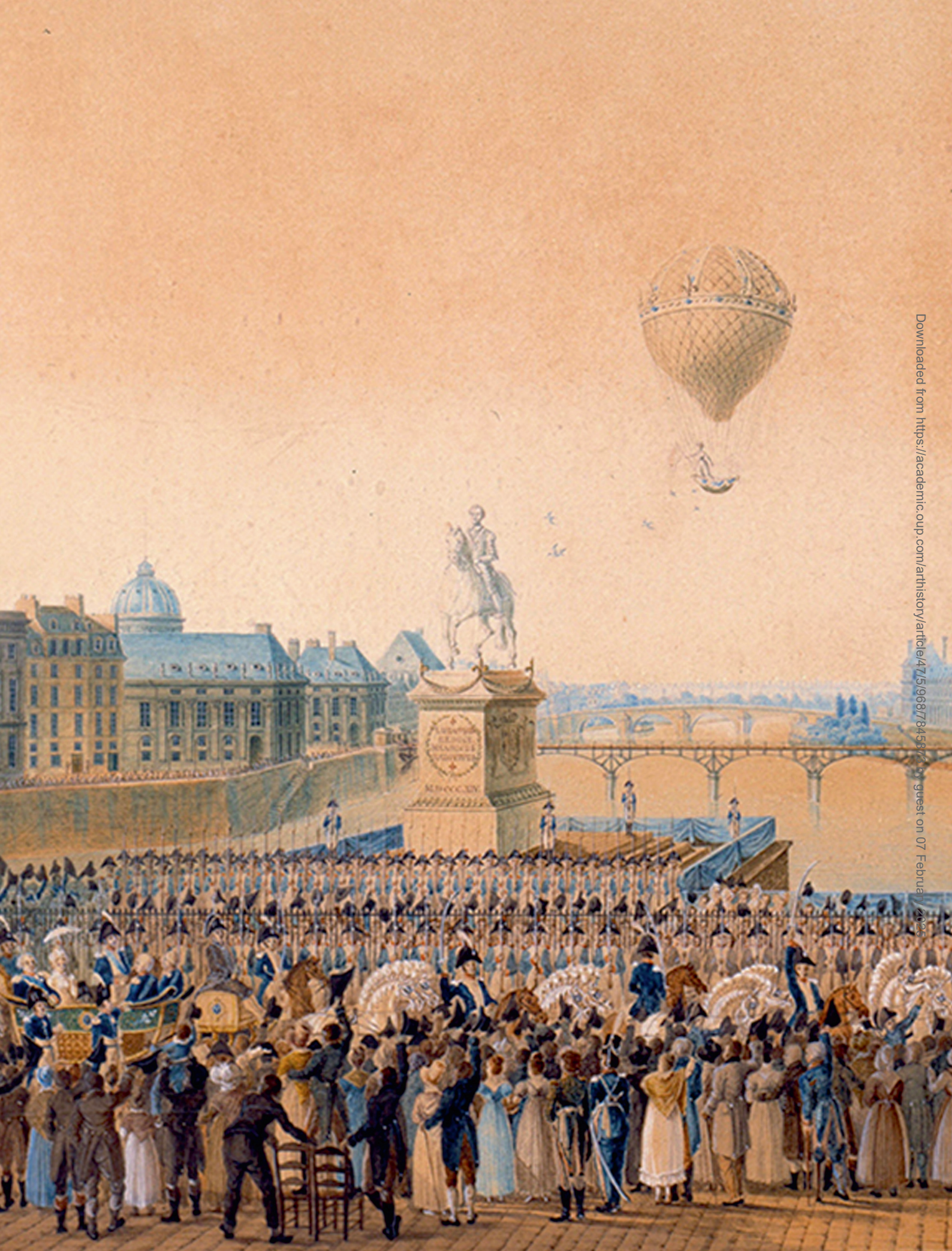

‘Un oubli généreux du passé’: Art, Politics and Oblivion, and the Salon of 1814

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Introduction

This article sets out to explore some of the ways in which artists, art critics and institutions responded to the unexpected collapse of Napoleon’s Empire in April 1814, the restoration of Louis XVIII and Louis’ extraordinary demand that the conflict and blood shed during the ‘last twenty-five years’ should be forgotten. Louis’ injunction was thought crucial to the success of the restored monarchy, so crucial that it formed part of the new French constitution, the *Charte Consitutionelle*. Article 11 of the *Charte* protected against legal retribution, declaring that all political affiliations of the last two decades were to be forgotten both in private and public life.[1] There was much to forget: the execution of the king and queen and an estimated 40,000 citizens executed during the Terror, the death of Louis XVII while in captivity, and the loss of some two million citizens during the Imperial wars. But the constitution’s message was clear. The French had been blinded by the false promise of Liberty. Now ‘by the grace of God’ the Empire had crumbled, and the government of France returned to its ancient form. Louis thereby assumed a throne vacated by his ‘unhappy ancestor’, his aim to ‘extinguish hate’ and encourage a general amnesia, ‘un oubli généreux et une réconciliation générale’.[2] It was said that while Louis could not forgive his elder brother’s execution, he could forget it. As the *Charte* states, ‘we (Louis XVIII) have erased from our memory, as we would like to be erased from history, all the evils that afflict the country during our absence.’[3]

Natalie Scholz has written of a lexicon in public and political life where the Republic and Empire figured only by inference and political events were seen as acts of God rather than the conscious political agency of citizens. The Revolution and Empire were described as the ‘past two decades’, ‘periods of “fury”’; France had been subject to a ‘storm’ and the French beset by a ‘delirium’.[4] When Napoleon appears, he is reduced to ‘Buonaparte’, with a vowel added to stress his foreign origin.[5] Louis, by contrast, was the newly restored link in what Charles-Marie Morin described as an ancient ‘chain’ stretching back to the Middle Ages and beyond, the ‘sacred yoke’ pulling the country to a better future.[6] Some notable interventions have examined the idea of memorial oblivion in political and literary culture of the period.[7] Little sustained attention, however, has been given to ways in which the visual arts and critics’ responses to them aligned with the monarchy’s injunction to forget the past, particularly during the first formative months of the Restoration leading to the Salon of 1814.[8]

Detail from Antoine-Ignace Melling, *Entrée du roi Louis XVIII à Paris, 3 mai 1814, au moment de son massage sur le Pont Neuf*, 1814 (*plate 9*).

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In some instances, it seemed, the past might be easily forgotten. Commissioned originally by Napoleon to make an allegorical painting to celebrate the birth of his son for the Tuileries Palace, Charles Meynier simply substituted the infant for the new-born Sun King and retitled the picture *La Naissance de Louis XIV*, earning the painter an entry in Alexis Eymery's list of political turncoats, the *Dictionnaire des girouettes*.[9] The Quatrième classe of the Institut de France, the office responsible for the administration of the fine arts established by Napoleon in 1805, similarly changed tack. In an address to the comte d'Artois, the king's brother in April 1814, its Director, the painter Nicolas-Antoine Taunay, observed how the king and the people of France had thrown themselves 'into one another's arms', and that the ties that bound the Institut to the 'Academy founded by Louis' heirs', had never been stronger.[10] For a very few artists, the wounds of the past were too deep to mend and the injunction to forget too hard. Although there were many allusions to the fate of the late royal family, of the 970 paintings on show in 1814, Louis XVI appears only twice, Marie-Antoinette, just once. More typically the political uncertainties of the Restoration, and with them the desire to look back to an ancient past, led artists to call upon an older repertoire of subjects and visual conventions. We find, for example, topographical painting, a genre that flourished during the Empire, combined with conventions last seen in seventeenth-century allegorical painting, baroque grandeur conceived on a sometimes comically small scale, a renewed interest in the minor genres and subjects that sought escape in domesticity and the everyday. There is an important caveat. While the subjects and particularly the critical responses to many paintings seem in step with the *Charte's* demands to forget the past, the Salon also included paintings last seen during the Empire. Critics often condemned the way in which the arts had been pressed into service by Napoleon and saw the Restoration as a moment of both political and cultural liberation.[11] It was with some caution, then, that only works without reference to an Imperial past were included in the 1814 exhibition.[12] Here we find another kind of oblivion, the assertion among some critics that art might best operate free from political influence.

This article sets out to examine how the *Charte*'s injunction to forget the past found various forms in the extraordinarily wide range of paintings shown at the Salon of 1814 and in the equally wide range of critical commentaries that accompanied them. Of note are the fragmented and historically contingent points of conjuncture between art, criticism and politics. How they come together during the Empire are not how they conjoin months after the Restoration, and how they conjoin during the first Restoration are not how they necessarily combine during Louis' second Restoration in 1815. And even here there are anomalies. Although the tone of art criticism often reflects the respective political priorities of the Empire and Restoration, the same cannot necessarily be said for the selection of works of art for the Salon. As Debra Schrishuhn has observed, the motive to re-exhibit works seen in earlier Salons was driven, in part, not so much by their 'content' but more by the administrative need to fill a hastily convened exhibition, one staged in a period of political uncertainty.[13] There is also the matter of artistic intent, the motive behind the production and display of paintings and the subjectivity of interpretation.[14] Although it is sometimes possible to point to an alignment between a picture's subject matter and its critical interpretation, or indeed the political or commercial context in which the two occur, art, art criticism and politics are in no sense necessarily or consistently causal, nor equally weighted in the generation of meaning. Pictures made under one regime might be shown later during another and the taste for certain genres—landscape and Troubadour painting for example—were exhibited

both during the Empire and Restoration. It is in this context that art criticism can offer an instructive insight into a picture's potential political interpretation, albeit an unreliable marker of a painter's intent. This article comprises a set of affiliated narrative and discursive trajectories, some short others longer, some textual and discursive, others material, its aim to examine the parts played by Salon painting in the troubled and complex transition from a crumbling Empire to an imperfectly formed restored monarchy. Here, in short, we find what Iris Moon and Richard Taws have described as a 'recalibration of an art historical angle of vision' in which the period's canonical figures take something of a back seat in favour of a different cast of characters and objects and with them a 'different temporal scope'.[15]

'Nous sommes enfin redevenus français': History, Nationhood and Oblivion

How did the pictures on show at the Salon and the critical responses to them articulate and contain memories of the recent past? The Salon opened on 1 November 1814—after extensive deliberation about the benefits of a postponing the start of the exhibition by three months. As Richard Wrigley has noted, a 'position paper' of May 1814 recognised that artists would have more time to prepare for the exhibition and that potential collectors, away from the capital to avoid the summer heat, were more likely to attend a winter Salon.[16] Still concerned that the Parisian art world had insufficient time to prepare for what seen as a crucial platform to demonstrate the vitality of art under the new regime, the correspondent for the *Journal Royal* nonetheless recognised that the exhibition was a perfect opportunity to show how artists were now able to work from their own inspiration rather than 'in the service of one man' (the unnameable Napoleon). Might the corresponding revival in religious sentiment that also marked Louis' return see French artists match the achievement of Raphael, he wondered?[17] The message was over-optimistic but clear: the Empire may have fallen but French art remained intact. For the one-time student of Jacques-Louis David now turned art critic, René-Jean Durdent, the Salon was a perfect opportunity to set the memories of the recent past aside and to demonstrate the enduring quality of the French School now that artists were free from the 'fatal influence of the demon of destruction' (Napoleon again).[18] Durdent explained how artists had finally dispensed with bloodthirsty images of the last two decades, the large numbers of military scenes that dominated earlier Salons and now had the chance to celebrate a new sense of national pride. It was with this in mind that his review began not with the highest in the hierarchy of the genres—*grande peinture*, the large, ambitious, idealised pictures taking their themes from Antiquity that had long been a cornerstone of the French academic tradition—but works taking their subjects from medieval and early modern French history. 'The Greeks and Romans will have to excuse us', Durdent explains, 'since we have finally become French again'.[19]

This search for a restored, distinctively French and fundamentally monarchical sense of national identity could be found in critical responses to a variety of paintings and notwithstanding the vagaries of critical interpretation within the paintings themselves. In many instances, artists and critics seemed attentive to the ideological needs of the moment, selecting subjects from a past close enough to allude to the nation's current plight but not so close that it risked disturbing the new regime's fragile political consensus. Indeed, as Marie-Claude Chaudonneret points out, the 'invasion' of Troubadour painting at the Salon of 1814 can be explained in part by artists' realisation that works showing subjects from the nation's monarchical past might advantageously be construed as showing a sympathy for the Bourbon cause.[20] Durdent's review began with an account of a now lost genre painting seen first

in 1814 by the anonymous 'Mme...', *Henri IV racontant à Elisabeth les malheurs de la Saint-Barthelemy*, showing the sixteenth-century English queen's horror of Henri's account of the protestant massacre of 1572 that marked the start of the Wars of Religion.[21] The structuration of the picture's narrative is key. It showed not the depiction of an atrocity but its narration, one that took place well beyond the living memory of French subjects. In this instance, horror—the like of which would have been part of the lived experience or at least the cultural memory of just about every Salon visitor in 1814—featured only in Elizabeth's response to a long dead but widely admired king whose statesmanship and conciliatory instincts brought the Wars to an end. This is not horror but emotion encountered second hand, prompted by its narration, which takes shape in silent pictorial form. The picture, like many on display in 1814, did not avoid the subject of political conflict. Rather it contained it.

Another painting first seen in 1814, François Buffet's *Mort de Henri III* takes an additional step back in time (*plate 1*). The picture shows Henri Valois' deathbed confirmation of Henri Bourbon (later Henri IV) as his successor. Theatrically set behind a gothic arcade, the picture shows not so much an event of significance to the present history of France, nor even a moment in the distant past that has a resonance with the present, but rather a picture pregnant with events that have yet to occur which, when they happen, are themselves only allusions to the nation's present. Buffet was not alone in his use of extended historical allusions. Alexandre Millin Du Perreux's *Vue du château de Pau, prise du grand parc, avec Henri IV enfant tenant une drape* (*plate 2*), again first seen in 1814, takes the spectator still further back in time showing Jeanne d'Albret with her infant son in the gardens of the château at the moment when the future king picks out the white battle colours of the Bourbons with the legend 'aut vincere, aut mori', 'conquer or die'. Broadly, the same historical calculus applies. Memories of the recent past are set aside, and the distant past configured elliptically to show events in the life of a French king, whose now well-known but (back at the time in which the picture is set) yet to be proven valour, anticipates the hopes for Louis' reign.

As Victoria Thompson and Kimberley A. Jones have observed, Henri served as an immediately legible symbol of dynastic continuity that appealed to both moderates and ultra-monarchists. In a period when Louis XVIII's political credentials were often questioned, Henri IV, the founder of the Bourbon dynasty, offered a more immediately compelling idea of a monarchy.[22] For political moderates, Henri was brave and politically astute, a generous and enlightened king; for ultras, he was the first in a long line of Bourbon martyrs and a memorial touchstone for fate of the late-king and his family. The image of Henri was everywhere apparent appearing in both official commissions and in numerous examples of popular visual and literary culture.[23] When in May 1814 a temporary plaster equestrian statue of Henri was hastily erected on the central peer of the Pont Neuf to replace the seventeenth-century bronze destroyed in 1793, it bore the legend 'With the return of Louis, Henri lives again'—'Ludocvico reduce, Henricus redivivus'. That month's official list of publications, the *Bibliographie de la France*, contained tens of plays, songs, engravings, anecdotes, popular biographies, published letters, school-books, *bons mots*, elegies and odes in which Henri's example is consistently shown to prefigure Louis' reign.[24] Here, the image of Henri IV is increasingly shown not as one of the nation's *grands hommes* but as a paternal figure attentive to the wellbeing of his subjects. Writing in one such ode, the panegyrist Henri Dessain, described Henri IV as 'loyal', 'a protector of the poor', 'big-hearted' and chivalrous, and explained how the cry 'Vive Henri IV' now rallied the nation and could be heard in heaven by the old king himself. For

Dessain, Henri provided a venerable model for Louis' reign, one that augured well for the nation's happiness.[25] Schoolbooks and *abécédaires*, taught in turn the rudiments of French handwriting, spelling and grammar by reminding children of the miseries of the Bourbons, Louis XVIII's 'happy return' and the reassurance that the nation's subjects were once more in the 'bosom of the family of Henri IV'.[26] Even within children's material and conceptual acquisition of language was an appreciation of the Bourbons' plight.

No less conspicuous were the dozen or so popular musicals, tragedies, *tableaux vivants* and historical vignettes performed in Paris in April and May 1814, again celebrating Henri's youth, his generosity, bravery, patriotism and statesmanship each of which again alluded to Louis' own person and to the circumstances of his restoration.[27] For the critic of the *Moniteur universel*, middlebrow theatre of this sort may have had none of the sophistication of the classical stage but its popularity perfectly captured the spirit of 'le bon Henri'.[28] One play, written originally during the reign of Louis XVI and hastily revived in time for Louis' restoration, seemed especially poignant. According to the critic for the *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, Barnabé-Farmian du Rosoy's *Henri IV ou la Bataille d'Ivry* was of questionable theatrical merit but its libretto praised Henri lavishly as a popular father to his people and was thought particularly well suited to what was cautiously described as 'current circumstances'.[29] More important still were the circumstances in which it was performed. Henri won

1 François Buffet, *La mort d'Henri III*, 1814. Oil on paper laid on panel, 74 × 125 cm. Private collection. Photo: Bridgeman Images.

the Battle of Ivry shortly before capturing the capital bringing the Wars of Religion to an end, although, as the *Journal* pointed out, in 1590 many European nations fought against rather than with Henri. The play therefore needed to be edited to align it with 'the happy circumstances in which we find ourselves'.[30] Not least, a moment was given on the play's opening night to remember its author, one of the first to die on the scaffold, poignantly on the feast day of Saint Louis in 1792.[31]

The long historical 'chain' about which Charles-Marie Morin spoke took other pictorial forms, taking the Salon visitor further back in time to the Valois, Capetian and Merovingian dynasties. In some cases, early modern and medieval history were extended even further into fiction, or something approximating it. First seen at the Salon of 1812, and one of the 80 pictures to make a return in 1814, Rosalie Caron's painting *Mathilde et Malek-Adhel au tombeau de Montmorency* (*plate* 3) took its subject from a popular historical novel by Sophie Cottin, *Mathilde ou mémoires tirés de l'histoire des croisades* of 1805 (Emma Bovary was a fan) in which Richard Coeur de Lion's sister Mathilde d'Angleterre, falls in love with Malek Adhel, her one-time captor and the brother of Saladin, after meeting at the tomb of the fallen knight Josselin de Montmorency. As Magali Briat-Philippe has observed, the historical details are less than accurate. Richard's sister accompanied him to the Crusade, her name was Jeanne not Mathilde and Jeanne remarried rather than ending her life in a convent.[32] For the most part, it mattered little. Seen from the vantagepoint of 1812, the painting was one of some 20 others showing popular chivalrous themes and, as Alain Pougetoux has indicated,

2 Alexandre Millin Du Perreux, *Vue du château de Pau, prise du grand parc, avec Henri IV enfant tenant une drape*, 1814. Oil on canvas, 73 × 132 cm. Pau: Musée national du château de Pau. Photo: Réunion des musées nationaux.

3 Rosalie Caron, *Mathilde et Malek-Adhel au tombeau de Montmorency*, 1812. Oil on canvas, 120 × 100 cm. Bourg-en-Bresse: Musée du monastère royal de Brou. Photo: Bridgeman Images.

one of ten in the collection of Josephine Bonaparte, now shown at the Salon for a second time.[33] However, seen in the context of the Salon of 1814, the picture betokened reconciliation. It is set in the distant past, a bit muddled on detail but perfectly pitched to meet the requirements of Article 11. While some critics struggled with the narrative obscurity of pictures such as these, the anonymous 'T.D.', writing in the *Gazette de France*, gave a strong hint about the transition between the Empire and Restoration, how medieval and early modern subjects might now be seen by the public and the shifting poetics of allusion that underpinned them. Once, such pictures may well have been all but incomprehensible, T. D. admitted. Now, however, a 'happy veil' had been lifted thereby fostering the nation's reconnection with its distant past and with it a renewed love of the monarchy.[34] By 1814, arcane subject matter was nothing other than the result of an historical aberration that made the nation's ancient past temporarily incomprehensible. Now that the Empire had fallen, the nation had reconnected with its ancient heritage and pictures of its past were legible again.

Wherever we find them, the settings in which we often encounter Louis' heirs are invariably meticulously depicted and shown against a backdrop of vivid local colour, period dress, furniture and architecture in which incidental detail becomes a mark not only of historical veracity but also an aid to empathic identification with the subject. Stephen Bann and Beth Wright have examined the ways in which early-nineteenth century strategies of visual representation facilitated this new sense of 'historical mindedness', an archeologically informed sense of the past often containing incidental detail to lend it verisimilitude.[35] As Bann notes, details commonly found in Troubadour painting—broadly what Durdent termed 'French' pictures—often had no specific function other than to assert the veracity of the event being described. Bann takes the example of a scene described by the French historian Jules Michelet in his account of the last moments of Jean-Paul Marat's assassin Charlotte Corday.[36] In an extended description of her last hours, Michelet wrote of the 'soft knock' at the 'small door' of Corday's cell that signalled her imminent execution.[37] The incident, as Barthes later observed, is not directly germane to the narrative. It tells us nothing about her crime or execution. Rather, in Barthes' words, it provides details that are seemingly 'superfluous'. [38] However, such details offer, he suggests, a 'narrative luxury', and speaks of the 'significance of the insignificance' of the event, an additional guarantee not so much that the event took place but rather an opportunity to witness the same experiences and material setting Corday herself might have encountered in her final hours.[39] Wright, in turn, has also examined some the narrative devices deployed in Troubadour painting during the Restoration and speaks of a mode of representation that insists on a picture's emotional resonance rather than its action.[40] A hyper-attention to incidental detail and the subordination of figures serve, she argues, as a means of managing a form of 'post-traumatic stress' where 'hyperarousal' in the form of excessive attention to pictorial detail serves as a means of deflection from

memories of violence.[41] The returning Bourbons, Wright argues, yearned for the local colour and incidental detail just as they treasured the memories of their own lost families.[42] An empathic connection with France's recent past was necessarily alien to the spirit of *l'oubli*. It was possible however to step back safely into a more distant past and, again, following the requirements of Article 11, forget the traumas of what was elliptically described as the 'last twenty-five years' but indirectly relive the sentiments they evoked in a contained form, in history or literature, or in Rosalie Cottin's case, in historicised fiction.

One critic, not wholly sympathetic to the turn taken by French painting, misunderstood the significance of insignificance perfectly. Writing on François Bitter's painting *Guenièvre et Lancelot* first shown in 1814 (*plate 4*), the critic for the *Journal de Paris* complained that the artist's indiscriminate depiction of 'useless', 'minor detail' detracted from the picture's main subject.[43] The art critic François-Seraphin Delpech shared similar concerns. Contrasting the narrative strategies of 'French' painting' and the example set by *grande peinture*, Delpech explained how on entering a crowded

4 François Bitter, *Guenièvre et Lancelot*, 1814. Oil on canvas, 24.7 × 189.7 cm. Private collection. Photo: Sotheby's London.

room with people of no particular significance, one might easily get distracted by the sumptuous furniture, jewellery, carpets and so on. However, the moment, 'a warrior of renown enters the room', such details disappear, and one is taken only with their countenance.[44] And so it was with Troubadour painting's conflation of conventions in genre painting and *grande peinture*. Attention to such detail and careful facture commonly found in small genre pictures of no pressing narrative importance looked out of place when used in the depiction of people and events of note. The correspondent for the *Journal Royal* summed up this 'monstrous turn' in French art, its concern with commerce and 'le faux brillant', novel expressions of gratuitous skill made with an eye on the expanding market for small, detailed pictures at the expense of 'art'.[45] Indeed, Marie-Claude Chaudonneret has called attention to the rapid growth in the numbers of genre paintings shown at the Salon, driven, critics argued, by artists' desire to exploit an expanding commercial market in the minor genres. For the first time, many of the pictures listed in the Salon *livret* were marked with an asterisk indicating they were in the possession of the artist and hence for sale.[46] Conrad Malte-Bruun, writing in the *Le Spectateur*, took a more circumspect view of Troubadour painting and the state of French art. He recognised the skill of Troubadour painters but insisted that 'the flame of genius' that defined great art had yet to be lit. [47] Broadly, French genius, he explained, had yet to discover a vehicle fully suitable for art's revival.

In short, it is precisely the intensity of emotional entanglement with a distant past brought about both by a picture's subject matter, its facture and, crucially given art criticism's shifting relationship to its subject, its critical interpretation that enabled memories of the Republic and Empire to be if not wholly forgotten then safely but vividly relived. The process whereby experiences are contained through the reconstruction of a narrative has been examined in Sigmund Freud's later work on collective rather than personal trauma. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud described trauma as a 'disruption', an external event so profound that it fractured patients' narrative construction of their lives.[48] Traumatic memory thereby becomes a 'foreign' experience that cannot be represented within an individual's psyche and is thus partially forgotten but, crucially, continues to be acted out. Here trauma constitutes what Michael S. Roth has termed, an 'unfinished relation to the past'.[49] If, however, we move from an individual to a collective wound, we might begin see trauma as an external historical event that troubles a collective rather than individual memory. Here again we encounter a temporal disruption that arrests narrative description. Building on Freud's analysis, Silke Arnold-de Simine has further suggested that a collective cultural trauma requires the radical disruption of temporality but also its definition through a 'lens', one that offers some collective focus on what it is that needs to be forgotten.[50]

While many of these Freudian analyses emerged in the wake of the First World War and later the Holocaust, it is possible to apply something of this formula to the context of the early Restoration. Given the factional divisions in French political life—the enmity between moderates and ultras at court, the residual sympathies for the Republic and Empire particularly among demobilised troops and the National Guard—it is impossible to speak of a totalised image of one traumatised nation. It is possible however to indicate a raft of sources where the conjunction between politics, criticism and art indicate that traumatic memories were best contained through elliptical references to a distant past. French subjects, as we have seen, were constitutionally mandated to forget recent conflict, one that, as so many observers noted, profoundly disrupted the deeply rooted narrative trajectory of French history

promulgated by the Bourbons. So often when critics spoke of the Empire's collapse and Louis' return, they do so either in a spirit of utter surprise, or else contend that the entire nation was in a state of prolonged delirium.[51] It is in this context that we might see the namelessness of Napoleon, his essentially alien, *un-French* characterisation as 'Buonaparte', the breaking of a French monarchical 'chain', and with it the injunction to forget the 'last twenty-five years' as events that took place outside what was seen as the normative course of French history. Indeed, we might see the radically extended trajectory of French history that ran from Clovis to Henri IV (but rarely not that much nearer) as a collective attempt to recreate—Bann uses the Freudian term 'to condense'—a sustained national story to compensate for the narrative failure of the Republic and Empire.[52] And might we even see, as Beth Wright implies, 'French' painting's worrisome attention to detail as a kind of neurosis designed to keep the trauma of recent memory at arm's length? If so much attention is devoted to the narrative luxuries of a distant past, might memories of more recent wounds be better contained? Pictures of this kind function as the antithesis of a talking cure. In so many instances, the past is so clearly and insistently depicted, so emotionally immersive that memories of more recent events are denied. Here, however the recent past is doubly problematic. Unlike the traumatic events to which Freud and others refer, the wounds of the Republic and Empire were often seen as self-inflicted in a moment of delirium. Indeed, and this is beyond the scope of the present article, Ronen Steinberg has written instructively on the perceived rise of mental illness in the Revolution's wake and the corresponding rise in the study of psychiatric disorders. Steinberg cites Jean-Lambert Tallien's chilling description of the longer-term psychological impact of the Terror, its capacity to not only cause an 'external trembling that affects the most hidden fibres…' but one that 'de-fraternize[s], de-socializes and de-moralizes.'[53] Following Steinberg's lead, might we see the politics of *l'oubli* and many examples of French painting that were variously shaped by it as attempts to *re-fraternise*, *re-socialise*, *re-moralise* and indeed to *re-historicise* a connection with the past?

A Sacral Figure for the King?

There were other ways in which art and criticism contained memories of the recent past. Portraits of Louis XVIII attracted significant critical attention, notable among them Simon-Pascal Gérard's portrait kept for the king's personal inspection (*plate* 5).[54] The portrait is a fitting tribute to the political and cultural contradictions of the Restoration. In the same way that Louis' ideal of kingship was informed by a model of Absolutist monarchy, so Gérard's portrait took its lead from a seventeenth-century model established by Louis XIV and XV's court painter Hyacinthe Rigaud. Like earlier royal portraits, Gérard's painting contains all the marks of divinely sanctioned office: the cloak, the *manteau fleurdelisé* symbolising the protection of the Blessed Virgin and the Holy Trinity, the *main de justice*, a symbol of judicial authority, the sceptre denoting military power, the crown and sword. Louis' conception of monarchy and Gérard's portrayal of it remained, however, something of a fiction. Back in April 1814, Louis had rejected the *Charte Sénatoriale*, a constitutional form of monarchy drafted by the Senate and the *Corp Législatif* in which the king returned to France not by divine right but as the result of the 'freely expressed wishes of the French people'.[55] However, the *Charte Constitutionnel*, redrafted on Louis' instruction by a royal commission, insisted that the king's authority rested on his inviolable and sacred right as the heir of Louis XVII. The redrafted *Charte* was still a bill of rights but one crucially *octroyé*, or gifted, in the same way that French kings had gifted privileges to institutions and subjects since

5 Simon-Pascal Gerard, *Le portrait en pied de Sa Majesté Louis XVIII*, 1814. Oil on canvas, 32 × 23 cm. Paris: Hôtel de Beauharnais. Photo: Bridgeman Images.

the twelfth century.[56] Louis XVIII nonetheless remained the head of a bi-cameral legislature and his executive powers were constitutionally constrained. It is perhaps fitting then that Gérard's royal portrait, unlike the earlier life-size models on which it was based, reflects this attenuation in authority. Gerard's portrait was small, just thirty-two by twenty-three centimetres, a fraction of the size of the portraits on which it was modelled. The portrait functions as not much more than a calling card for an older divinely sanctioned monarchy that still took performative shape, but in political terms was hard to sustain with much conviction.

It is also important to recognise that in the Spring of 1814, the fate of the nation and the role of the monarchy within it were still uncertain. Louis' political legitimacy

was fragile and largely manufactured. His restoration, as Martin Wrede had shown, remained one among a range of political options open to the victorious Allies.[57] Something of this fragility is apparent in Charles Comte's account of the royal family's passage into the city in May 1814.[58] Comte describes the day-to-day events of the royal retinue's journey from Calais to Paris and the palpable power vacuum evident after Napoleon's fall. Faced with the fear of occupying forces on the one hand, the pathetic spectacle of defeated Imperial troops begging for alms on the other, and faced too with the imminent return of the royal family to the capital and the uncertain loyalties of the traditionally republican-minded National Guard, many Parisians found it impossible to know to whom and how to express their patriotism.[59] Days before Louis' entry into the city at the Porte Saint-Denis, there had been hostility between National Guardsmen and occupying forces. And while the comte d'Artois' entry into Paris received a generally warm reception, news of Louis' rejection of the *Charte Senatoriale* provoked a chilly response from the awaiting crowd.[60]

This sacral image of kingship and the uncertain political setting in which it took shape might be depicted in other ways. In the past, the authority of French kings had been expressed in allegorical form, invariably on a large scale. The paintings that comprise Peter-Paul Rubens' Marie de Médicis cycle commissioned for the Luxembourg Palace after the death of Henri IV show, for example, the life of the eponymous widow in a series of 24 pictures each measuring some three by four metres high. At almost every turn, Marie's birth, her education, her marriage and arrival in France, the birth of her son, his succession as the minor Louis XIII and so on are expressed in broadly allegorical terms, attended by various deities, representations of Peace, Plenty, France and more. Around 1808, Jacques-Louis David had celebrated imperial authority on a similarly grand scale in his monumental portrayal of Napoleon's coronation, the *Sacre*. The event is littered with Carolingian, medieval and even French monarchical symbolism but is crucially stripped of allegorical figures. Imperial power takes a performative but tangible material form showing an event staged at the Cathedral of Notre Dame in December 1804. In 1814, something of an older, more overtly allegorical splendour found its way back into the visual arts. But, like Gérard's portrait, allegory was often unconvincing, compromised by political events, and, again, unlike the examples set by Rubens and David, invariably conceived on a small scale. Two pictures both shown at the Salon of 1814 make the point.

Pierre-Nicolas Legrand's sketch the *Allégorie de l'Entrée de Louis XVIII à Paris* (*plate 6*) shows the eponymous king receiving his *manteau fleurdelisé* flanked by Minerva, the goddess of Wisdom and Peace. Alongside, an allegorical figure of Paris offers Louis the keys to the city. Beside her is the figure of France and a putto presenting a golden plate of flaming hearts, a symbol of religious devotion, to Louis' brother the comte d'Artois. A curtain, erected in front of the Porte Saint-Denis provides a crucially important backdrop to the allegory, separating two contrasting modes of representation: imagined power in the form of the allegorical figures who have lined up to confer the city's keys on Louis, and the ranks of the National Guard just visible on the picture's left who (*pace* Comte's account) cheer the royal family's return. Louis-Philippe Crépin's *Allégorie au Retour des Bourbons le 24 avril 1814* continues in a similar vein (*plate 7*). Here, the king having taken his first step on French soil after some twenty years in exile, helps a faltering figure of France to her feet, surrounded by members of the royal family, the duchesse d'Angoulême, the Prince de Condé, the Prince de Bourbon and the allied heads of state, George III of Britain, Tsar Alexander of Russia, Francis, the Emperor of Austria and Frederick William of Prussia. Clearly out of

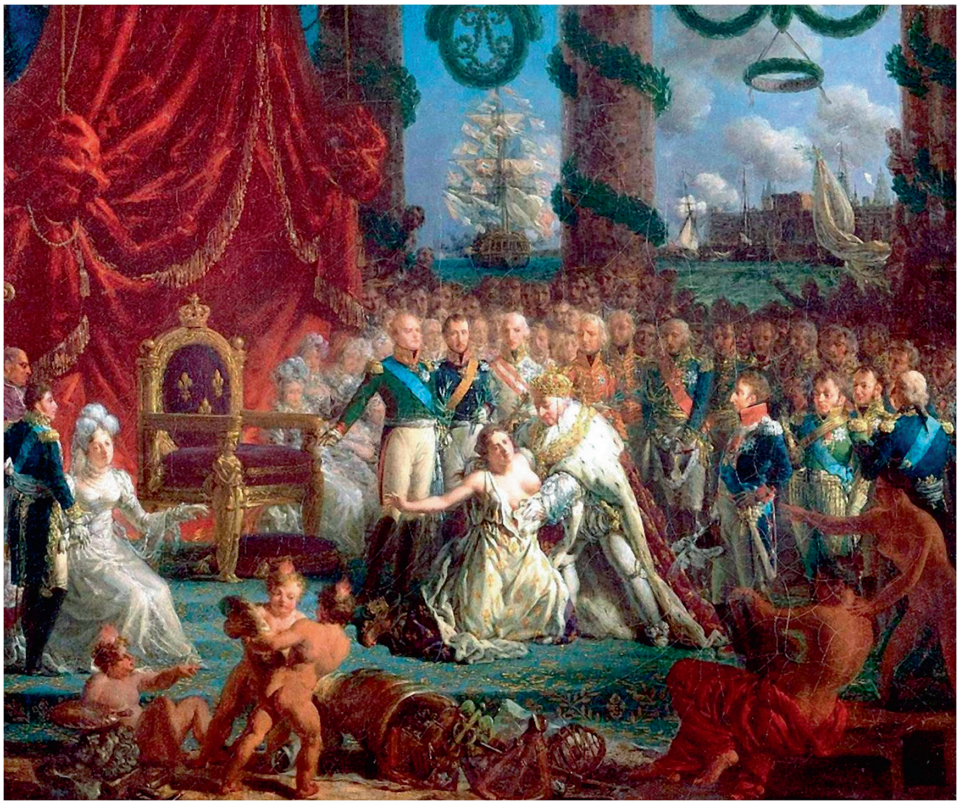
his depth—Crépin was best known for his military seascapes—the painter takes a political event and again elevates it to recall an older mystical ideal of monarchy, albeit one set in the quotidian space of a crowded Calais dockside. The king however looks too weighed down by his regalia. The material trappings of his sacral authority look too much for him to bear. The real source of Louis' authority is found in the presence of the ranks of the victorious allies and other dignitaries who flank him. And like so many pictures on show in 1814, the picture is again small, just fifty-five by forty-six centimetres.

Seen from the vantage point of the Spring of 1814, paintings of this kind are highly pertinent to the politics of *l'oubli*. Writing on allegorical forms of medieval Christian writing, Gayatri Spivak speaks of a 'translation' implicit in allegory in which a double structure comprising two stories, one inscribed within the other, 'create a meta-semantic system of significance'.[61] She describes the operation of a discontinuous temporality where two contexts operate in separate 'space-time coordinates' but are brought together where one coordinate comments on and lends mystic substance to the other. (David's *Sacre*, note, contains only one.) In the context of Legrand's painting, we might see the space-time of the Saint-Denis quarter (with its residents unsure where to find a stable source of political authority and the National Guard won around to the Bourbon cause at the eleventh hour) as one temporality, and the royal retinue's reception at the city's gate by Paris, Minerva, Peace et al. as another. Here, the latter elevates and confirms a mystic significance

6 Pierre-Nicolas Legrand, *Allégorie de l'entrée de Louis XVIII à Paris*, 1814. Oil on canvas, 97 × 103 cm. Paris: Musée Carnavalet, Photo: Bridgeman Images.

on the former. In Spivak's terms, a translation takes place between the complex and muddied political backstory that brought Louis from England, to Calais and then to the Porte Saint-Denis, arguably the very antithesis of allegory, and the mystic welcome at the city's gate. This kind of allegory, as Antoine de Baecque has shown, had already begun to be called into question.[62] Diderot was a predictably stern critic. Writing on the Salon of 1767, he described Noël Hallé's monumental painting *Minerve conduisant la Paix à l'Hôtel de Ville* as a picture of the merchants of Paris inviting Minerva and Peace for a hot chocolate, a work that confounds the divine and the quotidian.[63] We find a comparable formula in 1814. Louis' restoration had been driven by political expediency on the part of the Allies and had been met by French subjects with uncertainty, equivocation or in some cases hostility. Allegory, or at least in its 1814 incarnation, offered an opportunity to perform an older ideal of political authority, one that was far removed from recent memory the day-to-day realities of political life. Was Louis really a credible incarnation of the allegorical figures that came to meet him? In this sense, the impromptu curtain that separates the deities that surround Louis's circle and the residents of the Faubourg Saint-Denis is highly significant and fundamental to the performance of the politics of *l'oubli*. Performative monarchy and *realpolitik* were best kept apart; to remove the curtain hung across the Porte Saint-Denis and combine the two would be to unravel the fragile mystery of Louis' kingship.

Another very different depiction of the monarchy is shown in topographical paintings of the Royal family's triumphal returned to the capital in May 1814. Consistent with the demands of *l'oubli*, the authorities took care to ensure that Louis' procession into the capital avoided Imperial monuments and any hint of triumphalism the royal family's presence implied.[64] Paris nonetheless remained saturated with memories of the last two decades both through the lived experience



7 Louis-Philipe Crépin, *Allégorie au retour des Bourbons, le 24 avril 1814*, 1814. Oil on canvas, 46 × 55.5 cm. Private collection. Photo: Bridgeman Images.

8 Nicolas-Joseph Vergnaux, *Entrée de Louis XVIII à l'instant ou S. M. et son cortège passent à la Porte Saint-Denis*, 1814. Pen, ink and watercolour on paper 54.5 × 68 cm. Paris: Musée Carnavalet. Photo: Bridgeman Images.

of its citizens and its material fabric, the numerous public works, churches, markets, fountains, bridges and monuments variously taking their names from the regions of the Empire. Many references to the Republic and Empire were soon to be effaced following the second Restoration's attempt systematically to collect, catalogue and destroy all public (and sometimes private) traces of the Republic and Empire, the *mise en place* of 1815.[65] But for the moment such memories were best avoided.[66] Shown at the Salon of 1814, Nicolas-Joseph Vergnaux's topographical watercolour of the king's return to the capital show an older Paris with the king and his retinue steering a diplomatic course through the medieval capital, pausing at the location Legrand had depicted, the Porte Saint-Denis, the traditional processional point of entry into the city (*plate* 8). In Antoine-Ignace Melling's landscape (*plate* 9), also shown at the Salon, the same procession stops for a moment at another key point of geopolitical reference, the central pier of the Pont-Neuf, an ancient arterial route through the capital and the site of the temporary equestrian statue of Henri IV. In one of numerous accounts of the Royal family's return, Louis is recorded as having paused before the impromptu statue, declaring that nothing was dearer to his heart than this the image of his noble ancestor, and recalled how the location had long been revered by the 'children of France' and Henri, 'their father'.[67]

The portrayal of the royal family in a public rather than sacral setting is significant. In the early phase of the Revolution, popular sovereignty found expression in public festivals, the subject of numerous topographical paintings. The

9 Antoine-Ignace Melling, *Entrée du roi Louis XVIII à Paris, 3 mai 1814, au moment de son massage sur le Pont Neuf*, 1814. Watercolour, 63.5 × 98 cm. Versailles: Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon. Photo: Bridgman Images.

Fête de la Fédération celebrating the French Revolution's first anniversary famously drew the nation together in a limitless democratic space centred around a National Altar. A British visitor to the event, Helen Maria Williams, records the moment when asked to take an oath at the National Altar to affirm his patriotism, Louis XVI refused to leave the sacral space of his canopied throne on the basis that he and not the altar remained the prime locus of political authority.[68] There were two contested spaces: one national, constitutional, open, democratic, accessible to all, the other sacral, enclosed and centred around the divine person of the king.[69] By the spring of 1814, as we have seen, vestiges of sacral monarchy had been restored—albeit sometimes unconvincingly—but the traditions of an ostensibly more public participative space also endured. In Melling's watercolour, Louis and the duchesse are barely visible as their carriage passes through the crowd lining the Pont Neuf. As Victoria Thompson notes, in 1814, few Parisians would have been able to recognise the new king.[70] Rather, Melling's view is that of other Parisians who encounter not so much the king and certainly not his sacral being, but rather the public spaces in which a novel and somewhat ill-defined form of political authority moved. This level of pretence however soon becomes comic. Melling included a hot air balloon in the picture, piloted by Napoleon's one-time Aéronaute des fêtes officielles, Sophie Blanchard. Back in 1791, the balloon was a symbol of the boundless space of the Revolution, a limitless *x* to match the unbounded *y* axis of democratic space on the ground. Now, it is little more than a spectacle, one performed again in August 1814 when the City of Paris celebrated Louis's return by launching hydrogen-filled balloons in the shape of twice life-sized huntsmen on horseback, boars, tigers and dogs (*plate 10*).[71] In the past, the combination of heavenly creatures and kingship might have betokened some divinely sanctioned image of royalty or symbol of universal freedom. In this case, the

symbolism had run its course. The ties between royal power and its representation are reduced to little more than public entertainment. It was possible to restore the king, but the visual machinery used to lend his person the sacral authority it has once enjoyed now lacked credibility.

Art and Oblivion?

If assertions of the restored monarchy's origins in the distant past offered one path to oblivion, another could be found in the contention that art was best appreciated abstracted from the world of politics, although, of course, art's ostensible depoliticisation chimed perfectly with the conciliatory spirit of *l'oubli*. Richard Wrigley has pointed to a vein of practice and criticism during the early Restoration in which the arts were seen to offer respite from political turmoil. Charles-Paul Landon made precisely this point in the *Annales du Musée* for 1814, one echoed, as Wrigley notes, by a correspondent in the liberal journal *Lettres champenoises* of 1817, who observed how many painters now worked in isolation and took little heed of the world around them.[72] In 1814, attempts at art's depoliticisation took a variety of forms. As we have seen, there were too few pictures to fill the Salon. Louis' restoration was said to have caught the nation by surprise and critics observed that despite the three-month delay in the Salon's opening, the art world had little time to prepare.[73] By way of compensation, paintings last seen at the Salons of 1808, 1810 and 1812 returned to the Salon in 1814, albeit subject to a careful process to ensure that the once ubiquitous images of Napoleon that filled earlier exhibitions were excised from the selection.[74] Justification of the pictures' return showed some ingenuity. Charles-Paul Landon's *Annales du Musée*, a long-established illustrated record of the Salon, explained the paintings' return on the grounds that the king and foreign

10 Unknown artist, *Fête donnée par la ville de Paris à Louis XVIII le 29 aout 1814*, 1814. Coloured etching on paper, 31.4 × 46 cm. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Air Museum. Photo: Bridgeman Images.

amateurs had too long been deprived of the chance to follow the progress of the arts in France.[75] The arts it seemed progressed independently of the political context in which they were made, a challenging contention given that the Empire was said to have exercised so pernicious an influence on French culture. Conversely, the critic for the *Journal Royal* justified the pictures' return on the basis that the 'miraculous events' of Louis' restoration had so distanced the French from their immediate past that their memories of its art needed refreshing.[76] In this case, the injunction to forget worked too well. For good measure, there was also the contention that genuine talent protected artists from the coercive influence of politics. While artists of the second rank may have been susceptible to Napoleon's influence, those of genuine merit were immune.[77] Again, such responses were politically contrived wishful thinking rather than sustained critical and political analysis, but they point to no less ingenious and historically significant ways of reshaping art's history to sidestep memories of the last two decades.

11 Théodore Géricault, *Un hussard chargeant*, 1812. Oil on canvas, 349 × 266 cm. Paris: Musée du Louvre. Photo: Bridgeman Images.

12 Théodore Géricault, *Cuirassier blessé quittant le feu*, 1814. Oil on canvas, 358 × 294 cm. Musée du Louvre. Photo: Bridgeman Images.

One of the most conspicuous examples of art's aestheticisation, its abstraction from the world of politics, can be found in Théodore Géricault's portrait of an Imperial officer on horseback, the *Hussard chargeant*, first seen at the Salon of 1812 under the title, *Portrait équestre de M. D**** (*plate 11*). One of numerous military inspired pictures on show that year, the painting appeared again in 1814 alongside a hastily made pendant, the *Cuirassier blessé quittant le feu*, a picture of a soldier retired from battle (*plate 12*). Although military subjects were now roundly abhorred, critics had little to say about Géricault's paintings, save to note the pictures' poor execution. For Durdent, the *Hussard* had shown 'promise' on the artist's part when it was first seen in 1812 but one on which the painter had failed to capitalise in the *Cuirassier*. The picture was described as an oversized sketch best seen from fifty paces.[78] The figure was also said to be elongated and poorly modelled in places, and the texture of the horse gave the effect of a 'crude mosaic'.[79] Next to nothing was said about the picture's subject matter. Norbert-Bertrand Barbe has recently suggested that the two paintings were made as pendants, the sombre image of the retiring *Cuirassier* of 1814 made in atonement for the heroic figure of the Imperial *Hussard* of 1812.[80] If so, few

13 Henriette Lorimier, *Jeanne de Navarre à genoux devant le tombeau de son époux*, 1806. Oil on canvas, 191 × 168 cm. Rueil-Malmaison: Châteaux de Malmaison et Bois-Préau. Photo: Réunion des musées nationaux.

critics spotted the comparison. An explanation of the silence that accompanied the exhibition of Géricault's pictures might be found not only in the government's recent imposition of press censorship in October 1814 but also in the way in which Louis' government made a careful distinction between Napoleon's unbridled military ambition and the brave sacrifice of French troops. Large numbers of demobilised troops remained a powerful and sometimes hostile force in the capital. It was necessary therefore for Louis' administration to find a way to applaud the bravery of French soldiers with the caveat that their undisputed valour had been put to perverted ends by a foreign usurper. In a speech delivered at the Château de Tuileries in March 1815, Louis honoured the sacrifice of soldiers who had 'followed flags other than my own' explaining how they might easily recant and be welcomed back in into 'a father's arms like wayward children'.[81] In the same way that military courage and imperial ambition were clearly separated, so militarised art might be similarly disentangled from the exigencies of politics. It was not hard to rework this calculus and correspondingly see Géricault's paintings as examples of recent French art rather than imperial militarism, or as most critics seem curiously to have done, quietly dismiss them.

And if this calculus looks too finely chopped, there was also the part played by women exhibiting at the 1814 Salon. Until 1791, only the works of a few *académiciennes* and *agrées* found their way into the exhibition. With the abolition of professional privileges in 1791, the participation of women increased markedly. With a few conspicuous exceptions, women were thought best suited to the minor genres, particularly the relatively new category of small-scale, highly finished anecdotal pictures.[82] The minor genres, critics explained, could be practiced without recourse to drawing the naked male figure, a key component of the professionally more prestigious history painting. The minor genres were also generally smaller in scale than history paintings, making fewer physical demands on women. They also took less time to execute, thereby reducing the burden on the central role of women in early-nineteenth century French society, the maintenance of the home and the care and instruction of children, subjects they were perfectly placed to depict as painters.

First formally written into a legislative code in 1802, these essentialist concepts flourished in the conservative political climate of the early Restoration. Writing in 1814, the correspondent for the *Moniteur universel* observed how women rarely had the physical and intellectual resources to tackle history painting.[83] They had, however, excelled in small scale depictions of family life, typically executed with 'charm', 'sensitivity' and a delicate 'touch', skills perfectly suited to the depiction 'drapery, silks and ornament'.[84] In Henriette Lorimier's *Jeanne de Navarre à genoux devant le tombeau de son époux*—first shown at the Salon of 1806, bought by the Empress Josephine and subsequently shown again in 1814—the historical subject was of little interest to the correspondent of the *Moniteur universel* when compared to the grace, execution and the sentimental impact of the meticulously finished image of a pious widow instructing her infant son on the example set by his father (*plate 13*).[85] Quite who, what or why mattered little. Here, sentiment trumped historical detail. Given the

raft of scholarship on the professional restraints endured by women, proscriptions such as these come as little surprise. Set against the political backdrop of 1814, however, the depiction of sentimental subjects often centred around the ordered home, the dutiful wife or daughter became one further means of forgetting the recent past.

Written in the form of an epistolary preface to a female friend, the anonymous author of the *Dialogue raisonné entre un anglais et un français*, clearly mindful of the politically febrile atmosphere in which he wrote, noted how 'divine intervention' had put an end to 'twenty-five years' of battle painting, and how such pictures had 'weighed heavy' on all nations, 'hardening hearts' and 'stifling sensibility'.[86] National *gloire* cannot simply be forgotten, he reminds his readers, but it must now be based on the arts and letters not militarism, and it is in this context that women had a particular role. The 'prejudice' and 'barbarism' that had professionally constrained painters in the past were now over, he suggests, and startlingly sees the large number of women exhibiting at the Salon of 1814 as one of the few benefits of 'our Revolution'.[87] The role of women inevitably remained constrained. But those constraints now had a timely political resonance. The essential sensibilities of women, the operation of their 'organes déclicats', made them best suited for the exploration of the 'human heart'; women were innately happier than men, the critic explains and their role within the home and depiction of it functioned as a political palliative in a society weary of turmoil.[88]

One example of the way in which the essential qualities of women might be used to political affect can be found in Pauline Auzou's painting *Une des croissées de Paris, le jour de l'arrivé de S. M. Louis XVIII* bought by the duchesse de Berry in 1814 (*plate 14*). The painting takes its lead from seventeenth-century Dutch conventions where a picture's edge forms a surrogate window onto a commonplace domestic scene. In this instance however, as Auzou's critics noted, the painting elevates a humble genre by applying it to an event of national importance. The painting shows not the king's arrival in Paris but the event's emotional impact on a mother and young family looking out onto the procession from an upper storey window. The painting has everything one might expect from an artist of her sex, a 'delicate perfection' in the detail, the 'simple expression of an exquisite sentiment' and a subject centred if not exactly around the home, then on its border where politics and domesticity meet. The picture, now lost and known only through engravings, was also commendably small, just 22 by 30 inches, affording time for the painter to attend to her family duties, something dear to her heart according to an obituary published in *Journal des artistes* in 1835.[89] But listen to Féréol de Bonnemaison, curator to the picture's owner and a painter of a similar subject depicting the plight of women during the Directoire, a *Une jeune femme s'étant avancée dans la campagne se trouve surprise par l'orage* of 1799 now in the Brooklyn Museum, New York. He writes of the painting:

> A mother, still young and beautiful but exhausted from a long and painful illness, at the call of her elder daughter, takes her arm for support and rushes to a window festooned with flowers where she can see the august monarch who, before entering the city of his forefathers, has given a Charter to his people, and commanded that the atrocities and evils of the past are forgotten. She seems to have found renewed energy, a contented smile passes across her pale lips, sweet joy glistens in her tear-filled eyes. Surrounded by her family, she has forgotten her personal injuries and appears only to be concerned with the public's joy.[90]

In this instance, Auzou directs our gaze away from its ostensible subject—Louis' entry into the capital—to concentrate on the depiction of an exhausted mother's relief at the prospect of his return. Whatever the cause of the mother's ills, the *Charte*, with its mandate to forget the past serves as a palliative. The account was written some six years after the picture's appearance at the Salon. However, as Jennifer Heuer has lucidly shown, the politics of grief and its expression had long been a public concern.[91] Popular drama of the period frequently depicted Louis's restoration as the end to a period of suffering, one that had impacted markedly on the women and children who had lost husbands, sons and siblings in their hundreds of thousands in the Imperial wars. Once women had been required stoically to repress their emotions in the greater interest of the Republic and Empire.[92] Now, a mother's tears of joy marked the end to decades of suffering brought about by Louis's restoration. We return to a familiar theme, the gap between politics and its representation, the

14 Pauline Auzou, *Une des croisées de Paris, le jour de l'arrivé de S. M. Louis XVIII*, 1814. Coloured lithograph, 24 × 17.7 cm. Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France. Photo: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

15 Adolphe-Eugène-Gabriel Roehn, *Louis XVI au séjour des bienheureux, reçoit le duc d'Enghien*, 1814. Oil on canvas, 86.6 × 114 cm. Vigo: Museo da Cidades Quiñones de León. Photo: Museo da Cidades.

messy *realpolitik* of the first months of Louis's monarchy, the joy of some and the equivocation or hostility of others, and art and art criticism's capacity in various ways to paper over the cracks. The allied occupation of the capital, the presence of demobilised troops who conspicuously failed to celebrate the king's return, our ailing mother's baffled neighbours in the Saint-Denis quarter, many of whom might have looked in vain for a stable source of political authority, are each set aside. In this sense, tears of joy play a part analogous to allegory. Unbridled abstracted emotion without any immediate cause rather than abstract deities without any specific purpose offer yet another set of depoliticised referents that enabled the past to be forgotten.

As we have seen, pictures representing the late king and queen were few. They included Jean-François Garneray's painting of Louis XVI in captivity on the ramparts of the Temple, a now lost painting of Louis' grave at the cemetery at La Madeleine by Claire Robineau, and Adolphe-Eugène-Gabriel Roehn's startlingly polemical *Louis XVI au séjour des bienheureux recevant the duc d'Enghien* (*plate* 15). Like so many of his contemporaries, Roehn had recently enjoyed extensive Imperial patronage.[93] One of many painters to benefit from the royal family desire to follow Napoleon's example and to continue to support the arts, Roehn was employed by the duc d'Angoulême, a firm opponent of Louis XVIII's conciliatory policy of l'*oubli*.[94] In Roehn's painting, we find one of the most flagrantly royalist pictures on show in 1814 and one wholly hostile to a spirit of national reconciliation. Here, Louis and Marie-Antoinette, Madame Elisabeth and the young Louis XVII are shown alongside a roll call of some of the Revolution's best-known victims: the courtier Jacques Cazotte, the playwright du Rosoy, both executed in 1792, the Virgins of Verdun, twelve teenage girls executed in the same year for collaboration with emigrés, and the eponymous late duc, illegally abducted from Strasbourg and summarily executed under Napoleon's orders. The execution, the latest in a long line of Bourbon assassinations, was thought especially spiteful and cited as clear proof of Napoleon's perfidy. Soon after the picture's appearance, a publication of

the late-duc's biography appeared with a heart-rending account of his last hours and first-hand testimony of the bravery with which he met his death.[95]

That Roehn's picture defied the requirements of Article 11 seems to have mattered little to critics writing in 1814. The king admired the picture enormously, keeping it in his apartment for personal inspection for some days after the opening of the Salon.[96] The picture was also a great success with the public.[97] Soon after its arrival, the painting was moved from the exhibition's margins to centre stage at the Salon Carré.[98] For Durdent, Roehn's painting offered a traumatised nation a view of 'a world of eternal peace and happiness' albeit in a secular form out of step, some noted, with to the Bourbon's renewed affiliation with the Catholic church.[99] 'M' took great exception that a 'son of Saint Louis' should have found himself in a pagan setting and described the picture as 'cold'.[100] The critic wondered whether the painter's ambition had outstripped his talent and that Roehn was better confining himself to genre painting for which he was primarily known.[101] Durdent took a more generous view noting how it was too soon to make an objective assessment of the picture's merit. So painful were the memories the pictures evoked, it could only be seen through a veil of tears.[102] And if there were formal weaknesses, they might be excused given the speed at which the picture was made.[103] Events soon caught up with Roehn's picture. If the expiatory spirit of the painting was out of step with the politics of the first Restoration, it soon came into its own during the second. An engraving after the picture followed in 1815 and with it a lengthy pamphlet containing first hand reports of the duc's arrest and his final hours, the precise spot at the Chateau of Vincennes where he was shot, along with potted biographies of the picture's 34 victims.[104]

Conclusion

How, in sum, did the politics of *l'oubli* shape art and art criticism that accompanied the Salon of 1814? The answer, as we have seen, is littered with contingencies. In some instances, the arts appeared untouched by political events. Paintings produced and shown during the Empire reappeared at the Salon of 1814; similarly, pictures showing scenes from France's monarchical past were on display both before and after Louis' restoration. Political sympathy for the restored monarchy prompted the submission of some paintings to the Salon but there were other imperatives. Many critics, for example, saw the increase in the number of meticulously finished genre paintings on show in 1814 as an attempt to appeal to potential private collectors now that Imperial patronage had come to an end. Despite such contingencies, faced with the collapse of the Empire, artists and critics often looked to the Salon of 1814 as a litmus for the nation's cultural and political standing after the fall of the Empire. After 1814, critics celebrated art's liberation from the direct political influence of the Emperor and sought to re-establish a connection was the nation's distant monarchical past. As we saw, Louis' restoration meant that France had reconnected with its ancient heritage rendering once obscure themes legible again. Painters had their part to play. Images of Henri IV—a constant point of reference for apologists for Louis' administration—featured prominently in 1814, so too attempts (albeit often half-hearted) to revive allegorical forms of painting last seen during the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries. In turn, sentimental subjects painted with meticulous care offered an alternative, almost immersive sanctuary from the recent past. Oblivion and reconciliation, then, came in a variety of forms, some textual, others material and visual, and nearly all necessarily discrete and allusive. The Republican and Imperial past haunted the Salon, but its shade is often hard to spot, takes a variety of forms and often relies upon critical interpretation.

Art's relationship to the policy of *l'oubli*—so often hard to pin down without cross reference to a rapidly changing political environment—comes into sharper focus after Napoleon's brief return to power between March and July 1815, the Hundred Days. The event revealed the fragility of Louis' administration and led to the imposition of punitive reparations by the Allies, the ascendancy of the political right and with them the demand that the crimes of the past were not forgotten but recalled through a process of expiation. The Salon of 1817—the second of the Restoration—reflected something of this new political turn.[105] Again, we need to configure the links between art, criticism and politics with care. Many of the pictures shown in 1817 might plausibly have been seen three years earlier. Among the 1100 exhibits were the usual crop of portraits and landscapes, examples of *grande peinture*, religious pictures and subjects from medieval and early modern history. However, the recent past, so conspicuous by its absence in 1814, reappeared. In 1817, the late royal family featured in some twenty paintings, many official commissions, in many instances with Marie-Antoinette playing a leading role as tragic martyr.[106] The historical depth of field that three years before rarely stretched beyond the early-seventeenth century had now been extended into the turbulent 1790s in an attempt to recognise and atone for past crimes. Back in 1814, distraught queens taken from the backwaters of French history prompted tears in general, but it was necessarily hard to tie such emotions to a specific causal event from the recent past. This may have made some pictures hard to appreciate but such a strategy was perfectly in tune with the requirements of Article 11. Three years later, with the policy of *l'oubli* largely discredited, the paraphernalia and facture of French painting had not changed substantively. Emotions still ran high, and pictures still contained plenty of incidental detail. Now however both the recent past and its crimes had moved centre stage. Addressing them was an integral requirement for expiation.

Notes

1 Pierre-Armand Dufau, 'Charte Consitutionelle 4 juin 1814', *Collection des constitutions, Chartes et lois fondamentales des peuples de l'Europe at les deux Amériques*, Paris, 1821, 256.
2 *Charte Constitutionnelle—Extrait du Moniteur du 5 juin 1814*, Paris 1814.
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