

Moreau le Jeune and the *Monument du Costume*

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The *Monument du Costume*, most simply put, is a series of fashion narratives engraved over roughly a seven-year period by the French printmaker Jean-Michel Moreau le Jeune (1741-1814).¹ Twenty-four of the images of the *Monument* are by Moreau and two are by Sigismond Freudeberg. If the publication history is complex, considering the number of times various states of the engravings have been recombined and issued under similar titles with and without a text, the project itself can be defined as a fashion narrative only on the most superficial level.² While the twenty-six images of the *Monument* illustrate French fashions and furnishing in the Ancien Régime, the scenes more importantly reveal the manners and mores of the aristocratic class, with the first twelve scenes telling a cohesive and unified story.

Moreau, one of the most prolific printmakers working in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and through part of the second decade of the nineteenth, produced over 2000 prints and book illustrations. In his position as Dessinateur des menus-plaisirs, his patrons included the king and members of the court, but he also received commissions from such middle class patrons as Jean-Henri (Johann-Heinrich) Eberts, the Strasbourgian banker and financier, amateur engraver, and sponsor of the *Monument du Costume*.³

Most scholars interpret Moreau's twenty-four images collected as the *Monument* as his sincere homage to life in the Ancien Régime although he produced the scenes in two different decades, the 1770s and early in the 1780s, and the subject matter of all the images is only somewhat cohesive. The publication history of Moreau's involvement in the *Monument* began in 1776 with twelve images entitled the *Suite d'estampes pour servir à l'histoire des mœurs et du costume des Français dans le dix-huitième siècle*, continued in 1783 with the publication of twelve more scenes entitled *Troisième Suite d'estampes*

pour servir à l'histoire des modes et du costume en France dans le dix-huitième siècle and most scholars consider that it ended with the *Monument du Costume* in 1789, a uniting of the suites of 1776 and 1783 (plus two depictions by Sigismond Freudeberg). It is unlikely, however, that Moreau participated personally in the final project of 1789, or in any intermediary publications after 1783. Yet, scholars invariably discuss and interpret the *Monument* as though Moreau conceived it from the beginning as a unified whole. When Moreau's involvement in the publication history leading up to and including the *Monument* is explored, it becomes apparent that his participation in the project, and even his purpose, changed in the intervening years. His images of 1776 promote a highly idealized vision of an aristocratic family's approach to childbearing and motherhood based on the philosophy of Rousseau. The images produced in the 1780s, however, are less unified and some are standardized rococo fare. Most of them focus on the life of a young nobleman but there are also scenes that suggest libertinism and a morality at odds with the earlier *Suite* of 1776. Also included in the 1783 suite are two scenes focusing on rural life. It is the purpose of this paper to discuss and distinguish the phases of Moreau's fashion suites, examining his intentions for the earliest engravings against his intentions and even involvement in the final project, the *Monument du Costume* of 1789.

Art historians tend to interpret the various suites of Moreau's as holistic and concentrate primarily on quantifying the editions and exalting the technical achievements of the artist rather than examining content in a thoughtful way. Some of the earliest scholars of the artist like Marie-Joseph-François Mahéault and Emmanuel Bocher in their *catalogues raisonnés* merely list his fashion suites without much comment.⁴ Later René Colas does much the same when he in-

¹ This paper is an extract from my doctoral dissertation in progress, "Moreau le Jeune and the *Monument du Costume*: A New Interpretation." I thank my advisor, Dr. Robert Neuman, for his suggestions and encouragement and Catherine Gay-Greenman for her assistance in translating some of the texts in French.

² There is additional confusion because even editions from the same year by the same publisher vary. One 1777 version of Moreau's *Suite d'estampes* published by Prault, for instance, may have a brief explanatory text beneath the image while another may not. See Emmanuel Bocher, *Les Gravures françaises du XVIII^e siècle ou catalogue raisonné des estampes, vignettes, eaux-fortes, pièces en couleur au bistre et au lavis de 1700 à 1800*, vol. 6 (Paris: Morgand, 1882); Bocher, as meticulously as he could, reviewed the various states of Moreau's prints. Since prints were not sold

bound together as a single volume, collectors had a great deal of freedom in making additions and substitutions.

³ The Dessinateur des Menus-Plaisirs designed the ephemeral sets and props for royal festivities and ceremonies and often engraved these fêtes.

⁴ Marie-Joseph-François Mahéault, *L'Oeuvre gravé de Jean-Michel Moreau le Jeune (1741-1814): Catalogue raisonné et descriptif avec notes, iconographiques et bibliographiques*. (Amsterdam: APA-GW Hissink & Co, 1979); Bocher, *Les Gravures françaises du XVIII^e siècle*. Draibel's monograph on the artist takes the same approach. See Henri Draibel, *L'Oeuvre de Moreau le Jeune, Notice et Catalogue* (Paris: Chez P. Rouquette Libraire, 1874).

cludes Moreau's suites as part of his exhaustive bibliography on costume.⁵ Henri Draibel's monograph on the artist discusses the *Monument* only in passing while Adrien Moureau's text on Moreau stresses what the brothers Edmond L. and Jules A. Goncourt emphasize: Moreau's accurate depiction of aristocratic life during the period of Louis XVI in the *Monument*.⁶

Jean Adhémar, one of the twentieth century's preeminent scholars of eighteenth century French printmaking, gives Moreau's suites more attention, recognizing his subject matter as *vertueuse* (sincere, sentimental, virtuous) but fails to follow-through on this analysis, lapsing into more typical comments: the engravings are fresh, charming, and "life-like."⁷ Gaston Schéfer, too, gives the *Monument* a sensitive interpretation.⁸ The "masterpiece" is unlike standard fashion plates because the artist concentrates on the narrative, on the development of character, and because he puts into visual form Rousseau's ideas on motherhood and family. Schéfer relies heavily on statements in the introduction to the *Suite d'estampes* written by the patron Jean-Henri Eberts, and thus gives Moreau's engravings a greater seriousness of purpose.⁹ Schéfer, in what is generally an insightful analysis, separates the various suites leading up to the *Monument* but he limits his discussion, choosing not to focus on shifts in meaning from Moreau's earliest series in 1776 to the *grande folio* the *Monument du Costume* in 1789. Only later in the century will Schéfer's train of thought be pursued with scholars like Daniel Roche and Matthew Craske, among the few able to look at Moreau's project with a new perspective.¹⁰

Roche and Craske exploit the differences between Moreau's twelve earliest images and his later ones, even though their analyses and conclusions are quite different.¹¹ Roche refers to the change that occurs over time in tone and orienta-

tion. The *Monument* began, he writes, as a "deluxe album portraying the practices, furnishings & clothes in vogue in high society" until it finally, in its last incarnation in 1789, became the history of manners.¹² Although he does not explore fully this transformation, he makes implicit in his discussion that Restif receives the credit for this transformation since it is his text that is added to and controls the way we view the *Monument* today. Roche ends his analysis just short of examining Moreau's personal involvement in the *Monument*.

Craske discusses the *Monument* as a single project, each phase planned from the beginning. More significantly, however, is his assertion that the *Monument* of 1789 records a life of "inexhaustible leisure" and excuses "an unambiguously aristocratic set of values and a certain permissive moral code;" he chastises Moreau for not being more critical of the aristocratic class he depicts.¹³ In this, Craske is imposing historical hindsight on the project by saying, in essence, that in 1789 when "Moreau" did these images, he supported a lifestyle already *passé* because of its corrupt nature. By 1789, the engravings Craske cites as his examples were already thirteen years old and, moreover, were from Moreau's earlier suite. Moreau's support of the Revolution and his membership in various reform organizations is well-documented and should be used as another tool to impose meaning on the depictions. The diverse images that span thirteen critical years require an individualized approach. The scenes from 1776 read like a manual of behavior for an aristocratic class, emphasizing as they do family matters; the images from 1783, the *Troisième suite*, are far less unified—some seem to be neutral with regard to aristocratic behavior while others appear critical of it. Several of the images from this *Troisième suite* deal with the leisure

⁵ René Colas. *Bibliographie general du costume et de la mode: Description des suites, recueils, series, revues et livres français et étrangers relatifs au costume civil, militaire et religieux, aux modes, aux coiffures et aux divers accessoires de l'habillement, avec une table méthodique et un index alphabetique* (Paris: R. Colas, 1933).

⁶ Henri Draibel, *L'Œuvre de Moreau le Jeune, Notice et Catalogue* (Paris: Chez P. Rouquette Libraire, 1874). Adrien Moureau, *Les Moreau* (Paris: Librairie de l'Art, 1893); Edmund and Jules de Goncourt, *L'Art du dix-huitième siècle* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1860) 66.

⁷ Jean Adhémar, *Graphic Art of the Eighteenth Century* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1964) 163-64. Adhémar says the subject matter is *vertueuse* rather than *galante* (frivolous and involving the game of love). The Swedish engraver working in France, Nicolas Lafrensen 1737-1807 (Lavreince) for instance is an engraver of *galante* subjects. Adhémar writes that this game of love was not for everybody but rather it was reserved for "a section of the nobility, the roués, and a section of the bourgeoisie." Others, she writes, like *fermiers généraux* (tax collectors), merchants, and members of the legal profession, preferred sentimental subjects.

⁸ Gaston Schéfer, *Moreau le Jeune* (Paris: Goupil & cie, 1915) 56.

⁹ Eberts, in his introduction to the *Suite* of 1777, writes of concerns beyond mere attention to the fashionable: "we wish to show in our series the yearly progress of taste in clothing and furniture to provide that elegance can be separated from ridicule, that one can have a nice figure without having to purchase it with the health and life of the next generation."

¹⁰ Scholars like A. Hyatt Mayor and Arthur Mayger Hind tend to reduce these works by Moreau to an artifact of the Ancien Régime, categorizing them as authentic depictions of fashions, furnishings and manners. See A. Hyatt Mayor's "Le Monument du Costume," *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* May 28 (1933): 87-88 and *Prints and People: A Social History of Printed Pictures* (New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1971) n.p. Arthur Mayger Hind, the late Keeper of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum singles out Moreau for his "delicate talent" his "eye for the small superficialities of society" and thus reduces the artist to a light and airy decorator able to capture prettily "both letter and spirit of the life of the period" in Arthur Mayger Hind, *A History of Engraving & Etching from the 15th Century to the Year 1914: Being the Third and Fully Revised Edition of "A Short History of Engraving and Etching."* (New York: Dover Publications, 1963) 213, 217; Gordon N. Ray. *The Art of the French Illustrated Book 1700-1914*, vol. 1 (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1982) 97-101. While Ray is more thorough in his discussion of Moreau, emphasizing the artist's great ability to characterize the pattern of social life under Louis XVI, he still deems the *Monument* Moreau's view of reality.

¹¹ Daniel Roche, *The Culture of Clothing: Dress and Fashion in the Ancien Régime*, trans. Jean Birrell. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994); Matthew Craske, *Art in Europe 1700-1830* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997).

¹² Roche 15-16. Although the progression of the *Monument* will be discussed below, I am mainly concerned with the three major suites of 1776/7, 1783, and 1789.

¹³ Craske 156-47.

activities of a young man of the aristocracy and appear to be rather benign in content (Figure 1). In others, however, Moreau depicts the duplicitous nature of aristocratic romance in the Ancien Régime (Figures 2 and 3). Surprisingly, and as if to reinforce his growing critical view of this privileged class, Moreau includes at the end of the *Troisième suite* a scene of the rural bourgeoisie that focuses on the pure happiness they experience in their homey family-oriented life far removed from the sophisticated and materialistic court life (Figure 4). Craske neglects to mention that there is no documentation implicating Moreau's first-hand involvement in the 1789 *Monument*, which was published not in France but in Germany with the images created by Moreau dating no later than 1783. Craske's assertion that "far from retrenching and denouncing the suavity of false graces and theatrical affectations the prints celebrated such values with unprecedented panache" is not supported by the publication history of the project and artistic evolution of the artist. Moreover, if we look at the *Monument* as a fair measure of Moreau's works from this period, then we are summarily dismissing his contemporaneous engravings in the neoclassical style, a style that became especially influential for him after his trip to Italy in 1785.¹⁴

To deepen our understanding of the evolution of the series from 1776 to 1789, it is important to outline clearly the various phases of publication. Initially, Moreau self-published the *Suite d'estampes pour servir à l'histoire des mœurs et du costume des Français dans le dix-huitième siècle* in 1776—twelve engravings with brief verses beneath each image.¹⁵ This series is sometimes referred to as the second suite because it is nominally a continuation of the first twelve images by the Berne engraver Sigismond Freudeberg (Eberts sponsored these, too), although they are the first suite in which Moreau is involved.¹⁶ Freudeberg's engravings follow in chronological sequence the activities of the *elegante* during one imaginary day from her early morning rising to her bedtime ritual. Other than the appropriate chronology of the scenes, the women depicted are variously named so there is no cohesive narrative. The subject of the scenes is more clichéd than the Moreau images of the following year; Freudeberg presents, for example, the toilette, the scene in the bath, the duplicitous lover, and the masked ball. Moreau's dozen images that follow Freudeberg's focus on the life of an *elegante* named Céphise,

from the announcement of her pregnancy to her role as mother and then her re-entry into court society (Figures 5 and 6). The scenes are entitled: *La Déclaration de la grossesse* – 1776; *Les Précautions* – 1776; *J'en accepte l'heureux présage* – 1776; *N'Ayez pas peur ma bonne amie* – 1776; *C'est un fils, Monsieur!* – 1776; *Les petits Parains* – 1777; *Les Délices de la maternité* – 1777; *L'Accord parfait* – 1777; *Le Rendez-vous pour Marly* – 1777; *Les Adieux La Rencontre au Bois de Boulogne* – 1777; and *La Dame du Palais de la Reine* – 1777.

It is impossible to know if the verses preceded the scenes or if the scenes preceded the verses; whatever the case, they are not used in the "official" version of the suite published in 1777 by Eberts. The verses concern Céphise, our *elegante*, whose classicizing name evokes a beautiful butterfly. Moreau must have known Rameau's pastoral héroïque *Acanthe et Céphise* as well.¹⁷ In tone, the verses are sweet and innocent, reminding the married couple gently of their responsibilities while assuring them they will be good parents. The verses complement the scenes; they remind Céphise that pregnancy is a natural state, not one to be feared. Her family, friends and household staff form a protective circle around her as she prepares for this event. Her husband has even given up his irresponsible ways as he awaits the child. After the birth of the cherished son, Céphise blossoms as a natural mother with a "maternal heart." She is a natural wife as well, for Moreau emphasizes the loving relationship between Céphise and her husband. Finally, when the outside world calls once more, good Céphise re-enters aristocratic society, able to resist its temptations.

The "official" publication of 1777 just a year later and with the sponsorship of Eberts, is not very different from Moreau's self-published version.¹⁸ Besides the decision to exclude the verses, the most notable difference is the introductory essay by Eberts at the end of which is his straightforward description of each scene and an acknowledgment of the print privilege, a kind of copyright valid for six years.¹⁹ In the final paragraphs of the introductory essay, Eberts mentions a proposed third suite (still counting Sigmond Freudeberg's as the first) that will center on the activities of a *petit-maître*, a social type with artificial values and behaviors. The execution of this *Troisième suite* was evidently "delayed" and initially it may not have had a text or commentary.²⁰

The titles, with its images designed by Moreau, are listed

¹⁴ For but one example of his works from this period, see his engravings for *Figures de l'histoire de France* (Paris) 1785-1790. See also the discussion of Gordon N. Ray, *The Art of the French Illustrated Book 1700-1914* (New York: Pierpont Morgan Library, 1986) 96-97.

¹⁵ No author is credited for the verses.

¹⁶ Bertrand 396-7 lists a pre-publication version of the Freudeberg's first suite: *Suite d'estampes pour servir à l'histoire des mœurs et du costume des Français dans le dix-huitième siècle* published in Paris in 1774 and without text. The next year Eberts sponsored the *Suite d'estampes pour servir à l'histoire des mœurs et du costume des Français dans le dix-huitième siècle* published by Prault with designs, in my view, by both Freudeberg and Eberts.

¹⁷ Written in 1751 to commemorate the birth of Louis XV's grandson the Duke of Burgundy, the story concerns Acante and Céphise, young lovers thwarted by a nasty Genius but reconciled by a good fairy. It was performed for the first time in 1751 at Versailles.

¹⁸ Images from the earlier version are reversed and smaller.

¹⁹ Valentine Weiss, Conservateur, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Manuscrits, letter to the author, 29 December 2000. There are different levels of privilege; Eberts' applied for and received his for a six-year period beginning in 1777.

²⁰ Scholarly opinion differs on the inclusion of a text. This disagreement over something seemingly straightforward highlights one of the difficulties of

as follows with secondary titles following in parentheses: *Le petit Lever de l'homme de cour (Le Lever)* – 1781; *La toilette (La petite Toilette)* – undated; *L'Homme d'état allant à la messe (La grande Toilette)* – undated; *La Course des chevaux* – undated; *Le Pari gagné* – undated; *La Partie de whist (La Soirée au chateau)* – 1783; *La Déclaration (Oui ou non)* – 1781; *La Loge de l'opéra* – undated; *La Mariage (La Sortie de l'opéra)* – undated; *Le petit Souper (Le Souper fin)* – 1781; *On Demande en mariage de la fille du fermier (Le Seigneur chez son fermier)* – 1783; *Le Vrai bonheur* – 1778, 1782.²¹ The final two images are rural scenes, the lord of the manor greeting his tenants and the last, a happy family gathered together in their humble house in the countryside. These final two works may have anticipated, in fact, a fourth suite.²² Rarely is this 1783 series found outside the context of the 1789 grande folio *Monument du Costume*. The images were conceived between 1777 and 1783, although a few are undated.²³ The print privilège taken out by Eberts in 1777 and good for six years would have run out in 1783. It is important to note that no new images for the fashion series by Moreau appear after 1783. This means that all the scenes included in the *Monument* of 1789 were designed and published by 1783.

A mere three years after the *Troisième suite*, Restif de la Bretonne becomes involved with the project. With the sponsorship of Eberts, Restif added a text to the union of Freudeberg's first suite of engravings of 1776 and Moreau's first dozen engravings of 1776 and entitled this *Tableaux de la bonne compagnie ou traits caractéristiques, anecdotes secrètes, politiques, morales, littéraires, recueillies dans les sociétés du bon ton pendant les années 1786 et 1787*.²⁴ Published in Neuwied sur Rhin in 1786 and Paris in 1787, Restif, or whoever wrote the text (there is some argument over attribution) uses the illustrations to engage in lengthy anecdotal discussions of a social and political nature.²⁵ Typically, Restif's writing relies on a foundation of the embellished "real" incident and here the author uses Moreau's images as a springboard for his imagination.²⁶

working with any print series: individual prints may be combined and recombined by the collector and reissued later in various editions. Images and text may be added or subtracted from the series. It emphasizes, I think, that in the case of Moreau, the best way of determining his intentions is by looking closely at especially his first series of 1776 and then his next series of 1783.

²¹ I record these exactly as they are listed in the *Troisième suite* of the Reserve Room in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris.

²² Bertrand 390.

²³ The conception of *Le Vrai bonheur* is 1778 but it was not engraved until 1782. Drawings for a few other images, dated 1777 and 1778, exist and are in the Département des Arts Graphiques, Collection Edmond Rothschild of the Musée du Louvre.

²⁴ All the images, those by Moreau and those by Freudeberg, are reversed. Restif also includes the verses of Moreau, not published since 1776. There are also chapters of text with no accompanying engravings.

In the essay that accompanies *Les Adieux* (Figure 7) for instance, the author gives the principal figures complex lives and discusses events that occurred well before they arrived at the theatre. The essay is written in the first person, with the narrator as the gallant gentleman kissing Madame's hand. With enthusiasm he recounts for the reader the story Madame told him of a sexual conquest she heard involving a young virginal girl, her father, soldiers stationed in the town, and a wager. The essay soon degenerates into a gossipy exchange of information among the attendees, most of whom are not in Moreau's scene.²⁷ It is not known why Eberts chose Restif to complement the engravings with a text. While there is no documented personal relationship between the two men, possibly their social circles overlapped.

Finally in 1789 the *grande folio*, the *Monument du Costume physique et moral de la fin du dix-huitième siècle ou Tableaux de la vie* is published in Neuwied sur Rhin, a compilation of Moreau's (Second) *Suite d'estampes* of 1777, the *Troisième suite* of 1783, and two scenes by Sigismund Freudeberg. The *Monument* included a new text for each scene written by Restif who emphasized the voyeuristic and erotic interests we associate with that writer.²⁸

In its final incarnation, while elements of the separate suites that form the *Monument* are fairly cohesive, the project as a whole lacks unity. The two images by Freudeberg seem only tangentially related to the whole while the last two scenes of the *Monument* by Moreau focus on a different social class entirely.

Most of the engravings from Moreau's *œuvre* are illustrations for pre-existing texts. In this sense they are not expressions of his personal point of view. The *Suite d'estampes* and the *Troisième suite* are exceptions: here Moreau is not bound by the constraints of a pre-existing document. We should, then, look to his biography and the interests of his patron to find meaning in these fashion narratives.

Moreau, like his patron Eberts, straddled the social classes. Although Moreau was printmaker to the king, his patrons came

²⁵ James Rives-Child in *Restif de la Bretonne, Termoignages et jugements, bibliographie* (Paris: Librairie Briffaut, 1949) 312, disputes the attribution to Restif while Colette Bertrand strongly rules out Restif's involvement in the *Tableaux de la bonne compagnie*. See Bertrand's "Les Monuments du costume de Rétif de La Bretonne, XVIII^e siècle." *Revue de la Société française du XVIII^e* 15 (1983): 389-402.

²⁶ Charles A. Porter. *Restif's Novels, or An Autobiography in Search of an Author* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1967).

²⁷ I have used versions in the Beinicke Rare Book Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut and the Morgan Rare Book Library, New York City.

²⁸ See works such as *Famille vertueuse*, *Les Contemporaines*, and *Année des dames nationales*. Roche in *The Culture of Clothing*, 16, characterizes this as "the presentation of types of behavior, the importance of social markers, unease at the confusion of ranks and the definition of a vision revealing norms and habits in ways of dressing. It is at the same time a repertoire of ways of acting, an education in manners, a catalogue of symbolic practices and a reflection of Rétif's social seductions and obsessions."

from a broad social spectrum. Relatively little is known of his life. He was born in modest circumstances, the son of a wigmaker and brother to the future painter Louis-Gabriel (1739-1805). In 1765 Moreau married the granddaughter of Pierre Prault, patriarch of a family of publishers with royal privilege.²⁹ By marrying a Prault, Moreau became a member of this well-respected family of Parisian book publishers; this undoubtedly helped his career. His daughter Fanny, born in 1770, would marry Carle Vernet, son of Joseph, the founder of a dynasty of artists. It is Fanny who will write the only contemporary biography of her father, an elegiac and selective essay written four years after his death during the restoration to the throne of the Bourbon monarch Louis XVIII.³⁰

Moreau may have met his future patron Jean-Henri Eberts when the artist, at some point in the 1760s, became an assistant to the engraver Jean-Georges Wille, director of one of the most important print workshops in Paris in the second half of the eighteenth century. Wille writes of his own warm relationship with the banker from Strasbourg in his *Journal*, a work replete with insights into the period.³¹ It was also at Wille's studio that Moreau received first-hand exposure to the work of Greuze, an artist whose work inspired at least the final engraving, *Le Vrai bonheur*, from the *Troisième suite*.³²

The 1770s began for Moreau a decade of professional accomplishments. His position as of 1770 as the Dessinateur des menus-plaisirs thrust him into the political life of Paris in an active way. While for many Parisians civic life formed merely a backdrop in daily lives based on work and family as primary concerns, for Moreau or any Parisian whose livelihood depended even slightly on court patronage, shifting politics and the changes in traditional institutions remained in the foreground. Moreover in 1774 just two years before Moreau began the *Suite d'estampes*, Louis XVI (1754-1793), grandson of Louis XV, ascended to the throne after the death of his father and older brother.

Moreau worked not only for the court. He was, in fact, patronized by a varied clientele and in 1776, he received the

commission from Eberts for the series of narrative fashion plates, the *Seconde suite d'estampes pour servir à l'histoire des modes et du costume en France, dans le dix-huitième siècle* published in Paris in 1776 by Prault and later incorporated into the *Monument du Costume*.³³

From 1774-1783, at the exact time Moreau was creating his first *Suite d'estampes*, he produced the engravings for the *Œuvres Complètes* of Rousseau. Thus at the same time that Moreau was familiarizing himself with Rousseau's ideas on children, family and motherhood, he was designing his images for the *Suite d'estampes*. Even a cursory examination of the *Suite* reveals an emphasis on the nuclear family, albeit aristocratic, so in tune with Rousseau's ideas that the husband and wife depicted support certain child-rearing practices like freeing the infant from swaddling, promoting nursing mothers, and focusing on marriages based on love matches (Figure 8). Far from the heavy-handedness of some of his contemporaries, Moreau's polite and gentle approach promoting a loving nuclear family, as revealed in his verses as well as his images, was inoffensive enough to please a diverse audience. Progressive ideas including those by Rousseau that focused on new concepts of marriage and child rearing made inroads into the more literate segments of society.

Also in 1776, Jean-Jacques de La Lande, the astronomer, founded La Loge des Neuf Soeurs or Lodge of the Nine Muses.³⁴ The lodge took its name from the classical goddesses of the arts and sciences and soon became the most famous Freemason lodge in Paris. Moreau's name appears in the official roster of 1778 but he may have belonged earlier.³⁵ André Chastel emphasizes the lodge as a forum for the exploration of progressive and humanitarian ideas.³⁶ While we cannot say definitively how belonging to the lodge changed Moreau's ideas, being a part of this fellowship undoubtedly exposed him to a variety of opinions on contemporary issues. His openness to an exchange of ideas both intellectual and progressive counters the accepted view of him as one who promoted reflexively the social structure of the Ancien Régime in his fash-

²⁹ Françoise-Nicole Pineau, daughter of Dominique Pineau decorator and master sculptor and the late Jeanne-Marie Prault, who was granddaughter of Pierre Prault, patriarch of the publishing family. Françoise-Nicole's three uncles, of Laurent-François, Pierre-Henry, and Laurent, were part of the publishing house as well.

³⁰ Fanny Vernet, "Notice historique sur Jean-Michel Moreau, 20 octobre 1818," *Archives de l'art français*, 1 (1851-51): 183-190.

³¹ J.-G. Wille. *Mémoires et journal de J. G. Wille, graveur du roi*, ed. Georges Duplessis (Paris, 1857).

³² Wille and the engraver Pierre-Charles Ingouf (1746-1800) assisted by Moreau produced an engraving of Jean-Baptiste Greuze's *Household Peace* based on a drawing from 1766 whose subject relied heavily on the ideas of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. For a more detailed discussion see Richard Rand, *Intimate Encounters: Love and Domesticity in Eighteenth-Century France* (Princeton: Princeton UP 1997) 77.

³³ For instance, he engraved in 1770 the scenes of the festivities surrounding the marriage of the dauphin to Marie Antoinette. Moreau also produced a

number of portraits for a varied clientele. In 1773 he began illustrating the complete works of Molière and in 1774 he designed and engraved images for Jean-Jacques Rousseau's twelve volume project that he worked on until 1783, the same years as the *Suite d'estampes* and the *Troisième suite*. In 1775 he engraved images for *Les Saisons* written in 1769 by Jean-François Saint Lambert (1716-1803). A first suite of twelve images sponsored by Eberts and engraved by Sigismond Freudeberg had already been published in Paris by Barbou in 1774/75.

³⁴ *Chronicle of the French Revolution 1788-99*, ed. Jean Favier (London: Chronicle Communications Ltd., 1989) 54.

³⁵ Charles Porset, ed., *Une Loge maçonnique d'avant 1789: Les Neuf Soeurs* by Louis Amiable (1897; Paris: Edimaf, 1989).

³⁶ André Chastel, *French Art in the Ancien Régime 1620-1775*, trans. Deke Dusinberre (Paris: Flammarion, 1996) 258. Chastel mentions other members of the lodge, including members of the Vernet family, the painters Hubert Robert and Jean-Baptiste Greuze, the sculptor Jean-Anton Houdon, and intellectuals like Jean le Rond d'Alembert. Benjamin Franklin became a "Worshipful Master" during his trip to Paris in the 1770s.

ion narratives. The decade of the 1770s, in fact, appear to be a time of intellectual growth for the artist as he was exposed not only to the progressive ideas of Rousseau but to the challenging issues dealt with by Lodge members.

Moreau belonged to other societies that promoted change. He joined and served as president of the Société Académique des Enfants d'Apollon or the Apollonian Society founded in 1741.³⁷ Moreau also joined the idealistic-sounding Rite of the Philalethes or Seekers of Truth, a group whose membership overlapped with the masons and Apollonian society.

From 1776 through the 1780s Moreau exemplified the professional artist.³⁸ In 1780 his election to the French Academy as *agrée* or probationer meant he was eligible to be a full Académicien.³⁹ He “triumphed” at the Salons of the early 1780s and besides regularly exhibiting there, he completed several important projects like the new edition of Voltaire in 1789.⁴⁰

In 1785, he spent six months in Italy and in Rome saw the works of Jacques-Louis David. His exposure to Neoclassicism, however, goes as far back as his association with his first teacher and mentor, the neoclassical painter Joseph Le Lorrain in 1758.

I would suggest that the *Monument du Costume* of 1789, a compilation of engravings most of which were originally published in 1776 and 1783, be considered apart from Moreau's earlier fashion narratives. In the *Monument*, we find the active involvement of Restif de la Bretonne but no indication of Moreau's participation. The *Suite d'estampes* of 1776/7 urges

an aristocratic class to practice the progressive child-rearing theories of Rousseau. The *Troisième Suite* of 1783 is not really a narrative at all but rather primarily a group of depictions of the leisure activities of a *nobleman*: of his levée, his toilette, and his equestrian activities along with various seemingly unrelated scenes of a more flirtatious nature. The *Troisième suite* ends abruptly with depiction far more representative of Rousseau than any other work by the artist: a visit to the farmhouse of a large and loving family. Moreau includes no explanatory text, save for his verses of 1776, with any of these various projects. It is likely that Restif's involvement, first in 1786/7 when he adds a lengthy text to Moreau's (and Freudeberg's) earliest suite and then when he adds a text to the collected twenty-four images of the artist, occurred without the participation of Moreau. Therefore, the *Monument* cannot be taken as exemplifying Moreau's unexamined promotion of aristocratic values under the Ancien Régime. Nor can the *Monument* be used as an example of Moreau's political ideology as it was in 1789. As most scholars note but do not apply to an understanding of his images, Moreau was an ardent supporter of the Revolution. To evaluate these pictures of his, so idealistic in 1776, so much more difficult to quantify in 1783, as a unified whole reflecting his support of the social mores of the aristocrats during the Ancien Régime both ignores Moreau's life and assumes the *Monument* is the culmination of this series rather than a work apart.

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³⁷ For further discussion of this organization see Schéfer 72, who notes when Moreau joined the organization, it had dedicated itself to encouraging the progress of the sciences, of arts and of commerce by offering facilities for scientists and teaching classes, making a substantive contribution to free education while at the same time it lobbied for the reform of penal laws. There is an engraved portrait of Moreau in profile from the 1780s that carries the title “Société Acad. des Enfants d'Apollon.”

³⁸ Besides the *Suite d'estampes* of 1776/7 and the *Troisième suite* of 1783, other works include *Le Couronnement de Voltaire à la Comédie française* in 1778 and the *Serment de Louis XVI à son sacre* in 1779 and his designs for the theatre. In 1781 he began contributions to the new edition of Voltaire in 1781, the Kehl version, which he completed in 1789. In 1782 he depicted events celebrating the birth of the ill-fated dauphin.

³⁹ Membership in the Académie was de rigueur for artists, since one of the privileges of membership was the inclusion in the Salon, an exhibition held in the Louvre usually every other year from 1737. For an excellent discussion of the Académie and of the process in general, see the chapter entitled “The Artist's World” 11-34 in Philip Conisbee, *Painting in Eighteenth Century France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1981).

⁴⁰ He triumphed personally as well. During this period Moreau's daughter Fanny married the painter Antoine Charles Horace (Carle) Vernet (1758-1836), son of the painter Claude-Joseph Vernet (1714-1789). Their son became the respected painter Antoine Charles Joseph (Horace) Vernet (1789-1863). Fanny and Carle's daughter Camille married the painter Hippolyte Lecomte (1781-1857); their son, Charles Émile Hippolyte Lecomte Vernet (1821-1900) became a figure painter of fashionable orientalist subjects.



Figure 1. *La Course de chevaux*, Jean-Michel Moreau inventor, H. Guttenberg engraver, engraving, undated, Private Collection.



[above left] Figure 2. *La Loge de l'opéra (La Petite Loge)*, Jean-Michel Moreau inventor, Patas engraver, engraving, undated, Private Collection.

[above right] Figure 3. *La Sortie de l'opéra*, Jean-Michel Moreau inventor, Malebeste (Malbeste) engraver, engraving, undated, Private Collection.

[right] Figure 4. *Le Vrai bonheur*, Jean-Michel Moreau inventor 1778, J.B. Simonet engraver, engraving, 1782, Private Collection.





Figure 5. *La Declaration de la grossesse*, Jean-Michel Moreau inventor, P.A. Martini engraver, engraving, 1776, Private Collection.



Figure 6. *La Dame du Palais de la Reine*, Jean-Michel Moreau inventor, P.A. Martini engraver, engraving, 1777, Private Collection.



Figure 7. *Les Adieux*, Jean-Michel Moreau inventor, de Launay le Jeune engraver, engraving, 1777, Private Collection.



Figure 8. *Les Délices de la maternité*, Jean-Michel Moreau le Jeune inventor and Helman engraver, engraving, 1777, Private Collection.