Ancients versus Moderns? The Politics of Political Economy in France From Rousseau to Constant

Richard Whatmore

The limits of the received story

> 'Until Smith's work, the study of politics, properly speaking the science of government, had been confounded with political economy, which shows how wealth is created, distributed and consumed. This confusion stems perhaps solely from the unfortunate title given to researches of this kind…[in consequence] the demand has been made that political economy concern itself with all of the laws that regulate the domestic life of the political family.'[1]

Jean-Baptiste Say's judgement can be seen to problematize the title of this essay: Say appeared to be turning his back on the politics of political economy. According to Say, political economy needed to be restricted to the empirically certain science of wealth; this, he said, was Adam Smith's achievement in the *Wealth of Nations.* Wealth was 'independent of forms of government.' A state could be prosperous, regardless of who governed it, 'if it is well administered'. Looking backwards from 1803, Say held Jean-Jacques Rousseau, along with François Quesnay's sect of 'économistes' or physiocrats, responsible for impeding the progress of political economy as a science. His rise to prominence during the Restoration did not alter this view.[2] Despite numerous changes made to Say's *Traité*, it was repeated in the editions of 1814, 1817, and 1826. When he published what he believed to be his magnum opus in 1828-9, the *Cours complet d'économie politique pratique*, he included an essay on the historical progress of political economy. This also condemned Rousseau's continuing

influence, but happily concluded 'there no longer remains a single partisan of Quesnay's doctrine'.[3]

Until his death in 1832 Say remained dogmatic in his hostility to any political economy that failed to respect the boundaries he was certain that Smith had erected. Even English disciples of Smith were considered to be at fault on this matter, as Say made clear in his *Lettres à Malthus* (1820). At first glance Say appeared to be echoing the view of David Hume and Smith that absolute monarchies were as capable of fostering commerce as mixed monarchies or republics. This explains Bonaparte's initial hope that the *Traité d'économie politique* might justify the Napoleonic regime.[4] On meeting the Emperor, Say made it clear that his intentions were altogether different. The resulting assumption has always been that only liberal politics were compatible with Say's political economy. The argument of this essay is that what Say meant was more contentious, with significant consequences for our view of political economy at this time and its relationship with politics, morals, and religion.

The majority of historians have associated Say's work with the defense of a laissez-faire approach to markets in the context of legally entrenched civil liberties and limited government by representatives of the people.[5] Benjamin Constant was the source of this view. In writings between 1814 and 1820, quickly recognized to be definitive in the formation of French liberalism, Constant developed a perspective that was, on the surface, identical to Say's. Both argued that the post-revolutionary context made it imperative to couple plans for reform with a critique of historical writers who had misdirected French legislators in the past. For each writer, Rousseau was especially to be disparaged for causing France to decline economically. According to Constant, he had led the revolutionaries back to the politics of classical republicanism rather than accepting the necessity of embracing commercial society.[6] In Constant's opinion, France needed a new era of limited government along the lines of a reformed British Constitution to repair the damage of the 1790s.[7]

Commerce would then follow what Smith had famously called ‘the Natural Progress of Opulence’. As Constant put it in his lecture to the *Athénée Royale* at Paris in 1819, ‘Commerce has brought nations closer, it has given them customs and habits which are almost identical. The heads of states may be enemies: the peoples are compatriots.’[8] If politics and political economy were separated, and civil liberty recognized to be the most important political value, a new era of peaceful economic progress would begin.[9]

Constant successfully constructed a taxonomy of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ political economy, founded on a distinction between advocates and enemies of commerce. The former were necessarily liberals, moderns, and scientists. Opponents of commerce were republicans, socialists, utopians, and ancients. As political economy came to be seen as a distinct and intellectually successful science, ‘whig’ histories were written which ascribed the progress of liberal political economy to its ‘scientific character’.[10] Smith was more often than not described as the founder of the subject, although some French histories began to pursue a more nationalistic line, emphasizing Smith’s debt to the physiocrats in general and Turgot in particular. But the view that a distinctly liberal politics ought to accompany political economy dominated the historiography of the subject in France from the 1840s.[11] The view that the rise of political economy paralleled the triumph of reason over reactionary philosophies has directed most of the writings of twentieth-century historians of the subject.[12]

The aim of this essay is to challenge the orthodox story. Historians have underestimated the extent to which political economy was an insecure and divided discipline in the early nineteenth century, because of uncertainty about the consequences of Europe’s turbulent recent past. The revolutionary attempt to transform a civilized monarchy into a commercial republic shattered assumptions about the relationship between the political and the economic. A state was created in France in 1789 dedicated to increasing commerce, yet founded on the sovereignty of a nation lacking hierarchical ranks and a recognizable religious

establishment. Hitherto such conceptions of political rule and civil life had been associated with small states, such as the Swiss commercial republics, or uniquely fortunate conditions, such as the surplus of land enjoyed by the North American federal republic. Although the revolutionary state in France failed to maintain itself against internal assaults on its legitimacy, it successfully defeated a combined force of most of Europe's monarchies. In doing so it underlined the serious threat it posed to monarchical and aristocratic conceptions of sovereignty, and accordingly the accepted moral and social order. The question for the Napoleonic generation was how far the Empire or Restored Monarchy had vanquished commercial republicanism, or whether a form of republic could be found which coupled external militarily supremacy with internal order. Political economists disputed the meaning of the republican legacy. Advocates of free markets were divided over the fit between republican politics and commercial society; the particular position they adopted shaped what they meant by the liberty of trade.

Explaining how ideas about creating a stable republic influenced ideas about commerce and markets requires a reversal of the traditional lineage of eighteenth-century thinkers and their ideologies. In addition, a neglected distinction has to be reintroduced into historical analysis of this period: a distinction between 'modern republicans' and 'democratic republicans'. The choice of these terms is somewhat imprecise because of the difference between what is today meant by democracy and the altogether different definition adopted by eighteenth and early nineteenth-century writers. A more accurate wording would be to employ the distinction made famous by Machiavelli, between the 'governo largo', or broad-based government, and the narrow or aristocratic 'governo stretto'. The 'governo largo' entailed neither popular sovereignty nor government by the people in the classic Athenian sense. Rather, following Aristotle, it combined a society of different orders of citizens with governance by the distinguished, who nevertheless accepted the legal equality of all members

of the polity. For the sake of simplicity, but with their limitations in mind, this paper will use the terms 'modern republican' and 'democratic republican'. Put schematically, the paper will argue that Constant was a modern republican in a sense defined by Rousseau. Both of these thinkers advocated a republic in the sense of a state committed to defending equally the interests of all its members. But they were also fearful of the extremism that they expected to accompany popular rule. Democracy in government, in the participatory sense, had to be curtailed. At the same time neither thinker had any faith in kings, aristocrats, or merchants ruling in the place of the people. It was, therefore, necessary to create a source of authority that stood above all of the disparate elements of society. Rousseau, in the *Contrat social,* called this authority the state or sovereign. Constant called it the *système représentatif*. In envisaging a republic in which sovereignty was held by an artificially created abstract being, they were depriving the people of political agency. Rousseau and Constant shared a skepticism about the capacity of human beings to act benevolently towards one another. For Constant, social hierarchy was essential to maintain public order. For each thinker, constitutional mechanisms were also vital. In the small state where political authority could be exercised legitimately, Rousseau argued that the state would assert itself by replacing governments that infringed popular liberty or failed to protect the citizens. By contrast, Constant held that political authority could be legitimately exercised in large commercial states, if the government represented the people in a carefully defined manner. Like the abbé Emmanuel Sieyès, Constant believed that politics ought to be conducted by experts, being analogous to the division of labour in the economic realm.

Say, alongside nearly all of his contemporaries, opposed democracy as a form of government; but he was a democratic republican because he believed that the *demos* or people had to be political agents in making law and in governing the economy. Say was not a modern republican because he believed that the people must ultimately rule themselves. He

had more faith than Constant in the human capacity to be peacefully sociable. Creating political structures in government that were divorced from the people was, Say argued, politically deadly. By 'people' he meant the middle classes involved in the production of wealth, who could therefore be trusted because of their interest in public order. But he wanted as many individuals as possible, and ultimately every member of society, to be a productive agent. Say associated Constant's modern republicanism with Bonaparte's Empire and Britain's mixed monarchy. As Pierre-Samuel Dupont de Nemours recognized a letter of 1815, Say remained a physiocrat in important respects despite his public castigation of physiocratic doctrine.[13] The physiocrats had argued that it was possible to educate people to behave rationally in political and economic life, by enlightening them about their self-interest and thereby calming the more socially dangerous natural passions. For Say, political economy had to do exactly this, and from a long-term perspective teach the people self-government.

Constant was wrong to see the political economy of his day as simply for or against commerce and the market. Ideas about markets that were superficially similar became very different when combined with the distinct moral and political philosophies of modern republicanism as opposed to democratic republicanism. The essay begins by explaining what political economy meant to its readers in the eighteenth century. It follows work on Britain, the German states, and France, which has revealed the complicated relationship between political economy and ideas about forms of government, national defense, religion, and moral philosophy.[14] By focusing on the work of Rousseau and the physiocrats, the essay shows the extent to which political economy developed from controversies within Christian theology and the related issue of how to maintain peace in a world of competitive nation states. The essay then turns to the distinctive political economy of the revolutionary years in order to show the mistake historians have made in assuming continuity between the French

Enlightenment and the Revolution. Rather than accepting the common verdict that the 1790s were characterized by utopian classical republicanism and Jacobin terrorism, it is argued that the revolutionaries were intellectual innovators in political economy, largely because of their interest in large-state republican politics. Having established an ideological context in place of the accepted framework, the essay concludes by re-examining Say and Constant's vehement disagreement about politics and political economy, putting to rest the ideological fraternity presumed by generations of commentators.

The meaning of political economy before the Revolution

Writing in exile after the failed Genevan revolution of 1782, François D'Ivernois recalled the excitement generated by a celebrated compatriot's return in 1761:

> J.-J. Rousseau was come to Geneva to return to the protestant communion, from whence he had strayed through the folly of youthful days spent in romantic wandering. He studied in the constitution of his country those great principles of political economy, that he soon after displayed, and which encreased that celebrity so much lamented by him towards the close of his life.[15]

The principles of political economy 'soon after displayed' was a reference to the *Contrat social*, published on 15 May 1762. For D'Ivernois, what Rousseau called 'Économie politique' in his 1755 *Encyclopédie* article, 'the principles of political right' in the *Contrat social*, and 'that great and useless science' in *Emile*, made political economy the study of the survival, stability, and legitimacy of political societies, and especially small states such as their own Geneva. For the physiocrats too political economy had to be concerned with these issues if it was to be practically useful. The title of the collection of writings, edited by Pierre-Samuel Dupont de Nemours in 1767, makes this abundantly clear: *Physiocratie, ou*

constitution naturelle du gouvernement le plus avantageux au genre humain (1767). D'Ivernois's comment also underlines the extent to which political economy could not be divorced from religion. If Rousseau's political economy was, as D'Ivernois said, a panegyric on the Genevan constitution, this made it a defence of Calvinism to be contrasted with his earlier Catholicism ('the folly of youthful days spent in romantic wandering'). In fact, as Rousseau and the physiocrats acknowledged, they perceived their work to be theodicies: concerned with reconciling the existence of a just, all-seeing, and all-powerful God with the ubiquity of evil. In the eighteenth-century context, exploring the possibility of moral action in a world marred by the Fall meant treating nation states like individuals: individuals equally subject to the corrosive passions.[16]

The association of political economy with this perspective on politics, and specifically with forms of government, would have been accepted as natural by contemporaries. The term political economy, and its synonym 'political arithmetic', had become popular with the intensification of competition between large monarchies in early modern Europe.[17] This was especially the case with respect to commerce, because commerce was widely recognized as the possible basis of a spectacular increase in national military power. Political economy, therefore, focused on the nature and characteristics of large commercial monarchies, and the manner by which their establishment affected the traditional survival strategies of smaller monarchies and republics. Writers such as Antoyne de Montchrétien, author of the *Traicté de l'œconomie politique* (1615), stated explicitly that political economy was an aid to princes in their battles for international supremacy, teaching them to maximize their natural and human resources to maintain their state. Such arguments have sometimes been called mercantilist, in order to make a contrast with later, presumably cosmopolitan, defences of economic liberty: exactly when mercantilist arguments were replaced by anti-mercantilist ones, however, remains uncertain.[18] Other than the abbé

Charles-Irénée Castel de Saint-Pierre, who wrote just prior to and during the Regency, it is very difficult to find writers who believed that there was a short-term alternative to the internecine strife between states that had characterized European history, ancient and modern. Advocates of the liberty of the grain trade, such as the physiocrats themselves from the late 1750s, claimed that their policies would ultimately establish international peace; but they also openly admitted that this necessitated French hegemony, and, therefore, an end to the imperial ambitions of other European powers.[19]

If political economy was originally the study of how a state ought to defend itself against internal and external threats, by the eighteenth century it had tended to become a commentary on the relative strength of Britain and France. These states were important because of the rivalry between them, which manifested itself in diplomatic antagonism and, frequently, in military engagement. For most French writers of the middle decades of the eighteenth century, France was the supreme European power. It had an extensive population, ample natural resources, and enjoyed an advanced state of civilization. Nevertheless, Britain, inferior in all these respects, had defeated France in war at the beginning of the century and affirmed its military superiority during the Seven Years War of 1757-1763. Britain's success appeared to defy the natural order. Accordingly, political economy became concerned with the merits of mixed monarchy as opposed to other forms, the contrast between commercial practices among Protestant and Catholic peoples, and the possibility of fighting wars by reliance upon public credit. It also studied how practical it was to transform the *mœurs* or manners of a nation, to make its people more attuned to certain kinds of commerce compatible with moral or political virtue. By addressing such issues the French reading public expected its political economists to discover the secret of Britain's phenomenal rise, and apply the lessons to French circumstances. Alternatively, because the rise of Britain had been so unexpected and precipitous, they could reassure them that Britain's power and

prosperity rested on shaky foundations. Looking back on over a hundred years of intermittent war, and the third major defeat of France by Britain, Restoration writers attacked the physiocrats and Rousseau for being political enthusiasts whose ideas were among the causes of the economic disaster that the French Revolution was deemed to have been. When seen as more direct contemporaries saw them, from the pressing perspective of the debate about Britain, a different picture emerges.

Rousseau's modern republicanism for small states

In the case of Rousseau the antagonism of the Restoration writers was understandable. A cult of Rousseau had developed from the late 1760s, centring as much on his personal life as his philosophical paradoxes. Most of his books were publishing successes, including, it is now clear, the *Contrat social*.[20] More often they were publishing sensations. When the first part of Rousseau's *Confessions* appeared posthumously, in 1781, this cult intensified. The extent of the cult in revolutionary France has been well documented, particularly the moment when Rousseau's ashes were transferred to the *Panthéon*, accompanied by a series of commemorative public *fêtes*.[21] The Jacobins who turned to judicial murder in the belief that it would save the state from destruction identified Rousseau as the archetypal 'homme révolutionnaire'.[22] A view of Rousseau articulated in the early years of the Revolution by its critics, such as Jacques Mallet Dupan and Jean-Joseph Mounier, came to hold sway, namely that Rousseau had contributed more than any other author to national instability.[23] Rousseau's politics were described as those of an 'ancient', a seeker after classical republican notions of virtue; such an aspiration was considered by these writers to be a world away from the problems of modern societies and, therefore, politically deadly.[24] In his political economy, Rousseau was described simply as an arch-opponent of commerce. But when a distinction is made between Rousseau the political icon and Rousseau

the political author the necessary link with revolutions and political radicalism disappears. This was what Pierre-Louis Rœderer recognized when he reminded his listeners, in a series of public lectures in the spring of 1793, that Rousseau 'would have believed it impossible to create a constitution at such a time as this. He believed that governments founded in times of upheaval will ultimately destroy the State.'[25] In short, to use Rousseau in the revolutionary context it was necessary to find a republican kernel within an anti-republican shell.

Rousseau's 'Économie politique' of 1755 attracted attention for the statement that only free states could defend and maintain themselves in modern conditions. None of the leading monarchies of Europe, and very few of the minor republics and monarchies, were considered by Rousseau to be free or capable of establishing liberty as he defined it. All violated the division between sovereignty (the making of law) and government (the execution of law) that, he explained, was the key to liberty in modern states.[26] Political economy had to find means of creating free states in which citizens were genuinely independent, living under laws that were just and enjoying liberties that defined the best life possible given the power of the passions over every human soul. Rousseau warned that such a state had to be small, agrarian, probably mountainous, and sparsely populated, with inhabitants whose manners were dominated by an artificially created civil religion, which placed patriotism and the practice of social duties above other activities. In addition to the distinction between sovereignty and government, only a state that respected the civil liberty of its citizens could be truly said to be free. This meant that acts of government had to be as constrained as possible: in Rousseau's parlance, they should deal only with 'particular acts'. Acts of law had to be general, in that they were rules in the interest of every member of the community; as they were made by the political community as a whole this union of public good and law could be guaranteed. The incapacity of humanity for virtue, however, made it necessary for this restricted notion of government to be combined with legislators who sought to *formez les*

hommes: by public instruction, by religion, and by public and private example. Forms of government were of minimal relevance. Although Rousseau preferred an aristocracy of the wise, he was arguing that distinctions between monarchies and republics did little to help establish free states. What *did* do so was the calibre of the laws:

I call Republic any State ruled by laws, whatever may be the form of administration: for then the public interest alone governs, and the public thing counts for something. Every legitimate Government is republican. By this word I understand not only an Aristocracy or Democracy, but in general any government guided by the general will, which is the law. To be legitimate, the Government must not be confused with the Sovereign, but be its minister: Then monarchy itself is a republic.[27]

Like so many of his contemporaries, Rousseau expressed the view that Britain would decline as a great power. He agreed with Hume's 'Of Liberty and Despotism' (1741) that Britons enjoyed no more liberty than the French.[28] Against Hume, he believed that neither were free states and were consequently unstable political entities. This was mainly because he believed that Britain, abetted by France, was undermining the balance of power between nation states through useless wars for trade; this at a time when the barbarians were once again at the edge of the continent. He predicted in the ninth chapter of the second book of the *Contrat social* that:

The Russian Empire will try to subjugate Europe, and will itself be subjugated. The Tartars, its subjects or neighbours, will become its masters and ours: This revolution seems to me inevitable. All the Kings of Europe are working in concert to hasten it.

Taking steps to avoid such an outcome meant adopting Rousseau's small state solution. Rousseau was therefore not seeking to return Europe to a classical past of expansive republican empire. He made this clear in the seventh letter of the *Lettres écrites de la montagne*, explaining that 'the ancients cannot be a model for the moderns [because] they are

so foreign to us in every respect.' Rousseau *was* seeking to prove that small anti-commercial states were the most stable political structures. The most innovative aspect of his study would have been to show how such states could defend themselves and not be subjugated by commercial monarchies. Unfortunately, although he promised to show 'how the external power of a great People can be combined with the simple administration and good order of a small State', the second part of the *Contrat social*, completing his *Institutions politiques*, was never written.[29] In failing to show how Poland, Corsica, and Geneva could challenge larger states, Rousseau passed on such problems to the next generation.

Rousseau was a sceptic in politics and an arch-critic of the existing order. This was the verdict of Albrecht von Haller when he likened Rousseau's ideas to those of the ancient sceptic Carneades.[30] In terms of political economy, Rousseau warned that its practitioners had to be attentive to justice, the most important of all human values. Justice, he believed, was being destroyed by *amour propre*, the egoism that accompanied unfettered commerce. Humanity could do something about this because of their free will. In making this argument Rousseau surprised many of his Calvinist compatriots because he was rejecting Protestant accounts of Providence. To Rousseau the problem was that because of their enslavement to unnatural passions and inability to reason men had made a hell on earth. If only small and commercially simple states were capable of sustaining the artificial morality most akin to natural justice, it had to be accepted that redemption was unlikely, if not impossible. But an equally important message for subsequent writers was that such issues could not be distinguished from political economy proper.

Physiocracy as a Christian critique of modernity

The extent of Rousseau's pessimism led contemporaries to try and work out whether a more positive politics could be developed from his books. One person who tried was Victor

Riquetti, the Marquis de Mirabeau. Mirabeau had been converted to Quesay's physiocracy in July 1757, while revising *L'Ami des hommes*, the book which shared Rousseau's aim of restoring justice by addressing the worst ills of commerce, and particularly the tendency of commercial states to fight wars. In his view, Rousseau's work could be read as that of an unorthodox Christian who associated excessive commerce with moral laxity: a Christian critique of modernity, like physiocracy itself. Mirabeau wrote to Rousseau in 1767, sending him a copy of Mercier de la Rivière's *De l'Ordre naturel et essentiel des sociétés politiques*. Rousseau responded that, although he shared the aim of finding a form of government that might place laws above corrupt humankind, he could see

'…no middle ground between the most austere democracy and the most perfect Hobbism, for the conflict between men and laws, which makes for a perpetual unresolved war in the State, is the worst of all political states.'[31]

Mirabeau replied in turn that Rousseau had misunderstood the physiocrats' intentions, which were simply to return humanity to 'the primary notions of nature and instinct.'[32] These were first outlined during the crisis of public credit caused by the Seven Years War, when *anglomanes* were demanding that the nobility follow the British example and embrace commerce.[33] The physiocrats came to prominence with the writing of the *Théorie de l'impôt* in 1760, which promised to reform the French monarchy, and restore French fortunes in the process, without major constitutional upheaval. The popularity of such ideas in court circles was aided by Quesnay's links as Royal Physician to Mme. de Pompadour and her opponents, the nobles of the houses of Noailles and Villeroy.[34]

Physiocracy has, like many eighteenth-century ideas, largely been viewed from a nineteenth-century perspective. It has emerged as a proto-positivist philosophy, and more recently as proto-Marxist.[35] Commentators have usually described it as flawed because of the assertion of the primacy of agriculture, which could be refuted by reference to the self-

evident effects of industry. Physiocracy was not in fact opposed to commerce *per se*; it was rather one of the most confident and complex responses to the progress of commerce and civilization (a term coined by Mirabeau in *L'Ami des hommes*). The physiocrats sought to develop kinds of commerce that were compatible with Christian virtue, by establishing a political and legal framework within which the harmful passions would be curbed and a natural morality reasserted. As such it amounted to theodicy, explaining how God created evil in order to ensure human redemption. The resulting moral philosophy entailed a particular theory of sovereignty and of government.[36] The final aspect of physiocracy was a set of policies intended to guide French legislators in restoring the natural order. By focusing exclusively on the latter transition programme historians have neglected its broader concerns.

Quesnay, following Malebranche, came to the conclusion that the Fall could be combated because God gave humans the physical ability to maintain themselves despite the corruption of their moral faculties. The origin of human societies lay not in any innate sociability, or in the formation of a contract between wary individuals, but in the meeting of physical needs by the natural establishment of certain conventions and practices (such as benevolent relationships between men and women, the protection of children, etc.). Physical feelings had a cognitive content because of the divinely created universal spirit that all creatures imbibed when breathing. This divine framework had been corrupted when more complex societies were created by violence stimulated by the lust for power and property. Such amoral social developments had led to the establishment of the 'unnatural and retrograde order' of modern commercial societies. But God had ensured that foundational physical sensations continued to direct humans to make positive moral choices. This 'Grace of Christ' made redemption possible by linking self-love and self-preservation to such sensations. A better world could be created by returning to such a natural order, requiring the use of the kinds of commercial capital that were themselves the product of corruption and

egoism. Evil therefore served a purpose and could be reconciled with Providence. Removing antagonism between the classes of commercial society meant using the surplus generated by agriculture above the satisfaction of basic needs to support the institutions responsible for justice. The 'net product' of agriculture was to be the sole source of public revenues, and set at a level that ensured that the agricultural sector maintained itself. The resulting high productivity of agriculture, abetted by freeing trade, would ensure that manufactured goods were competitive.[37] An economy would gradually be created that was self-sufficient, with a commercial sector incapable of doing moral harm to the populace or financial damage to the political order. In the international arena such a transformed state would have no incentive to coerce or pillage the commerce of other states. It would play the role of peacemaker, secure on its remarkable economic foundation. With its natural resources, and social groups critical of commerce, France was held to be a prime candidate for physiocratic experiment.[38]

According to the physiocrats, economic justice could only be established if the political system rested on the distinction between the making of laws and their execution. The most efficient and wise method of making law was by a single individual, the sovereign monarch.[39] Armed with knowledge of the natural order, and with an interest in defending the interests of his subjects, such a monarch would in effect be a legal despot, ruling subject to the natural laws described by the physiocrats. The execution of law would be carried out by separate institutions; to this end the physiocrats called for the restoration of the provincial estates of France as administrative and executive bodies. Although aristocratic and democratic republics were legitimate, the best form of rule was that of a hereditary monarch, because it was impossible in practice for a single man to both make and execute the law. The problem with alternative forms of government was their tendency to be corrupted by the confusion of legislative and executive powers. If uncertainty existed about the roles of the

different elements of the state, faction would result. Such a perspective was the basis for the physiocratic critique of the British constitution.[40]

The physiocrats believed the kinds of commerce characteristic of the Dutch and British states to be particularly unstable. Overly dependent on the sale of manufactured goods, they had to ensure that these goods were competitive. This necessitated the low price of labour and made the state seek markets for its products, which sometimes required military action. In order to ensure high profits, which provided revenues to support the political system, the supply of goods had to be restricted. Most physiocratic writings expressed horror at the tendency of British and Dutch merchants to abandon their cargoes in order to maintain buoyant profits. It was clear, they argued, that the assumed prosperity of the British poor was a myth because such states could only support meagre domestic markets, being dependent on low labour costs. As Mirabeau wrote, such states 'gather up the flowers of the economic tree and suppress its fruit.'[41] The constitutional analogue to a commercial system dependent on merchants was a division of sovereignty between the mercantile and landed interests. A mixed system of government, in which legislative and executive functions were necessarily enmeshed, amounted to a recipe for civil war. As Quesnay put it in his *Despotisme de la Chine* (1767):

'All the different ranks of the State can contribute in a mixed government to the ruin of the nation, through the discordance between private interests that divide and corrupt the tutelary authority, causing it to degenerate into political intrigues and abuses deadly to society.'[42]

Several conclusions can be drawn from this brief survey. The first is the extent to which modern divisions between subject areas cannot be applied to eighteenth-century ideas. The second is the anglophobe character of French political economy, which refused to believe that Britain would long defy the natural order, and would collapse either through

bankruptcy or civil war. The third is that attitudes to markets were not simply positive or negative. Both Rousseau and the physiocrats accepted that commerce was vital to meeting needs. In different ways they were trying to define forms of commerce compatible with social stability and their version of social morality. Their perceived enemy, itself largely mythical, was the Mandevillian amoral approach to markets associated with existing British and Dutch commerce. In forming their arguments, Rousseau and the physiocrats were foreshadowing the liberal and socialist critics who have been described as innovators in the early nineteenth century. Although Rousseau questioned whether it could be done in practice, both he and the physiocrats shared the belief that laws and institutions designed to combat tendencies to corruption in the political world had of necessity to be applied to the economic realm. Defences of 'laissez-faire', such as the physiocrats's own, become more complicated when the Christian framework of this idea is taken into account: a framework with moral and political connotations.

The innovative political economy of the 1790s

In 1789 the revolutionaries abolished the ancient constitution and replaced monarchical sovereignty with the sovereignty of the nation. The three estates of society were condemned in law. French society was henceforth to have distinct ranks based on different kinds of labour, with no rank superior to another. The revolutionaries promised a more cosmopolitan approach to commerce. One of the reasons that Smith's *Wealth of Nations* was reprinted in France at this time was because of his critique of Britain's mercantile system, which suited French aspirations.[43] Priests of the Catholic Church in France were forced to take an oath of allegiance to the new order, accepting the primacy of their loyalty to France and their role as servants of the civil state. In 1789 the King retained a constitutional function as chief-magistrate. When this failed the revolutionaries abolished monarchy, declaring the

first French Republic in September 1792. In undertaking these acts they made a sharp break with the politics of the enlightenment authors they venerated. Rousseau, Voltaire, the physiocrats, and Montesquieu would have questioned the assertion of national sovereignty. They had also believed the creation of a republic in a large state to be impossible. It was an accepted fact of political discussion that republicanism was incompatible with the existence of a diverse political culture, and particularly one that had until recently been characterized by social hierarchy and clerical control over education. The luxury-based forms of commerce that Montesquieu had said were the bedrock of the French economy in *De L'Esprit des lois* were also deemed to be corrosive of a republican state. Republicanism in France was therefore distinct from that of the North American Founding Fathers. North America was blessed by being a new state, predominantly agricultural, and with seemingly infinite amounts of land. It was altogether more challenging to create a republic at the centre of Europe in the face of the opposition of kings, priests, and aristocrats. As Rœderer said, it was necessary 'to expose the futility of historical reasoning on this subject.'[44]

From 1792 the revolution was continuous in its aim of maintaining Europe's first large commercial republic. This meant that the revolutionaries perceived themselves to be innovators in politics, defending a new kind of state. In such conditions they turned to philosophers ancient and modern: more editions of classic books on politics appeared, alongside the collected works of major authors, than in any other decade of the century.[45] The political economists who had been concerned with the regeneration of France under the Old Regime were forced to adapt themselves to these circumstances. The response of the remaining physiocrats is significant because it reveals how a group united before 1789 quickly became divided. Nicolas Badeau was an early opponent of the Revolution. By contrast, Dupont de Nemours attempted to make physiocracy compatible with revolutionary needs, advising legislators 'not to exhaust themselves by seeking models in history, of which

there is not one.'[46] Initially Dupont argued that the class of landed proprietors ought to be responsible for making law, and therefore form political assemblies as representatives of the nation.[47] Once the debate over the new constitution was complete, Dupont sought to make physiocracy a force for education and popular moral change. In the aftermath of his imprisonment during the Terror, he turned to the new religion of Theophilanthropy as the latest means to promote ideas he continued to describe as physiocratic.[48] Condorcet, like Dupont, argued in 1789 that the class of landed proprietors ought to be given a prominent role in any new constitution.[49] After the King's flight to Varennes, however, he underwent a conversion to the doctrine of large-state republicanism. With Thomas Paine and the Brissotins, he campaigned for a new republican constitution, education system, and economy. While in hiding prior to his suicide, he wrote the *Esquisse d'un tableau historique de l'espèce humain*, which described revolutionary republicanism as the ninth stage of intellectual progress. Although superior to enlightenment politics, it foreshadowed the transformation of human nature that would be the end-point of the Revolution.

The promotion of the new republicanism became the goal of French political economy. J.-A. Creuzé-Latouche stated in the Convention in 1794 that political economy was 'the unique means of restoring abundance and making it compatible with liberty.'[50] In the same speech he called the inauguration of the first chair of political economy in France; it was established at the *École normale de Paris* later in the year and held by the mathematician Alexandre Vandermonde. Other revolutionaries rejected the term political economy because of its historic association with physiocracy, and preferred to use other terms, such as the 'social art' (although it had been coined by Badeau), the 'science of the social organisation', or 'social science'. When the Directory set up the Moral and Political Sciences branch of the *Institut National*, all of these terms, in addition to political economy, were used to describe what was essentially the same project.[51] Political economy had a dual goal. The first was to

work out means of creating a republican constitution that would be popular but stable. Numerous journals, speeches, and books across the spectrum of republican opinion made clear the extent to which political economy had become inter-linked with this aspect of revolutionary politics. When Algernon Sidney's *Discourses on Government* were translated in 1793 it is significant that it was reviewed under the heading political economy.[52]

Given that France was at war with European monarchies financed by Britain, it was unsurprising that one of the intellectual continuities before and after the Revolution was the extent of national anglophobia.[53] The politics of republican political economy was irrepressibly opposed to the British constitutional model. The second objective came to the fore as the republican constitutions continued to meet civil opposition. Political faction and antagonism was blamed on the political culture of the Old Regime. It became accepted that if a stable republic could be created in France a new and homogeneous political culture would have to be established, and established in every rank of the nation. Political economy became concerned with this issue: as one of the public essay questions set by the *Institut national* in 1797 asked, *Quelles sont les institutions les plus propres à fonder la morale d'un peuple?* Throughout the 1790s, paper money projects, public instruction, terrorism, and ultimately religion itself were employed to tie the people to the Revolution. After the Consular constitution of 1799 failed, Bonaparte's inauguration of the First French Empire set the scene for a thorough review of the republican experiment. This is the context in which to understand Say's utterance about politics and political economy.

'Modern' versus 'democratic' republicanism

In separating the 'science of government' from political economy Say was turning his back on the experiments in building republican constitutions of the 1790s. In itself this was unsurprising. The constitutions of 1793, 1795, and 1799 had each been undermined by

political divisions and had failed to maintain civil peace. Identifying Rousseau as a source of the problem was equally common among enemies of Jacobinism. In the 1790s Say would have been well aware of Rousseau's use by Robespierre and Saint Just, and his writings condemned both Rousseau and the Terror. In 1787 Say had commenced an apprenticeship in the life assurance business by serving as the Genevan financier Etienne Clavière's secretary. It was Clavière who first allowed Say to read his copy of the *Wealth of Nations*.[54] Clavière had been involved in radical politics in Geneva, France, and in Ireland for decades: associating with him led Say to work on the journal *Courier de Provence* in the early 1790s. The journal was in theory the mouthpiece of the revolutionary orator Gabriel Honoré Riquetti de Mirabeau, the son of the great physiocrat Victor Riquetti. In practice it was written by Clavière and three other Genevans, Jacques-Antoine Du Roveray, Etienne Dumont, and Pierre-Saloman Reybaz. These men became known as the 'Atelier de Mirabeau'.[55] It is worth noting that, as Genevan radicals, none of the *Atelier* was particularly sympathetic to Rousseau's politics: they believed that Rousseau had betrayed the small state reformist cause in the late 1760s.[56]

That Say embraced the politics of the Mirabeau circle is evident from his earliest writing. It is also clear that he followed Clavière in becoming a large-state republican: he was probably still serving as Clavière's secretary when he became the last minister of finance under the monarchy and the first of the French Republic.[57] While Clavière, alongside Brissot, Condorcet, Paine and Roland, supported the Girondin faction in the Legislative Assembly, Say had volunteered to serve in the revolutionary army in 1793. He therefore missed the beginning of the Terror and the death of Clavière and many of the other Girondins. On his return he was involved in the establishment of a republican journal antagonistic to the Jacobins, *La Décade philosophique, politique et littéraire*. Opposition to Rousseau could therefore have come from Genevan sources or from his support for the Gironde. As the

political correspondent for his journal in the late 1790s, Say continued his close relationship with Parisian political life. His opposition to the physiocrats is equally traceable to this fact. Say knew both Condorcet and Dupont de Nemours through Clavière and would have seen at first hand their involvement in republican constitutionalism. Dupont de Nemours also submitted articles for inclusion in *La Décade*. It was natural for Say to associate the physiocrats with the Mirabeau circle and with the republicanism that had so manifestly failed when Napoleon came to power.

Many historians aware of Say's revolutionary republicanism have assumed that with the publication of the *Traité* he made a seamless transition to liberalism. This is not the case. He continued to describe himself as a republican, as his friends later testified.[58] He also saw himself as a revolutionary, by which he meant someone who valued the liberties gained in 1789 and sought means of maintaining them. For Say, liberty could only exist once aristocracy had been extinguished. Continued vigilance was necessary to ensure that no new nobility arose, as he believed had occurred under Bonaparte. Say also associated liberty with opposition to organized religion, especially on a national basis. Although he believed Calvinism to be less dangerous than Catholicism, he was certain that religion had done little good in society. He believed the origins of the Terror to lie in Roman-Gallican fanaticism. During the Revolution Say's was accordingly among the most virulently anti-clerical and anti-Christian voices among the writers for *La Décade*, an attitude exemplified by his view of, and love for, Gibbon's work.[59] At some point after 1815 he planned to write a book that would show the damage done to humanity by religious belief. One of his notes states that 'religions will be replaced by industry as a centrifugal force in society'.[60] Like many anti-clericals, however, he considered himself to be an austere moralist. Making a society that was virtuous was the project that had failed during the Revolution: Say continued to believe that it ought to be resurrected.[61] By virtue Say meant a society characterized by frugality and

industry, respect for the liberties of others, and the adherence to a moral code that eschewed luxury and was dedicated to the public good. The problem was how to moralize society given the failure of constitutionalism, civic instruction, and Clavière's own paper money project.

Say believed that the work of making society virtuous would take generations. Once some form of representative government was established, aristocracy outlawed, and clerical influence over education minimized, he argued that commerce would operate in a different manner from the way that it operated in other forms of society. Government involvement in the economy had to be limited because of the temptation to corruption that no political officer could resist in the existing moral climate. But this did not mean that markets could be relied upon to be a force for morality by their independent action alone. Say had no faith in the 'hidden hand'.[62] In a simple society, such as the one which Say identified in certain North American states, the very lack of government, noblemen, and priests, combined with an abundance of natural resources, allowed commerce to co-exist with virtuous morals.[63] But in France it was necessary to use more direct means to influence the market. People from all of the productive groups of society had to be taught that self-interest corresponded with a life lived according to the precepts of virtue. When they embraced this creed they would recognize its benefits, and lead others to behave similarly. A moral revolution would gradually be achieved by such means.[64] After such change a return could be made to republican constitutionalism. Say admitted this in his final writings, arguing that once political economy had civilized nations 'pure politics and constitutional organization' would again come to the fore.[65] In the hope of preparing future generations for this eventuality, Say wrote a *Traité de politique pratique* to accompany his books on political economy. It was never completed, but the surviving manuscripts show that he continued to try to resolve the eighteenth-century conundrum of how to create a large state that was commercial yet just towards the poor.[66] Say therefore remained a republican committed to democratizing the

political realm. But the prior need was to 'democratize' the economic arena, by reducing inequality, extinguishing luxury, and promoting social virtues that would prevent new aristocracies from developing.

The role of political economy was to provide the education that would direct individuals in the economic realm. Without such a moral education markets would be corrupted. If inequalities continued to grow morality would gradually be extinguished. This was why it was so important to remind the French to avoid the British example. Say remained a dedicated anglophobe during the Restoration. He attacked the inequalities evident in Britain, which he traced to the existence of aristocracy and a national church. He also developed friendships with those whose view of politics and morals he believed he shared, and described those of Jeremy Bentham as being superior to any other writer of the post-revolutionary era.[67] In describing a more egalitarian commercial society in which labour was fairly rewarded, thereby reducing the extremes of riches and dearth, Say relied on Book III of the *Wealth of Nations*, in which Smith sketched the natural progress of opulence and the reasons for its corruption in British economic history. It is significant that Say's view of politics, and particularly his view of Britain's constitution, had little in common with Smith's own view.[68] Smith was attractive because he fitted the French republican perspective on immoral commerce. Say's central claim, that it was pointless experimenting with a republican constitution if social mores were already corrupted, was an idea made commonplace by the influence of Rousseau's writings. For each writer, the nature of political culture, and its link with popular *mœurs*, was always a pressing concern of political economy.

Say's opposition to Constant can now be clarified. It stemmed from their differing assessments of the nature and prospects of the British state. The revolutionary years had taken Britain to the very edge of military catastrophe, national bankruptcy, and civil rebellion. Yet the state had not only survived, but, by 1814, it had further entrenched itself as

the leading European power. One consequence was that *anglomanie*, rather than being an obsession with the *mores* of Britain's commercially-minded nobility, began to take the form of a more general interest in Britain's political history and peculiar constitutional structure.[69] The possibility of creating a constitution in France directly modeled on that of Britain ceased to be an impractical fusing of antagonistic political cultures, or a dangerous experiment that would probably have resulted in the collapse of either state. Constant was in the vanguard of this movement, considering Britain to be a model modern republic. Say hated the prominent aristocracy that fostered luxury-based commerce. The economic liberty associated with Britain's commerce was a sham, Say claimed, because the aristocracy manipulated markets for their own personal gain. Partial liberty in the context of the mercantile control of trade was no freedom at all. Britain was, to Say, a modern republic in the same sense as Bonaparte's Empire: leaders ruled in the name of the people, but in practice <u>against</u> the interests of the people. The people lacked political agency in Britain and in France. Say believed that the Catholic church especially, but in fact all established churches, were modern republics because they behaved in exactly the same way. They governed the people rather than teaching them self-rule. By contrast, for Constant religion was another tool for legislators to use against the popular tendency to violence and disorder.[70] In his ideas about political economy, Constant was well aware that markets were shaped by political and religious frameworks. But he rejected Say's view that markets could themselves be used to moralize society, once a republican social structure had been formed. At root, they espoused opposed moral philosophies. Say remained the disciple of Helvétius and Bentham in believing that self-interest could be enlightened. To Constant such ideas were false and dangerous because they ultimately fostered the kinds of egoism that their exponents labelled benevolence. Disinterested support for liberty had of necessity to rely on religious belief and practice.[71]

Such disagreement between liberals complicates the historical record for those who continue to espouse a 'black and white' approach to the intellectual history of markets. Scrutiny of Say's and Constant's ideas restores Rousseau to prominence as a political economist, and the French Revolution as an independent intellectual event. Furthermore, debates about the nature of republicanism in large commercial states becomes a significant force in early nineteenth-century life. Constant won the battle of ideas in justifying a modern republic and a political economy whose legitimacy we would now accept. But Say's belief that modern republics actually deprive the people of political and economic agency, is a recurring theme in contemporary political culture.

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[1] J.-B. Say, 'Discours préliminaire', Traité d'économie politique (Paris, 1803), 2 vols., vol. I, pp. ii-iii.

[2] Say was appointed professor of 'Économie industrielle' at the *Conservatoire* in 1819 and professor of 'Économie politique' at the *Collège de France* in 1830.

[3] Cours Complet d'économie politique pratique; ouvrage destiné à mettre sous les yeux des hommes d'état, des propriétaires fonciers et les capitalistes, des savans, des agriculteurs, des manufacturiers, des négocians, et en général de tous les citoyens, l'économie des sociétés (Paris, 1837), pp. 560n, 568.

[4] For Say's description of his early relationship with Napoleon, and hatred of the Empire, see the letter to Charles Robert Prinsep, written from Paris in May 1821, in Œuvres diverses de Jean-Baptiste Say, ed. by H. Say (Paris, 1848), pp. 429-38.

[5] G. de Ruggiero, The History of European Liberalism (Oxford, 1927), pp. 171-2; C. Welch, Liberty and Utility: The French Ideologues and the Transformation of Liberalism (New York, 1984), pp. 71-5; A. Jardin, Histoire du libéralisme politique (Paris, 1985), pp. 167,

187-8; A. Tiran, “Jean-Baptiste Say: Manuscrits sur la monnaie, la banque, et la finance”, in Cahiers monnaie et financement (1995), pp. 1-229; E. L. Forget, The Social Economics of Jean-Baptiste Say: Markets and Virtue (London, 1999).

[6] Traité de l’esprit de conquête et de l’usurpation (Paris, 1814), ch. 7.

[7] Principes de politique applicables à tous les gouvernements, ed. by E. Hofmann (Geneva, 1980 [orig. 1815]), pp. 25-41.

[8] “The Liberty of the Ancients Compared with that of the Moderns”, in Political Writings, ed. and trans. by B. Fontana (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 324-5.

[9] Commentaire sur l’ouvrage de Filangieri (Paris, 1822), book 1, ch. 1.

[10] H. Say, “Notice sur la vie et les ouvrages de Jean-Baptiste Say”, in Traité d'économie politique (Paris, 1838), 6th edn., pp. iii-iv; “Introduction”, in Œuvres diverses de Jean-Baptiste Say; A. Walras, De la Nature de la richesse et de l'origine de la valeur (Paris 1831); J.-A. Blanqui, Histoire de l'économie politique en Europe, depuis les anciens jusqu'à nos jours (Paris 1845), 3rd edn., 2 vols., ch. 36.

[11] For a nineteenth-century example see L. Say’s Turgot (Paris, 1887). For a more recent view see Louis Dumont, Homo Aequalis, translated as From Mandeville to Marx: The Genesis and Triumph of Economic Ideology (Chicago, 1977). In Marxist literature there has been a similar outcome, in that politics is consigned to the ideological superstructure, with eighteenth-century authors accordingly derided for displaying feudal or bourgeois credentials.

[12] J. Schumpeter, A History of Economic Analysis (Oxford, 1954), pp. 491-2; T. Sowell, Say’s Law: An Historical Analysis (Princeton, 1972), ch. 1.

[13] Letter to Say, 22 April 1815, Œuvres diverses, p. 366.

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[14] D. Winch, Riches and Poverty: An Intellectual History of Political Economy in Britain, 1750-1834 (Cambridge, 1996); K. Tribe, Governing economy: The Reformation of German Economic Discourse, 1750-1840 (Cambridge, 1988); P. Steiner, "Comment stabiliser l'ordre social moderne: J.-B. Say, l'économie politique et la revolution", in G. Faccarello & P. Steiner, eds., La Pensée économique pendant la Révolution Française (Grenoble, 1990), pp. 173-94; "Politique et économie politique chez Jean-Baptiste Say", in Revue française d'histoire des idées politiques, 5 (1997), pp. 23-58; La 'Science nouvelle' de l'économie politique (Paris, 1998); Sociologie de la connaissance économique: Essai sur les rationalisations de la connaissance économique *(1750-1850)* (Paris, 1998), pp. 187-248; I. Hont, "The Permanent Crisis of a Divided Mankind: The Contemporary Crisis of the Nation State in Historical Perspective", Political Studies, 42 (1994), 166-231; M. Sonenscher, "The Nation's Debt and the Birth of the Modern Republic: The French Fiscal Deficit and the Politics of the Revolution of 1789", History of Political Thought, 18 (1997), 64-103, 267-325.

[15] An Historical and Political View of the Constitution and Revolutions of Geneva in the Eighteenth Century, trans. by John Farell (London, 1784), pp. 160-1.

[16] See M. Sonenscher, "Property, Community, and Citizenship", in M. Goldie & R. Wokler, eds., The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Political Thought, forthcoming, and "Physiocracy as a Theodicy", History of Political Thought, 23 (2002), 326-39.

[17] C. Larèrre, L'Invention de l'économie politique au XVIIIe siècle (Paris, 1992); J.-Cl. Perrot, "Économie politique", in Une histoire intellectuelle de l'économie politique (Paris, 1992), pp. 7-52.

[18] E. F. Heckscher, Mercantilism (London, 1935), 2 vols., trans. by M. Shapiro, part v; the best critical commentary is by D. C. Coleman, "Eli Heckscher and the Idea of Mercantilism",

in Revisions in Mercantilism (London, 1969), pp. 92-117; “Mercantilism Revisited”, Historical Journal, 23 (1980), pp. 773-91.

[19] M. Sonenscher, “French Economists and Bernese Agrarians: The Marquis de Mirabeau and the Economic Society of Berne”, unpublished paper at the conference Republican Political Economy and Enlightenment: The Patriotic and Economic Societies of Berne in European Context, Lausanne, 2000.

[20] R. A. Leigh, “The impact of Rousseau’s ‘Contrat Social’ in eighteenth-century France: Mornet’s private libraries revisited”, in J. T. A. Leigh, ed., Unsolved Problems in the Bibliography of J.-J. Rousseau (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 1-23.

[21] See R. Barny, L’Eclatement révolutionnaire du rousseauisme (Paris, 1988).

[22] Saint-Just, “Rapport fait au nom du comité de salut public sur la nécessité de déclarer le gouvernement révolutionnaire jusqu’à la paix” and “Rapport au nom du Comité de salut public et du comité de sureté général, sur la justice, le commerce, la législation et les crimes des factions”, in Œuvres complètes (Paris, 1984), pp. 520-30, 806-810.

[23] J.-J. Mounier, Recherches sur les causes qui ont empeché les François de devenir libres, et sur les moyens qui leur restent pour acquérir la liberté (Geneva, 1792); J. Mallet du Pan, Considérations sur la nature de la Révolution en France, et sur les causes qui en prolongent la durée (London, 1793). See also Mounier’s De l’influence attribuée aux philosophes, aux franc-maçons et aux illuminés sur la Révolution de France (Tübingen, 1801).

[24] A sense of the opposition to Rousseau can be gleaned from the *supplément* published to the Œuvres de Rousseau (Paris, 1820) containing a series of critical responses to ‘sa personne et ses ouvrages’. For an overview see R. Derathé, “Les Réfutations du ‘Contrat Social’ en France dans la première moitié du dix-neuvième siècle”, in S. Harvey, M. Hobson, D. J.

Kelley and S. S. B. Taylor, eds., Reappraisals of Rousseau: Studies in Honour of R. A. Leigh (Manchester, 1980), pp. 90-110.

[25] Rœderer, Cours d'organisation sociale (1793), in Œuvres de Rœderer, ed. by A.-M. Rœderer (Paris, 1853-6), 8 vols., vol. VIII, pp. 261-2.

[26] "Discours sur l'économie politique", in Rousseau, Du Contrat Social (Paris, 1964), ed. by R. Derathé, p. 66. The Encyclopédie article "Économie politique" of 1755 was reprinted as the Discours at Geneva in 1758.

[27] Contrat Social, book III, ch. 6. Translations are from V. Gourevitch's edition (Cambridge, 1997).

[28] For commentary see J. G. A. Pocock, "Hume and the American Revolution: The dying thoughts of a North Briton", in Virtue, Commerce and History (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 125-42.

[29] Contrat Social, book III, ch. 15.

[30] On Swiss protestant readings of Rousseau see B. Kapossy, "The Sociable Patriot: Isaak Iselin's Protestant Reading of Jean-Jacques Rousseau", History of European Ideas 27 (2001), pp. 153-70.

[31] Rousseau to Mirabeau, 27 July 1767, Correspondance complète de Rousseau, 51 vols. (Oxford, 1965-1998), ed. by R. A Leigh, vol. XXXIII, p. 240.

[32] Mirabeau to Rousseau, 30 July 1767, Correspondance complète de Rousseau, vol. XXXIII, p. 256.

[33] Abbé Coyer, La noblesse commerçante (London and Paris, 1757), p. 112; J. Grieder, Anglomania in France, 1740-1789 (Geneva, 1985), ch. 1, ch. 4.

[34] Sonenscher, "The Nation's Debt", pp. 89-95.

[35] R. L. Meek, The Economics of Physiocracy (London, 1962); Social Science and the Ignoble Savage (Cambridge, 1976).

[36] This section follows Sonenscher, “Physiocracy as a Theodicy” and I. Hont, “The Political Economy of the ‘Unnatural and Retrograde’ Order: Adam Smith and Natural Liberty”, in M. Barzen, ed., Französische Revolution und Politische Ökonomie (Trier, 1989), pp. 122-49.

[37] “Maximes de gouvernement économique”, in François Quesnay et la physiocratie (Paris, 1958), 2 vols., vol. II, pp. 496-510.

[38] Mirabeau and Quesnay, Traité de la monarchie (1757-59), ed. by G. Longhitano (Paris, 1999).

[39] Quesnay, “Droit naturel”, in François Quesnay et la physiocratie, vol. II, p. 740.

[40] D. de Nemours, De l’origine et progrès d’une science nouvelle (London, 1768), pp. 25-30.

[41] Philosophie rurale, ou économie générale et politique de l’agriculture, reduite à l’ordre immuable des lois physiques & morales qui assurent la prospérité des empires (Amsterdam, 1764), 3 vols., vol. III, p. 317.

[42] François Quesnay et la physiocratie, vol. II, p. 919. See also Nicolas Badeau, Première introduction à la philosophie économique ou analyse des états policés (Paris, 1767), pp. 385-406; Mercier de la Rivière, L’Ordre naturel et essentiel des sociétés politiques (London, 1767), pp. 139-50.

[43] R. Whatmore, “Adam Smith’s Role in the French Revolution”, Past and Present, 175 (2002), 65-89.

[44]“Entretien de plusieurs philosophes célèbres, sur les Gouvernments Républicain et Monarchique” in Œuvres, vol. VII, pp. 61-71.

[45] For an overview see R. Darnton and D. Roche, eds., Revolution in Print: The press in France, 1775-1800 (Berkeley CA, 1989), part three.

[46] De la périodicité des assemblées nationales (Paris, 1789), p. 4.

[47] Examen du gouvernement de l'Angleterre, comparé aux institutions des États-Unis (London, 1789), p. 186.

[48] Philosophie de l'univers (Paris, an IV [1796]), pp. 102-4.

[49] Essai sur la constitution et les fonctions des assemblées provinciales (Paris, 1788); Œuvres de Condorcet (Paris, 1847-9), 12 vols., ed. by A. Condorcet O'Connor, vol. VIII, p. 126.

[50] Discours sur la nécessité d'ajoute à l'école normale un professeur d'économie politique (Paris, 1794), p. 10.

51 Abbé Grégoire, "Réflexions extraites d'un ouvrage sur les moyens de perfectionner les sciences politiques", in Mémoires de l'Institut National, Classe des Sciences Morales et Politiques (Paris, 1796-1803), 5 vols., vol. I, pp. 556-66. On the *Institut* see M. Staum, Minerva's Message: Stabilizing the French Revolution (Montreal and Kingston, 1996).

[52] La Décade philosophique, politique, et littéraire (Paris, 1794-1807), 42 vols., vol. III, pp. 537-44.

[53] For an overview see N. Hampson, The Perfidy of Albion: French Perceptions of England During the Revolution (Basingstoke, 1998).

[54] Say, draft Mémoires (1818), Say papers, Bibliothèque Nationale, Microfilm 6739, pp. 151-212.

[55] J. Bénétruy, L'Atelier de Mirabeau: quatre proscrits Genevois dans la tourmente révolutionnaire (Geneva, 1962).

[56] For Rousseau's opposition to revolution see his letters to the Genevan constitutional reformers (1767-8) in Correspondance complète, vol. XXXV, pp. 92-3, 101.

[57] Say, De la liberté de la presse (Paris, 1789); La Science du bonhomme Richard de Benjamin Franklin (Paris, 1794).

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[58] Charles Dunoyer, review of the 'Traité' (3rd edn.), in Le Censeur Européen, ou Examen de diverses questions de droits public, et diverses ouvrages littéraires et scientifiques, considérés dans leurs rapports avec les progrès de la civilisation, vol. 1 (1817), pp. 159-227, vol. II, pp. 169-221; Charles Comte, "Notice historique sur la vie et les ouvrages de J.-B. Say", in Cours complet (Paris, 1837), pp. v-xiii; Theodor Fix, "De l'économie politique: quels en sont le but, les principes et les lois", in Revue Mensuelle d'Économie Politique (Paris, 1833-1837), 4 vols, vol. I, pp. 4-8; John Stuart Mill, Autobiography (Boston MA, 1969), pp. 38-9; Augustin Pyrhamus de Candolle, Mémoires et souvenirs (Paris, 1862), pp. 123-4.

[59] Say called the Bible 'one of the most scandalous books ever written': 'Obituary of Gibbon', La Décade, 54 (30 Vendémaire, an IV), pp. 147-52. For commentary see R. Whatmore, Republicanism and the French Revolution: An Intellectual History of Jean-Baptiste Say's Political Economy (Oxford, 2000), pp. 120-5.

[60] Say papers, Microfilm 9096, p. 174; 6739, pp. 214-6.

[61] Traité (1803), vol. I, pp. 81-2n, 262-4.

[62] Ibid., vol. I, p. 96, vol. II, p. 345.

[63] "Cours à l'Athénée" (1819) in Say, Cours d'économie (Paris, 1997), ed. P. Steiner, pp. 83-6.

[64] "Discours d'ouverture du cours d'économie industrielle", in Œuvres diverses, pp. 145-7.

[65] "Discours d'ouverture 'd'Économie politique, de l'année scholaire 1831-2", in Œuvres diverses, pp. 162-5; "Discours d'ouverture au Collège de France" (1831), Bibliothèque Nationale microfilm 6648, pp. 12-13.

[66] Say Papers, Bibliothèque Nationale microfilm 9095, pp. 33-4, 270-329.

[67] See Say's review of Bentham's 'Plan of Parliamentary Reform', Le Censeur Européen, vol. 5 (1817), pp. 105-27.

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[68] See D. Winch, "A Great Deal of Ruin in a Nation", in P. Clarke and C. Trebilcock, eds., Understanding Decline: Perceptions and Realities of British Economic Performance (Cambridge, 1997).

[69] For an example see Guizot's revealingly entitled The History of England…for a rising generation, trans. M. Thomas (London, 1882), 3 vols., vol. iii, p. 410.

[70] De la Religion considérée dans sa source, ses formes et ses développements (Tübingen, 1999), ed. by T. Todorov and E. Hofmann, book 1, ch. 4, pp. 61-2.

[71] Constant, Du Polythéisme romain (Paris, 1833), ed. by M. J. Matter, 2 vols., book 12, ch. 2.