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Mark C. Carnes and Gary Kates, *Rousseau, Burke, and Revolution in France, 1791. Reacting to the Past Series*. London and New York: Longman, 2005. v + 184 pp. \$18.80 U.S. (pb). ISBN 0-321-33229-6.

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While there are numerous textbooks that deal with the French Revolution, Carnes' and Kates' *Rousseau, Burke, and Revolution* is not a textbook in the typical sense of the word. Instead, the book, like its partners in the *Reacting to the Past* series, uses great texts and a game format in order to immerse students directly into the political, social, and intellectual currents of a particular historical moment. The French Revolutionary game which is, according to the authors, "all about ideas," relies heavily on Rousseau's *Social Contract* and, to a lesser degree, Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. These readings are chosen, as the title of the book indicates, to give students a sense of ideological commitments and struggles during the French Revolution. Students are invited to use the ideas they find in these works to debate the form of France's first constitution. The book and the game it offers are intended less to give students an exact chronology of actual revolutionary events than to engage them in the spirit of eighteenth-century discussions about human nature, natural rights, and ideal—as well as possible—forms of government.

The book calls for the game and its treatment to take fourteen class periods, eight of which are run by students and devoted directly to recreating Constituent Assembly meetings in 1791. The first three sessions are relatively traditional in nature; the instructor outlines crucial Enlightenment issues by using selections from Voltaire's *Philosophical Dictionary* and the *Encyclopédie* and then discussing Rousseau's thought, especially that of the *Social Contract*, with students. However, once discussion of Rousseau's writings is complete, students receive their roles for the game and prepare to go back in time to June 1791. At this point, each student enters into a role, for example, Louis XVI, Lafayette, a legislative representative from the provinces, or a *poissarde* on the verge of starvation. No matter what the role, almost all of the class will find itself in some way responsible for shaping the "Constitution" that will govern the French in years to come.

It is at this point, a few class sessions in, that students will begin to find the textbook most useful. For instance, the "Historical Context" of the book opens with a description of the place and time during which the game itself begins: Paris on June 26, 1791. Students not only "witness" Louis XVI's return from his aborted escape attempt but also come to understand the ways in which King Louis' flight made the Constituent Assembly's job both more crucial and more difficult. Their debates over a constitution for the French people will also have to confront the question of whether or not a document that envisions a constitutional monarch is beneficial or even realistic. The context of the book then moves backward in time in a recap of the problems and questions that had dogged Louis XVI from early in his reign and continued to confront deputies to the Constituent Assembly. Student characters are also immediately encouraged to place the King's flight to Varennes in the context of Enlightenment debates, the American Revolution, and the early events of the French Revolution. These descriptions also explain the conflicts over feudal privilege, property, and food. The text not only focuses on narrative but also briefly analyzes significant historical documents from the beginning of the Revolution until the "current moment" in 1791. These include the Civil Constitution of the Clergy and Pius VI's Encyclical, "Charitas," which opposes the Civil Constitution. "Historical Context" also offers some reminders to students of issues that they may face—or find personally relevant to their characters—such as the

problem of *émigrés*, rural opposition to the revolution, and questions about the rights of women and slaves in the colonies.

The textbook itself continues to guide students as they—in the roles of their characters—debate the meaning and future shape of the revolution. The book offers an historical narrative to 1791 along with continual reminders that students need to enter into the period and advance the historical world view that is ideologically consistent with the character that the instructor or “gamemaster” has assigned. As Assembly debates begin in class five, students also read excerpts from Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France* in order to offer them another way of conceptualizing human nature and the role of government. (Students who are assigned to more ideologically conservative roles, such as that of Louis XVI, nobles, or non-juring clergy members are encouraged to read more Burke than the textbook’s excerpts, just as the most radical student roles recommend delving more deeply into Rousseau’s thought.) The book also offers primary source documents and background to the Revolution in order to assist students as they enter into these assigned “roles” as players on the revolutionary stage.

While the book offers guidelines and encourages historical verisimilitude, students themselves determine what course their revolution will take. If the Crowd manages to persuade the Assembly President to allow them to speak, they may be able to more easily gain the support of indeterminate characters. Similarly, if nobles and clergy are particularly persuasive, the class revolution will tend to emphasize the importance of a constitutional monarch and the king may even keep his head! During this portion of the course, just as in the Revolution, multiple concerns and varying motives underlie the speeches that the students give, whether they are to the Assembly or a local district that is being encouraged to join a riot. Political, social, and intellectual agendas are also made explicit in the newspapers that each revolutionary faction must publish. For example, if it makes a choice to focus on sin and salvation, the conservative newspaper may persuade an indeterminate character—a Catholic from the provinces who worries about the possibility of excommunication—to join the side of righteousness, though it will certainly alienate others. A different indeterminate character who reads Rousseau religiously may decide to join the crowd members in Paris who are speaking, writing, and even rioting against what they see as a tainted revolution. While a great deal of the ideological opposition is immediately apparent in the class debates, some of each character’s agenda remains opaque, as each student’s role sheet is secret and can offer unexpected criteria for “winning” the game. For example, while the king, not surprisingly, gets victory points for remaining alive, he and other characters also gain victory points by shaping the Constitution in ways that favor their ideological positions. At the end, the characters with the most victory points “win” the game, which encourages each student to stick more closely to—and truly understand—the agendas that characters like theirs would have had. This also functions to make students more persuasive in off-the-cuff speeches, for when they “own” their ideology, they can make more coherent arguments for it.

After all three editions of the revolutionary newspapers have been published and the Constituent Assembly has met seven times, the game is over and the class returns to a more traditional format. Students evaluate their game, including the parts of the Constitution that they have managed to pass, to see where they deviated from history and to explain why. They then read a discussion of French Revolutionary historiography in order to confront the tension between ideology, material existence, and “factual” historical writing. It is at this point that students put their own experiences in the game to work. Students will have done more than use the thought of Rousseau and Burke to persuade others of their positions; they sang revolutionary songs, promised bread to hungry people, and worried about the destabilizing *journées* of the crowd. They searched out, created, and used political cartoons, satire, and even profanity or libel in order to get their points across in their newspapers. In their own ways, these students also used cultural symbols and confronted the material problems of existence.

While the general text privileges a radical view of the Revolution, one in which the king is a buffoon at best and a criminal at worst, student role sheets (available in the Instructor's Guide and a downloadable file from Longman), definitely include opposing views. Nobles are reminded of the reasons that they were initially attracted to Enlightenment ideas but simultaneously encouraged to think of the need for stability and reminded of the ignorance of the crowd. Particular passages of Burke's *Reflections* are recommended to them, both for their clarity of thought and their persuasive force. They are told that a Rousseauian revolution will not free men but only enslave them more thoroughly. My students also learned a great deal by reading portions of their role descriptions aloud to the class during the game evaluation. Each role's tone and content differs so substantially--and is so persuasive to the reader--that students were struck anew by how much an ideological position can color "practical" decisions. This is, I think, one of the more important and less-understood aspects of the *Reacting to the Past* series, perhaps the French Revolutionary game in particular. Students not only explore different thoughts and unfamiliar ideas, but they learn how to confront their own assumptions. In a substantial way, they learn not to erase social and intellectual tensions, but how to use those tensions to clarify their own suppositions and world views. In this sense, the revolutionaries understood something that our contemporary culture sometimes loses sight of: intellectual debate and differing opinions are not the sign of a faltering democracy but some of the keystones by which it functions.

This game was designed for use as part of a semester-long "Reacting" seminar for thirteen to thirty first-year students. However, my own experience in using it with sixteen seniors in a seminar on the French Revolution was also overwhelmingly positive. My students may not have engaged with all of the factual components of the Revolution, but they certainly came away with a much clearer understanding of its emotional and ideological content. Many of them found themselves more engaged than they had thought possible. One student told us how her roommates--not members of the class--were both shocked and amused when she'd spend hours poring over French Revolutionary documents in order to prove her point...and then come back from class fuming about "Jacobin plots." Other students took the game so personally that I thought I might end up calling campus security during one Assembly meeting, which culminated with Crowd members trying to shout down the Assembly President, who had just prevented them from speaking in the Assembly. Her actions convinced the Crowd that she was in league with the Feuillants and Royalists and determined to prevent them from succeeding. Everyone was convinced that there were plots, intrigue, and secret plans afoot to keep them from reaching their goals.

These high levels of student engagement meant that students read and processed Rousseau, Burke, the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen much more thoroughly than they would have in any other format. By the time that we moved to the historiography portion of the course (longer for the senior seminar than in the initial course design), students were used to talking and ready to argue for their interpretations of the Revolution. They also had a greater emotional investment in the outcome of those discussions. For example, members of the crowd were, as a whole, much more persuaded by the Marxist interpretation than former Feuillants, and they used their experience to justify their interpretations. Rarely have I seen historiographical debates achieve this kind of intensity!

I would offer some caveats to any instructor interested in this particular *Reacting* experience. First of all, it has been very recently published and still has some kinks to be worked out, most notably with references in the student role sheets to items and assignments that did not make it into the final version of the game. I hope that a second edition will eliminate these problems. Second, although there are role assignments for as few as thirteen students, I suspect that the persuasive force of the game would be watered down as indeterminates are lost, since there is really no one to persuade. Finally, though in theory, all of the games require no particular expertise on the part of the "gamemaster," that theory did not seem to play out for *Rousseau, Burke, and Revolution in France, 1791*. Without my understanding of

the French Revolution—and a few pointed hints in my capacity as “gamemaster”—my students would have missed important nuances of the game. As it was, they were so busy trying to create newspapers and make speeches that they missed some of the practical issues that would have changed the tenor of Assembly debates. For instance, none of the students recognized that approval of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy called into question the ability of the non-juring clergy to participate in Assembly politics, so there was no attempt to oust them. Additionally, the “news bulletin” alerting students to rioting in St. Domingue sparked little concern and no discussion of the financial woes of the middle class or the problem of supporting human rights in a colonial context. The Assembly president also asked a number of questions that would have been difficult to answer if the instructor had little knowledge of the actual events of the Revolution. I suspect, however, that including a student quiz which highlights some of the major political events and their revolutionary importance might reinforce factual knowledge and solve this problem. For all of these reasons, I would encourage any instructor who is interested in adopting this text for a course to examine not only the textbook itself but also the Instructor’s Manual that offers guidance, role sheets, sample newspapers, etc, as both books together offer a much more complete picture of the game.

Using this textbook and its approach engaged students, helped them to critically analyze the past, and required them to speak, write, and participate at a very high level. Because of that, even when students left my course with small misunderstandings about how things really happened, they seemed to have a much greater understanding of why they happened and, more importantly, why we still care so much today.

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