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**"Encourager le commerce et répandre les Lumi'ere" : the press,
the provinces and the origins of the Revolution in France:
1750-1789**

Stephen Auerbach
Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College

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"ENCOURAGER LE COMMERCE ET RÉPANDRE LES LUMIÈRES:" THE PRESS,
THE PROVINCES AND THE ORIGINS OF THE REVOLUTION IN FRANCE:
1750-1789

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
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in

The Department of History

by

Stephen Auerbach

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the political, intellectual, and cultural significance of France's provincial newspaper press, called *affiches*, published between 1750-1789. Combining the histories of the press, provincial life, and the public sphere, this dissertation explores the ways in which the *affiches* became an indispensable part of local economic, cultural, and intellectual life while at the same time articulated a world view that was antithetical to the tenets of monarchical absolutism.

The first part of the dissertation focuses on the origins, form and contents of the provincial press. Faced with the twin obstacles of laws governing censorship and privilege, provincial newspapers eschewed political content and focused instead on forging networks of commerce: both economic exchange and the exchange of ideas. From this apparently nonpolitical and nonideological space the provincial papers were able to launch a systematic critique of absolutist society. The papers created a space where a community of individuals could come together outside their corporate existence and participate as equals. In the pages of the local papers, absolutist distinctions based on *corps*, *état*, and *ordre* had no resonance.

The second part of the dissertation focuses in on the port city of Bordeaux and its two local papers. Like other provincial papers in France, Bordeaux's papers were collective endeavors. Yet, the community that was fashioned in the pages of the Bordelais papers was necessarily an imagined community. It was not long, however, before the imagined community was transformed into an actual community. In 1784, the founders and editors of the *Journal de Guienne* formed a sister-organization, the *Musée de Bordeaux*. The *musée* provided the institutional base for many of the impulses

encouraged by the local papers. It was open, socially mixed, and provided a space where members could come together on an equal footing to discuss and debate the issues of the day while practicing the art of self-governance. The ideals of equality and commerce - first articulated in the Bordelais newspapers and *musée* - became for a brief moment in time the guiding principles of the Revolution.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The literature of the history of the French press is spotty. Much has been published on the journalism of the French Revolution, but the period from the founding of the *Gazette* by Théophraste Renaudot to the end of the Old Regime remains strangely neglected. There is real need for an extensive bibliographic investigation of the periodicals previous to 1789, combined with the listing of the holdings of the Bibliothèque Nationale and provincial libraries.¹

In the nearly sixty years that have passed since Marc Jaryc made those observations on the state of the historiography of the French press, the situation has markedly improved. Today, our understanding of the forms and functions of the French press in the Old Regime is not nearly as stark as it was even twenty years ago. Thanks to historians of the press on both sides of the Atlantic we now know that the French and francophone press was rich and varied in the eighteenth century. In France, historians of the press, especially those associated with the "Lyon-Grenoble" group, have done much to increase our understanding of key aspects of the press. Pierre Rétat and Jean Sgard have greatly contributed to our understanding of the scope and breadth of the press of the Old Regime by both focusing in on a range of periodicals for specific years, the editors and readers of the papers, and the relationship from one paper to another.² Gilles Feyel's work on the *Gazette* had helped shed new light on the economic arrangements

¹ Marc Jaryc, "Studies of 1935-1942 on the History of the Periodical Press," *Journal of Modern History* vol 15, no. 1 (1943) p. 135.

² Pierre Rétat and Jean Sgard have been at the center of the "Lyon-Grenoble" group for over twenty years. For examples of the fruitful collaborations of this group, see Pierre Rétat, ed., *L'Attentat de Damiers: Discours sur l'événement au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris, 1979); Pierre Rétat, ed., *Le Journalisme d'ancien régime* (Lyons, 1982); Hans Bots, ed., *La Diffusion et la lecture des journaux de la langue française sous l'ancien régime* (Amsterdam, 1988); Claude Labrosse and Pierre Rétat, eds., *L'instrument périodique* (Lyon, 1985); Pierre Rétat and Jean Sgard, eds., *Presse et histoire au XVIII^e siècle: L'année 1734* (Paris, 1978); see also Claude Labrosse and Pierre Rétat, *Naissance du Journal Révolutionnaire, 1789* (Lyon, 1989).

that allowed France's first periodical to circulate among a provincial readership.³ Their counterparts in America have done an equally impressive job in expanding our knowledge and understanding of the French press in the eighteenth century. Vivian Gruder's work on the political pamphlets that blanketed Paris in the months leading up to the Revolution has done much to contribute to our understanding of the political crisis that gripped the capital in the months preceding the convening of the Estates General.⁴ Similarly, Jeremy Popkin, Jack Censer and Carroll Joynes have done an excellent job in demonstrating that the extraterritorial francophone press published outside of France supplied readers with accurate, timely, and uncensored political news.⁵ As a result, the papers helped play an integral role in contributing to what Keith Baker has called "the politics of contestation" that extended back to at least the 1770s.⁶

Yet, at the heart of the historiography of the French press in the eighteenth century that has blossomed over these last twenty years lies a paradox: the most widely read and circulated French periodicals of the eighteenth century, the provincial *affiches*, have been the least studied. It has only been with the publishing of the *Dictionnaire des journaux* in 1991, that we have begun to truly understand the magnitude and scope of the French press in the Old Regime in general, and the provincial press in particular.⁷

Edited by Jean Sgard, and with contributions of over 140 scholars, the *Dictionnaire des*

³ Gilles Feyel, *La "Gazette" en province à travers ses réimpressions, 1631-1752* (Amsterdam, 1982).

⁴ Vivian R. Gruder, "Les Pamphlets 'Pre-Revolutionnaires,'" in Pierre Réat, ed., *La Révolution du Journal, 1788-1794*, pp. 13-24. On pamphlets see also Jeremy Popkin, "Pamphlet Journalism at the end of the Old Regime," *Eighteenth Century Studies* vol. 22, no. 3 (Spring, 1989), pp. 351-67.

⁵ See especially the collection of essays assembled in Jack R Censer and Jeremy D. Popkin, eds., *Press and Politics in Pre-Revolutionary France* (Berkeley 1987).

⁶ Keith Michael Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 168.

⁷ Jean Sgard, ed., *Dictionnaire des journaux, 1600-1789* (Paris, 1991).

journaux inventories, quantifies, and offers short descriptive essays on over 1200 French and French-language periodicals that were printed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and which had theretofore gone largely unexamined. Included in that list are the more than forty provincial *affiches* that were published between 1750 and 1789. Here, readers can find information on the men and women who edited the *affiches*, how often the papers were circulated, how much they cost, and a general sense of their contents. As Daniel Gordon noted in his review of the *Dictionnaire*, the great value in this compendium lies in the avenues of research it opens up, and the types of questions it provokes.⁸ "Like all great scholarly tools, the *Dictionnaire des journaux* is not simply a reference work for persons who already know what they want to know," Gordon writes. "It is a suggestive reservoir of facts that beckons us to examine the primary sources more fully and challenges us to formulate new questions that will give meaning to the epoch that produced them."⁹ In this dissertation I take up the challenge presented by Sgard and his collaborators. I argue that as the most widely read and circulated French papers of the Old Regime, the *affiches* are a unique source to examine the intellectual, cultural, and economic practices of eighteenth-century French men and women. Furthermore, the papers provide invaluable insight into the penetration of Enlightenment values and ideals into the provinces. Finally, the *affiches* were central to the formation of a Habermasian public sphere in which a public of readers were able to come together in the pages of their local paper and have a forum in which to opine on a variety of subjects and engage in critical debate.

⁸ Daniel Gordon, *Eighteenth-Century Studies* vol. 27, no. 1 (1993), pp. 125-28.

MARXIST INTERPRETATIONS AND 1960S REVISIONISM

Jaryc's call for a comprehensive study of the French press in the eighteenth century went largely unnoticed for the next twenty-five years. Indeed, when Volume I of *Histoire générale de la presse française* appeared in 1969, it was the first attempt at an inclusive study of the French press since Eugène Hatin's massive eight-volume collection *Histoire politique et littéraire de la presse en France* (1859-61).¹⁰ In the first volume of the *Histoire générale*, Louis Trenard offered an extensive treatment of the French press from its inception to 1814.¹¹ The most immediately recognizable difference between Trenard's examination of the press compared to Hatin's work a century earlier is Trenard's recognition of the existence of a provincial press. While Hatin seemed unaware of the *affiches*, Trenard dedicated a chapter to examining the local sheets. In *Histoire générale* Trenard defined and described the "new" genre of papers to a readership that knew little if anything about them. Holding up the sheets from Toulouse, Aix, and Marseille as representative of the genre, Trenard sought to piece together the common characteristics that united all of the *affiches*. Thus for Trenard, the provincial press operated as a national paper with local editions. While Trenard underestimated the variation that existed from paper to paper, and the importance of the local milieu in shaping the character of the *affiches*, his was the first attempt to locate the provincial press within the larger context of the periodical press of the Old Regime. Trenard's work, however, led to a renewed interest neither in the press of the Old Regime in general, nor in the provincial press in particular. Simply put,

⁹ Ibid., p. 125.

¹⁰ Jack Censer and Jeremy Popkin offer a useful overview of the historiography of the French press in "Historians and the Press," in *Press and Politics*, pp. 1-23.

Histoire générale was published at a time when the climate in eighteenth-century French studies was not particularly receptive to works on the periodical press. That, however, was about to change.

As in so many other areas, the 1960s brought sweeping changes to the way historians interpreted the Old Regime and the French Revolution. In what Sara Maza has likened to a Kuhnian paradigm shift, the once dominant Marxist socio-economic interpretation of the eighteenth century was in the process of being replaced by an interpretation that highlighted political factors.¹² At least since the 1930s, historians such as Georges Lefebvre, Ernest Labrousse, Jean Jaurès, and Albert Mathiez had argued that the French Revolution was the culmination of a series of on-going class conflicts between the aristocracy, bourgeoisie, urban workers, and the peasantry. For these historians, 1789 represented the victory of a bourgeoisie grown rich on capitalist enterprises over a stagnant aristocracy.¹³ This proved to be a short-lived victory, however, as it immediately led to another class conflict, this time between the bourgeoisie and the urban workers or *sans-culottes*. The social and economic perspective that dominated the historiography for over thirty years was not amenable to studies of the press. Historians of the day focused much of their interest on the lives of the lower classes who, in general, lacked the literacy skills, the money, and the leisure

¹¹ Bellanger, Godechot, Guiral, Terrou eds., *Histoire générale de la presse française* Vol. I, *Des origines à 1814* (Paris, 1969).

¹² Maza, "Politics, Culture, and the Origins of the French Revolution," *Journal of Modern History* 61 (December, 1989), pp. 704-23. In this article Maza does a good job of tracing the transition from a Marxist to a Tocquevillian perspective in the historiography of eighteenth century France. For an equally enlightening piece on the same subject see Jack Censer, "Commencing the Third Century of Debate," *The American Historical Review* vol. 94, no. 5 (December, 1989), pp. 1302-1325.

¹³ A useful overview of the Marxist interpretation of the eighteenth century and French Revolution may be found in William Doyle, *The Origins of the French Revolution* (Oxford, 1980), see especially chapter 1.

time to indulge in a subscription to a newspaper. Thus, France's periodical press did not figure prominently in the work of these historians.

The decade of the 1960s, however, witnessed the decline of the Marxist interpretation in favor of a rising revisionism. Alfred Cobban spearheaded that revisionism. In his now-classic *The Social Interpretation of the French Revolution*, published in 1964, Cobban argued that the revolutionaries were not, in fact, capitalists, and the Revolution itself was not sparked by a rising bourgeoisie.¹⁴ For Cobban, the bourgeoisie were in decline over the course of the eighteenth century and it was the peasantry that supplied the revolutionary dynamic. Though Cobban accepted the Marxist's social and economic categories of analysis, he nevertheless came up with markedly different conclusions. That was enough to open up the floodgates. Soon revisionist historians would not only be assailing the Marxist orthodoxy, but also any interpretations that privileged social causes of the Revolution.¹⁵

Perhaps the most influential work to come out during this period was the American scholar George Taylor's article "Noncapitalist Wealth and the Origins of the French Revolution."¹⁶ Here, Taylor argued that the Revolution could not be explained by the rise of capitalism or in terms of social struggle. Taylor claimed that it was impossible to determine whether the bourgeoisie were rising, as Lefebvre said, or

¹⁴ Alfred Cobban, *The Social Interpretation of the French Revolution* (Cambridge, 1964), see especially chapter 12 and the conclusion.

¹⁵ This is not to suggest that social and economic approaches to studying the origins of the Revolution were a thing of the past. Indeed, as Sara Maza has shown, many excellent works were written in the 1970s that privileged the role of social and economic tensions in the origins of the Revolution. See, for example, Colin Lucas, "Nobles, Bourgeois, and the Origins of the French Revolution," *Past and Present* 60 (August, 1973), pp. 84-126.

¹⁶ George Taylor, "Noncapitalist Wealth and the Origins of the French Revolution," *American Historical Review* 72 (January 1967), pp. 469-96. For insight into the state of the historiography at the end of the 1960s see Gerald Cavanaugh, "The Present State of French Revolutionary Historiography: Alfred Cobban and Beyond," *French Historical Studies* 7 (Fall, 1972), pp. 587-606.

declining as Cobban claimed. Rather, Taylor argued that 1789 and the reforms ushered in by the Revolution were the result of political crises: "it was essentially a political revolution with social consequences," Taylor famously wrote, "and not a social revolution with political consequences."¹⁷

Taylor's work proved to be the foundation upon which a new consensus among eighteenth-century French historians would ultimately be formed. This new consensus did not appear overnight, of course. As Maza has pointed out, "it has taken the last two decades for scholars in the field to come to terms with the methodological consequences of Taylor's (and others') 'hard revisionism.'"¹⁸ The implications of this switch in the historiography from a socio-economic perspective to one concerned with political causality had far reaching consequences. Indeed, today, three decades later, the "political turn" has yet to run out of analytical and interpretive steam.¹⁹ The shift in the historiography also infused studies of the periodical press with a new vitality. If the Revolution were indeed a political event, the result of political struggles, then the press would be a natural category of investigation. In theory, the periodical press is ideally suited for facilitating the spread of political debate and subversive ideas. Not surprisingly, the renaissance of press studies that blossomed during the 1980s and early 1990s, would pursue those very connections between the periodical press and the politics of contestation.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 491.

¹⁸ Maza, "Politics, Culture, and the Origins of the French Revolution," p. 705.

FURET, DE TOCQUEVILLE, AND THE 'POLITICAL TURN'

No one has been more influential in cementing the new political interpretation of the origins of the French Revolution than François Furet. In *Interpreting the French Revolution*, published in France in 1978, Furet leveled devastating attacks on what he termed the Marxist "catechism."²⁰ Furet believed that Marxist historians had overstated the tensions between the aristocracy and bourgeoisie. Furet argued the two groups had far more in common than historians had recognized. The crucial mistake made by Marxist historians, according to Furet, was that they accepted the rhetoric of the revolutionaries at face value. While the revolutionaries attacked the aristocracy and praised the Third Estate - most famously in Sieyès' *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers Etat*, Furet saw the revolution as a clash of political ideologies, not as a class struggle.²¹ Where the revolutionaries argued that the Revolution represented a radical break with the Old Regime - which was both a term and concept created by the Revolution - Furet believed that the Revolution had more in common with the Old Regime than the revolutionaries cared to admit.²² Furet persuasively argued that the revolutionaries created a myth of rupture in order to separate themselves from the regime they had just overthrown. In this, Furet was borrowing heavily from Alexis de Tocqueville's central thesis in his *L'ancien régime et la Révolution*.²³

¹⁹ On the longevity of the political approach and some suggestions on a successor see Suzanne Desan's provocative article "What's after Political Culture? Recent French Revolutionary Historiography," *French Historical Studies* vol. 23, no. 1 (2000), pp. 163-196.

²⁰ Originally published as François Furet, *Penser la Révolution française* (Paris, 1978) and translated as *Interpreting the French Revolution*, trans Elborg Foster (Cambridge, 1981).

²¹ On Sieyès see William H. Sewell, Jr., *A Rhetoric of Bourgeois Revolution: The Abbé Sieyès and "What is the Third Estate?"* (Durham, 1994). The answer that Sieyès gave to his immortal question was "everything." But, he followed with another question: "What has it been until now in the political order? Nothing." Sewell, *A Rhetoric*, p. 41.

²² Furet, *Interpreting the French Revolution*, p. 132-135.

²³ Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Ancien Régime*, trans John Bonner (London, 1988).

For Tocqueville and Furet, the real story of the Revolution was not sudden and violent change, but rather continuity.²⁴ The Revolution completed the absolute monarchy's process of administrative centralization and left the nation's social and economic institutions essentially untouched. Furet found Tocqueville's emphasis on continuity persuasive because it lent support to his own findings. In *Interpreting*, Furet had located the causes of both the Revolution and the Terror in the revolutionaries' ideology of radical egalitarianism. Importantly, Furet traced the genesis of this ideology back to Rousseau and to the voluntary organizations of the Old Regime where men and women came together and embraced Rousseauist notions of the general will and popular sovereignty.²⁵ Thus, for Furet, the origins of 1789 and 1793 could seamlessly be found in the political ideology of the Old Regime. The Revolution merely brought Rousseau's ideology to power.

Furet is perhaps single-handedly responsible for bringing the work of the nineteenth-century historian back into vogue among French historians. The Furet-Tocqueville explanatory model of the origins of the French Revolution has had a profound influence on the types of questions and assumptions historians make about the eighteenth century.²⁶

THE POLITICAL CULTURE OF THE OLD REGIME

Following the lead of Furet, historians searching for the origins of the Revolution have increasingly looked to the Old Regime. As Maza has noted, "if the

²⁴ Furet, *Interpreting the French Revolution*, especially pp. 132-63, and Tocqueville, *The Ancien Régime*, especially Book II, chapters 3-7.

²⁵ In arguing that Rousseau's notions of the general will could be traced from the voluntary organizations of the Old Regime through to the Jacobins and the Terror, Furet was borrowing more from Augustin Cochin than from Tocqueville. See *Interpreting the French Revolution*, pp. 164-204.

crisis that came to a head in 1789 was in essence political, then the key that would unlock the meaning of the Revolution lay in the political history of the Old Regime, and especially in that of its final decades.²⁷

In the wake of Furet's *Inventing the French Revolution*, much important work has been done on the origins of 1789. Keith Baker, for example, has argued that a string of Old Regime crises - beginning with the Jansenist controversy in the 1750s, the attempts to liberalize the grain trade in the 1760s, and the Maupeou coup of 1771 - set in motion intense political struggles among the branches of the monarchical government.²⁸ William Doyle's work on the *parlements* has added significant support for Baker's thesis.²⁹ Dale Van Kley has shed more light on the role of Jansenist ministers in what he has called the "desacralization" of the French monarchy.³⁰

Historians of the press too sought to locate the political conflicts of 1788-89 in the political culture of the Old Regime. Though Furet himself never studied the periodical press, his interpretive model raised many questions about the role of the press in disseminating political debates. Jeremy Popkin clearly summed up the state of historiography and the Tocquevillian revival when he wrote in his 1987 article entitled, appropriately enough, "The Pre-Revolutionary Origins of Political Journalism:"

If the barriers between nobles and educated bourgeois were breaking down long before 1789, if the revolution did not mark a major turning point in French economic development, and if the roots of revolutionary political ideology can be found in conflicts of the previous half-century, it would be surprising to discover that an institution as important as the revolutionary press had no

²⁶ On the influence of Furet see Maza "Politics, Culture, and the Origins of the French Revolution," pp. 707-709, and Censer, "Commencing the Third Century of Debate," pp. 1312-1316.

²⁷ Maza "Politics, Culture, and the Origins of the French Revolution," p. 710.

²⁸ Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution*, chapter 8.

²⁹ William Doyle, "The Parlements," in *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture*, Vol. I, Keith Baker, ed., *The Political Culture of the Old Regime* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 157-167.

³⁰ Dale K. Van Kley, *The Damiens Affair and the Unraveling of the Ancien Regime 1750-1770* (Princeton, 1984).

significant prerevolutionary roots. Indeed such a conclusion would challenge all general interpretations of the Revolution that emphasized the connections between the ancien régime and its successor.³¹

The challenge of course was bridging the chasm that seemed to separate the periodical press of the Old Regime, censored, dull, and quiescent, with the radical, free, and open press of the Revolution. The question in effect became: how does one go from the *Gazette de France* to Marat's *Ami du Peuple*?

To help solve this problem, historians of the press looked to the work being done by their colleagues studying the production and circulation of books in the Old Regime. Robert Darnton and Raymond Birn, for example, had already noted that books banned from publication within France were being published by francophone publishers outside of France and then shipped into the country.³² By emulating the work done by Darnton and Birn, historians of the press were able to locate a rich trove of political papers. Papers such as the *Gazette de Leyde*, the *Courier d'Avignon*, and Linguet's *Annales* were uncensored French-language periodicals, published abroad, but which circulated within France with varying degrees of tacit permission. These papers provided the linkage between the Revolution and the Old Regime that historians of the press were hoping to find. By carrying accurate and timely political news, these sheets were able to equip readers with the raw material necessary to form opinions on a wide range of political issues. The *Gazette de Leyde*, for example, elevated the role of the *Parlement de Paris* by treating that body as if it were the constitutional partner of the king. As Carroll Joynes has noted, during the Jansenist's refusal-of-sacraments

³¹ Jeremy Popkin, "The Pre-Revolutionary Origins of Political Journalism," in Keith Baker, ed., *The Political Culture of the Old Regime* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 203-242.

³² See Raymond Birn, *Pierre Rousseau and the Philosophes of Bouillon* (Geneva, 1964), and Robert Darnton, *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime* (Cambridge, 1982).

controversy in the 1750s, the *Gazette de Leyde* overwhelmingly supported the parliamentary ministers who defended the Jansenists, and offered condemnation for the Church. Throughout the crisis, the paper portrayed the monarch as well intentioned but ultimately inept and explicitly linked the Damien's attempted regicide of Louis XV in 1757 to the King's hapless attempts to end the controversy.³³

Thanks to historians of the press, and the work done by Baker, Van Kley, and others, we now know that France in the Old Regime had a rich and vibrant political culture; it was not the monotone politics of absolutism but rather a cacophonous politics of contestation between and among the ruling elites. Yet, by focusing in narrowly on a political discourse that might have contributed to the destabilization of the monarchy, historians of the press have ignored, and in some cases, written off, the provincial *affiches*. To be sure, Censer, Popkin and others have done a good job in widening the definition of what constituted politics at the end of the eighteenth century. Political speech was no longer just confined to the highest levels of the monarchical government and engaged in only by the King and his most trusted advisors. Rather, the writings of journalists, and editorials from people like Jean Luzac, the editor of the *Gazette de Leyde*, also had political significance.

In spite of that more inclusive definition, these historians still retain an overly circumscribed view of politics and political discourse. If we assume that political discourse is only that which has the monarchy and monarchical policy as its referent, then by definition we will not find any political criticism in the censored *affiches*. But if we go beyond that definition to include other discourses - discourses not necessarily

³³ Carroll Joynes, "The *Gazette de Leyde*: The Opposition Press and French Politics, 1750-1757," in Censer and Popkin, eds., *Press and Politics in Pre-Revolutionary France*.

operating in the realm of the court but which would have presented a challenge to, and critique of both the theory and practice of absolutism - then we will get a much more nuanced, and a much more accurate sense of politics at the end of the Old Regime.

Historians of the press, especially those on this side of the Atlantic, have been reluctant to take such an inclusive view of political debate. Ironically, by holding onto such a narrow and one-dimensional approach to the press, these historians have fallen victim to their very own criticisms. In 1987 Censer and Popkin wrote that:

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.³⁴

This, however, perfectly describes the view of leading American historians towards France's domestic press in the eighteenth century. As far back as 1981, Jack Censer condemned France's periodical press as undynamic. According to Censer, the press presented only an aristocratic view of society, screened out non-traditional views, and was responsible for there being no middle class consciousness in eighteenth-century France.³⁵ Thirteen years later, in *The French Press in the Age of Enlightenment*, Censer revised his opinion of the French press very little. Specifically examining the provincial *affiches*, Censer found them to be pro-monarchy, pro-church, and anti-philosophes. Which is to say, if one were looking for political contestation, or content which would have posed a threat to the monarchy, readers would find none in the pages of the local papers.

³⁴ Censer and Popkin, ed. *Press and Politics*, p. 2.

³⁵ Stephen Botein, Jack R. Censer, Harriet Ritvo, "The Periodical Press in Eighteenth-Century English and French Society: A Cross-Cultural Approach," in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 23 (1981), p. 490.

Jeremy Popkin has reached a similar conclusion, albeit from a different perspective. In his 1993 article, "The Provincial Newspaper Press and Revolutionary Politics," Popkin for the first time takes the *affiches* seriously and attempts to integrate them into a study of France's periodical press. He notes, "for different reasons, historians of the revolutionary press - including this author - have tended to give the provincial press short shrift."³⁶ Yet, in tracing the origins of the Revolutionary press, Popkin falls back on his old argument that during the Revolution, journalists such as Mirabeau, Brissot, and Marat, when looking around for a model of the press to emulate, chose not the censored provincial *affiches*, but the extraterritorial francophone presses. Once again, political criticism is the yard stick by which the French press is to be measured, and the *affiches* are found to be wanting.

Most recently, Vivian Gruder has searched through the provincial press looking for evidence of political debates in the waning years of the Old Regime. Gruder limits her study to the years 1787 to 1788, the years during which a series of pre-revolutionary crises were coming to a head, presumably the most likely period in which to find subversive contents in the *affiches*. Conceding from the start that the *affiches* carried no overtly critical content, Gruder attempts to locate "coded political messages" embedded within the pages of the *affiches*. Gruder herself noted the near-futility of her task:

the historian, straining to read the fine print of over two hundred years ago, searches for the sparse news of current events in the domestic French press through hours of monotony, interspersed with moments of fascination upon discovering the ways by which journalists and printers evaded the watchful eye of the censor while unveiling to their readers some bits of news and views.³⁷

³⁶ Jeremy Popkin, "The Provincial Newspaper Press and Revolutionary Politics," *French Historical Studies* vol 18, no. 2 (Fall, 1993), p. 435.

³⁷ Vivian R. Gruder, "Political News as Coded Messages: The Parisian and Provincial Press in the Pre-Revolution, 1787-1788," *French History* vol. 12, no. 1 (1998), p. 1.

In her study of the *affiches*, Gruder determines that until the end of 1788 and the lifting of censorship restrictions within France, the nation's provincial papers carried no overt political news and very little covert political content. The most common way editors were able to slip anything resembling politically sensitive material into the *affiches* was through book reviews. Gruder argues that editors were able to implicitly criticize the policies of Louis XVI by giving positive reviews to books written about past rulers of France and contemporary rulers of other countries. Thus, for example, when the *Affiches de Paris* reviewed a book on the ancient Gauls, noting that the ruler of the Gauls met frequently and consulted regularly with his people, readers in 1787 would recognize that as a critique of their current political situation.

Rather than focusing in narrowly on the bits and pieces of political content that might have slipped past the censors, there are more fruitful and rewarding ways to study the domestic French press. Historians of the press in France, for example, have looked at the periodical press in a markedly different way than their colleagues in America. Rather than examining the French press from the perspective of the Revolution and attempting to find a proto-revolutionary press in the years leading up to 1789, historians in France have situated the French press in the context of the eighteenth century. That is, instead of anticipating the revolutionary crises of 1789, historians such as Jean Sgard and Gilles Feyel have preferred to study the domestic French press for what it can tell us about the way men and women actually lived their lives and experienced their world in the eighteenth century. Thanks to the work of Sgard and Feyel and others we now know more about the provincial press than ever before.³⁸ Sgard has done excellent

³⁸ In addition to the *Dictionnaire des journaux*, see also: Jean Sgard, ed., *La presse provinciale au XVIIIe siècle* (Grenoble, 1983); Gilles Feyel, "La presse provinciale française dans la seconde moitié du XVIIIe

work in examining the ways in which the *affiches* helped transmit the new ideas of the Enlightenment and contributed to intellectual life in the provinces. Feyel has deepened our understanding of the diffusion of the *affiches* and has provided valuable insight into the papers' contents.

In this dissertation, I seek to add to our understanding of the provincial *affiches* by situating the papers within their proper milieu. The papers were, after all, local sheets that served a local community. By analyzing the men and women who edited and read the paper, and by exploring relationships between the *affiches* and other local institutions, we can get a much more robust and accurate picture not only of the local press but also of provincial culture. In his massive *Le Siècle des lumières en province: Académies et académiciens provinciaux, 1680-1789*, Daniel Roche has done an excellent job dispelling the notion, made popular by Tocqueville, that by the eighteenth century Paris had swallowed up all that was vital and vibrant about provincial cultural life. Roche argues that the provincial academies, along with other provincial institutions such as Masonic lodges and agricultural societies, provided the institutional base for the Enlightenment.³⁹ An examination of the provincial press suggests a different relationship between cultural and intellectual institutions in the provinces than the one outlined by Roche. The *affiches* largely drew on a different set of personnel than did the academies. While provincial academies flourished in cities with a *parlement*, the *affiches* took root in commercial centers. In Bordeaux, which had both a *parlement* and a thriving commercial economy, the local paper had its strongest affiliation not with the

siècle: Géographie d'une nouvelle fonction urbaine," in *La ville et l'innovation* (Paris, 1987); "La presse provinciale au XVIIIe siècle: Géographie d'un réseau," *Revue historique* (1984); and "La presse provinciale sous l'ancien régime," in Sgard, ed., *La presse provinciale*.

academy but rather with the academy's rival, the *Musée de Bordeaux*. Indeed, in Bordeaux the editors and readers of the local paper were also members of the *musée*, and of the city's philanthropic and charitable organizations. Thus, an examination of the *affiches* will help us rethink the institutions, personnel, and practices of provincial Enlightenment.

Another interpretive model that will help elucidate the centrality of the provincial press in understanding the Old Regime has already been suggested, albeit inadvertently, by Gruder in her article on the coded political content of the *affiches*. As Gruder pointed out, the *affiches* criticized royal policy by implicitly comparing the French crown with either a foreign rival or a past French monarch. Criticism through contrast was not a new technique, of course. The philosophes had been using that method to criticize a range of French practices and attitudes for decades. Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes* is perhaps the best example of this technique. In that classic work, the philosophe from Bordeaux held up a mirror to Parisian society by showing readers how their customs and culture looked to two outsiders. Having his two main characters come from Persia, Montesquieu was able to subtly compare and contrast the perceived despotism of the Persian harem with the French political system.⁴⁰ Grafigny used a similar approach in her *Lettres d'une péruvienne*.⁴¹

If we were to focus less intently on political criticism that had the monarchy as its target, we see that the *affiches*, in fact, embraced a range of Enlightenment cultural, intellectual, and discursive practices. Contrary to Jack Censer's conclusion that the

³⁹ Daniel Roche, *Le Siècle des lumières en province: Académies et académiciens provinciaux, 1680-1789*, 2 vols. (The Hague, 1978).

⁴⁰ Charles-Louis de Secondat, baron de Montesquieu, *The Persian letters*, trans. George R. Healy (Indianapolis, 1964).

affiches were anti-philosophes, I argue that the *affiches* embraced not just the philosophes as individuals, but also the project of Enlightenment. Robert Darnton has noted that the Enlightenment was good business, and in virtually every edition of every *affiches*, readers were bombarded with advertisements for the latest books written by the philosophes.⁴² More than just a commodity, however, the Enlightenment appeared in the local papers in a variety of ways. Editors provided their readers with poems written by the philosophes, and excerpts from their latest works. Most local papers kept readers up to date on the activities of various philosophes, and the obituaries for Voltaire, Rousseau and Benjamin Franklin, among others, were longer and more effusive in their praise than the ones carried for Louis XV. Beyond commercializing the Enlightenment and disseminating its main ideas, the *affiches* also provided a forum in which its central practices could be articulated. Just as the purpose of the *Encyclopédie* was to "change the common way of thinking," as Diderot wrote, the purpose of the *affiches* was to bring a public of readers together in new and alternative ways; in effect, to change the common way of interacting. This is not to suggest that by embracing the culture of the Enlightenment, the *affiches* were not engaging in political contestation. Rather, by using Habermas' concept of a bourgeois public sphere as a guide, I argue that the culture of the Enlightenment as expressed in the *affiches* offered a devastating critique of monarchical absolutism.

⁴¹ Françoise d'Issenbourg d'Happoncourt de Graffigny, *Lettres d'une péruvienne* (Paris, 1967).

⁴² Robert Darnton, *The Business of Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 1979), and *Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France* (New York, 1995).

HABERMAS AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE PUBLIC SPHERE

In his now-famous work, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Jürgen Habermas argued that by the middle of the eighteenth century, France began to develop a bourgeois or authentic public sphere that grew out of the private sphere and was opposed to the inauthentic public sphere of the court. According to Habermas, the new public sphere was constituted by a "public of private people making use of their reason," and became institutionalized in two distinct yet overlapping areas of French life.⁴³ First, the public sphere grew out of France's voluntary organizations - salons, Masonic lodges, clubs, and cafes. It was there where people of all ranks could come together not as members of a corporation with specific privileges and rights, but as individuals free to express themselves on a wide range of topics, opine, debate with others, and engage in critical discussion.⁴⁴ Second, Habermas also located the birth of the authentic public sphere in France's burgeoning periodical press. Newspaper, journals, and periodicals facilitated a two-way dialogue among France's growing "critical community," and allowed for the wide circulation of debate.⁴⁵ Taken together, Habermas' authentic public sphere ran directly contrary to the ideals of monarchical absolutism. As Keith Baker has noted, in the new public sphere, "publicity was now opposed to the secrecy shrouding the mysteries of absolute sovereignty. Reason...was

⁴³ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger with Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass., 1989), p. 51.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 51-56.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 67-73.

invoked against disordered commands of arbitrary will. The rights of thinking humanity were counterposed against traditional prerogatives of power.⁴⁶

Since its translation into French in 1978, and English in 1989, *The Structural Transformation* has greatly impacted the way historians view the eighteenth century. By locating the zone of confrontation between the monarchy and its critics in the non-politicized settings of salon, lodge, and newspaper press, Habermas has opened the way for scholars to ask new questions about old institutions. Dena Goodman's work on Parisian salons, for example, both expands and illuminates Habermas' schema. Goodman has demonstrated that in the eighteenth century, the Republic of Letters came to be institutionalized in the salons of Necker, Geoffrin, and Lespinasse. It was there that the task of the Republic of Letters - the reciprocal exchange of ideas aimed at benefiting the universal good of humankind - blended with salon sociability based on polite discourse and the presumption of equality. According to Goodman:

The Republic of Letters was the very center of the public sphere in which private persons learned to use their reason publicly: the republic's institutions of sociability were its institutions; the republic's modes and practices of communication structured the discourse of the public and its action.⁴⁷

Other scholars have similarly explored Habermas' institutions of the public sphere. Margaret Jacob's study of European Freemasonry reveals a venue in which a diverse group of men met as individuals to socialize and discuss.⁴⁸ Other institutions highlighted by Habermas have also found their scholars. James Johnson, for example, has argued that like salons, literary societies, and clubs, concert halls were another site

⁴⁶ Keith Baker, "Defining the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century France: Variations on a Theme by Habermas," in Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 185.

⁴⁷ Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca, 1994), pp. 14-15.

⁴⁸ Margaret C. Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment* (Oxford, 1991).

where individuals came together, expressed their opinions, voiced their criticisms, and ultimately were able to challenge the absolutist judgments of the king.⁴⁹ Jeffrey Ravel came to many of the same conclusions in his important work on public theatres in eighteenth-century France.⁵⁰

Thus, historians have done an excellent job exploring eighteenth-century France's cultural and intellectual institutions. The work of these scholars has helped expand and refine Habermas' schema and the result is that we now have a much more robust understanding of the ways in which people were able to come together, form a public, and challenge the legitimacy of the absolute monarchy. Yet, Habermas argued that the public sphere's institutional existence was located as much in the periodical press as in face-to-face discussions. This aspect of his conceptualization has gotten noticeably less attention. Even before historians began to draw heavily on Habermas' insights into the eighteenth century, we already knew a great deal about the extra-territorial francophone papers from Avignon, The Hague, Amsterdam, Leiden, and Utrecht that provided readers with fairly accurate political news and information and helped disseminate criticism of the French court. Habermas himself seemed unaware of the existence of such a diverse and plentiful extra-territorial press, and thanks to these studies we now know that political contestation in France can be dated back not to the 1780s as Habermas suggested, but to the 1750s. Still, we know very little about the role of the domestic French press in helping to bring about and shape the burgeoning authentic public sphere.

⁴⁹ James H. Johnson, *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History* (Berkeley, 1995), pp. 53-95.

⁵⁰ Jeffrey S. Ravel, *The Contested Parterre: Public Theater and French Political Culture, 1680-1791* (Ithaca, 1999).

In this dissertation I hope to do for the press what historians have already done for France's other institutions of the public sphere. That is, I hope to illuminate and extend our understanding of the role of the domestic French press, specifically the role of the provincial *affiches*, in helping to bring about a public sphere that stood in opposition to the inauthentic sphere of monarchical absolutism. The form and function of the *affiches* gave readers unprecedented control over the production and consumption of the papers. Subscribers to the local *affiches* were not just readers but writers as well. The consumers of the press were also its producers. There was no strong or dominating editorial voice in the *affiches*. Readers submitted nearly all of the contents that went into the making of each edition of the local sheets. The papers stood as a blank canvas upon which readers could find both a public voice and a ready audience. When invited to participate in the production of their local *affiches*, readers responded enthusiastically in a multitude of ways. They offered their fellow readers pieces of literary and artistic works in the forms of poems and short stories. The *affiches* also provided a space for readers to share their ideas and opinions. Readers submitted book and theatre reviews where they critically evaluated the work of others. Letters written to the editor and published in the *affiches* gave readers a chance to engage in some of the great debates of the eighteenth century. Subscribers to the *Journal de Guienne*, for example, explored and debated the moral and economic issues surrounding the slave trade; the *Affiches de Bordeaux* carried a three-month long discussion on whether the poor ought to be educated, and what would constitute a useful education for people condemned to spend the rest of their lives toiling in the fields; readers of the *Affiches de Dauphiné* used their local paper to express themselves on the issue of luxury.

While the debates that raged in the *affiches* during the last half of the eighteenth century might not strictly speaking be labeled political - that is, they never explicitly criticized the King or his ministers - they did allow readers to engage in critical discussion on topical issues. Perhaps as many as 200,000 readers across the nation had access to the open and transparent format of the *affiches*. By participating in the production of the papers, by submitting book and theatre reviews, and pieces of their own poetry, by engaging in far-ranging debates, a public of readers was transformed from passive subjects to active citizens. Thus, the story of the *affiches* is not wholly incongruous to a theory of continuity between the Old Regime and the Revolution. Indeed, I argue that the men and women of 1789, those elected first to the Estates General, then the National Assembly and the succeeding revolutionary bodies, did not simply arrive in Paris knowing how to be active citizens of a representative government. Rather, during the last forty years of the Old Regime, French men and women participated in the production of their local papers, wrestled with the leading issues of the day, discussed and debated with each other, and honed their critical and analytical abilities. In short, in the pages of the *affiches*, people were able to cultivate and nourish the skills that would prove so necessary during the Revolution.

Although Habermas' schema has not yet sparked a renewed interest in the press of the Old Regime, it has helped revitalize the notion that the French Revolution was the result, at least in part, of economic consequences and social antagonisms. Habermas' public sphere, was, after all, a bourgeois public sphere, that had its origins in the rise of capitalism and the bourgeois family. Historians have tended to set aside the class element of the public sphere, preferring to see it, as Keith Baker has suggested, as a

normative ideal rather than a sociological referent.⁵¹ Yet recent work, most notably by Colin Jones, rejects the "de-economized" version of Habermas' conceptualization and attempts to relocate the bourgeoisie in the creation of an authentic public sphere.⁵² In making his argument, Jones highlights the centrality of the *affiches* in fostering a commercial revolution during the last decades of the Old Regime.⁵³

As Jones has rightly pointed out, the provincial press was first and foremost dedicated to economic exchange. Small advertisements submitted by readers typically took up nearly half of each edition of the *affiches*. These advertisements were designed to unite a vast web of buyers and sellers, those looking for work and those looking for workers. In the pages of the *affiches* readers got a view of society in which everything was for sale; royal offices advertised for sale next to ads for jewelry, watches, umbrellas, snuff boxes, and barrels of wine. No economic transaction was either too big or too small to escape the notice of the *affiches*.

Jones' contention that the existence of the *affiches* is indicative of a vibrant middle class in the last decades of the Old Regime is provocative and his emphasis on the economic function of the provincial press has led to much recent work done on the nature and scope of consumption in the Old Regime. Building on the work of Daniel Roche, Cissie Fairchilds, and Annik Pardailhé-Galabrun, Jones himself has used the *affiches* to demonstrate a lively and growing market for medical products.⁵⁴ Picking up

⁵¹ Baker, *Interpreting the French Revolution*, p. 172.

⁵² Colin Jones, "The Great Chain of Buying: Medical Advertisement, the Bourgeois Public Sphere, and the Origins of the French Revolution," *American Historical Review*, vol. 101, no. 1 (Feb. 1996) p. 16.

⁵³ In addition to "The Great Chain," see also Colin Jones, "Bourgeois Revolution Revivified: 1789 and Social Change," in Colin Lucas, ed., *Rewriting the French Revolution: The Andrew Browning Lectures 1989* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

⁵⁴ Daniel Roche, *The People of Paris: An Essay in Popular Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, trans. Gwynne Lewis (Berkeley, 1987); *A History of Everyday Things: The Birth of Consumption in France, 1600-1800*, trans. Brian Pearce (Cambridge, 2000); Cissie Fairchilds, "The Production and Marketing of

where Jones left off, Morag Martin has demonstrated that advertisements for cosmetics carried in the *affiches* helped to create a market for fashion-related products by reaching a wide and disparate audience.⁵⁵ In a highly original piece of research that deserves wider attention, Robert James Merrett has argued that British foodstuffs became commonplace items on the tables of provincial aristocrats largely as a result of successful advertising campaigns waged in the pages of the *affiches*.⁵⁶ Michael Lynn's study of the *Musée de Monsieur* suggests that the process of commercialization was not limited to consumer goods alone.⁵⁷ Here, Lynn demonstrates that culture was also commercialized in the pages of the *Affiches de Paris*. Readers responding to an advertisement to join the *Musée* would have unprecedented access to the intellectual and cultural practices of science.

Though limited to the capital, Lynn's work hints at a larger process of commercialization of culture that took place in the pages of the provincial press. When readers took out a subscription to their local paper, they were buying entrance into a world not just of commerce and exchange but of culture as well. We have already seen that in the pages of the paper, everything was for sale. Price tags were attached to Royal offices just as they were attached to barrels of wine, gold watches, and billiard tables.

Cultural items were no exception. Books, plays, concerts, art exhibits, courses,

Populuxe Goods in Eighteenth-Century Paris," in John Brewer and Roy Porter, eds., *Consumption and the World of Goods* (New York, 1993) 228-48; Annik Pardailhé-Galabrun, *La naissance de l'intime: 300 foyers parisiens, XVIIe-XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1988).

⁵⁵ Morag Sarah Martin, "Consuming Beauty: The Commerce of Cosmetics in France, 1750-1800" (Ph.D diss., University of California, Irvine, 1999). See especially chapter 2.

⁵⁶ Robert James Merrett, "Eating à l'Anglaise in Provincial France, 1750-1789," *Eighteenth-Century Life* vol. 23, no.2 (1999) pp. 84-96.

⁵⁷ Michael R. Lynn, "Enlightenment in the Republic of Science: The Popularization of Natural Philosophy in Eighteenth-Century France" (Ph.D diss. University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1997), and "Enlightenment in the Public Sphere: The Musée de Monsieur and Scientific Culture in Late-Eighteenth-Century Paris," *Eighteenth Century Studies* vol. 32, no. 4 (1999) pp. 463-476.

paintings were all commodified just like any other item listed for sale in the paper. The only requirement to buying culture, whether it was in physical form like a painting or a book, or something less tangible like admission to a concert or the theatre, was simply money. As Habermas has noted, access to culture was a crucial aspect in the formation of the authentic public sphere. Access to cultural products supplied the emerging public sphere with a basis on which to form critical tastes and judgments distinct from the official taste of the monarchy and provided much needed revenue for France's writers, painters, and other artists.⁵⁸ Thus, in this dissertation I hope to demonstrate that the authentic public sphere was not just an intellectual, or even a cultural endeavor, but also a commercial enterprise; an enterprise that would have been impossible without the provincial press' dedication to the commerce and exchange of cultural products.

Part I of this dissertation (chapters 2-4), focuses on the origins, form and contents of the provincial press. Faced with the twin obstacles of laws governing censorship and privilege, provincial newspapers largely eschewed political content and focused instead on forging networks of commerce: both economic exchange and the exchange of ideas. Chapter 2 traces the development of the provincial press from its origins in the seventeenth century as nothing more than both official and illegal reprints of Renaudot's *Gazette*, to the second half of the eighteenth century in which the *affiches* grew to be the most vibrant and dynamic aspect of the domestic French press. With their emphasis on commerce and economics, the papers first took hold in France's commercial capitals such as Bordeaux, Nantes, La Rochelle, and Rouen. By the time of the Revolution there were forty-four provincial sheets in existence including one in nearly every *généralité*.

⁵⁸ Habermas, *The Structural Transformation*, pp. 36-37.

Chapter 3 begins an analysis of the papers' commercial contents. Taking out a subscription to a local paper was to gain entrée into a vast market of goods for rent or sale, and services for hire. Leafing through a copy of an *affiches* reveals a world in which everything was for sale and most wants, needs, and desires could be satisfied for the right price. The papers also provided a host of commercial news and information for their readers. Local chambers of commerce, for example, frequently used the paper to notify readers of business opportunities or to call their attentions to new monarchical policies relating to trade and commerce.

While half of the *affiches* were filled with commercial news and advertisements, the other half of the papers dealt with intellectual and cultural matters. In Chapter 4, I discuss the wide range of intellectual and cultural material that readers were exposed to. Readers could buy the latest work of Voltaire or subscribe to a leading periodical such as the *Mercure de France* or Linguet's *Annales*. Readers were also encouraged to submit their own poems and letters to the editor. The *affiches* were the most open and fluid publications of the Old Regime and readers' submissions often filled as much as 90 percent of each paper.

The *affiches* were local publications, edited by local men and women, concerned with local news. To better understand the ways in which an *affiches* operated within its local context and served a local community, Part II (chapters 5-6) focuses narrowly on Bordeaux's two papers. Chapter 5 discusses the *Affiches de Bordeaux*, the city's local paper for nearly three decades. The lifespan of the *Affiches* coincided with an unprecedented growth in the city's economy. Centered on overseas trade in sugar and cotton with the French West Indies, bordelais merchants and traders became

phenomenally wealthy over the course of the eighteenth century. The *Affiches* took the city's continued good economic health as its primary goal, and every issue of the paper supplied merchants with accurate and timely commercial news and tracked all the frenetic activity of the port. While the city's economy was booming, its intellectual and cultural life flagged behind. The editors of the paper took it upon themselves to stimulate interest in intellectual and cultural matters by providing readers with book and theatre reviews, carrying news from the local academy, and offering readers access to the new works coming from Paris.

In 1784 the editors of the *Affiches de Bordeaux* had their privilege to publish revoked and after twenty-six years in circulation, the paper was replaced by the *Journal de Guienne*. In chapter 6 I focus on Bordeaux's new paper. By 1784, Bordeaux was not the same city it was when the *Affiches de Bordeaux* began publishing in 1758. The economy was still running at near peak levels, but by then the intellectual and cultural life was nearly as vibrant as the economy. The *Grand-Théâtre*, designed by the famed architect Victor Louis, was renowned throughout the nation and the paper lavished attention on its nightly performances. The editors of the paper also established a sister-organization, the *Musée de Bordeaux*. The *musée* was designed to be the physical space that captured many of the practices and impulses of the paper. The *musée* was a place where people could come together, be convivial, read the newspaper, discuss what they had read, argue, and wrestle with the leading issues of the day. In the waning years of the Old Regime, the paper and *musée* became the crown jewels in the city's intellectual and cultural life.

Chapter 2

TOUT CE QUI PEUT RENDRE LE PARTICULIER PLUS INSTRUIT, OU PLUS HEUREUX OU PLUS RICHE: THE PROVINCIAL *AFFICHES* IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY FRANCE

It was Alexis de Tocqueville who first posited the theory that by the time of the Revolution, Paris had swallowed up all that was vital and dynamic about provincial life in France. Tocqueville's "center-periphery" theory claimed that the capital held such sway and was so teeming with cultural life that the country's best and brightest minds could not resist its lure. "The provinces had come under the thrall of the metropolis," to such a large extent, Tocqueville noted, that by 1789 the capital had "absorbed the intellectual life of the whole country at the expense of the provinces."¹ The development, spread, and lasting vitality of the provincial press in France, however, stands as a challenge to Tocqueville's claims. Indeed the growth of the provincial press operated on a completely opposite trajectory than the one laid out by Tocqueville. The history of the provincial press in France is not a story of birth and growth, followed by usurpation by the capital. Rather, the domination of Paris-based publications that had marked the French publishing world for over a hundred years came to an end in the 1750s with the creation of the provincial press. Provincial newspapers, called *affiches*, would grow to become the most vibrant and dynamic sector of France's newspaper press in the decades before the Revolution.

Prior to 1750, there was no authentic provincial press in France. That is to say, there were no regional papers produced by local printers, consumed by a local audience, containing largely local information. This situation stood in marked contrast to England,

¹ Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Ancien Régime*, trans John Bonner (London, 1988).

which by 1746 had a dense network of some forty provincial papers.² Provincial readers, like those in the capital, had to rely primarily on the three privileged Paris-based papers, the *Mercure de France*, the *Gazette de France*, and the *Journal des savants*, or on the Francophone press published across France's borders, primarily in the Low Countries. These papers were generally widely available in the provinces, obtainable either through public subscription or by a system of local reprints. The *Gazette*, for example, generally considered to be the nation's first periodical, was reprinted with permission in thirty-five provincial cities by the early part of the eighteenth century.³ By 1722, the *Mercure* was available in thirty provincial cities.⁴ In the city of Bordeaux, readers interested in obtaining the latest news from the capital or abroad had several possibilities. At one of the city's three *cabinets de lecture*, they could, for a small fee, read reprints of the *Gazette*, or the French-language *Courrier de Mardi et Vendredi*, or the *Gazette d'Hollande*. By the middle of the eighteenth century, Bordelais readers also had access to reprints of the *Gazette de Leyde*.⁵

What readers in Bordeaux - or in any other provincial city, for that matter - could not find were local publications, dedicated to the collection and dissemination of local news and information. This is not to suggest that there was no regional demand for such publications. Yet, whatever demand there may have been for local periodicals was continually stymied by a sweeping set of laws governing privilege in France. Privilege-holders for the three main papers were guaranteed monopolies in perpetuity for

² Bob Harris, *Politics and the Rise of the Press: Britain and France, 1620-1800* (New York, 1996) p. 60.

³ Gilles Feyel, *La Gazette en province à travers ses réimpressions, 1631-1752* (Amsterdam, 1982), p. 33.

⁴ Christopher Todd, *Political Bias, Censorship, and the Dissolution of the "Official" Press in Eighteenth-Century France* (Lewiston, NY, 1991), p. 27.

⁵ On the availability on newspapers in Bordeaux see Jane McLeod, "A Social Study of Printers and Booksellers in Bordeaux from 1745 to 1810," (Ph.D diss. York University, Toronto, 1987). On the

political, literary, and scientific news. Théophraste Renaudot and his heirs, for example, held the privilege for political content for over one hundred years. It was a right he and his family guarded jealously. Several times over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they aggressively pursued provincial printers whom they deemed to be violating their monopoly.⁶ The owners of the *Mercure* and the *Journal des Savants* protected their monopolies just as assiduously. Every attempt to establish a publication outside the capital was therefore quickly and roundly choked off. Between 1631 and 1749 a total of seven provincial papers began publishing only to be closed down a short while later.⁷

Yet after more than one hundred years of a de facto prohibition on the formation of a provincial press, the situation gradually reversed itself. Beginning in the 1750s, sparked by the Renaudot family selling their privilege, provincial publishers acquired the rights to edit and print their own papers. Finally, provincial readers had a way to supplement their Parisian and foreign sources with local news and information.

Once the floodgates were opened, the provincial press spread rapidly around the country. Starting first in Lyon, followed by the port cities of Nantes and Bordeaux, provincial *affiches* sprang up all around the country. Appendix 1, Table 1 provides a list of all the provincial *affiches*, the cities they were published in and the dates they were

general availability of reprints of the *Gazette de Leyde* see Jeremy Popkin, *News and Politics in the Age of Revolution: Jean Luzac's Gazette de Leyde* (Ithaca, 1989), chapter 5.

⁶ Howard M. Solomon, *Public Welfare, Science, and Propaganda in Seventeenth-Century France: The Innovations of Théophraste Renaudot* (Princeton, 1972), pp. 120-122.

⁷ According to Jean Sgard, those seven publications were: *Mercure de Gaillon* (1643), *Courrier du temps* (Toulouse, 1660), *Recueil troyen* (1699), *Nouvelles de Poitiers* (1734), *Nouvelles littéraires* (Caen, 1740), and the *Abeille flamande* (Lille, 1746). With the exception of *Nouvelles littéraires*, all of these papers folded within the first year. The Caen publication lasted a total of four years before it was closed down. For a complete list of French and French-language papers appearing in France between 1614-1789 see the indispensable compilation by Jean Sgard, *Bibliographie de la presse classique*, (Genève, 1984).

published. The growth of the provincial press was prolific. Non-existent before 1750, three decades later they were a commonplace aspect of provincial life across the country. By 1788 at least one paper appeared in almost every *généralités* and some regions had several. France's provincial press, once outnumbered so badly, even began to rival England's.

Indeed, once it began to develop, the provincial press became the most dynamic and fastest growing segment of the domestic French press. In terms of sheer numbers and durability, the provincial papers had outpaced those published in the capital. Appendix 1, Table 2 lists all native French periodicals published in France with a lifespan of four or more years for the years 1758-1788. During that thirty-year period, fifty-one Parisian-based papers lived at least long enough to see their fourth anniversary. In the provinces, there were slightly more, fifty-four papers, which survived four or more years. Paris was still the undisputed publishing mecca of the country, yet the provinces, once the backwater of the French publishing world, had assumed a new-found vitality.

THE ORIGINS OF THE PROVINCIAL PRESS IN FRANCE, 1631-1750

The origins of the provincial *affiches* can be traced back to 1631 and the founding of the *Gazette de France*. There is nothing remarkable about that, however, as the *Gazette* is generally considered to be the first French newspaper and Renaudot the founder of the periodical press in France. As such, all subsequent papers, to one degree or another, trace their origins back to 1631. What distinguishes the *affiches* from other periodicals is that the provincial press owed its existence not just to Renaudot's *Gazette*

but equally as much to another of his creations: the *bureau d'adresse* which he founded in Paris one year before the famous newspaper.

Théophraste Renaudot was an unlikely candidate to become the founding father of the French newspaper press. He was from Poitou, not Paris, trained in medicine, not journalism, and therefore was certainly not a member of the powerful Printers and Booksellers Guild.⁸ What Renaudot did have in his favor was his friendship with first Bishop, and later, Cardinal Richelieu, chief minister to Louis XIII. Renaudot's friendship with Richelieu served him quite well as their relationship moved quickly from friendship to patronage. With the help and backing of the cardinal, Renaudot was named royal physician and later became *Commissaire Général des Pauvres du Royaume*. Renaudot's foray into the world of publishing was not a smooth one initially. Immediately upon releasing the first issue of the *Gazette* in May 1631, Renaudot was sued by the owners of a rival paper - the *Nouvelles ordinaires de divers endroits* - which had beaten Renaudot to print by four months.⁹ The owners of the *Nouvelles* claimed that Renaudot had infringed upon their exclusive privilege, which, of course, he certainly had. Thanks to a direct intervention in the case by Richelieu, however, Renaudot won his court battle. The *Nouvelles* was shut down, and the *Gazette* became the sole source of political news throughout the entire country. The decree extended the monopoly to Renaudot and his heirs in perpetuity.¹⁰

⁸ For a comprehensive biography on the life of Renaudot, see Eugène Hatin, *Théophraste Renaudot et ses 'innocentes inventions'* (Paris, 1883); For a work in English see Howard M. Solomon, *Public Welfare, Science, and Propaganda in Seventeenth-Century France: The Innovations of Théophraste Renaudot* (Princeton, 1972).

⁹ Christopher Todd, *Political Bias*, p. 123.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Renaudot never forgot that the monopoly his paper enjoyed - indeed, the paper's very existence - was directly due to the cardinal and the king. As a result, the *Gazette* never failed to present his monarchical benefactors in the most favorable and positive light. Though the content of the *Gazette* has never been the subject of in-depth analysis, historians of the press generally agree that the paper's political reporting hewed closely to monarchical policy. Indeed, some have described the *Gazette* as not much more than a tool of governmental policy.¹¹ While the paper did go to great lengths to present foreign news fairly accurately and in a neutral tone, its coverage of domestic affairs bordered on the sycophantic. In the pages of the *Gazette*, the theory of an absolutist monarch came to life: the king was depicted as having super-human abilities. He was responsible for all that was good and just in the kingdom. When it came to ruling, the king did so effortlessly and without aid.¹² The king's ministers, even Richelieu, figured in the *Gazette* only occasionally, and then when unavoidable. As Jeremy Popkin has described it, "he [the king] alone acted; all others obeyed."¹³ Renaudot also glossed over or completely omitted bad news. There was no mention of the tax revolts that took place throughout the country in 1635, and news of the war with the Hapsburgs was mentioned only when events had deteriorated so dramatically and then only in oblique ways. Renaudot waited two months before reporting the fall of the fortress of Corbie, for example. During very bad periods, Richelieu himself wrote many of the news articles.¹⁴

¹¹ Jeremy Popkin, Jack Censer and Nina Gelbart have all reached this conclusion. See Jeremy Popkin, "The Prerevolutionary Origins of Political Journalism," pp. 205-207; Jack Censer, *The French Press in the Age of Enlightenment* (New York, 1994) pp. 15-25, and Nina Gelbart, *Feminine and Opposition Journalism in Old Regime France: "Le Journal des Dames"* (Berkeley, 1987), pp. 4-7.

¹² For the purest expression of the theory of absolutism see Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, "Politics Derived from the Words of Holy Scripture," in Keith Baker, ed., *University of Chicago Readings in Western Civilization, Volume 7, The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, (Chicago, 1987) pp. 31-47.

¹³ Popkin, "Prerevolutionary Origins," p. 207.

¹⁴ Solomon, *Public Welfare*, pp. 150-55.

The *Gazette* might seem to be a rather uninspired model for the provincial press to emulate but there was more to the *Gazette* than its political reporting. The *Gazette* was actually not one, but a series of three papers.¹⁵ There was the *Gazette* proper, which came out every Saturday and which (in theory at least) covered foreign and domestic news originating to the east of Paris. The *Nouvelles ordinaires*, a subsidiary of the *Gazette*, also came out every Saturday, and was intended to carry news originating to the west of Paris. The final section of the paper was markedly different from the other two. The *Feuille du Bureau d'Adresse* did not carry foreign or domestic news of any sort. Nor did it focus its attention on the activities of the monarchy. Indeed, the king, the court and his advisors were completely absent from the pages of the *Feuille*. Rather, the paper took as its subject matter the events taking place at Renaudot's *Bureau d'adresse*.¹⁶ The creation of first the *Bureau* and then the *Feuille* would prove to be seminal moments in the history of the provincial press. Over one hundred years later, the provincial *affiches* would combine aspects from both institutions in order to form the country's first autonomous local newspaper press.

Before starting the *Gazette*, Renaudot was France's minister of the poor. To help deal with the number of poor, unemployed and indigent people in the capital, Renaudot opened his *Bureau d'adresse* in 1630. The idea behind its creation was at the same time both simple and new. Renaudot's idea was to create a space where people looking for work and people looking for workers could find each other. In effect, the *Bureau* got its

¹⁵ On the *Gazette*, in addition to Solomon, see Claude Bellanger, Jacques Godechot, et. al., *Histoire générale de la presse française*, vol. 1, *Des origines à 1814* (Paris, 1969) pp. 83-95, and Gilles Feyel, "Gazette de France," in Sgard, ed. *Dictionnaire des Journaux, 1600-1789*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1991), pp 443-493.

¹⁶ On the *Feuille* see Gilles Feyel's excellent article "Feuille du Bureau d'Adresse," in Sgard, ed. *Dictionnaire des Journaux*, pp. 416-422.

start as nothing more than an employment agency. Before the creation of the *Bureau* poor-relief fell almost exclusively to the Church and the state. As Howard Solomon has pointed out, the goal of institutions like the *Hôtel Dieu* and the *des Bureau Général des Pauvres* were to treat the effects the poor had on society: begging, the spread of contagion, disturbing the peace, etc.¹⁷ Renaudot established his *Bureau* in order to get at what he believed was the root cause of poverty: unemployment. People who were unemployed or looking for work would come to the *Bureau* and list their skills and qualifications. People looking for workers could come and advertise their needs - for a small fee. The role of the *Bureau* was to unite the two parties; worker and potential employer.¹⁸

From that basic idea of uniting people who had complementary wants and needs, the *Bureau* soon expanded to cover a variety of services. Continuing to serve the poor, Renaudot secured a promise from the monarchy to offer low interest loans to those in need.¹⁹ In addition to helping the poor, the *Bureau* was also useful to other social groups. Renaudot took the same logic of uniting people who needed work with those looking for workers and applied to it a variety of goods and services. The *Bureau* had gone from being solely an employment agency to being a pawnshop of sorts. People from around Paris brought in all manner of goods to the *Bureau* in hopes of finding buyers. To keep track of it all Renaudot started to keep a registry: a written account of all the goods at the *Bureau* for sale.²⁰ There, people posted notices for jewelry, utensils, watches, and even land and royal offices. Teachers, lawyers, notaries

¹⁷ On traditional methods of poor relief in France in the seventeenth century, see Solomon, *Public Welfare*, pp. 21-60.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p 43. See also Bellanger, Godechot, et al, *Histoire générale*, Vol 1, pp. 84-86.

and other professionals used the *Bureau* as a way to advertise their services. The *Bureau* was a phenomenal success, and became a beehive of activity. People moving to the capital often made it one of their first destinations. Employers, employees, buyers, sellers, the poor, the middle class, the wealthy, all found something useful there. For Renaudot the guiding principle was to serve the public good and to be useful.²¹

The *Feuille du Bureau d'Adresse* was added just months afterwards with the intention of promoting and expanding the *Bureau's* success. The paper reproduced the *Bureau's* lists of goods and services available and added a short and descriptive commentary on each.²² The *Feuille* was a brilliant addition by Renaudot in two related ways. First, it provided Renaudot with the ability to promote and advertise the existence of the *Bureau* itself. Every new person who heard about the *Bureau* was potentially a new advertiser. Second, the paper allowed the advertisements listed in the *Bureau* to reach a wider audience. The list was no longer confined to the physical structure housing the *Bureau*. Rather, it circulated throughout the city. As Christopher Todd has pointed out, Théophraste Renaudot was not just the father of the country's first long-running periodical, the *Gazette*, but was also the inventor of classified small ads in France.²³ The *Feuille*, however, only came out sporadically and never more frequently than once a month. Indeed, the *Bureau d'adresse* - despite thriving for many years - died with Renaudot in 1653.

One hundred years later, by the middle of the eighteenth century, both papers - *Gazette* and *Feuille* - would serve as a model for the nascent provincial *affiches*.

²⁰ For an example of what the registry looked like, see Solomon, *Public Welfare*, pp. 53-55.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

²² Feyel, "Feuille," in Sgard, ed., *Dictionnaire de journaux*, p. 457.

Publishers of the *affiches* were able to end the centuries long de facto prohibition against the development of a true provincial press by combining Renaudot's two great inventions. The provincial *affiches* successfully combined the periodicity of the regularly appearing *Gazette* with the essentially commercial-oriented content of the *Feuille*. The result would be the country's first true and autonomous provincial newspaper press. While the *affiches* changed over the span of their fifty-year life span, adding local literary and cultural news, sometimes even a bit of politics, they never got away from their economic and commercial origins. The question still remains, however: how did Renaudot's short-lived *Bureau* and his even shorter-lived *Feuille* have such a strong influence on the provincial *affiches* over one hundred years later?

1749-59: THE PROVINCIAL AFFICHES ARE BORN

While Renaudot and his heirs successfully defended their monopoly on printing political news until 1749, during those years provincial *bureaux d'adresses* were established throughout France. These were not modeled after Renaudot's Parisian *Bureau*, however; that is to say, they were not agencies designed to bring together workers and employers, buyers and sellers. Rather, at this point in their development they were established solely to help Renaudot print and circulate his *Gazette*.²⁴ Provincial *bureaux* had no local functions and served essentially as an arm of the Parisian press. Yet the existence of these *bureaux* would prove to be decisive after 1750 and would grow to become the backbone and institutional base of the *affiches*.

1749 is both an important date in the history of the French press and a defining year for the development of the provincial press. That was the year that the Renaudot

²³ Christopher Todd, "French Advertising in the Eighteenth Century," *Studies on Voltaire and the*

family finally gave up control of the *Gazette*. On February 20, 1749, Eusèbe-Félix Chaspoux, the marquis de Verneuil, four generations removed from Théophraste Renaudot, sold the privilege for the paper to Pierre Nicolas Aunillon.²⁵ Two years after that, the paper and the privilege to publish it were transferred to the chevalier de Meslé and the tax farmer Louis Dominique Le Bas de Courmont. The two of them would irreparably alter the *Gazette's* relationship with provincial publishers and clear the way for the birth of the provincial *affiches*.²⁶

Meslé and Courmont viewed the *Gazette* largely as a moneymaking venture. In an attempt to maximize the paper's profitability, one of their first moves as new owners and privilege-holders was to cease provincial reprints of the *Gazette*.²⁷ This was a highly questionable decision. Reprints of the *Gazette* had been available in the provinces since the paper's inception. For over a century provincial readers had become used to inexpensive and regularly appearing copies of the paper being available either through street-hawkers or by subscription. Reprints of the paper drastically reduced the price of the paper for provincial readers. The *Gazette*, which regularly sold for twenty-one *livres*, (which included the price of subscription plus the cost of postage from Paris to the provinces), was available in its reprinted version in the provinces for one-third the price.²⁸ Moreover, allowing authorized provincial publishers the right to reprint and sell the *Gazette* locally had been a major source of income during the Renaudot family

Eighteenth Century, 266 (1989), p. 523.

²⁴ Gilles Feyel, *La "Gazette" en province*, pp. 6-12.

²⁵ Théophraste Renaudot's son Isaac took control of the *Gazette* after his father's death. Isaac died in 1679 and left the paper to his son Eusèbe. Upon his death in 1720, Eusèbe left the paper to his nephew Jacques Eusèbe Chaspoux, the marquis de Verneuil. He died in 1747 and willed it to his son, Eusèbe-Félix Chaspoux, marquis de Verneuil. Christopher Todd, *Political Bias*, p. 43-44.

²⁶ Todd, *Political Bias*, p. 44. See also Feyel, *La "Gazette" en province*, pp. 135-180.

²⁷ Gilles Feyel, "La *Gazette* au début de la guerre de Sept Ans," in Hans Bots, ed. *La diffusion et la lecture des journaux sous l'Ancien Régime* (Amsterdam, 1987) p. 101.

tenure. In the 1740s, for example, the Bordelais publisher Lacourt paid two hundred *livres* annually for the exclusive rights to reproduce the *Gazette* in Bordeaux.²⁹ If each of the over thirty-five authorized publishers was paying two hundred *livres*, then that was quite a tidy profit for the Renaudot family.

The new owners viewed the situation slightly differently. Meslé and Courmont saw legally authorized reprints as the source for the illegal reproductions still circulating in the provinces.³⁰ As aggressive as the Renaudots had been in pursuing illegal reproductions, they were never able to eradicate the practice entirely. Thus, for the new owners of the paper, ending the practice of leasing out the right to reprint the paper would have two related consequences: it would end illegal reprints and it would force provincials to pay full Parisian subscription price for the paper.

In place of the old system of provincial reprints of the *Gazette*, Mésle and Courmont brought out two new publications. The first was the *Annonces, affiches et avis divers*, soon known as the *Petites Affiches*, which began as a bi-weekly publication on May 13, 1751. The paper was available throughout Paris and served as a supplement to the *Gazette*.³¹ The content of the *Affiches* was essentially commercial. The paper advertised a variety of services wanted or for hire, and goods to buy or rent such as houses and apartments, royal titles, and new books. The paper also announced the opening of new plays and concerts throughout the capital.³² Which is to say, Meslé and Courmont's *Affiches* was an imitation of Renaudot's *Feuille du Bureau d'Adresse*. Although that publication had been defunct for over a hundred years, Meslé and

²⁸ Gilles Feyel, *La "Gazette" en province*, p. 180.

²⁹ Jane McLoud, "A Social Study of Printers and Booksellers in Bordeaux," p. 18.

³⁰ Christopher Todd, "French Advertising," p. 525.

³¹ Philip Stewart, "Affiches de Paris," in Sgard, ed., *Dictionnaire des journaux*, pp. 65-67.

Courmont owned the privilege for the *Gazette*, which entitled them to all the paper's subsidiary publications. While Meslé and Courmont were well within their rights to have their new paper imitate the *Feuille*, doing so brought them into direct conflict with Antoine Boudet, a well-known and respected Parisian bookseller.

Starting in 1745, Antoine Boudet had been publishing *Les Affiches de Paris, avis divers, &c.* which was known simply as the *Petites Affiches*. Meslé and Courmont's paper would not only have the same title as Boudet's, but the content was also remarkably similar.³³ To the authorities, it did not matter that Boudet's paper had come first. Meslé and Courmont were the legal owners of the privilege to the *Gazette*, which gave them the exclusive right to publish an advertising sheet in Paris and throughout the country. As a result, Boudet's paper was shut down on May 3, 1751 and there was once again only one paper in Paris with the name *Petites Affiches*.

The *Petites Affiches* was of no use or consequence to people living in the provinces. It was only available in Paris and was intended exclusively for a Parisian readership. One year after that paper's inception, Meslé and Courmont started a second publication, the *Annonces, affiches et avis divers de province* but which was shortened to the more manageable *Affiches de province*. As the title implied, the paper was supposed to do for the provinces what the *Petites Affiches* did for Paris. That is, it was designed to bring together buyers and sellers, those looking for work and those looking for workers. Added to the commercial content were some news items from around the

³² Ibid.

³³ Christopher Todd, "French Advertising," p. 526. See also Philip Stewart, "Affiches de Paris 2," in Sgard, ed., *Dictionnaire des journaux*, p. 65.

provinces generally focusing on natural disasters and the times cargo ships arrived in the nation's port cities.³⁴

As might have been expected, readers and publishers outside of Paris were not at all pleased with the new arrangements for a number of reasons. First, they had lost access to their cheap copies of the *Gazette*. Whether they were reading legally licensed reproductions, as for example, readers in Bordeaux were, or illegal copies of the paper, it was still much cheaper to obtain a copy of the *Gazette* under the old system. After revoking the right to reprint the paper in the provinces, the price to provincial subscribers immediately quintupled.³⁵ Added to that was the uncertainty of now having to rely on the postal system for delivery of the *Gazette*. Under the old system, locally reprinted copies were sold in the center of town by street-hawkers and were available at bookshops and *cabinets de lecture*.³⁶

Second, the new *Affiches de province* was a major disappointment to provincial readers. Though much cheaper than the new price of the *Gazette* - a year's subscription to the *Affiches* was seven *livres* compared to twenty one *livres* for the *Gazette* - the *Affiches* was essentially a Parisian publication being marketed as a provincial one. The paper primarily served as a source of Parisian news for the provinces. The *Affiches de provinces* proved useful for those provincial readers who either wanted to order goods from the capital or were planning a trip there. As a source of local news and information, however, the *Affiches de province* was simply inadequate.

³⁴ Michel Marion, "Dix années des 'Affiches, annonces et avis divers (1752-61)," in Jacques Godechot, ed., *Regards sur l'histoire de la presse et de l'information: Mélanges offerts à Jan Prinet* (Paris, 1980).

³⁵ Gilles Feyel, *La "Gazette" en province*, p. 180.

³⁶ Christopher Todd, "French Advertising," p. 527.

Realistically, of course, there was no way the *Affiches de province* could succeed as a provincial paper.³⁷ One publication could not satisfy the demands of readers in diverse provinces and cities around the country. By 1756, Courmont, now sole owner of the papers, came to that very conclusion himself. His solution was to begin the process of leasing out to provincial publishers the right to create local editions of the *Affiches*.³⁸ Those provincial editors who did lease the rights from Courmont were obligated to keep the same layout of the *Affiches* for the provincial versions, and they were prohibited from infringing on the *Gazette*'s sole right to print political news. But provincial readers finally had access to papers that were made by and for locals, and that were filled almost entirely with news and information of local interest.

THE GROWTH OF THE PROVINCIAL PRESS: AN URBAN NETWORK IS FORMED

By 1756 it had become clear to Courmont that the best way to profit from his ownership of the privilege for the *Gazette* was to subcontract it to provincial publishers. That same year he obtained permission for his scheme from Malesherbes, the *directeur-général de la librairie*. The model Courmont sought to emulate was based upon his relationship with Aimé Delaroche, bookseller and printer from Lyon. In 1750, Delaroche had negotiated an agreement with the then privilege-holder of the *Gazette* to print a bi-weekly sheet called the *Affiches de Lyon*.³⁹ Delaroche's paper was largely a

³⁷ The *Affiches de province* continued to publish for many years despite the creation of local, autonomous provincial *affiches*. In 1756, the paper split off from the *Gazette*. In 1761 it changed its name to *Affiches, annonces et avis divers* and in 1783 it merged with another periodical and became the daily *Journal général de France*. Christopher Todd does an excellent job of tracking these machinations. See Todd, *Political Bias*, especially chapter 8.

³⁸ On the leasing of the privilege to publish provincial sheets see Gilles Feyel, "La Presse provinciale sous l'ancien régime," in Jean Sgard, ed., *La Presse provinciale au XVIIIe siècle* (Grenoble, 1983), pp. 6-9.

³⁹ See Michele Gasc, "La naissance de la presse periodique locale à Lyon: *Les Affiches de Lyon, Annonces et avis divers*," *Etudes sur la presse au XVIIIe siècle* 3 (1978), pp. 61-79.

commercial sheet used to advertise the goods and services for rent, sale or hire from his *bureau d'adresse* which he had created in 1744 to serve the local needs of his community. Delaroche paid Courmont a yearly sum of 300 *livres* for the right to lease the privilege.⁴⁰ Six years later, Courmont decided to make that offer available to any and all interested provincial publishers.⁴¹

The difference between the new system of leasing and the old one of reprinting the *Gazette* in the provinces was vast. Under the new system local printers and publishers would be entirely responsible for the paper's content. Censorship laws still applied, of course, and the provincial papers were prohibited from political news - that still remained the sole purview of the *Gazette*. Other than those restrictions, by 1756 every provincial publisher interested in starting their own local paper were relatively free to do with it as they liked.

Once the new system of leasing gained governmental approval, the provincial newspapers began to diffuse rapidly throughout the country. Almost immediately local papers appeared in the port cities of Nantes, Bordeaux, Marseille and Rouen - forming the beginnings of a ring pattern around the periphery of the country. Shortly thereafter, the peripheral ring of papers grew to include La Rochelle on the Atlantic coast, followed by Metz and Besançon on the far eastern side of the country. Orléans and Tours would be the first cities on the interior of France to have their own newspapers. Papers were also added in Carpentras, near the papal city of Avignon, Perpignan, nestled between the Mediterranean Sea and the Pyrenees, and in the city of Aix, whose

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Feyel, "La Presse provinciale," in Sgard, ed., *La Presse provinciale*, pp. 7.

residents had already been enjoying access to the *Affiches de Marseille* for the previous nine years.⁴²

By 1769 and the end of the *affiches*' first full decade of existence, the provincial press had diffused to most of the country's major commercial centers. From the time Courmont first began the practice of licensing the right to the *Affiches*, until 1769, a total of fifteen papers had begun publication. Ten of those fifteen would still be in existence at the time of the Revolution. Taken together, those fourteen papers had an average lifespan of over twenty-five years. That is quite an impressive record, especially when we remember that there had been no tradition of a local periodical press upon which provincial publishers could build or take advantage.

The provincial press' biggest growth spurt was yet to come. In a period of just five years, from 1770 to 1775, the number of *affiches* nearly doubled to reach a total of twenty-nine. These new papers formed in areas that already had an *affiches* as well as expanding into new territory. Provincial papers began forming in cities within close proximity to Paris. Amiens, Reims, and Meaux all developed *affiches* during that five-year period. Joining those cities were three in Bourgogne (Dijon, Auxerre, and Sens); two in the Loire (Le Mans and Angers); and two in Languedoc (Montpellier and Nimes). The fourteen papers that came into existence from 1770 to 1775 proved to be just as durable as their older relatives. Ten out of the fourteen would live to see the Revolution, and at least two of them would survive well in to the middle of the nineteenth century.

⁴² Information on the dates of publication and lifespan of the *affiches* was either extrapolated or taken directly from the series of articles in Jean Sgard, ed, *Dictionnaire des journaux*, pp. 11-107.

The provincial press continued to expand rapidly during the years leading up to the Revolution. Between 1780 and 1788 another fifteen papers appeared throughout the countryside. Over the course of those eight years, areas that previously had only one *affiches*, got a second or sometimes even a third paper. The city of Orléans, whose own paper dated back to 1764, witnessed two nearby cities, Montargis and Bourges, develop papers of their own in 1780. A new paper was also added in Chartres in 1781 making the area perhaps the most thoroughly covered and well-saturated region for provincial news in the entire country.

It was also during this period that areas of the country that previously had no *affiches* developed their own papers. Before 1781, for example, there had been no *affiches* in the northeast corner of the country. Yet three papers sprang up all within a few years of each other: the *Affiches de Flandre* in Lille (1781), the *Affiches d'Artois* in Arras (1788), and the *Affiches du Hainaut* in Valenciennes (1788). During that same time period, two cities in Picardie developed new papers (Senlis in 1785 and Compiègne the following year). Papers also started in the southwestern cities of Périgueux and Saintes. Rounding out the list were the two Norman cities of Caen and Alençon.

Thus, the provincial press of the Old Regime was born when the first copies of the *Affiches de Lyon* began rolling off the presses in 1750 and it effectively came to an end with the debut of the very last provincial paper, the *Affiches de Hainaut* in 1788. Provincial *affiches* continued to be published, of course, up to, through and sometimes even beyond the Revolution. But the paper from Valenciennes represented the end of a system that had brought the periodical press to nearly every region of the country.

Between 1750 and 1788 a total of forty-seven provincial *affiches* had come into existence. Of those, thirty-one survived long enough to see the Revolution. Only eight, or 17.39 percent, of the papers disappeared within their first year of life. By way of comparison, between the same years, 1750 to 1788, 537 French language periodicals began publishing. Of those, 318 or 59.217 percent folded within the first year. Appendix 1, Graph 1 demonstrates the total number of *affiches* being published in each year between 1750 and 1788. Even taking into account papers that closed down, we see that the growth and survival rate of the papers was impressive. Yet, those figures do not tell the full story.

Drawing conclusions about the provincial *affiches* based solely on their lifespan can be misleading. While some papers indeed had a very short life, from a reader's perspective the local press must have seemed omnipresent. For example, despite having their local papers close down after less than a year, readers in Carpentras and Bayonne were not deprived of access to a newspaper. In Bayonne, readers were a part of the circulation orbit of the nearby *Affiches de Bordeaux*. For no extra subscription fee, they could receive the Bordelais sheet, submit or respond to ads, and write letters to the editor just as any reader could. The same was true for readers in Carpentras. The local paper there closed down in 1769 but readers could turn to the French language *affiches* from Avignon, which had begun publication in 1768.⁴³

Readers in Metz did not even have to look to a nearby city for a new local paper. Three years after the *Affiches de Metz* folded after only one year in circulation, it was

⁴³ There is some uncertainty as to when the *Affiches d'Avignon* ceased publication. Sgard et. al. have tentatively placed the last issue of the paper sometime in 1772. See Sgard, *Dictionnaire des Journaux* p. 1718.

replaced by the *Affiches de Lorraine*. The new paper was also published in the city of Metz and continued to serve readers in the city and throughout the province until 1792.

On February 3, 1770 readers in Dijon and the surrounding area got their first glimpse of the *Annonces et Affiches de Dijon*. The paper, edited by Monsieur Borget from his *bureau d'adresse* near Sainte Chapelle, was short-lived and printed its last edition on January 19, 1771. On January 2, 1776, almost five years to the day after the old paper shut down, the new *Affiches de Bourgogne* began circulating throughout Dijon and the province. This paper, edited by Jean-Baptiste Mailly not far from where Borget used to edit his paper, was nearly identical to its predecessor. It contained the same advertisements for goods and services for rent, sale or hire, the same legislative announcements, and the same news from the *Academie des sciences de Dijon*. The price of subscription was even the same; six *livres*. That paper too did not have a long life, printing its final edition just three days after Christmas, 1779. Four years later, however, readers got what would prove to be their final and longest lasting local paper.

Apparently deciding to split the difference with his predecessors, André Villot came out with his new paper on November 4, 1783. He called it the *Affiches de Dijon, ou Journal de Bourgogne*. For six *livres* per year, subscribers got essentially the same paper they had been reading off and on since 1770. This paper would have better success than the two previous efforts, lasting until 1795.⁴⁴

While some papers overlapped in circulation and replaced each other over time, other papers coexisted peacefully. Bordeaux and La Rochelle, geographically not far apart from each other, were certainly close enough to have one paper service both

⁴⁴ For a more complete printing history of the three local Dijon papers see Sgard, ed., *Dictionnaire des Journaux*, pp. 33-35.

communities. Both were port cities with vibrant and wealthy merchant communities. Not surprisingly then, and in spite of their proximity, both cities had their own papers which turned out to be some of the longest lasting and most durable papers of all the provincial *affiches*; The *Affiches de Bordeaux* endured for twenty-six years until it was replaced by the *Journal de Guienne*, while the *Affiches de La Rochelle* had an incredible sixty-seven year lifespan. In comparison, the situation in Marseille was slightly different. The *Affiches de Marseille* published for twenty years, while the nearby *Affiches d'Aix* only published for five years. Eventually both papers were replaced, first by the *Affiches de Provence*, and then by the *Journal de Provence*, which served the entire region up to the outbreak of the Revolution.⁴⁵

Thus by the end of the Old Regime, the provincial newspaper press had become omnipresent. Where there were none at mid-century, by 1788 nearly every one of the country's thirty-two *généralités* had at least one local paper and many could boast of being home to several papers. Yet, the question remains: why did some cities develop a paper while others did not? To answer that, we must first know something about the people who produced, and the people who consumed the new provincial offerings.

THE FOUNDING EDITORS OF THE PROVINCIAL AFFICHES

Unfortunately the founders of the local *affiches* have not yet been the subjects of very intense historical scrutiny, either as a group or individually. The best single source for information on periodical writers and publishers of the Old Regime, Jean Sgard's *Dictionnaire des journalistes*, only goes into detail on three of the provincial founders. Gilles Feyel, the most prolific scholar writing on the provincial press today, has had

⁴⁵ The circumstances surrounding the overlapping of papers in the Marseille and Aix region will be

very little to say about the people who produced the press. Yet, from the available information, it is possible to piece together a coherent picture of who the founders and editors were as a group.⁴⁶

Of the forty-seven provincial *affiches* that were started between 1750 and 1788, it is possible to identify forty-one of the people who started them. The details of the lives of those forty-one run the gamut from the incredibly sketchy - not much is known beyond their family name - to, in a few instances, a fairly detailed biography. Appendix 1, Table 3 provides a list of all the known founders of the local papers and their occupations.

The people who started *affiches* were men, with one notable exception. On January 7, 1767, André Giroud, well-known *imprimeur-libraire* from Grenoble, died, leaving behind a wife and six children. His widow Justine Giroud (née Souverant), with help from two of her children, took over the family printing press and bookshops. Less than ten years after that, Justine Giroud became the founder and the editor of Dauphiné's first provincial newspaper as well as the only woman to start a local *affiches* in the eighteenth century.⁴⁷

While Giroud was the only female founder of a provincial *affiches*, seventeen years before she started the paper in Grenoble, a woman was editing the *Affiches de Nantes*. In 1757, the printer Joseph Vatar started the *Affiches de Nantes*. Shortly thereafter, however, he died, and control of the business as well as the paper fell to his

discussed in the following section and is made clear in R. Gérard, *Un journal de province sous la Révolution: Le Journal de Marseille de Ferréol de Beugeard (1781-97)* (Paris, 1964).

⁴⁶ The terms "founder" and "editor" are not interchangeable. But, with one exception, all of the known founders of a provincial *affiches* also served as the paper's first editor.

⁴⁷ Michèle Fontaine and Michael Gilot, "Les Affiches du Dauphiné," in Sgard, *Dictionnaire des journaux*, pp 20-23.

widow, Anne Verger. She, in turn, edited and printed the paper until at least 1775, when her eldest son took over.⁴⁸ The only other woman who seems to have been involved in the production of an *affiches* was Madame Marchand, who became editor of the *Affiches d'Artois* on December 22, 1789. She remained at the helm of the paper until 1792, when her anti-revolutionary sentiments and writings not only put an end to the newspaper but also forced her to flee the country.⁴⁹

Of the forty men and one woman who founded local newspapers in the provinces, there was not a Panckoucke among them.⁵⁰ That is to say, the overwhelming majority of founding editors produced no other paper than their local *affiches*. Only three of the founders stand out from the rest for their work on multiple papers. Dominique Donat had perhaps the most diverse, and at the same time, the shortest, career of any of the founders. An *avocat* by trade, he began his publishing and editing career auspiciously enough when he started the *Affiches de Toulouse* on June 12, 1759.⁵¹ Six months later, for reasons unknown, he turned control of the paper over to his co-editor and moved to Marseille. On April 10, 1760, three months after arriving in the port city, he founded the *Affiches de Marseille*.⁵² Apparently Donat found Marseille as inhospitable as Toulouse. By September he had quit both the paper and the city and had moved across the bay to Perpignan. True to form, within a few months of his arrival he had a new local paper up and running. This time it was the *Affiches du Roussillon*. Like his first effort with the provincial press, the *Affiches du Roussillon* would be in

⁴⁸ Feyel, "Affiches de Nantes," in Sgard, *Dictionnaire des journaux*, pp 58-62.

⁴⁹ Sgard, ed., *Dictionnaire des journaux*, p. 13.

⁵⁰ Charles Joseph Panckoucke was the closest thing France had to a press baron. By 1786 Panckoucke produced no fewer than 4 newspapers including both the *Gazette de France* and the *Mercure de France*. See Suzanne Tucoo-Chala, *Charles-Joseph Panckoucke et la Librairie française, 1736-1798* (Pau, 1977).

⁵¹ M.T. Blanc-Rouquette, *La Presse et l'information à Toulouse des origines à 1789* (Toulouse, 1967)

⁵² Jacques Billioud, *Le Livre en Provence du XVIe au XVIIIe siècle* (Marseille, 1962), p. 113.

print for less than a year.⁵³ Undaunted by failure, Donat gave publishing one last try. This time however, it would not be with an *affiches*. In 1761, he founded the bi-monthly *Journal historique, politique, littéraire, etc.*⁵⁴ It too folded within a year, giving Donat the dubious distinction of having started and crashed three papers in a two-year time period.

The one paper that did manage to survive, the *Affiches de Marseille*, did so not because of Donat, but because of the man who took his place as editor of the paper: Joseph Paris de Lespinaud. Lespinaud's career was as interesting as Donat's and more successful too. Though just twenty-four years old at the time he took control of the *Affiches de Marseille*, he was already an established printer/bookseller and the owner of a local reading room. Yet, after only one year of editing that paper, and perhaps inspired by Donat, Lespinaud decided to make the short move to Aix, where he founded the *Affiches d'Aix* on January 7, 1770. That paper lasted for only three years. It is unclear what exactly Lespinaud did in the immediate aftermath of his failure in Aix, but eight years later, in 1781, he turned up in the city of Lille, where he started the *Affiches de Flandre*. Older and more experienced, he had much greater success with that paper than the one in Aix. In addition to editing the local paper there, he also (among numerous things) started a reading room, and became a ballooning aficionado and a friend of the apothecary, balloonist, and founder of the *Musée de Monsieur*, Pilâtre de Rozier.⁵⁵

The only other founder of a local *affiches* to have his hand in starting more than one paper was René-Alexis Jouyneau-Desloges. Jouyneau-Desloges began his career as

⁵³ Roland Andréani, "Affiches du Roussillon 1," in Sgard, ed., *Dictionnaire des journaux*, p. 92.

⁵⁴ See Roland Andréani, "Journal historique, politique, littéraire," in Sgard, ed., *Dictionnaire des journaux*, p. 693.

editor-in-chief in the city of La Rochelle. It was there that he started the *Affiches de La Rochelle* in September 1769. While that paper would be the longest running provincial *affiches* of them all, publishing for sixty seven years, Jouyneau-Desloges would only be involved with the paper for three of those years. In 1772, after it was clear that the La Rochelle paper was going to be a success, he moved to Poitiers where he founded the *Affiches du Poitou*. That paper was also a success and Jouyneau-Desloges remained at the helm until 1781 before he turned control over to another editor.⁵⁶

While only Donat, Lespinard, and Jouyneau-Desloges were involved with the founding of more than one provincial *affiches*, this is not to suggest that the others were newcomers to the world of publishing. On the contrary, taken as a group, the overwhelming majority of the founders made their living in some aspect of the publishing and book and newspaper selling business. Of the thirty-four founders whose professions we can identify, twenty-one were involved in either the production or sale or both of periodicals before they started their local *affiches*. From that group most of them had the title of *imprimeur du Roi* and/or *imprimeur du Parlement*, which meant that they had the sole right to print and circulate throughout their city all the royal edicts and parliamentary legislation. For this group, starting a local paper was a natural and logical next step in their professional lives. Publishing the *affiches* fit in nicely with the work they were already doing and the local paper proved an ideal place to circulate the

⁵⁵ Though Paris de Lespinard's biography is still waiting to be written, for a more detailed discussion of his years in Lille see Godechot, et al, *Histoire générale de la presse française*, t. 1, p 382-399.

⁵⁶ Gilles Feyel has written extensively on the life and career of Jouyneau-Desloges. In addition to his articles in the *Dictionnaire des journaux* on the "Affiches de La Rochelle" pp. 43-45 and "Affiches de Poitou" pp. 75-84 see also Gilles Feyel, "La presse provinciale sous l'ancien régime," in Sgard, ed., *La presse provinciale au XVIIIe siècle* (Grenoble, 1983), pp. 3-47.

governmental decrees which they were already printing, and to advertise books and papers they sold out of their shops.

Aside from those already in the publishing business, five of the founders were lawyers. Three of the five were *avocats*, one was an *avocat au Parlement*, and the other was a solicitor. Of the remaining founders, three were university professors and one an abbé. While these professions might seem like odd training for publishers of a newspaper, all of them were men of letters and participated in the cultural life of their city. For example, in addition to being an *avocat au Parlement*, Andrien Joseph Havé, founder and editor of the *Affiches de Reims*, was also the founder of the city's public library. Etienne-Géry Lenglet, the founder of the *Affiches d'Artois* was a writer as well as a lawyer. Mailly, founder of the *Affiches de Bourgogne*, was a teacher of history in Dijon, and sold books and newspapers from his local shop.

As a group, these men and women were not the publishing world's equivalent to Robert Darnton's Grub-Street hacks.⁵⁷ They tended to be older - thirty-seven on average at the time their *affiches* debuted - well-educated, and well-established. These heirs of Renaudot were all firmly integrated into Old Regime society, with deep familial and community ties. Many of the printers were operating family-run businesses. They had inherited their shops from their fathers or, in some cases, from their mothers; they worked on the paper with their sons and daughters, and oftentimes passed them on to their heirs when they died. The founder of the *Affiches du Beauvais*, for example, had taken over the publishing business started by his father-in-law. When he founded the

⁵⁷ In his by-now familiar thesis, Robert Darnton has argued that a young and ambitious group of writers, excluded from the world of "High Enlightenment" turned their resentment into virulent attacks on *le monde*, mostly in the form of pamphlet literature. See Robert Darnton, *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime* (Cambridge, 1982), chapter 1.

local sheet in 1786, his son helped him print up each addition. For many, their ties to the community ran just as deep. Several of them ran local *cabinets de lecture*, one was a member of the Academy of Dijon, another a member of a local *Société d'Agriculture* and a freemason. It is not difficult to imagine that they knew most of their subscribers personally or at least by name. In short, they were all members of an urban elite. There was not a noble among them, but they were certainly "notables"; well known throughout their towns, well established, and respected.⁵⁸ But can the same claims be made for the readers of the paper?

THE READERS OF THE AFFICHES

If little is known about the men and women who edited the local papers, next to nothing is known about the people who read them. Subscription records for the *affiches* no longer exist. Indeed, besides a very few notable exceptions, no subscription lists remain for any periodicals of the Old Regime. To help overcome this crucial lack of evidence, historians of the press have attempted to deduce a paper's readership from ancillary information. For example in her important work on *Le Journal des Dames*, Nina Gelbart attempts to reconstruct the readership of the paper in a variety of ways. First, she notes that at twelve *livres* a year the *Journal des Dames* would have been accessible to more than just the most wealthy. Obviously, the poor could not afford the paper but it was not the exclusive domain of the rich either. In addition to the price, Gelbart notes that literacy rates were on the rise in the eighteenth century and that many of the subscriptions might have been placed by reading clubs and societies that had spread throughout the provinces. There, each copy of the paper could have been read by

⁵⁸ On the idea of "notables" as a social category in the Old Regime see Daniel Roche, *Le siècle des*

up to 10 or 12 different people. Based on that circumstantial evidence, Gelbart estimates that the *Journal des Dames* had between three hundred and a thousand subscribers.⁵⁹ Jeremy Popkin was perhaps the first historian to suggest using a multiplier of 10 to 12 when attempting to figure out a paper's total readership.⁶⁰ As Popkin notes in his examination of the readership for the *Gazette de Leyde*, in addition to looking at just the number of issues printed for each addition, historians also need to take into account how many people might be reading each edition. "A copy sent to a large reading room, such as the Grand Société in The Hague, with its 200 members" Popkin notes, "might have been scanned by as many as several dozen people, whereas a copy sent to a nobleman in the French countryside might serve no more than a handful."⁶¹ Popkin therefore concludes that at the height of the *Gazette's* circulation, it might have been read by as many as between 50,000 and 100, 000 people, even though it only had an actual subscriber list of about four thousand people.⁶²

Popkin was fortunate to know how many people subscribed to the *Gazette*. Information on the exact numbers of subscribers for the *affiches* is sketchy. For example, the printer of the *Affiches de Chartres*, François Le Tellier, claimed that he printed between 300-350 copies of the paper in 1781 and between 400-450 copies the following year.⁶³ Based primarily on printing records, Gilles Feyel has determined that the *Affiches de Toulouse* had about 130 subscribers in 1759, the *Affiches de Angers* had fewer than 200 subscribers between 1773-1776, the *Affiches de Reims* had 250

lumières en province: Académies et académiciens provinciaux (Paris, 1978) and his more recent *France in the Enlightenment*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, 1998), esp. chapter 12.

⁵⁹ Nina Rattner Gelbart, *Feminine and Opposition Journalism in Old Regime France: "Le Journal des Dames"*. (Los Angeles, 1987), pp. 33-34.

⁶⁰ Jeremy Popkin, *News and Politics in the Age of Revolution* (Ithaca, 1989) p. 122.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

subscribers in 1776, the *Affiches de Marseilles* had 300 subscribers in 1784, the *Affiches de Flandre* had 600 subscribers in 1761 and the *Affiches de La Rochelle* had 600 in 1772.⁶⁴ Without subscription records it is exceedingly difficult to corroborate these numbers. Yet, for better or worse, Feyel's numbers have become the standard measure when discussing the readership of the *affiches*. Colin Jones, for example, used Feyel's numbers as a basis for estimating that each *affiches* had between 200 and 750 subscribers.⁶⁵ Jones then multiplied those numbers by "forty-odd papers" and determined that the entire provincial *affiches* had a total subscriber base of between 8,000 - 30,000 people.⁶⁶

As Popkin, noted however, figuring out the number of subscribers is only the beginning. The *affiches*, like the *Gazette de Leyde* and other periodicals in the eighteenth century, were shared among family members, in reading rooms, and in cafés. Using Popkin's multiplier of ten to twelve people reading one edition, it is possible that the *affiches* had a total readership of between 80,000 and 360,000 subscribers. If true, then the provincial *affiches* would have at least rivaled and perhaps trounced the *Gazette de Leyde* - the paper of record in the world of European politics - for total number of readers.

Ultimately, however, this approach is not very enlightening. Even if accurate - and that requires something of a leap of faith - it only tells us *how many* people read the *affiches*, but nothing about *who* the readers actually were. Once again, there is nothing but circumstantial evidence to go on.

⁶³ Gilles Feyel, "Affiches de Chartres," in Sgard, ed., *Dictionnaire des journaux*, pp. 28.

⁶⁴ Gilles Feyel, "La Presse Provinciale" pp. 33-34.

⁶⁵ Colin Jones, "The Great Chain of Buying: Medical Advertisement, the Bourgeois Public Sphere, and the Origins of the French Revolution," *American Historical Review*, vol. 101, no. 1 (Feb. 1996) p. 18.

The most fruitful approach might be looking at the *affiches* themselves. In the Prospectus for the *Affiches du Beauvaisis*, for example, the editor listed the types of people who he believed would be most interested in his paper. Among those listed were "Property owners, Capitalists, Clerks, Farmers, Merchants, Businessmen, Men of Letters and Artists, Women..."⁶⁷ To that list the *Affiches de Lyon* added "writers and amateur artists."⁶⁸ The *Affiches de Picardie* noted that "we write mainly for merchants and farmers," while the *Affiches de Toulouse* mentioned "famous lawyers, generous defenders of the fatherland [soldiers], magnificent merchants, savants, writers, artists of every sort, industrious and watchful farmers, and tender mothers."⁶⁹ Colin Jones, quoting the physician Baumès in 1802 notes that:

In the 1780s he and his friends in Nîmes would read and discuss the local Affiches: he characterized this group as enjoying "a happy mediocrity - that is to say [it consisted of] young lawyers and physicians and merchants of the second rank."⁷⁰

Another method of determining the types of readers the papers attracted is to have a closer look at where the papers spread and when. If we align the geographical diffusion of the papers with the general characteristics of the Old Regime cities to which the papers spread, then several trends become apparent.

First, the *affiches* were most likely to first develop in France's large urban areas. By 1789 the most populous provincial cities in France were Lyon (146,000), Bordeaux (111,000), Marseille (110,000), Rouen (73,000), and Nantes (71,300).⁷¹ These were precisely the same cities that first developed their own periodical press. Indeed only two

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Sgard, ed., *Dictionnaire des journaux*, p. 19.

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 48-49.

⁶⁹ Quoted in Jones, "The Great Chain," p. 20.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 18.

⁷¹ These figures are based on Ted Margadant's estimates. See Margadant, *Urban Rivalries in the French Revolution* (Princeton, 1992) p. 462.

of the nation's twenty five most populous cities - Versailles and Brest - did not have their own paper by 1789. Brest was within the circulation orbit of the *Affiches de Nantes*, while Versailles was not so much a city as the center of the royal court. Conversely, among the twenty smallest towns in France only Saintes and Auxerre had provincial papers.⁷²

Large and medium sized cities were better able to support a local paper for several reasons. The pool of potential subscribers was larger. The majority of the income that a paper generated was through the price of subscription. The rest of the income was derived through the sale of advertisements. While subscribers to a local paper got to advertise for free, anyone else wishing to take out an ad had to pay twelve *sols* per ad.⁷³ Here, too, larger and medium cities had the advantage. The more people there were, the greater the potential number of advertisers.

Second, and perhaps more importantly in trying to capture an image of the typical reader of the *affiches*, the papers took hold in economic centers. Of course the largest cities in the Old Regime were also importance centers of commerce, industry, and retail trade.⁷⁴ Thus, Lyon, the first city to develop a paper, was the most important textile city on the European continent. It was a center for international banking and finance as well as home to a booming silk industry. Rouen, another one of the first cities to start its own *affiches*, was not only a port city with a thriving maritime trade, but it also a key city in the grain trade and could boast of a successful textile industry. Nantes, the second city to develop a paper, had grown rich from a century of profits made on the slave trade.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Gilles Feyel, "La presse provinciale sous l'ancien régime," pp. 35.

However, there were more important factors than sheer size in determining a city's commercial vitality. Ted Margadant has argued that more important than a city's size was its location. Specifically, those cities that were located along waterways, either oceans or rivers, tended to be much more commercially active than those cities not on waterways.⁷⁵ Obviously the port cities of Bordeaux, Nantes, and La Rochelle gained enormous economic benefit from the maritime commerce that came through their ports. Yet, rivers, too, were a great source of commercial vibrancy for cities. Here Margadant sketches out the importance of access to riverways for the leading economic capitals of eighteenth-century France:

Paris commands a hierarchy of towns along the river system of northern France, with Rouen downstream on the Seine, Amiens on the Somme, Châlons on the Marne, Sens and Auxerre on the Yonne, and Orléans linked to the Seine River by canal, on the Loire. Other important cities in this region, such as Reims and Troyes are near navigable waterways leading to Paris. Farther north, the large town of Lille...headed a cluster of towns along the rivers and canals of Flanders, Artois, and Hainaut, while to the east, Nancy, Metz, and Strasbourg, ranging in size from 30,000 to 50,000 inhabitants, straddle the rivers leading northward into Germany.⁷⁶

The remarkable thing about that list of cities is that with the exception of Châlon, all of them had their own *affiches*. Conversely, Versailles, one of only two cities with over 50,000 inhabitants without water access, did not have its own paper.

Third, the dispersal pattern of the provincial *affiches* is notable for the cities where the papers did not take hold. While commerce and trade played such a key role in the development of the *affiches*, the papers were largely absent from parliamentary cities. Of all the cities that had a local paper, only nine - or about 20 percent - also had a *parlement*. In comparison, over 70 percent of cities with an *affiches* also had a chamber

⁷⁴ Margadant, *Urban Rivalries*. See especially chapter 1.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-29.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

of commerce. Only four cities (Besançon, Aix, Perpignan, and Metz) had both an *affiches* and a *parlement*, but no chamber of commerce. Conversely, twenty-six cities managed to support their local paper with a chamber of commerce but no *parlement*.⁷⁷

From this evidence it is possible to begin creating a tentative portrait of a typical reader of the *affiches*. Because the *affiches* first took hold in commercial cities, their social constituency would most likely be traders, manufacturers, merchants and businesspeople. These are the people that Colin Jones has called the "middling sort," and whom he describes as "market-oriented and bourgeois."⁷⁸ As we will see, the paper's stock-in-trade was information, and this made the papers indispensable to readers who depended on a variety commercial news (port news in Nantes, exchange rates in Lyon, etc.) in order to make a host of daily business decisions. An examination of the provincial papers themselves will no doubt help to fill out this emerging picture of a typical reader of the *affiches*.

THE MAKING OF A PROVINCIAL NEWSPAPER: FORM, LAYOUT, AND ASSEMBLY

As we have seen, provincial publishers leased the right to print local editions of the *Affiches de province* first from Courmont, and then from his successor, Pierre Benezhec. As a result of their common heritage, all of the provincial *affiches* shared certain common traits and hallmarks. Individual editors were free to determine the

⁷⁷ For a complete list of cities that had chambers of commerce see Gilles Feyel, "La presse provinciale française dans la seconde moitié du XVIIIe: Géographie d'une nouvelle fonction urbaine," in *La ville et l'innovation* (Paris, 1987), pp. 99. Ted Margadant lists all the provincial cities with a *parlement* in *Urban Rivalries*, pp. 463-465. As both Gilles Feyel and Colin Jones have noted, this trend runs contrary to the one established by Daniel Roche for the spread of provincial academies. In his seminal work, *Les Siècles des lumières en province: Academies et academiciens provinciaux*, (Paris, 1978), Roche argued that provincial academies were established predominantly in parliamentary cities. The presence of a strong local nobility provided much of the membership to both institutions. However, commerce activity not the presence of nobility seems to have been a greater factor in determining the diffusion of the *affiches*. See Jones, "The Great Chain," pp. 18-19, and Feyel, "La presse provinciale française," pp. 106-107.

specific content of their paper, but the form, layout, and to some degree even the name of the paper, was shared nearly uniformly by all of the *affiches*.

The names of the provincial papers were derived from the *Annonces, affiches et avis divers de province*. Each provincial paper typically had "annonces, affiches et avis divers" in its title, followed by the city or province of publication. Thus, the full title of the paper from Chartres was *Annonces, affiches et avis divers du pays chartrain* and the Bordelais sheet was entitled *Annonces, affiches et avis divers pour la ville de Bordeaux*. Occasionally, editors would change the word order slightly and come up with titles like *Affiches, annonces, et avis divers du Dauphiné*. Over time, however, these rather unwieldy titles were shortened to simply "Affiches" plus name of city or province of publication. The paper from Grenoble eventually became *Affiches du Dauphiné*, and the Bordeaux paper became *Affiches de Bordeaux*. Some editors ran through several permutations of the title. For example, the paper from Orléans started its life as *Annonces, affiches, nouvelles et avis divers de l'Orléans*. It stayed that way for nine years until the title was changed to *Annonces, affiches, et avis divers, etc.* After that the editor Couret de Villeneuve rested upon the simple *Affiches de l'Orléanois*.⁷⁹

It is unclear exactly why the titles were changed. In 1784, the *Affiches de Normandie* changed editors and became the *Journal de Normandie*, though in content, price, and layout it was essentially the same sheet. In the case of the paper from Orléans, the changes did not come about from a change in editorship. In those cases that did not involve a change in owner or editor it could simply be that a paper's title was changed to reflect what its subscribers were informally calling it. Colin Jones has noted

⁷⁸ Jones, "The Great Chain," p. 19.

⁷⁹ Sgard et. al. provides details on the name changes in *Dictionnaire des journaux*.

that as the eighteenth century wore on, some papers dropped the city name from their titles and replaced it with the name of their surrounding regions. For example, the *Affiches de Toulouse* became the *Affiches de Languedoc* and the *Affiches de Rouen* changed into the *Affiches de la Haute et Basse Normandie*.⁸⁰ Jones speculates that these name changes were intended to reflect greater aspirations on the part of the editors. This is possible, yet the opposite phenomenon was also at play; some papers began with the surrounding area in the title and later replaced it with the city of publication. For example, the paper from Montargis was first published with the title *Affiches, Annonces et Avis divers du Gâtinois*. Four years later the name was changed to *Affiches de Montargis*. Furthermore, the *Affiches de Bordeaux*, which for twenty-six years served the entire Guyenne region, never abandoned the city name in its title.

Regardless of their title, the format and layout of all the provincial *affiches* followed the same rubric. Again, the form of the paper was modeled after the *affiches de province*. The local sheets were usually four pages in length, printed in 9-point font, *Petit Roman* script with two columns of text filling each page. Some papers occasionally expanded to eight pages. While each paper was tailored towards the local community it served and printed items the editor believed would be of local interest or concern, all the *affiches* generally used the same subject headings to organize their content. All the advertisements and economic information were grouped under subject headings such as "*Biens à vendre ou à louer*," "*Avis divers*" and "*Conservation des hypotheques*." Most papers had a separate listing for other information such as grain prices and new books for sale. Papers such as the *Affiches de Nantes* that served port cities scrupulously reported on all the maritime news such as ship arrivals and

⁸⁰ Colin Jones, "The Great Chain," p. 23.

departures, ship destinations, and cargo. The provincial papers' non-economic content often fell under a variety of categories. Papers that served parliamentary or university cities had headings such as "*Jurisprudence*", "*Médecine*," and "*Vétérinaire*." All the papers had sections where readers could submit poems, stories and letters and included as well the winning numbers from the "*Loterie Royale*."

The *affiches* generally came out once a week, most often on Saturday. Thirty-five of the forty-seven papers began as weeklies, two papers came out twice weekly, and five of the papers came out two or three times a month. Appendix 1, Table 4 lists the price and periodicity of the provincial papers. Those papers that were still in existence in the years 1788-1789 usually increased their frequency in order to keep up with political events in Paris. On average, a yearly subscription to an *affiches* cost about 6 *livres* for those subscribers living in the same province where the paper was published. Subscribers living in other provinces had to pay slightly more because of higher postal rates. Those people had to pay on average seven *livres* ten *sols* for their yearly subscription. There was some slight variation in the prices, however. The *Affiches du Mans*, for example, only cost local subscribers three *livres* per year, while readers living in Arras had to pay twelve *livres* per year for the *Affiches d'Artois*. One possible explanation for the discrepancy in price between the two sheets was that the *Affiches d'Artois* came out twice weekly, while the *Affiches du Mans* was published only once a week.

Prices of the *affiches* changed very little over time. The price at the time of a paper's debut was typically the same price at the time of its departure. The only exceptions were if a paper increased its periodicity. The *Affiches de Bordeaux*, for

example, cost six *livres* in 1758 and remained that price until 1783. That was the year the Labottière brothers decided to go from a once-a-week production schedule to twice a week. As a result, they increased the price of a subscription to nine *livres* a year.

Furthermore, compared to other offerings of the French periodical press, the *affiches* were relatively inexpensive. At an average price of six *livres* for a yearly subscription, the *affiches* were the most affordable element of the French press. In comparison, the monthly *Journal des Dames* cost Parisian subscribers twelve *livres* per annum while provincial readers had to pay fifteen *livres*. The weekly *Affiches de province* cost a more reasonable seven *livres* ten *sols* for a subscription no matter where in the realm a reader lived, but the twice-weekly *Petites Affiches* cost an amazing twenty four *livres* in Paris, more for the provinces. In 1778, a provincial subscriber to Panckoucke's *Mercure de France* would have paid the lofty sum of thirty-two *livres* per year.

Because the provincial papers were the least expensive part of the French periodical press, they would have been affordable by the largest segment of the reading population. While dealing with price comparisons can often be a tricky matter, it is possible to get a sense of how affordable the *affiches* were by comparing them to other goods and services. According to Christopher Todd, by the end of the Old Regime, the national daily wage for unskilled workers averaged nineteen *sols* (in French currency of the day twenty *sols* equaled one *livre*). Skilled workers earned on average 1.5 *livres* per day. The average price of a theatre ticket was one *livre*, and the cost of staying at an inn was between three and six *livres*. Eating a meal out would run about two *livres*.⁸¹ Using

⁸¹ Christopher Todd, *Political bias*, p. 20. Gelbart mentions the price of a meal and lodging in *Feminine and Opposition Journalism*, p. 33.

those numbers as a guide, we see that a subscription to most of the *affiches* cost just about what the average unskilled worker made in a week. This probably put the paper out of reach for most unskilled laborers. Literacy, of course, would have also been a limiting factor, but literacy rates had been on the rise throughout the eighteenth century in France.⁸² Thus, unlike most of the other offerings from the periodical press, the *affiches* would have been within reach of most urban social groups. Certainly if a person could afford to buy a ticket to the theatre, stay at an inn, or buy a meal out, then he or she could afford a subscription to the local newspaper. Obviously, not everyone who could afford a subscription had one, but certainly everyone who had a subscription could afford it. That would include Baumès' "happy medium" - lawyers, doctors, and merchants, as well as wealthier members of the aristocracy.

Price, format and periodicity were not the only things that the local *affiches* had in common with each other. The process of getting the paper to print was basically the same across provinces. Each editor faced a similar set of challenges each week as he or she sought to get the paper out on time to subscribers.⁸³ The process typically began at the local *bureau d'adresse*. Like Renaudot's Parisian *Bureau* back in the seventeenth century, the provincial *bureaux* were the nerve centers of the local *affiches*. That was where the editors would begin the process of accumulating the vast majority of content for the next week's edition. The paper's advertisers came to the *bureau* to place and pay for an ad. Readers responding to ads would also come to the *bureau*. There, the editor

⁸² On literacy rates in France see Robert Muchembled, *Société, cultures, et mentalités dans la France moderne* (Paris, 1994), pp. 140-141.

⁸³ For individual accounts of local editors see M.T. Blanc-Rouquette, *La presse et l'information à Toulouse des origines à 1789* (Toulouse, 1969); M. Vogne, *La presse périodique en Franche-Comté des origines à 1870*, 3 vols (Besançon, 1977-78); A. Dubuc, "Les 'Annonces, affiches et avis divers de la Haute et basse Normandie': Premier journal normand (1762-84)," *Actes du 81^e Congrès national des*

would arrange a meeting between the advertiser and the person responding to the ad. For example, on February 5, 1779, someone placed an ad in the *Affiches de Dauphiné* announcing that he would be taking a trip to Paris later on in the month. This advertiser was hoping to find a companion for the trip, someone with whom to split the cost of the carriage. Anyone interested in responding should do so at the "*Bureau des Affiches, au Palais, à Grenoble*."⁸⁴ Not all advertisers wanted readers to respond at the *bureau* - shop owners generally listed the address of their establishment⁸⁵ - but the great majority of ads directed respondents there. The job then fell to the editor to unite respondent with advertiser.

In addition to the ads, which usually took up about 25 percent of each edition, the rest of a paper's content was also assembled at the *bureau*. Editors typically relied on a variety of sources for their news, stories, and information. Readers and subscribers themselves provided the paper with much of the paper's content, especially cultural and literary matters. The rest of the content came from a network of correspondents, writers, and journalists who worked for the paper. Each paper had two kinds of correspondents. First, in attempts to provide province-wide coverage, local editors had correspondents scattered throughout the province. In Nantes, for example, the editor there had correspondents in at least two other Breton cities, Auray and Brest, who would relay news and stories from those cities back to the *bureau* in Nantes. In order to bring news from the capital and from around the country to a local readership, local papers also had

sociétés savantes (Caen 1956); and René Favier, "Les 'Affiches' et la diffusion de l'innovation en Dauphiné à la fin du XVIIIe siècle (1774-89)," *Annals du Midi*, 97 (1985).

⁸⁴ *Affiches du Dauphiné*, February 5, 1779. The address of the *Bureau* was prominently displayed at the bottom of the first and last pages of each edition of the paper.

⁸⁵ Consistent numbering of each house and shop on a road did not exist until the nineteenth century. In the *affiches* addresses were listed as "near" well-known markers. For example, "près la Place Bodoyer" or "près le Collège."

correspondents in Paris and other provincial cities. In Amiens, the editor of the *Affiches de Picardie* had correspondents in Paris, Lille and Brussels. By 1762, Machuel, the editor of the *Affiches de Normandie*, was receiving reports from correspondents in sixteen cities scattered throughout the country.⁸⁶ The final pieces of material that went into the *affiches* were the borrowed contents. In order to lease a privilege to publish an *affiches*, editors had to agree to share all content with their fellow editors. The extent to which editors reprinted material varied from paper to paper but the amount never exceeded more than a page of borrowed material. More typically, an individual edition of an *affiches* would only contain one or two short articles that had been borrowed from another paper. The primary task of the individual *affiches* was to satisfy the needs of local readers and therefore local editors only borrowed from other sheets when they believed the material would be of some interest to their readership.

Once all the material had been collected and laid out, a sample copy of the edition was then printed up and sent to the local censor for approval. The censor was typically the local provincial intendant or an official from his office. The *affiches*, like all French periodicals at this time, were forbidden from printing anything that could be deemed critical to either religion, morals or the monarchy.⁸⁷ With a few notable exceptions, the local *affiches* generally steered clear of controversial subject matter. One of those exceptions occurred during early summer of 1777 in Bordeaux, when the Labottière brothers, editors of the local sheet, were fined 500 *livres* and had all their printing equipment confiscated for two months. Their punishment came as a result of

⁸⁶ Gilles Feyel, "La presse provinciale française," p. 102-103

⁸⁷ On censorship of the *affiches* see Gilles Feyel, 'La presse provinciale sous l'Ancien Regime', pp. 43-44 and for a broader perspective on the subject see especially Daniel Roche, "Censorship and the Publishing

publishing in the *Affiches* a critical piece entitled *Très humbles et très respectueuses remonstrances de la Cour des Aydes et finances de Guienne au sujet des Lettres patentes du Roi du 24 -- 1776 concernant les octrois de Bordeaux*. Though the offending piece did manage to get past the local censor, the brothers were not able to avoid punishment. In the end, however, their fine was reduced, their equipment returned, and the lesson was learned; they never ran afoul of the censors again.⁸⁸

After a paper was submitted to the royal censor, it could either be accepted outright, accepted conditionally, or rejected. When a censor finally gave his approval, he stamped or signed the copy, notifying readers that the government had approved the paper. Somewhere on every edition of every *affiches* throughout the entire country, usually at the bottom of the last page, appeared some version of the phrase "Read and Approved," or "Seen and Approved," or "With Approval." On the bottom of the *Affiches du Dauphiné*, for example, appeared the following "Permission to print and distribute. In Grenoble, 8 July, 1774. BOZONAT, Lieutenant-General of the police commission." The sheet from Toulouse read: "Read and Approved. VILLENEUVE. Seen with Approval, permission to print, this January 7 1788. LARTIGUE, Judge-mage."

After editors received that stamp of approval, they printed up a full run of the edition, sent it out through the post to the subscribers or to distribution centers, and got ready to do it all again for the following week.

Industry," *Revolution in Print: the press in France 1775-1800*, ed R. Darnton and D. Roche (Berkeley, 1989), pp 3-26.

⁸⁸ AD-Gironde, *Arrêt du Conseil d'État du Roi*, C3315. In "Great Chain" Colin Jones mentions several other examples of local editors "cowed into submission." See Jones, "Great Chain," pp. 35-36.

Once the process of leasing the privilege for the *Affiches de Paris* was set in motion in the 1750s, the provincial press spread rapidly throughout the kingdom. Necessity was the engine that drove the process. While papers from the capital and from abroad provided local readers with a myriad of information, news, and entertainment, they could not fill the local niche. When given the opportunity to subscribe to a local paper, provincial men and women responded enthusiastically. The *affiches* had the lowest failure rate for any French publications in the eighteenth century. Though the form, layout, and even the titles of the papers suggest uniformity, as we will see, the *affiches* served a local milieu and therefore each paper catered to the needs and interests of a local community.

Chapter 3

FACILITER TOUTE ESPECE DE VENTE ET D'ACHATS: THE COMMERCIAL CONTENT OF THE AFFICHES

Despite having a common ancestry, and sharing similar layout, design and price, the contents of the *affiches* varied from city to city. At base, the papers were individual and autonomous sheets serving local communities. The papers were both responsive to and reflected the needs of their readers. The goal of the individual editor, both as a business strategy and as a way to provide a community service, was to be as useful and relevant to local readers as possible. As a result, factors such as geographic location, the predominant economic activity of the province, and the editorial vision of the owner of the paper shaped the content.

The difficulty in categorizing the content of papers that varied from region to region and over time is further complicated by the eclectic make-up of the contents. The *affiches* contained advertisements, of course, and commercial information, but the papers were also filled with medical news, legal opinion, local history, updates from the worlds of art and science, book reviews and a host of other material. The breadth and variety of content in the papers was by design. The *affiches* were never meant to be specialized sheets appealing to only a narrow segment of the reading public like, for example, the *Gazette de santé*. The papers' prospectuses made clear the broad categories of content that would be included in the pages of the local *affiches*. The *Affiches de Franche-Comté*, for example, promised to include everything "concerning Agriculture, Commerce, the Arts, Sciences, the various aspects of History, etc." Other papers hinted at the diversity of content more vaguely. The prospectus for the *Affiches de Lorraine* promised its subscribers "all that can enlighten them and contribute to their happiness."

In a similar vein the *Affiches du Mans* offered "all that might likely be useful to the public."

In *The French Press in the Age of Enlightenment*, Jack Censer understandably and perhaps inadvertently highlights the difficulty inherent in trying to categorize the diverse content of the provincial *affiches*. Early on in his examination, Censer writes that the *affiches* were essentially advertising sheets, yet later he writes that the *affiches* were "more than a locus for advertisements."¹ The very way Censer arranges his monograph reflects the difficulty in defining the content of the *affiches*. The three chapters that make up Part I of his book are intended to cover the three dominant types of press in the Old Regime. Chapter one is entitled "The Political Press," Chapter two is called "The Affiches" and Chapter three is "The Literary-Philosophical Press." The first and third chapters cover distinct genres within the periodical press that Censer defines by content: chapter one discusses papers based on their political content, chapter three focuses on papers that had a decidedly literary and philosophical bent. Yet chapter two is defined neither by content - "more than advertisements" would have been an unwieldy title - nor by genre - which could have plausibly been entitled "the provincial press" had Censer not included the two Paris-based *Affiches* in his analysis. Thus, the question is: how can we analyze contents that did not belong to a single genre of the press, and which varied from paper to paper, region to region, and year to year?

In order to analyze the contents of the provincial *affiches* as a unique genre of the periodical press, I have sampled a number of local papers representing different

¹ Jack Censer, *The French Press in the Age of Enlightenment* (New York, 1994) p. 7 for the earlier description of the *affiches* as advertisers and p. 54 for the amended view.

geographic locations and over a period of years.² Geographically, the papers sampled cover the southeastern area, the port city of Rouen and the north coast, the southwest, and the region just north of Paris. The time periods sampled focus on the early life of the papers, (the 1750s), and the years - broadly defined - leading up to the Revolution (1773 to 1789). The remainder of this chapter will thus focus on the papers as a whole and cull from them the common elements of the content that united the provincial papers. The remaining chapters will focus in narrowly on one city's paper - the *Affiches de Bordeaux* and then the *Journal de Guienne* - in order to see how that city's local paper was influenced by and reflected the needs of the community it served.

The lifespan of the provincial press coincided with a vigorous expansion of the French economy. As John Shovelin has recently demonstrated, economic growth in the second half of the eighteenth century was much stronger than historians had previously believed.³ Between 1750 and 1790, signs of good economic health abounded. Shovelin notes that foreign trade grew by as much as 500 percent, manufacturing as a percentage of gross national product nearly tripled, accompanied by a doubling of the urban population.⁴ One result of the economic expansion, Shovelin argues, was a concomitant consumer revolution, which facilitated an upsurge in consumption. Simply put, more people had more money and were buying more things. Luxury items, for example, long belonging to the exclusive domain of the aristocracy, were beginning to be found in the homes of non-nobles.⁵ Colin Jones, citing the work done by Daniel Roche and others,

² The analysis in this section is based on the following papers and years: *Affiches du Dauphiné*, 1774-1789, *Affiches de Picardie*, 1773-1780, *Affiches de Toulouse*, 1788, *Affiches de Lyon*, 1758, and the *Journal de Normandie et Rouen*, 1788-89.

³ John Shovelin, "The Cultural Politics of Luxury in Eighteenth-Century France," *French Historical Studies* vol 23, no. 4, p. 585.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Though a fairly new topic of investigation, the list of works devoted to patterns of consumption and

noted the increased consumption patterns among the less well to do in Paris. "Showy pieces of furniture such as writing-tables, card-tables and coat-stands," Jones notes, became more common in the homes of Parisians from the popular classes. Jones goes on to write that:

Wallpaper, wall-hangings, mirrors, snuff-boxes, teapots, razors, chamber pots, and clocks are found in greater abundance; people spend more money on clothes, and these in turn becomes more showy....⁶

The consumer revolution was not strictly a phenomenon of the capital and, as we will see, provincial newspapers took as one of their primary tasks to serve the public's increased appetite for consumption. Facilitating commerce and economic exchanges of all kinds was at the heart of the papers' mission. As the prospectus for the *Affiches de Sens* put it, the paper's primary function was to "facilitate all types of purchases and sales." The paper from Besançon informed readers that "this work will successively contain all subjects that have to do with trade in Franche-Comté." For the *Affiches du Dauphiné*, the goal was nothing less than to promote all "public commerce."

Looking through the pages of the *affiches* is to gain, as Colin Jones has put it, a window into the "bazaar economy" that flourished during the last decades of the Old Regime.⁷ The view from the paper shows local cities as hotbeds of frenetic economic activity. Local residents were selling or renting large items like land and houses, and

consumer culture in eighteenth-century France is long and growing. The classics include Daniel Roche, *The People of Paris: An Essay in Popular Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, trans. Gwynne Lewis (Berkeley, 1987); *A History of Everyday Things: The Birth of Consumption in France, 1600-1800*, trans. Brian Pearce (Cambridge, 2000); Colin Jones, "Bourgeois Revolution Revivified: 1789 and Social Change," in Colin Lucas, ed., *Rewriting the French Revolution: The Andrew Browning Lectures 1989* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) and Cissie Fairchilds, "The Production and Marketing of Populuxe Goods in Eighteenth-Century Paris," in John Brewer and Roy Porter, eds., *Consumption and the World of Goods* (New York, 1993) pp. 228-48.

⁶ Colin Jones, "Bourgeois Revolution Revivified," p. 89.

⁷ Colin Jones, "The Great Chain," p. 22. Jones actually borrows the term from Michael Sonenscher who applies it more broadly to cover the world of work and wages in the eighteenth century. See Michael

small items like jewelry, umbrellas, and silverware. There were people looking for work who had experience and references and too many skills to name, and just as many employers looking to hire them. There was an incredible diversity of shops owned by merchants who used the paper to publicize the opening or re-opening of their stores. There were painters, musicians and professors newly returned from the capital and looking to find students or start new projects. The orderly world envisioned by the theorists of absolutism, with individuals neatly arranged into a tidy hierarchy of corporate bodies and estates determined by birth, was exploded in the pages of the paper.⁸ Rather than that world, the one we see in the *affiches* was a society in the grips of a chaotic capitalism where objects of high society like carriages and bejeweled swords were advertised alongside spittoons, and trusses; necessities like food and wine were on sale next to luxury items; royal offices for the social-climber and an offer of loans for the entrepreneur. From its inception to the Revolution, the provincial press was first and foremost a site for commerce.

ADVERTISEMENTS

Jack Censer was certainly correct when he wrote that the *affiches* were more than just advertisements. Yet any investigation of the contents of the provincial press must certainly begin with the advertisements. After all, the provincial *affiches* were the offspring of Renaudot's advertising sheet and the ads themselves - especially in the early years of the *affiches* - could take up as much as half of each copy. They were also

Sonenscher, *Work and Wages: Natural Law, Politics and the Eighteenth-Century French Trades* (Cambridge, 1989), see esp. chapter 1.

⁸ For the purist expression of the theory of absolutism see Charles Loyseau, *Les oeuvres de maistre Charles Loyseau* (Paris, 1666). For a partial translation of the essay see Loyseau, *A Treatise on Orders*, in *University of Chicago Readings in Western Civilization*, vol 7, Keith Baker, ed., *The Old Regime and the French Revolution* (Chicago, 1987), pp. 13-31.

the first things readers would typically see when they picked up a copy of their local *affiches*. They are a logical place to begin an investigation of the contents of the *affiches*. But the advertisements that filled the pages of the provincial press in the middle of the eighteenth century were a far cry from the ones that bombard readers today. There were no large, glossy pictures, or big, bold type, announcing the arrival of the newest model of automobile or yet another entry into the cola wars. Forerunners of those types of ads only date back to the nineteenth century.⁹ Rather, the advertisements in the *affiches* consisted entirely of text, written in the same small 9-point font as the rest of the paper, and appeared under such innocuous headings as "Goods for Sale or Rent" or "Particular Requests," or the even more succinct "Opinions." Taken as a whole, however, the advertisements in the pages of the *affiches* invited readers on a weekly basis to participate in a world of commerce and interaction, buying and selling, consumption and exchange. A world in which everything was for sale and every taste could be satisfied - for the right price.

REAL ESTATE

The first type of advertisement readers of an *affiches* would come across would be for real estate. Notices for apartments, houses, and land for either sale or rent were the most common type of advertisement in the pages of the *affiches*. Up to half of all ads in a copy would be for real estate. The ads consisted of between two to five lines of text (usually twenty to sixty words in total) and began by identifying the type of property being sold or rented. The ad would then highlight some of the key aspects of the property - whatever the advertiser thought would make the property more attractive

⁹ Morag Martin, *Consuming Beauty: The Commerce of Cosmetics in France 1750-1800* (Ph.D diss., University of California, Irvine, 1999), p. 74.

to readers - such as the size, location, or layout of the property. Ads finished with an address, in italicized font - where those interested in the property could contact the owners. Like most other types of ads in the paper, the notices for real estate were generally kept simple, to the point, and omitted any hyperbole or outrageous claims. The ads were clearly not trying to convince readers that they needed to rent or buy a house or that they even needed to rent or buy this or that particular house. Some notices would include a version of the phrase "all the conveniences that one might wish for," but that was clearly the limit to how much advertisers were willing to exaggerate. The strategy was simply to provide readers with information, a general description, and an address where they could get more information.

Many of the ads did not contain much of a description, like this one from the *Affiches du Dauphiné*.

House, in Grenoble, rue Brocherie, of which the majority is in good condition. Contact *Monsieur Troussset, Solicitor, near les Cordeliers*.¹⁰

Beyond informing readers that it is a house for sale - we know it is for sale because it appears under the heading "à vendre" - and its location, the ad does not really tell readers much. Even the description, "of which the majority is in good condition" is rather vague.

Other ads were more generous with the amount of details they provided for readers. For example, this notice advertised part of a split-level house for sale, with a shared kitchen and private bedroom.

A portion of house, in good condition and affordable, located in Grenoble on the end of rue Pérollerie, including a communal oven on the first floor and a bedroom on the fourth..¹¹

¹⁰ *Affiches du Dauphiné*, June 8, 1774.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, May 9, 1788.

Houses for sale or rent located just outside the city environs tended to be bigger than those in the city, with more living space and on larger plots of land. As a result, the ads for these properties tended to be longer and more descriptive. For example, located just one league from Toulouse was this country home for sale:

A beautiful and good Estate, well stocked and which has all the advantages one could wish for; building finished, with practical improvements, many trees, very pleasant, located one mile outside Toulouse, on the main road. Contact Monsieur *Pugens, Notary*.¹²

Appearing within one week of each other in the *Affiches du Dauphiné* were these three advertisements for houses offering prospective buyers plenty of space and land in the country.

This House is located at Moirans, a town situated three miles from Grenoble, on the road to Lyon, it is composed of a stable, a shed and hay loft, with a chicken coop and contiguous garden. Contact *Monsieur Rey, Notary of Grenoble, cour du Palais*.¹³

An Estate located in Miribel and near *des Echelles*, in a pleasant location, a substantial new house, large courtyard, stable, garden, barn, land, near orchards and woods, and all the conveniences one could want.¹⁴

Estate located in Corenc and near *la Tronche*, a half-mile from Grenoble, composed of land, near orchards, vines, woods, house and barn. Contact *Monsieur Gautier, Notary in this city, near the diocese*.¹⁵

Apartments and houses for rent were advertised in much the same way as those for sale. Essential information, except typically the price, was provided along with a short description of the property. These two ads appeared on the same day in the *Affiches de*

¹² *Affiches de Toulouse*, January 9, 1788.

¹³ *Affihces Du Dauphiné*, May 6, 1774

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, May 13, 1774.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Toulouse and highlight not only the range of spaces available to rent but also the different strategies advertisers used.

A large furnished Apartment, rue Saint Carbes, house of Monsieur *Raynal*, composed of an anteroom, a kitchen, a living room, a large bedroom, a large office with a second bed, a closet and an armoire. There is also another kitchen, a stove, and an office.

An Apartment on the third floor, with balconies, in the home of Monsieur Dagusan, rue Saint Rome; willing to give a good price to the tenant for the tapestries located there.¹⁶

The first apartment is impressive for its sheer size, diversity of space and the fact that it comes furnished. The simple description of this apartment speaks for itself. The second advertisement does not provide much information. This ad is noteworthy for the information it omits as much as for the information that it provides. Readers do not know how many rooms are in the apartment, if it comes furnished, or if there is a shared or private kitchen. The only thing readers do know is that Monsieur Dagusan is willing to part with his tapestries. This ad, like most ads in the *affiches*, never mentioned the price.

BIENS À VENDRE

In addition to real estate, the *affiches* were cluttered with ads announcing the sale of virtually every type of item imaginable. Irrespective of time or place, these ads were a constant fixture in the provincial press. Here readers and historians alike find the detritus of Old-Regime society. There were advertisements for books, royal offices, a host of luxury goods, snuffboxes, watches, animals, cosmetics, silverware, clothing, and virtually every other item from the incredibly mundane to the mildly exotic. Sellers of these goods generally adopted the same strategies as people selling real estate. Brevity

¹⁶ *Affiches de Toulouse*, January 16, 1788.

was the rule-of-thumb. The ads were no more than five lines long and in their simplest version, identified the item for sale, singled out one or two worthwhile qualities of the item, and closed with contact information. Ads for wine, for example, which appeared in *affiches* all over the country simply mentioned whether the wine was red or white, the vintage, -which seemingly had no bearing on quality as all the wine was "very fine" - and a contact name at the end of the ad. Some ads were even more direct than that, such as this one, which appeared in the Grenoble sheet on March 9, 1781, and simply read: "Excellent mandolin." Anyone interested in acquiring an excellent mandolin was told to report to the *bureau d'affiche* where they would then be put in touch with the owner.

Horses and dogs were popular commodities in the pages of the *affiches*. If a reader from Grenoble was not inclined to buy a mandolin that day in March, then she could have stopped by *rue de France* and spoken to the marquis de Saint-Didier about his two eleven-year-old all-black horses that were for sale and being advertised just above the mandolin ad. Our reader also would have had no problem finding a carriage for her horses to pull. Ads for cabriolets were never in short supply. Like other notices, ads for carriages ran the gamut from the direct and to the point like this one:

Cabriolet, for two, one seat in the front and the other in the rear, in good condition, with all the harnesses for two horses, for a good price. Contact our Office, Grenoble.¹⁷

To the much longer and more descriptive ads such as this:

Very pretty cabriolet, in the English style...for three or four people, very good suspension, very light and very solid, can be pulled by one horse, and can carry mail on long trips. It is new, decorated in the modern style, and has a very beautiful varnish. There are new and very handsome harnesses for two horses, with assorted guides, etc.

¹⁷ *Affiches du Dauphiné*, May 20, 1774.

While the first notice was a straight description of the item for sale, the second one highlighted not only the desirable qualities that a reader might look for in a carriage - light and well built, designed to withstand long trips, etc - but the ad also makes an appeal to a reader's sense of fashion. Where the first ad is for just a cabriolet, the second is for a "very pretty" cabriolet. The harnesses that came with it were "very handsome" and the entire carriage was done in a "very beautiful" varnish. The ad was careful to mention that the carriage was in both the English and modern style.

After acquiring such a well-built and stylish carriage as that, the only thing missing would have been:

A Danish Dog of the greatest beauty, trained to guard horses and to run next to a carriage. Contact Monsieur *Dupuy*, place de la Darade.¹⁸

LIVRES

In the pages of the *affiches*, cultural goods competed for space along with all the other items for sale. Books were the most common of the cultural products for sale. Some advertisers sold entire collections or libraries. For example, there was this notice for the sale of thirty-nine volumes of the *Encyclopédie*, which the seller was willing to part with at a substantial loss:

All new and in good condition, the *Encyclopédie* in-4th., from the *Société Typographique de Neufchâtel*, printed in 1779, composed of thirty-nine volumes, including three volumes of plates, and thirty-six others of speeches. This work costs 462 *livres* per subscription. Current price, 350 *livres*. Contact the office of the *Affiches*, in Grenoble.¹⁹

The subscriber who placed the previous notice might have been interested in the answer to this legal query:

¹⁸ *Affiches de Toulouse*, January 16, 1788.

¹⁹ *Affiches du Dauphiné*, May 16, 1788.

A private individual bequeaths his library, in which there is a subscription to the new *Encyclopédie*; at the time of his death, he had paid for everything he had received thus far. The question is: are his heirs obliged to pay for the rest of this subscription, and to pay for the volumes which appeared after the death of the testator, and which will appear until the completion of the work. Please address all answers to the Office of the *Affiches*, they will be inserted in the paper, if one wishes.²⁰

The great majority of books for sale in the *affiches* were not offered by individuals, however, but by the editor of the paper itself. This was especially true when the editor was also an *imprimeur-libraire*. The paper was a logical place to notify the public of newly published books for sale out of the editor's bookshop.

All genres of books were to be found in the *affiches*. As Robert Darnton has noted, works by the philosophes were hot commodities in the second half of the eighteenth century and readers could find titles written by all their favorites in the pages of their local paper.²¹ Locke's philosophical essays, Voltaire's letters, the collected works of J.J. Rousseau, as well as titles by Buffon, La Harpe, and La Mettrie, were all on sale in the local papers. The following notice advertised a collection of Voltaire's letters for sale. The editor of the *affiches*, who was also selling the book out of her shop, included a short description with the notice.

Letters of Monsieur de Voltaire, 18 volumes, in-8th. This invaluable collection, which never has [illegible], completes all collections previously published of the Works of this famous Author. Of the eighteen volumes, twelve contain various Correspondences, which provide the most curious anecdotes on Literature; three volumes of Correspondence with the king of Prussia; one, Correspondence with the Empress of Russia; and two, Correspondence with d'Alembert. The people who have in their libraries the beautiful edition from Geneva in forty volumes, will not want to miss this collection, printed on beautiful paper, in *Baskerville* script. The price of the 18 volumes is 54 *livres*. Each volume is between 5 and 600 pages.²²

²⁰ Ibid., July 27, 1787

²¹ Robert Darnton, *The Business of Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 1979), and *Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France* (New York, 1995).

²² *Affiches du Dauphiné*, September 5, 1788.

In the same paper the editor advertised the second volume of the complete works of Rousseau for sale, edited by Mercier. Under the headings "Mélanges," "Théâtre et Poésie," and "Musique" the editor took up nearly one page of text listing the entire contents of the book.²³ The *Affiches du Dauphiné* also advertised the following short and curious book for sale.

Dialogue between Voltaire and Rousseau, after their passage to Styx, in-8. 16 pages. *It is a comparison of these two great geniuses, where they are characterized with much sensitivity and taste.*²⁴

In addition to works associated with the Enlightenment there were also works on history. In 1774, the Grenoble paper advertised the release of the twenty-third and twenty-fourth volumes of *L'Histoire de France*. Three travel books were advertised the same day in the *Affiches du Dauphiné*:

Voyage to Isle de France, Isle de Bourbon, the Cape of Good Hope, etc., with new Observations on Nature and Men, by an Officer of the King, 2 volumes, 1773.

Voyage to Sicily and Greece, letters addressed by the Author to one of his friends Monsieur Winckelmann, translated from the German, with Notes.

Journal of the Voyage of Michel de Montaigne in Italy, Switzerland and Germany, in 1580 and 1581, with Notes by Monsieur de Querlon. 1774.²⁵

In the years after 1776, books on the American Revolution became standard fare in the *affiches*. Perhaps the most popular was this ad, which appeared numerous times and in many different papers.

History of the America Revolution, by reports from southern Carolina; by David Ramsay, Member of the American Congress; translated from English, decorated with maps and charts. 2 volumes. In-8.

²³ Ibid., March 9, 1781.

²⁴ Ibid., February 5, 1779.

²⁵ Ibid., June 3, 1774.

While that book promised a first-hand narrative of the Revolution, this one suggested a more scholarly approach:

Historical and political research on the United States of North America, where are examined the establishments of the thirteen Colonies, their relationship and their disagreements with Great Britain, their governments before and after the revolution etc., by a Citizen of Virginia, 4 volumes.²⁶

There were also advertisements for political works. Though they had to be particularly careful here not to run afoul of censors, editors did post advertisements for works that might have proven to be a liability. For example this book was sold openly in the months preceding the Revolution:

The Constitution of England, or the state of the English government, compared with the republican form and with the other monarchies of Europe, by Monsieur de Lolme, 2 vol., new edition.²⁷

Here, the French writer Jean-Louis de Lolme offered readers a decidedly Lockean perspective on the benefits of a constitutional monarchy. Though never directly attacking the French form of government, de Lolme went out of his way to praise such English traditions as freedom of the press. De Lolme also noted that the active role the Parliament played in English public life served as a necessary check against the authority of the monarchy.

OFFICES À VENDRE

Mixed in among all the other advertisements were notices for the sale of royal offices. Ads for offices were commonplace, and it would have been unusual if a copy of an *affiches* did not contain at least one notice of a royal office for sale. Though on one level royal titles connoted nobility and implied service to the state and king, on another level they were very much like any other piece of property. They were considered to be

²⁶ Ibid., April 25, 1788.

the private property of the owner, and owned in perpetuity. As such they could be sold, given away, or bequeathed. Certainly the *affiches* treated them like any other piece of property and they were routinely bought and sold in the pages of the paper like any other goods or services.²⁸

Ads for offices, like all other notices, could be brief and to the point, like this one from the *Affiches de Toulouse*:

An Office of Treasurer of France of the Bureau of Finances from the *généralité* of Toulouse. Contact Monsieur *Roc*, Notary, rue des Filatiers.²⁹

Or they could be longer and more descriptive:

Office of Archer-Usher-Guard of the Mounted Guard and Constabulary of France, with the right to work in all the Kingdom, for sale. Contact in Saint Quenin, M. Levassor, Solicitor; and in Chaulny, Sir Bourgeois, Usher.³⁰

All advertisements in the *affiches* sought to call attention to the most desirable characteristics of the items for sale. In the case of royal offices for sale, advertisers were sure to highlight the benefits that came along with the title. Some of the ads would only hint at the privileges that came with the office, such as this one that was hereditary and brought other "good privileges":

Office of Usher at the Bureau of Finances of the *Généralité* of Amiens, to sell. Gives the right to work all over the Kingdom and good privileges. This office is hereditary.³¹

Other ads were more explicit. For example there was this notice, also from the *Affiches de Picardie*, which noted that the office for sale brought with it the possibility of living

²⁷ Ibid, February 20, 1789

²⁸ For a more thorough discussion on the sale of royal offices in France see William Doyle, *Venality: The Sale of Offices in Eighteenth-Century France* (Oxford, 1996).

²⁹ *Affiches de Toulouse*, January 23, 1788.

³⁰ *Affiches de Picardie*, April 2, 1774.

³¹ Ibid., April 16, 1774.

anywhere in the country, was hereditary, and made the office-holder exempt from certain public charges.

Office of Mounted Usher in the Châtelet de Paris, to sell. One can, with this Office, reside in any city, borough or village of the Kingdom, one wants. It gives the right to apply, in all the Consular Jurisdictions of the Kingdom, by prevention, with all other applicants. Moreover, it exempts [the holder], everywhere where one resides, from all public expenses. Contact Monsieur Lefevre, Royal Notary, in Guiscard, near Noyon, title-holder of the Office.³²

Two months later, on the other side of the kingdom, there appeared this remarkable advertisement in the *Affiches de Dauphiné*. Notable not only for its length, this ad explicitly spelled out the details of the office for sale and did a cost-benefit analysis for any potential buyer.

Office of Treasurer of France of the Bureau of Finances of this Province. Its creation is one of oldest of this Bureau; it gives an annual income of 2261 *livres* in wages, and 300 *livres* from a portion of the common funds... if one fulfills these functions, which are 60 entries in three months: Nobility is acquired and is transmissible in the 1st degree, according to the regulation of 1639, made in Lyon by Louis XIII, and between the Three Estates of the Province of Dauphiné. This Office costs 44000 *livres*.³³

While atypical in its level of detail, this ad captures the essential characteristics common to all of the notices of items for sale. The ads sought to appeal to readers - sometimes on a basic level by calling attention to the benefits or qualities of the item. As we move from ads for items for sale to notices posted by people looking for work, we see the exact same strategy at play. People marketed their labor and skills the same way they marketed their goods for sale.

DEMANDES PARTICULIERS: IN SEARCH OF WORK

Whether they were newly arrived in a city, or long-term residents, whether they already had a job or were unemployed, workers looked to the local papers as ideal

³² Ibid., May 28, 1774.

spaces to find employment. While not as prevalent as advertisements for goods for sale, which appeared in every edition of every paper, employment notices could be found regularly in the local press. During an eight-month period in 1785, twelve ads for people looking for work appeared in the *Affiches de Toulouse*. This was a fairly typical number in the papers across the country. The *Affiches de Dauphiné* had fewer ads, while the *Affiches de Lyon* had more.

The employment ads in the *affiches* were similar to the other notices that appeared in the paper. Each ad sought to highlight the best and most desirable qualities that the worker possessed and that would also make him or her appealing to a potential employer.

The following advertisement from the *Affiches de Lyon* represents a standard employment notice. It was posted in 1758, which would have made it one of the earliest examples of an employment ad in the provincial press. At the time it was posted, Nantes was the only other community to have an *affiches*. Yet, the basic form and layout of this ad would over time be adopted and copied in all the other papers throughout the provinces.

A young man known in this city, who has served in good houses and who can write, shave, and curl; requests work as a *valet de chambre*.³⁴

The components of the ad were straightforward: the young man who placed this ad identified the type of job he was looking for, noted the relevant skills he possessed to carry out the job, and mentioned that he had work experience. No mention of local references was explicitly made

³³ *Affiches du Dauphiné*, July 8, 1774.

³⁴ *Affiches de Lyon*, March 3, 1758

As the century progressed, employment ads continued to list all relevant skills and work experience, but they also began to include appeals made to employers based on character and the availability of character references. These two ads, both from the *Affiches de Toulouse*, were published nearly thirty years after the Lyon ad and make explicit what that earlier ad only hinted at.

A young man, age 30, knowing how to shave, comb hair, and to write very well, would like to find a job in this City: he has very good recommendations of his good life and morals. Contact Sir Peries, Merchant.

A 30 year old young man would like to find a job for himself as a steward at an estate or Seigneury; he knows how to write and count; he is even in a position to tend to the revenue books; knows agriculture very well. His capabilities, good life and morals will be certified by people of distinction. Contact the Gatekeeper of Mr. de Lespinasse, Councilor to the Parlement, rue Ste. Claire.³⁵

In the years before the Revolution, character traits would stand on equal footing with experience and skills. Indeed, in certain cases, a good character trumped job skills.

A young man, age 33 years old, arrived from the West Indies, of good life and morals, would like to find a job as a cook, or businessman, in the city or in the Countryside, he can provide good recommendations; he can read and write, those who are interested can contact him at the home of Bapiste Aubergiste, rue Tripiers.³⁶

Noteworthy here was the fact that the worker changed the order that employment ads typically followed. Worker's ads usually first listed job skills, then mentioned the specific job they sought, followed by claims of having a good character and references. The ad above inverted that order and mentioned the worker's good character first, then the fact that he had references, and finally the job skills he possessed. Unlike the young man from Lyon in 1758, the entire town of Toulouse could not vouch for this man or his

³⁵ *Affiches de Toulouse*, April 6 and November 23, 1785.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, May 4, 1785.

character. He had just arrived from the Indies. As a result he listed his character traits first as if to answer the inevitable question: "what sort of person is this young man?"

IN SEARCH OF WORKERS

Ads placed by people looking for workers were very similar to those placed by people in search of jobs. Employers sought many of the same qualities and characteristics that workers listed in their own ads. This ad, which appeared in the *Affiches de Toulouse*, stated the job title, the preferred age of the applicant, and the skills needed to perform the job.

A Private individual, resident of Toulouse, would like to find a servant between 25 and 30 years old, who can shave and comb, and who has experience with service: one can apply to Mr. Salba, petit rue du Sénéchal.³⁷

Unlike that ad, these next two were far more vague on the specific skills they were looking for in a worker, but both stressed the need for any potential employee to have good letters of recommendations.

A Merchant of Rouen would like to find a Servant between 18 to 25 years, with experience in service and who can provide references. Contact the Office of the *Affiches*.

One would like to find a Cook who has good domestic skills, and has good references. Contact the Office of the *Affiches*.³⁸

Perhaps the biggest difference that existed between employer and employee ads was an emphasis on appearance. Only very rarely did workers mention anything about their appearance in ads. Potential employers, by contrast, often listed it as one of their primary concerns. In this ad from Grenoble, for example, the employers were looking to hire a domestic servant who could not only perform a whole host of tasks, and who was a good and moral person, and had references to show, but also had a nice looking face.

³⁷ *Affiches de Toulouse*, January 2, 1788

One seeks a Servant, 20 to 30 years old, who at least has a passably attractive face, who can read and write, who can, on occasion, cut and comb a wig, who is not useless in the kitchen, and who has good references of a good life and morals. This is for a middle class home, where there is only the Master and Mistress to serve.³⁹

Finally, not all employment ads sought some type of domestic help, nor were all of them placed by private individuals. The following ad was placed in the local paper by a community near Grenoble that was in search of a teacher.

The community of Sainte-Gregoire, made up of five parishes, would like to find for its main town a tutor for children, of good morals, knowing how to read and write, orthography and Latin. The job includes a house to live in, an orchard, and 150 *livres* in salary, or more based on experience; this sum is payable in thirds every three months...⁴⁰

Thus far the multiplicity and variety of the advertisements have shown that since their inception, the provincial papers had become commonplace and useful tools for facilitating commercial transactions, big and small. Whether someone or some group of people were looking to buy or sell, hire or be hired, the *affiches* brought together all interested parties. A successful transaction was never a guarantee, of course, but the papers created an environment in which mutually beneficial exchanges could occur. By creating a space where needs and demands of all kinds could be expressed and met, the papers created what Colin Jones has called "two-way lines of profit and pleasure."⁴¹ "Happiness fostered profits," Jones notes, "just as profit facilitated happiness."⁴² The final type of ads that appeared in the papers - those taken out by merchants, shopkeepers and small business owners - differed in intent if not in design from the ones we have seen already. Ads placed by individuals were typically for one-time

³⁸ *Affiches de Normandie*, January 9, 1788, and *Affiches de Toulouse*, January 2, 1788.

³⁹ *Affiches du Dauphiné*, May 4, 1785.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, October 30, 1778.

⁴¹ Colin Jones, "Great Chain," p. 25.

transactions. Someone offers for sale a carriage or a watch or a dog. Once the item is sold, the interaction between buyer and seller is concluded and the ad is removed. So too with ads for work. Once the position is filled there is nothing left to advertise. Ads taken out by businesses, shopkeepers and merchants, on the other hand, were aimed at gaining new clientele and retaining the customers they already had. These ads were publicizing the shop, its goods and even the shopkeepers themselves. In short, in the merchant and shop ads we see the beginnings of a budding entrepreneurialism.

AVIS

The *affiches* were an obvious and useful tool for local merchants and shopkeepers. The birth of the provincial press both nurtured and provided an outlet for the relatively new impulse of self-promotion. Before the existence of a local press there was the custom of hanging street posters around a city - which is where the name *affiches* originated. These posters did allow shopkeepers and merchants to gain a modicum of publicity but were obviously limited both in the number of people they reached and in their lifespan. By the early part of the eighteenth century, these posters were severely restricted by law in number and location, thereby further decreasing their usefulness to merchants.⁴³ The creation of a local press proved far more promising for the business community. The papers circulated around the city and province and therefore reached a much larger number of people. For shopkeepers, merchants and indeed for anyone who made a living by serving the public the logic was simple: the more people who learned of the existence of a shop, a store, or an office, the more

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Mercier provides an excellent discussion of the posters in *Tableau de Paris*, vol. IV, ch.307, in *Paris le jour, Paris la nuit* (Paris: Robert Lafont, 1990). For a historical perspective see Christopher Todd, "French Advertising," p. 513-522 and Morag Martin, *Consuming Beauty*, p. 64-66.

potential customers, business, and profit. As a result, it was not uncommon to see ads placed by a variety of shop owners and professionals: those who had relocated, those who were newly arrived, those who had just received a large inventory of the latest fashionable item from Paris, those with a new invention they wanted to share, and those who simply wanted to remind the public of their existence, all took advantage of their local newspapers.

In its most basic form, the business advertisement could be very similar to the other notices in the paper. Like this ad, which appeared in the Lyon paper, the first job of an ad was to convey information.

Madame Plisson - Dentist - informs the Public that she changed locations; she has moved in with Madame the wigmaker, on the first floor.⁴⁴

This ad was straightforward with no embellishment or exaggerations. This type of strictly informational ad was rare even in 1758 and became even more quaint as time went on. Increasingly, merchants, shop owners and professionals began to combine the informational notice with appeals to quality. Thirty years after Madame Plisson wrote to inform the public that she was moving into the wigmaker's shop, the following ad appeared in the *Affiches de Toulouse*.

Sir Malasoffe, Tapestry maker, announces that one will find many very fine Tapestries at his shop, of premiere quality, Rugs of Aubusson, and other pieces of furniture from the same factory; he is located on rue Nazareth.⁴⁵

This ad, like its predecessors, conveyed basic information, such as where the shop was located and the type of shop it was. However, Malasoffe did not just sell tapestries and rugs, but he sold "very fine" tapestries, which were all "premiere quality." This ad is not noteworthy because it was unusual or unique. Indeed, using adjectives such as "best"

⁴⁴ *Affiches de Lyon*, March 8, 1758

and "most desirable" and "superior" had become a very common advertisement strategy by the end of the Old Regime.

The goal of the advertiser was no longer just to inform readers. The logic of self-promotion dictated that merchants or shopkeepers strove to stand out among their colleagues. To do that advertisers had to offer the public something none of their competitors could, as this advertiser noted:

Sir Aquart, Master Wig maker, located opposite the Church des Pénitents Noirs, informs the Public that after having worked for several years in Paris, in the shops of the best Masters, he has come to move to this City, where his talents are already known for very fine wool Wigs; he specializes in Wigs à la *Chancelliere*, à la *Sartine*, and in stitched wigs, which is a style not yet known in Toulouse.⁴⁶

Then there was Monsieur Boileau, the Master sculptor and gilder from Grenoble who announced to the public that he alone possessed "the secret of making tables look like new, returning their original luster to them, and making their colors brighter."⁴⁷ He closed his ad with a nod towards customer satisfaction by adding that anyone who came to his shop would be served "promptly and to their satisfaction."⁴⁸

Along with appeals to quality came appeals to taste. Advertisers often tried to lure customers to their shops by promising them products that they might not be able to get anywhere else, or that satisfied the growing demand for foreign made and exotic products. As we saw already, the tapestry-maker from Toulouse called attention to rugs made at one specific factory. There was Monsieur Chamoulaud who sold French wallpaper that was "the imitation of those from England and the West Indies," and Monsieur Rigondau who "manufactures and sells all kinds of works for the decoration

⁴⁵ *Affiches de Toulouse*, January 23, 1788.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Affiches du Dauphiné*, May 6, 1774.

of apartments and clothing, such as tassels for the curtains as is the Italian style, rods for bells, Ottoman cushions, dresses in Polynesian style, and fringes of all types." Finally, there was Pierre Galbar who owned a shop in Toulouse. He spent over half of his ad informing readers about a special and beautiful English earthenware that he sold from his store.

Sir *Pierre Galbar*, located in the courtyard of the College of Saint Martial, Place Royal, notifies the public that his store has Bottles and all kinds of fine and common Glass; moreover, he has an assortment of very fine Crystal, made in France and in Germany, in the English style. One will find in his Store a complete set of new English faience, of higher quality, renowned for its smoothness and its whiteness; this earthenware has the priceless property of being able to withstand the hottest fire, without suffering the least deterioration from it, it is already known in good houses of distinction in the city... The Store has been open since the beginning of last August; since then it has renewed and increased its selection, which is made up of everything a customer could want. Sir *Galbar* also sells Porcelain.⁴⁹

If these ads were more aggressive in their approach to publicity and marketing when compared to ads placed by private individuals, then it is because merchants and shopkeepers had more at stake. Theirs was an on-going struggle to continually maintain and gain customers. As a result, their ads reappeared frequently in the papers over time and they utilized techniques to attract customers and sell products that went beyond anything seen in the private, individual ads. Medical advertisements took the practice of self-promotion and self-aggrandizement even one step further, occupying what Colin Jones had called "the more sensationalist wing" of the provincial press.⁵⁰

Local *affiches* were rife with medical advertisements and notices. Like shopkeepers, merchants, and others who made a living off of serving the public, medical personnel, too, utilized the *affiches* to extend their clientele. All aspects of the

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

medical world were commercialized, advertised and sold in the *affiches*.⁵¹ In addition to carrying regular updates and news from the Royal Society of Medicine, the *affiches* carried a variety of other medical and health information. For example, the *affiches* commonly advertised the existence of new medicines, the latest examples of surgical marvels, folk remedies, and an assortment of medical appliances available to the public. The *Affiches du Dauphiné* carried an essay-length article and cautionary tale entitled "A Note on the abuse of medicine, especially the use of Cinchona bark in the treatment of intermittent Fever." The article began by noting that "the most useful and beneficial remedies can sometimes become instruments of death when they are administered at the wrong time."⁵² The *Affiches de Picardie* carried a "Cure for gout,"⁵³ and the *Affiches de Toulouse* published this spine-chilling advertisement on January 9, 1788:

Sir *Bernard*, Goldsmith-Mechanic, privileged by the King, of Paris, has come to establish in Toulouse, at the shop of sir *Lahens*, Apothecary, rue des Couteliers, an Office of elastic-rubber Probes and wax candles (*Sondes de gomme élastique, et de bougies*), as well as elastic stitches, for the treatment of diseases of the urethra. Patients who have experienced it have met with good successes, which have earned him the approval of the Academy of Surgery of Paris, and the Major Surgeons of the Hospitals of the Capital, which makes use of his tools with the greatest success. They have reported not to have found more useful instruments for treating diseases of the urethra. Sir *Bernard* established similar offices in the principle cities of the Kingdom and abroad. One will also find at Sir *Lahens* very good syrups...that come from the Islands.

The papers also advertised the formation of public courses on health and medical issues. Courses on all aspects of childbirth and midwifery were very popular. The *Affiches de*

⁵⁰ Jones, "Great Chain," p. 27.

⁵¹ Colin Jones, who has done more work on the relationship between the medical world and the provincial press than anyone else, has argued that medicine and health "lie at the very heart of the commercializing, publicizing project of the *Affiches*." While I agree that medical advertisement is important, I see it as only one aspect among many that underwent a process of commercialization in the pages of the provincial press. In addition to Jones' essay "Great Chain," see also Laurence Brockliss and Colin Jones, *The Medical World of Early Modern France* (Oxford, 1997).

⁵² *Affiches du Dauphiné*, June 8, 1774.

⁵³ *Affiches de Picardie*, January 2, 1773.

Picardie announced a "Public and Free Course on Childbirth, in the *Généralité* of Soissons" that was to be taught by the famous Madame du Coudray.

Childbirth, a simple process for which it seems that only the forces of nature are required, becomes one of the most important and delicate processes when some... complications from unexpected accidents cause unforeseen difficulties and obstacles. It is necessary then that sure theory and science are utilized because all infants are precious and dear and the incompetence of a midwife can cost the life of both mother and child... The wisdom of the government and the benevolence of the heads of administration take care to prevent the dangers to which an inveterate ignorance continually exposes women. We have announced the arrival and the stay of Madame *du Coudray*, of Amiens, and we have indicated the lessons that she proposes to give on the art of childbirth.⁵⁴

In Grenoble, the paper carried an ad for a similar course to be taught by Heraud, a local surgeon. Though Madame du Coudray would not be the instructor, the course would never the less adhere strictly to "her method and her theory of childbirth."⁵⁵ As Heraud noted in the ad, the course was being offered without charge for "the good of humanity."⁵⁶

Thus far, the commercialization of medicine and medical products appears very similar to other types of publicity and advertisements that the *affiches* carried. Medical personnel announced their services the same way tapestry and wig makers did. Medical equipment, like the sort made by the Goldsmith-Mechanic in the above ad was marketed and sold in the same fashion as cultural products and luxury goods. Yet, there was one key difference. Separating the medical world from other types of goods and services advertised in the *affiches* was the existence of bogus ads, placed by hucksters in the hopes of making money off of the legitimate medical concerns of the public. As Colin Jones has written "the *Affiches* constituted one site in which the publicity-minded

⁵⁴ *Affiches de Picardie*, April 9, 1774. On the life of du Coudray see Nina Gelbart *The King's Midwife: A History and Mystery of Madame du Coudray* (Berkeley, 1998).

⁵⁵ *Affiches du Dauphiné*, May 20, 1774.

academician could rub shoulders with denizens of 'Quack Street'.⁵⁷ In short, for every legitimate ad placed by someone like Heraud for his course on midwifery, there was another ad placed by a charlatan pushing fake remedies for real diseases. Without one authorizing body to determine which medical products were available legally and which were not, it was left to the editors to make decisions on an individual basis.⁵⁸

Perhaps the most common type of "crackpot remedy" was for venereal diseases.⁵⁹ These ads could be found throughout the provincial *affiches*, from their inception to their demise, and in all parts of the country. This one is from Lyon:

Sir Honnorati, surgeon and botanist, rue de la Lolallerie of Saint Nizier, after the long experience and the practice which he has with venereal diseases and proper remedies for their cure, gives public notice that he has for a long time an infallible cure for gonorrhoea, which is so much easier to employ than the one involving pills, and which involves only a very easy to follow diet.⁶⁰

This next advertisement was from a doctor who claimed he had the cure for the vapors. So sure was he that he could cure the vapors, the doctor from Toulouse even offered a very modern sounding money back guarantee if the customer was not completely cured after three months.

Sir Lacoste, Surgeon, in the *faubourg* Saint Cyprien, has a cure for vapors, a very common disease affecting the genitals; this remedy does not require internal preparation on the part of the patient, and he informs patients that this radical cure works without having to take anything, and to better ensure the success of the cure, if at the end of three months, a patient has another attack, the author offers to refund the fee.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Colin Jones, "Great Chain," p. 33.

⁵⁸ Jones provides a good overview of the (lack of) regulatory authority on the part of the Royal Society of Medicine. See "Great Chain," pp. 30-33.

⁵⁹ This is Jones' term, Ibid., p. 29.

⁶⁰ *Affiches de Lyon*, March 8, 1758.

⁶¹ *Affiches de Toulouse*, January 9, 1788.

Making matters worse perhaps was the presence of testimonials carried by the *affiches*. These were letters published in the *affiches* written by supposedly real people who attested to the fact that Lacoste really could cure the vapors or that Honnorati really did have the cure for gonorrhoea. These were often nothing more than advertisements dressed up as letters to the editor and claiming to be motivated by service to the public. This letter, for example, was submitted to the *Journal de Guienne* and then picked up and reprinted in the *Affiches de Toulouse*.

Monsieur...I have just heard a rumor that seems to imply that I am not completely cured of anal fistula, for which I was treated by Monsieur *Tarboché*. In order to put an end to the attacks on a well established reputation, and the rare talents of this esteemed scientist, and to return justice to the truth, I request that you, Monsieur, insert in your Newspaper, the letter that I have the honor to address to you. I assure you that, by the care and the skill of Monsieur *Tarboché*, I am entirely cured of my fistula, that I ride a horse almost every day without feeling any pain, and that with all my heart I swear to my perfect recovery... Monsieur *Tarboché* located my fistula for the first time on June 6, 1787, and I was completely cured by August 18, 1787; thus, Monsieur, I hope and I wish to inform the Public by my letter, which is based on only the most exact truth, that, with thanks to God and to the care of Monsieur *Tarboché*, I feel better every day.⁶²

With ads for real medicines competing with ads for fake ones, and "orthodox" medical practitioners up against "charlatans," the consuming public was largely on their own.

The world of consumption that the *affiches* created and nurtured was a wide-open space; it was the world of the bazaar writ large, published once a week, reaching into every corner of the realm. The papers recast the role of both buyers and sellers. Sellers were now entrepreneurs, engaging in self-promotion to keep and gain customers.

Buyers were now the public, with needs to be met and tastes to be appealed to.

⁶² Ibid., January 16, 1788.

COMMERCIAL NEWS AND INFORMATION

While half of every copy of an *affiches* was devoted to advertisements, ads were not the extent of a paper's commercial content. Papers also devoted significant space to commercial information and news. Anything that editors believed would have been of interest or of use to their readers, and specifically to the local business community, was published in the paper. As a result, papers from different localities carried different types of news and information. What was useful to one community was irrelevant someplace else. The goal for each paper was to facilitate commerce and foster economic prosperity throughout the province.

Papers that served port cities like Bordeaux, Nantes, and Marseille carried a wealth of maritime news and information. The content in these papers ranged from basic information like weather reports, tide tables, and weekly updates on the price of grains and flour, to ship arrival and departure times, and ship's cargo. The *Affiches de Nantes*, for example, provided readers with long excerpts from Digard's *Observations on the Navy and Commerce*.⁶³ Other articles related to the port carried by the paper included "Notes on navigation and commerce in the North," and an essay on the best methods "to preserve the health of sailors during long voyages."⁶⁴ Like the papers serving other maritime cities, the *Affiches de Normandie*, based in the port city of Rouen, had a section in each week's paper entitled "Commerce." The contents of this section were typically supplied by the city's chamber of commerce and directed towards local traders and merchants. Most often this section was occupied with news from

⁶³ Gilles Feyel, "Affiches de Nantes," in Sgard, ed., *Dictionnaire de journaux*, pp. 58-62.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

France's overseas colonies, especially Saint-Dominigue.⁶⁵ On November 22, 1788, for example, the *Affiches de Normandie* published a letter written to the chamber of commerce by the Comte de la Luzerne, Minister of State for the Navy (*Ministre d'Etat de la Marine*). The subject of the letter was "on the need for carrying bricks, tiles, and slate to Saint Domingue."⁶⁶ In that letter, the minister informed the chamber of commerce, and thereby informed the readers of the *affiches*, that because of previous fires that had devastated the island, a new law had been passed that required all new houses and buildings throughout the entire island to build with roofs made from either bricks, tile, slate or "other fireproof material."⁶⁷ The minister pointed out - though he probably did not need to - that Saint-Domingue did not have enough bricks, tile or slate to comply with the law and would therefore need to import large quantities of the materials. Thus, an irresistible business opportunity landed right in the laps of the paper's readers that day.

While all the articles and letters published in the "Commerce" section were aimed at helping the local business community, not all the material would have been as generally useful as the previous letter. For example, two weeks after it informed readers about the money to be made in shipping bricks to Saint-Domingue, the *Affiches de Normandie* carried a letter written to the shoe manufacturers of Rouen informing them of a potentially untapped market. The letter suggested that shoes might be provided for the children of the island's "free mulatto and black women" who currently walk around

⁶⁵ Saint-Dominigue was vital to the French economy in the eighteenth century. By 1789, Saint-Dominigue produced nearly two-thirds of the world's coffee, nearly half of its sugar, and much of the cotton, indigo, and cocoa. See François Crouzet, "Bordeaux: an eighteenth-century *Wirtschaftswunder*?" in W. Feldenkirchen, F. Schonert-Rohlk and G. Schulz, eds., *Wirtschaft, Gesellschaft, Unternehmen: Festschrift für Hans Pohl zum 60* (Stuttgart, 1995), p. 56.

⁶⁶ *Affiches de Normandie*, November 22, 1788.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

barefoot. But, the letter warned, attention needed to be paid to the size of the shoes because "it is certain that they have bigger feet than Europeans."⁶⁸

Other papers also carried news and information of value to their local business community. The *Affiches de Dauphiné*, like most papers, carried a host of business-related content. Notices like this one announcing the formation of a Joint-stock company were common occurrences.

Prospectus for the formation of a Company of Shareholders, for the purpose of diverting water from the Romanche, which will be used to water the plains above Grenoble.⁶⁹

In addition to business and investment opportunities the paper also provided grain and bread prices on a weekly basis. Of paramount importance to the Grenoble merchant community was the publishing of Royal edicts that directly affected - sometimes for good, sometimes for ill - their ability to serve customers and turn a profit. No doubt merchants were quite pleased with the edict published on May 6, 1774. According to that "Arrêt" the local Grenoble market would henceforward be held on Thursdays, a change from the traditional Saturday market day. The reason why local merchants would have been so happy about this change was because a nearby town also held its weekly market on Saturday. Because of the "Arrêt" Grenoble merchants were now free to attend both markets, which would have provided a major boost to their businesses. The weekly regional markets, which served a predominantly rural, and peasant clientele represented a major source of income to merchants. Having the Grenoble market moved to Thursday meant that area merchants would have been able to sell significantly more grain and other foodstuffs as well as cloth, ironworks and a

⁶⁸ Ibid, December 5, 1788.

⁶⁹ *Affiches du Dauphiné*, May 2, 1788.

whole range of merchandise.⁷⁰ While this particular "Arrêt" was decided in the merchant's favor, having the ability to read about all new governmental rules and regulations in the pages of the local paper was more than a simple convenience; it was an immense benefit and advantage.

On September 29, 1786, the Grenoble paper had more good news for local merchants. That was the date when the paper announced that the post office was expanding its routes and coverage. The paper took a full page of the edition to provide readers with all the details of the planned expansion. The detail that merchants would have been particularly interested in was the increased frequency of postal runs to and from Lyon. The *Affiches* announced that for the new schedule a carriage would leave the post office in Grenoble every Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday at one in the morning and arrive in Lyon six hours later. Thanks to an improved system of roads built during the eighteenth century, the cities of Lyon and Grenoble had been in increasing commercial contact.⁷¹ The new postal route extended the possibility of mutually beneficial trade between the cities.⁷² Indeed, the very first lines of the announcement carried in the *affiches* highlighted the post office's role in facilitating commerce.

The administration of the Post of France, continually occupied with the desire to contribute to the progress of trade by the recent establishment of many Post Offices, has judged it necessary...in order to increase correspondences in the southern Provinces, announces that from the 1st of October of this year, there will be an additionally three posts a week from Lyon to Grenoble.⁷³

⁷⁰ For a good overview of the importance of markets to both merchants and peasants see Ted Margadant, *Urban Rivalries*, p 38-41. For a more detailed analysis of markets see Dominique Margairaz, *Foires et marchés dans la France préindustrielle* (Paris, 1988).

⁷¹ Margadant, *Urban Rivalries*, p. 24.

⁷² For an analysis of the relationship between Lyon merchants and those of other provinces, in particular the contact they had with merchants in Dauphiné, see Pierre Léon, "La région lyonnaise dans l'histoire économique et sociale de la France, une esquisse, XVIIe-XXe siècles," *Revue historique* 237 (1967).

⁷³ *Affiches du Dauphiné*, September 29, 1786. See Eugène Vaillé, *Histoire des postes française jusqu'à la Revolution* (Paris, 1946), for an analysis of the development of the postal system in France.

CONCLUSION

By carrying notices like this one, the provincial press was providing an indispensable service. Some of the types of information carried by the papers, like the Royal edicts, ship movements, and grain prices, were, of course, available to businesses before the creation of the *affiches*. But the arrival of the local press meant that they were now all conveniently located in a single source, printed each week, and available for the price of a subscription. The *affiches* also brought new opportunities to invest and turn a profit, like the announcement of a brick shortage in Saint-Domingue or the beginning of a stock-holding company in Grenoble. Perhaps the greatest advantage that the papers offered to local businesses was the ability to advertise, expand their customer base and increase profits. Commercialization and economic well being lay at the heart of the *affiches'* mission. They devoted more space to it than anything yet. Yet, the papers were more than just a locus for commercial news and even more than just advertising sheets. They were also an indispensable part of the intellectual and cultural life of the cities and provinces they served.

Chapter 4

LES JOURNAUX SONT FAITS POUR REPANDRE LES LUMIERES DU SIECLE: CULTURE AND POLITICS IN THE *AFFICHES*

The provincial *affiches*' approach to cultural and literary matters was not that different from the way they dealt with commercial content. Individual papers sought to provide useful and practical information to their readers within a local context. That is, each *affiches* tailored its literary and cultural content to local tastes and preferences. Context, in large part, dictated content. Thus, the *Affiches de Bordeaux* focused much of its content on that city's famous theatre; the *Affiches du Dauphiné* reported on events at the local Academy of Arts and Sciences; papers from university towns notified readers of events there, just as papers from cities with a *musée* focused much of their attention on the goings-on at those institutions. In cultural matters, as with economic ones, the *affiches* sought to appeal to local readership.

Which is not to say the papers were insular or solipsistic. That was not the case. Though the *affiches* served the provinces, they were far from provincial themselves. Indeed, local papers sought to engage readers in a wider world of culture, arts and literature. We have already seen how publishers advertised and publicized the newest work from the philosophes, and treatises on the events occurring across the Atlantic.

The same was true for newspapers. The *affiches* were local papers and never claimed to be able to satisfy all of their subscriber's needs. Just as no Parisian-based publication could ever cover all the news and noteworthy events from the provinces, neither could any provincial paper cover all the news and events from Paris, or Europe, or from the worlds of science, art, or politics. But what local papers could and did do

was provide readers with a gateway to those worlds by introducing them to specialized papers that dealt exclusively with art and literature, science, or politics. With only four pages of text in each edition, the *affiches* could not be all things to all readers, but it could point them in the right direction.

Political news, for example, was legally out of bounds for the provincial press. But editors of the paper knew full well that readers would want to be kept informed of events happening in Versailles and across the capitals of Europe. So, the local papers offered their readers subscriptions to political papers like the *Gazette de France* and the *Gazette de Leyde*. The *affiches* also provided reviews of the various papers so that readers could decide which subscription would best suit their tastes. The *Affiches de Picardie*, for example, devoted over one full page of copy in its June 10, 1779 edition, to informing readers about the availability of Panckoucke's new *Mercure de France*. The Amiens sheet provided basic subscription information, such as where readers could subscribe, how much the paper cost, and how frequently it came out. The local paper also provided a review of the new *Mercure*, informing readers that the paper was not only new but also significantly improved. For instance the political section of the *Mercure* had been expanded "in response to the wishes of the Subscribers who have complained about the smallness of the political section."¹ Yet, the aspects of the old paper that people liked still remained in the new version. "The same Men of letters who helped contribute to our success in the past, have promised to continue to help us," the article promised and went on to name La Harpe and Suard as two of the men of letters who would be writing for the paper.²

¹ *Affiches de Picardie*, June 10, 1779.

² *Ibid.*

While the *affiches* were barred from carrying political news because of privilege issues, anything that smacked of political commentary or criticism was off-limits due to censorship laws. So long as the Old Regime system of censorship was in effect, the provincial papers could not directly comment upon or appear to criticize monarchical policy. Provincial readers interested in political commentary were not entirely out of luck, however, because the *affiches* offered them the ability to subscribe to Linguet's *Annales politiques*. The *Annales* was unique among French language periodicals during the Old Regime, as it did not provide political news as such, but rather offered readers political commentary and opinion; and Linguet's opinions were provocative in their mildest forms and more often out-right inflammatory, including direct and personal attacks on political figures.³ Yet, calls for subscriptions to his paper were regular fare in the *affiches*. As Linguet was forever on the move, including spending time in prison, the *affiches* continually ran notices for the latest reappearance of the *Annales*. In 1787, when Linguet moved his operation from London to Brussels, the *Affiches du Dauphiné* reported on the move and offered readers a chance to subscribe to the new paper. The local paper described Linguet's paper and its editor's travails in this way:

A decent frankness and a constant care all contribute to the public utility; a constant respect for *morals*, the *culture* and the *government*, are the characteristics that always distinguished this Work. It has not been made any less so during this most difficult period, when it has suffered the most relentless and cruelest upsets.

After having fought this injustice, as best a person could fight it with no other resources than his rights, his courage and his honesty, the Author yielded...To begin again today is a tribute to his new circumstances.⁴

³ The best work on Linguet's life and his paper still remains Darlene Gay Levy, *The Ideas and Careers of Simon-Nicolas-Henri Linguet* (Urbana, 1980).

⁴ *Affiches du Dauphiné*, September 28, 1787.

Linguet's paper and the *Mercure* were just two examples of the fare offered in the pages of the provincial press. Local readers with a particular interest in science could go down to their local *bureau d'adresse* and take out a subscription to the *Journal des savants*. If health issues were more to their liking they could subscribe to the *Gazette de santé*. Women - and men too - might be interested in signing up for the *Journal des dames*. The *affiches* sought to offer readers something to satisfy every taste and interest. On December 18, 1778, *veuve* Giroud offered subscriptions to the following papers to the readers of the *Affiches de Dauphiné*:

Le Journal *Linguet*, 48 liv.

Le nouveau *Mercure de France* - literature and politics, written by the most esteemed men of letters from the capital; price 32 liv.

Le *Journal Encyclopédique* de Bouillon

L'Année littéraire, by Messieurs Freron & Grozier

Le *Journal de Médecine* - 12 liv.

Le *Journal de Physique*, by Monsieur abbé Rozier. 30 liv.

Le *Journal des Causes Célèbres* - 24 liv.

Le *Journal politique de Genève* - which appears three times a month, 18 liv.

Le *Journal politique de Bouillon*, 15 liv.

Le *Journal militaire* - One can find the prospectus for this new newspaper at the office of *Affiches*.

Les petites Affiches de Paris pour les Provinces, 7 liv. 10 s.⁵

Paris and London were the undisputed cultural capitals of Europe and the provincial *affiches* strove to bring that world to local readers. The papers excerpted and reviewed new books; they carried news from the literary world like the unprecedented coverage the papers offered on the deaths of Rousseau and Voltaire;⁶ and they offered subscriptions to the leading journals and gazettes. But provincial culture too was thriving, and the editors of the local papers devoted themselves first and foremost to the literary, cultural, and intellectual life happening right in their own backyards.

⁵ Ibid., December 18, 1787.

After commercial content, the *affiches* devoted the majority of space to covering local institutions of culture and learning. Provincial academies, *musées*, universities, and literary societies, all figured prominently within the pages of the *affiches*. These institutions were both the subject and object of the paper. The local paper announced all meetings, concerts, plays, and art exhibits. No activity requiring the presence of the public was left out. After the meetings were held and the concerts concluded, the *affiches* in subsequent editions would include a review of the event both for readers who were unable to attend and for those who were there but wanted to compare their own opinions of the event with the reviewer's.

One of the most important and frequent activities carried out by local academies and societies was the essay competitions. Questions were posed to the public by provincial academies and other groups and covered a wide array of topics. There was no better place to pose the questions than in the pages of the local *affiches*. The *Affiches du Dauphiné*, like most other provincial sheets, assiduously covered events at the local literary society. When that group proposed a question for an essay competition, the paper was sure to carry it. In 1787, for example, the literary group offered 300 *livres* for the best essay honoring the French military hero and local Grenoble legend, Pierre Terrail, the Seigneur de Bayard. The society threw the proposed topic out to the public by placing a notice in the paper:

The literary Society of Grenoble would like to devote a public homage to the most famous Hero that Grenoble and Dauphiné has given birth to; considering, moreover, that the time when the Bayard knight lived is one of the most interesting moments of our history, because of the revolution it brought to tactics, the spirit of knighthood, and letters, the society proposes a contest on the

⁶ The obituaries carried in the local press for Rousseau and Voltaire in 1778 took up more space than the ones carried for Louis XV.

Historical Praise of the Bayard Knight - the prize will be a gold medal worth 300 *livres* which will be awarded during the public meeting in May, 1788.⁷

One year later the literary society had chosen a winner and two months after that, in June 1788, the winning essay was printed in the local *affiches*.

The Grenoble paper also publicized the annual essay competition sponsored by the local *Académie Royale des Belles-Lettres*. The same year that the literary society was soliciting essays in praise of Bayard, the academy posed this question to the public:

In the past what were the various branches of Commerce in the region that is today the province of Artois, going back as far as the Gallic period; what were the causes of their decline and what would be the means of restoring them?⁸

The difference in type and scope of the questions posed by the academy and the literary society was no accident. The Grenoble literary society was interested in local history and chose a topic that would honor a local hero. The academy's question asking readers to write on commerce in a far-away province was not unusual. Essay competitions sponsored by the various provincial academies were on far ranging topics and stimulated interest on a national level. After all, the most famous prizewinner was Rousseau who concocted the winning essay for the academy of Dijon in 1750 while visiting his friend Diderot in prison.⁹

Each provincial paper carried news from the other academies in order to allow local readers to compete. For example, in 1787 the *Affiches du Dauphiné* announced the essay question for the Academy of Lyon: "can travel be considered a means for improving education?" One year later, the paper announced that Monsieur Turin, a lawyer from Paris, had won the competition. Though the Grenoble paper had published

⁷ *Affiches du Dauphiné*, May 25, 1787.

⁸ *Affiches du Dauphiné*, June 15, 1787.

the winning essay for the local academy's competition that year - and every year - if readers wanted to see the effort that won in Lyon they would have to come down to the *bureau* and buy it.

In addition to essay competitions, the provincial papers also focused their attention on other sources of local culture. Courses offered by local teachers were a mainstay of notices in the *affiches*. Courses were on a variety of subjects, either free or for a nominal fee, and were excellent opportunities to pursue a variety of interests. The most common courses offered focused on foreign languages, French literature, science, and natural history. In November 1788, the *Affiches de Normandie* announced the beginning of course on the English language being offered by Monsieur Justamond. One month earlier the paper published a notice for this free yet rigorous mathematics course:

Public and free Course of Mathematics: It will begin next November 4, in the Abbey de Fécamp, a Course in Mathematics, taught by a Benedictine of the Abbey. Any decent person whose goal is to only listen can enroll in the course. Lessons will be given four times a week, in the morning, and will be for one and a half to two hours per lesson.¹⁰

"How is it that children's education is so neglected today?" the *Affiches du Dauphiné* asked its readers by way of announcing the opening of a course on botany for local children.¹¹ This was a good question, considering all that the study of plants could do for a child:

The study of plants inspires simple and pure tastes; it blunts the attraction of frivolous amusements...in a word there is not a subject which offers more

⁹ Daniel Roche, "Milieux académiques provinciaux et sociétés des lumières," in François Furet, ed., *Livre et société dans la France du XVIIIe siècle*, 2 vols (Paris, 1965-70), 1:157.

¹⁰ *Affiches de Normandie*, October 1, 1788.

¹¹ *Affiches du Dauphiné*, May 2, 1788.

diverse pleasures, a greater utility, and that is more appropriate for all times, both sexes, and all ages.¹²

Finally, the *affiches* served as an outlet for local artistic and intellectual expression. Readers were free and - as we will see later - encouraged to write in on any subject at all. Some reader submissions took the form of letters to the editor, others were on subjects that a particular reader had an interest in or on a subject about which he or she had special knowledge. For example, Monsieur Gourjon, a priest from Grenoble, submitted a very long essay in which he expressed his "Thoughts on the Works of Locke, Bayle, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Voltaire." The essay began by praising the famous men. "These authors," the priest wrote, "will always be read with pleasure by friends of wisdom, reason, virtue, and humanity."¹³ This essay was not just a mere *éloge*, however, and with the author's praise also came criticism. The author's biggest regret and disappointment was that Bayle, Rousseau, and Voltaire all denied the possibility for "divine revelation" and "the wisdom that God is in control of the universe."¹⁴ For the priest from Grenoble, only Locke was a "true philosopher," because he alone of the group possessed the wisdom to "withhold his judgment on all proposals that he did not have clear ideas about."¹⁵

Some readers used the paper as a forum to call attention to noteworthy events or actions. One reader from Toulouse wrote a letter to the editor to call attention to the charitable activities of a local magistrate. "One sees many people who make a big deal out of small things," the reader wrote, "and very little about people who do good

¹² Ibid.

¹³ *Affiches du Dauphiné*, March 7, 1788.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

without recognition."¹⁶ The purpose of the letter then, was to encourage more good deeds by calling attention to them. Specifically, the letter-writer wanted to inform the public of the benevolence and charity of the first Magistrate of Toulouse. The writer was quick to note, however, that he had no hidden agenda or ulterior motive by offering public praise for the Magistrate:

I declare in advance that it is not my intention to curry favor with this Magistrate. I do not want anything from him, and I probably will never ask him for anything. I simply pay homage to the generous man...¹⁷

As Michael Lynn has demonstrated, science and scientific experiments were increasingly beginning to capture the Parisian public's attention.¹⁸ The following letter sent in to the *Affiches du Dauphiné* demonstrates that the interest in science was not confined to the capital alone. The letter was written by a scientist who had been conducting public experiments with balloons. The letter reveals the writer to be half scientist and half entertainer and self-promoter. "In twelve minutes, a balloon with 9500 cubic feet filled with a gas two-thirds lighter than air" the scientist wrote, "was launched into the sky."¹⁹ Along for the ride in the balloon was a goat strapped into a parachute.

On its arrival in the clouds, a mechanism which I had designed, cut the cord of the parachute; and the animal...glided slowly through the air on its way back down to the ground. The balloon, thus lightened, was, by another mechanism, emptied of its air, and hit the ground well before the parachute.²⁰

The writer was pleased to report that not only was his experiment a huge success but enjoyed by everyone present. Seeing the goat flying through the air and the balloon hurtling back to earth

¹⁶ *Affiches de Toulouse*, January 2, 1788.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Michael R. Lynn, "Enlightenment in the Republic of Science: The Popularization of Natural Philosophy in Eighteenth-Century Paris (Ph.D diss. University of Wisconsin, 1997).

¹⁹ *Affiches du Dauphiné*, June 6, 1788.

created the greatest sensation in the crowd, who were unaware of the cause of it. The balloon and the parachute went down in the same garden. The public, in their enthusiasm and hurry to see the animal, rushed to the site of the descent.²¹

Reader submissions often focused on matters of local history and natural history. The *Affiches de Bordeaux* serialized local writer Dom Devienne's essays on Bordelais history.²² On September 9, 1774 the *Affiches du Dauphiné* carried an essay written by a local reader on the unusual mineral deposits in a town located near Grenoble. The *Affiches de Toulouse* carried an article over one page long entitled "Observations made by a Subscriber on a terrestrial Salamander, 5 January 1788."²³

In addition to essay-length pieces, readers also submitted artistic expressions that typically took the form of short, two-line riddles, reviews of local concerts and theatre productions, or poems. The subject matter was far ranging and could include anything on which readers felt passionately. A philosophy student from Toulouse, for example, wrote a riddle on Voltaire;²⁴ another reader from Toulouse submitted a theatre review on a production he claimed was so well known there was hardly any reason to review it.

The Actors gave, Thursday the 10th a performance of *Nouvelle Amitié à l'épreuve*, a comedy in three acts and in verse, by Monsieur *Favart*. This work, which has played successfully in our theatre for nearly fifteen years, is consequently, very well known to the Public; therefore we will exempt ourselves from analyzing it.²⁵

The author then apparently decided that readers would benefit from a review of the production after all.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Devienne's work appeared frequently in the *Affiches de Bordeaux*. For example, see the May and June 1772 editions of the *Affiches*.

²³ *Affiches de Toulouse*, January 16, 1788.

²⁴ *Affiches de Toulouse*, January 16, 1788.

²⁵ Ibid.

Changes were made to the play which caused the reappearance of this Comedy. Two new characters, the black slave and Betzi, add a touch of cheerfulness, which far from taking away from the principal interest, adds much to the effect. It is not the same with Timur, the brother of Corali: this third character is not involved in the action. He appears in the first act and then only returns to bring about an outcome (*dénouement*) which appeared neither satisfactory nor as natural as what came before.²⁶

Poems submitted by readers usually took the form of panegyrics and could be in praise of trade and commerce, the king, the queen, one of the philosophes, a good friend, or even an acquaintance. Jack Censer has argued that poems carried by the *affiches* reserved their most sentimental language to praise French kings in order to promote "the view of an all-powerful and benevolent Bourbon monarchy."²⁷ This passage from a lengthy poem, written in praise of Henri IV by a reader of the *Affiches du Dauphiné* certainly supports Censer's claim.

You who have the famous name; adored by the French
O Henri! My Hero! My dear King! My Great man!
You who deign to listen to the voice of a dying old man
Which raises towards you for one the last time.
You were good: to my eyes, here in all your glory.....²⁸

As Censer points out, in the modern age such an *éloge* is reserved for rock stars, not politicians.²⁹ But in the eighteenth century such gushing sentiment and emotive language was not reserved for kings alone. Indeed, as this example from the *Affiches du Dauphiné* makes clear, readers of the *affiches* used the same expressive mode to praise friends and acquaintances. From a long poem submitted by a reader in praise of a doctor from Avignon consider the following:

Arrived in this City
to consult with my Daughter

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Jack Censer, *The French Press in the Age of Enlightenment* (New York, 1994) p. 56.

²⁸ *Affiches du Dauphiné*, October 7, 1774.

²⁹ Censer, *The French Press*, p. 56.

Beneficent God
Who wants to take care of my Family
I would like to know if tomorrow
I could, in the morning
Find one fortunate hour
For our kind Doctor
In whom one sees that Grace, is inseparable from talent
And who makes, by his cheerfulness
God has filled you with His gift to cure us,
to inform us
You know how to spread enlightenment

The doctor's much shortened response followed:

I receive, friend, this Epistle
Where art, taste, sentiment
Form a rich selection
Who would captivate in more than one way
But it remains whether I deserve
This praise that your heart traces:
When one writes verse like Horace
This is *Musa* and it is necessary to sing.³⁰

The cultural and literary contents of the paper - which consumed nearly half of each edition of the local papers - was aimed at facilitating greater involvement in the world of arts and letters: readers could subscribe to newspapers devoted to a range of topics, take a course for self-improvement or merely for fun, and compete in local and national essay competitions. For those readers with artistic abilities - and even for those without - the papers provided a highly visible space to publicize poems and other creative expressions.

COMMUNITY NEWS

The final ingredient that went into the provincial papers were contents designed to serve the needs of the community. This material, which did not fit easily into any other category, nonetheless served the needs and interests of local readers and was no

doubt just as valuable and useful as the advertisements or calls for subscriptions. While community news and information was strictly of interest to the local community, and therefore varied from paper to paper, there are commonalities across *affiches*.

Each paper had a section for lost or found items. Readers who had lost or found something could go down to their local *bureau d'adresse* and place a notice which would then appear in the following week's edition. Notices placed in the *affiches* announced the loss of mundane items like canes or clothing, and things with sentimental value like dogs, or expensive items like jewelry and the occasional notice for lost money. Notices for gold watches were by far the most prevalent. Ads for lost items typically included a brief description of the item and the general vicinity in which it was lost. The *Affiches du Dauphiné* carried the following two notices for lost gold spoons, that employ slightly different techniques. The second provides a more complete description of the item and notes when the items were lost. The first one does a better job of providing a locational reference and includes the all-important promise of reward.

Lost, the 6th of this month, between Basse-Jarrie and Grenoble, by the road of Eybens, six silver coffee spoons. Contact the Office of *Affiches*, in Grenoble, where they will indicate the person who has lost the spoons, and who will give a reward.

Lost spoons: they have been lost for eight days, two silver spoons, which are engraved with an apple tree and the crown of the count.³¹

While ads for lost items ranging from the sentimental to the expensive filled the papers, notices for lost children were also commonplace.

One is in sorrow for a young boy, approximately twelve to thirteen years old, of ordinary size for his age, black eyes, cute, wearing a gray jacket and brown

³⁰ *Affiches du Dauphiné*, June 3, 1774.

³¹ *Affiches du Dauphiné*, June 15, 1787 and June 20, 1788.

pants, both are well worn. He left the borough of Veynes (in the Gapençois), around Christmas, and no one knows where he went. *If anyone has any information please contact Daniel Garcin, master shoemaker, in Veynes.*³²

The *affiches* were community sheets, read by local citizenry. They were the obvious place to announce lost items. Like other ads carried by the paper, notices for lost items would reach a far-wider audience, over a longer period of time, than simply posting a sign in the city center. The more people who saw the notice in the *affiches*, the better the chance was of finding the misplaced item. The following notice, posted in the *Affiches de Toulouse*, also appealed to that same instinct.

Adam Deperrois, born in the parish *St. Etienne du rouvray-les-Rouen*; left his home as a young man and settled in Toulouse.....This man was married and had a daughter named *Françoise Deperrois*. She was married to a man whose name is unknown. In 1781 she resided in the parish *St. Sermin*, in Toulouse. One would like to know if this girl exists and if she has had a child from her marriage. *Monsieurs Marcoul, St. Martin* etc., Merchants, place de la Pierre, have been hired to get information on the present request.³³

Other types of notices placed by readers in the *affiches* included requests for companions needed for long trips. Readers placing these ads were typically traveling to Paris and were hoping to find someone either to share the expense of the carriage or just for company. These two notices were placed by readers looking to find a ride to Paris:

A Private individual who must leave for Paris the 15th of next February, would like to find a traveling companion; he does not have a carriage. Contact the Office of the *Affiches*.

A person from Grenoble, who must leave for Paris this February, would like to find somebody who has to make the trip, and who has a carriage. He will pay half of the expense.³⁴

³² *Ibid.*, June 15, 1779.

³³ *Affiches de Toulouse*, January 16, 1788.

³⁴ *Affiches de Toulouse*, January 9, 1788 and *Affiches du Dauphiné*, February 5, 1779.

Not all notices for companionship were looking to share a ride to Paris, however, as this one makes clear - demonstrating that even in matters of marriage, commerce was never just an afterthought in the pages of the *affiches*.

A Young lady of quality, whose education matches her birth, beautiful and irreproachable in her behavior, possessing all the qualities necessary to cure the most fickle man, offers her heart, her hand, and 12000 *livres* in dowry provided that her knight has at least a hundred thousand *livres* in fortune. Monsieur Tayac, son of the Notary, located on rue Boulbonne is charged to conclude this marriage, whenever it is convenient for the parties.³⁵

In addition to notices placed by readers, the *affiches* offered a wide range of community information. For example, many of the papers provided an annual tally of all the births and deaths that occurred in the province for the past year. Aside from the raw data, the papers also provided news of local dignitaries who died as well as the occasional bits of good news, like this notice from Grenoble.

Raymond-Durand, inhabitant of Grenoble, near the Gate Saint Laurent, age 102 years, has recovered his Memory, which he lost 7 or 8 years ago: he is doing very well, and enjoys the best health.³⁶

The *Affiches du Dauphiné* also informed readers about the opening of the local public library.

We have the duty to inform the public that the Library of this City, located in the former College of the Jesuits, is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday of each week, at 8 o'clock in the morning until midday, and from two thirty until 6 o'clock in the evening, in summer; and in winter, from 9 in the morning until midday, and from 2 until 5 in the evening.³⁷

The papers' service to their local communities helps explain why a Parisian paper like the *Affiches de Province* could never satisfy the needs of provincial readers. Local papers were inexorably intertwined with the communities they served. The entire

³⁵ *Affiches de Toulouse*, June 22, 1785.

³⁶ *Affiches du Dauphiné*, May 20, 1774.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, May 6, 1774.

content of a local paper was aimed at a local readership. Not that all the content referred to local events; the papers certainly provided news from Paris and abroad as well. But all the content was designed for local consumption. Local subscribers were the editor's customers. They sought to satisfy their customers, and expand their customer base, by providing a product that was of use and value.

POLITICS AND THE PROVINCIAL PRESS

Until the crises that swept the realm in the years 1787-1789 and forced the king to relax the rules on censorship as a prelude to calling the Estates General, the provincial *affiches* eschewed political material.³⁸ Laws governing privilege gave the *Gazette de France* - later to be shared by the *Mercure* - a complete monopoly on political news. The original agreements made between provincial editors with first Courmont and later Benezech that allowed for the spread of the *affiches* made clear that local papers were not to infringe upon the right of the *Gazette* to be the sole source of political news throughout the country. In addition to privilege, *affiches* were also subjected to the laws of censorship. These laws were broadly defined and included any material deemed offensive to the monarchy, the church, or morality. In the political realm it meant that except for the king's authorized agents, it was illegal for anyone - group or individual - to comment upon matters of public policy. As Keith Baker has aptly put it, "the politics of absolutism was not a public politics."³⁹

For the editors of the *affiches* to engage in politics meant running the risk of being closed down by the authorities. Editors could lose their privilege, publishers could have their presses impounded. These were not idle threats. In Bordeaux, the Labottière

brothers had their presses confiscated and had a large fine levied against them all for printing a *remonstrance* from the *Cour des Aides*.⁴⁰ The *affiches* were a business and they provided a community service. To get shut down was ultimately bad for business and it deprived the community of a vital service. In light of the double bind editors faced, the papers stayed away from political material. That is, until 1787 when the laws were relaxed and editors felt freer to enter into the growing political contestations.

However, it is incorrect to assume that since there was no formal politics in the *affiches* that the papers were unceasingly conservative or mindlessly royalist. That was not the case. If we readjust the analytical lenses with which we analyze the provincial press, focusing less on high politics, we see that the *affiches* did have an ideology and that ideology was profoundly antithetical to the theory and practice of absolutism. Keith Baker has argued that absolutism in eighteenth-century France was inextricably both a form of government and a type of society. The same logic that gave the monarch divine right status, also determined how society was to be arranged. That is, the trifurcated estate system, the privileged corporate bodies, even the modes of commerce and the arts, were all held together and unified by the absolute will of the monarchy.⁴¹ In theory at least, all the institutions of the realm were dependent on the king. Rémy Saisselin, quoting Herbert Luthy in another context, describes the absolutist order in much the same way Baker does:

³⁸ The best scholarly work to focus on the tumultuous events of this period still remains Jean Egret, *The French Prerevolution, 1787-88* trans. Wesley D. Camp (Chicago, 1977).

³⁹ Keith M Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution* (Cambridge, 1990) p. 170.

⁴⁰ The Labottière brothers were not alone. Jones notes that at various times over the last decades of the Old Regime, editors of the papers in Toulouse, Rouen, and Nantes were all threatened with sanctions resulting from material that had appeared within their papers. See Jones, "The Great Chain," pp. 35-36.

⁴¹ For an excellent analysis on the theory of absolutism as it developed over time in France see Roland Mousnier, "Les concepts d'ordres, d'états, de fidélité, et de monarchie absolue en France de la fin du XVe siècle à la fin du XVIIIe siècle," *Revue historique* 502 (April-June 1972): 289-312.

The ancien regime was an economic, social, and political order, a hierarchical society of "interconnected" parts which regulated the "distribution and allocation of functions respecting command, administration, public order, and justice."⁴²

Bossuet, the famous seventeenth-century theoretician of absolutism, described the relationship between government and society this way. "Only public enemies," Bossuet wrote, "make a separation between the interests of the prince and the interests of the state."⁴³ As a result, to critique one part of the system of absolutism was to critique the entire theory. Put another way, absolutism offered a much larger target than just its governmental functions. The worldview articulated in the pages of the *affiches*, like other Habermasian institutions of the public sphere, was fundamentally at variance with the dominant ideology of monarchical absolutism because the papers offered a competing vision of society at its most fundamental level: the way individuals interacted with each other in a range of activities.

The provincial *affiches* were an entirely new and unique form of publication in eighteenth-century France. Unlike other periodicals, in the *affiches*, the readers and not the contents were what mattered most. In Linguet's *Annales*, for example, readers were exposed to his political opinions. In the *Journal des Savants* readers were supplied with news from the world of science. The *Gazette de France* furnished readers with a window into the monarchy and foreign affairs. These and other publications were one-way sources of information. The content of the papers flowed from the writers and editors to the readers who were the consumers of the paper's content. Jeremy Popkin has argued that in supplying readers with timely and accurate news of political events in France, the *Gazette de Leyde* provided readers the "raw materials" with which they

⁴² Rémy Saisselin, *The Enlightenment Against the Baroque* (Berkeley, 1992), 62.

⁴³ Quoted in Baker, ed, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, p. 40.

could then use to form the basis for political opinions. Yet while the content of the *Gazette* "admitted [subscribers] to the realm of public affairs," the format of the paper, its one-way flow of information, served only to reinforce for readers their "powerlessness to affect" public policy.⁴⁴ The paper provided readers with a front row seat to the spectacle, so to speak, but they were not allowed to comment upon it.

While the content of political papers only flowed one way, Dena Goodman has demonstrated that the literary gazettes of the Old Regime afforded readers a higher degree of agency. In papers like the *Mercure* readers were encouraged to submit letters to the editor or pieces of poetry. Stéphanie de Genlis, as Goodman has noted, was thrilled to see in the *Mercure* a poem her husband had written for her.⁴⁵ Readers were becoming the subject as well as the object of the press as the rigid one-way lines of communication began to flow in both directions. As a result, readers came to see the journals "not simply as an instrument to inform and amuse them but as a forum for intellectual exchange with editors, writers and other readers."⁴⁶ To submit a letter or poem to the *Mercure* meant that readers could mingle, at least figuratively, with people like Voltaire and Diderot.

Perhaps the primary way readers could take an active role in the production of a paper in the Old Regime was through the practice of subscription. What began as a method to finance authors and booksellers in the face of dwindling state patronage, was transformed in the 1750s as a way for the public to actively participate in the project of

⁴⁴ Popkin, *News and Politics in the Age of Revolution* (Ithaca, 1989) p. 113.

⁴⁵ Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment*, (Ithaca, 1994) p. 179

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p 174.

Enlightenment.⁴⁷ By taking out public subscriptions to the work of the philosophes - the *Encyclopédie* is perhaps the best example of an Enlightenment work financed through subscription - readers were supporting the Enlightenment both with money and an ideological commitment. Subscription was thus a collective endeavor, forming a community out of like-minded readers. The practice of subscription made, as Goodman has shown "members out of readers, citizens out of subscribers."⁴⁸

The *affiches* were not simply yet another forum for readers to participate in intellectual and cultural production in eighteenth-century France. Rather, the provincial papers offered a fundamentally new and radical relationship between the producers and consumers, the subject and object, of the press. In the pages of the *affiches* the distinction between reader and writer was utterly and purposefully collapsed. The readers were the writers, the users were the producers. The production of a local paper was a thoroughly collective endeavor, which brought individuals together, united them in a common purpose, and transformed them into a community.

Individual *affiches* were almost entirely made up of reader submissions. It was readers who submitted the advertisements, announcements and notices; readers wrote the letters to the editor; in some papers readers posted legal questions and other readers answered them; readers supplied the poems, the riddles, and many of the book and theatre reviews. The only aspects of the paper that consistently were not from readers were announcements for new books - which came usually from the editor themselves - governmental decrees and edicts and reprints of articles from Paris-based journals. In a typical week a copy of an *affiches* was made up of about 90 percent reader submitted

⁴⁷ Goodman was perhaps the first historian to explore the link between subscription and the Enlightenment. See *Republic of Letters*, pp 175-182.

content. In short, the *affiches* consisted almost entirely of - in the modern vernacular of the Internet - user-generated content.

Readers were a new and limitless source of material. There was literally no end to the things people had to sell, or people looking for work, or people expressing themselves in poems, or letters to the editor. The *affiches* provided all of them unfettered access to publicity and an audience. There was no authoritative editorial voice imposing a point of view or ideology on the papers. There was just a simple and easy to follow format with different categories for ads, and letters to editor, and announcements, etc. Readers provided the rest.

The *affiches* were a collective endeavor and editors actively encouraged readers to participate. The belief on the part of both editors and readers was that the more people who participated in the production of the paper, the better the paper would be. In its Prospectus the *Affiches de Picardie* called on "all those who are in a position to contribute."⁴⁹ For the editor, readers submitting the "fruits of their reflections," enriched both the quality of the paper and the public good.⁵⁰ The editor's word choice is telling. Public participation, he wrote would improve "our paper," clearly implying a shared endeavor and a common purpose. The editor went on to describe that common purpose as facilitating "a commerce of friendship between citizens." In the Prospectus for the *Affiches du Dauphiné*, the editor promised that "all citizens can make observations on things that interest or are curious to them and we will hasten to publish

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 177.

⁴⁹ Prospectus, January 3, 1770.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

them.⁵¹ Two years later, a reader wrote to the editor of the Grenoble paper, offering a mixed review:

I read your paper with pleasure, Monsieur; I find them varied enough, rather interesting; but I would like to see more news from the Province, more details on our natural richness, on agriculture, manufacturing and arts.⁵²

According to the author of the letter, both the cause of these shortcomings and the remedy were obvious. There were simply not enough readers' submissions. The editor needed to repeat her calls for public participation. "Renew your invitation to our citizens," the author wrote, "for them to submit their reflections, their practices, their projects, and their successes."⁵³ According to the *Affiches de Lorraine*, the paper was created to be "a simple and easy way by which one can communicate to his fellow citizens."⁵⁴ In Orléans, the editor of the local paper announced, no doubt with some pride, that "our paper is the work of our fellow citizens."⁵⁵ Again, and like his counterpart from Picardie, the paper was "our" paper.

By inviting readers to become writers, subscribers to become producers, the *affiches* were offering a competing and subversive view of society. Individuals who participated in the production of their local papers did so in an open and equal way. Distinctions based on privilege, birth and deference did not resonate in the *affiches*. Rather than relationships based on deference or social hierarchy, the provincial sheets created a forum for people to come together, as the editor of the *Affiches de Picardie* put it, "with frankness and freedom within the bounds of friendship."⁵⁶ Thus the goal of

⁵¹ Quoted in Sgard, ed., *Dictionnaire des journaux*, pp. 32.

⁵² *Affiches du Dauphiné*, May 10, 1776.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ *Affiches de Lorraine*, December 24, 1774.

⁵⁵ Quoted in Sgard, "La presse provinciale et la lumière," in Sgard, ed. *La Presse provinciale au XVIIIe siècle*, (Grenoble 1983) p. 53.

⁵⁶ *Affiches de Picardie*, January 2, 1773.

his paper was to facilitate "a commerce of friendship between citizens..."⁵⁷ When invited to participate, readers wrote in to their local papers on a variety of subjects, some serious, some whimsical, some entertaining, some informative, but always with the intent to participate in the collective endeavor as equals.

For the editors and subscribers of the *affiches*, those who participated in the papers' production were never referred to as subjects. Rather, readers and writers were "citizens," "enlightened citizens," "good citizens," and "true patriots." The editor of the *Affiches de Poitou* began a letter to the paper's readers by addressing it to "Poitevins, my compatriots, my fellow citizens, my friends..."⁵⁸ In both vocabulary and ideology, this represented a significant break with the organizing principals of absolutist society. According to the theory of absolutism, there was no such thing as individuals, let alone citizens. The units of measure in the Old Regime were a variety of different types of corporate bodies such as estates, trade guilds, religious orders, etc. These corporate entities each had a set of unique privileges (literally "private law") that was bestowed upon them by the king and which gave them a place and standing in the state.⁵⁹ The king's theoretically absolute will held all these various and competing bodies together and unified them. William Sewell writes, "in contrast to the partial and self-interested concerns of the subordinate corporate bodies, the king was concerned with the welfare of the state as a whole."⁶⁰ The king, then, was the only public person in the realm. In

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Quoted in Sgard, "La presse provinciale et les lumières," pp. 54.

⁵⁹ William H. Sewell, Jr. "Ideologies and Social Revolutions: Reflections on the French Case," *The Journal of Modern History* Vol. 57, No. 1 (March 1985) p. 62. For an excellent analysis on the theory of absolutism as it developed over time in France see, in addition to Sewell, Roland Mousnier, "Les concepts d'ordres, d'états, de fidélité, et de monarchie absolue en France de la fin du Xve siècle à la fin du XVIIIe siècle," *Revue historique* 502 (April-June 1972): 289-312.

⁶⁰ Sewell, "Ideologies," p. 62.

contradistinction, the individual units of measure in the *affiches* were citizens and collectively citizens came together to form the public.

If writers and readers were citizens, and collectively they formed the public, then there was no greater good than in serving the public utility. All of the papers' content either implicitly or explicitly invoked the public in its pronouncements. Picking up and leafing through any copy of any provincial *affiches* is to see the public summoned and referred to repeatedly. In the Prospectus for the *Affiches du Mans*, as in most of the papers' prospectus, the editor made his intentions doubly clear: his paper would carry "all that is likely to contribute to the public utility....and all that appears useful for the Public."⁶¹ The *Affiches du Dauphiné* referred to "the interest of the public and general utility."⁶² The *Affiches de Carpentras* sought to "instruct the Public," while the *Affiches de Sens* would "share with the Public." The editors of the *Journal de Languedoc* wrote in their prospectus that "we hope that our work will be looked upon favorably by the Public."⁶³ The *Affiches du Dauphiné* also noted that the paper carried legal announcements in order to serve "the public interest and the general usefulness that we proposed in the production of our *Affiches*."⁶⁴ This was not simply an editorial device. Reader submissions too continually called upon the public. A letter on poisonous mushrooms that appeared in the Grenoble paper was written to "inform the Public."⁶⁵ The courses offered in the *affiches* were "useful to the Public." Even the particularistic economic concerns expressed in the advertisements invoked the name of

⁶¹ Quoted in Sgard, ed., *Dictionnaire des journaux*, pp. 49-50.

⁶² *Affiches du Dauphiné*, May 13, 1774.

⁶³ *Journal de Languedoc*, Prospectus, 1787.

⁶⁴ *Affiches du Dauphiné*, June 27, 1778.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

the public. In Toulouse, "Sir *Dazun* offers to the Public..." and "Sir *Aquart*...informs the Public." Often, shopkeepers' products "merit the confidence of the Public."⁶⁶

The continual invocation of the public followed a certain logical circularity. The readers and subscribers were also the writers and producers of the papers. They were the individuals who came together to form a public in the pages of the *affiches*. Thus it made perfect sense that the papers would address their contents to the public, that is, to the readers, writers, and subscribers of the paper.

Accompanying the new vision of society came a new value system. In the *affiches* individuals pursued two related goals: happiness and enlightenment. Both were achieved through *commerce* - not just the exchange of goods and services for money but also the exchange of ideas among individuals. Commerce and exchange made people wealthy and therefore happy, and it also brought them enlightenment. According to the *Affiches de Lorraine*, the paper would offer readers "all that can enlighten them and contribute to their happiness."⁶⁷ The editor of *Affiches de Dijon* informed readers that "all that can make the private individual more informed, or happier, or richer, has the right to interest the public."⁶⁸ The lofty goal of the *Journal de Languedoc* was to establish "a reciprocal commerce of enlightenment between Languedoc, the other provinces of the kingdom, and foreign countries."⁶⁹ The editor of the *Affiches de Dijon* believed that commerce and exchange fostered the "progress of human industry."⁷⁰

In this new community envisioned by the *affiches*, individuals pursued wealth and enlightenment not just as ends in and of themselves. Along with promoting

⁶⁶ *Affiches de Toulouse*, January 23, 1788.

⁶⁷ *Affiches de Lorraine*, December 29, 1774.

⁶⁸ Quoted in Sgard, "La presse provinciale et la lumières," pp. 54-55

⁶⁹ *Journal de Languedoc*, Prospectus, 1787.

happiness and wealth, the *affiches* promoted service to others. Sections in the papers entitled *Bienfaisance* publicized and encouraged philanthropical and charitable acts of all kinds. As Colin Jones has rightly argued, in promoting a public role for the care of the poor, the *affiches* were offering an implicit critique of Christian notions of charity and thereby a critique of the state.⁷¹ Repeated calls throughout the *affiches* and over time for increased acts of philanthropy on the part of readers was a rebuke to traditional poor relief methods. For those readers actively promoting charitable action, the Church was utterly insufficient as a charitable organization. Instead, they articulated a vision of service to the poor that went one step farther than even Renaudot imagined. While Renaudot established his *Bureau* in an attempt to nip poverty in the bud by finding jobs for the poor, the *affiches* publicized a range of aid to serve a variety of needs of the poor, including education, monetary relief, and health services. A letter published in the *Affiches de Toulouse* called upon readers to subscribe to a new philanthropic society that was forming. This new society "always in activity and never taking vacations," was formed in order to provide for the local poor and needy families. The letter began by inviting readers of the *Affiches* to participate:

All those with sensitive hearts are called on to contribute to the relief of the unfortunates. A philanthropist from this city has already contributed, under the veil of anonymity, 120 *livres* to Monsieur Frances, medical doctor and treasurer of the Philanthropic Society, which was distributed to the poor laborers in the banlieu...⁷²

⁷⁰ Quoted in Sgard, 'La presse provinciale et la lumière,' pp. 54-55

⁷¹ Jones, "The Great Chain," p. 37. Sgard also provides an excellent discussion of the role of *bienfaisance* in the *affiches*. See Jean Sgard, 'La presse provinciale et la lumière,' pp. 54-64. Jack Censer offers a competing view on the promotion of charity in the *affiches*. For Censer the promotion of *bienfaisance* served primarily as a means of social control and to reinforce negative notions of *le peuple*. See Censer, *The French Press in the Age of Enlightenment*, pp. 61-66.

⁷² *Affiches de Toulouse*, January 23, 1788.

The role of the *affiches* was to encourage charitable acts on the part of their readers by informing them of people in need and by publicizing the activities of local the philanthropic societies.

Thus, a new view of society emerged in the pages of the provincial press. The public was composed of a community of equals and the *affiches* articulates both new arrangements and new responsibilities among individuals. The goal of the papers was nothing less than "to establish new relations between men."⁷³ The papers were to operate for "the good of all." The editor of the *Affiches du Mans* spoke of serving not just the "public utility" but also "each one of the estates in general." The editor of the *Affiches de Dijon* strove to include "all that tends to reinforce the bonds of society."⁷⁴

The community that was fashioned in the pages of the local papers was of course a virtual community. The space created in which individuals from all ranks and orders could mingle existed for certain only in the pages of the weekly paper. But the *affiches* offered a model of how like-minded individuals could come together and engage in a common endeavor.

THE AFFICHES AND THE POLITICAL CRISES OF 1787-89

In 1787, the theory of absolutism in France ran headlong into the harsh fiscal realities of a bankrupt nation. Support for the North American colonies in their War of Independence against the British had left France in near financial ruin. Calonne, the controller-general, convinced Louis XVI that extraordinary measures were needed to deal with the looming crisis. In response, the king called for an Assembly of Notables in early 1787 to help solve the nation's financial woes. From there political events began to

⁷³ Quoted in Sgard, "La presse provinciale et la lumières," pp. 54.

unfold rapidly.⁷⁵ Calonne's plan was to raise revenues by abolishing the tax-exempt status enjoyed by nobles and clergy. The Assembly of Notables, made up of noblemen and clergy refused - not surprisingly - to go along with the plan. As a result, Calonne was fired by the king and replaced by Loménie de Brienne. Brienne's plan was to convoke provincial assemblies and give them administrative functions, including the right to raise taxes. The various provincial assemblies met but with little success, and on July 5, 1788 the king announced the first convening of the Estates General in 175 years. The monarchy also effectively lifted all censorship restrictions on political publications when it "encouraged all authors to publish their ideas about how the Estates General should proceed."⁷⁶ As Tocqueville commented, "the constitution of the nation was treated like an academic problem to be solved by an essay competition."⁷⁷

The political crises of the years 1787-89 launched the country into a nationwide political debate on a scale France had never before seen. The capital was literally awash in political pamphlets expressing viewpoints that ran the political spectrum.⁷⁸ The *affiches*, too, used the unfolding crisis to publish an unprecedented amount of politically oriented material. Though the papers continued to refrain from direct political commentary, they did keep readers informed of the events happening in the local provincial assemblies and in Paris. In short, the political crises did not alter the papers

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ The political crises in the years immediately preceding the outbreak of the Revolution are well known and therefore will not be explored in detail here. For a thorough analysis see Jean Egret, *The French Prerevolution*.

⁷⁶ Jeremy Popkin and Dale Van Kley, "The Pre-Revolutionary Debate," in *The French Revolution Research Collection*, 1991, pp. 6.

⁷⁷ Alexis de Tocqueville, *The European Revolution and Correspondence with Gobineau* (New York, 1959), pp. 69.

fundamental approach to serving its readership. Providing information was still the papers' stock in trade; in the years 1787-1789 that information happened to include news of a political world turned upside down.

True to form, the political crisis engulfing the nation first made its appearance in the pages of the *affiches* as a commodity; specifically, in the form of books for sale. When the king called for a meeting of the Estates General in 1788, that body had not met since 1614. Thus, it was quite unclear how that body ought to be constituted. In response, a flood of history books focusing on the previous meetings of the Estates General began to hit the market shortly after the king's announcement. As the following advertisement and review for one book made clear, these books were not simply works of history focusing on a bygone era. Rather, they were meant to provide applicable and useful knowledge that readers could use in the debate over the shape of the upcoming meeting.

Estates-Generals and other national Assemblies - Will be 10 volumes in-8, approximately 500 pages each.

The collection that we are announcing is not a history, per se, of the Estates-Generals: it is an anthology of material offered to those who look for true and sure notions, and good principles... The first volume goes back to the earliest time of the monarchy and the cornerstone of our public rights. It begins with the Salic law, the first guarantee of our property, by which a subject knew what he could acquire, how he could preserve it, and what was the immunity and the constraints on his person. This law is the unique moment of the civil state of the Franks, the time when royal authority began.⁷⁹

In addition to books on the history of the Estates General, those focusing on the nation's finances - the reason the Estates General was needed in the first place - were

⁷⁸ For a discussion of the contents of the pamphlets and their effect on policy see Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution*, esp. chapter 1 and Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution* trans Lydia Cochrane (Durham, 1991), esp. chapter 4.

⁷⁹ *Affiches de Normandie*, August 15, 1788.

commonplace items in the pages of the local papers. Ever since Necker disclosed the state of French finances in his famous *Compte rendu* in 1781, the reading public was anxious for and had become accustomed to news and information pertaining to the country's economic situation. The *Affiches du Dauphiné* announced the availability of a "Collection of Reports, states and Tables, concerning the finances of France, from 1758 until 1787, in-4" and published a lengthy excerpt from the book on the national debt.⁸⁰ The excerpt provided readers with a sophisticated theoretical discussion of the relationship between deficits, surpluses and the national debt and then filled in the blanks with numbers from the situation in France. It was an interesting selection to excerpt and no was doubt readily appreciated by the readers of the paper - especially the merchants, shopkeepers and businesspeople among them - who knew all too well the importance of keeping income and expenditures in balance.

Along with advertising the new books that were being published to keep up with political events, news from the local provincial assemblies was also standard fare in the *affiches*. The provincial assemblies represented a natural focus for the papers. First, the gatherings were a local matter - albeit with important national ramifications - and therefore merited coverage by the local paper. Second, the assemblies consisted of, at least in part, the papers' readers, writers, and subscribers. It is no surprise that participants in the provincial bodies would turn to the *affiches* when they wanted to inform the public of the events unfolding in the assemblies.

The provincial assembly in Rouen used the pages of the local paper to carefully spell out the importance of providing readers with detailed reports of its activities. As made clear in the first published reports to appear in the *Affiches de Normandie*, it was a

⁸⁰ *Affiches du Dauphiné*, April 25, 1788.

matter of choosing which model of government to emulate. On the one hand was the absolutist model in which people had no say in their government, and, on the other hand, was an enlightened view of government in which citizens were well informed and participated. According to the Rouen provincial assembly:

In Monarchies where all the power is in the hand of the Sovereign, and where the Nation, filled with obedience and submission, contributes to the state only by paying taxes, it is impossible to have a public spirit. If the fatherland becomes only a place where one is born, then little by little a disastrous indifference substitutes for the love of the general good. This disastrous selfishness isolates each individual, extinguishes all social virtues, and distends all the springs of the political machine. In such a place it is possible to meet skillful Ministers, enlightened and just Magistrates, brave warriors, and magnanimous, active Merchants, clever artists and hardworking people; but all virtues there are only private virtues..⁸¹

For the writers of the report, there was only one way out of this state of crisis (*état de crise*).

To make Citizens out of this crowd of subjects... However there can be only Citizens where the people themselves have access to Administration. It is the force of this truth, felt by the Government... that without doubt has led to the establishment of Provincial Assemblies..⁸²

The method for turning subjects into citizens would no doubt have been a familiar one for the readers of the *affiches*. According to the published report, it could only be done through interaction and exchange of ideas, only through a "mass of enlightenment and knowledge" created by publicizing the notes and reports from the provincial assembly and circulating them among the readership of the *affiches*. For the writers of the report, the ultimate goal was to get citizens involved in the political process in order to create "a *public opinion*."⁸³

⁸¹ *Affiches de Normandie*, January 30, 1788.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ The significance of "public opinion" as a factor in the political life of France in the last years of the Old Regime has been explored by Keith Baker *Inventing the French Revolution*, chapter 8; Mona Ozouf,

To handle the circulation of reports and additional material coming from the provincial assemblies, editors of the local *affiches* either supplemented the regular publication or else published their paper with greater frequency. For example, on June 23, 1789, the *Affiches d'Angers* went from publishing once a week to a twice a week schedule. That same year the *Affiches de Rennes* also became a bi-weekly publication. The *Affiches du Dauphiné*, which spent most of its life as a weekly, began publishing twice weekly between August 6 and November 23, 1789. After that, the paper came out three times per week.⁸⁴

It is no surprise that the production schedule of the *Affiches de Dauphiné* tripled in the years 1788 and 1789. The calling of the Estates General precipitated a large-scale debate over the composition of that body. The central issue at stake was whether the make-up of the Estates General would conform to its 1614 configurations - in which the three estates voted as separate bodies - or would embrace a more "modern" means of expressing the will of the representatives such as the principle of "one person one vote." The Parlement of Paris came down on the side of the former, Necker, the just-recalled and soon to be fired former finance minister, embraced a compromised "doubling of the Third" plan which involved increasing the size of the third's representation without actually increasing its political clout. In the provinces, Dauphiné was at the forefront of the debate. There, local residents sought to revive their provincial assembly on the basis of free elections and constitute it with half nobles and clergy and half members of the

'Public Opinion at the End of the Old Regime," *Journal of Modern History* 60 suppl. (September 1988): s1-s21; Daniel Gordon, "'Public Opinion' and the Civilizing Process;" Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*, pp. 20-39; and Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters*, esp. pp. 235-242

⁸⁴ For the periodicity of the provincial press see Sgard, ed., *Dictionnaire des journaux*.

third estate.⁸⁵ In the pages of the Grenoble paper, every pronouncement uttered by the local assembly became material for public consumption.

In November 1788, just months before the elections to the Estates General would begin, the Dauphiné assembly determined that the composition of the national body should follow their lead. According to the paper, the assembly supported the principles of "equal representation for all citizens."⁸⁶ That same day the paper published a letter sent to the king by the local assembly in which laid out four principles that should guide the composition of the Estates General. Among the principles articulated in the letter was a call for free and open election of representatives, more equal representation - that is, that the combined size of the first and second estates' representatives equal the size of representatives of the third estate - and finally that all deliberations be done together as one unified body. It was only by following these four principles that the king could assure "a true, just, and tranquil representation of citizens."⁸⁷

Finally In February of 1789, with the composition of the Estates General still very much an unsettled question the Dauphiné provincial assembly wrote a letter to Necker praising the minister for both resisting the plan of the Parlement of Paris and proposing to the king a more equitable solution. Though Necker's plan of December 1788 to "double the Third" was somewhat confusing - it was unclear whether doubling the number of members from the Third Estate meant all three orders would meet together or separately - the Dauphiné assembly clearly favored his proposal over that of

⁸⁵ On the debates over the make-up of the Estates General see Jean Egret, *The French Prerevolution*, esp. chapter 7. On the reform efforts that were underway in Dauphiné see Jean Egret, *Le Parlement de Dauphiné et les affaires publiques dans la deuxième moitié du 18e siècle* (Grenoble, 1942).

⁸⁶ *Affiches du Dauphiné*, November 21, 1788.

the Parlement of Paris. On February 6, 1789 the *Affiches du Dauphiné* published the following letter:

Sir, the Province of Dauphiné knew, for a long time, that the whole of France was indebted to your virtues and your genius; but the latest service that you have just given to the Nation is the pinnacle of your glory. The touching report that gave to His Majesty, on the form of the Estates General, has highly moved us. Never has one spoken about the rights of man, and plans to improve kings, with more feeling and dignity....All Dauphinnois hearts are with you forever.⁸⁸

Thus, while the political content of the *affiches* during the last years of the Old Regime was tame when compared to the pamphlet literature being generated on a daily basis in the capital, it did conform to the central tenets that the papers adhered to for decades. The purpose of the papers was to provide useful information to its readers and serve as a message board for local organizations and residents. The *affiches* did not so much report on news as serve as a message board for local readers, subscribers and writers. During the political upheavals of 1787-1789 some, like the Rouen and Dauphiné assemblies, found the papers to be ideal conduits to the public. In publishing the debates and pronouncements of these bodies, the *affiches* served both the readers' right to be informed and the local bodies' desire for publicity.

CONCLUSION

The goal of the provincial *affiches* was to serve the needs of their local communities. Both the failure of the *Affiches de province* and the subsequent rapid diffusion of the papers after 1750 is evidence of the fact that papers fulfilled a vital function for the communities they served. The Paris-based *Affiches* could not possibly serve all the needs of diverse local communities scattered around the four corners of the

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ *Affiches du Dauphiné*, February 6, 1789

realm. Merchants and shopkeepers used the papers to publicize their goods and achieve an unprecedented degree of publicity. Individuals with money were matched up with individuals with goods for sale. Newcomers to town could find work. When someone lost a valuable item or even something only valuable to him or her, they could post a note in their local paper. People wrote and submitted poetry. There was hard information that businesses needed, and a space to find some company, either for a carriage ride to Paris or even a spouse. As the editor of the *Affiches de l'Orléans* wrote, the goal of his paper was "in some sense to make of this province a single town."⁸⁹

If the papers' goal was to serve a community, it was an entirely new kind of community that was nurtured in the pages of the paper. Readers dictated content almost completely and in so doing fashioned a space where subjects could become citizens, individuals could form a public.

⁸⁹ Quoted in Jones, "Great Chain," p. 23.

Chapter 5

***LES AFFICHES DE BORDEAUX:* FRANCE'S SECOND CITY GETS ITS FIRST NEWSPAPER**

The *Affiches de Bordeaux* was the first newspaper for France's self-proclaimed "second city." When Jacques and Antoine Labottière launched the paper on August 1, 1758, their initial goals were straightforward enough: they sought to facilitate all manner of economic activity by providing the city's businesses with accurate and timely commercial information and to provide a forum for residents to advertise a wide variety of goods and services. Along the way the brothers hoped to make some money for themselves as well. During its twenty-six year history the paper succeeded brilliantly in accomplishing these goals. Yet, by the time they lost their privilege to publish the *Affiches de Bordeaux* in 1784, the Labottière brothers could boast of another accomplishment. By giving voice to the values of a burgeoning commercial society such as freedom and openness, the paper was articulating alternative social and cultural norms, which were separate from and opposed to state authority. For the *Affiches de Bordeaux*, it was a short step from speaking the language of economic exchange to arguing for a greater exchange of ideas and opinions among its readers. While the paper did not live long enough to fully participate in the new milieu it had helped to create, it certainly laid the ground work for its successor, the *Journal de Guienne*, to become the focal point for nearly all commercial, intellectual and cultural activity in the city. Of course, any discussion of the *Affiches de Bordeaux* must necessarily begin with the city of Bordeaux itself.

BORDEAUX IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Bordeaux in the eighteenth century offered fertile ground for a local newspaper to take root. It was the largest and most important city in the southwest region of France, and was the political, judicial, and administrative, capital of Guienne, with a powerful Chamber of Commerce, a well-known *parlement*, and a famous *académie*.

One contemporary observer described the city as:

Capital of Guyenne and of the Bordelais, with an archbishopric and an Archbishop who takes the title of *Primat des Aquitaines*, a university, an Academy of Science and Art, a *Parlement*, a Court of Aides, a Generality, an Intendance, an Admiralty, a *Sénéchausée*, a President, a Court of Judge-consuls, a Mint, a *Table de Marbre*, a Master of water and forests, a *Bureau des cinq grosses Fermes*, an Election, and one of the most beautiful ports in the kingdom...¹

Administratively, the city was home to the monarchical, provincial, and municipal bureaucracies. At the top of the political hierarchy, at least in theory, was the governor of the province of Guienne. By the eighteenth century, the nation's governors were largely courtiers and spent little actual time in their home province. This was true even for Guienne's most famous and longest serving governor, Marshal duc de Richelieu (1755-88). The real day-to-day authority rested in the hands of the provincial Intendant, who was the highest-ranking monarchical representative who actually lived in Bordeaux. The intendant was in charge of legal and financial concerns, among a host of other responsibilities. In the eighteenth century, Bordeaux's intendants were collectively known as “*de grands administrateurs*” because it was under their guidance and tutelage that Bordeaux was transformed into a modern city. Directed by the province's three most famous intendants, Boucher (1720-43), Tourny (1743-57), and

Dupré de Saint-Maur (1776-85), Bordeaux was transformed from a cramped medieval city into a modern one with wide avenues, open spaces, public gardens, and a prominent theatre.²

At the local level, a mayor and a six-member city council, called a *jurade*, ran the city. The *jurade* consisted of two noblemen, two lawyers, and two merchants, each of whom was chosen directly by the king to serve a two-year term. The *jurade* also served as a municipal court of law.

Indeed, by the beginning of the eighteenth century, Bordeaux had grown to become the judicial capital of southwest France. Just as Bordeaux was home to all three levels of bureaucratic administration, so too was it the seat of monarchical, provincial, and municipal law courts.³ Serving at the local level were, in addition to the *jurade*, commercial and maritime courts. There were also three financial courts: the *Cour des Aides*, the *Bureau des finances*, and the *Election de Bordeaux*. At the top of the judicial hierarchy was the sovereign court of Parlement. The Parlement of Bordeaux was one of twelve sovereign courts of the realm. Established in 1462, it was the third oldest and fourth largest in France, serving as a final court of appeals for over 2 million people.⁴

ECONOMIC GROWTH

“Much as I had read and heard of the commerce, wealth, and magnificence of this city, they greatly surpassed my expectations. Paris did not answer at all, for

¹ L'abbé Expilly, *Dictionnaire géographique, historique et politique des Gaules et de la France*, quoted in Alan Forrest, *Society and Politics in Revolutionary Bordeaux* (Oxford, 1975) p. 19.

² On the administrative jurisdictions in Bordeaux see *Almanach historique de la province de Guienne*, which was published in Bordeaux between 1760 and 1793 by the Labottière brothers. On the central role of Bordeaux's intendants see Louis Desgraves, "La vie politique" in François-Georges Pariset, ed., *Bordeaux au XVIIIe siècle* (Bordeaux, 1969) pp. 20-26.

³ William Doyle, *The Parlement of Bordeaux and the End of the Old Regime, 1771-1790* (New York, 1974) pp. 5-8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

it is not to be compared to London; but we must not name Liverpool in competition with Bordeaux.”⁵

Most of these legal, political, and administrative institutions were in place well before the eighteenth century, and by 1700 the city was already an important provincial capital. A century-long economic boom, however, brought unprecedented levels of wealth and prosperity to the Bordelais and transformed virtually every aspect of life in the city. Bordeaux on the eve of the Revolution hardly resembled the Bordeaux of 1700. Fueled by sharp increases in colonial trade and a vibrant re-exportation business, Bordeaux became France's most lucrative and productive port.⁶ In the course of the eighteenth century, France's foreign trade grew at an average rate of 2.5 percent while Bordeaux was able to sustain a growth rate of 4.6 percent.⁷ In 1717, the value of Bordeaux's foreign trade was 12.7 million *livres* or 10 percent of the nation's total foreign trade for that year. By 1789, Bordeaux's foreign trade had reached an impressive 248 million *livres*, which represented a full 25 percent of France's foreign trade.⁸ In the eighteenth century, the city experienced what François Crouzet has called an "economic miracle," and by 1789, Bordeaux had reached the pinnacle of its wealth, power, and

⁵ Arthur Young, *Travels in France and Italy*, (New York, 1929) p. 60.

⁶ Bordeaux's economy has been the subject of numerous studies. The classic work on the subject was written by Théophile Malvezin, *Histoire du commerce de Bordeaux*, 4 vols, (Bordeaux, 1892); more recently Paul Butel has done more work on Bordeaux's commerce and economy than anyone else. See especially *La croissance commerciale bordelaise dans la seconde moitié du XVIIIe siècle* (Lille, 1973, 3 vols.) and *Les négociants bordelais, l'Europe et les îles au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1974). Finally, François-Georges Pariset, ed., *Bordeaux au XVIIIe siècle* (Bordeaux, 1968), is a wonderful guide to all aspects of life in Bordeaux. On the city's economic growth see the chapters written by François Crouzet and R. Pijassou.

⁷ François Crouzet, "La croissance économique," in Parisset, ed., *Bordeaux au XVIIIe siècle*, p. 196.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

prestige.⁹ The Bordelais had seen nothing like it either before or since the eighteenth century.

BORDEAUX BEFORE "THE MIRACLE"

Prior to the economic miracle of the eighteenth century, the Bordelais economy was dominated primarily by the cultivating and exporting of its wines.¹⁰ Already by the beginning of the eighteenth century, Bordeaux wines were internationally renowned for their high quality. The region's famous clarets, most notably those produced by Haut-Brion, Laffite, and Latour, were in high demand, and a thriving export business developed between Bordeaux and the French coast, England, Ireland, and Northern Europe. By 1700, wine accounted for nearly 75 percent of the city's exported goods.¹¹

The region also supported small-scale industries that were directly related to the sale of wine. For example, there were glassmakers for the wine bottles as well as barrel and cork makers. Finally, the city was home to distillers who turned the local wine into brandy and liquors.¹²

Prior to the eighteenth century, Bordelais merchants also engaged in the import and re-export of sugar on a small scale. Sugar was bought by local Bordelais traders and merchants from the Canary Islands, from where it was shipped into the port of Bordeaux. Before 1700, demand for the expensive luxury product remained relatively low, however, and the import and re-export did not figure prominently in Bordeaux's

⁹ François Crouzet, "Bordeaux: an eighteenth-century *Wirtschaftswunder*?" in W. Feldenkirchen, F. Schonert-Rohlk and G. Schulz, eds., *Wirtschaft, Gesellschaft, Unternehmen: Festschrift für Hans Pohl zum 60* (Stuttgart, 1995), p. 56.

¹⁰ On the history of wine growing in Bordeaux and its centrality to the local economy see R. Pijassou, "Le vignoble Bordelais: La naissance des grands crus," in Parisset, ed., *Bordeaux au XVIIIe siècle*, pp. 155-90; Malvezin, *Histoire du commerce de Bordeaux* (Bordeaux, 1892) III, 270-80; William Doyle, *The Parliament of Bordeaux*, 86-101; Butel, *Les négociants bordelais*, 132-45.

¹¹ Malvezin, *Histoire du commerce*, III, pp. 278-79.

¹² Crouzet, "Le commerce de Bordeaux," p. 225.

economy. In 1683, for example, Bordelais traders and merchants imported only two million pounds of sugar and there were only three local refineries.¹³ By comparison, a century later, Bordeaux was the preeminent port for sugar refining and re-export. Between the years 1767 and 1776, Bordeaux brought in an average of sixty-three million pounds of sugar and refined it in twenty-six local refineries.¹⁴

The limiting factor prohibiting the growth of exports and profits in the seventeenth century was the fact that Bordeaux was not a *port d'armement*. This meant that Bordelais traders and merchants were not ship owners.¹⁵ As a result, Bordeaux's merchants and traders were forced to contract either with other French or foreign ships, usually Dutch, to carry and deliver their cargo. This situation limited profits for the merchants and prevented Bordeaux from becoming a world class port able to compete with its rivals, Nantes, Amsterdam, or Liverpool. The end of the War of Spanish Succession, however, would utterly alter the ways in which the Bordelais did business.

THE BEGINNINGS OF AN ECONOMIC MIRACLE

The end of the War of Spanish Succession in 1713 was the first significant event in Bordeaux's economic transformation. In the eighteenth century, colonial trade was the engine that drove the Bordeaux economy, and when the war ended, Bordelais merchants vigorously entered into trade with the French West Indies, particularly Martinique, Saint Domingue, and Guadeloupe. The end of the war meant that the seas were once again safe for overseas commerce, and Bordelais merchants, like their

¹³ Robert Louis Stein, *The French Sugar Business in the Eighteenth Century* (Baton Rouge, 1988) p. 146.

¹⁴ On the growth of Bordeaux's refining industry see Paul Butel, *La croissance commerciale bordelaise*, 961, and Malvezin, *Histoire du commerce*, III, p. 113.

¹⁵ Crouzet, "Bordeaux: An Eighteenth Century *Wirtschaftswunder*?" p. 45.

counterparts all over France and Europe, were beginning to see the enormous economic potential of the islands.

The French West Indies were established in the seventeenth century for military and not economic purposes. At that time, the island's economic output was largely limited to the growth and sale of tobacco.¹⁶ Sugar plantations only started on the islands in 1666, and while the potential existed for large-scale production of sugar, development had been stymied by an unstable market created by the near-continuous warfare that characterized the end of Louis XIV's reign.¹⁷ War in Europe wrought a very shaky business environment: overseas commerce was dangerous, and getting the colonial products to market was difficult. As Robert Stein has noted, the sugar industry needed peace to achieve prosperity.¹⁸

The end of the War of Spanish Succession proved to be just the opportunity merchants had been looking for. The peace spurred what Crouzet has called a "mania for colonial ventures" among French merchants.¹⁹ Fueling the mania was the prospect of enormous profits. Consumer demand for colonial products, particularly sugar and coffee, had begun to skyrocket in France, England, and throughout Northern Europe.

SUGAR AND COFFEE

Throughout the course of the eighteenth century the market for sugar and coffee exploded as these goods became an indispensable part of everyday life. Once belonging exclusively to the domain of the wealthy and aristocratic, over the course of the century, coffee and sugar were transformed into a staple for all social classes. The consumption

¹⁶ Stein, *The French Sugar Business*, p. 6.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Crouzet, "Bordeaux: An Eighteenth Century *Wirtschaftswunder*?" p. 54.

of coffee in France, for example, grew from two million to 120 million pounds in the eighteenth century.²⁰ Sugar importation grew by as much as 400 percent and by 1789 Parisians alone were consuming on average ten pounds of sugar per person, per year.²¹ Three factors help explain the increase in demand for these new products.

First, sugar and coffee had gone from being an expensive luxury item to an inexpensive necessity. As early as the 1720s, coffee and sugar were becoming an integral part of the everyday life of the European bourgeoisie, and to a lesser degree, even among the lower orders. This can most clearly be seen in a shift in the composition of meals. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the traditional French breakfast of wine and bread had been replaced with bread and coffee, mixed with sugar and milk. Louis-Sébastien Mercier's chapter entitled "How the Day Goes," in *Le Tableau de Paris*, demonstrates the degree to which coffee and sugar had become integrated into the daily life of groups across the economic spectrum by the 1780s: "So coffee-drinking had become a habit, and one so deep-rooted that the working classes will start the day on nothing else. It is not costly, and has more flavor to it, and more nourishment too, than anything else they can afford to drink; so they consume immense quantities, and say that if a man can only have coffee for breakfast it will keep him going till nightfall."²² Coffee and sugar had become staples at the other meals of the day as well. In the 1742 edition of *Nouveau voyage aux isles de l'Amérique*, Père Labat wrote that "one takes it [coffee] on completing dinner, one has it in the evening in order to more

²⁰ Crouzet, "La croissance économique," p. 194.

²¹ Stein, *The French Sugar Business*, p. 10.

²² L.S. Mercier, *Panorama of Paris: selections from "Tableau de Paris,"* edited and trans by Jeremy Popkin, (University Park, Penn., 1999) p. 97.

easily prepare for supper. If not accompanied by coffee, dinner appears incomplete.”²³

Sugar was not only used as an additive to coffee, but also allowed for the regular availability of candy, pastry, ice cream and sorbet. Thus, what had begun as a luxury item for the few had grown into a full-blown “revolution in the dietary regime” of millions of Europeans.²⁴

Second, Mercier’s observations on the frequency with which the working class drank coffee hints at yet another reason why the new colonial products had become so popular in the eighteenth century. The massive growth in the consumption of coffee and sugar was also due to their perceived health and medicinal benefits. During the eighteenth century both physicians and the medical literature of the day promoted the colonial products as cure-alls for many ailments.²⁵ Coffee and sugar were touted as remedies for hangovers, obesity, and migraines, and were believed to increase wakefulness and alertness. As Mercier pointed out, workers drank coffee, often sweetened with sugar, every morning because they believed it was nourishing and because it gave them enough energy to get through the workday. In addition, medical authorities of the day stressed the ingestion of sugar to relieve chest ailments, and as a safe laxative for infants.²⁶ For older people, sugar was believed to fight off colds and prevent drying skin.²⁷

Finally, the dramatic increase in demand for colonial products went beyond narrow health, nutritional, or dietary concerns. Rather, the increased consumption of

²³ Quoted in J. Goodman, ‘Excitantia: or how Enlightenment Europe took to soft drugs’, in *Consuming Habits* (New York, 1995) p. 137.

²⁴ Daniel. Roche, *France in the Enlightenment*, trans by Arthur Goldhammer, (Cambridge, 1998) p. 627.

²⁵ J. Goodman, ‘Excitantia: or how Enlightenment Europe took to soft drugs’ p. 134.

²⁶ Stein, *The French Sugar Business*, p. 11.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

coffee and sugar had become entwined with a larger cultural shift in the course of the eighteenth century. Woodruff Smith has argued that the most significant cultural pattern to develop during this time was the emergence of “respectability.”²⁸ For Smith, new notions of respectability – which took hold particularly among the bourgeoisie – were rooted in new rules of politeness, gender relations, and an emphasis on individual virtue. Coffee, sweetened with sugar, became the material base fueling this new movement because these products were understood to be not just “symbols of respectability, but part of the meaning of respectability itself.”²⁹ While Smith centers this cultural shift largely in the coffeehouses of London, similar trends can be seen taking place throughout Europe. Indeed, throughout the eighteenth century, new sites of enlightened culture and sociability sprang up across Europe and parts of North America. Coffee houses, cafés, and salons were places where people could meet on a regular basis to discuss new ideas, share opinions and information, and argue. In Habermas’ terms, these were crucial elements to forming an “authentic” public sphere; places where “private people come together as a public.”³⁰ Unlike at work or in church or family, people in the cafés and salons were free to express their own opinions and goals and to participate in critical debate on any topic. Fueling this critical debate was coffee mixed with sugar. There is little wonder that by the end of the eighteenth century there were reported to be 600 coffeehouses and cafés in London and Paris alone. Montesquieu noted, and to a degree lampooned, this phenomenon in the *Persian Letters*: “Coffee is much used in Paris,” Usbek reports, “it is distributed in a large

²⁸ W. Smith, “From Coffeehouse to Parlour: The consumption of coffee, tea and sugar in northwestern Europe in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries,” in *Consuming Habits*, p. 150.

²⁹ Ibid.

number of public houses. In some of these, the news is read; in others people play chess. There is one where the coffee is prepared in such a way that it imparts wit to those who drink it: at any rate, no one leaves the place without thinking that he is four times wittier than when he went in.”³¹ As Daniel Roche has pointed out, coffee, sugar and the other new colonial products had become “symbols of peaceful civilization” to the “*Encyclopédie* generation.”³² Indeed, the marriage of coffee and sugar to the project of Enlightenment was so complete that by the time of the Revolution the two were imbued with nearly identical qualities and characteristics; modernity, rationality, moderation, and sociability.

CAPTURING THE COLONIAL MARKET

To meet the new demand for colonial products, the French government completely transformed the economic base of the West Indies. By 1725, Martinique and Saint Domingue were growing coffee and sugar almost exclusively. The rich soil and warm weather provided an ideal atmosphere for cultivation of sugar and coffee. Throughout the century colonial production soared, and by the end of the Old Regime, Saint Domingue had become the world's leading producer of both coffee and sugar.³³

According to the "colonial system" first articulated by Colbert in the seventeenth century, colonies existed for only one purpose: to enrich the mother country. This meant that in the case of the West Indies, the French planters were allowed to sell their goods only to French merchants. By Letters Patent issued in April 1717, exclusive rights to

³⁰ Jürgen. Habermas, *the Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, 1989) p. 27.

³¹ Quoted in Roche, *France in the Enlightenment*, p. 627.

³² Ibid.

³³ By 1789, Saint Domingue was supplying 75 percent of the world's coffee and 60 percent of its sugar. See Crouzet, "Bordeaux: An Eighteenth Century *Wirtschaftswunder*?" p. 56.

trade in the colonial products of the French West Indies were granted to the merchants of thirteen French ports, including Bordeaux.³⁴ Despite the competition, Bordelais merchants quickly came to dominate the colonial trade with the islands. Though Nantes was said to have "created the French West Indies," the facts belie that claim.³⁵

Nantes did have an early edge over Bordeaux. Until the 1730s, Nantes was the leading port for trade with the colonies. Indeed, Bordelais merchants did not become heavily involved in the West Indian trade until 1713. That was the year Bordelais traders and merchants began assiduously buying and building ships, provisioning them, and sending them out to the islands. Once the Bordelais got involved in trade with the West Indies, it did not take them long to dominate. In 1713, sixty-six ships were launched from Bordeaux bound for the West Indies. During the years 1718 to 1721, an average of ninety-eight ships per year were sent, and in 1722 the number jumped to 137 ships.³⁶ By 1736, Bordeaux had overtaken Nantes as the leading port in trade with the colonies. As Bordelais merchants sent more and more ships to the islands, the total value of trade grew accordingly. In 1717, the total value of trade with the colonies (imports plus exports) was worth 3.4 million *livres*. By the end of the Old Regime, the value of trade had grown to be worth 123 million *livres*.³⁷ This growth represented an average growth rate of 5.1 percent per year for 72 years.³⁸ By the time of the Revolution, Bordeaux was handling half of all of the nation's colonial commerce.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 47.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 46.

³⁶ Crouzet, "La croissance économique," pp. 200-205.

³⁷ Butel, *Les négociants bordelais*, pp. 24-35; Crouzet, "Bordeaux: An Eighteenth Century *Wirtschaftswunder*?" pp. 43-44.

³⁸ While Bordeaux's overseas commerce increased at an average rate of about 5 percent a year over the course of the eighteenth century, there were severe fluctuations in growth due primarily to the three maritime wars of the eighteenth century. During the War of Austrian Succession, 1740-48, Bordeaux suffered a nine percent decrease in overseas trade. That was fairly mild compared to the losses caused by

The question then is: how was Bordeaux able to so thoroughly dominate the colonial trade for most of the eighteenth century? As François Crouzet has rightly pointed out, Bordeaux had no geographic advantage over its competitors; the city was no closer to the West Indies than was Nantes or La Rochelle and only slightly closer than La Havre.³⁹ The answer can be found in two separate but related factors.

First, Bordelais merchants were able to excel at colonial commerce for much of the eighteenth century by establishing a sophisticated three-legged system of trade with the West Indies and Europe. The first leg was to supply the West Indies with a majority of the food and materials needed there. Because the islands focused narrowly on cultivating just a very few crops, inhabitants of the islands were dependent on trade for all of their food and other vital goods. Bordelais merchants captured the market of exporting goods to the West Indies by transforming the city's port and merchant quarters into a massive international entrepôt.⁴⁰ Goods from around France and Northern Europe came into Bordeaux where they were stored and eventually shipped out and sold in the West Indies. From the Bordelais hinterlands merchants purchased agricultural products such as wheat, which was milled into a type of flour called, appropriately enough, *fleur de marine*. There was also wine of course, and olive oil, and other Mediterranean products from Languedoc and Provence, as well as silk from Lyon

the Seven Years War, 1756-63. During that conflict France temporarily lost access to the sugar islands and its holdings in Canada (which France was never able to retain). As a result, Bordeaux's trade was devastated for those years, falling off an average of 47 percent. The War of American Independence proved not to be the disruption that the previous wars had been. Though overseas commerce became more dangerous, that was counterbalanced by Bordeaux's access to the American market. On the sharp fluctuations in the rate of trade of the Bordelais see, Crouzet, "Bordeaux: An Eighteenth Century *Wirtschaftswunder*?" pp. 52-54, and "La conjoncture Bordelaise," in Pariset, ed., *Bordeaux au XVIIIe siècle*, pp. 287-324; Butel, *Les négociants bordelais*, pp. 189-94; and Pierre H. Boulle, "Patterns of French Colonial Trade and the Seven Year's War," *Histoire sociale-Social History* 7 (1974): 52.

³⁹ Crouzet, "La croissance économique," p. 205.

and machine parts and cannons made in nearby Périgord.⁴¹ In addition to acquiring those products, Bordelais merchants took advantage of centuries-old trading relationships fostered through the wine trade. When Bordelais ships would drop off wine in Ireland, England and Northern Europe, they would come back to port loaded with salted beef, timber and manufactured goods.⁴² Bordelais ships then delivered those goods to the islands where they were promptly sold.

Over the course of the eighteenth century, Bordeaux was supplying the French West Indies with the majority of its vital necessities. In the last years of the Old Regime, 56.5 percent of all ships headed to Saint Domingue disembarked from the port of Bordeaux and were of Bordelais registry. Marseilles was the closest competitor, sending 20 percent of the ships to Saint Domingue.⁴³ By 1784, the city's merchants supplied Saint Domingue with 72 percent of its salted beef, 88 percent of its flour, and 93 percent of its wine.⁴⁴

Furnishing the islands with food and other materials was closely tied to Bordelais merchants' ability to dominate the colonial market. The second leg of the trading circuit came after the European products brought to the islands in Bordelais ships had been sold off. Bordelais traders would then purchase colonial products and send their ships back home loaded down with coffee and sugar. By the end of the Old Regime, half of all ships leaving the West Indies were Bordelais ships returning to their homeport.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ On Bordeaux serving as an international entrepôt, see Paul Butel, *Les négociants bordelais*, pp. 47-52, and Crouzet, "Le commerce de Bordeaux," pp. 221-30.

⁴¹ Crouzet, *Ibid.*, pp. 226-27.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 225.

⁴³ Butel, *Les négociants bordelais*, p. 34.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Crouzet, "Le commerce de Bordeaux," pp. 222-23.

Once back in Bordeaux, the sugar and coffee would be off-loaded from the ships and prepared for re-exportation. The coffee and clayed sugar were stored, while the muscovado sugar, which was inedible in its raw form, was sent out to the twenty-six refineries that lay just outside the city.⁴⁶

The third and final leg of the trading circuit came when the colonial products were re-exported to England, Ireland, Northern Europe, and throughout France. Nearly 80 percent of the sugar and coffee brought into Bordeaux was re-exported, the great majority of it shipped to Holland and northern Germany. Amsterdam, Hamburg, Bremen, Stettin, Stockholm, and even Saint Petersburg were all major destinations for the re-export of colonial goods passing through Bordeaux. The value of Bordeaux's re-export business grew from being worth 1.7 million *livres* in 1728 to 75 million *livres* at the end of the Old Regime (a 6.5 percent average yearly growth rate).⁴⁷ The re-export of sugar alone in 1789 was worth 54 million *livres*.⁴⁸ After delivering their cargo across Northern Europe, Bordelais ships returned to port loaded down with European products. These products were in turn shipped to the West Indies and the entire process began over again.

THE SLAVE TRADE

Another factor that contributed to Bordeaux's dominance in the import and export of colonial goods had to do with the slave trade. Bordeaux's traders and

⁴⁶ Muscovado sugar made up only a small percentage of the sugar Bordeaux imported. For example, in 1777, 10 million pounds of muscovado sugar was refined in Bordelais refineries. That same year 63 million pounds of clayed or unrefined sugar was imported into Bordeaux. Despite that huge imbalance, Bordeaux still imported enough muscovado to stimulate a massive growth in the city's refining capabilities. See Butel, *La croissance commerciale bordelaise*, p. 961, and Malvezin, *Histoire du commerce*, III, p. 113.

⁴⁷ Crouzet, "Le commerce de Bordeaux," p. 233.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

merchants were not heavily involved in the slave trade and, oddly enough, that worked to their advantage in being able to secure a greater share of colonial trade.

The transformation of the West Indian economy from small plots of farming land into large sugar and coffee plantations at the end of the seventeenth century vastly increased the island's demand for slaves.⁴⁹ Over the course of the eighteenth century, French merchants purchased an estimated one million Africans and shipped them to the West Indies.⁵⁰ The demand for slaves in the French West Indies was fed overwhelmingly by merchants from Nantes. For much of the eighteenth century, at least until 1783, Bordelais merchants largely eschewed participating in the slave trade - for economic, not moral reasons.

From 1716 to 1722, 75 percent of all French slaving expeditions left port from Nantes.⁵¹ Once Bordeaux displaced Nantes as the leading port for colonial goods in 1736, Nantais merchants began to specialize almost exclusively on the slave trade. In comparison, Bordelais merchants participated only sporadically in the slave trade. The first slaving expedition sent out from Bordeaux sailed in 1720. That same year, Nantes sent eighteen slaving ships out. From 1700 to 1745, France sent out a total of 910 ships on slaving expeditions; 55.7 percent of the ships left from Nantes; 14.6 percent of ships left from La Rochelle; 12.6 percent departed from Lorient; only 4.9 percent of French

⁴⁹ See Joseph Inikori and Stanley Engerman, eds., *The Atlantic Slave Trade: Effects on Economies, Societies, and Peoples in Africa, the Americas, and Europe* (Durham, 1992), and David P. Geggus, "Sugar and Coffee Production and the Shaping of Slavery in Saint Domingue," in Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan, eds., *Cultivation and Culture: Labor and the Shaping of Slave Life in the Americas* (Charlottesville, 1993).

⁵⁰ As Stein notes, French participation in the slave trade in the eighteenth century was comparatively small compared to England and Portugal. While France was involved in the purchase, transportation and sale of 1 million slaves in the eighteenth century, the total number of Africans sold into slavery during the same period reached 6 million. Stein, *The French Sugar Business*, pp. 20-21. See also Paul E. Lovejoy, "The Volume of the Atlantic Slave Trade: A Synthesis," *Journal of African History*, XXIII (1982): 483.

ships participating in slaving disembarked from the port of Bordeaux.⁵² Those percentages remained fairly consistent until 1784 when Bordeaux began to send ships to Africa at a much higher rate.

The reasons why Bordeaux did not engage more strenuously in the slave trade were solely economic: Bordelais goods, especially wine and flour, were not in high demand in Africa. Therefore, the slave trade proved to be not very lucrative for Bordelais merchants. On the other hand, Nantais merchants benefited from their relationship with the Dutch East Indian Company, whose goods were in high demand in western Africa.⁵³

However, Nantes' domination of the slave trade was to Bordeaux's advantage in the colonial trade. French participation in the slave trade was essentially triangular.⁵⁴ A slaving ship would leave France, more often than not from Nantes, and sail to Africa. There, the ship's cargo would be off-loaded and sold, and in turn an average of 300 to 400 slaves would be bought and on-loaded to the ship. The ship would then sail to the West Indies, losing anywhere from twelve percent to twenty-one percent of its human cargo to disease, malnutrition or acts of violence along the way.⁵⁵ Once at the islands, the slaves would be sold, and colonial products purchased and shipped back to France.

⁵¹ Stein provides a list of all slaving departures from France's major seaports for the eighteenth century in *The French Slave Trade in the Eighteenth Century: An Old Regime Business* (Madison, 1979) 207-209.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Crouzet, "La croissance économique," pp. 205-207.

⁵⁴ On the triangular slaving routes see *Ibid.*, and Stein, *The French Slave Trade*, especially chapters 5-8.

⁵⁵ Stein gives slave mortality rates for the years 1713-1777 in *The French Slave Trade*, p. 209. John D. Garrigus has noted that even if a slave survived the trans-Atlantic crossing in the hull of a slaving ship, 50 percent of the slaves "stepping onto French colonial soil in chains would die within eight years from overwork, malnutrition, and disease. See "White Jacobins/Black Jacobins: Bringing the Haitian and French Revolutions Together in the Classroom," *French Historical Studies* Vol 23, no. 2 (Spring 2000): 262.

This was the route taken by Nantais ships. In comparison, the Bordelais route was much quicker, efficient, and therefore more lucrative. Rather than taking a detour to the west coast of Africa, Bordelais ships sailed back and forth directly between Bordeaux and the West Indies. This allowed Bordelais ships to make more trips to and from the West Indies and therefore to capture a higher percentage of colonial goods. While Nantes began with a clear advantage in trade with the West Indies, it was not long before Bordeaux began to dominate colonial trade. In 1729, Nantes accounted for forty-one percent of French trade with the colonies, while Bordeaux only contributed twenty-three percent. Yet, by 1743, Bordeaux had pulled ahead of Nantes, providing thirty-two percent of France's overall colonial trade compared to twenty-two percent in Nantes. By 1770, the imbalance had increased even further: fifty-five percent for Bordeaux compared to twelve percent for Nantes.⁵⁶ Between the years 1787 and 1789, Bordelais traders sent an average of 222 ships per year to the West Indies while their competitors from Nantes sent only ninety-five ships.⁵⁷

By the end of the Old Regime, Bordeaux was the preeminent port for trade with the colonies. No other French port city came close to matching Bordeaux's supremacy. In 1789, the total value of colonial trade between Bordeaux and the French West Indies equaled 112 million *livres*. In Nantes, the trade was worth fifty million *livres*; in Marseilles and Le Havre colonial trade was valued at forty-six million *livres* each.⁵⁸

It is important to note, however, that while Bordeaux did not participate in the slave trade to nearly the degree that Nantes did, it is incorrect to assume that the Bordelais did not benefit from slavery and slave labor. The large sugar and coffee

⁵⁶ Crouzet, "La croissance économique," p. 202.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

plantations were based almost exclusively on slave labor. Thus while Bordelais traders did not play a major role in the slave trade itself until the last years of the Old Regime, the entire city of Bordeaux reaped enormous profits from the colonial trade. As a result, Bordelais traders and merchants assiduously fought calls for abolition of slavery or of the slave trade throughout the century.

OPULENCE DES NÉGOCIANTS

With overseas trade to the colonies in high gear by the middle of the century, the city was experiencing an unprecedented economic boom. Trade and profits were at all-time highs and as we might expect, it was Bordeaux's merchant community that reaped the lion's share of benefits. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the city's merchants were achieving levels of wealth and prosperity unknown in the city's history. By 1750, at least sixty Bordelais merchants were multi-millionaires.⁵⁹

Among them were such notable figures as François Bonnaffé, by 1791 the richest man in Bordeaux, and perhaps one of the greatest success stories of the century.⁶⁰ Born into a Protestant family in Lacaune, Bonnaffé moved to Bordeaux in 1740 at the age of seventeen in the hopes of participating in the city's economic good fortunes. He apprenticed with a *courtier*, paying 300 *livres* per year for his apprenticeship, food, and board.⁶¹ By 1791, Bonnaffé was estimated to have had fifteen

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Henri Sée, *Economic and Social Conditions in France During the Eighteenth Century*, trans by Edwin H. Zeydel (New York, 1968) p. 151. The wealth and social standing of Bordeaux's merchants and overseas traders will be examined in greater detail in chapter 5.

⁶⁰ For the best account of Bonnaffé's life see E. Bonnaffé, *Bordeaux il y a cents ans (un armateur bordelais, sa famille et son entourage), 1740-1809* (Paris, 1887). See also J.P. Poussou, "Structures démographiques et sociales," in Pariset, *Bordeaux au XVIIIe siècle*, p. 350; and Forrest, *Society and Politics*, pp. 9-10.

⁶¹ Forrest, *Society and Politics*, p. 10.

million *livres* invested in land, two ships, and twenty-three homes along with six million *livres* in cash.⁶²

There was also David Gradis and his nephew Abraham, leaders of the local Bordelais Jewish community and the founders of a great mercantile dynasty. David Gradis began participating in overseas trade in 1722, shipping wine, flour, and salted beef to the West Indies and returning with sugar and coffee. During the Seven Years' War, when most other traders were afraid to send their ships out into the teeth of the British navy, David Gradis established the *Société de Canada* and provided regular ship service to and from Canada throughout the entire course of the War.⁶³ Though Gradis did not live to see the end of the War, his trading firm made over nine million *livres* by supplying Quebec with necessities. In 1751, his nephew Abraham took over the business and the family continued to prosper. Though Jews were forbidden to own land in the West Indies, letters patent issued by the monarchy in 1779 gave the family special permission to buy large tracts of land in Saint Domingue and Martinique.⁶⁴

Other prominent merchants able to amass impressive fortunes over the course of the eighteenth century were Paul Nairac, worth an estimated two million *livres*; Pierre Pellet with 1.8 million *livres*; Antoine Auger, had a fortune worth 1.5 million *livres*; and Phillippe Nairac had assets worth one million *livres*.⁶⁵ But the “nouveaux-riches” -- as the merchants were often derisively referred to by the city's more traditional, and usually poorer, social elites -- were not content to merely accumulate mass fortunes.⁶⁶

⁶² Poussou, "Structures démographiques et sociales," p. 350.

⁶³ Arthur Hertzberg, *The French Enlightenment and the Jews* (New York, 1968) p. 89. On the Gradis family, see also Henry Gradis, *Notice sur la famille Gradis et sur la maison Gradis et fils de Bordeaux* (Bordeaux, 1875).

⁶⁴ Hertzberg, *The French Enlightenment*, p. 92.

⁶⁵ Butel, *Les négociants bordelais*, p. 281.

⁶⁶ Forrest, *Society and Politics*, p. 8.

Rather, many of the city's prominent merchant families moved quickly to convert their wealth into outward displays of their newfound prosperity by building bigger and ever more luxurious *hôtels*. As Arthur Young noted in his journal on August 26, 1787:

The new houses that are building in all quarters of the town mark, too clearly to be misunderstood, the prosperity of the place. The skirts are everywhere composed of new streets; with still newer ones marked out, and partly built... They are all of white stone, and add, as they are finished, much to the beauty of the city. I inquired into the date of these new streets, and found that four or five years were in general the period.⁶⁷

The new merchant homes were built on such a grand size and scale as to send a clear and unambiguous message to the world: Bordeaux's merchants had arrived, they were men of consequence, wealth, and good taste. As Doyle has noted, the new homes were also built to rival the spacious mansions of the city's aristocracy, oftentimes employing the very same architects.⁶⁸ "Both [aristocrats and merchants] lived on a spacious, comfortable scale," Doyle writes, "behind discreet screens and coach gates, in houses liberally endowed with salons, libraries, and well appointed amenities."⁶⁹

While it may have been getting more and more difficult to tell merchant homes from aristocratic ones, as Doyle claims, occasionally merchants did manage to build homes that stood out from the rest. François Bonnaffé's home was one such notable example. Though he owned twenty-three of them, the mansion built in the center of the city, on the *Place de la Comédie*, where *rue Sainte-Catherine* met *cours du Chapeau Rouge*, was the biggest and most sumptuous house in Bordeaux. "Bonnaffé's Island" as the house was called, was designed by the renowned architect Laclotte, took up three city blocks, and was taller than the nearby *Grand-Théâtre*. This was by design. The

⁶⁷ A. Young, *Travels in France and Italy*, (New York, 1929) p. 60.

⁶⁸ Doyle, *The Parlement of Bordeaux*, p. 112.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

merchant instructed Laclotte to build a house that overshadowed the *Théâtre*, supposedly saying "I want to crush it."⁷⁰

Other merchant *hôtels* were also notable for their size and opulence. Lying between the *Théâtre* and the river was the "îlot Louis," a block of town houses built between 1774 and 1778 by Victor Louis for some of the city's wealthiest merchants. François-Armand Saige, the merchant and future mayor of Bordeaux (1791-1793), had his residence here, which resembled a Roman palace done in the neo-classical style.⁷¹ Doyle reports that the house, which took five years to build, cost Saige about 4,000 *livres* a month in construction costs.⁷² Occupying the first house in the row was the overseas trader, ship owner, and future Girondin leader Jean Boyer-Fonfrède. His house was remarkable for its massive staircase, which spiraled up three flights, "seemingly unsupported, in a single, uninterrupted movement."⁷³ So well known had the staircase become that Boyer-Fonfrède once received a letter simply addressed "to Monsieur Fonfrède, on his beautiful staircase, Bordeaux."⁷⁴ Finally, Paul Nairac - the wealthy Protestant ship owner, trader, and future member of the Constituent Assembly in Paris - had his Victor Louis *hôtel* on *place Tourny* near the *Jardin Public*.⁷⁵

Though many of the merchants were content to mimic the size and style of aristocratic homes, they appeared to be quite unwilling to live next to them. While the city's aristocrats traditionally had their homes in the narrow streets around the Palais, and their country estates to which they retired in the summer in order to tend the

⁷⁰ The quote is from F.-G. Pariset, "Le Bordeaux de Boucher et de Tourny," in Pariset, ed., *Bordeaux au XVIIIe siècle*, p. 640. See pages 639-640 and Planche XXIII for a description and photo of "Bonnaffé's Island."

⁷¹ Délie Muller and Jean-Yves Boscher, *Bordeaux* (Bordeaux, 1998) p. 52.

⁷² Doyle, *The Parlement of Bordeaux*, pp. 110-11.

⁷³ Muller and Boscher, *Bordeaux*, p. 52.

⁷⁴ Paul Butel, *Vivre à Bordeaux sous l'Ancien Régime* (Paris, 1999) p. 192.

vineyards, the newly rich merchants preferred streets around Saint-Catherine or better yet, in the Chartrons district.⁷⁶ Located along the banks of the Garonne on the outskirts of the city, Chartrons became over the course of the eighteenth century the quarter in which merchants preferred to live and do business. It was removed from the noise and congestion of the port and was located near to the fashionable *Jardin Public*.⁷⁷

Merchants also went their own way when it came to escaping the bustle of city life. The estates of the city's aristocrats were concentrated in the area of land to the west of the city between Lesparre and Langon, and to the east of the city in the fertile Entre-Deux-Mers region. In contrast, merchants instead chose to build their retreats in the *faubourg* Saint-Seurin, a quiet area where the city met the country, or in Mérignac, situated to the west of the aristocratic country enclaves located between Lesparre and Langon (which today is home to Bordeaux's International Airport). As the abbé Baurein wrote in the 1780s:

If the Parish of Mérignac is populated and cultivated it is not to its soil that it is indebted.... It is only in its vicinity to the city of Bordeaux that it owes its popularity. A merchant, in particular, who has some sense, is very pleased to have a country house, where he can go in the morning and return in the evening or even spend a few days there for recreation; but that supposes a certain affluence...⁷⁸

THE RIPPLE EFFECT

In the eighteenth century every sector of the city's economy was dependent on overseas trade. As long as trade flourished, the city prospered and it was not just the merchants who benefited. The strength and vitality of the city's port contributed to a

⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 69.

⁷⁶ On the location of aristocratic homes see Forrest, *Society and Politics* p. 8, and Doyle, *The Parlement of Bordeaux*, pp. 65-85 and 106-12. On aristocrats as cultivators see Doyle, *The Parlement of Bordeaux* pp. 86-101 and Robert Forster, "The noble wine-producers of the Bordelais in the eighteenth century," *Economic Historical Review* 14 (1961).

general sense of vibrancy and well being among virtually all sectors of the Bordeaux economy. A ripple effect took place which benefited those groups who relied directly on the port for their livelihood, as well as those only tangentially reliant upon trade.

As might be expected, those who derived direct employment from the port benefited from the growth in overseas trade. Sailors, dockers, pilots and the unskilled laborers who loaded and unloaded the ships were all experiencing growth and a rise in wages.⁷⁹ So too were those groups responsible for outfitting the ships, such as rope workers, sail makers, coopers, and carpenters.⁸⁰

The city's industrial base also flourished. Though never industrialized to the same extent as Lyon or Rouen, Bordeaux did develop the industrial capacity it needed to support overseas trade. Indeed, as Allan Forrest has noted, the city's industrial base, like most other sectors of the Bordeaux economy in the eighteenth century, was developed and almost wholly determined by the needs of the trading community.⁸¹ The sugar refining industry grew to meet the demand of rising sugar imports. Shipbuilding also experienced similar growth. By the end of the Old Regime, the shipyards of Bordeaux were employing 800 men, who were able to produce twenty-five new ships per year.⁸² In addition to shipbuilding and sugar refining, by 1791 the city was also home to twenty-four rope works factories, which employed 400 workers producing the ropes and cables needed to outfit mercantile expeditions.⁸³

⁷⁷ Forrest, *Society and Politics*, p. 7-8.

⁷⁸ Quoted in Doyle, *The Parlement of Bordeaux*, p. 66.

⁷⁹ Jean-Pierre Poussou, *Bordeaux et le sud-ouest au XVIIIe siècle: croissance économique et attraction urbaine* (Paris, 1983), especially chapter 1; Forrest, *Society and Politics*, p. 16.

⁸⁰ Forrest, *Society and Politics*, p. 16.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Crouzet, "Le commerce de Bordeaux," pp. 278-80.

⁸³ Forrest, *Society and Politics*, p. 16.

The growth in the city's overseas trade and the accompanying economic boom also provided a boost to indirect employment as well. The propensity on the part of merchants to build increasingly larger *hôtels*, further from the city center, not only provided employment for the city's architects, masons, and builders, but also provided work for a range of domestic employees; coachmen's services were increasingly in demand to shuttle merchants back and forth between the city and suburbs; gardeners were needed to tend to the outside of mansions while maids, cooks, and other personal attendants were employed to tend to the insides.⁸⁴

As levels of incomes and profits were rising around the city, so too was spending, and as Doyle has noted, the city was in the grip of a "hectic atmosphere of money-making and money spending."⁸⁵ The direct beneficiaries of all the money spending that took place were the city's artisans, shop owners, and especially those involved in the luxury trades. François de la Rochefoucauld, upon visiting the city in 1783, commented that "luxury is enormous in everything," while Arthur Young noted that "the mode of living that takes place among the merchants is highly luxurious."⁸⁶ As a result, clockmakers, wigmakers, goldsmiths and jewelers proliferated around the Chamber of Commerce and the Bourse, places where they were most likely to attract the eye of wealthy patrons.⁸⁷ Hat makers, stocking makers and soap manufacturers all experienced growth and vitality during this period as well.

In addition to providing the engine that drove the city's economy, the economic boom centered on the port also stimulated a concomitant growth in Bordeaux's

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁸⁵ Doyle, *The Parlement of Bordeaux*, p. 2.

⁸⁶ Both quotes can be found in Poussou, "Les structures démographiques et sociales," p. 347.

⁸⁷ On the growth in the luxury trades see Poussou, *Bordeaux et le sud-ouest*, p. 28, and

population. In 1700, the city's population stood at about 45,000. Bordeaux was the eighth largest city in France with a population that had roughly doubled in size over the previous two hundred years. Yet, in the course of the eighteenth century, the population more than doubled again, reaching 60,000 in 1750 and 110,000 by 1790.⁸⁸ The city had the fastest growth rate for any town in France, and by the Revolution ranked third in size, behind only Paris and Lyon.

While some of this growth can be attributed to natural population increases, the great bulk of it was largely due to an influx of immigrants seeking to participate in, and reap the benefits of, a robust economy. The immigrants who came to the city over the course of the century were a diverse group. As Jean-Pierre Poussou has demonstrated, the distance immigrants traveled to Bordeaux was a strong indicator of their social standing, and a predictor of their future economic success in the city.⁸⁹ Thirty percent of the immigrant population in the eighteenth century came to Bordeaux from the rural areas immediately surrounding the city. This group was overwhelmingly poor and comprised of unskilled laborers hoping to get employment in the city's factories, at the port, or as domestic employees. Another thirty percent of immigrants came from a distance of between forty and one hundred fifty kilometers. This group tended to be more socially mixed, with both unskilled laborers and skilled artisans and craftsmen. The majority of immigrants however, forty percent, came to Bordeaux from a distance of over 150 kilometers. Coming from areas such as Perigord, Auvergne, Limousin, and from abroad, those who came the farthest also had the highest number of professionals, including men who would prove instrumental to Bordeaux's rise in the overseas trade

Forrest, *Society and Politics*, p. 12.

⁸⁸ Poussou, "Les structures démographiques et sociales," p. 325.

market.⁹⁰ Bonnaffé had arrived from the Cévennes to seek his fortune, and other merchants came from as far away as Ireland and the German states.

Indeed, Poussou and others have been careful to qualify the cause and effect relationship between Bordeaux's economic success and immigration. While there is no doubt that immigrants were attracted to the city because of its strong economy, it is equally true that immigrants were a major factor driving the city's success.⁹¹ Foreign merchant families who had made Bordeaux their home, like the Schroder and Schyler families from Germany, or the Barton and Cruse families from Ireland, played a crucial part in Bordeaux's economic rise. Their wide-ranging commercial and familial ties were instrumental in making the city the leader in the three-legged trade between Bordeaux, the West Indies and Europe.

One distinct advantage that Bordeaux had over other French port cities in attracting foreign merchants was a comparatively good record of religious toleration. As Crouzet has noted, the religious persecution of Huguenots following the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 was never very intense in Bordeaux.⁹² The city lost very few Protestant merchants and in fact, attracted many from the nearby Protestant strongholds of Languedoc, Auvergne, the Cévennes, and Clermont-Ferrand. Moreover, many of the Irish, Dutch, and Germans who came to the city in the eighteenth century were themselves Protestants.⁹³ By the middle of the eighteenth century there were as many as 4,000 Protestants living in Bordeaux. Crouzet has argued that Bordeaux

⁸⁹ Ibid., pp. 333-37 and Poussou, *Bordeaux et le sud-ouest*, chapter 1.

⁹⁰ Poussou, "Les structures démographiques et sociales," pp. 333-37.

⁹¹ In addition to Poussou, Paul Butel and François Crouzet also make this point. See Poussou "Les structures démographiques et sociales," pp. 333-39; Butel, *Les négociants bordelais*, pp. 152-63; and Crouzet, "Bordeaux: An Eighteenth Century *Wirtschaftswunder*?" p. 51.

⁹² Crouzet, "Bordeaux: An Eighteenth Century *Wirtschaftswunder*?" pp. 50-51.

⁹³ Poussou, "Les structures démographiques et sociales," pp. 338-41.

became one of the bases of the Huguenot International "which spread its tentacles over Europe and which played a most important part in eighteenth-century international trade and banking."⁹⁴

The same religious toleration that encouraged Protestant immigration also provided a relatively safe haven for Jewish merchants. Sephardic Jews from Portugal first began settling in Bordeaux in the sixteenth century when Henry II granted permission to "the merchants and other Portuguese called new Christians," to relocate to France.⁹⁵ In 1615, however, Louis XIII demanded that the nation's Jews leave the country. The Parlement of Bordeaux, recognizing the importance of the local Jewish community in the business affairs of the city, successfully prevented the king's edict from being executed and the city's 260 Jews were allowed to remain.⁹⁶ Throughout the seventeenth century, the Jews of Bordeaux thrived in local business and commercial pursuits and, despite the occasional resentment from other merchants - who saw the Jews as economic competitors more than religious enemies - experienced high degrees of acculturation. By 1686, the Bordelais Jews ceased baptizing their children and by 1707 they were overtly practicing Judaism. In 1723, the Sephardic Jews of Bordeaux were officially recognized by the state as a *nation* and given rights and privileges like other corporate bodies of the Old Regime.⁹⁷ Like the city's Protestants, Bordelais Jews took advantage of their far-ranging familial contacts to excel in business. Jewish merchant families such as Gradis, Raba, and Furtado played key roles in the colonial

⁹⁴ Crouzet, "Bordeaux: An Eighteenth Century *Wirtschaftswunder*?" pp. 50-51.

⁹⁵ Quoted in Hertzberg, *The French Enlightenment and the Jews*, p. 16.

⁹⁶ Frances Malino, *The Sephardic Jews of Bordeaux: Assimilation and Emancipation in Revolutionary and Napoleonic France* (Alabama, 1978) p. 4.

⁹⁷ Hertzberg, *The French Enlightenment*, p. 12. See also Théophile Malvezin, *Histoire des Juifs à Bordeaux* (Bordeaux, 1875).

trade. The city's sugar refineries were almost wholly-owned by Jews. By the end of the eighteenth century there were as many as 1500 Jews living in Bordeaux.⁹⁸

The final ingredient that went into Bordeaux's profound transformation over the course of the eighteenth century was the growth in the physical city itself. The enormous influx of immigrants was in part responsible for the building boom that gripped the city over much of the century. As already noted, the bulk of the immigrant population was poor and the building of new districts in the city to accommodate them led to social segregation. As Forrest has noted, by the time of the revolution, 75 percent of the population, including the overwhelming majority of the city's poor, were crammed into five of the city's fourteen parishes.⁹⁹ While the poorer parishes had as many as 19,000 people apiece, the three parishes that comprised the tony city center had less than 2,000 inhabitants each.¹⁰⁰

Meanwhile, as the newly rich merchants were embarking on an unprecedented building spree that demonstrated their wealth and good taste, their efforts were being matched on a citywide scale by the provincial intendants. It was the "*grands administrateurs*" – especially Tourny (1743-57) – who saw to it that the city's commercial wealth, dynamism, and prestige was reflected in its buildings, streets and open spaces. Tourny's goal was nothing short of making Bordeaux into "the most

⁹⁸ While the city's Sephardic Jewish community did well economically and achieved a high degree of assimilation, Ashkenazi Jews, largely from Avignon and the German states had a more difficult time. The Ashkenazi Jews tended to be poorer than the Sephardic Jews and this created tensions between the two groups. Sephardic Jews saw themselves as socially superior and came to resent their poorer relatives. When the Jews from Avignon were expelled from the city in 1735, the Sephardic community did nothing to help them. Still, by 1750, the Intendant Tourny believed there was no difference between Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews and granted the former the same privileges of the latter. See Hertzberg, *The French Enlightenment*, pp. 93-99 and Malvezin, *Histoire des Juifs à Bordeaux*, pp. 188-211.

⁹⁹ Forrest, *Society and Politics*, p. 11.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

beautiful city in the kingdom.”¹⁰¹ To accomplish that he commenced grandiose building projects which transformed the city from a crowded and decrepit medieval town into a modern city. It was Tourny too, and to a lesser extent Dupré de Saint-Maur (1776-85), who was most responsible for reshaping the city by broadening its boulevards, creating a fashionable “downtown” area at Chapeau Rouge lined with shops and cafés, and adding new public spaces like the *Jardin Public*. It was also Tourny who commissioned Victor Louis to build the *Grand Théâtre*. Completed in 1779, the theatre was considered by many, including Arthur Young “by far the most magnificent in France. I have seen nothing that approaches it.”¹⁰²

THE GOLDEN AGE COMES TO AN END

The eighteenth century represented a golden age for Bordeaux. As overseas trade flourished so too did the rest of the economy. But the three maritime wars of the century, especially the Seven Years' War, and the economic slumps that they brought, showed the Bordelais how fragile their economic expansion could be. With the entire city's economy propped up by the port, the slightest perturbation in overseas trade was felt throughout the city. Unfortunately, the economic setbacks suffered during the wars were a mere taste of what was to come. In the few short years following the Revolution, Bordeaux would be dealt a series of economic blows from which the city would never wholly recover. The Revolution brought war once again with the British in 1793; the Terror decimated the merchant population of the city; the 1791 slave revolt in Saint Domingue and subsequent Haitian Revolution forever ended Bordeaux's domination of

¹⁰¹ Quoted in J.P. Poussou, "Le développement urbaine de Bordeaux au XVIIIe siècle," in Butel and Cullen, eds., *Cities and Merchants: French and Irish Perspectives on Urban Development, 1500-1900* (Dublin, 1986). On the city's numerous building projects see Pariset, "Le Bordeaux de Boucher et de Tourny," in *Bordeaux au XVIIIe siècle*, pp. 533-54.

colonial trade; and the Napoleonic era brought twenty more years of war with the British. Bordeaux was never again a serious force in the world economic market.¹⁰³ In

March 1808, the American Consul in Bordeaux described the city in stark terms:

From the Baltic to the Archipelago nothing but despair and misery is to be seen. Grass is growing in the streets of this city [Bordeaux]. Its beautiful port is deserted except for two Marblehead fishing schooners and three or four empty vessels which swing on the tide.¹⁰⁴

The city's population, on the rise throughout the eighteenth century, began a steady decline, and by 1806 had dwindled from a high of 111,000 residents to just 93,000. The nineteenth century failed to bring a return to the prosperity of the preceding century.

Bordeaux did not fully embrace industrialism like their competitors in Liverpool, Le Havre and Antwerp, and it paid an economic price for it. The city fell back on what it had been prior to the eighteenth century: the supplier of the world's finest clarets.

Ironically, over the course of the eighteenth century, while colonial trade was growing by leaps and bounds and fueling concurrent population and building booms, wine exports were quietly, almost imperceptibly growing by fifty-six percent, and reaching new markets especially in Hamburg, Lubeck, and Stettin. It would be the city's traditional economic base which proved to be the most enduring.

Yet, on August 1, 1758, when Jacques and Antoine Labottière launched the *Affiches de Bordeaux*, those troubles were all still decades away.

¹⁰² Young, *Travels in France*, p. 57.

¹⁰³ Crouzet, "Bordeaux: An Eighteenth Century *Wirtschaftswunder*?" p. 56.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in Paul Butel, "Revolution and the Urban Economy: Maritime Cities and Continental Cities," in Alan Forrest and Peter Jones, eds, *Reshaping France: Town, Country and Region during the French Revolution* (Manchester, 1991) p. 41.

THE LABOTTIÈRE BROTHERS

By the middle of the eighteenth century, Bordeaux's economic boom made the founding of a local paper inevitable. All the Labottière brothers had to do was stand out in front of their book and printing shop on the *place du Palais* to recognize the city's need for a local newspaper. If they did stand outside their shop they would have stepped out into the middle of all the activity, chaos, and palpable energy that engulfed the city in the 1750s. They would have seen magistrates, *avocats*, and their clients streaming past every day on their way to the *Parlement*, located around the corner.¹⁰⁵ From their vantage point on the *place du Palais* they could also see the *Bourse* and the powerful *Chambre de Commerce*, which brought the city's great merchants and businessmen into the area.¹⁰⁶ The area was also a convenient meeting place for those picking up the mail, which came into the *place Royale* from Paris. Closer to their shop were boutiques of all stripes lining both sides of the street. Their immediate neighbors were a *parfumerie* that was usually crowded with shoppers looking to buy all variety of *objets de toilette*, and a barbershop.¹⁰⁷ In effect, the Labottière brothers were surrounded by much of their future clientèle. From this ideal vantage point in the heart of the city, where the commercial and legal districts met, it was clear to the Labottière brothers that a newspaper like the kind that already existed in Lyon would thrive in Bordeaux; a paper that supplied accurate, timely and useful information to traders and merchants, united a vast web of buyers and sellers, and provided publicity for the city's doctors, lawyers, and other professionals.

¹⁰⁵ Ernest Labadie, *La Presse bordelais pendant la Révolution* (Bordeaux, 1910) p. 15.

FAMILY HISTORY

If Bordeaux was perfectly suited to have its own newspaper, then the Labottière brothers were equally well suited to be the publishers and editors of that paper. The Labottière name was well known and respected throughout the province. By the time the first edition of the *Affiches de Bordeaux* was printed on August 1, 1758, the Labottière family had been established in the region as master printers and booksellers for a century. Jacques and Antoine's great-grandfather François Labottière was a bookseller in Lyon in the seventeenth century.¹⁰⁸ Their grandfather Claude Labottière opened a book and printing shop in La Réole in 1682. His primary customers were the exiled Parlement de Bordeaux. When the *parlement* was allowed to return to Bordeaux in 1690, Claude moved his shop to the city too. In Bordeaux he started a small printing and bookshop on *rue Sainte-Colombe* and shortly thereafter moved into a larger space on the *place du Palais*.¹⁰⁹ It was there that the family business thrived.

Claude Labottière died in 1713, and his three sons, Charles, Raymond, and Etienne, took over the family business. The three brothers shortly added shops in Bayonne and La Réole to the one their father had started in Bordeaux. It fell to Raymond to run the shop on the *place du Palais*.

By 1750, Raymond's two sons - Antoine, born in 1715, and Jacques, born in 1717 - had joined their father in the business. Jacques had become a master bookseller and Antoine a master printer. By the time Jacques and Antoine went to work for their father, the shop on the *place du Palais* had become one of the largest and most

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ernest. Labadie, *Notices Biographiques sur les Imprimeurs et Libraires Bordelais des XVIe, XVIIe, et XVIIIe siècles*, (Bordeaux, 1890) pp. 48-52.

important printing and bookselling houses in the city. They employed six people to run two printing presses, and did all the printing for the local College of the Jesuits. As Jane McLeod has noted, the Labottière's shop also served as a quasi-salon, a social gathering place where people could come to read and discuss books before they purchased them.¹¹⁰ According to a police report, the shop was the "meeting place of writers. Consequently, much of the world comes there every day to get their mail and learn the news."¹¹¹

When their father died in 1754, Jacques and Antoine took over the family shop on the *place du Palais*.

THE ORIGINS OF A LOCAL PAPER

It is impossible to know exactly when Jacques and Antoine got the idea to start the sort of local paper that had been in existence in Lyon since 1750. The idea of providing Bordelais readers with local content had been of interest to the brothers at least as far back as 1750 when they printed the short lived *Le Courrier de la Garonne* which was nothing more than reprints of the *Gazette de Leyde* with a few local announcements added in.¹¹² The only other attempt to provide local news was the *Pamphlet Maritime*, started by the merchant Jean Duforest in 1750. The *Pamphlet* focused on the port, publishing the arrival and departures of ships. According to Ernest Labadie, the *Pamphlet* was not a paper at all but rather a poster that was tacked up in a

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Jane McLeod, "A Bookseller in Revolutionary Bordeaux," *French Historical Studies* 16 (Fall, 1989): 264-65.

¹¹¹ Quoted in Ibid., p. 265.

¹¹² Labadie, *La Presse bordelais*, pp. 8-9.

few places around the city, most often at the *Bourse* and *l'Hôtel des Fermes*.¹¹³ Over the next few years it was printed infrequently and finally disappeared altogether by 1758.¹¹⁴

That was the year Jacques and Antoine Labottière asked for and received permission to begin publishing Bordeaux's first local paper, *Les Affiches de Bordeaux*.¹¹⁵ The brothers' paper concerned itself primarily with local matters. The paper was a local institution both in outlook and orientation. It was designed for local consumption. It was intended to serve the everyday needs of the city's burgeoning commercial sector as well as to provide news and information on the cultural and intellectual life of the city.

Jacques became the primary editor of the paper, and Antoine its publisher. To collect the material that filled each week's edition - the information on ship movements, meetings at the academy, news from the parliament, etc - the brothers established a *bureau d'avis* in their printing and bookshop. They also attracted three well-known Bordelais to help with the writing. Fortuné Sticotti was a commissioner at the customs office and a bibliophile with an immense library. Jean-Jacques Bulotte was known for organizing concerts at his *pension* and, after 1784, for teaching courses on grammar in the Musée. Finally, there was Marie de Saint-Georges, an *avocat au Parlement de Bordeaux*.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Ibid., pp. 9-10.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ During the twenty-six years the Labottière brothers published their paper, the name changed slightly only three times. The January 3, 1760 edition carried the new name *Annonces, Affiches, Nouvelles et Avis Divers pour la ville de Bordeaux*. By the end of the decade the paper was called *Annonces, Affiches, et Avis Divers pour la Ville de Bordeaux*, and later on it was simply shortened to *Affiches de Bordeaux, Annonces, &c.* I use the catchall term *Affiches de Bordeaux* to refer to the brother's paper.

¹¹⁶ Labadie provides a very short biographical sketch of these three men in Labadie, *La Presse bordelais*, pp. 17-18.

From the very first edition of the *Affiches de Bordeaux*, the brothers made it clear to readers that the paper was to be a collaborative effort. The first edition of every new year contained the following invitation:

We invite Men of Letters to communicate their manuscripts to us, and Merchants to announce their observations to us, concerning Articles of trade, so that we can make our Paper more and more useful and pleasant.

The brothers were fortunate enough to have an extensive network of friends, family, and connections to tap into in order to collect material for their paper. Their family ties ran deep in the world of publishing and bookselling in Bordeaux. In 1758, when Jacques and Antoine began publishing their paper, there were three other Labottière owned and operated book and printing shops in Bordeaux: their uncles Charles and Etienne ran local bookshops, while their cousin Louis-Guillaume, Etienne's son, was a printer and bookseller.¹¹⁷ The brothers also had two female cousins who had married into the nobility, as well as relatives in Paris and the West Indies.¹¹⁸ In addition to their family ties, the brothers also had an extensive network of friends and acquaintances. Both Jacques and Antoine were educated at the Collège of the Jesuits, which meant that they studied with the sons of the city's lawyers, notaries and wealthier merchants.¹¹⁹ As McLeod has noted, in mid-eighteenth century Bordeaux, the place where a student was educated was instrumental in establishing social status as well as cementing relationships between families and friends.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Labadie, *Notices Biographiques*, pp. 48-52.

¹¹⁸ Jane McLeod, "A Social Study of Printers and Booksellers in Bordeaux from 1745 to 1810," (Ph.D diss. York University, Toronto, 1987) p. 253.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 247-49.

FAMILY PROSPERITY

Like the city in which they lived, the Labottière brothers prospered over the course of the eighteenth century. In the years after establishing the *Affiches de Bordeaux*, the brothers' business expanded to include printing for the *Cour des Aides*, shipping books to the West Indies, and attaining the rights to sell the *Gazette de Leyde*. By the 1770s, Jacques and Antoine were running the largest printing and bookselling business in Bordeaux, and by the 1780s they were the richest printers and booksellers in the city.¹²¹

Like the city's wealthy merchants, the Labottière brothers took a portion of their profits and invested in land. Jacques and Antoine bought a large plot of land in the suburb of Le Bouscat and hired the celebrated architect Etienne Laclotte to build the house. The brothers' grand country home, replete with a room for their printing presses so they could carry on business while away from their shop, was completed in 1773. Pariset notes that the *château* Labottière, set in an elegant French garden, its loggia formed between two massive columns, and its covered terraces, perfectly captured the wealth and opulence of Bordeaux at the height of its economic expansion. Indeed, an exact copy of the brother's home can be found in New York City, where it is home to NYU's History of Art Institute.¹²²

THE AFFICHES DE BORDEAUX: FORMAT AND CONTENT

The *Affiches de Bordeaux* began publication on August 1, 1758. It was a four-page sheet that came out every Thursday at noon. The paper was available only by a yearly subscription that cost either 6 or 9 *livres* depending on where the subscriber

¹²⁰ Ibid.

lived. On January 3, 1783 the paper switched to a bi-weekly publishing schedule, coming out on Tuesdays and Fridays. The increase in periodicity also brought the first price increase in the paper's history: to 9 or 12 *livres* per annum. The paper ceased publication on July 30, 1784.

Like all publications in the Old Regime, the *Affiches* was censored. Each week a copy of the paper was sent to the Intendant who had to approve the content before it could be distributed. The *Affiches* was forbidden from printing anything that could be deemed critical of religion, morals, or the monarchy. The first year of the paper's life was a heady time for international and political crises: French forces suffered reverses in West Africa and Canada at the hands of the British in the continuing Seven Years' War, and at home there was the on-going Jansenist controversy. Yet, one would never know it from reading the *Affiches de Bordeaux*. The Labottière brothers avoided anything that smacked of politics.

In 1777, Jacques and Antoine Labottière were reminded of why it was important not to publish anything deemed offensive to the government. That was the year the brothers became the exclusive printers for the *Cour des Aides*, a financial court with sovereign jurisdiction. On March 29 and again on April 5, 1777, the Labottière brothers published *Remonstrances*, which the court wrote intended for the king. This was illegal. Communications between the king and "his" *parlements* were not meant for public consumption. The brothers were fined 500 *livres* and had their printing presses impounded for two months.¹²³ The new intendant of Bordeaux, Dupré de Saint-Maur,

¹²¹ Ibid., pp. 281-82.

¹²² Pariset, "Le Bordeaux de Victor Louis," p. 640. For a picture of the chateau see Planche XIII.

¹²³ Ad-Gironde, *Arrêt du Conseil d'État du Roi*, C3315.

ultimately intervened on the brothers' behalf and had their fine reduced and their equipment returned.

ECONOMIC CONTENT

THE PORT

The paper's primary function was economic. Its goal was to help facilitate and increase the city's economy by supplying readers with accurate commercial information and by bringing together a web of buyers and sellers. By the time the *Affiches de Bordeaux* began printing, Bordeaux had been the nation's leading port for almost twenty years. The port was the center of the city's economic universe, and not surprisingly, it was also the center of attention for the paper. The *Affiches* devoted a great deal of energy and space to covering events at the port and the paper quickly proved to be an invaluable asset to the city's merchants and traders, who relied on the port for their livelihood.¹²⁴ Half the space the paper devoted to economic matters - about 25 percent of the total of each edition - was filled with details of ships entering or exiting the port, ship's cargo, and either their previous port of call or final destinations.

The *Affiches* covered the port in two distinct ways. First, in the section entitled *Mouvements des navires*, the paper provided readers with information on ship traffic in the port. Each week the paper would carry notices for ships entering or leaving the port. By 1758 some 2,500 ships per year were making the 110-kilometer journey from the mouth of the Garonne River on the Atlantic to the Gironde, the estuary of the Garonne

¹²⁴ Prior to 1758 and the arrival of the *Affiches de Bordeaux*, the city's merchants and traders had go to numerous places such as the *Chambre de Commerce*, the *Ferme Générale*, or the *Amirauté de Guyenne*, to get the equivalent information supplied in the *affiches*. See Paul Butel, *Chambre de Commerce*, p. 73.

that lay just south of the city.¹²⁵ Since there were no piers, newly arriving ships sat out in the port while smaller and lighter vessels shuttled back and forth loading and unloading cargo. Cargo that had just been off-loaded was put on oxen-drawn carriages and usually taken either to the refineries or to storage bins in the Chartrons.

The *Affiches* assiduously covered all of this activity and reported it faithfully to its readers. Each week the paper provided readers with a list of ships arriving at the port (lists sometimes included up to 30 different ships a week) along with ship's cargo, the captain's name, and previous port-of-call. For example:

La Cotte de Nippe, of Bordeaux, Captain Monsieur Guillocheau, coming from Saint-Domingue, full of sugar, coffee and indigo.¹²⁶

Le Jeune Etienne, Captain Monsieur Cambon Dumaini, coming from Saint-Domingue, full of sugar, coffee, and indigo.¹²⁷

Notices for ship departures differed slightly. Ships leaving port often had room to carry passengers, and ship owners used the pages of the paper to solicit customers. On September 29, 1774, for example, the paper announced the arrival from Saint Domingue of *La Sympothie*, a Bordelais ship, loaded with sugar, cotton, coffee, and indigo. In the following week's paper, this notice appeared, placed by the ship's owner, soliciting passengers as well as cargo for the return voyage:

La Sympathie, Captain Hince, with a capacity of 348 tons, will leave the 20th or 25th of October, for *le Cap*; this ship is very convenient for Passengers: inquiries about passage or sending freight can be addressed to Monsieur *Lahens aîné*.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ According to François Crouzet, between 1720-24, an average of 2,632 ships per year cleared out of Bordeaux. For the period 1785-1789 the yearly average had risen to 2,865. Crouzet, "Bordeaux: An Eighteenth Century *Wirtschaftswunder*?" p. 43.

¹²⁶ January 2, 1772.

¹²⁷ November 17, 1774

¹²⁸ October 6, 1774.

During wartime, mercantile trade routes were severely disrupted and any ship leaving Bordeaux faced a potentially lethal run-in with the British navy. As a response to the threat, Bordelais merchants adopted a variety of strategies. Ships frequently traveled in convoys, or were escorted by the French navy. Bonnaffé earned the nickname "Lucky" during the American War of Independence because his merchant fleet was able to outsmart and avoid British forces.¹²⁹ Merchants also took to arming their ships. These notices appeared at the height of the American War of Independence when the British and French navies were vying for supremacy of shipping routes in the Atlantic:

The ship *la Gracieuse*, armed with twelve cannons, will leave for Martinique, under the command of Captain *Pagaud*, at the end of the month; will take freight & Passengers.

The ship *La Confiance en Dieu*, of Bordeaux, a very fast sailing ship, will be armed half for war and half in merchandise...¹³⁰

Aside from reporting on ship movements, the paper also supplied readers with a wide range of secondary information related to the port and overseas trade. With a hectic atmosphere created by thousands of ships visiting the port every year, loading or unloading millions of tons of cargo, it was not uncommon for some of that cargo to end up lost or stolen. When that happened ship owners placed notices in the paper's *objets perdu volés ou trouvés* section in the hopes of getting their misplaced cargo retrieved. Coffee, sugar, and indigo were the most common items to go missing. On November 24, 1774, one week after the paper announced the arrival of the *Jeune Etienne*, loaded with sugar, coffee, and indigo, François Bonnaffé, the ship's owner, placed the following notice:

¹²⁹ Muller and Boscher, *Bordeaux*, p. 21.

Lost when the ship *le Jeune Etienne* was unloaded, a barrel of raw sugar, marked "IE" and stamped *le Jeune Etienne*; Monsieur Bonnaffé, owner of the ship, requests that those people who have any information contact him.¹³¹

While notices for lost items were far more common than notices of found items, the latter did occasionally make an appearance as well. This notice was placed in 1778:

Found, last May, when the ship *le Fort* was unloaded, at *le Cap* in Saint Domingue, 102 barrels of flour; those who shipped the barrels are requested to contact Monsieur Maisan, so they can retrieve them.¹³²

In addition to tracking ship movement, the paper also provided space for a range of material that was indirectly related to the port and overseas commerce. The well-known overseas trader and ship owner Paul Nairac used the section of the paper entitled *biens à vendre* to sell anchors, while others used the same section to sell entire ships. A ship owner in Bayonne placed this advertisement for the *Heureuse Société*:

The Ship *Heureuse Société*, of Bayonne, with a capacity of one hundred sixty tons, is for sale; it is furnished with all its equipment, and devices; it is also recognized to be a very good ship: those who want to know the proportions and the price should contact Monsieur Antoine Lambert, who has the complete inventory, and who has the authority to make the sale of the ship immediately; to take delivery in Bayonne.¹³³

Though there was no price included in the advertisement, the owner did inform readers that the ship had a very large carrying capacity. At 160 tons, that would have been one of the larger ships of its day.¹³⁴

Another staple of the *biens à vendre* section of the newspaper were advertisements placed by the *Amirauté de Guyenne*. The *Amirauté* was a local

¹³⁰ October, 15, 1778.

¹³¹ November 24, 1774.

¹³² January 1, 1778.

¹³³ February 21, 1771.

¹³⁴ François Crouzet has noted that ships leaving the port of Bordeaux increased in size and capacity throughout the century. While Bordeaux did have some exceptionally large ships clearing out, sometimes up to 800 or 900 tons, by 1785 the average tonnage of ships leaving Bordeaux was 112 tons. See Crouzet, "Bordeaux: An Eighteenth Century *Wirtschaftswunder*?" p. 43.

administrative body that governed mercantile trade in the province and had far-reaching judicial, administrative and fiscal authority. As Alan Forrest has noted, the *Amirauté* was responsible for resolving disputes over "property at sea, broken contracts, losses and insurance claims."¹³⁵ As a result of its judicial authority, the *Amirauté* frequently took possession of various mercantile goods and property that it had claimed through seizure and confiscation. That property was auctioned off to the public, and the *Amirauté* turned to the *Affiches* to advertise the goods for sale. The following notice appeared in March 1771:

For sale, by the Admiralty of Guienne:

50 sails.

40 fine sails - damaged, in a single batch

34 sails, damaged, in a single batch

Will be auctioned off to the highest offer and the last bidder, April 15, bids may be placed at the clerks office. These sails will be stored with Monsieur *Lacoste*, Broker, rue des Bahutiers; those who are interested in the items to be auctioned may see them there.¹³⁶

The paper also served as a clearinghouse of news and information relevant to overseas trade. Under the heading "Legislation," new laws or ordinances were published and the paper paid close attention to those edicts directly affecting commerce in general and overseas trade in particular. This notice appeared in the paper on July 9, 1778:

Declaration of the King, concerning the privileges of Sailors; issued at Versailles 21 March 1778, and recorded at the Court of Aides and Finances of Guienne, the following 17 June.

Readers were directed to the Labottière's bookshop where they could buy the entire text of the law.

¹³⁵ Forrest, *Society and Politics*, p. 23. In addition to Forrest, see also *Almanach historique de la province de Guienne, pour l'Année commune 1771* (Bordeaux, 1771).

The paper also carried other items of interest to the trading community. For example, in April 1772, the paper carried a report written by the Royal Academy of Sciences on navigation. The article suggested ways to improve safety and decrease the chances of a shipwreck which were "an affliction on humanity and terrible for trade."¹³⁷

THE ADVERTISEMENTS

While coverage of the port dominated the economic sections of the paper, it was not at the expense of the city's other commercial activities. Under the sections *avis divers*, *demandes particulières*, *emplois*, and *commerce*, the paper focused on uniting buyers with sellers, and creating a space where local shop owners could garner a measure of publicity.

Next to the port and the industry created to support overseas trade, Bordeaux was a city of artisans, shopkeepers, and market stalls. In the heart of the city could be found jewelers, tailors, goldsmiths, clockmakers, and others selling their wares to the merchants, lawyers, and magistrates who frequented the downtown area. According to the *Almanach du commerce* for 1791, the city was home to over 1,000 small shopkeepers and almost 3,000 artisans.¹³⁸ The *Affiches de Bordeaux* was an ideal venue for the growing ranks of the city's shopkeepers and artisans to publicize the opening of their stores or simply to remind the public of their existence. The paper circulated around Bordeaux, indeed the entire province, came out reliably once a week, and reached a wide audience. This advertisement from 1770 was typical of the kind placed by the city's shopkeepers:

¹³⁶ March 28, 1771.

¹³⁷ The entire article can be found in *Affiches de Bordeaux*, April 9, 1772.

¹³⁸ These figures are cited in Forrest, *Society and Politics*, p. 18.

Monsieur Durandeu, Shopkeeper, rue Bouquiere, the second shop next to rue Desirade, informs the public that he sells small candles for nighttime.¹³⁹

Similar advertisements placed by other shopkeepers appeared repeatedly throughout the paper's twenty-six year life span. During the month of May, 1788, for example, readers of the paper would encounter ads from a druggist, a confectioner, a perfume maker, a wig maker, and a pastry cook.¹⁴⁰

As a result of the wealth of the city and its residents, the trade in luxury goods prospered, and ads placed by shopkeepers selling luxury items made frequent appearances in the paper. For example, there was a *confectionneur* selling "quilted satin jackets, in very pretty embroidery; quilted satins, velour, very beautiful satin Musulmanes, striped and fashioned, for dresses, etc."¹⁴¹ Below that advertisement was this one which would appeal to readers with a sweet-tooth:

Monsieur Lambert sells chocolate, and vanilla, quite natural, and of the highest quality, which he manufactures at his shop, Café Robert.¹⁴²

Or, if they preferred something a little more cerebral, readers might prefer to stroll down to *cours du Chapeau Rouge* and pay Monsieur Lafontaine a visit after seeing this ad:

Sir Lafontaine, who has coffee from the Americas, located near the new houses of Chapeau-Rouge...informs people who will give him the honor of going to his shop that he receives, with punctuality, all the new political and literary gazettes and newspapers such as the *Courier de l'Europe*, etc.¹⁴³

In addition to the city's shopkeepers, people looking for work and those looking for workers also used the paper. The growth of the city, especially the creation of new

¹³⁹ January 4, 1770.

¹⁴⁰ These advertisements were taken from the *Affiches de Bordeaux*, May 7-28, 1778.

¹⁴¹ November 5, 1778.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ March 22, 1778

merchant residential areas in Saint-Seurin and Mérignac, located on the outskirts of the city, created a strong demand for domestic employees. Ads placed by people looking to hire carriage drivers, valets, chefs, gardeners, and other domestic workers appeared every week in the *Affiches*.¹⁴⁴ Advertisements like this one abounded:

We are looking for a servant of a mature age, with a gentle character, faithful, having good morals, knowing how to write a little, serve a table well, comb a wig, shave, etc; contact Sir *Merici*, in Saint-Seurin, who will interview the applicant.¹⁴⁵

Indeed, it was not just the city's wealthy traders or the local nobility that provided employment for domestic laborers. Those families that were financially well off, yet far from being in the ranks of the city's richest denizens, also employed servants. In her study of the Lamothe family of Bordeaux, Christine Adams notes that this bourgeois family - consisting of three lawyers, one doctor, one priest, and two unmarried daughters - always employed at least two domestic servants to help with chores and work around the house.¹⁴⁶ Despite possessing a "puritanical ethic of austerity," the Lamothe family employed servants in order to maintain "a certain degree of comfort, order, cleanliness, and privacy in their surroundings."¹⁴⁷

Alternatively, the paper also provided space each week to those in need of employment. One of the mainstays of the employment notices were ads placed by women searching for domestic work. Jean-Pierre Poussou has noted that 60 percent of the immigrants who came to Bordeaux from the nearby environs were women.¹⁴⁸ The

¹⁴⁴ For a good example of the breadth of employment notices located in the *Affiches de Bordeaux* see for example August 13, 1778.

¹⁴⁵ March 28, 1771.

¹⁴⁶ Christine Adams, *A Taste for Comfort and Status: A Bourgeois Family in Eighteenth-Century France* (University Park, 2000) p. 41.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 38, 41.

¹⁴⁸ Poussou, "Structures démographiques et sociales," p. 335.

majority of those women came to the city in search of domestic service¹⁴⁹ and the paper was a valuable tool in their search for work. A version of this notice - posted in August, 1778 - appeared and reappeared throughout the lifespan of the paper: "A woman of mature age, seeks work in a good house."¹⁵⁰ These two notices were also typical of the ads placed by women:

A young lady, from a good family, well known, who has received a good education seeks a position to raise other young ladies, in a house, which is necessary.¹⁵¹

A black woman, from the area, approximately twenty-five years old, free since birth, having references which are evidence of her good life and morals, would wish to find employment as a servant; she is a cook, and attends to the service of a table very well; her name is Pepper, and she is staying with Miss Hubert, rue des Allemandes, near Saint Michel.¹⁵²

This notice advertised the services of both a vine grower and his wife and was aimed squarely at the city's wealthy traders and merchants:

A good Vine grower and his wife, with no children, can do the housework for a businessman.¹⁵³

The paper also provided a forum in which buyers and sellers of every conceivable type of material goods could find each other. Under the heading "*biens et effets à vendre*" everything was for sale. Here a person could find land, wine, billiard tables, jewelry, apartments and houses for sale. A reader of the *Affiches* could even buy a royal office. According to one well-known anecdote, a minister to Louis XIV was reported to remark, "no sooner did the king create offices than God created fools to buy

¹⁴⁹ See Forrest, *Society and Politics*, p. 10.

¹⁵⁰ August 13, 1778.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² November 30, 1769.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

them."¹⁵⁴ As Doyle has noted, offices were bought as a way of making a living, as an investment, or for the privileges they offered, and there was never any shortage of them listed in the *Affiches de Bordeaux*.¹⁵⁵ The offices for sale ranged from relatively modest positions within the state bureaucracy -- like this ad posted on January 23, 1772: "An Office of Prosecutor at the Parliament, to sell: contact Monsieur Morin, Notary, rue de Trois-Conils"¹⁵⁶ -- to more prestigious posts like this advertisement from 1778: Office of Lieutenant of the *Grand Louveterie* of the King, allowed to carry arms, freedom to carry and wear the colors of His Majesty, exemptions from supervision authority, housing... watch and guards, responsibility for the City and Hospitals, to sell: contact Monsieur Borel, Trader, rue de Richelieu.¹⁵⁷

The final ingredients that made up the economic sections of the paper were business opportunities. The economic growth and prosperity of the city created ample opportunities to invest in the colonial trade, the industries supported by overseas trade, or the building boom: there were no shortages of calls to invest. Many came from the government itself.

Beginning with the intendant Boucher in the 1720s and lasting throughout the century, the city underwent a large-scale expansion. After fourteen centuries behind walls, the city was opened up, and its quay- side façade was entirely transformed in what Forrest has called the "greatest of the eighteenth-century experiments in planned urban development."¹⁵⁸ Boucher and his successors spared no expense in the numerous

¹⁵⁴ Quoted in William Doyle, *Venality: The Sale of Offices in Eighteenth-Century France* (Oxford, 1996) pp. 152-53.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, see especially chapter 6. See also Doyle, "Le Prix des charges anoblissantes à Bordeaux au XVIIIe siècle," in *Annals du Midi* 80 (1968): 65-77.

¹⁵⁶ January 23, 1772.

¹⁵⁷ January 14, 1778.

¹⁵⁸ Forrest, *Society and Politics*, p. 8.

building projects and this often led them to look to the city's wealthiest residents for a helping hand. This notice was placed by the city announcing the need of a loan:

the city of Bordeaux has been authorized by Letters-patent of the King...to borrow up to the sum of 200,000 *livres* to meet the costs of construction for a new Theatre, gives notice that this loan is open, and that one will receive the sum that will be offered, under contract, for the period of time, either a life long revenue or a fixed revenue, which will be the choice of the lender.¹⁵⁹

In addition to a need for loans, the process of reorganizing and transforming the city brought other investment opportunities. For example, the completion of the *place Royal*, a massive building project begun under Boucher in 1729 and finally completed in 1755, centralized the location of many of the city's administrative functions. This precipitated a sell-off of state-owned property in the city. This notice, placed by intendant Esmangart (1770-75), announced to the public the auctioning off of a massive plot of land:

Pursuant to the Edict of last March it will proceed without delay in front of Monseigneur the Intendant, to the highest offer and last bidder, *the sale* of the grounds, buildings and sites belonging to the King, in which the Office of Finances currently holds its meetings; those of the old Stock Exchange and the old Mint, located between the *place du Palais*, rue de Richelieu and the rue du Pont-Saint-Jean...the day the biddings will be received will be announced in the *Affiches*...¹⁶⁰

The government was not alone in using the *Affiches* in order to solicit loans or find investors. Individuals too placed ads searching for financial backing. The following ad initially seemed not to be a business proposal at all, but rather one of the many articles posted in the paper designed to stimulating reader interest in scientific matters:

some of the most important research that one can do in the field of experimental physics is undoubtedly that which has the aim of hatching and raising an almost infinite number of chickens, without a hen. Two people with knowledge of the discoveries of Monsieur de Réamur, the Abbé Nollet and the Abbé Pluche, have

¹⁵⁹ December 23, 1773.

¹⁶⁰ September 16, 1773.

pooled their knowledge to form an establishment whose benefits are obvious upon first sight.¹⁶¹

This advertisement, however, was aimed more at wealthy potential investors than amateur scientists. The ad called on 200 investors to lay out 100 *livres* each, with the goal of "giving birth each year to two hundred thousand pairs of chickens."¹⁶² The notice promised a rate of return on the investment of 15 *sols* per chicken until the initial investment was paid off. After that, "they will always continue to deliver to them a much better rater of return than could be gotten elsewhere."¹⁶³

The long advertisement, which took up almost an entire page of the paper, made two different sorts of appeals to readers. First, the authors of the ad pointed out that, unlike some other business proposals, their operation was strictly legitimate: "the establishment in question is not one of these chimerical projects, tempting in theory, yet which lose their benefits in the execution."¹⁶⁴ Second, the authors noted that this was not just a good business opportunity, but also a good chance to benefit humanity. With food production on the decline, especially the consumption of chicken, the ad pointed out that increasing supply would be a way for investors to "make themselves useful to the all the public."¹⁶⁵

INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL CONTENT

To open up the *Affiches de Bordeaux* was first and foremost to gain entrance into a vast market of commercial exchange and economic activity. It was a place in which private people sold personal goods by publicizing them to a wider audience. The

¹⁶¹ April 9, 1772.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

paper also provided the foundation upon which commercial societies are based: accurate and reliable information. The paper opened up a world of possibilities to its readers. With the right amount of money and some luck, a person could buy, rent, or hire anything they wanted. Yet, the Labottière brothers wanted to encourage more than just the making and spending of money. Thus, while the first few pages of every edition were devoted to commerce, the second half of every edition was dedicated to intellectual and cultural pursuits. The brothers sought to create a new sensibility among their readers by cultivating a taste for books, plays, and new ideas.

The brothers had their work cut out for them, however. While the city's economy had been experiencing rapid growth and vitality throughout the century, its intellectual and cultural life had not. Christine Adams has noted that at mid-century Bordeaux "was more respected for its commercial activity and material wealth than for cultural *éclat*."¹⁶⁶ Adams suggests that the reason for this disparity between economic and cultural progress was due to merchants' and traders' ambivalence: "although it was a rich city," Adams notes "support for the arts was not a priority in predominantly commercial Bordeaux."¹⁶⁷ There is evidence to suggest that was true. At the time the *Affiches* began publication, merchants and traders, the key players behind the "economic miracle," were largely absent from the city's intellectual and cultural life. The Academy of *Belles-Lettres* of Bordeaux, the crown jewel of the city's intellectual life since 1712, was devoid of merchants.¹⁶⁸ Bordeaux's salon activity, which was never

¹⁶⁶ Adams, *A Taste for Comfort and Status*, p. 218.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

¹⁶⁸ Daniel Roche, "Milieux académiques provinciaux et société des lumières," in *Livre et Société I* (Paris, 1965) p. 114.

very robust, was dominated by nobles and a handful of lawyers.¹⁶⁹ While they attended the *Comédie* assiduously, at mid-century merchants and traders had almost no appetite for books. In 1750, Jacques and Antoine Labottière's father Raymond, by then the largest bookseller in the city, was selling only four percent of his books to merchants.¹⁷⁰ Jane McLeod has concluded, "in Bordeaux in the mid-century it was still the traditional elites who were the booksellers' customers."¹⁷¹ Thus, while the Labottière brothers sought to facilitate commercial activity in an already red-hot economy, when it came to intellectual and cultural matters, they first needed to cultivate and nurture an interest.

BORDEAUX'S INSTITUTIONS OF CULTURE AND LEARNING

The brothers' approach to the city's intellectual and cultural life was similar to their philosophy on commercial news: first and foremost, supply readers with accurate and practical information. Thus, the *Affiches* served as a message board for Bordeaux's intellectual and cultural institutions. Chief among them was the Academy of *Belles-Lettres*, Sciences, and Arts. While the city was home to a university and to the *Collège de Guienne*, by the beginning of the eighteenth century both of these institutions had fallen into decline. Rather, the Academy was the centerpiece of Bordeaux's intellectual life.¹⁷² With Montesquieu as one of its founding members, Bordeaux's Academy was one of the most prestigious provincial academies in France. The academy was primarily concerned with scientific matters, and its central mission was to discuss, advance, and

¹⁶⁹ The salon of Madame Duplessy was the best known and well attended salon in Bordeaux. See A. Grellet-Dumazeau, *La Société bordelais sous Louis XV et le salon de Mme Duplessy* (Bordeaux, 1897).

¹⁷⁰ McLeod, "A Social Study of Printers and Booksellers," p. 188.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 188-89.

¹⁷² Much fine work has been done on the Bordeaux academy. Chief among them are: Jean de Feytaud, "L'Académie de Bordeaux sous l'Ancien Régime," in *Revue historique de Bordeaux et du département de la Gironde* 23 (1974): 71-86; Pierre Barrière, *L'Académie de Bordeaux: Centre de culture international au XVIIIe* (Bordeaux, 1951); Daniel Roche, *Le Siècle des lumières en province: Académies et*

share knowledge. Though membership in the exclusive body was reserved primarily for *parlementaires*, medical men, and a handful of lawyers, the Academy did involve the public on a regular basis.¹⁷³ The Academy held weekly public meetings, offered essay competitions several times a year, and opened its library up to the reading public three times a week. As a result, the Academy was a regular contributor to the paper; whenever public participation was needed, the Academy turned to the *Affiches de Bordeaux*.

The most important activity of the Academy was the *concour*s, its annual essay competition. Every year, and sometimes more than once a year, the Academy would pose a question or a topic and invite the public to respond. The public was given twelve months in which to submit essays. A winner was then selected and awarded a gold medal. In addition to the Academy's own competition, individuals with some money and a keen interest in a particular subject, would also pose questions, offer prizes, and let the Academy members select the winning essay. As Adams has noted, in 1781 a woman offered 300 *livres* for the best essay on curing bed-wetting.¹⁷⁴ Combining the Academy's essay questions with topics proposed by individuals led to as many as six competitions in one year. Daniel Roche has determined that between 1715 and 1791 the Academy proposed 149 different topics.¹⁷⁵ Between the years 1758 and 1784, every

académiciens provinciaux, 1680-1789 (Paris, 1978) 2 vols, and "Milieux académiques provinciaux et société des lumières," in *Livre et Société I* (Paris, 1965).

¹⁷³ The Academy of Bordeaux was called "the daughter of the Parlement" and with good reason. As Doyle has noted, almost all of its founding members in 1712 were magistrates of Parlement and by 1750 little had changed. It would only be in 1783 when the Academy underwent some reforms and membership was widened to include professionals, mostly lawyers and physicians. On the relationship between the Parlement and the Academy see Doyle, *The Parlement of Bordeaux*, pp. 132-33, and for a more complete analysis of the social make-up of the Academy see Roche, "Milieux académiques," pp. 114-18.

¹⁷⁴ Adams, *A Taste for Comfort and Status*, p. 201.

¹⁷⁵ Roche, "Milieux académiques," pp. 162-63.

essay competition offered by the Academy - the question, prizes, and terms of the competition - was announced in the pages of the *Affiches de Bordeaux*.

The topics offered by the Academy covered a wide range of subjects focusing predominantly on matters of science, history, and literature. According to Daniel Roche, of 149 topics offered over the lifespan of the Academy, twenty percent of the topics were on physics; eighteen percent on medicine; twelve percent on botany; eleven percent on history and literature.¹⁷⁶ Over time, a clear progression can be seen in the topics proffered by the Academy. For the first thirty-five years of the *concours* (from 1715 to 1750) the questions were almost exclusively scientific and heavily weighted towards the theoretical.¹⁷⁷ Some examples of questions posed during that period include: the causes of gravity, how sound is formed, and the causes of the movement of the oceans.¹⁷⁸ After 1750, however, there was a noticeable shift in the types of questions posed. Instead of focusing on the theoretical, the Academy began asking questions that were more useful and that had a practical effect on people's lives. Topics such as agriculture, especially viticulture, methods for improving sugar refining, and health dominated the *concours* after 1750.¹⁷⁹

In 1772, for example, a "zealous friend of humanity" offered 1200 *livres* for the best essay on:

What would be the best means to preserve Blacks when they are transported from the coasts of Africa to the Colonies of the New World, from the frequent and so often disastrous diseases that they experience on the trip.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. Christine Adams also presents a useful discussion of the Academy of Bordeaux and its essay competition. See Adams, *A Taste for Comfort and Status*, pp. 195-208.

¹⁷⁷ P. Barrière, *L'Académie de Bordeaux*, p. 129.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., and Louis Desgraves, "La vie intellectuelle," in *Pariset Bordeaux aux XVIIIe siècle*, pp. 96-97.

¹⁷⁹ The notable exception to this trend of useful topics came between the years 1782 and 1789 when the Academy solicited only *éloges* to Montesquieu. As Adams has noted, none of the essays were deemed worthy of the venerated Bordelais philosophe. Adams, *A Taste for Comfort and Status*, p. 197.

¹⁸⁰ January 23, 1772.

The anonymous individual who sponsored the competition was very specific about what he was looking for. All submissions must make sure that they "describe carefully all the various symptoms of these diseases and that they establish the nature and the characters of them; that they discuss the causes; and that the principles that their systems are founded on are well observed & sufficiently certified."¹⁸¹ Essays had to present solutions that were "simple, easy and economical... and whose effectiveness is confirmed by experiments, supported by all the suitable proof."¹⁸²

The person sponsoring the competition claimed that "his heart was moved when he calculated the number of these unfortunate individuals who perished in the vessels that transported them from Africa to the New World."¹⁸³ It is unclear, however, if his heart was moved by a genuine humanitarianism or by naked capitalism. After all, according to the logic of the slave trade, each individual slave was a commodity, with value, and a going market price. As Clarence Walker has noted "they [African slaves] were captured, enslaved, and purchased to produce crops. They served as a substitute for other forms of labor and for modern agricultural technology...Slaves were valuable and could even be insured."¹⁸⁴ The biggest threat to the lives of slaves while being transported between Africa and the West Indies in the hull of French slaving ships was disease.¹⁸⁵ As many as twenty percent of the slaves transported died during the voyage due to diseases.¹⁸⁶ To cure or even reduce the problem of disease, as this essay competition sought to do, would have provided a major financial benefit to merchants

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Quoted in Adams, *A Taste for Comfort and Status*, p. 203. Christine Adams discusses this essay in some detail as Victor Lamothe, in his capacity as academician, was an evaluator of the responses it generated. See pp. 203-204.

¹⁸⁴ Clarence Walker, *We Can't Go Home Again: An Argument about Afrocentrism* (Oxford, 2001) p. 114.

¹⁸⁵ Stein, *The French Slave Trade*, pp. 88-89.

involved in the slave trade. In the end, the essay contest garnered only three responses and none of them were deemed adequate to win the prize.¹⁸⁷ The poor response was perhaps a sign that issues revolving around the slave trade in the 1770s were not yet of pressing concern to the Bordelais: in the years 1772 and 1773, Bordeaux traders sent only a total of twelve ships on slaving expeditions, or just slightly more than 10 percent of France's total involvement in the trade for those years.¹⁸⁸

In addition to announcing the essay competitions, the *Affiches de Bordeaux* also carried notices for the Academy's public meetings. The announcements were carried in the paper one week in advance of the meetings and served as a public notice of the time and place of the meetings.

The Academy of Belles-Lettres, Sciences and Arts of Bordeaux, will hold its public assembly the Room of its new Hotel, rue Saint Domingue, next Monday, 13 of this month, at 2:30.¹⁸⁹

The Royal Academy of Sciences, Belles-Lettres and Arts, will hold, next Thursday, the 19 of this month, at 3:30 pm, a public Assembly in the room of its Hotel, rue Saint Domingue.¹⁹⁰

The Royal Academy of Belles-Lettres, will hold, as is customary, a public Meeting in the Room of its Hotel, rue Saint Domingue, next Tuesday.¹⁹¹

The meetings were held once a week and served various purposes. They gave the public an opportunity to meet with members of the Academy in order to discuss the essay competitions. Public meetings also allowed members a chance to lecture to an audience on subjects ranging from medicine, agriculture and natural science.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Adams, *A Taste for Comfort and Status*, p. 203.

¹⁸⁸ Stein, *The French Slave Trade*, 208.

¹⁸⁹ January 9, 1772.

¹⁹⁰ March 22, 1778.

¹⁹¹ August 20, 1778.

¹⁹² Desgraves, "La vie intellectuelle," p. 94.

The Academy was not the only one of the city's cultural institutions to use the pages of the *Affiches* to gain publicity. Bordeaux's second academy, the Academy of Painting, Sculpture and Civil and Naval Architecture, also took advantage of the weekly newspaper. The Academy of Painting was established when a group of local amateur and professional artists and architects began holding regular meetings in 1768.¹⁹³ The group's goal was to cultivate local artistic talent in the hopes of staunching the flow of Bordelais artists leaving for Paris.

As Adams has noted, the early years of the Academy were plagued by financial uncertainty and difficulty in gaining official recognition. One way members sought to persuade both the city council and the citizens of Bordeaux that an art academy would be worthwhile was to establish a free school of architecture.¹⁹⁴ Once the group had settled on a day for the grand opening of their school, they turned to the *Affiches* to drum up public support and participation:

The Academy of Painting, Sculpture, & Architecture, reestablished under the auspices of the Jurats by some Artists enthusiastic for the public good, wants to expand the free lessons that they have offered for three years to their fellow-citizens: to achieve this goal, it will open a Course of Architecture, where the principles of decoration, distribution and construction will be successively developed...we will expose the students to grand designs and relief models; so that their hand can follow their mind, students will trace on paper the results of the lessons that they have been given. The Course will open Friday May 1, at two o'clock, in the academy.

A similar notice also appeared the same day announcing the formation of a free public course on anatomy.

The Academy of Painting also held regular art salons open to the public. This was an opportunity for those artists affiliated with the Academy and its school to

¹⁹³ Very little has been written about the Academy of Painting. Christine Adams presents a good overview of the group in *A Taste for Comfort and Status*, pp. 208-220.

display their work to the public. Once again, members took advantage of the paper by informing readers of upcoming events. This notice, placed in August, 1774, announced the opening of a salon the following week:

The Academy of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, will hold this year a public exhibition of paintings in one of the rooms of the Stock Exchange. The Salon is scheduled to open on August 24; the catalogue of pieces will be distributed on that day.¹⁹⁵

The *Affiches de Bordeaux* served as a message board for other cultural and intellectual institutions as well. The Société Libre d'Emulation, a short-lived Bordelais institution with counterparts in Paris and other cities, also utilized the pages of the *Affiches*. The local Bordelais Société Libre was headed by the *abbé* Sicard and was dedicated to advancing agriculture, commerce and industry. As Sicard wrote "let us ferment the spirit of emulation, encourage industry, extend knowledge, spread instruction. It is by this competition of effort and of care that the general good is born of itself."¹⁹⁶

Like the Academy of Science, the Société Libre held public essay competitions, which were announced to the public via the *Affiches de Bordeaux*. This announcement carried by the paper in 1778 dealt with the distillation of grape residue and would have been of particular interest to many of the paper's readers:

Prize of 800 *livres*, proposed by the *Société libre d'Emulation*, established in Paris for the encouragement of Arts and useful Inventions.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 210.

¹⁹⁵ August, 18, 1774.

¹⁹⁶ Quoted in R. Céleste, *La Société Philomathique de Bordeaux de 1783 à 1808* (Bordeaux, 1898); Dena Goodman traces the history of the Société Libre d'Emulation de Paris in Goodman, *Republic of Letters*, pp. 260-63, 265-66.

The Company asks: Which is the most advantageous method to ferment the marc of the grape, to remove the burning sensation that it contains, and which are the most suitable vessels for its distillation?¹⁹⁷

In addition to the cultural and intellectual pursuits offered by the academies and the fledgling *Société Libre*, Bordeaux was also a city steeped in an appreciation for music and theatre. Indeed, the Academy of Sciences of Bordeaux began in 1707 as a music society and only slowly developed into an organization concerned with scientific matters. The city's churches, especially the cathedral of Saint André and the church of Saint Michel, served as sites for frequent concerts.¹⁹⁸ After the fire destroyed the *Grand-Théâtre* in 1755, a *salle de spectacle* was added on to the *hôtel de ville*. In the 1760s an effort was made to create an Academy of Music. The goal was to establish a free school of music, to hold musical competitions, and have awards for the best compositions.¹⁹⁹ According to Raymond Céleste, the project never came to fruition largely because the *jurade* refused to finance the group.²⁰⁰

The *Affiches* played an integral role in keeping the public abreast of concerts, locations, and show times. For example, under the heading *Avis* appeared notices like this one:

Next December 8, there will be in the *Salle su Spectacle*, for the benefit of Miss Laporte & Misters Roziere and Romainville; a second vocal and instrumental Concert, which will start at six in the evening, the price will be the same as that of the *Comédie*.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁷ September 10, 1778.

¹⁹⁸ Desgraves, "La vie intellectuelle," p. 108.

¹⁹⁹ Céleste, *La Société Philomathique*

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ November 30, 1769.

Those planning to attend the show would have been interested in this notice, which appeared in the *Affiches* the following week and just one day before the concert was scheduled to take place:

The concert that had been announced for the 8 of this month in the *Salle de la Comédie*, will not take place.²⁰²

Another measure of the popularity of music in the city was the number of music-related businesses that operated in the city. By 1785 there were four organ makers, twelve violin makers, fifty-six professional musicians, and four masters of dance.²⁰³ Many of these businesses, especially the instrument makers who operated out of shops, used the *Affiches* to advertise their wares. These two advertisements, placed by rival violin makers, happened to appear on the same day:

Sir Vincent Panori, Italian Violin maker, recently arrived in this City, informs the public that he makes, sells and repairs all sorts of musical instruments, like the flute, the third and fifth octave flute, flageolet of all tones, recorders, octave of recorder (an unknown instrument in this country, which is used mostly in the orchestras of Italy) bassoon, oboe, clarinet, violin, violate, violoncello and double bass; he also sells genuine strings from Naples, which he brought. He is located on the second floor of Monsieur Brunet's shop, Merchant d'oeuvre, on the river, near the Bourgogne gate.

Sir Barbier, Violin maker, announces that he sells various pieces of Music, composed by various Authors; he is located on the *place du Poissonsale*, near the *armes du Prince Ferdinand*.²⁰⁴

When it came to theatrical productions, the Bordelais had many options. The most popular venue for taking in a play was the *Grand-Théâtre*, which was finally reopened in 1780. There was also the *Variétés Amusantes* which was equally popular, and the *salle de spectacle* at the Intendance's residence. The city had its own permanent

²⁰² December 7, 1769.

²⁰³ Desgraves, "La vie intellectuelle," p. 112.

²⁰⁴ Both ads can be found in the *Affiches* on January 16, 1772.

troupe of actors and it played host to many traveling productions.²⁰⁵ The Labottière brothers approached the local theatre in much the same way they covered other cultural and intellectual institutions: first and foremost, they reported on the basics. Thus, under the heading *Spectacles*, the *Affiches* was replete with notices announcing the time, date, location, and other necessary details surrounding theatrical productions. This notice for was an entire charitable event, with plays, singing, music, and dancing:

The French and Italian Actors, will give next Saturday, 23 March, for the benefit of the Poor of the Hospital of Sainte-André, a performance of *Le Déserteur*, Musical Drama in three acts, by Monsigny, followed by *L'Orphelin Anglais*, a new Drama, in Prose and in three acts; between the two performances, Demoiselle Laporte will sing a new piece composed by Monsieur Beck; the production will end with finished by the *Allemandes*, danced by the Demoiselles Fenochio.²⁰⁶

In addition to carrying informational notices, the *Affiches* provided readers with other pieces related to the theatre. For instance, in March 1773 an essay-length article appeared in the *Spectacles* section of the paper entitled "On applauding in the Theatre."²⁰⁷ The article provided readers with a history of the practice of applauding beginning with the ancient Greeks and tracing the custom through to the eighteenth century.

The *Spectacles* section was also the place where readers could find reviews of productions playing in Bordeaux. Reviews were long, typically taking up almost the entire back page of the paper, and written by either Jacques, Antoine, or one of the paper's primary writers. The review carried in the February 4, 1773 edition of the

²⁰⁵ For a history of the theater in Bordeaux see Lagrave, *La Vie théâtrale à Bordeaux des origines à nous jours*. Tome 1, *Des origines à 1799* (Paris, 1985). Louis Desgraves also provides a good overview of theater-life in the city in the eighteenth century. See Desgraves, "La vie intellectuelle," pp. 104-06. Finally, Jeffrey Ravel examines a violent episode that occurred outside the *Grand Théâtre* in 1784 and which sparked a week-long series of clashes between spectators and policing authorities. See Ravel, *The Contested Parterre: Public Theatre and French Political Culture, 1680-1791* (Ithaca, 1999) pp. 178-85.

²⁰⁶ March 21, 1771.

Affiches served several purposes. First, it announced that *Pierre le Cruel*, the new tragedy written by Monsier de Belloy of the *Académie Française*, was soon to open in Bordeaux.²⁰⁸ The rather lengthy piece then went on to review the production. The first several paragraphs explained the plot which was based on historical events: In 1350 Pierre III, known as the Cruel, became the Spanish ruler of Castille. Blanche de Bourbon was his wife but not for long. Pierre deserted her in favor of his mistress while in the process killing several members of his wife's family. Blanche de Bourbon's half brother, the future Henry II raised an army and, with France's help, invaded Castille, and killed Pierre.

After the plot summary the reviewer informed readers that despite the fact that the lead was based on such an atrocious character, the play was still worthwhile:

The Author has followed the example of the great Corneille, the father of the French Theatre...by taking the precaution to surround horrible Cleopatra with virtuous and interesting characters, so that the audience's hearts would not become overburdened by the continual portrayal of crimes, and so that they could be touched by the portrayal of virtue.²⁰⁹

In a blatant display of local pride and patriotism, the reviewer noted that not only did all the important events of the play take place in Bordeaux, but also all the virtuous and interesting characters just happened to be Bordelais. For example there was Edward, Prince of Wales:

the hero of the play, head of the army which has just restored *Dom Pedre* to his throne...resided in Bordeaux for a long time as the Prince of Aquitaine, and his virtues made him adored there throughout his life, and his memory will be always blessed there.²¹⁰

²⁰⁷ March 11, 1773.

²⁰⁸ February 4, 1773.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

There was also Henry himself, who "risked his life and freedom, by coming [to Bordeaux] in disguise, in order to see the virtuous Commander Duguesclin who had been imprisoned."²¹¹ Finally, in Bordeaux once again:

Prince Edward restored Duguesclin's freedom, and his worthy wife sent part of his ransom to him, so that Duguesclin could distribute it to the poor Officers who were held captive with him in Bordeaux.²¹²

The reviewer ended the piece on an unexpected note, writing not about the play itself, but about the playwright's hopes and feelings. The reviewer notes that the Governor of the province, the Maréchal Duc de Richelieu, was pleased by the play, and this, in turn, pleased the playwright. But the real test, according to the reviewer, will be the public's reaction:

He will be no less flattered to submit his Work to the bright and impartial judgment of the public, whose taste and indulgence he hopes will teach him well how to make his art into a Tragedy more worthy of the French Nation.²¹³

By juxtaposing Richelieu and the public the reviewer was skillfully able to inform readers of the official view the play - that is, Richelieu's opinion - while at the same time elevating and appealing to their own taste and judgment.

**BOOKS FOR SALE AND NEWSPAPERS FOR SUBSCRIPTION:
ENTRÉE INTO A WIDER WORLD**

In addition to focusing narrowly on Bordeaux's institutions of culture and learning, the brothers sought to connect subscribers to a wider world of debate and ideas. Every issue of the *Affiches* provided readers with access to the latest books, plays, and journals that were available in Paris. Under the section "New Books" readers were introduced to as many as fifty new books per week for sale. In a typical two-week

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid.

period in April 1771, the *Affiches* carried notices for seventy-five new books.²¹⁴ The brothers were careful to note that all the books advertised in the pages of the *Affiches* were available for purchase at their bookshop.

François Furet has established five separate categories for classifying eighteenth-century books: religion, law, history, science and arts, literature.²¹⁵ Over two-thirds of the books the brothers kept stored in their bookshop consisted of history books, works on the science and arts, and literature.²¹⁶ They carried very few religious or legal books (about eleven percent each).²¹⁷ The small amounts of religious books in the Labottière collection comes as no surprise; throughout the eighteenth century the popularity of religious books was declining. At mid-century in Bordeaux they did not make up a significant portion of any Bordelais booksellers collection.²¹⁸ More surprising is the relatively small number of law books they carried. After all, Bordeaux was the legal center of the southwest, with magistrates and lawyers occupying important social positions in the city.²¹⁹

The books advertised in the *Affiches* corresponded closely to the types of books the brothers listed in their catalogue. The subject matter of the books advertised in the paper tended to be overwhelming historical, literary, and scientific or artistic. Books on

²¹⁴ See April 4 and April 11, 1771.

²¹⁵ François Furet, "La librairie du royaume de France au dix-huitième siècle," in *Livres et société* (Paris, 1965), vol. I, pp. 3-32.

²¹⁶ Though the Labottière brothers' book catalogue no longer exists, its contents are listed in Frédéric Barbier, *Le Musée de Bordeaux et sa bibliothèque, 1783-1793*, typescript, 1976, p. 34. For an examination of the Labottière brothers stock compared with other Bordelais booksellers, see McLeod, "A Social Study of Printers and Booksellers," pp. 180-83.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ On the decline in percentage of religious books see Furet "La librairie du royaume," pp. 3-32. For a breakdown of the catalogues of Bordelais booksellers at mid-century see McLeod, "A Social Study of Printers and Booksellers," p. 182.

²¹⁹ For the important place occupied by lawyers in the social hierarchy of eighteenth-century Bordeaux see the classic work by Henri Chauvot, *Le Barreau de Bordeaux de 1775 à 1815* (Paris, 1856). In

religion and law made infrequent appearances. Within each specific category, there was a wide breadth of books announced. For example, among history books listed for sale there were works on French history, ancient history, and foreign/European history. However, the brothers' clear preference was for local history. Every year they advertised the latest edition of the "Almanach Historique de la Province de Guienne" which they published annually from 1760 and 1793.²²⁰ They frequently published excerpts from it in their paper. Another book widely excerpted in the *Affiches* was Dom Devaine's *Histoire de Bordeaux*. The book was published in 1771, and ads like this one began appearing the same year:

History of the City of Bordeaux, Part one, containing civil events, and the life of several celebrated men, by *Dom Devienne*.²²¹

The brothers published portions of the book over the next few years and by 1778 portions of it were filling as much as half of each edition of the *Affiches*.

In addition to works on local history, memoirs were another popular type of book advertised in the *Affiches*:

Memoire of Sir Pierre-Paul Sirven, Huguenet, inhabitant of Castrate, Appellant against the Consuls and the community of Mazamet. Price, three *livres*.²²²

Memoire on the life Jean Monnet; former Direct of the Comic-Opera in Paris, the Opera in Lyon, and the Comédie Française in London, written by himself.²²³

Historical, Political, & Military memoire on Russia, containing the principal revolutions of this Empire, and the wars of the Russians against the Turks and Tartares, by *General de Manhein*.²²⁴

addition see also Doyle, *The Parlement of Bordeaux*, esp. Part I, and Adams, *A Taste for Comfort and Status*, esp. chapter 4.

²²⁰ Labadie, *La Presse bordelais*, p. 15.

²²¹ June 11, 1772. Voltaire championed the cause of Elizabeth Sirven who, in January 1762, was accused of killing her father Pierre-Paul Sirven. See Goodman, *Republic of Letters*, p. 42, and Peter Gay, *Voltaire's Politics: The Poet as Realist* (New Haven, 1988), pp. 277-78.

²²² January 10, 1771.

²²³ June 11, 1771.

²²⁴ *Ibid*.

There was also a variety of books on literature. There were dictionaries and almanacs such as:

Dictionary universal, historical, and critical of Manners, Laws, and Practices; and Military, Civil, and Political Customs; practical and superstitious religious ceremonies, old as well as modern, people of the four parts of the world, etc, by a society of men of letters.²²⁵

The true Almanac of Liège, for the year 1778, edited by Master Mathieu Laensbergh, Mathematician.²²⁶

There was also correspondences and works of criticism:

Critical Letters on luxury and manners in this century, to Madame D...by Monsieur Beliard.

Letters of Chevalier Dorigny, to his friend Melcourt, 2 vol.²²⁷

The philosophes made frequent appearances on the *Affiches*' list of books for sale. Among others, there were notices for *Réponse d'Horace à M. de Voltaire*, the *Pensées de M. d'Alembert*, and this essay by Anotine-Léonard Thomas in 1772:

Essay on the character, manners, and the spirit of women in the different centuries, by Monsieur *Thomas*.²²⁸

The Labottière brothers advertised and sold the quarto edition of the *Encyclopédie* as well as the complete works of Voltaire and Rousseau. According to Jane McLeod, all three sold very well: 130 subscriptions to Mercier's compilation of Rousseau's work, and - combined with another Bordelais bookseller - 253 subscriptions to the *Encyclopédie*.²²⁹

²²⁵ Ibid

²²⁶ January 1, 1778.

²²⁷ January 3, 1771.

²²⁸ February 4, 1773, January 12, 1774 and June 11, 1772 respectively. For a discussion of Thomas' attitudes towards women see Goodman, *Republic of Letters*, pp. 10-11.

²²⁹ McLeod, "A Social Study of Printers and Booksellers," p. 186.

The philosophes also played a supporting role in the "New Books" section of the paper. There were works about them, letters addressed to them, and books dedicated to them. These three were either inspired or provoked by Voltaire:

Sixth Letter of Monsieur de Voltaire, where he continues to examine the Commentaries of Corneille, by Monsieur Clement.²³⁰

The triumph of Sophocles, A comedy dedicated to Monsieur de Voltaire; by Monsieur Palissot.²³¹

Letters of some Portuguese and German Jews, to Monsieur de Voltaire.²³²

Other familiar authors regularly made it onto the Labottière's list of books for sale. Buffon was frequently for sale, as were Molière and Linguet. Various versions of Madame de Sévigné's letters were a mainstay, such as this notice from 1774: "New or newly discovered letters of Madame the Marquise de Sévigné."²³³

In addition, the paper carried a large number of foreign works translated into French. The year 1778 saw an outpouring of books on the United States, including works by Benjamin Franklin, the Scottish historian William Robertson, and a first-hand account of the American Revolution by David Ramsay. Other translations of contemporary works were also advertised. For example, there was this work by Bolingbroke:

Thoughts of Milord Bolingbroke, on different aspects of History, Philosophy, Morality, etc.²³⁴

Finally, the *Affiches* carried notices for the German philosopher Mendelsohn as well as for Goethe:

²³⁰ September 13, 1774.

²³¹ October 15, 1778.

²³² June 11, 1772.

Phédon or talks on the spirituality and immortality of the heart, by Monsieur *Moses Mendelsohn, Jew*, translated from the German by Junker.²³⁵

The Passions of Young Werther, a work by Monsieur Goethe, translated from the German by Monsieur Aubrey.²³⁶

Newspapers were yet another way for the Bordelais to participate in a wider intellectual and cultural milieu. The *Affiches de Bordeaux* provided readers with access to the leading papers of the day. Through subscription, people in Bordeaux could read the same material available to people in Paris, and indeed throughout Europe. The process of subscribing was relatively simple: the Labottière brothers would publish the prospectus for the leading French-language periodicals of the day, such as the *Mercur*e or Linguet's *Journal de Politique*. Readers interested in subscribing to a particular paper would then go down to the Labottière's *bureau d'avis* on the *place du Palais* and sign up.

The prospectuses carried in the *Affiches* were generally long, often taking up a full page of text, and provided readers with a description of the paper, its contents and subject matter, periodicity, and price, and often made note of well-known contributors. The ultimate goal of the prospectus was to win over subscribers.

The prospectus for Le Moyne Des Essarts *Journal des causes célèbres* described its *raison d'être* this way:

The Bar is a kind of stage where human passions, after a thousand obscure detours, a thousand secret disguises, come to be uncovered...A Collection of

²³³ January 12, 1774. Just below the notice for Madame de Sévigné's letters was an ad for Molière. For Buffon, see for example April 4, 1771. A notice for Linguet's *Observations sur l'Imprimé intitulé, Réponse des Etats de Bretagne au Mémoire du Duc d'Aiguillon* appeared on June 20, 1771.

²³⁴ January 24, 1771.

²³⁵ June 11, 1772.

²³⁶ January 1, 1778.

this kind is a varied tableau, where one meets a thousand features resembling civil life, current morals and the generation in which we live..²³⁷

In contrast, the strategy to increase the number of subscribers to the *Mercure de France* was to focus on that paper's renowned editors and contributors.²³⁸ As the prospectus for the *Mercure* made clear "a newspaper that brings together so many items cannot be the work of only one man."²³⁹ Thus, the *Mercure* would be a joint effort and its contributors included:

Misters d'Alembert, Marmontel, the Marquis de C ***, and others, promised their help to us; and we are too flattered by this promise not to summon them, in the name of the public, and hold them to their word, and to show that the interest that they take towards this work proves that it is natural for all Men of Letters to contribute, since it offers all the hope of literary rewards..²⁴⁰

In addition to the *Mercure de France* and the *Journal des causes célèbres*, the *Affiches de Bordeaux* offered their readers subscriptions to other notable papers such as Linguet's *Journal de Politique & de Littérature*, the *Journal ou Gazette de Littérature, des Sciences & des Arts*, the *Journal des scavants*, and Pahin de la Blancherie's *Les Nouvelles de la République des Lettres*.²⁴¹

COMMUNITY NEWS

The *Affiches de Bordeaux* served as a forum for an eclectic collection of local news and information. Community news items came in two varieties: those notices placed by the Labottière brothers in order to inform their readers on some topic of local interest, and notices submitted by readers themselves.

²³⁷ Prospectuses for various journals and gazettes were frequently carried more than once in the *Affiches de Bordeaux*. This one is from March 25, 1773.

²³⁸ The *Mercure* is one of the few periodicals of the Old Regime for which there is some subscription data. According to Daniel Mornet, in 1763 the *Mercure* had about 1600 subscribers. Of those, 900 lived in the provinces. See Mornet, "Sur l'intérêt historique des journaux littéraires au XVIIIe siècle et la diffusion du *Mercure de France*," *Bulletin de la Société d'histoire moderne*, IX (1910), pp. 119-22.

²³⁹ July 23, 1778.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

Readers used the space to satisfy a variety of needs. Most typical were notices for a lost or found item, or for people in search of a companion. Readers planning on a long journey, usually to Paris, would frequently place a notice in the paper in hopes of finding someone who would either share the cost or simply serve as good company.²⁴²

Notices for lost and found items were also popular items in the *Affiches*. The spectrum of items lost stretched from the very valuable such as money, gold watches, and other pieces of jewelry, to more personal items like canes, swords, and dogs. The following notice was placed by Paul Nairac:

Lost, Saturday December 24, between midday and three o'clock, two bank notes, attached together, of 600 *livres* each, made by the Sir Gaudin aîné: please return them to Monsieur Paul Nairac.²⁴³

Colin Jones has pointed out the notice placed by the owner of a lost Congolese slave in the February 14, 1771 edition of the *Affiches*.²⁴⁴ Notices for lost people were more likely to look like this one, however:

A child disappeared from his parents home on 30 September; he is approximately fourteen years old, round & brown face, gray eyes, brown eyebrows and hair, a slightly widened nose, and a scar on the lower part of the left ear; he was wearing a cinnamon colored wool coat, worn, a cotton jacket, worn, black pants, also worn. Anyone with any news is requested to please share it with the widow Carteu, chair maker, on the quay de Rohan, near the Caillau gate.²⁴⁵

The Labottière brothers also inserted pieces into the *Affiches* that were of interest to the community. Local history was a favorite subject with readers and the brothers included long and frequent excerpts of Devaine's *Histoire de Bordeaux*. The

²⁴¹ See November 3, 1774, January 12, 1774, June 11, 1772, and March 12, 1778 respectively.

²⁴² "Companion" notices were a regularly appearing feature in the *Affiches de Bordeaux*. See for example November 16, 1769.

²⁴³ December 29, 1774.

²⁴⁴ Colin Jones, "the Great Chain of Buying: Medical Advertisement, the Bourgeois Public Sphere, and the Origins of the French Revolution," *AHR*, vol 101, no 1 (Feb. 1996): 22.

²⁴⁵ October 15, 1778.

brothers often shrank the font size of the excerpts so that they could fit longer passages into a single edition of the paper.²⁴⁶ As a public service, the brothers also provided readers with important articles on breakthroughs in health and medicine. Christine Adams has shown how central health concerns were in eighteenth-century Bordeaux. "Watch your health" was the standard admonition around the Lamothe family residence.²⁴⁷ This is understandable since the slightest illness could prove debilitating. The *Affiches* carried any promising or worthwhile news from the world of medicine. This article, published in a supplement to the *Affiches*, warned of the dangers of copper:

A Chemist after having done much research on copper and on its property, has discovered that this metal contains a poison of an extraordinary substance, and which must frighten all people who continue to use utensils made of this dangerous metal...in their kitchen. The government, informed of this discovery...believes that it is advisable to publish it and to recommend the most severe precautions to prevent the disadvantages which can result from the use of copper vessels.²⁴⁸

In January 1772, the paper ran an article with a purported cure for respiratory illnesses. At the end of the piece the Labottières tacked on this editorial comment which suggests that the articles on medicine were a popular feature in the paper: "Note: We have repeated this article at the request of several people."²⁴⁹ Throughout its twenty six year lifespan, the *Affiches* carried cures, remedies, and warnings for a range of disorders including but not limited to: the prevention of smallpox, one of the most deadly diseases afflicting Europe in the eighteenth century; effects of the poisonous French napel plant; syphilis; and even the common cold.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁶ For example, see January 1, 1778.

²⁴⁷ Adams, *A Taste for Comfort and Status*, p. 37.

²⁴⁸ July 15, 1773.

²⁴⁹ January 9, 1772.

²⁵⁰ On smallpox see January 7, 1773; for the poisonous napel plant see January 30, 1772; on syphilis see March 17, 1774; and on the common cold see November 23, 1769.

Yearly updates on baptisms and deaths were also of interest to readers. Every January the *Affiches* would publish the results of the government's count of baptisms and deaths for the previous year:

according to a report by Sir Despiau, Captain Assistant medical officer of the city of Bordeaux, of the number of baptisms and deaths that there have been in the aforementioned city and suburb, since January 1, 1771, until last December of the same year, he has found that baptisms numbered 2883, and deaths numbered 3411; the number of deaths exceeded that of baptisms by 528 people, and according to the aforementioned report, in the year 1770 the baptisms were 2850 and the deaths were 2350; the year 1771 exceeded the year 1770 by 33 baptisms and 1061 deaths. Baptisms during the aforementioned year 1771, there were 1484 males & 1399 females, and of deaths there were 2056 males, and 1355 females. Recapitulation: Since and including the year 1750, until and including the year 1771, baptisms went up by 55543, and burials by 52015, which means that there were 3518 baptisms more than deaths.²⁵¹

If this report seems to border on the obsessive, that is because fears of depopulation were a common concern in eighteenth-century France, and particularly in Bordeaux.

Population was considered to be a crucial indicator of a nation's power and prosperity.²⁵² A large population was believed to result in economic expansion, while a small or declining population was seen as the death knell for a nation.²⁵³

Fears of depopulation were widespread but of particular concern to the Bordelais. While Diderot and Rousseau both believed that France was experiencing depopulation, it was Montesquieu who first warned of its hazards in 1721 in his *Lettres persanes*, and then again in 1748 in *De l'Esprit des lois*.²⁵⁴ In Letter 112 of the *Lettres*,

Rhedi writes:

²⁵¹ January 9, 1772.

²⁵² For an excellent overview of population concerns in eighteenth century France see Harvey Chisick, *The Limits of Reform in the Enlightenment: Attitudes towards the Education of the Lower Classes in Eighteenth-Century France* (Princeton, 1981) pp. 185-92.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

²⁵⁴ Voltaire was one of the few philosophes who rejected the idea that France was experiencing a period of depopulation. See *Ibid.*, p. 186-87. For an examination of Montesquieu's concern's with depopulation in *Lettres* see David B. Young, "Libertarian Demography: Montesquieu's Essay on Depopulation in the

I have come to the conclusion that there is scarcely a tenth of the number of men on earth that there was in former times. The startling thing is that the world is constantly becoming less populous, and, if this continues, in ten centuries it will be nothing more than a desert. This, Usbek, is the most terrible catastrophe which has ever happened to the world.²⁵⁵

Montesquieu was incorrect of course - at the time he wrote the *Lettres* population was on the rise throughout Europe - but his concerns were real and influential.²⁵⁶ The Parlement of Bordeaux went so far as to issue a decree warning against it.²⁵⁷ The *Affiches* carried annual reports on baptisms and death so that readers could monitor the situation for themselves. As we will see, the bordelais' fear of depopulation also came to the fore at unexpected times.

NEW FORMS OF PUBLICITY

Over a lifespan of nearly three decades in print, the format of the *Affiches de Bordeaux* changed little. Roughly half the paper was devoted to economic matters with the other half filled with intellectual and cultural concerns. But within that seemingly rigid framework lay a surprising malleability. The Labottière brothers called on their readers for submissions, and readers responded with more than just advertisements of goods for sale, or notices of lost dogs. In a sense, the *Affiches de Bordeaux* offered readers a blank canvas, a chance to express themselves to an audience. Readers used their newfound opportunity in a variety of ways. For example, a reader inspired by an actress's performance at the *Comédie* now had a forum to publicly praise her:

Lettres Persanes," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol 36, no 4, (Oct-Dec.. 1975): 669-82; for an analysis of the same concept in *Esprit des lois* see Robert Shackleton, *Montesquieu: A Critical Biography* (Oxford, 1961) pp. 42-45.

²⁵⁵ Montesquieu, *Persian Letters*, trans with an introduction and notes by C.J. Betts (London, 1973) pp. 203-04.

²⁵⁶ Young, "Libertarian Demography," p. 670.

²⁵⁷ *Ibi*, p. 187.

To Miss Leroi, Actress of the Comedy
You can move, you can make laugh;
You have bright eyes, and they soften you,
You have in your voice a style that people admire:
We regretted Ferriere, and you surpass her.

By, Monsieur G...²⁵⁸

While the *Affiches* offered the opportunity for public praise the opposite was also true.

This notice carries with it the implied threat of being exposed to the public as forgetful at best, untrustworthy as worst:

Mr. Dekater, Merchant, rue du Parlement, has been missing for a long time the first and second volume of *The Spectator*, in English, as well as the first volume of *The Tatler*, also in English; he urges the people to whom he lent these volumes to agree to return them, believing that it is only by a lapse of memory that they have kept them, or that perhaps they do not remember to whom the volumes belong.²⁵⁹

The *Affiches* was not the only opportunity for the Bordelais to achieve some measure of publicity and reach an audience, of course. As we have seen, readers of the paper had frequent opportunities to subscribe to other periodicals. Papers like the *Mercure*, for example, accepted poems and other submissions from readers on a regular basis.²⁶⁰ The *Affiches de Bordeaux*, however, was a local paper serving a local community. Sending in a submission to the *Mercure* or the *Journal des Dames* was a way for readers to interact with a virtual audience, albeit one strewn over Paris, the provinces, and abroad. The audience provided by the *Affiches de Bordeaux* was a virtual audience too, but readers who submitted a piece of poetry to the *Affiches* were reaching not just fellow subscribers, but their friends, neighbors, colleagues, and co-workers.

²⁵⁸ December 31, 1778.

²⁵⁹ January 10, 1771.

²⁶⁰ For reader participation to the *Mercure* see Goodman, *Republic of Letters*, 167-172. Nina Gelbart also discusses reader participation to the *Journal des dames*. See Gelbart, *Feminine and Opposition Journalism in Old Regime France: "Le Journal des Dames."* (Berkeley, 1987) pp 32-36, 112-13.

Gelbart has likened the act of subscribing to a periodical to joining a club.²⁶¹ Readers were expected to participate. The *Affiches de Bordeaux* was even more like a club than papers that served a geographically dispersed audience. The *Affiches* allowed the Bordelais to perform for, entertain, or instruct other Bordelais with their submissions.

The *Affiches* - again like a club - provided space for subscribers to debate with each other. This was never more evident than during the waning months of 1771 and the early months of 1772 when the *Affiches de Bordeaux* was the site for a spirited logomachy on the subject of a suitable education for France's rural peasants. Never before had a topic so dominated the local paper. Between November 7, 1771 and February 6, 1772, the *Affiches* published five letters on the subject. Each letter was massive, consisting of over 1000 words. In order to fit one letter into an edition of the *Affiches* - each single edition of the paper was only about 1600 words in total - the Labottière brothers shrank the font size of the letter down to 7-point from the usual 9-point. Even so, each letter took up half of the edition in which it was published. The five-letter debate on education represented the first time the brothers reduced print size in order to make a piece fit into an edition of their paper. The only other time they utilized that technique was when they excerpted long sections of Devaine's work on local history.

Publishing the debate came at a financial cost to the brothers. Since the letters were unusually long, other items normally carried in the paper had to be sacrificed, including advertisements. Ads were one of the paper's main sources of revenues.²⁶²

²⁶¹ Gelbart, *Feminine and Opposition Journalism*, p. 32. See also Goodman, *Republic of Letters*, pp. 172-82.

²⁶² It is unknown exactly how much the Labottière brothers charged for advertisements in their paper. Gilles Feyel has determined that editors of the provincial *affiches* charged anywhere between 1 *sol* per

Clearly the brothers believed it was more important to carry the public debate on education than it was to sell advertising space for five editions.

In 1698 a royal edict declared that all French boys up to the age of fourteen must attend schools and catechism classes.²⁶³ That edict provoked a debate, which by the 1760s had erupted into a national issue. According to Harvey Chisick the central issues were:

to what extent could the people, who were obliged to labor ten or twelve hours a day or more, be educated? And if they could be educated, would this benefit society, or would it disrupt the social order?"²⁶⁴

The issue was not whether or not the people could be educated. Most everyone agreed that some form of education was necessary, even if only religious training. The real debate was over suitability. Opinions on the subject generally fell into one of two camps. On the one hand was the minority opinion which argued that education should be the same for everyone, regardless of social standing or wealth. On the other hand was the far more common view that a person's education should be tailored to his or her place in society; for example, the sons of merchants and traders get one type of education while the sons of poor laborers get another type of education.

The subject was taken up in a variety of venues. Provincial academies and *parlements*, in Rouen and Rennes, for example, debated the issue and made it the subject of *concours*; essays and books were written and circulated; the philosophes too

line of advertisement and 1 *livres 4 sols* for an entire ad. The most common charge for advertising space seemed to be about 24 *sols* per ad. See Gilles Feyel, "La presse provinciale sous l'ancien régime," in Sgard, ed., *La presse provinciale au XVIIIe siècle* (Grenoble, 1983) pp. 35-36.

²⁶³ Chisick, , *The Limits of Reform*, p. 76.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7. In addition to Chisick's excellent work on the relationship between the Enlightenment and popular education in Old-Regime France, see the collection of essays in Louis Collin, ed., *Éducation et pédagogies au siècle des lumières* (Angers, 1983) esp. pp. 49-62 and 189-204.

weighed in with their opinions.²⁶⁵ As Chisick notes, enlightened attitudes towards the education of poor laborers was a paradox: while the philosophes and other members of the enlightened community "condemned ignorance and praised enlightenment" they also generally "opposed the spread of education among the lower classes."²⁶⁶

In Bordeaux, the debate was precipitated by an article entitled "Letter on the Physico-moral education of peasant children," which was initially run in the *Affiches de Picardie* but was picked up and carried by the *Affiches de Bordeaux*.²⁶⁷ The author of the piece was in favor of teaching peasants only the most basic and rudimentary skills.

To support his argument he offered a simple equation: all people, regardless of their rank or social position, are born to work; yet, people of different social ranks do different work; therefore, the education a person receives ought to be commensurate with the work he will one day do. Thus, the children of "men favored by birth and by fortune" should be given an education steeped in the sciences and the arts, while children of the common people (*gens du peuple*) should be limited to an education that was purely focused on teaching them to labor.²⁶⁸

As an example of the proper education for the common people, the author pointed to a school for poor children supported by one of the nation's provincial intendants. At this school, boys were taught how to do all sorts of manual labor but not how to read, write or calculate. Those skills were taught only to the girls. According to the author, knowing how to read, write, and calculate would serve as a kind of dowry

²⁶⁵ For a detailed examination of how widespread the debate on education reached in the second half of the eighteenth century see Chisick, *The Limits of Reform*, especially chapters II and III.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 119. For a discussion of the philosophes' attitudes towards educating the people, see also p. 5-9 and 118-27.

²⁶⁷ November 7, 1771.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

for the girls later in life. If women possessed basic skills that men lacked, he argued, then it only stood to reason that husbands would be more dependent on their wives. The result would be stronger marital bonds.

The author's real concern however was that if peasants were taught anything more than just basic labor skills, then they would get the (false) impression that they did not have to be peasants, that their condition could be improved. For him, birth determined social destiny and anything that confused that ran contrary to the public good. "Men of the countryside," he argued, "are singularly destined by status (*état*) to work daily and unremittingly with their hands."²⁶⁹ The belief that a person's social position could be improved had already taken hold among the peasantry, the author believed, and was leading to disastrous consequences:

The example of some peasants in the countryside, who came to Paris, and became Notaries, Porters, Ushers, Clerks, Servants, or even Lackey in some big house, turns their heads. To know how to read and write, is, they believe, the first step in achieving this kind of fortune.²⁷⁰

But these examples of success were illusory. They did more harm than good "because hundreds perish for every one that succeeds."²⁷¹ While the benefits for peasants who moved to the cities were few and fleeting, the dangers to society were very real. On the one hand, there was a depopulation of the countryside, and on the other hand the poor houses and hospitals around France were filled with peasants who were encouraged to believe they could find a better life in the nation's cities, only to fail miserably.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

The writer hoped that his article would spark a debate on education in the country and he wanted the provincial *affiches* to be the venue for that debate. If held, such a debate would only be for the public good:

if somebody, animated like me for the desire to contribute to the public good, has strong objections to my proposals, they will be able to forward them to me by way of the *Affiches*; and I will have the true pleasure of refuting them as best that I can: the result can only be a very interesting discussion for the Public, which will only be to its advantage.²⁷²

Two weeks later in Bordeaux the author got his response in the form of a point-by-point refutation. On November 21, the *Affiches de Bordeaux* printed "Letter from Monsieur B**** to the Editor of the *Affiches de Bordeaux*, in response to the author of the letter...on the education of peasant children."²⁷³ The author of the response, a Bordelais, strongly opposed the educational scheme offered in the first letter, and encouraged all friends of humanity to reject this "barbarous project."²⁷⁴ For the Bordelais, the proposed plan would do nothing but transform men into animals.

The author refuted the supposition that teaching peasants how to read and write would encourage them to give up the fields in favor of the city. Interestingly, he did not argue with the first author's underlying deterministic view of birth and the social order. He agreed with the premise that peasants will be peasants. Instead, he argued that even peasants should be taught how to read, write, calculate, and indeed, learn about science and the arts also. The Bordelais based his argument on the radical (at the time) theory of equality. After all, "men are men, no matter what their state."²⁷⁵ Therefore, regardless of rank or social position, a proper education was tantamount to an inalienable right. "Are

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ November 21, 1771.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

the well-off the only men in France who must be able to reason, to think, speak, calculate, etc, " He wanted to know. "Must the laborer suffer under the degrading weight of his pride?" ²⁷⁶

Furthermore, providing a proper education to peasants would not lead to the dire consequences that the earlier writer warned of. For proof, all one needed to do was look to France's neighbors. The Swiss, the Dutch, and the Germans all taught their peasants how to read and write and yet they had no trouble keeping them in the countryside. Why then should the French peasant be condemned to "crass ignorance."²⁷⁷

The bordelais writer then followed up his equality argument with an argument rooted in class. He argued that people like the first author, "*les grands*," were primarily concerned above all else with keeping peasants as slave laborers.²⁷⁸ Their biggest fear was that if peasants really did leave the countryside then the wealthy themselves would be forced to work. Despite the fact that the Emperor of China himself once worked a ploughshare, France's wealthy were afraid to get their hands dirty. Finally, the author took issue with the claim that teaching girls to read and write but not boys would make for stronger marriages. To the Bordelais, this was "poor and weak reasoning" pure and simple.²⁷⁹ If one spouse knew how to read, write, and calculate and the other did not, he argued, then nothing but mistrust and friction would follow.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

Ultimately, the writer concluded that "there are already far too many ignoramuses."²⁸⁰ Education would not lead to the sorts of horrors predicted by the first author and in fact, all men claimed a right to an education.

Two weeks after the *Réponse* was carried in the *Affiches de Bordeaux*, the paper carried another letter, this one entitled "Letter to Monsieur B*** on his response to the author of *Physico-morals and the education of peasant children*."²⁸¹ The writer of this piece aligned himself firmly with the author of the first letter, and against his fellow Bordelais. The debate had been joined.

The author of the third letter engaged the previous writer's argument about equality in two ways. First, he challenged it on ideological grounds. The author agreed there was certain characteristics that united all men, but he did not agree that it must therefore follow that all men should get an equal education. For him, three things bound men together: practicing their religion, consulting their conscience, and obeying their reason. Knowing how to read and write, he argued, was not essential or necessary for carrying out those tasks and therefore these were not necessary skills for all men to possess.

Next, the writer challenged the notion of equality on practical grounds. Simply put, in France there was no such thing as equality. Looking to the Dutch, the Germans, the Swiss, and even the Emperor of China was ultimately irrelevant. "Why? Because we are French."²⁸² The nature of the French state was not one of equality but inequality. It would therefore be disastrous, he argued, to have the state's educational system running

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ December 5, 1771.

²⁸² Ibid.

contrary to the nature of the government itself. The author admitted that in order to change the nature of education in France, one must first change the nature of the state.

He argued that France was already nearly in chaos, that the first writer's prognoses were already coming to pass. The educational system had filled peasants' heads with "chimerical ideas" about social advancement. "it is an established fact," he argued, "that the countryside is depopulated in France."²⁸³ Conversely, the prisons, hospitals and public places were filled with "sad victims," peasants who tried to be exceed their station in life.²⁸⁴ If the situation continued, he warned, if peasants left the countryside and there was no one left to till the fields or grow the food, then France would surely starve.

While the situation was dire, the remedy was quite simple. Keeping peasants uneducated would keep them in the countryside, behind a plough, where they belonged. For the author, ignorance was a kind of bliss, at least for the nation's peasants: "to make them happy and useful, it is necessary to hide enlightenment from them, and often to face the most natural laws."²⁸⁵

On December 26, 1771 the *Affiches de Bordeaux* carried another letter on the subject of peasant education. This fourth letter was written by a local priest who came out against the proposed plan to limit the education of peasant children. In opposing the plan, the writer addressed some of the topics raised in previous letters. He argued, for example, that to give women skills like reading and writing that their husbands lacked would not make for a stronger marital bond. Rather, it would sow seeds of suspicion

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

and husbands would come to fear and hate their wives. His primary objection to the plan, however, was motivated by religious concerns.

The author pointed out that priests must know how to read and write in order to conduct their duties. If peasants were denied an education that taught those basic skills, then they would also be denied access to the priesthood. "Those who had a right to the middle class (*bourgeoisie*)," he believed "would enjoy an exclusive privilege to be men of God."²⁸⁶

For the author, the ability of peasants to become priests was not an abstract right, but a necessity. If peasants did not enter the priesthood, then there would be a shortage of priests in the countryside. "Would the middle class will leave their cities, to go for *free* to worship in a village?" he asked.²⁸⁷ The answer was of course, no, and the result would be that peasants would have no one to tend to their religious needs. For the author of the fourth letter, that was the fundamental weakness of the proposed plan on education.

The last letter in the debate was carried by the *Affiches de Bordeaux* on February 6, 1772. The letter was entitled "In Defense of Peasants" and was written by the same Bordelais author who wrote the second letter.²⁸⁸ This last installment was written as a response the author of the third letter.

In this letter, the author returned to his contention that peasants could benefit from an education and still remain peasants. It was a claim he had made earlier using France's neighbors as examples. In this letter, he turned to France's own peasantry. He

²⁸⁶ December 26, 1771.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ February 6, 1772.

was certain that an examination of France's rural peasants would prove the axiom that "industry is the daughter of instruction, as poverty is that of ignorance."²⁸⁹

To look around the country, he argued, was to see two sorts of peasants: those who were educated, happy, and productive, and those who were uneducated, unhappy, and unproductive. For an example of the former he pointed to the peasants of Alsace and Lorraine, of the Trois Évêchés, and those living outside of Paris. There the children of peasants are educated, he wrote, and there the lands are cultivated best. The peasants are happy, and productive, and they remain to work the land where they were born. The children are content to learn how to plough the fields under the gaze of their parents.

For a contrary example, the author turned the Landes, a region just outside Bordeaux. There, he argued, one could see the ill effects all too clearly of uneducated peasants (*paysans ignorants*). The picture the author painted was a grim one:

We will see there some scattered dwellings, thatched roofs, filthy, unhealthy because of the negligence of those who live there. We will see men there...without industry, courage, strength, or the desire for greater comfort...liking idleness, detesting work, plundering their neighbors, malicious, making evil for evil's sake, the majority of them drunkards.²⁹⁰

The author concluded his letter by writing: "so long as I have contrary facts in front of my eyes, I will take the liberty, Sir, to believe that you are wrong, and I will dare to support my opinion." The debate on education in the *Affiches de Bordeaux* came to an end but not for lack of enthusiasm on the opposing sides.

The debate carried by the *Affiches* clearly was an important one to the Labottière brothers and their readers. Both sides claimed to be looking after the good of the peasants as well as the nation's best interest. The side that argued in favor of an equal

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

education for all, believed that educated peasants were happier and therefore more productive. Education was thus better for the peasant and better for the state. To the other side, education would only make life and work for the peasants unbearable. It would also give them the desire to change their state. Education therefore was bad for the peasant and ultimately bad for the nation.

CONCLUSION

In 1782 the brothers learned that their privilege to publish the *Affiches de Bordeaux* had been revoked. Provincial editors of the *affiches* did not own a privilege to publish, but rather leased the right from the editor of the *Affiches de Paris*. The Labottière brothers had renewed their lease in the past without incident or difficulty, and they still had four years remaining on their current lease when it was revoked. Dupont des Jumeaux, a new-comer to Bordeaux and friend of intendant Dupré de Saint-Maur, had used his political connections and influence to acquire the rights to publish the city's only newspaper. The brothers had been flatly outmaneuvered. On July 30, 1784 Jacques and Antoine printed the last edition of the *Affiches de Bordeaux*, informing their readers that “their newspaper will cease publishing because following certain steps taken without their knowledge, they were stripped of their privilege two years before it was due to expire.”²⁹¹ One month later, Dupont des Jumeaux' *Journal de Guienne* made its debut, becoming the nation's first provincial daily newspaper.

Dupont inherited a readership and a city transformed. The most obvious signs were the material changes that came from decades of economic prosperity. Bordeaux had grown in size and population, and its citizens had achieved unprecedented levels of

²⁹¹ July 30, 1784.

wealth. The Labottière brothers could rightly share some responsibility for the city's economic success. Their paper was dedicated to increasing Bordeaux's wealth and prosperity by providing accurate and timely commercial news to the city's merchants and traders. The paper also encouraged new avenues for economic exchange by uniting buyers with sellers, those looking for a job with those who needed workers, and a space where local shop owners could advertise their wares.

Dupont could not simply rest on the brothers' accomplishments, however, for Bordeaux was just about to enter into a new phase of its economic activity. As François Crouzet has noted, in many respects the last decade of the Old Regime saw Bordeaux at the pinnacle of its prosperity. However, it was also a period of uncertainty. A royal decree of 1784 allowed Saint Domingue for the first time to trade with non-French ships. Suddenly foreign - mainly American - ships were vying for a piece of the colonial trade that had once belonged almost exclusively to the Bordelais.²⁹² In response, the city's merchants and traders sought out other avenues of trade, and increasingly looked to Africa. For the first time ever Bordeaux became a force in the slave trade. These were all important economic issues that would have a far-reaching impact on the city. The editors of the new paper were forced to confront these issues almost immediately upon going to print.

By 1784, the city had also been transformed intellectually and culturally. When the *Affiches* first began publishing at mid-century, the city's intellectual and cultural life was not nearly as vibrant as its economy. Academic life and salon activity were dominated by a small group of the city's traditional elites: magistrates and other aristocrats, lawyers and doctors. These groups also bought the majority of books in the

city. Merchants and traders, so important to the city's economy, were largely absent from its intellectual and cultural life.

Yet, by the time the brothers turned the publishing reins over to Dupont des Jumeaux, that situation had changed markedly. Along with maintaining Bordeaux's prosperity, the brothers were concerned with cultivating amongst their readers a taste for books and new ideas. In order to increase interest and participation in the city's intellectual and cultural life, the brothers informed readers of local cultural events like plays and concerts; encouraged the pursuit of new ideas by offering books for sale and subscriptions to the leading papers of the day; and provided a space for artistic and intellectual exchange between readers.

Their efforts were a clear success. By 1784, Bordelais merchants and traders were not only taking a more active role in the city's intellectual and cultural life, they were, in fact, dominating it. As we will see in the following chapter, during the twenty-six years the *Affiches* was in print, merchants and traders went from buying the fewest number of books from Bordelais booksellers, to buying the most. Merchants and traders would also dominate the *Musée de Bordeaux*. Founded in 1784 the *Musée* quickly became the preeminent intellectual and cultural institution in the city, rivaling the Academy of Sciences and Arts for prestige and popularity, and putting the Academy of Painting out of business.

When Dupont began printing the *Journal* in 1784, he had inherited a readership that had practice in sharing ideas, and had grown comfortable in expressing themselves in print. Dupont would ask more of them still. He expected his readers to submit not only poems and letters, but also essays and book and theater reviews. In the prospectus

²⁹² François Crouzet, "Bordeaux: an eighteenth-century *Wirtschaftswunder*?" p. 55.

for the *Journal*, Dupont wrote that his goals for the new paper were “to encourage commerce and spread enlightenment.”²⁹³ Dupont's vision was made possible only through the efforts of the Labottière brothers to shrink the distance between the city's economic vitality and its cultural *éclat*.

After the *Affiches de Bordeaux* ceased publishing in the summer of 1784, Jacques and Antoine Labottière went back to selling books, printing for the *Cour des Aides*, and publishing works on local history and pamphlets for the theater. As it turned out, they were just biding their time. Five short years later the Revolution came and with it freedom of the press. Jacques and Antoine, by then aged 72 and 74 respectively, responded by reviving their old paper and by creating the new *Journal de l'Assemblée nationale*, a paper designed to keep the Bordelais informed of the events in Paris.

²⁹³ Prospectus, *Journal de Guienne*, August 3, 1784.

Chapter 6

THE *JOURNAL DE GUIENNE*, THE *MUSEE DE BORDEAUX*, AND THE END OF THE OLD REGIME, 1784-1791

1784 was an important and transitional year in the city of Bordeaux. A royal edict that opened up the French West Indies to foreign trade seriously threatened Bordeaux's trading monopoly with the colonies, and therefore endangered the century-long economic boom the city had been enjoying. That summer, the editors of the *Affiches de Bordeaux* announced to their subscribers that without warning they had suddenly and inexplicably lost their privilege to publish the city's only local paper. The following month the *Affiches* disappeared after a remarkable twenty-six year run and was replaced by the *Journal de Guienne*. The man behind the new paper, and the one most responsible for the loss of the *Affiches'* privilege, was Dupont des Jumeaux. Dupont, an Abbé from Perigord who had only been living in Bordeaux since 1781, was also the founder of the *Musée de Bordeaux*, which he had created in 1783. Together, the city's two newest institutions, *Journal* and *Musée*, would utterly transform the intellectual, cultural, and social life of Bordeaux in the years leading up to the Revolution.

Like the *Affiches*, the *Journal* continued to advance the city's economic prosperity. The new paper also fully embraced the Enlightenment ideals of criticism and reform, open debate, and public service. The *Musée* provided the institutional base for many of these impulses. It was open, socially mixed and provided a space where members could come together on an equal footing. Inside the walls of the *Musée*, members discussed and debated the issues of the day and had direct access to the world

of culture and ideas. Together, Bordeaux's two newest institutions served as a forum for the Bordelais to experiment with the principles and practices that proved so crucial during the early years of the Revolution

DUPONT DES JUMEAUX

Ironically, these two institutions, which were central to the formation of Bordelais cultural and political identity, were founded by a man who was not from Bordeaux. Originally from Perigord, Dupont moved to Bordeaux from Paris in 1781. Unfortunately, the details of his life are sketchy.¹ The great bulk of what is known about him comes predominantly from six surviving letters he wrote between May 22, 1783 and April 20, 1785 which are now stored at the *Bibliothèque municipale de Bordeaux*.

Though brief, the Abbé's life and career in Bordeaux was nothing short of remarkable. Just two short years after Dupont des Jumeaux arrived in Bordeaux he had managed to befriend the most powerful man in the province, the intendant Dupré de Saint-Maur; outmaneuver the city's most respected and well known publishers and appropriate the privilege to publish that they had held for twenty-six years; begin publishing France's first provincial daily newspaper; and create the *Musée de Bordeaux*, an institution that would eventually grow to rival the *Académie* as the center of intellectual and cultural life in the city.

Perhaps even more remarkable, the Abbé was able to succeed where others before him had failed. There had been numerous times in the past when rival newspapers were established to try and challenge the dominance of the *Affiches*. All were short-lived endeavors. The *Iris de Guienne*, for example, began publishing in 1763

and lasted less than a year. Ten years later François de Lamontaigne, a nephew of Montesquieu, tried to revive the failed paper but was unable to secure the right to publish it.² In 1773, Latapie sought authorization to publish a paper under the name *Éphémérides d'Aquitaine*, but he failed as well. Another attempt was made in 1782, but again failed.³ Others had tried to establish cultural societies and reading clubs. Seven years before Dupont founded the *Musée*, the Abbé Sicard established the *Société libre d'emulation*, a philosophical and philanthropic organization. This institution was unsuccessful. Yet by the time Dupont des Jumeaux left Bordeaux in 1785, his two institutions were flourishing and growing and would last until their eventual suppression during the Terror.

The years immediately preceding Dupont's arrival in Bordeaux were spent in Paris, where he offered courses in mathematics at Court de Gebelin's *Musée de Paris*.⁴ Louis Desgraves and Johel Coutura have suggested that Dupont was also a member of the Masonic *Loge des Neuf-Soeurs*, though there is no direct evidence to support that contention.⁵ We do know that in 1780 Dupont wrote a letter to the Bordeaux city council seeking permission to offer a "free and public course of mathematics, mechanics, astronomy, optics and hydrodynamics." It is unclear why exactly Dupont

¹ The best source of information on Dupont for the years he was in Bordeaux remains Marie-Thérèse Bouysson, "Le Musée de Bordeaux (1783-1789), étude psycho-sociologique d'une société de lumières," (diplôme d'études supérieures, University of Paris-Sorbonne, 1967; Paris, microfiche, 1973).

² Ernest Labadie, *La presse bordelaise pendant la Révolution*, (Bordeaux, 1910) pp. 19-22. See also Nina Gelbart, *Feminine and Opposition Journalism in Old Regime France: Le Journal des Dames* (Berkeley, 1987) pp. 27-28 and 208-209; and Robert Grandroute, "L'Iris de Guyenne," in Sgard, ed. *Dictionnaire des Journaux, 1600-1789* (Paris, 1991) pp. 555-557.

³ Labadie, *La presse bordelaise*, p. 23.

⁴ On the *Musée de Paris* see Sophia A. Rosenfeld, "A Revolution in Language: Words, Gestures, and the Politics of Signs in France, 1745-1894" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard Univ., 1995), 160-71, and Michael Lynn, "Enlightenment in the Public Sphere: The Musée de Monsieur and Scientific Culture in Late Eighteenth-Century Paris," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 32.4 (1999): 463-476.

⁵ See Louis Desgraves, *L'Aquitaine aux XVI-XVIII siècles*, p. 654, and Johel Coutura, "Le Musée de Bordeaux," *Dix-Huitième Siècle* (vol. 19, 1987) p. 149-164.

chose Bordeaux. Perhaps he was attracted to the city because he was originally from nearby Périgord in the Dordogne. Whatever his motivation, he was turned down by the city council, which informed him that the local *collège* had exclusive rights to offer educational courses in Bordeaux. Dupont was furious at being turned down and by the poor way he believed he had been treated by the *jurade*. Nearly five years later he would write in a letter: "I would rather suffer a hundred thousand deaths than deal with those people there."⁶

Matters did not end there, however. The intendant of Guienne, Dupré de Saint-Maur, overruled the *jurade*'s decision and gave permission to Dupont to come to Bordeaux and teach the course. The intendant went out of his way to aid Dupont by providing a room in the *Hôtel de Ville* for Dupont to hold his course. The intendant even hired the Abbé to be the personal tutor for his children. Dupré de Saint-Maur's intervention on Dupont's behalf began a pattern that would repeat itself several times over the next few years: at crucial junctures along the way, the intendant inserted himself into local affairs to the benefit of Dupont des Jumeaux. For example, in 1782 the intendant again intervened and helped secure the privilege to publish the *Journal de Guienne*. Dupré de Saint-Maur also added much needed cachet to the new *Musée* when he turned over rooms in the *Hôtel de Ville* for the groups meetings and public exhibitions and when he agreed to serve as that body's first president. Dupont des Jumeaux recognized the benefits of having the most powerful man in the province as a benefactor. He expressed this several times in his letters. On February 14, 1785, Dupont wrote that the *Musée* owed its existence to "the beneficial and enlightened protection of

⁶ BM de Bx -- Ms 829 April 16 1785.

Mr. Dupre de St Maur Intendant of Guyenne."⁷ For the intendant's part, he seemed to have developed a real affection for the Abbé, writing "I love him [Dupont] like my child."⁸

Indeed, a consistent thread that runs through all of the Abbé's time in Bordeaux is his seemingly uncanny ability to bring together people from across broad social, cultural, and religious backgrounds and unite them in a common purpose. After all, Dupont des Jumeaux arrived in Bordeaux as an outsider, knowing no one. Yet when it came time to start the new paper and organize the *Musée*, he knew exactly whom to solicit for help and, importantly, how to be persuasive. In the very first letter that Dupont sent out to prospective members of the *Musée* he identified people who had already agreed to participate. The list is impressive and represents the most respected and well-known names from the merchant community, the world of politics, and intellectual life.⁹ Taken as a whole, these original founding members of the *Musée* gave Dupont des Jumeaux the financial backing he needed to support his new endeavor, intellectual heft, and political clout. In reply after reply, those asked to participate seemed more than happy to. Saige, the future secretary of the *Musée*, responded to Dupont, writing that "without completely knowing the plan or the goal of your establishment, I am nevertheless flattered to contribute to this great usefulness to our country...."¹⁰ Membership in the *Musée* would eventually include large numbers of the

⁷ Ibid., February 14, 1785.

⁸ Couturra, "Le Musée de Bordeaux," p. 157

⁹ The exact date of this letter is unclear. Bouyssy dates it 26 March 1783. That seems unlikely however as Dupont des Jumeaux sent out a letter on the same date to Péry, asking if he would participate in this new endeavor. Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that the above letter was sent out shortly after 26 March, 1783. For a complete list of muséens, see Appendix IV.

¹⁰ Quoted in Bouyssy, "Le Musée de Bordeaux," p. 26

city's leading merchants and lawyers, a smattering of parlementaires, and members of the *Académie*, including Protestants, and Jews.

Dupont went about launching the *Journal de Guienne* in much the same way. Lacking any real editorial or publishing experience of his own, he sought out people who would bring crucial experience and credibility to the project. He enlisted Clozanges and Gaufreteau, both early supporters of the *Musée* and two of the city's best-known writers, to be co-editors of the paper. When it came time to print the first edition, Dupont turned to Jean-Baptiste Séjourné, a well known publisher in Bordeaux and one of the Labottière brothers' biggest rivals.¹¹

In early 1785, less than a year after the *Journal de Guienne* began publishing and not quite two years after the *Musée* began holding regular meetings, Dupont des Jumeaux relinquished control of both institutions and left Bordeaux for good. The circumstances surrounding the Abbé's departure are as murky as those pertaining to his arrival. Robert Grandroute, borrowing from the research of Ernest Labadie, has suggested that Dupont lost control of the newspaper to his co-editors and was essentially forced out of the city.¹² Dupont himself lends some credence to this theory. In a letter dated February 14 1785, Dupont wrote that Clozanges and Gaufretau had tried to strip him of his share of the editorship. Dupont did not elaborate except to say that they were worried that his exceptionally close relationship to the intendant would deprive "our *Journal de Guienne* a multitude of subscriptions."¹³ Despite whatever unease the two might have had however, it is unlikely this would have convinced

¹¹ Ernest Labadie, *Notices biographiques sur les imprimeurs et libraires bordelais des XVI^e, XVII^e, et XVIII^e siècles* (Bordeaux, 1900) pp. 109-110.

¹² Robert Grandroute, "Journal de Guyenne," in Sgard, ed., *Dictionnaire des Journaux*, pp. 582-85, and Ernest Labadie, *La Presse bordelais* p. 15.

Dupont to leave the city. Indeed, in a letter written a full year before, Dupont was already alluding to the possibility that he would leave the city with Dupré de Saint-Maur and his family when the intendant retired.¹⁴ Dupont wrote that he would accompany the intendant and his family to Argent, "and when they set out again towards Paris, I will go to Vienna where I have established projects; if they do not succeed, I will go to Petersburg and if those which I formed for this last city do not succeed, I will withdraw myself to a small, quite, unknown corner of the earth. There, I will do geometry, and I will be quite happy."¹⁵ Nonetheless, Dupont's last surviving letter, written April 20 1785, listed his return address as *Hôtel Lusignant rue des Vieilles Etuves* in Paris. After that, Dupont des Jumeaux essentially dropped out of sight and no one in Bordeaux heard from him again.

While many questions still remain to be answered about the life of Dupont des Jumeaux, clearly his most important legacy is the two institutions he left behind. Together they fundamentally transformed the cultural, intellectual and social life of the city of Bordeaux. Dupont conceived of the two organizations together and he designed them to be mutually supportive. While soliciting people to join his new *Musée*, Dupont wrote that "the *Journal de Guienne* for which I obtained the privilege with Misters de Clozanges and de Gaufreteau, and which will appear in a few days like the *Journal de Paris*, would grow rich by the results of the work of this company [the *Musée*] and would make them known."¹⁶ The newspaper supported the *Musée* by publicizing

¹³ February 14, 1785

¹⁴ William Doyle does an excellent job of discussing the events that led up to Dupré's retirement especially his losing battle with the Parlement over the issue of the *corvées*. See Doyle, *The Parlement of Bordeaux and the End of the Old Regime, 1771-1790* (London, 1974) pp. 233-244.

¹⁵ February 4, 1784.

¹⁶ March 26, 1783.

meetings, concerts, and course offerings. It also shone a light on the *Musée's* various public services and charitable donations. For its part, the *Musée* financially supported the paper by subscribing to it and providing a physical base where readers of the paper could come together as a group and be sociable, discuss important issues, and engage in cultural endeavors. Though it is necessary to examine these institutions separately it is important to remember that they worked in concert, sharing not only the same founder, but also the same vision of society and the same goal in trying to make that vision a reality.

THE JOURNAL DE GUIENNE

On September 1, 1784, the first edition of the *Journal de Guienne* was sent out to subscribers, bringing to an end the twenty-six year run of the *Affiches de Bordeaux*. This was no minor occasion. People in the city had grown up with the *Affiches* and many probably could not recall a time when the city had had no newspaper of its own. At a time when other provincial papers proved to be short lived, with changing ownership and changing names, the *Affiches de Bordeaux* was a model of regularity and dependability, coming out every Thursday for nearly three decades. Moreover, the life of the paper coincided with the city's greatest economic boom in its history. The city's economy grew at an average rate of five percent a year throughout the course of the eighteenth century, far outpacing the national average.¹⁷ This was no coincidence. The newspaper took the city's economic well being as its prime concern. Dupont des Jumeaux and the other editors of the new paper understood full well that they were replacing a well-known and respected local institution that had come to play an

essential role in the daily life of the Bordelais people. They knew that the city's business community made important economic decisions based on the information found in the *Affiches*; that others counted on the paper to find work or housing; while still others used the paper as a guide to the city's cultural happenings and social events. Dupont, Clozanges, and Gaufretau also knew that there might be some lingering ill feelings about the way they had taken the privilege away from the Labottière brothers. To alleviate these concerns the editors of the *Journal* sought to make the new paper seem as familiar to readers as the old one. In both form and layout the two papers were remarkably similar. Indeed in the prospectus for the *Journal*, the editors were careful to point out that "all the articles included in the *Affiches* will be the concern of this newspaper."¹⁸

Yet in at least one important way the *Journal* was noticeably different from its predecessor. While the *Affiches* was a weekly sheet, the *Journal* came out every day, becoming provincial France's first daily paper. Since the paper's stock-in-trade was in providing timely and accurate information, coming out every day could only be a benefit to the paper's subscribers. Providing daily updates on economic news such as exchange rates and commodity prices was essential to the business community. The same is true for cultural events. Reviews of plays and concerts, done regularly and in a timely fashion, allowed readers to make a host of informed decisions on where and how to spend their money and leisure time. Later on during the years 1788-89, when political events were moving rapidly in Paris, daily reporting was a necessity. Readers would have to pay for the convenience, however. A yearly subscription to the *Journal* cost

¹⁷ For details of Bordeaux's spectacular economic growth, as well as fluctuations in the growth rate, see chapter 4, pp. 3-30.

readers twenty-four *livres*, which was a significant increase over the price of the *Affiches de Bordeaux*.¹⁹ For much of its existence the price of subscribing to the *Affiches* had held steady at just six *livres*. Only in the last year of its life, when the Labottières began publishing the paper twice weekly did they raise the price to nine *livres*.

THE PROSPECTUS AND PROSPECTIVE READERS

As for most eighteenth-century French periodicals, there no longer exists a subscription list for the *Journal de Guienne*.²⁰ As a consequence, there is no record of how many people subscribed to and read the paper, or who those people might have been. It stands to reason that the *Journal* picked up most or all of the subscribers to the *Affiches*. If readers of the *Affiches* wanted a local paper that reported on news and events in Bordeaux, and provided a space for their fellow Bordelais to advertise a range of goods and services for sale or hire, then there was no other place to turn to than the *Journal de Guienne*. On the other hand, the *Journal* cost three times more than the *Affiches* which might suggest that some of the less-affluent subscribers of the *Affiches* could not afford to sign on to the new paper. In trying to piece together a coherent picture of the *Journal*'s readership, however, these deductions are of little value, as there no longer exists a list of subscribers for the *Affiches* either.

The one major piece of evidence that has survived for the *Journal* that is lacking for the *Affiches* is the prospectus. While this document obviously does not list subscribers, it does provide a wealth of information about whom Dupont des Jumeaux

¹⁸ Prospectus, *Journal de Guienne*, 1784

¹⁹ In comparison, a subscription to the *Gazette de Leyde* cost 36 *livres* a year, while a year's subscription to the *Gazette de France* cost 16 *livres*. See Popkin, *Revolutionary News: The Press in France, 1789-1799* (Durham, 1990) p. 18-22.

and his co-editors thought they were writing for. The prospectus is valuable because it spoke to an audience of readers whom the editors hoped and thought would subscribe to the paper. The prospectus was an advertisement of sorts, a way to market the sheet to the public. It was an attempt to appeal to readers in the hopes of getting them to subscribe. To that end, the prospectus laid out the format of the paper, provided readers with an idea about its scope and contents, and discussed the goals and aspirations of the editors. In trying to piece together an image of the typical reader of the *Journal*, the prospectus provides some fundamental clues. No one knew their subscribers, that is, their customers, better than the editors themselves.

Published on August 3, 1784, less than one month before the *Journal* would make its debut, the *Prospectus* was the first statement the public had heard from the editors of the new paper. Subscribers to the *Affiches de Bordeaux* had been informed just days earlier that the Labottière brothers had lost their right to publish the paper and that they were being replaced by a new sheet.²¹ According to the *Prospectus*, the goals of the new paper were straightforward but lofty: "to encourage trade and spread enlightenment." For the editors, the two were not mutually exclusive goals. The two went hand in hand. Bordeaux, they wrote, was a city that "nature had intended to flourish by the arts, like it shined by its riches."

To achieve these goals, the editors articulated a vision of a newspaper that did not differ significantly from the *Affiches*. Half of each edition would focus on the economic life of the city, and the other half would be concerned with intellectual and cultural pursuits. The economic sections of the paper focused on both the big and the

²⁰ See Jack Censer, *The French Press in the Age of Enlightenment* (New York, 1994) pp. 184-91.

²¹ See *Affiches de Bordeaux*, July 30, 1784.

small aspects of commercial life in the city. The *Journal* would offer news and information from the port, provide space for shopkeepers to advertise their goods, and carry advertisements intended to unite a vast web of buyers and sellers, those looking for work, and those looking for workers. The sections that focused on the intellectual and cultural life of the city were designed to keep readers informed of events at the *Académie* and the newly formed *Musée*. New books, engravings, and poetry would be advertised for sale and often reviewed for the benefit of readers. The schedule of theatrical events around the city would also be announced and reviews provided. Finally, the *Journal* was dedicated to providing readers with news and updates from the world of the arts and science. For the editors, success would be achieved if they were able to nurture and cultivate "this delicacy of taste and this flourishing of urbanity, which does not reign exclusively in the capital."²²

Thus while the *Prospectus* is not definitive on the subject of readership, it does provide some useful clues about which groups would most likely be drawn to the *Journal*. The first of the paper's two stated goals - "to encourage trade" - no doubt appealed to the merchants, traders, and businessmen of the city. Indeed, no other occupational activity was so clearly singled out as a concern and primary focus of the paper as was the activity of those Bordelais engaged in commercial pursuits. The first promise the paper made was to promptly provide subscribers with "notices relating to the various speculations about the development of the principles and theories of trade."²³ In practice, that meant that for the big merchant families and overseas traders there would be information on:

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

the construction, the armament, the cargo, the destination, the arrival and the departure of Ships; nautical observations, maritime news, foreign sales, the price of the goods of France and of the Colonies; the Insurance Courts, and the Exchanges of the grand capitals of Europe.²⁴

But the *Journal* was not just the paper of big business. For the city's smaller merchants, shop owners, and artisans the paper offered a space to post "change of residence notices; display contracts from the office of mortgages (*bureau des hypothèques*); lists of prohibitions...and notices concerning goods to be sold."²⁵

Large portions of the paper were not only written for those engaged in commerce, but by those engaged in commerce. As the editors noted in the *Prospectus*, the tasks that they had chosen for their paper were too big to be accomplished by any one person. Thus, the *Journal* would be "the fruit of the work and the zeal of a Company of men educated in Trade, and well-versed in Letters."²⁶

The *Journal's* worldview as well as the scope of its contents was thoroughly commercial. Yet, as we have seen, commerce was not the paper's sole interest. Deducing a possible readership from the paper's second goal, however, is much more problematic. Many, if not all, of the intellectual and cultural activities outlined in the paper had the potential for dual constituencies. For example, the legal minutia contained in the extracts of the *causes célèbres* pleaded before the Bar of Guienne would be of interest to the city's lawyers, but as Sarah Maza has shown, in Paris, legal proceedings sparked an interest that went well beyond legal circles.²⁷ The paper also reported on

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Maza has argued that some of the eighteenth-century *mémoires judiciaires* were likely to reach a large and socially mixed audience. "In the city of Paris," Maza writes, "which on the eve of the Revolution counted about half a million inhabitants, five or ten thousand, maybe more, of the most educated, prosperous, and influential people had access to briefs that were sold, given out for free, hawked by

events at the *Académie* and the *Musée*, which surely would have been of interest to members of those organizations. Yet, both the *Académie* and the *Musée* had regular and frequent public components to them. The *Académie* held weekly meetings in which the public was invited to attend and had a public library. The *Musée* held concerts, art salons, and other activities that were open to non-members.

Thus, while it is fairly clear to see that merchants, traders, and shopkeepers ought to be counted among the paper's customers, it is less clear where to draw the outer boundaries of its readership. At a minimum, a subscriber had to have the ability to read and the twenty-four *livres* required for a yearly subscription, which was not an insubstantial amount. This meant that the skilled laborers and artisans that could have afforded a subscription to the *Affiches de Bordeaux* could never afford one to the *Journal de Guienne*. As a result, the *Journal* was likely to have a readership that was more socially homogeneous and elite than its predecessor.

Ultimately, then, the *Prospectus* is valuable but limited in determining the readership of the paper. Along with merchants and traders, the paper likely counted among its readership the same notables of the city whom its predecessor had cultivated: parlementaires, academicians, certainly muséens as we will soon see, lawyers, doctors and other professionals. In the end, the prospectus only informed potential readers what the editors intended to print. Looking in detail at what the *Journal* actually carried over the course of its seven-year life span might help to shed more light on the problem.

peddlers, read in cafés, and summarized or reprinted in newspapers." See Maza, *Private Lives and Public Affairs: The Causes Célèbres of Pre-Revolutionary France* (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 127-129.

ECONOMIC CONTENT

By 1784, the city's economic activity was squarely centered on the port. Through much of the century, overseas trade and commerce had been the city's lifeblood and the engine that drove or influenced nearly every aspect of the city's economy. It was only natural that the *Journal* would focus much of its attention and energy there. Indeed as we have seen from the prospectus, encouraging commerce was the paper's first stated and primary goal. This meant that on a daily basis, the *Journal* provided useful, accurate and timely maritime information to the merchants and traders counted among the paper's readership.

THE PORT OF BORDEAUX

The port of Bordeaux was a primary destination and launching point for ships going to or returning from the French West Indies, Europe, and after 1784, Africa. It was not unusual to see the harbor dotted with ships from as far away as Russia. On a typical day in January 1785, a total of twenty-six foreign ships including vessels from Denmark, Hamburg, and England had dropped anchor in the city's port. The previous year, a total of 1,982 foreign ships had arrived in Bordeaux and 1,855 Bordelais ships left the port.²⁸ Like their predecessors, the editors of the *Journal* sought to keep track of all this frenetic activity by dedicating the first page of every edition to maritime news and information on the port. Here Bordelais merchants, traders, and businessmen could find details on every ship to arrive in port, with a description of the ship's contents, where it had come from, the type and amount of cargo it was carrying, the captain of the ship, and the ship owner or merchant who would be handling the cargo once it had arrived at the dock. The same type of information was given for ships leaving port. The

listing for the ship *La Marquise de Cassogni* is a typical example of these ads.

According to the *Journal*, the ship was scheduled to leave the port of Bordeaux on January 2, 1785 bound for Saint Domingue, under the command of Monsieur Dudilot, who also owned the ship. It was carrying 300 tons of wine, brandy, beef, butter, and flour. Unlike previous trips to the islands, there was no room for passengers that day.²⁹ Notices like that one were an everyday occurrence in the pages of the paper. Bordelais ships left port destined for the West Indies loaded with local products such as wine, eau-de-vie, and flour, as well as with European goods like timber and salted beef. The paper also reported on the ships' return voyage when they had exchanged their European goods for colonial products such as coffee, sugar, and cotton.

In addition to covering ship movement in and out of the port of Bordeaux, the *Journal* also kept readers up to date on important maritime news. On September 1, 1784 the paper notified readers about a fire that had ripped through the main commercial district of Port-au-Prince. The first reports had come in from the captain of *La Marquise de Cassini* who was anchored in the port and witnessed the destruction first hand. The article carried in the *Journal* reported that 130 houses or shops had been destroyed in the main commercial district. The article went on calculate the value of the property destroyed, taking into account that property brought in rent for its owners:

The five blocks burnt produced, one said, in rent from the stores, 1.1 to 1.2 million francs, not including the rental of apartments, which raised the value by 10 percent, and gave eleven million for their value; several houses bringing in twenty-five per cent because the rents have gone up since the war.³⁰

²⁸ *Journal de Guienne*, July 30, 1784.

²⁹ *Journal de Guienne*, January 2, 1785.

³⁰ September 1, 1784.

This information would have proven of great interest to a variety of readers of the *Journal* for several reasons. The connection between Saint Domingue and Bordeaux had been long-standing throughout the century. Most notably there was the economic affiliation. Bordeaux had grown rich over the course of the century by provisioning the island with its necessities while at the same time supplying Europe with colonial products. More than that, however, the article's focus on the financial loss wrought by the fire pointed to the reality that, by the end of the century, many of Bordeaux's wealthiest families owned property in Saint Domingue. Merchant families such as the Nairac, Gradis, and Bonnaffé had substantial holdings there. In addition, Doyle has noted that many parlementaire families also invested heavily in land and property on the island.³¹ The Dupaty family, for instance, owned extensive property on the island, including several sugar and coffee plantations. Beyond the economic connection between Saint Domingue and Bordeaux, however, was a familial connection. Many of the colonists who had settled on the island in the eighteenth century were originally from Bordeaux and still had family there.³² During the slave revolts that swept Saint Domingue in the early 1790s, the colonists returned to Bordeaux in droves and took up permanent residence there.³³

The *Journal* provided readers with other maritime news as well. Every day the paper posted meteorological observations, such as the times of sunrise and sunset, the weather forecast and, most importantly, the tides schedule. Though seemingly mundane, this was precisely the type of information that the city's merchants and overseas traders

³¹ Doyle, *The Parlement of Bordeaux*, pp. 102-104.

³² Forrest, *Society and Politics*, p. 53.

³³ Casey, *Bordeaux*, pp. 48-50. See also R. Darrell Meadows, "Engineering Exile: Social Networks and the Atlantic French Community, 1789-1809," *French Historical Studies* 23.1 (2000) pp. 67-102.

depended on. It allowed merchants to predict more accurately if and when a shipment of goods would be delayed because of weather or rough seas. It also helped to calculate how long it would take goods being shipped from the port to arrive at their destination. In short, this information helped the Bordelais to make informed business decisions in a variety of ways.

AVIS DIVERS

Reporting on port activity and providing information to the city's biggest merchants and traders was not the *Journal's* sole function however. Like the *Affiches*, the editors of the *Journal* blended covering the activities of big business with the minutia of everyday business life in the city. The paper devoted space to people looking for work, people looking for workers, and people trying to sell everything imaginable from Royal offices to snuff boxes and canes. The same day the paper reported that *La Marquise* was setting sail for Saint-Domingue loaded with beef and wine, Monsieur Blondel, formerly of Paris and newly arrived in Bordeaux, informed the public that he was opening a shop on the fashionable rue St. Cathérine. There shoppers could buy perfume, confections, and liquors - all top quality and, he assured, all at a reasonable price.³⁴ If a reader was not looking for perfume, but for, say, a Royal office, then they could meet with Monsieur de Copmartin on rue Castillon who was selling his "Office of Lawyer of the King, in the Seneshal & Presidial of Guienne."³⁵ Indeed anything that involved the exchange of goods or services for money fell within the purview of the *Journal de Guienne*; no transaction was either too big or too small to escape notice.

³⁴ January 2, 1785.

³⁵ Ibid.

Culture too was put on sale in the *Journal*. In virtually every edition there were portrait painters looking for subjects, music lessons starting, and people looking to buy prints. Indeed, a reader looking for self-improvement or simply a hobby could turn to the newspaper and find any number of people willing to help, for a price. Readers interested in dance lessons for example, could get personal attention from Monsieur Chaseau in his house on rue Doydy in the Chartrons district. Or, if they preferred to learn how to play the violin, Monsieur Chaseau was an accomplished music teacher.³⁶

SLAVERY

The single greatest economic issue that separated the *Affiches* from the *Journal* was slavery. Slavery and the slave trade were never prominent issues in the pages of the *Affiches*. Before 1784, Bordeaux's involvement in the slave trade represented only a very small fraction of the city's economic activity and therefore mention of it appeared in the paper only infrequently. For the first eighty years of the eighteenth century, Nantes was the undisputed leader in the French slave trade, sending half of all French ships during that period. La Rochelle came in a distant second, providing 13 percent of the ships in the slave trade. Bordeaux was third contributing just 9.5 percent of the French ships.³⁷ As we saw in the previous chapter, Bordelais merchants greatly preferred direct trade with the West Indies - sending their trading vessels directly to the French islands loaded with local products and European goods and returning with coffee, sugar, and indigo - to the far more circuitous and time consuming route of the

³⁶ *Journal de Guienne*, January 3, 1789

³⁷ For complete data on France's participation in the slave trade in the eighteenth century, see Robert Louis Stein, *The French Slave Trade in the Eighteenth Century: An Old Regime Business* (Madison, 1979), pp. 207-211. All figures cited here either come directly from Stein or have been extrapolated from Stein's data.

slave trade.³⁸ From 1736 until the Revolution, Bordeaux was the premier port for both furnishing the islands with European goods, and importing colonial products into France.

Bordeaux's dominance would be threatened, however, by a shift in monarchical policy. In 1784, the very same year the *Journal de Guienne* first went to print, the French monarchy fundamentally altered the trading relationship between the West Indies and France's port cities. Under pressure from the planters in the colonies who wanted to expand the market for their goods, the crown issued a royal edict that partially repealed the *Exclusif*, a trading monopoly that Bordeaux and twelve other French cities had enjoyed with the islands since 1717.³⁹ Direct trade between the French West Indian islands and foreign countries was now legally permissible for the first time.

For the Bordelais, this meant increased competition for securing colonial products. Over the course of the eighteenth century, Bordeaux's traders and merchants had bested their competitors from Nantes, La Rochelle, and other French ports, but the repeal of the *Exclusif*, meant that they would now have to contend with the Americans, British, and Dutch. As it turned out, the increased competition meant very little. Trade between Bordeaux and the French West Indies dipped only slightly between the years

³⁸ For more details on the triangular slaving route compared with the more direct routes taken by the Bordelais see Chapter IV, pp. ?

³⁹ On the significance of the 1784 edict see Paul Butel, "Revolution and the Urban Economy: Maritime Cities and Continental Cities," in Alan Forrest and Peter Jones, eds., *Reshaping France: Town, country, and region during the French Revolution* (Manchester, 1991) pp. 39-40; and François Crouzet, "Bordeaux: an Eighteenth-Century Wirtschaftswunder?" in W. Feldenkirchen, F. Schonert-Rohlk and G. Schulz, eds., *Wirtschaft, Gesellschaft, Unternehmen: Festschrift für Hans Pohl zum 60* (Stuttgart, 1995), p. 55.

of the royal edict of 1784 and the Revolution.⁴⁰ Of far more significance than the actual loss of commerce, however, was the uncertainty created by the edict. According to François Crouzet, the perception among Bordeaux's overseas traders and merchants was that the new edict was going to be economically ruinous.⁴¹ In response, many Bordelais merchants entered into the slave trade as a way to recoup the economic shortfalls believed to be looming just on the horizon.

The next five years brought a dramatic surge in the Bordelais' slaving activity. During the first years of the 1780s, Bordeaux's involvement in the slave trade remained steady at the levels it had been throughout the century. That is, Bordeaux's share of the entire French slave trade hovered right around ten percent. After 1784 and the partial repeal of the *Exclusif*, however, Bordeaux's involvement increased substantially. By 1787, Bordeaux accounted for 20 percent of French slaving activity. The following year that number increased to 25 percent and in 1789, nearly thirty-one percent of all French slaving ships departed from Bordeaux. In just five short years Bordeaux more than tripled its involvement in the slave trade in both percentages and in absolute numbers.⁴² This increased presence in the slave trade came at the expense of their competitors from Nantes, whose share of the trade was reduced from a high of fifty percent in the 1770s to just thirty-three percent during the years 1785 to 1789.

Debate over the morality and perceived economic benefits of slavery and the slave trade waxed and waned over the course of the century in Bordeaux. Montesquieu

⁴⁰ Indeed, some segments of Bordeaux's trade actually increased. In 1784, Bordeaux imported 60 million *livres* worth of colonial merchandise. In 1786 that figure had increased to 64 million, and by 1788 reached 88 million *livres*. Crouzet, "Bordeaux: an Eighteenth-Century Wirtschaftswunder?" p. 55.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² In 1783 Bordeaux sent out 14 ships on slaving expeditions, which represented 10 percent of the total of French activity. In 1789, Bordeaux sent out 43 ships or 31 percent of all French slavers.

was one of the nation's earliest and most eloquent voices opposing the practice of slavery.⁴³ In his now-famous passage from *L'Esprit des lois*, written in 1748,

Montesquieu employed a deeply ironic tone to make his point:

It is impossible for us to assume that these people [black slaves] are men because if we assume they were men one would begin to believe that we ourselves were not Christians. Petty spirits exaggerate too much the injustice done the Africans. For, if it were as they say, would it not have occurred to the princes of Europe, who make so many useless agreements with one another, to make a general one in favor of mercy and pity?⁴⁴

In 1772, when the *Affiches de Bordeaux* announced an essay competition on the best means for "protecting the Negroes shipped from the coast of Africa to the Colonies of the New World from the frequent and often fatal diseases they suffer during the crossing," the contest generated a paltry three responses.⁴⁵ None of the responses were deemed good enough to win the contest. Furthermore, the question provoked absolutely no debate in the *Affiches*. The Bordelais, who had sent just six ships to Africa that year, were thoroughly uninterested in the subject.

That ambivalence would quickly change. The 1780s brought a new intensity to the anti-slavery forces in France, culminating with the creation of the Parisian-based abolitionist group *Société des amis des noirs*.⁴⁶ Clearly disturbed by the new anti-slavery environment, the Bordeaux Chamber of Commerce wrote a letter to its

⁴³ For two excellent guides to the debate on slavery in eighteenth-century France see Edward Derbyshire Seeber, *Anti-Slavery Opinion in France During the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1937), and Pierre H. Boule "In Defense of Slavery: Eighteenth-Century Opposition to Abolition and the Origins of a Racist Ideology in France," in Frederick Krantz, ed., *History from Below: Studies in Popular Protest and Popular Ideology in Honour of George Rudé* (Montreal, 1985) 221-241.

⁴⁴ Montesquieu, Charles-Louis de Secondat, baron de. *L'Esprit des lois*. Translated into English as *The Spirit of the Laws* trans. and edited by Anne M Cohler, Basia Carolyn Miller, and Harold Samuel Stone (Cambridge, 1989), XV, 5, p. 250.

⁴⁵ For the complete notice see the *Affiches de Bordeaux*, January 23, 1772. For details on the response generated see Christine Adams, *A Taste for Comfort and Status: A Bourgeois Family in Eighteenth-Century France* (University Park, 2000) pp. 203-207.

counterparts in other provincial cities asking that they stand together and oppose any changes to France's laws on the slave trade.⁴⁷ Created in 1705, the Bordeaux Chamber of Commerce was made up of the city's traders, merchants, and wine growers, and as a result, assiduously fought for and defended the members' financial interests.⁴⁸ In the 1780s, as the Bordelais began to substantially increase their presence in the slave trade, the Chamber of Commerce took it as its top priority to defend the practice.⁴⁹

The early years of the Revolution brought the issue of slavery to a head. In 1789, many members of the *Société des Amis* were elected to the Estates-General and the Declaration of Rights of Man seemed to implicitly spell the end of slavery in France.⁵⁰ Bordelais merchants and the Chamber of Commerce continued to argue their side of the issue. One particularly vitriolic pamphlet written and circulated in Bordeaux in 1790 attacked members of the *Société des Amis* as being enemies of agriculture, commerce, navigation, manufacturing, and the French colonies, and accused them of being in league with the British.⁵¹ Merchants from Bordeaux also joined together with their counterparts from other commercial ports - most notably Nantes - and sought to have their own representation in the Estates-General and National Assembly. When they were denied, the merchants formed the *députés extraordinaires*, a group whose

⁴⁶ On the Society, see Daniel P. Resnick, "The Société des amis des noirs and the Abolition of Slavery," *French Historical Studies*, VII: 4 (1972), 558-69.

⁴⁷ Paul Butel, "Revolution and the Urban Economy: Maritime Cities and Continental Cities," in Alan Forrest and Peter Jones, eds, *Reshaping France: Town, Country and Region during the French Revolution* (Manchester, 1991) p. 41.

⁴⁸ The classic work written on the Chamber of Commerce of Bordeaux is Michel Lhéritier, *Histoire des rapports de la chambre de commerce de Guienne avec les intendants, le parlement, et les jurats de 1705 à 1791* (Bordeaux, 1913). For a more recent treatment see Paul Butel, *Histoire de la Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Bordeaux: des origines à nos jours (1705-1785)* (Bordeaux, 1998). See also Joan Casey, *Bordeaux, Colonial Port of Nineteenth-Century France* (New York, 1981) pp. 26-48.

⁴⁹ Archives départementales de la Gironde, C4249, *Chambre de Commerce de Bordeaux - délibérations*.

⁵⁰ Pierre H. Boule "In Defense of Slavery," p. 227. On the French Revolution and slavery, see the comprehensive collection, *La Révolution et l'abolition de l'esclavage* (Paris, 1968), 12 vols.

⁵¹ See Alan Forrest, *Society and Politics in Revolutionary Bordeaux* (Oxford, 1975) pp. 52-53.

task was to keep the Assembly informed of mercantile, and specifically overseas commercial, concerns.⁵²

In an address to the National Assembly, Bordeaux's *députés extraordinaires* offered a multi-faceted defense of the slave trade and slavery.⁵³ The merchants grounded their arguments on economic necessity, social stability, and morality. The merchants claimed that ending the slave trade would be an economic disaster not only for Bordeaux, but for the colonies as well. Moreover, they argued that freeing the slaves on the islands would bring social chaos and upheaval to the islands. On Saint Domingue alone, there were approximately 465,000 slaves compared to just 30,000 whites, many of whom were from Bordeaux.⁵⁴ Finally, the merchants claimed that slave conditions on the islands were not as bad as the *Assemblée Nationale* had been led to believe. In fact, they argued, slaves were better off in the West Indies, where they were exposed to the Christian religion and a "civilized" way of life, compared to the barbarism and cannibalism they would face in Africa.⁵⁵

The *Journal de Guienne* could not have been born in headier or more uncertain times. With a lifespan that covered the years 1784 to 1791, the paper not only witnessed the Bordelais at the very peak of their involvement in the slave trade, but also saw the

⁵² Pierre H. Boule "In Defense of Slavery," p. 231. See also Frederick L. Nussbaum, "The Deputies Extraordinary of Commerce and the French Monarchy," *Political Science Quarterly*, XLVII (Dec, 1944), 534-55. The *députés extraordinaires* largely consisted of merchants from France's port cities and those directly involved in colonial trade. Boule argues that merchants not involved in colonial commerce tended to keep their distance. This was true of the merchants of Grenoble who refused to support a plan to seat merchants separately in the Estates General. For the complete text of the merchants of Grenoble's response see *Les Affiches de Dauphiné*, November 28, 1788. Not coincidentally, the *Affiches de Dauphiné* was a staunchly anti-slavery sheet, reprinting large pieces of abolitionist literature including weekly excerpts from the former British slave trader turned abolitionist John Newton's *The Journal of a Slave Trader*.

⁵³ Archives départementales de la Gironde, 8J703. See also Alan Forrest, *Society and Politics*, pp. 53-54.

⁵⁴ Forrest, *Society and Politics*, p. 53.

issue blossom into a national debate. The question was, of course, how would the *Journal* handle the pressing issue of slavery and the slave trade? On the one hand, it would have been difficult to speak out too strongly against the slave trade in a city dominated by merchants. Paul Nairac, for example, had made his vast fortune in the slave trade and was one of the few Bordelais merchants whose involvement predated the 1784 royal edict.⁵⁶ Nairac was not only one of the wealthiest merchants in the city, but also one of the most respected. He came from a well known and established commercial family, was a frequent contributor to the *Journal de Guienne*, a member of the *Musée*, and in 1789 would be elected a deputy to the Estates-General. Indeed, it was a letter from Nairac that informed the citizenry of Bordeaux that the Bastille had fallen.⁵⁷ The *Journal*, dedicated to the economic vitality of the city, would have a difficult time attacking an economic practice that many Bordelais were engaged in and profited from.

However, there were also moral considerations as well as the opinions of the enlightened community. Voltaire, Raynal, and Diderot had all explicitly come out strongly against slavery.⁵⁸ Finally, there was Montesquieu. No other Bordelais was as revered and admired as the *philosophe* from La Brède. In 1780s Bordeaux, his opinions were still influential.⁵⁹ Unfortunately for the editors of the *Journal*, the past offered no

⁵⁵ Ibid. The Bordelais merchants' claims were almost identical to those laid out by their counterparts from Nantes. On the nantais' defense of the slave trade see Pierre H. Boule "In Defense of Slavery," pp. 229-233.

⁵⁶ On Paul Nairac and the Nairac family see Paul Butel, *Les Dynasties Bordelaises: de Colbert à Chaban* (Paris, 1991), pp. 157-161.

⁵⁷ A.M. Bordeaux, D227, lettre de Paul Nairac.

⁵⁸ See especially Sue Peabody, "*There are No Slaves in France:*" *The Political Culture of Race and Slavery in the Ancien Regime* (Oxford, 1996) pp. 94-103.

⁵⁹ In 1777, for example, at his reception into the Académie, Delphin de Lamothe declared "Montesquieu, you still live, you light the way for us, you warm us, may the Academy live as long as your name and your work." Quoted in Adams, *A Taste for Comfort and Status*, p. 197.

guide. The *Affiches de Bordeaux* had simply not had to deal with the issue to any great extent. Dupont des Jumeaux and his co-editors were heading into uncharted territory.

The issue of slavery and the slave trade made its first appearance in the *Journal* as a commodity, specifically in the form of slaving ships for sale. Advertisements for slaving ships carried by the *Journal* were nearly indistinguishable from ads for ships for sale in the *Affiches*. In both papers, ads listed the relevant and important details about the ship for sale such as its tonnage, equipment, when and where it was made, and its condition. The carrying capacity, or tonnage, of the ship, was the most useful detail to a prospective buyer because that determined the amount of goods the ship would be able to haul on trading runs. After 1784, however, a new phrase began to creep into these ads: *propre pour la traite des nègres*. Under the heading "Ships for Sale" these two ads appeared in the *Journal* in April 1789:

A Ship, with a capacity of 500 tons, very-solid, built in Bordeaux, and having made only four voyages, *to sell or exchange* for another, appropriate for the slave trade. See the Journu brothers, rue du Chapeau-rouge.

The Ship Mercury, of Baltimore, Captain Mr. Stuvart, very appropriate for the slave trade. If this Ship is not sold, it will leave for Baltimore, on the 25 to the 30 of this month and will take freight and passengers..⁶⁰

Indeed, after 1784, every ship listed for sale in the *Journal* was designated as being suitable for the slave trade. These advertisements suggest a changed economic environment. As the Bordelais increasingly turned to the slave trade, they would need ships suitable for the task. Sellers, recognizing the new demand, sought to capitalize on it by highlighting the fact that their ships could transport slaves.

At the same time the *Journal* was running ads for slaving ships, it also, on occasion, carried anti-slavery messages. Most often this came in the form of book

excerpts. The most common strategy on the part of the editors was simply to provide quotes from a book and let readers draw their own conclusions. In providing excerpts from the *Petit Dictionnaire de la Cour & de la Ville*, the paper offered this very brief introduction: "The slave trade is a strong and fashionable subject today; the author has brought a fresh perspective to it with his strong ironies, which do not detract from the strength of his ideas."⁶¹

The introduction is ambiguous. While complimenting the author on the strength of his ideas, it is left unclear whether the editors actually agree with those ideas. The series of excerpts the editors provided, however, sent an unmistakable message. This was a strong anti-slavery piece written in a deeply ironic tone:

Are Negroes men? No, because we need sugar and cinnamon. Are Negroes men? No, because we make them tigers

Dear Sirs, said an English Trader, in the House of Commons, you would never imagine how treacherous the Negroes are. Their spite is such, that on certain coasts of Africa, they prefer death to slavery. They are bought, they are stabbed; they are thrown in pits, so much is lost for the purchaser. Judge, by this fact, the perversity of this damned race.

I do not know what reasons we have to paint the Devil black; but the Negroes have very good reasons to paint him white.⁶²

The editors were content to let the excerpts speak for themselves. In the following day's paper, however, the editors showed more of a willingness to engage directly in the debate on slavery by offering a positive review to an anti-slavery speech. On March 21, 1789, the *Journal* announced for sale a speech given by the Bordelais Laffon de Ladebat. The piece amounted to what would be the *Journal's* strongest statement on the issue of slavery.

⁶⁰ April 2, 1789 and April 19, 1789.

⁶¹ March 30, 1789.

André-Daniel Laffon de Ladebat came from a well-known commercial family in Bordeaux.⁶³ Indeed, his father had made a portion of the family fortune in the slave trade. Laffon de Ladebat was himself a merchant and an important and respected figure in Bordeaux's intellectual and cultural circles. He was a member of the *Académie de Bordeaux* as well as the *Musée de Bordeaux*. In August 1788, Laffon de Ladebat delivered a speech to the *Académie* entitled "On the necessity and the means of destroying slavery in the Colonies," in which he offered a stinging critique of slavery and the slave trade. The following March, the *Journal* informed readers that the text of the speech was for sale. The paper also provided readers with excerpts from the speech and offered some commentary as well.

The editors began their review by noting that the epigraph to the speech was a quote by Montesquieu: "the cry for slavery is the cry for luxury and pleasure (*volupté*), and not for public happiness."⁶⁴ This was an especially suitable quote because, as the editors noted, the King had called upon "all classes of citizens" to contribute to the happiness of the Nation. Specifically, the King had asked the French to find a means "that would ensure the freedom of the slaves in our Colonies, without harming the interest of these same slaves, with that of the Colonists and to the general good of the State " Laffon de Ladebat's speech, the editors noted would provide some healthy and useful ideas for this project.⁶⁵

The excerpts provided from the speech spoke directly to the central concerns of the pro-slavery side of the debate: that is, that ending slavery would prove socially

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ For a brief biographical sketch of Laffon de Ladebat and his family, see Paul Butel, *Les dynasties bordelaise*, pp. 153-155.

⁶⁴ March 31, 1789

disruptive and economically ruinous. Laffon de Ladebat attempted to turn these arguments on their head however, writing:

It is believed that the political balance and the maintenance of national riches are still opposed to this wish of reason and nature. If I proved that this balance and the maintenance of the richness requires that slavery be abolished, and if I indicated the means by which to do it, I would have perhaps rendered some service to humanity. ⁶⁶

Was Laffon de Ladebat successful and able to achieve his goals, the editors asked. That, they wrote, their readers would have to judge for themselves. Clearly though, the editors themselves found the speech to be persuasive. The editors noted that freedom was "the most sacred right," and that the author's "heart and his logic, the clarity of his calculations, and the precisions of his results," had served to persuasively argue the case against slavery. ⁶⁷

In the end, no one ideology or opinion would dominate the paper on the issue of slavery. The *Journal* never became a wholly anti-slavery sheet like its counterpart in Grenoble, but neither did it simply regurgitate the arguments of the Chamber of Commerce. The editors of the *Journal* seemed mindful of the interests of the merchant community, many of whom no doubt were subscribers of the paper, and treaded gingerly around the subject, at least until the waning months of the Old Regime. For the merchants' part, they too seemed content to have the issue of slavery primarily relegated to the economic sections of the paper and not see it blow up into a full scale debate in the pages of the *Journal*.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

COMMUNITY NEWS

In addition to facilitating economic activity at all levels, the *Journal* also focused in on the minutia of daily life in Bordeaux. Readers were kept abreast of births, deaths, and baptisms, and given annual totals of each. They were kept updated on various religious and civic ceremonies. They were told the winning Parisian lottery numbers. There were also essays on local history, architecture and archeology as well as the latest news and gossip from the capital and word on the latest *causes célèbres*. There was a lost and found section - mostly comprised of gold watches and dogs.

Occasionally more important items were lost as this ad demonstrated:

Child Found: The second of this month, found, around 5 o'clock in the evening, on rue Ste. Thérèse, in Chartrons, *a small Girl*, approximately 3-4 years old, wearing a small white vest and a red handkerchief on her head. Those who are worried can check with Monsieurs Jamet and Micheau, coopers, on the aforementioned street.⁶⁸

Such an ad illustrates just one of the advantages of the *Journal* being a daily paper. That child would have been missing for at least a week before a similar ad would have appeared in the *Affiches*. It also helps underscore how central the paper was to life in the city. Unlike foreign gazettes or Parisian papers, the *Journal* was a local institution attending to local concerns. The paper addressed individual subscriber's narrow and particular desires for accurate and timely commercial information; their desire to make money. But the paper also fed their interest in local events and civil concerns. In a sense, the *Journal* brought together a disparate group of merchants, businessmen, lawyers, and doctors - all with their individual concerns - and made a community of readers out of them, united by common interests. We see this again and again in the

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ July 4, 1789

pages of the *Journal*, especially in the sections of the paper that dealt with the cultural and intellectual life of the city.

RÉPANDRE LES LUMIERES: CULTURAL AND INTELLECTUAL CONTENT IN THE JOURNAL

While the "useful" took center stage in the pages of the *Journal*, the editors - echoing the sentiments of Voltaire's *Candide* - were quick to note that "the useful did not exclude the agreeable."⁶⁹ Indeed, for all its devotion to covering economic news and its dedication to providing its readers with timely information on a host of topics, as we have already seen, the *Journal de Guienne* had a double objective. Along with its primary task of encouraging trade, the paper's role was also to spread enlightenment.

What exactly does it mean to "spread enlightenment and what did the editors have in mind when they stated it as their second goal in the *Prospectus*? Their first goal, "to encourage trade" was specific in both the activities and the personnel involved. Their second goal is less intuitive on both counts. Yet, clues can be found in those pages of the paper dedicated to the arts, sciences, and literature, to cultural and intellectual pursuits, and to education and learning.

Except for the issue of slavery, the economic sections of the *Journal* hardly differed from the *Affiches*. The *Journal's* approach to the intellectual and cultural life of the city was an entirely different matter, however. Indeed, there was an important and fundamental break between the two papers' approach to covering intellectual and cultural matters. In both quantity and quality, the *Journal* offered readers a broader scope of material than the *Affiches*. As we saw in the previous chapter, the *Affiches*

⁶⁹ Prospectus. In *Candide*, Voltaire noted "the country was cultivated for pleasure as well as necessity. Everywhere the useful was also agreeable." See Voltaire, *Candide and other Writings*, trans by Haskell M. Block, New York, Random House, The Modern Library, 1956.

devoted much time and space to covering events at the city's intellectual and cultural institutions. The *Journal* would do the same. However, the city of Bordeaux in the years leading up to the Revolution was not the same city the Labottière brothers had covered for nearly thirty years. Simply put, there was more cultural and intellectual activity and therefore a need for expanded coverage. For example, the *Musée de Bordeaux* opened its doors in 1783 and would quickly grow to rival the *Académie* as the premiere intellectual and cultural institution in the city. The *Musée* also offered a wealth of courses open to the public. Victor Louis' *Grand-Théâtre* finally opened in 1780 and was in full operation by the time the *Journal* made its debut.

Beyond providing basic information on events around the city, the *Journal* also sought to inculcate in their readers a sense of agency by encouraging them to participate in the production of the paper. By 1784, those readers who had grown accustomed to writing in to the *Affiches* were ready to opine on a range of subjects. The editors opened up the pages of the paper to their readers and the *Journal* functioned as a message board and a forum for critical debate.

In addition, the *Journal* offered readers things that the *Affiches* never did. The paper regularly reported on the activity of the city's new philanthropic organization and strongly embraced the philosophes. In short, for the editors of the *Journal*, spreading enlightenment meant fostering a self-consciously critical and reform-minded spirit among their readers, encouraging public service through acts of charity, and facilitating participation in the city's thriving intellectual and cultural life.

THE ACADÉMIE, THE MUSÉE, AND THE GRAND-THÉÂTRE: BORDEAUX'S INSTITUTIONS OF CULTURE AND LEARNING

Victor Louis' theatre was the crown jewel in the cultural life of Bordeaux. In 1755 a fire badly damaged the *Hôtel de Ville*, which also housed the city's theatre. It was only after eighteen years of discussion and debate between the *jurade*, the parlement, and the intendant, that Victor Louis, the famed architect, was commissioned to start work on a new theatre. Finally completed in 1780, the new theatre stood as a testament to the city's great wealth and prestige. With twelve colossal columns on its façade representing the nine muses and three goddesses (Juno, Venus, and Minerva), the theatre was a perfect example of neo-classical architecture.⁷⁰ The inside of the theatre was equally impressive with its large entrance halls, concert rooms, a café, shops, and a Grand Concert hall replete with a hand decorated ceiling and a massive stairwell leading to foyers and balconies.⁷¹

The *Journal de Guienne* dedicated space in every edition to covering events at the theatre. Under the section entitled "Spectacles" the paper informed readers of the theatrical schedule, noted the troupe and any noteworthy performers, mentioned their previous works, and often included a short summary of the production. The *Grand-Théâtre* attracted a variety of visiting musical and dramatic performers from Paris, and all over Europe, especially from Brussels, and Italy. It also maintained its own troupes for comedy, opera, tragedy and ballet.⁷² From the notices carried by the *Journal* it is clear that the Bordelais enjoyed the works of seventeenth-century playwrights such as

⁷⁰ For an excellent description and photos of the theatre see Délie Muller and Jean-Yves Boscher, *Bordeaux* (Bordeaux, 1998), pp. 49-52.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.

⁷² P. Courteault, *La Révolution et les théâtres à Bordeaux*.

Corneille and Racine. The public also clearly had an affinity for more contemporary works. By 1790, Voltaire's tragedies such as *Zaire* and *l'Orphelin de la Chine* had been performed thirty-nine times in the *Grand-Théâtre*, and Beaumarchais' *Le Barbier de Seville* had been performed eighty times. *Le Mariage de Figaro* was also performed four times in less than five years before it was ultimately banned throughout the country in 1785.⁷³

Like its predecessor, the *Journal* also kept readers abreast of events taking place at the *Académie*. The editors continued the tradition of publishing notices for the *Académie*'s annual *concours*, and carried announcements for its weekly public meetings.⁷⁴ In addition, the paper also ran short notices like this one, which publicized the hours the *Académie*'s library would be open to the public:

Public Library: In the Academy, rue Saint Domingue. It will be open today, from 2 until 5 this afternoon.

For the nearly thirty years the *Affiches de Bordeaux* was in print, the *Académie* dominated the intellectual and cultural life of Bordeaux and the Labottière brothers dedicated significant space to covering its events and activities. During the lifespan of the *Journal*, however, the *Académie* would have to compete with the newly created *Musée de Bordeaux* both for space in the paper and for readers' attention. Ultimately, it was a losing battle. As the companion institution to the *Journal*, the *Musée* was given pride of place by Dupont des Jumeaux, Gaufreteau, and Clozanges.

Though a club with a membership comprising 150 Bordelais, the *Musée* was also open to the public to a remarkable degree. The *Musée* held weekly public meetings,

⁷³ *Bordeaux au XVIII siècle*, p. 104-106. Sarah Maza points out that Louis XVI was alleged to have said that if *Le Mariage de Figaro* were ever performed the Bastille would fall. *Public Lives*, p. 289.

⁷⁴ For the *Affiches de Bordeaux*'s coverage of the *Académie*, see Chapter IV, pp. 51-57.

gave concerts, and sponsored art exhibits and lectures. The *Journal* published long and detailed accounts of the public meetings that could run on for pages. A review of a public meeting held in May 1789 was not atypical. The public meeting was held at the *Musée* in honor of Monsieur Daufrey's visit to the city and specifically to the *Musée de Bordeaux*. Daufrey, perpetual secretary of the *Académie Royale de Toulouse* and a member of that city's newly created *Musée*, was a correspondent with Bordeaux's *Musée*.⁷⁵ The *Journal* began its coverage by reviewing Daufrey's opening speech entitled "On the Divisions of Men of Letters:"

one noticed an elegant diction, clear and precise ideas, pieces were written with warmth, and several were linked cleverly together. It made abundantly clear the capacity of Men of Letters to influence opinions when they are united. It ridiculed the enemies of order, which serve only to degrade the noble functions that their talents destined them for, and feeds the public malignancy.⁷⁶

The *Journal* then moved on to recount and review the rest of that evening's entertainment, which included a poem on commerce, an epistle on cheerfulness (which the author of the epistle noted was only brought about by uniting "the agreeable and the useful"), another epistle on friendship, a third epistle addressed to "a Lady of Normandy," the reading of several fables, a story entitled "The Tale of the Sinner and the Swiss" (which the *Journal* declared to be "a joke too forced"), and a speech on geography. On this last item the *Journal* reported that it "clearly expressed the various links that bind Geography to Astronomy & Physics. This work proved to be distinguished knowledge."⁷⁷ In its report on the Epistle on cheerfulness, the *Journal* informed readers that "we wish it were possible for us to give more quotations. We will

⁷⁵ I will go into greater detail on the organization and activity of the *Musée de Bordeaux* later in this chapter.

⁷⁶ June 6, 1789.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

limit ourselves to the piece where the Poet describes ancient manners." Even so, the poem ran to well over a page in length.

The *Journal* finally concluded its coverage of the evening by reviewing the concerts that closed the meeting. For readers who missed the meeting that night, the *Journal* informed them that the musical finale, which included a violin and piano concerto, a symphony, and two singers, was "one of the most beautiful the *Musée* has ever given."⁷⁸

In addition to public meetings the *Musée* also served the public by offering educational courses on a variety of subjects. The *Journal* publicized these courses and served as a clearinghouse of news and information for the students enrolled in them. Monsieur Proudhomme, a mathematics professor at the *Musée* repeatedly used the *Journal* first to announce the forming of his course and later to communicate with his students. On April 25, 1788, Proudhomme informed readers of the paper that he would be conducting a course on experimental physics at the *Musée*. Four days later, he published his prospectus for the course in the paper. On May 8, apparently at the behest of his students ("they asked me to agree to insert this in your Newspaper"), Proudhomme reviewed the material from the first day of class. This example was not an unusual one in the pages of the *Journal*. The *Musée* offered a range of scientific courses such as geometry, chemistry, and astronomy, as well as language courses in French literature, Latin, German, Italian, and English. Professors for each of these offerings used the *Journal* in the same way and with the same frequency as did Proudhomme.

The paper also provided two-way lines of communication. It reported on events at the *Musée*, and, on occasion, allowed readers the chance to address the institution. In

December 1785, the *Journal* printed a letter written by a concerned father whose son wanted to learn Greek in the course of his studies as a lawyer. The problem was that there was no place to learn Greek in Bordeaux. The father applauded his son's goal and yet was saddened by the fact that it would separate them. In his letter to the *Musée*, that "esteemed society," the father pleaded with them to begin a course on Greek so that his son could remain in the city.⁷⁹ The letter writing campaign was seemingly successful. The *Musée* did in fact add a Greek language course, though whether it was in time for this man's son to take is unknown.

THE JOURNAL, THE PHILOSOPHES, AND THE CULTURE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

Dupont des Jumeaux and the other editors of the *Journal* took a noticeably different approach towards the philosophes than did their predecessors. Jack Censer has argued that the provincial newspaper press never embraced the philosophes either "as individuals or as a movement..."⁸⁰ Yet, the *Affiches de Bordeaux* offered a much more nuanced appraisal of the philosophes than Censer allows. During its twenty-six year run the philosophes made frequent, albeit irregular appearances, in the pages of the *Affiches*. Not surprisingly, Montesquieu was the paper's favorite and, as Robert Grandroute has shown, the *Affiches* took every opportunity to praise the life and works of the local philosophe.⁸¹ Voltaire was another of the paper's favorites, and throughout much of the 1770s, the Labottière brothers provided their readers with large portions of Voltaire's letters to Caliraut.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ December 28, 1785.

⁸⁰ Jack Censer, *The French Press in the Age of Enlightenment*, p. 58

⁸¹ R. Grandroute, "Montesquieu travers la presse Bordelais de la seconde moitié du XVIIIe siècle," *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* (1985), pp. 1027-43.

The most common place for the philosophes to make an appearance in the pages of the *Affiches*, however, was in the section entitled "New Books." As we saw in the previous chapter, books by enlightenment writers were a mainstay among the ads announcing new books for sale. Typically, books were listed for sale without comment. Occasionally the Labottière brothers include the following admonition next to enlightenment works, imploring their readers to keep an open mind:

One has attached ridicule to the name of philosopher; but this is just a pretext to spare oneself from, or to get revenge against, the lessons of philosophy.⁸²

Rather than accepting or rejecting the enlightenment as a movement outright, individual philosophes were judged on a per-case basis. Thus for example, in 1761 the Labottière brothers gave a positive review to Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse*:

All the best things that our moralists have so far said about dueling, suicide, charity, prayer, etc, are brought together in this work; but the citizen of Geneva has, over and above all the moralists, the rare gift of persuasion.⁸³

Yet, in a 1758 review of Helvétius' *L'Esprit*, The brothers attacked the book for what it deemed to be the author's overtly atheist philosophy and called on Helvétius to apologize.⁸⁴

While the philosophes made regular appearances in the *Affiches*, they were virtually omnipresent in the *Journal*. Readers of the new Bordelais sheet were inundated with the names of Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, and others. During its first month in print, the *Journal* made reference to the philosophes, either individuals or as a group, at least once a day, on average. For example, the *Journal* ran two different poems written by Voltaire, another poem written by Marmontel, a poem written by a

⁸² November 30, 1758

⁸³ April 39 1761. See also L. Desgraves, *L'Aquitaine aux XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles: Institutions et culture*, (Bordeaux, 1992) 477-78.

reader to Rousseau and Voltaire, and review of Voltaire's play *Nanine* which was being performed in the *Grand-Théâtre*. On September 11, 1784, the *Journal* provided readers with a review and excerpts from Montesquieu's *Oeuvres posthumes*, which took up nearly half the entire issue. Next to that, the *Journal* carried the inscription that was chosen to adorn Voltaire's *Oeuvres*:

Poet, Historian, Philosopher, Orator
He is not any more. But, his name will live throughout the ages
Time has avenged itself against the Author
But cannot do anything to his Works.⁸⁵

ON DOIT LA VERITE AU PUBLIC: THE JOURNAL AND THE SPIRIT OF
CRITICISM

Dupont des Jumeaux and his co-editors did more than just feature the philosophes prominently in the pages of their paper. In addition to their real affinity for the philosophes themselves, the editors also self-consciously embraced the culture of enlightenment and particularly its spirit of criticism. As Immanuel Kant noted in 1781 "our age is, in especial degree, the age of criticism, and to criticism everything must submit."⁸⁶ Criticism became a key ingredient in the *Journal* most notably in the paper's reviews of theatrical productions and new books.

On September 6, 1784, one week after the paper first went to print, Dupont des Jumeaux laid out for his readers the principles the paper would follow in reviewing and critiquing the local theatrical scene. Rather than simply repeat the (apparently) well known critique of the *Troupe de Bordeaux* that while its ballet and opera performances were not bad, the comedic and tragic performances left much to be desired, the *Journal*

⁸⁴ Louis Desgraves discusses the incident in *La presse à Bordeaux (XVI-XVIIIe siècles)* p. 152.

⁸⁵ September 11, 1784.

⁸⁶ Quoted in Roger Charier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*, trans. by Lydia G. Cochrane, (Durham, 1991) p. 162.

would instead offer criticism with the goal of reforming the theatre and "perhaps contributing to the progress of the arts."

According to Dupont, the *Journal* would follow three basic principles when reviewing the theatre. First, the paper would offer immediate encouragement for good performances. Second, the *Journal* would closely follow the careers of the actors and actresses and inform readers of any progress they made. Dupont noted however that while the editors would offer encouragement when they could, the main ingredient of the reviews would be criticism. "Our criticism can be severe," Dupont noted, but it would always be "honest and impartial."⁸⁷

Dupont wasted no time and launched into a full-scale critique of the Bordeaux theatre. The theatre, he argued, was suffering from a severe "drought of talent."⁸⁸ Lack of talent, however, was not the theatre's main problem:

We warn that we will follow, without relaxing, the bad taste that lessens our pleasures, while destroying the illusion by the trappings of luxury and inaccurate costumes. We will not cease thundering against these actors, and these furtive actresses, who sacrifice the interest of their art to the whims of a coquettishness [unreadable]. We have been shocked too often by the odd contrast of an actress in a light and silky blouse, playing the role of a character of weak virtue, with her father covered in the rough clothes of a bumpkin.⁸⁹

Finally, Dupont noted that the paper's inspiration, and indeed its courage, came directly from the philosophes themselves: "The most distinguished Men of letters invited us to raise the first cry, and must assist us of with all their talent to accelerate the triumph of the reason."⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

The same critical spirit that the editors applied to their theatre reviews was also brought to bear on the paper's book reviews. Less than a week after the article on the theatre appeared in the paper, the *Journal* carried its first book review. On September 11, 1784, the editors offered readers a lengthy review of Montesquieu's just-published *Oeuvres posthumes* and used the occasion of their first review to lay out the principles and dictates the paper would follow when reviewing books.

While choosing such a beloved local author for their first review might have presented certain problems for the editors of the *Journal*, it also provided them with a perfect opportunity showcase their commitment to honest and impartial criticism. "We applaud ourselves," the editors remarked "to be able to begin our career with an homage to this great man."⁹¹ After all, the editors noted, where else but in Montesquieu's own hometown paper would readers expect to find an homage to the revered philosophe?

But, the editors asked, "this title of Fellow-citizen, which our Readers share with Montesquieu, must it, in our Paper, make the critic dumb, make him speak only in admiration?"⁹² The answer of course, was "no." Like Montesquieu himself the paper had to have "the courage to speak the truth."⁹³ Indeed, the editors noted that by emulating Montesquieu's critical spirit they were actually paying the man the highest homage and abiding by the principles he himself found to be of crucial importance. Instead of mindless platitudes that would only insult the philosophe's memory, the paper promised readers a frankness, but one that would not alarm "the partisans of the celebrated Montesquieu." In the end, the editors struck upon a sort of compromise between their commitment to honest criticism on the one hand, and roiling the fans of

⁹¹ September 11, 1784.

⁹² Ibid.

the local icon on the other. The compromise was that all praise went to Montesquieu, but all criticism would be aimed squarely at the editor of the compilation. After all, "censure, exercised against a posthumous work, is possible without blaming the author. A Writer is responsible not for what he did, but for what he published." Despite the compromise, the principle had been established: the editors owed the public the truth and the paper's reviews would be critical but fair.

CETTE IMMENSE TACHE NE PEUT ETRE REMPLIE PAR UN SEULE HOMME:
READERS WRITE

In addition to emulating the critically minded spirit of the philosophes, the editors of the *Journal* also embraced the enlightenment ideal of open debate and discussion. Thus, the editors opened up the pages of their paper to the voices of their readers. As in the *Affiches* that came before, in the *Journal* there was no clear distinction between readers and writers.

The *Journal* continued this practice and called upon its readers to participate in the construction of the paper. Like the *Affiches* the *Journal* accepted and indeed encouraged its readers to write to it, to help in the production of the paper, to offer their expertise, thoughts, and ideas. As we saw, the *Prospectus* offered a call to participation. The project of writing the paper was simply too big for one person. Thus, it was to be a collaborative effort and that collaboration included the readers.

Readers took the call to participate seriously and when given the chance to express themselves and voice their opinions they responded enthusiastically. One of the favorite and common ways readers used the paper was to express themselves artistically and creatively with poems, and riddles. On September 2, 1784, one day after its debut,

⁹³ Ibid.

the paper carried its first poem. The poem was submitted by a subscriber and was in many ways a perfect way to introduce the Bordelais to their new paper. The poem was entitled "On Commerce" and was an homage to the true nobility and transformative effects of commercial activity. According to the poet, Bordeaux owed its well-known *éclat* to its merchants and traders:

Whatever our fate, rest is guilty, when it is not the price of a honorable work.
Far from us is the ungrateful man, without talent, without virtue, who stagnates,
and who dies before he has lived. The most useful man is also the wisest

Bordelais Merchants approve my homage! I traversed this Port, this vast City,
Whose brilliance is the fruit of your activity. I saw all the resilience of a happy
industry, which enriches the Fatherland.

Trade! Soul of the World and its guardian god, it is you who joined together one
and the other hemisphere: A trident in one hand, and treasure in the other, the
Earth under your pace is converted into gold.

The *Journal* also carried longer works of creative expression penned by their readers. Like the poem on commerce, the story carried on August 17, 1785, is also highly suggestive of the paper's readership. The author's point of view is made explicit in the title: "Tableaux of two Societies of men of which one scorned Letters, and the other of which cultivated them." In this story the author describes two fictitious societies. The first society was uncivilized. The people lived in caves, without learning or commerce. The first society was marked by violence and the almost animalistic way the people lived. They barely had language skills sufficient to communicate with each other. The second society was "a society of men of letters." It was the exact opposite of the first society. Where as the people in the first society were strangers to trade, commerce and learning, the people of the second society embraced them wholeheartedly. As a result, the second society was:

Easy with dignity, laughing with decency, pleasant even with severity! There will reign the emulation of spirits with the accordance of hearts, the agreement of wills with the difference of opinions, the purity of discussions with the probity of feelings.

The second society was not a utopia, the author pointed out, because after all, it was comprised of imperfect human beings. But "their vices were rare and tempered by courtesy."

Taken together, the poem and the fable expressed a viewpoint that not only would have been palatable to a majority of the paper's readers, but also would have put the *Journal* squarely in synch with mainstream Enlightenment thought on the benefits of commerce. Voltaire, for example, explicitly linked the greatness of England with its commercial greatness.⁹⁴ It was merchants, Voltaire noted, who "contribute to the well-being of the world."⁹⁵

The two pieces carried by the *Journal* also echoed the sentiments of Montesquieu and Raynal. Both philosophes argued that as the tentacles of commerce spread out over the globe, they brought with them enlightenment and civilization. "Commerce," Montesquieu argued, "cures destructive prejudices, and it is an almost general rule that everywhere there are gentle mores, there is commerce and that everywhere there is commerce, there are gentle mores. Therefore, one should not be surprised if our mores are less fierce than they were formerly"⁹⁶ In his *Histoire des deux Indes*, Raynal makes a similar claim:

I have said to myself: who is it that hath digged these canals. Who is it that hath dried up these plains? Who is it that hath founded these cities?? Who is it that hath clothed, and civilized these people? Then have I heard the voice of all

⁹⁴ Voltaire, *Philosophical Letters*, trans. by Ernest Dilworth (New York, 1961) pp. 39-40.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁹⁶ Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, p. 338.

enlightened men among them, who have answered: this is the effect of commerce.⁹⁷

Furthermore, the fable on the two societies expressed a view that was strikingly similar to William Robertson's central argument in his *History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V*. Translated into French in 1771 by Jean-Baptiste Suard, the work of the Scottish writer had become well known in France in the last decades of the Old Regime.⁹⁸ In this work, Robertson traced the history of Europe from what he termed "barbarism to refinement."⁹⁹ As Daniel Gordon has noted, Robertson relied on a strictly binary classification system. Societies were either barbarous or civilized and the purpose of history "was to explain the transition between the two."¹⁰⁰

What then propelled a society from barbarism to civilization? For Robertson, like the writer of the fable from the *Journal*, commerce was the key:

Commerce tends to wear off those prejudices which maintain distinction and animosity between nations. It softens and polishes the manners of men.¹⁰¹

Not all of readers' submissions were about the benefits of trade, however. The paper also carried a variety of poems that could express fondness for a friend or relative, affection for a local actress, or admiration for a philosophe. Riddles were also a popular way for readers to participate in the contents of the paper. One riddle usually appeared

⁹⁷ Raynal, *Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies* (London, 1821), Book I, p. 4.

⁹⁸ For an excellent discussion of Suard's translation of Robertson see Daniel Gordon, *Citizens Without Sovereignty: Equality and Sociability in French Thought, 1670-1789* (Princeton, 1994), pp. 150-160. The Bordelais lawyer, muséen, and *conventionnel* Dominique-Joseph Garat was a good friend and correspondant of Suard's. See Garat's *Mémoires historiques sur les XVIIIe siècle et sur M. Suard* (Paris, 1820), as well as *Correspondance inédite de Condorcet et Mme Suard, M. Suard et Garat, 1771-1791* (Paris, 1988).

⁹⁹ Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 152.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

¹⁰¹ Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 156.

in the *Journal* at least once a week, with the answer provided in a later edition. This one appeared in May, 1786:

Happy is the one, who, cherished *Neptune*
At the whim of the winds, carried on my *last*,
Healthy and refreshed, arrives at my *first*,
And, in my *all*, enjoys its fortune.¹⁰²

In addition to carrying poems, riddles, and other creative expressions written by their subscribers, the editors also ran a separate "Letter to the Editor" section of the paper. Here, readers could communicate directly to other readers, criticize or praise the editors, and inform the public about news items that the paper had missed. Ultimately, it was a space where the Bordelais reading public could carry on a conversation with itself on self-selected topics of interest.

Fittingly enough, the first "letter to the editor" carried by the paper was written in response to the editors' piece on the Bordeaux theatre. "Hey, what! Monsieurs," the reader wrote, "is it true that you are proposing to banish from our stage carelessness and luxury in order to substitute a noble simplicity?"¹⁰³ The subscriber had no doubt that the editors would fail in their attempt to reform the theatre. "You will not succeed in abolishing a use that can not be founded only on reason," the author noted, "since it is old."¹⁰⁴ If they were to succeed, the author predicted the editors would receive nothing but scorn and ridicule from the people who liked the theatre the way it was.

Throughout the life of the *Journal*, the theatre remained one of the subscribers' favorite subjects. Readers took it upon themselves to either review and critique theatrical productions, or criticize the paper for its handling of the theatre. One

¹⁰² May 12, 1786. The answer to the riddle is "Bordeaux."

¹⁰³ September 16, 1784.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

subscriber, who identified himself only as "a Creole, amateur of the Theatre," took it upon himself to write and submit reviews on a regular basis. The article, which appeared in April, 1785, was his very first attempt. He prefaced his review with these remarks:

I left the Theatre, where *Corneille's Démocrate amoureux* was performed. I made some remarks, and I will have the honor to communicate them to you; and if they agree with your observations, I request that you share them with Public.¹⁰⁵

The paper itself occasionally became the object of readers' criticism. A letter carried by the paper in December 1784, demonstrates that not all readers were thrilled with the content of the theatre reviews. The letter was written by a subscriber who identified himself as a businessman. He was perpetually busy with work, he wrote, and had very limited time for relaxation.¹⁰⁶ The author of the piece was writing to complain about the paper. Specifically, he believed that the editors were not living up to the promises they made to subscribers in their *Prospectus*. As a businessperson, the subscriber viewed the *Prospectus* as a contract made between the editors of the *Journal* and their readers:

Let us read your Prospectus, which must be taken as a reciprocal (*synallagmatique*) contract between you and your Subscribers. . . . At the end of the fourth subparagraph "All the articles included in the *Affiches*, under the title *avis divers*, will be the concern of this Newspaper."¹⁰⁷

The author's main criticism was that the *Journal* was not providing readers with enough information about upcoming plays. As a result, the writer found himself to be in quite a bind. He enjoyed spending his leisure time in the theatre, yet he did not have

¹⁰⁵ April 15, 1785.

¹⁰⁶ Robert Stein notes that this was a common attitude among eighteenth-century French merchants. Business was merchants' top priority and "non-business matters were laudable only if they did not interfere with what was truly important." Stein, *The French Slave Trade*, p. 188.

enough time to waste it on bad plays. In effect, time was money, and therefore too valuable to spend sitting and watching a poor production. His admittedly unsatisfactory solution was to stop going to the theatre altogether. The author was quick to point out that this was not only bad for him, but it would also hurt the theatre's business. "You deprive me of my relaxation," he wrote "and the receipts of the theatre suffer for it."¹⁰⁸ Since other subscribers felt just as he did ("if you have not already received similar complaints, you will") the *Journal* was doing a serious injustice to both their customers and the theatre of Bordeaux. Indeed, the author claimed his motivation for writing was not just to help himself, but also to serve "the common cause."¹⁰⁹

In addition to writing theatre reviews, readers also wrote to the *Journal* with their own book reviews. Like the book reviews written by the editors, readers' own reviews offered a critical examination of recently published books. This particular piece, a review of Lafon's "National Institutions, according to the philosophical principles of Chancellor Bacon," was a generally strong and positive review. The reader's most serious criticism was reserved not for the book or the author, but for the public, who the reviewer feared would ignore this fine work:

The application of Lafon's theories obviously has happy effects on the teaching of arts and sciences. But it will not be seized upon by the majority of men and this is a regret I had while reading this excellent work.¹¹⁰

Other letters to the editor sought to supplement the news and information provided by the *Journal* with other noteworthy items. This letter was written by a subscriber who believed the *Journal* had failed to report on an important story:

¹⁰⁷ December 30, 1784.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ May 5, 1788.

I have been surprised, Sir, that the Journalists have not found, for six months, the occasion to speak about a discovery which I had the honor of announcing.¹¹¹

The discovery, which will "interest all scientists, and be of great use for geography," was an ancient cemetery in Poitiers.¹¹² Since the *Journal* had not written about it, the author of the letter was taking it upon himself to inform readers of this noteworthy discovery.

We see from readers' letters that they felt proprietary about the paper and its contents. Readers were annoyed when the *Journal* did not serve their needs as well as it ought to, and they took it upon themselves to offer articles of importance when the paper failed to do so on its own. Which is to say, the paper operated as the editors envisioned it in the *Prospectus*. It was a group effort. Only by participating in the make-up of the paper, critiquing it when it was deficient, submitting their own pieces of interest, would readers get the paper they wanted and deserved.

LES ACTIONS VERTUEUSES SONT PLUS COMMUNES QU'ON NE PENSE:
THE JOURNAL AND THE CULTURE OF CHARITY

The editors of the *Journal* also sought to inculcate among their readers a spirit of giving and an ethic of serving the public good. For the editors, to serve the less fortunate was an essential ingredient in their goal to "spread enlightenment," and everyone who gave to the poor and needy earned the title "friend of humanity."¹¹³ While the *Affiches de Bordeaux* reported only infrequently on acts of charity, the *Journal* devoted an entire section of the paper to it. As the editors wrote in the *Prospectus*:

¹¹¹ May 15, 1786.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ June 21, 1785, quoted in Jean Sgard, "La presse provinciale et les Lumières," in Sgard, ed. *La presse provinciale au XVIIIe siècle* (Grenoble, 1983) p. 58. On the role and frequency of bienfaisance in the provincial press see the same article by Sgard, pp. 56-59.

Virtuous acts are more common than one thinks, and it is always useful to present this record: it encourages virtue; it comforts the honest hearts that are too often afflicted with the spectacle of vice.¹¹⁴

During the first years of the paper's existence the editors narrowly concentrated their charitable efforts on Abbé Sicard's school for deaf and mute children. The well known and respected Sicard, a student of the Abbé de l'Epée, the man perhaps most responsible for developing sign language in France, supported his school solely by charitable donations.¹¹⁵ The editors of the *Journal* opened up the pages of their paper to Sicard, and allowed him to publicize his school and seek charitable donations.

Sicard utilized the opportunity and frequently ran articles that explained to the public how his school functioned and emphasized his need for funding. "The School for Deaf and Dumb of Bordeaux," Sicard explained in his notices "subsists only by the acts of public charity."¹¹⁶

Sicard informed the public that the cost of running his school was 1200 *livres* per year. For that money, the students were housed, fed, clothed, and instructed in reading, writing, geometry, geography, French grammar, and Catholicism. "This knowledge," Sicard wrote, "is essential to the deaf and dumb...experience and observation has shown." Students remained at Sicard's school usually for six years. After graduation, the Abbé sought to place his students with employers in the fields of engraving, printing, clerical work, and the mechanical arts.

¹¹⁴ *Prospectus*.

¹¹⁵ On de l'Epée and Sicard's work on developing sign language see Jules Paul Seigel, "The Enlightenment and the Evolution of a Language of Signs in France and England," *Journal of the History of Ideas* Vol. 30, No. 1. (Jan. - Mar., 1969), pp. 96-115, and James R. Knowlson, "The Idea of Gesture as a Universal Language in the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries," *Journal of the History of Ideas* Vol. 26, No. 4. (Oct. - Dec., 1965), pp. 495-508.

¹¹⁶ Sicard's notices appeared regularly in the *Journal*. This quote was taken from an article which appeared on July 1, 1789.

A short period of time after the *Journal* would carry Sicard's letter on his school, it would run another letter written by the Abbé. This second letter was written to thank those who had responded with donations and to notify the public of their charitable acts. In May 1786, for example, Sicard wrote to thank a group of merchants for their donation of 200 *livres* and to thank the *Journal* for carrying his notices:

I was touched by the charitable donation given by a company of traders from this city, to the indigent Deaf and Dumb, and I would like to inform the public, by way of your Newspaper, which appears to me especially devoted to inspire and celebrate all that can contribute to relieving the suffering of humanity.¹¹⁷

What better use for the profits made from commerce, Sicard asked, then to donate them to the needy and less fortunate? The Abbé then went on to thank others who had donated to his school. "Already Monseigneur the Archbishop, " Sicard informed readers, "Messieurs the Vicar-Generals, the *Musée* of this city, and some other people have contributed."¹¹⁸

The situation in Bordeaux changed in 1786 with the creation of a philanthropic society. The society had 100 members including Paul Nairac and "almost all our merchants and...other people of distinction."¹¹⁹ The society worked closely with the Abbé Sicard and indeed, along with the *Journal*, the three presented a coordinated and unified front in the effort of poor relief. After 1786 and the establishment of the philanthropic society, Sicard began using the *Journal* to notify readers of a range of charitable causes and opportunities beyond just giving to his school. For example, Sicard would write a letter to the *Journal* informing readers about a fire that had killed a man and left his widow and children destitute. "She [the widow] has a right to count on

¹¹⁷ May 7, 1786.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Quoted in William Doyle, *The Parlement of Bordeaux*, p. 133.

your recommendation, Messieurs," Sicard wrote, "you, who whose generous heart is so eloquent in the cause of humanity."¹²⁰ Or, he would write about a family from the *faubourg Saint Seurin*. The father of the family, Sicard noted, a former merchant, was paralyzed and over-run with debts he could not pay. The only thing keeping the family going is the 'help that I promised to them from the charity of your Readers."¹²¹

Readers would then respond to those pleas by either giving money to the philanthropic society, which would in turn give it to Sicard, or they would give donations directly to the Abbé. Either way, the editors of the *Journal* would record the charitable acts on the part of the philanthropic society and by their readers by publishing reports in the paper for everyone to see. Under the heading "Charity" the paper daily offered reports on new examples of the Bordelais' generosity.

The philanthropic society too used the paper. The society would report on how much money it had received in donations, who had made donations, and what the society was going to do with the money. Thus, for example, the society reported in the January 3, 1789 edition of the *Journal* that it had received:

300 *livres* from Monsieur D.C.M.; 240 *livres* from one of his associates; 120 *livres* from an anonymous neighbor of Monsieur Delorthe, and a promise of 75 *livres* from Messieurs K and M.¹²²

After establishing where the money had come from, the society informed readers where it was destined. In that same article, it was noted that 100 *livres* were given to Sicard and his school, and the same amount was given to the Parish Montaigne. The society

¹²⁰ May 17, 1789.

¹²¹ April 29, 1788.

¹²² January 3, 1789.

also noted that it had donated 1200 *livres* to the poor of Bordeaux as a New Year's present.¹²³

Individual readers of the *Journal* also made frequent charitable gifts and the paper was careful to record each donation. "An Officer, decorated, gave us 222 *livres*," the paper informed readers.

We gave this sum to the coffers of the Philanthropic Society. We also received from Monsieur B, 61 *livres*, for the paysanne in question from days ago in our paper.¹²⁴

By opening up the pages of the paper to Sicard and the philanthropic society, and by faithfully recording even the smallest acts of giving, the *Journal* created something of a mania for giving in the last years of the Old Regime in Bordeaux. Everyone was willing to get into the act, and there was no higher good than in helping a fellow-Bordelais down on his or her luck. This letter was sent in to the editors by a subscriber and then published:

Dear Sir, here is 6 *livres*, which a young child intended to use to buy New Year's gifts for her sister, they decided, by mutual agreement, that it was better, considering the public misery, to give the money as a gift to the poor; they therefore request that you, Sir, use the money in a way that you think is most suitable.

The editors informed readers that they had used the money that the children had generously donated, to buy bread for the poor.¹²⁵

MERCHANTS AND THE ETHIC OF PARTICIPATION

Taking out a subscription to the *Journal de Guienne* was not an invitation to passivity. Readers of the sheet were active agents and not passive consumers. They were encouraged to send in their advertisements and notices, write letters to the editor,

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ January 4, 1789.

review books and plays, write poetry and help financially support those less fortunate than themselves. If the editors of the *Journal* asked a lot from its readers, more than the *Affiches*, that was because they could. Readers of the *Affiches* had grown accustomed to expressing their views in a public forum. The *Journal* inherited a readership that was already culturally and intellectually aware and engaged. The main task for the *Affiches* was to cultivate among its readers a taste for new ideas and nurture an appreciation for art and literature. As Christine Adams had noted, at mid-century, before the *Affiches* had gone to print, "support for the arts was not a priority in predominantly commercial Bordeaux."¹²⁶

Yet, evidence suggests that the Labottière brothers were able to reverse that trend. We see one clear indication of this in patterns of book buying among Bordeaux's merchants. During the second half of the eighteenth century, book buying in Bordeaux was clearly on the rise among all segments of the population. At mid-century, just a few years before the *Affiches* started production, there were just five book sellers in the city (four of whom were from the Labottière family). By 1788 there were at least eleven.¹²⁷ This remarkable boom in the book selling business can be primarily attributed to merchants who over the course of the last half of the decade made up the fastest growing segment of the book buying population.

As Jane McLeod has aptly demonstrated, during the last decades of the Old Regime, the merchants of Bordeaux went from being a relatively insignificant part of the book buying population to virtually dominating it. In 1750, for example, only four

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 213.

¹²⁷ Jane McLeod, "A Social Study of Printers and Booksellers in Bordeaux from 1745 to 1810," (Ph.D diss. York University, Toronto, 1987) p. 189.

percent of Raymond Labottière's customers were merchants.¹²⁸ The overwhelming majority of his business came from the traditional social elites of the city; forty seven percent of his customers were from the clergy, twenty one percent were members of Parlement or other nobles, fifteen percent were lawyers and twelve percent were doctors.¹²⁹ By the outbreak of the Revolution these numbers were turned on their head. Thanks to a rare surviving bookseller's account ledger, we now know that in 1790 Bordelais merchants accounted for forty three percent of Jean Ducot's retail sales; clergymen accounted for seventeen percent of sales, while nobles only five percent.¹³⁰

The types of books merchants bought is revealing. While the books they bought expressed varied and far-ranging tastes and intellectual interests, merchants' clear preference was for anything written by the philosophes. As McLeod has demonstrated, Bordelais merchants were overwhelmingly the single largest consumers of the major works of the Enlightenment, buying them at more than double the rate of Bordelais lawyers and doctors, and four times the rate of clergymen.¹³¹ When merchants wanted books on politics they gravitated towards Milton, Locke, Rousseau, Mirabeau, Mable, and Voltaire; when it came to history, Condillac and Raynal were merchant's favorites.¹³² Indeed, Rousseau and Voltaire were the biggest draws for merchants, but they also bought books by Diderot, La Harpe, Marmontel, Buffon, and Condorcet¹³³

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 188

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ *Livre journal*, ADG, 7B 1450, *Registre; bilan de faillite*, ADG, 7B 540. Jane McLeod provides extensive analysis of Ducot's account book in both her dissertation and in Jane McLeod, "A Bookseller in Revolutionary Bordeaux," *French Historical Studies* Volume 16 Number 2 (Fall 1989): 262-283.

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 276.

¹³² Ibid., p. 267-268.

¹³³ Ibid.

Perhaps even more revealing in how far merchants had come in their interest in cultural and intellectual matters, is the fact that the city's merchants responded enthusiastically to Dupont's call to join the *Musée*.

MUSÉE DE BORDEAUX

Like its founder, Dupont des Jumeaux, the *Musée de Bordeaux* has all but fallen off historians' radar screen. Daniel Roche, who has done an excellent job analyzing the *Académie de Bordeaux*, devotes less than two pages to the *Musée de Bordeaux* in his otherwise comprehensive study *Les Siècle des lumière en province*.¹³⁴ More recently, Christine Adams' study of the Lamothe family highlights the brothers' role in the *Académie* but curiously overlooks Victor Lamothe's participation in the *Musée*.¹³⁵ The few scholars who have written about the *Musée* have tended to focus in narrowly on specific aspect of the institution: Marie-Thérèse Bouyssy has examined the sociological make-up of the members of the *Musée* while Frédéric Barbier focused in on its library, and Johel Coutura analyzed the relationship between the *Musée* and Freemasonry.¹³⁶ Lacking among these otherwise fine works is a systematic analysis of the *Musée* and its place in the intellectual and cultural landscape of late eighteenth-century Bordeaux.

The *Musée* was conceived of by its founder to be the premier intellectual, cultural and educational facility in the city. In searching for existing models to emulate, Dupont des Jumeaux turned his sights to the new institutions that had sprung up in Paris in the late 1770s and early 1780s. In a letter written a year after the founding of the *Musée de Bordeaux*, Dupont made clear the Parisian influence: "I form this project in

¹³⁴ See Roche, *Les Siècle des lumière en province: Académiciens et académiciens provinciaux, 1680-1789*. 2 vols. (The Hague, 1978): vol I pp. 66-68.

¹³⁵ Christine Adams, *A Taste for Comfort and Status*.

order to bring together, beginning 1783 in the capital of Guienne," Dupont wrote, "all the advantages of the *Musée* of Monsieur Gebelin which is only a literary society, all the advantages of the *Musée* of Monsieur Pilatre where courses are given on different sciences and languages, and those of the salon of Monsieur de Blancherie, where one is exposed to pieces of paintings, sculpture, engraving, design, models of naval architecture, etc."¹³⁷ Equally clear, however, was that Dupont was not interested in merely reproducing in Bordeaux what had already been established in Paris. Rather, in creating the *Musée de Bordeaux*, Dupont combined elements from each institution to form something that was new and uniquely Bordelais. Dupont's *Musée* was at the same time a school where Professors taught courses for students and interested adults, a literary society that provided access to the latest newspapers and books, and a cultural institution where experts could display their art, put on concerts, or give lectures, in a public environment.

The creation of the *Musée* represented an implicit rebuke to the *Académie de Bordeaux*. Since its inception in 1712 the *Académie* had been the centerpiece of the city's intellectual and cultural life. But the *Académie* was a small, socially proscribed, and homogenous body. It never had more than forty-eight full time members and until the 1750s, membership was drawn almost exclusively from the Parlement.¹³⁸ Which by definition meant members were aristocratic and Catholic. After 1750, the *Académie* did broaden its social makeup somewhat by recruiting members from the city's professional

¹³⁶ Bouysson, "Le Musée de Bordeaux;" Barbier, *Le Musée de Bordeaux et sa bibliothèque (1783-1793)* (Paris, 1977). Photocopied, Bm de Bx.; Coutura, "Le Musée de Bordeaux."

¹³⁷ February 4, 1784.

¹³⁸ Doyle, *The Parlement of Bordeaux*, p. 132.

groups, most notably among lawyers and doctors.¹³⁹ Merchants, however, were not asked to participate. Daniel Roche has noted that "one finds no merchants or wealthy middle class businessmen..." in the *Académie* of Bordeaux.¹⁴⁰ This is remarkable considering not only that Bordeaux was well known throughout the eighteenth century for its commercial vitality, but also because the city's merchants were generally held in high esteem among their fellow Bordelais.

As least since Diderot, France's academies had come under attack for the extremely narrow make up of their membership. In his article entitled "Encyclopédie," Diderot argued that as they currently existed, the academies, and universities too, were insufficient to achieve the goal of creating a universal encyclopedia. Rather, in order to achieve this goal, Diderot wrote:

You will be forced to seek assistance from a great number of men from all classes of society, men of value, but to whom the doors of the academies are no less closed because of their status.¹⁴¹

Thus, for Diderot, the flaw in France's existing institutions was that people of merit and talent were excluded merely because they lacked social status. The *Musée* sought to remedy that problem. With its motto of "Liberté-Egalité," the *Musée de Bordeaux* was the *Académie* for those excluded from the *Académie*. Membership in the new institution was open to any interested expert, amateur or student, regardless of one's social standing or rank.¹⁴² Not surprisingly, those groups traditionally excluded from the *Académie* responded enthusiastically to the *Musée*. Merchants dominated the new institution, constituting nearly forty percent of its membership. Baulny has gone so far

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Roche, "Milieux académiques provinciaux," pp. 130-131.

¹⁴¹ Quoted in Goodman, *The Republic of Letters*, p. 25.

as to label the *Musée* a "sort of revenge for merchants excluded from the academic world."¹⁴³ While the city's merchants did constitute the single largest bloc within the *Musée*, they were not the only profession represented. Lawyers too joined the *Musée* in large numbers, making up over twenty percent of the membership. Among the merchants and professionals the *Musée* attracted, were also significant numbers of Jews and Protestants.

The one common denominator that united all the members was that all were leading figures in the economic, cultural, or political life of Bordeaux. There was Dupré de Saint-Maur, of course, the group's first president. The founding editors of the *Journal de Guienne* were also founders and members of the *Musée*. The Abbé Sicard served as the new group's secretary. Membership also included Dominique-Joseph Garat and his brother Dominique Garat. The wealthy merchant Paul Nairac was a member, as was the richest man in the city, François Bonnaffé. The man who would become the city's mayor during the Revolution, François-Armand Saige, had joined the *Musée* as had his cousin Guillaume-Joseph Saige, Keith Baker's classical republican.¹⁴⁴ Laffon de Ladebat, the Protestant merchant and fierce abolitionist was also a member as were the leading Jewish merchants Gradis, Raba, and Furtado. Future deputies to the Convention Vergniaud, Gensonné, and Guadet had also joined the *Musée*.

The creation of the *Musée* not only represented an implicit criticism of Bordeaux's older and more prestigious institutions, but it also posed a direct threat to them. By opening up its doors to men of talent, and accepting amateurs and

¹⁴² While not overtly barred from joining, the *Musée* had no women members. The *Musée* did have several female correspondants however. The role of correspondant will be discussed later in this chapter.

¹⁴³ O. Baulny, "Miranda et Bordeaux," *Revue Historique Bordeaux* (1966) pp. 114-15.

professionals alike, the *Musée* was quickly attracting a significant number of the city's leading lights. Bordeaux's two academies responded to *Musée* in different ways. In 1783, the same year the *Musée* was created, the *Académie* of Belles-Lettres and Sciences ended its tradition of arranging its membership hierarchically. Prior to 1783, nobles were considered "regular" members, while non-nobles were merely associates.¹⁴⁵ Despite the reform, Dupré de Saint-Maur - a member of both the *Musée* and the *Académie* - still believed there were notable differences between the two institutions. In his inaugural address, Dupré told the muséens who had gathered together for the very first time that "the object of your institution, Messieurs, is to extend that which is limited, and to make common the wealth of a small number."¹⁴⁶ Put simply, Dupré and the other early founders of the *Musée* took it as their goal to give the public access to the prevailing intellectual and cultural currents of the day.

While the *Académie* of Belles-Lettres and Sciences tried to adapt to the new reality created by the *Musée*, the city's other academy, the *Académie* of Painting, was all but run out of business by Dupont's institution. As Christine Adams has noted, the *Académie* could simply not compete with the new institution for new members.¹⁴⁷

ORGANIZATION AND ACTIVITY

The *Musée* was organized around a membership of 150 associate members and a series of committees that oversaw the general day to day running of the organization. The guiding organizational principle of the *Musée* was democracy. Each associate was allowed one vote, and during bi-weekly General Assembly meetings members voted on

¹⁴⁴ On G-J Saige, see Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution:Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1990) pp. 128-152.

¹⁴⁵ Roche, *Le Siècle des lumières*, pp. 109-10, and Adams, *A Taste for Comfort and Status*, p. 199.

¹⁴⁶ Ms 829 (x) no. 1 -- B.M. de Bx, June 10, 1783.

a variety of issues. For example, when membership levels fell below 150, the general assembly met to vote on potential candidates for membership. To be considered for membership in the *Musée*, candidates had to be nominated by a member, and had to have "an intact reputation and be known for their talents, or by their taste for sciences, letters and the arts"¹⁴⁸ In addition to voting on new members, associates also voted on the make up of the General Committee. This committee consisted of the president, vice-president, and four secretaries of the *Musée*. They were elected to one-year terms and were decided by a plurality of votes at the General Assembly meeting held at the end of every May. This committee essentially had two tasks: first, to name members to the other committees that were responsible for organizing public meetings, such as the committee on painting and sculpture and the committee on music; and second, to facilitate the General Assembly meetings. At these bi-weekly meetings, members voted on issues that had come up since their last meeting and which had been placed on an agenda by the secretaries.¹⁴⁹

If democracy was the *Musée's* guiding principle, contributing to the progress and dissemination of useful knowledge was the group's primary purpose. In practice, this meant that the *Musée* focused its attention on three areas of activity; education, artistic and cultural exhibits open to the public, and access to the latest newspapers, journals and books from around France and all over Europe. To support its educational activity, the *Musée* recruited professors from around the city and elsewhere, and courses were either free or available for a small fee. The subject matter was highly slanted towards

¹⁴⁷ Adams, *A Taste for Wealth and Status*, p. 218.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. In practice, a more significant barrier to membership was the required 48 *livres* per year dues which was far more than any artisan or small shopkeeper could afford.

the sciences and language training; *utilité* was the key word for the *Musée's* curriculum, and any subject that was deemed to have a practical applicability was considered as a possible course offering. The first course offered by the *Musée* in 1784 was in mathematics and was taught by Dupont des Jumeaux. Other offerings included courses in astronomy, geometry, physics, Latin, Greek, German, English, and French.¹⁵⁰

Aside from its formal pedagogical function, the *Musée* was also a cultural institution. It viewed itself in part as a community of scientists, men of letters, and artists who put the fruit of their efforts on display for public consumption several times a year. The *Musée's* public meetings came to encompass a wide array of activity including art exhibits, musical concerts and recitals, poetry readings, lectures, and the occasional display of new inventions. Meetings were held no less than four times a year and were designed to educate, entertain and enlighten both the associate members of the *Musée* and the general public.¹⁵¹ The very first public meeting, held June 10, 1783, set the tone for all the others to follow; Dupont des Jumeaux opened the meeting with a speech on the purpose of the *Musée*, the progress of arts, and the importance of education. Garat followed with a lecture entitled "On bringing together a taste for letters with the spirit of commerce." The meeting closed with a concert.¹⁵²

The final ingredient that made up the *Musée de Bordeaux* was its function as a *salon de lecture*. The *Musée* had an impressive collection of books and newspapers ("torches of taste and reason,," as Abbé Sicard referred to them¹⁵³) that were available

¹⁴⁹ For a description of how the *Musée* was organized See *Recueil des ouvrages du Musée de Bordeaux. Dédié à la Reine. Année 1787*. B.M. de Bordeaux H 5140

¹⁵⁰ *Recueil*.

¹⁵¹ Each member of the *Musée* was allowed to bring up to three non-members.

¹⁵² Bm de Bx - Ms 829 tome 13.

¹⁵³ Sicard, "Discours de clôture," *Recueil*, p. 360.

to all members. The *Musée* allocated 600 *livres* a year from its budget to buy new books and on the eve of the Revolution there were 1374 titles in its collection. According to François Barbier the collection contained 46.2 percent literature and belles-lettres; 13.8 percent history and geography; 6.4 percent science and art; and 3.4 percent theology.¹⁵⁴ Abbé Sicard pointed out that not only did the group have an affinity for the French "classics" but they were also drawn to contemporary liberal and reformist writings. "We can...admire the art of Racine and Corneille; reflect on the discoveries of Dalember and Franklin; examine the profound thoughts of Locke, Condillac and Montesquieu, and discuss the patriotic projects of Necker and Turgot."¹⁵⁵ The *Musée*'s library was in fact heavily slanted towards the work of the philosophes and the group's reading room provided members the most direct access to the Enlightenment.

In addition to its substantial book collection, the *Musée* also subscribed to the leading newspapers of the day. The *Recueil* boasted that "all public papers, national and foreign, and new literary works" could be found in the *Musée*'s reading room.¹⁵⁶ Among other papers, the *Musée* subscribed to the *Journal encyclopédique*, *Gazette des gazettes*, *Gazette salulaire*, *Gazette de France*, *Journal des savants*, *Mercure de France*, *Gazette de Leyde*, Linguet's *Annales politiques*, *l'Esprit des Journaux*, *la Journal de physique*, and of course the *Journal de Guienne*.¹⁵⁷ The goal was to provide news and information from a multiplicity of perspectives, from across the francophone world, on politics, arts and ideas. Yet, reading in the *Musée*'s *salon de lecture* was designed to be neither a solitary nor a passive experience. Rather, the *Musée* sought to create an atmosphere that

¹⁵⁴ F. Barbier, *Le Musée*, p.16.

¹⁵⁵ Sicard, *Recueil*.

¹⁵⁶ "Administration et règlements du *Musée*," *Recueil*.

¹⁵⁷ Bibliothèque municipale de Bordeaux, Ms 829, T. I-XXII.

would stimulate lively debate and discussion among the membership. The many newspapers were supposed to provide the fuel for those debates. For the members of the *Musée*, the value and benefits that came from open and honest discussion between members were undeniably clear: "It is by conversation that ideas are spread," Abbé Sicard wrote, "that doubts are cleared up, that imagination is stirred, and that one polishes his character. It often soothes sadness and pushes aside boredom. An excellent conversation opens all the roads of the spirit and the heart"¹⁵⁸ By recognizing the value of debate among its membership, the *Musée* was building on a tradition that harkened back to the Labottière's *Affiches de Bordeaux* and continued on in the *Journal*. Both papers had encouraged readers to write in and express opinion on a variety of topics. The *Journal* opened its pages to readers' letters and provided a forum for critical analysis and debate. The *Musée*, at last, was the physical structure where readers could continue the debates begun in the newspapers in a face-to-face manner. The *Musée*'s library and the newspapers it subscribed to provided the raw material to fuel those debates. Beyond that, and perhaps even more important, the *Musée* cultivated an environment that strove to be free of the hallmarks of absolutist society. Inside the *Musée* there was none of the traditional ranks or distinctions. Members did not discuss and debate as nobles or clergy, or as merchants or lawyers; they came together and interacted as individuals; debates rose and fell based on the merits of an argument and nothing else.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ Sicard, *Recueil*.

¹⁵⁹ In this regard, the *Musée de Bordeaux* had more in common with Parisian salons than with provincial academies. Though the *Musée* lacked the important presence of salonnières, both institutions were dedicated to open and critical debate not restricted by social standing. On the Parisian salons in the eighteenth century see Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters*, especially chapter 3.

In addition to providing the grist for debate and discussion among members, the library and newspapers help highlight the essentially dual nature of the *Musée*. On the one hand, it was a local institution, run by local men, dedicated to improving Bordelais life by making education, culture, and intellectual exchange available on a wide scale. Yet, on the other hand, for all its emphasis on local affairs, the *Musée* was cosmopolitan, and sought to foster relations with a wider world. Books and newspapers served that function, in part, by bringing the outside world of news and ideas into Bordeaux. The *Musée* also reached out beyond its borders by establishing a network of communication with correspondents in cities throughout Europe. Though they never reached their lofty goal of having "correspondents in all countries where letters are cultivated," they did have regular contact with 61 people in Paris, Toulouse, Besançon, Nimes, London, the West Indies, Stuttgart, Brussels and elsewhere.¹⁶⁰ Correspondents wrote letters to the *Musée de Bordeaux*, keeping members informed and up-to-date on local events in the world of politics, literature, and science. Letters were then read out loud at the *Musée's* bi-weekly General Assembly meetings. Members had the chance to discuss the content of the letters and responded in kind, informing their correspondents on the news from Bordeaux.

Typically, correspondents came from other *Musées* or similar institutions like the *Musée de Paris*, the *Musée de Toulouse* and Le Cercle des Philadelphes in Saint Domingue. A correspondent's visit to the *Musée de Bordeaux* was always a cause for celebration and the *Musée* held lavish public gatherings in their honor. As we saw earlier, at these public events, the correspondent gave a lecture, followed by numerous other speeches, poems, and concerts. The *Musée* also took advantage of the numerous

¹⁶⁰ "Administration et règlements du *Musée*," *Recueil*.

contacts its merchants had made through business dealings; thus, lines of communication were established along already existing lines of trade and commerce. This was especially true with Guadalupe, Martinique and other major shipping destinations. Indeed, many of the qualities and characteristics generally associated with commerce were also attributed to the *Musée's* network of correspondents; both were seen as superceding national borders in order to unite people in reciprocal lines of interaction and exchange intended for mutual benefit and pleasure. For the *Musée*, its correspondents formed a "continuous chain of enlightenment."¹⁶¹

CONCLUSION

The *Journal de Guienne* and the *Musée de Bordeaux* were conceived of together and designed to be mutually supportive and complimentary. Throughout its nine year run, the *Journal* sought to bring its two primary goals to fruition. In order to facilitate commerce, the paper tended to the needs of the city's business community. It focused most of its attention on the port, the epicenter of the city's economic boom for much of the eighteenth century. The *Journal* did not neglect the needs of smaller merchants however, and the paper was always open to shopkeepers who wanted to advertise their wares and to people who were either looking for work, workers, or something to buy or sell. The paper pursued its other goal, spreading enlightenment, with equal vigor. The *Journal* wholeheartedly embraced enlightenment ideals of criticism, open debate, and serving the public good. The editors used the paper not only to set an example for their readers but they also opened up the pages of the *Journal* to their readers. Thus, readers

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

were encouraged to express themselves on a range of subjects, either artistically or critically. In the end, the paper was a product by, for, and about its readers.

The *Musée* provided a physical space where these various impulses could be expressed in a face to face manner. It was a place where people from across the social spectrum, and with varying degrees of expertise, could come together as equals and engage in common projects for the benefit of themselves and their community. By 1789 the *Journal* and the *Musée* were the preeminent intellectual and cultural institutions in the city. In the pages of the paper and inside the walls of the *Musée*, merchants, traders, and businessmen - so long the legal inferiors of the First and Second Estate - stood on equal footing. Yet, crucially, these were not anti-aristocratic organizations. Unlike the *Académie*, the *Journal* and the *Musée* did not discriminate on the basis of birth. While it is not surprising that merchants, lawyers and others eagerly embraced the new institutions, both the paper and the *Musée* also attracted significant numbers of traditional elites.

In his *Ancien Régime*, Tocqueville argued that the French were grossly unprepared to assume political leadership after 1789 because they had no political experience. "There being no approach toward political liberty," Tocqueville wrote, "the business of government was not only ill understood, it was not understood at all."¹⁶² This line of argument, however, misses the larger point. Narrowly speaking, Tocqueville is surely right when he argues that the great majority of men and women had no formal role in official state politics under the Old Regime. Indeed, most people were legally proscribed from participating in the affairs of state. Yet, having experience in the affairs of absolutist politics would have been of no value during the

Revolutionary period anyway. Absolutism had been discredited. The country was searching for alternative models to governing and the arrangement of society. *Muséens* and those who had participated in the construction of the *Journal* had the type of experience that would be crucial for leading in a transformed world. In the years leading up to the Revolution, members of the *Musée* had been practicing the art of self governance, engaging in direct democracy, and experimenting with equality. Similarly, those who had participated in the *Journal* had grown accustomed to thinking critically and expressing their opinions on a wide range of subjects. That would be precisely the type of experience needed to lead during the Revolutionary period. The new political culture being worked out in the *Musée* and *Journal*, though antithetical to absolutism, did not cause the Revolution, but once the Old Regime became unhinged after 1789, those people who had been articulating and living by an alternative value system were prepared to lead in the "new" regime.

¹⁶² Tocqueville, *The Ancien Régime*, p 112.

Chapter 7

CONCLUSION

The provincial *affiches* were the French press in the eighteenth century. More people subscribed to the *affiches* than to any other periodical in France. At the height of its popularity, the *Mercure* had 12,000 subscribers. The *Journal de Paris* had a more modest 9000 subscribers. While exact numbers are difficult to determine, even the most conservative estimates put the total number of subscribers for the *affiches* at no few than 15,000, and indeed that figure may have been closer to 30,000. By 1789 a network of *affiches* crisscrossed the nation, reaching deeply into every corner of the kingdom, with at least one paper appearing in every *généralité*. Thanks to the increasingly wider reach of the postal system, and the practice of subscription, people who lived along the Pyrenees Mountains from the Bay of Biscay to the Mediterranean Sea in the southwest, to those living in the very northern and eastern regions such as the residents of Valenciennes, all had access to a local *affiches*. No area of the kingdom was either too remote or too small to be outside the circulation orbit of the *affiches*.

Yet, unlike the *Mercure* and other Parisian newspapers available in the provinces, the *affiches* were not a national paper. They were local sheets, read and produced by local men and women, which filled a local niche. The *Affiches de Normandie* focused its gaze on life in Rouen, just as the *Affiches de Bordeaux* was preoccupied with events in that port city. Picking up and leafing through any one of the forty-four *affiches* that were in print in 1789 is to see, first and foremost, a newspaper obsessed with the details of local life. Merchants and shopkeepers took out notices in their local paper to inform readers they were changing location, or when new and

interesting wares had arrived from the capital or abroad. Local residents advertised a panoply of goods and services for sale, rent, or hire. Papers also served as a guide to local leisure activities and entertainment. In the *affiches* a reader could find a tutor to teach her how to paint or play a musical instrument. If books were more to her liking, then she could find the hours of the public library in the paper and determine which local bookshop was carrying the latest work from her favorite author. If her tastes ran towards the philosophes then chances were good that the local paper might publish excerpts of their works in its pages. Local cultural and intellectual institutions used the newspaper in much the same way the business community did. Notices were placed in the paper to inform readers of upcoming events and to relay information. Readers were kept abreast of the times and dates of public meetings at the academy or *musée*. The *affiches* also published show times for the theatre. Finally, there was local news. The *affiches* were at the centers of the communities they served and operated as something of a town square. Tidbits of information filled the pages of the local paper, as when the *Affiches de Dauphiné* informed readers that the oldest resident of the city was feeling better after a bout of illness. If a reader lost something of value he could go to the local *bureau d'avis* and take out a notice in the paper, asking his fellow-residents to keep an eye out for it. Readers did the same thing when they found something valuable.

Missing from the pages of the *affiches* was anything that smacked of criticism of the King, his representatives, or the Church. Most historians who have looked at the provincial press have come to the inescapable conclusion that the monarchy would find very little to object to in the pages of the censored *affiches*. I have not disputed those findings in this dissertation. Yet, I do argue that the *affiches* were central to a

transformation of the political culture in France beginning in mid-century and culminating in the French Revolution. Therein lies the central mystery of the *affiches*: how could papers utterly devoid of politically critical content have helped contribute to a new kind of politics in France, one based not on the precepts of absolutism, but rather on the more democratic principles of open and critical debate based on merit? The *affiches* achieved this feat by wholeheartedly embracing the ideas and practices of the Enlightenment, which were antithetical to the theory and practice of monarchical absolutism.

The *affiches* were at the epicenter of provincial enlightenment in France in the second half of the eighteenth century. The philosophes were a mainstay in the pages of the *affiches* over time and in all the papers. The Enlightenment was commodified as each week notices for new books written by and about the philosophes bombarded readers. Notices for the collected works of Rousseau and Voltaire were repeatedly carried in the *affiches* and, as Jane McLeod has noted, in Bordeaux subscriptions sold briskly for those works.¹ In addition to Voltaire, Rousseau, and advertisements for the *Encyclopédie*, certain papers had their favorite philosophe whom they assiduously championed. In Bordeaux the local paper never missed an opportunity to mention the name of the celebrated Montesquieu. The *Affiches de Dauphiné* opened its pages to the local philosophe Thomas, advertising his work for sale, and publishing his letters. The Enlightenment was not a monolith, of course, and neither were the *affiches*. As Jack Censer has rightly pointed out, some papers criticized certain philosophes.² The *Affiches de Bordeaux*, for example, in one of its earliest reviews, chastised Helvétius' *De l'Esprit*

¹ Jane McLeod, "A Social Study of Printers and Booksellers in Bordeaux from 1745 to 1810," (Ph.D. diss. York University, Toronto, 1987) p. 186.

for its overt atheism. Yet this does not mean the papers were anti-Enlightenment. Indeed, the philosophes frequently attacked each other and it would be surprising if the *affiches*, which encouraged readers to write and express opinions on virtually any subject they wanted, contained no criticism of the philosophes at all. Offering a critique or a negative review of one work by a philosophe did not keep the *affiches* from advertising works of the Enlightenment or from offering readers excerpts from books, poems and letters of the philosophes.

Yet, the Enlightenment was more than just the philosophes. It was also a set of intellectual and cultural practices. The papers' unique form and format offered an implicit rebuke to absolutism while arguing for an alternative arrangement of society. Where absolutism was hierarchical, the *affiches* were egalitarian. Royal offices, which conferred rank and noble status, were given no special consideration in the *affiches*. Rather, they were simply another commodity for sale, purchased or passed over based on perceived benefits in comparison to costs. Similarly, Royal edicts had to compete for space and attention among notices for the latest cure for gonorrhoea, or an announcement that the city was about to get a new wig maker. In the pages of the provincial press, King, quack, and wig maker stood on equal footing. The Royal edict was not printed in larger font, in color, or set apart from the rest of the contents. Editors let their readers decide for themselves which notices were useful, relevant, and therefore important.

The commercial sections of the *affiches* have rightly been compared to a bazaar. Picking up a copy of the *affiches* was an entrée into a vast market of goods and services for sale, rent, or hire. The *affiches* offered a space where private and personal wants and needs found public expression. Money was the engine that drove the entire process.

² Jack Censer, *The French Press in the Age of Enlightenment* (New York, 1994) p. 58.

Advertisements in the *affiches* rarely mentioned price, yet money was always the subtext. The paper brought buyer and seller, employer and employee, together. Whether the deal was ultimately consecrated or not was determined by cost versus benefits. Sarah Maza has persuasively argued that in the eighteenth century it was unlikely to have occurred to anyone that wealth ought to determine how society was organized. "Eighteenth-century writers," Maza has noted, "came up with a variety of schemes for describing the society they lived in or the one they wished to inhabit."

But one classification they never proposed was the one that seems commonsensical to the average inhabitant of the twentieth century; a division into upper, middle, and lower classes determined mostly on the basis of wealth. This was unlikely to occur to a denizen of eighteenth-century France because wealth alone could not be imagined as a basis for explaining society, let alone running it; everyone knew the effects of money were disjunctive rather than conjunctive.³

Yet, the view of the world from the pages of the *affiches* was precisely one based on wealth. Money, combined with the laws of supply and demand, and not position in the social hierarchy, tradition, or deference, were determinative.

For philosophes and editors of the *affiches* alike, the term *commerce* connoted more than just the exchange of goods and services for money. Rather, as Dena Goodman has cogently demonstrated, *commerce* encompassed a range of human interactions: economic exchange as well as the exchange and communication of ideas.⁴ In the *affiches*, discussion and debate were as fluid as economic transactions. Editors made clear to their readers that the local *affiches* not only served the community but would also be created by the community. Readers were encouraged to write in on a

³ Sarah Maza, "Luxury, Morality, and Social Change: Why There Was No Middle-Class Consciousness in Prerevolutionary France" *Journal of Modern History* vol. 69, no. 2 (June 1997), pp. 208-209.

range of topics, from issues of great national importance like slavery or the format for the Estates General, to topics with a more narrow appeal like the singing ability of a local actress. Readers' submissions were the lifeblood of the papers. When the *Affiches du Dauphiné* seemed to be suffering from a lack of vitality, a reader wrote to the editor suggesting that she renew her call for subscribers to write in with their thoughts, comments, and observations. When readers were invited to participate in the production of their local paper, they responded with poems, essays, letters to the editor, and book and theatre reviews. They responded too by debating with each other. The common denominator of all reader submissions was that they bore none of the hallmarks of an absolutist social order. In the *affiches*, opinions and tastes were democratized. The *affiches* offered the space for all readers to express themselves on a wide range of subjects. The editors did not impose a uniformity of opinion on the sheets, but rather published all views and let the public make up its own mind.

The relationship between readers and writers in the pages of the *affiches* was in sharp contrast to the dictates of an absolutist social order. In France, absolutism determined much more than just the form of government. Rather, it also determined the modes of economic production and distribution, and the arrangement of society. Old Regime France was not composed of individuals but of a conglomeration of corporate bodies distinguished by privileges. This corporate system was, as François Furet noted, "arranged hierarchically and concentrically around the monarchy" and held together by his supreme will.⁵ It was in the corporate bodies that individuals gained legal standing

⁴ Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters* (Ithaca, 1994) p. 26. See also Colin Jones, "The Great Chain of Buying: Medical Advertisement, the Bourgeois Public Sphere, and the Origins of the French Revolution," *American Historical Review*, vol. 101, no. 1 (Feb. 1996) p. 25.

⁵ François Furet, *Interpreting the French Revolution*, trans by Elborg Foster (Cambridge, 1981) p. 166.

in Old-Regime society and a status in one of its estates. Through a combination of tradition and law, absolutism established a complex system that prescribed the way individuals could relate to, and interact with, the government as well to each other. Keith Baker has suggested that it was only during the Revolution that a noticeable separation between state or politics, and society came into being. Prior to the Revolution, "state and society...were clearly distinguished neither in theory nor in practice."⁶ Under such a system, seemingly mundane activities such as writing a letter to the editor of the local *affiches*, could take on political, even subversive, meaning. In England, with its greater freedoms and more vibrant civil society, expressing opinions in an open and free manner was not incompatible with the political culture.⁷ In France, to do so was to implicitly criticize the absolutist order. This is not to say that people did not frequently do just that. There is an abundance of recent scholarship demonstrating that despite a lack of civil society, French men and women found institutions - salons, Masonic lodges, musées, and cafés - where they could come together outside of their corporate existence and meet as individuals.⁸ The *affiches* served as just such a meeting ground for provincial readers across France.

Bordeaux represents an excellent example of how central the local paper could be in helping to create wealth, disseminate new ideas, nurture new cultural practices, and ultimately to help transform the political culture. In many ways Bordeaux was an atypical city in Old Regime France. It was more populous than every provincial city but

⁶ Keith Michael Baker, "Enlightenment and Revolution in France: Old Problems, Renewed Approaches," *Journal of Modern History*, 53 (June 1981), p. 287-88.

⁷ For an example of the first rate work being done by scholars exploring the relationship between the press, the public sphere, and political culture in eighteenth-century England, see Hannah Barker, *Newspapers, Politics, and Public Opinion in Late Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1998).

one. It was the seat of monarchical, provincial, and municipal bureaucracies and judicial authorities. Bordeaux was the ecclesiastical center of the southwest, with its own *Parlement*, *Académie*, and Chamber of Commerce. Moreover, the city experienced a nearly century-long period of economic expansion. From 1715 to 1789, Bordeaux's economy grew twice as fast as the national average. The city's overseas merchants and traders were the immediate beneficiaries of this period of economic vitality, amassing unprecedented levels of wealth, and building massive *hôtels* to rival the most lavish homes of the nobility. But the benefits of the boom were not confined to the trading community. Shopkeepers, especially those selling luxury goods, witnessed an upsurge in business. Those responsible for building and outfitting the ships that sailed between the French West Indies and Bordeaux all reaped the benefits of economic gains. The intendants moved quickly to capitalize on the region's newfound prosperity by utterly transforming the physical face of the city. The old, medieval city walls were torn down, cramped and narrow city streets were expanded into wide boulevards, and the quayside façade, the first thing many visitors to Bordeaux would see, was built to reflect the city's opulence. Bordeaux was not a "typical" city in the eighteenth century, but it does serve as an exemplary model for studying the *affiches*. The study of Bordeaux and its two newspapers represents the potential of the provincial *affiches* to transform the intellectual, cultural, and commercial life of a province in the second half of the eighteenth century.

From the time Bordeaux got its first local newspaper in 1758, to the time the Labottière brothers were forced to shut down production of the *Affiches de Bordeaux* in

⁸ On salons see Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters*; on lodges see Margaret C. Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment: Freemasonry and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Oxford, 1991); on cafes see

1784, the city had undergone a profound transformation. When the Labottières informed readers that the *Affiches* was to be a collective effort between editors and readers, it was the first opportunity most bordelais had to express themselves in print to a wide audience. The first few years of the life of the *Affiches* saw the bordelais taking their first timid steps into the public arena. Readers filled the pages of the *Affiches* with commercial information, employment notices and advertisements for barrels of wine, billiard tables, jewelry, and an assortment of other goods. Letters to the editor or other opinion pieces were rare in the early going of the paper. Yet, over time readers took full advantage the paper offered them and expressed themselves on a wide range of subjects in a variety of formats. Readers wrote and submitted poetry, riddles, and opinion pieces. By the end of its life the *Affiches* was carrying robust debate and dialogue such as the one exploring the merits of educating peasant children.

The Labottière brothers' paper also played a central role in helping to transform the Bordelais from a population concerned primarily with business practices to one that also valued culture, new ideas, and books. Every week the *Affiches* advertised new and noteworthy books for sale, informing readers of new titles - often with a review - and which local shop was selling them. The Labottière's advertising campaign was a success. The number of booksellers in the city grew from a mid-century high of six - of which four were owned and operated by the Labottière family - to no fewer than eleven on the eve of the Revolution. There was also a complete turnaround in both the types of books sold and in the customer base of the shops. In the 1750s, nobles were the primary book-buyers in the city. Religious books were the most common type of book sold. By the 1780s, after being subjected to nearly three decades of advertising in the *Affiches*,

Thomas Brennan, *Public Drinking and Popular Culture in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Princeton, 1988).

merchants, lawyers, and other professionals became the leading consumers of books in the city.⁹ Their tastes overwhelmingly ran to the philosophes.¹⁰

In 1784, Dupont des Jumeaux and the *Journal de Guienne* inherited a readership that was receptive to the ideas of the Enlightenment and engaged in the cultural life of the city. After twenty-six years of the *Affiches*, readers had grown accustomed to voicing their opinions in front of a public, engaging in discussion and debate on topics from the important to the mundane, and critically evaluating other people's work in the form of book and theatre reviews. The *Journal* capitalized on and expanded the participatory traditions of the *Affiches*. In the years before the Revolution, the cultural and intellectual practices of the newspaper spilled over into new institutions, and grew to become the dominant practices of the city. The *Musée* and Philanthropic Society brought the Bordelais together in new ways and helped forge new relations among them. The Philanthropic Society was created to facilitate the charitable impulses encouraged by the *Journal* and served as a space where the Bordelais came together as compassionate citizens, motivated by a desire to help their fellow citizens. The *Musée* became the physical space where readers of the *Journal* could argue, debate, and hone their critical spirit face to face. In the *Musée*, the Bordelais interacted as social and intellectual equals, and the public concerts or art exhibits were events where they could gather, socialize, and be convivial outside of work, family, and church. The *Journal* served as the nerve center for the new institutions, informing readers about those in need of charity, shining the bright light of publicity on those who generously gave money, and reviewing public events at the *Musée*.

⁹ Jane McLeod, "A Social Study of Printers and Booksellers," p. 188.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

In *Becoming a Revolutionary*, Timothy Tackett examined the backgrounds and experiences of the representatives to the National and Constituent Assemblies in order to trace the emergence of a revolutionary culture.¹¹ One of Tackett's central tasks was to explore and explain the relationship between the Enlightenment and the formation of a political consciousness on the part of the deputies. In exploring this possible link, Tackett hews to a rather broad definition of what constituted the Enlightenment in Old Regime France. He includes, for example, not just philosophes, defined as men of letters who made the majority of their income from their writings, but also those people who might have come into contact with philosophes.¹² He also includes those deputies who held membership in the Parisian or provincial Academies and Masonic lodges. Despite such an inclusive view of the Enlightenment, however, Tackett still must conclude that the Enlightenment had very little impact upon the emergence of a revolutionary political culture. "The overwhelming majority" of Deputies, Tackett notes, "had no connection with these various overt manifestations of Enlightenment culture."¹³

Yet, as inclusive and broad as Tackett defines the Enlightenment, his definition is still too narrow. The Enlightenment in the provinces was more than just local Academies and Masonic lodges. The central ingredient in provincial Enlightenment culture in the second half of the eighteenth century was the local *affiches*. The *affiches* helped foster an interest in the work of the philosophes, disseminated the ideas of the Enlightenment, and nurtured its central cultural practices among the readership. The

¹¹ Timothy Tackett, *Becoming a Revolutionary: The Deputies of the French Assembly and the Emergence of a Revolutionary Culture (1789-1790)*, (Princeton, 1996).

¹² Ibid. See chapter 2 for Tackett's discussion of the relationship between the Enlightenment and the emergence of a revolutionary culture.

local *affiches* gave provincial readers the opportunity to argue, debate, and criticize, all within the bounds of a presumed equality. In doing so, readers were not only participating in Habermas' authentic public sphere, but were also experimenting with an alternative political culture. Nowhere is this more clearly seen than in Bordeaux.

The shortcomings of Tackett's approach is highlighted in his examination of the deputies from Bordeaux. Tackett makes no mention of either Paul Nairac, the wealthy merchant, frequent contributor to the *Journal de Guienne*, and active *muséen*, or Victor Desèze, who was also a member of the *Musée*. Yet, it was precisely their experiences in these institutions - places where they learned to think critically, interact with others on the basis of equality, and criticize within the bounds of conviviality - that prepared them for their work in the capital as deputies. Equally telling is Tackett's discussion of the Garat brothers. He rightly counts both Dominique and Dominique-Joseph Garat among those Deputies who had contact with the Enlightenment, but not because they regularly participated in the production of the *Journal*, or because they played an active role in the *Musée*. Rather, Dominique Garat was enlightened because he had once met Montesquieu.¹⁴ Dominique-Joseph Garat was enlightened because he once met Rousseau and because he wrote an *Eloge de Fontenelle*.¹⁵ Yet this "Enlightenment by association" approach is severely limiting and does not adequately account for a range experiences on the part of Bordelais men and women.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 53-54.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 52.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 52-53. Despite being a deputy to the National Assembly, a *conventionnel*, the Minister of Justice and Minister of Interior, Dominique-Joseph Garat has been the subject of very little scholarly interest. One of the best works on this under-appreciated figure is William J. Murray, "A Philosophe in the French Revolution: Dominique-Joseph Garat and the *Journal de Paris*," in Frederick Krantz, ed., *History from Below: Studies in Popular Protest and Popular Ideology in Honour of George Rudé* (Montreal, 1985) pp. 177-196.

Through their participation in first the *Affiches de Bordeaux*, and then the *Journal de Guienne* and the *Musée de Bordeaux* a significant group of Bordelais were gaining valuable political experience. It ought to be no surprise, then, that in 1789 the men and women who had participated in the production of the *Journal*, and the *muséens*, completely usurped political authority in the city. As the instruments of absolutist government at the local level were swept away, merchants, traders, businessmen and lawyers - those who had been frozen out of direct political involvement during the Old Regime - assumed the reins of power. Saige, the secretary of the *Musée*, was elected mayor of the city. The old *jurade* was disbanded and in its place was put an elected municipal council. *Muséens* dominated these elections as they would the entire apparatuses of local government between the years 1789 and 1793.¹⁶ The leading political club in the city, *Les Amis de la liberté*, was founded by Pierre Victurnien Vergniaud, commissioner of the *Musée* and contributor to the *Journal*, Armand Gensonné, also a contributor to the *Journal* and member of the *Musée*, and Boyer-Fonfrède, who had frequently contributed to both the *Affiches* and the *Journal* and was a member of the *Musée*.

When it came time to elect representatives to the National Convention in 1791, the majority of Bordeaux's representatives came from the *Amis* and many of them had experience with the paper and *Musée*. Once in Paris, this group formed the backbone of the Girondin deputies.¹⁷ Though there were more than just representatives from the Gironde among the Girondin deputies, the Bordelais such as Gensonné and Vergniaud,

¹⁶ For a complete list of election results and representatives to the Council see Archive Municipale de Bordeaux, k16, *Maitres et officiers municipaux de Bordeaux*, 1790.

¹⁷ On the Girondins see the classic work by M.J. Sydenham, *The Girondins* (London, 1961). For a work that focuses specifically on Bordeaux's contributions to the Girondin see François Furet and Mona Ozouf,

along with Jean-François Ducos, Jean-Antoine Grangeneuve, and Marguerite-Elie Guadet did dominate the Girondin movement and the Convention over the next two years. In 1792, the Girondin deputies were purged by the Montagnards and put on trial. At his trial, Vergniaud was asked what was it that bound the Girondins together into such a tightly knit group. His answer was telling. Vergniaud replied that it was only "friendship, and regard for one another" that brought and kept them together as a group.¹⁸ His Montagnard inquisitors did not believe that answer but perhaps they should have. After all, these were a group of men who had spent the last decade of their lives serving on the various committees of the *Musée de Bordeaux*, debating and arguing about the issues of the day in its *salon de lecture*, and submitting letters to the editors, notices, and pieces of poetry to their local newspaper.

The arrest of the Girondin leaders sparked the federalist revolt, a coalition of larger provincial cities including Bordeaux, Marseilles and Lyon against what was perceived to be the extremism of the Montagnards and Paris' meddling in provincial affairs.¹⁹ The revolt was short lived and by the summer of 1793 the Montagnards had restored order in the provinces. In order to weed out those Girondins who had fled from the capital back to their native provinces, and to make sure those sympathetic to the Girondin cause did not rise again, the mechanisms of the Terror were brought to former federalist strongholds. In Bordeaux, this meant that all the merchants, lawyers, and businessmen who had come to political office only a few years before suddenly found themselves out of power again. The entire system of local government was turned over

Le Gironde et les Girondins (Paris, 1991). With the exception of Alan Forrest's excellent article in Furet and Ozouf, neither work examines the experiences of Bordeaux's deputies prior to their arrival in Paris.

¹⁸ Quoted in Sydenham, pp. 34-35.

to Montagnard loyalists and anyone deemed sympathetic to the Girondins was arrested. Gensonné, Boyer-Fonfrède, Ducos, Vergniaud, and the other Girondins from Bordeaux had already been, or would shortly be executed. Many of their fellow Bordelais would suffer the same fate. *Negociantisme* became a new revolutionary crime and the Terror decimated the political and commercial leadership of the city.²⁰ Saige, the sitting mayor, was executed. Duvigneau, the co-editor of the *Journal, muséen*, and member of the *commission populaire* was killed. Marandon, a writer for the *Affiches* and the *Journal* before becoming the editor for the staunchly federalist *Courrier de la Gironde*, was also put to death. The seventy-three year old Simon Lacourt, publisher of the *Journal, muséen*, and federalist sympathizer was executed. The Labottière brothers, supporters of the *Amis*, had their lives spared, but their payments suspended. They died a few years later bankrupted by the Montagnards. In all, six writers for the *Journal* were executed along with seventeen *muséens*; twelve more *muséens* were fined and five were ultimately acquitted.

In 1894 the city of Bordeaux honored the local victims of the Terror by erecting the *Monument aux Girondins*. The 162 foot bronze column can be seen throughout the city. On one side of the column is an allegory to commerce, the other side lists the names of the martyred Girondin leaders and on the very top is a statue depicting Liberty breaking her chains. The monument stands not just as a memorial for the Bordelais who lost their lives during the Terror, but as a testimony to the ideals of commerce, enlightenment and equality that were cultivated and flourished in the *Affiches*, the

¹⁹ Bill Edmonds, "'Federalism' and Urban Revolt in France in 1793," *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 55, no. 1 (Mar, 1983) pp. 22-53.

²⁰ For a comprehensive list of those killed in Terror in Bordeaux see A. Vivie, *Histoire de la terreur à Bordeaux*, 2 vols, 1877.

Journal, and in the *Musée*, and which had for a brief period been the guiding principles of the Revolution.

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APPENDIX

Table 1 - The Spread of the Provincial *Affiches*

Dates Published	Name of Paper
1750-1821	Affiches de Lyon
1757-1790	Affiches de Nantes
1758-1784	Affiches de Bordeaux
1759-1764/ 1775-1789	Affiches de Toulouse
1760-1780	Affiches de Marseille
1760/1776-1781	Affiches de Roussillon
1762-1791	Affiches de Normandie
1764-1794	Affiches de l'Orléans
1765-1786	Affiches de la Franche-Comté
1765-1766	Affiches de Metz
1768-1797	Affiches de la Touraine
1769	Affiches de Carpentras
1769-1773	Affiches d'Aix
1769-1790	Affiches de Lorraine
1769-1836	Affiches de La Rochelle
1770-1771/1783-1795	Affiches de Dijon
1770-1776	Affiches de Montpellier
1770	Affiches de Nîmes
1770-1801	Affiches de Picardie
1771-1796	Affiches d'Auxerre
1771-1862	Affiches du Mans
1772	Affiches de Bayonne
1772-1805	Affiches de Reims
1772-1844	Affiches de Sens
1773-1789	Affiches d'Angers
1773-1789	Affiches du Poitou
1774-1792	Affiches du Dauphiné
1775-1779	Affiches de Bourgogne
1775-1791	Affiches de Meaux
1776-1788	Affiches de Provence
1777-1780	Affiches de Montauban
1779-1789	Affiches d'Auvergne
1780-1790	Affiches de Bourges
1780-1793	Affiches de Montargis
1781-1793	Affiches de Flandre
1781-1811	Affiches de Chartres
1782-1790	Affiches de Moulins
1782-1795	Affiches de Troyes
1784-1792	Affiches de Rennes
1785-1793	Affiches de Senlis
1786-96	Affiches de la Basse Normandie
1786-1788	Affiches du Beauvaisis
1786-1791	Affiches de Saintonge
1787-1789	Affiches de Périgueux
1788-1792	Affiches d'Artois
1788-1789	Affiches du Perche
1788-1789	Affiches du Hainaut

Table 2 - Paris Versus the Provinces

Paris (51)	Provinces (54)
Bibliothèque de physique 1758-69	Affiches de Bourdeaux 1758-1784
Journal des Dames 1759-78	Affiches de Toulouse 1759-89
Avant-Coureur 1760-73	Affiches de Marseille 1760-80
Journal ecclésiastique 1760-92	Affiches de Normandie 1762-91
Gazette salutaire 1761-93	Affiches de l'Orléanais 1764-90
Journal de pièces de clavecin 1762-71	Affiches de la Franche-Comté 1765-86
Journal des spectacles 1762-69	Courier du Bas-Rhin 1767-94
Catalogue hebdomaire 1763-89	Feuilles maritime de Bordeaux 1767-88
Etat de la marine 1763-90	Affiches d'Avignon 1768-72
Gazette du commerce 1763-83	Journal d'éducation 1768-78
Journal d'agriculture 1764-74	Affiches d'Aix 1769-73
Journal hebdomaire d'A. Le Duc 1764-97	Affiches de Lorraine 1769-90
Ephémérides du citoyen 1765-72	Affiches de Montpellier 1770-1776
Nécrologe des hommes célèbres 1767-82	Affiches de Picardie 1770-1790
Journal des beaux-arts 1768-75	Affiches d'Auxerre 1771-96
Notice de l'almanach sous verre 1768-1811	Affiches du mans 1771-1862
Notice des découvertes 1768-1823	Affiches de La Rochelle 1772-1836
Gazette des Deux-Ponts 1770-89	Affiches de Reims 1772-1805
Gazette universelle de litt. 1770-77	Affiches de Sens 1772-1844
Journal musique 1770-77	Affiches de la Touraine 1772-89
Muse lyrique 1770-88	Affiches d'Angers 1773-89
Nouveau Spectateur 1770-75	Affiches de Nantes 1773-89
Recueil des fêtes et spectacles 1770-86	Affiches du Poitou 1773-89
Nature considérée 1771-81	Affiches du Dauphiné 1774-92
Etat actuel de la musique 1772-77	Affiches de Bourgogne 1775-79
Causes célèbres 1773-89	Feuille hebdom. de Limoges 1775-89
Détail des succès 1773-88	Feuille maritime de Marseille 1775-89
Correspondance litt. 1774-91	Affiches de Meaux 1776-89
Nouvelles Ephémérides écon. 1774-88	Affiches de Provence 1776-88
Spectateur français 1774-79	Affiches du Roussillon 1776-81
Bibliothèque univ. Des romans 1775-89	Feuille maritime du Havre
Gazette des tribunaux 1775-89	Affiches de Montauban 1777-89
Journal de lecture 1775-80	Journal de Lorraine 1778-87
Année littéraire 1776-91	Affiches d'Auvergne 1779-89
Mémoires concernant l'histoire 1776-91	Affiches de Bourges 1780-90
Journal de Paris 1777-1841	Affiches de Montargis 1780-93
Nouvelles de la Rép. des L. 1777-88	Journal de la Gén. de Montpellier 1780-90
Annales poétiques 1778-88	Affiches de Chartres 1781-1811
Journal de Monsieur 1778-83	Affiches de Flandre 1781-93
Mercure de France 1778-94	Journal de Provence 1781-97
Journal d'ariettes 1779-95	Affiches de Moulins 1782-1790
Journal de littéraire 1779-83	Affiches de Troyes 1782-95
Mélanges tirés d'une bibl. 1779-88	Affiches de Dijon 1783-1795
Journal de clavecin 1781-92	Affiches de Rennes 1784-90
Bibliothèque physico-économique 1782-1826	Journal de Guyenne 1784-92
Journal de médecine militaire 1782-89	Journal de la langue française 1784-95
Journal de violon 1784-90	Journal de Lyon 1784-92
Courier lyrique et amusant 1785-89	Journal de Nîmes 1784-89
Journal général de France 1785-92	Affiches de Senlis 1785-1793
Nouvelles de l'art de guérir 1785-91	Affiches de la Basse Normandie 1786-96
Délassements de Polymnie 1786-92	Affiches de Saintonge 1786-91
	Feuille maritime de Nantes 1786-93
	Affiches d'Artois 1788-92
	Véritable Sentinelle du peuple 1788-92

Table 3 - The Editors of the *Affiches*

PAPER	FOUNDER	OCCUPATION
Affiches de Lyon	Aimé Delaroche	imprimeur-libraire
Affiches de Nantes	Joseph-Mathurin Vatar	imprimeur
Affiches de Bordeaux	Jacques et Antoine Labottière	imprimeur-libraire
Affiches de Toulouse	Dominique Donat/Jean-Florent Baour	avocat/professeur
Affiches de Marseille	Dominique Donat	avocat
Affiches du Roussillon	Dominique Donat	avocat
Affiches de Normandie	Etienne-Vincent Machuel	imprimeur-libraire
Affiches de l'Orléans	Martin Couret de Villeneuve	imprimeur
Affiches de la Franche-Comté	Viguiet	imprimeur-libraire
Affiches de Metz	??	??
Affiches de la Touraine	André Bruslon du Boullay	??
Affiches de Carpentras	Dominique-Gaspard Quenin	Imprimeur du Roi et Parlement
Affiches d'Aix	Paris de Lespinard	Imprimeur-libraire
Affiches de Lorraine	Cordier de Clermont	??
Affiches de La Rochelle	Rene-Alexis Jouyneau-Desloges	journaliste
Affiches de Dijon	Andre Villot	??
Affiches de Montpellier	Marguerite Pages -Marinier	??
Affiches de Nîmes	??	??
Affiches de Picardie	Godart	imprimeur
Affiches d'Auxerre	Francois Fournier	imprimeur
Affiches du Mans	Charles Monnoyer	imprimeur-libraire
Affiches de Bayonne	??	??
Affiches de Reims	Adrien Joseph Havé	avocat au Parlement
Affiches de Sens	??	??
Affiches d'Angers	Pierre Deville-Billault	notaire etimprimeur
Affiches du Poitou	Rene-Alexis Jouyneau-Desloges	Journaliste
Affiches du Dauphiné	Justine Giroud	imprimeur-libraire
Affiches de Bourgogne	Jean-Baptiste Mailly	Professeur de histoire
Affiches de Meaux	??	??
Affiches de Provence	Meynard	??
Affiches de Montauban	Vincent Teulieres	imprimeur-libraire
Affiches d'Auvergne	Pierre Chabrit	avocat
Affiches de Bourges	Félix Pallet	imprimeur/libraire
Affiches de Montargis	??	??
Affiches de Flandre	Joseph Paris de Lespinard	Imprimeur-libraire
Affiches de Chartres	Jean-Francois Lacombe	compositeur-typographe
Affiches de Moulins	Rauyer	??
Affiches de Troyes	Sainton	libraire
Affiches de Rennes	Mauger	Procureur au Presidial
Affiches de Senlis	Varnau	abbé
Affiches de la Basse Normandie	Moysant	professeur
Affiches du Beauvaisis	Jacques-François de Paule Bertrand	imprimeur du Roi
Affiches de Saintonge	Pierre Toussaints	imprimeur du Roi-libraire
Affiches de Périgueux	Brousse et Berger	??
Affiches d'Artois	Etienne-Géry Lenglet	avocat au Parlement
Affiches du Perche	Jean-Zacharie Malasis	imprimeur du Roi
Affiches du Hainaut	M. Debavay	avocat

Table 4 - Price and Periodicity of Papers

<u>NAME</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Periodicity</u>
Affiches de Lyon	9 l.	weekly
Affiches de Nantes	6 l. - 7 l. 10 s.	weekly
Affiches de Bordeaux	6 l. - 9 l.	weekly
Affiches de Toulouse	6 l. - 7 l. 10 s.	weekly
Affiches de Marseille	??	weekly
Affiches du Roussillon	??	??
Affiches de Normandie	7 l.	weekly
Affiches de l'Orléans	6 l. - 7 l. 10 s.	weekly
Affiches de la Franche-Comté	6 l. 12s - 7 l. 10 s.	2x week
Affiches de Metz	6 l. - 8 l.	weekly
Affiches de la Touraine	6 l. - 7 l. 10 s.	weekly
Affiches de Carpentras	?	weekly
Affiches d'Aix	7 l. 10s	weekly
Affiches de Lorraine	6 l. - 7 l. 10 s.	weekly
Affiches de La Rochelle	6 l. - 7 l. 10 s.	weekly
Affiches de Dijon	6 l. - 7 l. 10 s.	weekly
Affiches de Montpellier	6 l. 12 s. - 9 l.	weekly
Affiches de Nîmes	??	??
Affiches de Picardie	7 l. 1 l.	weekly
Affiches d'Auxerre	4 l.	2x month
Affiches du Mans	3 l. - 6 l.	weekly
Affiches de Bayonne	??	??
Affiches de Reims	6 l. - 7 l. 10 s.	weekly
Affiches de Sens	6 l.	??
Affiches d'Angers	6 l. - 7 l. 10s	weekly
Affiches du Poitou	7 l. 1 s. - 9 l.	weekly
Affiches du Dauphiné	6 l. - 7 l. 10 s.	weekly
Affiches de Bourgogne	6 l. - 7 l. 10s.	weekly
Affiches de Meaux	7 l. 10 s. - 9 l.	3x month
Affiches de Provence	6 l. - 9 l.	weekly
Affiches de Montauban	6 l. - 7 l. 10 s.	weekly
Affiches d'Auvergne	8 l. - 10 l.	weekly
Affiches de Bourges	6 l. - 7 l. 10 s.	weekly
Affiches de Montargis	5 l. - 6 l.	2x month
Affiches de Flandre	??	??
Affiches de Chartres	6 l. - 7 l. 10 s.	weekly
Affiches de Moulins	6 l. - 7 l. .5s.	3x month
Affiches de Troyes	6 l. - 7 l. 10 s.	weekly
Affiches de Rennes	7 l. 4 s. - 9 l.	weekly
Affiches de Senlis	6 l. - 6 l. 4 s.	2x month
Affiches de la Basse Normandie	6 l. - 7 l.	weekly
Affiches du Beauvaisis	7 l. 4 s. - 9 l.	weekly
Affiches de Saintonge	6 l. - 7 l. 10 s.	weekly
Affiches de Périgueux	6 l. - 7 l. 10 s.	weekly
Affiches d'Artois	12 l. - 13 l.	2x week
Affiches du Perche	6 l. 7 l. 10 s.	weekly
Affiches du Hainaut	6 l.	??

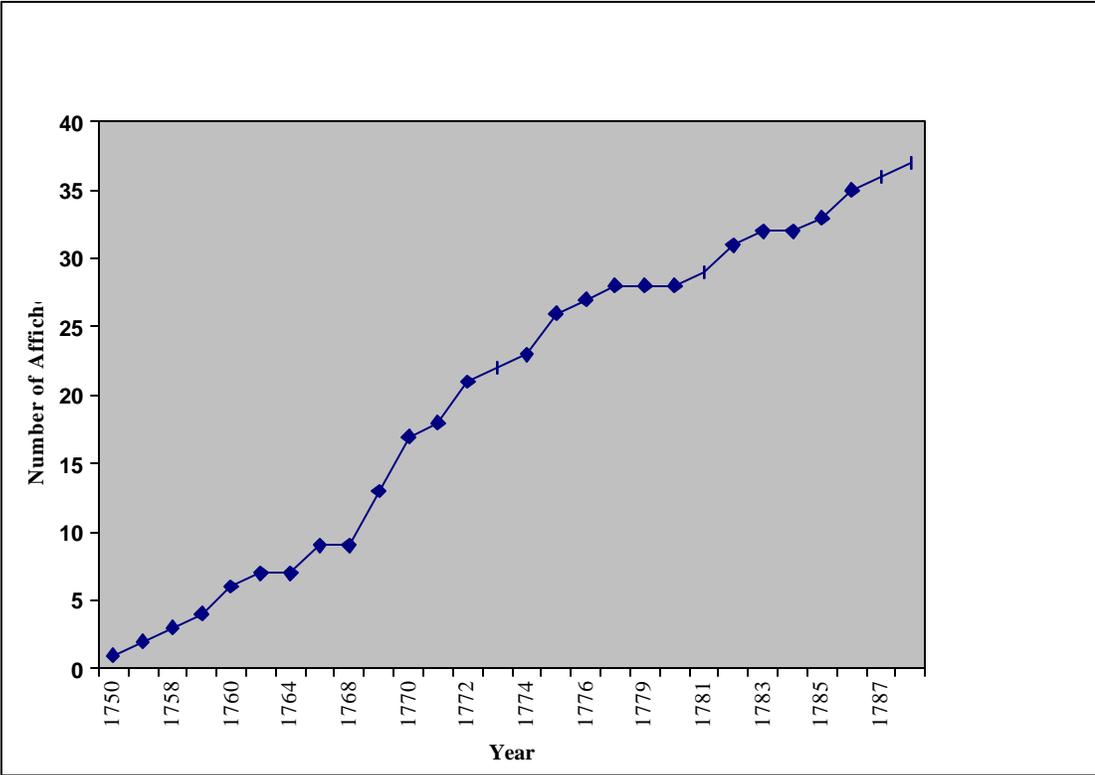


Figure 1 - Cumulative Number of Affiche Published by Year

VITA

Stephen Auerbach was born and raised in New Haven, Connecticut. After graduating from Amity High School, Stephen moved to Los Angeles where he enrolled as a freshman at the University of Southern California. Finding the Southland not completely to his liking, Stephen dropped out of college and headed to Europe in order to "get a real education." After spending a year backpacking through Europe and working on a Kibbutz, located where the Mediterranean Sea meets the Israeli-Lebanese border, Stephen returned to America in order to complete his college education. In the fall of 1989, Stephen entered the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor as a junior. Two years later he graduated from Michigan where he was happy to receive his bachelor of arts degree with distinction from (then) President George H.W. Bush. The following year Stephen spent in Ann Arbor, Michigan working as a bartender at the collectively-run Del Rio Bar. In the year 1992-1993 Stephen moved to Chicago, Illinois where he earned his master of arts degree in the social sciences from the University of Chicago. In 1995 Stephen moved to Baton Rouge, Louisiana where he enrolled as a Ph.D student in the Department of History. In 1997, while working on his dissertation, Stephen moved to Davis, California where he worked in the History Department of the University of California, Davis. Currently Stephen lives in Lawrence, Kansas and teaches at the University of Kansas.