

From the Foundation of Liberal Political Economy to its Critique: Theology and Economics in France in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

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Abstract. The relationship between economics, religion and morals are by far more complex than usually stated. It is possible to show that, at some crucial steps of the development of economics, religious thought gave it a decisive impetus, lying thus at the heart of this development. But it is also true that religious thought developed a strong critique of these very developments. This is this double movement between religion and political economy that the example of eighteenth and nineteenth century France shows unambiguously. The very beginning of the French eighteenth century allows us to exemplify the first kind of relationship : it shows how, with the Jansenist P. de Boisguilbert, some fundamental propositions of liberal political economy stemmed out of religious questions and controversies. The French nineteenth century, by contrast, witnessed the second and inverse movement : it shows how some Protestant and Catholic authors (G. de Staël, B. Constant, J.-P. A. de Villeneuve-Bargemont, Ch. de Caux, Ch. Périn, Ch. Gide), dissatisfied with the evolution of the economic situation, strongly criticized the “laissez-faire” economic theories of the time and tried to change them.

1 Introduction

According to an old thesis the birth and evolution of political economy were simple and straightforward. Growing out of some insights found in the

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Greek philosophers and in the Scholastic thought, economics is supposed to have freed itself from the domination of religion and morals that prevented its development. It is supposed to have become, around the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, an autonomous scientific discipline. Sweeping aside all the debates around usury and the just price, the alleged Mercantilists started — the story goes on — a more serious and scientific way of reasoning “in terms of number, weight, or measure” and their efforts were completed by the French and Scottish Enlightenment, culminating in Turgot’s *Réflexions sur la formation et la distribution des richesses* and Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations*.

This way of telling the story, however, cannot be accepted today. Take for example this phrase : “in terms of number, weight, or measure”, which is supposed to symbolize the new scientific route indicated by Petty. Not only does it not constitute an original way of thinking — it is widely used in the scientific writings of the time — but the scientists who used it intended to refer to the Bible from which it is drawn (Wisdom XI, 20-21). This simple fact suggests that the relationship between economics, religion and morals are by far more complex than usually stated. It is possible to show that, at some crucial steps of the development of economics, religious thought gave it a decisive impetus, lying thus at the heart of this development. But it is also true that religious thought developed a strong critique of these very developments.

This is precisely this double movement between religion and political economy that the example of eighteenth and nineteenth century France shows unambiguously. This field of study has been until recently neglected, and research is currently in progress. It is nevertheless possible to give a first picture of the relationships between theology and economics in this country — a kind of progress report — focusing only on some significant episodes of these movements. The very beginning of the French eighteenth century allows us to powerfully exemplify the first kind of relationship and to show how some fundamental propositions in economics stemmed out of religious questions and controversies. The French nineteenth century, by contrast, witnessed the second and inverse movement : it shows how religious thought, dissatisfied with the evolution of the economic situation, strongly criticized the economic theories of the time and tried to change them. In order however to understand this to and fro movement it is necessary to give first some brief idea of the historical and ideological context of the period.

2 The historical and ideological context : political turmoil and religious controversy

The hectic French political history during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is reminded first because it was not without consequences on the religious and economic debates of the time. From the end of the sixteenth century, France was under the regime of the Absolute Monarchy of the Bourbons — the so-called “Ancien régime” — the target of the 1789 French Revolution. The Republic was proclaimed in 1792, but wars and political instability led to various political regimes stabilising with the Consulate (1799) and the First Empire (1804). After the fall of Napoleon, the Bourbons came back to power (first and second Restoration, 1814 and 1815) until the July Revolution of 1830 and the institution of the “bourgeois” July Monarchy of Louis-Philippe. The 1848 Revolution proclaimed the Second Republic, ended three years later by Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte’s putsch (Second Empire, 1851). After the fall of Napoléon III in 1870 and the civil war of the “Commune de Paris” (1871), a third Republic was eventually proclaimed, which proved to be a stable regime till World War II.

Catholics and Protestants

The peculiar religious situation of France during the period must be stressed. After the Protestant reforms of the sixteenth century, France witnessed a long period of tragic instability because of the conflicts between Catholics and Protestants. The so-called Wars of Religion devastated the country — the most powerful symbol, still alive in the collective memory, being the Saint Bartholomew’s Day Massacre of the Protestants by the Catholics, which started in the night of August 24th, 1572. The 1598 Edict of Nantes, a treaty proposed and signed by King Henri IV — a former *huguenot* — put an end to the wars and managed to preserve a space for the Protestants. Nevertheless, Henri’s successors Louis XIII and Louis XIV always considered the Protestants with great suspicion. Intolerance logically led Louis XIV to repeal the Edict of Nantes in 1685, provoking new persecutions against Protestants and the emigration of many of them out of the kingdom. Protestant worship was again officially admitted in France during the 1789 Revolution. Religious freedom was subse-

quently redefined by Bonaparte in some clauses he added in 1802 (organic law of Germinal Year X) to the 1801 Concordat signed with the Pope.

Hence, for our period there are two important consequences. On the one hand, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Protestant Churches were still very weak, and in the process of being reconstructed. Their action, moreover, was still hindered by the authorities — especially concerning rights of association and publication. This lay in a striking contrast with the fact that many prominent writers of the time were in fact Protestants (Germaine de Staël, Benjamin Constant, Jean-Baptiste Say, Jean-Charles Léonard Simonde de Sismondi and François Guizot for example). The situation changed however with the Second and Third Republic.

On the other hand, during the eighteenth century and until the 1830 July Revolution the Catholic Church was increasingly contested because of its close links with the Absolute Monarchy and its opposition to the “Philosophes” and to reforms. It saw its influence on the population greatly decline with the development of atheism, deism and pantheism. It was severely shaken during the French Revolution, and, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Catholic Church was just starting to re-conquer public opinion. No doubt that it did not appreciate the resurgence of the Protestants. A strong anti-Protestant rhetoric developed again that culminated by the end of the century in a racist discourse, with arguments that also echoed in anti-Semitic writings.

Rifts within the Catholics’ camp

In addition, during our period the French Catholic Church itself was not without serious internal conflicts. Among the topics that divided the Catholics, a question was the opposition between Gallicans and Ultramontanes. The controversy was of importance because it involved the question of the relationships between the spiritual and the political powers. Supporters of Gallicanism were in favour of a relative autonomy of the French Church *vis-à-vis* the pope, that is, a certain intervention of the State in religious affairs, for example for the nomination of bishops. On the contrary, Ultramontanes supported the idea of a pre-eminence of the power of the Pope — regulatory as well as spiritual — on the French Church. Not very well accepted at the beginning of our period, Ultramontanism eventually prevailed during the nineteenth century.

Another important aspect of the French religious and ideological context of the period is the legacy of the strong seventeenth century Jansenist movement that, with transformations, was still intellectually influential during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Bourbon Monarchy very much disliked the Jansenists who, while Catholics, were supposed to be close to Calvinism on certain points of the dogma — the question of Grace for example — and as such a danger to the State. This led to Jansenism persecution under the reign of Louis XIV.

As is well known Jansenism was a very pessimistic version of Augustinian thought, developed after the posthumous publication of *Augustinus* (1641) by Cornelius Jansen (1585-1638), bishop of Ypres (Flanders). While it generated important controversies — especially with the Jesuits — and was condemned by the Pope, it had a huge diffusion in France. It deeply influenced most of the intellectuals of the time and its themes were expressed in a widely spread literature. This includes the works of Blaise Pascal, La Rochefoucauld and La Bruyère for example, but also Pierre Nicole (1625-1695). Nicole is less well known today but his successful *Essais de morale* had many editions until the end of the eighteenth century.

3 The age of creation : Jansenism and the emergence of liberal political economy

The first important and significant link that can be found in the French literature between theology and political economy concerns the birth of liberal economics : it exemplifies in a striking way how religious thought can generate a decisive advance in economics — in these precise circumstances, the foundation of liberal political economy itself. This happened at the very beginning of our period, at the turn of the eighteenth century, in the writings of Pierre de Boisguilbert (1646-1714), the most celebrated among them being *Détail de la France* (1695) and *Factum de la France* (1707). Boisguilbert was brought up in a Jansenist family and, in his youth, spent some time at the “Petites Écoles” of Port-Royal, a well-known Jansenist institution. A lawyer — an “Ancien Régime” officer in charge of some police and justice offices in Normandy — he was struck by the appalling economic situation which prevailed in France

during the second half of the reign of Louis XIV and consequently proposed solutions for the recovery of the kingdom. His thought shared the Jansenist approach and was clearly influenced by Nicole's *Essais de morale* (especially the first volumes, 1670-1675) and by *Traité des lois* (1689) by Jean Domat (1625-1696), who was a celebrated lawyer and friend of Nicole and of Pascal.

Nicole's approach

Jansenist philosophy put a fundamental stress on the Fall of Man after Adam's sin, and on the negative consequences that ensued. Human beings replaced in their hearts the love of God with love of themselves — self-love, self-interest — and irremediably adopted in all circumstances egoistic behaviour. Incapable of any charitable attitude, they are motivated by self-love which is the driving force and explanation for each of their decisions and actions. This approach of course raised many important questions concerning religion (with such a depraved nature, is it simply possible to love God and to be saved?), morals (is there still a possibility for any virtuous action?) and society : if all men always and only aim at obtaining all that satisfies their self-interest, how can a society be maintained? Would not such a situation inevitably ensure a state of war of all against all? "The self-love of other men opposes itself to all our own desires This is how all men are at battle with one another. . . . One does not understand how societies, republics and kingdoms came to be formed from this crowd of people full of passions so contrary to union, and who tend only to destroy one another" (Nicole, 1675 : 116-17). It is true that, after the Fall, man is left with some sparks of reason, but this reason is too weak and depravity too potent to allow anything other than passions to direct his behaviour. Man nevertheless realizes that he cannot achieve his selfish goals if he uses violence and coercion. This is why he tries to make the most of his remaining reason, though only to achieve the goals of his passions : he is willing to submit to other men's wishes but only to fulfil his own self-interest.

The old moral tradition thus reversed. It is not reason that constraints and neutralizes one's passions, but rather the passions exploit reason to achieve their goal. This type of conduct, Nicole terms "enlightened self-love". Thanks to it, Nicole stresses, a society can endure and develop. And this society, which in its inwardness is absolutely without love, actually looks full of charity and

benevolence. Market activities are the best examples of this enlightened self-love, with the celebrated image of the innkeeper that was to be found again in Boisguilbert and the subsequent literature : “For example, when travelling in the country, we find men ready to serve those who pass by and who have lodgings ready to receive them almost everywhere. We dispose of their services as we wish. We command them ; they obey They never excuse themselves from rendering us the assistance we ask from them. What could be more admirable than these people if they were acting from charity ? It is cupidity which induces them to act” (Nicole 1670 : 204).

It is to be noted that this revolution in morals — where the passions and the depraved behaviour of man can have in the end socially positive outcomes — was restated some years later by a celebrated French Protestant theologian and philosopher, Pierre Bayle (1647-1706), in Chapter cxxiv of his *Continuation des pensées diverses . . . sur la comète* (1704) entitled “En quel sens le Christianisme est propre ou non à maintenir les sociétés”. There he stressed the fact that a society in which people would strictly follow the precepts of the Gospel would be poor, weak and the prey of its neighbours. In order for a country to be rich and prosperous, he wrote, the maxims of Christianity have to be left to the preachers : “keep all this for the theory, and bring back the practice to the laws of Nature . . . which incite us . . . to become richer and of a better condition than our fathers. Preserve the vivacity of greediness and ambition, and just forbid them robbery and fraud Neither the cold nor the heat, nothing should stop the passion of growing rich” (Bayle 1704, I : 600). As we know this idea was also to be developed shortly afterwards by Bernard de Mandeville.

It is Nicole’s and Domat’s opinion however that “enlightened self-love”, while necessary, is not a sufficient condition for a peaceful social life. A stable social order cannot be achieved without the help of bonds of a different kind, among which the most important are the rules of propriety and honour, religion and, above all, the “political order”, that is, a very strong political organization of society implying highly stratified estates and a marked inequality between men. Nicole’s conception of society is not market-based and the basic social link is still political and moral.

Boisguilbert and the foundation of liberal political economy

Boisguilbert in contrast obliterates the moral and political order and brings market relationships to the fore. As a Jansenist, however, his starting point is the same than Nicole's : the depravation of men after the Fall, the "terrible corruption of the heart". The logic of markets expresses nothing else but the systematic application of men's self-love to transactions, generating a maximizing selfish behaviour that lies at the heart of economic theory : "Each man seeks of fulfilling his self-interest to the greatest degree and with the greatest ease possible" (Boisguilbert 1691-1714 : 749).

Now, applying here some notions derived from Cartesian physics, Boisguilbert defines a state of optimal equilibrium as a situation in which every economic agent is allowed to realize his natural inclinations freely, that is, to buy and sell, trying to get the most he can out of the various situations he encounters. As each agent is only connected with the other ones by means of markets and of prices, it is not surprising to see Boisguilbert defining the "état d'opulence" equilibrium — a state of plenty — as a situation in which a specific price system occurs : the "proportion prices". They are defined as those prices that generate a "reciprocal utility" or a "shared profit". They make every producer "out of loss", that is, realize the equality of demand and supply in markets. This can be deduced in particular from the recurrent passages in which a "tacit condition of exchanges" is referred. To keep the economy in equilibrium, Boisguilbert states, one must pay attention to this fact that each producer only buys someone else's commodity under the implicit assumption (a "tacit condition") that someone else, directly or indirectly, buys the commodity he sells.

But can "proportion prices" prevail ? What about the destabilizing action of self-love ? Adopting Nicole's rhetorical style, Boisguilbert presents the problem as a paradox. He first states the necessity for each agent to be aware of the fragility of equilibrium. Each man, he writes, cannot obtain his own wealth but from the effectiveness of the "état d'opulence", he must not forget the necessity of fairness and justice in trade, he has to think of the common good. But, Boisguilbert adds, under the pressure of self-love he continuously acts in the opposite way. "Through a terrible corruption of the heart, there is no individual who does not try from the morning until night and does not employ

all his efforts to ruin this harmony, though he has only his happiness to expect from its maintenance” (Boisguilbert 1691-1714 : 891).

Can an equilibrium be reached with such a negative individual behaviour? Boisguilbert’s answer is positive. His opinion however is sometimes stated in a curious way : an equilibrium results, he notes, because “Providence” is keeping a watchful eye on the working of markets; because a “superior and general authority”, a “powerful authority” is continuously seeing to it that the economy is working properly — and he mentions “the harmony of the Republic, that a superior power governs invisibly”. As a matter of fact the phrase “superior and general authority” does not mean the intervention of the State : Boisguilbert states precisely the opposite. Nor the word “Providence” means “miracle” or stands for a rationally inexplicable state of affairs : in seventeenth-century French language — and especially for Nicole — it refers in the first place to the “secondary causes”, the objective laws God instituted at the creation of the world, that can be discovered through scientific research.

In Boisguilbert’s writings, “Providence” simply refers to the rules of free competition. An equilibrium is reached “*provided nature is left alone*, in other words, that nature is given its freedom” (ibid. : 891-2). Competition is the coercive power, the “general authority” that governs markets “invisibly” and assures the “harmony of the Republic”. It is in the interest of each seller, it is stated, to face the greatest possible number of buyers, as well as to be free to sell goods everywhere to anybody he wishes. From the buyer’s point of view, the symmetrical situation prevails. It is in the buyer’s interest to encounter a great number of sellers and to be able to buy from all persons, in all places. Thus, Boisguilbert asserts, free competition must prevail throughout the economy in order to balance these opposite forces and to eliminate the succession of buyer and seller’s market that characterizes crises. The conclusion is then straightforward : *laissez faire*, and *laissez passer*. “A person of status [Colbert] sent for an important merchant to confer about the means of re-establishing trade, that one would have to be blind not to agree that it was ruined ; the merchant said that there was a very certain and easy method to put into practice, which was that if he and his ilk [the ministers] stop interfering in it [in trade] then everything would go perfectly well because the desire to earn is so natural that no motive other than personal interest is needed to induce action” (ibid. : 795) And here reappears Nicole’s example of the

innkeeper. Economic activities “are governed by nothing other than the self-interest of the entrepreneurs, who have never considered rendering service nor obligating those with whom they contract . . . ; and any innkeeper who sells wine to passers-by never intended to be useful to them, nor did the passers-by who stop with him ever travel for fear that his provisions would be wasted” (ibid. : 748).

This is the greatest innovative feature of Boisguilbert’s work from which the basic proposition of liberal political economy unambiguously emerges. Most of the social theory of Nicole and Domat is obsolete. The self-love of the economic agents does not even have to be enlightened. Self-interest is not destabilizing, provided it is embedded in an environment of free competition — only the “rentiers” remain to be enlightened because they are not involved in trade and their action is at the origin of crises : but this is another story. Society is conceived as market-based and economic transactions form the basic — indirect — social link between otherwise independent economic agents. In Boisguilbert’s words, the realm is just a “general market of all sorts of commodities”. But if the political order disappears, this is not to say that the State has no part to play : its role is to make sure that the rules of free competition actually prevail and, in that respect, it has to “ensure protection and prevent violence from occurring” (ibid. : 892).

This new approach was to inspire the main developments in political economy during the eighteenth century. Quesnay and the physiocracy, Turgot and sensationist political economy, all developed the basic free trade ideas proposed by Boisguilbert. There was, however, an important difference : the Jansenist theological basis of the behaviour of the economic agents in markets have become redundant. They are replaced by another foundations : the sensationist principles found in John Locke’s 1690 *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, and powerfully developed in France by Étienne Bonnot de Condillac (*Essai sur l’origine des connaissances humaines*, 1746 and *Traité des sensations*, 1754). This substitution was essentially the work of Turgot — on which he also based his critique of the Scholastic doctrine of usury. Although the conclusions remain unchanged, the selfish attitude in markets is now explained by the natural inclination of human beings to feel pleasure and avoid pains — to get utility and avoid disutility — and a maximazing attitude sometimes associated to the “maximis et minimis” calculation in mathematics.

Dislocated from its religious foundations, liberal political economy became more widely accepted forming a both positive and normative discourse and generating — using here Max Weber’s phrase — a new “conduct of life”. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, especially with Jean-Baptiste Say (1767-1832) and his liberal disciples, political economy and its policy proposals stood unavoidably at the centre of most political and social controversies. Some important developments of economic theory were still to be boosted by religious thought. Examples include the work of H. H. Gossen in Germany or the more confidential but nevertheless pathbreaking contributions by the abbé Maurice Potron in France. However nineteenth Century France also saw the strong revival of various types of religious sentiments — as described by Sismondi (1826 : 21) “the nineteenth century proves to be eminently religious. It is so by choice, freely and consequently in a deeper and more innermost way than all the centuries that came before”. This revival in turn nurtured a critical examination of the newly emerging economic wisdom. The relationships between theology and economics started to be defined by conflict and an age of critique was now on the agenda.

4 The age of critique (1) : the Protestants and the first critique of political economy

A new wor(l)d

At the start of the nineteenth century, for such an influential economist as Jean-Baptiste Say, the sensationist foundations of political economy were complemented by utilitarianism and a strong anti-religious sentiment. He conceded that religion could be socially and politically useful. However, in his eyes, the religious sentiment itself originated only out of the limitation of the human mind, fear and some propensities like the credulous belief in marvellous stories. Later in the century, many liberal economists — most of them members of the “Société d’économie politique” and collaborators of the *Journal des économistes* — (for example Antoine-Élisée Cherbuliez, Frédéric Bastiat, etc., and even Michel Chevalier) stressed instead the reality of profound agreement between religion and liberal political economy. Liberal political economy unveils the laws of prosperity and harmony and its results are thus supposed to be in

accordance with the Divine justice and morality. This kind of discourse was however purely formal and not very convincing. The change of intonation though — from the time of Say on — is noteworthy and, for political economy, marks the transition from an offensive to a defensive position. In the meantime, a fierce critique of liberal economics had been formulated, within which some Christian economists played an important part.

In the eyes of many authors, the huge development of commerce marked the emergence of a new world. This new world constituted one of industry, the first industrial crises and above all the incredible spread of poverty. In particular, it was no longer possible to speak of “the poor” like in the past. This word seemed too narrow to express a massive and permanent phenomenon : many people who were physically able to work were periodically jobless and a great number of those who had a job could not earn a wage sufficient to maintain their family in a decent way. Previously, poverty was diffuse : with industrialization, it became heavily concentrated in some categories of the population and in some places. It was massive, obvious and visible and its very existence seemed tightly linked to the huge and parallel development of wealth. A new word was needed for this new world : “paupérisme” started to be widely used in the French language from the 1820s on. With pauperism, what would be called later the “social question” was posed. The emergence of various movements for a more or less radical reform of the society, the July Revolution of 1830, the 1848 Revolution, the uprisings during the Second Republic, all these dramatic events went hand in hand with a strong indictment of political economy. Wherever was the Eden promised by Quesnay, Turgot, Smith and Say ? Most authors argued that, free trade and the establishment of a “commercial society” did not better the condition of the majority of the population, rather seeming to produce the opposite. Something was flawed in the economic system itself, and the discourse of its supporters had to be re-examined. This reconsideration was carried out by various authors writing from different perspectives.

Many critics were fighting for their Christian ideals. Some were Protestants, such as early nineteenth Century political liberalism theoreticians Germaine de Staël (1766-1817) and Benjamin Constant (1867-1830), or later the economist Charles Gide (1847-1932). Others were Catholics including Jean-Paul Alban de Villeneuve-Bargemont (1784-1850), Charles de Coux (1787-1864) and Charles Périn (1815-1905). Some, took a direct inspiration from the Bible and

the Gospel to promote socialist ideas, including Pierre Leroux (1797-1871), and particularly Constantin Pecqueur (1801-1887). Pecqueur, among other important contributions, used the old scholastic doctrine of usury to justify his condemnation of profits and his proposal for a planned economy based on the public property of the means of production.

What constitutes the most striking fact in this story — differentiating the French situation from what happened in all other countries — is unquestionably that the dissatisfaction with liberal political economy led to the creation of new religions. Think for example of Henri Claude de Saint-Simon (1760-1825) and his manifesto for a New Christianity; the subsequent Saint-Simonian religion developed by “Fathers” Saint-Amand Bazard (1791-1832) and Barthélémy Prosper Enfantin (1796-1864); or Auguste Comte (1798-1857) and his Religion of Humankind — all proposed during the 1820s and early 1830s.

Because of the limited space devoted to this chapter, the following pages only focus on some developments pertaining to the two main and traditional lines of religious thought in France.

The Protestant critique : from the opposition to sensationism and utilitarianism to solidarism and cooperation

The Protestant critique preceded the Catholic one and is expressed in a similar way in the writings of Germaine de Staël and Benjamin Constant. Staël and Constant were not economists. Staël, the daughter of Jacques Necker, the celebrated Swiss protestant banker and minister of Louis XVI, was primarily novelist and philosopher, trying to preserve the best part of the legacy of the eighteenth century “philosophes”. Together with Constant she was at the centre of a major intellectual group known as the “groupe de Coppet” — named after one of her estates, Coppet in Switzerland. This group included Jean-Charles-Léonard Simonde de Sismondi (1773-1842). Constant was one of the main French liberal political thinkers, working toward the optimal political order in a post-Revolutionary and industrialist society based on laissez-faire principles. Staël and Constant shared with Say both some fundamental concepts of liberty — and a strong opposition to Napoleon’s regime. They are sometimes assimilated to the liberal economists, especially on the basis on such declarations as Constant’s : “I have defended the same principle for forty years :

complete liberty, in philosophy, in literature, in industry, in politics. And I mean by liberty the triumph of individuality” (Constant 1829b : 520). Unlike Say however they both acknowledged the consequences of modern liberty in a “commercial society” can be extremely negative. From this they developed a strong critique of the behaviour of the modern economic agent based on self-interest and justified by sensationist philosophy and utilitarianism.

Following Constant’s arguments, the progress generated by industrialism and the efficient role of self-interest are not without problems. Nature, it is true, endowed human beings with love of themselves for their personal preservation. But it also gave them sympathy, generosity, pity, so that they do not sacrifice their fellow citizens, and egoism becomes destructive whenever these counterweights are destroyed. Competition between self-interests in markets is thus insufficient for the attainment of an economic and social harmony. In a modern society the equilibrium between self-interest and virtue is quite fragile and the powerful urges of the former can easily destroy the latter.

Constant analysis of this negative aspect of modernity is best developed in his 1826 review of Charles Dunoyer’s *L’industrie et la morale* (Constant 1826). He argues firstly, that the success of modern society based on industrialism and on the enjoyment of civil liberty and privacy unavoidably leads to moral lethargy and decay. In a state of material wealth, citizens tend to accept any compromise in order to preserve their well-being, endangering thus domestic political liberty. This process of compromise also naturally entails deterioration in the moral position of human beings, who now appear to be no more than animals.

Secondly, Constant champions the notion of natural rights against the desire of Bentham to replace it with the concept of utility. It is true, he admits, that a natural right is sometimes imprecise. But the concept of utility is worse in this respect : it too can be interpreted in many contradictory ways and involves an important subjective and arbitrary element. “The principle of utility has a greater danger than that of law, since it arouses in the mind of man hope of profit, and not the sentiment of duty. But the appraisal of profit is arbitrary ; it is the imagination that decides ; but neither its error nor its caprice are capable of altering the notion of duty” (Constant 1829a : 552). Natural rights, the sentiment of duty, are independent of any calculation. The principle

of utility, inducing everybody to calculate in terms of pleasures and pains, is destructive of morality.

The same is true with respect to morals based upon interest and the notion of interest well-understood. If many authors, Constant remarks, maintain that actions based on self-interest coincides with sound morality and justice, this is because the notion of self-interest is used in a much broader and philosophical way than usual. Say, for example, emphasises the fact that this self-interest must be enlightened. But people simply do not understand this way of thinking and, as far as they are concerned, self-interest only entails an immediate and restrictive meaning : “when you tell them that they must govern according to their self-interest, they understand that they have to sacrifice to their interest all opposing or rival interests” (Constant 1829a : 548).

In sum, the liberty of the Moderns, the morality based on self-interest and the principle of utility, strictly separate “the logical and rational part of man” from his “noble and elevated part” — the realm of sentiments — retaining only the first. How to react against this state of affairs? It is necessary to arise and maintain “the most that is possible, nobles and disinterested sentiments” (ibid. : 421). But how? The practice of political liberty can help, and this is a reason why Constant warns against its neglect. However, this practice alone cannot be conclusive. Moral sentiments depend in fact on religion. Moral and religious sentiments have the same origin, God. Everything comes from a kind of universal and intimate revelation that everybody can freely feel : “it has its source in the human heart. Man need only listen to himself, he needs only listen to a nature which speaks to him with a thousand voices to be carried invincibly into religion” (ibid. : 43-4). This religious sentiment is independent of any institutionalized cult. In Staël’s eyes, for example, one of the best expressions of genuine faith is Rousseau’s celebrated “Profession de foi du vicaire savoyard” inserted in his philosophical novel, *Émile ou De l’éducation* (1762). If however an institutionalised church had to be selected, this would be some modernised version of the Protestant cult.

The diffusion of morals and religion is thus necessary to the preservation of society, but — contrary to an old view — this does not make it economically counterproductive. Constant stresses the fact that the countries in which the religious sentiment is the most widespread are also the most successful in eco-

conomic development. “Look at England, this crowd of sects which make it the object of their most lively ardour and of their assiduous meditations. England is however first among European countries for work, production, industry. Look at America America covers the seas with its flag ; it devotes itself, more than any people, to the exploitation of physical nature ; yet such is the degree of religious feeling in this region, that often just one family is divided into several sects, without this divergence disturbing the peace or domestic affection” (Constant 1825 : 672-3). England and the United States are of course two Protestant countries. It is not unlikely that Constant refers here implicitly to the old controversy about the comparative merits or demerits of the Catholic and Protestant countries in economic development — a controversy that developed again sporadically during the nineteenth century.

On the Protestant side, the critique raised by Staël and Constant was developed and considerably amplified by Sismondi especially in his *Nouveaux principes d'économie politique* (1819, 1827). This contains no explicit reference to theology. Some of his sentences, however, echo Constant's assertions and the evolution of his own religious attitude is similar to Constant's. In France proper, probably because the Protestants were busy with the reorganization of their cults, the links between theology and economics was no major concern. This was to change, however, especially during the first decades of the Third Republic. Some movements — inspired by economists as well as theologians and philosophers — revived the critique of political economy, questioning again the alleged benefits, for a community, of a regime based on selfish and maximizing agents freely competing in markets, and stressing again instead the importance of the principles of a Christian ethics based on solidarity and cooperation. One major author in this respect is certainly the economist Charles Gide, who first taught political economy at the University of Montpellier and ended his career at the prestigious Collège de France in Paris. He was very active in the Protestant “École de Nîmes” and, through his tireless action and many writings from the years 1880s to his death in 1932, developed the economic aspects of solidarity. Examples include the various editions of his *La Coopération : conférences de propagande* and *Économie sociale : les institutions de progrès social*. Gide argued against the idea of competition as a selfish struggle for life, replacing at the centre of his theoretical discourse the concept of “individualism” with those of “individuality” and cooperation. He developed

a theory of markets and exchanges based on efficient co-operative societies of consumption : a field, he thought, that, as a prime mover for a deep and peaceful social and economic change, was more effective than the more traditional co-operatives of production. He was also eager to demonstrate to the liberal economists, that this economic re-organization of society was not only possible but more efficient than a purely selfish-based competitive regime while showing the socialists, that violent anti-democratic and liberticidal changes were useless. Gide is now almost exclusively remembered as an historian of economic thought because of the successful textbook he wrote with Charles Rist, *Histoire des doctrines économiques depuis les Physiocrates jusqu'à nos jours*. His true significance though is seen in his rediscovery as the main theoretician of the co-operative movement and “mutuellisme”.

5 The age of critique (2) : the Catholic critique and the two births of Christian political economy

A tale of two traditions

The first critique by Staël and Constant was formulated for the main part before the triggering of the first modern economic crises and the spread of pauperism. The second stage of the Christian critique of political economy took place at the end of the Restoration, during the July Revolution and the ensuing July Monarchy. It was Catholic led, and first known as “charitable economics” or “Christian political economy”. This movement contains two entwined, but distinct elements reflecting dual intellectual traditions and developments.

The first strand of Christian political economy is the most celebrated : out of this came the phrases “charitable economics” and “Christian political economy” resonating within the public at large. Its origins are found in the three volume work by Villeneuve-Bargemont *Économie politique chrétienne ou Recherche sur la nature et les causes du paupérisme en France et en Europe et sur les moyens de le soulager et de le prévenir* (1834). While following Sismondi’s *Nouveaux principes d’économie politique* and published in the context of an existing literature on poverty — for example *Le visiteur du Pauvre* by Joseph-Marie de Gérando (1820), and Tanneguy Duchâtel’s *De la charité dans*

ses rapports avec l'état moral et le bien-être des classes inférieures de la société (1829) — the book nevertheless created sensation because of its powerful denunciation of the evil of pauperism and its supposed causes : the policies suggested by political economy. Villeneuve-Bargemont observations had a real world context : he had been a prefect, in the département of Nord in particular where the textile industry was developing. He had the opportunity to observe the plague of pauperism, and had made an attempt to gather the greatest possible number of data. Documented research on pauperism was in its infancy in early nineteenth-century France, and the celebrated books by Louis-René Villermé, *Tableau de l'état physique et moral des ouvriers employés dans les manufactures de coton, de laine et de soie*, and Eugène Buret, *De la misère des classes laborieuses en Angleterre et en France*, were only published in 1840.

Villeneuve-Bargemont's own background is conservative. As the child of an aristocratic family, he was five years old at the outburst of a Revolution, during which the possessions of his family were confiscated. Under the Empire, he started an administrative career that he continued during the Restoration. At the time of the July Revolution of 1830, he was prefect and Conseiller d'État. As a legitimist, that is, a supporter of the elder branch of the Bourbons — dethroned in 1830 — he refused to swear allegiance to the new king Louis-Philippe and was forcibly retired. He was briefly (1830-31) deputy at the National Assembly, took part to a legitimist plot against the July Monarchy, and then devoted himself to writing his 1834 book. In 1840, he was re-elected to the National Assembly where he was a member of the legitimist group and stayed until the 1848 February Revolution. He made a noticed speech in December 1840 in favour of a law restricting the work of children in the manufactures — significant as the first great social law of the century. Together with another conservative legitimist, Armand de Melun, he took part to the foundation of the *Annales de la charité* (1845) — “A monthly review devoted to the discussion of questions . . . concerning the lower classes” — that became in 1860 the *Revue d'économie charitable*. Again with Melun, he took part to the foundation of the “Société d'économie charitable” (1847). As a Conservative notable Villeneuve-Bargemont did not however neglect the academic institutions. He was elected to the “Académie des sciences morales et politiques” (1845), published in the *Journal des Économistes* and his book on the history of political

economy, *Histoire de l'économie politique* (1841) was published with the liberal publisher Guillaumin.

In contrast to this movement, the second strand of Christian political economy was neither administrative nor academic. Its identity is with neither the conservative forces nor the legitimist milieu scandalized by the new economic and social order. It can be found in a group of Catholic activists who, at the turn of 1830, gathered around the abbé Félicité Robert de Lamennais (1782-1854). Lamennais was well known amongst contemporaries, especially after the publication of a series of writings — *Essai sur l'indifférence en matière de religion* (1817-23) and *De la religion considérée dans ses rapports avec l'ordre politique et civil* (1825) — giving him the reputation of a formidable theologian and polemist. He was an activist of the Ultramontane cause and a fierce critique of Gallicanism. In addition he was also ultra-royalist though during the 1820s, like Chateaubriand, he became disappointed by the Restoration. He proposed an alliance between the Church and the liberals and called for the introduction of some fundamental rights — liberty of conscience, liberty of the press, liberty of teaching — and for the separation of the Church and the State. He had with him some disciples with whom he was publishing *Le Mémorial catholique*. At the time of the July Revolution, they were joined by a Dominican monk, Henri-Dominique Lacordaire (1802-1861) and by some laymen — Charles de Coux (1787-1864) and Charles Forbes de Montalembert (1810-1870). They founded a daily newspaper, *L'Avenir* — whose motto was “God and Liberty” — and the “Agence générale pour la défense de la liberté religieuse”, with the joint purpose of fighting for the freedom of teaching and to serve as a publishing house.

L'Avenir was short-lived : its progressive ideas were condemned by Pope Gregory XVI (*Mirari Vos*, 15 August 1832). The Lamennais group accepted the judgment but Lamennais himself progressively broke with the Church and evolved towards socialism. The other members of the group went on fighting in favour of Catholicism and they progressively formed a powerful network of influence, with some journals like the *Revue Européenne*, *Le Correspondant*, the daily *L'Univers* and the intellectually ambitious periodical, *L'Université catholique. Recueil religieux, philosophique, scientifique et littéraire*. The group exerted a lasting influence on the French intellectual life. The positions were not so clear-cut among its members, and an evolution happened with time

in favour of either a liberal political or a conservative but social Catholicism. While the Catholic hierarchy progressively adopted the principles of the latter, the former was always condemned. It is in this ferment of ideas that we can find the other origin of Christian political economy.

The economist of the group was Charles de Coux. At the beginning of the French Revolution, he was 3 years old when his family emigrated, and was raised in Great Britain. He returned to France in 1803, but resumed travelling abroad. He settled in Paris in 1823 and, in 1830, in a long letter to Lamennais, he proposed him some critical reflections on political economy from a Christian perspective, for a possible publication in *Le Mémorial catholique*. The same year, he took part in the foundation of *L'Avenir* in which he published political papers and a series of two articles entitled “Économie politique” (1830-31), probably those he intended first to give to the *Mémorial*. The “Agence pour la défense de la liberté religieuse” published in 1832 his *Essais d'économie politique* — a thin book composed of two lectures he gave at the request of Frédéric Ozanam (1813-1853).

Lamennais encouraged Coux to develop his ideas. An opportunity presented itself when the Belgian episcopate decided in 1834 the foundation of a Catholic university, first located in Malines and then in Louvain. The chair of political economy was offered to Coux who held it until 1845 when he came back to Paris as the director of *L'Univers*. After the February Revolution he left *L'Univers* and, together with Lacordaire, Ozanam and Maret, he became a member of the editorial staff of the newly founded liberal *L'Ère nouvelle*, the organ of the first “Démocratie chrétienne”. Like Lacordaire, he left some months later.

In Malines and Louvain, Coux developed his ideas and had some disciples. However part of his lectures also had diffusion beyond his own circle. *L'Université catholique* published lectures from a Catholic perspective on all fields. From the first issue in 1836 until 1840, part of the Coux lectures — “Cours d'économie sociale” — was published in this journal. *L'Université catholique* also asked the collaboration of Villeneuve-Bargemont who, from 1836 till 1838, gave to the journal a “Cours sur l'histoire de l'économie politique” — the basis of his 1841 book. Coux also collaborated to the *Dublin Review*.

The (D)evil : the English system

As an example of the developments proposed by Christian political economy, let's examine briefly Villeneuve-Bargemeont's approach. He noted that the sad reality of pauperism developed first in England, a country to be considered at the origin of all the sufferings of Europe under the industrial system. Under the phrase "English system", Villeneuve refers both to the kind of social and economic development that the United Kingdom witnessed since the end of the eighteenth Century, and to the fact that this development was favoured and encouraged by the "English school" of political economy : "Smith's school". The theme is not new. Whereas Say and the Liberal economists were inclined to praise England and English political economy in spite of some theoretical divergences, Sismondi already powerfully presented England as an example of how a highly civilized country could go astray and make important mistakes in economic policy because of the existence of wrong doctrines. He also stated that "while focusing the attention of my readers on England, I wanted to show, in the crisis that she endures, both the cause of our present sufferings . . . and the story of our own future if we go on on the basis of the principles that she followed" (Sismondi 1827 : xvi). Villeneuve-Bargemont radicalized the critique : "The writings of Malthus and of Messrs de Sismondi, Droz and Rubichon showed that, while the manufacturing system in England could enrich the nation, that is, the industrial entrepreneurs, it was at the expense of the wealth, health, morality and happiness of the working classes" (Villeneuve-Bargemont 1834, I : 15).

What are then the flaws of the English system ? Two kinds of critiques are formulated. The first insists on the instability of an economy based on the development of "artificial" needs and manufactures. The second questions and challenges the basic hypothesis of Liberal political economy. However the two are intertwined : the very behavioural assumptions of political economy, and the theory based on them, induce in fact the continuous increase of artificial needs, material wealth and industry.

In a nutshell, Villeneuve-Bargemont takes up Staël's charge against political economy and the modern free market society : that of being based on a narrow sensationist philosophy which ignores all sentiments and ethics, and which dictates a morals based on interest. "It is certain that Smith almost

always disregards moral and religious considerations : with the consequence that, basing the principle of work and civilisation on a continuous excitement of the needs, he founded the theory of the production of wealth on industrial monopoly, sensationist philosophy, and on the selfish morals of personal interest” (Villeneuve-Bargemont 1836, 87). The phrase “industrial monopoly” means here that all the forces of society were directed towards the extension of manufactures, industry and commerce, to the detriment of agriculture. “The principle of the progressive excitement of industry through the continuous excitement of the needs appears now as a fatal doctrine that must inevitably lead to the last consequences of selfishness and immorality.” (ibid. : 89)

Hence an unavoidable instability of the system, the excess of supply and the crises, with their negative consequences, that is, an incredible inequality in the distribution of income, pauperism and the emergence of a new feudalism, more oppressive than the former one : the feudalism of money and industry. Hence also the fact that, for the most part, “the appalling destitution, the existence of which in England was indicated by Malthus, could more rationally be attributed to the industrial system than to an excess of population” (Villeneuve-Bargemont 1834, I : 9). The resulting state of things was unbearable, and some violent social reaction was to be expected in England. As for the other countries, “it is still time to take another route and to cure ... the English disease which threatens to infect us” (ibid. : 15). But which route? Two main complementary axes are proposed to remedy the situation.

The first direction is strictly economic and consists in re-directing the development of the country in a more “natural” way, with agriculture as the pivotal sector — all other activities being subordinate to it — together with a change in the final demand, a limitation of the needs and a fair distribution of income with decent wages.

The second way out is a necessary moral reform based on the Christian religion. This will allow the structural change in economic behaviours to take place, based on the conviction that happiness and welfare neither require continuous material accumulation nor always changing needs — an important aspect of welfare being the spiritual development of humanity — and that they will be favoured by the practice of the first of all Christian virtues : charity. “Uniting

firmly the science of the material wealth with the science of the moral wealth” (ibid. : 83) is thus the French solution.

Disregarding Villeneuve-Bargemont’s more specific developments, in particular his ideas on the various types of associations, the program in favour of a “French system” is summed up in the following way.

How to make labour, industry, the production of wealth . . . be in harmony with the welfare of the most numerous classes of society? The way exists . . . but it requires . . . a complete change in the social doctrines. Instead . . . of being only guided by cupidity and the morals of material interests, one should consider all human beings . . . as brothers . . .; one should demonstrate in all undertakings moderation, justice, charity; one should love and seek progress in everything, but with wisdom, . . . without selfishness; one should not neglect the acquisition of the commodities of life, but not get them at the expense of the happiness of others; one should regulate needs, desires, profits, so that labour, wages and the moral and physical betterment of the lower classes could go with the increase in wealth One should thus protect agriculture because it leads more certainly to this goal, encourage the machines which are useful to all but proscribe . . . those . . . harmful to the working class : such is the solution to our problem. The industrial selfishness will, no doubt, answer : *Master, your words are harsh!* For you, maybe. But they are clear and soft to the hearts which are not closed to justice and truth. (ibid. : 385-6)

From a theoretical point of view, Villeneuve-Bargemont did not have a significant following — except perhaps Ramon de la Sagra in Spain — and the group of which he was a member, around the *Annales de la charité* and the “Société d’économie charitable”, had only limited practical ambitions. He envisaged a new theoretical development founded on Christian principles, but the project as well as the delimitation of a possible school of thought always remained vague. “It is enough for our ambition to have shown in advance the extent of their mission to the writers who would like to enter a noble and new career : we would be happy if our works . . . could contribute to the coming . . . of new and Catholic Adam Smiths who would realize what we just foresaw and indicated” (Villeneuve-Bargemont 1838, 17)

Coux's social economics

Charles de Coux's ideas started developing prior to Villeneuve-Bargemont's and he subsequently criticized Villeneuve's project of a reorganization of society on the basis of agriculture. This policy, in Coux's eyes, would not have solved anything. He rejected Malthus's principle of population, the "wrong concept of wealth" proposed by the economists and criticized their neglect of the distribution of income forming a harsh critique of political economy. Coux's system was based on two fundamental ideas. Firstly, and somewhat paradoxically, he accepted the basic concepts of political economy, the free markets framework. Central to his approach is the requirement to provide a sufficiently high and decent level of wages. Disappointingly, he fails to demonstrate how this is to be implemented.

Secondly, and more fundamentally Coux introduced the concept of "social economics". Coux's idea was to include political economy in a larger set of theoretical propositions that was supposed to confer it its real meaning — a meaning without which it remains partial and therefore dangerous as in the English approach. The production of wealth supposes the existence of a society, and society supposes sociability. "Social economics" aims at studying the conditions of this sociability. Its object is to determine which form of society is the most capable of securing it, therefore favouring the creation of wealth in a stable and durable environment. "Its main object is the knowledge of the laws of society ; it is . . . the necessary prelude to political economy" (1836, I : 95). It is of a higher order than political economy because it has something to do with the law of God. "It is difficult to believe that . . . no voice ever arose to prove the economists that all their most central theories . . . are implicitly contained in Catholicism. Even a superficial study of their doctrines could have been sufficient to realize that they are just but a collection . . . of the consequences that naturally ensue from the application of the revealed truths." (1830-31, 106)

Like in the Jansenist approach, the basic selfish and maximizing behaviour of agents in markets is explained by theology. As it is impossible to change it, Coux aimed at neutralizing its effects. This neutralization is at the basis of social economics — or Christian political economy — and is based on the uncovering of the sole stable social link susceptible to generate a real prosperity.

This link is indicated by religion. It is based on a fundamental ethical value : sacrifice. It is this point “that distinguishes fundamentally Christian political economy from the anti-Christian political economy. The former considers sacrifice as the principle which generates wealth, but for the latter it is cupidity.” (1836, II : 161)

How should we understand this sacrifice? It is the Christian virtue, that is, the attitude which puts the love of one’s neighbour, charity, at the centre of action, and which makes men have a virtuous conduct even at their own loss. In such a way a lasting social link is created. Coux stresses the fact that this virtuous behaviour is not only compatible with the material prosperity of a nation but is in fact the only way to achieve it. Any sacrifice to the benefit of others certainly impoverishes the person who does it. But this person in turn receives the benefits of the sacrifices made by others, and in this way the general welfare is increased. “If the sacrifices of the Catholic were lost for society, if the hardships he endures, his unselfishness, his charity, his good faith, the purity of his mores, would not turn to the benefit of anybody, we would not have anything to answer to the anti-Catholic economists. But is it really so? . . . The Christian sacrifice, while finding its principle in the love for God, always . . . turns to the benefit of others, and if it impoverishes those who make it, it enriches others. But we all are the others of others, and, consequently, each member of a Catholic society finds in the sacrifices of the other members a great compensation of his own ones. Nay, he is a hundredfold rewarded since, on the one hand, there is no lasting society without a reciprocal devotion of its members and, on the other hand, the more the spirit of sacrifice is vigorous, the greater are the social advantages that are divided between all.” (1836, I : 93)

But what obliges the members of a community to adopt such a behaviour so opposed to the nature of the man after the Fall? It is, Coux states, not only the belief in a God, but in a “remunerative and vengeful God” who inevitably and infallibly rewards and punishes men during their eternal life. Human beings are led by the balance they make between their immediate and temporal interest, which is always uncertain, and their eternal interest, which instead is certain. They are still led by cupidity, but by “the cupidity for the goods of another life, the craving for an imperishable wealth” (1836, I : 96). Self-interest is always the prime mover, but “an enlarged, inflated self-interest, extended beyond the

grave” (1836, I : 280). Sociability is based on this fact. There is no state of nature, no social compact. Only religion matters, and moreover a religion based on a Revelation because what is just or unjust, good or bad, must be clearly stated from the outset and independent of the actions and opinions of men.

The lectures published by Coux in *L'Université catholique* develop extensively this point of view and propose a typology of societies based on the possible combinations of two elements : what he calls the *legitimate* order (based on religious beliefs) and the *legal* order (based on political structures). Suffice it here to note that, of course, the aim of these developments is to show that Catholicism is the only religion susceptible to generate a genuine and lasting prosperity. Coux's lectures are a work of apologetics, and Christian political economy is also conceived as a weapon against the Protestants.

While Villeneuve-Bargemont had no disciples, the posterity of the Lamennais group was substantial and influential. The dissemination of the Catholic ideas on political economy benefited from Coux's teaching and publications. His action was continued by one of his students, the Belgian Charles Périn, who succeeded him in 1845 to the chair of political economy in Louvain. Périn started publishing a bit later, especially in reaction to the 1848 Revolution — *Les économistes, les socialistes et le christianisme* (1849). He was certainly the most “economist” of the Catholic tradition and his importance can hardly be overestimated. Through his many writings — among which his celebrated treatise *De la richesse dans les sociétés chrétiennes* (1861) and *Le patron : sa fonction, ses devoirs, ses responsabilités* (1886) — he systematically developed Christian political economy and laid the foundations of what was to be called “social Catholicism” — the social doctrine of the Church being officially expressed for the first time in Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum*.

While Montalembert — and in part also Coux — was clearly defining the main features of “liberal Catholicism”, Périn represents the outcome of another line of thought that, in a sense, was also in gestation within the Lamennais group in the early 1830s. Defining himself as a follower of Joseph de Maistre's (1753-1821) counter-Revolutionary ideas, he developed systematically Christian political economy in a conservative way — “social Catholicism” — actively arguing and militating in favour of paternalism, patronage and an organisation of firms and economic activities based on a new form of guilds or corpo-

rate bodies. These proposals were all very close to those of Frédéric Le Play (1806-1882). The contrast is striking with the “social economy” and the “social Christianity” based on solidarism and cooperation, that the Protestants were trying to theorize and practically organize at the same period.

6 Conclusion

This chapter aimed at analysing some decisive moments in the hectic relationships between theology and economics in France during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Any survey of such is of course incomplete, given the wealth of primary literature, authors and debates over such a long period. Some traditional and important topics — like the controversies about usury, the arguments over the comparative influence of the Catholic or Protestant cults on the economic development of nations, or the various proposals of new religions — have necessarily been left aside. The analysis focused on some core propositions of economic theory, dealing with the basic behaviour of agents in markets.

The reader must also remember that the links between economics and theology in France have not been seriously studied in the past and that researches in this field resumed only recently after a long period of disinterest — especially from the economists’ corner. It is nevertheless hoped that this chapter does provide a general but precise view of the subject and depict this strong to and fro movement — first of creation and then of critique — that characterized the French context.

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