

# Florida State University Libraries

---

Electronic Theses, Treatises and Dissertations

The Graduate School

---

2015

## The Official Word: Justifying Sensitive Napoleonic Policies, 1804-1815

Richard J. Siegler



FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

THE OFFICIAL WORD: JUSTIFYING SENSITIVE NAPOLEONIC POLICIES, 1804-1815

BY

RICHARD J SIEGLER

A Thesis submitted to the  
Department of History  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts

Degree Awarded:  
Spring Semester, 2015

Richard Siegler defended this thesis on April 13, 2015.

The members of the supervisory committee were:

Rafe Blaufarb  
Professor Directing Thesis

G. Kurt Piehler  
Committee Member

Jonathan Grant  
Committee Member

The Graduate School has verified and approved the above-named committee members, and certifies that the thesis has been approved in accordance with university requirements.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Rafe Blaufarb for his invaluable advice and support throughout the completion of this thesis. Equal thanks are due to G. Kurt Piehler and Jonathan Grant for providing me with critique and bringing vastly different perspectives that have improved my thesis tremendously. All three of these professors have constantly challenged me to develop and hone my skills as a young historian both inside and outside the classroom.

I am also immensely grateful to the Institute on Napoleon and the French Revolution and Department of History for providing me with funding and assistance during my time at Florida State University. Much of the research for this thesis has come out of the stellar Special Collections housed at Florida State's Strozier Library. A special thank you is also due to my good friend and Rare Books Librarian William Modrow. Without his tremendous support, humor, and insight during the hours I spent in Special Collections reading through mountains of *Le Moniteur* articles, the experience would have certainly not been the same.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract .....	v
INTRODUCTION .....	1
CHAPTER ONE: A MOTION FOR HEREDITY .....	29
CHAPTER TWO: THE CREATION OF THE IMPERIAL NOBILITY, 1806-1808 .....	51
CHAPTER THREE: ELEVATION OF JOSEPH BONAPARTE TO THE THRONE OF SPAIN, FEBRUARY TO JUNE 1808 .....	71
CHAPTER FOUR: THE FAMILIAR STORY OF A FRENCH MONARCH MARRYING AN AUSTRIAN ARCHDUCHESS .....	91
CHAPTER FIVE: A REIMAGINED LIBERAL EMPEROR DURING THE <i>CENT-JOURS</i> , MARCH 1815 .....	104
CONCLUSION: <i>GAZETTE NATIONALE OU LE MONITEUR UNIVERSEL</i> AS THE SOUL AND FORCE OF THE NAPOLEONIC STATE .....	120
Bibliography .....	127
Biographical Sketch .....	133

## ABSTRACT

My thesis explores how Napoleon and his bureaucrats crafted justifications for five sensitive shifts in domestic policy from 1804 to 1815. More specifically, how the Napoleonic state used the official press organ of the French government, the *Gazette Nationale ou le Moniteur Universel*, to present those justifications for public consumption is the central aim of this thesis. While largely assumed to be an instrument of propaganda for the Napoleonic regime, *Le Moniteur* has received few detailed studies as to the language, timing, and frequency of articles inserted into the political section of the official journal; of how the Napoleonic state used language to influence public opinion. My thesis will rectify this conspicuous absence and illustrate how Napoleon's government explained its increasingly monarchical character through several key examples: (1) the creation of the hereditary empire in 1804; (2) the creation of an imperial *noblesse* from 1806 to 1808; (3) the elevation of Joseph Bonaparte to the throne of Spain in 1808; and (4) Napoleon's marriage to Austrian archduchess Marie-Louise in 1810. The fifth chapter on Napoleon's return to France in 1815 during the *Cent-Jours* is the exception that proves the rule. Returning from Elba, Napoleon used *Le Moniteur* to justify his return in a new "liberal" light, abandoning the overt monarchical character of his previous rule. This is a story of how the Napoleonic state attempted to carefully package meticulous justifications and extensive explanations for these sensitive changes that marked significant departures from previous domestic policy, for the French reading public.

## INTRODUCTION

Soon after its establishment in 1799 with the coup of 18 *Brumaire*, the Napoleonic state granted one of the most popular newspapers during the French Revolution, the *Gazette nationale ou le Moniteur universel*, the title of official journal of the French Republic.<sup>1</sup> This decision to privilege a single newspaper as the official journal meant that *Le Moniteur's* political section, covering both domestic and international news, was to be controlled directly by the government through Hugues-Bernard Maret's state department. As the official mouthpiece of the Napoleonic state from 1799 to 1815, *Le Moniteur* was used as a tool of propaganda to prepare public opinion for significant and sensitive changes in state policy. Moreover, *Le Moniteur* served as a vehicle by which the regime justified and explained a series of policies that harkened back to the decisions and institutions of monarchical France.

Manipulation comes in many forms and is relative. Every single newspaper or periodical has an agenda, government controlled or private, whether that is a political agenda or simply an obligation to sell a product in order to continue the profitability of their business. Unlike in the regimes of the eighteenth-century, where matters of politics, religion, and philosophy often had to be addressed indirectly, through hints and suggestions, or disguised in the dry, matter-of-fact tone that predominated the period's gazettes.<sup>2</sup> The Napoleonic regime brought matters of politics, philosophy, and pragmatism to the forefront of their justifications for sensitive shifts in domestic politics. Their goal was not to address such issues indirectly as earlier regimes had, but to craft contexts of necessity surrounding the change and outline the state's point of view

---

<sup>1</sup> *Gazette Nationale ou le Moniteur universel*, n° 97, septidi, 7 nivôse an VIII de la république française, une et indivisible (A Paris, de l'imprimerie du citoyen Agasse propriétaire du Moniteur, rue des Poitevins, n° 18).

<sup>2</sup> Hans-Jurgen Lusebrink and Jeremy D. Popkin, eds., *Enlightenment, Revolution, and the Periodical Press* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2004), 10.

through conscientious timing and coverage, as well as precise language to fastidiously package state-approved rationales for public consumption.

This thesis explores how Napoleon and the state bureaucrats working for the political bureau of the state department justified four policy shifts that evoked immediate comparisons with the policies of *ancien régime* France: 1) the creation of the hereditary French Empire in 1804; 2) the creation of the imperial nobility (*noblesse*) 1806-1808; 3) the elevation of Joseph Bonaparte to the throne of Spain in 1808; 4) and Napoleon's marriage to Austrian archduchess Marie Louise in 1810. All of these political decisions were significant deviations in the previous trajectory of the Napoleonic state that began its tenure in 1799 as a republic and gradually transformed itself into an empire, which increasingly bore the trappings and policies of traditional European monarchies. The fifth chapter is the exception that proves the rule of *Le Moniteur's* role as a mechanism of justification that details Napoleon's effort to recast himself as a liberal emperor upon his return from exile in 1815 during the *Cent-Jours*.

The traditional historiographical view of the early-modern French press under Bourbon rule has been: "For the period up to the French Revolution in particular, the press has often been dismissed as uninteresting because of the presumption, fostered by the revolutionaries and accepted ever after, that, stifled by censorship, it reflected only an officially approved view of the world."<sup>3</sup> The French press under the Napoleonic regime was certainly censored and surveilled. Yet, the Napoleonic state's willingness to consistently and thoroughly justify its policies through the official press organ of the government, *Le Moniteur*, has received no scholarly attention. Through often complex, extensive, and detailed explanations, Napoleon's state actively sought to

---

<sup>3</sup> Censer and Popkin, eds., *Press and Politics in Pre-Revolutionary France* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 1987), 2.

prepare and placate public opinion through the articles and news it carefully and intentionally decided to publish in the political section of *Le Moniteur*.

These were not unilaterally declared or decreed changes in policy they were gradual shifts that were built-up and contextualized in supporting evidence over extended periods of time. While *Le Moniteur* was used for the simple purposes of propaganda, influencing public opinion by fabrications of varying degrees of the truth, it had a much more significant role as the vehicle through which the Napoleonic state justified its decisions and policies, particularly those that could be deemed sensitive due to their similar nature to those policies pursued by Bourbon France. The contextual and explanatory evidence used in each of the five case studies challenges our understanding of Napoleon's state. This thesis presents a more nuanced picture of the Napoleonic state and Napoleon himself as actively seeking to prepare public opinion for significant shifts in domestic policy, and more crucially, to justify those actions to the French public. The underlying assumption of this study is that the state's view, how it understood its relationship with the public sphere through its willingness to justify its actions to its literate citizens as a legitimate source of power in the tradition of the eighteenth century, and the nuanced distinctions it made between political news and the role of the private press and publishing world is crucial to understanding the development of the early-modern French press entering the nineteenth century and after the Second Restoration.

## Historiography of Napoleonic Propaganda<sup>4</sup>

Since his defeat at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, Napoleon Bonaparte's personal aura and meteoric rise from minor Corsican nobleman to the undisputed ruler of France has continued to captivate historians and the public at large for the last two centuries. In fact, so much has been written about him in the last two hundred years that he is perhaps the most written about "historical personage except Jesus of Nazareth."<sup>5</sup> In light of his literary popularity, one would imagine that there are few topics that remain unwritten, yet that is far from the case. While Napoleon's military feats and his person have been given scholarly and popular treatment *ad nauseam*, there still remain gaping holes in the historiography. One such area is Napoleon's role as a propagandist and master manipulator of media forms,<sup>6</sup> particularly the press. While the desire to manipulate his public image through popular media such as newspapers, songs, pamphlets, artwork, and medallions has received some attention,<sup>7</sup> the majority of works that address this topic largely ignore what was being printed and published in newspapers during the empire. Crucially, there have been almost no linguistic analyses of newspapers or periodicals to tease out the messages that the Napoleonic censors approved for publication and how those messages were framed for public consumption. Simply put, what views were the political

---

<sup>4</sup> Propaganda, or the (definition of propaganda as a conscious effort to affect the attitudes of large numbers of people toward definite doctrines by direct manipulation of social suggestion), has long stood in the popular memory of the Napoleonic regime as a central political tool for maintaining domestic docility and support. Napoleon himself is widely regarded as one of the finest propagandists of the age, borne out of the revolutionary tradition. He was a master manipulator of people, institutions, and resources. Some of the mediums he utilized to transmit propagandistic messages were newspapers, pamphlets, songs, coins, triumphal architecture dedicated to military victories and national achievements.

<sup>5</sup> Robert B. Holtman, *The Napoleonic Revolution*, critical periods of history ed. (New York: Lippincott, 1967), 7.

<sup>6</sup> Jack R. Censer and Lynn Hunt, *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2001), 144.

<sup>7</sup> Refer to Colin Moore, *Propaganda Prints: A History of Art in the Service of Social and Political Change* (London: A&C Black Publishers Limited, 2010); Wayne Hanley, *The Genesis of Napoleonic Propaganda, 1796-1799 (Gutenberg-E)* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2005); Alan Forrest, "Propaganda and the Legitimation of Power in Napoleonic France," *French History* 18, no. 4 (2004): 426-45.

censors trying to impress upon the public and through what means were they trying to accomplish this? Were they utilizing subtleties of languages, historical or national mythologies, or were the messages blunt and straight-forward?

Without such closer studies, the propaganda efforts of the Napoleonic regime (1799-1815) have acquired an almost axiomatic and self-evident character to historians. They restrict themselves to more administrative and legal approaches, citing the numerous laws on censorship during the Consulate and Empire, restrictions on the political press, shifts in official state iconography, and the reorganization of the book trade in 1810. The lack of detailed case studies on the nature of Napoleonic propaganda, its effects on the cultural and social development of early-nineteenth century France, and on the burgeoning public sphere in post-Revolutionary France, as well as the specific instruments used to transmit state-approved messages during the imperial period, when Napoleonic power was at its height, is quite surprising. Astoundingly, the chief source of print propaganda, the official *Gazette Nationale ou le Moniteur Universel* (*Le Moniteur*) has received no detailed study. Most scholarly discussions of *Le Moniteur* have been subsumed into larger works on the French press or on the gazette's founder Charles-Joseph Panckoucke.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, the relationship between Hugues-Bernard Maret's Department of State and its oversight over the political news in *Le Moniteur* has been the subject of no scholarship at all.

Chief among the books that focus on the imperial period is Robert Holtman's *Napoleonic Propaganda*, which has more or less served for the last six decades as the definitive text on

---

<sup>8</sup> René de Livois, *Histoire de La Presse Française, Tome 1* (Hollande: Les Temps de la Presse, 1965); Suzanne Tucoo-Chala, *Charles-Joseph Panckoucke and La Librairie Française, 1736-1798* (Pau: Editions Marrimpouey jeune, 1977); André Cabanis's *La Presse sous le Consulat et l'Empire (1799-1814)* (Paris: Société des Études Robespierristes, 1975); Eugène Hatin, *Histoire Politique Et Littéraire de La Presse En France* (Paris: Poulet-Malassis et de Broise, 1860).

Napoleonic propaganda, even though Holtman never intended it to serve as such.<sup>9</sup> The gap in our understanding of Napoleon's early efforts at using propagandistic methods, most notably newspapers and medallions, during his time as a French general campaigning in Italy from 1796 to 1797, has been recently filled by Wayne Hanley's excellent book, *The Genesis of Napoleonic Propaganda, 1796-1799*. Yet, works dealing with the imperial period have been few and far between.<sup>10</sup>

Part of the reason for this lack of studies dealing with propaganda during the Napoleonic period has been the interest of book historians, historians of journalism, and historians of the press on the French Revolution and its causes. Thus, they have mainly focused their attention on the post-Enlightenment *ancien régime* press in France, and its evolution throughout the Revolutionary period of the 1790s. In particular, the debates on the role of the book, pornographic texts, *libelles*, and the press among other forms of media on the de-sacralization of the French Monarchy and its subsequent collapse in 1789 have been the subject of significant scholarship.<sup>11</sup> Recent studies have shown that if the pornographic *libelles* and political texts

---

<sup>9</sup> Robert Holtman, *Napoleonic Propaganda* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1950), vii.

<sup>10</sup> See the following works that largely only deal with Napoleonic propaganda tangentially or focus on a single aspect or part of the period: Geoffrey Ellis's *Napoleon* (London: Longman, 1997); François Furet's *The French Revolution, 1770-1814* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996); Martyn Lyons's *Napoleon Bonaparte and the Legacy of the French Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Furet's, *Revolutionary France, 1770-1880* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Albert Boime's *Art in the Age of Bonapartism, 1800-1815* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1990); Jean Tulard's *Napoleon: The Myth of the Savior* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984); R. Ben Jones's, *Napoleon: Man and Myth* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977); Marc Martin's *Les Origines de la Presse Militaire en France, 1770-1799* (Chateau de Vincennes: Service Historique de l'Armée de Terre, 1975); André Cabanis's *La Presse sous le Consulat et l'Empire (1799-1814)* (Paris: Société des Études Robespierriennes, 1975); J.M. Thompson's *Napoleon Bonaparte* (1952); Albert Léon Guerard's *Reflections on the Napoleonic Legend* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924); Romi's "Bibelots de propagande ou de souvenir," *Mirror de l'histoire* (1959): 46-51; and the entries for propaganda in Tulard et al.'s *Dictionnaire Napoléon* (Paris: Fayard, 1987) and Owen Connelly et al.'s *Historical Dictionary of Napoleonic France, 1799-1815* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985). Only the works of Holtman, Cabanis, and Martin deal with Napoleon's methods, but once again, do not cover the entire imperial period.

<sup>11</sup> This debate has taken on a life of its own in the last thirty years for some of the representative works on it, see: Keith Michael Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays On French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Robert Darnton, *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996); Robert Darnton, *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime*, Reprint ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985); Roger Chartier, *The Cultural*

influenced by the Enlightenment worked to undermine the *ancien regime* government of France, their significance was more in the fact of their existence, or what they stood for, “which implied a public right to know what was being done at Versailles and, ultimately, a public right to judge the government,”<sup>12</sup> and less in their overt nature. Others have presented novel and interesting arguments on the formation of a French public sphere, enmeshed in a world of daily politics and news, during the chaotic Revolutionary period that re-established the freedom of the press, and its effect on French popular and political culture.<sup>13</sup> Perhaps the most significant achievement of these historians has been to bring the importance of the newspaper and periodicals to the forefront of studies on European culture, society, and the public sphere during the early modern period.

### **The Power of the Newspaper: Print Culture, The Public Sphere, and Political News**

“Newspapers. I set this word down with a feeling of deep respect. Newspapers are one of the great instruments of culture through which we Europeans have become what we are.”<sup>14</sup> – August Ludwig von Schlözer

“All enlightened men seemed to be convinced that complete freedom and exemption from any form of censorship should be granted to longer works. Because writing them requires time, purchasing them requires affluence, and reading them attention, they are not able to produce the reaction in the populace that one fears of works of greater rapidity and violence. But *pamphlets*, and *handbills*, and especially *newspapers*, are produced quickly, you can buy them for little, and because their effect is immediate, they are believed to be more dangerous.”<sup>15</sup> – Benjamin Constant

---

*Origins of the French Revolution* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 1991); Haydn Mason, ed., *The Darnton Debate: Books and Revolution in the Eighteenth Century*, (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1998); Jack Censer, *The French Press in the Age of Enlightenment* (London: Routledge, 2014).

<sup>12</sup> Jack R. Censer and Jeremy D. Popkin, eds., *Press and Politics in Pre-Revolutionary France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 23.

<sup>13</sup> For some of the best works on the growth of the popular press during the French Revolution, see: Jeremy D. Popkin, *Revolutionary News: The Press in France, 1789-1799* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990); Hugh Gough, *The Newspaper Press in the French Revolution* (Chicago: The Dorsey Press, 1988); J. Gilchrist and W. J. Murry, eds., *The Press in the French Revolution* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1971); Claude Bellanger, Jacques Godechot, Pierre Guiral and Fernand Terrou, *Histoire Générale de la Presse Française*, Vol. 1, *Des origines à 1814* (Paris: Presses Université de France, 1969); and Jacques Godechot, "L'expansion française et la création de la presse politique dans le bassin méditerranéen," *Cahiers de Tunisie* (1954): 146-71.

<sup>14</sup> August Ludwig von Schlözer, *Theorie der Statistik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1804), 78.

<sup>15</sup> Benjamin Constant, *De la liberté des brochures, des pamphlets et des journaux* (Paris, 1814), 1.

“To attach no importance to public opinion is a proof you do not merit its suffrage...The truth is not half so important as what people think to be true.”<sup>16</sup> – Napoleon Bonaparte

While the Napoleonic bureaucracy’s attempts at using various forms of media to propagandize the French public has received few detailed studies, a number of social historians specializing in France have provided an excellent foundation for understanding the development and increasingly important role of the newspaper in the creation of a public sphere. The term “public sphere” originated from the works of the German sociologist and philosopher, Jürgen Habermas, particularly his book, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*.<sup>17</sup> In *The Structural Transformation*, Habermas describes a set of institutions he categorizes as the bourgeois public sphere, which developed in the West beginning in the late seventeenth century.

This public sphere was an arena of discourse that came to be separated from both the state and from civil society, or the realm of public and economic life.<sup>18</sup> His work suggested that the press was a reflection of the growth of this public sphere that was independent of and inherently in opposition to the state.<sup>19</sup> He was also one of the first to emphasize the importance of the periodical form that allowed for a more egalitarian exchange between readers and authors, which incarnated the kind of discussion that defined the ‘bourgeois’ public sphere (*Öffentlichkeit*).<sup>20</sup> While the lessons drawn from Habermas’s model have changed in the last twenty years, due to recent scholarship pointing to the fact that state officials were often the leading promoters and the largest part of the audience for periodicals in the early modern period, his work, particularly the notion of a “public sphere,” has continued to inspire social historians

---

<sup>16</sup> Robert Holtman, *Napoleonic Propaganda*, vi.

<sup>17</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: an Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society (Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought)* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1991).

<sup>18</sup> Michael Warner, ed., “Publication and the Public Sphere,” in *Publishing and Readership in Revolutionary France and America: a Symposium at the Library of Congress*, ed. Carol Armbruster (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993), 167.

<sup>19</sup> Joop W. Koopmans, ed., *News and Politics in Early Modern Europe (1500-1800)* (Dudley, MA: Peeters-Leuven, 2005), 4.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

working on early modern topics.<sup>21</sup> Although his conception of the ‘public sphere’ has been criticized from various scholars, from rational choice theorists to postmodernists, it is nonetheless a useful concept for this study.<sup>22</sup> The ‘public sphere,’ this literate body of informed, politically engaged citizens, was the audience of *Le Moniteur*. They were the people whom the Napoleonic state was attempting to rationalize and justify its sensitive policy changes to.

Yet this thesis is not interested as much in the people who were reading *Le Moniteur*, but rather the government-approved justifications and explanations that the Napoleonic regime was attempting to present to the French public. For practical reasons a study of the readers, without uniformly treating their motivations to read print materials would provide a substantial undertaking. In essence, the complexity of the public sphere can be seen in the development of reading habits throughout the eighteenth century which, “progressed in degree, from occasional to regular readers, and in various ways, all readers could have been reading differently and for different purposes,” with motivations ranging from merely keeping up with events and “efforts to decode written signs and letters, looking for information and escape, or reading for pleasure.”<sup>23</sup> There are too many diverse reasons for reading printed material and how such news was interpreted by the reading public at large or specific readers.

Any study attempting to discern those reasons suffers from a lack of source material offering definitive answers. Most people wrote about what they read and not why they read, or even less so about how subtleties of language, if recognized, influenced their opinion on French politics. To date, no historian has been able to compile an accurate record of how widely read

---

<sup>21</sup> Koopmans, *News and Politics in Early Modern Europe*, 26.

<sup>22</sup> J. A. Downie, “Public and Private: “The Myth of the Bourgeois Public Sphere”,” in *A Concise Companion to the Restoration and Eighteenth Century*, ed. Cynthia Wall (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005); Lincoln Dahlberg “The Habermasian Public Sphere and Exclusion: An Engagement with Poststructuralist-Influenced Critics,” *Communication Theory* 24, no. 1 (February 2014): 21-41; Lincoln Dahlberg “The Habermasian Public Sphere: Taking Difference Seriously?,” *Theory and Society* 34, no. 1 (2005): 111-36.

<sup>23</sup> Daniel Roche, “Printing, Books, and Revolution,” in *Publishing and Readership in Revolutionary France and America*, ed. Carol Armbruster (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993), 8.

the major journals of the Napoleonic period were, as the task is nearly impossible without consulting sufficiently detailed postal records or extensive collections of publishers' business records, if they remain extant. Instead of attempting this task, this thesis focuses on the state-side of things, how and why the Napoleonic regime justified certain significant shifts in domestic politics. How the state "saw" its role in relation to the public sphere and attempted to inform them through carefully crafted explanations for significant changes in the regime's policies.

The goal of this section is to give a brief account of the general trajectory of press history and some of the important insights that have been presented by historians in the last thirty years. In particular, this section will focus on the growing role of public opinion during the eighteenth century and the changing role of the press during the French Revolution and the 1790s. These insights will highlight the importance of the newspaper and periodical press during the early modern period and revolutionary 1790s, which will set up the later discussion of *Le Moniteur*, its official role as the press organ of the French government, as well as a more nuanced presentation of the general goal of censorship during the Napoleonic period.

Throughout the history of civilization, news has been recorded and transmitted in a myriad of ways. There has been a certain dependence upon news to most accurately formulate political decisions, yet the news media, the dissemination of news, and the way politics deals with news have constantly changed over the centuries. What truly set the early modern period apart from previous epochs, was the gradual transformation of politics into "something that more people were involved in" and the formation of 'public opinion' aided by a growing media, or providers of a digest of recent events.<sup>24</sup> This media was far from being independent as European authorities believed that they could mold the news to their will, by surrounding their decision-

---

<sup>24</sup> Koopmans, *News and Politics in Early Modern Europe*, x.

making process with secrecy, through the spread of adulterated information or propaganda, and through the regulation or censorship of the urban printers and publishers that formed the press.<sup>25</sup>

However, these authorities and states lacked the necessary manpower, efficient administrative organization, and the desire to place their public in complete ignorance about the true state of affairs and government policy. In fact, it was often important for certain members of the public to have an accurate account of the real state of affairs, such as bankers and merchants, who needed to be kept up to date on the military and political situations due to their close relationship with state finances. Traditionally, scholars have assumed that because decisions about ministerial appointments, diplomatic alignments, and war were the prerogatives of sovereigns and their advisors, that ordinary people would have not had much interest in them. Furthermore, as newspapers before the French Revolution did not directly urge their readers to take specific political views, such as voting or protesting, scholars have assumed that readers tended to think of themselves as passive subjects of authority, rather than as potentially active citizens.<sup>26</sup> These assumptions have only been challenged in recent years, especially in the context of the increased occurrence of major European wars in the eighteenth century and feverish rumors regarding their impending outbreak, which effected people from the wealthiest financiers to humblest local traders of grain and livestock.

While the late-eighteenth century newspaper was far from being a true mass medium due to the still relatively high illiteracy rates among adults and its expense, it crucially remained a genre of printed material that could reach an audience extending from the wealthy elites to the

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Koopmans, *News and Politics in Early Modern Europe*, 15. While newspaper might not have, pamphleteers did: David A. Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France: Inventing Nationalism, 1680-1800* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

urban poor, and potentially the peasantry.<sup>27</sup> By the end of the century, literacy became the test of citizenship and the instrument of political subjectivity, as “through print culture the subject’s right to monitor the state and the potential for citizen activism were fulfilled.”<sup>28</sup> As the political press transformed politics into “spectatorial, critical activities, capable of being exercised privately, but more appropriately enacted within the sphere of public society itself,”<sup>29</sup> the various locales of public politics such as the alehouse, tavern, newsroom, coffeehouse, clubs, salons, counting houses, shipyards, and *cabinet de lecture*, made the public sphere temporarily visible, “but print made it permanent, allowing it to exist through a ‘steady, solid simultaneity through time....’”<sup>30</sup>

Furthermore, the growing newspaper network developing throughout the eighteenth century across Europe, supported primarily by the public spheres and growing literacy rates in many of the western European countries such as England, France, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and the German states, created a sort of informal information system. Editors of various continental print materials often exchanged copies with their counterparts in other nations and cities, gradually building a network that allowed readers to:

...follow the complex patterns of great-power politics and to construct in their own minds the possible relationships between apparently unconnected events in distant places. This publicly accessible information network, even though it was under the control of governments that regulated the period’s postal systems and either censored newspaper texts or, in many cases, simply appointed the editors, was unique in the pre-modern world. None of the other great world civilizations permitted the development of a system that made so much political information available to ordinary individuals, regardless of their social status, at a relatively modest cost. Thus, in early modern Europe, it was not merely sovereigns and their ministers, or a small elite of internationally-minded merchants, who had

---

<sup>27</sup> Jeremy D. Popkin, *News and Politics in the Age of Revolution: Jean Luzac's Gazette de Leyde* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 3. For the most recent survey of literacy in Europe at the end of the eighteenth century, see Harvey J. Graff, *The Legacies of Literacy*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 173-259.

<sup>28</sup> Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire, and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 35-36.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Wilson, *The Island Race*, 35-36.

access to a continuously updated picture of world politics, and particularly to news about the period's wars.<sup>31</sup>

This information network, embroiled in international politics, allowed its readers, particularly those outside the circles of power to think in the same terms as their rulers by providing representations of the powerful at work through the print materials.

It fulfilled their desire to appear well informed and satisfied the common “urge for psychological identification with the prominent and powerful.”<sup>32</sup> In this way, the political gazettes that began to predominate during the latter-half of the century, created an imagined community,<sup>33</sup> where readers:

...came to think in terms of political realities and learned to exercise informed judgment about political problems. The slow and imperceptible process of political education prompted by the existence of newspapers was one of the ways in which the men and women of the early modern period acquired a kind of *de facto* citizenship – that is to say, a conviction, based on practice even if not recognized in law, that they had a right to be informed and to express opinions about political policy.<sup>34</sup>

People became invested in politics and desired daily national and international news.

Colin Jones further argued that this process of political education for citizenship went hand-in-hand with the way in which newspapers of the period taught readers to think of themselves as having important economic choices.<sup>35</sup> It was the newspapers' unique relationship to the currents of information and its unique capacity for bringing geographically dispersed readers together and

---

<sup>31</sup> Koopmans, *News and Politics in Early Modern Europe*, 16.

<sup>32</sup> Koopmans, *News and Politics in Early Modern Europe*, 18.

<sup>33</sup> The term “imagined community” was coined and popularized by Benedict Anderson in his work: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections On the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, Revised Edition*, Revised ed. (New York: Verso, 2006).

<sup>34</sup> Koopmans, *News and Politics in Early Modern Europe*, 19. See also: Margaret R. Somers, *Genealogies of Citizenship: Markets, Statelessness, and the Right to Have Rights* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

<sup>35</sup> Koopmans, *News and Politics in Early Modern Europe*, 19; Colin Jones, “The Great Chain of Buying: Medical Advertisement, the Bourgeois Public Sphere, and the Origins of the French Revolution,” *The American Historical Review* 101, no. 1 (February 1996): 13-40.

fostering them into imagined communities, founded on the right to be informed, that inspired its popularity.<sup>36</sup> Undeniably, newspapers:

...made manifest the impact of state actions and politics on daily life and regional and national prosperity and standing, and allowed individuals to participate imaginatively as well as materially in the processes of domestic and imperial government. Newspapers were thus central instruments in the social production of information: representing and verifying local experience and refracting world events into socially meaningful categories and hierarchies of importance....<sup>37</sup>

This imagined community grew tremendously during the Revolutionary period as politics became an activity for every man, and the right to be informed would only be reinforced during the Revolution with the profusion of political pamphlets and newspapers. It was this right that the Napoleonic regime took issue with. Rather than attempt the impossible in abolishing it, the state sought to direct it and inform the public through carefully crafted messages and articles inserted into *Le Moniteur*, frequently duplicated by other papers during the Napoleonic period.

While the contrast between the French press of the pre-revolutionary period and that of the 1790s is not as stark as we once believed, according to Keith Michael Baker,<sup>38</sup> the Revolution did allow for a greater amount of daily news and opinions from various political actors to arrive more quickly to the public, resulting in more frequent discussion and political debate.<sup>39</sup> Perhaps the most significant change between the pre- and revolutionary press was the changing audience after 1789. Unlike in the pre-1789 period where newspapers remained fairly expensive if not bought by a group of people and had less overall numerical variety, the revolutionary press openly sought out the popular readers to drive political opinion.<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> Hans-Jurgen Lusebrink and Jeremy D. Popkin, eds., *Enlightenment, Revolution, and the Periodical Press* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2004), 21.

<sup>37</sup> Wilson, *The Island Race*, 33-34.

<sup>38</sup> Keith Michael Baker, "Politics and Public Opinion Under the Old Regime: Some Reflections," in *Press and Politics in Pre-Revolutionary France*, eds. Jack R. Censer and Jeremy D. Popkin (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1987), 204-246.

<sup>39</sup> Censer and Popkin, eds., *Press and Politics in Pre-Revolutionary France*, viii.

<sup>40</sup> Lusebrink and Popkin, *Enlightenment, Revolution, and the Periodical Press*, 15.

While individual papers did not increase their circulation much more than their predecessors under the *ancien régime*, “the overall readership exploded numerically through a substantial increase in numbers of papers.”<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, some of the other press-related changes during the Revolution such as the “creation of ample press coverage; a diversity of opinions; a government in retreat before the press; a large audience – all seemed to foreshadow the mid-nineteenth-century press.”<sup>42</sup> In this way, the French Revolution was truly forward-looking in terms of press and publishing developments. As we will see, it was this widened sphere of public debate and popular or mass political reading that the Napoleonic regime sought to assiduously restrict outside their control, and carefully monitor under its control.

The seizure of power by Napoleon in 1799 with the coup of *Brumaire* and his rise to the position of First Consul have often been seen as the derailment of the revolutionary press developments of the 1790s. In line with many of the significant shifts in domestic Napoleonic politics, which tended to harken back to the *ancien régime*, the French press lost some of its freedom and sovereignty with the restoration of a licensing system for periodicals and the re-imposition of censorship. The edict of 27 nivôse an VIII (17 January 1800) limited the number of newspapers being printed and distributed in Paris from eighty to thirteen, with subsequent suppressions eventually reducing this figure to four. The law justified this reduction on the basis of a number of reasons. Its first article stated that the war time conditions required the curbing of the press allowing the Minister of Police to leave:

for the duration of the war, printing, publishing and the distributing to the hereinafter referred journals: *Le Moniteur universel*; *le Journal des Débats et des Décrets*; *le Journal de Paris*; *le Bien-Informe*; *le Publiciste*; *l'Ami des Lois*; *la Clef du Cabinet*; *le Journal des Hommes libres*; *le Journal du Soir, par les frères Chaigneau*; *le Journal des Défenseurs de la patrie*; *la Décade Philosophique*; and

---

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Lusebrink and Popkin, *Enlightenment, Revolution, and the Periodical Press*, 15.

newspapers dealing exclusively with science, arts, literature, commerce, announcements and notices.<sup>43</sup>

While on the surface, this points to the autocratic tendencies of the Napoleonic regime in a state of war, it also highlights the crucial distinction the government made between political news and news dealing with informative topics such as the sciences, the arts, literature, commerce, and more local affairs, as we will explore shortly. Moreover, the republican press that operated so widely during the Revolution was completely eliminated, with the exception of *Le Moniteur*, and only the *Journal des Débats et Décrets* and the *Publiciste* remained from the right-wing press.<sup>44</sup> Yet, the simple fact of the reintroduction of censorship, which has commonly been presented solely as just one of the steps towards the Napoleonic bureaucracy becoming more autocratic, does not paint the whole picture. In the last twenty five years, Carla Hesse's *Publishing and Cultural Politics in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1810*<sup>45</sup> has been one of the few works to present a more nuanced appreciation of the motivations and actual scope of censorship during the Napoleonic period.

Hesse does an excellent job of contextualizing the unmitigated disaster and economic ruin among the commercial publishers and printers of Paris due to the de-regulationist and laissez-faire policies toward commerce in ideas that was implemented by the National Assembly and National Convention between 1789 and 1793. Rather than creating an enlightened Republic, which was their aim, the freed printing world churned out hardly anything at all, and what they did produce was relatively vulgar and driven by the popular market.<sup>46</sup> Intervention by the

---

<sup>43</sup> 27 nivôse an 8 (17 janvier 1800) – Arrêtê relatif aux journaux (II, Bull. CCCXLV, n° 3535), *Collection Complète Des Lois, Décrets d'intérêt Général, Traités Internationaux, Arrêtés, Circulaires, Instructions, Etc: Volume 12* (Paris: Société du Recueil Sirey, 1 janvier 1826), 68.

<sup>44</sup> Jeremy D. Popkin, *The Right-Wing Press in France, 1792-1800* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 171.

<sup>45</sup> Carla Hesse, *Publishing and Cultural Politics in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1810* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

<sup>46</sup> Hesse, *Publishing and Cultural Politics in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1810*, 160-161.

various revolutionary governments involved the expansion and centralization of government printing and publishing, and a rewards system for those who proffered “the cooler virtues of philosophical inquiry, self-improvement, and public utility,”<sup>47</sup> in order to “impose political and cultural unity on the divided nation. This strategy was not checked by Thermidor but continued throughout the Directory and Napoleonic period as well.”<sup>48</sup> This can be seen in the language of the edict of 27 nivôse, particularly articles four and five that disparage any periodicals creating domestic conflict by publishing ideas contrary to the social pact or sovereignty of the people:

(art. IV) The owners and editors of the newspapers preserved by this order will present themselves to the minister of police in order to prove their French citizenship, of their homes and of their signature, and will pledge allegiance to the Constitution. (art. V) All the newspapers which will insert articles contrary to the due respect of the social pact, to the sovereignty of the people, and to the glory of the armies, or which publish invectives against the Government and friends of the nation or allies of the Republic, even when these articles would be taken from foreign newsheets, will be removed on the spot.<sup>49</sup>

The official nature of *Le Moniteur* can be viewed as part of this overall strategy. Its government-approved presentation of the news and current events aided the imposition of political and cultural unity on a nation that had been so divided throughout the 1790s.

Two of the central consequences of the freeing of the press in 1789 were the “deep yet perceptible shift of the center of gravity in commercial printing, from an elite literary culture centered in the production and consumption of expensive and time-consuming books toward a democratic culture of ephemeral pamphlets, broadsides, song sheets, and especially newspapers and periodicals”<sup>50</sup> and the cultural tension that emerged in the publishing world under the Republic. This tension played a “commercial literary market dominated by political journals and

---

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 161.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 160-161.

<sup>49</sup> 27 nivôse an 8 (17 janvier 1800) – Arrêtê relatif aux journaux (II, Bull. CCCXLV, n° 3535), *Collection Complète Des Lois, Décrets d'intérêt Général, Traités Internationaux, Arrêtés, Circulaires, Instructions, Etc: Volume 12* (Paris: Société du Recueil Sirey, 1 janvier 1826), 68.

<sup>50</sup> Hesse, *Publishing and Cultural Politics in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1810*, 200.

novels that inflamed the public and private passion of citizens,” against a “subsidized official culture that sought to inculcate the cool discipline of scientific reason and to propagate the republican virtues of utility, productivity, and the public good, on the other.”<sup>51</sup> The Napoleonic government sought to restrict and control the former and subsidize the latter.

Ultimately, the traditional myth of the Napoleonic regimes totalizing censorship falls apart as Hesse presents numerous examples of the problems that the expansion of government censorship and surveillance of the printed work caused for the administration. Due to the fact that the “government formally recognized the principle of freedom of the press, surveillance and censorship of the book trade were difficult to justify, let alone enforce. The magnitude of the task overwhelmed the resources of the prefect of police, who was facing resistance from publishers and authors to the obligatory deposit....”<sup>52</sup> The regime even resorted to reviving the inspections of individual booksellers and printing shops, but more shocking, the *ancien régime* system of *permission tacites* and *tolérances*, by which “an officially sanctioned literary civilization could be distinguished from independent and unauthorized cultural initiatives.”<sup>53</sup> The return to this system before the complete reorganization of the book trade in 1810 illustrates the limitations of highly centralized and efficient Napoleonic bureaucracy and their focus on censoring only those works that were popular in audience and lacking the high cultural standards of France, as defined by the regime. Hesse traces government expenditure in relation to the imperial administration of the book trade,<sup>54</sup> which highlights that the priorities of the administration, in terms of money and personnel:

---

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 204.

<sup>52</sup> Hesse, *Publishing and Cultural Politics in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1810*, 227.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> The numbers for her claims can be found in: AN, ser. F4, cartons 2572-2573, doss. 1-2; and BN, nouv. Acq. Fr. 1362, feuilles 63-64.

...lay in surveillance rather than censorship. Whereas censorship was episodic and half-hearted throughout the Napoleonic period, implementation of the decrees of February 5, 1810, mobilized a small army of Napoleonic inspectors and prefects to produce a massive census of every single printer, publisher, bookseller, manufacturer of printing types, colporteur, and keeper of a *cabinet de lecture* in the entire empire.<sup>55</sup>

It was not until this census and the accompanying reform and standardization of the book trade were completed in 1810 that the regime was able to effectively censor the popular works that hurt the business of the old guard printers and offended the sensitivities of the government.

Censorship or political cooperation with the regime, was a trade-off that allowed the elite publishers to enjoy police surveillance and protection of their property from literary piracy, which was a more pressing concern demonstrated by the turbulent years after the law of 1793. In the words of Carla Hesse, “The new regime had begun. And it was a new regime based on surveillance rather than censorship as the chief preventative mechanism of cultural control... The regulation of 1810 was designed by and for the older and larger printing establishments of Paris and the departments. In exchange for a restricted monopoly, they agreed to surveillance.”<sup>56</sup> This was a carefully negotiated trade-off, not a forced imposition. The Napoleonic regime needed the talented printers and their equipment just as much as those printers and publishers required the Napoleonic state’s surveillance apparatus to control illegal editions of their works and pirated works. The censorship of the periodical press was a reaction to the cultural populism of the republican period and an effort to eradicate the parts that could not be controlled and direct those that could. The dangers of the periodical press were those aspects that lent it to become so popular during the Revolution: they were cheap, prone to sensationalism, easily available, sparked popular discussion and reaction, required little time commitment, and were easy to read. These dangers, as so eloquently elaborated on by Benjamin Constant at the beginning of this

---

<sup>55</sup> Hesse, *Publishing and Cultural Politics in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1810*, 231.

<sup>56</sup> Hesse, *Publishing and Cultural Politics in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1810*, 236.

section, lie in direct contrast to the book, which was expensive, lengthier, more time-consuming, and harder to read. It was the aforementioned tradition of civic activism and its release from past restraints during the French Revolution, and the numerous dangers of the newspaper, in their mindset, that the Napoleonic regime sought to assiduously restrict and direct, as we will see later.

While the Napoleonic regime could not, and did not even attempt, to completely censor all printed materials, its goal was to aggressively limit the amount of uncontrolled or uncensored news reaching the public sphere. The daily politics that Frenchmen had grown accustomed to being involved in and informed of under the *Ancien Régime* during the eighteenth century and then during the Revolution was not to be completely stifled, alienating the public sphere, but directed and managed by a careful bureaucracy. This was the role that *Le Moniteur* played in French politics, the information network, and in the public sphere. Why else would the Napoleonic regime promote *Le Moniteur* as the official newspaper and present its justifications for certain decisions if it disregarded the importance of the public sphere and the importance of controlling the debates in that sphere by providing bureaucratically approved news? Napoleon himself has been quoted as saying that “the chatter of the newspapers, it has its dangers, can also have its advantages.”<sup>57</sup> The information network and the sphere of public opinion that it fed into, “that was recognized before the end the century by the French monarchy as the sole source of legitimate power,”<sup>58</sup> continued to earn the grudging respect of the Napoleonic regime.

Before turning to *Le Moniteur* itself, there is one more important trend in the recent historiography of the early modern press to consider that has provided additional direction and impetus to this study. Severely underrepresented in the historiography have been linguistic-oriented studies, which provide a nice contrast to the institutional-heavy approaches that are

---

<sup>57</sup> Baron Ernouf, *Maret, Duc de Bassano* (Paris: G. Charpentier, 1878), 221.

<sup>58</sup> Censer and Popkin, eds., *Press and Politics in Pre-Revolutionary France*, xi-xii.

common to many works in the field of press and journalism history. The linguistic turn has been inspired by the need for a better understanding and fresh approaches to the history of journalism in regard to the role of language in the shaping of social and political consciousness in the early nineteenth century. The approach centers on what was being said by the journalist, or in the case of *Le Moniteur*, what messages were being crafted into printed words for public consumption. The linguistic turn has influenced a number of disciplines throughout the social sciences having been pioneered through the efforts of Gareth Stedman Jones.<sup>59</sup> This thesis is the first study to bring this approach to the history of the Napoleonic press.

Two French scholars who have been dedicated to utilizing linguistic approaches to the history of the French press during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, have influenced this work: Pierre Rézat and Jean Sgard.<sup>60</sup> Although they largely focus on the pre-revolutionary press, their approach emphasizes what was said in the newspapers as much as the more traditional questions: “who read newspapers, how were they produced, and what were their relations with governments.”<sup>61</sup> Their integration of the institutional approach that has illuminated a great deal about the personal and financial connections between the press and the

---

<sup>59</sup> The debate over the linguistic turn regarding the role of language in the shaping of social and political consciousness in nineteenth-century Britain was inspired by Gareth Stedman Jones work: ‘Introduction’ and ‘Rethinking Chartism’ in his *Languages of class: studies in English working-class history, 1832-1982* (Cambridge 1983), p. 1-24, 90-178. Other contributions include Robert Gray, ‘The deconstructing of the English working class,’ *Social History* 2 (1986), p. 363-73; David Mayfield and Susan Thorne, ‘Social History and its discontents: Gareth Stedman Jones and the politics of language,’ *Social History* 17 (1992), p. 165-188; Jon Lawrence and Miles Taylor, ‘The poverty of protest: Gareth Stedman Jones and the politics of language – a reply,’ *Social History* 18 (1993), p. 1-16.

<sup>60</sup> Some of their most notable works include: Pierre Rézat, “Les gazettes européennes de langue française,” *Bulletin des bibliothèques de France* [en ligne], n° 3, 2002 [consulté le 19 décembre 2014]. <http://bbf.enssib.fr/consulter/bbf-2002-03-0111-016>; Pierre Rézat, *La Gazette d'Amsterdam: Miroir de l'Europe au XVIIIe siècle* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2001) ; Pierre Rézat, *Les Journaux de 1789: Bibliographie Critique* (Paris: Presses du CNRS, 1988) ; Pierre Rézat, *Les gazettes européennes de langue française*, suivi d'Une étude sur les fonds des gazettes anciennes à la Bibliothèque nationale de France (42-Saint-Just-la-Pendue : Imprimerie Chirat, 2002) ; Jean Sgard, Centre d'étude des sensibilités de l'Université de Grenoble III, *Le Vocabulaire Du Sentiment Dans L'œuvre de J.-J. Rousseau* (Genève: Slatkine, 1980); Jean Sgard, *L'abbé Prévost: Labyrinthes de La Mémoire*, 1re ed. (Paris: PUF, 1986); Jean Sgard, *Mémoires Secrets de Bachaumont, 1762-1787* (Paris: Tallandier, 2011).

<sup>61</sup> Koopmans, *News and Politics in Early Modern Europe*, 5.

government and the public with the linguistic approach that analyzes the “actual language through which journalists sought to project to their readers a particular view of the world,”<sup>62</sup> has provided a tremendous boon to the field. Philip Harling, an historian of the British Empire and citizenship has argued that, “In order to gain a more vivid impression of the versions of public life that periodicals furnished to their readers, it is time to examine the language that journalists used to fashion their images of reality.”<sup>63</sup> In our context, that would be the reality the Napoleonic state wanted to create for the French public from 1799 to 1815. The linguistic turn and many of the questions that it has raised related to the actual language of journalists and the images of reality they desired to create have been influential in developing the themes and argument of this essay, to be fleshed out below in the final section of the introduction. It is with this understanding of the linguistic turn and the more nuanced view of Napoleon’s “propaganda machine” in mind that we turn to the *Gazette Nationale ou le Moniteur Universel*.

### *Gazette Nationale ou le Moniteur Universel*

"Ce journal, éclos sous les premiers rayons de la Révolution, nous présente le phénomène le plus rare dans les temps modernes, la stabilité."<sup>64</sup> – Hugues-Bernard Maret

Before we begin analysis of the key political shifts that form the chapters of this thesis, a brief survey of the history of *Le Moniteur* is in order. The *Gazette Nationale ou le Moniteur Universel*, henceforth referred to as *Le Moniteur* was established on 24 November 1789 by one of the original French “press barons” of the eighteenth century, Charles-Joseph Panckoucke. Panckoucke also owned one of the most important pre-revolutionary French periodicals, the *Mercure de France*, as well as the stepchild of Denis Diderot’s great *Encyclopédie*, the

---

<sup>62</sup> Lusebrink and Popkin, *Enlightenment, Revolution, and the Periodical Press*, 199.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ernouf, *Maret, Duc de Bassano*, 26.

*Encyclopédie méthodique*.<sup>65</sup> For Censer and Popkin, Panckoucke was “one of the first great French press barons, accumulating privileges for periodicals and dreaming of creating truly modern political and literary journals that would give him a virtual monopoly on the market.”<sup>66</sup> The paper’s original intent was to provide comprehensive coverage of the debates of the National Assembly, cultivating a reputation of accuracy and impartiality. According to Hesse, “Its meticulous stenographic coverage of National Assembly proceedings immediately established the *Moniteur* as an unrivaled source of daily political information for the country.”<sup>67</sup> Its success was immediate and by 1791, Panckoucke had cultivated a loyal list of eighty-five hundred subscribers. Yet, Panckoucke was often forced to walk a tight rope during the Revolutionary period, particularly the Terror, to ensure his paper remained largely neutral and became *the* nation’s newspaper.

It was united with Hugues-Bernard Maret’s *Bulletin de l’Assemblée* during the early phase of the Revolution to reach a wider audience, as well as add a more personal flair to the paper,<sup>68</sup> by combining their contacts and subscription lists. Moreover, during the Terror, *Le Moniteur* received considerable state subsidies to insure its continuance.<sup>69</sup> Maret went on to become Napoleon’s Secretary of State under the Consulate in which capacity he oversaw the direction of *Le Moniteur*, Duc de Bassano in 1809, and minister of Foreign Affairs from 1811 to 1813. Maret is an interesting figure because he embodies the close relationship between the French bureaucracy and the publishing world that developed during the 1790s and was maintained during the empire. Not only was he involved with *Le Moniteur*, but he also owned

---

<sup>65</sup> Robert Darnton and Daniel Roche, *Revolution in Print: The Press in France 1775–1800*, (University of California Press, 1989), 148.

<sup>66</sup> Censer and Popkin, eds., *Press and Politics in Pre-Revolutionary France*, 16.

<sup>67</sup> Hesse, *Publishing and Cultural Politics in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1810*, 189.

<sup>68</sup> Ernouf, *Maret, Duc de Bassano*, 25.

<sup>69</sup> Hesse, *Publishing and Cultural Politics in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1810*, 189.

roughly half of one of the other major French periodicals published in Paris, that of the *Journal de Paris*.<sup>70</sup> Napoleon seems to have encouraged this liaison, with the *Journal de Paris* becoming a moderate newspaper under Maret and Roederer's control until 1811, and another tool by which the government could insert articles or at the very least have portions of *Le Moniteur* excerpted into it. This theme can also be identified with the *Journal des Débats*, the most widely read paper throughout the Napoleonic period, "which was the product of a merger whose details are obscure but which enabled the Bertins to exploit the subscription lists of a number of earlier right-wing papers."<sup>71</sup> Not only did the *Journal des Débats* frequently excerpt articles directly from *Le Moniteur*, greatly increasing the scope of readership of the latter's articles, but it also retained many of the former right-wing newsmen of the papers that were disbanded by the edict of 27 nivôse an VIII; those that it could not employ were often shuffled into political roles under the Napoleonic regime.<sup>72</sup>

In 1794, Panckoucke's son-in-law, Henri Agasse, assumed the directorship of his father-in-law's publishing business, which comprised of twenty-seven presses while employing over a hundred workers. Located on the rue des Poitevins, it was the largest privately owned commercial printing and publishing house in France, if not the world.<sup>73</sup> *Le Moniteur*, the publishing house's *pièce de résistance*, became the first "large-format national daily political newspaper in France," based off of the English model, "created in response to the public demand for 'news' after the freeing of the press in 1789."<sup>74</sup> However, in stark contrast to the majority of new Parisian periodicals sprouting up in France, "which modeled themselves on Brissot's *Le Patriote Français*, the *Moniteur* prided itself on the accuracy of its political information rather

---

<sup>70</sup> Ernouf, *Maret, Duc de Bassano*, 222.

<sup>71</sup> Popkin, *The Right-Wing Press in France, 1792-1800*, 171.

<sup>72</sup> Popkin, *The Right-Wing Press in France, 1792-1800*, 172.

<sup>73</sup> Hesse, *Publishing and Cultural Politics in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1810*, 188-189.

<sup>74</sup> Hesse, *Publishing and Cultural Politics in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1810*, 189.

than on its political opinions or the rhetorical skills of its authors.”<sup>75</sup> This divergence from many of the other periodicals of the 1790s, was not only crucial for establishing its large base of loyal readers, but also immediately endeared the paper to the Napoleonic regime in 1799. Its reputation for accuracy and impartiality as well as its extensive and loyal audience made it an ideal candidate to become the official press organ of the French government, proclaimed on 7 nivôse an VIII (28 December 1799) in the header of the paper, stating:

We are authorized to notify our subscribers, that from this day [7 nivôse] *Le Moniteur* is the only official newspaper. It will contain the sessions of the constituted authorities, acts of government, the news of the armies, and the facts and concepts, both interior [domestic] and exterior [foreign], provided by the ministerial correspondence. An article will be especially devoted to science, art and new discoveries.<sup>76</sup>

The last sentence regarding the arts, sciences, and technology or discoveries seems to be inserted to assuage the readers of the paper that it would retain its articles on more worldly topics and not focus entirely on governmental and political matters.

Agasse himself would successfully continue his father-in-laws business and in 1810 was described by the government as “one of the most honest men in the world, who has sacrificed everything for his father-in-law, Panckoucke. He prints the *Moniteur* and other works that are important and full of merit. A superb printing shop that runs day and night.”<sup>77</sup> Once again illustrating the importance that the Napoleonic regime placed on *Le Moniteur* as a newspaper “full of merit” and honesty, one above partisan politics that could present to the people of France information and arguments approved for consumption by the regime. The newspaper was a worthwhile medium for the government to explain its actions and present its world-view, but

---

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> *Gazette Nationale ou le Moniteur universel*, n° 97, septidi, 7 nivôse an VIII de la république française, une et indivisible (A Paris, de l’imprimerie du citoyen Agasse propriétaire du Moniteur, rue des Poitevins, n° 18).

<sup>77</sup> Hesse, *Publishing and Cultural Politics in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1810*, 189.

only in the context of a controlled environment. The chaos of the free press during the Revolution and the vicious partisanship of the early periodicals were to be avoided at all costs.

Under the supervision of Maret's office, the paper was divided into two sections. The first was official and its contents directly originated from the consular office and then the imperial office. Each evening, the proofs of the political articles, foreign and domestic news, police reports, supplements on government finances, army bulletins, as well as the debates or rulings of the *conseil d'état* and the *Sénat conservateur* were reviewed by the staff of the secretary of state and then approved with or without revisions. In addition, roughly two-hundred copies were then sent at the expense of the government to many of the high-ranking bureaucrats who held office throughout France, including the ministers and prefects.<sup>78</sup> The second part of the newspaper was filled with a variety of topics that the government was less interested in controlling ranging from reports on industry and agriculture, statistical data (*statistique générale de la France*), obituaries (*nécrologie*), recent literature (*livres divers*), the arts and music (*conservatoire de musique*), and even the weeks' lottery numbers (*loterie*), to occasional songs and poetry, travel and local information (*avis*), rates of exchange (*cours du change*) and a sample of the plays being performed at the major theaters (*spectacles*). These largely apolitical topics were left to the editor Agasse and his staff to approve.

Also emblazoned at the bottom of each issue was a notice for those desiring to subscribe to the newspaper or to continue their subscription in the future. The inscription reads:

The subscription is in Paris, rue Poitevins, n° 18. The price is 25 francs for three months, 50 francs for six months, and 100 francs for the whole year. You only register at the beginning of each month. You must send the letters and money, postage paid, to citizen Agasse, owner of the newspaper, rue Poitevins n° 18. It must be understood in sending the payment that it cannot be refunded. The letters of *départemens* with postage due, shall not be removed from the post. Care must be taken for more safety enclosing those letters which contain values,

---

<sup>78</sup> Ernouf, *Maret, Duc de Bassano*, 221.

and send everything concerning the drafting of the sheet to the editor at the rue Poitevins n° 18, from nine in the morning until five in the evening. (In Paris, the printing shop of citizen Agasse, owner of *Moniteur*, rue des Poitevins, n° 18).<sup>79</sup>

The expense of a *Le Moniteur* subscription for more modest Frenchmen would have been considerable. For comparison, a subscription for the physically smaller and not as lengthy *Journal des Débats* cost 15 francs for three months, 29 francs for six months, and 56 francs for the entire year.<sup>80</sup> In lieu of published accounts of the newspapers sales records, the collective nature of early modern reading, as well as the common practice of excerpting from *Le Moniteur* among the other remaining popular newssheets, is crucial here to understand the reach of *Le Moniteur*. Furthermore salons, reading rooms, masonic lodges, taverns, municipal facilities often made copies of major news articles available for consumption. Judging from Agasse's income of 3,000 livres for editing,<sup>81</sup> plus profits from other ventures of his publishing house, in conjunction, with the reduction of costs from *Le Moniteur* becoming the official paper and the elimination of a multitude of potential competitors after the edict of 27 nivôse, the paper remained a successful periodical throughout the Napoleonic period.<sup>82</sup>

But its main utility to the Napoleonic state was not its financial stability. Rather, it was the newspapers ability to act as a vehicle through which the government could publish justifications for significant policy changes. The sheer space available in *Le Moniteur*, being a full folio-sized newspaper, unlike its competitors, allowed for extensive and detailed coverage of

---

<sup>79</sup> For an example see : *Gazette Nationale ou le Moniteur universel*, n° 96, sextidi, 6 nivôse an VIII de la république française, une et indivisible (A Paris, de l'imprimerie du citoyen Agasse propriétaire du Moniteur, rue des Poitevins, n° 18).

<sup>80</sup> *Journal des Débats et Loix du Pouvoir Legislatif, et des Actes du Gouvernement*, lundi 30 Avril 1804, (de l'imprimerie de le Normant, rue des Prêtres-Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, n° 42).

<sup>81</sup> Hesse, *Publishing and Cultural Politics in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1810*, 176. Paul Delalain, *L'Imprimerie et la librairie à Paris de 1789 à 1813* (Paris, 1900); and AN, ser. F18, carton 25, "Notes sur les imprimeurs ci-après désignés" (1810-1811).

<sup>82</sup> Ernouf, *Maret, Duc de Bassano*, 221. See also: Robert Darnton, "L'Imprimerie de Panckoucke en l'an II," *Revue française d'histoire du livre*, 23 (1979): 359-69; F.A. Duprat, *Histoire de l'Imprimerie Impériale de Paris* (Paris : Duprat, 1861) ; and David I. Kulstein, "The Ideas of Charles-Joseph Panckoucke, Publisher of the Moniteur Universel, on the French Revolution," *French Historical Studies* Vol. 4, No. 3 (Spring, 1966): 304-319.

events, decisions, and speeches. The savvy political bureau of Maret's state department harnessed the considerable potential of *Le Moniteur* to contextualize and justify five momentous transitions in domestic policies. How did the French government explain the creation of a hereditary empire after years of republican government in France? How did it placate public opinion to enact the establishment of a new noble order? What was printed in *Le Moniteur* that justified the elevation of Joseph Bonaparte to the throne of France's longstanding ally Spain? How was the emperor's marriage to an Austrian Archduchess that necessarily drew parallels with Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, rationalized for the French public sphere? Each of these changes had clear parallels with the decisions and institutions of monarchical, *ancien régime* France, but were uniquely explained by use of political theory, pragmatism, historical examples, or even appeals to idealism. Even the last chapter, recounting Napoleon's return from exile on Elba, was the subject of extensive justification. However, unlike the previous four chapters, Napoleon abandoned the monarchical accouterment of his previous reign and recast himself as a liberal emperor. This exception proves the rule of the Napoleonic state's consistent pursuit of preparing public opinion for sensitive shifts in state policy from 1804 to 1815 and justifying those changes in the official *Gazette nationale ou le Moniteur universel*.

## CHAPTER ONE

### A MOTION FOR HEREDITY

“Comme Charlemagne, Citoyen Premier Consul, vous avez fixé par vos victoires les limites antiques et naturelles de la France; comme lui vous acquerrez, par vos institutions, le titre glorieux de restaurateur de l'empire français.”<sup>83</sup> – Le citoyen Granet, président de la conseil-général du département de Seine-et-Oise

The declaration of the First French Empire on 18 May 1804 under the hereditary rule of Napoleon Bonaparte and his family was a significant change in the structure of French state. As the First Consul, Napoleon had been consolidating more and more power in his hands through greater centralization and permanent bureaucratization of the state that had already been under way during the Directory,<sup>84</sup> elimination of political rivals, both Jacobins and monarchists, weakening the scope of the electoral process by creating an electoral pyramid that was “designed to neutralize popular democratic forces and to ensure that elections would produce a conservative result,”<sup>85</sup> and by limiting the powers of the legislative bodies, particularly the *Tribunat*. With the adoption of the Constitution of the Year X, Napoleon was granted the title of ‘Consul for Life,’ by the legislature, which was confirmed by a plebiscite and proclaimed official on 2 August 1802 (14 Thermidor, An X).

These developments eased the transition towards a hereditary monarchy, but it was the immediate context of an assassination plot against the life of the First Consul in 1804 that

---

<sup>83</sup> *Gazette Nationale ou le Moniteur universel*, n° 213, lundi, 3 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 23 Avril 1804, (A Paris, de l'imprimerie du citoyen Agasse propriétaire du Moniteur, rue des Poitevins, n° 18).

<sup>84</sup> Martyn Lyons, *France under the Directory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 237-38; Martyn Lyons, *Napoleon Bonaparte and the Legacy of the French Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 30.

<sup>85</sup> “An electorate of about 6 million at the base would nominate a tenth of its number to form the lists of notables at the municipal level. From these 600,000 notables would be appointed all local officials, municipal councilors, mayors and sub-prefects. They were also responsible for choosing the next tier of the electoral system, namely, the *listes départementales* of 60,000 men, from whom officials would be chosen at the level of every department... The notables on the departmental lists would then elect a *liste nationale*, whose 6,000 members would be eligible for membership of the national legislative.” Lyons, *Napoleon Bonaparte and the Legacy of the French Revolution*, 61.

provided the impetus to convince “all but the most fervent republicans that vesting hereditary authority in Napoleon’s line was the best safeguard for the gains of the Revolution.”<sup>86</sup> This plot was the most recent in a long line of conspiracies directed against the life of the First Consul with the Plot of the Infernal Machine (*intrigue de la rue Saint-Nicaise*) on 24 December 1800 and the Conspiracy of Daggers (*Conspiration des poignards*) on 10 October 1800 being two of the most well-known. The 1804 conspiracy was plotted by Georges Cadoudal, a *chouan*, in league with agents from Brittany, England, and a number of French émigrés in close proximity to the exiled House of Bourbon. All of these plots posed varying degrees of danger to the life of the First Consul, but only the 1804 conspiracy contained a serious plan for the overthrow of the state with the appropriate Bourbon allies who would reassume the throne as well as the necessary resources from the English.<sup>87</sup> The 1804 conspiracy highlighted the weakness of the current regime that lacked a hereditary line of succession if something unfortunate were to happen to the First Consul. It was the hereditary aspect that would maintain the stability of the regime and prevent the feared collapse back into revolutionary chaos or worse, the return of the Bourbon’s and a privileged, feudal order based on birth.

The change to a hereditary monarchy, presented with the more politically sensitive verbiage of “empire” and “emperor,” in the hands of a single man and his family line necessarily drew parallels to the toppled *ancien régime* government of France before the French

---

<sup>86</sup> Rafe Blaufarb, *Napoleon, Symbol for an Age: a Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008), 14.

<sup>87</sup> Baron Ernouf, *Maret, Duc de Bassano* (Paris: G. Charpentier, 1878), 228-229. “D’abord élective à temps, puis à vie, puis héréditaire. Cette dernière phase fut préparée par les conspirations sans cesse renaissantes, et bien autrement efficaces que l’influence des courtisans. La nature des choses tendait à l’hérédité. Les attentats contre la vie du chef en précipitèrent la déclaration. Consul à temps, un coup de main pouvait le chasser à son tour. Consul à vie, il suffisait d’un assassin...Il prit l’hérédité comme un bouclier. Il ne s’agissait plus seulement de le tuer; il fallait renverser l’Etat. Voilà la vérité, voilà le fond des choses, voilà ce que dira l’histoire quand il y aura un historien.”

Revolution.<sup>88</sup> How did the French government attempt to justify this significant shift in domestic politics and at the same time distance it from the house of Bourbon and their “despotic” rule of France that had existed only fifteen years prior to this declaration and of which many Frenchmen and women had experienced firsthand? What set the Napoleonic regime apart from the Bourbon monarchy, which was not only overthrown by the people of France in a violent revolution, but the head of that family, the King of France, Louis XVI had been executed in Paris? On the surface, the hereditary nature and the placement of sole power in the hands of a single, all powerful man, represented a challenge to the republican ideals of the French Revolution. What was to happen to the *biens nationaux* that had been sold up to that moment and what was to happen to the French émigrés who were living in exile throughout Europe and even farther afield? How were the former revolutionary elites and the forces of the Old Regime to be further reconciled with this new government?<sup>89</sup> How were these questions to be reconciled and explained in a way that presented the new change in the structure of the government as an absolutely crucial change for the prosperity of the French nation?

The Napoleonic regime was not short of answers, nor expansive and detailed justifications for the change. This is borne out not only in the extensive published minutes of the *Tribunat* and *Sénat* beginning in the first week of May 1804, but also in a torrent of addresses to the First Consul from across France ranging from departmental prefects, high-ranking military officials, and the administrative councils of major French cities to the lowliest town mayors, priests, and municipal councils. Not only do these addresses attempt to present a state that has

---

<sup>88</sup> *Gazette Nationale ou le Moniteur universel*, n° 221, Mardi, 11 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 1 Mai, 1804, (A Paris, de l'imprimerie du citoyen Agasse propriétaire du Moniteur, rue des Poitevins, n° 18). The speech by Curée in the *Tribunat* contrasts the Bourbon feudal rule, and its numerous abuses, with the potential rule of Napoleon whose rule would be based on merit, preserving the gains of the Revolution, and maintaining France's preeminence in the international sphere.

<sup>89</sup> Lyons, *Napoleon Bonaparte and the Legacy of the French Revolution*, 60.

reached an overwhelming consensus, but also a nation as electoral colleges, members of provincial academies of science, and schools of arts and business and other organizations that are not as directly related to the state bureaucracy had their addresses published in *Le Moniteur*. The frequent publication of these addresses points to the importance that the Napoleonic regime placed on creating a sense of a mass upswell of public opinion in favor of the First Consul being named hereditary emperor. As we will see, these addresses were used extensively to illustrate the strong support that the regime received in the wake of the 1804 conspiracy attempt, and later, the support that the *Tribunat*'s motion for heredity could call upon throughout France.

The Napoleonic regime utilized *Le Moniteur* to present its justifications and explanations for heredity, primarily through the debates of the legislative bodies, the *Sénat* and *Tribunat*. They employed conscientious coverage and timing, as well as precise language to fastidiously package their views to the French public. The justifications often contained references to national and historical mythologies. They also consisted of frequent comparisons between Napoleon and his achievements with historical figures, most notably Charlemagne, Joan of Arc, Alexander, and Justinian.<sup>90</sup> The official newspaper also created an atmosphere of immediacy on the one hand and support on the other, through what it carefully decided to publish, by focusing on three matters: An air of immediate danger to the “stability” and “tranquility” of the French nation due to the recent plots and conspiracies against the life of the First Consul; the significant achievements of Napoleon in both the international and domestic spheres, particularly securing the natural and ancient borders of the French state and the implementation of a new, rational civil code; and finally the massive outpouring of support that the motion for heredity was presented to

---

<sup>90</sup> References to these historical figures and many more people and countries (such as Britain being the new Carthage) can be found throughout the addresses sent to the First Consul between February 18<sup>th</sup> and May 18<sup>th</sup> of 1804.

have garnered both regionally across the physical landscape of France and hierarchically from the lowliest town officials to the powerful state bureaucrats.

Context was crucial for the regime in order to present the motion for heredity in the most necessary and immediate light. This was not a spur of the moment change in the content of the articles that fill *Le Moniteur* from the middle of February until the 18<sup>th</sup> of May, but a deliberate one that became indispensable in order to safeguard the tranquility and stability that the French nation had been able to so thoroughly enjoy under Napoleonic rule, or so the functionaries of the state came to believe.<sup>91</sup> *Le Moniteur*'s staff and their bureaucratic inspectors, under the supervision of Maret's state department, actively used the space in the newspaper to present the threat of instability on the one hand, and the magnificent achievements of Napoleon on the other.<sup>92</sup>

Throughout the three month period after the 1804 conspiracy's development was arrested by the middle of February, from the 18<sup>th</sup> of that month to May 18, articles, discussions, and references regarding the conspiracy, England's complicity in it, the secret correspondence of British agents Francis Drake and Spencer Smith, the involvement of former French general Pichegru and actively serving general Moreau, and brigands (*chouans*) backed by agents occupy a significant portion of the foreign and domestic political news printed in *Le Moniteur*.

---

<sup>91</sup> The articles in *Le Moniteur* mention the arrests of certain disreputable men, including Querrel who was to spill the beans on the entire plot while on "death row." Yet, it is not until three days after the arrest of Moreau and the last week and a half of February that a constant theme begins to emerge in the context, language, and timing of particular articles and information.

<sup>92</sup> On this point I differ with Baron Ernouf in his characterization of Maret: "At a time where public opinion dominated, misplaced if we want by too recent memories of demagogic anarchy, pronounced itself so energetically for the dictatorship, it is necessary to hold account of Maret's relative liberalism by mentioning the establishment of Senate committees of individual liberty and freedom of the press. If these indications, which detect his personal tendencies remained in state of a dead letter, it is not him that we must blame." Baron Ernouf, *Maret, Duc de Bassano* (Paris: G. Charpentier, 1878), 228. Actions not words should form our characterization of Maret who oversaw the political news being published in *Le Moniteur*. His "relative liberalism" did not seem to have any qualms about using the official journal to vigorously publish the regimes understanding of events and actions. To be clear, its Ernouf's characterization of Maret as a more passive player in the regimes propaganda effort that I am criticizing rather than imparting a moral judgment on whether what the regime was doing was "good" or "bad."

This three month period is not arbitrary, it is based on the arrest of many of the involved *Chouans* in the first two weeks of February as well as the arrest of General Moreau on 15 February 1804, and the proclamation of the Empire on 18 May 1804.<sup>93</sup> Between these two dates, the government utilized *Le Moniteur* to present their perception of the events, the danger they posed, and how best to prevent such future occurrences, which developed into the motion for heredity. Before February 18<sup>th</sup>, the vast majority of articles in the political section of *Le Moniteur* are centered around the Civil Code debates, the *hypothèque* debate, and poor relief as the government gathered facts about the conspiracy, continued arresting conspirators, and organized a publishing strategy.

Within the 90 day period after the arrest of general Moreau and before the proclamation of the empire, 72 of the days contained articles that referenced any number of the previously listed events and people related to the conspiracy and the potential of future sinister schemes to disrupt the stability of the French government. That is a remarkable eighty percent of the daily issues of *Le Moniteur* during that span.<sup>94</sup> Clearly, the bureaucrats who maintained oversight over the political news being published in *Le Moniteur* understood the potential threat to the Napoleonic regime. It was not the recent conspiracy that was quickly quashed by the diligence of the police and spy network under the Consulate that worried them the most, but the void that would be created if it was overthrown by intrigue or the death of Napoleon.

The president of the *Corps Législatif*, Fontanes, conveyed this general feeling, which animated, “the great bodies of the State [that] is found in every heart. The whole of France fell back in terror of the abyss that a large attack could open and anarchy that was again preparing to

---

<sup>93</sup> Ernest Daudet, *L'exil Et La Mort Du Général Moreau* (Paris: Hachette et cie, 1909), 19.

<sup>94</sup> This and other numbers regarding the numerical occurrence of certain terms, events, or people comes from an empirical reading of *Le Moniteur* and are entirely my own.

fill the ruins.”<sup>95</sup> Yet, Fontanes also stated that, “All the criminal plots are disrupted, and already the danger is past,” and even trivialized the plot presenting it as a common occurrence that great legislators and conquerors, like Bonaparte, faced:

Those who have seen firsthand the safety of the First Consul, at a time when everyone feared for him and for us, were able to apply to him this reflection of a great political writer on Charlemagne (1): "*He played all dangers, particularly those faced by great legislators and great conquerors; I mean conspiracies.*"

History will not fail to observe this point of resemblance that seems to place the restorer of the French Empire with its most illustrious founder.<sup>96</sup>

To Fontanes and the state bureaucrats, it was the potential future conspiracy, enticed by the inherent weakness of the Consular regimes reliance on the person of Bonaparte with no real mechanism to guarantee a peaceful succession that would maintain the guarantees of the Revolution that caused a flurry of activity and perhaps some sleepless nights among Maret and his staff. Tribune Jean-Francois Curée said it best in his motion for heredity, “In this happy situation we the People of France are in possession of all rights which were the sole purpose of the Revolution of 1789, the uncertainty of the future comes as the only trouble of the present state.”<sup>97</sup> That is why the concern for heredity was immediate: it was not solely the threats of the recent past, but those of the uncertain future that spurred the regime to action.

The second prong of the publishing strategy that emerged between February and May in *Le Moniteur* served as a counterpoint to the invectives against the “sinister” English, the arrests of conspiratorial brigands, and their subsequent trials and punishments. The goal was to emphasize Napoleon’s achievements foremost as a statesman and also as the leading general of France. In those two domains his role in the creation of the Civil Code and in the

---

<sup>95</sup> *Gazette Nationale ou le Moniteur universel*, n° 148, samedi, 28 pluviôse an 12 de la république française, 18 Février 1804, (A Paris, de l’imprimerie du citoyen Agasse propriétaire du Moniteur, rue des Poitevins, n° 18).

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> *Gazette Nationale ou le Moniteur universel*, n° 221, Mardi, 11 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 1 Mai, 1804, (A Paris, de l’imprimerie du citoyen Agasse propriétaire du Moniteur, rue des Poitevins, n° 18).

reestablishment of France's preeminent position on the continent were given the most attention.<sup>98</sup> For example, the general council of the department of the Seine-et-Oise wrote in their address to Bonaparte, "Like Charlemagne, Citizen First Consul, you have secured by your victories the ancient and natural borders of France; like him you acquire, by your institutions, the glorious title of restorer of the French Empire."<sup>99</sup> Featured even more prominently were articles, discussions, and references to the Civil Code, which appeared on 48 of the 90 days during the three month period preceding the declaration of Empire.

While this 53 percent figure pales in comparison to the eighty percent occurrence of articles on the conspiracy, its staying power after the publication of the Civil Code on March 21<sup>st</sup> until the proclamation of Empire on May 18<sup>th</sup> was impressive, appearing in 40 percent of the issues of *Le Moniteur* during that period. The Civil Code was widely praised in many of the addresses and featured prominently in the *Tribunat* speeches as a rational, accessible, and clear codification of law. In Curée's motion he asked rhetorically, "has not the Civil Code the most complete and methodical system of legislation ever, emerged majestically from the learned and laborious discussions of legal scholars and statesmen, and spread knowledge of civil rights to the people?"<sup>100</sup> Other tribunes expressed similar sentiments, with Siméon declaring that Napoleon had given France, "Justice so richly endowed with a code composed of all the treasures of ancient and modern jurisprudence, [which] promises to enjoy and spread the benefits."<sup>101</sup> Above all else, the Code symbolized the regime's commitment to the rule of a pragmatic, just, and consistent law that was contrasted with previous governments of the French Revolution,

---

<sup>98</sup> See: Wayne Hanley, *The Genesis of Napoleonic Propaganda, 1796-1799 (Gutenberg-E)* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2005).

<sup>99</sup> *le Moniteur universel*, n° 213, lundi, 3 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 23 Avril, 1804.

<sup>100</sup> *le Moniteur universel*, n° 221, mardi, 11 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 1 Mai, 1804. Translation from: Rafe Blaufarb, *Napoleon, Symbol for an Age: a Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008), 105.

<sup>101</sup> *le Moniteur universel*, n° 222, mercredi, 12 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 2 Mai, 1804.

particularly the lambasted Directory. Fontanes, as always, succinctly summarized the significance of the Civil Code, “A great enterprise designed in vain by Charlemagne himself, is finally completed. A Uniform Code will govern thirty million men. All the ancient peoples of Gaul together as a single people embrace one another on behalf of the same ancestors; and as they have a common origin, they live under the same laws and share the same destiny.”<sup>102</sup> This achievement, perhaps above all else, garnered the most praise for the First Consul among the bureaucrats and the addresses, and placed him on the short list of famous statesman and conquerors.

The third and final part of the strategy involved the publication of hundreds of addresses to the First Consul in order to illustrate the broad based support the Napoleonic regime could count on from its own bureaucracy and those of the French public. Members of the civil service, ecclesiastics from both the Catholic and Protestant denominations, the army, the navy, cities, local councils, members of various associations particularly learned societies, and even addresses by groups of citizens from across France sent letters to the First Consul exclaiming their horror at the plot against his life, what Napoleon meant to the French state, and what he meant to them, personally.

On May 14, the mayor and municipal council of Orléans sent Napoleon a letter thanking him for continuing the memory of Joan of Arc by re-erecting her statue in their city and went so far as to compare the two, proclaiming, “It is you, Consul General, who, like Joan of Arc, have taken up the reins of government floating in weak and uncertain hands; it is you who has by force of success, glory and moderation, returned peace to Europe, and France to the first rank among nations.”<sup>103</sup> The civil and military functionaries of Dijon went even further, claiming that

---

<sup>102</sup> *le Moniteur universel*, n° 184, dimanche, 4 Germinal an 12 de la république française, 25 Mars, 1804.

<sup>103</sup> *le Moniteur universel*, n° 234, lundi, 24 floréal an 12 de la république française, 14 Mai, 1804.

the multiplicity of Napoleon's triumphs as well as the, "boldness and brilliance of your enterprises, raised the enthusiasm of the armies to the highest degree; that of the nation was no less; and one year has barely elapsed that the fortune of Bonaparte had already passed into a proverb like that of Alexander, Caesar, and Pompey."<sup>104</sup> Throughout our 90 day period, addresses of a similar tone and gratitude sent to the First Consul appear on 78 percent of the days and were published in large clusters of anywhere between four and 59 addresses.<sup>105</sup>

More than anything else, these addresses occupied a significant amount of the available space in *Le Moniteur's* issues. So much so that on March 21<sup>st</sup>, the editor of *Le Moniteur*, Henri Agasse, wrote:

The number of addresses to the First Consul decided upon by the various army corps, civilian and military functionaries of all the departments, by the clergymen of all faiths, and the inhabitants of most towns, daily becomes so great, that we are forced to give up the method of publication we have adopted so far [of printing the entire address]. Henceforth we propose to limit ourselves to quote the authors of those which have not yet been published, and choose from the expressions of unanimous sentiment, those opinions that seem to better characterize and paint it.<sup>106</sup>

To provide a sense of just how many addresses were being published, during the month prior to the editorial decision to change the format of the addresses, *Le Moniteur* inserted 455 of them. Of those 455, 238 or 52 percent were civilian functionaries, 189 or 42 percent were members of the military, fifteen or three percent were clergymen, both Catholic and Protestant, eleven or two percent were from the navy, and the remaining two were from the Bank of France and the *Institut National*. While the two largest government institutions, the civil service and the military were given an overwhelming preponderance of the space reserved for addresses in *Le Moniteur*, there

---

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Over that ninety-one day period seventy of the issues contained addresses to the First Consul. The two days with the largest amount of published addresses were given supplements to fit them all. February 4, 1804 contained the low point of four addresses while March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1804 contained the fifty-nine addresses and included a supplement to the normal issue.

<sup>106</sup> *le Moniteur universel*, n° 180, Mercredi, 30 ventôse an 12 de la république française, 21 Mars, 1804.

was a deliberate attempt to present the widespread nature of support Napoleon received. This trend becomes more evident throughout April after most of the higher ranking official's letters were already published, allowing for the foreign departments, judges of peace, mayors, line infantry regiments, and municipal councils to have their addresses enshrined in the official newspaper.

With context firmly established, the first mention of heredity in *Le Moniteur* is found on the second page of the May 1<sup>st</sup> edition with the full 2,260 word motion for Napoleon being empowered as Emperor and justification of the Empire being made hereditary in his family, from *Tribunat* member, Curée. Throughout the rest of the first week of May, the speeches on the motion for heredity of twenty-three tribunes are published in *Le Moniteur*. These debates occupy nearly all of the space in these issues of the official newspaper and twice require supplements to the normal edition in order to include the lengthier speeches. Many of them cite numerous political theorists and philosophers such as Montesquieu, Rousseau, Bacon, Cicero, Machiavelli, Jean Bodin, Edward Gibbon, and Mirabeau. Furthermore, nearly all the *Tribunat* speeches published in *Le Moniteur* elaborate on three central strands meant to justify the creation of a hereditary empire: the political and military context in Europe, popular sovereignty, and the continuity of heredity with the goals of the French Revolution.

The tribunes utilized the political and military context of Europe in order to illustrate two themes, namely, the novelty of the contemporary military situation where the most powerful nations of civilized Europe were allied against France and the commonality and success of hereditary rule across the large states of Europe. Tribune Gillet set the stage with a lengthy comparison between the European military situation in the successions of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries and that of 1804. Whereas the old French kingdoms faced Mohammedan raids and

barbarian hordes, the French republic was faced with the “combined efforts of civilized Europe.”<sup>107</sup> France at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century required a man capable of maintaining France’s position in the first rank of nations and defeating the efforts of allied Europe to end a political order based upon the rule of uniform law. That man was Napoleon Bonaparte, “who triumphed like Hannibal and Charlemagne, through the inaccessible rocks of the Alps...who pulled together the old limits our empire, who would dare dispute our right to coat the majesty that belongs to a Great Nation?”<sup>108</sup> Yet, it was not just an outstanding man that the nation desired, but a political system, respected by Europe, with an extensive history of stability.

What was the foundation of these powerful states of Europe, which combined their strength in the hopes of defeating republican France? It was the stability and continuity of their political systems that had established and maintained their status among the first rank of nations. Tribune Siméon highlighted this commonality and posited the question of why larger states in Europe, where there would be greater means to oppose the government of one, are continually inclined to hereditary government?<sup>109</sup> Tribune Duveyrier answered him calling upon the examples of history, arguing, “We well know that in the big states, the mode of temporary election, incidentally, always forced at each vacancy of the Head of Government, a system of permanent alarms, individual ambitions, foreign attempts of internal revolts, revolutions, destruction. History gave us, in this regard, rare and always fatal examples.”<sup>110</sup> Moreover, tribune Jaubert rhetorically asked, “Look around us. How do the great powers of Europe

---

<sup>107</sup> Discours du c. Gillet, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 222, mercredi, 12 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 2 Mai, 1804.

<sup>108</sup> Discours du c. Siméon, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 222, mercredi, 12 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 2 Mai, 1804.

<sup>109</sup> Discours du c. Siméon, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 222, mercredi, 12 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 2 Mai, 1804.

<sup>110</sup> Discours du c. Duveyrier, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 222, mercredi, 12 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 2 Mai, 1804.

constitute themselves? With a hereditary power.”<sup>111</sup> Why should France maintain the weaker form that offers an opportunity for her European enemies to cause interior disturbances? Not only should France adopt heredity because of its success in generating stability over centuries as well as its natural synergy with large and populous states, but also to avoid the electoral system that had proved so unsuitable during the previous decade.<sup>112</sup>

The danger of an electoral government, the alternative to heredity, was further derided by Tribune Duvidal, who referred to it as “a frightening doctrine of revolution. Each change makes clear particular ambitions, nourishes the spirit of faction, opens opportunities for intrigue...in France the doctrine of heredity is national.”<sup>113</sup> The tribunes took this argument even farther, presenting evidence that for fourteen centuries heredity had been the “true expression of the will of the people.”<sup>114</sup> Ironically, the short electoral experiment in France where the vast majority of people could engage in politics was derided as dangerous, while hereditary rule in the hands of single family was presented as the will of the sovereign people of France and the wish of the French people in 1789.<sup>115</sup> What evidence did the tribunes utilize to argue this seemingly absurd case?

The tribunes begin by blurring the line between the Republic and hereditary rule. Gillet cited J. J. Rousseau who stated, “I call Republic any State governed by laws, under any form of administration that this may be,”<sup>116</sup> which, of course, was the foundation of the Napoleonic

---

<sup>111</sup> Discours du c. Jaubert, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 223, jeudi, 13 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 3 Mai, 1804.

<sup>112</sup> Discours du c. Fréville, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 222, mercredi, 12 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 2 Mai, 1804.

<sup>113</sup> Discours du c. Duvidal, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 223, jeudi, 13 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 3 Mai, 1804.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., Duvidal utilizes historical examples and the cahier des assemblées bailliagères.

<sup>115</sup> Discours du c. Duveyrier, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 222, mercredi, 12 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 2 Mai, 1804.

<sup>116</sup> Discours du c. Gillet, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 222, mercredi, 12 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 2 Mai, 1804.

regime. Gillet went on to declare that the “Republic in general, this is the thing of the people...[it] considers the welfare of the totality of its citizens,” citing Cicero’s argument that, “The Republic, is a thing of the people, whether it be produced by the one or by the nobles, or whether it is governed by the whole population.”<sup>117</sup> As his last source, Gillet employed the speech of the abbe Millot, a deputy of the 1484 States-General who declared, “A state or some government is public affairs and public affairs is the thing of the people. When I say the people, I mean to say the collection or totality of citizens.”<sup>118</sup> If a republic, such as the Consulate was a thing of the people then would the transition to hereditary government deny the sovereignty of the people?

Most assuredly not, according to Tribune Siméon who utilized the historical examples of power transfers under Pépin and Hugues Capet and compared them to the contemporary situation in France, stating, “Nothing will be changed in the nation. We will pass on a government to the same government, so that it is only a title more in line with our grandeur, more analogous to that of which other peoples have decorated their leaders, it will acquire the force of perpetuity, and the security of the future...”<sup>119</sup> The reestablishment of hereditary rule would not change the foundation of the republic created by the French Revolution, namely, a government restrained by the rule of a uniform and just legal system. The “we” Siméon referred to was not the legislators, but the people of France, because, “It is for themselves that people raise their supreme magistrates...Hereditary is rather an assurance of tranquility...the people, the owner and provider of sovereignty, can change its government, and consequently dismiss it...”<sup>120</sup> Siméon even

---

<sup>117</sup> Discours du c. Gillet, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 222, mercredi, 12 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 2 Mai, 1804.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Discours du c. Siméon, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 222, mercredi, 12 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 2 Mai, 1804.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

mentioned the exclusion of the Stuart line in England as an example of this right, which was the only one that allowed the English to exclude the reigning family. Yet, while the French government itself would remain based upon the rule of law, was the principle of heredity in line with the goals of the French Revolution?

Perhaps the most significant dilemma for many of the tribunes centered on demonstrating that there was a continuity of policy between the French Republic and Empire, and above all that hereditary rule was in line with the goals of the French Revolution. Tribune, Siméon began by calling upon the historical examples of Pépin and Hugues Capet, noting that, “when the institutions are weakened, and the degenerated family can no longer support the weight of public affairs, another family is elevated.”<sup>121</sup> Thus, when “Pépin, according to Montesquieu, was crowned, it was more or less a phantom of a ceremony. It gained nothing by that than adornments; it had changed nothing in the nation.”<sup>122</sup> When the successors of Charlemagne, “had lost the supreme power, Hugues Capet held the two keys of the kingdom; we unpack on him a crown that only he was able to defend.”<sup>123</sup> Continuing the logic, Siméon compared those examples to the contemporary situation in France, stating:

We are in the same circumstances. Let there be no mistake in looking like a Revolution, that which is only a consequence of the Revolution. We will finish it. Nothing will be changed in the nation. We will pass on a government to the same government, so that it is only a title more in line with our grandeur, more analogous to that of which other peoples have decorated their leaders, it will acquire the force of perpetuity, and the security of the future as far as it is in the power of men to make himself aware of masters by wise precautions.<sup>124</sup>

The last line seems to be a caution to future statesman to prevent the return of an autocrat who abuses his power, transforming himself from a leader to a master. This analogy is used

---

<sup>121</sup> *le Moniteur universel*, n° 222, mercredi, 12 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 2 Mai, 1804.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

frequently by the tribunes to paint Napoleon as the noble leader who will not abuse the uniform legal system he had just instituted and become a “master.” In fact, Curée ends his motion for heredity by urging his fellow statesman to approve the motion, “because by voting heredity of a leader, as Pliny said to Trajan, we prevent the return of a master.”<sup>125</sup> Therefore, not only would the change to hereditary government prevent the return of an abusive monarchy, but it was, according to Siméon, even a consequence of the Revolution.

This line of argumentation is continued in great detail by tribune Fréville who concentrates on the events of 1789 to 1791. Mounting the rostra, he asked the rhetorical question regarding the Constituent Assembly’s maintenance of hereditary rule, albeit in attenuated form, “In this famous era by the general enthusiasm which had warmed, which had carried the nation, would it have seemed believable that its representatives had the weakness to maintain any institution incompatible with liberty and equality?”<sup>126</sup> The error of that Assembly was not its continued support of hereditary government, but who it chose to rule in that role after Louis XVI’s flight. According to Fréville, “when the Constituent Assembly tried to place the scepter back in the such feeble hands of a dethroned king by public opinion it was, I say, at this time that the first disagreement is manifested between the Nation and its representatives.”<sup>127</sup> The choice was decried not only because Louis XVI had proved himself unworthy, but also because it went against the will of the people.

Yet, the error was never in the desire to continue the rule of hereditary government, “because the hereditary government is capable of combining itself with a free constitution, because it enters in its essential character no necessary connection with that odious multitude of

---

<sup>125</sup> Discours du citoyen Curée, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 221, Mardi, 11 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 1 Mai, 1804.

<sup>126</sup> Discours du citoyen Siméon, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 222, mercredi, 12 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 2 Mai, 1804.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

privileges, feudal distinctions, and incoherent institutions from which the Revolution has forever rid our homeland.”<sup>128</sup> In fact, in the words of Fréville, “What is indisputable is that the warmest friends of freedom would have been at the height of their vows, if the crisis that I have just mentioned had led them to found a new dynasty.”<sup>129</sup> Not only was heredity not at odds with the Revolution, but it would have been the height of their duty to create a new dynasty with a more worthy family. Fréville’s rhetorical prowess is evident once again when he asked, “When we ask all Frenchmen, open to love of the country, is this heredity of the supreme power a sacrifice that experience and necessity pulls us at the expense of the principles that France invoked when she held the last of the Bourbon’s accountable?”<sup>130</sup> The only answer could be no, because the affirmative would mean that:

...after having maintained these principles by so many sacrifices, if after having them consecrated by so many victories, we had to deny them, a painful feeling would torment the Nation...One would wonder why rivers of blood would have been paid. Hollow in the eyes of Europe, and what would be more painful still, hollow to our own eyes, we would be forced to admit that we had bought at so high a price the right to choose our own form of late and shameful recantation. Simply put, if heredity was against the principles of the Revolution, then the years of bloodshed and sacrifices would have been for naught.<sup>131</sup>

Furthermore, why would the Constituent Assembly decided to continue it even after the King’s flight in 1791? Fréville framed the problem as, “how could they agree on the selection of a leader worthy of the start, to get on the bulwarks of the Franks?”<sup>132</sup> This lack of an obvious leader to inherit the mantle of hereditary government was the underlying problem not the form of government, which was tainted in its form, not its character, by the institutions of the Bourbon regime.

---

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Discours du citoyen Fréville, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 222, mercredi, 12 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 2 Mai, 1804.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

Returning to the present, Fréville concluded his speech, stating, “It is by the same reasons that we desire today heredity of the supreme power; we have not ceased to be the French of 1790 that history will not accuse of a single servile concession,”<sup>133</sup> with the implicit understanding that they had found a man worthy of the title and that this title was not a submission to a new abusive autocrat, but one that was very much in line with the gains of the Revolution.

Tribune Gillet built upon this idea in a similar vein, explicitly stating: “That man, France has found in Napoleon Bonaparte.”<sup>134</sup> The suffering during revolutionary years was not for nothing, “It was necessary that the maturity of the times produced a hero which Providence had decreed the alliance with the destinies of the first nation of the World.”<sup>135</sup> It was no longer archaic feudal charters that were to be obeyed, but “it was the law which ordered. It reigns uniformly throughout all France... In the North and the South one lives the same under the Code Napoleon.”<sup>136</sup> Gillet went on to compare Napoleon’s achievements with some of the famous Frankish rulers and matched the rhetorical dexterity of Fréville:

If, as Pepin Herstal, he was able to calm the discontent and unrest; if, as Charles Martel, he broke the enemy's war effort, and made his name famous even among the peoples of the East; if, as Pepin the Short, he restored the union between the civil power of the government and the moral power of religion; if, like Charlemagne, he was the conqueror of Germany, the protector of Italy, the legislator of France, the honor of warriors, the rival of savants, the restorer of public instruction; though with a broader thinking and a higher power than the son of Robert the Strong, he finally put up a dike to the attacks of maritime nations that greed has made devastating; if he replicates in himself all the titles that were adopted by the nation among the regenerators of its dynasties; tribunes, you

---

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Discours du citoyen Gillet, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 222, mercredi, 12 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 2 Mai, 1804.

<sup>135</sup> Discours du citoyen Fréville, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 222, mercredi, 12 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 2 Mai, 1804.

<sup>136</sup> Discours du citoyen Fréville, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 222, mercredi, 12 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 2 Mai, 1804.

hesitate to vote for a new dynasty began under the auspices of his genius and glory?<sup>137</sup>

The state, and the French nation, had seemingly found their man.

In closing his motion for heredity, Curée summarized the argument in favor of Bonaparte and the relationship between heredity and the Revolution, “In a word, all the people had wanted in 1789 was restored, equality had been maintained, the law, which alone can impose burdens on citizens for the well-being of the state, has been respected; the administration responds sternly to everything that could undermine the finality of the sales of national property, and the rights of buyers. Finally, the altars were raised, and religious doctrine consecrated at the same time as freedom of conscience.”<sup>138</sup> To tribune Duveyrier, the people of France were merely asking for, “This ancient warranty [heredity], melted in its political system and institutions...that gives great states, not the promise of a few years, but the permanence of centuries.”<sup>139</sup> The French people of 1789 simply wanted a “hereditary leader, institutions guaranteeing public freedom and inviolable laws, that is the wish of the French people in 1789... Today we demand the solemn pact requested and promised in 1789.”<sup>140</sup> The return to heredity was the culmination of the French Revolution and the fulfillment of the desire of those who participated by assuming their ancient right to elect their leaders. This rather unusual understanding of popular sovereignty formed the foundation of the justifications for heredity. In short, stability through a uniform and just legal system, protection of those who bought national property, and freedom of religion, three of the main goals of the Revolution, had been secured by the Napoleonic regime and would continue to form the bedrock of that government, whether it was hereditary or not.

---

<sup>137</sup> Discours du citoyen Gillet, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 222, mercredi, 12 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 2 Mai, 1804.

<sup>138</sup> Discours du citoyen Curée, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 221, Mardi, 11 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 1 Mai, 1804.

<sup>139</sup> Discours du c. Duveyrier, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 222, mercredi, 12 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 2 Mai, 1804.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

There was only a single dissenting voice in the *Tribunat*, that of Lazare Carnot, a famous French politician and general of the Revolutionary period well-known for saving France from invasion in 1793-94 with his organizational skill. Carnot's speech was published in *Le Moniteur* on 4 May 1804. He argued that factionalism and the evils France experienced during the 1790s were a result of "circumstances as imperious as they were fleeting,"<sup>141</sup> not because those negative qualities are inherently associated with republicanism, which many of the other tribunes had posited. Contrasting the 1790s with post-Treaty of Amiens France, which no longer had factionalism and was in a "calm state," Carnot declared that "it is easier to form a republic without anarchy than a monarchy without despotism."<sup>142</sup> Furthermore, the only mechanisms that had been developed to temper supreme power were "intermediate or privileged bodies" in regard to which, Carnot asked the rhetorical question, "But isn't this remedy worse than the problem? After all, absolute power only takes away liberty, whereas the institution of privileged bodies strips both liberty and equality...."<sup>143</sup> Thus, for Carnot, the reestablishment of heredity in itself did not provide the most danger to France. Rather it was heredity's association with privileged bodies such as the return of a *noblesse*, beholden to the new hereditary family for patronage, power, and office that would eliminate the newly established principle of equality, which he could not abide.

The return of a nobility, which Carnot presaged, did not come immediately, but between 1806 and 1808, the Napoleonic regime prepared public opinion for a reestablished *noblesse*, albeit of a different nature than its *ancien régime* counterpart, which will be the subject of the

---

<sup>141</sup> Discours du citoyen Carnot, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 224, Vendredi, 14 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 4 Mai, 1804.

<sup>142</sup> Discours du citoyen Carnot, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 224, Vendredi, 14 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 4 Mai, 1804.

<sup>143</sup> Discours du citoyen Carnot, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 224, Vendredi, 14 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 4 Mai, 1804.

next chapter. Unfortunately for Carnot, “The Organizer of Victory (*l’organisateur de la victoire*),” his rhetoric failed to persuade the rest of the *Tribunat* and the members of the *Sénat* who ratified the motion for heredity. In fact, many of the *Tribunat* speeches published after his made it their primary goal to refute him point by point, including Carrion-Nisas who was allowed to speak a second time, entirely to attack the arguments of the lone dissenting tribune. For example, tribune Costaz takes Carnot to task for using the United States as example of a large, populous state that is a successful republic. Costaz argues that the United States is an exception because of its relatively small and widely dispersed population and because it has no major European powers as immediate neighbors.<sup>144</sup> Furthermore, Carnot seemingly failed to convince the French reading public at large who read the articles in *Le Moniteur*, or other French journals such as the *Journal des Debats* and the *Journal de Paris* that commonly excerpted articles from the official journal as evidenced by the plebiscite results in November 1804.<sup>145</sup>

This “week of justification” was built on the contextual foundation of the 1804 conspiracy and its counterpoint the impressive achievements of Napoleon as a statesman and general, as well as the hundreds of addresses to the First Consul, which dominated *Le Moniteur’s* pages. The Napoleonic regime utilized *Le Moniteur* and its broad reach as the second most popular newspaper during the Napoleonic period to explain and justify this sensitive and fundamental shift in domestic policy from a Republican form of government to a hereditary monarchy. The French public’s inundation with extensive and carefully crafted contextual evidence and then justifications over a three month period from February 18<sup>th</sup> to May 18<sup>th</sup> was a masterful attempt to package the change in the most positive light through extensive coverage,

---

<sup>144</sup> Discours du citoyen Costaz, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 225, Samedi, 15 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 5 Mai, 1804.

<sup>145</sup> 2 August, 1804 / 14 Thermidor, An XII: End of the counting of votes cast during the plebiscite on the Empire: 3,521,675 ayes, 2,579 noes (Source: *Bulletin des Lois*).

precise timing, and persuasive language. Immediately following the declaration of Napoleon as emperor and the placement of heredity in his family line, the addresses and any mention of the conspiracy were abandoned, while the Civil Code was given markedly less attention during the subsequent two weeks. Just as it was said that stability would be reaffirmed in France with the declaration of hereditary rule, tranquility returned to the pages of *Le Moniteur* after the 18<sup>th</sup> of May. How the regime would prepare public opinion for future shifts in domestic policy, specifically after the enormous victories of Napoleon from 1804-1807, will be the subject of the next four chapters.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE CREATION OF THE IMPERIAL NOBILITY, 1806-1808

“L’opinion publique n’est point incertaine sur les avantages de ce système. S’il restait encore quelques doutes à résoudre, j’aurais recours à l’expérience des siècles, et à l’autorité de l’un de nos plus grands publicistes, qui a considéré l’existence et le maintien des distinctions héréditaires, *comme entrant, en quelque façon, dans l’essence de la monarchie.*”<sup>146</sup> – Archi-Chancelier Jean-Jacques-Régis de Cambacérès, *Le Moniteur* 14 Mars 1808

Carnot’s greatest fear regarding the creation of a new hereditary monarchy was its close association with privileged bodies, particularly a nobility (*noblesse de l’empire*), that could strip both liberty and equality.<sup>147</sup> His opposition to the motion for heredity on these terms was vindicated between 1806 and 1808 when the Napoleonic state gradually passed legislation confirming the reestablishment of a *noblesse*. Yet this new nobility was not to be founded on the basis of high birth as that of the *ancien régime*, but on the recipient’s merit and service. This new order was preceded in 1802 by the creation of the *Ordre national de la légion d’honneur*, a merit-based order created to award French citizens for “eminent merit” or extraordinary service, in both the military or civil domains, to the French nation.<sup>148</sup> It was not a hereditary order, with the exception that if three consecutive generations were inducted into the *légion d’honneur*, their direct descendent would automatically be inducted as well.<sup>149</sup> The *légion d’honneur* was open to any French citizen, from any profession, regardless of wealth. However, it ended up being overwhelmingly awarded to Frenchmen serving in the army, especially those who had been long-

---

<sup>146</sup> Intérieur, Paris, le 12 Mars, *Gazette Nationale ou le Moniteur universel*, n° 74, Lundi, 14 Mars 1808 (A Paris, de l’imprimerie du citoyen Agasse propriétaire du Moniteur, rue des Poitevins, n° 14).

<sup>147</sup> Discours du citoyen Carnot, *Gazette Nationale ou le Moniteur universel*, n° 224, Vendredi, 14 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 4 Mai, 1804 (A Paris, de l’imprimerie du citoyen Agasse propriétaire du Moniteur, rue des Poitevins, n° 18).

<sup>148</sup> Corps Législatif, séance du 29 Germinal, 6 heures du soir, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 241, Vendredi, 1 Prairial an 10 de la république française, 21 Mai, 1802.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

serving soldiers who had fought under Napoleon, as well as the high-ranking statesman and bureaucrats.<sup>150</sup>

What the *légion d'honneur* did not provide was a stable foundation for a new societal elite beholden to Napoleon and his imperial regime. To accomplish that goal, the regime needed to delicately introduce a system of hereditary titles that would not only grant wealth and property, but also prestige. The incentives of a yearly monetary stipend, what amounted to a fiefdom of personal property, the prestige of a unique title, and the ability to pass on that title to the holder's male heir were meant to garner loyalty to the still young First French Empire. Moreover, all four of these enticements existed under the old noble order of the Bourbon monarchy. What set the two systems of monarchical patronage apart was the lack of privileges and preferment associated with the imperial incarnation. Any effort to alter the principle of equality under the law would have been anathema to a centralized hereditary state that justified its own creation on the basis of popular sovereignty and heredity's continuity with the goals of the French Revolution, as we have seen. The only two privileges granted to the new imperial nobles was the right to use a unique heraldry design and the fact that all lands granted to these nobles by their title were held in *majorat*, meaning that they were held indivisible and passed down to the first-born male heir of the previous title holder.<sup>151</sup> This last "privilege" was a requirement for the title to be made hereditary, along with the need for the title-holder's heir to have the necessary level of income to support that title.

Yet, even with the lack of privileges and preferment akin to the *ancien régime noblesse*, this was still a sensitive shift in domestic policy that once again harkened back to monarchical

---

<sup>150</sup> Alexander Grab, *Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 42. Also see: Louis Bergeron, *France Under Napoleon*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 64.

<sup>151</sup> Claude Ducourtial-Rey, "Legion d'Honneur," in *Dictionnaire Napoléon*, ed. Jean Tulard (Paris: Fayard, 1987), 1054-61.

France. The French Revolution had firmly abolished privileged orders in the name of “*liberté, égalité, fraternité*” and thus any attempt to reestablish noble titles, which could easily be construed as the potential return of privileges, had to be orchestrated with the utmost caution. The sensitivity of reestablishing a *noblesse* can be seen in two clear ways. First and most obviously, through the vast separation in time between each of the decrees meant to establish the new noble order. The two most important laws, those creating the title of *duc* in 1806 and the titles of *comte, baron, and chevalier* in 1808, were separated by nearly two full years. This piecemeal approach was reinforced by the fact that none of the laws related to the imperial nobility were given any form of sustained coverage in the official newspaper. Unlike the motion for heredity, there was no attempt to publish numerous articles related to the new *noblesse* either before or after the laws were published in *Le Moniteur*. The drawn out nature of the decrees on the nobility from 1806 to 1808 and the lack of any sustained coverage in *Le Moniteur* highlights the sensitivity of the change for the Napoleonic state.

As sensitive as this change was, the official journal of the French government was still used to justify the recreation of a *noblesse*. And although sustained coverage was no longer the method of presentation and a tool to garner increasing support for this shift in domestic policy, context remained a crucial aspect of *Le Moniteur's* coverage. Instead of publishing addresses of support for the change, the regime used the issues preceding and succeeding the *noblesse* decrees to present the Napoleonic regime in the most positive light. Maret's political bureau of the state department couched the solitary *noblesse* decrees in a multitude of articles featuring the international success of France against the Third and Fourth Coalitions and the domestic successes of the government in terms of infrastructure built, the new education system, and various enticements to French industry. Not only did the state carefully announce the new noble

titles after major military victories, but they also used *Le Moniteur* to present the justifications in a profusion of tremendous successes.

This chapter will chronologically trace the gradual process of instituting a new imperial nobility, beginning with a brief discussion of the introduction of French princes with the creation of the empire, and focusing on the decrees related to non-imperial family titles during the years 1806 to 1808. It will focus on the language, timing, and the nature of the coverage of each of the major decrees on the nobility. Above all, it will illustrate the three central strands of argumentation used to justify the creation of the new imperial nobility: the need for institutions analogous to hereditary monarchy, its beneficial nature for French society, and the lofty example noble titles would set for meritorious service to the state.

In addition to creating the empire on 18 May 1804, the *senatus-consulte organique* (28 Floréal an 12) also introduced a number of new imperial, essentially royal, titles in France.<sup>152</sup> Title three, section IX of the decree relating to the imperial family established that the male members of the imperial family carried the title of *Princes français*, while the eldest son would carry the title *Prince imperial*.<sup>153</sup> As Napoleon did not have a son at the time of this decree, princes Joseph and Louis Bonaparte were named as his successors for the time being. There is absolutely no mention of any further titles or the possibility of an imperial nobility. With the foundation of noble titles in the form of the imperial princes, why did the regime wait another two years before publishing decrees creating the title of *duc*?

While the sensitive nature of noble titles most likely played a large role, more practically, the new French Empire was still relatively unsecure as a third coalition of Britain, Austria, and Russia was mobilizing to reduce growing French power and influence in central Europe. Instead

---

<sup>152</sup> *le Moniteur universel*, n° 240, dimanche, 30 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 20 Mai, 1804.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

of potentially disrupting the stability that had been established domestically with the swift end to the 1804 conspiracy, the regime seems to have decided on a cautionary approach. Furthermore, the titles that would be created from 1806-1808 relied on foreign territory to provide the land and sources of income for the new noble titles. Although Napoleon had solidified the conquest of territory surrounding France, which regained “it’s natural and ancient borders,”<sup>154</sup> these tracts of land were mostly incorporated directly into France proper or into allied satellite states. It was the decisive victories of Napoleon at Austerlitz in 1805 over the third coalition and his stunning defeat of Prussia in 1806 that propelled France to the height of her power. These victories provided the secure foundation that offered Napoleon the opportunity to extend French influence and patronage by two means.<sup>155</sup> They allowed him to begin placing his family members on foreign thrones in order to ensure compliance with Napoleonic policies among neighboring states. Secondly, the victories provided the requisite conquered foreign territory for use as the primary incentive of the forthcoming noble titles. The prime pieces of real estate granted to holders of the imperial titles were all located outside of France proper thus binding the new nobleman to the Napoleonic state. If the new nobleman wanted to maintain his prestige and wealth associated with the imperial title he would have to defend French power external to the nation’s natural borders.

After the creation of the princely titles in 1804, it was not until 1 April 1806 that another decree related to imperial titles was published in *Le Moniteur*. This decree established the title of *duc* for those Napoleonic state servitors who demonstrated long standing meritorious service above and beyond the standards of the *legion d’honneur*, of which the candidate was almost certainly already a member. It also came after the almost unbelievable victories of Napoleon and

---

<sup>154</sup> *le Moniteur universel*, n° 213, lundi, 3 Floréal an 12 de la république française, 23 Avril, 1804.

<sup>155</sup> Grab, *Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe*, 2, 13.

his *Grande Armée* over the third coalition at the battle of Austerlitz on 2 December 1805, and the subsequent Treaty of Pressburg on 26 December 1805. This stunning campaign formed the bulk of the articles related to international politics and continental Europe leading up to the first *noblesse* decree. Articles related to soldiers being rewarded with admittance into the *légion d'honneur*, the pensions for the families of those who had fallen during the campaign, motions to erect monuments and mint coins related to the victory, and the general sense of French success and pride occupied a significant portion of the foreign and domestic news in *Le Moniteur*.<sup>156</sup> Furthermore, war was not the only domain Napoleon was finding tremendous success. On the home-front, immediately preceding and succeeding the 1 April decree were many articles on the adoption of Prince Eugène by Napoleon, the construction of roads and bridges, the lycées (school system), the project of the Code of Civil Procedure, and Napoleon's efforts to entice industry centered on the creation of a *conseil du prud'hommes* in Lyon.<sup>157</sup> In this veritable plurality of success *Le Moniteur* published the first mention of noble titles for Frenchmen who were not members of the imperial family.

Yet the decree published in *Le Moniteur* in the beginning of April was not solely concerned with the ducal title. In fact, the decree only mentions the generic title of *duc* once in a four page spread in the official journal. Rather, the solitary mention of the new title was carefully couched in a lengthy discussion of the imperial household, the rules that governed that household, the special titles given to Marshals Murat and Berthier, as well as to Joseph

---

<sup>156</sup> Extrait des registres du Sénat-conservateur, du mercredi 15 Janvier 1806, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 25, jeudi, 25 Janvier, 1806; Intérieur, Paris le 28 Janvier *le Moniteur universel*, n° 29, mercredi, 29 Janvier, 1806; ...

<sup>157</sup> See for example: Intérieur, Paris le 22 Janvier, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 23, jeudi, 23 Janvier, 1806; Corps-Législatif, Paris le 5 Mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 65, jeudi, 6 Mars, 1806; Intérieur, Paris le 9 Mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 69, lundi, 10 Mars, 1806; Corps Législatif, Paris le 5 Avril, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 96, dimanche, 6 Avril, 1806.

Bonaparte, Pauline Bonaparte, and her husband prince Borghese.<sup>158</sup> These new titles were rationalized both in general and specifically to each case. But the explanations did not originate from the *Tribunat* or any other legislative body as during the motion for heredity.<sup>159</sup> Instead, the titles were justified in a letter by Napoleon to the *Sénat* and in *Archi-Chancelier de l'Empire* Cambacérès's opening speech to the *Sénat* on 30 March 1806. The justifications were no longer coming from a legislative body indirectly elected by the notables of France, but from above. They came from the two highest ranking members of the French imperial state: the head of state and his right-hand man.

The 1 April 1806 issue of *Le Moniteur* began with Cambacérès's address to the *Sénat*, declaring, "Gentleman, at the same moment when France, united of intention with you, assured its happiness and glory by swearing to obey our august sovereign, your wisdom foresaw the need to coordinate in all parts of the system of hereditary government and by strengthening it by institutions analogous to its nature."<sup>160</sup> These unspecified institutions analogous to the system of hereditary government were, of course, a *noblesse*. But a *noblesse* was not solely in the interest of the government and the members of the state, as according to Cambacérès, "It is above all in the interest of the people that princes are elevated above other man. The honors which surround their cradle have as their motive to give greater authority to the examples of submission and of virtue which are their first debt to the fatherland."<sup>161</sup> Once again, popular sovereignty, the interest of the people, is indirectly invoked as a tenant of the rhetoric justifying a monarchical shift in domestic policy.

---

<sup>158</sup> *le Moniteur universel*, n° 91, mardi, 1 Avril 1806. (After the creation of the Empire, *Le Moniteur* dropped any reference to the French Republic in its issue title and the location of publication shifts between rue des Poitevins n° 6 and n° 14, which are other print shop locations owned by Henri Agasse along the same road)

<sup>159</sup> In fact, the *Tribunat* was eventually suppressed by decree of the *Sénat* on 19 August 1807 (*Bulletin des Lois* n° 2785, *Sénatus-consulte concernant l'Organisation du Corps Législatif*).

<sup>160</sup> Discours du Archi-Chancelier Cambacérès, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 91, mardi, 1 Avril 1806.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*

Cambacérès, continued his justification of hereditary titles, stating, “It is also for the accomplishment of their great destinies, that they must be placed, almost from birth, under the eyes of the father of the Empire, so that his supervision directs their inclinations towards the interest of the state, and that a stricter morality purifies and ennobles all their affections.”<sup>162</sup> The state edifice here served as an incubator of good moral virtues and the close proximity of young princes and titled noblemen to it would serve to acclimate them to the duties and proper conduct of imperial rule. There is no specific reference to a *noblesse* or of the ducal titles. Instead, Cambacérès presents four emblematic men who by their service, past conduct, and character are to be given princely, ducal, or royal in the case of Joseph Bonaparte, titles to territory external to France proper.

The four men, each of whom are given a distinct section in the *sénatus-consulte organique* (30 Mars 1806) outlining their new titles and associated sovereign territory, are Joseph Bonaparte, Marshal Joachim Murat, Prince Borghese husband of Pauline Bonaparte, and Marshal Alexandre Berthier. For each of them, Cambacérès highlighted the qualities and service that the state deemed most worthy in considering them for the new titles. Already a prince of France, Joseph Bonaparte was presented the throne of the kingdom of Naples. In the words of the Arch-Chancellor, “This glorious reward of Prince Joseph’s service, of his constant and pious affection for the head of his family, will be for you, gentleman, a subject of great satisfaction.”<sup>163</sup> The praise for Prince Murat who was married to Caroline Bonaparte followed in a similar vein. Murat was being presented with the title to the Duchies of Clèves and Berg, and of his merits, Cambacérès proclaimed, “The military glory of Prince Murat, the importance and brilliance of his successes, his public and private virtues will interest every Frenchman to the just price that he

---

<sup>162</sup> Discours du Archi-Chancelier Cambacérès, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 91, mardi, 1 Avril 1806.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

obtains, and will render his authority dear to all his new subjects...His conduct in the last campaign, gave him new rights to your esteem and to public confidence.”<sup>164</sup> Once again, personal virtues, both private and public, as well as successful service or merit embody the standout qualities that were used to justify their elevation to ennobling titles. Murat’s close relationship with the imperial family through his long-time military service with Napoleon and his marriage to one of the emperor’s sisters certainly did not hurt.

The emphasis on merit for the good of the French state was further highlighted by the Arch-Chancellor in his discussion of Marshal Berthier’s elevation to Prince and Duke of Neufchâtel. Playfully known as “the emperor’s wife,” Cambacérès noted, “his majesty has created worthy awards...for several of his subjects who have rendered great services to the war, or who, in prominent functions, contributed in a distinguished manner for the good of the state.”<sup>165</sup> Specifically, Berthier was praised for his service as the chief huntsman and minister of war for the Napoleonic state, and was to receive the principality of Neufchâtel as, “a testimony of our benevolence for the attachment that he has always shown us, and the fidelity and talent with which he was constantly served us....”<sup>166</sup> Virtue or the character of the man, and the examples of service to the state, are the two means by which Berthier, and the other men were to be given ennobling titles.

This central tenant of the justifications for hereditary noble titles was summarized by Cambacérès at the end of his speech as, “This great design, gentleman, and the secondary measures that accompany it, will be known in Europe as the price his majesty attaches to the exploits of the brave people who supported his work, and to the loyalty of those that he has

---

<sup>164</sup> Discours du Archi-Chancelier Cambacérès, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 91, mardi, 1 Avril 1806.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> Titre 6, n° VI, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 91, mardi, 1 Avril 1806.

employed in the direction of great affairs.”<sup>167</sup> Napoleon was the monarchical patron doling out noble titles and principalities. Yet it was no longer solely to those who were enmeshed in the web of patronage through their high birth and family connections, but those who also served the state consistently and to the highest degree. Moreover, the creation of these titles offered political benefits. According to Cambacérès, “The usual brilliance that surrounds eminent men in dignity, gives them on the people an authority of advice and of example that the monarch sometimes advantageously substitutes to the authority of public functions. On the other hand, these same men are the natural mediators of the people at the throne; it should therefore be an asset of the state, that by the stability and the splendor of their condition, they are raised above all vulgar considerations.”<sup>168</sup> This new nobility was necessary because it would create a class of people above “vulgar” considerations, who through their wealth, property, and prestige would be secure and stable. Not only would they be bound to the state, but they would also act as mediators between the state and the people of France. This imperial nobility would not be a privileged body above the people and the principle of equality before the law as under the *ancien régime*.

Immediately following the Arch-Chancellor’s speech, Nicholas François de Neufchâteau, the president of the *Sénat*, mounted the rostra and read Napoleon’s letter to the Senate. This letter only served to reinforce the notions of popular sovereignty and the examples of meritorious service that the regime sought to reward and found upon a dynasty beholden to Napoleon and his empire. Thus the emperor proclaimed, “We have thus found a way to balance the interests and the dignity of our throne and the sense of our gratitude for the services which we have been

---

<sup>167</sup> Discours du Archi-Chancelier Cambacérès, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 91, mardi, 1 Avril 1806.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

rendered in the civil and military professions,”<sup>169</sup> meaning the new nobility, which is never directly stated. He continued that, “...Whatever the power to which divine Providence and the love of our peoples have elevated us, it is insufficient for rewarding so many brave men and for recognizing the numerous testimonies of loyalty and love that they have given to our people.”<sup>170</sup> The titles were the necessary enticements and rewards for state service that the regime held in such high regard. The continued mention of “brave men” serves only to highlight the importance of military service, though civilian administrators of the higher echelons of the bureaucracy were often rewarded to a similar degree.

What Napoleon does make absolutely clear is that this new group of ennobled men was meant to bind those greatest servants of the state to the throne and imperial social order, couched in the rhetoric of acting in the interest of the people. Thus, Napoleon ends his letter to the *Sénat*, stating, “...we have been principally guided by great thought of consolidating the social order and our throne which is the foundation and the base, and of giving centers of correspondence and support to this great Empire; it is attached to our dearest thoughts, to that to which we have devoted our whole life; the grandeur and prosperity of our peoples.”<sup>171</sup> This blunt admission only continued the trend of implicitly stating their, in hindsight, explicit goal of creating a new imperial noble order. So where does the title of *duc* appear, and what is said about this new noble title?

Aside from the specific references to Prince Murat becoming the duke of Clèves and Berg, as well as Marshal Berthier becoming prince and duke of Neufchâteau, the title of *duc* in the generic sense only appears in section I, title VI of the *sénatus-consulte*. This title is related to the provisions applicable to the princes of the Empire, titular grand dignitaries and published in

---

<sup>169</sup> Message de S. M. l'Empereur et Roi, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 91, mardi, 1 Avril 1806.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Message de S. M. l'Empereur et Roi, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 91, mardi, 1 Avril 1806.

*Le Moniteur* after a page and a half of procedures, rules, and provisions related to the governance of the imperial household. Article XLI of this section stated, “The dignitaries and the *ducs* are subject to the provisions of Article XXXI (If a member of the Imperial House comes to engaging in deportment and forget his dignity or his duties, the Emperor may impose for a given time and which will not exceed a year, the following sentences, namely: arrests, the expulsion of his person, exile) above, as provided by this section.”<sup>172</sup> That is the only mention of the ducal title in this entire decree; that it is susceptible to Article XXXI in that the Emperor has the power to punish those nobleman who do not act according to the high standard of their disposition.

There is no separate decree outlining the ducal title. Even the definition of *duc* in the *Bulletin des Lois* of 1806 refers the reader to *dignitaries*, which states “The dispositions of the statute related to the imperial household are applicable to the grand dignitaries and to *ducs*.”<sup>173</sup> This lonely mention of the generic title of *duc* helps to illustrate the sensitive nature of ennobling titles, but it also highlights the amount of effort put into obscuring the early stages of the process of creating a new noble order. There is a brief article of section II that outlined the provinces that, “We have erected and erect into duchies grand fiefs of our empire the provinces designated hereafter: *La Dalmatie, L’Istrie, Le Frioul, Cadore, Bellune, Conegliano, Treviso, Feltri, Bassano, Vicence, Padoue, Rovigo*.”<sup>174</sup> But this general outline of provinces to be set aside as grand fiefs came with no mention of what titles would be associated with them, who they would be given to, and when.

This lack of specificity in decrees dealing with the imperial *noblesse* was continued in a *sénatus-consulte organique* issued on 14 August 1806. This was an ancillary decree to the one

---

<sup>172</sup> N° 1, Titre VI, Article XLI, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 91, mardi, 1 Avril 1806.

<sup>173</sup> *Bulletin des Lois*, 4<sup>e</sup> série, Tome Quatrième, page 9 of the glossary referring to the content on page 377.

<sup>174</sup> N° 2, Article III, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 91, mardi, 1 Avril 1806.

issued on 30 Mars 1806, but it was never published in *Le Moniteur*. However, it is important for the trajectory of the new nobility as in the third article the *Sénat* declared:

In the case where his Majesty would come to authorize the exchange or alienation of assets consisting of the duchies within the French Empire, erected by the acts of March 30<sup>th</sup>, or the appropriation of all new duchies or *other titles that his Majesty may create in the future*, he will grant alternative assets within the territory of the French Empire, with the price of alienation.<sup>175</sup>

This subtle reference to new duchies and other titles that the emperor might create in the future is repeated three other times in the decree. Moreover, the decree goes on to state that:

When his Majesty deems it suitable, either to reward for great services, for exciting useful emulation, or for contributing to the splendor of the throne, he may allow a head of family to substitute his free assets to for the endowment of a hereditary title that his Majesty would create in his favor, reversible to his eldest son, born or unborn, and his descendants in a direct line, male to male, by order of primogeniture.<sup>176</sup>

Here the Napoleonic state clearly delineated the three reasons for which a hereditary title could be granted: great service to the state, creating an example for other citizens to aspire to, and to add to the grandeur of the empire with institutions more analogous to its hereditary and monarchical nature. With this decree there is finally a clear trajectory for the creation of future titles and duchies as well as the requirements to be considered for such endowments. Yet none of this was published in the official journal. It is not until 1808 that further decrees related to the imperial *noblesse* are published that not only created more titles such as *comte*, *baron*, and *chevalier*, but they also present a unified vision of an imperial nobility. Why did the regime wait another two years before instituting their holistic vision in clear and precise language?

The international context is perhaps the most important factor in suspending the progress towards a unified imperial nobility. While Napoleon achieved significant victories over the Austrian and Russian armies in the war of the Third Coalition in 1805, there was no permanent

---

<sup>175</sup> *Bulletin des Lois de l'Empire Français*, 4<sup>e</sup> Série Tome Cinquième, (N<sup>o</sup> 1823) *Sénatus-Consulte*, du 14 Aout 1806 (A Paris, de l'Imprimerie Impériale, Janvier 1807).

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

resolution for a lasting peace between the European powers. In fact, Prussia declared war on France on 1 October 1806, which led to the War of the Fourth Coalition from October 1806 to 7 July 1807, involving Britain and Russia. Even with the spectacular and rapid victories over the Prussian army at the Battles of Jena-Auerstaedt on 14 October 1806, the war dragged on for another year. It was not until after the Treaty of Tilsit ended the war that Napoleonic France's hegemonic power in central Europe was confirmed after defeating its two Germanic rivals, the Austrian Empire and the Kingdom of Prussia.<sup>177</sup> With these victories came a glut of new territory from which the Napoleonic state could create duchies for its prominent servitors. To further illustrate the importance of these victories for the progression of an imperial *noblesse*, it was not until the last months of this war that the first solely ducal titles (rather than the combination of ducal and princely titles as with Murat and Berthier) were created. The two titles created in 1807 were the *Duc de Dantzick*<sup>178</sup> awarded to Marshal François Joseph Lefebvre and *Duc de Lodi*<sup>179</sup> given to Francesco Melzi d'Eril, an Italian statesman who served as the president of the Italian Republic before Napoleon transformed that state into the Kingdom of Italy.

Both of these men, one from the military profession and the other a civilian statesman, served as examples of extraordinary service not only to Frenchmen, but also to foreign citizens in territory under the French Empire, as in the case of Melzi. Nationality was not the determining factor in the multi-national empire. Rather, loyal and consistent service to the state was the determining factor for ennoblement: a noble order truly open to everyone. In the extract of the minutes of the secretary of State on Marshal Lefebvre, Maret declared:

These letters confer the hereditary title of *duc de Dantzick*, to Marshal Lefebvre, praetor of the Senate...The long illustrious military career of Lefebvre will

---

<sup>177</sup> Grab, *Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe*, 13.

<sup>178</sup> Intérieur, Paris le 11 Juin, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 165, vendredi, 12 Juin 1807.

<sup>179</sup> Extérieur, Royaume d'Italie, Milan 19 Décembre 1807, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 360, samedi, 26 Décembre 1807. Melzi's response to the Emperor is published in *le Moniteur universel*, n° 362, lundi, 28 Décembre 1807.

forever be remember by the siege of Danzig, and by the brilliant success which ended it. His Majesty could not reward in a more worthy manner of him, old and numerous services, at the same time he prepares just subjects of emulation to those who shall one day succeed to the dignity that Marshal Lefebvre has just received.<sup>180</sup>

Marshal Lefebvre's successful service to the state is what is held up to be an example of emulation. His family or birth, professional connections, or accumulated wealth are never mentioned.

This clear message of who is being reward and above all else why, is further reinforced by the emperor himself who justified the new hereditary titles in another message to the *Sénat* on 12 June 1807. In this message, Napoleon expounded on the principles that the new hereditary titles would be based upon, "Through our decrees of 30 March 1806, we established the duchies for rewarding great civil and military services, which have been or will be rendered to us, and to give new support to our throne, and surround our crown in a new radiance."<sup>181</sup> The emperor's letter, published in *Le Moniteur*, was characterized by an extensive defense of hereditary titles for the new empire. Napoleon continued with a stark contrast between wealth and prestige gained through state service and those gained by self-interest:

It is for us to think about ensuring the state and the fortune of families who fully devote themselves to our service, and who constantly sacrifice their interest to ours. The permanent honors, legitimate wealth, honorable and glorious that we would like to give to those who render us eminent services either in a civil career or in a military career will contrast with the illegitimate wealth, concealed, ashamed of those who, in the exercise of their duties, would seek their own interest, instead of having in view those of our peoples and the benefit of our service.<sup>182</sup>

Appealing to the honor of his fellow Frenchman, Napoleon proclaimed, "Without doubt, the conscience of having done his duty, and the substance attached to our esteem, is enough to retain a good Frenchman in the line of honor; but the order of our society is thus constituted, that to

---

<sup>180</sup> Intérieur, Paris le 11 Juin, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 165, vendredi, 12 Juin 1807.

<sup>181</sup> Message de S. M. l'Empereur et Roi, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 165, vendredi, 12 Juin 1807.

<sup>182</sup> Message de S. M. l'Empereur et Roi, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 165, vendredi, 12 Juin 1807.

apparent distinction, to a great fortune are attached a consideration and splendor of which we want to surround those of our subjects, great by their talent, by their services and by their character, this first gift of man.”<sup>183</sup> Thus, the sense of accomplishment of doing ones duty and the praise associated with that would be enough to maintain the spirit of an honorable Frenchman. However, according to Napoleon, because the nature of society puts a greater emphasis on wealth and distinction, the state should reward those subjects who by their talent, services, and character are worthy of an ennobling title. The wording of this justification by the emperor placed the impetus for recreating titles on the nature of French society, and not just upon the more practical need of the state to create a set of wealthy proprietors beholden to the new empire.

With the Treaty of Tilsit in 1807 and peace on the European continent, dominated by a powerful imperial France, the Napoleonic state published the decree in *Le Moniteur* in two parts explicitly outlining the new imperial *noblesse* in March 1808. *Archi-Chancelier* Cambacérès once again introduced the decree to the *Sénat* beginning his speech with the epigram of this chapter:

Public opinion is no longer uncertain on the advantages of this system. If there still remained any doubt to resolve, I would use the experience of centuries, and the authority of one of our greatest publicists, who considers the existence and the maintenance of hereditary distinctions, *as entering in some fashion, in the essence of monarchy.*”<sup>184</sup>

It had taken since the creation of the hereditary empire in 1804, and particularly the years 1806 to 1808, for public opinion to apparently grasp the importance of hereditary distinctions to the new imperial regime. This statute that Cambacérès brought to the *Sénat*, “must give movement

---

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> Intérieur, Paris le 12 Mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 74, lundi, 14 Mars 1808.

and life to the system set up by the *senatus-consulte* of 14 August 1806.”<sup>185</sup> One might wonder what system that decree had created with its lack of specific language related to any noble titles other than those of a select few, whom through their proximity and service to Napoleon, as well as marriages to his sisters, were granted princely titles. The intention might not have been clear to the reader in 1806, but it is quite clear in 1808.

These titles were essential to a monarchical system. According to Cambacérès, “The preeminence that such an institution establishes the ranks that it determines, the memories it conveys, are the food of honor and that honor is at the same time the principle of Government under which the force of national character returned to us.”<sup>186</sup> Not only was a *noblesse* the source that fuels honor, but at the same time it was the principle of government which has regenerated French national character. In fact, for the first time, the word *noblesse* is used in one of these decrees, but only in regard to say that, “These considerations have determined Napoleon not to defer any longer the benefits of an institution in which he has placed all the nobility and grandeur of his spirit.”<sup>187</sup> This decree did, however, clarify that the titles of *comte*, *baron*, and *chevalier* were to be added to the title of *duc* to form a system of imperial titles (*titres impériaux*). The regime also enumerated the people whose civil or military station, in addition to their record of state service, granted them admission to a certain rank of the new nobility. Cambacérès in particular, went to great lengths to emphasize the fundamentally different nature of the new imperial nobility. In his address, he argued that, “The new order of things does not create barriers between citizens.”<sup>188</sup> Moreover, “The regular nuances that it establishes, does not

---

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Intérieur, Paris le 12 Mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 74, lundi, 14 Mars 1808.

<sup>187</sup> Intérieur, Paris le 12 Mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 74, lundi, 14 Mars 1808.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

carry infringements to the right which render all Frenchmen equal in the presence of the law.”<sup>189</sup>

One of the central tenants elaborated upon in the motion for heredity would not be disturbed by the new nobility because, “it confirms on the contrary these same rights, since it serves morality, since it guides public opinion.”<sup>190</sup> The creation of new nobility went above solidifying the security of the state, it also helped guide the national character and public opinion of France. Equally important, the imperial *noblesse*, “it will be recognized above all...can fix the uncertainties of the future,”<sup>191</sup> in a brief allusion to one of the justifications used in the creation of the empire in 1804.

Whereas the creation of the hereditary empire was rigorously justified in *Le Moniteur* by the speeches given among the tribunes and contextualized by the reoccurrence of three types of articles over a three month period, the return of hereditary nobility lacked the same clear contextualization in the official journal and the justifications came from the emperor himself and his Arch-Chancellor, Cambacérès. The lack of sustained coverage points to the sensitivity of the reaction of a *noblesse* for the Napoleonic regime. The general fear of the return of any sort of privileges meant this shift in domestic policy was handled even more delicately than the creation of the Empire. The fact that the decrees were spread across two years from 1806 to 1808 and were published amidst news of Napoleon’s international and domestic successes highlights the cautious approach the Napoleonic regime took in instituting the new nobility.

In the rhetoric of the state, presented through the official journal of the French state, this was a monarchical institution necessary and supremely beneficial not only to the state itself, but to society as well. The elevation of Frenchmen serving the state in military and civilian capacities set an important example of meritorious, long-term service to the French nation, to be

---

<sup>189</sup> Intérieur, Paris le 12 Mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 74, lundi, 14 Mars 1808.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Intérieur, Paris le 12 Mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 74, lundi, 14 Mars 1808.

followed by the rest of society. It was also a system of incentives meant to garner the support of the French *notables* and the most talented members of the state. By placing their fiefdoms, and the associated income of their lands, outside the French Empire, it created a natural incentive for them to remain attached to the principle of French expansionism and power in Europe. Yet these titles were not based on birth or blood akin to the *ancien régime* nobility, but based on talent, merit, and service. Any member of society, regardless of station or wealth, could theoretically be granted an imperial title. The new titles of *duc*, *comte*, *baron*, and *chevalier* did not create a separate rank of citizens distinct from the rest of society. They were not granted privileges, nor preferment, and were required to hold their lands in *majorat* in order for the title to remain hereditary.<sup>192</sup> What was not said in the decree of 1 March 1808 unifying the, up to that point piece-meal *noblesse*, was the ability of the new uniform system to better integrate the old French nobles into the imperial *noblesse*.<sup>193</sup> By March of 1808, this imperial *noblesse*, a strongly monarchical institution in its appearance, but differing in its character of equality before the law and its foundation of merit, was firmly established. The sensitivity of the hereditary institution of nobility seems to have faded by 1808 after the major victories of Napoleon and his *Grande Armée* over the other continental European powers. Yet, this was not the end of the Napoleonic regime's gradual shift in domestic policies towards those that harkened back to the actions and institutions of monarchical France.

In the context of Napoleon's long-term ennobling project, Joseph Bonaparte's elevation to the throne of Spain in 1808 seems to form the apogee of the process of recreating an imperial French nobility; a nobility beholden to Napoleon and his state with a clear incentive to defend French power external of her natural borders. While Joseph had been king of Naples, a minor

---

<sup>192</sup> Décret Impériaux, Paris le 14 Mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 76, mercredi, 16 Mars 1808.

<sup>193</sup> By 1814, twenty-two percent of the imperial nobility consisted of old regime nobles: Grab, *Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe*, 43.

but not insignificant Europe state, from 1806 to 1808, his ennoblement as the king of Spain was something altogether different in scope and scale. Spain was still a fairly major Europe power with a massive overseas Empire in Spanish America. The abdications of Charles IV and his son Ferdinand VII in favor of Joseph sent a shock across Europe as the Spanish Bourbon family had ruled Spain since 1 November 1700, confirmed in 1714 by the Treaty of Utrecht. This was a major change in the sovereign ruler of a significant European state, transforming it into what essentially amounted to a French puppet regime. How the Napoleonic state justified this change in the sovereign of one of its few longstanding allies from 1796 to 1808 will be the subject of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER THREE

### ELEVATION OF JOSEPH BONAPARTE TO THE THRONE OF SPAIN,

#### FEBRUARY TO JUNE 1808

“King Charles, by his treaty with me, surrenders to me all his rights to the crown of Spain. The Prince had already renounced his pretended title of King, the abdication of King Charles in his favor having been involuntary. The nation, through the Supreme Council of Castile, asks me for a king; I destine this crown for you. Spain is a very different thing from Naples; it contains 11 million inhabitants, and has more than 150 million in revenue, without counting the Indies and the immense revenue to be derived from them. It is besides a throne which places you at Madrid, at three days' journey from France, which borders the whole of one of its frontiers. At Madrid you are in France; Naples is the end of the world.”<sup>194</sup> – Letter of Napoleon to Joseph Bonaparte, Bayonne, 11 May 1808

In the general proliferation of imperial titles, of new princes, dukes, and other nobles from 1806 to 1808, the elevation of Joseph Bonaparte to the throne of Spain uniquely stands above all else. While Joseph had previously reigned as King of Naples and Sicily from 1806 to 1808, his transition from ruling a minor European power to a considerable European power that still maintained a large colonial empire at the time was a major policy decision on the part of Napoleon. In early 1808, Spain was in possession of a significant portion of North, South, and Central America. They controlled the viceroyalties of New Spain, New Granada, and of the Rio de la Plata, as well as Florida and other territory across the Americas. Napoleon's decision to give his brother the title of King of Spain was unlike his other efforts to place family members on foreign thrones in terms of scope and scale. This was not some minor principality bordering imperial France. The sheer size and wealth of the Spanish Empire in 1808 made this a significant, and sensitive, political decision.

---

<sup>194</sup> *The Confidential Correspondence of Napoleon Bonaparte with His Brother Joseph* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1856), 318.

Furthermore, Spain had been one of the few consistent allies of the French during the French Revolutionary Wars from 1796 to 1799 and the Napoleonic Wars from 1799 up to 1808.<sup>195</sup> How did the Napoleonic regime attempt to justify this change in sovereign of a significant European power that had served as an ally of France for the past decade? How did the political bureau of Maret's state department contextualize this change in *Le Moniteur* by the articles inserted into the political section of the newspaper related to Spain? What kind of picture did the bureaucrats paint of the Spanish monarchy and, in particular, the reign of King Charles IV? What was the impetus for this change in the sovereign ruler of Spain?

This chapter will chronologically trace the events surrounding the abdications of Charles IV and his son in favor of Napoleon's brother Joseph, and their coverage in the official journal of the French government. From February 1808 to the ascension of Joseph Bonaparte as King of Spain on 4 June 1808, Maret's state department went to great lengths to present the positive reception of the French army by the Spanish population and to emphasize the dysfunctionality of the Spanish royal family and the resulting instability of the Spanish government. It will also trace the two main strands of argumentation published in *Le Moniteur* and used to justify this sensitive change in the sovereign of a major French ally that harkened back to previous policies of the French monarchy, notably the crisis surrounding the War of Spanish Succession (1701-1714). The first strand, argued primarily through the *Junte* assembled by Napoleon detailed the pragmatic benefits to Spain of being bound through blood to the Napoleonic enterprise. The second, coming from the Emperor himself and his bureaucracy, outlined how Joseph's rule in Spain, and by proxy French rule of Spain, would be a process of regenerating a nation that had lost its way during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

---

<sup>195</sup> The alliance is briefly interrupted after the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805 when the Spanish eventually withdrew from Napoleon's continental system. However, by 1807, the Spanish returned to the system and repaired their relations with the French.

Regardless of the supposed inefficiencies of Bourbon rule in Spain under Charles IV and the blame the Spanish fleet was given for the crushing Franco-Spanish defeat at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805, the real impetus that allowed for greater French control of Spain came from the Spanish royal family themselves.<sup>196</sup> Long-term economic problems, rumors of sexual scandal between the Queen and Prime Minister Manuel de Godoy, and the general lack of competence by King Charles IV, and above all, the French presence, created friction between the Spanish people, the monarch, and the crown Prince Ferdinand. These issues led to an aborted attempt by Prince Ferdinand to overthrow his father in 1807 (the El Escorial Conspiracy),<sup>197</sup> and more seriously, a series of riots and popular revolt near town of Aranjuez in 1808. This “Mutiny of Aranjuez” (*Motín de Aranjuez*) from 17 March to 19 March 1808 resulted in the dismissal of Godoy and the forced abdication of Charles IV in favor of Ferdinand.

Economic troubles, hatred of Godoy and lack of faith in Charles IV were not the only issues that contributed to the popular uprising at Aranjuez. French troops had been freely traversing Spanish territory on their way to subdue the British-supported Portugal, while also garrisoning a number of Spanish cities to maintain a strong supply line across the Iberian Peninsula connected to France.<sup>198</sup> This strong French presence was associated with Godoy’s alienating policies and was greatly resented by the Spanish subjects who viewed it as a national humiliation and emblematic of the weakness of the current monarchy.<sup>199</sup> Of all the reasons given in *Le Moniteur* for Spanish unrest, the presence of the French army is only ever presented

---

<sup>196</sup> Michael Broers, *Europe under Napoleon 1799-1815* (London: Hodder Education Publishers, 1996), 149.

<sup>197</sup> The result of this conspiratorial plot was published in *Le Moniteur* on 19 Février 1808 (Extérieur, Madrid, le 1<sup>er</sup> Février, *Gazette Nationale ou le Moniteur universel*, n° 50, vendredi, 19 Février 1808 (A Paris, de l’imprimerie du citoyen Agasse propriétaire du Moniteur, rue des Poitevins, n° 14).

<sup>198</sup> Alexander Grab, *Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 127.

<sup>199</sup> Grab, *Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe*, 126-127; Broers, *Europe under Napoleon 1799-1815*, 149.

in the most positive of lights. Typical of this approach is an article in the 22 February 1808 issue of *Le Moniteur* discussing French troops parading in Valladolid:

The French troops have made, the day before, large maneuvers, which were attended by His Excellency the General-in-Chief, the general of the Spanish division, and all the French generals who find themselves currently in Valladolid. This general review was done on a great plain named *Alto de Sonisidro*, located a quarter of a league from the city. It was observed by a great quantity of people and many people in carts, who had come to enjoy the spectacle. The weather was beautiful, and the maneuvers were done with much perfection. It was six o'clock when the troops returned to the city.<sup>200</sup>

Numerous articles in *Le Moniteur* throughout February and March are written in a similar style, with the Spanish people coming to observe the skill and magnificent displays of the French generals and their troops.

This rosy picture is not interrupted until the events of Aranjuez are published in the official journal on 29 March 1808. The onus for the revolt at Aranjuez and the blame for the seemingly sudden turn to violence and instability were placed firmly on the shoulders of the Spanish royal family. Crucially, the article in *Le Moniteur* was written from the point of view of a Spanish subject experiencing the events firsthand. The article began in dramatic fashion, “For four days events have occurred which shake the throne of our masters. For six months the minds have been highly agitated. Some have accused the *prince de la Paix* (Godoy) of being in concert with the Queen to kill the *prince des Asturies* (Ferdinand).”<sup>201</sup> To make matters worse, “the *prince des Asturies* was at the head of a party to dethrone his father. It was said that he had received this project from his wife. The solemn advice, lengthy procedures followed by exiles and public acts, far from calming public opinion, further agitated it.”<sup>202</sup> As the first picture of

---

<sup>200</sup> Extérieur, Valladolid, le 30 Janvier, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 53, lundi, 22 Février 1808.

<sup>201</sup> Extérieur, Espagne, Madrid le 29 Mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 89, mardi, 29 Mars 1808.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

contemporary Spanish affairs that *Le Moniteur* paints for the French public, the message is clear. This is a situation of utter chaos, instability, and intrigue.

But what of the French troops who were stationed throughout the Iberian Peninsula? The vast majority of them were, “on the banks of the Ebro and far more than 40 leagues from our capital,” while the Spanish troops, “had been recalled from Portugal, and were advancing force marched on the capital.”<sup>203</sup> In this seemingly desperate position, “The court appeared divided and without a plan. What we ordered one day, was countermanded the next. There was neither order nor unity of power.”<sup>204</sup> The anonymous author of the article then goes on to detail the events of the Aranjuez mutiny. Indecision reigned among the court elite and Charles IV. By March 18<sup>th</sup>, “peasants proceeded in crowds to Aranjuez... The night of 17 to 18, was a night of tumult.”<sup>205</sup> The article continued, recounting the seizure of Manuel Godoy at his chateau and the people of Madrid, who upon hearing the news, “went in crowds to the house of the *prince de la Paix* and to those of several ministers. In all, furniture was broken, windows smashed in pieces. No one is opposed to disorder; the captain-general had lost his head.”<sup>206</sup> To further emphasize the scenes of disorder and the lack of respect and deference shown to Charles IV, the article ended with the following statement, “The Swiss regiments remained confined in their barracks.”<sup>207</sup> Even the professional soldiers, the famous Swiss regiments, sworn to protect the sovereign who hired them, would not leave their barracks to defend the Spanish government. For the French readers, this would have been quite a jarring shock, emphasizing the king’s lack of command. They would have remembered the Swiss Guard regiments sworn to protect Louis

---

<sup>203</sup> Extérieur, Espagne, Madrid le 29 Mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 89, mardi, 29 Mars 1808.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Extérieur, Espagne, Madrid le 29 Mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 89, mardi, 29 Mars 1808.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> Extérieur, Espagne, Madrid le 29 Mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 89, mardi, 29 Mars 1808.

XVI during the French Revolution who fought valiantly to defend their honor and employer at the Tuileries palace (10 August 1792).<sup>208</sup>

Following this anonymous article from a Spanish perspective is one from the French side of things in *Le Moniteur*. After recounting the events of the third week of March, the observer added news of the French army stationed on the Iberian Peninsula. According to the article, the Grand-Duke of Berg (Marshal Murat) travelled from Aranda to Alkevanda in three days with the army corps' of Marshal Moncey and General Dupont. Murat's arrival in Madrid "appeared generally desired. The mass of people of Madrid were calm and tranquil; and as it happens in such cases, the disorders had only been caused by a small number of individuals."<sup>209</sup> Order had been restored by the "generally desired" French military and those who participated in the popular disturbances were dismissed as being small in number. The rather black and white comparison between the welcomed and competent French and the seemingly incompetent Spanish military and political elite is made clear in the contrasting language used in each article.

Succeeding these two articles on the front page of *Le Moniteur's* 29 March 1808 issue, are a proclamation from Charles IV, a royal decree, an edict, and an addresses by the King's council to the public of Madrid. Together, these four political acts outline the consequences of the Aranjuez revolt, most importantly, the abdication of King Charles IV in favor of his son Ferdinand. Charles IV began his proclamation magnanimously addressing his people, "My beloved subjects, your noble unrest in these circumstances is a new testimony which assures me of the feelings of your heart. I who love you as a father, I hasten to comfort you in the state of anxiety that oppresses you. Breathe in peace."<sup>210</sup> But this touching address quickly turned to a justification for the presence of the French army in Spain as the King proclaimed, "Know that

---

<sup>208</sup> J. M. Thompson, *The French Revolution* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1959), 288.

<sup>209</sup> Extérieur, Aranjuez, le 21 Mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 89, mardi, 29 Mars 1808.

<sup>210</sup> Proclamation du Roi, Aranjuez, le 16 Mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 89, mardi, 29 Mars 1808.

the army of my dear ally the Emperor of France crosses my State with the feelings of peace and of friendship; it intends to carry itself to the points threatened by an invasion of the enemy.”<sup>211</sup>

He concluded this short address entreating his subjects to “Conduct yourselves as you have done so far with the troops of the ally of your king, and you will see in a few days the peace of your hearts restored,”<sup>212</sup> suggesting that this proclamation was merely to appease Spain’s powerful ally before Charles abdicated.

His abdication was the focus of the second political act, a royal decree, which stated, “As my habitual infirmities do not allow me to endure any longer the heavy weight of the government of my kingdom, and needing to restore my health, to enjoy the more temperate climate of private life, I have decided, after much deliberation, to abdicate my crown in favor of my heir, my most beloved son the Prince of Asturias.”<sup>213</sup> Health concerns, rather than the current political chaos and unrest in Spain were the reasons for his abdication. Charles concluded the decree emphasizing that, “this Royal Decree of my free and spontaneous abdication is exactly and duly accomplished.”<sup>214</sup> This willingness on the part of Charles IV in abdicating his throne turned out to be false and rapidly became a major issue that resulted in the Bayonne abdication crisis to be discussed in detail later.

The third political act, the lengthiest, is an edict from the new King Ferdinand given by his retainer Don Arias Mor that largely concerns itself with confiscating “all the goods, effects, actions, and rights of Don Emmanuel Godoy wherever they may be,”<sup>215</sup> all in the name of those who suffered at his hands. The entire point of this decree is to introduce Ferdinand to the people of Spain and to distance himself from the almost universally hated minister Godoy and the

---

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> Proclamation du Roi, Aranjuez, le 16 Mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 89, mardi, 29 Mars 1808.

<sup>213</sup> Décret Royal, Aranjuez, le 19 Mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 89, mardi, 29 Mars 1808.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

<sup>215</sup> Édité, Aranjuez, le 20 Mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 89, mardi, 29 Mars 1808.

regime he represented. Ferdinand then addressed the people of Madrid, specifically, through his council, which, “boasted that all the inhabitants of this faithful city will retire to their homes and that they will remain in the most perfect tranquility, and persuaded them to give His Majesty, in the first moment of his reign, the surest evidence of the sincerity of their feelings and loyalty....”<sup>216</sup> For the moment, tranquility had seemingly been restored to Spain by the succession of Ferdinand VII.

This notion is reinforced by a number of articles published in the last week of March in *Le Moniteur* detailing the movements of the French army and the reactions of the Spanish population. For example, the April 1<sup>st</sup> edition recounts Murat and his column of French soldiers marching to Madrid as, “The Grand Duke of Berg, at the head of the French army, entered this morning in our town. Joy reigned over all faces, and the French have been received with all the evidence of satisfaction. The beautiful maintenance of the troops after such a long march, the beauty of the regiments of cuirassier regiments has been particularly noticed.”<sup>217</sup> The unbounded confidence of the article ends with the statement, “Tranquility is entirely reestablished in Madrid, and we are certain that it will no longer be disturbed.”<sup>218</sup> The reason for this tranquility, of course, was the implied effect of the orderly and competent French military, not the ascension of Ferdinand VII. This notion is reinforced by a further article on the army of the Grand Duke of Berg that exclaimed, “The crowds around the camps are enormous. They never tire of seeing the troops whose success has caught the imagination of the Spanish for a long time... The most perfect tranquility reigns in all Spain.”<sup>219</sup> In less than a month, the illusion of tranquility quickly evaporated.

---

<sup>216</sup> Le Conseil au public de Madrid, Aranjuez, le 20 Mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 89, mardi, 29 Mars 1808.

<sup>217</sup> Extérieur, Espagne, Madrid le 24 Mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 92, vendredi, 1 Avril 1808.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> Extérieur, Espagne, Madrid le 25 Mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 93, samedi, 2 Avril 1808.

The first sign that pointed towards discontent beneath the surface of Spanish affairs can be found in in *Le Moniteur* in the titles used to denote the previous and current Spanish monarchs. Ignoring the abdication of Charles in March, *Le Moniteur* always refers to him as the *roi*, Charles IV and his wife as the Queen. Ferdinand VII, on the other hand, is only referred to as the *prince des Asturies*.<sup>220</sup> To add to this confusion, there are separate clues hinting at the movement of the French Emperor, the King of Spain, and his son the crown prince to meet one another.<sup>221</sup> Unreported in the official journal, the former king Charles had been complaining to Napoleon that his abdication was forced and not valid. It is not until 3 May 1808 that Charles' letter to Napoleon and his claim that the abdication was forced upon him is published in *Le Moniteur*.

In his letter, Charles IV declared, "I protest and declare that my decree of 19 March, by which I abdicated the crown in favor of my son, is an act of which I had been forced, for preventing greater evils and the spilling of blood of my well-loved subjects. It must in consequence be regarded as of no value."<sup>222</sup> The rest of the letter reads as a desperate plea on the part of Charles IV to convince Napoleon to confirm him as the rightful king of Spain. In dramatic language, Charles exclaimed that he had come, "to throw himself in the arms of a great monarch his ally, deferring completely to his disposition, which alone can make him happy, that of his entire family, and of his faithful and beloved subjects."<sup>223</sup> The fact that the official journal of the French government published a confidential letter between two monarchs speaks volumes as to the amount of respect, or lack thereof, the Spanish king was given by his supposed ally. Charles's over-the-top approach to negotiations would fail to persuade, but it did accomplish the

---

<sup>220</sup> For an example of this, see: Extérieur, Espagne, Madrid le 9 Avril, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 108, dimanche, 17 Avril 1808.

<sup>221</sup> Extérieur, Espagne, Madrid le 9 Avril, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 108, dimanche, 17 Avril 1808.

<sup>222</sup> Lettre du Roi Charles IV à l'Empereur Napoléon, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 124, mardi, 3 Mai 1808.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

goal of *Le Moniteur* of maintaining focus on the Spanish side of affairs. Napoleon is kept aloof of events in the newspaper. He is not presented as having asked either of the Spanish royals to meet him at Bayonne to resolve to abdication crisis. He is presented as the just arbitrator.

Meanwhile, Ferdinand had a different agenda than his father. He hoped that Napoleon would confirm him as King of Spain and add legitimacy to his succession. But both Spanish royals were to be disappointed when they arrived at Bayonne on 20 April 1808.<sup>224</sup> Particularly after news of the Dos de Mayo uprising on 2 May 1808 in Madrid against the French army stationed there finally reached France. News of this uprising and the violent scenes that occurred in Madrid are reported in a front page letter from Spain in *Le Moniteur* on 11 May 1808. It began by dispelling the previous picture of “perfect tranquility,” stating, “The people of Madrid have always been fermenting since the events of Aranjuez...Daily insults were made to the French...For two days the gatherings were numerous; they seemed directed by a goal.”<sup>225</sup> This goal, which turned out to be the expulsion of the French military from Madrid was not mentioned. What they did make clear was that, “Without a severe lesson, it was impossible to return that strayed multitude to a reasonable mindset.”<sup>226</sup> After recounting scenes of fighting throughout Madrid, the letter ends with the actions of the government *Junte*, which, “immediately ordered, the disarmament of the city: all good citizens applauded this measure, and saw with pleasure the punishment of those rebels, who, without the presence of the French, smashing the throne of the *weak kings of Spain*, would have destroyed the kingdom and driven that brave nation into protracted agony.”<sup>227</sup> Those “weak” kings of Spain, meeting with Napoleon in Bayonne, were responsible for the Dos de Mayo revolt, not the French army, which

---

<sup>224</sup> Intérieur, Bayonne le 20 Avril, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 117, mardi, 26 Avril 1808.

<sup>225</sup> Intérieur, Bayonne le 6 mai, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 132, mercredi, 11 Mai 1808.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

<sup>227</sup> Intérieur, Bayonne le 6 mai, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 132, mercredi, 11 Mai 1808.

was the only institution propping up a feeble government. This was far from the truth,<sup>228</sup> but the consistent message in *Le Moniteur* of a weak Spanish monarchy was only becoming more forceful.

After this uprising, the strategy of the official journal immediately changed as Napoleon became an active participant in this crisis. According to the official newspaper, “When the Emperor received here news of the events of Madrid, he went at once to King Charles... The King immediately took the resolution to name the Grand-Duke of Berg lieutenant-General of the kingdom...”<sup>229</sup> This act essentially made Marshal Murat the most powerful man in Spain, and established what amounted to French control of the kingdom. Also in this issue of *Le Moniteur* were three letters, one from Napoleon to the prince of Asturias, one from Charles IV to the prince of Asturias, and the last one from the prince of Asturias to Don Antonio, the second son of Charles.<sup>230</sup> Together, these three letters chronicled the events that placed control of the Spanish monarchy in the hands of the French emperor. In his letter to the prince of Asturias, Napoleon admonished him for the awkward position Ferdinand had put him in, “As for the abdication of Charles IV, it took place at a moment where my armies covered Spain: and to all eyes of Europe and posterity, I should appear to send many troops in order to rush the throne of my ally and my friend.”<sup>231</sup> Not only did the timing make Napoleon look bad in the eyes of Europe and posterity, but “As a sovereign neighbor, it is permitted of me to want to know before you have recognized this abdication... If the abdication of King Charles is of pure motives, if it was not forced by the insurrection and riot of Aranjuez... I have no difficulty admitting it, and I recognize your royal

---

<sup>228</sup> The people of Madrid had come to the Royal Palace to stop the fourteen-year-old son of King Charles, Francisco de Paula from being sent away from Spain. Murat ordered a battalion of Imperial Guard grenadiers and some artillery to the palace to disperse the crowd. Their decision to fire upon the crowd incited the rebellion, which spread across the city. Source:

<sup>229</sup> Intérieur, Bayonne le 6 mai, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 132, mercredi, 11 Mai 1808.

<sup>230</sup> The letters from Charles to Ferdinand and from Ferdinand to Don Antonio are published in both Spanish and French to draw further attention to the matter (*le Moniteur universel*, n° 132, mercredi, 11 Mai 1808).

<sup>231</sup> Lettre de S. M. l'Empereur au prince des Asturies, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 132, mercredi, 11 Mai 1808.

highness as King of Spain. I therefore desire to talk with you for this purpose.”<sup>232</sup> It is only at this moment that the real impetus for the meeting at Bayonne was revealed as due to Napoleon’s insistence. The letter ends with two extremes, a threat if anything happened to his soldiers, “the ruin of Spain would be the result,” and a hopeful desire to, “conciliate and to find opportunities to give him [king Charles] proof of my affection and perfect esteem.”<sup>233</sup> Realities in Spain during the subsequent five years were much closer to the former than the later.

King Charles, ever the faithful ally, began his letter to his son with a declaration, “My son, the perfidious councilmen who surround you, have placed Spain in a critical situation. It can only be saved by the Emperor.”<sup>234</sup> Ferdinand’s misdeeds meant that, “all depends henceforth on the mediation and the protection of this grand Prince.”<sup>235</sup> His conduct of, “resorting to popular agitations, flying the standard of factions, it is ruining Spain, and leading you in the most horrible catastrophes,”<sup>236</sup> and required the full support of the French emperor. According to Charles, Napoleon “knows all the insults I have received, and violence that was done to me; he said he would not recognize you as king, and that the enemy of his father cannot inspire the confidence of strangers; moreover he showed me your letters that attest to your hatred for France.”<sup>237</sup> This airing of dirty laundry between Charles IV and his son likely did nothing but further damage their image among the French reading public.

In a move of diplomatic deception, Napoleon and Charles pressured Ferdinand into abdicating the throne in favor of Charles, after the French emperor had already persuaded Charles to secretly renounce his claims to the Spanish throne. This meant that the prince of

---

<sup>232</sup> Lettre de S. M. l’Empereur au prince des Asturies, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 132, mercredi, 11 Mai 1808.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

<sup>234</sup> Lettre du roi Charles IV, à son fils le prince des Asturies, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 132, mercredi, 11 Mai 1808.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Lettre du roi Charles IV, à son fils le prince des Asturies, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 132, mercredi, 11 Mai 1808.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

Asturies's letter of May 6<sup>th</sup> to *l'Infant don Antonio* in *Le Moniteur* in which he wrote, "My venerable father and lord, to give proof of my love, my obedience and my submission...I renounce my crown in favor of V. M. [Charles],"<sup>238</sup> ceded the rights to the throne of Spain to Napoleon. This crucial piece of information was not printed in *Le Moniteur* until 16 May 1808, which stated that, "all the existing differences had been smoothed over,"<sup>239</sup> by a treaty between Napoleon and Charles IV. Although the terms of that treaty could not be discussed as it was being communicated to the *Sénat*, it did let on that "the Emperor Napoleon shall have all rights of the house of Spain,"<sup>240</sup> and that Charles and his family were affected a residence, "for enjoying throughout his life."<sup>241</sup> A diplomatic way of saying they were placed under house arrest in France in perpetuity.<sup>242</sup>

Where, or more precisely, when does Joseph Bonaparte enter the picture? Up to this point he had not been referenced in any of the articles on Bayonne or Spain, and the sparse articles on the Kingdom of Naples only mentioned that King Joseph had been continuing his duties as normal. We know from Napoleon's correspondence with his elder brother that the first hint that Joseph might be called to Bayonne occurred in a letter dated 18 April 1808.<sup>243</sup> Two succeeding letters from Napoleon to his brother on May 6<sup>th</sup> and May 11<sup>th</sup> confirmed the decision to place Joseph on the throne of Spain.<sup>244</sup> Why did the government wait another month before declaring that Joseph was to become the new king of Spain in *Le Moniteur* on 18 June 1808?

---

<sup>238</sup> Lettre du prince des Asturies à l'Infant don Antonio, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 132, mercredi, 11 Mai 1808.

<sup>239</sup> Intérieur, Bayonne le 11 mai, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 137, lundi, 16 Mai 1808.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> Intérieur, Bayonne le 11 mai, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 137, lundi, 16 Mai 1808.

<sup>242</sup> The Spanish royal family remains at the château of Valancey owned by Talleyrand. Intérieur, Levroux (dép. de l'Indre) le 13 mai, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 153, mercredi, 1 Juin 1808.

<sup>243</sup> *The Confidential Correspondence of Napoleon Bonaparte with His Brother Joseph* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1856), 317.

<sup>244</sup> *The Confidential Correspondence of Napoleon Bonaparte with His Brother Joseph* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1856), 317-318.

During that time, Napoleon and his bureaucracy had been attempting to piece together a *Junte suprême de gouvernement*, an elite legislative body made up of Spanish subjects who would act as the conduit through which Napoleon would issue his decrees destined for Spain. Rather than have the Grand-Duke of Berg act as anything more than a military commander with some political responsibilities, Napoleon assembled this, “great Junte of State which must reunite in Bayonne, will be composed of 150 people taken from the clergy, the nobility, and the bourgeoisie.”<sup>245</sup> Unsurprisingly, this was done to lend a greater amount of legitimacy to the process of Napoleonic assumption of the Spanish crown and the new constitution being prepared to coincide with the announcement of Joseph’s elevation to the throne.

Over the course of the first week and a half of June, the Spanish dignitaries and elites made their way to Bayonne in southern France in order to assemble the supreme government *Junte*.<sup>246</sup> Their purpose became clear on 18 June 1808, when *Le Moniteur* published a host of addresses by the *Junte*, the city of Madrid, and the *cardinal archeveque de Toledé* to Napoleon. All three of these letters to the French Emperor were meant to justify the transfer of sovereignty of the throne of Spain to Napoleon. In the context of Spanish chaos and impotency, the letters serve to emphasize French competency, the natural alignment of Spanish and French interests, and the process of rebuilding or regenerating Spain. Even more importantly, the initial announcement that Joseph Bonaparte was to become King of Spain was made public by the *Junte*, not from the French government or even from Napoleon himself.<sup>247</sup> Initiative, in the picture that *Le Moniteur* paints, came from the legitimate *Junte* of Spain, not from the French.

---

<sup>245</sup> Extérieur, Espagne, Madrid le 23 mai, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 157, dimanche, 5 Juin 1808.

<sup>246</sup> Intérieur, Bayonne le 4 juin, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 160, mercredi, 8 Juin 1808.

<sup>247</sup> Adresse de la ville de Madrid à S. A. I. et R., Madrid le 15 Mai, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 170, samedi, 18 Juin 1808.

The *Junte*'s address to Napoleon begins its justification of French control of Spain by declaring that their long-standing alliance, and the united interest of two nations underlying that pact, essentially made Spain and France one in the same. The transfer of sovereignty from Charles IV to Napoleon was, "we believe the greatest proof of love that our rulers have given to the Spanish nation," and that it was based upon, "a principle evident by itself and confirmed by a long series of political events."<sup>248</sup> This principle, "That there is no Pyrenees! This was the constant view of good Spaniards, because there can be no Pyrenees when the interests are the same, when trust is reciprocal, and when each of the two nations obtains, to the same degree, the respect of its independence and dignity."<sup>249</sup> It was natural that France and Spain should be more closely united as their interests were the same. There were no Pyrenees Mountains between the two countries, simply mutual respect, independence and dignity. By changing the status quo to replace the Spanish Bourbons with a Bonaparte, the Spanish nation would simply be continuing its long-standing policies that were united with those of France. The rhetoric of cosmetic change that does not actually change anything, as we saw in some of the *Tribunat* speeches in chapter one, reappears here in the *Junte* address.

After a brief praise of Napoleon and his system of efficient imperial government, the *Junte* stated that under the auspices of his family, "The Spanish monarchy will resume the rank which belongs to it among the states of Europe united by a new family pact, to its natural ally, whose power is so great."<sup>250</sup> Not only are the two countries natural allies due to proximity and unity of interests, but the power and prestige of imperial France will return Spain to its former glory among the European states. To put it more emphatically, "Regardless of the prince that

---

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> Adresse de la Junte suprême de gouvernement à S. M. l'Empereur et Roi, Madrid le 13 Mai, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 170, samedi, 18 Juin 1808.

<sup>250</sup> Adresse de la Junte suprême de gouvernement à S. M. l'Empereur et Roi, Madrid le 13 Mai, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 170, samedi, 18 Juin 1808.

Your Majesty destines for us, chosen in your august family, he will provide us by this the only guarantee of which we have need.”<sup>251</sup> The fact that a Bonaparte will rule Spain is the only guarantee the *Junte* required to believe that the mutual union would be a success for both nations.

The political pragmatism of the *Junte* continued as it pointed out that, “Spain can claim a privilege that none of the allied countries of Your Majesty [can]...The throne of Spain was raised to the greatest height.”<sup>252</sup> In fact, “It seems therefore this throne calls the eldest of the august brothers of His Imperial Majesty. It is moreover a good omen that the order established by the nation is so well in agreement with the feelings of respect and admiration that the virtues of this prince and the wisdom of his government have already inspired us.”<sup>253</sup> This subtle hint at who should, and would become the King of Spain is typical of the delicacy and savviness of *Le Moniteur*'s political staff, who not only indirectly name Joseph, but do it through the political vehicle of the *Junte*. The hopes of the *Junte* were confirmed by the following address by the city of Madrid to Napoleon, which proclaimed:

The city of Madrid has learned that the august sovereigns have presented the crown of Spain into the hands of the Great-Emperor, and that the *Junte supreme de gouvernement*, as well as the council of Castille, had sent their greetings to His Imperial Majesty and King for the happiness of this monarchy, considering it as certain...[he] deigned to place the crown on the head of his august brother Joseph Napoleon, king of Naples.”<sup>254</sup>

What made Joseph such a worthy candidate for the Spanish throne, aside from his close personal connection with Napoleon? According to the *Junte* he was, “a prince prepared and trained for

---

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> Adresse de la Junte suprême de gouvernement à S. M. l'Empereur et Roi, Madrid le 13 Mai, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 170, samedi, 18 Juin 1808.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> Adresse de la ville de Madrid à S. A. I. et R. le sérénissime seigneur, Madrid le 15 Mai, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 170, samedi, 18 Juin 1808.

the art of reigning in the great school of Your Majesty [Napoleon],”<sup>255</sup> which referred to Napoleon’s propensity to name his family members as sovereigns of various conquered European states, and Joseph’s specific experience as the king of Naples from 30 March 1806 to 6 June 1808.

Yet, underlying these pragmatic justifications for Joseph’s elevation to the throne was an even more powerful explanation for French control of Spain. This second justification was found in the proclamation of Napoleon himself immediately succeeding the addresses from the *Junte*, city of Madrid, and Cardinal-Archbishop of Toledo. The magnanimous emperor began his speech to all Spaniards, announcing, “After a long agony, your nation had perished. I saw your pain: I am going to remedy it. Your grandeur, your power forms part of mine. Your princes have ceded me all their rights to the crown of Spain. I do not wish to rule over your provinces, but I want to acquire the eternal titles to love and recognition of your posterity.”<sup>256</sup> His remedy quickly became clear in the following paragraph as he asserted, “Your monarchy is old: my mission is rejuvenating it. I will improve all your institutions, and I will make you enjoy, if you back me, the benefits of reform, without wrinkles, without disorders, without convulsions.”<sup>257</sup> Furthermore, Napoleon revealed that he, “will set down all my rights, and I will place your glorious crown on the head of another of myself, guaranteeing you a constitution which reconciles the holy and salutary authority of the sovereign with the liberties and privileges of the people.”<sup>258</sup> The assumption was that such a constitution and reforms would be desired by the Spanish people whose discontent was brutally repressed in Madrid on 2 May 1808. How could a country that had been held hostage by the events of political chaos under the rule of the

---

<sup>255</sup> Adresse de la Junte suprême de gouvernement à S. M. l’Empereur et Roi, Madrid le 13 Mai, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 170, samedi, 18 Juin 1808.

<sup>256</sup> Proclamation, Bayonne le 25 Mai, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 170, samedi, 18 Juin 1808.

<sup>257</sup> Proclamation, Bayonne le 25 Mai, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 170, samedi, 18 Juin 1808.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

last Bourbon king not be in favor of reform? Naturally, the dissension of the Spanish had more to do with who was doing the reforming and level of force being applied to enact such changes.

But such concerns did not play a part in the grand scheme of regenerating the Spanish nation that became the principal justification for French control of the Spanish crown. To this end, Napoleon asked the Spanish to, “remember of those which had been your fathers; see that which you have become. The fault is not yours, but the bad administration that governed you.”<sup>259</sup> The lengthy and detailed contextual construction of a Spanish monarchy plagued by indecision, rife with conflict, and a Spanish political landscape in crisis had built up to this contrast between previous Bourbon rule in Spain and the forthcoming French rule of that nation. Napoleon concluded his speech emphatically, “Be full of hope and confidence in the current circumstances; because I want your last descendants to retain my memory and say: *He is the regenerator of our fatherland.*”<sup>260</sup> This statement, with Napoleon’s own emphasis on the last sentence, was the principal explanation for Joseph’s elevation to the throne of Spain.

This was a long-term project of regeneration of the Spanish monarchy, and more broadly the Spanish nation. Building off of the pragmatic hopes, desires, and beliefs of the *Junte*, the city of Madrid, and the Cardinal-Archbishop of Toledo, the French government presented themselves as restoring order, efficiency, and above all greatness, to a Spain that had been flounder in political upheavals since the prince of Asturias’s failed El Escorial Conspiracy in 1807. The petty bickering and instability in the royal family had unsettled the Spanish population, according to *Le Moniteur*, rather than the presence of the French military stationed across Spain to invade Portugal.

---

<sup>259</sup> Proclamation, Bayonne le 25 Mai, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 170, samedi, 18 Juin 1808.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

The official journal's conscientious coverage and timing, as well as precise language from the middle of February 1808 to June 1808 created the appearance of sustained crisis that could only be resolved by disciplined French intervention. This intervention came from Napoleon himself as he requested to meet with Charles and Ferdinand at Bayonne in order to solve the abdication crisis that had since threatened to further destabilize the Spanish monarchy. By means of deception, the emperor received the sovereign right to the throne of Spain and intended to pass on it to his elder brother Joseph, ruling in southern Italy as the King of Naples and Sicily. This process was delayed by the desire to present French actions as legitimate by assembling a *Junte supreme de gouvernement* to not only acknowledge Napoleon's right to the throne, but also to justify his elevation of Joseph as King of Spain. The savvy political bureau of *Le Moniteur* retained as much information as possible until the news was presented through the *Junte* rather than through the French government. The political staff painstakingly built up to Napoleon's proclamation in the 18 June 1808 issue of the official newspaper that explained French control of Spain as a project of regenerating a nation. The main tool of this regeneration was the new constitution for Spain, published in its entirety, both in Spanish and French, in *Le Moniteur* on 15 July 1808.<sup>261</sup> The constitution occupied the entire issue of *Le Moniteur*, but it was never fully or even partially enacted across Spain due to the Peninsula War, marked by extensive guerrilla warfare, that began with the Dos de Mayo uprising and spread across Spain in the following months.

Napoleon Bonaparte's elevation of his brother Joseph to the throne of Spain was not the only sensitive, and controversial, policy decision regarding his family that harkened back to monarchical France. His decision to annul the marriage to his wife, the Empress Josephine, of nearly fourteen years for an Austrian archduchess was a delicate matter. Moreover, the marriage

---

<sup>261</sup> Acte Constitutionnel de l'Espagne, Paris le 14 Juillet, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 197, vendredi, 15 Juillet 1808.

of a French monarch to an Austrian Archduchess necessarily drew unsavory parallels. The reign of Louis XVI and his well-publicized and derided marriage to Marie Antoinette would have remained in the recent memory of the majority of adult Frenchmen and women living under Napoleonic rule. How the Napoleonic regime justified the necessity of this marriage through *Le Moniteur* will be the subject of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE FAMILIAR STORY OF A FRENCH MONARCH MARRYING AN AUSTRIAN ARCHDUCHESS

“Aussi bien, lors du mariage autrichien, le gout qu’a montré Napoléon de se rattacher aux Bourbons ne saurait paraître douteux...Par un effort continu, à partir de 1805, il tendit à se faire admettre lui-même dans la société, la famille des rois.”<sup>262</sup> – Frédéric Masson

Napoleon Bonaparte’s marriage to the Austrian Archduchess, Marie Louise, in 1810 represents the fourth and final case study of this thesis regarding political decisions made by the Napoleonic bureaucracy that harkened back to monarchical France. Few changes during the Napoleonic period (1799-1815) had such an immediate and obvious parallel with the political decisions of *ancien régime* France. The decision to procure a marriage between the French monarch and a member of the Austrian royal family would have necessarily aroused memories of the reign of Louis XVI. The vast majority of the French population would have remembered Marie Antoinette, her marriage to the King of France, and the role she played as the wife of Louis XVI and Queen of France. They would have recalled the vicious hatred directed towards her in pamphlets and pornographic *libelles*, particularly in relation to her spending habits and during and after the Diamond Neckless Affair.<sup>263</sup> In fact, as the great granddaughter of Empress Maria Theresa, Marie Louise was the great niece of Marie Antoinette.<sup>264</sup>

The danger that the French royal family found themselves in after their flight to Varennes in June 1791 eventually induced the Holy Roman Emperor, brother of Marie Antoinette, and the

---

<sup>262</sup> Frédéric Masson, *Le Sacre Et Le Couronnement de Napoléon* (Paris: Paris Société d’éditions littéraires et artistiques, 1908), 59.

<sup>263</sup> Sarah Maza, *Private Lives and Public Affairs: the Causes Célèbres of Prerevolutionary France (Studies On the History of Society and Culture)* (London: University of California Press, 1995), 176-177.

<sup>264</sup> Imbert de Saint-Amand, *The Happy Days of the Empress Marie Louise*, trans. Thomas Sergeant Perry (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1890), 1.

King of Prussia to announce the Declaration of Pillnitz. In this document, the two sovereigns declared their interest in Louis XVI's situation and threatened that, "they will use the most efficient means in relation to their strengths to place the King of France in a position to be totally free to consolidate the bases of a monarchical government that shall be as amenable to the rights of sovereigns as it is to the well-being of the French nation."<sup>265</sup> This apparent threat only crystallized French resolve to defend the Revolution and induced them to preemptively declare war on Austria on 20 April 1792. Beginning at this point, up to the marriage of Napoleon to Marie-Louise in 1810, France had fought the Austrian Empire in four major European wars.<sup>266</sup> The brief reversal of European alliances that occurred with the diplomatic revolution in 1756, which pitted longstanding enemies France and Austria in an alliance, was long since over. The fact that the Revolutionaries had executed Marie Antoinette in October 1793 only added to general animosity between the two countries. So how had did Napoleon Bonaparte, Emperor of the French, come to marry an Austrian Archduchess after having personally defeated Austrian armies in four separate coalitions since 1796?

A number of practical and political considerations were important in creating the Hapsburg-Bonaparte family alliance. First and foremost was the desire on the part of Napoleon to sire an heir in order to further solidify his familial dynasty.<sup>267</sup> By 1810, his fourteen year marriage to the Martinician Creole Joséphine de Beauharnais had failed to produce a son. Joséphine had been married to a French nobleman, Alexandre de Beauharnais, before her marriage to General Bonaparte, by which she had two children. However, she was six years

---

<sup>265</sup> [http://www.emersonkent.com/historic\\_documents/declaration\\_of\\_pillnitz\\_1791.htm](http://www.emersonkent.com/historic_documents/declaration_of_pillnitz_1791.htm).

<sup>266</sup> The wars of the First (1792-1797), Second (1798-1802), Third (1803-1806), and Fifth (1809) Coalitions.

<sup>267</sup> This desire becomes clear in *Le Moniteur* with a lengthy discussion of the Imperial Dotations by the Senate on 2 February 1810. This discussion emphasizes that only an imperial prince in the direct line of the Emperor could enjoy certain privileges of the imperial domains. (Intérieur, Sénat Conservateur, Paris le 1 Février, *Gazette Nationale ou le Moniteur universel*, n° 33, vendredi, 2 Février 1810).

older than Napoleon and by 1809 it was clear that she was unable to bear any more children. The death of the eldest nephew of emperor, Napoleon Charles Bonaparte in 1807 and an assassination attempt at Vienna in 1809 help to explain the timing and urgency of the annulment.

But the Austrians were not the first country Napoleon attempted to create an alliance with through marriage. His first choice was to marry one of Tsar Alexander I's sisters, to cement an alliance with the Romanov dynasty, but Alexander constantly delayed negotiations.<sup>268</sup> Unofficial overtures between the Austrians and French diplomats eventually resulted in Emperor Francis II accepting Napoleon's marriage proposal with the contract being signed on 7 February 1810. A marriage alliance with the Hapsburg dynasty, one of the two oldest royal families in Europe alongside the Bourbons, was an impressive achievement by the fledgling Bonaparte dynasty. It added a greater air of legitimacy to Napoleon's regime with the hope that the Franco-Austria alliance would form the bulwark of a continued strong French presence in central Europe. All four of these practical reasons played a role in encouraging Napoleon to annul his marriage to Joséphine and to marry Marie-Louise, but how did the Napoleonic state attempt to prepare public opinion for this unexpected alliance that harkened back to *ancien régime* France? What sort of contextual evidence was used to present the change in the most necessary light and what were the justifications published in *Le Moniteur* to placate public opinion?

Before tracing news of the marriage to Marie Louise from February to June 1810, a brief discussion of the coverage of Napoleon's annulment of his marriage to Joséphine is in order. There is only a single small paragraph devoted to the annulment in *Le Moniteur*. That article appeared on 14 January 1810, announcing that Arch-Chancellor Cambacérès, "as a result of the authorization that he received from His Majesty the Emperor and King and Her Majesty the Empress Joséphine, submitted a request to the Diocesan court of the *officialité de Paris*. This

---

<sup>268</sup> Alexander Grab, *Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 16.

court, after...having heard the testimonies, declared, by immediate sentence of the 9<sup>th</sup>, the nullity...of the marriage of S. M. the Emperor Napoleon and S. M. the Empress Joséphine. The metropolitan *officialité* confirmed that sentence on the 12<sup>th</sup> of this month.”<sup>269</sup> This short announcement of the annulment provided no justifications for the change, nor was the Empress to be mention at all in the succeeding four months in *Le Moniteur*. The message seemed to be that the annulment was a private matter, something that looked to the past. The marriage to Marie-Louise, in stark contrast, would be a massively public affair. Every single step of the process was to be published in *Le Moniteur* from the minutest detail of the extravagant ensembles of the royal courts to the overall preparations of the police and public works officials of the Napoleonic state to celebrate the marriage in Paris.<sup>270</sup> This was a momentous occasion, to be on the scale of the former royal weddings, the last of which had been Louis XVI’s marriage to Marie Antoinette in 1770. Thus, while looking back in scope, scale, and extravagance to the royal weddings of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the marriage also looked to the future of a prosperous, stable, and long-lasting French Empire under the house of Bonaparte.<sup>271</sup>

The first hint of an alliance with the Austrian Hapsburgs came on 25 January 1810 in an article on the new appointment of M. Otto as the French ambassador to Austria. In announcing Otto’s appointment, “His Majesty...hastened to give orders relative to the reception which must be made to His Excellency, according to his rank and to the friendly relations which exist

---

<sup>269</sup> Intérieur, Paris, le 13 Janvier, *Gazette Nationale ou le Moniteur universel*, n° 14, dimanche, 14 Janvier 1810 (A Paris, de l’imprimerie du citoyen Agasse propriétaire du Moniteur, rue des Poitevins, n° 14).

<sup>270</sup> For a detailed description of the events in Austrian and the court, see Extérieur, Autriche, Vienne, le 10 Mars, *Gazette Nationale ou le Moniteur universel*, n° 79, mardi, 20 Mars 1810 ; and entire edition of *Le Moniteur* is dedicated to the police measures regarding the Paris celebrations, Prefecture de Police, le 29 Mars, *Gazette Nationale ou le Moniteur universel*, n° 89, vendredi, 30 Mars 1810.

<sup>271</sup> Abby Zanger argues that, “Marriage is a ritual that does not so much *preserve or maintain the constitution of the state as it works at state building or change.*” Abby E. Zanger, *Scenes from the Marriage of Louis XIV: Nuptial Fictions and the Making of Absolutist Power (Hardback) - Common* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 8.

between the two powers.”<sup>272</sup> News of these supposed friendly relations would have seemed unexpected as only four months prior, Napoleon had militarily defeated Austria and forced them to sign the Treaty of Schönbrunn, which ceded Salzburg to Bavaria, West Galicia to the Duchy of Warsaw, and Trieste and Croatia to France; he also forced them to pay a massive indemnity of 200 million francs and negotiated a clause to reduce their army to 150,000 men.<sup>273</sup> The rationale for this alliance would come nearly a month later on 28 February 1810 in Cambacérès’s speech to the *Sénat* asking for their approval of the proposal for Napoleon to marry Marie-Louise.

Once again, the justifications for this political decision came in the form of the Arch-Chancellor reading a message from the Emperor to the Senate. While presented as a request to the Senate, that body had long ceased to offer any form of opposition to Napoleon and thus it was simply a gesture of procedure. Still, without any formal opposition, the Napoleonic state remained committed to justifying the marriage proposal through *Le Moniteur*, beginning with Cambacérès’s speech. The Arch-Chancellor began by revealing that the state sent the Prince de Neufchâtel to Vienna as, “our extraordinary ambassador, in order to ask the hand of the Archduchess Marie-Louise, daughter of the Emperor of Austria.”<sup>274</sup> This was a sign of serious intent, as the Prince de Neufchâtel was Marshal Berthier, one of the most decorated men of the Napoleonic state who served as the emperor’s chief of staff, Vice Constable of the Empire, as well as the minister of war from 1800 to 1807.

Yet, what was the goal of allying with the defeated, but still proud Austrian Empire? According to Cambacérès, “We wanted to eminently contribute to the happiness of the present

---

<sup>272</sup> Extérieur, Autriche, Vienne, le 12 Janvier, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 25, jeudi, 25 Janvier 1810.

<sup>273</sup> Grab, *Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe*, 16.

<sup>274</sup> Adresse au Sénat par S. A. S. Cambacérès, Intérieur, Paris le 27 Février, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 59, mercredi, 28 Février 1810.

generation.”<sup>275</sup> Naturally, this meant the birth of an heir who could solidify the regime’s future with a line of direct descendants who could inherit the privileges of the imperial domains and the crown. It also meant long-term peace. In this vein, he continued, “The enemies of the Continent have founded their prosperity on its divisions and its rift. They can no longer fuel the war in supposing our projects incompatible with the links and duties of kinship, we have come to contact the reigning imperial house of Austria.”<sup>276</sup> The five coalitions against France up to this point had been driven by countries seeking to benefit from divisions among European powers and assumed that the Austrian and French interests were incompatible. However, this is no longer the case, according to the Arch-Chancellor, as the French had contacted the Austrians with the hope of a marriage that would establish peace between the powers.

The Arch-Chancellor’s speech ends with a brief statement on Marie-Louise and why she was an outstanding choice to be Empress of the French. He asserted, “The brilliant qualities that distinguish the Archduchess Marie Louise have earned her the love of the Austrian people. They have fixed our gaze. Our people will love that princess for the love of us, until, witness of all the virtues that have placed her so high in our thoughts, they love her for herself.”<sup>277</sup> Sensing that this would not be a popular choice immediately, Cambacérès insists that the French people will love her “for the love of us,” or more simply the love of stable European relations. It might take time, but he believed the French people would come to love her for the undescribed brilliant qualities that made her the desired choice.

The *Sénat*’s response to this address is published a week later in *Le Moniteur* on 5 March 1810. Their response only further reinforced the justifications presented by Cambacérès of

---

<sup>275</sup> Ibid.

<sup>276</sup> Adresse au Sénat par S. A. S. Cambacérès, Intérieur, Paris le 27 Février, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 59, mercredi, 28 Février 1810.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

establishing a long, prosperous continental peace and further stability in France itself. They argued that Marie-Louise's "presence in the middle of the capital of the great Empire [Paris], will be the happy sign of the duration of the continental peace cemented by the moderation of your character, and that perfidious insinuations will no longer disturb."<sup>278</sup> Thus, the Austrian Archduchess' mere presence in France would cement a lengthy continental peace as the other European powers, Britain, Prussia, and Russia were unlikely to ally against France at the height of her power and the Austrian empire. This turned out to be far from the case after the disastrous Russian invasion, but it seemed fairly plausible in 1810. The "perfidious insinuations," seem to refer to Napoleon's reputation across Europe as a war-monger and that this French-initiated gesture towards peace could potentially, though unlikely, diminish that reputation.<sup>279</sup>

Just as crucial as continental peace was the birth of a true heir to the French throne. In this capacity, "The happiness of the World is in your hands, Sire, and yours will be confided to that young princess of which the brilliant qualities have fixed your gaze."<sup>280</sup> The birth of a son, directly descended from Napoleon was truly the central tenant of long-term French imperial power. The Senators presented this goal as the fulfillment of, "the wishes of the French people," who hoped that "France may soon have young princes who, under the paternal eyes of Your Majesty, learn to become worthy of the great name which you will transmit to them!"<sup>281</sup> However, once again, the people are said to love the marriage, "for the love of you,"<sup>282</sup> and for the potential of heirs, rather than for the undefined qualities of the Austrian princess. There is no

---

<sup>278</sup> Extrait des registres du Sénat-Conservateur du samedi 3 mars 1810, Intérieur, Paris le 4 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 64, lundi, 5 Mars 1810.

<sup>279</sup> Austrian ambassador to France in 1808, Clemens von Metternich is quoted as having said, "It is no longer the French people who are waging war, it is Napoleon alone who is set on it...Even his army no longer wants this conflict." Grab, *Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe*, 15.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid.

<sup>281</sup> Extrait des registres du Sénat-Conservateur du samedi 3 mars 1810, Intérieur, Paris le 4 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 64, lundi, 5 Mars 1810.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

attempt to argue that the French people would love Marie-Louise as a person, and especially not for her birth or familial connections. Rather it was the practical goals that would be accomplished by the marriage, of an heir and potential continental peace that were touted as the desire of the French people.

Published immediately succeeding this letter from the Senate, is a short paragraph from Napoleon to the Senators. Interestingly, the emperor appropriated the old French monarchical notion of the Queen being the mother of the nation, declaring, “I am touched by the sentiments you express to me. The Empress Marie-Louise will be for the French a tender mother. . . .”<sup>283</sup> Yet, he immediately adds the qualifier that “she will also be my happiness.”<sup>284</sup> The last mother of France was not particularly well-received, and the parallel between Marie-Louise and Marie Antoinette differs in one respect. That the marriage to Marie-Louise is the choice of Napoleon, the paternal father, rather than an arranged marriage forced upon him as was customary during the *ancien régime* with Louis XVI marrying Marie Antoinette well before he became king. In this way, Napoleon can illustrate the marriage decision as an active choice, reinforced by the practical goals that the union represents. It is this personal choice, Marie-Louise’s role as “his happiness,” and therefore the happiness of the nation that stands out in the justifications that would have almost certainly been made by the Bourbon kings had they justified their marriages to the French public.

What follows after the justifications of the Senate, Arch-Chancellor, and Napoleon in the form of the necessity of a direct heir and potential continental peace, was an immense campaign to cover every single event and celebration related to the marriage. Coverage in *Le Moniteur* closely followed both the events in Austria and those that would occur in France. The consistent

---

<sup>283</sup> Sa Majesté a répondu en ces termes, Intérieur, Paris le 4 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 64, lundi, 5 Mars 1810.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

publication of articles on the marriage festivities and ceremonies began on 6 March 1810 with the Austrian announcement that, “The greatest preparation is being made for the celebrations which will immediately follow the arrival of the extraordinary ambassador of the Emperor Napoleon. These celebrations will be as brilliant as those that took place for the marriage of the Emperor [Francis II]. It will be seen throughout as the emblem of the union between the two Empires...”<sup>285</sup> Subsequent articles detail the large crowds that gathered to see Marie-Louise and the signing of the marriage pact, which had occurred earlier on 7 February 1810.<sup>286</sup> Most of the news surrounding events in Austria are published in *Le Moniteur* as excerpts from Austrian newspapers, especially the *Gazette de Vienne*.

While the celebrations in Austria are presented as being spectacular, the preparations for those that would occur in Paris once the new empress arrived are given the most attention. For instance on 15 March 1810, the official newspaper published a short article detailing the civil marriage ceremony of Napoleon that took place at Saint-Cloud. The description of what was to be expected stated, “There will be a celebration for which the park will be lit. The fountains, and especially the great waterfall, will be illuminated...this will provide a magnificent spectacle. The park and the garden will be open to the public.”<sup>287</sup> The entire program of this ceremony was published in a three page spread of *Le Moniteur* on 31 March 1810, which detailed whom would play a prominent part in the official events, what the emperor and empress were to say to one another, the public entry into Paris, and the marriage ceremony in the Louvre.

Not to be left out of the festivities, the non-political section of *Le Moniteur*, controlled by the owner and editor of the paper, Henri Agasse, inserted a series of articles consisting of fine

---

<sup>285</sup> Extérieur, Autriche, Vienne le 19 Février, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 65, mardi, 6 Mars 1810.

<sup>286</sup> Extérieur, Autriche, Vienne le 18 Février, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 65, mardi, 6 Mars 1810 ; Extérieur, Autriche, Vienne le 24 Février, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 65, mardi, 6 Mars 1810.

<sup>287</sup> Intérieur, Paris le 14 Mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 74, jeudi, 15 Mars 1810.

arts that were created and poems meant to honor “Napoleon the Great,” his wedding, and more broadly his achievements.<sup>288</sup> Filled with allusions to ancient heroes and Roman culture, the poems reinforce the recently appropriated image of Napoleon as the monarch and father of the French people. For instance, in a reference to the Roman poet Horace’s saying *Hic ames dici Pater atque Princeps*, a poem by J. Esménard exclaimed, “Here, the holy title of Monarch and of Father we have named you.”<sup>289</sup> Other examples include a cantata sung by M. Arnault of the *Institut National*, on 2 April 1810 during the religious marriage ceremony reinforce the earlier justification of the union’s desired goal of establishing long-term peace, “Hear the voice which resounds from the banks of the Danube to the banks of the Seine. Hear the voice that guarantees a long reign to the happiness that this great day brings.”<sup>290</sup> A final example is the inscription of a foundation stone for a Parisian construction project that read:

On April 11 M. D. CCC. X. a memorable year where the rebellious Spanish were subdued! A day more memorable still! Where by his union with Marie-Louise of Austria, Magnanimous Emperor Napoleon, (That God accords him a numerous posterity!) reunited two nations long divided, consolidated the peace of the Continent and founded the dearest hopes of France.<sup>291</sup>

These poems, engravings, cantatas, and discussions of fine arts served as devices to reiterate the justifications of the marriage between Napoleon and Marie-Louise. The presence of these poems and articles in the non-political section of *Le Moniteur* that was entirely controlled by the editor of the newspaper emphasized the extensive and persistent coverage of the imperial wedding in the official journal.

Yet, defending the marriage in terms of political and practical aims in the mold of the traditional monarchies was not enough for the Napoleonic regime. The official newspaper’s

---

<sup>288</sup> Beaux-Arts et Poésie, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 107, mardi, 17 Avril 1810.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.

<sup>290</sup> Cantate, Intérieur, Paris le 2 Avril, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 93, mardi, 3 Avril 1810.

<sup>291</sup> Ministère de l’Intérieur, Paris le 15 Avril, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 104, samedi, 14 Avril 1810.

coverage of this union was presented on the same grandiose terms as the former royal weddings.<sup>292</sup> In fact, a direct reference to the famous celebrations known as the *Carrousel* during the reign of Louis XIV was found in *Le Moniteur* on 17 April 1810 amidst the preparations for the royal wedding in Paris.<sup>293</sup> The article announced that:

Great preparations are also made on the *Champ-de-Mars*, this immense *cirque* which can hold the entire population of Paris. Banquets, concerts, carrousel, games of all kinds... We know that since Louis XIV, we had not given the magnificent spectacle of a *Carrousel*. Everyone brings in this moment the tribute of his ideas for making the execution of these games easier and more brilliant, for which our ancestors had a favorite taste.<sup>294</sup>

Here we have a clear desire for the imperial wedding to match the extravagance and scale of the *ancien régime* royal weddings and associated celebrations, for which their French ancestors had “a favorite taste.” It was not merely enough to match the typical royal weddings, but to rival the famous and grandiose celebrations of Louis XIV. This was a new apex for France. It was a chance to demonstrate all the monarchical glory of the new regime as, “all the arts, all the talents will vie to make the festival more worthy of our sovereigns.”<sup>295</sup> This argument has a clear parallel with those used in chapter one to justify the creation of the empire and institutions more analogous to its nature.

However, their foundation is notably different. The justifications for the increasingly monarchical character of the Napoleonic regime had reached their culmination. Rather than arguing for institutions “more analogous to its grandeur” on the basis of popular sovereignty or their compatibility with the goals of the French Revolution, the regime explained itself in terms

---

<sup>292</sup> For examples of the associated celebrations, see: Charles Perrault (1628-1703). *Courses de testes et de bague faites par le roy et par les princes et seigneurs de sa cour en l'année 1662* (Paris: Imprimerie royale, Sébastien Mabre-Cramoisy, 1670).

<sup>293</sup> For descriptions of the *Carrousel*, see: *Iornal historique dv grand et magnifique carovsel ov tovrnoy de Lovys XIV, roy de France et de Navare. Contenant ce qui s'est fait & passé les cinq & six de iuin courses de la bague* (Paris: Chez I.B. Loyson, 1662).

<sup>294</sup> Intérieur, Paris le 16 avril, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 92, lundi, 2 Avril 1810.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid.

of the pragmatic goals of its sovereign. The decisions of the regime were linked directly to the person of Napoleon, namely his amorphous “happiness.” They were also presented in the light of the 18<sup>th</sup> century paternalism of the French monarch.<sup>296</sup> Napoleon was the father, acting on behalf of the good of his children. In his own response to the *Sénat*, Napoleon affirmed, “I am happy to have been named by Providence to rule this loving and sensible people.”<sup>297</sup> Any notion of popular sovereignty had been abandoned and Napoleon’s reign was now the result of almighty Providence, not the people of France, or even the political elite that supported him. This re-appropriation of reigning by divine right as the *ancien régime* Bourbons is the epitome of the ostentatious quasi-absolute monarchy that the French Empire had become by 1810. The Napoleonic state was unapologetically and outwardly monarchical in its institutions and ostentatious character.

By year six of his reign as Napoleon I, and following his marriage to the Austrian Archduchess Marie-Louise, the French emperor had reached the summit of traditional monarchical power. The justifications for this marriage came from Arch-Chancellor Cambacérés reading a letter from Napoleon, the *Sénat*, and Napoleon himself. The marriage of the French monarch was explained by the practical goals that it would accomplish, notably external stability in the form of an alliance with the Austrian Empire that would deter further coalitions against France. The Prince of Neufchâtel admitted as much to Marie-Louise during the celebrations in Austria, when he told her, “Political considerations may have influenced the determination of our

---

<sup>296</sup> There is a debate over how much the image of the “good father” actually hurt the image of the French kings after Louis XV and aided the “de-sacralization” of the French monarchy. For the purposes of this paper, Napoleon’s re-appropriation of the image of the good father can be seen in the broader context of European monarchs presenting themselves as paternal figures, such as Britain’s King George III. See: Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 1991); Barry M. Shapiro, *Traumatic Politics: the Deputies and the King in the Early French Revolution* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2009).

<sup>297</sup> Sa Majesté a répondu en ces termes, Intérieur, Paris le 4 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 64, lundi, 5 Mars 1810.

two sovereigns.”<sup>298</sup> It also represented internal stability in the form of an heir to the imperial throne. There is no mention of the prestige that the Napoleonic throne would acquire by marrying into one of the two oldest royal families in Europe, the Hapsburgs. Rather, “this union of two powerful families...will give to two generous nations further reassurances of tranquility and happiness.”<sup>299</sup> Moreover, Marie-Louise was not to be accepted simply for her own qualities, but because of her imminent role as the “tender mother” of France. Even more crucially, the marriage was the will of the monarch.

Napoleon and Marie Louise came to genuinely love one another and form a strong marriage. However, the French emperor’s defeat in Russia and subsequent failure to stave off a massive allied invasion of France in 1814 meant he was forced to abdicate his imperial throne. Following his abdication, Napoleon was to never see Marie Louise or his son again as they were both taken under the protection of the Austrian Emperor, Francis II. While personally devastating, Marie Louise’s absence from Napoleon’s side during his return aided his efforts to reimagine his rule when he returned to France during the *Cent-Jours* in 1815. Instead of casting himself as the powerful paternalistic monarch, in the mold of traditional European kings, he used *Le Moniteur* to rebrand his style of rule in a more liberal light. How Napoleon abandoned the political institutions and decisions he had made from 1804-1814 and recast himself as the liberal Emperor in direct contrast to the French Bourbons, will be the subject of the next chapter.

---

<sup>298</sup> Discours de l’ambassadeur extraordinaire à S. A. I. Madame l’archiduchesse Marie-Louise, Extérieur, Autriche, Vienne, le 10 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 79, mardi, 20 Mars 1810.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### A REIMAGINED LIBERAL EMPEROR DURING THE *CENT-JOURS*,

#### MARCH 1815

“Le *Moniteur* du 21 est arrivé hier en cette ville. Il a été réimprimé aussitôt. Le drapeau tricolore a été arboré partout avec un enthousiasme général. Les troupes de ligne et la garde nationale ont à l’instant reprise leur cocarde chérie aux cris de *vive l’Empereur!*”<sup>300</sup>

After reaching the apogee of his monarchical powers, Napoleon Bonaparte and his empire faced a series of escalating diplomatic and military issues that eventually brought about the abdication of the emperor in 1814. Unable to quell the guerilla war in Spain, decisively defeat Wellington’s British and Portuguese army, bring Britain to the peace table by means of the continental blockade, or to maintain Russia as an ally, Napoleon eventually decided to solve the last of those issues first by invading Russia. The famed Russian invasion of 1812 was nothing short of a disaster. Still, it took the Grand Alliance of Russia, Britain, Prussia, and Austria another two years before ending French hegemony in central Europe and forced Napoleon to abdicate with no chance of victory. Having been exiled to the small island of Elba in the Mediterranean, Europe hoped they had seen the last of the emperor and his eagles.

Amidst conflicting reports of unrest in France under the reign of the restored Bourbons and disagreements between the allies convened at Vienna, Napoleon decided to act on 26 February 1815.<sup>301</sup> Evading the British and French ships tasked with guarding the island,

---

<sup>300</sup> Intérieur, Metz, le 24 mars, *Gazette Nationale ou le Moniteur universel*, n° 88, mercredi, 29 Mars 1815 (A Paris, de l’imprimerie de M<sup>me</sup> veuve Agasse, rue des Poitevins, n° 6).

<sup>301</sup> Martyn Lyons, *Napoleon Bonaparte and the Legacy of the French Revolution* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994), 285.

Napoleon and a contingent of “a thousand men and four guns”<sup>302</sup> landed at Golfe-Juan near Antibes in southern France. Their journey, north through the Alps towards Paris was covered daily in *Le Moniteur* under the control of the Bourbons, which presented a much different picture of events than the newspaper would when recounting those same scenes once Napoleon regained his throne.

The month of March in the official newspaper is unique during the Napoleonic period as it provides the views of two directly opposed regimes within a single month. Both the Bourbon government and the Napoleonic state used *Le Moniteur* as a vehicle to justify their legitimate claims to the throne of France, while anticipating and countering the explanations of the other. In this way, *Le Moniteur* served as a battleground between two regimes desiring to justify themselves to the French public. Once Napoleon returned to the summit of power in France and regained control of *Le Moniteur*, the ever-faithful secretary of state Maret reassumed his duties to oversee the political news being published in the official gazette. Yet, the newspaper was no longer used to justify the increasingly monarchical character of the Napoleonic state, but rather the new, popular and idealized liberal government that was unveiled with Napoleon as the liberal emperor. Thus, the coverage of the early events of the *Cent-Jours* is an exception that proves the rule of the political role *Le Moniteur* played in France from 1804 to 1815.

This chapter will be divided into two parts. The first, beginning on 7 March 1815, will present the arguments mobilized by Louis XVIII<sup>303</sup> and the Bourbon regime to demean the legacy of Napoleon and justify their restoration in terms of his failures in *Le Moniteur*. In fact, they anticipated his new liberal agenda and presented themselves as a significantly more liberal and restrained regime when compared to Napoleon’s “grand Empire.” The second part of this

---

<sup>302</sup> Gardes Nationales de France, ordre du jour, Intérieur, Paris le 7 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 67, mercredi, 8 Mars 1815.

<sup>303</sup> Frequently referred to as Louis the Desired by the Bourbon controlled *Moniteur*.

chapter will trace the justifications the re-empowered Napoleonic state printed in the official journal to counter the arguments of the Bourbons and contrast their supposedly feudal, privileged, and unpopular monarchy with his policies that harkened back those of the French Revolution. All three of the arguments mobilized in chapter 1 (international context, popular sovereignty, and continuity with the French Revolution) that were used to justify the creation of the hereditary empire, return in 1815 as Napoleon presented himself and his state in a renewed “liberal” light.

The first mention of Bonaparte’s landing, as he was referred to by the Bourbons, is found on 7 March 1815, roughly six days after he reached the French coast. This delay was due to the fact that “the telegrams which had first made it known, had given no details.”<sup>304</sup> The initial reference to the landing is vague, stating, “The operation of the Congress of Vienna had permitted us to believe in the general establishment of a solid and durable peace...this tranquility is troubled.”<sup>305</sup> Further details were revealed in an *Ordonnance du Roi* containing measures of general security, which explained that the state would be compromised if, “we do not take prompt measures to repress the company that has just been formed on one of the points of our Kingdom, and stop the effects of plots and attacks intended to excite civil war and destroy the Government.”<sup>306</sup> But who was behind such an attempt in a reduced, but still powerful France? None other than Napoleon Bonaparte, who “was declared a traitor and rebel to be brought to the head of the army in the department of the Var...[who] directed all governors, commanders of armed force, national guard, civil authorities and ordinary citizens...to attack him

---

<sup>304</sup> Chambre du Roi, Intérieur, Paris le 7 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 67, mercredi, 8 Mars 1815.

<sup>305</sup> Proclamation Convocation des Chambres, Intérieur, Paris le 6 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 66, mardi, 7 Mars 1815.

<sup>306</sup> Ordonnance du Roi Contenant des Mesures de Sureté Générale, Intérieur, Paris le 6 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 66, mardi, 7 Mars 1815.

[Bonaparte].”<sup>307</sup> What were his motives for such an audacious return to France, in the rhetoric of the Bourbons?

According to the King’s order of 6 March, Napoleon Bonaparte had dared “set foot on the soil of France, hoping to divide us, igniting civil war and accomplishing his plans of revenge, he is absolutely not one of us who no longer feels animated of the most profound indignation.”<sup>308</sup>

For Louis XVIII, it was solely Napoleon’s personal ambition and thirst for revenge because of the perceived slight of losing his throne to the Bourbons. In fact the king posited the question, “It is thus not enough that the delirium of his ambition had dragged us in every part of Europe, had raised all peoples against us, lost the provinces that French valor had conquered before he was even known in our ranks, lastly opened the kingdom and capital to the same foreigners?”<sup>309</sup>

The escape from Elba was simply a personal mission of a deluded and dethroned monarch who had only disrupted French peace and with his fall, even lost territory that the French Republican armies had conquered during the 1790s. Napoleon’s personal desire to “arm the French against the French, disturb our inner peace, destroy all our hopes,” went so far as to “deprive us again the freedom and the constitutional charter that Louis the Desired had rendered us.”<sup>310</sup> This was not merely an attempt to belittle Napoleon for occupying the French throne as an usurper,<sup>311</sup> but to justify Bourbon rule rather than that of Napoleon. The intention was to portray Napoleon as a “desperate” man driven by reckless ambition who was “the only man who had an interest in

---

<sup>307</sup> Ibid.

<sup>308</sup> Comte Maison, Gouvernement de la première division militaire, ordre du jour, Intérieur, Paris le 7 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 67, mercredi, 8 Mars 1815.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid.

<sup>310</sup> Comte Maison, Gouvernement de la première division militaire, ordre du jour, Intérieur, Paris le 7 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 67, mercredi, 8 Mars 1815.

<sup>311</sup> Ministre de la Guerre, Ordre du jour a l’armée, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 68, jeudi, 9 Mars 1815.

troubling”<sup>312</sup> the peace of Europe, in contrast to the Bourbon regime that was based on liberty and constitutional principles.

The Bourbon-controlled *Le Moniteur*<sup>313</sup> went even farther, portraying Bonaparte as an arbitrary absolute monarch. In an order of the day by the National Guard, Count Dessoie maintained that Napoleon, “shattered his own institutions, and under the pretense of a regular government, exercised the most arbitrary and absolute power, sacrificed the population, wealth, industry, and commerce of France, in the desire to extend without limits his domination and destruction of all the dynasties of Europe, for establishing his family.”<sup>314</sup> Personal interests, notably his family, motivated his capricious policies, not the interest of the French nation. Even more troublesome, “This man who, to say in a word, has given to the world a new and terrible example of the abuse of power and wealth, when ambition is without end, passions unbridled, and talent without virtue.”<sup>315</sup> The Napoleonic regime had criticized the old nobility for its lack of a virtuous example during the creation of the imperial nobility, now Napoleon was subject to the same criticisms.

He reappeared in France just “when France scarcely began to breathe under a moderate Government; when the extreme parties, compressed by the Charter, are reduced to vain murmurs and without power to trouble the public peace.”<sup>316</sup> France had finally regained stability with a moderate, constitutional government only for Bonaparte to return in attempt to create disorder

---

<sup>312</sup> Gardes Nationales de France, ordre du jour, Intérieur, Paris le 7 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 67, mercredi, 8 Mars 1815.

<sup>313</sup> Minister of State, Emmerich Joseph de Dalberg controlled *Le Moniteur* under the initial Bourbon restoration as Maret was relieved of his duties as secretary of State. Furthermore, the editor of *Le Moniteur*, Henri Agasse, a loyal servant of the Napoleonic state, had passed away earlier on 1 May 1813. The printshops of the newspaper seem to have passed to his widow.

<sup>314</sup> Gardes Nationales de France, ordre du jour, Intérieur, Paris le 7 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 67, mercredi, 8 Mars 1815.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid.

<sup>316</sup> Gardes Nationales de France, ordre du jour, Intérieur, Paris le 7 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 67, mercredi, 8 Mars 1815.

and chaos. If that was not enough, he also brought with him, “conscription, the continental blockade, indefinite war, arbitrary power, public disrepute...preceded by civil war and revenge.”<sup>317</sup> This obvious effort to discredit Napoleon while bolstering the image of the Bourbon government seems to stem from a reasonable amount of insecurity, particularly towards the position of the army. Thus, akin to the methods used to contextualize and prepare public opinion for the creation of the empire, *Le Moniteur* published addresses to the king from both the political elite and the military from 9 March 1815 until Louis XVIII fled Paris on the night of 19 March 1815.<sup>318</sup> These addresses, though not published in the extraordinary numbers of those from 1804, were meant to show the widespread support for Louis XVIII, especially as cities, infantry regiments, and groups of citizens also had their messages published in the official journal. In the end, the consensus was that “Even those driven by scrupulous fidelity to the oath they had made to the Emperor, but who had carried a French heart, abandoned without return the man who has abandoned himself. Bonaparte in France, is today only an adventurer.”<sup>319</sup> The threat was dismissed. There still remained the entire French army, though reduced significantly from the imperial days, for Napoleon to encounter.

Events went widely off-script for the Bourbons on 14 March 1815, after Marshal Ney, send by Louis XVIII to stop Napoleon’s march joined his former emperor with roughly 6,000 men. This event was only briefly alluded to in *Le Moniteur* the night the king fled Paris, in a royal proclamation that bemoaned the defection of a small part of the French army.<sup>320</sup> The following morning’s issue of the official newspaper published a short sentence on the flight,

---

<sup>317</sup> Gardes Nationales de France, ordre du jour, Intérieur, Paris le 7 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 67, mercredi, 8 Mars 1815.

<sup>318</sup> Examples include addresses of support from the Cour de Cassation, the cour des comptes au Roi, the Cour royale de Paris, the department of the Seine-et-Oise, etc.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid.

<sup>320</sup> Proclamation du Roi, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 79, lundi, 20 Mars 1815.

stating, “The king and the princes had left in the night.”<sup>321</sup> This note is immediately succeeded by one revealing, “His Majesty the Emperor arrived tonight at 8 o’clock in his palace the Tuileries...He constantly walked in the midst of an immense crowd which was everywhere in front of him.”<sup>322</sup> His Majesty had finally returned to Paris, but how was Napoleon to explain and justify his return as emperor to the French public that apparently flocked to see him?

The initial attempt to validate his return came on 21 March 1815 in *Le Moniteur* in the form of three addresses: one directed at the French army, another to the French public, and the last was aimed at the generals, officers, and soldiers of the Imperial Guard as well as the rest of the military. These publications, printed on the front page of the official newspaper the day Napoleon officially regained his throne exemplify the crucial role that *Le Moniteur* consistently served from 1804 to the *Cent-Jours*: as the official word of the government and as a vehicle to justify the sensitive changes in Napoleonic policy. Combined, those three documents feature the three central strands of argumentation used to justify the new liberal French empire: the international context, popular sovereignty, and continuity with the goals of the French Revolution.

The restored emperor’s first act was to explain the defeat he suffered in 1814 against the allied armies in France, as well as his subsequent abdication. Instead of linking the 1814 campaign’s failure to his overoptimistic effort to defend French control of central Europe in 1813 or the failed invasion of Russia that deprived the French army of its first-class cavalry and soldiers, he claimed, “We have not been defeated. Two men from our ranks had betrayed our laurels, their states, their prince, their benefactor.”<sup>323</sup> These two men, Marshal Marmont (*duc de*

---

<sup>321</sup> Intérieur, Paris le 20 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 80, mardi, 21 Mars 1815.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid.

<sup>323</sup> A Armée, Proclamation Au Golfe-Juan du 1<sup>er</sup> mars 1815, Intérieur, Paris le 20 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 80, mardi, 21 Mars 1815.

*Raguse*) and Marshal Augereau (*duc de Castiglione*), were credited with stabbing the emperor, the state, and the army in the back through political intrigue. Through their treasons they were also directly associated with a much larger evil: the rule of the French Bourbon princes.<sup>324</sup>

Addressing the French military, Napoleon's proclamation presented those princes as, "Those we have seen for twenty five years traversing all of Europe in order to arouse our enemies, who have spent their life fighting against us in the ranks of foreign armies cursing our beautiful France... If their reign lasted, all would be lost, even the memory of those immortal days."<sup>325</sup> The explicit correlation between the Bourbons and royalist émigrés with foreign armies and treason was a common theme in the justifications, especially in messages or proclamations directed towards the army. The larger international context of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars was utilized to paint the Bourbons and their princes as traitors to France, and even more fundamentally, as unequivocally against the cherished gains of the French Revolution.

Counter posed to this impression, Napoleon linked his reign directly to the symbols and legacy of the French Revolution. This was done, both to highlight his legitimate claim to the throne of post-Revolutionary France having been a son of the revolution, and to contrast his recreated empire as one directly opposed to the principles of the Bourbon monarchy.

Throughout the addresses to the people of France, as well as to the soldiers, the Napoleonic state distinctly emphasized the return of revolutionary symbols such as the tricolor flag and cockades. For instance, in a proclamation to his soldiers, Napoleon encouraged them to, "Tear down those colors that the nation has proscribed, and for twenty-five years, served as a rallying call to all the

---

<sup>324</sup> Au Peuple Français, Intérieur, Paris le 20 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 80, mardi, 21 Mars 1815.

<sup>325</sup> A Armée, Proclamation Au Golfe-Juan du 1<sup>er</sup> mars 1815, Intérieur, Paris le 20 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 80, mardi, 21 Mars 1815.

enemies of France. By displaying this tricolor cockade; it will carry you in our great days!”<sup>326</sup> The replacement of the white *fleur-de-lys* flags and white cockades of the Bourbons on state buildings, in the army, and across the country was given tremendous attention in *Le Moniteur*. The white cockade, the *fleur-de-lys* decoration, the Orders of Saint-Louis, Saint-Esprit, and Saint-Michel were also officially abolished from France.<sup>327</sup> The stark contrast between the revolutionary symbols appropriated by Napoleon and those royalist emblems that they were replacing catered to the imagery and message, which the Napoleonic state was attempting to present of the emperor as inherently a product of the French Revolution.<sup>328</sup>

Another justification that took center stage in the efforts to explain Napoleon’s return was popular sovereignty. The notion that Napoleon was chosen by the people of France to be their emperor played a significant role in rationalizing his attempt to rebrand himself as a “liberal” ruler. In the initial proclamation to the soldiers of France, Napoleon portrayed himself as, “Your general, called to the throne by the choice of the people and raised on your bulwark, returns to you: come join him.”<sup>329</sup> Even more emphatically, his interests were those of France and her people according to the same address in which he announced, “Soldiers, come around under the flags of your chief. His existence only consists of yours, his rights are only those of the people and yours; his interests, his honor, his glory are no other than your interest, your honor, and your glory.”<sup>330</sup> But soldiers were only a part of the audience the emperor was trying to reach.

---

<sup>326</sup> A Armée, Proclamation Au Golfe-Juan du 1<sup>er</sup> mars 1815, Intérieur, Paris le 20 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 80, mardi, 21 Mars 1815.

<sup>327</sup> Décret Impériaux, Intérieur, A Lyon le 13 mars 1815, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 80, mardi, 21 Mars 1815.

<sup>328</sup> How much Napoleon was a “son” of the Revolution and to what degree he ended or solidified it is the subject of a historiographical debate that need not be rehashed here. It is enough to show that the Napoleonic regime utilized the revolutionary symbols for their own purposes of presenting Napoleon as the liberal emperor. See: Lyons, *Napoleon Bonaparte and the Legacy of the French Revolution*.

<sup>329</sup> A Armée, Proclamation Au Golfe-Juan du 1<sup>er</sup> mars 1815, Intérieur, Paris le 20 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 80, mardi, 21 Mars 1815.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid.

In his address to the people of France on 21 March 1815, the notion of popular sovereignty, and more precisely, the legitimacy of the new Napoleonic government that was based upon that principle, formed the central theme. For instance, the address began with Napoleon asserting that, “Raised to the throne by your choice, all that which had been done without you is illegitimate.”<sup>331</sup> Legitimacy had been conferred upon him by popular sovereignty, not by foreign armed force as with the Bourbons. His previous reign as emperor, confirmed by the plebiscite of 1804, was touted as the antithesis of the Bourbon’s return to the throne:

A prince who would rule over you, who would sit on my throne by the force of those same armies which ravaged our territory, would seek in vain to support the principles of feudal law, it could only assure the honor and the rights of a small number of individuals of people who for twenty-five years condemned them in all our national assemblies. Your inner tranquility and your outward consideration would be lost forever.<sup>332</sup>

The restoration was achieved on the back of intrigue and foreign armies, not by a popular will. Their principles were those of foreign monarchs, not the equality and liberty of the French Revolution. Such interest and institutions “can only be guaranteed by a national government and by a dynasty born in these new circumstances.”<sup>333</sup> The Bourbons were illegitimate princes who were out of touch with the needs and desires of the “new” France forged during the French Revolution. In fact, Louis XVIII and his ministers were “Waiting for the moment where they would dare destroy the *Légion d’Honneur*,”<sup>334</sup> which was used as an emblematic example of Napoleonic institutions that embodied equality among all classes and the lack of privileges.

Fortunately for the French, in his exile, Napoleon had heard “your complaints and your views; you request this government of your choice which alone is legitimate...I crossed the seas

---

<sup>331</sup> Au Peuple Français, Intérieur, Paris le 20 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 80, mardi, 21 Mars 1815.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid.

<sup>333</sup> Au Peuple Français, Intérieur, Paris le 20 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 80, mardi, 21 Mars 1815.

<sup>334</sup> Les généraux, officiers et soldats de la Garde impériale, aux généraux, officiers et soldats de l’armée, Intérieur, Paris le 20 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 80, mardi, 21 Mars 1815.

in the midst of perils of all kinds; I arrive among you, take my rights which are yours.”<sup>335</sup> These rights, “won at the cost of our blood”<sup>336</sup> were being threatened by Louis XVIII and his royalist supporters. In the, “few months that the Bourbons reigned, they have convinced you that they *have forgotten nothing and learned nothing*. They are always governed by prejudiced enemies of our rights and those of the people.”<sup>337</sup> Napoleon presented himself as the alternative to this royalist nightmare. He was portrayed as a liberal emperor draped in the symbols and rhetoric of the French Revolution.

Each of the three justifications mobilized to defend Napoleon’s return to the French throne were also empowered and conferred with additional legitimacy because the emperor supported his rhetoric of liberal reform with actual political change. At what point did Napoleon unveil his liberal agenda in *Le Moniteur* and officially recast his new regime as one that exuded the principles of the revolution? The great divergence between previous Napoleonic policies that exhibited monarchical characteristics and the new political agenda first appear on 21 March 1815 in a series of imperial decrees.

One of the most notable decrees abolished the *noblesse* and all feudal titles. The decree also associated its objective with those of the revolutionary Constituent Assembly and the national assemblies:

The *noblesse* is abolished, and the laws of the Constituent Assembly will be implemented. The feudal titles are removed; the laws of our national assemblies will be implemented... The individuals who obtained our national titles, as national awards, and of which the *lettres-patentes* had been verified to the *conseil du sceau des titres*, will continue to carry them.<sup>338</sup>

---

<sup>335</sup> Au Peuple Français, Intérieur, Paris le 20 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 80, mardi, 21 Mars 1815.

<sup>336</sup> Ibid.

<sup>337</sup> Les généraux, officiers et soldats de la Garde impériale, aux généraux, officiers et soldats de l’armée, Intérieur, Paris le 20 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 80, mardi, 21 Mars 1815.

<sup>338</sup> Décret Impériaux, Intérieur, A Lyon le 13 mars 1815, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 80, mardi, 21 Mars 1815.

Thus, the theme of maintaining the reborn imperial state's agenda with the ideals of the French Revolution continued in the imperial decrees. While radical, they did not abolish the imperial titles that Napoleon had granted, rebranding them as "national titles," since they were awarded for national service rather than through feudal means. In the words of the emperor, "I forever move away from the memories of the feudal regime, of serfdom and of the bondage to the land."<sup>339</sup> Instead, he moved permanently towards the French Revolution.

Another imperial decree ordered the abolition of censorship of the press. It declared, "The *direction générale de la librairie et de l'imprimerie*, and the censors, are abolished."<sup>340</sup> The stringent censorship that developed after the creation of the *direction générale de la librairie et de l'imprimerie* in 1810 was ended in an attempt to distance the new "liberal" regime from that of the original French empire. This distancing the new liberal empire with its previous incarnation also resulted in the official journal of the French state losing its "official" status. On 26 March 1815, *Le Moniteur* announced that it "was no longer the official journal. That which is official must be guaranteed by the signature of a minister of public functionary, and there is no longer henceforth another official publication other than the *Bulletin des Lois*."<sup>341</sup> *Le Moniteur's* association with the Napoleonic state's attempts to justify itself, and more generally with a restricted press, required a political separation to distance the new regime from the old. Within a week the recast Napoleonic state was beginning to resemble the Revolutionary governments in its rhetoric and the character of its actions.

One of the other major steps towards transforming the French state into a liberal empire was to enlist the support of famous revolutionaries and republican politicians. Napoleon was

---

<sup>339</sup> Décret Impériaux, Intérieur, A Lyon le 11 mars 1815, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 80, mardi, 21 Mars 1815.

<sup>340</sup> Décret Impériaux, Intérieur, Au Palais du Tuileries le 24 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 84, samedi, 25 Mars 1815.

<sup>341</sup> *le Moniteur universel*, n° 85, dimanche, 26 Mars 1815.

able to employ Lazare Carnot, the organizer of victory who had voted against his Life Consulate in 1802 and the hereditary empire in 1804, as his minister of the Interior.<sup>342</sup> Carnot's adherence to the new regime added a degree of legitimacy to the liberal program of Napoleon and drew other moderates and former revolutionaries to the new government such as Jean Denis, comte Lanjuinais who served as the president of the new Chamber of Representatives.

Appropriately, the first actual use of the word *liberales* in *Le Moniteur* came on 25 March 1815 in a message from the Minister of the Interior, Lazare Carnot, who had tremendous pull as a staunch, but moderate republican, and an unnamed departmental prefect. Once again contrasting the Bourbons with Napoleon, Carnot exclaimed, "The weak princes imposed from abroad, had become foreigners themselves to our laws, to our morals, have attempted, during an interregnum of eleven months, of returning us to the times of feudalism; they had badly disguised their views under the cloak of some liberal ideas which had only been in their words: but this they could not disguise."<sup>343</sup> The real liberal agenda came from the emperor Napoleon, as "Already the official documents, published in the *Moniteur*, made known the magnanimous intentions of our legitimate sovereign."<sup>344</sup> These intentions that the Emperor expressed, "for the happiness of the people... unite our efforts to cherish a prince who returns to us by Providence, and who guarantees our children equality of civil rights, the enjoyment of all properties, and no less our precious national honor."<sup>345</sup> The liberality of the Bourbons could only be found in their words rather than their actions. Napoleon on the other hand, according to Carnot, backed his words with action that restored the principles of the revolution.

---

<sup>342</sup> Intérieur, Paris le 21 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 81, mercredi, 22 Mars 1815. Carnot's adherence to the new regime also points to the desperation of some of the moderates and republicans who felt Napoleon was the best chance to prevent the Bourbons from reneging on the principles of the Revolution.

<sup>343</sup> Ministre de l'Intérieur, Paris le 22 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 84, samedi, 25 Mars 1815.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid.

<sup>345</sup> Ministre de l'Intérieur, Paris le 22 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 84, samedi, 25 Mars 1815.

The prefect's response to Carnot, published in *Le Moniteur* on 27 March 1815, acknowledged Napoleon's new aura and noted that, "The reign of grand conceptions and liberal ideas returned with him."<sup>346</sup> In a similar manner to the arguments used to justify Napoleon's ascension to the throne of France as hereditary monarch, the Prefect also articulated that with him, "France will retake her rank among the great nations, educated by past misfortunes, she will abuse neither her force nor the ascendancy of his glory."<sup>347</sup> Thus, this reborn France would also be constrained in her ambition, retaking her place as one of several great nations. In a letter published in *Le Moniteur*, Napoleon's other ministers described his return to the French throne as "the free choice of the people and the national recognition of merit. The country raised its majestic brow; she greets for the second time, of the name liberator, the prince who dethroned anarchy, and whose existence can only now consolidate our liberal institutions."<sup>348</sup> Napoleon's transformation into a liberal emperor gradually shifted from his personal desire for liberal reforms into a necessary good for the revolutionary ideas to remain extant in France.

Perhaps the best summary of this transition is crafted by the Council of State, who "taking up its duties, feels obliged to make known the principles which rule its opinions and conducts. Sovereignty resides in the people, it is the only source of legitimate power."<sup>349</sup> This is a far cry from the justifications used in 1810 during the initial reign of the emperor. The French Revolution in 1789 created a nation, which "regained its right that had been ignored or usurped. The National Assembly abolished the feudal monarchy, established a constitutional monarchy and a representative government."<sup>350</sup> All of these institutions and actions, and the principles for

---

<sup>346</sup> Intérieur, Saint-Lô le 23 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 86, lundi, 27 Mars 1815.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid.

<sup>348</sup> Adresse des ministres de S. M., Intérieur, Paris le 26 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 86, lundi, 27 Mars 1815.

<sup>349</sup> Adresse du conseil-d'état, Extrait du registre des délibérations, Séance du 25 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 86, lundi, 27 Mars 1815.

<sup>350</sup> Intérieur, Paris le 22 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 82, jeudi, 23 Mars 1815.

which they stood, required the Emperor to be called again in 1815, “to ensure once again by these institutions, all the liberal principles, individual liberty and equality of rights, the liberty of the press and the abolition of censorship, freedom of religion, to be called to vote, and laws by the representatives of the nation legally elected, national properties of all origins, the independence and immovability of all courts, the responsibility of ministers and all the agents of power.”<sup>351</sup> All of these were part of the Napoleonic state’s new agenda and the emperor’s acceptance of them marked a sharp contrast with his earlier reign.

The justifications of the international context, popular sovereignty, and the regimes continuity with the ideals of the French Revolution, utilized in the 1804, were re-appropriated by the Napoleonic state to recast Napoleon as a liberal emperor. *Le Moniteur* retained its essential role as the vehicle of those justifications before losing its status as the official gazette of the French government, due in large part, to the reform agenda it was explaining. The emperor came to symbolize the resolve of moderates and former revolutionaries who feared the ultra-royalists and Bourbon intentions. Their resolve was, “to change this state of things, of restoring the imperial throne which can only guarantee the rights of the nation, and to make disappear this royal throne that the people had proscribed as only guaranteeing the interests of a small number of individuals.”<sup>352</sup> This constructed fear of the Bourbons does not necessarily follow the actions of Louis XVIII who had accepted the sales of national property and other revolutionary gains, but his charter failed to “recognize the revolutionary principle of the sovereignty of the people.”<sup>353</sup> Yet, Napoleon remained the antithesis of the Bourbons in his rhetoric, emphasizing their ascension to the throne by foreign force and his new liberal policies that were not only being spoken, but also put into action. Justifying this political shift, though no longer

---

<sup>351</sup> Ibid.

<sup>352</sup> Intérieur, Paris le 22 mars, *le Moniteur universel*, n° 82, jeudi, 23 Mars 1815.

<sup>353</sup> Lyons, *Napoleon Bonaparte and the Legacy of the French Revolution*, 285.

monarchical in character, still fell within the purview of *Le Moniteur* and forms the exception that proves the rule.

## CONCLUSION

### ***GAZETTE NATIONALE OU LE MONITEUR UNIVERSEL AS THE SOUL AND FORCE OF THE NAPOLEONIC STATE***

“J’ai fait du *Moniteur* l’âme et la force de mon gouvernement”<sup>354</sup> – Napoléon Bonaparte

Soon after its establishment on 24 November 1789, the *Gazette Nationale ou le Moniteur Universel* garnered attention as a trust-worthy and reliable periodical. Its coverage of the debates of the National Assembly in particular, rapidly earned the newspaper a large following in Paris. *Le Moniteur* was the first large-format daily political newspaper in France and its creation was largely in response to, “the public demand for ‘news’ after the freeing of the press in 1789.”<sup>355</sup> Yet this new periodical stood out amongst its competitors not only for its size, but also because “in contrast to the majority of those new Parisian periodicals, which modeled themselves on Brissot’s *Patriote Francais*, the *Moniteur* prided itself on the accuracy of its political information rather than on its political opinions or the rhetorical skills of its authors.”<sup>356</sup> This would change after Napoleon rose to power in France with the coup of *Brumaire* in 1799 and made *Le Moniteur* the official newspaper of the state.

Napoleon’s state came to rapidly rely upon and utilize the official gazette as an arm of state’s daily interaction with its citizens. By 1810, its editor Henri Agasse was described by the government as “one of the most honest men in the world, who has sacrificed everything for his father-in-law, Panckoucke. He prints the *Moniteur* and other works that are important and *full of*

---

<sup>354</sup> René de Livois, *Histoire de La Presse Française, Tome 1* (Hollande: Les Temps de la Presse, 1965), 162.

<sup>355</sup> Carla Hesse, *Publishing and Cultural Politics in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1810* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 189.

<sup>356</sup> *Ibid.*

*merit.*<sup>357</sup> *Le Moniteur*'s merit for the Napoleonic state was not just the newspaper's reputation for accuracy, or even its financial stability, but its capacity to act as an intermediary between the state and the French public. Its ability to form a contingent link between the two, based upon the government's desire to influence and direct news. Above all, *Le Moniteur* provided a platform for the Napoleonic state to defend, justify, and prepare public opinion for political changes that were deemed sensitive in nature.

From 1804 to 1815, the *Gazette Nationale ou le Moniteur Universel*, the official press organ of the Napoleonic state, served as a tool of propaganda for Napoleon. But as we have seen, it was not used to simply publish fabricated stories, invectives against foreign powers, or even simply exaggerations of the truth. Rather, *Le Moniteur* served as the central vehicle for sophisticated, extensive, and diverse policy justifications for a series of politically sensitive transitions during the reign of Napoleon I<sup>er</sup>. The official journal's role was to prepare public opinion for these shifts in policy through conscientious timing and coverage, as well as precise language.

This aspect of the official newspaper, as a vehicle of the state's justifications of its own policies, has received little attention in the historiography. In Robert Holtman's *Napoleonic Propaganda*, which has served as the primary scholarly text for the role of propaganda under Napoleon's consular and imperial governments, he dedicates chapter eight to the devices that the French state used in its print propaganda efforts from 1799 to 1815. Of the twenty-two "devices" that he expounds upon in that chapter, *Le Moniteur*'s role as a device of justification, or more generally, the state's desire to justify its policies, receives no mention at all. Of the devices or techniques that proved generally effective for Napoleon, according to Holtman, such

---

<sup>357</sup> Carla Hesse, *Publishing and Cultural Politics in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1810* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 189.

as “letters, rhetorical questions, ridicule, emotional vocabulary, space, and falsification,”<sup>358</sup> *Le Moniteur*’s much more crucial function of explaining and justifying sensitive shifts in state policy to the French public is overlooked. This thesis rectifies that absence, which can also be found in the larger historiography, and provides a more nuanced and precise perspective on how the Napoleonic state attempted to interact with and influence the French public sphere.

From 1804 to 1810 *Le Moniteur*’s function as a vehicle of justification can be seen in four political shifts that harkened back to the decisions and institutions of monarchical France. The creation of the hereditary empire in 1804, the establishment of an imperial *noblesse*, the elevation of Joseph Bonaparte to the throne of Spain, and Napoleon’s marriage to Austrian archduchess Marie-Louise were all changes that added to the increasingly monarchical character of the French empire and represented significant political decisions. The preparation for each of these changes fell into two parts: a series of articles meant to contextualize and demonstrate the necessity of the shift, followed by the justifications themselves. The fifth chapter, detailing Napoleon’s effort to explain his return to France in 1815 and recast himself as a liberal emperor, followed this same formula. It is the exception that proves the rule. Instead of looking back to Bourbon, monarchical France as the regime had done from 1804 to 1810 Napoleon used *Le Moniteur* to rebrand himself as a liberal ruler and reinforced this image through actual policies. Interestingly, the political bureau of Hugues-Bernard Maret’s state department re-appropriated the three central arguments used in 1804 to justify the creation of the empire during the *Cent-Jours*: international context, popular sovereignty, and continuity with the goals of the French Revolution. In the end, *Le Moniteur* itself lost its long-standing privileged position as the only official journal of the French government as a result of Napoleon’s liberal policy changes.

---

<sup>358</sup> Robert B. Holtman, *Napoleonic Propaganda* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1950), 246.

Furthermore, there was a deliberate effort to present each of the rationalizations for the political shifts of the Napoleonic state as legitimate and necessary through variations in whose printed words were being utilized to advance them. For instance, the first monarchical shift, that of the creation of the empire in 1804, was primarily justified in *Le Moniteur* by the members of the *Tribunat* who, out of all the legislative bodies, had the closest connection with the revolutionary ideal of a popular, representative government. On the other hand, the creation of the nobility was largely explained by the Arch-Chancellor of the empire, Cambacérès and the emperor himself. The imperial *noblesse* was the most sensitive of the changes as seen by the vague terms used to describe the policy shift, the immense length of time that passed before the *noblesse* was given a unified structure, and the fact that any sort of new ennobling order would be associated with its *ancien régime* counterpart. The Napoleonic state had become unapologetically monarchical in its character and institutions with the exception of the creation of the *noblesse*. The transition to hereditary monarchy, the placement of his family members on the thrones of foreign countries, and his marriage into the traditional European family of monarchs through the Hapsburgs were explained in frank, extensive, and detailed justifications. The imperial nobility, on the other hand, was always presented in vague terms. Aristocracy remained uncomfortable for the Napoleonic. Practical reasons such as ongoing European warfare that threatened French power in central Europe and a lack of conqueror territory on the fringes of the empire also delayed the uniform noble order that would be passed into law in 1808. These reasons did not find their way into the rationalizations in *Le Moniteur*, highlighting that the justifications are not meant to be taken at face value. Thus, what was printed in the official newspaper is precisely what the Napoleonic state thought provided the most convincing justifications to present to the French public.

The novelty in this understanding is not the obvious notion that the regime attempted to use an official newspaper to influence French public opinion. Rather it is the fact that the Napoleonic state actually entered into a dialogue, regardless of how one-sided it was, with the French public and actually attempted to justify its own actions in print directed at its citizens. This is a major departure from the traditional European monarchies and the Bourbon kings who ruled old regime France. Prince Klemens von Metternich, the Austrian ambassador to France and then the Foreign Minister of the Austrian Empire recognized not only the power of the newspaper, but also Napoleonic France's unique use of that medium. In reference to the French use of newspapers as tools of influence, Metternich argued:

A great fault which all the governments, and particularly our own, have committed since the commencement of the French Revolution is that they had regarded as useless, as beneath their dignity and that of the good cause, and indeed even as dangerous, to speak truth to the public, and to speak it incessantly. This fact is never more contestable than when the French are concerned.<sup>359</sup>

The Napoleonic state, in contrast, spoke the truth, or what they wanted to present as the truth, to the French public on a daily basis. In the words of Metternich, the French "have the game to themselves...they have taken up the weapon we have disdained to make use of."<sup>360</sup> The actual effects of this weapon are difficult to discern and would be the subject of an entirely different sort of essay.

The greatest barrier to any such study would be a distinct lack of definitive source material. Many people write about their own ideas and those of other people, but they rarely write about what they have read in a newspaper. Even more, they rarely write about how a certain newspaper article or series of articles influenced their own thinking. People do not usually document whether such print material was convincing or not. Moreover, any attempt to

---

<sup>359</sup> Holtman, *Napoleonic Propaganda*, 204.

<sup>360</sup> Holtman, *Napoleonic Propaganda*, 204-205.

generalize would confront the problem of the sheer diversity of reasons that people read, and more crucially, interpret print material. Any attempt to generalize on the level of the “public” or even specific groups of people would most likely be a significant stretch of extant sources.

Yet, we do know that *Le Moniteur* boasted between six thousand and eighty-five hundred subscribers in 1810<sup>361</sup> and innumerable additional readers through its reach among state servitors, *cabinets de lecture*, salons, municipal buildings, the army camps, the dining halls of the *lycées* and as reprints in handbill form.<sup>362</sup> Additionally, the official newspaper was frequently excerpted from by the few remaining newspapers and thus further circulated the state’s messages. While we cannot say for sure how “successful” the Napoleonic regime influenced public opinion, the consistent use of *Le Moniteur* as the regime’s official organ for over fifteen years seems to point towards its usefulness and potential reward. Ultimately, the Napoleonic state remained committed to justifying itself in print from 1804 to 1815.

The fact that the Napoleonic regime took the time and effort to present elaborate justifications for the significant shifts in domestic politics through the medium of *Le Moniteur*, illustrates their at least tacit acknowledgment of the power of the public sphere (as well as their imagined ability to influence it). These were sophisticated and detailed justifications crafted by a savvy political bureau that has received no scholarly attention. This attempt to manage and influence the public sphere through print material highlights the role of the official journal as a crucial arm of Napoleon’s state apparatus. Throughout the Napoleonic period, *Le Moniteur* served as an explanatory tool and vehicle for political and practical justifications for the state’s sensitive policies, as seen in the five case studies. The official word of the government was

---

<sup>361</sup> Gustave Le Poittevin, *Liberté de La Presse Depuis La Revolution, 1789-1815* (Paris: Rue Soufflot et Rue Toullier, 1901), 239; Hesse, *Publishing and Cultural Politics in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1810*, 200.

<sup>362</sup> Napoleon I. *Dernières Lettres Inédites De Napoléon Ier.* (Paris: H. Champion, 1903), 377; Antonin Périvier, *Napoleon Journaliste* (Paris: Libraire Plon, 1918), 139.

predicated on the power of language: on the ability of written words, and the ideas behind those words, to influence thoughts and actions. In this sense, the *Gazette Nationale ou le Moniteur Universel* truly was the “soul and force” of the Napoleonic state from 1804 to 1815.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Primary Sources

Archives Nationale, ser. F18, carton 25, “Notes sur les imprimeurs ci-après désignés” (1810-1811).

Archives Nationale, ser. F4, cartons 2572-2573, doss. 1-2.

Bibliothèque Nationale, nouv. Acq. Fr. 1362, feuilles 63-64.

Caraccioli, Louis-Antoine. *Paris, métropole de l’univers*. (Paris 1802).

Constant, Benjamin. *De La Liberté Des Brochures, Des Pamphlets Et Des Journaux*. Paris, 1814.

Delalain, Paul. *L’Imprimerie et la librairie à Paris de 1789 à 1813* (Paris, 1900).

Napoleon I. *Dernières Lettres Inédites De Napoléon Ier*. (Paris: H. Champion, 1903).

Perrault, Charles. *Courses de testes et de bague faites par le roy et par les princes et seigneurs de sa cour en l’année 1662* (Paris: Imprimerie royale, Sébastien Mabre-Cramoisy, 1670).

*Collection Complète Des Lois, Décrets d’intérêt Général, Traités Internationaux, Arrêtés, Circulaires, Instructions, Etc: Volume 12*. Paris: Société du Recueil Sirey, 1 janvier 1826.

*Gazette Nationale ou le Moniteur Universel* (A Paris, de l’imprimerie du citoyen Agasse propriétaire du Moniteur, rue des Poitevins, n° 18).

*Journal des Débats et Décrets (et Loix du Pouvoir Legislatif, et des Actes du Gouvernement)*, also known as the *Journal de l’Empire* from 16 Juillet 1805 to the First Restoration and during the Hundred Days (A Paris, de l’imprimerie de le Normant, rue des Prêtres-Saint-Germain-l’Auxerrois, n° 42).

*Iorvnal historique dv grand et magnifique carovsel ov tovrnoy de Lovys XIV, roy de France et de Navare. Contenant ce qui s’est fait & passé les cinq & six de iuin courses de la bague* (Paris: Chez I.B. Loyson, 1662).

*The Confidential Correspondence of Napoleon Bonaparte with His Brother Joseph*. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1856.

### Secondary Sources

- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections On the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, Revised Edition*. Revised ed. New York: Verso, 2006.
- Baker, Keith Michael. *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays On French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- . "Politics and Public Opinion Under the Old Regime: Some Reflections." In *Press and Politics in Pre-Revolutionary France*, edited by Jack R. Censer and Jeremy D. Popkin (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1987): 204-246.
- Bell, David A. *The Cult of the Nation in France: Inventing Nationalism, 1680-1800*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003.
- Bergeron, Louis. *France under Napoleon*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981.
- Blaufarb, Rafe. *Napoleon, Symbol for an Age: a Brief History with Documents*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008.
- Broers, Michael. *Europe under Napoleon 1799-1815*. London: Hodder Education Publishers, 1996.
- Censer, Jack R., and Lynn Hunt. *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution*. University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2001.
- Censer, Jack R. and Jeremy D. Popkin. *Press and Politics in Pre-Revolutionary France*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.
- Censer, Jack. *The French Press in the Age of Enlightenment*. London: Routledge, 2014.
- Chartier, Roger. "Book Markets and Reading in France at the End of the Old Regime." In *Publishing and Readership in Revolutionary France and America*, edited by Carol Armbruster. (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993).
- . *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 1991.
- Dahlberg, Lincoln. "The Habermasian Public Sphere and Exclusion: An Engagement with Poststructuralist-Influenced Critics." *Communication Theory* 24, no. 1 (February 2014): 21-41.
- . "The Habermasian Public Sphere: Taking Difference Seriously?" *Theory and Society* 34, no. 1 (2005): 111-36.
- Darnton, Robert. *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

- . "L'Imprimerie de Panckoucke en l'an II." *Revue française d'histoire du livre*, 23 (1979): 359-69.
- . *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime*. Reprint ed. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985.
- Darnton, Robert and Daniel Roche. *Revolution in Print: The Press in France 1775–1800* (University of California Press, 1989).
- Daudet, Ernest. *L'exil Et La Mort Du Général Moreau* (Paris: Hachette et cie, 1909).
- Ducourtial-Rey, Claude. "Légion d'Honneur." In *Dictionnaire Napoléon*, edited by Jean Tulard, 1054-61. Paris: Fayard, 1987.
- Downie, J. A. "Public and Private: "The Myth of the Bourgeois Public Sphere"." In *A Concise Companion to the Restoration and Eighteenth Century*, edited by Cynthia Wall, 1. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005.
- Duprat, F.A. *Histoire de l'Imprimerie Impériale de Paris* (Paris : Duprat, 1861).
- Elias, Norbert. *Gesammelte Schriften 09. Über Die Zeit*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag KG, 2004.
- Ellis, Geoffrey. *Napoleon*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Ernouf, Baron. *Maret, Duc de Bassano*. Paris: G. Charpentier, 1878.
- Forrest, Alan. "Propaganda and the Legitimation of Power in Napoleonic France." *French History* 18, no. 4 (2004): 426-45.
- Grab, Alexander. *Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- Habermas, Jürgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: an Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society (Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought)*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1991.
- Hanley, Wayne. *The Genesis of Napoleonic Propaganda, 1796-1799 (Gutenberg-E)*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2005.
- Hatin, Eugène. *Histoire Politique Et Littéraire de La Presse En France*. Paris: Poulet-Malassis et de Broise, 1860.
- Hesse, Carla. *Publishing and Cultural Politics in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1810*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

- Holtman, Robert B. *Napoleonic Propaganda*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1950.
- Hunt, Lynn. *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution: with a New Preface, 20th Anniversary Edition (Studies On the History of Society and Culture, No. 1)*. 20th ed. Berkley: University of California Press, 2004.
- . *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
- Jones, Colin. "The Great Chain of Buying: Medical Advertisement, the Bourgeois Public Sphere, and the Origins of the French Revolution." *The American Historical Review* 101, no. 1 (February 1996): 13-40.
- Koopmans, Joop W., ed. *News and Politics in Early Modern Europe (1500-1800)*. Dudley, MA: Peeters-Leuven, 2005.
- Kulstein, David I. "The Ideas of Charles-Joseph Panckoucke, Publisher of the *Moniteur Universel*, on the French Revolution." *French Historical Studies* Vol. 4, No. 3 (Spring, 1966): 304-319.
- Landes, David S. *Revolution in Time: Clocks and the Making of the Modern World*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1983.
- Laskey, John C. *A Description of the Series of Medals Struck at the National Medal Mint by Order of Napoleon Bonaparte*. London: Blackhorse Court, 1818.
- Le Poittevin, Gustave. *Liberté de La Presse Depuis La Revolution, 1789-1815*. Paris: Rue Soufflot et Rue Toullier, 1901.
- Livois, René de. *Histoire de La Presse Française, Tome 1*. Hollande: Les Temps de la Presse, 1965.
- Lusebrink, Hans-Jurgen, and Jeremy D. Popkin, eds. *Enlightenment, Revolution, and the Periodical Press*. Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2004.
- Lyons, Martyn. *France under the Directory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.
- . *Napoleon Bonaparte and the Legacy of the French Revolution*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994.
- Mason, Haydn, ed. *The Darnton Debate: Books and Revolution in the Eighteenth Century*. 3 vols. Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1998.
- Masson, Frédéric *Le Sacre Et Le Couronnement de Napoléon*. Paris: Paris Société d'éditions littéraires et artistiques, 1908.

- Maza, Sarah. *Private Lives and Public Affairs: the Causes Célèbres of Prerevolutionary France (Studies On the History of Society and Culture)*. London: University of California Press, 1995.
- Melton, James Van Horn. *The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe*. Cambridge, UK.: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Moore, Colin. *Propaganda Prints: A History of Art in the Service of Social and Political Change*. London: A&C Black Publishers Limited, 2010.
- Munck, Thomas. *The Enlightenment: a Comparative Social History 1721-1794*. London: Bloomsbury USA, 2000.
- Périvier, Antonin. *Napoléon Journaliste*. Paris: Libraire Plon, 1918.
- Pettigrew, Andrew. *The Invention of News: How the World Came to Know About Itself*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014.
- . *News and Politics in the Age of Revolution: Jean Luzac's Gazette de Leyde*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989.
- Popkin, Jeremy D. *The Right-Wing Press in France, 1792-1800*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980.
- Rétat, Pierre. *Les Journaux de 1789: Bibliographie Critique*. Paris: Presses du CNRS, 1988.
- , Pierre. *La Gazette d'Amsterdam: Miroir de l'Europe au XVIIIe siècle* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2001).
- . *Les gazettes européennes de langue française*. Suivi d'Une étude sur les fonds des gazettes anciennes à la Bibliothèque nationale de France (42-Saint-Just-la-Pendue : Imprimerie Chirat, 2002).
- de Saint-Amand, Imbert. *The Happy Days of the Empress Marie Louise*. Translated by Thomas Sergeant Perry. New York: Scribner's Sons, 1890.
- Sgard, Jean. *L'abbé Prévost: Labyrinthes de La Mémoire*. 1re ed. Paris: PUF, 1986.
- . Centre d'étude des sensibilités de l'Université de Grenoble III. *Le Vocabulaire Du Sentiment Dans L'œuvre de J.-J. Rousseau*. Genève: Slatkine, 1980.
- . *Mémoires Secrets de Bachaumont, 1762-1787*. Paris: Tallandier, 2011.
- Shapiro, Barry M. *Traumatic Politics: the Deputies and the King in the Early French Revolution*. University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2009.

- Somers, Margaret R. *Genealogies of Citizenship: Markets, Statelessness, and the Right to Have Rights*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Tucoc-Chala, Suzanne. *Charles-Joseph Panckoucke and La Librairie Française, 1736-1798*. Pau: Editions Marrimpouey jeune, 1977.
- Warner, Michael, ed. "Publication and the Public Sphere." In *Publishing and Readership in Revolutionary France and America: a Symposium at the Library of Congress*, edited by Carol Armbruster. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993.
- Wendorff, Rudolf *Der Mensch Und Die Zeit: Ein Essay*. Opladen: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1988.
- Wilson, Kathleen *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire, and Gender in the Eighteenth Century*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Woloch, Isser. *Napoleon and His Collaborators: the Making of a Dictatorship*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002.
- Zanger, Abby E. *Scenes from the Marriage of Louis XIV: Nuptial Fictions and the Making of Absolutist Power*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

I was born in Monroe, New York on 20 February 1992. I attended Monroe Woodbury High School in Monroe, New York, graduating in 2010. I entered William Paterson University in Wayne, New Jersey as a history major and honors college student. Thanks to the advanced credits from AP course in High School and a full course load as an undergraduate, I was able to earn my B. A. in three years. I graduated *summa cum laude* from William Paterson in 2013. Following my graduation, I was accepted into the graduate history program at Florida State University majoring in Early Modern Europe and minoring in Asian history. I was also graciously accepted as a member of the Institute on Napoleon and the French Revolution under the tutelage of Rafe Blaufarb. I have since co-authored a catalogue essay with G. Kurt Piehler on the human experience of World War II. Upon completion of this master's thesis I will be continuing my studies as a Ph.D. student under Dr. Blaufarb at Florida State University.