

expanding, particularly in the area of the media. From old studies such as Charles Aubertin, *L'Esprit public au XVIII^e siècle* (1873) to newer investigations such as Pierre Rétat, ed., *L'Attentat de Damiens* (1979), all seek public opinion, and some even use versions of his method, though without the same emphasis on illicit materials. In the final analysis, Darnton can claim that these never quite close the gap between text and views, but a paucity of sources make it likely that inference will always be necessary. Even his own effort, which shows the use of the libels by contemporaries in the revolutionary situation, can only make a logical connection but produce no smoking gun. His leap seems no less substantial than other researchers' and no more likely to discourage historians interested in discourse and other methods. Even fellow travelers in approach will hesitate at Darnton's findings, which rely on a very narrow, if important, band of evidence to explain a critical step in the Revolution.

Another matter worth noting is Darnton's particular use of the texts he specifies. For the most part, Darnton analyzes meanings outside the economic and political pressures faced by author and publisher. He derives meanings without using the context of the writing, an approach which he has done so much to stimulate and which has grown by leaps and bounds. This omission, in the synthesis of a lifetime of valuable work, remains difficult to comprehend. Nonetheless, despite these demurrers many basic issues are delineated and debated with exceptional grace and clarity; much valuable information is presented; specialists and non-specialists will profit by viewing and evaluating it.

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JAMES L. OSEN, *Royalist Political Thought during the French Revolution*. (Contributions to the Study of World History, number 47.) Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1995. Pp. xii, 154. \$55.00.

With the current dominance of political interpretation in the historiography of the French Revolution, a new study of royalist thought is appropriate and welcome. More than a generation has passed since the appearance of Paul H. Beik's *The French Revolution Seen From the Right: Social Theories in Motion, 1789-1799* (1956) and Jacques Godechot's *La Contre-Révolution: Doctrine et action, 1789-1804* (1961). More recently, works on royalist newspapers have appeared, notably Jeremy D. Popkin's *The Right-Wing Press in France, 1792-1800* (1980) and Jean-Paul Bertaud's *Les Amis du roi: Journaux et journalistes royalistes en France de 1789 à 1792* (1984). An updated study should go beyond what is written and offer fresh insights through penetrating and sophisticated analysis of royalist thought, by drawing close connections between royalist writings and actions during the Revolution, or by examining less-known writers whose commonplace ideas might reflect more common views.

James L. Osen's study focuses on supporters of absolutism, excluding those who accepted some form of constitutional monarchy. Osen incorporates in this study the arguments of royalist journalists and essayists, drawing on little-known writers as well as more familiar names such as Emile D'Antraigues, Sénac de Meilhan, Antoine Ferrand, and Antoine Rivarol. Curiously, there is no mention of Mirabeau-Tonneau or of the abbé Maury, the latter a favorite of caricaturists. This brief work does not satisfy expectations, since it does not substitute for or add to the existing corpus of knowledge. The chapters, in strict chronological order and with no thematic focus, present selected writings of the particular years in summary and quite literal form, with little incisive analysis and considerable repetition of ideas. Time and again we read of the argument that the Revolution was caused by the Enlightenment, Freemasons, Calvinists, and all sorts of enemies of God or the church. The chapter on "The Royalist Press and the Directory" offers little explanation of the political developments that called forth journalistic comments. In reiterating that the monarchy failed to court public opinion before 1789, the author overlooks recent books and articles that examine royalist and ministerial propaganda. A number of grammatical and stylistic faults mar the text; the most novel expression appears in Osen's judgment of the abbé Antoine Sabatier's (de Castres) argument that joined a view of human selfishness and evil in society to utilitarian calls for the general welfare: "So he ends up sounding something like a pussycat" (p. 71).

We may thank Osen for bringing to our attention the royalist writers' obfuscation of history by the substitution of vacuous moralizing for precise analysis and their indulgence in Manichean arguments that demonized their opponents and called for acts of "terror," bringing upon these royalists and their cherished monarchical government the "Terror" of the French Revolution. Let the current decriers of the Jacobins be aware that "terror" was a mutual responsibility.

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ALBERT BOIME, *Art and the French Commune: Imagining Paris after War and Revolution*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995. Pp. xiv, 234.

In this well-argued, well-written, and well-illustrated book, Albert Boime argues that the physical destruction and human death toll of the Franco-Prussian War and the war between the French government and the revolutionary Parisian government known as the Commune profoundly influenced two generations of French artists: the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists. Born between 1832 and 1841, the major Impressionists were mature painters by 1871. Moderate republicans, they rejected the egalitarianism of the Commune, but condemned the slaughter of its supporters during the *semaine sanglante*. The Impression-

ists developed the style for which they are known in the aftermath of the Commune; they painted Parisian streets, gardens and parks, rivers, bridges, and train stations, erasing the destruction widely and erroneously attributed to the Commune, returning workers to their proper place (work not politics), and symbolically reclaiming the public spaces of Paris and its environs for the bourgeoisie. This symbolic erasure and reclamation was a deeply political enterprise. To late-twentieth-century Americans who are drawn to the Impressionists' paintings of the 1870s largely for their beauty and innovation, Boime's demonstration of the artists' conservative political agenda will come as a surprise.

The Impressionists' successors, children rather than mature adults in 1870–1871, reacted differently to the war and the Commune. Where the older generation “wished to restore and forget and get on with their lives,” the younger Post-Impressionists “wanted to aid in the formation of a new social structure” (p. 73). They wanted to create a new, tolerant, non-competitive, egalitarian world, not to reclaim power and control for the bourgeoisie.

Boime has produced a crossover work that will speak to historians and art historians alike. He combines a masterful analysis of dozens of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings with an analysis of the period's political history. His major interest is in the Impressionists, and most of the book is devoted to them, but a lengthy epilogue is devoted to an innovative analysis of Post-Impressionist Georges Seurat's *Un Dimanche à la Grande-Jatte* (*Sunday on the Island of Grande-Jatte*).

The book challenges conventional views of Impressionist paintings and will be of obvious interest to art historians. It also will be of considerable interest to other historians, since it asserts the importance of the Paris Commune in the making of the modern world through its impact on culture. Boime devotes considerable attention to women's roles in the Commune and the Impressionists' and Post-Impressionists' representations of them (the former held patriarchal views; the latter, feminist), which feminist historians will find interesting and persuasive. Above all, this book demonstrates the impoverishment of our understanding of the past that occurs when historians and art historians ignore each other's work. By placing the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists in their historical and political context as well as in the context of art history, Boime expands and enriches our understanding of some of the world's great paintings and of the Commune's importance.

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JEFFREY WEISS. *The Popular Culture of Modern Art: Picasso, Duchamp, and Avant-Gardism*. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1994. Pp. xix, 331. \$45.00.

In this study, Jeffrey Weiss departs from the seemingly banal observation that modern art is incomprehensible to open a new optic onto the field of Parisian popular culture prior to World War I. Rather than seek to interpret the notoriously perplexing works of Pablo Picasso, Marcel Duchamp, and other avant-gardists, Weiss sets out to uncover the ignored history of the public response—in newspaper reviews, satirical cartoons, advertising, costume and stage design, haute couture, and music hall numbers—much of it hostile and parodic. This archeological approach yields a wealth of fascinating material, that is in itself one of the major contributions of the book. But Weiss also proves to be a sophisticated reader of these visual and verbal texts, taking seriously and without condescension the terms with which modern art was received by its contemporaries. His findings establish a vivid picture of a broad-based culture permeated by *blague* (irony, deceit, or mockery) and *réclame* (publicity), farce and mystification, the snobbish desire to appear to have advanced taste and the fear of being duped.

Paradoxically, Weiss finds that the Parisian avant-garde shared this spirit of *blague*, delighted in a good hoax, and participated actively in self-promotion, the propagation of confusion, and mystification. Aware of the public's mistrust and accusations of bad faith, many artists responded in kind, taking incomprehension as a theme or engaging in self-parody. The Italian futurists, led by F. T. Marinetti, deliberately employed the very techniques of *réclame* criticized in the press, often seeking confrontation with the public and notoriety as ends in themselves. Weiss describes Duchamp's withdrawal from the traditional practice of painting in favor of the cerebral selection of readymades and work on the *Large Glass* as a symptom of the same malaise experienced by the public. Like the disillusioned *raté*, or failed artist, which the popular press imagined many avant-gardists to be, Duchamp rejected a career as a salon-exhibiting artist and made futility and impotence the themes of his subsequent anti-art. Picasso's collages, in Weiss's analysis, are seen to participate in the satirical humor and disjunctive structure characteristic of the music hall, which was simultaneously engaged in parodying cubism. Just as music-hall jokes drew on newspaper reporting and depended on a shared knowledge of contemporary events and debates, Picasso's collages employ fragments of newspaper, advertising, and popular songs. These collages address a similarly informed insider audience, attuned to the idiomatic meanings of popular cultural materials and to their unexpected or parodic new appearance in the context of high art.

For Weiss, the cultural fabric of prewar Paris is unified by the prevalence of *blague* and mystification, parody and hoax, the search for novelty and *réclame*. He discerns an open channel between the manifestations and techniques of popular culture, especially as exemplified in the music hall, and those of the avant-garde. By leveling the hierarchy that usually obtains between the “high” art practices of the modernists and