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Emmanuel Fureix, *La France des larmes: deuils politiques à l'âge romantique (1814-1840)*. Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 2009. 502 pp. Tables, figures, notes, bibliography, and index. 30 € (pb.) ISBN 978-2-87673-497-5.

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In March 2011 the New York Times ran a story about a strange funeral in Libya. There were men marching through the streets of the Capital, Tripoli, carrying on their shoulders thirty coffins containing the bodies of civilian casualties of American and European airstrikes, or so the state media claimed. For several hours, participants in this procession chanted slogans in favor of Colonel Muammar el-Qaddafi and against what they identified as “crusader colonialist aggression.” The only problem is, most of the coffins seemed to be empty. Only twelve were actually buried and the rest were whisked away in what turned out to be an elaborate piece of political street theater, designed to show support for the embattled regime. The reporters of the New York Times noted that there were many cheers, but very few tears.[1]

In spite of its title, few tears were also shed in the scores of funerals that Emmanuel Fureix analyzes in his fascinating new book. The book, winner of the prestigious *Prix Chateaubriand*, examines the role of the emotions associated with death—mostly grief and mourning—in the political culture of the Restoration and the July Monarchy. We read about the anniversary of the regicide of Louis XVI and the funeral of Louis XVIII, but also about the commemoration of ordinary victims of the Terror. We read about the funeral of Louis XVIII’s nephew, the Duc de Berry, whose assassination in 1820 became a rallying cry for the ultra-royalists, but also about the burials of heroes of the liberal opposition, such as the revolutionary and Napoleonic military leader, General Foy, whose funerary procession in 1825 was said to have attracted more than one hundred thousand participants (p. 331). We read about the rumors and anxieties around Napoleon’s death on the island of Saint-Hélène in 1821, and of the pomp and glory that surrounded the repatriation of his remains in 1840, but also about the commemoration of the victims of the 1830 revolution. We learn much that is new about the funerals of celebrated individuals such as the former *conventionnels* Cambacérès and Lanjuinais or the actor Talma, but also about the burials of less well-known individuals, such as Fieschi, who had been executed in 1836 for an attempt on Louis-Philippe’s life, or the victims of forgotten Parisian insurrections, such as the insurrection of May 1839, which left about one hundred casualties in its wake. Yet, for all the death and loss, the participants in these funerary processions seem to have engaged less in tears, and more in the careful management of symbols, gestures and bodies. All appearances to the contrary, we do not really have here a history of emotions, political or otherwise.[2]

What we do have here is a groundbreaking, impeccably researched, and convincingly argued political history of a relatively neglected period. Fureix argues that the cult of the dead constituted a central site for the political apprenticeship of modern France. The Restoration and the July Monarchy used funerary rites to bolster their legitimacy and to recover a modicum of sacredness in light of the devastating effects that the regicide of Louis XVI had on the royal

institution. Those who had been formally excluded from the political sphere by the restrictive electoral system of *la monarchie censitaire*—and they were the majority—found a space to stake their claims by attending certain funerals but not others, by undertaking pilgrimages to the graves of certain individuals while ignoring those of others, and even by exhibiting symbols of mourning, or refusing to do so. Some funerals turned into mass events that raised the specter of disorder and defiance in ways that foreshadowed the coming of mass politics at the end of the nineteenth century. Yet, neither the regime nor the opposition could dominate fully the messages conveyed by such occasions, whose meanings, more often than not, escaped the intentions of their authors. Rather, funerary rites and the emotions associated with them allowed for the exploration of conflicts, tensions, and efforts at reconciliation in a post-revolutionary society that, to use Fureix's felicitous phrase, "had become opaque to itself" (p. 21).^[3]

Fureix's book is thus situated in the context of two bodies of scholarship. On one hand, the book intervenes in the growing number of studies that highlight the formative role of funerary practices in forging a republican consensus in France.^[4] Fureix's book differs from such studies by showing that the cult of the dead played more of a role in deepening lines of conflict than in manufacturing a national consensus. On the other hand, the book makes a major contribution to the growing number of studies that have recently been revising our view of the post-revolutionary period in particular, and the nineteenth century more broadly. The works of Howard Brown, James Livesey and Andrew Jainchill on the Directory, Sheryl Kroen on the Restoration, or Sudhir Hazareesingh on the Second Empire have taught us that periods which had hitherto been quite neglected by historians have been decisive in the emergence of a republican consciousness in France.^[5] Fureix's book makes a compelling contribution to this cumulative reinterpretation of the blind spots in the historiography of modern France by showing the democratizing impulses at play underneath the surface of seemingly undemocratic, reactionary regimes.

The book is divided thematically into four parts. The first part provides context for the politicization of the cult of the dead during the first half of the nineteenth century. This derived from the crisis of political representation under the Restoration, the emergence of new cultural attitudes to death and bereavement, and the appropriation and reinvention of older funerary traditions. Part two focuses on mourning the victims of the Revolution. In this context, the Restoration constituted something of a "return of the repressed," but one that proved more conflictual than therapeutic. In Paris, the remembrance of ordinary victims of revolutionary violence tended to be relegated to the private sphere, while the commemoration of royal victims tended to be public and carefully managed.

Ultimately, mourning the Revolution took the form of expiation. But expiation was inherently contradictory. It could mark a desire for reparation and pacification—something that suited Louis XVIII's politics of *oubli* well—but it could also take on accusatory tones that threatened to reignite civil strife. Thus, plans to build an expiatory monument for the regicide of 1793 at the Place de la Concorde, which was renamed Place Louis XVI during the Restoration, were abandoned on the request of Louis XVI's daughter because the scaffolding erected on site in preparation for the construction was reminiscent of the scaffold of the guillotine, which occupied the same spot during the Revolution. As Fureix puts it, mourning the Revolution during the Restoration meant an effort to "remember without representing, expiate without accusing, and recalling without reawakening [civil discord]" (p. 221). It is not easy for contemporary readers to grasp just how central the concept of expiation was to the political culture of the period, and one of the strengths of this book is that it resurrects this lost sensibility so well.^[6]

The third part of the book deals with efforts of the Restoration and the July Monarchy to institute national rites of bereavement. 1830 emerges as a watershed year in Fureix's story. The July Monarchy suffered from an inherent contradiction since it came into being through an act of popular insurrection. The problem for Louis-Philippe's regime was how to commemorate the "brave victims of July" (p. 300) without honoring their actions. So, for example, ceremonies on the anniversary of the insurrection avoided any reference to the victims' social origins. These attempts to construct a hybrid cult of the dead under the July Monarchy ultimately failed, but in the process, they did much to accelerate the transformation of burial ceremonies into spaces of political contestation.

Part four examines rites of bereavement as sites of protest and opposition and is to my mind the most engaging and innovative section of the book. Fureix covers much ground here, from funerals of liberal heroes, through the messianic myth that was constructed around Napoleon's death and reburial, to the popular mourning of those who were condemned to death for political crimes, or those Parisians who died in one of the many urban insurrections of the period. The funerals of liberal heroes afforded those who were formally excluded from the political sphere an opportunity to voice opposition to the regime as well as anticlerical views. This politicization became much more overt and radical after 1830. Thus, in the funeral of the military hero and liberal deputy Lamarque (d. 1832), students revived the old Jacobin slogan, *la liberté ou la mort*, and exhibited a relatively new political symbol that was destined to haunt Europe in subsequent decades, namely, the red flag. The emotions unleashed by Napoleon's death gave rise to a battle of representations, with the royalists reviving the image of Napoleon the ogre, and the popular classes celebrating the man from Saint-Hélène as a demigod. In this sense, the plasticity of the Napoleonic myth allowed for the crystallization of opposing political values.

In the case of those executed for political crimes or of those who died on the barricades, the authorities were at pains to prevent either from becoming martyrs by, for example, keeping the site of their burial secretive, but they became the subjects of a popular cult nonetheless. For example, the grave of Maréchal Ney, executed in 1815 for his part in Napoleon's one-hundred days, became a site for pilgrimage even though it was unmarked. Interestingly, Fureix finds that the clandestine cult of political victims owed much to women. Rites of bereavement were traditionally seen as part of a woman's role in the family. And from the perspective of authorities, the relegation of women to the private sphere meant that their sympathies for the dead posed less of a political threat. Yet these seemingly private expressions of grief could and did slide quickly into politics and the public sphere. When the widow of Carbonneau, one of the "patriots of 1816" who was executed for plotting to attack the Tuilleries, asked for the restitution of some pieces of verse that her husband had written before his death, she encountered the resistance of the police prefect, who worried that she might publish them, thus producing a "bad effect" (p. 448).

The research presented in the book focuses squarely on Paris, which emerges as something of a necropolis. The choice is understandable, given the city's centrality in the political conflicts of the time, but it does occasionally lead to some skewed perspectives. For instance, Fureix argues that the commemoration of ordinary victims of the Terror tended to be privatized during the Restoration. This is certainly true for Paris, notwithstanding the case of the cemetery of Picpus, which occupied a more ambiguous private-public space, but in Lyon, to take one example, municipal authorities were involved in the construction of an expiatory monument on the grounds of Brotteaux, where the victims of the reprisals that followed the siege of the city in 1793 had been interred in mass graves.[7] One also wishes that Fureix had devoted more space to analyzing the economic dimensions of the cult of the dead. After all, his story unfolds in the context of the emergence of a modern market economy in France, including a thriving literary market, as indicated by the mounting number of brochures published and sold on the occasion of

Napoleon's death (pp. 411-412). Could it be that, aside from its political content, the cult of the dead was also becoming profitable?[8] These are not really points of criticism, but rather invitations for further discussion. None of them detracts from the strengths of Fureix's argument that the cult of the dead crystallized the political conflicts of the romantic era and that, particularly as shown in the fourth part of the book, it became a central site for the articulation of popular sovereignty in the context of a monarchical regime.

As a final point, I'd like to mention the aesthetic experience of reading this book. As I leafed through its pages, I found myself drawn more and more into a lost world. The impressive erudition, the level of detail and Fureix's writing succeed, in a sense, in bringing a past to which we have little access back to life—a romantic point of sorts, certainly not one of scholarly critique, but one that is, it seems to me, the mark of great works of history.

NOTES

[1] David D. Kirkpatrick and Kareem Fahim, "Elements of Theater on View in Libya." *The New York Times*, Mar., 25, 2011, A10.

[2] This would require, at the very least, a rigorous analysis of how the medical and psychological literature of the time conceptualized emotions. See William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[3] On the challenges of representing society in the post-revolutionary context, see Denise Z. Davidson, "Making Society 'Legible': People-Watching in Paris after the Revolution," *French Historical Studies* 28, No. 2 (2005): 265-296.

[4] See Jean-Claude Bonnet, *Naissance du Panthéon: essai sur le culte des grands hommes* (Paris: Fayard, 1998); Avner Ben-Amos, *Funerals, Politics, and Memory in Modern France, 1789-1996* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); and Joseph Clarke, *Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France: Revolution and Remembrance, 1789-1799* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[5] See Howard G. Brown, *Ending the French Revolution: Violence, Justice, and Repression from the Terror to Napoleon* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006); James Livesey, *Making Democracy in the French Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001); Andrew Jainchill, *Reimagining Politics after the Terror: the Republican Origins of French Liberalism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2008); Sheryl Kroen, *Politics and Theater: The Crisis of Legitimacy in Restoration France, 1815-1830* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); and Sudhir Hazareesingh, *From Subject to Citizen: the Second Empire and the Emergence of Modern French Democracy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998).

[6] Although Sheryl Kroen first drew attention to the importance of expiation in the political culture of the Restoration, Fureix's treatment of the subject is much richer in detail.

[7] See *Le monument religieux des Brotteaux: historique, liste des victimes du siège de Lyon en 1793* (Lyon: Impressions de M. Audin et CIE, 1925).

[8] On the rise of the literary market, see Christine Haynes, *Lost Illusions: the Politics of Publishing in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010).

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