an image, symbol, or discourse cannot completely control the way in which the communication is “read”.[2] Power, in fact, is the product of a negotiation between those in authority and those from whom they want to win support. As these authors show, power rests not only on force but on public acceptance. Accordingly, the authors of these essays also address public opinion and the reception of the political representations that they analyze.

The essays in this collection were presented at a colloquium in Paris in June 2004. Hans-Ulrich Thamer organized the conference under the auspices of the Center for Research “Sonderforschungsbereich 496” at the University of Munster in Germany, and the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft at the Institut historique allemande in Paris. The colloquium reflected an international collaboration in the area of French cultural history. Although the papers in the collection are by historians from France, Germany, and the United States, unfortunately, the collection did not include any papers by British historians. As conference papers, the work included represents research that is in different stages of completion. Some essays, such as that of Christina Schroer, are full-length articles. Others, such as those of Annie Duprat, Hans-Ulrich Thamer, or Cheryl Kroen, are much shorter, and provide an overview of work in progress or are based on recently published works.[3] Overall, reading these essays together provides a fascinating look at the work being done in the field of cultural history.

Although work in cultural history cannot be defined simply by the genres addressed, these essays do demonstrate the creativity in applying the methods and assumptions of cultural history to a variety of types of representation.[4] Visual images including engravings, painting, and caricatures pick up on the themes articulated by Lynn Hunt. Christina Schroer, on engravings from the Directory, Rolf Rechartdt on the changing visual portrayals of the constitution, Armin Owzar and Annie Duprat on images of Napoleon, and Elizabeth Fraser on the Delacroix’s *Massacre at Scio*, all add to the growing literature on visual representation. All of these essays address the issue of how the images were received

How successive governments used the theatre as a political tool is the subject of several papers, including those by Philippe Bourdin, Rüdiger Schmidt, and Sheryl Kroen. These papers argue that after the initial freedom of the constitutional monarchy, the government took firmer measures to control theatre productions, thereby politicizing them. This control extended not only to the subject matter, scripts and directors, but also to the figurative space between the stage and audience. Early in the revolution, class distinction in the seating disappeared and the audiences were allowed to react to the plays. After 1792, audience participation was increasingly discouraged. Under the Directory, government control loosened, thereby also allowing the government to divorce itself from the message. Yet, class distinctions in seating reappeared. Under Napoleon, the government took tight control. Under the relatively looser controls of the Restoration as Kroen demonstrates, ordinary French people embraced participatory theatre in order to express opposition to the Restoration government.

The third type of symbolic representation addressed here is that of public ritual. Bernard Gainot, writing on the Revolution and Bettina Frederking, on the Restoration, explore the importance of funeral rituals for revolutionary generals and the Duc de Berry respectively. Hans-Ulrich Thamer's work focuses on the use of banquets in the early revolution and the revival of this ritual form in the late Restoration, thereby demonstrating the continuity of form despite the changing political message.

Finally, Eric Barrault and Jo Burr Margadant demonstrate the use of writing in fashioning representations of the self in a changing political environment. Barrault's research on the historian Charles Lacretelle and Margadant's on Louis-Philippe explore the ways in which people of the period, through their writing, refashioned their political images or self representations in order to conform to the many changes in political regime.

The collection of essays is arranged chronologically so that together, they present the reader with a good sense of how each successive regime used symbols and images to manipulate public opinion. The collection as a whole also demonstrates that from the Directory onwards, this attempt to create a unified message failed precisely because the symbolic representation of consensus and legitimacy did not match the reality of a divided France. Fully half the volume is devoted to the revolutionary decade. These papers argue that despite the efforts of the revolutionaries to create a new political culture, they drew on a repertoire of symbols and forms of representation that had considerable continuity with the *Ancien Régime* and imbued them with new meanings. All make clear that that the revolutionary decade had several turning points as the revolution became more radical. Although the authors signal 1792 and the advent of the Republic as an important turning point, they focus on the period of the Directory and later. In his introduction, Jean-Clément Martin indicates that the authors made this choice because only with the end of the Terror could the threat to the goal of unity posed by bitter political cleavages become apparent. By emphasizing the Directory as a turning point, these essays make a contribution to the growing reassessment of this regime.<sup>[6]</sup> It was these political divisions that were to bedevil successive governments, thereby posing the contradictions in trying to establish unity in representations of power.

The papers on the Napoleonic Era emphasize how Napoleon dealt with the political factionalism of the Directory and used symbolism centered on his person as a source of unity. One of the recurring themes in these essays is the depiction of the soldier as a new model of sacrifice and patriotism. This group of essays also juxtaposes the use of both repression and symbols to reinforce the centrality of Napoleon as a unifying figure, with an examination of the way the public interpreted the government's representation of itself. For example, Annie Duprat demonstrates how caricature continued to be used to critique the regime. Despite the tight control imposed by Napoleon, these papers show that his regime also struggled with establishing legitimacy because of the contradictions in the images presented to the public and the reception of them. As Armin Owzar demonstrates, in the occupied German territories, the regime used a wide variety of symbols and messages to appeal to a population that was divided by geography, religion, language, and social status. The variety of means employed to win

public loyalty actually sent a pluralistic message that belied any notion of unity. Nonetheless, as Natalie Petitau concludes, the Napoleonic regime did succeed in building on the revolutionary legacy by reinforcing the values of military honor, glory, and merit with lasting effect.

The papers on the Restoration also contribute to the growing literature that has redefined the period.<sup>[7]</sup> They emphasize the ways in which the Bourbons tried to create a new basis for legitimacy and the contradictions in message that bedeviled the regime. The Bourbons used representations from the past that ignored the ways that France had changed, and therefore prevented it from establishing an effective consensus on its right to rule. Cheryl Kroen focuses on the "*politique d'oublie*," whereby the crown tried to ignore the revolutionary legacy, a denial of reality that undermined its credibility. Nathalie Scholz examines the sentimental representation of the royal family to represent the monarchy in order to use notions of patriarchy as a way to gain legitimacy, a theme shared by Elisabeth Fraser on Delacroix. A paper by Bettina Frederking compliments the other papers on the restoration, especially that of Kroen, in arguing that the increasing identification of the monarchy with the church sent a contradictory message about forgetting and reconciliation given the propensity of the clergy to blame the French openly for the regicides. Jo Burr Margadant's paper on the Duc D'Orleans addresses the problem that the future king but also every other member of the elite who weathered the revolutionary period had to refashion their identity to fit each successive regime. All of these papers conclude that the Bourbons were unable to find a way to represent themselves credibly to the French people, a failure that contributed to the reasons for the revolution of 1830.

No volume can cover all aspects of cultural history as practiced currently. Nonetheless, papers specifically on imagery related to the place of women in these regimes would have been welcome. To be sure, the articles on Revolution and on the Napoleonic era address the role of the soldier, and create a convincing picture of how masculine values were central to the message of these regimes. The convincing case made for the centrality of male images of the soldier could have been balanced by more analysis of how constructions of femininity fit into the political messages. Similarly, the essays on the Restoration discuss the family as a metaphor, specifically in terms of how the Bourbons used the ideal of patriarchy within the family as the basis for their claim to legitimacy. Only Fraser's paper explicitly brings the role of women into the analysis. In all of these cases, attention to the gendered nature of the symbolism could benefit from more analysis.

In conclusion, the essays in this volume provide an excellent window on current research on politics and representation in the revolutionary era. All share the premise that not only did successive French regimes manipulate images and symbols in order to shape public opinion and win support, but that they were unsuccessful in doing so. First, the plurality of viewpoints meant that no unitary vision of France was possible. Second, by insisting on representing their government as unified, each regime's message lacked credibility because the message did not correspond with reality. Taken together, these essays provide an excellent overview of the ways in which the new cultural history is reshaping the understanding of the revolutionary period.

## LIST OF ESSAYS

Natalie Scholz et Christina Schroer, "Préface"

Jean-Clément Martin, "Introduction: représentation et pouvoir à l'époque révolutionnaire (1789-1830)"

Philippe Bourdin, "Les factions sur les tréteaux patriotiques (1789-1799): combats pour une représentation"

Christina Schröer, “La représentation du Nouveau Régime: les élites politiques et sociales dans les gravures du Directoire”

Rüdiger Schmidt, “‘Le théâtre se militarise’: le soldat-citoyen dans le théâtre de la Révolution française”

Bernard Gainot, “Rites et contexte dans les cérémonies funèbres en l’honneur des généraux de la République (1796-1800)”

Hans-Ulrich Thamer, “Entre unanimité et conflit: la politisation des banquets publics, (1789-1799)”

Rolf Reichardt, “L’imaginaire de la Constitution de 1789 à 1830: symbolique d’union ou de division politique?”

Armin Owzar, “‘Par le grâce de Dieu et les constitutions, Emperor des Français.’ La représentation anachronique de l’Empire napoléonien dans les régions occupées de l’Allemagne”

Éric Barrault, “Un historien face à la politique symbolique de L’Empire: Charles Lacretelle, historien de la Révolution française”

Annie Duprat, “Symboles et allégories dans la caricature napoléonienne: la caricature comme auxiliaire de la politique symbolique”

Natalie Petiteau, “Portée de la politique symbolique à l’égard des armées napoléoniennes (1800-1830)”

Sheryl Kroen, “La théâtralité festive: la Restauration et l’héritage démocratique de la Révolution française”

Elisabeth A Fraser, “La politique de la famille sous la Restauration: les Massacres de Scio d’Eugène Delacroix”

Natalie Scholz, “La monarchie sentimentale: un remède aux crises politiques de la Restauration?”

Jo Burr Margadant, “La Restauration du Duc d’Orléans, 1814-1817: façonnement d’une figure cohérente”

Bettina Frederking, “‘Les funérailles de la monarchie,’ ou ‘l’impossible oublié’”

## NOTES

[1] Lynn Hunt, “Introduction: History, Culture, and Text,” in Lynn Hunt, ed., *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press), pp. 1-22; Lynn Hunt, *Culture and Class in the French Revolution* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984). Roger Chartier, “Texts, Printing, Readings,” in Lynn Hunt, ed., *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1989), pp.154-175; and Roger Chartier, *Cultural History: Between Practices and Representations*, tr. by Lydia G. Cochrane (London: Polity Press, 1988).

[2] Roger Chartier, “Texts, Printing, Readings,” in Lynn Hunt, ed., *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1989), pp.154-175.

[3] Work by Annie Duprat on caricature includes, *Le roi décapité. essai sur les imaginaires politiques, préface de Claude Langlois* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1992); *Histoire de France par caricature*, (Paris: Divers,

1999); *Les rois du papier: La caricature de Henri III à Louis XVI* (Paris: Belin, 2002). Hans-Ulrich Tamer, whose published work focuses more on the Nazi period, has published a book on the French Revolution, *Die französischen Revolution* (Munich: Beck, 2004) and is currently engaged on several projects under the auspices of Project C5 on ritual and representation during the French Revolution and Napoleonic periods. Sheryl Kroen's essay summarizes the main arguments in her book, *Politics and Theatre: the Crisis of Legitimacy in Restoration France* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000). The works listed here are only a sample of the extensive research that is the basis for these papers.

[4] Lynn Hunt, "Introduction: History, Culture, and Text," in Lynn Hunt, ed., *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press), p. 9.

[5] Included in this literature are Denis Woronoff, Julian Jackson, translator, *The Thermidorean regime and the Directory, 1794-1799* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Bronsilaw Baczko, Michael Petheram, translator, *Ending the Terror: The French revolution After Robespierre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); James Livesay, *Making Democracy and the French Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001); Howard G. Brown and Judith Miller, eds. *Taking Liberties: the Problem of a New Order from the French Revolution to Napoleon* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003); and Howard G. Brown, *Ending the French Revolution: Violence, Justice, and repression from the terror to Napoleon* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008).

[6] Among the many works redefining this period are Sheryl Kroen, *Politics and Theatre: the Crisis of Legitimacy in Restoration France* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000); Robert Alexander, *Rewriting the Revolutionary Tradition: Liberal Opposition and the Fall of the Bourbon Monarchy* (New York and London: Cambridge, 2004); Natalie Scholz, *Die imaginierte Restauration. Repräsentationen der Monarchie Ludwigs XVIII* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Burgesellschaft, 2005); Françoise Wacquet, *la Fête royale sous la Restauration, ou l'Ancien Régime retrouvé* (Geneva: 1981); Isser Wolloch, *The New Regime: Transformation of the French Order, 1789-1820s* (New York: 1994); Jo Burr Margadant, "The Duchesse of Berry and Royalist Political Culture in Postrevolutionary France" *History Workshop Journal* 43 (1997): 23-52; Emmanuel Waresquiel and Benoît Yvert, *Histoire de la Restauration, 1814-1830. Naissance de la France Moderne* (Paris: Perrin, 2002); David Skuy, *Politics and Miracles: France and the Royalist reaction of 1820* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill Queen's University Press, 2003), and Geoffrey Cubitt, *The Jesuit Myth: Conspiracy Theory and Politics in Nineteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

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