

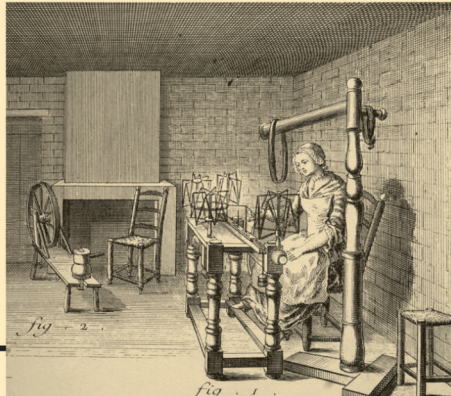
EUROPÄISCHE AUFKLÄRUNG  
IN LITERATUR UND SPRACHE

28

Beatrice Schuchardt /  
Christian von Tschilschke (eds.)

PROTAGONISTS OF  
PRODUCTION  
IN PREINDUSTRIAL  
EUROPEAN LITERATURE  
(1700-1800)

Male and Female Entrepreneurs,  
Craftspeople, and Workers



PETER LANG

What form did the portrayal of business owners, entrepreneurs, peasants, craftspeople and similar ‘protagonists of production’ take before it became the subject of negative assessments in the epoch of industrialization? Focusing on the European Enlightenment movement with a special emphasis on Spain, this book sheds light on how both male and female figures working in production are represented by novels, plays, economic tracts and in the press. Literary scholars, historians, and economists analyse how those portrayals are related to the history of economic thought, 18th-century economic discourse, and enlightened Political Economy – with an epilogue by Deirdre McCloskey.

**Beatrice Schuchardt** is a scholar of Spanish and French Literary and Cultural Studies at the University of Dresden, Germany. Her areas of interest include the anthropologization of enlightened economic theory in Spanish 18th-century theatre, Latin American media icons, Postcolonial Theory, trauma and dictatorship in Latin American detective novels, and performance subjects in the genre of Spanish, Latin American and French e-mail-novels.

**Christian von Tschilschke** holds the chair of Romance Literary Studies (Spanish) at the University of Münster, Germany. His research interests include the relationship between literature and media (film/television), theory and practices of intermediality, documentarism and docufiction, French, Spanish and Latin-American cinema, Spanish literature and culture of the 18th century, French and Spanish contemporary literature as well as the Spanish discourse about Africa.

Protagonists of Production in Preindustrial European Literature  
(1700-1800)

# EUROPÄISCHE AUFKLÄRUNG IN LITERATUR UND SPRACHE

Herausgegeben von  
Siegfried Jüttner und Christian von Tschilschke

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**PETER LANG**  
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Thomas Apolte

## Prologue

Economic agents do not have the best reputation, neither in a broader public nor in the arts. This is somewhat astonishing in light of the fact that we are all economic agents of sorts. It is even a truism among economists that any sort of decision we can conceive of is, *inter alia*, always and everywhere an economic decision. After all, making a decision implies that we have alternatives to choose from, and choosing among alternatives in a consistent manner is, by an economist's definition, an economic decision. Still, economic decisions are widely perceived as ethically objectionable in public.

Obviously, economists and most non-economists look at economic processes, economic decisions, and economic actors from a very different angle, and that traces back to the very definition of what an economic decision is all about. Starting from here, the different angles shape our particular perceptions about all sorts of real-world economic phenomena, and that works itself through our epistemic processes, all the way to the point where we reach those agents that instigate and promote industrial production processes. Typically, the modern-day reservations against the protagonists of production are grounded in often exceptionally high incomes, if only of those that became publicly visible, which, at the same time, are those relatively few who turned out to be successful in their economic endeavors. It is quite common to perceive the thus generated wealth of successful entrepreneurs as unjust and rooted in ruthless exploitation of the poor, consistently pursued in a process of cold-hearted economic decision-making. Naturally, then, the world would be a better place if only we limited the scope of economic decisions, and here we come full circle.

Against this background, it is striking to learn that the image of the protagonists of production has not always looked like it looks today. Rather, it was subject to substantial changes over time, and this did indeed come as a surprise to me. In particular, the early industrial revolution and the labor movement that emerged in the course of the rapid and disruptive process of industrialization seem to have played a crucial role. On the one hand, this is not overly surprising. On the other hand, though, assigning a generally positive and negative image of the protagonists of production to the time before and after the first industrial revolution, respectively, would be far too simple-minded.

An intriguing way to reach a more colorful and informative picture of the evolution of the image of protagonists of production is to dig into the history of literary art and fiction around the industrial revolution, and this is precisely what the project “Protagonists of Production” did. The result was a wonderful conference held in November 2019 at the University of Münster, skillfully organized and hosted by Beatrice Schuchardt and Christian von Tschiltschke of the Department of Romance Studies at the University of Münster. Beatrice contacted me earlier that year and asked me if I might consider letting our Center for Interdisciplinary Economics be a partner of the official hosts. It didn’t take much persuasion to convince my colleagues at our Center to gladly accept. As a result, we can today take pride in having been part of a conference that was exceptional and inspiring in almost every respect.

It is of course far beyond the scope of expertise of an economist like me to evaluate the competence and authority of those many national and international participants that stem from philology. Still, from what I saw and heard in their contributions I can only say that I was impressed. On top of that, the organizers managed to win Deirdre McCloskey, the one scholar that must come first to the mind of economists and philologists alike for a conference like this, since she is famous for having contributed widely acknowledged and fascinating insights to both academic disciplines.

The organizers did a wonderful job in conceptualizing and organizing a conference that will remain with all of us as something exceptional. It would have been all the more pitiful if the results of the conference had not somehow been made available to the public. I am hence delighted that the protagonists of the production of this volume can now present the result of their stupendous work to a broad audience of those that participated in the conference and those that could not. The volume is the outcome of an outstanding piece of interdisciplinary scholarship, which is extraordinary not least since it bridges the expertise of academic disciplines that could hardly be more remote from each other in terms of the topics they cover, the methodology, and not least the respective academic traditions. We, the members of the Center of Interdisciplinary Economics, are proud to have been part of this truly remarkable project.



Beatrice Schuchardt and Christian von Tschilschke

# Introduction: European Enlightenment as the Era of Both Male and Female Protagonists of Production (1700–1800)

## 1. Why talk about “Protagonists of Production”?

On the literary stage, business owners are primarily shown in a negative light. They seldom appear as protagonists but make particularly common antagonists. Recurrent topoi of this biased literary portrayal are the themes of entrepreneur “in a tight spot”<sup>1</sup> and that of the “exploitative capitalist.”<sup>2</sup> From a historical perspective, the widespread belief “of the crookedness of bosses, industrialists and business owners”<sup>3</sup> is primarily a consequence of the onset of the industrial revolution in the 19th century and of the political ideologies reacting to this development. But what form did the literary picture of business owners take before it became the subject of primarily negative assessments in the epoch of industrialization?

The present volume focuses on this question, which has, up to now, rarely been asked, by concentrating on systematic, diachronic, and comparative research into literary portrayals of business owners and other representatives of the production industry in the literature, press, and economic tracts of Spain, England, France, Italy, and Germany written in the 18th century. In this context, the term “entrepreneur,” which at this time remained semantically unstable, is also to be examined and given greater conceptual clarity. Thus, the present volume intends to offer an interdisciplinary, both literary and economic perspective on pre- and early industrial conditions in 18th-century Europe.

As will be shown, in this heroic and experimental epoch of production, such portrayals of people involved in economic and production processes were not limited to the exploiter-exploited dichotomy but encompassed a much wider

- 
- 1 Cf. von Matt 2009, 99: “Wo immer der Unternehmer in der Literatur auftaucht, muss er in die Klemme geraten” (“Wherever the entrepreneur appears in literature, he has to get into a tight spot.” Our trans.).
  - 2 Cf. Rust 2013, blurb: “der ausbeuterische Unternehmer-Kapitalist.” Our trans.
  - 3 Rust 2013, blurb: “der Verworfenheit der Bosse, der Unternehmer und der Fabrikanten.” Our trans.

field, including not only industrialists and the workers they employed, but also craftspeople, the self-employed, farmers and agricultural workers. Before the “specter of capital”<sup>4</sup> began to dominate in the literature of the 19th century and beyond, representatives of professions in the field of production became significant social role models during the epoch of the Enlightenment. Business owners, workers, craftspeople and farmers all turned into “economic heroes,” characters who were designed to be looked up to, creating a situation unique in the history of literature. Furthermore, as the gender hierarchy started to change in the 18th century, attention was paid for the first time to female protagonists in their roles as professionals in the field of production.

The eighteen contributions collected in this volume go back to the interdisciplinary conference “Protagonists of Production. Staging male and female entrepreneurs, craftspeople and workers in preindustrial Spanish and European economic tracts, literature and press (1700–1800),” which took place from November 6–9, 2019, at the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster (Germany) and brought together numerous literary scholars, economic historians and economists from Austria, France, Germany, Spain, and the USA, researchers who all share the research field of economics and literature.<sup>5</sup> Specifically, the conference set out to examine the following leading questions:

1. What caused the discursive upgrading of the production sector in the preindustrial period?
2. Which relationships exist between ideas to be found in economic theory, as seen in 18th-century economic tracts, and the portrayals of protagonists of production in the press and in entertainment media of the Enlightenment such as theatre and the novel?
3. How are the male and, especially, female protagonists of production portrayed in the press, theatre and novels of the 18th century?
4. In what way are the press, theatre and novels used for propaganda purposes by the new political economy of the Enlightenment and to what extent do they resist or question the main discourses of political power?

In order to tap the full inter- and transcultural potential of these questions, they were primarily intended to be examined from a European perspective,

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4 Cf. Vogl 2014.

5 Thankfully, the conference was financially supported by the German Research Foundation (DFG).

with a focus on the literary and discursive exchange between Spain and France, England and Italy.

## **2. Why Spain and Europe? A short note on existing research and the necessity to fill some gaps**

In the 1970s, literary portrayals of merchants, business owners, industrialists and workers from the 19th century onwards became the focus of literary analysis,<sup>6</sup> most studies tying into Marxist perspectives.<sup>7</sup> However, from the mid-1980s, this perspective lost importance in literary studies.<sup>8</sup> Instead, an area of research developed that was oriented towards the theory of discourse and included economic history in its considerations.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, economic theory and economic history in turn undertook a re-evaluation of literary texts,<sup>10</sup> sometimes by introducing a feminist perspective.<sup>11</sup>

In its examination of working people and those active in production, recent research prioritizes anthropological aspects over social ones, shifting the focus away from the significance of belonging to a specific social class and towards typologies of people working and active in the field of production, which emerged in European literature from 1800 onwards.<sup>12</sup> In comparison to the 19th century, little attention has been paid to the representation of economic aspects in 18th-century literature. A few exceptions do exist: for example, the long-overlooked Spanish Enlightenment and its sketches of working people in economic theory<sup>13</sup> and literature<sup>14</sup> have recently attracted greater interest within the individual disciplines of economic history, economic theory and literary studies. However, there is as yet no systematic, international and interdisciplinary investigation into the concepts of protagonists of production in economic theory and literature prior to industrialization. There are, for example, no studies focusing on the discursive interferences between economic tracts and works of literature, which

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6 Cf., e.g., Nuth 1991; Bly 1992.

7 Cf., among others, Belda Planes 1976; McTague 1976; Rodríguez 1985.

8 Cf. Andioc 1987.

9 Cf. García Garrosa 1990, 1996; Volkmann 2003; Hontanilla 2008; Witthaus 2012; Pignol / Akdere 2016.

10 Cf. Rommel 2006; McCloskey 2007, 2016.

11 Cf. McCloskey 1993, 2001; Ferber 2003.

12 Cf. Díez Rodríguez 2015; Gies 2015, 2016; Bauer 2016.

13 Cf. Díez Rodríguez 2014; Ocampo Suárez-Valdés 2015.

14 Cf. Schuchardt 2015, 2016, 2018, 2019, 2022; Witthaus 2017.

cross from England over to France and towards Spain and the parts of Italy ruled by Spain. This is a research gap the present volume intends to fill by exploring the nature of these discursive interferences.

Another factor, that is of similar importance both for literary studies and for economic history, has also not been given adequate attention: around 1750, a change takes place in economic tracts, as well as in the literary forms of drama and the novel. For the first time, female characters begin to appear alongside male protagonists of production. The fields of activity of these women are no longer limited to the family housekeeping; they are actively involved in processes of production as agricultural workers and craftspeople.<sup>15</sup> Although the concept of the *femina oeconomica* has, over the last few years, increasingly become the focus of both economic<sup>16</sup> and literary studies,<sup>17</sup> on the one hand, no one has tried to define what differentiates her from her male counterpart. On the other hand, the working and producing woman, the *femina fabra*, still fails to be represented in academia.<sup>18</sup> Our conference volume sees this circumstance as an opportunity to discuss the striking gender reprogramming of economic behavior in the 18th century, taking into account the discursive interdependency between demands for economic reform in Spain, Italy, England and France as well as international gender concepts of the Enlightenment.<sup>19</sup>

### 3. Historical, political, and economic contexts and text-corpuses

Prior to 1700, individuals involved in production processes seldom appear in tracts of economic theory and are only occasionally seen in literature and theatre, where they primarily take on the role of ridiculous figures such as the “simple-minded peasant.” However, this changes in the course of the 18th century, reflecting the emergence of Political Economy as a discipline with its enlightened proposals for reform aiming to improve the respective national economy. Characters from the field of production, who had up until then rarely been given sufficient attention, gain in prominence. This increase in status migrates from

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15 Cf. Gies 1996; Schuchardt 2015, 2022; Méndez Vázquez 2016.

16 Cf. Ferber / Nelson 1994, 2001; Fabel 2002.

17 Cf. Habermann 2008; Tschilchke 2014, 2018; Schößler 2017.

18 On this lack of definition of the *femina oeconomica*, cf. Schuchardt 2022, 222–231. For a definition of the *femina oeconomica* and *femina fabra* for the context of 18th-century Spain, cf. Schuchardt 2022, 569–578.

19 Cf. Gronemann 2013.

economic tracts to media primarily popular with a proto-middle class audience: the press, theatre and novels. The impressive panorama of working people and professions shaped by both production and craftsmanship, which is particularly conspicuous in Spanish and French literature, certainly deserves to be given systematic attention due to its social and artistic significance.

Here, an important role is played by international processes of reception and discursive interferences between the European centers of economic development and their peripheries. Such processes can, firstly, be found in the influence of English (Hume; Mandeville; Smith), French (Quesnay; Say; Voltaire) and Italian (Genovesi; Struzzi) tract literature on the economic reform discourse on the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>20</sup> Secondly, these processes can be seen in the manifestations of an Enlightenment movement in the press with a reforming and middle class focus, found primarily in the journalistic form of the *Spectators*, which extends from England across the whole of Europe.<sup>21</sup> Thirdly, they are expressed in the English sentimental novel, which first influenced English theatre, then taking on form in the “sentimental comedy” that in turn spread from England to France and then Spain.<sup>22</sup>

Political programs for increasing profits in trade and industry existed in Spain, England, France and Italy. They were not only found in royal decrees, in economic tracts and in the press, but also in the theatre, a medium with a particularly broad impact on society. Especially in Spain and Italy, it acted as the “school of the people”<sup>23</sup> and as a vehicle of state-controlled economic discourses of reform.<sup>24</sup> For this reason, special attention should be paid to the theatre when aiming to investigate the discursive connections between economic theory and literature. The novel also proves to be a relevant literary form, and that not only because of its influence on sentimental theatre. As the example of Daniel Defoe shows, novelists interested in questions of economics (see *An Essay Upon Projects*, 1697) and journalists concerned with the industrial sector (see *The Weaver*, 1719 ff.) stand at the very beginning of a discursive exchange between economics and literature (see *Robinson Crusoe*, 1719; *Moll Flanders*, 1722). The same is true for one of the most prominent economists of Spanish Enlightenment, Gaspar

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20 Cf. Gittermann 2008; Ocampo Suárez-Valdés 2010; Díez Rodríguez 2015.

21 Cf. Ertler / Hobisch 2014a / b; 2012; Tschiltschke 2012.

22 Cf. García Garrosa 1990; Fuentes 1999.

23 Álvarez Barrientos 2005, 189: “escuela del pueblo.” Our trans.

24 Cf. Schuchardt 2015.

Melchor de Jovellanos, author of various economic tracts and of the sentimental drama *El delincuente honrado* (1774; “the honest criminal.” Our trans.).

#### 4. A very productive field: Literature and economy

A closer look on the relationship between literature and economy shows, however, that the difficulties already start with the notion of literature itself. As we all know, the word “literature” in a modern sense, which describes an aesthetically valued, mostly fictional kind of writing, is the result of the modern literary system that emerged in the 18th century as a relatively autonomous symbolic and social field.<sup>25</sup> Before that, the word “literature” was used to refer to any kind of knowledge fixed in a written form, whereas the realm of art was covered by the terms “theater,” “poetry” and “prose.” In Spain, for instance, the distinction between “literature” and “knowledge” only begins to appear at the very end of the 18th century.<sup>26</sup>

With regard to the relationship between literature and economy, we can differentiate in a very general sense between two different fields we might call “literature of economy” and “economy of literature.” The “literature of economy” embraces the representation of any aspect concerning the economic life: from matters of content – figures, themes, motifs and the economy as a reflexive or functional model for society – to the form and the very structure of literary works themselves. The “economy of literature” refers to the whole of the socio-economic conditions that influence and determine literature in its production, reception and distribution.

Among the methodological approaches that help us to understand the field of the “literature of economy,” traditional literary studies of influences, themes and motifs may still prevail. But this should not render the important impulses that came from the anthropology of literature, the systems theory or the theory of literature as an “interdiscourse” less visible.<sup>27</sup> Especially the systems theory and the theory of interdiscourse considerably contributed to increasing the awareness

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25 Cf. Schmidt 1989.

26 There is, by the way, an interesting attempt to rewrite the history of the Spanish literature of the 18th century with a view to a more traditional, broader perspective: the *Historia literaria de España en el siglo XVIII* (“*Literary History of Spain in the 18th century.*” Our trans.), edited in 1996 by Francisco Aguilar Piñal, also includes articles about themes such as religion, economy or musicology.

27 Cf. Vogl 2002, 2014 and Plumpe / Werber 1995. The term “interdiscourse” follows Link 1988.

that literature always picks up economic issues according to its own inherent laws, procedures, interests, traditions and conventions, instead of merely reflecting or propagating certain current discourses.

So, if we keep this in the back of our minds, when we take a glance at the trajectory of the present volume, we recognize that the panorama of themes and approaches it offers is quite complete: Literary texts in a broader sense like treatises and dictionaries are represented as well as literary texts in a narrower sense. Traditional genres like the theatre stand beside new genres like the novel or the press which first appeared in the 18th century. As to the literary examples, they come from various European countries: England, France, Germany, Italy and Spain.

## 5. Interdisciplinarity taken seriously

Nowadays, “interdisciplinarity” and “transdisciplinarity” are key concepts in the academic field. What some of us might have already experienced when we travel to conferences bearing the “interdisciplinarity quality stamp” is this: Everyone is talking about things from their own discipline’s perspective, which is good. But, at the latest when we begin to talk about concepts, we find that we have difficulties making ourselves understood – and understanding each other. As Claire Pignol and Çinla Akdere have observed, when it comes to interdisciplinary collaboration, economists tend to cooperate with scholars of related disciplines such as mathematicians rather than with researchers of the field of literary studies.<sup>28</sup> A similar phenomenon can be observed in literary studies, where investigators turn to colleagues from cultural or media studies rather than to the empirical facts-based physicists, mathematicians, or economists.<sup>29</sup> Of course, this depiction is quite schematic, and things already have changed for the better, since there *are* economists who consider literature to be a source of economic knowledge,<sup>30</sup>

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28 Cf. Pignol / Akdere 2016, 77.

29 As stated by Pignol / Akdere 2016, 77: “L’indifférence de nombreux littéraires à l’égard de l’économie résulte aussi de la volonté de scientificité des économistes, qui les a conduits à emprunter soit le langage mathématique, soit le langage d’expert, codifié et stéréotypé auquel précisément s’oppose la littérature” (“The indifference of many literary scholars towards economics also results from economists’ will to scientificity, which led them to borrow either the mathematical language, or the codified and stereotyped language of experts which literature specifically resists.” Our trans.).

30 The idea that literature contains economic knowledge was recently emphasized by Urban 2018.

and we do find researchers of literary studies cooperating with economists<sup>31</sup> and neuroscientists.

The present volume – like the conference held in November 2019 at the University of Münster – is an attempt to take interdisciplinarity between economists, historians and researchers in literary studies seriously, shedding light on the representation of protagonists of production in economic tracts, press and literary texts by considering economic history, economic theory and their being adapted to and reflected by different genres. The keynote lecture on “The Bourgeois Revaluation and the Rise of Liberalism, 1648–1848” was held by Deirdre McCloskey. As gender issues form a central aspect in many of the studies gathered here, the concept of “conjective economics” developed by her is very apt to describe to how this volume conceives interdisciplinarity. Originally, “conjective economics” meant that the discipline of economics, which was simply understood as dominated by male scholars back in the 1990s (and sometimes still *is*), needed to take into account a feminine academic perspective, accepting it as an intrinsic and necessary part of a discipline on the verge of change. As McCloskey put it in 1993: “It is neither the circle nor the square, neither objective nor subjective. It is what we know together, by virtue of a common life and language. It is what men and women know together in their conversations, together or apart.”<sup>32</sup> What McCloskey once postulated for conjective economics is a fruitful approach to the way we see interdisciplinarity here, that is, as a *common knowledge* of researchers from different fields. It is in this sense that in the following pages, we as scholars of literary studies, economists and economic historians share *what we know together* about protagonists of production invented and represented by different enlightened media and genres that reflect on economic questions, searching for a *common language of interdisciplinarity*. For our volume, this leads to the fact that economists analyze novels, and that scholars of literature consider the influence of economic tracts, while both relate to the latest insights into the economic history of the European Enlightenment.

## 6. The thematic spectrum of the contributions

The contributions to the present volume are arranged into six different topics. The first section is devoted to the historical and theoretical foundations of the research field in question. In their opening contribution, “From *otium* to

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31 Cf., e.g., the volume on *The Honorable Merchant* (2019) edited by business ethicist Christoph Lütge and Christoph Strosetzki from Romance Studies.

32 McCloskey 1993, 76.



*nec-otium*: Vile Trades, Dishonorable Entrepreneurs. The Case of Spain,” Joaquín Ocampo Suárez-Valdés and Patricia Suárez Cano analyze the so-called “cascade of contempt” which influenced the social and economic development particularly of the Mediterranean countries and, more specifically, Spain, discrediting manual labor for a long time. In his essay “Poverty Between Dignity and Criminalization in Early-Modern France and Spain: Attempts to Include and Exclude the Poor,” Manfred Tietz approaches the question of (lack of) productivity from the other side of the social spectrum, looking at how the problem of poverty and mendicancy was dealt with from the late Baroque to the final stages of the Enlightenment. Andreas Gelz, for his part, examines “The Nation as Economic Agent in Eighteenth-Century Spanish Apologetic Texts,” i.e. the collective dimension of entrepreneurship and the productivity of the nation, instead of addressing the topic “protagonists of production” from the perspective of the individual entrepreneurs, craftspeople and workers.

This is in turn the focus of the second section, “Male Protagonists of Trade and Industry: Of Businessmen and Entrepreneurs.” Christoph Stroetzki opens this section with a study of the reception of French commercial law by a German philosopher and economist of the 18th century: “The *Dictionnaire universel de commerce* (1723) and Savary’s Mercantilism in the Writings of Carl Günther Ludovici.” Jan-Henrik Witthaus, on the other hand, in his contribution, “Doing Business in the Spanish *Antiguo Régimen*: The Case of Juan de Goyeneche y Gastón: Between Profit, Heroism and Political Commitment,” reconstructs an early and little-known example of entrepreneurship in the context of the first Bourbon reforms in Spain. With María Jesús García Garrosa’s reflections on “Business and Businessmen in Eighteenth-Century Spanish Drama,” the focus shifts to examining the fictional representations of economic agents and their didactic instrumentalization by the reformist economic thinking of the Spanish government. However, the political use of literature also brings resistance into focus, for example, in Claire Pignol’s discussion of “Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister*, Rousseau’s *Emile*, Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*: The Embarrassment of Choosing a Profession,” which addresses the rejection of entrepreneurial calculation in a comparative European perspective. Christian von Tschiltschke concludes this section in his article, “Between State-Managed Reforms and Private Utopia: The Entrepreneurial Projects of Pablo de Olavide.” This contribution examines one of the most prominent figures of 18th-century Spain, whose reform activity and literary work is regarded as subject to a tension that is as fundamental as it is exemplary.

The third section opens the field of “Female Protagonists of Production.” As David T. Gies shows in “Two Women, Two Ways: Economy and Theater in

Enlightenment Spain,” there are some, albeit very few, instances in 18th-century Spanish theater in which women are credited with positive economic behavior beyond the realm of domestic economy traditionally reserved for them. In contrast, in her paper, “Maja’s Labors Lost in Ramón de la Cruz’s *sainetes*,” Ana Hontanilla analyzes the strategies for the prevailing devaluation of female labor inside and outside the home, as it is especially evident in popular Spanish theater. The spaces of economic action that are at the same time opened up to and reserved for women in the comedies of the Italian playwright Carlo Goldoni are the subject of Esther Schomacher’s essay “Work It, Baby! Economics and Emotions on the Marriage Market in Goldoni’s *La Locandiera* and *Trilogia della villeggiatura*.”

The fourth section consists of two contributions that deal explicitly with “Economic Protagonists of Both Sexes.” Thus, in her study “From Civilian Heroes to Protagonists of Production,” Beatrice Schuchardt identifies different male and female economic types staged by 18th-century Spanish theatre, stereotyped figures that relate to different economic theories of Spanish Enlightenment, e.g. the *femina fabra* representing Spanish industrialism and incarnating the Bourbon political-economic idea that integrating female producers increases the wealth of the nation. Klaus-Dieter Ertler’s essay, “‘Spectatorial’ Entrepreneurs in the Moral Essays of the 18th Century,” which examines the enormous influence of the new journalistic genre of the Spectator on economic discourse in Europe, also focuses on the topics of political economy in enlightened Europe, analyzing one British, one Danish, one French, and one Spanish example of the spectral press.

The central importance of Daniel Defoe’s novel *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and related texts is the subject of the fifth section, “Robinsonades.” It includes three contributions, each of which demonstrates in its own way that the island idyll can be understood as an ideal-typical laboratory of economic activity. While Nils Goldschmidt and Hermann Rauchenschwandtner reconstruct “Robinson Crusoe’s Economy” and trace its reverberations in economics up to the present with numerous examples, Urs Urban explores the German, Latin American and French pretexts of Robinson in “The Literary Genealogy of the Working Man: From Early Modern Castaways and Settlers to Robinson Crusoe.” Natalie Roxburgh, however, centers on the novel itself. In her article, “Defoe, Economically Constructed Property, and Reputational Credit,” she argues that while *Robinson Crusoe* echoes Locke’s property theory of value, in some respects it goes beyond it, thus paving the way for early liberalism.

The sixth and last section is reserved for an economic sector that received special attention during the period of the Enlightenment in many countries: the

“Protagonists of Agriculture and the Influence of Physiocracy.” Susanne Schlünder thematizes “Nature as a Protagonist of Production in Jovellanos’s *Informe sobre la Ley Agraria* and *Diario – A ‘Measurement of the Sublime’*” and elaborates on how a contemplative and a utilitarian attitude towards nature overlap in the writings of the Spanish poet and statesman Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos. Another tension-filled relationship to nature is discussed by Annika Nickenig, who, in her contribution, “Pastoral Economies. Natural vs. Human Productivity in Bernardin de Saint-Pierre’s *Paul et Virginie*” distinguishes different, even opposite ways by which man makes use of nature. In her article, “An Idealistic, but Failing Protagonist of Production: Claude-François-Adrien de Lezay-Marnésia and His Physiocratic Project in the New World,” Anna Isabell Wörsdörfer presents the case study of a French military officer, agriculturist and Encyclopedist, who emigrated to America, but had to experience the failure of his ambitious plans of reform.

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## **Section 1 Historical and Theoretical Groundings**



Joaquín Ocampo Suárez-Valdés and Patricia Suárez Cano

## From *otium* to *nec-otium*: Vile Trades, Dishonorable Entrepreneurs. The Case of Spain

**Abstract** The present article seeks to analyze the genesis and evolution of the so-called “cascada del desprecio” (“cascade of contempt.” Our trans.) and its weight in shaping collective “mentalities” (honor, pride, work, enterprise, usury, leisure, business), with profound impacts on the social and economic development of European countries, particularly Mediterranean countries and, more specifically, Spain. However, what does the expression refer to? In the words of a renowned modernist, Pere Molas, it could be summarized as follows: “Each social group sought to identify itself with the one above it, erasing the differences separating them, and at the same time trying to distance itself from the group below it, exaggerating the reasons for separation as much as possible”<sup>1</sup> (our trans.). The “cascade of contempt” permeated the cultural and legal codes of Mediterranean societies. Let us attempt to clarify this hypothesis further. In preindustrial agrarian societies, social elites possessed a worldview (*Weltanschauung*) that legitimized their pre-eminence. With it, they sought to ensure the reproduction of the economic and social conditions on which their power was founded. Underpinned by heterogeneous doctrinal bases (moral, economic, political), they sought to escape the relativism of the future and present themselves “not as a product of a mutable reality but as a model by which to measure mutability”<sup>2</sup> (our trans.). It is obvious that the topic studied here, as it unfolds over the “very long term” in a historical sense and involves a plurality of analytical variables (economic, cultural, political), necessarily requires the selection of documentary sources. For the same reason, there may always be thematic or information issues that are not addressed or are dealt with only partially. As a justification, it can only be argued that the ultimate aim of this work has been to bring order to the available investigations and to offer a state of the question that serves as a starting point for deepening the details here barely contemplated.

**Keywords:** *Otium*, *nec-otium*, company, society, State, Protestant Reformation, Enlightenment, Liberalism.

### 1. Introduction

The communication we presented to the conference *Protagonists of Production (1700–1800)*, held at the University of Münster in November 2019, seeks to

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1 Molas 1985, 171. On the term “cascade de mépris” cf. Vincent 1981, 154.

2 Grossi 1992, 31–34.

analyze the genesis and evolution of the so-called “cascada de desprecio” (“cascade of contempt.” Our trans.) and its weight in shaping collective mentalities (honor, pride, work, enterprise, usury, leisure, business), with profound impacts on the social and economic development of European countries, particularly Mediterranean countries and, more specifically, Spain.

Historically, the aspiration of social elites to reproduce the economic and political conditions on which their privileged position rested was directed towards a worldview that aspired to escape the relativism of the future and present itself “not as a product of a mutable reality but as a model by which to measure mutability”<sup>3</sup> (our trans.). From the sacred texts to patristic literature, from Greek philosophy to medieval scholasticism, such a worldview would be displayed in different but complementary discourses: in a social theory of the three “orders” or “states,” in a moral or normative economy of the market, in an ethics of economic conduct (honor, virtue, interest, work, leisure, luxury) and, last but not least, in a philosophy or political theory of power. Ultimately, nothing that could affect the articulation and stability of the social order was outside an orthodoxy that received its strength from the authority conferred upon it by tradition or religion.

However, from the realm of economic facts, this worldview would not fail to see cracks that would undermine its solidity and aspiration towards universality. The medieval “trade revolution” (De Roover), the commercial and social rise of the Italian and Dutch republics, modern urban and financial development, and the Protestant Reformation would widen the fissures until an alternative orthodoxy developed. This process would accelerate in the 18th century, when rationalist iusnaturalism, liberal constitutionalism, and political economy placed their entire doctrinal arsenal at the service of the transition from feudalism to capitalism, from the old regime to liberalism, ultimately in the service of the liberal revolution. The time would come, then, for private interest, for “perfect property,” for the “invisible hand” of the market and for *nec-otium*. The new society, without orders or vassals, but rather with classes, would elevate work as a source of wealth and property and both as guarantors of access to citizenship. To use a military metaphor, it can be suggested that the battles against the dishonor of trades and companies, against the incompatibility of nobility and business, or against the segregation of the liberal and mechanical arts were part of the same war: that which freed the emerging class society from the constraint of the “three orders.”

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3 Grossi 1992, 31–34.



## 2. *Otium, nec-otium* and statements, a dual doctrinal affiliation

*The ancient philosophers thought that money was unproductive and, therefore, that money lending interest was immoral. However, these authors taught this doctrine while Athens and Rome were full of bankers who ignored it and gave money to usury.<sup>4</sup> (Our trans.)*

*Genovesi, 1765*

In the texts of the three “religions of the book,” considerations of an economic nature – in addition to being ambivalent, if not contradictory, scattered and lacking systematicity – were subordinated to moral reflections on concrete facts (usury, hoarding, adulteration of weights and measures, taxes) that affected the precarious stability of agrarian societies.<sup>5</sup> Influenced by the classical legacy in scholastic and medieval social and political discourse, we emphasize two components of that legacy.<sup>6</sup> The first, the economic component, is exemplified by Aristotle’s *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*. This differentiates between *oikonomia* (domestic economy) and *chrematistike* (commercial economy). The former referred to the satisfaction of “natural needs” by bartering goods for their use value; the second concerned the satisfaction of non-natural needs and incorporated the use of money. For Aristotle, given that money was a mere instrument to measure value and a fungible good, its use as a deposit or reserve of value constituted an unnatural activity at the service of personal enrichment and was therefore destructive of social and moral balances.<sup>7</sup>

The second component, present in works by authors such as Plato or Cicero, refers to the social order. In *The Republic*, there is an explicit hierarchy consisting of “three orders”: rulers, guardians or warriors, and craftsmen or producers, associated, in turn, with the virtues of intelligence, courage, and laboriousness. Based on this hierarchy, the city of Rome was stratified into two states: the nobility and the plebs, the former associated with lineage/virtue/wealth and the latter with the vile trades. In a tradition dating back to Hesiod, Herodotus and Socrates, both the Greek *scholē* and Roman *otium*, that is, liberation from physical work, constituted a prerequisite for access to wisdom, virtue and honor.<sup>8</sup> However,

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4 *Lezioni*, 1765, 166.

5 Cf. Wilson 1997, 13–27.

6 Cf. Gómez Camacho 1998, 45–67; Sierra Bravo 1975, 33–37.

7 Cf. Perotta 2011; Polanyi 1976.

8 Cf. Hernández de la Fuente 2012, 7–100.

it would be in *De Officiis*, a treatise of practical ethics turned into a source of authority for medieval philosophy, that Cicero would systematize that thesis. In “Two types of gain, one honorable and one mechanical,” on the one hand, he pointed out that in the case of “unbecoming and vulgar” trades (craftsmen and day laborers), “the very wage they receive is a pledge of their slavery,” and on the other, he contrasted small-scale trade, reputed as “vulgar,” to trade on a large scale, which “is not to be greatly disparaged”<sup>9</sup> (our trans.). Finally, he compared the “liberal” arts, which are honorable and require a “higher degree of intelligence,” with “mechanics” or “mercenaries,” which are typical of plebs and dishonorable, except for agriculture, an occupation than which there is “none more profitable, none more delightful, none more becoming to a freeman.” To this distinction, incorporated into Roman law, Campomanes attributed the “political error” committed by the Mediterranean countries in maintaining this segregation between studies and the arts.<sup>10</sup>

The inheritance cited would maintain its vigor throughout the Middle Ages. The theory of the three “orders” or “states” – *oratores, bellatores, laboratores* – in addition to a literary presence, would also attain a legal and moral embodiment.<sup>11</sup> In the case of Spain, this theory would appear legally sanctioned both in the *Fuero Juzgo* and in the *Partidas*<sup>12</sup> and morally, repeatedly, in spiritual guides for traders.<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, the contrast between the liberal and mechanical arts, incorporated into the Catholic tradition in the 6th century by Saint Isidore and Cassiodorus, would crystallize in the 8th century into the *trivium* and *quadrivium* of monastic and cathedral schools. Finally, as far as scholastic philosophy is concerned, St. Thomas’s *Summa Theologiae* summarized the principles inherited from patristic doctrine in relation to (a) monetary changes: “to take usury for money lent is unjust in itself”; (b) trade: “to use fraud to sell a thing above its just price is downright sin”; and (c) the arts: “whatever habits of

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9 Cicero, Book I, Chapter XLII, 1.345.

10 Cf. Llombart 2009, 33–37.

11 Cf. the satirical poem by the Bishop of Laon, Adalberon, *Carmen ad Robertum regem francorum* (998). In Spain, the three orders are reiterated in Berceo, in the *Libro de Alexandre* or in the *Libro de los estados* of Infante Don Juan Manuel. Cf. Maravall 1966.

12 Part II, Tit. XXI, “Concerning knights and the things which it is proper for them to do” (our trans.) reads: “We also decree that a man should not be created a knight, who travels for the purpose of engaging in trade...” (our trans.). Cf. Sánchez-Arcilla 2004, 286–291; Álvarez Rubio 1999, 15–49.

13 Cf., for example, the *Modus iuste negotiandi in gratiam meratorum*, attributed to Raimundo de Peñafort.

the speculative reason are ordered to such works are by analogy called arts, but liberal arts, in order to show their difference from works directed to the body, which are, after a fashion, servile”<sup>14</sup> (all our trans.).

However, moral doctrines were one thing and economic practices quite another. Since the 11th century, the urban and commercial renaissance and the development of international fairs are found at the origin of new financial and commercial instruments (bills of exchange, censuses, public debt, trading companies, double accounting, etc.) that would be the spearhead that opened the first cracks in the moral axiologies and social hierarchies consecrated by tradition.<sup>15</sup> Thus, in the Italian maritime republics, the moral treaties that secularized the ethical consideration of wealth and poverty proliferated from the 13th century. Like Salutati or Pontano, Alberti, in *Del governo della famiglia* (1433), associated “holy economicity” with the rational management of business. It was around this same time that the great Italian trader/bankers (Datini, Bardi, Medici) combined usury operations with generous donations to the Church, received noble titles and were buried in chapels or monasteries.<sup>16</sup> In *The Romance of the Rose*, attributed to J. de Meun, one reads: “Poverty is worse than death, for she torments and gnaws at soul and body and brings them not only to condemnation but also to larceny”<sup>17</sup> (our trans.).

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14 *Summa Theologiae*, (1265–1274), cit. in Vigo Gutiérrez 1977, 34–37; Naismith 2015, 127–151.

15 Cf. Roover 1942, 34–39.

16 Cf. Sombart 1977, 115–128; Maravall 1972, I, 105–122.

17 Wood 2002, 69–73.

### 3. “A powerful gentleman is Sir Money”: Modernity and the first ruptures (16th and 17th centuries)

*Men earn an income and sustain themselves either from farming the field or contracting and hiring with other men. The first mode of income is innocent profit and holy gain because it is purely natural. The other, made by the merchants and architects of other trades, is unnatural gain. (Our trans.)*

Fray Luis de León (1583).<sup>18</sup>

#### 3.1. From facts to ideas: Mercantile capitalism, protestant reform and the rehabilitation of labour and trade

Both processes drastically and substantially altered the medieval doctrinal legacy. The first would open the door to a model of growth in which trade would replace agriculture as a source of accumulation. Three pillars helped to consolidate the “mercantile system.” Based on economic analysis, *Political Arithmetick* (Petty, 1672) assumed the consecration of positive economics over normative economics, while “self-interest” and the natural order were enshrined as market-articulating principles. In ethical discourse, Cartesian scientific reason would be imposed on scholastic “right reasoning.” Thus, in Hobbes (*Leviathan*, 1651) and Spinoza (*Ordine Geometrico Demonstrata*, 1675), passions, the individual pursuit of profit and utility, and developing oneself based on a hard-working life were considered compatible with virtue. Finally, the consolidation of national monarchies would be accompanied by a political philosophy – *The Prince* (Machiavelli, 1513), the *Six Books of the Commonwealth* (Bodin, 1576), *The Reason of State* (Botero, 1589) – that would replace the divine sanction of power with lay criteria of a realistic and pragmatic nature.

With the Protestant Reformation, the affirmation of the Puritan *ethos*, faced with the austere ideal of Catholic asceticism, was accompanied by the condemnation of leisure and the consideration of business as compatible with Christian morality.<sup>19</sup> For Richard Baxter (*Christian Directory*, 1676), “slothfulness and idleness are sins that naturally tend to want, and God hath caused them to be punished with poverty.”<sup>20</sup> If, in 1730, Richard Cantillon warned that “states that

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18 León 1992, 35.

19 Ocampo 2018.

20 Baxter 1676, 2000, I, 1433.

embraced the Reformation and do not have monks or beggars have become the most powerful” (our trans.), Adolfo Blanqui corroborated it in 1839 by arguing that in Protestant nations “populations have contracted regular habits, more austere customs, greater propensity to work”<sup>21</sup> (our trans.).

Since the 16th century, the legal and moral rehabilitation of merchants “*en gros*” (wholesale or market), suppliers, bankers, and industrialists would be as noticeable as the double current leading from aristocratic mercantilization – direct or shareholder participation by the nobility in trading companies or mining or metallurgical businesses – to bourgeois ennoblement.<sup>22</sup> Cultural and legal resistance to this double social mobility would be most pronounced in the Mediterranean countries most influenced by classical philosophical and legal heritage. The case of *dérogance* in France is illustrative in this regard. Although the government of Louis XIII had issued different ordinances favorable to the compatibility between nobility and business, in 1610, Loyseau pointed out in *Traité des seigneuries* that “vile profit makes the nobility withdraw” (our trans.) and yet in 1678, La Roque – *Traité de la noblesse* – was scandalized that this withdrawal was not applied in England and the Netherlands. However, at the same time, there were already conflicting proposals: in *Le commerce honorable* (J. de Eon, 1646), *Le parfait négociant* (J. Savary, 1657) and *Remarques sur l'état des Provinces-Unies* (W. Temple, 1672), English and Dutch economic success was linked to the gap opened by the Protestant Reformation in the traditional consideration of work and business.

### 3.2. The Spanish exception?

Since the 16th century, the economic consolidation of a new class of businessmen linked to international trade, public contracts, war, and finance has run in parallel with their aspiration to nobility.<sup>23</sup> However, *Nueva Recopilación* (1567) would reiterate the legal and doctrinal prejudices sanctioned by the jurists who dealt with the subject, such as Arce de Otalora (*Summae Nobilitatis Hispanicae*, 1589). The same was true in the courts when they issued statements against merchants rising to municipal councillorships or *hidalguía* as long as they did not assert nobility and “purity of blood.”

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21 Cantillon 1730, 66; Blanqui 1839, 173.

22 Redlich 1955; Stone 1976, 34–45; Molas 1985, 56–67.

23 Pike 1978, 54–65; Figueroa Melgar 1979; Aranda Pérez 2003, 21–67; Marcos Martín 2007.

However, once again, the facts would contradict the prevailing opinion in the public sphere. The Spanish economic expansion in the 16th century was generated by the second scholasticism – more specifically by the economic treatises from the School of Salamanca – a deluge of “manuals for confessors” (our trans.) aimed at providing solutions to Catholic scruples to enrichment, moral reconciliation, and capitalism.<sup>24</sup> In 1571, Tomás de Mercado, noting that in Germany, Flanders, and France “usury has long reigned” and was the cause of the “acerbic punishment of God to take Catholic confession away from them,” denounced the practice in Seville whereby “knights, out of greed or necessity, have stooped to relate to dealers” and, in the reverse, “merchants, with an appetite for nobility and *hidalguía*” (all our trans.) founded entailed estates and became ennobled.<sup>25</sup> No less representative of the new spiritual and economic climate was the debate on “aid to the poor,” initiated by Luis Vives (*De subventionem pauperum*, 1526), that would raise two issues of interest: on the one hand, how to reconcile the right to property with the right of the poor to survival through alms and, on the other hand, the need to address the risks to the social and political order entailed by the idle. In this context, we note the gradual entry onto the scene of a social policy that, as in Protestant countries, rejected social *laissez-faire* and advocated repressive measures against idleness.<sup>26</sup>

Luis Ortiz’s *Memorial* (1558), or “How to remove so much idleness from Spain and introduce work” (our trans.), serves as an inflection point between the 16th and 17th centuries of the Spanish economy. The time of *arbitrismo* and the economic literature of decadence had arrived.<sup>27</sup> In 1600, Gonzalez de Cellorigo published his *Memorial de política necesaria y útil restauración de la república de España*, a forerunner of *Gran Consulta* (1619) of Felipe III aimed at seeking solutions for a consumed and committed Spain. Upon examining the causes of decadence, he inevitably chose to address the idleness, unemployment, excessive poverty, legal dishonor of work, desire for *hidalguía* and ennoblement by wealthy entrepreneurs, and the comparison of Spain with European industrial nations.

Like economic literature, political literature would also reflect the change in values registered in Spanish society. It was a change that saw numerous cultural resistances. Thus, Diego de Mesa wrote:

The day laborers and mechanical officers are not only not fit to rule and command but, on the contrary, to obey and serve, for being people without virtue and without

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24 Cf. García Sanz 1999.

25 Cf. Mercado 1571, 22–23; Mercado 1569, I, 94.

26 Cf. Gutiérrez de los Ríos 1600; Gómez Camacho 1998, 109–141.

27 Perdices de Blas 1996.

intelligence [...]. Agriculture and all else that is received from the land are the natural acquisition and possession of property. Industry and greed engendered another genre more alien to nature, which is achievement or usury, the art of giving money for money, and which is intended not to sustain life but, rather, gain profit that is not natural but totally artificial or industrious.<sup>28</sup> (Our trans.)

In the work of Mariana, dissent emerges: “Neither nobility or wealth will suffice if other virtues and merits are missing for anyone to gain the honors of the republic” (our trans.). He also added: “We must prevent the Prince from taking great care not to allow some to agglomerate all riches themselves. He shall protect trade; he shall ensure that they are arts held in esteem”<sup>29</sup> (our trans.).

Mariana’s thesis was consistent with political efforts to break down such barriers. The Count-Duke of Olivares’s aspiration to “reduce the Spaniards to merchants” would be gradually introduced in legislation. The awareness of backwardness vis-à-vis European colonial powers inspired Felipe IV’s policy of *reformation*. From 1626, the Privileged Companies for Indian trade were promoted, to encourage the nobility to follow suit. In the 1620s, trade and industry were declared compatible with the status of nobility. During the reign of Carlos II, the *Pragmática* of 1682 recognized that “maintaining factories has not been, nor is contrary to the quality of nobility.”<sup>30</sup> Again, events would play out in favor of this policy: the financial needs of the Crown in the time of Carlos II and Felipe V led to a rare inflation of honors that translated into the sale of titles, magistratures, charges, and honors and the emergence of a nouveau-nobility of wealthy bankers, middlemen and traders.<sup>31</sup>

#### 4. *Luces* against prejudices and privileges (18th century)

*It seems that a new light has spread, and in a very short time it became known how absurd were the maxims we had adopted for many centuries, the chains in which they had imprisoned our interests. (Our trans.)*

Sánchez, *Memoria* (1783).<sup>32</sup>

The transition from a mercantile to an industrial society rearmed the doctrinal arsenal of the *Luces* in their battle against *L’Ancien Régime*. Luxury, *doux*

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28 Cf. Mesa 1623–1625, 26–29.

29 Cf. Mariana 1599, 289 and 396.

30 Callahan 1966; Figueroa y Melgar 1979; Guillamón 1981.

31 Andujar Castillo 2004; Felices de la Fuente 2013.

32 Cf. Sánchez 1783, 59.

*commerce*, merchant nobility, “vile trades,” guilds, leisure, and class privileges would be some of the “fronts” in the battle. However, the fluid current of *Luces* would find its best ally in the rushing river of events: in the industrial revolution and in the bourgeois liberal revolutions that marked the passage from feudalism to capitalism, from the society of the three estates to the class society, from *otium* to *nec-otium*.

In Spain, the economic policy of the Bourbon Reforms encouraged the use of the Consulates and Trade Boards to stimulate participation by businessmen with expectations of ennoblement. The *Real Cédula* (“Royal Decree.” Our trans.) of March 18, 1783 sanctioned this trend: trade and industry, exercised for three generations, constituted a source of ennoblement.<sup>33</sup> With the generalization of double social mobility, the consubstantiality of “honor” with blood or lineage began to fade. Political recruitment for the high ranks of administration among provincial elites would tend to emphasize the merit and “virtue” associated with public service.<sup>34</sup>

#### 4.1. “Sweet trade” and merchant nobility

In his *Essai politique sur le commerce* (1734), Jean-François Melon contrasted the spirit of commerce with that of conquest, an idea developed by Montesquieu under the topic of *doux commerce* that would end up reopening the military nobility/merchant nobility debate with the publication of Coyer’s *La noblesse commerçante* (1756).<sup>35</sup> The roots of this debate can be traced to the previous century, when Hobbes and Spinoza proposed an ethical code in which passions, interests, and utility coexist harmoniously. The *doux commerce* (“sweet trade.” Our trans.), Montesquieu would state in *L’Esprit des lois* (1748), “heals destructive passions, softens customs, carries sobriety, economy, order...”<sup>36</sup> During his stay in England, he had experienced first-hand the two traditions that polarized political philosophy: the values

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33 Molas 1989, 47–52; Anes 1997.

34 Maravall 1979, 56–67; Morales Moya 1987.

35 This debate had been anticipated in England. In *The Conscious Lovers* (Richard Steele, 1721), one of the actors pointed out: “We traders are a kind of nobility that has sprung up in the last century. We are as honoured and useful as you, the landowners.” In Spain, theatrical references came later – see among others Antonio Vila y Camps (1776): *El noble bien educado*.

36 Lib. XX, Chap. I, 219.



of civic republicanism – the sobriety and virtue of a society of “medium fortunes” – and those of the commercial society, dominated by finance and the concentration of wealth.<sup>37</sup>

In Spain, the echoes of the controversy had been felt since 1732, when Zavala y Auñón lamented the desire for ennoblement among wealthy traders.<sup>38</sup> In 1750, Bernardo Ward advised the nobility, “raised without precise occupations,” to dedicate themselves to “spreading the spirit of industry”<sup>39</sup> (our trans.). Translations and editions of trade dictionaries as well as economic journalism anticipated the social rehabilitation of the entrepreneur. In 1755, Graef took up the subject in his *Discursos Mercuriales*: England, Italy, the Netherlands, and Prussia “favored nobles eager to enter trade or factories,” while in Spain, “our noble inclination deprives this kingdom of all fortunes.”<sup>40</sup>

The defense of commercial society would find its best ally in political economy. In 1769, Enrique Ramos, the disseminator of Montesquieu in Spain, associated *felicidad pública* (“public happiness.” Our trans.) and trade. Given the Basque manufacturing and commercial trajectory, it should not be surprising that it was within the *Sociedad Bascongada de los Amigos del País* (“Royal Basque Society of Friends of the Country.” Our trans.) that the debate on merchant nobility reached its greatest intensity, both in moral and political literature.<sup>41</sup> Before the Spanish translation of Coyer’s work appeared in 1781,<sup>42</sup> the Marquis of Narros (*Ensayo*, 1766), Heros (*Discursos sobre el comercio*, 1775), and Uría Nafarrondo (*Aumento del comercio con seguridad de conciencia*, 1785) had engaged with the issue extensively. Among the three authors cited, the defense of the merchant nobility was accomplished without questioning the society of the three estates.

The rupture arrived in 1778 from the hand of Foronda, in his *Disertación sobre lo honrosa que es la profesión del comercio* (“Dissertation on how honorable commerce is as a profession.” Our trans.) a rupture in that, unlike Narros or Heros, his doctrinal source was not Coyer but Hume, whose analysis of the compatibility of nobility and trade questioned the political and economic legitimacy of the society of the three estates itself. In “Of Commerce” (*Political Discourses*, 1752), Hume maintained that the institutional order should be based on new

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37 Manin 2001.

38 Cf. Zavala y Auñón 1732, 171.

39 Cf. Ward 1750, 152.

40 Sánchez-Blanco 1990.

41 Barrenechea 1995.

42 Espinosa y Cantabrana 1781.

principles that provide secure rules to protect private interests and ensure a balanced distribution of wealth: “a too great disproportion of wealth among citizens weakens any State. It is requisite to govern men by other passions and animate them with a spirit of avarice and industry, art and luxury.”<sup>43</sup> Even so, neither political economy nor the laws could uproot a secular controversy that still prevailed in Spain in 1800:

It has been controversial for a long time whether the profession of merchant is a state of nobility. As far as the English and Dutch are concerned, this matter has already been decided for many centuries. In other nations, the dispute continues with ardor.<sup>44</sup> (Our trans.)

#### 4.2. The “aristocratic luxury” vs. “commercial luxury” debate

Since the 16th century, “old luxury,” a symbolic externalization of nobility, had come to rival the “new luxury” associated with market expansion and new consumption patterns. The basis for that change points in three directions: (a) from economic events to the improvement in levels of household income; (b) from economic analysis to mercantilism, which contrasted basic needs or the “needs of the body” with the unlimited “needs of the mind” that spurred trade and industry; and (c) from moral philosophy to the abundance of arguments reconciling self-love and individual passions with harmonious social relations. Thus, in the Netherlands, the De la Court brothers (*Political Discourses*, 1662) distinguished between the excessive and irrepressible “monarchic luxury” and the “Republican luxury” characteristic of the commercial society and compatible with a virtuous life and frugal consumption.<sup>45</sup> As early as the 18th century, the debate on luxury became internationalized and attracted the attention of moralists, economists, and philosophers, becoming polarized between the extremes represented by Mandeville – “Thus every part was full of vice, yet the whole mass a paradise” (*The Fable of the Bees*, 1714) – and the more nuanced theses of Montesquieu, Hume, and Adam Smith.

In Spain, from 1750 on, the study of luxury would follow three analytical streams. The first, formulated in economic terms, was written by Romá, among others, who in 1768 argued that “as long as men are satisfied with the necessary, their desires and, therefore, their industry will be very limited,” and thus he favored “infusing an unlimited desire to enjoy all comforts” (all our trans.) as

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43 Cf. Hume 1752: 2011, 249–251.

44 Cf. Lázaro Dou 1800, I, 35.

45 Lope 1992, 129–150; Berry 1994, 124–164.

a means of reviving industry.<sup>46</sup> Arriquíbar, Ramos, and Jovellanos would make similar assertions. A second line of thought emphasized moral arguments. If in 1775 Heros criticized the “uncontrolled luxury” of wealthy traders, in 1788, Sempere would associate luxury with “vanity and desire to distinguish oneself”<sup>47</sup> (all our trans.). The same reproof appeared in the *Memorial* (1789) presented by Floridablanca to Carlos III: “The monster of luxury and disorder of the vices adopted by traders, as if they had the fixed incomes of great lords, has devoured and devours profits”<sup>48</sup> (our trans.). A third analytical route, already fully liberal, became apparent in 1776 in the work of Manuel de Aguirre. In his *Discourse on luxury*, the object of a trial by the Inquisition, Aguirre reiterated the arguments used by Hume in *Of Refinement in the Arts* (1752) concerning the moral legitimacy of utilitarian behavior and the consideration of luxury as an expression of social evolution and a source of industry.<sup>49</sup> That same argument was promulgated in the six speeches on the subject that were published in those years in *El Censor*.

### 4.3. *From nobleza útil to the critique of privileges*

*In Spain, in the highest classes, all is numb. Satisfied with inherited honors and riches, the nobles live for pleasure alone. In England, the causes of our balanced distribution of wealth must surely be found in our government.*

Townsend, 1787<sup>50</sup>

Townsend linked this contrast to the Protestant Reformation. Moreover, he commented that not only were “the convents emptied” and “numerous holidays abolished,” but civil, religious, and commercial freedoms were also achieved that paved the way for the industrial revolution. In Spain’s late Enlightenment (1789–1808), the aspiration to *felicidad pública* as a reconciliation between economic growth and a balanced distribution of income would be linked to the need to eliminate the “legal hindrances” derived from the “historical constitution.” In

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46 Roma i Rosell 1768: 1989, 142–143.

47 Sempere y Guarinos 1788. On the same topic, see *El Censor*: “Discurso XCIIIX” 1786, 434–437. That same year (1786) *Memorial Literario* published a “Political conversation on luxury, damage caused by the State, such that it has had to get involved and the means of containing it,” by José I. Cavaza.

48 Floridablanca, *Memorial*, 1789: 1867, 35–37.

49 Elósegui 1991.

50 Cf. Townsend 1791: 1988, 251.

the words of León de Arroyal, “the public happiness of a kingdom is derived from its good or bad constitution”<sup>51</sup> (our trans.). The link between institutions and the economy would be a common argument in these years. Nuances would come in establishing the routes, reforms or ruptures, to address those “hindrances.” Jovellanos makes clear the difficulty of reconciling critiques of the society of the three estates with the “historic constitution.” In his *Memoria sobre el establecimiento de un Montepío de hidalgos en la Corte* (1784) (“Memorandum on the establishment of a Fund for nobles in the court.” Our trans.), after denying “any aversion to the nobility” and expressing his respect for any constitution protecting society from “the three orders,” he admits that, examined in its “political meaning,” nobility represented an “accidental quality” (our trans.). In addition, anticipating possible criticism, he adds: “I know that these ideas will suffer the anathema of philosophy, but I speak now as a politician”<sup>52</sup> (our trans.). And indeed, Cabarrús would soon accuse him of a “regrettable condescension towards the powerful.”<sup>53</sup>

Although iusnaturalism and liberal constitutionalism established the doctrinal bases on which to develop a legal-political alternative to the “historic constitution,” its expression in Spain advanced slowly and unevenly. A first step was represented by the repeated defense, in the pages of *El Censor*, of a society of “medium-sized fortunes” (our trans.) as an alternative to the concentration of wealth inherent in traditional society; in the absence of the restrictions of the three estates, social *laissez-faire* would naturally lead to a society in which wealth differentials would be the exclusive fruit of property acquired by work.<sup>54</sup> If Foronda, invoking the “holy father Smith,” claimed that “public happiness” required “abolishing exclusive privileges,” Jovellanos appealed to the invisible hand of interest that “shakes men up and establishes a balance that the laws can never achieve” (all our trans.).<sup>55</sup> However, delegitimizing privileges and opening the door to a society of “medium-sized fortunes” left unresolved the political and moral problem of a “new” inequality that emerged as urban and industrial society and the market economy developed. While Cabarrús regarded the inviolability of “sacred property” as the articulating principle of liberal society, Ramon Campos, translator of Adam Smith, would go further:

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51 Cf. Arroyal 1786–1795, 65.

52 Cf. Jovellanos 1784: 2008, 598–611.

53 Cf. Cabarrús 1792: 1973.

54 Cf. “Discursos” XXV and XXXIX.

55 Cited in Foronda 1789–1794, 127, and Jovellanos 1795: 2008, 703.

The distribution of wealth is absolutely essential in the plan of nature. From the savage man to the cultured man, from beggar to magnate, there is a progressive graduation of morality and rationality. The political distinctions corresponding to the natural differences of birth, assets, sex and profession are the machine that nature uses to cultivate and improve the species.<sup>56</sup> (Our trans.)

On the eve of industrial society and the political consecration of liberalism, property was on its way to being enthroned as a condition of access to citizenship and political participation. In Spain, with a markedly rural economy, initial criticisms of inequality were formulated more in moral terms than economic ones.<sup>57</sup> At times, the rejection of the disintegration of traditional society found refuge in the topic of “praise for the village and disdain for the court” (our trans.).<sup>58</sup> In the opposite sense and on the eve of the new century, the voices embracing the changes associated with incipient industrialization would become increasingly frequent. If for Foronda the city reflected the civilizing role of the industry, Ramón Campos said of the city and progress: “Languish in the damp valley if you wish, poets, but put the cultured man in large populations: Where is there a show more tireless than in the immense and opulent city?”<sup>59</sup> (Our trans.)

#### 4.4. *From the oficios viles to honoring the mechanical arts*<sup>60</sup>

*The mechanical voice, misunderstood in Spain, should be erased from vocabularies and books and, if possible, banished from the mind itself. (Our trans.)*

*Juan E. de Graef, Discursos mercuriales (1755)*

Discrimination between the mechanical and liberal arts enjoyed moral, legal and social sanction. As noted, the “cascade of contempt” was reproduced within the different professions of each productive sector and their respective corporations (consulates, guilds, colleges, arts, trade boards, etc.). Since the end of the 16th century, *arbitrismo* had raised the flag against leisure and social stigma towards the vile trades: in *Memorial* (1558), Luis Ortiz, addressing Felipe II, called for

56 Cited in Cabarrús 1782, 2, and in Campos 1799, 100.

57 See, among other examples, *Discursos forenses* (1791) by Meléndez Valdés, *Conversación de Perico y María* (1786) by Mariano Ruiz, and *Epigramas* (1784) by Arroyal.

58 *Observatorio rústico* (1772), by Gregorio de Salas. On this issue see Passola 2001, I, 13–26.

59 Campos 1799, 103.

60 On this question: Domínguez Ortiz 1945; Callahan 1961; Anes 1970; Guillamón 1978; Maravall 1983; Díez 2001.

the repeal of the laws of the Kingdom by which manual trades are annihilated. In 1686, Álvarez Osorio wrote: “Some arrogant sages, following the false and common opinion, say that the arts and trade hinder the nobility by being mechanical”<sup>61</sup> (our trans.). Hence, the offensive resumed in the 18th century was not novel; the difference would now lie in the will to address the problem of the honor of the trades in political terms. Although pronouncements favoring the suppression of legal dishonor proliferated, it was the editions of *Discurso sobre el fomento de la industria popular* (“Discourse on promoting popular industry,” 1774. Our trans.) and *Discurso sobre la educación popular de los artesanos y su fomento* (“Discourse on public education of artisans and their development,” 1775. Our trans.), that would mark a strategic change in the treatment of the problem.<sup>62</sup> With the 1775 edition of *Discurso*, there were two additional objectives: reforming trade privileges to establish freedom of industry and work and ending the distinction between “the arts.” The reverberations of both editions of *Discursos* in political economy were immediate.<sup>63</sup> A first legal solution would come with the Royal Charter of March 18, 1783, which recognized that all “arts and trades are honest and honorable that do not debase the family or the person by whom they are exercised, nor do they disqualify one from obtaining the municipal posts of the Republic or the enjoyment and prerogatives of *hidalguía*” (our trans.).

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61 Cf. Álvarez Osorio 1686: 2009, vol. 3, 33–37.

62 The 1774 edition of *Discurso* was generously financed by the Council of Castile, with a print run of 30,000 copies – an extraordinary number for an economic work in the 18th century and even from a contemporary perspective – that were sent to chancelleries, courts, chief magistrates, bishops, priests, economic societies, etc., accompanied by an order of the governor of the Council and a royal card urging its dissemination and the application of the principles established in the work. Cf. Llombart 1992, 235–277.

63 Among others: Francisco de Bruna y Ahumada (*Reflexiones sobre las artes mecánicas*, 1776); Antonio Arteta de Monteseuro (*Disertación sobre el aprecio y estimación que se debe hacer de las artes prácticas*, 1778); Antonio Pérez and López (*Discurso sobre la honra y deshonra legal*, 1781), etc. On the social and literary reverberations of the debate on guilds and honorification of trades, cf. *Los Menestrales* (1784) by Candido María Trigueros, *Adiciones a la historia del ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote...* (1786) by José María Delgado, *La industriosa madrileña y el fabricante de Olot o los efectos de la aplicación* (1791) by Francisco Durán, or *En alabanza de un carpintero* (1798) by Nicasio Álvarez Cienfuegos.

## 5. Bourgeois society: From *otium* to *nec-otium*

### 5.1. *From otium to freedom of work*

The decree of June 8, 1813 issued by the Courts of Cadiz – “On the free establishment of factories and the exercise of any industry” – instituted freedom to work without examination, title or incorporation into guilds. Shortly thereafter, decrees would be issued abolishing exclusive privileges and the feudal regime. Economic liberalization would steadily spread through society itself.

In the latter case, the aim was to remove the legal barriers that limited social mobility. Provisions would be made in a staggered manner for the dissolution of the feudal order or the “three states.” In the face of this order, the liberal order emerged uncontested, with two necessary consequences: a) a class society in which work and property would replace lineage, blood and privileges as a source of differentiation and stratification of individuals; and b) in legal/political terms, the rights-bearing citizen was born in opposition to the subject. To fulfill that purpose, various provisions would be made, such as the removal of the need to prove nobility or *limpieza de sangre* (“purity of blood.” Our trans.) to access schools, academies or the military, or the end of tax privileges and immunities and the equality of all citizens before the Treasury.

### 5.2. *Work, property, nec-otium*

Liberalism enthroned property as a condition of access to citizenship and political participation. The first Spanish electoral law – *Instrucción para la elección de Diputados de Cortes* (1810) (“*Instruction on the election of deputies of the courts.*” Our trans.) – already included a veiled reference to the desirability of future deputies being landowners. Between 1808 and 1814, the political/constitutional debate would emphasize the link between property and suffrage. In 1820, from the pages of *El Censor* and *El Imparcial*, industrialization was attributed a role in moderating inequality. Finally, it should be recalled that constitutionalism was not alone in legitimizing the liberal order. It shared this task with the arguments provided by a political economy already stripped of the enlightened utopia of “public happiness,” a new economy that considered property and inequality as a given and the market as a natural means of resolving social conflict.

## 6. Conclusions

The fact that the “cascade of contempt” had a more intense and lasting influence in modern Spain than in other European countries requires us to recall

the uniqueness of the peninsula's historical trajectory, particularly its medieval history. The Reconquest, war and repopulation would consecrate the social, economic and political pre-eminence of the ecclesiastical and nobiliary estates, a pre-eminence that, sanctioned legally and institutionally, was superimposed upon a society with an agrarian foundation and with little urban, commercial and manufacturing development.<sup>64</sup> The weakness of the urban middle classes explains the absence of a critical social mass likely to lead resistance or drive changes that would alter the existing balance. This balance would be reinforced by the legitimization provided by an Aristotelian-Thomist philosophical tradition endorsed by Spanish militancy in the Catholic Counter-Reformation.

From a more concrete perspective, one might wonder about the true impact of the “cascade of contempt.” As far as the economic impact is concerned, reference has already been made to the tendency among entrepreneurs as early as the second half of the 16th century to divest from manufacturing, large-scale trade or banking and direct their capital towards the acquisition of rustic assets, entailed estates and titles – what Braudel would call the “treason of the bourgeoisie.” As for its impact on the political sphere, there is no doubt that lineage and blood, not merit, conditioned the recruitment of elites for centuries. Finally, from the arena of society and “mentalities,” it has been emphasized that despite the legal and doctrinal offensive against codes of honor in trades, bourgeois values were slow to replace those of the society of the three estates, while manual labor would long remain a source of low social esteem.<sup>65</sup>

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64 Maruri 1998.

65 Callahan 1972.



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Manfred Tietz

# Poverty Between Dignity and Criminalization in Early-Modern France and Spain: Attempts to Include and Exclude the Poor

**Abstract** The antagonists and – at least in large part – the victims of the economic “protagonists of production” were the multifaceted class of the poor. With the immense economic boom of post-medieval Europe, philosophers, theologians, and policymakers noticed the increasingly massive and visible sociological phenomena of poverty and mendicancy, and their potential social dangers, which would give rise to a series of ideological debates on the phenomenon of poverty, its causes, and possible means of correcting this problem, whether through almsgiving, labor (forced or not), or by imprisoning individuals. This contribution will sketch the different proposals that were offered – from the late Baroque to the final stages of the Enlightenment – to solve a grave problem that European societies faced at the time. An illustration of the traditional (religious) approach will draw upon the sermon *De l'éminente dignité des pauvres* (“On the eminent dignity of the poor.” My trans.), by the French Bishop Jacques Bénigne Bossuet (1627–1704). The lay-philanthropic approach of the “philosophers” will be analyzed with reference to texts by two illustrious representatives of the Spanish Enlightenment: *El Discurso de la situación y división interior de los hospicios con respecto a su salubridad* (“Discourse on the situation and internal division of hospices with regard to their salubrity.” My trans.), by the jurist, politician, and literary author Gaspar Melchor Jovellanos (1744–1811), and the *Fragmentos de un discurso sobre la mendiguez* (“Fragments of a discourse on the beggar.” My trans.), by the jurist and poet Juan Meléndez Valdés (1754–1817).

**Keywords:** poverty, public charity, almsgiving, mendicancy, beggars

## 1. Industrialization, nascent capitalism, and massive poverty: The two faces of the Early Modern economic boom between social fact and ideological reaction

With industrialization and early capitalism – whose origins can be traced back to the 16th century – came not only the accumulation of immense private wealth and capital in the search for profitable investments, but also, in counterpoint to the glory of productivity and progress, the misery of heretofore unheard-of poverty and mendicancy among large swaths of the European population that, according to historian Bronisław Geremek (1932–2008), led to “una miseria sin precedentes en términos cualitativos y cuantitativos en todas las épocas

anteriores”<sup>1</sup> (“a misery unprecedented, qualitatively or quantitatively, in any prior era.” My trans.).

One of the results of the recent studies of this immense and complex mendicancy – which for many years did not merit the attention of economic historiographers, who preferred to focus on the triumphs and material progress of the different national economies – has been the conclusion that the battle against mendicancy was not, as it had been in the Middle Ages, solely the preoccupation of the Church, with its strong appreciation and practice of charity and almsgiving, two dogmatically and historically well-founded systems. Quite the contrary: From the late Middle Ages and the beginning of the Early Modern period, secular institutions were very aware of this problem and sought appropriate remedies for it. They looked to the recently-established urban centers where this mendicancy manifested earlier and more intensely, as well as to political-monarchical institutions – in modern terms, the State. Nor was there a lack of lay authors to describe and analyze the phenomena of indigence at a purely intellectual level; it is enough to refer to Juan Luis Vives (1492–1540), or his contemporaries, Erasmus (1466–1536)<sup>2</sup> and Thomas More (1478–1535),<sup>3</sup> the latter dreaming of a utopia without poverty (or wealth) and thus with no need for begging.

This practical and theoretical preoccupation with the serious social phenomena of poverty and mendicancy was manifested in a multifaceted literature. From this abundance I will present here only three paradigmatic texts of the 17th and 18th centuries. One is by the French theologian (and, after 1681, Bishop) Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet (1627–1704), one of the most prominent conservative intellectuals of Louis XIV’s court; the other two are by two Spanish jurists, high officials and poets, Gaspar Melchor Jovellanos (1744–1811) and Juan Meléndez Valdés (1754–1817), typical and very distinguished representatives of the Spanish Enlightenment. Together, these texts present a complex and contradictory collection of ethical and political options with which to resolve the

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1 Geremek 1991, 145. This work has been translated into several European languages. For the Spanish-language edition see Geremek 1989. Among the numerous studies on poverty in Early Modern Europe, for a social and intellectual-historical perspective, see especially Mollat 1978 and, more recently, Lutz 2008 and Torres et al. 2016. For a markedly theological-juridical perspective see the multi-volume work by Schmidt et al. 2006 and Schneider’s detailed study (2017); for Spain see the summary articles by Carasa Soto 1992 and 2010, and Wenzel’s regional study (2012).

2 Bierlaire 2016, 23–33.

3 Bore 2016, 35–49.



urgent transnational or “European” problem of poverty and mendicancy from the Middle Ages until the end of the 18th century. Moreover, these are texts from very different literary genres. Bossuet’s is a sermon preached in 1659. It is known by the programmatic and provocative title *L’minente dignité des pauvres*, while the texts by Jovellanos (*El Discurso acerca de la situación y división interior de los hospicios con respecto a su salubridad* [“Discourse on the situation and internal division of hospices with regard to their salubrity.” My trans.]) and Meléndez Valdés (*Fragmentos de un discurso sobre la mendiguez* [“Fragments of a discourse on the beggar.” My trans.]) are legal-political reports by two senior officials, written on behalf of the Spanish Crown to address the urgent problem of mendicancy at the administrative level.<sup>4</sup> These are not antiquated or intellectually obsolete texts. Curiously, Bossuet’s text was recently reissued and commented by the French legal scholar and sociologist Alain Supiot (\*1949), professor at the Sorbonne,<sup>5</sup> and the well-known *nouveau philosophe* Pascal Bruckner (\*1948).<sup>6</sup> Both see in Bossuet’s sermon a valuable proposal to rethink the problem of poverty and the injustices of ultra-liberalism in our time. As for the intellectual relevance of Jovellanos and Meléndez Valdés, their illustrious role in the Spanish Enlightenment speaks for itself.

## 2. The sacralization of poverty and the poor: From the Bible to the late middle ages

Bossuet delivered his sermon on “the eminent dignity of the poor” in a carefully chosen venue, before an audience no less elect. The time was February 1659, the place, the home of a Parisian charity known as *Filles de la Providence* (“Daughters of Providence.” My trans.), founded by Marie Lumague (1599–1657), the devoted widow of one of King Louis XIII’s gentlemen, and dedicated to gathering, educating, and cultivating poor young women so that they would not risk falling into vice and sin. The founder herself was present at this solemn event, as was the Catholic Church’s leading propagandist for public charity in

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4 Juan Meléndez Valdés 1821, 273–310.

5 See Supiot’s edition of the sermon (2015, 9–39) and his programmatic commentary “Les renversements de l’ordre du monde” (“The reversal of the World Order.” My trans.), in which he postulates that economics and politics should focus on the social phenomenon of poverty and not on that of production and unequal distribution of wealth itself, Supiot 2015, 41–64.

6 See the chapter “De l’minente dignité des pauvres?” (“On the eminent dignity of the poor?” My trans.) in: Bruckner 2016, 45–55.

France, well-known priest (and future saint) Vincent de Paul (1581–1660), and an audience of powerful potential donors – laymen, of course – from both the Court and the Parisian bourgeoisie, as it was an occasion for securing funds to guarantee the further financing of an institution that had already exhausted its founder’s resources.

Under the circumstances, we can assume that the priest did not attempt an economic or sociological analysis of poverty – which was omnipresent in France at the time – but focused on presenting to the already convinced the most relevant, most noble, and most affecting points of Christian doctrine on the social phenomenon of poverty and its attendant mendicancy. In fact, Bossuet’s sermon is a brief treatise – of very high rhetorical quality – on poverty and its dogmatic and moral scope that, in its basic lines, reflects the traditional doctrine of the Catholic Church, drawn from the biblical texts<sup>7</sup> according to which Jesus himself was, in historical reality, “[L]e plus pauvre de tous les pauvres”<sup>8</sup> (“the poorest of the poor.” My trans.), and the real poor of his time were the first objects of the salvation work of the Son of God. This vision implies a radical rejection of wealth, as stated in the Gospels: “más fácil es a un camello pasar por el ojo de una aguja que a un rico entrar en el reino de los cielos”<sup>9</sup> (“it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God”<sup>10</sup>). In Bossuet’s view, the Church has always been a Church of the poor and not of the rich, who, with their pride and “economic self-sufficiency,” believed they needed neither grace nor divine Providence. This opposition of “rich and poor” resulted in one of the most persistent convictions of medieval religious practice: the obligation – and in many cases also the will – on the part of the rich to help the poor in a sort of mutually meritorious exchange, wherein individual almsgiving was seen as the key to the gates of paradise for the wealthy – gates that, without it, would remain closed to them. But Bossuet carried this one step further, reminding his audience that divine Providence had founded the Church for the poor, who are – in their humility and acceptance of suffering and the Cross – the very image of Jesus Christ, so that “dans le royaume de Jésus-Christ

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7 On the complex conception of the poor in both the Old and New Testament see Schneider’s detailed analysis (2017, 23–44), which highlights the historical background of that perspective as well as the fact that those texts neither idealize poverty nor consider it a voluntary ascetic goal.

8 Bossuet 2015, 23.

9 Mc 10, 25, as well as the nearly identical texts Lc 18, 25 and Mt 19, 24. I cite the Bible in Spanish, following R.P. Serafin de Ausejo’s 1991 edition.

10 For the Bible quotes, see the New Revised Standard Version of the Holy Bible.

la prééminence appartient aux pauvres”<sup>11</sup> (“In the kingdom of Jesus Christ, the preeminence belongs to the poor.” My trans.). This Church only admitted the rich on the condition that they were ready to serve the poor.<sup>12</sup> The Church is, thus, the Church of the poor, in which they distribute spiritual privileges and benefits, just as the rich dispense material privileges and benefits on Earth. So as not to condemn themselves to eternal fire, it was in their best interests to aid the poor with alms, respect them as the authentic image of God, and to serve them with the greatest respect.<sup>13</sup>

For Bossuet, these reflections sufficed, in the grand medieval theological tradition, to explain and legitimize the existence of “la pobreza y la mendicidad como [elementos] estructurales y funcionales en la sociedad creada por Dios”<sup>14</sup> (“poverty and begging as structural and functional [elements] of a society created by God.” My trans.). He sensibly limits himself to qualifying as an “étrange inégalité”<sup>15</sup> (“strange inequality.” My trans.) the tremendous difference between rich and poor that existed in France at the time. This inequality does not seem scandalous or unjust to him, since the rich protect their own interests by

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11 Bossuet 2015, 10.

12 “[L]es riches n’y sont admis (sc. à l’Église) qu’à condition de servir les pauvres.” See also this forceful criticism of the rich: “[...] les riches qui s’imaginent que tout leur est dû, et qui foulent aux pieds les pauvres, ne sont dans l’Église que pour les servir; puisque les grâces du Nouveau Testament appartiennent de droit aux pauvres, et les riches ne les reçoivent que par leurs mains. Vérités certainement importantes et qui vous doivent apprendre, ô riches du siècle, ce que vous devez faire à l’égard des pauvres, c’est-à-dire honorer leur condition, soulager leurs nécessités, prendre part à leurs privilèges” (“the rich who imagine that everything is due to them, and who trample on the poor, are in the Church only to serve them; since the graces of the New Testament belong by right to the poor, and the rich receive them only by their hands. These are certainly important truths which should teach you, O rich of the world, what you should do with regard to the poor, that is to say, honor their condition, relieve their needs, share in their privileges.” My trans.). Bossuet 2015, 10 and 11.

13 “Les portes, dit Jésus-Christ, vous seront ouvertes, pourvu que les pauvres vous introduisent. (...) Ainsi la grâce, la miséricorde, la rémission des péchés, le royaume même est entre leurs mains ; et les riches n’y peuvent entrer, si les pauvres ne les y reçoivent. Donc, o pauvres, que vous êtes riches! mais, o riches, que vous êtes pauvres.” (“The doors, says Jesus Christ, will be open to you, but only if the poor bring you in. [...] Thus grace, mercy, the remission of sins, the very kingdom is in their hands; and the rich may not enter unless the poor receive them. So, O poor, how rich you are! But, O rich, how poor you are.” My trans.). Bossuet 2015, 31.

14 Calafate Delgado 2016, 166.

15 Bossuet 2015, 28.

caring for the poor,<sup>16</sup> though indeed, he insists on the dignity of the poor while knowing full well that it is not adequately respected in contemporary French society.<sup>17</sup> In any case, Bossuet's sermon contains no attempt to hold the poor responsible for their mendicant status, nor any proposal – at the secular state level – for a systematic solution to the problem posed by poverty in this earthly life. This solution is best postponed until the afterlife – whether in Heaven or Hell – where the “natural order” will be reversed and the poor will be first, in the words of the Bible, and the rich will be last, unless they have been saved by their works of mercy,<sup>18</sup> a situation depicted in the *auto sacramental* (a literary genre related to sermons) *El Gran Teatro del Mundo* (1635) by Pedro Calderón

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- 16 For Bossuet, the Church is a place where the difference between rich and poor is best left unspoken since, as the priest never tires of repeating, the rich are only admitted “à condition de servir les pauvres, où il ordonne que l'abondance supplée au défaut, et donne des assignations aux nécessiteux sur le superflu des opulents. Entrez, mes frères, dans cette pensée: si vous ne portez le fardeau des pauvres, le vôtre vous accablera; le poids de vos richesses mal dispensées vous fera tomber dans l'abîme: au lieu que si vous partagez avec les pauvres le poids de leur pauvreté, en prenant part à leur misère, vous mériterez tout ensemble de participer à leurs privilèges” (“on the condition that they serve the poor, where he ordains that abundance make up for want, and gives portions to the needy over the superfluity of the opulent. Enter, my brothers, into this thought: if you do not carry the burdens of the poor, yours will overwhelm you; the weight of your ill-shared riches will cause you to fall into the abyss: if, instead, you share with the poor the weight of their poverty by taking part in their misery, you will all deserve to participate in their privileges together.” My trans.). Bossuet 2015, 28–29.
- 17 “Qu'on ne méprise plus la pauvreté et qu'on ne la traite plus de roturière. Il est vrai qu'elle était de la lie du peuple; mais le Roi de gloire l'ayant épousée, il l'a ennoblée par cette alliance, et ensuite il accorde aux pauvres tous les privilèges de son empire.” (“Despise poverty and treat her as a commoner no longer. It is true that she was the dregs of the people; but the King of glory has married her, has ennobled her through this alliance, and thus he grants to the poor all the privileges of his empire.” My trans.). Bossuet 2015, 30.
- 18 This Biblical quote (Mt 20, 16) serves as the essence of Bossuet's sermon. Despite this transcendental theological claim, it should be noted that, beyond certain theological formulas that would be acceptable to his well-off and “right-thinking” audience, he avoids any real radicalism in his evaluation of poverty. In the outline of his sermon he cites the Church father Tertullian's assertion that “les Césars ne peuvent être chrétiens: *Christiani esse non possunt Cæsares et maiores sæculi*” (“Caesars cannot be Christians.” My trans.), though he leaves it out of the final version, probably because the Bible also does not condemn the rich in principle (see Schneider 2017, 31). He also deletes the reference to Saint Paul of Nola and Saint Melanie, who, born into rich and powerful families, renounced their social status and defended radical poverty.

de la Barca, wherein the Pauper is saved and the Rich Man who refused to give alms is condemned without a second thought: “desciende adonde / te atormente tu ambiciosa / condición eternamente, / entre penas y congojas” (“descend to where / your ambitions torment you / eternal condition / between pain and sorrow.” My trans.), vv. 1529–1532.

### 3. The historical reality of poverty and attempts at a solution: “Alms of door and street” vs. urban social policy

In his reflections on the role of poverty in the history of human salvation, Bossuet presents an outstanding theological dignification, or mystification and sacralization, of the poor. While these thoughts did indeed reflect the doctrinal ideal of the Church, they had little to do with the real problems posed, both for the Church and for secular authorities, by the immense and ubiquitous poverty in urban and rural life at the time. This massive poverty coexisted with persistent vagrancy and a lamentable corruption of customs arising from many factors, including epidemics of the plague, a series of subsistence crises, and technological advances in agricultural exploitation and the resultant urbanization.<sup>19</sup>

To address the grave problem of endemic mendicancy, two very different approaches can be observed. One is the multisecular ecclesiastical doctrine that underpins Bossuet’s reflections and requirements. This doctrine obliges all Christians, to the best of their ability, to give alms to every pauper or beggar, without problematizing or questioning the causes or authenticity of their poverty.<sup>20</sup> This type of almsgiving was practiced at the individual level on the one

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19 According to Schäfer (<sup>3</sup>2018, 325), there was an enormous rural exodus in the period between 1348 and 1520, which led to a dramatic rise in mass poverty in the cities of Europe.

20 We see for example the very high regard for almsgiving in the works of Fray Luis de Granada OSB (1504–1588), the most widely read religious author of the time. In one of the numerous reissues of his work, we find almsgiving among “las tres principales obras con que satisfaremos á Dios” (“the three main works with which we satisfy God.” My trans.) (1804, 169–180), which are “ayunos, limosnas y oración” (“fasting, alms and prayer.” My trans.) (Granada 1804, 169). He cites Saint Augustine to extol the theological value of almsgiving: “así como se apaga el fuego del infierno con el lavatorio del agua saludable del bautismo, así tambien se apaga la llama de los pecados con las limosnas y obras de justicia; de suerte que el perdon de los pecados se dió en el bautismo, nos lo da cada dia el exercicio de las limosnas, como otro segundo bautismo” (“just as we extinguish the fire of hell with the salubrious water of baptism, so we extinguish the flame of sin with alms and works of justice; as the forgiveness of sins was given in baptism, the exercise of alms is given to us every day, like a second baptism.”

hand, in keeping with the New Testament commandment of love (“charity”) of one’s neighbor as a path to individual rewards in the afterlife, and at the systemic level on the other hand, organized by the Church (monasteries and parishes) and the State (as a general rule, urban institutions). The prestige of this practice was legitimized and propagated by the existence of an ideal voluntary poverty, as manifested in the foundation of mendicant orders such as the Franciscans and the Dominicans in the 13th century.<sup>21</sup> In this collective understanding of poverty, the pauper was generally considered a human being who owed his precarious state not to any moral defect or particular vices, but to the inscrutable and unalterable workings of divine Providence. Therefore, the pauper and beggar deserved the compassion and charity of any Christian, who in turn could accumulate good works for his own salvation.<sup>22</sup>

On the other hand, urban authorities, mostly secular civilians, were confronted with the daily reality of an increasingly aggressive and frightening vagrant, inclined toward robbery and other crimes. They had to find funds to solve the problem of mendicancy in a society that no longer unconditionally shared the charitable Christian view of the poor, and that increasingly sought to differentiate between the “true poor,” who deserved every kind of charitable assistance, and

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My trans.). Indeed, he never tires of glorifying the merits and virtues of charity: “Ella alcanza gracia para quien quiere: suelta las ataduras de los pecados, hace huir las tinieblas, y apaga las llamas de nuestras pasiones. A ella estan abiertas las puertas del cielo, y así como á reyna ninguno de los porteros le osa preguntar quien sois, ni qué quereis, ántes la salen todos á recibir benignamente. Virgen es, y tiene alas de oro, y los vestidos de hermosura: su rostro es blanco y manso; y con las alas y la ligereza que tiene, siempre asiste ante la presencia de Dios” (“She grants grace to any who want it: she looses the bonds of sin, makes darkness flee, and quenches the flame of our passions. The gates of Heaven are open to her, and just like a queen no porter dares to ask who you may be or what you want before they graciously emerge to receive you. She is a virgin, with golden wings and vestments of beauty: her face is white and mild; and with her wings and her lightness she is always in the presence of God.” My trans.) (Granada 1804, 175–176).

- 21 See the chapter “Gelobte Armut: Hochmittelalterliche Armutsbewegungen und die Realität(en) der Armen” (“In Praise of Poverty: High Medieval Poverty Movements and the Realities of the Poor.” My trans.), in Schneider 2017, 138–306.
- 22 Bossuet (2015, 31) cites the two Biblical quotations on which this doctrine is based: “Redime con limosnas tus pecados y maldades, ejercitando la misericordia con los pobres” (“Atono for your sins with righteousness, and your iniquities with mercy to the oppressed.”), Daniel 4, 27, and “Bienaventurados los misericordiosos, porque ellos alcanzarán misericordia” (“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.”), Mt 5, 7.

the – supposedly much more numerous – “false or feigned poor,” who begged not out of necessity but out of laziness or moral depravity. Several measures were enacted to discourage these false beggars, who abused the Christian benevolence of individuals as well as institutions: prohibiting begging in the street without the express permission of authorities<sup>23</sup>; expulsion from cities, even extending to corporal punishments like flogging or being condemned to the galleys (which, in the long term, amounted to a death penalty); or confinement in those group houses reserved for other types of marginalized individuals – the old, the sick, poor widows, fallen women and abandoned children – the so-called *hospicios*, in which they hoped to improve the civil and religious morale of the poor and prepare them to practice any trade by forcing them to work for little or no pay, so as not to drive down the salaries of honest workers. All of these measures were enacted in combination with the prohibition of public begging in the cities.

The first author with a humanistic background<sup>24</sup> to synthesize these efforts at systematically reforming public assistance to the poor,<sup>25</sup> in order to mitigate mendicancy in the beginning of the Early Modern period, was Juan Luis Vives, whose book, *De subventione pauperum*, libri II,<sup>26</sup> was seminal for the entire post-medieval debate on mendicancy. Reflecting the attitude of the humanist faction of the urban bourgeoisie at the time, “contra la endémica impotencia de las estructuras jurídico-políticas formales frente al pauperismo”<sup>27</sup> (“opposing the endemic impotence of the formal juridical-political structures in the face of pauperism.” My trans.), it was written for the city of Bruges, which was under Spanish rule at the time, and published in Lyon in 1526.<sup>28</sup> While Vives does not

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23 People authorized to beg in public had to present written permission from the parish or magistrate, or wear a specific identifying mark on their clothing.

24 For the humanists’ view of the poor see Bierlaire 2016, 23–33, Augustin Redondo 2016, 35–64, and Rabaey 2016, 65–87.

25 Santolaria Sierra 2016, 105–122. In Germany, the theologian Johannes Geiler von Kaysersberg (1445–1510) wrote sermons that were delivered in the Cathedral of Strasbourg and anticipated many of Vives’s ideas on reform, see Voltmer 2006, 91–135. For this Catholic priest, the poor remain the symbol of Jesus Christ and should be given “ein Almosen des Herzens” (“an alms of the heart.” My trans.). Voltmer 2006, 132.

26 Reliable evidence of contemporary interest in Vives’s book are two 16th-century translations into vulgar languages: Vives 1533 and 2006. The author of the German translation, Kaspar Hedion (1494–1552), was a renowned Protestant theologian and preacher at the Cathedral of Strasbourg, in contact with the great reformers Luther, Zwingli, and Bucer, and preoccupied, like them, with the problem of mendicancy.

27 Susín Betrán 2000, 111.

28 See Zeller 2006.

question the magistrates' obligation to care for the (true) poor, he insists that the poor have an obligation as well, to do everything possible to secure their own subsistence through work.<sup>29</sup> This work may be required even of children and the sick, according to one of his basic principles, "que cada uno coma su pan adquirido por su trabajo"<sup>30</sup> ("that each eats his bread acquired through his work." My trans.). With a vision of the pauper as a human being with a profound aversion to work, Vives "desmitifica la figura medieval del pobre que [...] pretendía mostrarse como seguidor de Cristo"<sup>31</sup> ("demystifies the medieval figure of the pauper who [...] pretended to show himself as a follower of Christ." My trans.) and, with an "elaboración teórica del concepto de la falsa pobreza, considera la mendicidad como un auténtico problema de orden público"<sup>32</sup> ("theoretical elaboration of the concept of false poverty, considers begging to be an actual problem of public order." My trans.). There is no doubt that Vives's proposals represent a paradigm shift in the perception of beggars and the social phenomenon of mendicancy. They constitute

toda una nueva reflexión sobre una nueva racionalización de la caridad que con la base de la estigmatización [i.e. criminalización] y represión de la mendicidad y la divinización del valor trabajo como elemento de integración-anulación, se va a [...] determinar el futuro desarrollo del tratamiento de la pobreza, aunque sea al principio en plano fundamentalmente teórico.<sup>33</sup>

("a whole new reflection on a new rationalization of charity based on stigma [i.e. criminalization] and the suppression of begging and sanctification of labor value as an element of integration-invalidation, and would determine the future development of the treatment of poverty, though initially on a fundamentally theoretical level." My trans.)

Thus, the problem of begging passes from the purview of the Church, with its traditional, generally positive concept of the pauper, to that of the public and secular-civil authorities, whose concept is much more negative, and consequently more severe and penalizing. This development – which some historians see as a "secularization" of poverty and mendicancy – led, in the 1570s, to "el amplio movimiento europeo del encierro o recogimiento de pobres"<sup>34</sup> ("the

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29 On this shift in perspective, see Keck's (2010) comparison of the theological concept of almsgiving in St. Thomas (*Summa theologiae*, II-II, quaestio XXXII) with Vives's more humanist philosophical stance.

30 Susín Betrán 2000, 114.

31 Tropé 2016, 315–333.

32 Susín Betrán 2000, 111.

33 Susín Betrán 2000, 111.

34 Santolaria Sierra 2016, 105.



broad European movement to confine or incarcerate the poor.” My trans.), to reduce the “visibilización de la miseria” (“visibility of misery.” My trans.) and its “potencial peligro”<sup>35</sup> (“potential threat.” My trans.), greatly feared by the magistrates, which would set the stage for the politics of the 18th century to confront what, at the time, was called the problem of the “non-producing classes.”<sup>36</sup>

Before moving on to the Enlightenment, it is worth recalling that throughout the 16th century the problem of poverty and mendicancy remained a matter of discussion, particularly among theologians; the controversy between the Dominican monk Domingo de Soto (1494–1560) and the Benedictine monk Juan de Robles (1492–1579)<sup>37</sup> is a well-known example. In his *Deliberación de la causa de los pobres* (“*Deliberation on the cause of poverty.*” My trans.) (Salamanca 1545, 49 p.) and his *De la orden que en algunos pueblos de España se ha puesto en la limosna, para remedio de los verdaderos pobres* (“On the order placed on alms for the remedy of the true poor in some Spanish towns.” My trans.) (Salamanca 1545, 60 p.), de Soto, a famous theologian who represented Charles V at the Council of Trent, does not oppose a reform of mendicancy. However, arguing from a theoretical-charitable perspective and a “visión sacra de la pobreza”<sup>38</sup> (“sacred vision of poverty.” My trans.), he emphatically rejects any criminalization or social exclusion of the poor. He opposes bureaucratic investigations into their lives, morals and needs, and recognizes no distinction between true, false and foreign beggars. By the same token, he rejects incarcerating the poor, insisting on their individual rights, which also include “manual almsgiving,” the prohibition of which he regards as legitimate only if urban authorities and the Church take on the full responsibility of meeting their basic needs.<sup>39</sup> We see a very different argument in the Benedictine’s writings. Robles, a distinguished member of the Order of Saint Benedict, esteemed orator, author of a Spanish translation of the Four Gospels (unpublished in his lifetime), and active in the complex practice of caring for the urban poor in Zamora, writing from a more administrative perspective, “censura críticamente la vida de los mendigos y vagabundos y todos sus

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35 Susín Betrán 2000, 115.

36 Santolaria Sierra 2016, 105 and 116–118.

37 For a brief sketch of the two positions see the chapter “La controversia doctrinal sobre el remedio de pobres en la España del siglo XVI” in Santolaria Sierra 2016, 119–122.

38 Santolaria Sierra 2016, 123.

39 Nor does de Soto shy away from social criticism, observing that for the examination of the life and religious practice of the poor, there is no corresponding scrutiny of the rich, and furthermore, “que a muchos pobres los ricos los hicieron pobres” (“that many of the poor were made poor by the rich.” My trans.). Santolaria Sierra 2016, 120.

desmanes, mostrando que es un deber de buena gobernación de la república el poner orden en esta cuestión social”<sup>40</sup> (“critically censures the lives of beggars and vagabonds with all their excesses, showing that it is a duty of good governance of the republic to bring order to this social question.” My trans.), leading him to advocate for the civil authorities’ strict intervention in the control of the poor, and to approve of the practice of confinement that was being implemented – in his eyes, with great success – within and outside of Spain. Despite their clash of principles, both of these author-theologians agree that mendicancy is “una cuestión que está adoptando formas sociales que exigen respuestas cada vez más organizadas”<sup>41</sup> (“a question that is taking social forms that demand increasingly organized responses.” My trans.). In this series of systematic reactions we find the writings and proposals of the cleric Miguel Giginta (1534?–1588?),<sup>42</sup> and those of Cristóbal Pérez de Herrera (1558–1620),<sup>43</sup> a former Protomedicus of the Galleys. Giginta is responsible for founding the so-called “Casas de Misericordia” (“Houses of Mercy,” two in Madrid, in 1580 and 1581, and one in Barcelona in 1583), sometimes known as “conventos secularizados”<sup>44</sup> (“secularized convents.” My trans.), stern institutions “où tout est prévu que le coût soit le moins élevé possible” (“where everything is planned to keep costs as low as possible.” My trans.),<sup>45</sup> with the charitable intention of combining the moral improvement of the poor with making use of their capacity for work. Pérez de Herrera founded the “Albergue o Hospicio de Madrid” (“Hostel or Hospice of Madrid”), which welcomed both the poor and the sick, and reserved a special section for “fallen women.” The attribute shared by both institutions was the already well-known but increasingly enforced “condena moral y religiosa del no-trabajo” (“moral and religious condemnation of unemployment.” My trans.) and “la condena religiosa, moral y política de la ociosidad”<sup>46</sup> (“the religious, moral, and political condemnation of idleness.” My trans.), which, in Pérez de Herrera’s case, “rompió de forma absoluta con la concepción y el tratamiento tradicional y sacralizado de la pobreza”<sup>47</sup> (“broke completely with the traditional sacred conception and

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40 Santolaria Sierra 2016, 121.

41 Santolaria Sierra 2016, 122.

42 *Tratado de remedios de pobres*, 1579. See the edition and introductory study by Felix Santolaria Sierra, 2000.

43 *Discurso del amparo de los legítimos pobres*, 1598. See the edition with introduction and notes by Cavillac 1975.

44 Susín Betrán 2000, 120.

45 Catherine Gaignard 2016, 131.

46 Santolaria Sierra 2016, 118.

47 Susín Betrán 2000, 124.

treatment of poverty.” My trans.). In the words of Raúl Susín Betrán, we can already see here “un cierto interés mercantilista que podemos entender como avance del ideal ilustrado posterior” (“a certain mercantilist interest that we may see as a precedent of the later enlightened ideal.” My trans.).<sup>48</sup> In fact, there were no new attempts to solve the problem of mendicancy from the death of Philip II in 1598 through the 17th century, although the phenomenon of poverty continued to worsen under the disastrous economic circumstances that marked the reigns of Philip III, Philip IV, and Charles II.<sup>49</sup> On a literary level, this increasingly critical vision of the poor and marginalized is evident in picaresque novels, where the world of the poor and unemployed is depicted, for example in the works of Mateo Alemán (*El Guzman de Alfarache*, 1599–1604) or Cervantes (*Rinconete y Cortadillo*, 1613), as an autonomous universe with an ethics of its own, as opposed to the nascent “mentalité bourgeoise”<sup>50</sup> (“bourgeois mentality.” My trans.) in Golden-Age Spain.

#### 4. Demystifying poverty and sacralizing work in the Enlightenment: From alms to (forced) labor

The dire state of the Spanish economy in the second half of the 17th century carried over into the early 18th century, bringing with it exorbitant numbers of the poor.<sup>51</sup> It was not until the reigns of Ferdinand VI (1746–1759) and Charles III (1759–1788) that a new economic project came into being, developed by a range of economists and ministers such as José del Campillo (1693), Bernardo Ward (?–1776), Campomanes (1723–1802) and the Count of Floridablanca (1728–1808). The goal of this economic policy was “public felicity,” assured by the prosperity of the State, accomplished by the labor of all citizens and “vassals” and guaranteed by the absolute ruler. In this era of nascent industrialization, the concept of “utility” was increasingly inculcated, together with a “divinización del

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48 Susín Betrán 2000, 118.

49 Worth a separate mention is the *Monumento triunfal de la Piedad Católica. Erigido por la Imperial Ciudad de Çaragoza* (Zaragoza 1672), by the jurist Pedro José Ordoñez, who nevertheless still advocates for the prohibition of begging, public intervention to succor the poor, and confining them in every type of hospice.

50 Cavillac 1983, 15.

51 According to Bernardo Ward’s well-known calculations, Spain had seven million inhabitants in 1750, of whom two million were unemployed: Of those, 50,000 were paupers supported by public funds and 150,000 were vagabonds and the work-shy who, in lieu of working, relied on various types of alms. Susín Betrán 2000, 125–126.

trabajo”<sup>52</sup> (“sanctification of work.” My trans.), while the idea of “non-work” – or, to use the word of the age – “idleness” (of the poor, but also of the rich and the clergy) became a radically negative concept. In this Enlightenment ideology, “poverty” and “mendicancy,” already conflated with idleness in some areas, acquired an even heavier stigma as “poor” gradually came to mean “lazy,” refusing to contribute one’s potential “human capital” to Spain’s yearned-for industrialization. In this way, the poor definitively lost their sacred status and almsgiving became no longer the charitable duty of all Christians, but, from the perspective of Campomanes’ new economic principles, “como premio [...] considerable a la holgazanería” (“like a hefty prize for laziness.” My trans.), or, in more modern terms, a nefarious and counterproductive “transferencia de renta permanente e institucionalizada de los individuos productivos a los improductivos”<sup>53</sup> (“permanent and institutionalized transfer of income from productive to unproductive individuals.” My trans.). The pauper represented the opposite of the new ideal, the “hombre útil”<sup>54</sup> (“useful man.” My trans.), and after the Esquilache Riots of 1766, a political threat as well.<sup>55</sup> In such a context, it is not surprising that “the father of the Spanish Enlightenment,” the generally benevolent Benedictine monk Fray Benito Jerónimo (1676–1764), would resort to such terms as “peste,” “holgazanes por impostores” and “zánganos inútiles” (“plague,” “loafers and impostors,” and “useless drones.” My trans.) of contemporary society, without qualification or nuance to allow for invalids or the “true” poor.<sup>56</sup> For his part, Feijoo praises the traditional hospices, not as a charitable institution but for strict confinement and a system of severe punishments with the threefold function of converting mendicants into useful subjects (“regnicolas”): (1) accustoming all paupers to work (“pues muy raro hay [pobre] tan impedido, que no pueda emplearse en alguna ocupación mecánica”<sup>57</sup> [“because very rare is a person so handicapped that he cannot be employed in some mechanical operation.” My

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52 Susín Betrán 2000, 111.

53 Sarasúa 2004, 175.

54 See Covarrubias V. 2005, 181–229, for a particularly attentive analysis of the positions of Feijoo, Campomanes and Jovellanos for 18th-century Spain.

55 Sarasúa 2004, 173–174.

56 Feijoo 1777, 255–259. *Cartas eruditas y curiosas*. T. 3, carta XXIII.

57 Recall Montesquieu’s famous words in his *De l’esprit des lois* (1748, L. XXIII, cap. 29, titulado “Des hôpitaux”): “Un homme n’est pas pauvre parce qu’il n’a rien, mais parce qu’il ne travaille pas.” (“A man is not poor because he does not own anything, but because he does not work.” My trans.). For the ideological background of this statement (with which Feijoo seems to agree), see Larrère 2010, 24–43.

trans.]); (2) employing them without pay (“servirse de ellos sin salario alguno, ni otra pensión, que darles de comer” [“make use of them without salary or other pension than something to eat.” My trans.]) to increase the common good in public works, agriculture, or the military and (3) offering them the chance – indeed, the obligation – to “vivir cristianamente” (“to live in a Christian way.” My trans.), “especialmente en la frecuencia razonable de los Santos Sacramentos”<sup>58</sup> (“especially in the reasonable frequency of the Holy Sacraments.” My trans.). Feijoo himself does concede that “es fácil demostrar la utilidad de los Hospicios; pero es muy difícil su fundación, y mucho más su conservación, habiendo mostrado la experiencia varias dificultades, o tropiezos, que muchas veces han impedido lo primero, y muchas veces más imposibilitado los segundos” (“it is easy to demonstrate the utility of the Hospices, but very difficult to justify their foundation and, much more, their preservation, experience having shown various difficulties or setbacks which many times have impeded the former, and many more times defeated the latter.” My trans.). However, he trusts the two responsible powers (the “Autoridad Regia,” that is the secular State) and “la Pontificia” (the Church and the Ecclesiastics) to establish a hospice system that will end the problem of poverty and street alms that so annoys Spain’s rising bourgeoisie.<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, Enlightenment thinkers were convinced that the “Estado moderno [was taking charge] de la parte más importante de la beneficencia”<sup>60</sup> (“modern state [...] of the most important part of charity.” My trans.), which would ensure the improvement of a system that had been so degraded under its previous ecclesiastical guidance. This faith was unjustified, as is evident in the numerous proposals that Gaspar Melchor Jovellanos (1744–1811), jurist, politician and Enlightenment philosopher, presented nearly three decades later, in his *Discurso acerca de la situación y división interior de los hospicios con respecto a su salubridad* (“Discourse on the situation and internal division of hospices with regard to their salubrity.” My trans.) (1778)<sup>61</sup> for the improvement of the hospices’ external conditions.<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, this persistent criticism of the royal hospice

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58 Sarasúa 2004, 175.

59 Feijoo 1777, 259–260.

60 Santana Pérez 1996, 344.

61 Jovellanos 1952, 431–435.

62 Jovellanos mentions three factors of crucial importance for a good hospice: “1.<sup>a</sup> su salubridad; 2.<sup>a</sup>, su economía [i.e. the organization of labor and maintenance costs of the inmates, their food and clothing]; 3.<sup>a</sup> su buen orden. La primera dice respecto á la conservación de la salud de los hospicianos, y abraza toda la policía interior respectiva á este punto. La segunda á la industria de los mismos, y abraza las reglas relativas á la división y clases de los trabajos, esto es, la policía económica del hospicio. La tercera

system's deficiencies will not prevent another jurist, also a high official of the monarchy (though unemployed when he wrote his text) and a personal friend of Jovellanos, from extolling the utility of hospices in solving the perennial problem of poverty 25 years later.<sup>63</sup> I am referring to the *Fragmentos de un discurso sobre la mendiguez* ("Fragments of a discourse on the mendicancy." My trans.), written by Juan Meléndez Valdés in 1802. His initial citation of a brief legal text of the time (Law 4, title 20, part VIII) has a programmatic character:

Tales como estos, a quien dicen en latín *validos mendicantes*, de que no viene ningún pro a la tierra, que non tan solamente fuesen echados de ella, mas aún que si seyendo

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á las costumbres, y dice relación á la conducta de los hospicianos, comprendiendo cuanto es preciso para una buena educación, instrucción y corrección, esto es, toda la policía moral de los hospicios." ("1. its salubrity; 2. its economy [...]; 3. its good order. The first addresses the preservation of the residents' health and contains all of the respective internal policy on this point. The second refers to their industry, and covers the rules relating to the division and class of work, that is, the economic policy of the hospice. The third addresses the customs and conduct of the residents, comprising what is needed for a good education, instruction and correction, that is, the moral policy of the hospice." My trans.) (1952, 431a). His observations imply a radical critique of the existing hospices and he loses no time in asserting "que el proyecto de un hospicio general" ("that the project of a general hospice." My trans.), i.e. situated outside of urban centers to reduce mendicancy and escape; separation of the sexes and classification (children, the elderly, the sick, real and pretend paupers, able to work or not, etc.) según lo que exige la salubridad, la buena economía y la buena moral, es una verdadera quimera. Sería preciso formar una casa tan grande como una poblacion entera, y entonces de su misma extension y separacion nacerian nuevos inconvenientes" ("according to the demands of salubrity, good economy and strong morals, is a true chimera. It would require a house as big as an entire population, and then from its extension and separation new inconveniences would arise." My trans.) (1952, 432a). Moreover, Jovellanos knew very well that for the proper functioning of the hospices – and the solution to the problem of mendicancy – a profound change in mentality was needed on the part of the poor who lived there, "quitando [...] á la preocupacion general la ocasion de mirar con desafecto estos asilos de la humanidad, y de reputarlos como prisiones destinadas á encerrar la pobreza y la miseria" ("removing [...] from the general concern the occasion to look with disfavor on these asylums of humanity, and consider them prisons designed to enclose poverty and misery." My trans.) (1952, 434b).

63 For other writings of the era with the same conclusion see the study and anthology of texts and the brief introductory study by Alejandro Mayordomo Pérez and Luis Miguel Lázaro Lorente 1988.

sano de sus miembros pidiesen por Dios [i.e. begging for alms on the street], que non les diesen limosna porque escarmentasen et tornasen a facer bien viviendo de su trabajo.<sup>64</sup> (“Such as these, who are known as *validos mendicantes* [‘valid mendicants’] in Latin, and who are of no use to the regions [where they reside], should not merely be driven from these places, but moreover those who are healthy in their limbs and yet beg by appealing to God, should be given no alms, that they may think of something better and learn again to live from the work of their hands.” My trans.).

Meléndez Valdés returns to the postulate that the solution to poverty is the work of the poor themselves, even if it amounts more or less to forced labor. To implement this, in the first section of his text<sup>65</sup> he refers to the institution of hospices; not the inefficient (albeit sometimes very well endowed) hospices so despised by the public, but the “hospices of the future,” reformed at the national level, with competent managers who invest their funds not in ineffective bureaucratic administration, but in promoting competition in the work of the poor themselves, using the clergy and their sermons as intermediaries to promote acceptance of the hospice system on the part of the poor.<sup>66</sup> Next, Meléndez Valdés sketches an extremely negative image of the poor in contemporary Spain<sup>67</sup>: brutalized human beings, ragged vagabonds, excessively annoying everywhere, of an “asqueroso desaseo” (“disgusting mess.” My trans.), smelly, plagued by countless contagious illnesses, given to wine and to the “desórdenes más feos” (“ugliest of disorders.” My trans.) and “todos los vicios” (“all of the vices.” My trans.), thieves without morality or religion, dangers to public order, with children who “toman

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64 *Fragmentos de un discurso sobre la mendiguez*, 273.

65 “Del estado de nuestros Hospicios” (“On the state of our hospices.” My trans.). Meléndez Valdés 1821, 273–278.

66 “[...] que despierten [in the poor] al interés y la codicia dando una parte de la utilidad del trabajo al mismo que la gana para su establecimiento en la salida; [...] interese en su favor al clero, y suenen con frecuencia en los púlpitos y el confesionario sus indecibles utilidades y cuán gratos son por ellas sus bienhechores al estado y a la religión, que tanto recomiendan la caridad y la beneficencia; sean casas verdaderamente de piedad y enseñanza, y no de rutina y tiranía; [...]” (“that they awaken [...] interest and greed, giving part of the profit of labor to him who earns it for its establishment at the outset; [...] interest in its favor in the clergy, who frequently hold forth in the pulpits and the confessional on its unspeakable benefits and how grateful their benefactors are to the state and to religion, who recommend charity and beneficence so highly; that they truly be houses of piety and teaching, and not of routine and tyranny; [...]” My trans.) Meléndez Valdés, 277.

67 Chapter: “Corrupción moral y embrutecimiento de los mendigos” (“Moral corruption and coarsening of beggars.” My trans.). Meléndez Valdés, 278–280.

de los padres esta vida corrompida y libre, y con ella la inmoralidad y la mentira” (“learn this corrupted and libertine life from their parents, and with it the immorality and lies.” My trans.), so that “sin un freno poderoso” (“without a mighty brake.” My trans.) the whole of Spain “será en muy pocos años un pueblo de pordioseros y vagabundos” (“will be a people of beggars and vagabonds in a few years.” My trans.). It is the poor who are responsible for “the ills of Spain” at the time, “el envilecimiento y deshonor de la nación, su despoblación y su pobreza”<sup>68</sup> (“the debasement and dishonor of the nation, its depopulation and its poverty.” My trans.). On the other hand, Meléndez Valdés also tries to explain this scandalous situation on a more abstract level, referring to an “errada economía”<sup>69</sup> (“false economy.” My trans.) of the State and, above all, to some false notions of almsgiving and charity for the poor that prevailed in Spain,<sup>70</sup> opposing in very harsh terms – in his capacity as an official and theorist of enlightened despotism – the traditional image of the poor still propagated by many theologians in the 18th century, and thus held by the majority of the population. In rejecting the idea of almsgiving, which he considers extremely false and dangerous, he refers to the Bible itself and to the Fathers of the Church:

La veneracion religiosa y el amor santo que inspira el Evangelio acia la verdadera pobreza, ó mas bien desapego de los bienes y riqueza de este mundo, trasladado sin razon á la mendiguez, ha sido causa de que ésta no se mire cual debe, como una consecuencia necesaria de la holgazanería ó el desarreglo, [...]. A no ser en rarísimos casos, el mendigo es siempre un hombre sin economía ni conducta, que ha disipado en vicios cuanto ganó; que no ha sabido educar cristianamente a sus hijos para que amparen su vejez; [...]. Así pues, las máximas de que *el pobre es una imagen viva del Redentor; la pobreza, Dios la amó; pobre de Jesucristo; pobre, pero honrado*, aplicadas a la mendiguez por la ignorancia ó una caridad irreflexiva, la fomentan, la canonizan y producen en la sociedad las consecuencias mas fatales. Sépase que la mendiguez es ociosa, disipada, inmoral, y opuesta por lo mismo á las santas máximas del cristianismo: [...].<sup>71</sup>

(“The religious veneration and holy love that the Gospel inspires toward true poverty, or rather detachment from worldly goods, transferred without reason to the beggar, has

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68 Meléndez Valdés, 278–279.

69 Meléndez Valdés, 280.

70 See the chapters “La mendiguez reprobada por la religión, la moral y las leyes: los que la favorecen, malos ciudadanos” (“Mendicancy rebuked by religion, morality, and the laws: those who favor it, bad citizens.” My trans.) and “Enfermedades de la mendiguez, y riesgo inminente de contagios en que por ella estamos” (“Diseases of mendicancy, and the imminent risk of contagion that we are in.” My trans.) in *Fragmentos de un discurso sobre la mendiguez*. Meléndez Valdés, 280–290.

71 Meléndez Valdés, 280–283.



caused it to be seen not as it should, as a necessary consequence of laziness or disorder, [...]. The beggar is with very few exceptions a man without economy or conduct, who has dissipated his earnings in vice; he has not known how to educate his children to ease his old age in the Christian manner; [...]. Thus, the maxims that *the poor man is the living image of the Redeemer; that God loves the poor; the poor of Jesus Christ; poor but honest*, applied to the beggar out of ignorance or heedless charity, these foster it, canonize it, and produce the most fatal consequences for society. Let it be known that begging is idle, dissipated, immoral, and therefore opposed to the holy maxims of Christianity: [...].” My trans.)

To support his condemnation of almsgiving he cites as irrefutable testimony the lawmakers of classical Antiquity, who “castigaron hasta con la pena de muerte la vagabunda mendiguez”<sup>72</sup> (“even punished the homeless beggar with death.” My trans.) and concludes:

Vedemos rigurosamente la limosna indiscreta de puerta y calle, cebo de la pereza, [...]; penetrémonos bien de la obligación santa del trabajo en todos los estados desde el más humilde o mas pobre al mas encumbrado y opulento, para evitar el tedio que nos roe y consume en la inercia del ocio; [...].<sup>73</sup>

(“Let us rigorously prohibit indiscreet alms from door and street, bait of laziness, [...]; let us understand well the holy obligation of work in all states, from the most humble or poorest to the most exalted and opulent, to prevent the boredom that gnaws and consumes us in the inertia of idleness; [...].” My trans.)

To underscore the public threat posed by beggars, Meléndez Valdés offers an almost apocalyptic image of the hygienic, moral and economic dangers they represent.<sup>74</sup> He draws particular attention to the children whose parents abuse and sometimes even mutilate them to elicit more sympathy from the public; instead of making their children “laboriosos” (“useful.” My trans.) they deny them “brazos trabajadores” (“working arms.” My trans.), without which “no hay ni riquezas ni poder, y sin ellos, ni fuerzas, ni consideración política, ni felicidad interior” (“there is neither wealth nor power, and without these, neither strength, nor political consideration, nor inner happiness.” My trans.) in contemporary Spain.<sup>75</sup> This insistence on the necessity and the “secular sacralization” of work served the mercantilist policy of Carlos III’s and Carlos IV’s ministers.

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72 Meléndez Valdés, 283.

73 Meléndez Valdés, 283–284.

74 “Enfermedades de la mendiguez, y riesgo inminente de contagios en que por ella estamos.” Meléndez Valdés, 285–290.

75 Meléndez Valdés, 287.

Despite this negative vision of the poor in Bourbon Spain, Meléndez Valdés, the “dulce Batilo,” so compassionate toward the exploited folk of the countryside and the elderly, is convinced that there are ways to motivate the poor to resist their indisputable tendency to laziness and accept a job. The anthropological basis for this conviction appears in the chapter “El interés, la codicia, el espíritu de adquisición, móvil poderoso del trabajo y necesario en las sociedades”<sup>76</sup> (“Interest, greed, the spirit of acquisition, powerful motive to work and necessary in societies.” My trans.), whose fundamental ideas undoubtedly arose in the aftermath of a seminal text of liberal thought, *The Fable of the Bees* (1714, 1723) by Bernard Mandeville (1670–1733), and its thesis that private vices (or passions like emulation and individual greed) become public benefits and the basis of the wealth of nations.<sup>77</sup> According to this moral code, which is optimistic but has little in common with traditional Christian ethics, there is in all human beings a “deseo natural de trabajar para ganar, y de adquirir para después gozar”<sup>78</sup> (“natural desire to work for gain, and to acquire and later enjoy.” My trans.). The solution thus lies in understanding why the poor of Spain have lost this universal desire. For Meléndez Valdés, there is no doubt that one of the causes is the “caridad irreflexiva” (“heedless charity.” My trans.) of Spanish Christians and the traditional system of public assistance, already condemned by many other authors.<sup>79</sup>

Based on these anthropological ideas, inspired by the optimism typical of the Enlightenment, Valdés opposes the confinement and violence of many existing hospices and proposes a much more liberal idea for the whole of Spain: (1) a single system of hospices in both urban centers and smaller towns, (2) an “asociación”<sup>80</sup> that includes and excites the entire nation for the intellectual, moral and professional (re-)education of the poor under the benign control of a “Junta [of volunteers]”<sup>81</sup> compuesta de eclesiásticos y seculares de uno y otro

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76 Meléndez Valdés, 290–293.

77 For the debates on this thesis of Enlightenment thought, see Albert O. Hirschman’s (2004) analysis of the interdependence of passions and interests in the real and mental economy of individuals.

78 Meléndez Valdés, 292.

79 Meléndez Valdés’s official attempts to reform the many ineffective hospitals in the city of Ávila (1792–1793) are covered in Astorgano Abajo 2004, 37–60.

80 See the chapter “Idea de una asociación de caridad para socorro de los pobres” (“Idea for a charitable association for the succor of the poor.” My trans.), Meléndez Valdés 1821, 293–305. Meléndez Valdés does not further specify a name for this future institution.

81 Meléndez Valdés insists that this work be unremunerated – “por amor de Dios” (“for the love of God.” My trans.) – (1821, 299) because it is already known that in many

sexo”<sup>82</sup> (“Board [...] composed of ecclesiastics and secularists of both sexes.” My trans.), (3) the confidence, typical of the optimistic anthropology of the Enlightenment, in the efficacy of such education, and finally, (4) the belief in the voluntary cooperation of the poor, whom they hoped to convince with rational arguments based on self-interest, and thus inspire the “amor saludable del trabajo, persiguiendo sin cesar al ocio y la pereza” (“healthy love of work, endlessly pursuing leisure and laziness.” My trans.).<sup>83</sup>

Meléndez Valdés knows perfectly well that this plan could be seen as “un proyecto especulativo de inaccesible ejecución; porque la tibieza y la helada circunspección nunca saben salir de las sendas trilladas, aun en los últimos ahogos” (“a speculative project of unattainable execution; because tepidness and icy circumspection never know how to leave the beaten path, even to the point of drowning.” My trans.). Nevertheless, he persists in his belief in the persuasive power of rational argument and writes that “[...] en los males apurados, deben ser los remedios nuevos y apurados como los mismos males; y este que nos aflige [i.e. the problem of poverty] es gravísimo y de urgente reparacion”<sup>84</sup> (“in its hurried ills, the new and hasty remedies must be like the ills themselves, and that which now afflicts us [...] is very serious and needs urgent repair.” My trans.). Moreover, he is convinced that there are “[e]stablecimientos extranjeros en beneficio de los pobres”<sup>85</sup> (“foreign establishments for the benefit of the poor.” My trans.) that definitively prove that his reflections and proposals are not simply “sueños brillantes”<sup>86</sup> (“shining dreams.” My trans.). He refers to institutions in France, the Netherlands, England and Germany,<sup>87</sup> and especially to a “casa de industria de Munich, obra del célebre Rumford, este genio benéfico,

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cases the maintenance of different types of hospitals was merely a pretext – both among secular managers and clerics – to seize funds from those institutions. See the study by Wolfram Aichinger (2010) on the Antonine hospitals in Spain, where the monks barely roused themselves to cure the sick, despite the many and lucrative privileges (including free pig farming) accorded them for precisely this purpose.

82 Meléndez Valdés 1821, 299.

83 Meléndez Valdés 1821, 297.

84 Meléndez Valdés 1821, 303.

85 Meléndez Valdés 1821, 305–307.

86 Meléndez Valdés 1821, 305.

87 In these countries – enthusiastic participants in the Enlightenment – the remedy proposed for poverty and mendicancy was not alms (whether individual or organized), which were seen as an incentive for laziness and idleness, but voluntary or even forced labor, which in France led to Montesquieu’s rejection of the “Hôpitaux Généraux” established during the reign of Louis XIV. Larrère 2010, 26–28.

a quien tanto debe la desvalida humanidad, y cuyos escritos inmortales son el breviario de los economistas en este importante ramo”<sup>88</sup> (“a house of industry in Munich, the work of the famous Rumford, that charitable genius to whom a helpless humanity owes so much, and whose immortal writings are the breviary of economists in this crucial topic.” My trans.). This Count Rumford, today almost totally forgotten, was in his time a worthy philanthropist in the fight against mass poverty in Napoleonic Europe.

At the end of these reflections, there is not the slightest doubt that in the “pensamiento profundamente regalista de Meléndez Valdés”<sup>89</sup> (“profoundly regalistic thought of Meléndez Valdés.” My trans.) only the State – that is, the secular institution of the enlightened monarchy – has the duty and the capacity to help the poor. At the same time, he is of the opinion that all of the (quite numerous) previous measures have failed completely. For this reason, he reiterates his insistence that Spanish public opinion be brought around to support a new and comprehensive program to combat poverty, which he sees as perfectly feasible. More important, however, is

[ganar] una mano paternal y benéfica que temple con la humanidad lo duro de la ley, y sepa unir el espíritu de orden con la moderación; que lllore sobre el mendigo aun cuando le castigue; [...] que con una bondad reflexiva, unas ideas generales de administracion, una pureza de intencion, un zelo infatigable, un patriotismo ardiente, esté sobre todo, y vele sobre todo singularmente en los principios [...]. Yo la conozco bien; y ella sola por su poder, su actividad y sus recursos puede hacer a la patria, á la religión y á la desvalida humanidad un servicio tan señalado.<sup>90</sup>

(“to have a paternal and beneficent hand that tempers with humanity the sternness of the law, and knows how to unite the spirit of order with moderation; let him cry for the beggar even as he castigates him; [...] that with a reflexive kindness, general ideas of administration, purity of intention, indefatigable zeal, ardent patriotism, shall be above all, and see above all to principle [...] I know him well; and he alone in his power, his activity, and his resources can render to the country, to religion, and to helpless humanity such a signal service.” My trans.)

This highest authority, which the royalist Meléndez Valdés does not name, is no doubt the King, as the supreme exemplar of benevolent despotism. However, we know today that this royal authority was not up to the exigencies of the time.

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88 Meléndez Valdés 1821, 307. On the merits of Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford (1753–1814), philanthropic writer and famous inventor of the time, see Hammermayer 2005, 244–246.

89 Astorgano Abajo 2004, 37.

90 Meléndez Valdés 1821, 309–310.

Presumably, Valdés himself was aware of this incompetence and that was why his reform proposal remained fragmented.

## 5. Poverty and the poor between utopian inclusion and real exclusion

A brief final note: In the early days of the Modern Era, poverty was considered a sacred phenomenon of inscrutable divine Providence, which men had the opportunity and the duty to alleviate through almsgiving, a deed closely linked to an authentically Christian life. Later, philosophers, administrators and lawmakers sought ways to combine the act of Christian almsgiving with forms of assistance that were more secular, more rational, more economic and more bureaucratic – though perhaps not always more effective or humane. It was only in the Enlightenment that thinkers and politicians reached the conclusion that it would be possible to one day eradicate poverty by educating the poor, substituting the “divine right to alms” with the “right to work,” interpreted as an inescapable obligation of modern man, who was thus solely responsible for his own existence. In reality, though, it seems that the Enlightenment ideal of including the poor in a welfare society would have no effect on the harsh reality of their exclusion from the industrially-enriched society of the 18th and 19th centuries, as promoted by the “protagonists of production.” Thus, it is logical that, unlike the protagonists of economic productivity, the “beggar” was not granted a significant role in those literary genres of the time, especially theater and lyric poetry, that were understood as reflective or propagandistic instruments of Enlightenment thinking.<sup>91</sup>

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91 The English translation of this text was carried out by Anna Larsson, to whom I am most grateful.

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Andreas Gelz

## The Nation as Economic Agent in Eighteenth-Century Spanish Apologetic Texts

**Abstract** Eighteenth-century Spanish apologetic literature aimed to counter the often ideologically-motivated popular stereotype of Spain as an unproductive, idle and backward nation. To do this, the literature praises the economic and socio-political achievements of the time as well as the country's modernization. To analyze this textual strategy, we must change the focus; instead of investigating the representation of individual entrepreneurs, craftspeople, and workers, we turn our attention to the depiction of the collective dimension of entrepreneurship and the productivity of the nation. Our overview of this "genre" insists on the rhetorical, discursive, and logical strategies that ensure the transition from an individual to an aggregated, macroeconomic, and political figure. In short, what are the key elements of this figure's economic activity and how do the different elements respond to existing intercultural prejudices?

**Keywords:** Economy, National Identity, Spanish Enlightenment, Spanish-French Relations, Spanish Apologists

To approach the topic "protagonists of production" from perhaps a rather unusual perspective, we must shift the focus from the individual entrepreneurs, craftspeople and workers, and instead examine the collective dimension of entrepreneurship: i.e., the productivity of the nation. Hence, one may expect that this paper will be centered on the socio-political and economic agenda of enlightened absolutism. However, instead, this paper focuses on a polemic that was particularly present during the last third of the 18th century. This polemic, fueled above all by French authors, evoked anti-Spanish sentiments, including elements of the so-called *leyenda negra* ("Black Legend"), the stereotype of a Spanish nation characterized by fanaticism, inquisition, colonial excess and socio-political traditionalism. Moreover, the polemic also addressed an economic perspective, portraying Spain as an unproductive, idle and backward nation. The polemic culminates in the *Encyclopédie méthodique's* entry on Spain, published in 1782. This piece of writing by Nicolas Masson de Morvilliers, along with its infamous question "Que doit-on à l'Espagne?" ("What do we owe to Spain?" My trans.),<sup>1</sup> provoked a considerable number of impassioned replies,

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1 Masson de Morvilliers 1782, 565.

and influenced the public debate in the 1780s. These texts include *inter alia* the writings by Antonio José Cavanilles, *Observations de M. l'abbé Cavanilles sur l'article "Espagne" de la nouvelle Encyclopédie* ("M. Abbé Cavanilles' observations on the article 'Spain' in the new Encyclopedia." My trans.) (Paris 1784); Carlo Denina's *Respuesta a la pregunta: ¿qué se debe a la España?* ("An answer to the question: What do we owe to Spain?" My trans.) (Valencia 1786); and Juan Pablo Forner's *Oracion apologética por la España y su merito literario: para que sirva de exornacion al discurso leído por el abate Denina en la Academia de Ciencias de Berlin, respondiendo á la quëstion Qué se debe á España?* ("Apologetic oratory in favor of Spain and its literary merit: in order to serve as an elaboration on the discourse read by the Abbé Denina at the Academy of Sciences of Berlin, answering the question What do we owe to Spain?" My trans.) (Madrid 1786). Additionally, there was a further entire series of texts by Juan Pablo Forner, in which he makes a stand against attacks on his *Oracion apologética*, such as *Pasatiempo de D. Juan Pablo Forner en respuesta a las objeciones que se han hecho a su Oracion apologética por la España* ("Pastime by D. Juan Pablo Forner, in response to the objections made to his apologetic Oratory in favor of Spain." My trans.) (Madrid 1787). However, this polemic is not restricted to apologetic texts,<sup>2</sup> but can also be found in other genres. A few examples are the periodic press and the moral weekly publications such as *El Censor* (one of the few voices supporting Masson's criticism). Furthermore, the polemic can be found in many travel reports as well as in literature, including well-known texts such as José Cadalso's *Cartas Marruecas* (1774/1789).

The most inflammatory sentence of Masson's text, "Que doit-on à l'Espagne? Et depuis deux siècles, depuis quatre, depuis dix, qu'a-t-elle fait pour l'Europe?" ("What do we owe to Spain? And for two centuries, for four, for ten, what has Spain done for Europe?" My trans.),<sup>3</sup> casts doubt upon Spain's productivity and, thereby, its contribution, among other things, to the European economy. According to Cavanilles' summary of the arguments put forward in the *Encyclopédie*, Spain's backwardness is supposedly brought about by the nation's idleness and laziness<sup>4</sup>: "il n'y a enfin chez les Espagnols qu'ignorance, apathie, ou gravité oisive"

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2 For the theory and history of apology in Spain see also Tschiltschke 2009, 185–202.

3 Masson de Morvilliers 1782, 565.

4 According to Masson, religious intolerance was also a central cause of Spain's economic crisis: "Para Masson, la decadencia de España no se inscribe en el contexto global de la historia socio-económica de la temprana modernidad [...], sino que se explica exclusivamente como resultado de la intolerancia religiosa" ("For Masson, the decline of Spain is not inscribed in the global context of the socio-economic history of early

(“Finally, there is only ignorance, apathy, or idle seriousness among the Spanish.” My trans.). In addition to this apathy, lethargy is also named: “les reproches d’inertie absolue et de léthargie”<sup>5</sup> (“reproaches of absolute inertia and lethargy.” My trans.); as well as paralysis, in a reference to “paralytiques espagnols”<sup>6</sup> (“paralytic Spaniards.” My trans.). The reference to economic unproductiveness is thus corroborated by characterological and psychological features of the Spanish, as well as by a medical diagnosis. This depicts a seemingly constitutive deficiency of the Spanish society and its members, excluding the Spanish from the European dynamics of progress and modernization in the course of the Enlightenment. We will now turn to how the Spanish reacted to the allegations of the polemic.

In the following pages, I will present a few exemplary responses from some of the aforementioned texts. Regardless of their apologetic function, these texts are, in my opinion, relevant instances of the self-description of Spain in the context of newly-emerged economic discourses. In this context it is important to remember that the fierce attacks against Spain as a haven of obscurantism and counter-Enlightenment forced the Spanish to question their national identity, and thereby shaped the Enlightenment discourse in Spain.<sup>7</sup> Our survey of some of the apologetic texts will rely on the textual – that is, the generic, rhetorical, discursive, and logical – strategies that ensure the transition from the construction of the figure of the individual entrepreneur to that of the nation as an economic agent. These strategies bridge not only the potential contrast between private vices and public benefits, but assert above all Spain’s dynamism and modernity.

One of the first reactions to Masson’s article was written by Antonio José Cavanilles: *Observations de M. l’Abbé Cavanilles sur l’article Espagne de la Nouvelle Encyclopédie* (“M. Abbé Cavanilles’ observations on the article Spain in the new Encyclopedia.” My trans.) (Paris 1784). The text was first published in French and subsequently translated into Spanish. It is divided into two parts: the first is an elaborate panorama of the situation and development of Spain in the

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modernity [...], but is explained exclusively as a result of religious intolerance.” My trans.). Lope 1998, 405.

5 Cavanilles 1784, 67.

6 Cavanilles 1784, 5.

7 See also Tschiltschke 2009 and Gies 1999, 310: “La pregunta de Masson, pues, ha revelado, como antes sugerimos, una crisis de identidad. ‘¿Qué se debe a España?’ se traduce para los ilustrados (o contrailustrados) que estamos examinando en ‘¿Qué es España?’ ‘¿Quiénes somos nosotros?’ [...]” (“Masson’s question, then, has revealed, as suggested earlier, a crisis of identity. ‘What do we owe to Spain?’ turned into ‘What is Spain?’ ‘Who are we?’ for the enlightened [or counter-enlightened] people.” My trans.).

18th century under the reign of the Bourbon king Carlos III (1759–1788). The second part is a reaction to Masson's skepticism about the historical merit of Spain, which deals with the history of the Spanish nation in a European context. Here, there is a central dilemma that apologetic writing must confront. On the one hand, it must lament Spain's decline from its assumed golden age of the mid-sixteenth to the mid-17th century, known as the *Siglo de Oro* ("Golden Age"), to its crisis in the 18th century, in order to legitimize the Bourbon reform policies – without, on the other hand, providing ammunition for the anti-Spanish polemics of other European nations.<sup>8</sup>

### 1. Apologetic authors in Spain – toward a pluralized and divergent understanding of Enlightenment

A fundamental argumentation relates to the concept (but not necessarily to the term) of Enlightenment. In the text, the apologetic author pluralizes and semantically differentiates the concept of Enlightenment along national borders. Apologists employed this technique to counter the verdict of Spain as an unenlightened or counter-enlightened nation, and at the same time, to relativize the normative meaning of a French-influenced understanding of philosophy. Consequently, Cavanilles distinguishes between two philosophies of Enlightenment. On the one hand, a philosophy that is theoretically orientated, originated in France, and that Cavanilles deprecates as speculative or unworldly. On the other hand, a philosophy that is characterized as particularly practical in Spain and that is perceived as economically and socially relevant with regard to modernization processes. This form of differentiation is based on the Enlightenment norm of social utility ("utilidad"), which was omnipresent in the Spanish 18th century, and which acted as a guideline for economic reform proposals. This differentiation also goes beyond the theory-practice relationship that is typical of the era, and instead creates a picture of conflicting conceptions of philosophy and theory.<sup>9</sup> In particular, Juan Pablo Forner, a rather

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8 “¿Cómo contrarrestar y procurar una reforma que lleve hacia el progreso y la felicidad de España sin que se haga un balance crítico y actual y, de esta manera, no linde el terreno de la Leyenda negra?” (“How can we counteract and seek a reform that will lead to the progress and happiness of Spain without making a critical and current balance and, in this way, not approach the terrain of the Black Legend?” My trans.). Chen Sham 2004, 160–161.

9 Tschilschke 2009, 238 uses the example of Juan Pablo Forner to point out a similar strategy of reinterpreting important Enlightenment terms: “Forner macht zwar exzessiven Gebrauch von den aufklärerischen Schlüsselbegriffen ‘utilidad’, ‘virtud’,

conservative author, who at the same time supported the politics of enlightened absolutism, stresses this aspect: “No hemos tenido en los efectos un Cartesio, nor un Neuton: démoslo de barato: pero hemos tenido justísimos legisladores y excelentes filósofos prácticos, que han preferido el inefable gusto de trabajar en beneficio de la humanidad á la ociosa ocupacion de edificar mundos imaginarios en la soledad y silencio de un gabinete”<sup>10</sup> (“Actually, we had neither a Descartes nor a Newton: let us accept this: but we had just legislators and excellent practical philosophers, who preferred the indescribable pleasure of working for the benefit of humanity over the idle occupation of building imaginary worlds in the solitude and silence of an office.” My trans). The ideas of those who belong to “eminentes intérpretes de la razón civil”<sup>11</sup> (“eminent interpreters of civil reason.”

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‘progreso’, ‘felicidad’, ‘libertad’ und ‘racionalidad’, aber nur, um sie systematisch in seinem Sinne umzukodieren. Das geschieht in zwei Schritten: zum einen diskreditiert er die Gegenstände, Methoden und Ziele, mit denen sich die Begriffe im Verständnis der von ihm bekämpften *filósofos*, der französischen Aufklärer, gewöhnlich verbinden. Ebenso wortreich wie eintönig denunziert er sie als ‘caprichos’, ‘sophismas’, ‘sueños’, ‘delirios’, ‘ficciones’, ‘mundos imaginarios’ etc. Zum anderen unterlegt er ihnen eine neue Bedeutung, die seinem eigenen Ideal – ‘practicar dignamente las virtudes humanas y civiles’ (VIII) – entsprechen” (“Forner makes excessive use of the Enlightenment terms ‘utility’, ‘virtue’, ‘felicity’, ‘liberty’ and ‘rationality’, but only to systematically recode them for his purposes. This occurs in two steps: in one he discredits the objects, methods and goals with which the terms are usually associated in the understanding of the *filósofos*, the French Enlightenment thinkers whom he opposes; in terms as verbose as they are monotonous, he denounces them as ‘whims’, ‘sophisms’, ‘dreams’, ‘delusions’, ‘fictions’, ‘imaginary worlds’ etc. In a second step he gives the words a new meaning that meets his own ideal: ‘to practice the human and civil virtues with dignity.’” My trans.). See also Cañas Murillo and Lama 1998, Carbonell 1995, 71–80, Lopez 1976, 373–380.

- 10 Forner 1786, 12. His *Oracion apologética por la España y su merito literario* was originally intended as a contribution to a *curso de elocuencia* at the Real Academia in 1785, but the text did not receive an award: “Una apología o defensa de la Nación, ciñéndose solamente a sus progresos en las ciencias y artes, por ser esta parte en la que con más particularidad y empeño han intentado obscurecer su gloria algunos escritores extranjeros, que llevados de sus engañosas preocupaciones y faltos de seguras noticias, han publicado obras llenas de injurias e imposturas” (“An apology or defence of the nation, limited solely to its progress in the arts and sciences, this being the area where some foreign writers, led by their misleading concerns and lack of certainty, have tried with great care and determination to obscure its glory, publishing works full of insults and impostures.” My trans.). Lopez 1976, 317.

11 Forner 1786, 16.

TO OBSERVATIONS

interrompue que par une seule campagne. Que deviennent pendant un espace aussi long tous les généraux du monde ?  
Avons-nous manqué de héros pendant

<p>« qu'il lui faudroit pour faire « un siege. »</p> <p>566. « Cette nation, au- « jourd'hui paralysée, est la « plus ignorante de l'Euro- « pe. »</p> <p>565. « Tout ouvrage étran- « ger est arrêté ; on lui fait « son procès, il est jugé. Un « peuple qui attend d'un moi- « ne la liberté de lire et de « penser... &amp;c. »</p> <p>555. « L'Espagne est pau- « vre, et foible au dedans. »</p> <p>566. « Pauvre au milieu « de ses trésors. »</p> <p>565. « On voit à ses dé- « faites son ignorance dans « la marine. »</p> <p>560. « On a compté dans « toute l'Espagne et dans les « isles Canaries 117 cathé- « drales. »</p>	<p>« droits on fabrique des ar- « mes, on coule du canon. »</p> <p>567. « Encore un effort, « qui sait alors à quel point « peut s'élever cette superbe « nation? »</p> <p>566. « La philosophie, « sans cesse repoussée, a pé- « nétré enfin dans ce royau- « me, et a déjà détruit une « foule de préjugés. »</p> <p>667. « Le revenu national, « autrefois si borné, monte de « nos jours à 170,000,000. »</p> <p>559. « La marine redou- « table de l'Espagne. »</p> <p>Dans la même page se trouve l'énumération des ar- chevêchés et évêchés, et on compte 59 sieges.</p>
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Voici quelques autres assertions de M. Mas-  
son qui prouvent l'insuffisance de son instruc-  
tion.

<p>561. « Le livre d'un pro- « testant est proscrit de droit, « n'importe de quelle matiere « il traite, parceque l'auteur « est protestant. Tout ouvra-</p>	<p>Les bibliotheques publi- ques et particulieres de l'Es- pagne sont composées des meilleurs ouvrages de l'Eu- rope. On vend publiquement</p>
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**Illustration 1:** Cavanilles, Antonio José. *Observations sur l'article Espagne de la nouvelle encyclopedie*. Paris: A. Jombert, 1784, 10

My trans.) contrast with those who aim to “fundar repúblicas impracticables”<sup>12</sup> (“found impracticable republics.” My trans.).

Furthermore, the authors of the apologetic texts try to point out where the critics of Spain have contradicted themselves. Cavanilles, for example, uses almost tabular forms of representation in order to compare contradictory text passages in Masson’s text (Illustration 1).

This procedure also focuses on key concepts of the Enlightenment. Cavanilles, for example, presents Masson’s request for a self-enlightenment of the reactionary Spanish society and its prejudices as no less a simple preconception on

12 Forner 1786, 17.



the part of the French author, based on obsolete knowledge drawn from inaccurate sources and thus requiring revision. Secondly, it is Cavanilles' reference to empirically verifiable evidence that is in line with a modern, enlightened understanding of the notion of science, and that should help to overcome Masson's prejudice. Accordingly, Cavanilles frequently invited Masson to visit Spain in order to get an impression of the economic situation and asked him to confront his prejudice with an altered "new" reality.<sup>13</sup> However, this rather improbable future journey by the critic of Spain is somehow anticipated in Cavanilles' text. He metaphorically equates a geographic and a textual journey across different Spanish provinces, with the aim of showing their economic capacities: "faisons parcourir à M. Masson les provinces de Murcie, de Valence et de Catalogne: il y verra l'ardeur avec laquelle leur paresseux habitants travaillent dans les champs avant la pointe du jour, et y restent jusqu'après le coucher du soleil: il verra comment on ne laisse aucun instant de repos à la terre"<sup>14</sup> ("Let Mr. Masson travel across the provinces of Murcia, Valencia and Catalonia: he will see the ardor with which their lazy inhabitants work in the fields before daybreak, and with which they stay in the fields until after sunset: he will see that no moment of rest is left to the land." My trans.). In a similar vein, Cavanilles cites a Spanish bishop who praised the manpower of the Spanish workers. He emphasizes, once again, the visual evidence: "Mais il avoit vu: c'est un avantage qui manque à M. Masson"<sup>15</sup>

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13 This idea echoes the practice of inspection tours popular with members of the state elite of enlightened absolutism – consider Jovellanos' numerous tours, which subsequently became factual texts, such as his many *Informes*. At the other end of the spectrum, the idea recalls the imaginary journeys of fictive travelogues, such as José Cadalso's *Cartas Marruecas* (1774/1789), which also belong to Enlightenment writing. "Como afirma Jovellanos en su 'Discurso dirigido a la Real Sociedad de Amigos del País de Asturias, sobre los medios de promover la felicidad de aquel principado' [...], el ilustrado debe emprender la tarea de analizar la situación de su país, no a partir de un conocimiento que pudiera ser erudito o libresco, es decir, derivado de libros y fuentes escritas, sino en primer lugar, de aquel conocimiento que surge del método crítico, de una observación y una reflexión fidedigna de primera mano. Por ello, el ilustrado debe ir a buscar el mismo las pruebas documentales en el terreno" ("As Jovellanos affirms in his 'Discourse addressed to the Royal Society of Friends of the Land of Asturias, on the means of promoting the happiness of that principality' [...], the enlightened man must undertake the task of analyzing the situation of his country, not from a knowledge that could be erudite or bookish, that is, derived from books and written sources, but primarily from that knowledge that arises from the critical method, from a reliable first-hand observation and reflection. For this, the enlightened man must go and see for himself the documentary evidence in the field" My trans.). Chen Sham 2004, 119.

14 Cavanilles 1784, 81–82.

15 Cavanilles 1784, 97.

(“But he had seen: this was an advantage that Mr. Masson was lacking.” My trans.). This textual correlation of a concrete encounter with the country and its productive forces by means of an economic panorama of its individual regions is closely tied to the frequent usage of deictic particles. More precisely, these particles constitute a referential hint towards the new economic reality of Spain for the reader and, at the same time, its scenic representation: “Prouverons-nous maintenant à M. Masson que l’Espagne n’a aucun besoin, comme il le croit, de ses voisins pour faire un siege”<sup>16</sup> (“Now, we will prove to Mr. Masson that, in contrast to his beliefs, Spain does not need its neighbors to make a siege.” My trans.); “Ici, l’horreur de l’oisiveté et l’amour du travail possède autant les femmes que les hommes”<sup>17</sup> (“Here, women and men are equally possessed by the horror of idleness and the love for work.” My trans.).

## 2. Remapping the Spanish Economy – the mise en scène of a modernized Nation

In addition to the textual space, the second aspect of the textual strategy of apologetic texts concerns the general representation and problematization of spaces in apologetic writings. Space, from both a rhetorical and figurative perspective, presents Spain as an economic area, and it thus performatively realizes the country’s productivity and dynamic. In the course of this process, Cavanilles’ “inspection” of the Spanish reality creates a new symbolic map. This map aims to demonstrate the new economic dynamic of the country and diverges from Spain’s existing political and religious “cartography.” The imaginary journey on which the author “invites” Masson de Morvilliers initially takes place in the Spanish periphery and subsequently shifts the focus to the center of the monarchy: “Cette très foible esquisse des provinces qui entourent l’Espagne suffira peut-être pour donner aux lecteurs impartiaux une idée plus favorable de l’industrie espagnole, que celle qu’on a pu s’en former d’après l’article de l’Encyclopédie. Mais parcourons le reste de l’Espagne, et arrêtons-nous un moment dans les provinces du centre”<sup>18</sup> (“This very weak sketch of the provinces surrounding Spain may be enough to give impartial readers a more favorable idea of Spanish industry than that which could be obtained from the article in the Encyclopedia. But let us travel the rest of Spain, and stop in the central provinces for a while.” My trans.). The evidence

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16 Cavanilles 1784, 15.

17 Cavanilles 1784, 86–87.

18 Cavanilles 1784, 97–98.

for the almost exuberant productivity of the outer provinces contrasts with the lack of productivity in the center of Spain, Castile-Leon. Although its important role as the breadbasket of Spain and production center of wool is emphasized, Cavanilles largely sees Masson's criticism of the region as justified. But Cavanilles' imaginary movement across the economic areas of Spain produces an idea of emergent productive regions, which maintain and stabilize the crisis-ridden center of the country. Besides that, Cavanilles raises the question of whether it is even conceivable to conclude, when examining this region, which is perhaps in crisis, that the nation as a whole is living in decadence.

Cavanilles intensifies this economic reterritorialization of Spain in order to undermine Masson's scheme to exclude Spain from Europe. Following Cavanilles' walk through the course of history and the geography of Spain, it becomes clear that the dynamic of peripheries is not only circular but also expanding.<sup>19</sup> Thus, Cavanilles does not only refer to the internal migration of workers across certain productive regions of Spain<sup>20</sup>; he also, to cite a historical example, refers to the continuous presence of Spanish painters at European courts.<sup>21</sup> This shows that the migration of Spanish artists, as well as peasants, craftsmen and workers, across the Spanish borders has always existed. These observations seem to prove the attractiveness of the Spanish economy as well as the interdependence of Spain and the rest of Europe, as opposed to the exclusion of Spain from European economic exchange. With a view to the present, Cavanilles says: "Toutes ces différentes cultures occupent une grande quantité d'hommes: ceux-ci ne se contentent pas des fatigues de leur pays, ils passent encore les Pyrénées pour aider les François des provinces méridionales dans leurs travaux"<sup>22</sup> ("All these different cultures employ a large number of people: they do not settle for the fatigue of their country, they still cross the Pyrenees to help the French of the southern provinces with their work." My trans.). From a metonymic perspective, this export dynamic also holds true for the commodities made by the craftsmen

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19 This argument is a variant of a historical "dialectic" that was already elaborated upon by Christian von Tschilschke, who talks of a paradoxical valorization of the geographical peripherality of Spain ("Aufwertung der geographischen Randständigkeit") and claims that Spain hides "[h]inter der vordergründigen Selbstmarginalisierung also nicht[s] weniger als die Aufwertung der exzentrischen Provinz zum heimlichen Zentrum" ("behind the ostensible self-marginalization no less than the revaluation from the eccentric province to the secret center" My trans.). Tschilschke 2009, 240–241.

20 Cavanilles 1784, 88–89.

21 Cavanilles 1784, 145–146.

22 Cavanilles 1784, 96.

and workers, as they compete with French products on the French home market as well. At its extreme, this dynamic resulted in Spanish products being regarded as more original than the original foreign product itself. Cavanilles gives the example of handwoven “Turkish” carpets that were actually produced in Spain. Accordingly, Cavanilles – realizing a kind of imaginary spatial superposition – asks his French antagonist rhetorically: “Connoît-il *nos tapis turcs* supérieurs aux véritables? (my emphasis)”<sup>23</sup> (“Does he know about *our Turkish carpets*, which are superior to the real ones?” My trans.).

In Cavanilles’ train of thought, there is, as I have ascertained, a set of arguments concerning the instrumentalization of space, which is related to the economic capacity of Spain as a nation. Besides a certain logic of outdoing and substitution, another logic can be identified: totalization. In contrast to Masson, Cavanilles believes that the whole world is already convinced of the quality of Spanish products, and that this counters Masson’s disrespect towards Spain and its products: “Tout le monde connoît les fusils excellents qu’on fait en Espagne, dont la sûreté égale la beauté du travail: on connoît les étoffes de Valence, de Talavera, nos dentelles, nos fabriques de toiles, que nous lustrons avec la même perfection que nos voisins”<sup>24</sup> (“Everyone is familiar with the excellent guns made in Spain. Their accuracy equals their beauty: one knows the fabrics from Valencia, from Talavera, our lace, our canvas factories, which we polish with the same perfection as our neighbors.” My trans.).

### 3. The agency of the Nation and Bourbon leadership – Economic and cultural “enrichment” of Spain

Besides the reference to space, time is also an important dimension in apologetic texts. Those who, like Masson de Morvilliers, deny that the Spanish nation had any historical achievements and, at the same time, skeptically judge its potential for development, problematize two central timelines. However, Cavanilles tries to connect these two timelines in a positive way. On the one hand, with regard to the past, he stresses the cultural, political and economic achievements of the Spanish people; particularly those that are still relevant to Cavanilles’ contemporaries, such as the “discovery” of America and its impact on seafaring, maritime law, trade and science.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, Cavanilles emphasizes that

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23 Cavanilles 1784, 32.

24 Cavanilles 1784, 33.

25 Cavanilles 1784, 142; Denina 1786, 32–35, 60–61; Forner 1786, 96–97. For a discussion of the fundamental ambivalence in Forner’s and other apologists’ texts

the new economic reforms by Carlos III<sup>26</sup> were in line with this sequence of historical innovations.

Carlo Denina is another important participant in this debate. In his reply at the Berlin Academy, he counters Masson's historical-philosophical narrative of the decline of Spain by linking it, as Cavanilles and others did, to an economic argumentation. According to Denina, the decline of Spain was not a consequence of an innate tendency to idleness and laziness, or religious supremacy; rather, the decline was the result of monopolization, which developed due to the predominant position of the Spanish Monarchy during the Early Modern Period (in turn, this implied, in a certain way, the dependence of Spain on the wealth of its colonies, which raises the question of the relationship between periphery and center within the Spanish universal monarchy). Denina concludes that Spain did

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about the relationship between Spain and its Latin American colonies, see Yagüe Bosch: "Inseparable ya de su propia condición polémica, la conquista de América asume así un contradictorio papel simbólico: representa, por una parte, las aspiraciones y logros hegemónicos de un pueblo y los valores primordiales en que aquéllos se habían sustentado; al mismo tiempo, encarna las frustraciones de ese mismo pueblo, su desafortunada trayectoria histórica y las culpas que el mundo occidental le imputa en una nueva y conflictiva coyuntura" ("Already inseparable from its own controversial condition, the conquest of the Americas thus assumes a contradictory symbolic role: on one hand it represents the hegemonic aspirations and achievements of a people and the primordial values on which they had been sustained; at the same time, it embodies the frustrations of this same people, their unfortunate historical trajectory and the blame that the western world imputed to them in a new and discordant situation...") My trans.). Yagüe Bosch 2005, 121. Castilla Urbano considers Cadalso's *Cartas Marruecas* as dominated by a negative view of the importance of the colonization of Latin America for Spain. Castilla Urbano 2015, 50. "Lo que le preocupa a Cadalso es que, una vez colonizados los pueblos indígenas, la empresa americana no ha tenido un desarrollo feliz para la Península: ni desde el punto de vista de lo que produce, ni por los gastos que provoca, ni por la reducción de la población que propicia, ni por los obstáculos que ha supuesto para la creación de una industria nacional, además de inducir a España a la dependencia de otros países" ("What preoccupies Cadalso is that, once the indigenous peoples had been colonized, the American enterprise has no longer developed felicitously for the peninsula; neither from the point of view of what it produces, nor of the expenses it entails, nor of the reduction of population that it prompts, nor of the obstacles it has posed to the creation of a national industry, in addition to forcing Spain into dependence on other countries." My trans.). Castilla Urbano 2015, 44–50. At the same time, however, Cadalso also – in Castilla Urbano's opinion – points to a general criticism of European colonization, which also includes other nations that, in his opinion, are biased in their criticism of the Spanish conquest of Latin America.

26 Cavanilles 1784, 107–109.

not have to fear any political or economic competitors and thus developed a monopoly that inhibited its further development and modernization:

Los Españoles que encontraban recursos inagotables en el nuevo Mundo, no tuvieron gana alguna de comerciar mas con los otros Países de la Europa, y por ese medio se quedaron fuera de estado de seguir los progresos que en ellos hacían. El mismo gobierno puso todas sus atenciones en la America, pues la miraba como fuente principal de sus riquezas. [...] La prosperidad, los honores arrastran à la flojedad, à la pereza, à la presuncion, y al orgullo; y à fuerza de persuadirse que no pueden tenerse rivales, se encuentra al fin quien nos adelante. He aquí lo que le ha sucedido à la España; hacia la mitad del siglo pasado cuando la España comenzaba a decaer, necesitaba que fuese movida por alguna otra Nacion que pudiese darla esta emulacion tan util à los Pueblos como à los particulares; pero esta Nacion no se presentó entonces à su vista. Por desgracia se creyó superior à todo cuanto le rodeaba.<sup>27</sup>

(“The Spanish, who found inexhaustible resources in the New World, had no more desire to trade with the other countries of Europe, and were thus unable to keep up with the progress made within Europe. The Spanish government directed all its attention to America, regarding it as Spain’s main source of wealth. [...] Prosperity and honors lead to lethargy, laziness, presumptuousness and pride; and in persuading oneself that one has no rivals, one is ultimately overtaken by somebody else. This is what happened to Spain; towards the middle of the last century, when Spain started to decay, it needed to be moved by some other nation able to give Spain this emulation, which is as useful for the people as it is for the individual. But this nation did not show up for Spain. Unfortunately, it considered itself superior to everything around it.” My trans.).

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27 Denina 1786, 63–65. This argumentation deviates from the conservative interpretation of this historical development. It states that Spain’s scientific, technical and economic regression, which was assumed by other European nations, is compensated for by the people’s pride in their traditional moral standards: “Diese strategische Option zielt darauf ab, all das, was sich von außen betrachtet als fehlendes Wissen und mangelnder Fortschritt darstellt, als Tugend zu verbrämen bzw. in moralisches Kapital umzumünzen. So wird zum Beispiel die unzureichende Konkurrenzfähigkeit Spaniens auf dem Gebiet der modernen ‘positiven’ Naturwissenschaften, [...] sinngemäß mit dem Hinweis pariert, dass die Erforschung der “Naturgesetze,” wie sie Newton betrieb, einer Tendenz zur Oberflächlichkeit Vorschub leiste und nicht zum Wesen der Dinge vordringe, wie es den tiefgreifenden Bedürfnissen der spanischen Mentalität eher entspreche” (“This strategic option aims to take everything that is viewed from the outside as a lack of knowledge and progress and dress it up as virtue, convert it to moral capital. For example, Spain’s inadequate competitiveness in the field of modern ‘positive’ natural science [...] is parried with the point that the study of natural law, as exercised by Newton, encourages a tendency towards superficiality and ignores the essence of things, which is better suited to the profound needs of the Spanish mentality.” My trans.). Tschiltschke 2009, 241.

Another argument is also tied to time and economy, referring to the 18th century and a possible regeneration of Spain under the influence of the Bourbon reforms<sup>28</sup>: the concept of efficiency. Cavanilles argued that, considering the dimension of the economic crisis and the short time available, the upturn that the Spanish society had been observing since the beginning of the century under the rule of the Bourbons was only made possible by an improvement in the efficiency and productivity of society, due in turn to the use of power, diligence and a competitive spirit: “donnons le prix à la nation qui aura employé le plus d’application, de force pour s’élever, et qui aura prouvé le plus d’émulation”<sup>29</sup> (“Let us give the prize to the nation that has used the most application, the most strength to rise, and that has demonstrated the most emulation.” My trans.).

Cavanilles rejected other concepts that applied to Spain – for example, the thesis that Spanish institutions and their cultural, political and economic initiatives are still in their infancy – in order to emphasize the agency of the nation as a protagonist of social and economic rise. This is in contrast to the reference to childhood and the impression of a passive development of society. In this way, and in contrast to Masson’s pessimism, the idea of a better future appears, not least because of the influence of the economic policy of the Bourbons. Cavanilles sees some of these aspects of the future anticipated in the successful exploitation and reclamation of the Sierra Morena by German settlers, which was supported by Carlos III: “Encore quelques jours, et nous verrons les effets salutaires qui résulteront des sages ordonnances de notre gouvernement. Qu’on en juge par le spectacle intéressant que présente la Sierra Morena, ce pays ci devant si inculte et si désert, le refuge de tous les malfaiteurs, et qui, aujourd’hui couvert d’habitations et riche par sa culture, a donné l’exemple de la seule colonie qui ait réussi de nos jours [...]”<sup>30</sup> (“In a few days, we shall see the salutary effects that will result from the wise orders of our government. Let us judge by the interesting spectacle of the Sierra Morena, a country that was previously so uncultivated and deserted, the refuge of all evildoers, but that today is full of dwellings and rich in culture. It is the only example of a colony that has succeeded in our day [...]” My trans.).

However, this perspective on development is not the only form of temporal logic that Cavanilles put forward to counter foreign criticism of the alleged economic stagnation in Spain. Consequently, his text, like many other apologetic texts, shows a number of lists and enumerations that, for example, barely

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28 Cavanilles 1784, 72, 105.

29 Cavanilles 1784, 24.

30 Cavanilles 1784, 86.

correspond to the idea of a process of development and transformation. Instead, the lists point to a type of linear or gradual logic of accumulation.<sup>31</sup> Of particular interest here is that this traditional form of apologetic writing, which can be traced back to the 17th century, is “modernized” and expressed through an economic metaphor. It deals with the effect of capital accumulation and the transfer of this idea into other social spheres. Wealth as a manifestation of large properties is tied to wealth of knowledge and cultural education. The terms such as enrichment or treasure (“trésors”)<sup>32</sup> are used with regard to the theatre and other cultural forms of expression (“Notre théâtre a été enrichi”).<sup>33</sup> There are lists of the inventions and the number of publications, among other things, which were made by the Spanish throughout the course of history (Illustration 2).<sup>34</sup>

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31 Contemporaries were already considering that Cavanilles’ approach might be extreme. According to Lopez 1976, 360, J.F. Bourgoing wrote in his *Tableau de l’Espagne moderne* (1807): “Il était encore plus prodigue en éloges que l’auteur français ne l’avait été en reproches graves. L’un avait tout refusé, l’autre revendiquait tout; aussi pour appuyer ses assertions, fut-il obligé de citer une longue nomenclature d’auteurs, d’érudits, d’artistes, dont la plupart étaient inconnus aux Espagnols eux-mêmes” (“He was even more lavish in praise than the French author had been in serious reproaches. The one had refused everything, the other claimed everything; also to support his assertions, he was obliged to quote a long list of authors, scholars, artists, most of whom were unknown to the Spaniards themselves.” My trans.). Gies points to some of Spain’s achievements in the 18th century that are repeatedly mentioned in the apologetic texts: “También podríamos señalar lo que citan todos los estudiosos del siglo: la fundación de la Real Academia Española, la Real Academia de la Historia, las varias tertulias, las Sociedades de Amigos del País, la Biblioteca Real; el avance industrial (tejidos, porcelanas, relojes, órganos y claves, siderurgia, tapices, armas, lienzos, tabaco); la modernización de las calles, de los medios de transporte, de la iluminación en las ciudades, del correo; la creación del Banco de San Carlos (luego Banco de España), la prensa periódica, y la organización urbana de casas por manzanas. Si todo esto — y muchísimo más — marca el dieciocho español, ¿de qué se quejaba Masson en 1782?” (“We could also point to what all of the century’s scholars cite: the foundation of the Royal Academy of Spain, the Royal Academy of History, the various circles, the Societies of Friends of the Country, the Royal Library, industrial advancement [textiles, porcelain, clocks, organs and keys, the iron and steel industry, tapestries, weapons, canvas, tobacco]; the modernization of the streets and of means of transport, urban illumination, the post, the creation of the Bank of San Carlos [later the Bank of Spain], the periodic press, and the organization of houses in blocks. If all this – and much more – marks the Spanish eighteenth century, what did Masson have to complain about in 1782?” My trans.). Gies 1999, 309.

32 Cavanilles 1784, 69, 71, 85.

33 Cavanilles 1784, 46.

34 Cavanilles 1784, 42–43, 154.



SUR L'ARTICLE ESPAGNE. 155  
 L'article ESPAGNE de l'Encyclopédie, en attendant que ma patrie trouve un vengeur plus éloquent et plus instruit.

L'Espagne a fait connoître à l'Europe le quinquina, la salsepareille, la cochenille, l'aïné, le sassafras, le roucou, le bois de Brésil et celui de Campêche, le cacao, le kermès, la vanille, le sucre, la vigogne, la platine, &c. &c.

F I N.



DE L'IMPRIMERIE DE DIDOT L'AÎNÉ.

**Illustration 2:** Cavanilles, Antonio José. *Observations sur l'article Espagne de la nouvelle encyclopedie*. Paris: A. Jombert, 1784, 154–155

#### 4. A new vision of Spain and traditional forms of writing

The last aspect I would like to mention refers back to the approach to space in the text, or the textual space. It is striking that the text shows a divided typeface and that the image Cavanilles creates in his main text of a future Spain is continuously accompanied by footnotes, which function as a foundation for both the text and his vision of Spain, providing empirical evidence such as numbers, statistics, lists, and quotes. This text composition merges different types of economic writing; for instance, a balance sheet that refers to Spain's economic reality and productivity, alongside more traditional forms of writing (Illustration 3).

## SUR L'ARTICLE ESPAGNE. 83

abondance tant de différentes especes de fruits excellents. <sup>(1)</sup>

Observons les royaumes de Grenade et d'Andalousie. Ces provinces ne sont

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(1) Voici une note exacte des produits du royaume de Valence.

Soie , 2,000,000 de livres ,	
à 15 liv. font . . . . .	30,000,000 liv.
Chanvre, 25,000 quintaux ,	
à 40 liv. . . . .	1,000,000
Lin, 30,000 quintaux ; à 50 l.	1,500,000
Laines ordinaires , 23,000	
quintaux , à 40 liv. . . . .	920,000
Riz, 140,000 charg. à 37 liv.	5,180,000
Huile, 100,000 quint. à 45 l.	4,500,000
Vin ; 3,000,000 de cantaros	
cont. 8 pintes, à 15 sous ,	2,250,000
Raisins secs , 60,000 quint.	
à 10 liv. . . . .	600,000
Figues, autant, à 8 liv. . . . .	480,000
Dattes et palmes, . . . . .	300,000
Somme totale . . . . .	<u>46,730,000 liv.</u>

Reste à évaluer le bled, l'avoine, le maïs ;  
les amandes, la soude, les carouges, le sel, le

**Illustration 3:** *Cavanilles, Antonio José. Observations sur l'article Espagne de la nouvelle encyclopedie.* Paris: A. Jombert, 1784, 91, 83

The format of this text is also particularly relevant because it affects the question of genre.<sup>35</sup> Finally, one could ask to what extent traditional genres of the

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35 Tschiltschke 2009, 254–255 pointed out the hybrid structure of apologetic texts in Forner's *Oración*. As a published book, rather than as a text, the *Oración* contains numerous other texts: a preface, notes, and appendices, as well as other texts that were created in the course of the polemic around Masson's text, texts "die sich hinsichtlich Intention, Stil, Adressaten und Entstehungsprinzip deutlich voneinander unterscheiden und die zudem nicht einmal alle von demselben Autor stammen" ("that

treatise and apology, among others, could be problematized by this co-presence of such non-discursive forms. It is possible that the traditional genres are no longer adequate when it comes to describing the complex economic situation of modern Spain at the end of the 18th century.

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differ significantly in terms of intention, style, addressee and principle of creation, and that do not even come from the same author.” My trans.). Tschiltschke interprets this structure in terms of a “dialogue” between different ideological positions, which was not atypical of the Enlightenment.

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## **Section 2 Male Protagonists of Trade and Industry: Of Businessmen and Entrepreneurs**



Christoph Strosetzki

# The *Dictionnaire universel de commerce* (1723) and Savary's Mercantilism in the Writings of Carl Günther Ludovici

**Abstract** Jacques Savary (1622–1690) was asked to draw up a uniform French commercial law in the “Conseil de Réforme.” His “Code Savary” is the basis of the French Commercial Code. His *Dictionnaire universel de commerce*, was published posthumously in 1723. This encyclopaedia was translated by Carl Günther Ludovici (1707–1778), a full professor of “world wisdom” at the University of Leipzig. For Ludovici, the city of Amsterdam lives in wealth and abundance thanks to its extensive facilities to optimize trade, such as its port, stock exchange, bank, credit facilities, insurance and worldwide connections. Ludovici's mercantilism is expressed in the fact that he regards trade as the main source of prosperity and is as little interested in the cameralistic increase of taxes for the benefit of the absolute ruler, as it is in the physiocrats' classification of agricultural laborer as *classe productive*. Rather, the approaches of Adam Smith and Mandeville are more likely to suit his perspective, which is tailored to the individual trader.

**Keywords:** Jacques Savary, Carl Günther Ludovici, Adam Smith, Amsterdam, mercantilism, cameralism, liberalism

## 1. Jacques Savary

In 1667 Jacques Savary (1622–1690) was called to the State Chancellery of Louis XIV by Jean-Baptiste Colbert, then minister of finance. There he was asked to draw up a uniform French commercial law in the “Conseil de Réforme.” His “Code Savary” is the basis of the French Commercial Code, published in 1807, and the German Commercial Code of 1900. Savary's extensive work, *Le parfait négociant* (1675), systematically describes the world of mercantile trade. His *Dictionnaire universel de commerce*, in which, incidentally, various early uses and a definition of the word “entrepreneur”<sup>1</sup> can be found, was published posthumously in 1723 by his sons, Jacques Savary des Bruslons and Louis-Philémon Savary. This encyclopaedia was translated by Carl Günther Ludovici

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1 A definition is also listed in Savary des Bruslons 1742, 248: “Entrepreneur. Celui qui entreprend un ouvrage. On dit: Un Entrepreneur de manufacture; un Entrepreneur de Bâtiment; pour dire. Un manufacturier, un Maître Maçon.”

(1707–1778). Ludovici was a full professor of “world wisdom” at the University of Leipzig. He had engaged with Wolf’s and Leibnitz’s philosophy and was co-editor of volumes 19 to 64 of Zedler’s *Großes Universallexikon* from 1739 to 1754. He translated the *Dictionnaire universel de commerce* into German from 1741 to 1743 and then also wrote his own economic works, such as the *Eröffnete Akademie der Kaufleute* (1752–1756), which we will discuss later in this article. Jacques Savary was his great role model. For him, Savary is principal among the new authors of mercantilism.<sup>2</sup>

It is well known that mercantilism is closely associated with the name of Colbert. Having established that Jacques Savary is its theorist and the philosopher Ludovici considers him its principal proponent, we will first look at the theories of French mercantilism and its relationship to its German counterpart, cameralism, and then distinguish it from competing approaches, such as physiocracy and economic liberalism. Finally, with the help of some example texts, we will ask whether Ludovici can be regarded as a mercantilist.

What does a mercantilist foreign trade policy consist of? First and foremost, it aims at minimizing imports of finished goods and exports of raw materials, promoting imports of raw materials and exports of finished goods, and providing services to domestic entrepreneurs and institutions.<sup>3</sup> Low wages are meant to increase international competitiveness. In addition to Jacques Savary, two important German mercantilists were Paul Jakob Marperger (1656–1730) and Johann Georg Büsch (1728–1800). In the French form of mercantilism, economic policy regulations follow the recommendation of the monarch’s advisers, whereas in England or the Netherlands they are the result of pressure from the merchants.<sup>4</sup> For most mercantilists, trade and commercial production – for instance, in factories – are more important than agricultural production for increasing national prosperity.<sup>5</sup> It is neither money as such, nor the abundance of money, but its constant circulation and the speed at which it circulates that is decisive.<sup>6</sup> From 1700, however, Pierre Boisguilbert and Sébastien Vauban were the first voices in France to advocate a more liberal trade policy. After the War of Spanish Succession had ended with the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, France mitigated its protectionist policies and made liberal trade agreements with some countries.<sup>7</sup>

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2 Cf. Ludovici 1752–1756, preface of the first volume.

3 Cf. Walter 2003, 29.

4 Gömmel 1994, 79.

5 Gömmel 1994, 85, 93.

6 Gömmel 1994, 89.

7 Gömmel 1994, 104.



Since recent research questions the effectiveness of early modern dirigisme and denies the concept of mercantilism any empirical relevance, it is now seen only as a discourse of economic policy.<sup>8</sup> Here the idea dominates that a positive foreign trade balance can only be achieved at the expense of one's trading partners, so that no one can win without another losing. In this respect, mercantilism can be described as a system of violence with fluid transitions to trade war. Furthermore, it is generally accepted that military strength depends on wealth and economic prosperity. A country can arm itself sufficiently only if it is rich. In the course of the 18th century, the focus shifted from redistribution to the possibility of increasing national wealth without disadvantaging the nation's trading partners.<sup>9</sup>

The extent to which mercantilism is Colbert's invention, and whether the term is derived from his measures, is a matter of debate. After all, he defined trade as the war of money, which is won when the value of one's exports exceeds that of one's imports. In his opening speech in the *Conseil de Commerce* of 1664, he praised his king for having led a war of money since he had taken office: "Spain, Germany, England and a few others have already been defeated, over whom you brought great misery and with whose remains you enriched yourself, which in turn provided you with the means to accomplish the great things you have accomplished and still accomplish every day."<sup>10</sup> (My trans.) However, this speech can also be interpreted as an attempt to prevent the king from waging a military war against the Netherlands and to foment, instead, a secret trade war against the Netherlands in alliance with England.<sup>11</sup> As there is no evidence to suggest that Colbert was Machiavellian in the pursuit of national advantage, he could also be considered a supporter of a more peaceful definition of trade. This could involve an exchange of the surplus for the necessary, if, for instance, English lead is exchanged for French wines.<sup>12</sup> After all, in 17th-century France, agriculture accounted for 80 % of the gross national product.<sup>13</sup>

However, the structures of an absolutist state, organized in a strictly hierarchical way, encourage dirigist interventions. In 17th- and 18th-century France, kings often left governing to their ministers. Only Louis XIV and Louis XV took an active part in governing, after the death of Mazarin in 1661 and Fleury in

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8 Simon 2014, 65–66.

9 Simon 2014, 68–69; cf. also Burkhardt 1992, 565.

10 Cf. Clément 1861–1873, 250.

11 Cf. Isenmann 2014, 146 f.

12 Cf. Isenmann 2014, 166.

13 Cf. Gömmel 1994, 17.

1743. The *conseil d'état du roi* consisted of the *conseillers d'état*, who held their office for life, and the *maîtres de requête* and the *intendants des finances*, who had the right to buy their office. In the 18th century, the office of *intendants du commerce* was added. From the second half of the 16th century, in addition to the Ministers of the Navy, War, the Royal Household and Foreign Affairs, there was a Chancellor of Justice and a Controller-General of Finances, responsible for taxes, economic development and police. Within the provinces, governors of ancient nobility were the head administrators, until Louis XIV replaced them with intendants from the bourgeoisie or the nobility of the robe.<sup>14</sup>

## 2. Cameralism and physiocracy

Cameralism is regarded as the German variant of mercantilism. Derived from *camera*, the princely treasury, it attempts to raise taxes as the basis for the absolute exercise of power.<sup>15</sup> After the Peace of Westphalia, absolutism also prevailed in German states. In 1666, a so-called “Commerz-Collegium” was established in Austria as an authority of economic development. The most important German representative of cameralism is Johann Joachim Becher, who published the foundational work “Politischer Discurs von den eigentlichen Ursachen des Auff- und Abnehmens der Städt, Länder” in 1668.<sup>16</sup> In the 18th century, academic chairs in the cameral sciences were created in Germany, the first in Halle and Frankfurt an der Oder in 1727, in Rinteln in 1730, in Göttingen in 1755, in Erfurt in 1763, in Leipzig in 1764, and in Erlangen and Kiel in 1770.<sup>17</sup>

The German mercantilists emphasized trade above all, in contrast to the French, who insisted on high quality in their luxury articles and, like Johann Joachim Becher, considered production of secondary importance.<sup>18</sup> Aristotle had already distinguished between politics and economics, between state and domestic community. The former, oriented to the *bonum commune*, was to ensure peace and justice, while the latter was to provide food, the *necessitates vitae*, necessary for physical existence. In keeping with this understanding, the cameralist Johann Heinrich Gottlob von Justi (1720–1771) regarded the state as a particularly large house and the king as the great landlord of this large estate. Thus

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14 Cf. Gömmel 1994, 6–8.

15 Cf. Walter 2003, 32.

16 Cf. Schäfer 1989, 50.

17 Cf. Schäfer 1989, 49.

18 Cf. Simon 2014, 71.

agriculture and production were reevaluated.<sup>19</sup> In 1747, von Justi received a prize for his philosophical work on Leibnitz's theory of monads. In 1751 he was appointed professor of cameralism in Vienna. His research concerns the relationship between the individual, society and the state. Influenced by Pufendorf and Wolf, he idealizes an absolute monarchy, moderated by a fundamental law. For him, it is the task of the cameralists to extract from the property of the state, in the interest of the pursuit of happiness, that which is necessary to defray the expenses of the government.<sup>20</sup>

The physiocrats started a backlash against mercantilism in the 18th century. They distinguish between the world order created by God, the *ordre naturel*, and the social organization established by man, the *ordre positif*. Both must be reconciled in order to win prosperity for the country. Physiocracy is *la science du droit naturel appliqué aux sociétés civilisées*.<sup>21</sup> Of the resources labor, capital and land, the physiocrats consider only land to be relevant. Francois Quesnay (1694–1774), King Louis XV's consulting physician, outlines a *Tableau économique* in which he distinguishes three economic movers: agricultural laborers as the *classe productive*, landowners as the *classe distributive* (redistribution and use of rental income) and artisans and merchants as the *classe stérile*. Since the landowners spend the rental income and thus stimulate money circulation, they are particularly important.<sup>22</sup> The physiocrats also opposed any kind of luxury consumption, which was quite important to the mercantilists.<sup>23</sup> Fundamental physiocratic writings were *L'ami des hommes* (1757) and *Philosophie rurale, ou économie générale et politique de l'agriculture* (1764) by the Marquis de Mirabeau (1749–1791). The physiocrats advocated the liberalization of international trade in order to reduce price fluctuations for agricultural products.<sup>24</sup> In reality, however, physiocratic approaches were rarely implemented; one example is the 1764 liberalization of grain exports, which was repealed in 1770 due to increases in bread prices. Turgot (1727–1781), appointed *Contrôleur Général des Finances* in 1774, liberalized the grain trade again. He abolished guilds and master rights, which he legitimized by appealing to the natural right to freedom of activity.<sup>25</sup>

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19 Cf. Simon 2014, 74.

20 Cf. Dittrich 1974, 104 f.

21 Cf. Gömmel 1994, 111.

22 Cf. Gömmel 1994, 121.

23 Cf. Gömmel 1994, 130.

24 Cf. Gömmel 1994, 142.

25 Cf. Gömmel 1994, 138.

### 3. Mercantilism

Mercantilism is also countered by classical political economics and its *laissez-faire* liberalism. Adam Smith's (1723–1790) *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) does not grant the state any direct intervention in the market. Smith, as Professor of Moral Philosophy, instead focuses on the individual economic actor. His work, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), therefore postulates that, taking the individual as a starting point, egoism is the condition for prosperity. A productivity-increasing division of labor and the existence of free markets are in the interest of the human need for exchange. If each individual thinks only of his own advantage, the economy regulates itself by the “invisible hand,” according to supply and demand.<sup>26</sup> Mandeville (1670–1733) had already seen the importance of individual egoism in a free market, considering human egoism as the basis of economic prosperity. In his *The Fable of the Bees*, the rich are only interested in pleasure and luxury, while the poor only survive by working hard. But once righteousness, austerity and modesty are introduced, the state becomes impoverished. Consequently, private vices bring public benefits.

It has been shown that the different theories of mercantilism and physiocracy focus on the state as a whole, being more concerned with the advantages and disadvantages of state interventions than with the activity of the individual businessman, who finds support by the works of Savary and Ludovici. As both authors consider the activities of the trader to be particularly important, they can be regarded as representatives of mercantilism. After Vasco da Gama opened the sea route to India in 1498, commerce by sea replaced the overland trade routes, which had become dangerous due to the advance of the Ottomans in the 15th century. Moreover, it was no longer the individual cities or leagues of cities that struggled for trade hegemony, as in the Middle Ages, but states against states. Each state tried to promote its own trade by damaging foreign trade and shipping. While the Spanish and Portuguese dominated in the 16th century, the Dutch and English prevailed in the 17th and 18th centuries. In India, in only a few decades, the rule of the Portuguese was replaced by that of the Dutch, who were then joined by the English. While Spain was mainly interested in precious metals in America, Dutch and English sailors were able to successfully smuggle other goods to America, partly through Spanish intermediaries; the former through the colony of Curaçao, the latter through Jamaica.<sup>27</sup>

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26 Cf. Braun et al. 2013, 23.

27 Cf. Kulischer 1970, 197–203.

#### 4. Carl Günther Ludovici

How does Carl Günther Ludovici evaluate trade? He wrote the preface to his *Akademie der Kaufleute oder vollständiges Kaufmanns-Lexicon, aus welcher alle Handlungen und Gewerbe, mit allen ihren Vortheilen, und der Art, sie zu treiben, erlernt werden können* in Leipzig in 1752. The first volume was published in its second edition in 1767. In this complete lexicon of commerce, he attempts to present trade and business on land and sea on the four continents of the world with all their advantages. In particular, however, he explains which goods can be most beneficially bought and sold at which places. Further, he offers a “correct description of all empires and states, seaports, cities and trading places with their peculiarities, which the merchants need to know concerning their actions and journeys.”<sup>28</sup> (My trans.) The “merchant geography” shows which goods are missing in which places and where certain goods are most frequently used, i.e., where they are most expensive due to high demand. His encyclopedia introduces different people involved in trade, such as the accountant, the negotiator or the broker, gives insight into accounting, describes postal services, miles and hourly calculations, and explains the customs, weights, measures and types of money in the different regions and provinces. He gives an overview of all raw and processed goods, from spices and roots to smoked goods, their smell, taste and color, and how to buy, store and resell them at the best price. Information about manufacturers is useful for a merchant, but also information about commercial colleges, commercial courts, banks, stock exchanges and pawnshops. He attempts to provide explanations of all words and phrases used by traders, manufacturers and craftsmen. He instructs traders on how, having gained experience in one field, they can change to another and work independently there. Finally, he presents the essentials of all commercial sciences in an appendix. “Academy” is what he calls his encyclopedia, because everyone may instruct himself with its help. As universities, colleges or associations are called academies, his book is an academy for merchants. After all, he holds that the prosperity of entire countries depends on trade. Marperger, the “Kommerzienrat,” had also suggested setting up professorships at universities to teach everything considered relevant to the business community. Accordingly, merchandising and erudition complement each other.<sup>29</sup>

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28 Ludovici 1752–1756, preface of the first volume.

29 Cf. Ludovici 1752–1756, preface of the first edition.

## 5. Ludovici's Aachen and Amsterdam

In the following section, two articles of Ludovici's *Lexicon* will be presented as examples: one on Aachen and one on Amsterdam. In the former, he notes that the city's name in Latin is "Aquisgranum" and in French "Aix-la-Chapelle," that it is a German, free imperial city and that it is the oldest one. He describes its geographical location and points out that as the residence of Charlemagne, it was known as "des Heiligen Römischen Reichs freie Stadt Aachen."<sup>30</sup> He discusses the distribution of power and offices in the city, as well as its most important products for trade, i.e. cloths, copper kettles and steel sewing needles, and mentions its warm sulfur and saltpeter baths and the calamine stone found in nearby mines. In 1166, Frederick I granted the merchants of Aachen the privilege of exemption from customs in the Holy Roman Empire, which Emperor Charles V confirmed in 1520. Charlemagne had also ordered that the citizens of Aachen throughout the Holy Roman Empire may not be arrested by foreign courts. Moreover, Ludovici considers the Great Fair in Johannis worth mentioning, as well as the fact that trade with Holland takes place in nearby Liège. Finally, he enumerates the different measures and weights that are used, the individual means of payment of different currencies and the goods exchanged in trade with Holland, particularly with Amsterdam.<sup>31</sup> Thus his focus seems to be on information that might be primarily relevant for a merchant.

That Amsterdam is the prototype of a trading city is evident in the detailed article that the lexicon dedicates to this city. While the article about Aachen has seven columns, Amsterdam is given 54. Ludovici describes Amsterdam as "the most famous city of trade and commerce in all of Europe"<sup>32</sup> (My trans.) and calls "the general meeting place of merchants and goods of the whole world: as there is no richer, more abundant city in the whole world."<sup>33</sup> (My trans.) He stresses the importance of shipping and the port, which are supervised by a group of admirals. He describes the Town Hall, pointing out that its cellars hold the treasures of the Bank of Amsterdam and that the carillon on its tower indicates the time when merchants meet at the stock exchange – from 12 pm to 1.30 or 2 pm. The stock exchange is described as a large building in which about 4,500 traders assemble – and, based on the country of origin or type of goods, have fixed places in order to be more easily found. They trade, for instance, in wine,

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30 Cf. Ludovici 1752–1756, 3.

31 Ludovici 1752–1756, 9–10.

32 Ludovici 1752–1756, 677.

33 Ludovici 1752–1756, 677–678.

copper, blue dye, cloth, sugar, glassware and East Indian goods such as pepper, nutmeg and cinnamon. In addition to the large stock exchange, there are also specialized exchanges, such as the grain exchange.<sup>34</sup> The Bank of Amsterdam, which has already been mentioned, was founded in 1609 and located in the basement of the Town Hall. This was the institution that the citizens of Amsterdam trusted with their money. The different possible operations and transactions are described in great detail. The bank's employees are paid from the town's budget, which makes them municipal employees. The author includes a long list of the weights, measures and coins used in Amsterdam and their equivalents elsewhere. The insurance system is characterized as very elaborate. For instance, one can insure not only a ship itself, but also its freight and the cost of its return journey. It is even possible to insure an "imaginary profit."<sup>35</sup> If the item insured decays noticeably, the insurer must pay the designated sum within a prescribed period. Naturally, the insurance agent receives a commission. Equally important are advance payments and credit transactions, which are not as easy in southern Europe as they are in Amsterdam. The threads of the whole world come together in Amsterdam, as is illustrated by the following example: "A merchant in one of the French seaside towns needs a load of Baltic hemp, and therefore tasks his correspondent in Königsberg to buy it for his account and to take the amount from the bank company. in Amsterdam."<sup>36</sup> (My trans.) This refers to an Amsterdam bank where payments are made. An Amsterdam ship is responsible for the transport, the freight of which is insured by an Amsterdam company. Another example illustrates that business, insurance and transactions are also made in Amsterdam when a merchant on the Baltic Sea orders wine from the Bordeaux area. In summary, Amsterdam is where all the products and goods of all the other countries in the world can be found and no other place provides as much convenience and "as many sources of help for the operation of large and diverse commercial enterprises and financial transactions."<sup>37</sup> (My trans.)

## 6. Conclusion

To sum up, it can be said that for Ludovici, the city of Amsterdam lives in wealth and abundance thanks to its extensive facilities to optimize trade, such as its port, stock exchange, bank, credit facilities, insurance and worldwide connections.

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34 Cf. Ludovici 1752–1756, 702.

35 Ludovici 1752–1756, 726.

36 Ludovici 1752–1756, 728–729.

37 Ludovici 1752–1756, 730.

Aachen, too, prospers mainly because of the privileges of its merchants and due to its trade with Amsterdam. Ludovici's mercantilism is therefore expressed in the fact that he regards trade as the main source of prosperity. Since he writes for traders and not for politicians, topics like minimizing imports of finished goods and exports of raw materials, while promoting imports of raw materials and exports of finished goods, are of no interest for him, nor is understanding mercantilism as a trade war. This German variant of mercantilism is as little interested in the cameralistic increase of taxes for the benefit of the absolute ruler, as it is in the physiocrats' classification of agricultural laborers as *classe productive*, landowners as *classe distributive* and merchants as *classe stérile*. Rather, the approaches of Adam Smith and Mandeville are more likely to suit his individualistic perspective, which is tailored to the individual trader.

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Jan-Henrik Witthaus

# Doing Business in the Spanish *Antiguo Régimen*: The Case of Juan de Goyeneche y Gastón: Between Profit, Heroism and Political Commitment

**Abstract** Juan de Goyeneche (1656–1735) can be considered one of the early protagonists of Bourbon Reformism, although he seems rather forgotten compared to other figures of 18th-century Spain – intellectuals and politicians such as Francisco Cabarrús, Pablo de Olavide or Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos. If we thumb through the recently published manual of Eugenio Torres Villanueva, who offers a collection of portraits of one hundred Spanish businessmen, Goyeneche is the first to be mentioned. Not only did he pursue several publication projects, he was also one of the principal supporters of the early Bourbon regime and provided the Crown with financial and material resources. He built factories and colonies for workers, for instance the settlement of Nueva Baztán, which is located near Alcalá de Henares. This contribution will focus on several portraits of Goyeneche taken from the literature of the era, reflecting on the historical role he played in the 18th-century Enlightenment and illustrating the growing appreciation of business and industry.

**Keywords:** entrepreneurship, Spain, 18th century, patriotism, heroism

## 1. Introduction

Juan de Goyeneche (1656–1735) can be considered one of the early economic protagonists of Bourbon reformism. However, he seems to be rather forgotten compared to other figures of the Spanish 18th Century – intellectuals and politicians such as Francisco Cabarrús, Pablo de Olavide or Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos. Nevertheless, he did pursue several publication projects, was an erudite humanist and edited the famous *Gaceta de Madrid*. First and foremost, he was one of the principal supporters of the early Bourbon regime and provided the Crown with financial and material resources. He built factories and colonies for workers, for instance the settlement of Nueva Baztán, which is located near Alcalá de Henares.

In the first part of this article we will look at the character of entrepreneurship that Goyeneche embodied throughout his life, focusing on the most relevant data from his biography. This Basque businessman represented a mode of economic behavior that can be considered representative of the *Antiguo Régimen*, before

the rise of liberalist thought. This type of entrepreneurship does pursue wealth, that is to say the accumulation of material fortune, but its main goal is the acquisition of symbolic capital and ascent within the social hierarchy. Entrance to the inner circle of Madrilenian nobility, proximity to the Crown, and the introduction of one's family members into these social spheres are the primary ambitions.

The second part will show that this type of entrepreneurship is mirrored in several portraits of Goyeneche taken from the literature of the age – the most famous being the eulogy by Benito Jerónimo Feijoo in the dedication of the fifth volume of his *Teatro crítico universal*. As we will see, the introduction of economic thought and the new appreciation of business and industry are discussed in terms of heroism and nationalism. In the mercantilist context of Spanish reformism, doing business is considered an action taken not only for one's own sake, but for the sake of national regeneration.

## 2. The life of an entrepreneur within the old order<sup>1</sup>

Juan de Goyeneche was born in the valley of Baztán in Basque Country, near the French border. As he mentioned on several occasions, the Goyeneche family was the most traditional and powerful clan in that region. Its presence in Baztán can be traced back to the Early modern period, when the status of Spanish gentry – or *hidalguía* – was generally attributed to all inhabitants of the Basque Country. Andrés, the first-born son of the family, inherited the Goyeneche fortune. For the other children, alternative careers were envisaged. Juan moved to Madrid around 1670 to start his studies at the Jesuit College. There he led the life of an erudite humanist, writing books about the historical background of the families of Baztán and biographies of 17th-century historical personalities such as Antonio de Solís, the well-known historian who had written a treatise on the conquest of Mexico, the most important intellectual text of the Spanish Baroque. At the end of the 17th century Goyeneche managed to secure permission to print the *Gaceta de Madrid*, and he can therefore be considered a protagonist in the early history of Spanish newspapers. This project shows that he combines humanist education and the spirit of entrepreneurship. The privilege to print the newspaper was confirmed by Philip V in 1701, and grew into a monopoly that remained in his possession throughout his lifetime.

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1 This chapter is based on information from Caro Baroja 1969, 102–291; Callahan 1969; Floristán Imízcoz 2005, Velasco Moreno 2017.

His relationship with the Duke of Oropesa, president of the Castilian Council, was probably very helpful in gaining the attention of King Charles II. Additionally, his economic experiences and resources enabled him to obtain the job of treasurer of the King, and he later took over the Queen's treasury. Obviously his financial talents were generally acknowledged and appreciated. Towards the end of the 17th century, he joined a company that provided the materials, which can be considered a high point in his financial career. At the same time he expanded his power and influence by acquiring territories, majorats and titles in the areas surrounding Madrid.

The change of dynasties in Spain brought great political advantages for the northern provinces, particularly the Basque territory, which supported Philip of Anjou against the Habsburg armies. This new political alliance led to the rise of the Basque party in the Spanish capital – a historic moment, which the Spanish historian Julio Caro Baroja called the “Navarran Hour,” “la hora Navarra.”<sup>2</sup> Juan de Goyeneche obviously took a chance and provided the Bourbon candidate with resources and credit during the War of Succession. However, he was not simply an opportunist, given that his partisanship for the Bourbon cause started considerably early, that is, too early to tell what the political future would bring. With political and economic reasons in mind, Goyeneche thought that only Philip was an acceptable candidate for the throne. It is important to emphasize that Goyeneche's commitment to the Bourbon dynasty is the historical basis for his close relationship with the later royal family, who never wavered in their gratitude to the Basque entrepreneur.

From the very beginning of the Bourbon reforms, Goyeneche not only supported the implementation of mercantilist policy, but he also personally embodied it. First and foremost is the founding of the community of Nueva Baztán, a housing estate with textile and glass factories, situated near Alcalá de Henares.<sup>3</sup> The celebrated Spanish architect José Benito Churriguera built Goyeneche's residence, as well as the main church. The promotion of manufacturing formed part of the mercantilist strategy to improve Spanish industry by producing luxury goods. This proved to be very helpful for the national balance of trade, because articles like cologne or silk handkerchiefs, for instance, could be produced in Spain, which contributed to its independence from foreign industry.

Juan de Goyeneche died in his residence in Nueva Baztán in 1735. His aforementioned activities permit us to conceive a mere sketch of his life's work.

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2 Cf. the title of Caro Baroja 1969. Cf. Torres Sánchez 2010.

3 Cf. also Blasco Esquivias 2011.

But I would like to stress three aspects that characterize his particular type of entrepreneurship.

First it may be useful to call to mind the polemics launched by another Navarran author and representative of Spanish Enlightenment prose: Valentín de Foronda, whose *Economics Letters* were directed against the economic tradition of licences or privileges linked to special manufacturers or guilds.<sup>4</sup> At the end of the 1780s, Foronda announced the advent of liberalist thought and policy in Spain. In this sense, Juan de Goyeneche plainly embodies the old order. His success is clearly connected with his strong relationships with the Crown, which granted him privileges to provide the royal fleet with material and to produce uniforms for the army.

Second, Goyeneche had a wide network of Basque businessmen who helped raise funds for the Crown during the War of Succession and afterwards. He was an experienced networker, not only in the high social spheres, but also in maintaining good relationships with the people of his home region.

Third, Goyeneche added humanist erudition to his economic experience and expertise. The most committed apology of commerce and mechanical arts I know of is found in the *Discursos Mercuriales* of Juan Enrique Graef, from the middle of the 18th century. Thus, in a time when Spanish trade, handcraft and industry were yet to be legitimized, Goyeneche combined economic competence with the symbolic capital of humanist activities and knowledge. Indeed, he patronized publications and supported religious institutions. The conversations held in his house were praised by well-known authors like Feijoo as salons blessed with grand culture and broad wisdom.

### 3. Portraits of Goyeneche in the prose of the early Spanish Enlightenment

The aforementioned biographical aspects drawn from the description of Goyeneche's life help to understand how his person and his reputation fit into the political discourse of reform-oriented policy established by the Bourbon government. The historian William Callahan explains the ideological background: "In eighteenth-century Spain," he tells us, "there developed a determined, long-term campaign to eradicate the reputed aversion of the nobility toward commerce and industry. This effort emerged directly from the policy of a state

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4 First published in the journal *Espíritu de los mejores diarios literarios que se publican en Europa*. Cf. Cladera 1787; Cladera 1788.

committed to the restoration of national power through the promotion of trade and manufacturing.”<sup>5</sup> In his article, Callahan focuses on the political tendency of 18th-century Spain as a whole. But the legitimization of handcraft, industry and commerce, as well as the commitment of social elites, must be described as a process that developed at different rates and on different levels. In addition, social resistances must be considered on the one hand, to show the discursive strategies of advertising a new type of entrepreneurship on the other.

Therefore, it is useful to look at several portraits of Goyeneche that can be found in the prose of the 18th century. The genre of the eulogy is an important discursive instrument to ameliorate the image of commerce and industry. Indeed, it is an appropriate instrument to shape cultural patterns and regulate human relationships by launching exemplary biographies as models of social behavior.

### 3.1 Bartolomé Alcázar

The first example of a eulogy dedicated to Goyeneche is drawn from a *History of the Jesuits in Toledo* (1710), written by Bartolomé Alcázar, a teacher at the Imperial College of Madrid. Alcázar was an influential personality in the cultural policy of the Bourbon regime. He was one of the founders of the Royal Academy and his historical treatise on Jesuits in Toledo was considered a paradigm of proper use of the erudite Castilian style.<sup>6</sup>

Alcázar’s eulogy of Goyeneche can be found at the end of the dedication chapter, addressed to his son, Francisco Xavier de Goyeneche. The eulogy focuses on the humanist formation of the Basque entrepreneur, with whom Alcázar had been acquainted for many years, since Goyeneche had studied at the Imperial College when he was a teacher there. Speaking of Goyeneche’s broad humanist erudition, his old mentor seems pleased to praise his tertulia and literary occupations in Nueva Baztán: “No es de menos estimable variedad, el que de nuevo (muy selecto, y aun exquisito) formò, en Español también, de Facultades serias, y amenas, que oy reserva en vn pulido gabinete de su Bosque de Baztan, donde, ò solo, ò con amigos, tiene en sosegado ocio, *tal vez*, sin Macrobio, sus Dias Saturnales, y sin Aulio Gellio, sus Noches Atticas.”<sup>7</sup> (“It is of no less estimable variety, that which he [very selectively, even exquisitely] formed anew, also in Spanish, of serious and amenable faculties, which he today keeps in a

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5 Callahan 1969, 152.

6 For more information cf. the pages on RAE, n.d.

7 Alcázar 1710, n.p. [9 f.].

polished cabinet in his Forest of Baztán where, whether alone or with friends, he holds in restful leisure, perhaps, without Macrobius, his Saturnal Days, and without Aulio Gellio, his Attic Nights.” My trans.)

As we will see, Feijoo also mentions these meetings with the most flattering words. In Alcázar’s text, Goyeneche’s erudite occupations are described following the example of the ancient Romans and their concept of *otium*,<sup>8</sup> that is to say, the idea of the statesman who retires from politics and business to dedicate his spare time to literary activities (“Noches Atticas”) and conversations (“Dias Saturnales”). These allusions seem to point to the following circumstances: First, that Aulius Gellius wrote his *Attic Nights* at night-time, and second, that the *Saturnal Days* of Macrobius are a representation of philosophical conversations. Thus humanism is described as an ancient habitus that includes literary activity (also realized by the judge Gellius as *otium*) on the one hand and conversational wisdom (as shown in Macrobius) on the other.

Additionally, Alcázar comments on the economic projects of his former student, even sublimating these endeavors into heroic actions. Thus he emphasizes one particular episode of the War of Succession, the 1705 Battle of Cadiz:

Dexo aquella, quizá nunca otra vez vista, demonstracion en Vassallo de su grado, quando, al entrar el Rey N. Señor en la possession de estos Reynos, presentó à su Magestad mas de ochenta robustos Mastiles de Navios, puestos à su costa en la Bahía de Cadiz; donde oportunamente sirvieron de impenetrable Cadena contra la armada enemiga rebatiendo su impetuoso furor, y libertando de su enconada invasion tan celebrado Emporio.<sup>9</sup>

“He made that, perhaps never to be seen again, demonstration as a vassal of his degree, when, as our lord the King took possession of these Kingdoms, he presented to his Majesty more than eighty robust masts of ships, placed at his own expense in the Bay of Cadiz; where they opportunely served as an impenetrable chain against the enemy’s armada, repelling their impetuous fury, and freeing this celebrated emporium from their fierce invasion.” My trans.)

The provision of army equipment and logistics are described as the deeds of a loyal vassal, unstinting in his readiness to sacrifice for a political cause.

Thus economic competence and patriotic attitude are represented as two sides of the same coin, and one could observe that the Spanish literary topos of “Arms and Letters” is varied and considerably changed<sup>10</sup>: Not only the exercise of weapons is to be honored, as we hear in a famous speech by Don Quixote in

8 Cf. André 1966, 531–541. Cf. Witthaus 2018.

9 Alcázar 1710, n.p. [11].

10 Cf. Curtius 1990, 178 f.



chapter 38 of the first part of the novel; the provision of arms and equipment is just as important. Under these circumstances, having done business in the *Antiguo Régimen* can be reevaluated and described as a truly patriotic activity.

### 3.2 Gerónimo de Uztáriz

Given the importance and celebrity of Goyeneche's economic activities, it is not really surprising to find a short eulogy to him in the classical treatise of Spanish mercantilism, *Theory and Practice of Commerce and Marina*, written by Gerónimo de Uztáriz (1724). This book is considered one of the central publications on economic politics in Spain in the first half of the 18th century. It was translated into several European languages.<sup>11</sup>

Uztáriz, a statesman originally from Navarra,<sup>12</sup> praises his compatriot as an important protagonist of mercantilist economy. Once more his selflessness and usefulness to Bourbon reform policy are enumerated:

[...] lo tomò por su cuenta, sin mas asociación, que la de su proprio desvelo, y caudal, y lo plantificò, y puso corriente à gran costa suya en el Nuevo Baztán, donde se fabricaban yà buenos Crystales para todos usos; y aunque pudo desalentarse, viendo, pocos meses depues, que no podia subsistir en aquellos parages por la escasez de la leñas, que debe ser muy abundante para esto, se animò al nuevo empeño de trasplantarlo en Villanueva del Coròn, cerca de los dilatados, y espesos Bosques de Cuenca, como lo ha executado, repitiendo el gasto de nuevas habitaciones, y oficinas [...].<sup>13</sup>

("[...] he took it on his own account, with no other association than that of his own sleeplessness and wealth, and he planned it and put it into operation at his own expense in Nuevo Baztan, where they made good crystal for all uses; and although he could have been discouraged, seeing, a few months later, that he could not subsist in those places because of the scarcity of firewood, which must be very abundant for this, he busied himself in the new endeavor of transplanting it to Villanueva del Coròn, near the extensive and dense forests of Cuenca, as he has done, repeating the expense of new rooms and offices [...].” My trans.)

The semantic isotopy that can be found in this extract indicates the grand expenses Goyeneche was willing to accept in order to build up the crystal industry in Spain: “lo tomó por su cuenta” (“he took it on his own account”),

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11 Cf. Márquez 1944, who gives the most level-headed assessment of *Theoría y práctica* I have found.

12 He can be considered another example of the “Navarran Hour.” Cf. Caro Baroja 1969, 455–458.

13 Uztáriz 1742, 161.

“su propio desvelo y caudal” (“his own sleeplessness and wealth”), “repetiendo el gasto” (“repeating the expense”).

Thus a history of economic failure – or at least of uneconomic behavior – is turned upside down. Accordingly, in this short narration, perseverance and single-mindedness are emphasized and reformulated as readiness to sacrifice and selflessness. The reader should understand that the failure of the crystal factory by no means discourages Goyeneche; on the contrary, he is willing to set up a new enterprise elsewhere.

Thus Goyeneche functions rhetorically as an example of patriotic behavior, and once again it is noteworthy that his patriotism is seen from an economic point of view: Uztáriz explains to the reader the significance of national industry and the necessity of counterbalancing high import rates. Financial investment and economic endeavor can and must be convertible to patriotic virtue and national reputation.

### 3.3 Benito Jerónimo Feijoo

The last example is taken from probably the best-known work of the early Enlightenment in Spain: *The Critical and Universal Theater – Teatro crítico universal* (1726–1740), written by Benito Jerónimo Feijoo. In the dedication of the fifth volume, published in 1733, Feijoo addresses Goyeneche as an important supporter and friend. Of course, the praise of the Basque businessman is honest; Feijoo worships him as a protector of the arts and as a patron of rising young politicians and clergymen.

However, the dedication to Goyeneche is plainly a strategic move. The publication of *Teatro crítico universal* had generated a great many detractors, who launched massive attacks against the Benedictine author.<sup>14</sup> A publicly avowed alliance with Goyeneche would strengthen his position. Nevertheless, one is tempted to speak of a win-win situation, since the preface is a true monument to the Basque entrepreneur. Feijoo misses no opportunity to illustrate the businessman’s great erudition. Furthermore, like Alcazar and Uztáriz, Feijoo praises Goyeneche’s support of the King in the Siege of Cadiz, and his brilliant logistic achievement in transporting tree trunks from the Pyrenees to the coast. He also mentions the founding of Nuevo Baztán:

El Establecimiento de tantas manufacturas, el alto, y felizmente logrado proyecto de conducir de las intratables asperezas de los Pirineos, y aun del centro de esas mismas asperezas, árboles para las mayores Naves, la fundación de un lugar hermoso, y

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14 Cf. Giovanni Stiffoni 1986, 46–56.

populoso en terreno que parecía rebelde a todo cultivo; pedían sin duda no sólo una comprensión elevadísima, mas una grandeza de ánimo incomparable.<sup>15</sup>

(“The establishment of so many manufactures, the lofty and happily achieved project of conducting from the intractable roughness of the Pyrenees, and even from the center of that same roughness, trees for the largest ships, the foundation of a beautiful and populous place in a land that seemed rebellious to all cultivation, undoubtedly required not only a very high understanding, but an incomparable greatness of mind.” My trans.)

In this paragraph, Goyeneche appears to be a real founder of civilization, who exploits and develops wild territory. Obviously, Father Feijoo, while writing this passage, had Alcázar’s eulogy in mind, in which Goyeneche’s actions are described in a very similar way:

Dexo aquella magnanimidad, con que por muchas leguas, en los Pyreneos de Aragon, venciendo montes, cortando riscos, abriendo cauces, conduciendo arroyos y fuentes, fabricando exclusas, y haziendo cortas de Arboles procerissimos, con inmensos gastos; ha conseguido sacarlos en almadias, por los Rios Aragon y Ebro, hasta el Mediterraneo [...].<sup>16</sup>

(“I leave that magnanimity, with which for many leagues, in the Pyrenees of Aragon, overcoming mountains, carving cliffs, opening channels, navigating streams and fountains, building locks, and cutting trees, with immense expenses; has managed to convey them in rafts, by the Aragon and Ebro Rivers, to the Mediterranean [...]” My trans.)

Thus, according to Alcázar as well as to Feijoo, his faculties are not only intellectual. Being an entrepreneur and a provider of raw materials, he is shaped into an authentic founder of civilization. Indeed, the civilizing force of economic activity becomes an important topos of Enlightenment literature. Here, civilization goes along with economic reforms and national regeneration, initiated by the Spanish Crown. In this sense, as Giovanni Stiffoni puts it, by dedicating the fifth volume of his magnum opus to the Basque entrepreneur, Feijoo shows his loyalty to the political wing of Bourbon reformism, at this time strongly influenced by the state secretary, José Patiño.<sup>17</sup>

Moreover, in the flattering rhetoric of Feijoo, Goyeneche’s resolve reveals the natural “grandeur of his soul” (“magnanimidad,” see above). In contrast to his predecessors Alcázar and Uztáriz, he does not hesitate to make his hero-worship explicit; he uses the term *heroe* – and does so in the context of commercial projects: “Era menester, sobre un entendimiento de miras muy sublimes,

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15 I cite the online version of the *Teatro crítico universal*: Feijoo 1997, n.p.

16 Alcázar 1710, n.p. [11].

17 Stiffoni 1986, 57.

un espíritu heroico en el grado más eminente, para tomar por su cuenta un hombre sólo la Fábrica de Cristales, habiendo visto perderse sucesivamente dos Compañías formadas al mismo intento”<sup>18</sup> (“On an understanding of very sublime views, a heroic spirit in the most eminent degree was necessary for one man alone to take over the Crystal Factory, having seen the successive loss of two Companies formed for the same purpose.” My trans.) Feijoo is entirely aware of the hyperbolic nature of his use of the word *hero*, so he justifies the expression:

El Heroísmo tiene diferentes clases. Los hombres pueden hacerse famosísimos por varios rumbos. Cada uno podrá repartir entre ellos su estimación como quisiere. Lo que yo siento es, que más fácil es hallar en una República un guerrero tan ilustre como Escipión, un Cónsul tan político como Apio Claudio, un Orador tan discreto como Tulio, un hombre tan docto como Varrón, que hallar un todo, como el de Don Juan de Goyeneche: hallar, digo, un hombre tan para todos, y tan para todo.<sup>19</sup>

(“Heroism has different kinds. Men can become very famous in various ways. Each one can distribute his esteem among them as he wishes. What I feel is that it is easier to find in a Republic a warrior as illustrious as Scipio, a Consul as political as Appius Claudius, an Orator as discreet as Tullius, a man as learned as Varro, than to find a whole, like that of Don Juan de Goyeneche: to find, I say, a man so for everyone, and so for everything.” My trans.)

“A man so for everyone and so for everything”: this is truly an interesting definition of heroism, which in a way foreshadows modern times: Goyeneche seems to be a heroic promoter of economic independence and military regeneration:

No creo que estaba fuera de este sentir nuestro Monarca Felipe V cuando dijo a su Confesor, que si tuviese dos vasallos como Goyeneche, pondría muy brevemente a España en estado de no depender de los Extranjeros para cosa alguna, antes reduciría a estos a depender de España para muchas.<sup>20</sup>

(“I do not think that our Monarch Philip V was out of this sentiment when he said to his Confessor, that if he had two vassals like Goyeneche, he would very briefly put Spain in a state of not depending on Foreigners for anything, before reducing them to depend on Spain for many things.” My trans.)

His example appears to be adequate to reopen the debate on the definition of heroism and to transcend the limits in which the term was traditionally discussed. In the context of 18th-century Spain, this conceptual maneuver is a strong indicator of a changing system of values.

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18 Feijoo 1997, n.p.

19 Feijoo 1997, n.p.

20 Feijoo 1997, n. p.

#### 4. Conclusion

Finally, I would like to summarize the conclusions drawn from this overview of historical sources, emphasizing three points in particular.

First: The rhetorical genre of eulogy appears to be an important instrument to influence social systems of values. It depends not only on the object of speech, but also on its subject. The case of Juan de Goyeneche shows us how cultural ideals are shaped by exposing social paradigms of action. Moreover, a discourse analysis approach must look beyond the quantity of utterances or the rules of their formation. It must focus on the author of the speech as an agent of change in his culture and society. The texts of Alcazar, Uztáriz and Feijoo, though they may address slightly different reading publics, are situated in the center of cultural production and political power. The path from utterance to validity of speech is paved by the support and promotion of authors and texts.

Second: The relevance of the economy to the Bourbon reforms is introduced, stressing the importance of resolve and action. Goyeneche's economic competence is represented by adding humanistic culture and broad wisdom. In this way, active and contemplative lives are unified. However, humanistic activities function as symbolic or cultural capital, which help to stylize the exemplary fashioning of an 18th-century entrepreneur.<sup>21</sup>

Third: The main rhetorical strategy observed in the aforementioned texts is the re-casting of economic enterprise as heroic action. This conceptual maneuver could be considered a far-reaching intervention in the Spanish cultural system, because since the Middle Ages and the Reconquista, heroism had been associated with warfare and military skills. Additionally, in the Baroque tradition, heroism is linked to social survival at the Court, as a study of the works of Baltasar Gracián will show.<sup>22</sup> In the sources mentioned above, Goyeneche appears to be unselfish, adventurous, ready to sacrifice himself, and always willing to save the fatherland. This ideal of entrepreneurship did not last long. The Spanish mouthpieces of liberalism preferred the ordinary businessman to the heroic entrepreneur. But this is of course a matter for other studies.<sup>23</sup>

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21 Cf. Greenblatt 2005, 1–10.

22 See for instance his *El Héroe* (1639).

23 Cf. Witthaus 2019.

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María Jesús García Garrosa

# Business and Businessmen in Eighteenth-Century Spanish Drama

**Abstract** The text analyses a group of late 18th-century Spanish sentimental plays centered on business and businessmen, focusing on the dramatic techniques used by various dramatists. Their objective was to dignify commercial activity by eliminating prejudices concerning such figures in works aimed at making known reformist government economic thinking.

**Keywords:** business, businessmen, economic policy, late 18th-century Spain, sentimental drama.

## 1. Introduction

In the final two decades of the 18th century, Spanish drama explored a subject area based in the world of work and its productive members. Plays were performed which can be seen as a literary variant of essays, treatises, press articles and legal texts which promoted the new government policy of encouraging economic progress via measures which aimed to dignify certain lines of work and their practitioners, people generally thought ill of by contemporary Spanish society. Theatrical texts, seen as a school for behavior from an Enlightenment point of view, would be charged with disseminating basic principles of this economic policy to a broad and varied public who probably ignored theoretical or legal texts, producing works of fiction which might contribute to a reform of attitudes and social behavior concerning manual labor and business.

Some of these texts have been studied, individually or with others adopting the same subject matter, in analyses which have highlighted the identification of authors with the reformist policy and desire for dissemination, sometimes openly promotional, of government actions in the economic field.<sup>1</sup> The realistic nature of the works gives them an extraordinary documentary value, because they present on stage characters, contexts, styles of life, work patterns and a specific vocabulary. However, they do not only imply the literary recreation of a

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1 See, in particular, Angulo Egea 2006, 112–128; Fernández Cabezón 1996, 337–361; García Garrosa 1990, 156–161, 1991, 85–97, 1993, 673–692; McClelland 1970, 430–435; Schuchardt 2018, 353–372.

social reality – “mirrors, unproblematic reflections of their times”<sup>2</sup> – since they aim to participate in the reality which they reflect, modifying it and providing models of conduct attuned to the new socio-economic policies. The focus of the present study is to analyze how this was represented by particular texts dealing with commercial activity.

## 2. The plays

The businessman is a character frequently featured in dramatic works in various genres, but it is in sentimental plays where we encounter a greater dramatic exploitation of this figure and the commercial activity he represents.<sup>3</sup> One focus of sentimental works is the depiction of “les conditions” (“social standing.” My trans.): “L’homme de lettres, le philosophe, le commerçant, le juge, l’avocat, le politique, le citoyen, le magistrat, le financier, le grand seigneur, l’intendant”<sup>4</sup> (“The man of letters, the philosopher, the businessman, the judge, the lawyer, the politician, the citizen, the magistrate, the financier, the great lord, the governor.” My trans.); their position therefore identifies them as active members of a society to whose advance they contribute by their labors and efforts. Sentimental drama is thus suited to reflecting the rise of a middle class devoted to mercantile, financial and manufacturing activity, and to vindicating the dignity and economic relevance of trades considered menial or base, carried out by artisans and laborers. And the texts employ dramatic techniques which present their work circumstances in a way which brings out the problematic aspects, the conflict between the personal (the honorability of their professional duties) and the social (prejudices concerning their activities). The advantages of such methods are substantial since they encourage a moral reading of plays by focusing on examples of exemplary behavior and facilitate the inclusion of speeches praising the work of businessmen, manufacturers and artisans, a feature perfectly matching the modernizing thrust of government in economic matters. In addition, the sentimental tone encouraged an emotional response in the audiences, a most effective way of correcting vices and promoting morally acceptable attitudes from a neoclassical literary perspective.

An important fact concerning Spanish drama which embraced varied sectors of economic activity relates to its origin. There were more translations than original works, a feature common in a field where translation was abundant and

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2 Burke 2008, 20.

3 See García Garrosa 1993, 155–174.

4 Diderot 1951, 1258.

imitated originally English subject matter, such as George Lillo's *The London Merchant* (1731) and its many European imitators. Yet, how should one interpret this pattern of theatrical works designed to outlaw prejudices rooted in Spanish society using practices from business or manual labor in other societies which reacted to its behavior and attitudes, as in England, France and Italy? Besides literary fashion there is a possible socio-economic explanation, which seems to include original texts such as *El triunfo del amor y la amistad, Jenwal y Faustina* ("The triumph of love and friendship, Jenwal and Faustina." My trans.), by Gaspar Zavala y Zamora, whose main character is a banker, but located in the English port city of Bristol, an important commercial center in the 18th century. Setting or re-creating these works in another country provides an international context allowing a transference to Spain of European models of progress thanks to the benefits of financial and mercantile activity and industrial production in sectors like the textile industry. Spanish audiences, still victims of prejudice towards such jobs, witnessed productive and prosperous societies in which not only the middle classes but also the nobility contributed their labors to the economic progress of society, where the risks to their professional activity (bankruptcy, ruin, unforeseen disasters and accidents) merely highlighted the honor and virtue of those involved, bringing specific benefits to their exemplary citizens: riches and well-being, solid reputations and social prestige.

Some of these plays will be analyzed in the following pages to determine the degree to which the message aimed at the general public could be adopted and produce an effective response, that is to say, a change of attitudes and a resulting enhanced reputation for certain areas of economic activity. Equally, it will bring out the dramatic techniques used in its achievement.

### 3. Morality in practice

The moral aim of sentimental drama was to inspire in mankind the love of virtue and the abhorrence of vice,<sup>5</sup> favoring a polarized presentation of situations and characters, plus recourse to two techniques common to all moral literature: a direct moral lesson conveyed via maxims, and its indirect exploration in the form of dramatic action.

The plays to be analyzed are designed to defend the professional ethics of businessmen facing accusations of malpractice, to which they were subjected in Spain as well as in other countries, judging by translated French and Italian

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5 Diderot 1951, 1256.

works which tackle the issue. For this reason, the dramatic plot commonly took as its starting point a situation which highlighted risks to the profession, in order that the businessman could demonstrate exemplary conduct and their moral and professional integrity. Such is the structure of plays like *Los comerciantes* (“*The businessmen*”), *El filósofo sin saberlo* (“*The philosopher unaware of it*”), *El comerciante de Burdeos* (“*The businessman of Bordeaux*”), *Los dos amigos ó sea el negociante de León* (“*The two friends or the business dealer from León*”), *Los franceses generosos* (“*The generous Frenchmen.*” All my trans.) and *El triunfo del amor y la amistad* (“*The triumph of Love and Friendship.*” My trans.).

They take as their protagonists commercial traders, businessmen and money-changers, the latter an elusive label whose precise and curious lack of definition suggests a profession which operated in a broad field combining mercantile activity, in the strict sense of the word, with the financial. As Jesús Cruz has demonstrated in the case of Madrid, it was not uncommon for bankers participating in certain commercial areas to branch out and create stability in their financial affairs,<sup>6</sup> and for businessmen to eventually operate as money-changers:

En Madrid, por ejemplo, existía una gran confusión a la hora de distinguir un banquero de un comerciante. [...] a los primeros se les denominaba “cambistas”, porque sus negocios se orientaban fundamentalmente al giro de letras de cambio. Sin embargo, durante todo el siglo XVIII y principios del XIX los Cinco Gremios actuaron como la más sólida institución de crédito de la época. Es más, algunos comerciantes principales dentro de la estructura de los Gremios Mayores giraban letras y ofrecían créditos con interés, aunque no fueran considerados cambistas.<sup>7</sup>

(“In Madrid, for example, there was great confusion when distinguishing a banker from a businessman. [...] the first were called money-changers, because their business focused mainly on handling letters of exchange. However, during the whole of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth the Five Guilds operated as the most reliable credit institution of the period. What is more, some leading businessmen, within the operating structure of the Major Guilds, handled letters of exchange and offered credit at interest, although they might not be considered money changers.” My trans.)

In *Los franceses generosos* Antonio Valladares de Sotomayor demonstrates this practice by showing that the protagonist Simón de Valenzuela, a “rich merchant” from Madrid, is unable to repay a loan of 40,000 pesos “de la letra que se cumple / correspondiente à los Gremios”<sup>8</sup> (“of the expiring letter of exchange, payable to the Guilds.” My trans.) which is due the following day. Darmont,

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6 Cruz 2000, 76.

7 Cruz 2000, 74–75.

8 Valladares (b) n. d. (I, 4). Quotations will be by act number and page or leaf.

a money-changer (that is to say a financier in a more modern sense), and the English protagonist of *El triunfo del amor y la amistad*, is bankrupt at the beginning of the plot, due to the shipwreck of a boat transporting his fortune to Jamaica, while in *Los dos amigos*, Aurelio, a “rich businessman,” is in fact a silk manufacturer from the French city of Lyon. In *Los comerciantes*, the work which best illustrates the multiple activities of these “bankers cum merchants,”<sup>9</sup> Jacinto, a young man who has partly taken over his father Pancraccio’s business, has purchased a batch of cheeses from Holland, to be paid for in six months. In other words, he is a merchant in the full sense of the word, who, in order to pay for products bought wholesale, for which payment must be made in cash, acts as a financial agent, taking money from investors whose capital plus interest must be repaid at an allotted moment. The merchant signs a bill of exchange, on the maturing of which the investor reclaims his capital plus interest. If the merchant no longer has hard cash, he is unable to make the repayment, and this gives rise to a situation which provides the starting point for many plays.

It is a problem which must have been quite common in late 18th-century Europe: the lack of liquidity, a measure which worsened as business increased. What is noteworthy is that, with a great sense of theatricality, dramatists reacted by initiating their works in media res, so that when the curtain opened, the spectator witnessed the worry of the protagonist due to repay by the following day a significant sum which he did not possess, as well as his efforts and those of his assistants to find hard cash. The imminent expiry of the bill creates a dramatic tension which transmitted to the audience the risks and difficulties for the profession of various ups and downs, including the vicissitudes involved in the flow of money and bank documents: shipwrecks of boats transporting them (*El triunfo del amor y la amistad*), war conditions which delay the arrival of mail or its interception (*Los franceses generosos*).

Such a sudden change of fortune (according to the terms of Aristotle’s *Poetics*) could see a businessman cum banker faced with the ethical dilemma of covering up his financial breakdown in order to maintain his personal reputation, or confront it and face possible imprisonment. The issue is of great importance since it centers on the bad reputation in contemporary society of behavior in these professions. The chosen plays illuminate the disrepute occasioned businessmen by bad practices and the lack of scruples of some of them. In *El comerciante de*

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9 Cruz 2000, 83. The work, premièred in 1782, is a translation of Goldoni’s *I mercatanti* (“*The businessmen*”), but the practices in Venice where the action is set are similar to those in Spain at the same time, as is demonstrated by the book of Jesús Cruz.

*Burdeos* the Baron despises the behavior of his brother-in-law, the honest and prosperous Bontam, for this very reason, and Bontam's friend, the fellow businessman Dupuis, is forced to admit that "Es cierto que entre nosotros hay gentes que no conocen la probidad [más] que por el nombre" ("It is true that there are those among us who only know the word probity, not the reality." My trans.) and that "hay muchos bribones y tontos" ("there are many rogues and fools." My trans.)<sup>10</sup> who consistently contravene their professional rules. The protagonist of *Los comerciantes*, Pancracio, is no rogue, but rather an upright professional and one aware that reputation in the financial sector is safe as long as cash is available, since otherwise investors would hasten to withdraw their money. For that very reason, at the beginning of the plot he is tempted to hide the deficit and conform to the very action which the widely-held, bad reputation attributed to businessmen: "quando amenaza el peligro de una quiebra se procura con brabatas, grandezas supuestas è imposturas desmentir la sospecha, y conservar la reputacion [...]; entre tanto se gana tiempo para evitar la desgracia" ("when the risk of bankruptcy looms, people employ bravado, supposed noble connections and impostures to give the lie to suspicion and maintain reputation [...]; in the meantime one wins the necessary time to avoid disgrace." My trans.)<sup>11</sup> And the fact that many involved in business resorted to such disreputable practices, is spelled out, in a tone close to parody, in *El triunfo del amor y la amistad*, premièred in 1803, in which the petulant Vangrey advises the money dealer Darmont:

En diciendo vos he quebrado: no tengo créditos ni fondos, y mis deudas ascienden á tanto, *laus Deo*: vos quedais absuelto de culpa y pena, y vuestros acreedores sin apelacion. [...] ya saben muy bien las leyes la integridad y conciencia del comercio. [...] ya saben nuestras leyes, que está vinculada la integridad en los Comerciantes como la fe y verdad en los Escribanos. [...] En suma, vos apartad el caudal que os queda, llamaos banca rota, y gozad del abrigo de las leyes.<sup>12</sup>

("By saying I am bankrupt, I admit I have no credit or financial resources and my debts have risen to such and such a level, *laus Deo*, you are absolved of blame and punishment, and your creditors have no right of appeal [...] the law recognizes integrity and good faith in commerce. [...] the law acknowledges that for businessmen integrity is like good faith and truth to judicial scribes. [...] In short, you set apart the amount which is due to you, declare yourself bankrupt and enjoy the protection afforded by the law." My trans.)

The temptation to follow the advice of Vangrey is not represented on stage in works whose aim is to dignify the activity of merchants and businessmen, evidencing

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10 Valladares (a) n. d. (I, 9–10).

11 Anon. (a) n. d. (I, 3).

12 Zavala n. d. (II, 14–15).

their honesty and exemplary conduct in even the most extreme circumstances. Darmont accepts prison, where he encounters, as the action begins, the honest businessman Lorenzo, the protagonist of *El hombre agradecido* (“*The grateful man.*” My trans.), to be returned to later, and who has reached this situation, not as a result of the risks to his job or bad administration, but through the extravagance of his wife. And without reaching such straits, dramatists sought strategies to save these businessmen of worthy morals; such are the theatrical devices which allude, once more, to the economic practices found in contemporary Spain and Europe.

The friendship networks between Spanish financiers, and between them and their European counterparts, was fundamental in cases when one went bankrupt, since it set up links of solidarity and mutual assistance in moments of difficulty or specific pressure.<sup>13</sup> In *Los franceses generosos*, it is the French business friend, Mr. Franvill, who we suppose (the work is incomplete) will come to the aid of his colleague Simón de Valenzuela, by means of his son, Coronel Franvill, who, by chance, is lodging in Simón’s house as a result of the occupation of Madrid by Napoleon’s forces. In *El hombre agradecido*, the businessman Bruno, previously employed by Lorenzo’s father and back from Jamaica where he has grown rich from trade with the British, will save the imprudent Lorenzo from prison and financial ruin.

The pattern of mutual support in the commercial and financial sectors was common in other countries, as various of the translated plays show. In *Los comerciantes*, Mr. Rainmur, a Dutch merchant who lodges with Pancracio in Venice, puts his wealth at his colleague’s disposal when he is about to be arrested for being unable to pay three bills of exchange the following day due to “*quiebras de correspondientes, pérdidas de mercancías en el mar, y sobre todo la mala conducta de mi hijo*” (“the bankruptcy of correspondents, losses of goods at sea, and in particular the misconduct of my son.” My trans.).<sup>14</sup> A particularly interesting case occurs in *Los dos amigos, ó sea el negociante de León*, whose central subject matter is “*las vicisitudes y quiebras que tiene el Comercio*” (“the difficulties and bankruptcies of commerce.” My trans.),<sup>15</sup> and the solidarity between those involved: issues concerning the liquidity of the wealthy merchant Aurelio, on the eve of repayment, due to the sudden death of the banker who held his

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13 Cruz 2000, 76.

14 Anon. (a) n. d. (I, 4).

15 Botti n. d. (I, 10). The work, premièred in 1807, is a translation of *Les deux amis ou Le négociant de Lyon* (1770), by P.A. Caron de Beaumarchais.

money; this gives rise to a series of generous acts in which he is financed by his friend, the government tax inspector Roberto, Albano, a general accountant with the Finance Ministry, and his own daughter, with money from her dowry.

The standard plot in such plays makes clear that in many cases outside funding is produced after the businessman confronts difficulties, and, when about to be imprisoned, requests it from within the family, from the would-be spouse of his daughter, often a rich and greedy merchant, who abandons the girl when he fears his dowry in peril. This pattern is evident in *Los franceses generosos*, in the character Blas, while *El triunfo del amor y la amistad* presents an interesting plot alternative from a socio-economic point of view: faced with the refusal of Vangrey to help the father of his future wife, it is Jenwal, the cashier of Darmont, in love with his daughter Faustina, who replaces the money dealer in prison and obtains money from his friend Smirn, overturning the original bankruptcy and in return is rewarded with the hand of Faustina. Kinship practices in the commercial sector, with a cashier or assistant linked by marriage to the head of the business, thus guaranteeing its continuation,<sup>16</sup> are made evident in this and many other works treating the same subject matter.

Some of these plays utilize another theatrical feature in order to emphasize the honesty of businessmen: contrasting characters. It is a simple device, opposing the practices of a good and bad merchant. One effective example of its use, both with regard to plot and the spectator's potential moral lesson, centers on Lorenzo and Bruno in *El hombre agradecido* by Luciano Comella.<sup>17</sup> It is also very effective in *Los comerciantes*, focusing on a contrast between characters and the way in which their profession is exercised by Pancracio and Rainmur, long-standing businessmen with solid ethical principles, contrasted with the reprehensible conduct of the young Jacinto who has a commercial business as part of his father's firm. The moral drama sets out to demonstrate that his dubious practices and lack of scruples derive from his youth and the influence of bad company. By means of this contrast the author emphasizes the personalities of the established businessmen, both models of mercantile behavior, made clear in the work's title when staged in Barcelona: *Modelo de comerciantes* ("The model for businessmen." My trans).

The works featured here bear witness to the fidelity with which drama portrays practices in the commercial and financial world of Spain and other countries. And they achieve it by means of theatrical techniques which aim

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16 Cruz 2000, 40–42.

17 See the analysis by Schuchardt 2018, 353–372.



to maintain the spectator's interest and provoke a reaction which favors moral instruction. Realism and emotion, sometimes even pathos, are undoubtedly the basis of the success of these works, as is evident in the review by the *Diario Pinciano* ("The Valladolid Journal." My trans.) of the première in Valladolid of *Los perfectos comerciantes* ("The perfect businessmen." My trans.) by Valladares de Sotomayor: "Muchos espectadores de esta profesión había en el teatro. Unos salieron enternecidos y otros avergonzados. Esta es una comedia digna de repetirse" ("There were many spectators of the same profession in attendance. Some left after being emotionally touched, others out of shame. This is a play worthy of being repeated." My trans.).<sup>18</sup> The "sentimental catharsis" caused some spectators, after seeing themselves and their bad practices reflected on stage, to feel ashamed, and, we might imagine, to seek to correct them. The educative function of the theater was thus achieved.

#### 4. Maxims

The use of maxims was another strategy available to the dramatist, and was especially useful in ideological drama, as in the plays featured; it becomes the vehicle for political measures likely to destroy prejudices concerning certain economic activities exercised by the middle classes. But a plain moral message risked boring the spectator, hence its use provoked mixed reactions. The case of *El hombre agradecido* may serve to demonstrate the situation in some detail.

The play was premièred on May 6, 1790, and a learned journal, the *Memorial literario* ("Literary Gazette." My trans.), published a review that same month, beginning with a detailed exposition of the plot before analyzing character. Commentaries on Blasa are especially interesting, a wife whose vanity derives from her noble status, but who scorns the base occupation of her business husband, Lorenzo, and has frittered away his profits living as a woman of fashion, a person whose character – that is to say, her dramatic portrayal – strikes the reviewer as extreme and unrealistic:

El carácter de D<sup>a</sup> Blasa es cierto que si el Autor se propuso que fuese el de una muger loca ó estúpida, y que en esto consistiese el ser noble ó tener el capricho de tal, lo consiguió á maravilla, porque en ella no brilla de ningun modo, ni la razon, ni rayo de ella. [...] ¿Puede haber en la naturaleza un carácter semejante? [...] ¿Dónde se halla una muger como esta? El Autor la halla en la Nobleza. Así con la pintura de este carácter, no podia menos de herir el sentido comun y aun de creerse que aqui no se pintaba una muger qual se propuso al principio sino ingerir varios rasgos, dirigidos directamente á

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18 *Diario Pinciano*, 7.02.1787.

algunas personas determinadas de alto rango, como muchos querían comprender en las expresiones de montar en jaca, subirla al estrado, regalar vestidos bordados a los toreros, que los nobles siempre están debiendo a los comerciantes, que las Baronías y Regimientos se comercian, etc.<sup>19</sup>

(“The character of Doña Blasa is correct if the author intended her to be a mentally disordered or stupid woman, and if this consisted in her being noble or behaving as if she were, it worked superbly, because it did not stand out in her, nor was she acting from reason or was there any sign of it. [...] Can one find in nature a character like that? [...] Where can one find a woman like her? The author identifies her character with nobility. In this way his depiction of her can only offend common sense and one can only believe that such a woman was not characterized as such originally but adopted various traits directed especially at people of high status, and many would understand from expressions such as ride a pony, elevate her to the ladies area, donate embroidered clothing to bull-fighters, say that nobles always owe debts to businessmen, that high-ranking noble and military ranks can be purchased.” My trans.)

As we can appreciate, the critic disapproves of the defense of business and businessmen based on a criticism of the nobility, their idleness, social uselessness and delight in luxury and extravagant expenditure. But the reviewer is especially displeased by the amount of criticism Blasa directs against business, and the fact that her negative remarks have no counterbalance, that is to say that they are not firmly rebutted by other “honorable” characters: Bruno, Lorenzo, or Antonia, his sensible sister-in-law. Hence, after quoting some pejorative lines by Blasa about business, he points out:

Qué ocasión esta para rechazar esta injuria al comercio, compuesto según D<sup>a</sup> Blasa de enredos; qué ocasión para decirle algo de la palabra, buena fé, puntualidad y hombra de bien de los comerciantes en general, de su honrado empleo en proporcionar las comodidades humanas y muchas utilidades a la República, para que de este modo fuese en contraste la razón con la locura.<sup>20</sup>

(“What an opportunity this provides to reject this insult to commerce, constituting nothing but trouble according to Doña Blasa; what an opportunity to tell her something about keeping one’s word, good faith, being on time and good character in businessmen in general, referring to their honorable employment in providing human commodities and many other useful services to the state, all in order to contrast reason and mad behavior by such means.” My trans.)

And since the characters in the play do not do so, it falls to the reviewer himself, using arguments and phrases to be found in many an essay or theoretical

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19 *Memorial literario*, May 1790, 139–140.

20 *Mem. lit.*, 141.

treatise published at the time in defense of business and on its compatibility with being noble:

El comercio puede hallarse en todas las profesiones civiles, y por consiguiente en la nobleza; el comercio jamás ha envilecido, ni el noble pierde por el comercio: ni dexa de haber nobles comerciantes, ni pueden menos de comerciar en sus frutos y rentas; y ¿qué harán con sus fabricas los que las tengan, ó qué harían los que las tuviesen? Hasta los Reyes comercian en su línea; y no puede haber estado feliz sin comercio. ¿Cómo, pues, no se contrasta este desprecio de D<sup>a</sup> Blasa?<sup>21</sup>

“Trade is to be found in all civil professions and also for that reason among the nobility. Trade has never been degrading, nor do nobles lose anything by trade, nor do there cease to be nobles in trade, neither can they help but do business by the results they produce or their income. What will their factories do for those who own them or what would they engage in if they had them? Even monarchs do business in their fashion and no country can be happy without commerce. How come, then, that this scorn from Doña Blasa is not made subject to comparison?” My trans.)

What this review essentially makes evident is that in order to be effective in destroying prejudices and changing behavior, theatrical works must be clear and employ contrasts, not only in the plot and portrayal of characters, but also in the opinions expressed. It equally provides evidence of a precise ideological focus in defense of commerce and its practitioners, as well as of a nobility engaged in business, who, in the opinion of this reviewer of enlightened ideas, may not be attacked at the same time as defending citizens who are useful to the state, while also plebeian.

Embracing a moral and educative conception of the theater, this and other reviews in the *Memorial literario* suggest that it is not enough to represent on stage every mechanical trade one aims to dignify or professions essential to the economic development of the country such as businessmen and financiers, nor is it sufficient to advance arguments which demonstrate by honest, faultless behavior that the demeaning to which they are subjected is baseless. It is necessary for dramatists to sprinkle their plays with the maxims which unflinchingly emphasize to the spectators the moral message of the plays and government policy: encouraging commitment, love of work, and good business practice.

This is what many dramatists achieved. In *El filósofo sin saberlo*<sup>22</sup> there is an insistence, in various interchanges between the prosperous merchant Mr. Vanderk and his son, a victim of accusations of the indignity of such an occupation, that nobility (Vanderk hides his noble status because he took part in a

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21 *Mem. lit.*, 141–142.

22 A translation of *Le philosophe sans le savoir* (1766), by Michel-Jean Sedaine.

duel) is not incompatible with the profession of commerce since “en un siglo tan esclarecido no puede quitar la nobleza lo que es capaz de darla” (“in an age as enlightened as the present nobility cannot be removed by something able to bestow it.” My trans.). The maxims in praise of commerce and its social usefulness do not fail to appear:

¿Y que estado es, hijo, el de un hombre que de un rasgo de pluma se hace obedecer de cabo á cabo del mundo? Su nombre, su firma no necesita como la moneda de que su valor intrinseco sirva de fianza al sello del Soberano: su persona lo hace todo y basta que firme. [...] No es á un solo pueblo, á una sola nacion á quien sirve; sino a todas. [...] Somos en la superficie de la tierra como otras tantas hebras de seda que unen á las naciones y las obligan á recobrar la paz por el bien del comercio. Esto es, hijo, en suma, un honrado negociante.<sup>23</sup>

(“And what status is there, son, in a man who with one stroke of the pen can make himself obeyed throughout the world? His name, his signature do not require something like money whose intrinsic value is guaranteed by the image of the sovereign; his person alone is sufficient and only his signature is needed. [...] He does not serve just one people or a single nation but all of them. [...] On the surface of the earth we are like so many strands of silk which unite nations and oblige them to restore peace through the good of commerce. This, in short, son, is what constitutes an honorable businessman.” My trans.)

Proof that the practice of commerce can lead to nobility is evident in Aurelio, protagonist of *Los dos amigos*, who, as a result of his services to the state, is going to be raised to the nobility on the very day in which the action is set. Equally present in this work is the explicit defense of the benefits to the state derived from the income brought about by business and received directly or indirectly by all the workers employed in Aurelio’s textile industry:

[E]n Leon mantengo doscientos telares: para la proporcion de las sedas se necesitan triples brazos. Igual numero de personas se ocupan en los plantíos de las moreras, y en el cuidado de los Gusanos de seda. Lo que se extrae de mi Fábrica es vendido por todos los Mercaderes del Reyno, y todos estos viven y ganan: y asi como la industria eleva el valor de las materias al centuplo, asi mismo todas esas personas, empezando por mi, rinden alegremente al Estado un tributo proporcionado á la utilidad que les granjea la propia emulacion. [...] ¿Y quién hace volver en tiempo de paz todo el oro que la guerra dispensa? Ninguno es capaz de contrastar al Comercio el honor de volver al Estado ya exhausto aquel nervio y los caudales que habia perdido. Si, amigo, interin reposa el Guerrero, el Negociante sostiene la Patria.<sup>24</sup>

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23 Anon. (b) n. d. (II, 8–9).

24 Botti n. d. (II, 15–16).

(“In León I operate two hundred looms, and because of the provision of the silks triple that number of workers is required. The same number of people are employed in the plantations of mulberry bushes and tending to silkworms. The products from my factory are sold by every businessman in the kingdom, and all of them make a living and a profit, and in this way industry multiplies the value of materials a hundred-fold, and in a similar fashion all these people, beginning with me, happily render to the state a tribute proportional to the usefulness which competitiveness creates. [...] And who restores in peace-time the expenditure which war causes? No-one can oppose to commerce the honor of providing the backbone and wealth which had already been lost in an already exhausted state. If, my friend, the warrior then takes his rest, it is the businessman who keeps the motherland afloat.” My trans.)

For similar reasons we could mention certain passages from *El comerciante de Burdeos*, in an unfortunately incomplete translation by Valladares of an interesting French work.<sup>25</sup> The play has certain similarities with *El hombre agradecido*, in that its protagonist is an honest, prosperous plebeian merchant married to a spendthrift wife, with a degree of nobility in that her brother is a Baron, for whom “el no tener titulo de Marquesa ni Duquesa y solo el de su marido le es carga mui pesada” (“not having the title of Marchioness or Duchess and bearing only that of her husband is a very heavy burden.” My trans.), and who denies “ser muger de un Negociante y asi imagina que el marido de la hija enoblecerá la madre” (“being the wife of a businessman and therefore imagines that her daughter being married to a nobleman will elevate the mother.” My trans.).<sup>26</sup> *El comerciante de Burdeos* is proof of the reticence of some nobles in acknowledging the worth and representative nature of traders, bankers and business agents in contemporary society. The Baron, brother-in-law of the businessman Bontam, is very proud of recommending to his niece Rosa a noble husband who will allow her to “salir de entre el polvo de los almacenes” (“get out from under the dust of the workshops.” My trans.); he also holds this opinion, which is rebutted by the businessman Dupuis:

Yo me admiro que un hombre tal como el Sr. Baron, á quien no se le puede negar el talento, pueda encapricharse de una preocupacion gotica, de que el Comercio es un estado vil: pues no, no lo es asi, y esto nace de no conocerlo. Por los favores que se dispensan al Comercio se manifiesta bastante la estimacion que de él se hace. Los dias de la ignorancia y de la barbaridad ya han pasado.<sup>27</sup>

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25 *Le commerçant de Bordeaux* (1770), by Sébastien Gazon-Dourxigné.

26 Valladares (a) n. d. (I, 2–3).

27 Valladares (a) n. d. (I, 8).

(“I am amazed that a man like the Baron, whose talent cannot be denied, is capable to embracing the whimsical medieval prejudice that commerce is a degrading activity. No, it is not like that, and such a belief derives from a lack of knowledge. As a result of the favors granted to commerce is revealed the high esteem in which it is held. The days of ignorance and barbarity are over.” My trans.)

The remarks in defense of commerce appear in a lively dialogue in which Dupuis sets out the contributions of this activity to the state, in the most concrete arguments, based on its moral and economic worth: “[N]ada es bajo en un estado que procura los medios de exercitar actos de bondad” (“nothing is denigrating in an occupation which facilitates the means of carrying out acts of charity.” My trans.): it provides work which is able to relieve the misery of the poor, and can “volver en provecho de la sociedad humana tantos brazos que puede ser se armaran a destruirla” (“turn to the benefit of human society the man-power which might otherwise be armed to destroy it.” My trans.).<sup>28</sup> What is more, trade promotes the circulation of money, because it provides the rich with useless, expensive objects; in this way, money derived from their riches buys luxuries which indirectly benefit the state.

The words of Vanderk, Aurelio and Dupuis translate those of the original French characters, but their validity in a Spanish context is clear if we compare them with the arguments of Spanish writers on commerce, accustomed to stimulating the exercise of mercantile activity. For example, in praising wholesale traders in his *Bosquejo de política económica española* (“*Outline of Spanish political economy*.” My trans.), Campomanes wrote:

Estos son el fomento de la república y los canales por donde gira una gran porción de su sangre hacia el erario y hacia los particulares, con especie de flujo en las compras que hacen y de reflujo en las ventas con que surten al común. De su abundancia nace la baratura y la conveniencia. Este gremio de hombres es centro de la felicidad de las repúblicas.<sup>29</sup>

(“They are the ones who stimulate the development of the state and provide the channels through which a vast amount of its blood reaches the treasury and individuals, producing a flow by means of the purchases made and the resulting sales which supply the common good. Out of their abundance cheapness comes as well as convenience. This association of men is the focal point of the happiness of states.” My trans.)

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28 Valladares (a) n. d. (I, 10).

29 Rodríguez Campomanes 1984, 131–132.

## 5. Conclusion

We should finally ask ourselves to what extent the body of plays centered on the world of work contributed to the educational aims of the theater, firing spectators with a love of virtue and rejection of vice; that is to say, fiction helping to reduce prejudice associated with certain activities which restrained the economic advance of a society which at the time was redefining the concepts of honor, virtue and social usefulness.

There can be no doubt that government counted on the support of willing dramatists who for over two decades made a fashionable dramatic subject out of the difficulties of artisans, manufacturers, bankers and businessmen, all virtuous, honorable citizens put forward as models of exemplary conduct in accordance with the spirit of the reform plans which legislation had already begun to establish. The theater undoubtedly enabled this message of renewal to reach an audience which included manufacturers and businessmen tempted to abandon their profession, having tired of its bad reputation and wishing to make good in other fields and see their social status recognized. The reading of published plays perhaps permitted nobles wary of the honor associated with commerce to reflect on prejudices which seemed old-fashioned and inappropriate in a period enlightened by reason and progress.

These were realist works which reflected a particular reality and a desire to transform it. If they were effective in changing attitudes and modifying social practices, then that is something which historians should examine, but the close reading of some plays and their reception by members of the public generates few expectations. It is evident that some works scrupulously respected the actions and objectives of government in favoring progress, but we also know that they were less well received, perhaps because of their excessive didacticism which in the end frustrated the healthy propagandistic intentions of their authors. Audience records show that the most successful works were not the ones which transmitted a moralistic economic message directly, ones over-loaded with maxims and moral speeches, but rather those in which dramatists were skillful at slimming down and integrating the didactic element in a well-structured plot, which was both entertaining and provided surprises. These were works which captured attention using the techniques proper to comedy (smiles, ridiculous characters, even parody), and the sentimental genre (virtuous characters, emotion, tears, scenes of pathos with a necessary stirring of feelings).

Overall, it seems undeniable that this body of sentimental dramas, as well as some works centered on manners which dealt with this same subject matter, transmitted to citizens of late 18th-century Spain values which defined a

modernizing society: work as a way of achieving a position in society, prestige, honor; also the value of hard cash as an indicator of status and associated with well-being; the honesty of a professional activity which generates confidence and forms the basis of reputation, renown and a good name. And they achieved it, as for much other subject matter, by casting an eye on Europe. Many of these works, either translated from or set in England, France and Italy, make known a social model to which one could aspire, a materialization of the ideal of progress and economic prosperity and the flexibility of a class system which a reformist sector wished to achieve in Spanish society on the eve of the nineteenth century.<sup>30</sup>

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30 The English translation of this text was carried out by my colleague and friend, Professor Philip Deacon (University of Sheffield), a renowned specialist in eighteenth-century Spanish culture, to whom I am most grateful.



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Claire Pignol

# Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, Rousseau's *Emile*, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*: The Embarrassment of Choosing a Profession

**Abstract** This article questions the determinants in choice of profession among the three main characters in Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Rousseau's *Emile*, or *Education* and Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*. After analyzing their choices through the lens of human capital, it concludes, based on the characters' innermost deliberations and trajectories, that a comparison of return on investment is not a key factor in choosing a particular type of training or profession. Choices made at the beginning of adulthood depend, first and foremost, on the self-representations of the characters, and on their desires and talents. Their education and apprenticeship give them access to a self-knowledge that, although disappointing some of their expectations and hopes, allows them to integrate happily into a world that requires everyone to engage in a profession useful to others.

**Keywords:** Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, Rousseau's *Emile*, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, education, division of labor, human capital, rational choice.

## 1. Introduction: Economics from a reading of literature: The reasons behind our economic decisions

This text does not propose an inquiry into the legacy of Rousseau in Goethe's novel. Neither does it consider *Wilhelm Meister* within the context of literary or intellectual history, nor contribute to the history of the reception of economic ideas. It explores economic notions inherited from the economic thought reflected in literary and philosophical texts of the 18th century, among which the notion of rational choice holds an important place. Current economists – and maybe not only economists – think about choices of education and training for a profession in terms of human capital. Education and training are understood as investments that produce returns, mainly through wages for the individual and economic growth for society. The returns on investment depend on external resources, such as technologies, and internal resources, such as talents, which condition our investments and determine the choice to invest in human rather than physical capital, as well as the type of education and training to be promoted.

Thomas Piketty evokes such a choice in his comments on Balzac's *Père Goriot*. Vautrin offers Rastignac “a lesson about his future prospects,” “paints a detailed

portrait of the various possible careers that await his young friend if he pursues studies in law or medicine, fields in which professional competence counts more than inherited wealth” and “explains very clearly to him what yearly income he can aspire to in each of these professions.”<sup>1</sup> Rastignac must make a trade-off between, on the one hand, the “mediocre income”<sup>2</sup> associated with a profession achieved through study, and, on the other, the income from financial capital gained through a strategic marriage. Piketty points out that “democratic modernity is founded on the belief that inequalities based on individual talent and effort are more justified than other inequalities.”<sup>3</sup> He questions the legitimacy of inequalities with regard to a concept of justice commonly shared in contemporary democratic societies and elucidates the social conditions that allow people to choose between investing in human or financial capital according to their expected returns. Moreover, he shows that this is not really a choice, since social conditions (especially inheritance tax) should lead any well-informed agent who knows how to make a trade-off, if he is not constrained by the different moral rules held by Rastignac and Vautrin,<sup>4</sup> to prefer financial capital to human capital.

Our question is a little different and concerns the parameters on which these choices depend and, in particular, the choice of training that gives access to a trade and its associated income. Piketty certainly does not summarize an economic trade-off by comparing the expected returns of different possibilities. He is aware that other constraints come into play and points out that Rastignac, for example, mentions the fact that the future heiress is “neither very pretty nor very appealing.”<sup>5</sup> Moreover, Rastignac is not yet willing to start his own career as an assassin. But his work does not delve into what, apart from social impossibilities, discourages us from basing a choice primarily on the expected income.

Reading Defoe, Rousseau and Goethe, we question the reasons given by their characters, after careful deliberation, for their choices. These reasons matter, for they make clear what is hidden in the economic trade-off: the nature of the choice, and the individual’s purpose and self-representation – i.e., of talents, constraints, inner desires – that guide and motivate such choices. These representations not only form the basis of their choices, but also shape the agents’ perception of the results of their choices. Like philosophy, but by other means, narrative literature

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1 Piketty 2014, 239.

2 Piketty 2014, 239.

3 Piketty 2014, 241.

4 In order to secure the girl’s inheritance, Rastignac must still murder her father.

5 Piketty 2014, 240.

questions the nature of human choice from the singular path of one character's point of view. The three characters, Robinson, Emile and Wilhelm, express feelings – expectations, hopes, disappointments, regrets – associated with their choices of education and training. These feelings show the reader what is at stake in such decisions.

## 2. Working men: Reluctance or hostility

*Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1795), *Emile, or Education* (1762) and *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), in spite of their differences, share a common constraint: Before entering adulthood for Emile, or on entering adulthood for Wilhelm Meister and Robinson Crusoe, the characters need to choose a profession and begin their training. They become economic agents by having to find a place in society through their chosen work. The reasons for this necessity differ for each character and give rise to expressions of reluctance, sometimes hostility, either to the necessity of labor or to specific trades.

Rousseau's character, Emile, is an aristocrat whose fortune allows him not to have to engage in work. Rousseau uses two arguments to support the necessity of learning a trade. The first is a factual argument, even though it is merely forecast and has not yet happened: "The crisis is approaching, and we are on the edge of a revolution."<sup>6</sup> Since no one can be sure that Emile will keep his fortune, he must learn a way to earn his living. The second and main argument is moral: "in society, one lives at the cost of others, he owes them in labour the cost of his keep; there is no exception to this rule. Man in society is bound to work; rich or poor, weak or strong, every idler is a thief."<sup>7</sup> Rousseau imagines the outraged surprise of Emile's mother, for whom learning a trade would be disgraceful: "A trade for my son! My son a working man! What are you thinking of, sir?"<sup>8</sup> Rousseau dismisses this objection, wishing "to raise him to the status of a man," a status that requires him to "work for honour, not for need." In this instance, "honour" is not to be understood as that which arouses the admiration of contemporaries, and thus Rousseau enjoins his audience not to "cultivate the arts which depend on the artist's reputation," require "fame," and make those who exercise it "the sport of public opinion,"<sup>9</sup> threatening them with an odious servility incompatible with humanity. This is why one must not teach the child

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6 Rousseau 1921, 145.

7 Rousseau 1921, 146.

8 Rousseau 1921, 146.

9 Rousseau 1921, 147.

“learning adapted to feed the mind, not the body,”<sup>10</sup> nor encourage him to be “an embroiderer, a gilder, a polisher [...] a musician, an actor, or an author.”<sup>11</sup> Rousseau paradoxically concludes: “I would rather have him a shoemaker than a poet.”<sup>12</sup> The person who has “recourse, at need, to [his] hands and [his] handiwork” escapes such servitude. Hence Rousseau does not base the choice of career on the child’s real or imagined talents, as this would impose conditions for fulfillment on the chosen profession: “Remember I demand no talent, only a trade, a genuine trade, a mere mechanical art, in which the hands work harder than the head, a trade which does not lead to fortune but makes you independent of her.” We must not lay “too much stress on the choice of a trade; as it is a manual occupation, Emile’s choice is no great matter.”<sup>13</sup>

Wilhelm Meister and Robinson Crusoe’s situations differ from that of Emile. They belong to the bourgeoisie, and the necessity of work is for them a matter of fact imposed by circumstances. However, the kind of work to which they are bound has been chosen by their fathers. Robinson’s father, who “got a good estate by merchandise,”<sup>14</sup> chose the law for his son, where he “had a prospect of raising [his] fortune by application and industry, with a life of ease and pleasure.”<sup>15</sup> Robinson is intended for “the upper station of low life”<sup>16</sup> which is, according to his father, “the most suited to human happiness, not exposed to the miseries and hardships, the labor and sufferings of the mechanic part of mankind, and not embarrassed with the pride, luxury, ambition, and envy of the upper part of mankind.”<sup>17</sup> Robinson resists such reasonable advice: “I would be satisfied with nothing but going to sea; and my inclination to this led me strongly against the will, nay, the commands of my father.”<sup>18</sup>

Wilhelm Meister, similarly to Robinson, explains from the beginning of the narration that he “had been set apart for the mercantile life, and placed under the guidance of a neighbor in the counting-house.”<sup>19</sup> He rebels against this imposed choice: “my spirit at this very time recoiled more forcibly than ever from all that

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10 Rousseau 1921, 147.

11 Rousseau 1921, 147.

12 Rousseau 1921, 148.

13 Rousseau 1921, 149.

14 Defoe 1995, 9.

15 Defoe 1995, 10.

16 Defoe 1995, 10.

17 Defoe 1995, 10.

18 Defoe 1995, 9.

19 Goethe 2000, 27.

was to bind me to a low profession. It was to the stage that I aimed at consecrating all my powers – on the stage that I meant to seek all my happiness and satisfaction.”<sup>20</sup> His association with the aristocracy makes him regret not being one of those “whom their birth of itself exalts above the lower stages of mankind,” who can enjoy the “convenience,” the “ease of movement” allowed by a fortune, for “who can better know the worth and worthlessness of earthly things, than he that has had within his choice the enjoyment of them from youth upwards?”<sup>21</sup> In a letter to his friend Werner,<sup>22</sup> he explains the reasons for his persistent choice of the stage as a means of reconciling his own desires with the circumstances imposed on him by his origins. The need to work goes against his nature: “To speak it in a word, the cultivation of my individual self, here as I am, has from my youth upwards been constantly though dimly my wish and my purpose. The same intention I still cherish [...]. Had I been a nobleman, our dispute would soon have been decided; but, being a simple burgher, I must take a path of my own.”<sup>23</sup>

Wilhelm’s misfortune is due to his social origins. If the nobleman “does and makes,”<sup>24</sup> the “burgher” “effects and procures; he must cultivate some single gifts in order to be useful; and it is beforehand settled, that, in his manner of existence, there is no harmony, and can be none, since he is bound to make himself of use in one department, and so has to relinquish all the others.”<sup>25</sup> Such a condition goes against Wilhelm’s own desire: “This harmonious cultivation of my nature, which has been denied me by birth, is exactly what I most long for.”<sup>26</sup> Wilhelm is here similar to Erich Auerbach’s Stendhal, “aristocratic son of the *ancien regime grande bourgeoisie*,” who “of course, like his heroes, [...] can work and work efficiently, when that is what is called for,” but cannot “take anything

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20 Goethe 2000, 27.

21 Goethe 2000, 93.

22 On the opposition between Werner and Wilhelm on economics, see Urban 2013.

23 Goethe 2000, 167.

24 Goethe 2000, 168: “If the nobleman, merely by his personal carriage, offers all that can be asked of him, the burgher by his personal carriage offers nothing, and can offer nothing. The former had a right to seem; the latter is compelled to be, and what he aims at seeming becomes ludicrous and tasteless. The former does and makes, the latter but effects and procures; he must cultivate some single gifts in order to be useful, and it is beforehand settled, that in his manner of existence there is no harmony, and can be none, since he is bound to make himself of use in one department, and so has to relinquish all the others.”

25 Goethe 2000, 168.

26 Goethe 2000, 168.

like practical professional work seriously in the long run. Love, music, passion, intrigue, heroism, these are the things that make life worthwhile [...]”<sup>27</sup>

In spite of the differences both in the constraints that limit their choices, and in the desires that animate them, the three characters are economic agents insofar as they must experiment with labor in order to make a living and fit into society. Thus, Marthe Robert writes about Robinson Crusoe, who “breaks the conventions of a purely theoretical Utopia, where life sustains itself miraculously without taking issue with concrete problems”<sup>28</sup>:

For the first time in narrative literature, reality could not be vanquished with only the strength of desire, one needed tools, calculations, all the experience and patience of a workman. Up to this point the novel was a notoriously idle genre [...] the rule suggests that one never works. Crusoe put an end to that imposed idleness [...] With him, work, exertion, and need took their place at the heart of the utopia. It was no longer a case of denying the empirical world in order to take revenge on or lament how disappointingly bereft one was, but instead to transform it at any moment into a vast workshop where the mind and the hands were equally active.<sup>29</sup>

Certainly, the worlds of Emile and Wilhelm are not utopias. They do not clash with the question of subsistence as strongly as Robinson’s world does. But these are modern and realistic characters, since the social order, embodied by a father or tutor, imposes on them a work from which they must draw their subsistence and find their place in society. In this sense, they foreshadow what Auerbach will designate as “realism,” understood as a “serious literary treatment of everyday occupations and social classes – merchants, artisans, peasants, slaves – of everyday scenes and places – home, shop, field, store – of everyday customs and institutions – marriage, children, work, earning a living – in short, of the people and its life.”<sup>30</sup>

Meanwhile, they are not the lowest in society and can choose which kind of work to experiment with and practice. Robinson and Wilhelm, in desiring an occupation on the sea or the stage, show that their choices are guided by something more important – self-representation – than mere well-being and expected returns on investment in human capital. As Urs Urban points out, for Wilhelm it is a matter of recognizing talent (if he has one), of training and perfecting

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27 Auerbach 2003, 464.

28 Robert 2000, 141.

29 Robert 2000, 141.

30 Auerbach 2003, 31.



himself to enable him to access the “beauty of life” – or, in other words, of translating “vocation” (*Berufung*) into “profession” (*Beruf*).<sup>31</sup>

Emile differs from them both in that his trade is not chosen by himself, as he is a child, but by his tutor, with the knowledge of self and others that is implied by the experience of adulthood. Rousseau certainly expresses confidence that this choice would also have been that of the young Emile, guided by his reading of Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*. Emile is still in childhood, before the second birth of adolescence: “Make haste, therefore, to establish him on his island while this is all he needs to make him happy; for the day is at hand, when, if he must still live on his island, he will not be content to live alone, when even the companionship of Man Friday, who is almost disregarded now, will not long suffice.”<sup>32</sup> The choice of a well-guided child or an adult with the self-knowledge that comes from the experience of one’s own life is, in short, without importance or consequence. But it is important not to put this choice in the hands of an adolescent, prey to the vicissitudes of self-esteem.

### 3. A disappointing apprenticeship: Consciousness of one’s own mediocrity

Robinson and Wilhelm’s apprenticeships, on the island or the stage, produce disappointment by making each aware of the inadequacy of his talent when faced with his desires and his own mediocrity. Robinson and Wilhelm, before their apprenticeship to life, dream of themselves as uncommon characters. Robinson, whose head is “filled very early with rambling thoughts,”<sup>33</sup> whose “thoughts were so entirely bent upon seeing the world,”<sup>34</sup> adds to this the desire to enrich himself in commerce. Wilhelm thinks of himself as different from mediocre characters such as Werner. Both novels tell the story of their heroes’ errors and of their consequences.

Robinson cites his “ill fate” which “pushed [him] on now with an obstinacy that nothing could resist” in spite of the “calls from [his] reason and [his] more composed judgment to go home.”<sup>35</sup> From the very beginning of Goethe’s novel, Wilhelm invokes with irony the poem in which he imagined the “Muse of tragic art” and “the personified Commerce”: the former, “formed as a queen [...], the

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31 Cf. Urban 2013.

32 Rousseau 1762.

33 Defoe 1995, 9.

34 Defoe 1995, 12.

35 Defoe 1995, 20.

child of freedom,” a “goddess” whose “feeling of her own worth gave her dignity without pride”; the latter, “old housewife, with the distaff in her girdle, the bunch of keys by her side, the spectacles on her nose, ever toiling, ever restless, quarrelsome, and penurious, pitiful and dissatisfied!”<sup>36</sup> Wilhelm is the character who best embodies the disappointment that accompanies worldly learning and, especially, self-discovery. As François Jost rightly points out, Wilhelm, more than the world itself, recognizes his place in that world, and is beginning to be able to define himself.<sup>37</sup> His learning produces a recurring doubt about his own talent. After Marianne’s supposed betrayal, he attacks “his talent as a poet and actor, with spiteful criticisms on every side”<sup>38</sup>: “In his labors he could see nothing but a shallow imitation of prescribed forms, without intrinsic worth: he looked on them as stiff school-exercises, destitute of any spark of nature, truth, or inspiration. His poems now appeared nothing more than a monotonous arrangement of syllables, in which the tritest emotions and thoughts were dragged along and kept together by a miserable rhyme [...]. With his theatric talent it fared no better. He blamed himself for not having sooner detected the vanity on which alone this pretension had been founded.”<sup>39</sup> This is the first moment of resignation to “set about devoting his powers with the greatest zeal to the business of trade”: “diligent [...] on the exchange or in the counting-house, in the sale-room or the warehouses,” he carries out correspondence and calculations “with the greatest diligence and zeal,” though not “with that warm diligence which to the busy man is its own reward, when he follows with constancy and order the employment he was born for.”<sup>40</sup> This moment is only the first in a long journey of self-knowledge. In Book VIII, while Jarno explains that the Tower society, which has been secretly guiding his journey since the beginning, chooses those who “felt and recognized the purpose they were born for, and had got enough of practice to proceed along their way with a certain cheerfulness and ease,”<sup>41</sup> Wilhelm replies that “what I can, will, or shall do, has been more unknown to me than ever.”<sup>42</sup>

Such ignorance about what he can and shall do is not only the result of doubts about his talent as an actor. Wilhelm has had the opportunity to see the rewards

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36 Goethe 2000, 27.

37 Cf. Jost 1969, 105.

38 Goethe 2000, 51.

39 Goethe 2000, 51–52.

40 Goethe 2000, 52.

41 Goethe 2000, 230.

42 Goethe 2000, 230.

that trade and industry can bring. In response to his father's persistent questions about his travels, he produces a description of the state of the country's trade and industry; his imaginary narrative – drawn from documents rather than from his own experience – makes him feel “for the first time, [...] how pleasant and how useful it might be to become participator in so many trades and requisitions, and to take a hand in diffusing activity and life into the deepest nooks of the mountains and forests of Europe.”<sup>43</sup> Wilhelm's slow discovery of the world, neither linear nor cumulative, and the insular episode lived by Robinson, lead both of them to the knowledge of their own desires and means to happiness. Through their apprenticeship to life, both discover themselves as ordinary characters, deprived of true talent or remarkable destiny, but able to cope despite this.

Indeed, their stories are not tragedy or drama. Wilhelm's mistake was to misjudge his abilities and to imagine that he could acquire the talent he lacked. The realization of this error does not signal the end of his hopes for a happy life, but rather their fulfillment. Moreover, if Wilhelm questions the lofty idea of the actor's career and role in society, and his own ability, his experience is salutary and necessary in that it allows him to discover true fulfillment by renouncing the theater. Like Robinson, he is not defeated by his disappointing apprenticeship, but adjusts the representation of himself to the lessons of his experience. This adjustment, as disappointing as it is with regard to his dreams, is not a misfortune. It is quite the opposite, a condition of happiness: happiness on the island for Robinson, for whom “the conversation which employed the hours between Friday and me was such, as made the three years which we lived there together perfectly and completely happy, if any such thing as complete happiness can be formed in a sublunary state”<sup>44</sup>; happiness for Wilhelm in his marriage with Nathalie, a happiness he “ha[s] not deserved, and which [he] would not change with anything in life.”<sup>45</sup> Each character, at the end of his lived experience, freed from the confusion that consumed him at the beginning of the novel, confident of himself and his desire, is ready to fully enjoy existence. If “a man is never happy till his vague striving has itself marked out its proper limitation,”<sup>46</sup> apprenticeship is the means to knowledge and acceptance of limitations.

Rousseau's treatise on education differs from the two novels in that it never gives us access to Emile's interiority, and only accompanies him to the age when

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43 Goethe 2000, 160.

44 Defoe 1995, 221.

45 Goethe 2000, 336.

46 Goethe 2000, 307.

Defoe and Goethe's characters begin their stories. If Goethe's novel is a kind of pre-novel, or preamble, that arms his hero so that he is ready to live the novel of his adult life, Rousseau's treatise still precedes the pre-novel or *Bildungsroman*. Even the marriage of Emile and Sophia differs from that of Wilhelm and Nathalie, since Emile's education and his encounter with Sophia have, at least temporarily, protected him from the storms of passion and trials that will become the subject of Emile's sequel: *Emilius and Sophia*.<sup>47</sup>

#### 4. Social utility

The evolution of the characters' perceptions, expectations and choices is not only the result of their growing knowledge of themselves, but also a response to their consideration of social pressure, to an awareness of the role they can and must play to make themselves socially useful. Their choice of profession does not bind them alone. Any activity must find justification in the social utility of its result.

The praise of usefulness is a recurring motif throughout the three works. Defoe shows Robinson's transformation from a character who, before his shipwreck, wanted to become rich, to a new man who soon understands the uselessness of money. Upon finding gold and silver on his wrecked ship, he exclaims: "Oh drug! [...] What art thou good for? Thou art not worth to me, no, not the taking off the ground."<sup>48</sup> The Crusoe before the shipwreck wanted to make his fortune; the Crusoe of the island no longer cares about anything but his well-being, his productivity, and curses the desire for enrichment that enticed him into travel and subsequent shipwreck. From an economic perspective, this transformation results from a desire for well-being rather than for monetary enrichment.

Paradoxically, it is isolation from human society that allows Robinson to regain a sense of true usefulness. This is why he is proposed as a model to Emile, to develop his imagination about material work and train him to make judgments based not on others, but on the true utility of things. This is not to instill in him the false idea that he can dispense with the commerce of his fellow men, but that he might retain, in this very commerce, the desire for well-being and the taste for usefulness that characterize Robinson. This is why agriculture, Robinson's main occupation, is "the earliest and most honourable of arts," "the earliest, the most honest of trades, and more useful than all the rest, and therefore more honourable for those who practise it."<sup>49</sup> As Arnaud Berthoud writes, all of Emile's

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47 Cf. Rousseau 1783.

48 Defoe 1995, 62.

49 Rousseau 1762.

thoughts are directed by his preceptor towards concern for his well-being and “by the instrumentation of what surrounds him.”<sup>50</sup>

For Wilhelm, the encounter with Theresa and then Nathalie is an opportunity to consider the pleasure of satisfying the needs of others. Nathalie expresses it forcefully: “From my youth upwards, I can recollect no livelier feeling than that I was constantly observing people’s wants and had an irresistible desire to make them up. [...] The charms of inanimate nature, to which so many persons are exceedingly susceptible, had no effect upon me; the charms of art, if possible, had less. My most delightful occupation was and is, when a deficiency, a want appeared before me anywhere, to set about devising a supply, a remedy, a help for it.”<sup>51</sup>

However, while usefulness is indispensable, it is not the only quality to take into consideration. Rousseau chose for Emile the carpenter’s trade, which is not only clean and useful, but “calls for skill and industry, and while fashioning articles for everyday use, there is scope for elegance and taste.”<sup>52</sup> Wilhelm discusses at length the comparative importance of the beautiful and the useful. He regrets being a simple burgher who “must cultivate some single gifts in order to be useful, and it is beforehand settled, that in his manner of existence there is no harmony, and can be none, since he is bound to make himself of use in one department, and so has to relinquish all the others.”<sup>53</sup> The renunciation of primary ambitions is not, however, a renunciation of the beautiful in favor of the useful. It leads to a reconsideration of the conflict between beauty and usefulness because the category of social utility, which will guide his choice to become a surgeon, cannot be enough. As Jarno says: “all [...] lies in man, and must be cultivated: yet not in one, but in many. Every gift is valuable, and ought to be unfolded. When one encourages the beautiful alone, and another encourages the useful alone, it takes them both to form a man. The useful encourages itself; for the multitude produce it, and no one can dispense with it: the beautiful must be encouraged; for few can set it forth, and many need it.”<sup>54</sup> The multiple human dispositions must not be sacrificed to the useful. But also, adds the *abbé*, “Whoever aims at doing or enjoying all and everything with his entire nature; whoever tries to link together

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50 Berthoud 2007, 18.

51 Goethe 2000, 292–293.

52 Rousseau 1921, 164.

53 Goethe 2000, 168.

54 Goethe 2000, 306.

all that is without him by such a species of enjoyment, will only lose his time in efforts that can never be successful.<sup>55</sup>

Wilhelm's early youth, as well as Robinson's, was a rebellion against the social demands expressed by paternal injunctions. The discovery of the world – the natural world of the island for Robinson, the social world for Wilhelm – offers them the opportunity to find a place in this world. They are no longer locked into the painful alternative that was offered to them at the beginning of the narration: to submit to orders that thwart their deepest desires, or to rebel. A third way is open: to make the desires of others their own, finding in a socially useful activity the place of their own satisfaction.

## 5. Conclusion

Contemporary economic theory makes the notion of human capital the key to understanding the individual choices involved in training and choosing a trade. Connected to this notion, but different, Rousseau's treatise and Defoe and Goethe's novels show how our choices on education, training and profession matter, or do not matter. They matter not only in terms of return on investment, but because they also build the character's representation of himself and the role he can play in society. This representation may be disappointing. Becoming an economic agent means learning how to cope with this disappointment and to build another representation, one in which taking part in useful activities is not the renunciation of one's own desire. This, at least as important as the acquisition of skills, is what the three characters, Robinson, Emile and Wilhelm, learn through their adventures, education and apprenticeship.

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55 Goethe 2000, 317.

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Christian von Tschilschke

# Between State-Managed Reforms and Private Utopia: The Entrepreneurial Projects of Pablo de Olavide

**Abstract** If we look for prefigurations of modern capitalist entrepreneurship in 18th-century Spain, Pablo Antonio José de Olavide y Jáuregui (1725–1803) would perhaps appear to be one of its most emblematic, and probably best-known incarnations outside of Spain. However, in order to determine Olavide’s new enlightened economic habitus and the particular nature of his “atopian” entrepreneurship, which has not yet found its “place” in the Spanish society of the time, as I will argue, this paper concentrates primarily on the transformations and continuities of the texts that prepared and accompanied his famous reform project of the colonization of the Sierra Morena (1766–1767), the *Fuero de Población* (1767), and the *Informe sobre la ley agraria* (1768), as well as the utopian parts of his widely read Christian treatise *El Evangelio en triunfo o historia de un filósofo desengañado* (1797–1798), which he composed shortly before his death.

**Keywords:** Olavide, entrepreneurship, agrarian reform, inner colonization, self-interest, biopolitics, Christian utopia

## 1. The atopia of the entrepreneur in 18th-century Spain

Whereas historical figures such as the Basque businessman, erudite humanist and politician Juan de Goyeneche y Gastón (1656–1735), one of the representatives of the early Spanish reformism of the 18th century, are not so well known to a wider audience today,<sup>1</sup> Pablo Antonio José de Olavide y Jáuregui, or Pablo de Olavide for short, to whom this contribution is devoted, is in contrast one of the most emblematic and best-known Spanish reformers of the Age of Enlightenment, probably even outside Spain.

Choosing a figure as famous as Olavide for the purpose of characterizing him as a Spanish “protagonist of production,” however, involves certain advantages and disadvantages. To be sure, one of the biggest advantages is that the work and endeavors of Olavide seem to coincide with the scope and the limits of the Spanish Reform movement itself, as has already been stated, for instance, about Benito Jerónimo Feijoo for the first half of the 18th century.<sup>2</sup> The disadvantage

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1 On Goyeneche cf. Witthaus in this volume.

2 Cf. Stiffoni 1986, 61–62.

probably is that focusing once more on this particularly brilliant, talented, energetic, entrepreneurial and dazzling figure diverts the attention from other reformers of the second or third rank, such as perhaps Juan de Goyeneche, and might continue thus to contribute to an antiquated and stereotyped idea of the Spanish Enlightenment.

So what makes Olavide such an outstanding figure?<sup>3</sup> At least five things need to be mentioned here. First, his origin. Olavide was a so-called “indiano,” a remigrant from the Latin American colonies. He was born in 1725 in Lima, the capital of the Viceroyalty of Peru, and came to Spain in 1752 at the age of 27, impelled by juridical prosecution. In Spain, his American provenance proved to be significant in two ways: for quickly being considered an expert in questions of colonization and, according to historians, for the freshness, the impartiality and the “virginal sentido de lo nuevo” (“virginal sense of the new.” My trans.)<sup>4</sup> with which he set about the Herculean reform task he was later asked to perform by the Spanish government against the resistance of the ruling elites.<sup>5</sup>

Second, his projects. Over a span of ten years, between 1766 and 1776, Olavide held several public offices, first in Madrid and then in Sevilla, that served to establish his reputation as an effective and resolute reformer in Spain and abroad. In this period he carried out reforms in fields as diverse as the municipal treasury, infrastructure, welfare assistance, the theater, the educational system and, above all, the foundation of forty new settlements in the deserted and fallow areas of Andalusia and the Sierra Morena, where he succeeded in placing 6,000 settlers from Germany and other countries.<sup>6</sup> In Olavide’s own words, these “Nuevas Poblaciones” (“New Settlements”) were conceived as a model for the rest of Spain “no sólo para la buena agricultura, sino también para la industria,

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3 On Olavide’s life and work, cf. mainly the monographs by Defourneaux 1959; Aguilar Piñal 1966; Capel 1970; Perdices Blas 1993 and Marchena Fernández 2001 as well as the articles by Dufour 1966 and Perdices Blas 2003.

4 Núñez 1987, XI. Cf. also Aguilar Piñal 1969, 23 and Capel 1970, 5.

5 I address the question of the extent to which Olavide’s acting in metropolitan Spain was influenced by his colonial experience in more detail in Tschilschke 2017. For Olavide’s status as “criollo” and “indiano” cf. Neal 2017, 13–15.

6 On Olavide’s reform projects beyond the monographs already mentioned, cf. Aguilar 1974; Alcázar Molina 1927, 1930; Avilés Fernández / Sena Medina 1988, 1991; Bernaldo de Quiros 1986; Caro Baroja 1952; Chiareno 1986; Merchán 1996; Oliveras Samitier 1998; Palacio Atard 1962, 1989, 2006, 103–122; Pérez Fernández 2018; Pérez Fernández / Hamer Flores 2020; Reese 2022; Vázquez Lesmes 1979; Vicens Vives 1972, 446–447.

actividad y trabajo de sus naturales” (“not only for good agriculture, but also for the industry, activity and labor of its people.” My trans.).<sup>7</sup>

Third, the fact that he was persecuted and convicted by the Inquisition. Olavide’s ambitious colonization project and his activities as superintendent of the New Settlements came to a sudden end when he was arrested in Madrid and accused of heresy by the Holy Inquisition in 1776. Two years later, he was sentenced to lifelong seclusion in a monastery in a spectacular public propaganda trial. To any observer, it was clear that the Inquisition wished to make an example of him. In the 18th century, Olavide was therefore considered throughout Europe as “la víctima por antonomasia de la Inquisición” (“the victim of the Inquisition par excellence”).<sup>8</sup>

Fourth, his international reputation. The huge echo that Olavide’s punishment evoked in the whole of Europe has mainly to do with his previous trips to France: Since 1757 he had become acquainted with many major figures of the Enlightenment, like Voltaire, Diderot and D’Alembert. It was his first biographer, Denis Diderot, who in 1779 laid the basis for the myth of Olavide as a scapegoat of the church and a great reformer, a myth that already surrounded him during his lifetime and created his posthumous fame.<sup>9</sup> What’s more, the New Settlements in Andalusia rapidly turned into an attraction for international travelers from England, France, Germany and Italy, including Giacomo Casanova, who reports on his visit there in 1768, in his posthumous *Histoire de ma vie* (“*History of My Life*”).<sup>10</sup>

Fifth, Olavide’s so-called “conversion.” After two years of detention in Spain, Olavide managed to escape to France. Under the impression of the excesses of the French Revolution he began to write a monumental apology of Christianity

7 Letter to Miguel de Múzquiz, September 5, 1774, quoted from Perdices Blas 2003, 17.

8 Dufour 1988, 5.

9 Cf. Denis Diderot “Don Pablo Olavidès. Précis historique, rédigé sur des mémoires fournis par un espagnol” (about 1779; “Don Pablo Olavidès. Historical précis, written according to memories provided by a Spaniard.” My trans.). For the fabrication of the later myth of Olavide, cf. Núñez 1987, XXVII–XXXIV and Marchena Fernández 2001, 86–92, in which, however, no mention is made of the historical novel *Goya oder Der arge Weg der Erkenntnis* (1951; “*This is the Hour*,” 1956) by the German writer Lion Feuchtwanger (1884–1958) who, in the third chapter of the second part, devotes some very suggestive pages to Olavide and the proceedings that were attempted against him.

10 The numerous literary and travelers’ testimonies, both Spanish and foreign, about the “Nuevas Poblaciones” are studied, among others, in Alcázar Molina 1930, 99–103; Capel 1970, 113–134 and Chiareno 1986.

in four volumes, *El Evangelio en triunfo o historia de un filósofo desengañado* (“*The Gospel of Triumph, or the story of a disenchanted philosopher*”), which would become his most successful work. Anonymously published in Valencia in 1797, it was soon translated into English, German, Italian, Portuguese and Russian, and turned out to be one of the greatest bestsellers of the 19th century. To Olavide “la más singular apología de la religión católica que nunca haya sido escrita” (“the most original apology of the Catholic religion ever written.” My trans.)<sup>11</sup> allowed him to return to Spain, where he died in 1803.

Despite this short outline of Olavide’s life and work, I am not specifically interested in his biography here, even though it might be “la más altamente novelesca de todo el XVIII español” (“one of the most novelesque of all the Spanish 18th century.” My trans.).<sup>12</sup> I would prefer to concentrate on the particular nature of the entrepreneurship which is so obviously at work in his reforming practices and writings. For this purpose, I will compare the continuities and transformations between the texts related to the colonization of the Sierra Morena and the utopian parts that, quite surprisingly, constitute the fourth volume of his Christian treatise. In doing so, we have to keep in mind that the relationship between reform and utopia is dialectic in the sense that reforms are always inspired by an ideal of better practice, and utopia is often conceived with the intent to inspire reforms.

So, if we consider first the pragmatic texts of the 1760s and then the extensive apology he composed shortly before his death, it very quickly becomes obvious that his reforming ideas and measures astonishingly did not change significantly over the years, whereas their pragmatic and conceptual framings indeed did alter: from reform to utopia, and from the state as an agent to the individual as the center of action. But between these two positions one place remains empty: the place of the modern private entrepreneur. We might call this the “atopia”, the placelessness of the entrepreneur in Olavide. Even if many traits of modern entrepreneurship, understood emphatically as an act of “creative destruction”<sup>13</sup> that recombines natural, human, and financial resources in an innovative way, always willing to take risks, are already present in Olavide’s thinking and acting, this new habitus still lacks a proper place in the Spanish society of the 18th century.

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11 Dufour 1988, 5. On the successful commercialization of the book, cf. Dufour 2003.

12 Aguilar Piñal 1969, 20.

13 The term was coined by Werner Sombart (“schöpferische Zerstörung”) and popularized by Joseph A. Schumpeter. Cf. Schumpeter 1942, 80–86.

## 2. Olavide's commitment to state-managed reforms

Olavide's personal support of state-managed reforms is nowhere more evident than in the colonization of the Sierra Morena and the southern parts of Andalusia. This prototypical Enlightenment project, managed by Olavide by order of King Charles III in June of 1767, came along with a series of instructive documents: a report written by Olavide about a project to establish settlements in Southern America, critical for choosing Andalusia; the *Informe sobre el proyecto de colonización de Puerto Rico y América del Sur* (1766, "Report on the Colonization Project of Puerto Rico and South America." My trans.); a legislative code of 79 paragraphs designed to regulate the social and economic life of the settlers to the smallest detail, the *Fuero de Población* (1767, "Population Charter." My trans.); the correspondence between Olavide and his supervisor, the Minister of Finance Miguel de Múzquiz y Goyeneche; and, most notably, a report about planned reforms in the agricultural sector, elaborated by Olavide and a team of experts, presented in 1768: the *Informe sobre la ley agraria* ("Agrarian Law Report." My trans.).

As a new agricultural policy was considered decisive for growth, prosperity, and the happiness of the nation, the report relied mainly on the physiocratic ideas shared by most supporters of the Bourbon reform policies of the era, like Pedro Rodríguez de Campomanes (1732–1802) and Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos (1744–1811). This did not mean that the industrial and commercial sectors were to be neglected.<sup>14</sup> However, they were to remain subordinate to agriculture as the principal source of wealth for the state. Before becoming a politician, Olavide had already been a successful businessman who defended domestic free trade and the concept of competition.<sup>15</sup> In his writings about the colonization project, these ideas reappear adapted to the rural sector. According to Olavide, agricultural production was to be complemented by factories and by what Olavide's friend Campomanes, in his widely read essay *Discurso sobre el fomento de la industria popular* ("Treatise on the Promotion of Popular Industry." My trans.), published in 1774, classified as "industria popular" ("popular industry." My trans.), that is home-based textile production.

Discussing Olavide's approach to reforming the rural sector, one should not forget that he always acted as a loyal agent of the absolute monarchy and never challenged the estate-based society of his epoch. At the same time, he propagated

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14 Perdices Blas therefore considers the designation "agrarista" ("agrarianistic." My trans.) more appropriate than "physiocratic" (Perdices Blas 2000, 275).

15 Cf. Perdices Blas 2003, 15–17.

and promoted a fundamental shift in mindset towards capitalist principles. By subordinating all aspects of human life to the economic imperatives of rationalization and the maximization of productivity – for the benefit of the state and the nation – he must inevitably have come into conflict with religious traditions and the Church's claim to power, as his indictment by the Inquisition shows.

Instead of elaborating on the technical, economic, and administrative details of Olavide's reform endeavor, in the following I would prefer to focus on three aspects that seem characteristic of this mentality shift: the plea for private property and self-interest, the defense of biopolitical measures, and the approval of female labor.

The very basis of Olavide's reform project, as he develops it in his *Informe sobre la ley agraria*, is the distribution of equally large parcels of uncultivated land to families of settlers and the intention to provide them with the material, equipment, and skills to cultivate this land independently. Of course, the principal purpose of this measure was to combat one of the severest problems of the Spanish economy: the neglect of large estates by the Church and other great landowners. It was planned to give the new settlers the opportunity to sell their goods on the market and to reinvest the gains in their properties. The free "flujo de compras y ventas" ("flow of purchases and sales")<sup>16</sup> seemed vital to Olavide to keep the land in good condition. For him, as for other Spanish Enlightenment thinkers, the motor of all action was self-interest, the basic idea of economic liberalism. In his report the word "interés" ("interest") appears sixteen times, the collocation "propio interés" ("self-interest") seven times, and "estímulo" ("incentive") four times. According to Olavide, "el interés del propietario, del colono y del Estado es que la tierra produzca todo lo posible" ("the interest of the landowner, the colonist and the State is that the land produces a maximum." All my trans.).<sup>17</sup>

Olavide's second obsession is biopolitics. It is not in the least surprising that the Spanish historian Francisco Vázquez García dedicated a whole chapter of his study about the emergence of biopolitics in Spain, *La invención del racismo. Nacimiento de la biopolítica en España, 1600–1940* (2009; "The Invention of Racism. Birth of Biopolitics in Spain, 1600–1940." My trans.) to the case of the New Settlements in the Sierra Morena, whose general objectives and disciplinary mechanisms he analyzes in detail. In his eyes, they constitute "un verdadero paradigma de normalización disciplinaria en el gobierno de una población" ("a

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16 Olavide 1987, 525.

17 Olavide 1987, 486.

real paradigm of the disciplinary normalization in the governing of a population.” My trans.).<sup>18</sup> If we follow Michel Foucault, biopolitics always obey the economic logic of capitalism. In fact, Olavide views the settlers as a raw material and intends to get the maximum benefit out of them. The specific biopolitical dimension of the project becomes apparent in a variety of aspects, beginning with the spatial division and distribution of the population in places “sanos, bien ventilados, sin aguas estancadas que ocasionen intemperies” (“healthy, well ventilated, without stagnant water that causes bad climate.” My trans.) and situated near the fields where they work, so that they do not lose time, as required by Articles V and VII of the *Fuero de Población*.<sup>19</sup>

Further aspects include the characteristics by which colonists were selected. In fact, this was done according to three criteria, as summarized by Luis Perdices Blas: “El primero fue el religioso, pues todos debían ser católicos. El segundo, el económico: solo se admitía a agricultores y artesanos que ejercieran oficios útiles. El tercero, y último, el biológico: se regulaban las edades de los admitidos” (“The first was religious, since everyone had to be Catholic. The second was economic: only farmers and artisans who exercised useful trades were allowed. The third, and last, was biological: the ages of those admitted were regulated”).<sup>20</sup> In addition to German, Swiss, Savoyard and Flemish foreigners, Spaniards were also admitted on the condition that they did not come from neighboring regions. The real reason for this requirement was surely the intention to create a “new man,” cut off from the determining roots of his territory and mentality, “partiendo de cero” (“starting from scratch”)<sup>21</sup> in order to have “un personal libre de las ideas tradicionales en España en la sociedad rural, y por tanto, fácil de modelar conforme a los preceptos ideales que inspiraban tan ambicioso proyecto, cuyas experiencias servirían en su caso para ser trasplantadas a las demás regiones de la Península” (“a personnel free of the traditional ideas in Spain in rural society, and therefore, easy to mold according to the ideal precepts

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18 Vázquez García 2009, 44.

19 The Royal Decree was signed on June 25, 1767 and published on July 5, 1767. A facsimile of the text can be found on the website of the Ministry of Culture (URL: [www.mcu.es/archivos/lhe/servlets/VisorServlet.jsp?cod=003295](http://www.mcu.es/archivos/lhe/servlets/VisorServlet.jsp?cod=003295)) or the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (URL: [https://ddd.uab.cat/pub/pragmatiques/pragmatiques\\_273.pdf](https://ddd.uab.cat/pub/pragmatiques/pragmatiques_273.pdf)). All further citations refer to this source. All translations are mine. Its author was Pedro Rodríguez de Campomanes, assisted by Pablo de Olavide (cf. Perdices Blas 1995, 181). For an annotated summary cf. Capel 1970, 83–99.

20 Perdices Blas 1995, 191.

21 Vázquez García 2009, 44.

that inspired such an ambitious project, whose experiences would serve in their case to be transplanted to the other regions of the Peninsula”).<sup>22</sup>

In accordance with article XXVIII of the *Fuero*, in which the superintendent was allowed to “promover casamientos de los nuevos Pobladores con Españoles de ambos sexos respectivamente; para incorporarles más fácilmente en el cuerpo de la Nación” (“promote marriages of the new settlers with Spaniards of both sexes respectively; to incorporate them more easily into the body of the Nation”), Olavide defended an active marriage policy of unions between foreigners and Spaniards in order to create a homogeneous national body. As can be deduced from the accusations made against Olavide before the Holy Office in Cordoba, he apparently attributed a higher value to procreation and population increase than to the dogmas of the Catholic Church. This explains the reproaches made against him by the German Capuchin friar Fray Romualdo de Friburgo in 1775, who denounced him before the Inquisition, among others, for not giving due importance to the sixth commandment (“You shall not commit adultery”), for openly criticizing the celibacy of the ecclesiastics and for organizing public dances and masked balls.<sup>23</sup>

The state assistance offered to the population covers all aspects of collective and individual life: health and hygiene (hospitals and apothecaries are created), education (schools and public libraries are opened), the organization of leisure time (public dances are held on holidays in the main square), and even food (people are guaranteed sufficient food and do not drink too much alcohol). Although in article LXXIV it is decreed that “todos los niños han de ir à las Escuelas de primeras letras” (“all the children must go to the elementary schools”), in the following article they are denied all access to higher education: “No habrá Estudios de Gramatica en todas estas nuevas Poblaciones; y mucho menos de otras Facultades mayores, en observancia de lo dispuesto en la *Ley del Reyno*, que con razón les prohíbe en Lugares de esta naturaleza; cuyos moradores deben estar destinados à la labranza, cría de ganados, y à las artes mecánicas, como nervio de la fuerza de un Estado” (“There will be no Studies of Grammar in all these new Populations; and much less of other major Faculties, in observance of the provisions of the *Law of the Kingdom*, which rightly prohibits them in Places of this nature; whose inhabitants must be destined to farming, cattle breeding, and the mechanical arts, as the nerve of the strength of a State”). All settlers who do

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22 Lohmann Villena 1964, 82.

23 For more details see Defourneaux 1959, 327–329; 352–353 and Perdices Blas 1995, 347–361; 383–391.



not abide by the regulations imposed on them by the Charter are subject to harsh disciplinary sanctions, as specified in article LIV: “En el termino de dos años, si no se puede lograr antes, debe tener cada Vecino corriente su suerte y habitacion; y no haciendolo, ò notandose abandono en su conducta, se le reputará en la clase de vago, y quedará en el arbitrio del Superintendente de las Poblaciones, segun las circunstancias, aplicarle al servicio Militar, à la Marina, ò otro conveniente, ò prorrogar el termino, si mediare justa y no afectada causa.” (“In the term of two years, if it cannot be achieved before, each Neighbor must have his own current lot and habitation; and not doing so, or showing abandonment in his conduct, he will be considered in the class of vagrant, and it will be at the discretion of the Superintendent of the Populations, according to the circumstances, to remand him to Military, the Navy, or other convenient service, or to extend the term, if there is just and unaffected cause.” My trans.).<sup>24</sup>

Another issue that attracted Olavide’s attention was female labor. In line with the views of other reformers such as Jovellanos and Campomanes, Olavide was displeased with a situation where the majority of the population – in fact he refers to women and boys – is idle and unproductive. Therefore, he insisted that women should work in factories or make handicrafts at home, always appropriate to their sex like spinning, stitching or weaving – the already mentioned “industria popular.”<sup>25</sup> In a letter to Miguel de Múzquiz he writes in October 1773: “Nada me ha parecido tan importante como excitar los colonos y colonas a la aplicación. Gimo con dolor de ver que la ociosidad es la ruina de estas Andalucías, y me repugna la destructora costumbre que observo en ellas de que por razón de Estado, no han de trabajar las mujeres, teniendo las ideas tan corrompidas en esta parte que tiene por oprobio la honesta aplicación y por decoro de su sexo la ociosidad.” (“Nothing seemed so important to me as to encourage the settlers to be industrious. I groan with pain when I see that idleness is the ruin of these Andalusians, and I am disgusted by the destructive habit I observe there, that for reasons of state women are not permitted to work, their ideas being so corrupted in this area that honest application is a disgrace and idleness is the decorum of their sex.” My trans.).<sup>26</sup>

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24 Cf. also Lera García 1988, 53–54.

25 As to Jovellanos’s opinion of women’s inclusion into the workforce, cf. Gies in this volume.

26 Cf. URL: <https://frasaji3.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/3c2aa-parte.pdf>. Accessed February 20, 2022. Regarding Olavide’s attention to the situation of women see also Perdices Blas 1995, 102–105.

### 3. Olavide's private utopia

Twenty years after the failure of the project to colonize Andalusia – or at least, its partial failure, because some of the settlements still exist today – Olavide returned once again to his earlier ideas, though on fundamentally other terms and conditions. While the reform project had soon proven to be utopian in the trivial sense of the word as “desirable but impracticable,” the 1700-page Christian treatise *El Evangelio en triunfo o historia de un filósofo desengañado*, written for the most part at the Château de Cheverny during his stay in France and published in 1797–1798, which he based on the model of the epistolary novel, was a utopia in a more specific way, especially the fourth volume.<sup>27</sup>

In the last six letters of this volume, the “apología racional del cristianismo” (“rational apology of Christianity,” My trans.),<sup>28</sup> the exemplary story of the conversion to Christianity by the disenchanted philosopher protagonist, who resembles Olavide himself, is replaced by the correspondence between two other persons, Mariano, a close collaborator of the philosopher, and his friend Antonio, who is traveling abroad. In the letters which Mariano addresses to Antonio, corresponding to letters XXXVI–XLI (and last) of *El Evangelio en triunfo*, the same ideas about education, public assistance and agriculture reappear, barely modified, but now fictionalized, that Olavide had first developed during his time as intendant of Sevilla and superintendent of the New Settlements.<sup>29</sup>

Looking only at the parts about agriculture, we actually find his old concepts: private property, the stimulating effects of self-interest, biopolitical questions from the proper distribution of the population to questions of nutrition, as well as the need for women and young people to do useful work. Thus, Mariano, as the mouthpiece of his friend the philosopher, insists: “La tierra está dividida en pequeñas propiedades, cada propietario o cada arrendador tiene la suya” (“The land is divided into small properties, each owner or lessor has his own”).<sup>30</sup> “Premios y ventajas” (“rewards and

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27 On the influence of Olavide's experiences in France on *El Evangelio en triunfo* cf. Carrasco Monsalve 2007; on the utopian character of the fourth volume cf. Dufour 1985, 1990; and on its novelistic features cf. Dufour 1995. On the entire book, cf. Gómez Urdáñez 2004 and Rodrigo Mancho / Pérez Pachco 2017.

28 Aguilar Piñal 1969, 42.

29 Gérard Dufour speaks in this regard of “una total fidelidad a sus ideas de antaño” (“a total fidelity to his former ideas.” My trans. Dufour 1988, 19). A more detailed comparison between the socio-economic reform projects and *El Evangelio en triunfo* can be found in Almanza-Gálvez 2015.

30 Olavide 2004, 269.

benefits”)<sup>31</sup> should encourage the implementation of reforms. The field workers were supposed to live as close as possible to their fields, so as not to lose time on the way to work and to escape the temptation to idleness that would await the father of the family in the village: “La distancia le quita la facilidad y la tentacion de ir a la taberna” (“The distance takes away the ease and temptation to go to the tavern”).<sup>32</sup> The desirable participation of women and children in field work is also easier to achieve in this way, so that in the end “[t]oda la familia toma el gusto y la inteligencia de los trabajos del campo” (“the whole family takes the taste and the understanding of the works of the field.” All my trans.)<sup>33</sup> – to name just a few examples.

But moving from reality to fiction and from reformism to utopianism is not the only change in Olavide’s program. There is also a stronger influence of Christian morality. This becomes particularly clear when Mariano / the philosopher points out that the redistribution of land should not only increase productivity, but also support and protect the poor laborers against the rich stock farmers, of whom he says: “son como los vampiros, que se chupan la substancia pública” (“they are like vampires that suck up the public substance”).<sup>34</sup> For himself he denies any interest in generating business profits. Nevertheless, he is well aware of the fact that charity in the long run brings a return for himself and the community. The utilitarian aspect of charity is evident, among other things, in the fact that he deliberately keeps the levies he collects from the settlers low in order to reward them for their efforts: “mi ánimo no es hacer el negocio de un traficante, que quiero imprimir a esta operación el carácter de beneficencia, y que es menester ahora alentar a los colonos en un negocio en que no conocen todavía sus grandes ventajas” (“my intention is not to do the business of a dealer, that I want to give this operation the character of charity and that it is now necessary to encourage the settlers in a business in which they do not yet know the great advantages.” My trans.)<sup>35</sup>

The most important difference, though, is, that the whole project is now individualized. It seems as if the reformer Olavide, after his disappointing experiences in Spain and with the French Revolution, had finally lost confidence, as Perdices Blas points out, “en que el Estado comience a realizar las reformas y

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31 Olavide 2004, 269.

32 Olavide 2004, 275.

33 Olavide 2004, 275.

34 Olavide 2004, 269.

35 Olavide 2004, 277.

dé ejemplo” (“in the faculty of the state to initiate reforms and to set an example.” My trans.).<sup>36</sup> He now places all his hopes on private initiative and individual commitment. The perfect incarnation of all this is the figure of the disenchanted philosopher. The way he transforms his own village should serve as a best practice for a future society.

#### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that the practical initiatives and theoretical writings of Pablo de Olavide are characterized by the coexistence and sometimes surprising combination of traditional and innovative features. This is true for the period of his life in which he acted as a state reformer in Madrid, Sevilla and Andalusia, as well as the period when he created his private utopia in French exile by the means of literature. On the one hand, he believes in the power of the state and the absolute monarchy, in the healing truth of (Catholic) Christianity and Plato’s paternalistic concept of the philosopher as a leader, and on the other hand he stands for the performance of the individual, the stimulating power of self-interest, rational, future-oriented planning and engaging in risky activities. So, what we can observe in the example of Olavide is that even though some essential features of the modern capitalist entrepreneur are already there, in Spain in the second half of the 18th century they have obviously not yet merged into a social figure of its own. This may be one of the specific limitations of the epoch in Spain mentioned at the beginning.

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36 Perdices Blas 1995, 474. Perdices Blas also brings up the idea that Olavide possibly read Adam Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) but admits that there is no clear evidence for that (cf. Perdices Blas 1995, 477–478).

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## **Section 3 Female Protagonists of Production**



David T. Gies

# Two Women, Two Ways: Economy and Theater in Enlightenment Spain

**Abstract** If the theater in 18th-century Spain offers numerous examples of women who squander money and waste resources on silly pastimes such as fashion, extravagant hairdos and jewelry, or in frivolous activities such as dance and shopping, we see very few examples of women who work, or women who have some control over the disbursement of funds. The economy was considered to be a masculine endeavor in which women were rarely included. Representations of domestic work – work that was naturally not compensated – were of course frequent, but that work was always marked as feminine and associated with concepts such as honor, abnegation, or family duty. However, two examples from the 18th-century repertory – *La industriosa madrileña y el fabricante de Olot, o Los efectos de la aplicación* (1790), by Francisco Durán, and *La familia a la moda* (1805), by María Rosa Gálvez – reveal cracks in this closed system, and might suggest that by the end of the 18th century some (few) men and some (few) women were beginning to recognize, and encourage, a feminine protagonism in the economic sphere.

**Keywords:** Durán, Gálvez, work, economy, women, Enlightenment

## 1. Introduction: Women and the economy

While Spanish 18th-century theater is replete with examples of women who waste money and squander resources on frivolities such as fashion, hairdos, jewelry or silly pastimes including shopping and dance, we have very few depictions of women who work, or of women who have some say in the control and disbursement of funds.<sup>1</sup> As we have learned from Esther Schomacher's

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1 Cf. La Force 1965, 100–101: “While guilds held journeymen and apprentices in near bondage for most of the century, they were loath to accept women in their ranks. They limited employment to men in many trades, or gave them preference in others. As long as male silk twisters were unemployed at Barcelona, for example, their guild denied employment to women. Charles III began the assault on such discrimination when he abolished all guild rules that withheld employment from women in trades compatible with their sex and strength on January 12, 1779. But royal proclamations spread slowly through Spain, and frequently provincial authorities even formulated policies in opposition to them. This happened on January 16, 1784, when the Special Council of Commerce of Barcelona forbade women to spin cotton in many villages

contribution,<sup>2</sup> in Italy, Goldoni's *La locandiera* ("The Mistress of the Inn." My trans.) might provide us with a one-off look at a woman engaged in the hotel business, while in Spain, we get rare glimpses of female characters engaged in trade in Ramón de la Cruz's *Las escofieteras* (1773) ("The Fashionable Dressmakers." My trans.) or José López Sedano's *La posadera feliz* (1779) ("The Happy Inkeeper." My trans.), to cite just a few examples. These are anomalies.

It is hard to counter the notion that the economy was generally considered to be a masculine enterprise, one in which women participated rarely, if at all. In many cases the woman became merely the face of the business, which was actually controlled by a husband, father, or brother. Depictions of domestic work, which of course went uncompensated, appear with some frequency, but domestic work, always coded as feminine, normally appeared associated with concepts such as honor, abnegation, child-rearing, or familial duty. Economic agency for the most part was still withheld from most women. Yet two examples from the 18th-century theater repertory – Francisco Durán's *La industriosa madrileña y el fabricante de Olot, o Los efectos de la aplicación* (1790) and María Rosa Gálvez *La familia a la moda* (1805) – reveal cracks in this closed system. While neither of these plays can lay claim to revolutionary status, a close look at them might suggest that by the end of the 18th century, some (few) men and some (few) women were beginning to recognize, and push for, the emergence of female agency in the economic sphere.

We need not rehearse here the obvious fact that "enlightened" economic matters were handled nearly exclusively by men. The mere title of the first chapter of David Ringrose's study of the economy of Carlos III – *Economics in Eighteenth-Century Spain: Ideas and Men* (1962) – points toward that gendered reality. When Jovellanos noted in his *Elogio de Carlos III* that "la nación empieza a tener economistas" ("the nation is beginning to have economists." My trans.),<sup>3</sup> those economists were,

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of Catalonia. The women complained bitterly, for they earned more and worked less by spinning cotton rather than wool. Setting aside this ruling on January 2, 1784, the General Council of Commerce and Money allowed women to spin materials of their choice. Two months later, Charles III permitted all women to Spain to determine their occupations, provided they chose occupations compatible with their sex, decency, and strength." Cf. also Castro Monsalve 1991, Kowaleski-Wallace 1997, Lewis 2010, Lope 1992, and Strosetzki 2018.

2 Cf. the article of Esther Schomacher in this volume.

3 Cited in Witthaus 2018, 320.

invariably, men.<sup>4</sup> Women consumed wealth, but they did not generate or control it.<sup>5</sup>

## 2. Francisco Durán, *La industriosa madrileña* (1790)

When Francisco Durán – most famously remembered as the father of Agustín Durán, whose *Discurso* of 1828 has been credited with intensifying the debate over Romanticism in Spain<sup>6</sup> – decided to tackle the issue of industry in the Catalan town of Olot (and mix in a healthy dose of transvestism, sibling rivalry, and marriage conflict), he seemed to be taking up the charge issued in the *Real Cédula* of 1783, whose intent was, in the words of María Jesús García Garrosa, “de difundir mediante el teatro la idea de que cualquier trabajo es honesto, evitar el desprestigio de la actividad manual y lograr así el avance económico mediante un aumento de la productividad” (“to spread via theater the idea that any work is honest, to avoid the loss of prestige that manual labor suffers and thus to achieve economic advancement by means of an increase in productivity.” My trans.).<sup>7</sup> Indeed, he did spread that idea, as a review in the *Memorial Literario* asserts:

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4 Jovellanos argued for the inclusion of women into the workforce, as long as the jobs they took were “propios de su sexo” (“appropriate to their sex.” My trans.), although he did confess that “Nosotros fuimos los que contra el designio de la Providencia, las hicimos débiles y delicadas. Acostumbrados a mirarlas como nacidas solamente para nuestro placer, las hemos separado con estudio de todas las profesiones activas, las hemos encerrado, las hemos hecho ociosas, y al cabo hemos unido a la idea de su existencia una idea de debilidad y flaqueza, que la educación y la costumbre han arraigado más y más cada día en nuestro espíritu” (“Informe” 1785, 33). (“We were the ones who, against Providence’s design, make them weak and delicate. Accustomed as we were to seeing them as having been born only for our pleasure, we have separated them from all active professions, we have locked them up, we have made them lazy, and in the end we have subscribed to the idea of their existence as a debility and a weakness, that education and custom have rooted more and more each day into our spirit.” My trans.) Cf. also Elorza 1968.

5 Cf. Haidt 2003.

6 Cf. Gies 1975.

7 García Garrosa 1993, 673. “La cédula de [18 marzo] 1783 representa la culminación de una larga campaña para elevar la estimación del trabajo en la España del siglo XVIII” (Callahan 1964, 71–72). Durán’s play provoked some reaction in the contemporary press, as Joaquín Álvarez Barrientos indicates: “...ni que se representaran robos como en *La industriosa madrileña*, en la que, como protesta ‘del pueblo feliz, no se dejó acabar la función, lo que motivó un bando, publicado en el *Memorial Literario* de marzo de 1790, en el que se prohibía a los concurrentes los ‘movimientos, gritos y palabras que puedan ofender la decencia, el buen modo, sosiego y diversión de los circunstantes,’ bajo pena de

Las sentencias y buenas máximas de industria y comercio están sembradas oportunamente por toda la acción. El asunto elegido por el autor no podía ser más a propósito en un tiempo en que se protegen tanto las artes y se combaten tanto las preocupaciones que alimentaban la ociosidad y desterraban la aplicación.<sup>8</sup>

(“The judgments and good maxims of industry and commerce are appropriately sprinkled throughout the plot. The subject chosen by the author could not be more appropriate in a time when arts are so protected and concerns that fed laziness and fought against hard work are so embattled.” My trans.)

Yet Durán also inscribed into his play some thoughtful, if subtle, meditations on gender and agency. We look in vain for a proto-feminist manifesto or an outright declaration of the rights of a full-fledged *femina oeconomica*, to use Christian von Tschiltschke’s inspired term.<sup>9</sup> Still, Durán was capable of suggesting a new model of feminine behavior, although not the one of typical womanhood that we might have expected.<sup>10</sup>

Doña Cecilia de Aragón y Palanzuela, the “industriosa madrileña” of the play’s title, weaves cloth. This is not unusual, as we have learned from Rebecca Haidt’s *Women, Work and Clothing in Eighteenth-Century Spain*, where we are reminded that “. . . in regions around the Spanish capital, actual spinners, weavers and cloth-workers performed mind-numbing hours of labor in ‘nebulosas industriales’ (industrial zones) to produce textiles that, once sold, might become fashionable garments.”<sup>11</sup> Durán immediately connects the play’s title with the spatial center of the play (Olot<sup>12</sup>) when Blas comments,

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quince días de cárcel y treinta ducados de multa” (“Not even representing robberies like in *La industriosa madrileña*, in which, as a protest by ‘the happy populace’, the performance was not allowed to finish, which provoked an announcement, published in the *Memorial Literario* in March of 1790, in which the public was banned from ‘movements, shouts, and words that might offend the decency, the good conduct, calm, and fun of the bystanders’, under pain of fifteen days in jail and a fine of thirty ducats.” My trans.) (2019, 55).

8 February 1790; cf. Tschiltschke 2018a, 248–253. and Urzainqui 1992, 270.

9 Cf. Tschiltschke 2018b, 376.

10 I have looked at this play from a slightly different angle in “‘Sentencias y buenas máximas’: Francisco Durán, dramaturgo y poeta ilustrado” (1996).

11 Haidt 2011, 2.

12 Textiles were a vibrant, explosively expanding industry during the Spanish 18th century. In 1737 Spain had one cotton weaver; by 1804 more than 100 existed. “The number of looms expanded from 353 in 1760 to 4000 in 1804 [...] Between 1775 and 1784 output trebled; employment mushroomed from a handful in 1737, to 10,000 in 1760, to 50,000 in 1775, to 100,000 in 1804” (La Force 1965, 17). Olot had 100 looms in 1785, and more than 500 a mere nine years later. Durán inserts his play into the middle of this heated issue.

que mientras la industria  
 en Olot los campos puebla,  
 dexa el ocio en otras partes  
 las poblaciones desiertas.<sup>13</sup>

("that while industry  
 populates the countryside in Olot,  
 laziness in other parts leaves  
 those places underpopulated." My trans.)

But "la madrileña" of the title is nowhere to be found as the play opens. The weaver in question is "un tal don Juan de Illescas"<sup>14</sup> ("one don Juan de Illescas." My trans.) who "endilga tan bien texidos / de algodón, de hilo u seda, / que todos quantos los ven / se admiran y se embelesan"<sup>15</sup> ("cleverly produces such wonderful cotton, filament or silk cloth, that everyone who sees them is in awe and enchanted." My trans.). Nothing new here. Cataluña had traditionally been seen as the center of "industry" (i.e., commerce) and women, when they participated in the production of textiles, often did so from their domestic, rather than their public, spaces.<sup>16</sup> Commerce impregnates the whole first act, as we hear much chatter of loans, IOUs, a cash-short businessman, debts, and inheritances.

Where Durán does get clever, and perhaps even slightly subversive, is in the subtle incorporation of gender into the commercial fabric of the play. We learn, for example, that the source of Don Pablo's money is not his own industriousness or financial acumen, but rather his first wife, Silvestre's mother ("yo debo mis riquezas / a su madre"<sup>17</sup> ["I owe my wealth / to his mother." My trans.]; we will remember this detail later when we look at Gálvez's play). In fact, Silvestre is not industrious at all. Rather, he urges his half-brother Esteban to quit working and do what the typical white, upper-class male did in 18th-century Spain, that is, live off of his rental income ("que vivas como viven / las personas de tu esfera, / dexándote de labores / propias de gente plebeya"<sup>18</sup> ["you live like those of your station, avoiding work deemed for the common folk"])). Esteban rejects the offer,

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13 Durán 1790, 2. All citations from the play come from the digitized version produced by the Biblioteca Nacional de España. <http://bdh-rd.bne.es/viewer.vm?id=0000069335&page=1>.

14 Durán 1790, 3.

15 Durán 1790, 3.

16 Schuchardt 2015, 109–122 has focused attention on the connection between religion and economic prosperity in Durán's play.

17 Durán 1790, 5.

18 Durán 1790, 5.

underscoring rather smugly that “es muy pícaro o muy necio, / el hombre que vive a expensas / del trabajo de los otros”<sup>19</sup> (“the man who lives off the work of others is a rascal and a fool.” My trans.) He has also been contemplating a business relationship with that previously mentioned Don Juan de Illescas, characterized as a rather odd man who keeps to himself (“de nadie ver se dexa”<sup>20</sup> [“he lets no one see him.” My trans.]), and washes and irons his own clothes (talk about gender role confusion!).

As a counter-weight to this skilled weaver D. Juan de Illescas, Durán gives us the uneducated Blas, who also weaves cloth, but of such poor quality (“con muchos defectos”<sup>21</sup> [“with a lot of defects.” My trans.]) that it is summarily rejected (“*La echa en un rincón del teatro*”<sup>22</sup> [“*He throws it into a corner of the theater.*” My trans.]). One man does it well, another does it poorly. We might be led to believe that it will be education or social status that differentiates the skilled weaver from the unskilled one, or even just mere hard work. Esteban upbraids his half-brother Silvestre, who refers to “las viles artes”<sup>23</sup> (“the detestable crafts.” My trans.).

¿Quién te ha llenado, Silvestre,  
de tan silvestres ideas?  
¿Viles llamas a las artes?  
¿A la industria menosprecias,  
quando no hay sin ella Estado  
que tener pueda opulencia?<sup>24</sup>

(“Who has filled you, Silvestre,  
with such savage ideas?  
You call the arts vile?  
You despise industry,  
when without it no State could  
have any affluence?” My trans.)

He then compares the “silvestre” Silvestre unfavorably with that industrious gentleman from Madrid, his would-be partner, D. Juan de Illescas.

Durán’s *coup de théâtre* – and most subversive moment – comes midway through the first act. The audience is set up to believe that in this play the fault

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19 Durán 1790, 5–6.

20 Durán 1790, 3.

21 Durán 1790, 8.

22 Durán 1790, 8.

23 Durán 1790, 7.

24 Durán 1790, 7.



lines of the weaving industry are split by class or education. But when Esteban posits the lazy Silvestre against the skilled and industrious D. Juan de Illescas (“Cada día extraño más / la notable diferencia / que hay de mi hermano a Don Juan”<sup>25</sup> [“Every day I am surprised more by the notable difference between my brother and Don Juan.” My trans.]), a shocking reveal takes place: it turns out that Don Juan is not a hard-working gentleman from the capital city, but rather ... a woman. Suddenly, the equation shifts.

### 3. Transvestism in Spanish theater

Transvestism, or cross-dressing, was hardly new to Spanish life and letters. Dozens, if not hundreds, of examples can be adduced of men who disguised themselves as women (or, as we know, Shakespearian actors who played women’s roles on stage) or, more frequently, women who dressed as men in order to achieve certain goals. Catalina de Erauso (“La Monja Alférez”) comes to mind as an historical example, subsequently immortalized in a comedia by Juan Pérez de Montalbán (1626). Or, even a quick perusal of the Golden Age canon reveals that Tirso de Molina (*El vergonzoso en palacio*, 1624), Lope de Vega (*El alcalde mayor*, “*The Governing Mayor*,” 1620; *La escolástica celosa*, “*The Jealous Student*,” 1626), and Calderón de la Barca (*La vida es sueño*, “*Life is a Dream*,” 1635, *La hija del aire*, “*Daughter of the Air*,” 1653.; My trans.) all transformed women into men for various dramatic reasons.<sup>26</sup> Yet I think there is one fundamental difference between the cross-dressing protagonists of Golden Age plays and this new work by Francisco Durán. What is that difference?

It is this: Where in previous centuries cross-dressing was used to conceal anxieties related to love, identity, national origin or revenge, the fine novelty injected by Durán is that his cross-dresser, Doña Cecilia de Aragón (transformed into Don Juan de Illescas), does so for purely economic reasons. As Esteban calls to Don Juan, Durán’s stage direction reveals the following: Doña Cecilia opens the door on the left, and she is seen to be dressed and coiffed honestly, according to Madrid’s styles; but the cloth of her dress should be new, foreign, and in good taste (“Abre Doña Cecilia la puerta de la izquierda, y se dexa ver vestida y peynada honestamente al uso de Madrid; pero la tela del vestido debe ser nueva, singular y de buen gusto”<sup>27</sup> (“Doña Cecilia opens the door to the left, revealing herself to be dressed and coiffed simply in the style of Madrid; but the

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25 Durán 1790, 7.

26 Cf. Bravo-Villasante 1988, 10–21.

27 Durán 1790, 7.

cloth should be new, unique, and in good taste.” My trans.). Esteban reacts: “¿Qué transformación es esta? (*Muy sorprendido*)”<sup>28</sup> (“What kind of transformation is this?” [*Very surprised*]. My trans.).

As Cecilia recounts her sad childhood (orphaned, shut up in a garret to weave, maltreated by a greedy and homicidal aunt), she also reveals that she focused on “imitar las labores / de las ropas extranjeras”<sup>29</sup> (“imitating the work of foreign clothing.” My trans.). In order to avoid being blamed for her aunt’s murder of a nobleman, Cecilia arranged to “mudar de vestimenta”<sup>30</sup> (“change her clothes.” My trans.) and flee to Olot, where, as D. Juan de Illescas, she entered into a business deal with Esteban. Now, however, she is determined to move to France, as she sees herself as an “aventurera”<sup>31</sup> (“adventuress.” My trans.). Esteban gives her a left-handed compliment when he recognizes that she is both beautiful and wise (“pocas veces / hermana naturaleza / dos tan grandes qualidades”<sup>32</sup> [“few times does nature combine two such great qualities.” My trans.]), but then, recognizing the cleverness of her gender transformation, declares:

que una joven que ha ocultado  
su sexo de esa manera,  
que sabe tantas labores,  
y vive con tal modestia,  
no puede menos de ser  
discreta, humilde y honesta.<sup>33</sup>

(“that a young woman has hidden  
her sex in this way,  
who knows so many tasks,  
and who lives so modestly,  
cannot be other than  
discreet, humble and honest.” My trans.)

She is reluctant to appear in public dressed as a woman, but Esteban convinces her to go out with him to get a marriage license. The gender confusion nearly disappears as Durán focuses much of the rest of his play on melodramatic sibling rivalries, familial debts, and a putative illegitimate child, although Silvestre’s father Don Pablo refers to Cecilia with the same term she had used

28 Durán 1790, 8.

29 Durán 1790, 8.

30 Durán 1790, 9.

31 Durán 1790, 12.

32 Durán 1790, 12.

33 Durán 1790, 12–13.

on herself – “aventurera”<sup>34</sup> (“adventuress.” My trans.), converting her, thus, into an “other.” In Act 3 he will intensify his dislike for her, labeling her “esa advenediza”<sup>35</sup> (“that upstart.” My trans.). Cecilia has fled her complications “en disfraz de varón”<sup>36</sup> (“in male disguise.” My trans.). But we note that she does not merely flee disguised in men’s clothing; now she is described as “desfigurada” (“Iba bien desfigurada / con la capa y el sombrero / de Blas”<sup>37</sup> [“She was completely disfigured / with Blas’s cape and hat.” My trans.]), a subtle grammatical transformation that snaps the play back to a gendered conflict and reveals that while Durán does indeed give her some agency, it is only mediated and partial. When she reveals herself as a woman, she is promptly locked in her room (“la Cecilia ya está presa”<sup>38</sup> [“Cecilia is now locked up.” My trans.]). She is accepted into the household (and into the story) only when she comes or goes dressed as a man.

Playwrights frequently used the family as a microcosm of the larger society as a whole. When these “literary” ideas are inserted into the complex network of prohibitions, decrees, embargos, tax systems, and mercantilist control that ruled the textile industries, certain patterns tend to emerge. The family is an analogue of society. While Durán leans into analogy in order to confront the problem of the economy, María Rosa Gálvez de Cabrera does this somewhat more directly in *La familia a la moda* (“*The Modern Family*.” My trans.).<sup>39</sup>

#### 4. María Rosa Gálvez, *La familia a la moda* (1805)

Gálvez presents another “manly” figure. I use the word “manly” cautiously, because Doña Guiomar is clearly a woman in charge of her own destiny. But her liberation comes only at the expense of her husband’s death, when finally, she is allowed, because she is a widow, according to Spanish law, to act with agency in her own economic affairs.<sup>40</sup> Gálvez sets up a series of important dichotomies

34 Durán 1790, 15.

35 Durán 1790, 24.

36 Durán 1790, 20.

37 Durán 1790, 23.

38 Durán 1790, 29.

39 Cf. Gies 2015, 391–405 and 2016, 154–163.

40 Cf. Buivan 2014, 138–139, citing Shubert 1990, 32–33: “Upon marriage she [a woman] automatically lost most of her legal rights and became an appendage of her husband. She required his permission to be in business and he had the authority to administer her property; she could not sell or mortgage the property she brought to the marriage without his approval, nor could she accept or reject an inheritance by herself. The Civil Code told wives that they should obey their husbands and punished disobedience with

in the play based on gender, generation, geography, and class: male vs. female, parents vs. children, rural vs. urban, and rich vs. poor. The family dynamics play themselves out along these various fault lines, but what interests us here are the economics involved in the various familial relationships.

In spite of the fact that Guiomar comes to Madrid backed by a fortune of nearly one million *reales*, her urban relatives dismiss her as an ignorant, “tosca figura”<sup>41</sup> (“coarse figure.” My trans.) merely for hailing from the provinces. They refuse to take her seriously – as a relative, as a woman – until she asserts her authority by reminding them that she controls not only the family’s wealth and future, but also the printed documents that will consolidate her power, what Buivan calls her “mastery of legal documentation.”<sup>42</sup> Those documents are her last will and testament, and the marriage contract that will finally allow Inés (her niece) to marry Carlos. She is the word, the text, *and* the law. Textiles factor into this play, as they did in Durán’s *La industriosa madrileña*, and French textiles in particular come in for special criticism: if the “tosca” Guiomar is criticized as being poorly dressed (“Jesús, qué poco elegante / estás, y qué mal vestida”<sup>43</sup> [“Jesus, how inelegant you are, and how poorly dressed.” My trans.]), her sister-in-law’s servant Teresa is described by the author as “vestida a la francesa ridículamente”<sup>44</sup> (“dressed ridiculously in the French style.” My trans.), leaving it clear to all readers that the play will be about ideology and economics, not about fashion.

Gálvez might wish us to view Guiomar as a worthy representative of Spain’s solid (i.e., traditional) ways and consider her something of a proto-feminist for her unwavering conviction in her own ability to control her purse, her destiny, and the destiny of her wayward family.<sup>45</sup> That the author sides with the women in this play (Madama and Teresa are excluded from this category because of their otherness, that is, because of their attachment to frivolous French customs) is underscored by the stunning moment when Faustino, who throughout the play has been disrespectful to his aunt, takes up a dance, not with one of the suitable

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jail terms of five to fifteen days. This legal subordination remained in effect until 1931. Wives had to live where their husbands did and could not leave without permission ... Only with the death of her husband or through legal separation could a woman recover her legal rights” Cf. also Díaz Marcos 2009.

41 Durán 1790, 165.

42 Buivan 2014, 20.

43 Gálvez 2001, 152.

44 Gálvez 2001, 115.

45 Cf. Establier Pérez 2006, 179–185.

partners that might be available to him, but rather with ... a chair, a wooden, inanimate object that captures perfectly the patriarchy's generalized dismissal of women.

## 5. Conclusion

I have spent more of my allotted time discussing *La industriosa madrileña* because *La familia a la moda* has been written about more extensively by myself and others. But my point, I hope, has been made. As María Jesús García Garrosa reminds us, these plays failed commercially and consequently probably did not contribute to “difundir las ideas de reforma de Carlos III y su equipo ilustrado” (“spreading Carlos III and his enlightened team’s ideas of reform.” My trans.).<sup>46</sup> Still, it does not strike me as irrational or even a stretch of the imagination to suggest that the late 18th and early 19th centuries witnessed an important and two-step process of development in the economic sphere, and playwrights did indeed contribute to a subtle shift in the thinking of the times. The first step might be the mere recognition that the *homo oeconomicus*<sup>47</sup> – the merchant, the manufacturer, the entrepreneur, or (dare we say it?) the budding capitalist – had a role to play in the creation of structures that pointed toward a modern society. Traditionally, societies forged their identities around geographic realities, social values, ethnicity, power, trade, or religion. But slowly the agglutinating characteristic became economic and commercial activity (Voltaire wrote of the “common interest” in his *Letters Concerning the English Nation*, 1733). This recognition was helped along by Adam Smith, Jovellanos, Valentín de Foronda, Campomanes, even Carlos III himself, and the institutions they supported, such as the Sociedades Económicas de Amigos del País. The second step was picked up by the likes of Francisco Durán and María Rosa Gálvez, who in fictional and dramatic form suggested that women might also one day play an important role in the economic transformation of Spanish society.

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<sup>46</sup> García Garrosa 1993, 692.

<sup>47</sup> Again, cf. Tschiltschke 2018a, 253–257.

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Ana Hontanilla

## Maja's Labors Lost in Ramón de la Cruz's *sainetes*

**Abstract** Theatrical representations during the 18th century taught working-class women in Madrid the value of domesticity. This teaching reflected government's desires not only to define working-class women's place in society and the city, but also to ensure the domestication of working-class men. To address the strategies of representation that reflected official policies to create a docile male labor force, I place Ramón de la Cruz's *sainetes* at the intersection of two 18th-century discourses: one, a sentimental discourse about women, and two, a political economy discourse about working-class men. These two discourses intersect and simultaneously structure the ideal working-class female prototype, the domestic *maja*. This is because defining the position of the female *maja* with regard to her male counterpart, the *majo* – a central function of the gendering of women in general – was a way to clarify the role of the working-class male within the larger frame of national economic imperatives.

**Keywords:** *castañera*, *maja*, *petimetra*, *sainete*, sentimental discourse, political economy

### 1. Introduction

Women's paid labor is crucial to the functioning of families, neighborhoods, and manufacturing enterprises. This is true today as it was in 18th-century Spain.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, attempts to trace women's work in the historical archives typically yield few fruits.<sup>2</sup> Many factors contribute to render the work of women invisible; this article will focus on the theater. In particular, it will consider strategies around representations of 18th-century working-class female prototypes, the street vendor or *castañera*, the *maja*, and the *petimetra*, in Ramón de la Cruz's *sainetes*, or humorous one-act comic operettas. I argue that, by creating a hierarchy of respectability among women of the working classes, de la Cruz explicitly devalues women's paid labor, whether inside or outside the home. Theatrical representations taught working-class women their role as domestic partners. This teaching reflected programmatic desires not only to define working-class

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1 Haidt 2011, 51.

2 Bolufer 1996, 215; Haidt 2011, 25.

women's place in society, but also to ensure the domestication of working-class men.

To address the strategies of representation that reflected government policies to create a docile male labor force, I place the *sainetes* at the intersection of two 18th-century discourses; one, a sentimental discourse about women, and two, a political economy discourse about working-class men. These two discourses intersect and simultaneously structure the ideal working-class female prototype, the domestic *maja*. This is because defining the position of the female *maja* with regard to her male counterpart the *majo* – a central function of the gendering of women in general – was a way to clarify the role of the working-class male within the larger frame of national economic imperatives. My reading does not offer an account of actual working-class women's historical social positions or identities, nor does it propose that theatrical representations mirrored society. Rather, I explore how the *sainete's* employment and emplotment of romantic conflict and resolution creates a hierarchy of working-class female labors. In this hierarchy, the stay-at-home *maja*, who delegates the duty of productive labor to the *majo*, is rewarded with marriage, while her enterprising counterparts, the street vendor and the *petimetra*, are condemned to spinsterhood.

Previous studies have shown how the theater in 18th-century Spain educated its audiences to associate labor, productivity, and industry with domesticity, delivering lessons about each gender's roles. It accomplished this through the common plot device of a man falling in love with a woman who offers social and economic capital.<sup>3</sup> Publications such as pamphlets and journals, as well as social events such as choral groups, although designed to interest working men, showed working-class women the happy resolution to life's problems by embracing domesticity. Promoting stable, productive, manageable workers by means of their domestication served to maintain the socio-economic status quo.<sup>4</sup>

Here, I demonstrate how teaching male audiences into choosing productive work, meaning manufacturing labor, through marriage, first required the domestication of the *maja*, a type that gained respectability when she renounced her trade and turned over economic productivity to men. I explore this in the de la Cruz *sainete* titled *Las castañeras picadas* (1787). I also examine the lyrics of *seguidillas* (dances for Castilian folk songs) included in de la Cruz's *sainete La Petra y la Juana ò el buen casero* (1791).

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3 Schuchardt 2015, 112.

4 Vialette 2018, 171; Andreu 2010, 29.

## 2. Key terms

Before I proceed, allow me to define key terms. Working-class women of 18th-century Spanish society, especially in Madrid, were represented by the cultural figures of the *petimetra* and the *maja*, both of them well studied by Rebecca Haidt (1999; 2011) and Tara Zanardi (2016), among others. These figures drew attention from visual artists like the painters Lorenzo Tiépolo and Francisco de Goya, as well as from playwrights like Ramón de la Cruz, each artist targeting different audiences. In de la Cruz's *sainetes*, the *maja*'s dress, manners, speech, and other behaviors reproduced the low-class popular registers of his audiences.<sup>5</sup> The *petimetra*, in contrast, attempted to distinguish herself from the popular classes by imitating French fashions.<sup>6</sup> Although *sainetes* reflected the target audience, both *majas* and *petimetras* stood out by dint of their earnings, which brought them under suspicion. In contrast Lorenzo Tiépolo, hired by the Royal family during his stay in Spain, idealized the street vendors and fortune-tellers by showcasing them in local costume.<sup>7</sup> Goya transformed the image of the *maja* through idealization for the amusement of aristocrats like the role-playing duchess of Alba, who posed for her portrait in the guise of a lower-class *maja* in *La maja vestida*.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps this artificial appropriation of working-class costume and manners subtypes contributed to the invention of the *maja* as a national prototype. Here I discuss the working-class woman's domestication not in the visual arts, which targeted upper-class private consumers, but in public performances destined for mass consumption.

A *castañera* was a street vendor of chestnuts. They were exclusively women, according to 18th- and 19th-century iconography. In *Las castañeras picadas* (1787), story A revolves around two chestnut sellers and two *petimetras*; the two parties noisily accuse each other of indecent behavior. The term *picada* means, literally, perforated or penetrated, and metaphorically, angry. Of equal importance is story B, about the *majo* Gorito, whom the *castañera* Temeraria and the *maja* Javiera – a widow and carpentry shop owner – try to entice into marriage. He must decide which to marry.

The *sainete* was a short play performed in the intermission between the first and second acts of a tragedia or comedia. Entertaining audiences with humor, music, singing and dancing, these plays enjoyed immense popularity and

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5 Falk 1976, 301–304.

6 Haidt 1999, 33–35.

7 Zanardi 2018, 16.

8 Zanardi 2018, 144–148.

sometimes constituted the theater house's main draw.<sup>9</sup> Ramón de la Cruz, in particular, worked with actors, musicians, and company directors to create and cast roles instantly recognizable to popular audiences. Actors were cast according to a perceived type and role. In the play *Las castañeras picadas*, for instance, two actresses competing professionally in real life, Polonia Rochel from Sevilla and María Ribera from Madrid, would perform the roles of the *castañeras* competing for customers on the scene; likewise, two actresses, Joaquina Arteaga and Rafaela Moro, known for their questionable sexual morality, and thought to have a *petimetra* attitude, would perform the corresponding role of the *petimetra*; actress Francisca Laborda, widowed young in real life, would perform the role of the female character who, once widowed, must marry soon.<sup>10</sup> This meta-theatrical aspect of the *sainete* elided the boundaries between the theater and the street to amuse the masses. Characters on the stage and actors outside the theater would or stand in for different types, by modeling positive or negative moral behaviors.<sup>11</sup> *Sainetes* continued to be widely performed throughout the first half of the 19th century; among the titles most frequently staged was *Las castañeras picadas*.<sup>12</sup>

Intersectional feminism is a methodology that identifies how different constructs of social and political control, such as race and class, overlap with gender. It is a qualitative analytic framework that identifies how interlocking systems of power affect those who are most marginalized in society.<sup>13</sup> Black feminist scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term in 1989; since that time, controversy has surrounded the application of intersectionality to areas of study other than black feminism. To some, feminists applying intersectionality to analyze structures of power unrelated to the oppression of black women further contributes to their erasure.<sup>14</sup> To others, reading intersectionally helps to shed light on the positions held by the marginalized.<sup>15</sup> I suggest that intersectionality helps highlight how the female working class is situated at the juncture of two discourses of power during the 18th century: a sentimental discourse regarding women, and a political economy discourse regarding working-class men. Bringing the two discourses together helps me see how *majas*, at the intersection

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9 Coulon 1983, 235–237.

10 Dowling 1996, 289–293.

11 Falk 1976, 299–301.

12 Vallejo González 2007, 70.

13 Cooper 2016, 1–3.

14 Alexander-Floyd 2012, 19.

15 Smith 1998, xvi.

of class and gender, were assigned the role of creating the *majo*, the real labor force. But this had to be done via the *maja*'s domestication and consequent devaluation of her paid labor.

In the 18th century, the theory of moral sentiments proposed that women's sensibility was superior to that of men; accordingly, women were assigned the role of mediators. Their mission was to improve men who, in contrast to women, were dominated by their passions. Men needed help to reunite reason and sensibility. Men needed to be "civilized," otherwise their "natural" inclinations would overtake them. They needed to be domesticated into marriage and sexually regulated. Men's love should result from a sentimental education designed to harmonize desire and reason, affect and interests. Love would replace or at least transform the passion of lust, which was capricious, selfish, and at odds with social norms. Literature plotted the process by which women would teach men how to love. As such, public and private morality was seen to rest upon women's commitment to a domestic role.<sup>16</sup>

The political-economic discourse of the time, on the other hand, established distinctions among social groups through the categories of national wealth, general employment, and productive work.<sup>17</sup> Political economists calculated national wealth according to the production of useful goods and the number of (male) workers employed in such production.<sup>18</sup> If manufacturers contributed to the wealth and strength of the monarchy, the individual who was not known to produce goods for consumption and exchange, either in artisans' shops or by farming, could be labeled as vagrant and therefore harmful to the nation.<sup>19</sup> This notion of labor created productive and unproductive subjects, providing the basis for the Crown to develop policies designed to increase the number of workers and decrease the number of idlers. Executive decrees on vagrancy normalized the economic imperative toward productivity, criminalizing men who were viewed as derelict in their duty to work.<sup>20</sup>

As for women, 18th-century political economy barred them from the category of productive workers altogether. However, sentimental discourse overlapped with political-economic discourse in light of the requirement that women fill the role of mediators between the social order and men's passions. Working-class

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16 Bolufer 2016, 24–26 and 2004, 362–363.

17 Díez Rodríguez 2014, 21–49.

18 Uztáriz 1724; Ward 1750, 28–29, 90–91.

19 Sempere y Guarinos 1787, xxi–xxii.

20 Pérez Estévez 1976, 66–135.

women were also expected to promote not only men's character, but also their productivity. In the name of moral sensibility and to serve the nation's economy, working-class women were expected to help working-class men find their place in society – to learn how to love not only their wives, but also the common good by becoming productive as laborers. They should, in short, put all their energies into supporting a *majo* in his economically productive work, and certainly not in undertaking such work themselves.

The danger posed by any undomesticated working-class woman who did not embody these characteristics and role, and the need to enforce the *maja*'s ideal role, became a subject of cultural representation, specifically in *sainetes*. *Sainetes* were an important medium for educating the working classes. The lessons were clear: men must become workers; women, social mediators. The plays used the domesticated *maja* ideal to urge working-class female earners to take up a similar domestic role and leave earning to *majos*. Let us look into these strategies for domestication.

### 3. Aggressive humor

Sigmund Freud recognized that humor can sometimes be hostile. Distinguishing between innocent and tendentious jokes, Freud characterized hostile humor as “disguised aggressiveness.”<sup>21</sup> He asserted that humor and its associated pleasures circumvent social restrictions upon aggression. Humor will “bribe the hearer with its yield of pleasure into taking sides,” persuading those who laugh to take the speaker's side without question.<sup>22</sup> Through aggressive humor, denigration finds its way to the listener.

Derogatory jokes and comments targeting women who earn are scattered throughout de la Cruz's repertoire. Consider, for instance, his incorporation of songs (*seguidillas manchegas*) in *La Petra y la Juana ò el buen casero*. The lyrics of the song sung at the beginning of the play warn men not to marry women who lack a dowry, and to be careful in choosing a wife because women would delude them about what resources they could bring to the relationship through their labor: “¡Quantas niñas hay en este mundo / que presumen de todas labores, / y con esto escarmientan al bobo, / que se casa con ellas sin dote!” (“How many girls are in this world / who brag about all labors / and with this they teach a lesson to the ignorant man / who marries them without a dowry.” My trans.).<sup>23</sup> This

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21 Freud 1905, 129.

22 Freud 1905, 76.

23 Cruz 1791, 8.

popular song, like many others of the time, communicated the idea that, without monetary support from a father figure, women have no worth to a potential husband; even their paid labor is valueless. Many such references appear in Ramón de la Cruz's three hundred *sainetes*, similarly dismissing women's contribution to the paid labor force.

#### 4. Spaces in conflict in *Las castañeras picadas*

The *sainete* *Las castañeras picadas* was first performed in Madrid in 1787 in the Teatro de la Cruz. Modern critics commend its adept use of plot, story, colloquial language, the casting of actors, and music, all of which, I propose, work to domesticate the *maja*, while entertaining the audience.<sup>24</sup> Let us analyze how the play's use of space created hostility between two types of working-class women, according to their respective levels of embodiment of the *maja* ideal.

On the left side of the stage, the audience sees a door open onto a tavern; on each side of the door, a *castañera* sells chestnuts from a kiosk. The tavern door divides the two *castañeras* as they compete for male customers entering the bar. On the right side, a door opens into the home of two *petimetra* sisters, who sit behind a barred window set above the door, situating them above the street vendors. Both groups are working-class women: the *petimetra* sisters are seamstresses, the *castañeras*, street vendors. But their spatial positions indicate a significant difference between them. The *petimetras* are placed inside the house, that is, within the parameters of the patriarchal order; the *castañeras*, in contrast, are on the street, outside a father's protection or control. The respective placements indicate their different moral positions: the *petimetras* spending most of their time inside the home and under the care of the father enjoy a higher moral standing, since they more closely resemble the ideal domestic *maja*. The *castañera*, who is literally outside that valorized position, does not.

#### 5. The sexualization of women's work

One of the *castañera* characters is named Estefanilla Pintosilla. She advertises her chestnuts by screaming "¡A las gordas! ¡A las gordas y calientes" ("Come to the fat ones! To the fat and hot ones!" My trans.).<sup>25</sup> Her placement near the tavern and her emphasis on the roundness and hotness of the chestnuts sexualize both her and her business. Her language suggests that, along with chestnuts, she sells her

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24 Dowling 1996, 289.

25 Cruz 1870, 3.

body, or that by buying and eating chestnuts one may experience the pleasures of sex. When Pintosilla is asked why she works on the streets, she responds: “tener oficio” (“to have a trade.” My trans.). But other characters undercut her desire to earn by claiming that she needlessly endures “la nieve, el viento y el agua” (“the snow, wind, and water.” My trans.), since she has a boyfriend, Macareno, who provides for her. Thus, there is no reason for her to engage in trade, which has value only if it is an absolute necessity – as would be the case of the poor – rather than a mere desire.

Geroma Temeraria is Pintosilla’s business competitor. Like Pintosilla, she is a single, strong-willed woman with no father in sight; her surname literally means “imprudent.” As they compete for customers, the two chestnut vendors exchange witty provocations about who is the best saleswoman. The conversation ends with Pintosilla threatening Temeraria: “Naaja, / anda fuera, y dale un beso / á mi vecina en la cara” (“Knife, come out, and kiss / my neighbor’s face.” My trans.). Temeraria replies “No la saques, y me obligues / á que yo use de mis armas / de fuego / [...] / Mis ojos, / que de una sola mirada / son capaces de hacer mas / estragos que cuatro balas” (“Don’t get it out and force me / to use my firearms... weapons / [...] / My eyes, / which in a single glance / can cause more / damage than four bullets.” My trans.).<sup>26</sup> The conflict goes no further because Don Dimas, the *alguacil* or policeman, approaches the scene at this point. He does so in response to the two *petimetras* in the balcony, who along with their father, Don Sisebuto, have filed a complaint against the *castañeras*.

Accused of being publicly scandalous, Temeraria and Pintosilla join forces. They argue that the *petimetras* have no right to be scandalized, because the *petimetras* have themselves scandalized the neighborhood through their coquettish alliances with men, their laziness in becoming seamstresses, and for stealing food and money from their father. Unlike those “holgozanas que se dedican á modistas” (“lazy women who work as seamstresses.” My trans.), Pintosilla and Temeraria face true hardship on the streets. The *petimetras*, in contrast, “están siempre á la ventana, / aguardando á dos pelones / de fraque y mucha corbata, / nunca pueden sin testigos / recoger y tirar cartas / y lo que á su padre chupan / de la despensa, y del arca” (“are always seated at the window / waiting for two scoundrels / dressed in suit-coats and long neckties / they are unable without witnesses / of receiving and dropping letters / as well what they seize from their father’s / pantry and safe.” My trans.).<sup>27</sup> In these exchanges, the

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26 Cruz 1870, 4.

27 Cruz 1870, 6.



*majas* accuse the *petimetras* of scandalous behaviors, the same social breach that the *petimetras* have first accused them of committing.

Nevertheless, within the hierarchy of offenses against the patriarchal order, *Temeraria* is at the bottom. Her very wealth implicates her. She is more prosperous than *Pintosilla* because she is a member of the chestnut guild, owns her own kiosk, and has a dowry of one hundred pennies from her aunt, a fat seller in the meat market. *Temeraria*'s prosperity allows her to hire a sales assistant, an elderly man named *Mojiganga*, who candidly recognizes that he benefits from his relationship with *Temeraria*: If it were not for her, he would not be able to smoke or drink good wine in so many taverns throughout the city.<sup>28</sup> But does *Temeraria* benefit from her relationship with *Mojiganga*? It turns out that *Temeraria* has trusted her business to a man who spends his salary on wine and fails to defend her business interests. This is evident in the fact that *Mojiganga* has sold the *petimetras* chestnuts on credit several times, but is intimidated by their higher social position, as indicated by their “frac y botas lustradas” (“dress-coat and shiny boots.” My trans.);<sup>29</sup> thus the *petimetras* are free to ignore their debt.

In story B, *Temeraria* fails in a different way to act effectively, this time in her social role as a woman. Her boyfriend, *Gorito*, is a central character in this story. The *sainete* suggests that, rather than acting as a moral instructor to men, *Temeraria* corrupts them, as they inevitably become pimps – a fate that befalls *Gorito*.

## 6. Re-appropriation and domestication

Who will mediate between the *majo* and his society, if the *castañera* fails to do so? Who will save *Gorito* from *Temeraria*? Story B centers *Gorito* and *Javiera*, the owner of the carpentry shop where *Gorito* works. *Javiera* has recently become a widow. Her trusted older employee, *Trabuco*, reminds her that after seven weeks of mourning she needs to remarry and find a new husband to own the business. *Gorito* is a likely candidate; in fact, *Javiera* has promised him a promotion within the ranks of the trade, including taking her deceased husband's place in the guild. But *Gorito* likes both *Temeraria* and *Javiera*. To help him choose in a fair manner, he summons *Trabuco* – the same *Trabuco* that works for *Javiera* –, a man of reason, and *Macareno*, who has studied *albeitería* or the veterinary arts. “Usted, señor Blas Trabuco, / que es hombre de razon, haga / justicia, y el Macareno /

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28 Cruz 1870, 4.

29 Cruz 1870, 4.

que profesó en Salamanca / diez meses de albeitería, / y que sabe, de la pata / que cojean las mujeres, / diga lo que se le alcanza” (“You, Mr. Blas Trabuco, / a man of reason, make / justice, and Macareno / who studied in Salamanca / ten months of veterinary / and knows about women’s weak anatomy / speak your opinion.” My trans.).<sup>30</sup> The choice of a veterinarian as an expert on working-class women’s nature suggests that *castañeras* are themselves animals or animal-like. The advice these two men give Gorito contradicts the plot. They tell him he should choose according to his inclination. Yet the plot clearly shows that Gorito’s inclination must be toward the woman who represents stability, respectability, and hard work – that is, Javiera. He must not choose Temeraria, whose support of Mojiganga’s idle drunkenness, among other traits, contaminates her as a potential *maja*.

## 7. Conclusion

The *sainetes* do not domesticate the *maja* using the language or manners of sensibility, but through a system of punishments: Working-class women who remain loyal to father and home and who facilitate men’s access to productive labor are rewarded by marriage. Working-class women who leave the home because they want to work and earn make bad marriage material. Worse, they corrupt men away from productive labor. The working *maja*’s sexualization occurs both because her workplace is the streets and because she appeals to male customers through innuendo. The *sainete* pits street vendors against *petimetras* by using the domestic *maja* as a standard for social respect – only the women who replicate that sort of *maja* are worthy of the same honor. In the process of creating a hierarchy of respectability among working-class women, those women’s labor is explicitly devalued. Ultimately, the domestication of working-class women is oriented to help working-class men find their place in society.

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30 Cruz 1870, 9.

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Esther Schomacher

# Work It, Baby! Economics and Emotions on the Marriage Market in Goldoni's *La Locandiera* and *Trilogia della villeggiatura*<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract** This paper investigates the emotional-cum-financial manoeuvres on the marriage market of two of Goldoni's most famous female protagonists by reading them against the discursive backdrop of contemporary concepts of embodied emotion as well as of contemporary economic theory. In a first step, this paper highlights the often-overlooked connections between 18th-century emotional and economic theories. Within this discursive context, the interrelatedness of feeling and financial behavior in the case of Goldoni's protagonists is then understood as an ironic reflection on the contemporary "economic" understanding of feelings on the one hand – and on the other, in the contemporary understanding of economic actions as depending on emotional self-government. In a final step, it will be possible to shed some light on the consequences of these interlocking observations with regard to questions of female agency, introspection and subjectivation.

**Keywords:** Enlightenment, sensibility, body, manipulation, money

## 1. Marriages and markets

This paper will focus on two plays whose female protagonists are not only surprisingly independent and surprisingly headstrong, but also quite cold-hearted when it comes to emotional matters. In *La Locandiera* (*The Mistress of the Inn*, 1752) the heroine, Mirandolina, owner of a small but profitable inn, conducts a psychological experiment on one of her distinguished guests: She decides to humiliate the Cavaliere di Ripafratta, a known misogynist, by making him fall madly in love with her. Sure enough, she succeeds, only to then ridicule the lovesick Cavaliere, who takes this very badly. In *La trilogia della villeggiatura* (*The Holiday Trilogy*, 1761),<sup>2</sup> the female protagonist Giacinta does something

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1 I would like to thank the editors, Beatrice Schuchardt and Christian von Tschilschke, for their kind invitation to present and discuss an earlier version of this paper at the conference "Protagonists of Production," and the conference's participants for their inspiring questions and comments, which once more gave proof of the productivity of international and interdisciplinary exchange.

2 The plays are cited here in English using the following editions: Carlo Goldoni. *The Mistress of the Inn*. Trans. by Merle Pearson. Madison: Wisconsin Dramatic

very similar: She involves her fiancé, Leonardo, and the flirty beau Guglielmo in an artificial contest for her affection by inviting the latter to spend the summer in the countryside with her and her enlarged family party. In Giacinta's case, however, things go even less according to plan. Rather than arousing her future husband's jealousy and goading him into falling more passionately in love with her, she ends up falling in love with Guglielmo herself, only to find that in the end she cannot escape the promised union with the unloved Leonardo.

At the same time, both female protagonists are portrayed as economic actors – Mirandolina successfully manages her own inn (which doubtless adds to her personal attractions), while Giacinta is a fashion-forward, avid shopper and considers the countless luxury goods she acquires as a necessary supplement and “sign” of her marital eligibility. In this way, the young women's emotional strategies are intrinsically linked to their economic transactions: In both comedies the young women's behavior is seen as a combination of strategies and tactics employed in the social, emotional and economic dynamics that go under the denomination of “marriage market.”<sup>3</sup> Whereas Mirandolina, though initially having no wish to marry, finds herself a coveted object of young men's marital intentions, Giacinta is already engaged and all the more conscious of the difficulty in finding a balance between the need for financial security and emotional attachment.

This paper sets out to show, however, that the artful emotional ploys in the field of match-making that Goldoni's women show themselves (more or less) capable of do not represent an early theatrical display of proto-capitalistic alienation – that is, the plays do not exhibit match-making as an inauthentic, money-driven business, which leaves no room for genuine love. I will argue instead that the control and the conscious design of emotions displayed by Goldoni's heroines with respect to love mirrors contemporary philosophical and medical theories that place economic issues not outside, but literally inside of the human body and mind.<sup>4</sup> To put it bluntly: In the plays, there are no authentic feelings that

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Society, 1912; Carlo Goldoni. *The Holiday Trilogy*. Transl. by Anthony Oldcorn. New York: Marsilio, 1992.

- 3 For a reading of *La Locandiera* in the context of Venetian marriage culture in the 18th century, see Ward 2018; with regard to its economic aspects see pp. 236–237.
- 4 Throughout this paper I will use the concept of “emotion” in the sense it acquired, by and by, during the 18th century; that is, as a synonym of “feeling,” and encompassing both older concepts of (violent) “passion” and (gentler) “affection.” It is important to note from the outset that the 18th century did not place the “emotions” solely within the soul (psyche), but understood them to be “psycho-somatic,” involving and “moving”

could be alienated through contact with monetary economy – because feelings themselves are always intrinsically economic.

In this way, Goldoni's portrayal of a close correspondence between the emotional and monetary behaviors of his female protagonists will provide an opportunity to explore the implicit, and for the most part unacknowledged relations between 18th-century psycho-physiological notions of an "economy of feeling" and the emerging economic theories of the time.<sup>5</sup> As this paper will go on to show, the plays not only use the intricate combination of economy and emotion to ironic and comic effect, but also as a basis to promote, rather than stifle, their female protagonists' sense of self.

## 2. Producing feelings

In the case of *La Locandiera*, the intricate relation of love and finance is at the forefront of the comedy's plot from Scene I/1: Mirandolina, the young, independent Florentine innkeeper, is virtually besieged by two of her three noble guests, who are in love with her and compete for her affection by either playing up their rank, or by showering her with pricy gifts, and the question whether love is "caused" by reverence for social standing or by the display of monetary wealth is debated at length. After the misogynistic rants of the Cavaliere have triggered Mirandolina's desire to teach him a lesson by making him fall in love with her (I/9), it only takes a few special favors, one meal (II/4) and one make-believe fainting fit (II/17) to accomplish the task. By the end of Act 2 he follows her around like a puppy (III/6). Eventually, when the Cavaliere's newly awakened

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both body and soul to varying degrees. For an etymological history of the concept and a summary of its changes during the Enlightenment, cf. Barclay et al. 2019, 1–5.

- 5 The connection between the 18th century's emotional "culture of sensibility" and the contemporary emergence of both classic economic theory and a consumer economy has variously been noted, especially with regard to English literature and philosophy; cf. e.g. Barker-Benfield 1992, Ellis 1995, Skinner 1998, Morillo 2001. The works of Jane Austen have justly elicited particular scholarly attention in this respect (cf. Michie 2011, Hall 2017, Massei-Chamayou 2012, Bohanon/Vachris 2015). While the works of Beatrice Schuchardt have focused on the connection of economics and emotion in Spanish and French moral and sentimental comedy (cf. Schuchardt 2016, 2018, 2019), research on Goldoni's dramatic works of the same period has so far not taken this into account. For a helpful overview of decades of research on Goldoni's dramatic work cf. Ward 2018, 233 and 254 (Note 2). On Goldoni's positioning vis-à-vis the contemporary emotional culture cf. Oster 2008, Behrens 2020; on his ironic negotiation of "consumerism" in *La Trilogia della villeggiatura* cf. Behrens/Schomacher 2017.

feelings get out of hand and he threatens her with violence, Mirandolina not only agrees to marry Fabrizio, the faithful servant who protects her from the Cavaliere's aggressions, but also consciously decides to love him: "But then, dear, everything will be yours, don't hesitate. I shall always love you, you will always be my soul." (III/20, 99).

Even though Giacinta's initial situation is very different from Mirandolina's, the strategies she deploys in managing the emotions of people around her – as well as her own – resemble those of the earlier heroine: The daughter of an elderly ex-merchant, who now spends his time squandering his once dearly earned money, along with friends and neighbors from the same social strata, on the preparations for the visit to, the stay in, and ultimately the return from the *villeggiatura*,<sup>6</sup> Giacinta is engaged to the rather languid Leonardo. It is clear from the outset that he wants to marry Giacinta principally to get his hands on the promised dowry, whereas Giacinta and her father believe the match to be economically advantageous for them. As the audience – but not the characters – learn in Act 1, both parties are wrong. Giacinta's dowry as well as Leonardo's fortune have long been spent. Against the backdrop of this malfunctioning economy – and amongst an endless parade of unaffordable luxury goods, which the various families use as media within a system of mutual social observation and distinction, and the individual members for their own identity politics<sup>7</sup> – Giacinta embarks on her own

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6 The trilogy's three parts each picture one "phase" of the summer stay in the country: *Le Smanie per la villeggiatura* (*Off to the Country*), the preparations, *Le Avventure della villeggiatura* (*Adventures in the Country*) the stay in the countryside, and *Il Ritorno dalla villeggiatura* (*Back from the Country*), the return. Drawing on the contemporary Venetian custom of the "villeggiatura," that is, the patriciate's summer stay in the country "villas" on "terraferma" ("solid land") outside the "laguna," Goldoni not only creates a heterotopic space in the foucaultian sense (Behrens/Schomacher 2017, 185–187), but also an ironic reflection on the loss of its traditional economic function within the Venetian economy: Whereas in the 15th to 17th centuries, the *villeggiatura* allowed the lord to survey the harvest and trade in agricultural produce – and provided the patrician families with cash for the coming winter – in the 18th century the *villeggiatura* had become a luxury retreat geared towards an ever increasing "conspicuous consumption" (for this ethnographic-economic concept cf. Veblen 1918, 75). On the historical development of the custom of *villeggiatura* cf. Molmenti 1981, Gullino 1996, and Varanini 1996, as well as Bentmann/Müller 1971. With particular emphasis on the (quasi-)narcissistic, self-reflecting aspects of the *villeggiatura* for a Venetian aristocratic and merchant identity during the 18th century, cf. Fajen 2013, 64. On Goldoni's various theatrical appropriations of this staple motif of Venetian life, cf. e.g. Bordin 1995 and 1996.

7 Behrens/Schomacher 2017, 187–190; 193.



emotional gamble: In order to turn Leonardo into a more ardent lover and to test her own feelings, she grants Guglielmo favors, pays more attention to him than to anybody else, always sits next to him, and sees that he is served first and with the best chocolate, coffee and costly food. These actions, however, increasingly affect herself. The more preference for Guglielmo she allows herself to show, the more she feels. While her future husband Leonardo is completely unresponsive to her provocation to feeling, and Guglielmo does his usual flirtatious spiel, it is Giacinta herself who falls prey to the emotions she set out to inspire: “But alas, Brigida mine, this living together, this seeing each other every day, at every hour of the day, his being so considerate, the right words at just the right moments, [...] – all fatal openings, horrible traps... I don’t know, I don’t know where it’s all going to end. [...] [I]ndifference became gratification, and gratification passion.” (*Adventures in the Country*, II/1, 122–123).

When the trilogy ends with the obligatory wedding, the lack of amorous passion in the match between Giacinta and Leonardo is as unmistakably obvious as the failure of everyone’s financial hopes. Leonardo and Giacinta will be shipped off to an unprofitable country house and will have to live frugally with the income it yields (*Back from the Country*, III/2; III/12).<sup>8</sup>

In neither comedy is the romantic concept of love as an uncontrollable, “inner” emotion centered on another person’s innermost character even taken into consideration. Instead, the plays picture love as an almost automatic reaction produced by a person’s environment, and therefore an object of careful and/or manipulative management. Love appears to be caused by a specific set of behaviors; it can be fueled by the sensual perception of goods, by certain activities or even the ingestion of certain foods. In this way, characters can allow (or risk) love to emerge by exposing themselves to a specific set of incitements – or avoid it by keeping a safe distance from them. At the same time, both the emotional incitements and the individual reactions to them are portrayed as intimately connected to the realm of goods and money: Not only do goods and

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8 It is interesting to note the difference between Goldoni’s characters and those of the Spanish *comedia sentimental*: While at first sight there appear to be a number of parallels – Giacinta appears to conform to the image of the wasteful *petimetra*; her father to that of the deviant *pater familias* who has lost control of his household; and his friend Fulgenzio to the character of the virtuous re-establisher of order (cf. Schuchardt 2019, 123–124) – Goldoni’s play seems to subvert the moralistic impetus observable in the Spanish comedies insofar as here the “deviant” characters are by far the more interesting ones, whereas the virtuous and thrifty characters are portrayed as emotionally void and boring from the beginning.

products play an important part as “stimuli” for psycho-physiological reactions; more importantly, differences in the economic situation and management abilities of the two heroines seem to mirror – and to a certain extent even cause – the different capabilities of emotional management. While Mirandolina manages her own economic and emotional circumstances well but fails to take the possible consequences of her successful manipulation of others (namely the violence of the Cavaliere’s affection) into account, Giacinta, though unknowingly, mismanages economics and emotions from the outset, first of all by starting from the wrong economic premise: that is, the assumption of her own and her future husband’s wealth.

By putting the interrelations of economic and emotional questions center stage (both figuratively and literally), the comedies reverberate with some of the major philosophical and scientific issues that came to characterize the “culture of sensibility” during the 18th century: They question the nature of emotions, the relation of body and mind, and ultimately the functioning of emotions in social interaction, ethics and economic behavior.<sup>9</sup> Goldoni’s much discussed “bourgeois” update of the poetics of comedy thus seems to involve short-circuiting the comic triad of “*Handel, Verhandlung, Liebes-Händel*” (“business, negotiations, and love-affairs.” My trans.<sup>10</sup>) with precisely those issues of “feeling and response” his contemporaries were virtually obsessed with.<sup>11</sup> As opposed to the contemporary “sentimental novel” and the openly moralistic *comedia sentimental*, though, the plays comically appropriate the dark, ironic side of this mix.<sup>12</sup> Not only do they downgrade the high-minded moral, philosophical and

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9 Cf. Dixon 2003; Barclay et al. 2019; Vila 1998; Anderson et al. 2019; Morillo 2001, 178–222; Barker-Benfield 1999; Sarasin 2001, 43–94. The famous moralistic debate on luxury is one of the prime examples of the cultural urgency of this connection, as it shows how economic behavior is seen as an outward sign of individual inward virtue and self-control (or lack thereof); cf. Arato 2000, Borghero 2000, Colle 2000, Berry 1994. On Goldoni’s appropriation of the debate, particularly in the *Trilogia della villeggiatura*, cf. Behrens/Schomacher 2017, 194.

10 Schuchardt 2019, 123. The etymological double meaning of “affair” as erotic liaison and economic transaction is present in the German “Liebeshändel,” though the latter’s connotation at the same time implies a more conflictual notion of love relationships, as e.g., in “lovers’ quarrels” or “intrigues.”

11 Skinner 1998, 2; on Goldoni’s reformed poetics of the *commedia dell’arte* tradition cf. Alonge 2004, Vescovo 1995.

12 While both Skinner 1998 and Csengei 2012 have highlighted the “culture of sensibility’s” often unacknowledged fascination with (and ultimately its reliance on) its “darker,” more violent aspects – like pain, exclusion, states of unconsciousness and silencing,

scientific debates of the times to the level of lovers' quarrels, young ladies' swoons and shopping sprees, stereotypical fainting fits and lengthy discussions about different qualities of chocolate<sup>13</sup>; they also explore the possibilities of make-believe, insincerity, and cruelty, and – last but not least – of fundamental incongruities between emotional and financial conditions.

### 3. Emotions and economics

At first this focus on the production of feeling may seem strangely at odds with the prevailing “sentimental” attitude displayed in novels of the time, where violently erupting emotions – especially other-directed emotions like sympathy, empathy and love – are often seen as outward proof of moral worth.<sup>14</sup> But a closer look at the surrounding medical and hygienic discourse shows that when Goldoni's female characters consciously “work” on the emotions of others (as well as, a little less consciously, on their own) their attitude mirrors some of the prevalent 18th-century concepts of feelings.

While the Enlightenment's two main, and contrary, medical traditions, i.e. the mechanistic school and the emerging theory of vitalism, disagreed on almost every assumption concerning the human body and its inner workings, their views on the relation of body and soul, and on the operation of emotions, constitute a surprising common ground.<sup>15</sup> In his ground-breaking study on the history of the hygienic discourse, Philip Sarasin has shown that – despite their

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Barclay et al. stress the contemporary anxiety regarding possibilities of manipulation and fakery (Barclay et al. 2019, 8). Neither addresses examples where this has been appropriated with the effect of comically or ironically undermining the “culture of sensibility” itself, as, e.g. Behrens 2006 does.

- 13 New drugs like tobacco, coffee and chocolate, which had only just become affordable for wider ranges of Europe's population, were considered strong physical and mental stimulants in the contemporary medical and dietetic discourse, and therefore a prerequisite for the intellectual efforts connected with the Enlightenment's projected artistic, social, political and scientific changes (cf. Kemper 1993, Klettke 2003; on their embeddedness within a hedonistic and exoticizing culture cf. Camporesi 1990; for the Spanish context cf. Tschiltschke 2022). Goldoni's play, however, evokes this cultural meaning in an ironic manner: Not only are coffee and chocolate used merely as manipulative means of affective communication for the emotional frivolities of the “leisure class,” their use is also imitated and mocked by the servants, who are the only ones from whom effort is required during the *villaggiatura* (e.g. *Avventure*, I/3).

14 Skinner 1999, 7.

15 Behrens 2006, 52–54; Contarini 1997, Vila 1998.

differences – both medical theories consider physical, psychological, and mental processes as intimately connected, and often as ultimately indistinguishable, as they were “governed” by a set of external causes and influences, known as the “*res non naturales*” since Antiquity.<sup>16</sup> In the course of the 18th century this view of the body and its intricate connection to the “higher” human faculties fed into a wider, ultimately bourgeois cultural shift in attitude vis-à-vis the body, its sensations and reactions – more precisely, a shift towards a detailed management of stimuli, of “outward” influences and the corresponding “inward” processes with the conscious and reflexive aim of cultivating pleasurable sensations, and thereby promoting individual happiness as well as a long and prosperous life: “To maintain the harmony of their own body-machine by self-administered means of regulation is the biopolitical message for enlightened citizens, the virtually revolutionary program of self-regulation.”<sup>17</sup> All of this required a strong, conscious, self-analyzing and reflective subject in total control of his (and to a certain extent also her) body.<sup>18</sup> Within this anthropological framework and its “medical, physiological redefinition of human subjectivity,”<sup>19</sup> emotions are cast in a double role: Firstly, they were seen as basic, yet essential reactions to stimuli and influences, and thus, reliable indicators of the self’s success in the hygienic fine-tuning of his or her body and soul.<sup>20</sup> Secondly, though, they were seen as influencing factors themselves, as experiences that feed back into the nervous constitution and re-affect body and soul.<sup>21</sup>

This porous understanding of body, soul, and emotions not only let to a strictly “referential” view of the human body, insofar as it was seen to produce signs of the passions which could – and should – be deciphered by the experiencing and simultaneously self-observing subject, but also by his or her social surroundings.<sup>22</sup> It also entailed the precept that emotional experiences

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16 Sarasin 2001, 33–51.

17 Sarasin 2001, 75 (my trans.); cf. Behrens 2006, 52.

18 On the concepts of the subject in Enlightenment medical and hygienic discourse, cf. Sarasin 2001, 452–465, with a detailed discussion of Michel Foucault’s analysis of “technologies of the self,” “self-care” and “self-governance” in the wider context of “technologies of knowledge” and power relations. On the complicated and contradictory gendering of the medical-hygienic and moralistic discourses, see Sarasin 2001, 356–399, Steinbrügge 1995; Barclay et al. 2019, 6–7.

19 Csengei 2012, 81.

20 Sarasin 2001, 211–259.

21 Vila 1998; Pender 2019.

22 Csengei 2012, 5; Todd 1986; this gives rise to a “theatrical” quality of the emotions, which became associated with a “formal system of gesture.” This, though, does not

could and should be managed, shaped, and controlled according a system of defining features like gender, class and race, which denoted their appropriateness as well as their health effects for specific individual circumstances,<sup>23</sup> while subjects were, at the same time, connected to each other and to the world by sharing the (almost) all-pervading emotional force of “sympathy.”<sup>24</sup> The ascent of women as the truly “sensible” sex within the “culture of sensibility” has often been noted, as has the general agreement on the “proper attributes of the sensible female,” that is: “[c]haritable impulses and benevolence, the feeling heart and the speaking body.”<sup>25</sup>

Studies on the interrelation of the Enlightenment’s moral and emotional nomenclature did not fail to notice their strong links to early classical economic thinking, with Adam Smith’s consecutive authorship of *The Theory of Moral Sentiment* and *The Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* providing a particularly fertile object of research.<sup>26</sup> Whereas earlier research assumed an antagonistic relationship between rational, economic “self-interest” and the more passionate “sentiments” the former was supposed to control,<sup>27</sup> recent studies have observed even Adam Smith’s reliance on the concept of “sympathy” and on his ambivalent framing of “self-interest” itself as a feeling, belonging to the

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render them any less authentic in contemporary eyes: “Proper training in emotional display enabled people to better demonstrate their authentic selves. [E]motion could be honed through education and experience to produce better judgements and moral action that was central to the culture of sensibility” (Barclay et al. 2019, 8). In this context, I can only indicate the possible link between this concept of “theatrical” emotions and the common observation that Goldoni’s characters often seem to “re-enact” and stage-manage their display of emotions for the eyes of other characters, without being able to do it justice (cf. e.g. Behrens 2020, 245).

- 23 Whereas “sensibility” was, on the face of it, a “universal” human trait – and constituted a strong point in favour of egalitarian values – the emotions “caused” by the sensible body machine were nonetheless considered to vary among the various social strata, as well as among human races and between women and men – thereby contributing to (rather than questioning) the naturalization of social, racial and gender differences. Cf. Barker-Benfield 1992, 23 ff; Skinner 1999, 10–12; Csengei 2012, 32–39.
- 24 “If the senses enabled an emotional reading of the world, then sympathy was the communication of that emotional knowledge between actors, an activity that enabled them to determine the character and truth of an individual’s behaviour” (Barclay et al. 2019, S. 8). Cf. Scengei 2012, 29 ff.
- 25 Skinner 1999, 10.
- 26 Heath 1995; Barker-Benfield 1992, 132–141; Skinner 1999, 12–13; Csengei 2012, 50–61.
- 27 Cf. Hirschman 1977.

very same ambiguous category of indicators/influences as all other feelings and requiring the same degree of management.<sup>28</sup> Instead of urging people to suppress their emotions and follow a disembodied rational self-interest for the economy's sake, tracts and treatises rather seem to have argued in favor of an elaborate psycho-physiological and emotional "economy," understood in the Aristotelian sense of "householding."<sup>29</sup>

On a more pragmatic level, this means that individual economic behavior could, on the one hand, be perceived as a direct effect of each individual's psycho-physiological management and moral state, that is, of the careful balancing of stimuli, sensations and emotions.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand "economy" was seen as a management device in its own right: Trade does, after all, help to provide subjects with the substances and objects they need in order to keep their emotional household in equilibrium, yet it also entails the danger of allowing for excess and dysregulation.<sup>31</sup> Like the passions themselves, economic behavior plays a double role: It is an "outward" symptom, but also, a (tendentally self-enhancing)

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- 28 Cf. Csengei 2012, 10 and 53, with particular attention to the ambiguous, socially divisive aspects of Adam Smith's notion of "sympathy," which, according to Smith, should only extend towards persons of one's own social stratum and moral standing; with respect to the question of possible excesses of "charity" caused by uncontrolled, overpowering feelings of "sympathy," cf. Skinner 1999, 15 ff.
- 29 Sarasin 2001, 249 ff; even though Sarasin argues against an understanding of the subject's self-management in "economic" terms – despite the fact that economic metaphors abound in the sources he quotes – based on a different notion of "subjectivity" in economic and hygienic/psycho-physiological discourses; Barker-Benfield 1972, as well as Bennett 1999 and 2016 convincingly highlight the epistemic proximity of psycho-physiological and "classical" economic theories and, hence, argue in favor of an economic understanding of psycho-physiological "self-regulation" and management. On the "classical" economists' reliance on physical and biological models, cf. Schabas 2003; 2005. The question of the implied position of the subject in both discourses will be elaborated on further down.
- 30 Cf. e.g. Benjamin Franklin's elaboration of a moral, emotional, temporal and economic book-keeping in his autobiography, written from 1771 to his death in 1790 (Franklin 1868, 219–226).
- 31 Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, for example, does not remain silent on the "moral" and psycho-physiological side-effects of trade; cf. his long litany against amusements of all kinds, as well as "menial servants, ballet dancers, and others of that ilk" (Mirowski 1989, 169).

feedback mechanism that lets the effects of hygienic management again be felt by the entire “*homme machine*.”<sup>32</sup>

#### 4. The dark side of “sensibility”

Of course, a highly interdependent and complicated contraption of physical processes, stimuli and response, emotions, observation, and economic action like the one described above is very prone to malfunction, and contemporary treatises never fail to warn their readers against the risks of psycho-physiological as well as economic mismanagement.<sup>33</sup> Goldoni’s plays, much like Giuseppe Parini’s contemporary and ironically didactic poem *Il Giorno*, display a more critically subversive attitude towards the surrounding culture of “controllable sensations,” as well as the underlying “psychagogy.”<sup>34</sup> They not only expose the “mechanics” of feelings themselves to ridicule – they also specifically explore their socially cruel, disturbing aspects.

Seen against the backdrop of the contemporary culture of sensibility, *Mirandolina* appears as the ultimate ironic inversion of the “sensible” woman’s “benign reforming influence.”<sup>35</sup> She stresses her affective coolness, her economic and emotional independence – and her display of violent emotions towards the Cavaliere di Ripafratta is nothing but a show. Instead of gently educating the unfeeling misogynist in the emotional art of “sensibility,” she rather cruelly employs the mechanics and economics of emotion in her experiment: She provides the appropriate surroundings through food and luxury goods, displays the whole range of symptoms of love and infatuation as envisioned by the culture of sensibility (sighs, swoons, special attention, nervousness, and, ultimately, an aptly faked fainting fit<sup>36</sup>), using the supposed referential structure of body against the grain – that is, she fraudulently shows the “outward” signs of love in order to make the Cavaliere believe she is “inwardly” in love with him. With this

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32 On the radically materialistic concept of the “*homme machine*,” as proposed by the French physician and philosopher Julien Offray de La Mettrie, cf. Rather 1965, Vartanian 1960 and Wellman 1992; cf. also Sarasin 2001, 57–62; Csengei 2012, 90–100.

33 Cf. Skinner 1999, 4–6, with special emphasis on the debate on luxury and aristocratic psycho-physiological, sexual and economic degeneracy.

34 Behrens 2006, 41 and 48.

35 Skinner 1999, 10.

36 On various “outward” symptoms of feeling, cf. Csengei 2012, 5; on the “sentimental swoon,” Csengei 2012, 140. With regard to *Mirandolina*’s “calculated seduction” in the famous “ironing scene” (III/6) and its erotic tension, cf. Kleinhans 2008.

she also appropriates the assumption that “passions” are shared among sensible and sympathetic bodies and souls for her own ends. She uses the symptoms of love to cause the feeling of love on the Cavaliere’s part. And, last but not least, her actions are tailored to his affective constitution. Knowing that he had always avoided women in the past, she can count on his emotional vulnerability in that quarter: The Cavaliere is simply not used to the kinds of stimuli Mirandolina purposefully provides for him, and inevitably falls prey to emotions he has never felt before. His previous excessive hatred towards women abruptly turns into equally excessive and violent love for Mirandolina, and ends up threatening his social standing and integrity, his wealth, and also his mental as well as physical well-being (III/16–18).

Giacinta, on the other hand, ticks all the boxes that characterize a “sensible” woman – but does so in an excessive and, what is more, deliberately performative manner: Her obsession with fashion, with the proper attire and accessories for the stay in the country, the right amount and quality of exquisite treats like coffee and chocolate, but also her handling of affects and emotions are marked by her consciousness that her way of behaving should meet society’s expectations: her heart feels and her body speaks because she knows that is what identifies her as an upper-class, appropriately “sensible” young lady (cf. her discussion of fashion, *Smania* II/12).<sup>37</sup> Yet, at the same time, in her case this performance does not consist of mere play-acting, but constitutes a form of social, as well as psycho-physiological self-fashioning: She expects the right stimuli and the right physical and emotional responses triggered by them to indeed shape and secure her sense of self, which does not exist independently of this intricate form of embeddedness in an environment providing impulses and excitements, sensations and pleasures.<sup>38</sup> The emotional gamble she takes with Guglielmo’s presence during the *villeggiatura* is part and parcel of this endeavor: It answers to her (just) impression that her fiancé Leonardo’s feelings for her might not be strong enough to provide the right affective environment for a future bride, and to stir her own emotions and desires. But while she is busy attempting to compensate for the lack of stimuli, as well as passion, and trying to manipulate the feelings of others, she forgets that the stimuli she provides – just as aptly and thoroughly as Mirandolina – also affect her own “sensible” body and soul, who have virtually been trained to react to them.

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37 Behrens 2020, 241.

38 On the notion of the social and economic “embeddedness” of the individual’s emotional management in Enlightenment thought, cf. Csengei 2012, 11.



As both plays exhibit the subliminal connection of the new economic and psycho-physiological discourses of the time through the various ways their young heroines' affective tactics interrelate with their economic actions, they show that medical-hygienic and economic management are in equal measure based on a self-observing, self-controlling, "strong" subject. Mirandolina's emotional self-control is reflected (and in turn enhanced) by her control over and her realistic assessment of her own economic "net worth" – but at the same time the one enhances the other: her knowledge of her financial assets makes her particularly guarded with respect to love, lest that lead to the loss of both her economic and her emotional independence. Giacinta's outright contempt for the nitty-gritty details of what Parini will ironically call the "annojante domestica economia"<sup>39</sup> ("boring household economy." My trans.), and her emphasis on the (socially distinctive) pleasures the acquired goods will provide (rather than on their price tags), denotes the very same reckless want for stimuli and the same attitude of sensation-seeking that will ultimately lead to her ruinous love for Guglielmo. In her case the lack of control in both fields exponentiates. Yet, even if the first effect is a bitterly ironic undermining of the "individual's fixation on their body machine as a high-maintenance [...] centre of [...] attention"<sup>40</sup> (my trans.), the plays nonetheless take the effects of self-awareness, self-discovery and the process of self-fashioning, which this very syndrome both allows and provokes, surprisingly seriously.

### 5. *Education sentimentale*: "Working" on emotions and economics

It has often been claimed that *La Locandiera* as well as *La trilogia della villeggiatura* both end on a rather disappointing note – Mirandolina gives up the independence she has previously relished and marries her employee, and Giacinta leaves her home for the humble cottage she will henceforth inhabit in the company of her lack-lustre husband. Dramaturgically more important and far more interesting than this subversion of the genre-defining happy end is what happens before, while the heroines are actively engaged in the negotiations around emotions and economics on the marriage market: The young heroines display a keen sense of agency, and observe the reverberations of their emotional-economic negotiations within their own selves very closely.

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39 Parini, *Il Giorno*, dedication "Alla Moda," quoted from Behrens 2006, 38.

40 Behrens 2006, 41.

Firstly, the economic-emotional management and manipulation provides the female protagonists with a possible strategy to influence their position and their bargaining power in the marriage market, and therefore with opportunities to *act* on their own behalf. Rather than being turned into commodities, ready to be auctioned off by their fathers or guardians, the Enlightenment's specific combination of an economics of emotion and emotional economics allows them to "work" on the positions of others as well as on their own within this game, and thereby (try to) change the game itself, even though, as the plays show, this is a risky business. Secondly, a closer look reveals that both female protagonists undergo a very similar, emotionally cathartic development that ultimately can be understood as a process of subjectivation, in the course of which they both become self-reflective, appropriately "sensible" and well-managed characters (in the full 18th-century sense of the word<sup>41</sup>). While *Mirandolina* and *Giacinta* are busy emotionally manipulating others, they end up educating themselves. Unlike the moralistic plays of the same period, though, these plays highlight the fact that the process is rather more interesting than the result. Both female protagonists learn to "read" their emotional constitution, to identify those passions that are exaggerated and socially disruptive and at least promise to manage their emotional "households" in sync with their economic ones. Both are, at the end, more aware of the consequences their actions have for others than they were at the beginning, and are therefore at least on their way to becoming truly "sensible," but also rather conventional women. *Mirandolina* eventually attenuates her pursuit of "self-interest" ("interesse") and independence, becomes more receptive towards her surroundings – and an ordinary member of the mercantile middle class: "Now I am married, gentlemen. I don't need protectors, I don't need lovers, I don't need gifts. [...] Changing my state, I wish to change my way of life; [...]" (III, 20, 98–100). *Giacinta* recognizes the destructive effects of her "sensationalist" and theatrical desire for luxury and admiration, tones down her over-agitated sensibilities to the level of lukewarm "tenerezza" ("tenderness") towards her future husband and her father, and ends up as the frugal wife of an impoverished gentleman (*Back from the Country*, III/12–13).<sup>42</sup> Yet, though "character" may be the proof of successful subjectivation – a static final point of a turbulent process – ultimately it is not the result, but the process itself, with its active working on emotional economics and economic emotions, which makes *Mirandolina* and *Giacinta* the "protagonists of production" of their own stories.

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41 Csengei 2012, 9; Lynch 1998.

42 Behrens 2020, 246–247.

## 6. Conclusion

Read in this way, the dramatic texts become prisms. Their particular perspective on the marriage market, and their heroines' transactions in it, brings one essential – and often forgotten – common feature of contemporary theories on emotions and economics into view: the surprising fact that psycho-physiological (medical, hygienic) theories *and* classical economic models alike required a strong self-controlled and self-observing subject. The prominent classical-liberal notion of “the free market” as a self-organizing system is based on an anthropology that on an individual level presupposes a careful psycho-somatic equilibrating of self-interest against other feelings (like sympathy), and does not give *carte blanche* for unbridled egotism. As the plays bring the close connections between the Enlightenment's economic, moralistic and medical-hygienic discourses into focus, they show that within this framework a “free market” might in fact work to everyone's advantage – if individuals governed themselves. But they also show that this is something individuals very rarely do.

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## **Section 4 Economic Protagonists of Both Sexes**



Beatrice Schuchardt

# Staging Spanish Political Economy as Figural Types: From Civilian Heroes to Male and Female Protagonists of Production

**Abstract** In the second half of the 18th century, the economic and theatrical reform pushed forward by the Spanish Bourbon state and its ministers leads to the creation of a new type of hero, appearing both in economic tracts and in theater: the “civilian hero,” a term coined by Peter Jehle in his comparative analysis of 17th-century French and 18th-century Spanish theater (2010). Unlike the conqueror type of hero raging on 16th- and 17th-century stages, that hot-tempered, “Old-Christian” aristocrat reluctant to work, the civilian hero created by the reformed theater of Spanish neoclassicism is characterized by his professional activity. He is virtuous and virile, a patriarch benevolently watching over his family and business, but also over the moral and economic behavior of his compatriots. This new type of hero is incarnated by the honorable merchant or the entrepreneur. He is a “brainworker,” and he is essentially male. Unlike neoclassic comedy, e.g. Trigueros’s play *Los menestrales* (1784), a piece that, following a royal decree of 1783, allegedly esteems craftspeople but actually puts them back in their functional working-class place, late 18th-century sentimental comedy written by popular authors such as Comella or Valladares put onstage the virtuous heroism of both male and female characters that incarnate physical labor: peasants, weavers, charcoal burners and ragpickers. This is the hour of birth of a new economic type staged in 18th-century Spanish theater: the “protagonist of production.” The article focuses on the varieties of types presented on Spanish stages of the time and how they relate to an enlightened political and moral economy.

**Keywords:** civilian hero, protagonist of production, *vir oeconomicus*, *vir faber*, *vir rusticus*, *femina oeconomica*, *femina fabra*, Spanish 18th-century theater

## 1. From *homo oeconomicus* to *vir oeconomicus*: Why economic man is an economic male

The most prominent embodiment of economy to be found in both economic tracts and literature is the *homo oeconomicus*. This type is closely linked to the rise of political economy, which has been related to Adam Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations*, published in 1776. The Spanish economist Vicent Llobart Rosa identified this same year as a threshold, in which Smith is not the only one to publish a significant tract. In the very same year, Étienne Bonnot de Condillac writes his essay *Le Commerce* and Anne Robert Jacques Turgot publishes his *Réflexions*

*sur la formation et la distribution des richesses* as a book.<sup>1</sup> In Spain, the minister Pedro Rodríguez Conde de Campomanes, one of the leaders of the enlightened reform of economy and society, is preparing to publish the *Apéndices* (“Notes.” My trans.) to his most prominent essays, his discourses on how to foster popular industry (1774) and on how to establish an educational system for apprentices in the crafts (1775). 1776 is also the year in which, according to Llombart Rosa, political economy slowly begins to turn from a political science into a scholarly discipline.

Political economy and its spirit of enlightened reform are closely linked to what Foucault has called “governmentality.”<sup>2</sup> This Foucauldian concept designates a form of political power based on the entities of a state willing to collect statistical information about its population. The sheer amount of it is now of increasing importance as a source of enrichment for the sovereign and his state machinery.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the growth or decline of the population must be regulated by “biopolitics,” that is the political regulation of birth and death rates, which now become important in terms of the competition of the European powers for hegemony.<sup>4</sup> While the population as a whole is considered a source of riches – in Spain the political concern about its growth is called *poblacionismo* (“Populationalism.” My trans.)<sup>5</sup> –, the individual in the 18th century, in England even earlier, turns from an obedient vassal to a functional economic entity of the governmental whole: the citizen. His function is to enrich the nation by being industrious, useful, and a sociable patriot.

Considering the link between political economy, governmentality, and the European balance of power, it is not surprising that the very concept of the *homo oeconomicus*, a term inspired by Adam Smith, but coined by Vilfredo Pareto and Maffeo Pantaleoni,<sup>6</sup> seems to be a vehicle, if not an incarnation of power related

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1 Cf. Llombart Rosa 2006, 96.

2 Cf. Foucault 1994, 134–161.

3 Cf. Campomanes 1975, 100: “La población numerosa y destinada es el mayor bien de un Estado y el fundamento de su verdadero poder” (“The numerous and dedicated population is the greatest asset of a State and the foundation of its true power.” My trans.).

4 In this competition, economy more than war seems to become the decisive factor. According to Schumpeter 2007, 430, transnational economic relations in this epoch are relations of warfare.

5 Cf. Martín Rodríguez 1999, 501.

6 Cf. Schomacher 2021, 248 with reference to Pantaleoni 1889, 30–31 and Pareto 1919: 14 ff. Schomacher also recommends Persky 1995, 221–231 and O’Boyle 2009, 194–205 as further readings.

to economy, and to economic action. When it comes to literary studies, “economic man” is mostly understood to be a “mental figure related to the history of dogma” (my trans.; “dogmengeschichtliche Denkfigur”<sup>7</sup>) of national economy and political sciences, as a controversial “model of action theory, philosophy and sociology” (my trans.; “Modell allgemeiner Handlungstheorie, Philosophie und Soziologie”<sup>8</sup>) that has by now become a key concept in interdisciplinary literary and cultural studies. Its meaning ranges from the “ideal type of decision-maker” (my trans.; “Idealtypus eines Entscheidungsträgers”<sup>9</sup>) to a “profit maximiser driven by self-interest” (my trans.; “eigennützig und prinzipiell ungesättigt nach Nutzenmaximierung strebenden Prototyp”<sup>10</sup>), showing the whole spectrum of competent economic action between individual gain and social benefit.

The concept has not gone without criticism in economics, more concretely, in “conjunctive economics,” a term by Deirdre McCloskey,<sup>11</sup> who tackled the topic long before it was addressed by literary studies. It is surprising that the term, which claims to refer to the “economic human” and means the “economic male,” still passes unquestioned in the great majority of literary and cultural studies – or that *homo oeconomicus* has only seldom been unmasked as a *vir oeconomicus*.<sup>12</sup> Deirdre McCloskey did and was actually the first to note the fact that the term literally means “economic human,” not “economic man,”<sup>13</sup> thus hinting that it seems to imply male economic agency only. McCloskey was also first to bring up the term *vir oeconomicus*, which she defined as follows: “*Vir oeconomicus* sporting around the marketplace is stereotypically male: rule driven, simple-mindedly selfish, uninterested in building relations for their own sake. A cross between Rambo and an investment banker, our *vir oeconomicus* has certain boyish charms, but a feminine solidarity is none of them.”<sup>14</sup>

Looking at the gender of the “economic human,” it is also very telling that the concept seems to be in need of a female counterpart like the *femina oeconomica*. This makes it very clear that the concept does not include women. The power implications of this concept reaching back to Adam Smith have been analyzed by

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7 Wunderlich 2007, 11.

8 Blaschke 2004, 17.

9 Wunderlich 1989, 9.

10 Wunderlich 1989, 9.

11 Cf. McCloskey 1993, 67–93.

12 I defined the term *vir oeconomicus* in my study on economic types in Spanish 18th-century sentimental comedies. Cf. Schuchardt 2022, 220–237.

13 Cf. McCloskey 1993, 79, footnote 4.

14 McCloskey 1993, 79.

German sociologist Friederike Habermann in her study on “*Homo oeconomicus and the other*” (my trans.; “*Der homo oeconomicus und das Andere*”). Very surprisingly, despite the many studies on the concept of the *homo oeconomicus*, especially in literary studies and German philology, where the term has been very prominent, none of the research on the *femina oeconomica* in literature tries to define what an economic woman actually is. Instead, the concept seems to stand for itself with no need to be defined, since it has been widely considered simply to be the female version of the economic male.<sup>15</sup>

Of course, compared to the majority of economic men, there seem to be very few economic females to be found in literary history. In her study of German literature from Goethe<sup>16</sup> to Händler, Franziska Schößler hints at the fact that there is one single example of a female entrepreneur to be found between 1795 and 2019, and this example only appears at the beginning of the 21st century.<sup>17</sup> David T. Gies has also shown this for 19th-century Spanish theater, stating that the “[...] history of women in Spanish theatre is as much a history of absence as it is of presence, and the absence can speak very eloquently.”<sup>18</sup> In the field of theater, which is the focus of the present study, there are of course female characters, and also female dramatists. Still, in the context of Spanish literature, with the exceptions of the research done by David T. Gies,<sup>19</sup> Ana Hontanilla,<sup>20</sup> Rebecca Haidt<sup>21</sup> and Christian von Tschilschke,<sup>22</sup> they have hardly gained any attention as economic protagonists, let alone as “protagonists of production.” Of course, when we look at 18th-century Spanish theater, there are many more *virii oeconomici* (“economic men.” My trans.) than *feminae oeconomicae* (“economic women.” My trans.). Besides, just like economic women, economic men also need to be differentiated according to the economic sectors in which they work and according to the spaces of action that they work within, or rather, that they are limited to.

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15 Also in Vogl’s 2019 handbook *Literatur & Ökonomie* (“*Literature and Economy*.” My trans.), the article on the *homo oeconomicus* by Felix Maschewski does not reflect on the gender implications of the term. A concept such as the *femina oeconomica* is not even mentioned. Cf. Maschewski 2019, 160–163.

16 As to Goethe, cf. Claire Pignol’s contribution in this volume.

17 Schößler 2017, 285.

18 Gies 1994, 230.

19 Cf. Gies 1996, 451–457; 2016, 153–172.

20 Cf. Hontanilla in this volume; 2008, 48–64.

21 Cf. Haidt 1998; 1999, 33–50; 2003, 153–157; 2011.

22 Cf. Tschilschke 2014, 283–303.

This is why the present study proposes a typology of economic men and women in the 18th century. This typology is derived from the *vir oeconomicus* as a gendered concept and cannot make any claim to be universal.<sup>23</sup> On the contrary, in this study, it only applies to late 18th-century Spanish sentimental comedies. It is around 1770 when the sentimental genre begins to emerge in Spain, which is close to the so-called “Sattelzeit,” or threshold, of political economy that Llombart Rosa observed in 1776.<sup>24</sup> As sentimental comedy is as much about economy as it is about sentiments, I would rather call it *comedia económico-sentimental* or “sentimental-economic comedy.”<sup>25</sup>

So how is the *vir oeconomicus* to be defined in the context of 18th-century Spanish sentimental-economic comedy? He is a male theatrical type and a fictional product of governmentality and of the Bourbon spirit of reform. He is the point where Spanish Bourbon economic, theatrical and social reform merge and can be considered a role model of male economic behavior in the context of enlightenment: He represents a canon of antique, Christian and bourgeois virtues combined. His economic behavior and the behavior of the types deriving from him follow the “great doctrines” of Spanish and European enlightened economic thinking: While the *vir oeconomicus* type relates to “Spanish Late Mercantilism” (*mercantilismo tardío*)<sup>26</sup> and “Industrialism” (*industrialismo*),<sup>27</sup> the *vir rusticus* type relates to Spanish *agrarismo* (“agrarianism.” My trans),<sup>28</sup> a

23 Cf. Schuchardt 2022, 233–237.

24 Cf. Llombart Rosa 2006, 96.

25 For the transfer processes of the genre of Spanish sentimental comedy between England, France and Spain, its relation to the Royal Decree of 1783, its specificities, and concrete examples cf. García Garrosa 1990; 1991, 85–95; 1993, 673–692; 1996, 427–446; 2011, 7–28. On the representation of businessmen in Spanish sentimental comedy, cf. also García Garrosa’s contribution in this volume.

26 For the phases of Spanish Mercantilism cf. Ocampo Suárez-Valdés 2010, 97 f.

27 For Spanish Industrialism cf. Lluch 2000, 577–581 and Ocampo Suárez-Valdés 2012, 91–122. Inspired by the doctrine of mercantilism, the politics of industrialism aim at promoting the primary sector, that is, industry, in order not to be dependent on imported goods and to export manufactured ones.

28 For a definition of *agrarismo*, cf. Marti 1997, 193: “Si l’on devait utiliser des catégories modernes de classification, l’agronomie appartiendrait aux sciences exactes, puisqu’elle utilise la physique, la chimie, la biologie, la météorologie, etc. L’agrarisme serait classé dans les sciences humaines, comme l’économie, car c’est avant tout une perspective de l’analyse des faits et des mécanismes économiques. L’agronome est un technicien alors que l’agrariste est un penseur pragmatique” (“If one were to use modern categories of classification, agronomy would belong to the exact sciences, since it uses physics, chemistry, biology, meteorology, etc. Agrarianism would be classified in the human

school of economic thinking inspired by French Physiocracy, but inspired by the practical orientation of Spanish Enlightenment. A third male type of late 18th-century Spanish theater, the *vir faber*, relates to physical work as a virtue. In all three cases, following the enlightened idea of utilitarianism, the self-interest of those types is limited by what is good for the national whole.

## 2. The many shapes of economic males in literature

Not only in 18th-century Spanish comedies, but in literature from the Middle Ages on, economic males appear in many different shapes. The most prominent and frequent type of economic male is the merchant. We might think of Shakespeare's (1565–1616) famous *Merchant of Venice* (1600), or of George Lillo's (1691–1739) “bourgeois tragedy”<sup>29</sup> *The London Merchant* (1735). Lillo's theatrical piece is the first example of 18th-century literature turning the merchant, hitherto regarded as a suspicious person seeking only his own profit, into the type of the “honorable merchant.”<sup>30</sup> Besides the merchant, entrepreneurs and industrialists begin to appear as exemplary 18th-century economic literary types.<sup>31</sup> In contrast, from the 16th century on, suspicious economic types like the picaro,<sup>32</sup> the beggar,<sup>33</sup> robbers, bandits<sup>34</sup> and good-for-nothings<sup>35</sup> are more

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sciences, like economics, because it is above all a perspective of the analysis of economic facts and mechanisms. The agronomist is a technician while the agrarianist is a pragmatic thinker.” My trans.). According to Lluçh and Argemí 2000, 717, agronomics and physiocracy are complementary disciplines, as both intend to implement a capitalist order with agriculture at its bases.

29 McCloskey 2016, 267.

30 On the “long journey” of the merchant from “deceiver and conman” to “honorable merchant” cf. Tietz 2019, 96–117. On the concept of the honorable merchant in 18th-century France cf. Strosetzki 2019, 3–17. On the honorable merchant in Spain cf. Witthaus 2019, 143–162.

31 On the representation of the entrepreneur in 18th-century Spanish theatre cf. Schuchardt 2019, 119–142.

32 On the *pícaro* (“prankster.” My trans.) as *homo oeconomicus* cf. Cavillac 1994; Urban 2014, 195–216 and 2019, 37–49; Schuhen 2017.

33 Cf. Tietz in this volume.

34 As Jehle states (2010, 158), after the 18th century, criminals, robbers, outlaws and fools can only begin to re-enter the literary stage when the bourgeois order has been established and is thus secured.

35 Cf. Hontanilla 2016, 509–531.



frequently found. Both the “good” and the “bad” economic types show the many facets of economic males.<sup>36</sup>

What is rather surprising is the scarcity of craftsmen in literature. In medieval Germany, for instance, there are few examples of literary representation to be found, e.g. Hans “Schnepper” Rosenplüt, a chainmail-maker also famous as a writer of urban poetry.<sup>37</sup> In medieval England, craftspeople showed their artisan identity in theatrical plays that were performed on the occasion of religious processions during Christian holidays, the so-called *Civic Cycles*.<sup>38</sup> In 16th-century England, Thomas Dekker’s (c. 1572–1632) bourgeois comedy *The Shoemakers Holiday* (1599) chooses a representative of the trades as a protagonist. It seems that we find craftspeople as positive literary agents much earlier in England than in other Western European countries, where their appearance seems to be limited to the 18th century. In Spain, for instance, there are hardly any tradesmen to be found in Spanish literature until Spanish sentimental comedy begins to stage them from the 1780s on, inspired by French examples and playwrights.<sup>39</sup> As Agnieszka Komorowska has shown in her study, this is different for merchants, who already appear as protagonists in 17th-century plays.<sup>40</sup> Louis-Sébastien Mercier’s (1740–1814) play *La brouette du vinaigrier* (1774) (“*The Wheelbarrow of the Vinegar Trader*.” My trans.), for example, is adapted for the Spanish audience by Antonio Valladares de Sotomayor (1747–1820) in *El trapero de Madrid* (1782) (“*The Ragman of Madrid*”).<sup>41</sup> This play marks the beginning of the portrayal of protagonists working physically. It continues with *El carbonero de Londres* (1790)<sup>42</sup> (“*The London Charcoal Maker*”). These plays contain characters which I subsume under the type of the *vir faber*,<sup>43</sup> that is, a virtuous male working physically on a wide range of handicrafts or a small

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36 On the figure of the “good for nothing” in 19th-century Germany cf. Bauer 2016, 263.

37 Cf. Reichel 1982, 131.

38 Cf. Rice/Pappano 2015, 231. Cities where the *Civic Cycles* were performed include Coventry, Norwich and Newcastle.

39 For the staging of tradespeople in 18th-century Spanish theatre cf. Fuentes 2014, 211–232.

40 Cf. Komorowska, in print.

41 For both plays cf. García Garrosa 2012, 2 who asserts that the first performance of the Spanish version took place on September 16, 1782. On the French play and its Spanish adaptation cf. also Schuchardt 2022, 529–558.

42 For an analysis of this play, cf. Schuchardt 2022, 462–478.

43 Cf. Schuchardt 2022, 399–436.

retailer responsible for both production and sales. Our *vir faber* is rewarded for his work by riches, social advancement and / or a favorable marriage.

### 3. Women as economic agents

When we look at European literature from the Middle Ages on, women, on the contrary, mostly seem to appear as objects of men's transactions on the marriage market,<sup>44</sup> or, as Esther Schomacher put it, more rarely, as entrepreneurs on the marriage market.<sup>45</sup> At least, they seem to become such entrepreneurs in the 18th century. When we look at late 18th-century Spain, this is the time when sentimental comedy begins to stage women as brainworkers of the household, but also as physical workers. As Gies and Tschiltschke have shown,<sup>46</sup> we find two specimens of women active in the economy: a brainworker managing or morally correcting the household, that is, a *femina oeconomica* like Guiomar in Gálvez's *La familia a la moda*, and women working physically and producing something, a kind of theatrical type which I call *femina fabra*,<sup>47</sup> like the weaver Cecilia from Francisco Durán's play *La industriosa madrileña* (1789).<sup>48</sup>

Like the *vir oeconomicus*, the *femina oeconomica* also represents a gendered theatrical type that serves to instruct the audience in the main guidelines of 18th-century Spanish Bourbon economic reform. As a feminine role model, she embodies "good economy," that is, economy as imagined by Bourbon ministers like Campomanes. She furthermore represents the ideal of enlightened bourgeois Spanish femininity, which consists in the ability to show a range of fine feelings.<sup>49</sup> Prudence is her central virtue.<sup>50</sup> Spatially, she is confined to inwardness, that is, a household that she manages successfully. In this respect, the female protagonist of Gálvez's play *La familia a la moda*, Doña Guiomar, a *femina oeconomica* who

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44 For the *sainetes* of 18th-century Spanish playwright Ramón de la Cruz, this aspect has been analyzed by Schlünder, 2018, 335.

45 Cf. Schomacher in this volume.

46 Cf. Gies 1996, 451–457; 2016, 153–172; and in this volume. Cf. Tschiltschke 2014, 283–303.

47 For Cecilia as a *femina fabra*, cf. Schuchardt 2022, 608–617.

48 On Durán's play, cf. Gies in this volume and Gies 1996, 451–457. Cf. also Schuchardt 2015, 109–122.

49 Cf. Bolufer Peruga 1998, 255–257.

50 On the early theatrical representation of prudence as a feminine virtue cf. Schaefer 2018, 135. McCloskey 2007, 254 hints at the fact that Thomas Aquinas attributed *prudentia* to reason alone, while the other virtues (*iustitia*, *temperantia* and *fortitudo*, in the sense of "courage" or "bravery") applied reason to passions, according to Thomas.

comes from outside, that is, from beyond the mountains to intervene in the mismanagement of her brother's household, is an exception. The *femina oeconomica* is also a good and caring wife, which, from the perspective of biopolitics, makes her the ideal reproducer and mother.

As to the *femina fabra*, who is embodied not only by the character of Cecilia in Durán's *La industriosa madrileña*, but also by Leandra in Comella's *El pueblo feliz* (1786),<sup>51</sup> she is also virtuous, talented in her craft, and, most importantly, chaste before entering marriage, which is to compensate for the poor image of physical work in women, especially, who were mostly of low social rank. The *femina fabra* is willing to suffer, when falsely accused of being unchaste, so that others have to intervene to prove her innocence. Like the *femina oeconomica*, the *femina fabra* is caring, and thus makes an ideal wife and mother. To conclude, the *femina fabra* is valuable in a double sense, biopolitically and economically, because she is both a producer and a reproducer. The latter aspect is related to the fact that, from the 16th and into the 18th century, economists like the representatives of the School of Salamanca<sup>52</sup> and enlightened economists like Campomanes and Jovellanos had worried about a decrease of the Spanish population,<sup>53</sup> a concern that stems from an idea developed by Giovanni Botero in *Della ragion di Stato* (1589): that the prosperity of a state depends on the number of people it has. Therefore, the 18th-century policy of economic reform aimed at increasing the population. Interestingly, a decrease in population during the 18th century is not reflected by the data we have on that epoch, e.g., in the censuses.<sup>54</sup>

#### 4. Civilian heroes vs. protagonists of production

Literary historian Inmaculada Urzainqui, referring to the genre of the "spectators" in particular,<sup>55</sup> observes that, in 18th-century Spain, theater criticism in the press is totally permeated by the political ideology of reform of the Bourbon court under Charles the Third.<sup>56</sup> The spectators are the first, but not the only public

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51 Cf. Schuchardt 2022, 617–625.

52 E.g., González de Cellorigo, Sancho de Moncada, Saavedra Fajardo and Martínez de Mata. Cf. Martín Rodríguez 1999, 503, with reference to Saavedra Fajardo 1946, 508; González de Cellorigo 1600, fol. 4; Sancho de Moncada 1974, 134 and Martínez de Mata 1971, 287.

53 Cf. Martín Rodríguez 1999, 501 f.

54 Cf. Instituto de Estadística 2019.

55 Cf. Ertler in this volume.

56 Cf. Urzainqui 1992, 271.

organs to underline the importance of industry, of commerce, of merchants and of professionals in general. Physical work is encouraged rhetorically and by legislation.<sup>57</sup> The *Real Cédula* (“royal decree.” My trans.) of 1783, declares the arts, crafts, and commerce to be honorable professions.<sup>58</sup> Before that, working people were confronted with what Antonio Maravall called “deshonra legal”<sup>59</sup> from the Middle Ages on, a “state of dishonor supported by the law” (my trans.). Faced with an economy that is not able to compete with English and French productivity, especially in the textile sector,<sup>60</sup> and with a growing population demanding goods of all kinds, the new Bourbon dynasty that stepped up to reign from 1700 follows a different strategy than the Habsburgs and tries to promote industrial production and commerce. The Bourbons also undertake a theatrical reform from the 1760s on. The pyramidal hierarchical order of the Bourbon State leads to a convergence of economic reform and theatrical reform.<sup>61</sup> Theater as a popular medium of entertainment, in this context, becomes the instrument to disseminate the guidelines of the Bourbon economic and social reform, a project that implies reconceptualizing gender roles.<sup>62</sup> In late 18th-century Spanish theater, and in the subgenre of sentimental comedy especially, economic theory and political economy are now impersonated by recurring male and female theatrical types. Whereas 17th-century theater is ruled by what Díez Borque calls an “aristocratic spirit,”<sup>63</sup> we find in Spain the same staging of bourgeois virtues that McCloskey has already observed in 17th- and 18th-century England.<sup>64</sup>

The staging of economic sectors like cultivation, production and commerce by 18th-century English, French and Spanish sentimental comedies confirms Claire Pignol’s and Çinla Akdere’s remark that while economy as a discipline focuses on the abstract system of economic processes, economy is put into concrete terms in literature.<sup>65</sup> This mainly works by relating economic processes to human fate: gain, loss, desperation, happiness, love and marriage.

From the moment when theater and the propaganda of economic reform begin to merge in the genre of sentimental-economic comedy, a new type of

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57 Cf. Ocampo Suárez-Valdés and Suárez Cano in this volume.

58 Cf. Urzainqui 1992, 270.

59 Maravall 1984, 375 f. Cf. also Ocampo Suárez-Valdés and Suárez Cano in this volume.

60 Cf. Hontanilla.

61 Cf. López-Cordón Cortezo 2019, 26.

62 Cf. Urzainqui 1992, 271.

63 Díez Borque 1976, 228.

64 Cf. McCloskey 2007.

65 Cf. Pignol/Akdere 2017, 77.

hero conquers the Spanish stage: The great aristocratic warrior and conquistador is replaced by the “civilian hero”<sup>66</sup> (my trans.), a concept developed by Peter Jehle. The civilian hero comes to converge with the enlightened male ideal of the *hombre de bien* who combines reason and sentimentality.<sup>67</sup> He differs from the aristocrat due to his profession as a merchant or entrepreneur, making him a useful patriot and fruitful contributor to the national economy, while at the same time being also philanthropic, sociable, and, due to the important role of Catholicism in Spanish everyday life, a good Christian. As to his professional activities, like the *vir oeconomicus*, the “civilian hero” is a brainworker, plus he is essentially male. When staged by sentimental-economic comedy, we find his brainwork indicated on stage by desks, quills, clocks, papers and books. The stage directions, which do not seem to appear in Spanish theater until the 18th century, are very telling in this respect, e.g., in Francisco Luciano Comella’s play *El hombre agradecido*.<sup>68</sup>

From the 1780s on, we find not only civilian heroes involved in commerce, but also male and female characters involved in production processes entering Spanish stages. The work of the type that I call “protagonists of production” – like the charcoal-maker’s and the ragpicker’s – involves dirt and sweat and is physically demanding. This fact is rhetorically compensated by the plays when they proclaim the “spiritual” nobility, sometimes even the factual, but hidden aristocracy of those hardworking types. Examples of this type of plays are *El carbonero de Londres* (1790) by Valladares de Sotomayor, or *El trapero de Madrid* (1801)<sup>69</sup> by the same author.

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66 Cf. Jehle 2010, 176. The German term is “ziviler Held.” According to Jehle 2010, 183, the civilian hero is an individual “das sich von den überkommenen Gestalten des ‘vasallo’ und des ‘súbdito’ zu emanzipieren beginnt, um als Glied der clase media [sic] brauchbar zu werden” (“who begins to emancipate himself from the traditional forms of ‘vassal’ and ‘subject’ in order to become useful as a member of the middle class.” My trans.).

67 Fuentes (1999: 71) defines the Enlightenment social ideal of the *hombre de bien* on the basis of its characteristic balance of reason and emotion: “Junto a la razón y lógica, que ordena desde lo simple hasta lo complejo, existe la fuerza del sentimiento, y la simbiosis y perfecto equilibrio entre razón y emoción, caracterizaría al hombre de bien.” (“Along with reason and logic, in order from the simple to the complex, there is the force of sentiment, and the symbiosis and perfect equilibrium between reason and emotion would characterize the man of good will.” My trans.).

68 Cf. Schuchardt 2019, 124–126.

69 Cf. on this play García Garrosa 2012, 1–10.

The male and even female protagonists of production show a set of recurring virtues that they share with the civilian hero: temperance, prudence, industry, and – this is a specificity of catholic Spain – love understood as philanthropy that appears in the guise of Christian *caritas*.

In contrast to these “good economic agents” and gendered figural incarnations of the Bourbon spirit of reform, we also have the “bad economists” that I call *vir profusus* and *femina profusa* due to their tendency to imbalance and waste. As McCloskey put it in *Bourgeois Virtues*, evil is imbalance, and this is true for our gendered types of bad economists.<sup>70</sup> Our 18th-century bad economic agents waste money, material, time, other people’s patience, and emotions. This brings us to the term “economy of affects,” used by Susanne Schlünder.<sup>71</sup> Driven by greed and envy, the economy of affects of the *vir* and *femina profusi* is a bad one. Their economic incompetence meets their sinfulness, and this is where religion comes in again. This is also specific for the Spanish case. Ana Hontanilla and Rebecca Haidt have worked on the types of the *petimetre* and *petimetra*, that is, the male and female fop.<sup>72</sup> While the type of the *femina profusa* seems to be represented on stage mostly by the *petimetra*, the *vir profusus* appears in a broad range of shapes, from the *petimetre* to the heretic to the swindler. The *vir profusus* and the *femina profusa* share being unproductive in an economic and biopolitical sense. They prefer leisure and laziness to work.<sup>73</sup> And finding yourself a suitable partner is hard work, since it requires investigation, negotiation and social intelligence, which apply to none of our egocentric prodigal persons.

Together, the abovementioned good and bad economic theatrical types evoke what Witthaus has called the “anthropologization of economy”.<sup>74</sup> The central status that economy, professionalism, negotiation, production and biopolitical reproduction, but also the refusal to be (re-)productive, hold in late 18th-century Spanish sentimental comedies declares economic behavior to be the *conditio sine qua non* of the human being. Making economy human, and equating it with

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70 Cf. McCloskey 2006: 279 ff.

71 Cf. Schlünder 2018, 321.

72 Cf. Haidt 1998; 1999, 33–50; 2003, 153–157; Hontanilla 2008, 48–64. Haidt and Hontanilla focus on the *petimetra*, a negative gendered typification of excessive consumption, a figure as repellent as it is comical, targeting a variant of fashionable foppery characterized by the lavish consumption of foreign luxuries and concomitant destitution.

73 Cf. Fajen / Gelz, 2017.

74 Witthaus 2012, 293. My trans.

human virtues and vices, is the way the Bourbon political economy experiments with economic storytelling by making use of the medium of theater.

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Klaus-Dieter Ertler

## “Spectatorial” Entrepreneurs in the Moral Essays of the 18th Century

**Abstract** The moral essays of the English *Spectator* (1711–1712; 1714), edited by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, had an enormous impact on the European cultural landscape. These new forms of communication contributed to the construction of a modern reading public, where protestant morality and behavior moved to the center of discourse. The Spectators developed basic arguments fostering not only the emerging epistolary novel, but also tales about economic improvement in the preindustrial European societies. The novel *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe is an indirect result of this discursive dynamic. In our contribution, we will study the spectatorial productions of Romance speaking cultures in order to get a picture of the protagonists of this emerging economic development.

**Keywords:** Spectators, moral essays, entrepreneurs, France, Denmark, Norway, Spain

### 1. *The Spectator* as a prototype for the “spectatorial” genre

The idea of enterprise, trade and globalization was an essential part of Addison and Steele’s editorial project *The Spectator* (1711–1712; 1714). Short texts of a few pages published on a regular basis with strong elements of fiction, especially fictional auto-representation, were intended to awaken and maintain the interest of a reading public, creating the praxis of a start-up mentality by promoting a communicative and public network. In that way, the authors were keen not only to entertain their public, but also to transmit a series of moral reflections and experiences, in short to establish a public enterprise with positive financial results. Their project was planned as a genuine economic success story with an anonymous protagonist in the role of an entrepreneurial spectator, author, editor and distributor, disseminating at the same time an ethics of Protestantism and finally preparing the way of new forms of communication.

One of the main features of the moral press is the fictional representation of the spectatorial protagonists. In general, the creator of the papers remains anonymous, observing the world and offering a series of conclusions concerning his or her experiences. Very often, other voices like collaborators or letter-writers participate in these exchanges with the readers. Following this device, in the very beginning of the prototypical *Spectator* the characterization of the figure is closely linked to the economic project of the papers: “I have given the Reader just so much of my History and Character, as to let him see I am not altogether

unqualified for the Business I have undertaken.”<sup>1</sup> We find a clear justification for the “undertaking,” the “enterprise,” the “business,” the “negotium” of the moral press, although the fictional Spectator presents his readers with the theoretical side of his paper-linked life:

Thus I live in the World, rather as a Spectator of Mankind, than as one of the Species; by which means I have made my self a Speculative Statesman, Soldier, Merchant, and Artizan, without ever meddling with any Practical Part in Life. I am very well versed in the Theory of an Husband, or a Father, and can discern the Errors in the CEconomy, Business, and Diversion of others, better than those who are engaged in them; [...] In short, I have acted in all the parts of my Life as a Looker-on, which is the Character I intend to preserve in this Paper.<sup>2</sup>

In the second issue, Mister Spectator presents his club with representatives of different social functions. The representative of business appears in the person of Sir Andrew Freeport, whose worldview is characterized by advocacy for strong British leadership in the development of a global market. For Andrew Freeport, who prefers the wit of a trader to that of a scholar, trade and business are better able to resolve the problems of the world than military action. In his arguments he generally follows the proverb “A penny saved is a penny got,” expressing a key concept of protestant ethics:

The Person of next Consideration is Sir Andrew Freeport, a Merchant of great Eminence in the City of London: A Person of indefatigable Industry, strong Reason, and great Experience. His Notions of Trade are noble and generous, and (as every rich Man has usually some sly Way of Jestings, which would make no great Figure were he not a rich Man) he calls the Sea the British Common. He is acquainted with Commerce in all its Parts, and will tell you that it is a stupid and barbarous Way to extend Dominion by Arms; for true Power is to be got by Arts and Industry.<sup>3</sup>

In the spectatorial publication system, those responsible for the production and distribution of the papers play a central role. The offices of the printers and distributors are generally the main address for communication between the readership and the authors or editors. Their names generally appear in current footnotes in order to update the state of the distribution. Like the stories of Mister Spectator or his collaborators, the communication held in the printing or publishing office can generate a narrative frame – or even an independent narrative – of the moral paper. These offices constitute the marketplace of the

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1 Bond 1965, I, no. 1, 5.

2 Bond 1965, I, no. 1, 4–5.

3 Bond 1965, I, no. 2, 10.

spectatorial business. Sometimes they even have an important role in the handling of current advertisements.

The material aspects of the production of the moral paper and its economic implications constitute one of the important topics of the *Spectator*. The dissemination of ideas took place within a specific materiality, that of the loose sheet (journal, essay or weekly), which necessarily shaped or formatted these ideas. It is relevant to see how this materiality influences the writing process, circulation, censorship and reception of the journals. It was discussed in terms of commerce within a proto-economic discourse. The journals thus shaped a general reflection on the rapidly transforming society, where the rising mercantile elites pondered the status of merchandise, the spread of consumerism, and the profits and dangers of trade.

The British *Spectator*'s materiality – its paper, its conditions of manufacture and sale, its material afterlife after trade – is a recurrent entry with profound repercussions on the imitators of the periodical. The insistence on the periodical's fragile status is both a celebration and catharsis of its possible disappearance and oblivion. This strategy therefore develops into a meta-discourse wherein both reader and author are acutely aware, in the act of reading, of both the form and content of what is being read. In no. 367, Mister Spectator offers a clear-cut insight on these economic links, related to his papers:

By the Word *Material* I mean those Benefits which arise to the Publick from these my Speculations, as they consume a considerable quantity of our Paper Manufacture, employ our Artisans in Printing, and find Business for great Numbers of Indigent Persons. [...] The Materials are no sooner wrought into Paper, but they are distributed among the Presses, where they again set innumerable Artists at Work, and furnish Business to another Mystery. From hence, accordingly as they are stain'd with News or Politicks, they fly thro' the Town in *Post-Men*, *Post-Boys*, *Daily-Courants*, *Reviews*, *Medleys*, and *Examiners*. Men, Women, and Children contend who shall be the first Bearers of them, and get their daily Sustenance by spreading them. In short, when I trace in my Mind a Bundle of Rags to a Quire of Spectators, I find so many Hands employ'd in every Step they take thro their whole Progress, that while I am writing a Spectator, I fancy my self providing Bread for a Multitude.<sup>4</sup>

Another feature of the economic vocation of Mister Spectator and its scriptorial praxis can be seen in its counter-position to Catholic monks, former specialists of the global communication system. The authors and participants believe in a strategy of vivid text production, where short texts have a higher impact on the readership than voluminous books. Moral papers are therefore catalyzing

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4 Bond 1965, III, no. 367, 379–380.

circulators of ideas, promoting rapid dialogues and fostering learning by short textual impact. As the main readership is intended not to be the scholars, but the mercantile population, the texts must attain a higher degree of pragmatic dimension. The paper must circulate well in order to raise funds and guarantee the pursuit of the spectatorial project.

Mister Spectator and his colleagues admire the functional role of English commerce, whose local representation is the Royal Exchange. The famed site of trade and commerce attracts the attention of the looker-on and finds a representative in the moral papers. Spectator no. 69 follows one of the numerous nominations of the Bourse:

There is no Place in the Town which I so much love to frequent as the *Royal-Exchange*. It gives me a secret Satisfaction, and in some measure, gratifies my Vanity, as I am an *Englishman*, to see so rich an Assembly of Countrymen and Foreigners consulting together upon the private Business of Mankind, and making this Metropolis a kind of *Emporium* for the whole Earth.<sup>5</sup>

In the proto-liberal construction of the *Spectator*, the reader can also find numerous references to philosophers of European Antiquity, whose quotes are positioned as epigraphs. In no. 450, introduced by a text of Horace concerning the virtue of thinking about money, a certain Ephraim Weed addresses a letter to Mister Spectator (Richard Steele), where positive connotations of money find a prominent place:

All Men, through different Paths, make at the same common thing, *Money*; and it is to her we owe the Politician, the Merchant, and the Lawyer; nay, to be free with you, I believe to that also we are beholden for our *Spectator*. [...] Love of Money prevents all Immorality and Vice; which if you will not allow, you must, that the Pursuit of it obliges Men to the same Kind of Life as they would follow if they were really virtuous: Which is all I have to say at present, only recommending to you, that you would think of it, and turn ready Wit into ready Money as fast as you can.<sup>6</sup>

The idea of Mister Spectator as entrepreneur finds its way to the continent by the multiple translations and adaptations of the prototype.

The French *Spectateurs* amplified the British meta-discourse on materiality, highlighting the journals' ephemerality to counteract the criticism of their opponents. Writers of ephemeral journals – very often in the function of entrepreneurs – had to prove that their loose sheets, on a par with weighty volumes, were a legitimate medium to convey serious, scientifically accurate

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5 Bond 1965, I, no. 69, 292–293.

6 Bond 1965, IV, no. 450, 81; 85–86.



content. The arduous conquest of this new legitimacy can be described as the birth of the modern feuilleton. Furthermore, economic, financial, political, technical and material constraints were also expressed by writers as well as publishers, exposing and celebrating the unique features of the media through this meta-discourse.

In the Spectators of the Romance cultures, materiality and meta-materiality are linked to the existence of the journal, reflected not only by the author or editor, but especially by the reading and paying public. Through materiality the economic question is discussed as well as the problem of ephemerality and therefore of its survival. This mechanism constitutes one of the core functions in the processing of a vivid communications network. Thematically the Spectators work as a catalyst of a proto-liberal society, constantly reflecting on the roots of moral behavior within a socially dynamic system.

## **2. *La Spectatrice danoise* as an example of the multifarious reception in Europe**

One of the prominent spectators of the later period in French was *La Spectatrice danoise* (1749–1750) by Laurence Angliviel de la Beaumelle, a dynamic and entrepreneurial Huguenot from Cevennes, who emigrated for religious reasons to Calvinistic Geneva, then for economic reasons to Copenhagen, where he worked as a private teacher for a very wealthy and influential family. The young Frenchman tried to find his way in Danish society and discovered the spectatorial papers as a possible form of income. La Beaumelle was aware of the continental impact of the English prototype, well known by its numerous translations and adaptations. He opted for a French version, which could reach an international scale of reception and could be translated later to Danish and German. La Beaumelle was well informed about the local situation, even if he himself was not acquainted with the Danish language. He also knew the importance of a prominent title and chose *La Spectatrice danoise ou l'Aspasie moderne*. With this adaptation of a famous prototype, he followed the function of networking within the spectatorial dissemination process, which was characteristic for the upcoming and financially promising genre. In 1750, he travelled to Paris to network with booksellers. Even if he could sell only about twenty copies of his *Spectatrice danoise*, he was always aware of the economic impact of his writing. In the first “Amusement” of his paper, he refers to the necessity of success at the reception for his future texts:

Si, malgré toutes ces faveurs des Loix, je ne réussis pas; si mes *Amusémens*, au lieu de paroître le matin sur la toilette des Dames, ou sur les bureaux des hommes, languissent

dans la boutique de mon Libraire, je les regarderai comme détestables, & renoncerai pour toujours au métier d'écrire.<sup>7</sup>

("If I do not succeed, even with all the favors of the laws; if my *Amusements* – instead of appearing at the toilette tables of the Ladies, or on the bureaux of the gentlemen in the morning – are lying in the boutique of my bookseller, I would detest them, and I would renounce writing forever." My trans.)

Like in the spectatorial prototype, the author implements a communicational network with his/her readers and offers the address of the selling bookshop: "Je suivrai les avis de tous ceux, qui en adresseront de sensés à Monsr. G. FURSMAN qui demeure dans la ruë *Aabenraae* à Copenhague, & qui s'est bien voulu charger de mes Commissions."<sup>8</sup> ("I will follow the advice of all those who will address some reasonable advices to Mr. G. FURSMAN, who lives in the *Aabenraae* Street in Copenhagen and who was so kind to handle my commissions." My trans.) With all this information, the reader in Denmark should be integrated into the international communicational process and participate in the spectatorial project. At the end of each *Amusement*, the addresses of the commissioners are mentioned. At first, we find two addresses, and later on three: "On distribuera tous les lundis & tous les vendredis ces feuilles périodiques chez Mr. G. FURSMAN à Copenhague, ruë *Aabenraae*, & chez Mr. MENGEL, Libraire, ruë *Kiöbmagergaden*."<sup>9</sup> ("We distribute these periodical papers each Monday and each Friday at Mr. G. FURSMAN in Copenhagen, *Aabenraae* Street, & at Mr. MENGEL, Bookseller, *Kiöbmagergaden* Street." My trans.) At about the same time, La Beaumelle deploras his economic problems in a letter to his brother Jean: "Je vous avouerai que le motif qui m'anime au travail est moins le désir de m'illustrer que celui de me tirer du sein de la dépendance et de la pauvreté. C'est l'argent qui fait l'homme en ce siècle pervers."<sup>10</sup> ("I admit that the motivation for my work does not come so much from the desire to make myself illustrious than from the desire to pull myself out of dependence and poverty. It is money which makes man so perverse in this century." My trans.)

In the same letter, La Beaumelle writes an enthusiastic report about the spectatorial project:

Mes feuilles se vendent assez bien. J'en tire 12 Rixd. [...] la semaine. On va les traduire en danois. Pourvu qu'il s'en débite 1.000 exemplaires en l'une ou l'autre langue, ici ou dans l'étranger, je puis compter sur 1.200 rixd. l'année [...]. Le point est que l'ouvrage prenne.<sup>11</sup>

7 Angliviel de La Beaumelle 1749, vol. I, am. 1, 7.

8 Angliviel de La Beaumelle 1749, vol. I, am. 1, 8.

9 Angliviel de La Beaumelle 1749, vol. I, am. 1, 8.

10 Letter to Jean, August 25, 1748, s.p., cit. in Lauriol 1978, 122.

11 Letter to Jean, August 25, 1748, s.p., cit. in Lauriol 1978, 151.

(“My pages are selling well. I receive 12 Rixd. [...] per week. We will translate them into Danish. So long as 1000 copies will be distributed in one or the other language, here or abroad, I can expect 1200 Rixd. per year [...]. The point is that the paper goes public.” My trans.)

Indeed, after the 11th Amusement, the economic figures seemed to be improving and the number of selling offices doubled. Mr. Momme at the Danish Stock Exchange as well as the Bookseller of the Orphan’s House were added at the final list, and Mr. Rothe replaced M. Mendel at *Kiöbmagergaden*: “On distribuera tous les lundis & les vendredis ces feuilles hebdomadaires chez Mr. G. FURSMAN à Copenhague, ruë *Aabenraae*, chez Mr. MOMME à la *Bourse*, & chez Mr. ROTHE, ruë *Kiöbmagergaden*, ainsi que dans la Libraire [sic] de la maison des Orphelins sur le nouveau marché.”<sup>12</sup> (“We distribute these weekly papers every Monday and Friday at Mr. G. FURSMAN in Copenhague, *Aabenraae Street*, at Mr. MOMME at the *Bourse*, & at Mr. ROTHE, *Kiöbmagergaden Street*, and in the Bookstore of the Orphans at the New Market.” My trans.).

At the beginning of the 23rd Amusement, the Spectatrice asks if it is true that Poets must be poor. For her, the answer confirms the contrary. In the history of literature, many writers in Ancient Europe were wealthy and powerful, for instance Horace, Terence, Lælius, Scipion, Virgil or Seneca. In Modern Times, the situation had not changed for poets, as we can see in the careers of Boileau, Colbert, Racine, Chapelain, Rousseau, Waller and – last but not least – Addison and Pope. “On dissuade avec raison les jeunes-gens de s’addonner à la Poësie: mais, si je ne me trompe, on a tort de leur dire, qu’elle ne mène à rien.”<sup>13</sup> (“It is reasonable to dissuade young people from poetry, but, if I am not mistaken, it is wrong to tell them that it does not lead anywhere.” My trans.) The Spectatrice highlights the economic faculties of these poets, e.g. Seneca, who was governor and minister of Neron, “sans compter une demi douzaine de Millions de Rixdales, qu’il sçut amasser à la Cour”<sup>14</sup> (“without counting the dozens of millions of Rixdales he was able to raise at the Court.” My trans.).

In general, Angliviel de la Beaumelle evaluates the consequences of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in French and European Society and demonstrates the negative impact of the measures for France. In the subtext of the argumentation, the reader discovers the general entrepreneurial shift to the protestant cultures after 1685 and finds the reception and dissemination of the

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12 Angliviel de La Beaumelle 1749, vol. I, am. 11, 88.

13 Angliviel de La Beaumelle 1749, vol. I, am. 23, 177.

14 Angliviel de La Beaumelle 1749, vol. I, am. 23, 177.

*Spectator* in the same line. The migration and editorial function of Pierre Bayle represents an excellent example of this development.<sup>15</sup>

### 3. *Le Spectateur français ou le Nouveau Socrate moderne at the end of the century*

After the French Revolution, Jacques-Vincent Delacroix publishes his *Le Spectateur français ou le Nouveau Socrate moderne* (1790). In the 13th discourse, Mr. Londrelarge, a manufacturer of clothes, reports in a letter that he had to close down his factory in Lodève and dismiss all of his employees. The Revolutionary Government had forced him to do so.

MONSIEUR,

Je suis un honnête fabricant de la ville de Lodève, mes draps qui sont fabriqués avec la laine du pays, ne sont gueres propres qu'à pour habiller les domestiques; et comme la race en est perdue dans nos cantons depuis la révolution, où il n'y a pas un seul homme qui soit aujourd'hui assez à son aise pour en avoir, je me suis rendu avec vingt balles de mes draps à Paris, où il reste encore parci, par-là quelques laquais à habiller. Un honnête marchand de la rue Saint-Denis, m'achetta toute ma pacotille qu'il me paya en assignats, sur lesquels je perdis six à sept pour cent. [...] J'ai écrit sur le champ à ma maison de Lodève pour qu'elle suspendit toute fabrication [...].<sup>16</sup>

("DEAR SIR,

I am an honest manufacturer of the city of Lodève, my clothes are made with the wool of the country, are almost solely destined for dressing servants; but as this race is lost in our cantons since the Revolution, where anybody would not be pleased to have it, I went with twenty bales of my clothes to Paris, where there are still some few footmen to be dressed. An honest merchant of Saint-Denis-Street bought all my merchandise and paid me in assignats, what brought me a loss of six to seven percent. [...] I wrote immediately after to my firm in Lodève to suspend all production. [...]" My trans.)

Mr. Londrelarge's letter confirms the isotopical arguments of the 13th discourse and of Jacques-Vincent Delacroix's papers in general. This discourse is dedicated to the counterproductive reforms of the French Government, where entrepreneurs and their firms were driven out of existence by the fatal currency of the assignats. As moral papers per se and from their very beginning were integrated into a liberal process of production, based on market specific supply and demand, which determined the survival of the publications itself, the praxis of the assignats could not be a real alternative to premodern market structures. On

15 Cf. Angliviel de La Beaumelle 1749, vol. I, am. 49.

16 Delacroix 1791 [1790], discours XIII, letter 4, 256–257.

the other hand, the example of the letter demonstrates another problem caused by the structural changes of society. As the social dress code changes with the Revolution, some specific market sectors have to change too or cease activity. These effects on the economy after the Revolution also had consequences for the moral papers themselves, especially in Spain, where – with the exception of a few official papers of the monarchy of Charles IV – all press production had to be closed down by February 24, 1791.

#### 4. *El Pensador* as the first important Spectator in Spain

The first prominent Spectator in Spain was *El Pensador* (“The Thinker,” 1762–1763; 1765. My trans.) with 86 (52+34) numbers or “thoughts,” published by the Canarian author José Clavijo y Fajardo. At that time, the protestant spectatorial approach had shifted to the cultures of catholic tradition, where the papers operated in the interest of enlightened absolutism. In Spain, the Bourbon King Charles III (1759–1788) had fostered the creation of new forms of communication in order to implement a series of proto-liberal social reforms. It is clear that these papers – concerning matters of economy – did not reach the narrative levels of the French journals. But it introduced the subject and opened the way to economic thinking, although in a more traditional and general way.

Like many other Spectators in Europe, the *Pensador* was closely linked to the journalistic entrepreneur José Clavijo y Fajardo, who was at that time employed in the Royal Offices in Madrid. He was engaged to one of the French author Caron de Beaumarchais’s two daughters, who ran a boutique for French fashion in the Spanish capital and were known as the “Caronas.” A scandal broke out when he ended his engagement. As a result, Clavijo lost his government job in 1763, and the publication of the *Pensador* was interrupted for almost two years. The narration of the facts was disseminated in Europe by Beaumarchais’s *Mémoires* and later on by Goethe, whose play *Clavijo* (1774) continued the denigration of the Spanish author.

From the beginning, the *Pensador* in his function as autor and editor is conscious of the economic aspects of his work: “Aunque no me vendo, y que por consiguiente nada le importan à Vm. mis calidades, quiero que seamos amigos, y es preciso empezar por darle gusto.”<sup>17</sup> (“Even if I do not sell, and consequently you are not interested in my qualities, I would like to be friends, and it is important to start pleasing you.” My trans.) Although the journalistic entrepreneur

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17 Clavijo y Fajardo 1999, vol. I, no. 1, 13.

refers to the link between money and the existence of his papers, he prefers to highlight friendship as the basis for communication.

Following the spectatorial praxis, the *Pensador* opens an address of reference, an office, where readers can find material access to the communicational network and, if they wish, submit their texts for the press etc.: “A este fin los podrán embiar con cubierta para el *Pensador* à los hermanos Orcèl, Libreros en esta Corte, calle de la Montera; y la experiencia hará vér, que el *Pensador* no convierte en merito proprio el trabajo ageno.”<sup>18</sup> (“For that reason they can send them [texts] in a sealed envelope addressed to *El Pensador* to the Brothers Orcèl, Booksellers of this Court, Montera Street; and experience will show that the *Pensador* does not use the work of another for his own merit.” My trans.) In particular numbers, the paper follows the spectatorial tradition in indicating the selling point in a note at the end of the issue.

*Pensamiento* (“Thought,” my trans.) no. 38 consists of two letters to the director and offers a general introduction to the subject “commerce.” Following the arguments of the epistolographs, Spain still has an obligation to catch up with contemporary economic developments in Europe: “A muchos hombres he oïdo hablar de Comercio con tan poco acierto, que no he podido resistir à la tentacion de poner en forma de Pensamientos algunos de sus principios, à lo menos mas generales.”<sup>19</sup> (“I have heard so many people talking about commerce with so many deficiencies, that I could not resist the temptation to put some of its principles – at least the most general – in the form of some “Thoughts.” My trans.) Spain’s disadvantages in comparison with other European states dominate the argumentation, and diligence and idleness constitute the central line of distinction. In the papers, diligence as the missing link in Spanish society is directly linked to virtue and positive development of a society, and idleness constitutes the main fault in the nation, whose aristocratic organization brings economic stagnation and difficulties in implementing entrepreneurial structures.<sup>20</sup> One of the flourishing economic domains is the field of fashion, whose goods are imported from France and thus cannot contribute to the wealth of the nation. A famous theme in the Spanish spectators – referring also to a citation of Juvenal – is the thrifty husband and his heedless wife, whose spending on fashion exceeds the household’s economic capacity, its *oikos*.<sup>21</sup>

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18 Clavijo y Fajardo 1999, vol. I, no. 1, 21–22.

19 Clavijo y Fajardo 1999, vol. III, no. 38, 299.

20 Cf. Clavijo y Fajardo 1999, vol. III, no. 41, 363–392.

21 Cf. Clavijo y Fajardo 1999, vol. III, no. 53, 1–19.

## 5. *El Censor*, a second highlight of the genre in Spain

The second prominent Spectator in Spain was *El Censor*, with 167 issues (1781–1788) published by Luis García Cañuelo and Luis Marcelino Pereira. Like *El Pensador*, the moral papers defend the reforms of King Charles III, and offer a variety of economic questions, highlighting the economic improvement of the nation. First of all, infrastructures should be created to abolish beggary in Spain. Idleness must be banished, especially when it was linked to noble heritage. The idle aristocrat is revealed to be one of the main problems in Spanish society. In no. 22, an English traveler observes that the traditional distribution of land prevents an adequate development of wealth and contributes to the decadence of the country. In no. 52, a certain Philo-Ibero refers to this letter and offers a series of comments on the Englishman’s observations from an inside position. In the traditional Spanish system, work and diligence have lost their function and must be reintegrated in the modern class structure. Gold and metals should be linked with work and diligence, is the message. A discourse on money can be found in the 39th essay, where personal moderation seems to be the correct behavior concerning capital. The question is closely related to virtue – as it was in the English spectatorial discourse – but in the catholic environment personal self-restraint seemed to be the way to find self-fulfillment. In an allegory of the 50th discourse, the Censor shows the immovable obstacles to improving Agriculture, Industry and Trade in Spain at the time. Finally, the economic questions in the sense of a globalization are discussed by Philopater,<sup>22</sup> whose plea for trade and effort refers to the presumptions of protestant ethics. The allegorical representations of the three economic factors can be seen as a prefiguration of entrepreneurial behavior.

One of the general aspects of the Spanish Spectators can be seen in the responsible management of the household, the oikos, in which gambling, fashion and extravagant self-representation must be condemned. The cases of dilapidation are even more egregious when the capital is linked to inherited funds and spent without personal application of work or entrepreneurial interest. The aristocratic mode of self-representation leads to the most striking fault of Spanish society. With their strong interest in French fashion, women and “petit-mâtres” are shown as threats to the financial stability of the family household.

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22 García Cañuelo et al. 1989, no. 112–117, 825–940.

## 6. Conclusion

The English *Spectator* may be considered as the starting point of an international venture. Shipped to the colonies, imitated by many other European weeklies or periodicals, the *Spectator* became a global, proto-mass medium in the 18th century, where their authors, editors, printers, distributors and readers participated in a more or less profitable commercial exchange. The Spectators were aware of this function, not only at the pragmatic level, which permitted their material survival, but also at an idealistic level, when entrepreneurial themes and morals dominated the discourses. Concerning the reception and distribution of the English *Spectator* on the European continent, the first corresponding network was prepared by the Huguenot infrastructure, a population of intellectual authors and printers who had emigrated to the protestant regions of Europe and were very active in promoting protestant ethics in Europe. An entrepreneurial figure like the Spectator formed an essential element in this complex structure.

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## **Section 5 Robinsonades**



Nils Goldschmidt and Hermann Rauchenschwandtner

## Robinson Crusoe's Economy

**Abstract** The novel *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe remains the decisive economic narrative which is employed in economics textbooks for illustrative purposes, but which also promotes a certain kind of economic discourse. Böhm-Bawerk, for example, shows by drawing on Robinson Crusoe the associated connection of savings, time, and production, which is essential for modern capital theory. Thus, in the novel Robinson Crusoe is not merely a protagonist of production, but rather the discourse giver of production. Moreover, labor beyond subsistence becomes the legitimating principle of the new discipline as the *causa sui ipsius*. It is decisive, further, that *Robinson Crusoe* is a novel which tells the story of education and the forming of an economic subjectivity of how thoughts can become economic thoughts, and how feelings, beliefs, and a will can lead to an economic calculus. It thus shows how a subjectivity of the economic subject can become a prerequisite of *homo oeconomicus*.

**Keywords:** Narrative economics, economic rationality, detours of production, subjectivity of the economic subject, saving and production

### 1. The Microeconomics of *Robinson Crusoe*: The subjectivity of the subject

That Daniel Defoe's novel *Robinson Crusoe* continues to inspire the imaginations of economists and supplement the prevailing formal mathematic relations remains a puzzle (*problema*). Since the dawn of modern economics, classical and neoclassical economists have thought in tables, structures and allocations (the classical) as well as in mathematic quantities and relationships (the neoclassical). *Robinson Crusoe* is the prime example of this economic narrative, which to this very day is found in economics textbooks. A prominent example is *Intermediate Microeconomics* by Hal Varian, one of the most widely read textbooks worldwide. In it, Varian discusses the Robinsonian economy over 18 pages. Among other things, he writes:

In this economy Robinson Crusoe plays a dual role: he is both a consumer and a producer. Robinson can so spend his time loafing on the beach thereby consuming leisure, or he can spend time gathering coconuts. The more coconuts he gathers the more he has to eat, but the less time he has to improve his tan. [...] At this point, the slope of the indifference curve must equal the slope of the production function by the standard argument: if they crossed, there would be some other feasible point that was preferred. This means that the marginal product of an extra hour of labor must equal the marginal

rate greater than the marginal rate of substitution, it would pay for Robinson to give up a little leisure in order to get the extra coconuts. If the marginal product were less than the marginal rate of substitution, it would pay for Robinson to work a little less.<sup>1</sup>

This passage makes two things evident: For one, it appears as though Varian must never have read *Robinson Crusoe*; for if we have read it correctly, coconuts never appear in the text. For another, one will recognize that economists manage to make rather simple matters – such as the question: do I want to work, or do I prefer leisure? – remarkably difficult in a manner that only an economist could.

Nevertheless, this novel is not just an illustration of economic relations, but (a) a lesson on the education of an economic subject<sup>2</sup> and (b) an explanation that goes beyond a merely mathematic economics. Thus we can assert with Derrida's writings on Rousseau<sup>3</sup> that the latter, like many economists today, rejects books – for different reasons: the one (Rousseau) because the abundance of symbols leads to prejudice, and so there is almost a perverse desire at work, to imagine a world without other people<sup>4</sup> – it is well known that *Robinson Crusoe* is the only book that Émile is allowed to read, though Rousseau actually imagines this novel to be a “non-book”; the others (economists), because the abundance of mathematical symbols makes the reading of books, and thus a so-called economic dogma story, superfluous.

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1 Varian 2014, 629–631.

2 *Robinson Crusoe* is at the same time a tale of the *Ursprung* (“origin.” Our trans.) of an economic subjectivity. On the “ideology” of *Ursprung* see Macherey 2006, 268. The obligatory reading of *Robinson Crusoe* linked to Berkeley's “solipsism” with regard to the question “What affected the Europe of the emerging nation-states so profoundly in this form?” that is, in the form of *Robinson Crusoe*, still that outlined in Bahr 1984, 157–169. Contrary to the abundance of signs that make up a library of Defoe interpretations, Bahr simply maintains that for Robinson, economics means above all a reduction of signs, i.e., a semiologic economy of signs and thoughts. Bahr 1984, 157: “What affected the Europe of the emerging nation-states so profoundly in this form? The dream of a ‘simple transparency’ as opposed to the ‘mysticism of capital’? The idea of an autonomy that shifts heroism to one's own struggle with life? The absolute monarchization of every individual? Is Robinson the economic solution to the rending of the self between two narcissistic egos, the ‘divine-fatherly’ and the ‘diabolical-feminine’ so mercilessly described by Milton and Pascal? Does Robinson even offer a solution? Or does he rather describe how he suffers the violence of signs that ceaselessly push, harass, expose, overwhelm, and consume him?” (Our trans.).

3 On Rousseau, cf. the contribution of Claire Pignol in this volume.

4 Cf. Deleuze 1993, 364.

Particularly as regards a mathematic economics, what this all means epistemologically is unclear.<sup>5</sup> To not only master the rules, but to know one's way around, something must be shown. *Robinson Crusoe* is the economic projection whereby the formal relations of microeconomics can be shown. Formulae and diagrams express functions and axioms, they define an economic rationality of the subject (*homo oeconomicus*), without being able to represent the *subjectivity of the subject*. Only in the present behavioral economics is the subjectivity of the subject addressed in a particular (peculiar) psychological way. Subjectivity is a theoretical (self-confidence) and a practical self-grounding *relation to the self*.<sup>6</sup> Robinson is first practical, then theoretical.

Economic knowledge becomes evident in the discourse on Robinson Crusoe (spanning, among others, Böhm-Bawerk, Derrida, Marx, Blumenberg, Moretti and H.C. Artmann's "Robinson Grusel" and "Robinsonia"<sup>7</sup>); it becomes rational because it is emphasized from empirical abundance. In Defoe's work, principles of economics are formed based on the encyclopedic knowledge of the "Projecting Age" (Foe, Defoe). These principles are derived from the following questions: How does Crusoe recognize the *Zuhandenheit*<sup>8</sup> of the *Wozudinge*,<sup>9</sup> that is, how does Robinson acquire a technical knowledge of how capital goods, in particular, are to be produced and used? "Why does [Crusoe] *work* so much,"<sup>10</sup> although there is no competition on the island – and continue to work so relentlessly even after *comfort* has been attained? Why does Defoe's Robinson (in contrast to Tournier's) not get bored, even when his survival is assured? What

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5 Thus, it must be clarified elsewhere whether mathematics is formal, platonic or an act of intuitionism – and to what extent this affects mathematics in economics.

6 Blumenberg 1996, 451: "Der Mensch hatte begonnen, mit seinem alten Gott als der *causa sui ipsius* zu rivalisieren. Nichts anderes ergab ihm das Szenarium möglicher Autarkie als ein solches Fast-Nichts der Voraussetzungen eines Daseins wie das des überlebenden Schiffbrüchigen." ("Mankind had begun to rival his old God as the *causa sui ipsius*. No other experience provided the possibility of autarky as a near-absence of the prerequisites for existence like that of a shipwreck survivor." Our trans.) He had capital goods, at least; further, the limits of self-sufficiency are of particular concern because Robinson knows *comfort*.

7 Artmann 2015a, 605; Artmann 2015b, 455–463.

8 It is worth remembering that Derrida speaks of "Robinson Heidegger," see Derrida 2017, 66, but did Robinson know boredom? If deep "boredom" represents people, then what is Robinson?

9 Cf. Schapp 2004, 103: "Geschichte steht für den Mann" ("History stands for the man." Our trans.). *Robinson Crusoe* is archetypal for a story that represents the man Robinson.

10 Moretti 2014, 50.

preferences does he have after the “economic problem”<sup>11</sup> of absolute need (that is, bare survival) has been solved? Does Crusoe only become “rational” once he begins to *teach* Friday – and us – so that we may educate *ourselves* economically? Is self-preservation (*conservatio sui*) on the island only possible because it is a story? What institutions and rules minimize the transaction costs on the island when he returns to it? What role does probability<sup>12</sup> play, in the sense of the Bayesian probability that now predominates in economics? Why does Crusoe leave the plantation, despite extracting so much wealth from the colony? Must the structure of the colony be *shown* and *retold* in order to be able to extract yet *more* wealth? What is Crusoe’s actual “interest”?<sup>13</sup>

The novel then provides information on self-evident economic facts that are not in fact self-evident; namely, that there must be knowledge of the use of goods – and above all, when a good is a good.<sup>14</sup> What does it mean, in this context, that the value of a good is subjective? Is a property of the good a prerequisite for subjective use, or does a subjective faculty of knowledge determine whether a good is also (causally) useful *to me*?<sup>15</sup>

In a narrative sense, the novel therefore shows relationships that are simply presupposed (or concealed) in mathematical formulas or cannot be shown<sup>16</sup> – and above all, it shows that subjectivities must first be formed. This is the singular, if not insular, question of the novel in comparison to other discourses, particularly with regard to Hobbes (and Defoe was a reader of Hobbes) and Rousseau (as a reader of Defoe): How is inequality (between Robinson and Friday) possible without leading to civil war (Hobbes), decline (Rousseau) or even a master/slave dialectic of life and death (Hegel)? And that is precisely the opportunity inherent in economics, so long as there is exchange. How is an adversary possible who

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11 Keynes 2008, 21.

12 Cf. Campe 2002, 188–208; Schnyder 2009, 146–157.

13 For more on interest “as an operator of the new art of government,” cf. Foucault 2008.

14 Defoe 2008, 110: “In a Word, The Nature and Experience of Things dictated to me upon just Reflection, That all the good Things of this World, are no farther good to us, than they are for our Use [...]”

15 Today the many and varied efforts to clarify these questions are mystifying; a mere glance at the history of economic science shows the effort exerted by Carl Menger, for instance, in answering them with the use of marginal utility in the form of tables. It was only William Stanley Jevons’ mathematical formulation that goods are *more or less* useful that brought clarity to the matter.

16 Even in a foundational work of mathematical economics, the *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior* by von Neumann and Morgenstern, a story is integrated at a crucial point, namely, “The Final Problem” by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.



does not become an enemy? The novel discusses this, although it certainly also raises questions of political sovereignty. It should therefore be noted somewhat schematically that between the plantation owner and his return to the island, the horizon of an island economy opens up, which will then span the globe.

This modern foundation of the economy stands out even more<sup>17</sup> because there is no competition on the island yet.<sup>18</sup> Robinson's interest is not yet a liberal interest, essentially determined by competition. This gap would later be filled by the fantasy of economic textbooks, which linked the Pareto optimality (between Robinson and Friday, in the form of an Edgeworth box) with the amount of goods (and this, in turn, to the productivity of production).

The novel therefore gives a nearly immeasurable leeway to the ability to recognize elements of economic knowledge that are hidden from less mathematically gifted minds in the formal signs. Accordingly, narrative economics prove that a purely formal economy can only form economic subjects insufficiently. In addition to an epistemological criticism of the formal signs, the shaping of a subject into a *homo oeconomicus* is at stake, i.e. the question how a subjectivity with emotions, uncertainties, intransitive preferences, a weakness in decision-making, is managed in such a way that the subject becomes rational. So what Robinson shows is how individuals can make rational decisions in order to go beyond survival to transform the world into an economic arena, how Robinson can develop a stable, rational interest that – colonially, of course – will rule the world. Robinson thus displays a subjectivity that is essentially practical, and which he employs to fight for his interests. He knows that he is a “fool to his

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17 In contrast to Aristotle's *Economics*, both autarky and exchange value fade into the background: Robinson no longer asks how production should be limited in an autarkic manner, or which measure of comparability (*axia*) first enables exchange, but how thoughts can be *ordered* economically and rationally. Half a century before Jeremy Bentham's *tables*, the order of thoughts means for Robinson the formation of a *calculus of pleasure and pain*. Cf. Defoe 2008, 57: “I might have something to distinguish my Case from worse, and I stated it very impartially, like Debtor and Creditor, the Comforts I enjoy'd, against the Miseries I suffer'd, [...]” This economic rationality (*a calculus of Evil and Good*) is more than an accounting of goods, but the ordering of thoughts and feelings so that one's economic interest can be consistently rational. This is therefore the founding act of modern economics, because its foundation is the individual (methodological individualism) and its rationality. As is well known, for Marx this is not a question of method, but a model of bourgeois society, and the individual is a mystification (“Mystifikation”) of capital, later a personification (“Charaktermaske”).

18 Defoe 2008, 109: “There were no Rivals. I had no Competitor, none to dispute Sovereignty or Command with me.”

own interest,”<sup>19</sup> so the tale emphasizes how interest is expressed. A story is told about fickleness to underscore the importance of subjectivity in the face of many temptations.

That interest is therefore not an anthropological fact, but the result of a historical dispositive. And interest is more than mere survival. The answer to J.M. Keynes’s masterfully formulated question, what actually happens when the economic problem is resolved, that is, when survival is assured, is mapped out in Robinson’s work. What does Robinson do once he has done enough? The axiom currently presented by post-growth economists, that one should rest once one has enough, is also shown here. Robinson formulates “enough” – albeit ambiguously – in four maxims: (1) to consider where there is more joy than lack, i.e. “the bright Side of my Condition,” although there is a calculation here; (2) to compare the previous state of life with the present; (3) a logic of resentment, i.e. that others are doing badly and I am better than they are; (4) to finally know, at the end of the adventure, who one should be.<sup>20</sup>

## 2. Becoming rational

Yet this novel is not an interpretation of formal contexts, because this is no longer read as a “non-book,” but as a “tabula rasa” filled with symbols. However, it is no Cartesian *cogito*, ruminating on the “Island of Despair,”<sup>21</sup> no *genius malignus* that disturbs Robinson, but the footprint of a possible other that is uncanny – and is this sign not also himself (*ipsius*)? Thus, what is depicted is essentially a subject who survives in action, in that he relates to himself, and only orders his thoughts much later – and this is the expression of an economic rationality, namely, an economic approach to things.

Robinson is simply interpreted as a *homo oeconomicus*, who learns to deal rationally with the island world. The novel is thus a collection of signs with which the following economic aspects can be shown: (1) methodological individualism; (2) consumption; (3) technology; (4) allocation of goods; (5) intertemporal decisions on consumption, i.e. whether the entire amount of goods is to be consumed in a period of time; (6) detours of production (Böhm-Bawerk) that lead to capital goods; (7) exchange; (8) respective cost advantages of different productivities; (9) expectations; and (10) games, i.e. strategic interactions with Friday. The structure of a microeconomics textbook can be organized on the

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19 Defoe 2008, 36.

20 Cf. Defoe 2008, 111–112.

21 Defoe 2008, 60.

basis of this novel. The fact that Robinson is also the island's sovereign leads to the question which institutions and which property rights<sup>22</sup> are associated with the highest gains in welfare: plantation owners or the consuming and producing *homo oeconomicus*?

Robinson is now eager to manage his "household Affairs"<sup>23</sup> by working, saving, and orienting himself to life on the island. Mercantile economic forms of living – nefarious project-making and adventuring – are consciously rejected. The need to see to one's well-being by correcting mistaken calculations is a consistent reality in economic knowledge. It is not mercantilism, Colbertism, or German or Austrian political science that regulate what wealth is, but *the life of an individual* that measures how wealth can be generated. No sovereign, political authority, or welfare policy can dictate how this should occur; rather, a *subject* gives himself the economic maxims.

If policy developed alongside and simultaneously beneath sovereignty, as a separate area of economic knowledge,<sup>24</sup> then Robinson is policy and sovereignty in one person. He invents work as the legitimation of his rule over the island; work is thus the "*modern legitimizing principle of social power*."<sup>25</sup> It is not only work that becomes a principle, however, but also the means of work. Robinson

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22 On property rights in Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, cf. the contribution of Natalie Roxburgh in this volume.

23 Defoe 2008, 66.

24 An exemplary depiction of this new order of economic knowledge can be found in Christoph Heinrich Anthon's presentation of the Oeconomia (*Project der Oeconomic in Form einer Wissenschaft*, 1716). Cf. Vogl 2015, 35. In contrast to the sovereignty of a Leviathan, the Oeconomia occupies the center of the picture: "Bei allen Analogien in der vertikalen und horizontalen Bildgestaltung werden geradezu Antithesen zur Hobbes'schen Begriffsallegorie formuliert. So liegen zu Füßen der Ökonomie eben nicht verschiedene Praxisfiguren, die dann von einer personifizierten Staatstheorie überwölbt und dominiert würden. Es ist ganz und gar umgekehrt. [...] Es verwundert daher nicht, dass sich die Ökonomie selbst über alledem als Repräsentation aktiven Lebens erhebt und dabei (politische) 'Klugheit' ('Prudentia') und (ökonomische) 'Arbeitsamkeit' ('Labore') vereint." ("In all of the analogies in vertical and horizontal image formation, near-antitheses to the Hobbesian allegory are formulated. Thus, it is not the case that different figures of practice lie at the feet of the economy which are dominated by a personified theory of the state. Quite the opposite, [...]. It is therefore no surprise that the economy itself rises above all this as a representation of active life and thereby combines (political) wisdom (Prudentia) and (economic) industriousness (Labore).") (Our trans.). Vogl 2015, 36–37.

25 Moretti 2014, 51.

discovers a world “of tools and aids.”<sup>26</sup> The new objects of experience, i.e. goods as a prerequisite for consumption and production, are the substrate of new legal measures, namely the laws of economy.

While the objects of experience (goods, prices, trade routes, marketplaces, etc.) led to economic mercantile political knowledge around 1800, this new experience concerns Robinson himself – he has this new experience himself. Just as individuals must learn, based on various political initiatives, that they have an interest and that this is subject to certain regulations, in that needs are linked to work, production, exchange, and the market (this is also Werner Sombart’s argument in *Der moderne Kapitalismus*), so Robinson learns directly from fecklessness, mistakes, and the associated learning processes how an interest can become rational; thus, he acquires economic knowledge. Once his work overcomes the hardships of survival, he turns to his journal to reflect on this: “[...] to deliver my Thoughts from daily poring upon them, and afflicting my Mind; and as my Reason began now to master my Despondency, I began to comfort my self as well as I could [...]”<sup>27</sup>

The counter-developments are now conspicuous: If wealth, in the mercantile and especially the social economic discourse from a certain development – based on the *security* of social and economic behaviors – is connected with *imagined* needs<sup>28</sup> that go beyond the truly necessary, “real” needs, then Robinson is known to desire nothing: what drives him is, quite simply, *comfort*.<sup>29</sup>

### 3. Robinson Crusoe as a protagonist of saving and production

Although Robinson objectively has nothing but time, this is intrinsically linked to his labor and production: The choice of when and how much he works also determines when he does not work, i.e., when he has free time. Interest, as an expression of an economic calculation, is thus always associated with opportunity costs. Although he thinks of credit and debit in terms of *Good and Evil*, costs that arise because alternatives cannot be chosen at the same time – opportunity costs – are even more important. This matters most because he cannot consume and not-consume at the same time. And not-consuming means saving: saving is

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26 Blumenberg 1996, 450.

27 Defoe 2008, 57.

28 Cf. Rauchenschwandtner, in press.

29 Defoe 2008, 109: “In the first Place, I was remov’d from all the Wickedness of the World here. I had neither *Lust of the Flesh*, the *Lust of the Eye*, or the *Pride of Life*. I Had nothing to covet; for I had all that I was now capable of enjoying.”

therefore clearly the ultimate occurrence in the text. This does not mean saving amounts of money – which Robinson also does, and which is irrational at zero interest – but saving as savings, as a prerequisite for productivity growth.<sup>30</sup> Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk, the founder of Austrian capital theory, demonstrates through an interpretation of *Robinson Crusoe* what saving is. Saving is *not* the collection or accumulation of capital; rather, saving is an intertemporal decision: One only saves when one chooses to forego consumption. The production of tools to work more efficiently necessitates saving. In this way the emergence of capital goods can also be shown. As Böhm-Bawerk has noted:

Suppose there is such wealth of berries that the result of nine hours' gathering is sufficient to support life, while ten hours' gathering gives such a return as to guarantee a supply amply sufficient to maintain Crusoe in health and strength. Obviously, he has now a choice between two lines of conduct. Either he may take advantage of the opportunity thus offered to complete his provision, and consume each day the fruits of an entire ten hours labour – in which case it is perfectly clear that he has now no time and strength left to make a bow and arrows; or, although the productive power at his disposal would enable him to live better, he may content himself with mere subsistence, which, as we said, can be provided by the nine hours' labour of gathering; then, and then only, has he a tenth hour free in which to make weapons for future use. This amounts to saying, in other words, that, before capital can actually be formed, the productive powers necessary to its making must be saved by encroaching on the moment's enjoyment.<sup>31</sup>

Saving is thus the reason Robinson was first able to appear prominently as *homo oeconomicus* (according to Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk). Economic rationality is therefore time-economy, because Robinson learns to reckon with the profits of the future. It is not the *virtue* of saving, which tries to assert itself against the sins of avarice and waste, and which is a dramatic occurrence of his time, but a *calculation* of saving that opens the new horizon of economics. Without interest or debt, Robinson learns to include future yields in his calculations. No heteronomous commitment to a believer forces the individual into the rationally “unabänderliches Gehäuse”<sup>32</sup> (“immutable corpus.” Our trans.) of capitalism; it

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30 At this point too, the insight is not purely economic, because the fact that there is grain at all is a miracle of nature. Cf. Defoe 2008, 67: “But after I saw Barley grow there, in a Climate which I know was not proper for Corn, and especially that I knew not how it came there, it startl'd me strangely, and I began to suggest, that God had miraculously caus'd this Grain to grow without any Help of Seed sown, and that it was so directed purely for my Sustenance, on that wild miserable Place.”

31 Böhm-Bawerk 1891, 102.

32 Weber 2013, 79.

is rather the decision as a choice that justifies economic rationality. None of the many and varied educational histories of successful or unsuccessful economic development (from Wilhelm Meister to the teachings in Stifter's *Nachsommer*<sup>33</sup>) has the particular clarity of a calculation on whether to consume or not to consume.

Few would ponder the portrayal of Robinson if he were to sink into unprofitable leisure.<sup>34</sup> *Robinson Crusoe* is therefore not an illustration or an example, but a narrative that provides food for thought even to those with little formal education. For Böhm-Bawerk, Robinson takes the economic stage to demonstrate for the first time that saving is necessary. But why save? To be more productive. Why work so much? To shape oneself as subjectivity, as *causa sui ipsius*, to bring the modern *conservatio sui* to the economic notion. This work also emerges immanently from subjectivity *without other people* and takes *comfort* as a vanishing point.

Robinson shows an economic rationality consisting of the following structural elements: work, beyond what is necessary; and intertemporal consumption with reference to the capital stock. That is why time is also a resource for Robinson, requiring decisions based on opportunity cost, and for the first time also opening up an astonishing question: What about the time that remains outside production and exchange? This, according to Blumenberg, is time that must be expended on pastimes. Even if there is enough time – and Robinson has a lot of time – it still needs to be allocated, because leisure is costly, since no work gets done. The adventurous life, so often regretted as a thoughtless life subject to chance, must be corrected in accordance with a comprehensive calculation. Coincidence and the associated probabilities must also be taken into account.<sup>35</sup> The century of probability (from the Bernoullis to Thomas Bayes) does not exist outside of the economic discourse. Just as it is the main task of mercantile policy to prevent happenstance in the name of *security*, this is also an essential concern for Robinson.

Robinson also demonstrates that a second narrative structures this form of economic subjectivity, because upon returning to his island (in the second part), he is no longer a subject who sets the conditions of his own labor, but a well-meaning despot who grasps at the sovereignty of politics and sets the social

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33 On the efforts to give subjects an educated bourgeois narrative, in accordance with which the spirit, i.e. the subjectivities, would be formed, cf. Sprengel 2020, 328–358.

34 Tournier 1992.

35 Defoe 2008, 55: “I would provide for the Accidents that might happen, [...]”

rules: So is the bourgeois model (work, saving, rational expectations, i.e. time and gravity) just a passage to becoming again a colonial ruler, with a certain economic education and by all accounts benevolent?

At the same time, reconsidering Robinson Crusoe also implies for us economists that we should not reduce him to a reductionist economizer; in other words, we should not make him into an economic clown, but should take him seriously as a subject within his environment. No one has done this as well as Gustav Schmoller, a key figure in the so-called "Historical School" of political economy and a critic of an economics which remains on a formal-deductive level. Expounding on the work of the Austrian economist Carl Menger, he notes: "Who wants laws, Menger says, must abstract. I respond to that: all thinking and understanding of course rests on abstraction; but it is important to abstract correctly, so that as a consequence of our abstractions economic truths emerge, not farcical phantoms, dreamy accounts of Robinson, which would seek to replace genuine economic examination and the truth."<sup>36</sup>

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36 Schmoller 1888, 283.

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Urs Urban

# The Literary Genealogy of the Working Man: From Early Modern Castaways and Settlers to Robinson Crusoe

**Abstract** Though Robinson Crusoe is probably the first literary protagonist of production, he is not the first to be shipwrecked on an island where he must decide how to make a living. On the contrary: Shipwreck is, at least since the beginning of the early modern period, an important theme in literary texts, and actually sets the whole narrative in motion. What his precursors – among them the German picaresque *Simplicius Simplicissimus*, the Spanish sailor *Pedro Serrano* and the French settler François Leguat – do, once they find themselves stranded, differs significantly from the choices Crusoe makes to emancipate himself from fortune and conquer his environment. This article focuses on the differences between the respective modalities of action, in a quest to understand what is needed to become – like Crusoe and so many others from the 18th century on – a protagonist of production.

**Keywords:** work, *Simplicius Simplicissimus*, *Pedro Serrano*, François Leguat, *Robinson Crusoe*, emancipation

## 1. Work as a medium of emancipation

The literature of the 18th century decisively contributed to the emergence of the notion that work can enable the working man to emancipate himself from domination. In the year 1765, Denis Diderot began his novel *Jacques le Fataliste*, in which he demonstrates how domination can be undermined when the servant actively engages with adverse fortune (*fortuna adversa*), leading to a dialectic inversion of the master-servant relationship. Hegel, as is generally known, readopts this idea and makes it theoretically productive by showing how the servant, through his work, is finally revealed to be the actual master (just as the master, through his unproductivity, becomes the servant), and thus how work effects (what Foucault would call) a process of subjectivation that generates the subject of work, as well as its object.

Now once the subject no longer is subjugated to work, but subdues its environment by means of that work (thus making it “disposable,” as Hartmut Rosa would say), it begins to understand that it is itself able to act – and, henceforth, to conceive itself as the protagonist of its own life story. Work thus acquires a positive significance and can no longer be considered mere toil or trouble, but a

medium of emancipation (even though this positivity reverts to negativity again, once the subject positions itself above the world of things at the cost of its environment: in other words, at the cost of its own nature<sup>1</sup>).

The entry *travail* (“work.” My trans.) in volume XVI of the *Encyclopédie*, which appeared in the same year, 1765, takes this ambivalence into account; it says that although man is “doomed” to work, due to the necessity of making a living, he also has his work to thank for his serenity, his reason and (perhaps) his virtue. Work is the “occupation journalière à laquelle l’homme est condamné par son besoin, & à laquelle il doit en même tems [...] sa sérénité, son bon sens & sa vertu peut-être”<sup>2</sup> (“daily occupation to which man is condemned by his need, and to which he owes at the same time [...] his serenity, his good sense and his virtue perhaps.” My trans.). And further: “La Mythologie qui le considéroit comme un mal, l’a fait naître de l’Erebe & de la Nuit”<sup>3</sup> (“The Mythology, that considered it an evil, made it the offspring of Erebus and the Night.” My trans.). The allusion to the mythological origin of the negative connotation suggests – precisely by leaving that conclusion unsaid – that it is time to take work out of the darkness, to unveil its emancipatory potential in the light of reason, so to speak: the working man is not only productive, but is acting reasonably and righteously as he works.

However, this positive reappraisal of work requires what Critical Theory<sup>4</sup> calls “instrumental reason”, which converts man’s environment into an object of his action, and in that way, transforms him into the subject of his work. Thus, says Vilém Flusser, the thing becomes the condition (or perhaps better, the prerequisite) of his being: “Die Dinge meiner Umgebung sind meine Bedingung”<sup>5</sup> (“The things of my environment are my condition.” My trans.). This insight is also due, not least, to literature: It is in the very centre of Daniel Defoe’s 1719 novel *Robinson Crusoe*.

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1 This is the central theoretical figure of what Horkheimer and Adorno call the “dialectics of enlightenment”: In the first chapter of their book, the example of Ulysses tying himself to the mast so as not to succumb to the siren’s song is supposed to show that the rational approach to the world turns dangerous as soon as it presupposes the suppression of irrational (such as bodily) impulses, because these impulses inevitably return and cause trouble. Adorno/Horkheimer 1947, 50–87.

2 *Encyclopédie*, 567–568.

3 *Encyclopédie*, 567–568.

4 The aforementioned Adorno and Horkheimer, for instance.

5 Flusser 1993, 9.

## 2. Work as a medium of oppression

At the beginning of the early modern period, work primarily means drudgery or “travails”: The *Trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*, for instance, are adversities, obstacles in the protagonists’ path, which repeatedly defer the fulfilment of their love until they finally find one another (as well as God).<sup>6</sup> This conforms to the definition listed in the *Diccionario de la lengua española*, in particular for the use of the word in its plural form: “penalidad, molestia, tormento o suceso infeliz”<sup>7</sup> (“penalty, nuisance, torment or unhappy event.” My trans.), a meaning etymologically based on the Latin word *tripalium*, an apparatus used to punish slaves.

But we should also keep in mind the *pícaro* (“prankster.” My trans.) who does everything to meet his own needs without resorting to work, and who acts, in this respect, exactly in the same way as the *escudero* (“squire.” My trans.), who would rather starve than produce anything by his own hand; although the *pícaro*, unlike the *escudero*, does not risk losing his honour when he asserts his own interests at the expense of others.<sup>8</sup> The *pícaro* generally gets what he needs by other means, such as fraud or theft (or, if he is a she, a *pícaro*, makes her own body the object of economic practice,<sup>9</sup> which was not considered a form of “work,” as is today). Now, if the *pícaro* does not work, that is primarily due to the lack of opportunity – for he is neither a peasant, cultivating the soil, nor an artisan, living by the work of his hands. Instead he belongs to that “mass of free proletarians” which, according to Marx, “was hurled on the labour market by the breaking-up of the bands of feudal retainers.”<sup>10</sup> It is no coincidence that the picaresque novel originates and prospers in that very period in which Marx situates the incubation phase of early modern capitalism: “The prelude of the revolution that laid the foundation of the capitalist mode of production, was played in the last third of the 15th, and the first decade of the 16th century.”<sup>11</sup> This makes the *pícaro* an early candidate for hiring himself out in working contexts that “convert producers into wageworkers” – but that do not yet exist, or at least not in

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6 For a first but differentiated approach to Cervantes’s novel cf. Gerhard Poppenberg’s afterword to the latest German edition (Poppenberg 2016).

7 Real Academia Española.

8 As he does in what is generally considered the first picaresque novel, *Lazarillo de Tormes* (anon. 1554).

9 Which makes *Justina* and her ilk “daughters” of the *Celestina* (implicit in the title of Salas Barbadillo’s 1612 novel, *La hija de la Celestina*).

10 Marx 2011, 383.

11 Marx 2011, 383.

sufficient measure, particularly in Spain: “The proletariat created by the breaking up of the bands of feudal retainers and by the forcible expropriation of the people from the soil, this ‘free’ proletariat could not possibly be absorbed by the nascent manufactures as fast as it was thrown upon the world. [...] They were turned *en masse* into beggars, robbers, vagabonds, partly from inclination, in most cases from stress of circumstances.”<sup>12</sup> The result is a proliferation of what Bernhard Siegert calls new “mobility-types,”<sup>13</sup> like pilgrims, mercenaries and rogues, who undermine the stable order of society, precisely by setting it in motion: and so, by means of spatial practice, produce a new space, which is a space of mobility (and increasingly replaces the old space of order). For this, they need money, which establishes that very “smooth space” in which mobility can be put into effect; if it gets lost (stolen, for instance, by bandits), they see themselves, at least temporarily, heavily constrained in mobility (as is the case in Cervantes’s novella *Dos doncellas* [“*Two maidens.*” My trans.], to give but one of numerous examples).

On closer inspection, however, there *are* situations in which the *pícaro* works – or at least, seems to work. Thus, at the end of his life story, we find *Guzmán de Alfarache*, protagonist and narrator of Mateo Aleman’s novel (1599/1605), on board a galley, where he serves as an oarsman. Yet this is a kind of compulsory labour, to which he is sentenced as a consequence of his parasitical mode of existence (his unproductivity), and which, therefore, he does not undertake of his own free will, and for which he is not remunerated. In this case, the dispositive of punishment overlies work in a way that entirely neutralizes its emancipatory potential. This is supposed to fix, to discipline and to make productive the *proto-proletarian* mobility-types set free from the feudal order: “The fathers of the present working class were chastised for their enforced transformation into vagabonds and paupers.”<sup>14</sup> However, the compulsory labour of the oarsmen *is* actually productive, insofar as it transforms physical strength into energy that propels the ship (the “swimming house,” Cervantes calls it in his novella *Licenciado Vidriera*<sup>15</sup> (“*The Lawyer of Glass.*” My trans.) on its journey to the New World: and into a global market.

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12 Marx 2011, 387.

13 Siegert 2006, 9 ff.: “Mobilitäten, solche und solche” (“Mobilities, such and such.” My trans.).

14 Marx 2011, 387.

15 The *licenciado* (“lawyer.” My trans.) himself gets to know “la extraña vida de aquellas marítimas casas” when he starts his journey through Southern Europe (Cervantes 1980, vol. II, 51).

Though disdained as a means of meeting one's own needs in ancient times, in the Middle Ages work came to be seen as agreeable to God, but not absolutely necessary from a religious or economic point of view: Those who were poor because they could not or did not want to work could always count on the charity of those who were better off.<sup>16</sup> This is still more or less true at the beginning of the early modern period – even though theorists of economic life and project makers (such as the one critically mentioned by Berganza, the dog, in Cervantes's novella<sup>17</sup>) are starting to realize that work is essential for the wealth of a nation. Thus, the *pícaro* only works if he has to – because he cannot get what he needs by other means. Conversely, if he does work, it is not to emancipate himself from a heteronomy of political or economic order. This clearly appears as soon as he *could* do so, because he has *exceptional* opportunities to try out new self-techniques and cultural practices, unhindered by any social constraints while doing so. When this opportunity arises, he does not benefit from it: Where he most approaches his successor, debarking, like him, on an island that is primarily a space of possibility, he does not pursue the path that the latter will take. Unlike Robinson Crusoe, he does not reinvent himself as a project maker or a protagonist of production and thus, so to speak, as a *homo oeconomicus*.

### 3. The possibility of an island I: *Simplicius Simplicissimus*

We are speaking here of the exceedingly simple-minded Simplicius, protagonist and narrator of Hans Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen's 1668 novel (or rather 1669, for the last volume of the novel under discussion).<sup>18</sup> Like his Spanish forerunner Guzmán de Alfarache, he too boards a ship – albeit voluntarily and as a financially solvent passenger. Also unlike Guzmán, of whose whereabouts

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16 For a far more differentiated approach to this issue cf. Manfred Tietz's contribution in the present volume.

17 The project maker, mocked by the two dogs, comes up with nothing less than “un memorial” (“a writing.” My trans.) that promises “la total restauración de sus [del rey] empeños” (“the full restoration of his [the king's] undertakings.” My trans.) Cervantes 1980, vol. II, 391. For a detailed study of the figure of the project maker in *Quijote* as well as in Cervantes's *Novelas* and other narrative texts of the early 17th century cf. Perdices de Blas/Redder 2006.

18 Müller (2014, 151) states that the picaresque novel – at least Grimmelshausen's – thus ends in the *Robinsonade*. Maresová 2018, too, tries to establish a parallel between the *pícaro* and the castaway. But though shipwreck actually is a motif in both cases, it does not lead to the same results: Once ashore, Simplicius does not do what Robinson will do later on. In other words: Simplicius is not Robinson because he does not work.

in the New World the story reveals nothing (as if the New World was a wholly empty space of imagination into which one disappeared), *Simplicius* tells us where his journey leads him: He shipwrecks and ends up on an island, together with another castaway, a carpenter. What happens here can hardly be read, retrospectively, otherwise than against the background of the story of Robinson Crusoe, who, on the September 30, 1659, washes up on an island, where he will remain for 28 years.

Against this background, the current *topoi* of the shipwreck narrative are easily recognizable: the lonesomeness of the protagonist, naked and without means, who finds himself exposed to an environment where he is constrained to act in order to survive, and possibly cohabit with others. On closer inspection, however, the very trope that will later make the shipwreck narrative so attractive (in the form of the *Robinsonade*) does not appear in *Simplicius* at all: That is the possibility to leave a civilization experienced as problematic, and to benefit from the state of exception to transform what had only seemed imaginable as a utopian space of imagination<sup>19</sup> – the island<sup>20</sup> – into a concrete living space or *Lebensraum* (Michel Foucault, explicitly in relation to the overseas settlements, calls this a “compensatory heterotopia,” “another real space, which is as perfect, accurate and well-regulated as ours is orderless, wayward and confused.”<sup>21</sup> My trans.) *Simplicius* is not interested in this at all – only in quenching his thirst, appeasing his hunger and neither getting wet nor freezing while he sleeps. The fact remains: The *pícaro* only works, or more generally only starts to become active, if he must do so to satisfy vital needs – because his parasitism, in the absence of a host organism, has no target. To work, beyond meeting his basic needs, in order to put the world at his disposal or even to re-establish the level of civilization he has lost – as Robinson Crusoe will do – never enters his mind, and probably never would.

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19 As, for instance, in Thomas More’s philosophical conception of an ideal community (Morus 1516).

20 Gilles Deleuze makes the island a theoretical figure. As such it is, first of all, an object of our dreams: “To dream of the islands means to dream that one begins again from zero, that one creates something new, that one starts all over again.” (My trans.). Deleuze 2003, 11. For him this is exactly what Robinson Crusoe does not do, as he does little more than reconstruct “bourgeois everyday life based on capital” (my trans.) – without “inventing anything” (my trans.). Deleuze 2003, 14.

21 Foucault 1967, 45.

#### 4. The possibility of an island II: *Pedro Serrano*

The general practice of starting the history of the Robinsonades with Robinson Crusoe obscures the fact that its protagonist, precisely in his quality as a project maker and a ‘protagonist of production’, may be Defoe’s invention, but his literary genealogy dates back to the shipwreck narratives (as we find them in the Greek-Byzantine novel, for instance in Cervantes) and travel literature of the early modern period.<sup>22</sup> A look at this genealogy offers insight into both the disposition of the respective agents, and the modalities of their activity – and it is precisely because Crusoe’s forerunners behave differently that the peculiarity of *his* behaviour comes into view.

Thus, already in the Spanish literature of the early 17th century, we encounter a shipwreck survivor who ends up on an island where he finds himself exposed to a completely hostile environment. In his *Historia general del Perú* (“*General History of Peru*.” My trans.), the second part of the *Comentarios reales* (“*The royal commentaries of Peru*”<sup>23</sup>) published in 1617 (the first volume appeared in 1609), Garcilaso de la Vega, called “the Inca”,<sup>24</sup> relates a short story titled *El naufragio de Pedro Serrano* (“*The shipwreck of Pedro Serrano*.” My trans.). The shipwrecked Serrano swims to an island that the narrator describes as a nameless wasteland: an empty space, in which the castaway, in his own name and therefore, regardless of conventions and laws, solely responsible for his actions, can and must become active. The environment to which he is exposed offers little that

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22 Jaroslava Maresová’s genealogy of the shipwreck narrative, in addition to well-known and by now canonical texts like Cabeza de Vaca’s *Naufragios* (“Shipwrecks.” My trans.) and the anonymously published report on the 1552 shipwreck of the São João (which became a bestseller and found its way into Bernardo Gomes de Brito’s famous *História trágico-marítima* [*Tragic maritime history*.” My trans.], published in 1735), includes a letter from a certain Maestre Juan, whose report on a shipwreck in 1528 off the Serrana Bank (Ledezma 2010) is considered the most important pre-text of Garcilaso’s story of Pedro Serrano (Maresová 2018, 325–326). Jörg Dünne imputes to the shipwreck relation the function of a “semantic contingency-management” (Dünne 2011, 178. My trans.) and, in addition, considers it poetologically as the “primal scene of early modern subject-narration” (179. My trans.); however, he is explicitly not interested in what happens on the island after the shipwreck, nor in “the narrative arrangement of the reconstitution or the failure of the order of civilization” (My trans.), but rather in the narrative productivity of the gap between order (the map) and practice (the actual journey that ends in shipwreck). Cf. also Wolf 2013 and Klotz 2006.

23 For the English translation cf. Garcilaso de la Vega 1688.

24 For an introduction to Garcilaso’s life and work cf. Gumbrecht 1994, 287–289.

allows him to survive: The soil is infertile and produces nothing edible, nor is the wildlife suitable for consumption – so that he finds barely anything on which to subsist. Later, with the aid of a knife he brought to the island, he manages to kill turtles whose blood permits him to quench his thirst and whose flesh appeases his hunger. He collects rain in their carapaces and thus can provide himself with water. Eventually he even succeeds igniting a fire, which not only enables him to cook his food, but also to draw the attention of passing ships.

The passage from the raw to the cooked maybe, here as well, indicates a cultural practice with a certain civilizing function; though Serrano never moves beyond this primitive level of civilization. For this reason, the narrative as well finally stagnates, at least this first part, which is about the practices of food procurement. Though these practices are called, again and again, *trabajo* (“work”), they are not the kind of work that would emancipate the subject from its environment and place it above the object of its work, but little more than rather primitive cultural techniques, which Pedro Serrano uses with great difficulty, in order to survive and thus to preserve his “naked life.” It is only thanks to his “efficiency and inventiveness” (my trans.) – “con su industria y buena maña” – that he can succeed. But this is anything but “sovereign” (as is, later on, the behaviour of the protagonists of François Leguat’s travelogue, the “eight kings of the island”): Far from “deciding on the exception”, Pedro Serrano puts into practice a very low-threshold activity, generating nothing more than what he absolutely needs. He exerts maximum effort for minimal result: the preservation of his “naked life” (“se vió como nació”: “he saw himself as he was born.” My trans.).

Eventually, a second event (after the initial event: the shipwreck) interrupts this existential and narrative routine, namely the arrival of another castaway. This event forces Pedro Serrano (as well as the newcomer) to think about how he should face this Other: If the central problematic in the first part of the story was the (laborious) preservation of life and the very primitive techniques it requires, now the challenge is living together, and that means deciding what significance to ascribe to the Other and to the Other’s life. Both struggle to assess the other’s sudden appearance – and, first of all, to identify him. Pedro Serrano at first believes the newcomer (“el huésped” – the “guest.” My trans.) to be the devil, who has come in disguise to lead him into temptation (as will happen to Simplicius, who is haunted by the devil in the form of a woman), and the guest imputes the same to him. Terrified, Pedro Serrano loudly begs God for assistance, whereupon the Other identifies him as a fellow Christian and intones the *credo* in order to communicate a sense of security to the recluse. In the name of God, they recognize each other as fellow human beings or, more precisely, as Christian human beings. This is all that is needed for them to tacitly agree not to



infringe on each other's life and to share henceforth their common destiny: For if the Other, as is the case here, is recognizable as an *alter ego* whose humanity is beyond question, one must observe the biblical prohibition on killing. The question raised in this way – how to know when someone is a human – is vital not only for the further plot development (which would possibly proceed in another way if Pedro Serrano had encountered someone whose humanity he considered questionable, instead of a fellow Christian) but also, in a more general way, for the anthropological classification of the inhabitants of the New World – as had been discussed half a century before, during the so-called (and well known) controversy of Valladolid, when Bartolomé de las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda went head-to-head, arguing about whether the natives had the right to claim human dignity, or if they were closer to animals, and therefore could be forced into compulsory labour.<sup>25</sup>

The end of Garcilaso's story is interesting: The two castaways finally leave the island after having spent seven years there. Back in Europe, Pedro Serrano travels from Spain to Germany, where he hopes to meet the Emperor. On his way he reports on his experience on the island; in order to add credibility to his tale, he has retained his savage appearance and as such he embodies an uncanny mix of familiarity and strangeness, so his audience feels well entertained and pays him richly for his performance. When he finally comes to the Emperor and tells him too of his adventure, the latter awards him a considerable lifelong pension. Thus, he is compensated for what he has suffered and henceforth his survival is assured, without his ever having worked, or having to work anymore. It is clearly the matrix of salvific history that underlies this story: It tells us that he who gives himself up to providence (that is, to what has been provided for him) and accepts contingency, will be indemnified for it later and elsewhere (by future salvation). Economically speaking, that means seeing actual loss as future benefit. This is nothing less than the literary illustration of the principle of works righteousness (which does not equate good behaviour with productivity) – and is, therefore, quite far from the initially mobilized worldview of Enlightenment, which conceives work as a medium of emancipation and self-empowerment.

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25 Cf. Todorov 1985, 183 ff.

## 5. The possibility of an island III: François Leguat

About a hundred years later, things have changed. We should at least briefly mention François Leguat's 1707 travelogue,<sup>26</sup> because it transcends the simple shipwreck narrative and sets a scene that anticipates the *Robinsonade* in some ways. On the April 30, 1691, François Leguat and seven other Huguenot emigrés (who had to leave France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes) debark on the island of Rodrigues, not far from La Réunion in the Indian Ocean. The colonists immediately set about occupying the seemingly empty space, building houses and cultivating the land. Like Robinson, they make use of all sorts of tools that they have brought to the island. With the aid of this equipment, they have everything they need to survive, and they benefit from the island's natural resources; fishing and hunting, collecting and harvesting what nature provides. Their survival, Pedro Serrano's only preoccupation during seven years, is never at stake: Sovereignly, they dominate their environment as they convert it into the object of their work. And work confers upon them at the same time (just as later described by the *Encyclopédie*) the moral maturity needed to live together in a way that does not permit one to assert his interests at the expense of another, and thus come into conflict with the community.

What is happening here is that a subject, by means of its work, subjugates its environment and makes it the object of domination. Thus, it is no surprise that the second edition of the German translation of Leguat's travelogue (first translated in 1709), published in 1723, is released under the title *The French Robinson*. Apart from that, however, this French Robinson is much less a *homo oeconomicus* than the English one. If Locke, in the very year that Leguat leaves Amsterdam, asserts that in converting the soil into the object of his work, man makes it legally his own, this "liberal fiction," as Joseph Vogl puts it, of a right of property acquired by work, is completely foreign to the French colonists: The question of property just doesn't enter their minds – perhaps only because they consider it unquestionably their natural right to take possession of the island, and there is no Other to dispute this right. Unlike Crusoe, they see no reason to differentiate between their own space and a space of the Other, and thus to institute the very biopolitical distinction that will be so decisive for the economic man of the *Robinsonade*, once he starts to make life productive. The French Huguenots feel no compulsion toward progression or expansion, unlike Crusoe, whose enterprise turns out to be genuinely imperialistic: Just because he *can*,

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26 Cf. Leguat 1707, as well as Jean-Michel Racault's very instructive introduction (Racault 1995).

he develops ever more differentiated cultural techniques, which confer an ever more complex level of civilization on his household. The French colonists, on the other hand, just stop once the houses are built and the food is on the table, and they thank God for the favour he has accorded to them. This is why they start to feel bored – a problem Crusoe, moving from one project straight to the next, would never have.

This is also why they stay on this side of the capitalist dispositive: because for Crusoe and his successors, it is this very differentiation of cultural techniques, and the documentation, by means of specific notation systems, of what they know about these practices and the subjects who execute them, in order to ultimately install a government, that makes life itself productive. If this is unthinkable in Garcilaso and not thought of until the end in Leguat, it is they who articulate the question that will be answered by Crusoe and all the other protagonists of production we will meet, later on, in the *Robinsonades*.

## 6. Conclusion

The protagonist of production must be imagined as someone who *works*, not only to make a living, but also, and perhaps primarily, to rise above the objects of his labour. Once he dominates the process of production – owing his status as an active subject to the work he executes upon an object – he takes the leading role in that process and becomes, so to speak, its protagonist. In other words: The protagonist of production becomes the subject of work from the moment he finds himself no longer subjected to work, but himself subdues the environment in which he is embedded: just as the divine commandment enjoins him to do.

Now if, in this respect, Robinson Crusoe seems to be the first *literary* protagonist of production, he is by no means the first to be shipwrecked on an island where he must decide how to make a living – on the contrary, shipwreck is, at least since the beginning of the early modern period, an important trope of literary texts, which actually sets the whole narrative dynamic in motion, both on the level of the *histoire* and on that of the *discours* (which is why Jörg Dünne is perfectly right in correlating the “birth of the narrator’s voice” with shipwreck<sup>27</sup>). But if, here too, the island is a space of possibility (just as narration itself is), then Crusoe’s precursors, for their part, fail to make use of the opportunity to try out new self-techniques and new cultural practices: It never even comes to mind – neither to a castaway like Simplicius Simplicissimus or Pedro Serrano, nor to

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27 Cf. “Schiffbruch und die Geburt der Erzählerstimme” in Dünne 2011, 216 ff.

François Leguat and his fellow settlers – to work in order to emancipate themselves from submission to the order of things and to dominate their environment by means of “instrumental reason.” However, this is precisely why it is useful to look at their behaviour: It allows us to understand what is *needed* to become – like Robinson Crusoe – a (literary) protagonist of production.

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Natalie Roxburgh

# Defoe, Economically Constructed Property, and Reputational Credit

**Abstract** Arguing that *Robinson Crusoe* engages with Locke's property theory of value, this paper reassesses the reason that many portrayals of protagonists of production are so negative by historicizing bourgeois virtues. Defoe's *oeuvre* takes Locke's theory a step further by justifying property through behaving well, manufacturing reputational credit in order to legitimate material accumulation. This step, I argue, comes at an important moment in the early history of liberalism.

**Keywords:** Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, Locke, labor theory of property, credit, public credit, liberalism

## 1. Introduction

This paper seeks to historicize the emergence of the entrepreneurial subject in the British context by revisiting a classic English novel, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), with a view to how 17th- and 18th-century commentators envisioned and rationalized the appropriation of property through production as a form of reputational credit. Many representations of the literary past, especially those from the 19th century, are colored by the attitudes of authors – literary producers – who felt threatened by the emergence of an economically oriented protagonist of production who was able to make a living independent of a feudal and patriarchal order. The purpose of this paper is thus to contextualize the reason – or rather, the ideological outlook – that accounts for why so many later representations of these protagonists are negative or ambivalent.

## 2. John Locke and the labor theory of property

The complexities of the British historical situation render somewhat complicated what it means to produce something of value in the early modern period. Over the course of the 17th and 18th centuries, property ownership underwent a transformation. Whereas in the early modern period, owning property meant that one had land through birth, property ownership gradually became dependent on economic factors under an agrarian capitalist system. Landholders, supported by Parliament, started valuing their land through money, embracing a labor theory of property, as found later in John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*, published

in 1689. In the process, and leading up to the English Civil War earlier in the century, a theory of value emerged that was oriented around the financial interests of merchants, who were allied with the Crown. These competing value systems, which can be discussed in terms of interests based on land versus credit, are emphasized by historian Robert Brenner in *Merchants and Revolution* (1993), a monograph that challenges the way many historians had assumed the Civil War to be a bourgeois rebellion against aristocrats.<sup>1</sup> Brenner argues that most feudal lords transformed their households in order to make them more profitable, and by the end of the 16th century, there were very few who did not.<sup>2</sup> By the end of the 17th century when Locke was writing, there was a demise of politically constituted property through both the development of agrarian capitalism and also through the rise of credit, which increasingly substituted for specie in trade.

Through the gradual empowerment of the commercial classes, especially around the time of the Glorious Revolution in 1688, land became only one kind of property among other less tangible forms. Capitalism did not emerge suddenly as a neutral system that came into being naturally after state restrictions were lifted.<sup>3</sup> Rather, in the 17th and 18th centuries, the market – and market logic – gradually became seen as an imperative rather than an opportunity.<sup>4</sup> Ellen Meiksins Wood argues that economically constructed property entailed an obligation that all should eventually participate in markets, as the Crown no longer had the authority to grant landed tenure. It was rationalized “from below,” though a process of rendering land fundamentally productive through labor.<sup>5</sup> Production, therefore, is fraught with a historical change by which a new logic became all-pervasive, encompassing spheres that were once not deemed economically oriented at all.

The idea of justifying property in land through labor is already present in the writings of Locke, whose concept of the *state of nature* is a direct response to Robert Filmer, who argued that authority comes from the King in analogy to a husband within a household. This stance justified monarchical authority, patrilineal inheritance, and landed tenure. Locke’s words attempt to take the authority from the King (or the male progenitor) and transfer it to the person who labors

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1 Brenner 1993, 643.

2 Brenner 1993, 640.

3 Wood 1999, 6.

4 Wood 1999, 62.

5 Cf. also Joanna Picciotto’s *Labors of Innocence* 2010, 9 which argues that “[t]he story of the emergence of the public sphere [...] is also the story of how production became the ruling figure for intellectual life.”



to make land useful or productive: “[E]very Man has a Property in his own Person. This no Body has any Right to but himself. The *Labour* of his Body and the *Work* of his Hands, we may say, are properly his.”<sup>6</sup> Individual labor, and not the feudal or patriarchal order, is what legitimizes the ownership of private property: “The *labour* that was mine, removing them out of that common state they were in, hath *fixed my Property* in them.”<sup>7</sup> Labor not only legitimates the appropriation of property from the common, but it is also the basis of value in this text: “For ‘tis Labour indeed that puts the difference of value on every thing.”<sup>8</sup> Usually commentators note that Locke is responsible for a labor theory of *property*, but it is easy to see how 18th- and 19th-century political economists such as Adam Smith would then pick this up for the labor theory of *value*. My point here is that Locke was responding to feudal patriarchy in particular: the philosophical system that accompanied politically constructed property and that justified landed tenure. Locke is thus part of the shift to economically constituted property, insofar as he argues that value proceeds from – and is legitimated by – production rather than through explicitly political means.

Defoe’s *oeuvre* develops – but also adds to – a version of economically constructed property as articulated by Locke. What he provides is an idea of how reputational credit figures into the way production is used to rationalize the accumulation of property. *Robinson Crusoe* was different from many works that we retrospectively call novels, especially for its lack of women, but what critics tend to agree on – and what makes it an important precursor to the novel, if not a novel in itself – is that it emphasizes individualism.<sup>9</sup> What is more, some readings of *Robinson Crusoe* assume a labor theory of property as outlined by Locke. This protagonist of production, acting as an individual, mixes his labor with the land that he comes across, and this justifies Crusoe’s ownership of the land on the island. Crusoe’s behavior is often said to resemble that of the *homo economicus*: the naturally self-interested, self-rational, and self-made man who balances profits and utility.<sup>10</sup> However, some of these readings are only plausible if one ignores the first third of the novel, before Crusoe undergoes a major religious conversion in which he learns to manage his reputational credit better than

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6 Locke 1988, IV.27.1–4.

7 Locke 1988, IV.28.24–26.

8 Locke 1988, IV.40.3–4.

9 Watt 1957, 60, 63–64.

10 Hewitson 2011, 111.

he does at the beginning. This reputational credit, I argue, is what Defoe adds to Locke's legitimization of property through production.

### 3. *Robinson Crusoe* and reputational credit

The first third of *Robinson Crusoe* is fundamentally speculative, and it is oriented around risk. Crusoe takes a risk and rejects the simple life of trade (and also simple productivity) that his father condones. It goes badly, as there is a storm and a shipwreck. And he laments accordingly: "I began now seriously to reflect upon what I had done, and how justly I was overtaken by the Judgment of Heaven for my wicked leaving my Father's House, and abandoning my Duty."<sup>11</sup> He disobeyed the patriarch, and he feels himself to be punished by God for having tried to go beyond what was already a prosperous livelihood: "Had I used half as much Prudence to have look'd into my own Intrest, and have made a Judgment of what ought to have done, and not to have done, I had certainly never gone away from so prosperous an undertaking [as a plantation]."<sup>12</sup> His desire to risk what he has – the simple plantation and agrarian undertaking – for more has serious consequences, and there is a spirit of repentance – he prays for his own deliverance. In the first third of the novel, risk for its own sake proves necessary, but insufficient, for the type of success imagined through any ideology of individualism. After Crusoe becomes very ill, he undergoes a spiritual conversion. At this point, another type of production becomes requisite: the manufacture of reputational credit.

*Robinson Crusoe's* conversion entails a process in which its protagonist learns to produce the way in which the reader should hold him to account. And this is what comes to justify his accumulation of resources and eventual state of wealth. Crusoe's production not only entails a simple appropriation of land in the Lockean way but also an ostentatious accounting for what he does. On the ship, he finds precious supplies that allow him to produce this reputational credibility: "I found Pen, Ink and Paper, and I husbanded them to the utmost, and I shall shew, that while my ink lasted, I kept things very exact."<sup>13</sup> His accounting, however, is not only of his property but also of the moral deservedness of his predicament. "I now began to consider seriously my Condition, and the Circumstance I was reduc'd to, and I drew up the State of my Affairs in writing [...] and I stated it very impartially, like Debtor and Creditor, the Comforts

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11 Defoe 2007, 9.

12 Defoe 2007, 36.

13 Defoe 2007, 56.

I enjoyed, against the miseries I suffered.”<sup>14</sup> For this, Defoe uses a page layout that resembles an accounting ledger.

Throughout the rest of the narrative, which also includes a diary rather than a retrospective, we see certain hints of Crusoe’s consciousness of his reputation. For example, he anticipates in advance how others will view the way he has kept his property: “So that had my Cave been to be seen, it look’d like a general Magazine of all Necessary things, and I had everything so ready at my Hand, that was a great pleasure to me to see all my Goods in such Order, and especially to find my Stock of all Necessaries so great.”<sup>15</sup> In short, Crusoe undergoes a religious conversion, and he subjects himself to self-scrutiny in a Puritan sense, which means that he becomes a better accountant before God and his fellow human beings (even when he is alone on the island). All profitable returns on risk are discussed in terms of God’s grace. Risks gone badly are recoded as Providence, and he thinks of all bad bets as part of God’s plan for his spiritual (and, as it turns out, material) development. The outcome of his endeavors is that he lives like a king on the island, while his investments abroad – without his knowing it at the time – make him rich. Tellingly, in the final pages, Crusoe suggests that he craves further adventures: He wants to take further risks – presumably, risks managed well.

The type of reputational credit that helps to legitimate property thus has Calvinist undertones. Crusoe justifies his acquisition of property through a sort of credit with God, writing off his bad bets as part of God’s Plan. But this also translates to credit with other humans. Here, one observes a pattern identified by Max Weber and R.H. Tawney: that protestant Christianity and capitalism helped to create one another.<sup>16</sup> What justifies Crusoe’s amassing of wealth is his learning to account for himself through the form of the ledger, and he does so by imagining God (and not a king or a retainer) as the final authority. Profit is simply a sign that he is of the elect. The story about economically constructed property is thus also tied to a famous secularization narrative. But, when one reads Defoe through a Lockean understanding of property, one observes that economically constructed property is also *financially* constructed property. The Defovean protagonist of production is one who speculates well and produces his or her credibility *in the process of* managing his or her property. As Margot C. Finn and Craig Muldrew have argued, credit is both a form of money and it is tied to reputation;

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14 Defoe 2007, 57.

15 Defoe 2007, 60.

16 Tawney 1954, 9; Weber 1930, 40.

it is both quantitative and qualitative, and it is always subject to social negotiation.<sup>17</sup> This social sort of negotiation will become a focal point of the development of the English novel in the 18th and 19th centuries.

#### 4. Defoean property and the management of credit

Taking carefully managed risks – and turning one’s credibility into property through a sort of speculative labor – is also prominent in *Moll Flanders* (1722) and *Roxana* (1724), Defoe’s two novels featuring eponymous female protagonists. While Locke’s *First Treatise of Government* was a direct response to patriarchalism, and in particular to Filmer, these two novels are also a rebuke against the form of patriarchalism that feminists now call patriarchy, and these narratives (problematically) suggest that new mechanisms of credit and commerce can liberate women from the tyranny of men, who are sometimes represented as bad money managers. Roxana, born in France but raised in London with a decent living, loses everything she has inherited to a husband whose poor business management leaves her penniless with five children.<sup>18</sup> *Roxana* thus rejects the part of patriarchalism that suggests a man should rule in the household: “I had no Inclination to be a Wife again, I had had such bad Luck with my first Husband, I hated the Thoughts of it; I found, that a Wife is treated with Indifference, a Mistress with a strong Passion; a Wife is look’d upon, as but an Upper-Servant, a Mistress is a Sovereign; a Wife must give up all she has.”<sup>19</sup> She then becomes a courtesan, later passing herself off as royalty in Europe through the management of her reputation. She – much like *Moll Flanders* – is able to behave in a way that renders her credible to others, and the only thing that gives her away is the inadvertent production of children, an occupational hazard of her chosen career. That is to say, Defoe’s *oeuvre* suggests a way in which reputational credit transforms gender relations by allowing women to be financial individuals, so long as they are not married.

Tellingly, Defoe’s experimentation with the early novel – or, more precisely perhaps, what we would now call *fiction* – is notable in its attempts to model a protagonist of production in real life. By the time Defoe got around to writing what we would now consider to be his non-fiction text on trade, he had already worked out how credibility and credit inform the entrepreneurial protagonist. In *The Compleat English Tradesman* (1725), the tradesman is elevated to the status

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17 Finn 2003, 19; Muldrew 1998, 3.

18 Defoe 1987b, 42.

19 Defoe 1987b, 170.

of gentleman, but this is without the ethos of leisure characteristic of the non-laboring echelons of society.

*The Compleat English Tradesman* focuses on behavior and reputation, offering advice on when to marry, how to deal with bankruptcy, and which pleasures are acceptable. There is little discussion of how to manage goods or produce useful products. Rather, the manual teaches the reader how to behave, and how to anticipate other people from the outset, much like in *Robinson Crusoe*. Credit, which by the 1720s is essential for trade, is ultimately more important than what is actually produced, and the accounting ledger is fundamental to the tradesman's conduct: "A tradesman's books are his repeating clock, which upon all occasions are to tell him how he goes on and how things stand with him in the world."<sup>20</sup> The amount of money or credit one possesses, however, is much less important than his reputation, which – like in the works of fiction discussed earlier – is subject to stories rather than numbers. Ruining a tradesman's reputation is the same as ruining his credit: "A story raised upon a tradesman, however malicious, however false, and however frivolous the occasion, is not easily suppressed, but, if it touches his credit, as a flash of fire it spreads over the whole air like a sheet; there is no stopping it."<sup>21</sup> The ledger produces a sort of calculated or quantitative value, but the ledger by itself is insufficient, as stories about the character of the tradesman produce reputations that allow for the ledger to work in the first place. Reputational credit, therefore, is central to Defoean production, and the tradesman produces credit alongside whatever else he or she may be undertaking.

In short, behavior is the emphasis of this economic tract. Indeed, merely gesturing towards honesty is more important than the actual value displayed on the ledger, as evidenced by the discussion of becoming bankrupt, in which it is imperative that the tradesman knows how to "break in time": "[W]hen a man breaks in time, he may hold up his face to his creditors, and tell them, that he could have gone on a considerable while longer, but that he should have had less left to pay them with, and that he has chosen to stop while he may be able to give them so considerable a sum as may convince them of his integrity."<sup>22</sup> It is important to point out here that what is actually produced is not merely a trustworthy number. Indeed, Defoe's *oeuvre* also complicates what William Derringer rightly calls the "quantitative age" of civic epistemology beginning in 1688.<sup>23</sup> My

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20 Defoe 1987a, 15.

21 Defoe 1987a, 142.

22 Defoe 1987a, 59.

23 Derringer 2018, 306.

critique is akin to Deirdre McCloskey's argument in the *Rhetoric of Economics*, first published in 1982, about how later economic science will obscure narrative, analogy, symmetry, and other means of authority through its reliance on number.<sup>24</sup> Quantification carries with it an important rhetoric, but it is not a number by itself, but rather the number in a socio-cultural frame that matters. For Defoe, production entails the manufacture of credit as a sort of reputation.

## 5. Conclusion: The protagonist of liberalism

If we take any lessons from Defoe's *oeuvre*, it is that propriety – and not property alone – comes to legitimate wealth, and the protagonist of production is one who manages both by internalizing a certain financial logic. Propriety is what is needed for the “bottom up” justification endemic to economically constructed property as such, requiring a transition one can read through both religious and secular discourses, and a concept that will translate differently across social strata, as it will entail behavior proper to one's station. Indeed, we see how bourgeois virtues begin to emerge at first to contest the patriarchal and feudal system. Later, we will call this liberalism, but this requires a change at the level of state, as well, which will also have to produce its own reputational credit. Defoe tellingly writes at the same time that the British public credit system comes into being, which leads to major changes at the level of public finance. When we tell the story of liberalism, however, we sometimes forget about how this new behavioral logic – for both the individual and the state – came into being.

It is worth noting here that before publishing all of the texts mentioned so far, Defoe occupied himself passionately with promoting the emergent British public credit system, which some saw as a way to empower the financial elites at the expense of the landed interests through Parliamentary support of a private business, the Bank of England, which was established in 1694. Defoe's various writings in *The Review* (1704–1713) and *An Essay Upon Public Credit* (1710) evoke the State as a virtuous manager of credit that neutrally covers all interests equally: “CREDIT is not the Effect of this or that Wheel in the Government, moving regular and just to its proper work; but of the whole Movement, acting by the Force of its true Original Motion, according to the exquisite Design of the Director of the whole Frame.”<sup>25</sup> Is this Director God? Or does Defoe refer to the director of the Bank of England? In either case, Defoe's description of the state's

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24 McCloskey 1985, 100.

25 Defoe 1710, 16.

virtue also serves as a prescription for how it should work, resembling the accounting ledger. In this pamphlet, Defoe evokes a “creditor of last resort,” which by the 1720s issues the banknotes that have become the unit of account.

This idea of a public-private entity that serves as a creditor of last resort is relevant to Joseph Vogl’s critique of a liberal ideology that hides its history. In *The Ascendancy of Finance*, the English translation of the German *Der Souveränitätseffekt*, Vogl writes:

The blind spot of liberalism – the result of its notorious opposition between politics and economy – causes the role of liberal concepts in the economic orientation of political power since the eighteenth century to be distorted. [...] On the one hand, liberalism offered an apology for ‘prudent government’, a continuous review of state action according to the criteria of natural laws. On the other hand, it trivialized the connection between political structures and economic dynamics, and the process by which the economy became sovereign.<sup>26</sup>

In Vogl’s reading, what liberalism required was the establishment of public-private structures, such as the Bank of England, that helped to motor a reciprocity of political-economic policy-making in order to become the “creditor of last resort,” which is his definition of sovereignty.<sup>27</sup>

Contrary to liberal ideology, the state has a role in this new economy because it issues and polices the currency that becomes the unit of account over the course of the 18th century, accepting its own public credit instruments – paper money – back in the form of tax payments, what Christine Desan calls a “fiat loop.”<sup>28</sup> While in the 18th century, paper money through public credit had to be politicized because it was still not seen as a neutral medium of exchange, the Bank Act of 1844 “established the legal conditions in which Bank of England notes could fall beneath the horizon of cultural visibility – in which they could pass without scrutiny or question,” argues Mary Poovey.<sup>29</sup> During this period, political economy more fully depoliticizes commercial interests. At the same time, it reconfigures the concept of *interest* as a part of human nature, removing the pejorative connotations it had during the 17th century, allowing for an emergent political science – and a way of calculating interest in an aggregate – that can rest assured that everyone *has* one. In retrospect, commentators select *Robinson Crusoe* in order to illustrate the naturalness of the *homo economicus*,

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26 Vogl 2017, 37.

27 Vogl 2017, 91.

28 Desan 2014, 311–312.

29 Poovey 2008, 219.

but – read through economic history – one observes that Defoe’s texts were prescriptive rather than descriptive, having much to do with his advocacy of public credit as well as the coerciveness of market forces that Meiksins Wood writes about, which ultimately require people to behave in a certain way. If individuals and the state behave with a similar propriety, paper can function as money. This point was controversial, but eventually we would forget the controversy. Remembering the controversy, however, helps us to make sense of negative portrayals of protagonists of production in literary texts.

The new protagonist of production, the liberal, entrepreneurial subject that resembles Defoe’s characters, is often seen as participating in a system that entails the production of wealth for a new elite. Economically constituted property comes with imperatives that do not feel like a consensus for all. For one, the new protagonist of production, the embodiment of liberal values, is only possible because the emergent financial system is also partly based on exploiting people of color in colonial projects, as one observes from Crusoe’s encounter with Friday. The protagonist of production is also tied to the general worry about liberalism writ large: From Jane Austen to George Eliot, we observe a deep ambivalence in the characters that have made it independently as individuals by eschewing ties that come from familial connection and inheritance, with the claim that they have made it on their own. This ambivalence will eventually fade through the rise of professional culture later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But, as commentators now talk about the *demise* of liberalism, it pays to remember the ambivalent way in which it came into being, perhaps best marked through the characters, protagonists, and subjects who produce things that have not only use value but also exchange value in an abstract system built on paper and bourgeois virtue, and who, independently, earn a living through their efforts.

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## **Section 6 Protagonists of Agriculture and the Influence of Physiocracy**



Susanne Schlünder

## Nature as a Protagonist of Production in Jovellanos's *Informe de Ley Agraria* and *Diario* – A “Measurement of the Sublime”

**Abstract** The Spanish thinker Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos's tension-filled relationship to nature is shaped by economics. Influenced by epistemic disruptions in the 18th century and a growing economization of nature, the political-economic reformist text *Informe de Ley Agraria* (1795) shows traces of a proto-ecological governmentality: Utilizing the populace as a workforce and increasing production in the primary sector are politically and economically, but also socially and ethically linked. At the same time, the concept of nature that underpins the discourse of reform is anchored in religion. The admiration of a seemingly inexhaustible nature and the attempt to exploit natural resources as efficiently as possible for the benefit of mankind thus go hand in hand. This is particularly evident in the early entries of the *Diario*, where hymn-like descriptions of nature alternate with neutral stocktaking. This running juxtaposition is condensed in the two-sided figure of a “measurement of the sublime.”

**Keywords:** Jovellanos, agriculture, nature, accountability, economy, sublime, Enlightenment

One of the commonplaces of economic history research in the European Enlightenment is the observation that Spain was not one of those nations to which a high or even sufficient productivity rate could be attested in the 18th century. Although the concepts of productivity and unproductivity, i.e. *productividad / improductividad* do not yet appear as such in the *Diccionario de Autoridades*, published between 1726 and 1739, contemporary complaints about the state of the country can nevertheless be subsumed under it. Being barely industrialized at the time, the agricultural sector, to which Adam Smith also devotes special attention in *The Wealth of Nations*, played a decisive role for the country. Thus, in Enlightenment Spain, speaking of agriculture can be identified as referring to economy and society as a whole.<sup>1</sup> Poppow has shown that in the course of an “ökonomische Aufklärung” (“economic enlightenment.” My trans.) as a “maßgebliche Etappe einer epochenübergreifenden ‘Wissensgeschichte der Ressourcennutzung’” (“decisive stage in an epoch-spanning ‘epistemological

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1 Cf. Llombart / Ocampo Suárez-Valdés 2012, 120.

history of resource use.” My trans.), the agricultural sector should be regarded as a matter of extraordinary importance throughout Europe, insofar as production increases should be achieved through the optimized use of natural yields and mineral resources.<sup>2</sup> It is no coincidence that François Quesnay based his physiocratic approach in the 1758 *Tableau économique* on agriculture when he started with the maxim “rich farmers, rich land” and developed a model of circulation that references the human bloodstream. In keeping with this, a large number of Spanish treatises and reform proposals are dedicated to economic questions related to agricultural concerns, ranging from Jerónimo de Uztáriz y Hermiaga and Benito Jerónimo Feijoo to José Campillo y Cossío, Pedro Rodríguez de Campomanes, Pablo de Olavide, Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos and Antonio José Cavanilles, to name but a few Enlightenment reformers.

In my approach, the “protagonist of production,” then, is nature itself. Nevertheless, when speaking about “nature” in this paper, I do not mean a fixed and ahistorical entity, but a specific historical spectrum of meaning as part of a human-nature or human-world relationship.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, I am interested in the above-cited reform papers because they attempted to increase productivity rates through an optimized exploitation of natural resources and are thus inscribed into the current of an economization of nature<sup>4</sup>; a trend which emerged as such only during the 18th century and differed by its cameralistic character from early modern approaches to “budgeting” with nature in the sense of the ancient concept of *oikos*.<sup>5</sup>

The following article is divided into three parts: First of all, I am interested in determining the trend toward an increasing economization of nature in the 18th century, its factors, its functioning and its implications. My reference

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2 Cf. Poplow 2010, 4–5. On the significance of the primary sector for Europe as a whole, cf. Llobart / Ocampo Suárez-Valdés 2012, 122–124.

3 Cf. Kirchhoff / Karafyllis 2017, XI–XVII, XIII.

4 In their special issue “Rechnen mit der Natur: Ökonomische Kalküle und Ressourcen” (“Reckoning with Nature: Economic Calculations and Resources.” My trans.), the authors distinguish “[s]eit 1700 drei systematisch verschiedene, historisch aufeinanderfolgende Naturökonomien” (“since 1700, three systematically different, historically successive natural economies.” My trans.), which nevertheless overlap and situate the “kameralistische Natur” (“cameralistic nature.” My trans.) in the years between ca. 1700 and 1900. Cf. Haller et al. 2014, 9.

5 While early modern treatises on agriculture such as Gabriel Alonso de Herrera’s 1513 *Tratado de Agricultura* merely reflect empirical knowledge, the Enlightenment texts draft a prospective catalogue of measures.

points are those concepts of nature that were promoted as decisive in the central European states and cultural spaces in the 18th century, and mark a break with traditional notions and relationships.<sup>6</sup> In a second step, I will analyze Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos's apparently tension-filled relationship with nature, using central texts by the Spanish reformer as a paradigm. A focus lies on his *Informe de Ley Agraria* [*Report on the agrarian law*] of 1795 as a paradigmatic text for the – ultimately failed – reform proposals of the Enlightenment philosopher. By making biopolitical considerations on agricultural resources and population growth, this proposal demonstrates at first glance the economization of nature in the Spanish context. Thus, it stands in striking contrast to some descriptions of nature that the Enlightenment philosopher unfolds in his *Diario*, which I will analyze in a third step. Unlike the public treatise, here we sometimes find an affective relationship with nature that has been described as pre-Romantic by several scholars.<sup>7</sup> However, to the extent that sober proposals for improving infrastructure and emotive observations of nature overlap even in the *Diario*, the question arises how we can explain the opposing but coincident tendencies of an economization and affectivization of nature. I assume that we can outline a field of tension, the understanding of which is important not only in a historical perspective with reference to the Spanish Enlightenment's concept of nature. Rather, in accordance with the thesis pursued here, it could contribute to a better understanding of the progression from an early modern concept of nature as God's creation to a modern view of nature “als Serviceeinrichtung [...], die Ökosystemdienstleistungen und -güter für den Menschen bereitstellt” (“as a service facility that supplies ecosystem goods and services to humans.” My trans.).<sup>8</sup> In this sense, a figure that appears in Jovellanos seems particularly revealing, as it integrates the infinite with the measurable and quantifiable, and thus I would call it a “measurement of the sublime.”

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6 Cf. the volume *Asymmetric Ecologies*, which examines the Eurocentric nature that is at issue here in a transatlantic colonial structure: Carrasco / Schlünder [forthcoming 2022].

7 Cf. del Río, 1953, 634–635; cf. Caso González 2006, 41.

8 Haller et al. 2014, 16. Cf. the term “Dienstleistungsökologie” (“service ecology.” My trans.), which Haller uses to refer to the concept of biodiversity. Haller 2014, 66.

## 1. Economizing models of nature and their enabling conditions

The 18th century is marked by a profound transformation in the man-nature/man-world relationship due to the differentiation and systematization of various areas of knowledge, the institutionalization of new disciplines, and the increasing dissemination of scientific figures of thought and forms of knowledge.<sup>9</sup> The decisive rupture that occurred during the Enlightenment was accompanied by a number of conditional factors: religiously influenced systems of reference lost their general binding force, new surveying technologies were being tested in the context of La Condamine's geodetic expedition in 1735, and cataloguing systems like Linnaeus's *Systema naturae* (1749) as well as radical reinterpretations of earth and world history carried out by Buffon in his *Histoire naturelle* (1749–1788) were being established. New knowledge about geological deep time and the dimensions of the earth's history thus collided with biblical concepts of time and gradually made problematic the idea of an extratemporal natural environment produced by divine creation.<sup>10</sup>

The preparations for these upheavals in the history of knowledge and epistemology were made in the course of a "mathematization of nature" that transpired during the 17th century, the prerequisites for or rather cornerstones of which were physics (Galileo, Newton), rationalism (Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz), and empiricism (Locke, Berkeley, Hume).<sup>11</sup> They came up against a differentiated way of looking at natural phenomena that were related to the evolution of spatiotemporal principles on the one hand and divine creation on the other, conceived of as something atemporal.<sup>12</sup> Following the pertinent study by Lepenies, we see the development of a specific discursive formation that marked the transition from a static and unchanging idea of nature to one that was historical and progressive.<sup>13</sup>

*The End of Natural History*, as the German historian of science calls it, describes the temporalization of a certain form of knowledge, partly a result of the fact that the accelerated growth in knowledge outpaced traditional forms of information processing. Recent studies on Linnaeus, who can serve as an example here, show that the "information overload" that arises from the accumulation and compilation of facts both required and promoted new methods of documenting

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9 Cf. Gloy 1995.

10 Cf. Cheung 2017.

11 Cf. Falkenburg 2017.

12 Cf. Sieglerschmidt / Biehler 2008.

13 Cf. Lepenies 1980.



knowledge. We might call the result of this new approach “indexing nature,” with reference to a relevant article on the invention of the index card used by Linnaeus.<sup>14</sup> A look at the methods of the Swedish naturalist, who was constantly supplied with new information via a global network of correspondents, yields insightful observations. The taxonomies and nomenclatures that he developed should not be attributed to his position “as a ‘scholastic’ scholar with an almost pathological predilection for *a priori* reasoning that only aimed to reduce diversity to abstract classifications.”<sup>15</sup> Rather, they owe their existence to the proliferation of facts and reveal the connection between scientific and economic interest in knowledge: “Linnaeus’s research was [...] deeply influenced by economic concerns, to the extent that these cannot be dissociated from his botanical endeavors.”<sup>16</sup> As a proponent of the cameralism favored by the Swedish elites of his time, he was interested in the question of a “natural affinity,” because he hoped to replace expensive imported goods with similar plants that could thrive in the Scandinavian climate.<sup>17</sup> Access to nature designed for comparability and verifiability should therefore be understood as a “kameralwissenschaftliche Inventarisierung staatlicher Ressourcen, [die] auf die Pflege und Vermehrung des Staats- und Naturhaushaltes [zielte]” (“cameral-scientific inventory of state resources [that aimed] at maintaining and increasing the state budget and the balance of nature.” My trans.). Thus, the conclusion can be drawn that for the 18th century, “Ökonomisches und wissenschaftliches Wissen über die Natur konstituierten sich gegenseitig” (“economic and scientific knowledge of nature were co-constitutive.” My trans.).<sup>18</sup> This form of enumerating and calculating natural and financial resources can be seen as an expression of the quantifying imperative of the Enlightenment that has been described by Theodore Porter in his volume *Trust in Numbers*.<sup>19</sup> The acquisition of pure numeric values, according to Porter’s thesis, already implies the possibility of value creation.

Alongside the shock to religious horizons of interpretation, we can view the “accountability” of nature,<sup>20</sup> its cataloging and measuring, as one of the central

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14 Cf. Müller-Wille / Scharf 2009.

15 Müller-Wille / Charmantier 2012, 5.

16 Müller-Wille / Charmantier 2012, 14.

17 Müller-Wille / Charmantier refer to experiments on silkworms, fed with various types of mulberries under Linnaeus’s supervision. The aim was to produce domestic silk and thereby reduce the cost of foreign imports. Müller-Wille / Charmantier 2012, 13–14.

18 Haller et al. 2014, 9.

19 Cf. Porter 1995.

20 Cf. te Heesen 2005.

techniques of governing in an apparatus of power that emerged during the 18th century. “Nature” became a space filled with multifaceted possibilities for creating value as well as the object of a biopolitical governmentality that, with the invention of the category of “population,” also affected the human being. Following Bühler, this “arithmetic” relationship to nature, as I will call it, can be viewed as part of a proto-ecological governmentality, which owes its origins to the simultaneous establishment of political economy and political ecology in the 18th century: Both “[...] entstehen aus demselben Bedingungsgefüge, nämlich aus der Regierung und Regulierung der Bevölkerung auf Grundlage wissenschaftlicher Aussageformen” (“[...] arise from the same set of conditions, that is, from the rule and regulation of the people on the basis of scientific statements.” My trans.).<sup>21</sup>

First traces of this new kind of governmentality can already be observed in Hans Carl von Carlowitz’s *Sylvicultura Oeconomica* of 1713, whose approach can be combined with that of Quesnay: “Kann [...] François Quesnays Formel der ‘ökonomischen Regierung’ mit Foucault als Grundlage der politischen Ökonomie gelten, [...] so Carlowitz’ Formel der ‘conservation’ [der knappen Ressource Holz, S.S.] als Grundlage der politischen Ökologie.”<sup>22</sup> (“If [...], following Foucault, François Quesnay’s formula of ‘economic rule’, can be considered as the basis of political economy, [...] then so can Carlowitz’s formula of ‘conservation’ [of wood, a limited resource, S.S.] as the basis of political ecology.’ My trans.). Carlowitz’s treatise is regarded as the first founding text of a sustainable forestry science, although it presented – paradoxically, one might say – the forest as a quantifiable resource, as can be seen in the short summary introducing the first part of Carlowitz’s opus: “Von denen Wäldern insgemein, dem bißherigen und noch weiter einreißenden grossen Holz-Mangel, dessen Ursachen, auch wie selbem durch eine gute Menage ingleichen durch Säen und Pflanzen so wohl des in- als des ausländischen Holzes vorgebeuget / und die Holzung conserviret werden könne” (“Of those forests in general, their hitherto and still devastating dearth of wood, whose cause may be prevented, through good household management, by sowing and planting both domestic and foreign wood / and the wood may be conserved.” My trans.).<sup>23</sup> For before the deforestation and reforestation can be regulated, the forest must be registered as a national good and estimated in monetary terms, which corresponds with concepts such

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21 Bühler 2018, 21.

22 Bühler 2018, 23.

23 Carlowitz 1713, 1.

as a deficiency of wood and the “ménage” (household management) used by the German tax accountant and mining administrator.

However, it would be too short-sighted to trace the tendencies described for the 18th century solely to a secular-economic mindset because, as reference to Linnaeus again makes clear, the tendency to economization is based on physico-theology. Thus, the Swedish naturalist was concerned with “die göttliche Existenz aus einer vernunftmäßigen und nützlichen Ordnung der Natur abzuleiten” (“deducing divine existence from a rational and useful order of nature.” My trans.), which he described as an “autoritäre Ökonomie der Schöpferordnung” (“authoritarian economy of the creator regime.” My trans.), particularly in his *Oeconomia Naturae* (1749).<sup>24</sup> Exactly this overlay, which seems to me to be characteristic of Enlightenment relations with nature, represents an ideal starting point for devoting oneself to the human-nature relationship developed by Jovellanos with a view to Spain, as I will show in the following.

## 2. Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos: Relationship to nature as a relationship of use – Elements of an ecological governmentality

“Quizá sea interesante subrayar que una de las causas que desarrollaron en Jovellanos el amor a la Naturaleza fue la Economía.”<sup>25</sup> (“It is perhaps interesting to highlight that one of the causes that gave rise to Jovellanos’s love for nature was economy.” My trans.) With this assertion, José Caso González characterizes the reformer’s relationship to nature, as he had already collected notes on population figures, agricultural products, crop yields and trade in the places he traveled through on a trip to Seville as early as 1768. If the Asturian-born thinker perceived the Castilian landscape as barren and monotonous a good decade later, its expansive plains having been barely developed agriculturally and economically, this would seem to confirm his economizing perspective.<sup>26</sup> The human-nature relationship outlined here in his early writings, and defined by aspects such as the use of natural resources and economic efficiency, finds its most striking expression in the *Informe de Ley Agraria* (“Report on the agrarian law.” My

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24 Haller et al. 2014, 9. Though it would be impossible to properly relate the different approaches of Linnaeus and Buffon in this limited space, it should be mentioned that Buffon’s *Histoire naturelle* is also quite physico-theologically oriented.

25 Caso González 2006, 18.

26 Caso González refers here to the observations of Jovellanos’s contemporary, Ceán Bermúdez, as well as to his correspondence with Ponz, cf. Caso González 2006, 18–20.

trans.), published in 1795.<sup>27</sup> This text, which describes a political reorganization of agricultural production, is one of the most important political and economic writings, not only of this Spanish Enlightenment thinker, but of the Spanish Enlightenment as a whole.<sup>28</sup> As Jovellanos himself points out at the outset, his famous treatise on agriculture is both a political undertaking and a “nuevo y difícil estudio” (“new and difficult study.” My trans.) at the same time, located at a crossroads of agrarian revolution and agricultural revolution<sup>29</sup>: “Desde su fundación había consagrado la Sociedad sus tareas al estudio de la agricultura, que es el primero de los objetos de su instituto; pero considerándola solamente como el arte de cultivar la tierra, hubiera tardado mucho tiempo en subir a la indagación de sus relaciones políticas si Vuestra Alteza no llamase hacia ellas toda su atención” (“Since its foundation, the Society had devoted its efforts to the study of agriculture, which is the first of the institute’s objects; but considered solely as the art of cultivating the land, it would have taken a great deal of time to rise to the investigation of their political relations, had Your Highness not devoted your full attention to them.” My trans.).<sup>30</sup>

With a view to the urgent supply problems resulting from the increase in population from 1750 onwards, and which were accompanied by land shortages and rising prices,<sup>31</sup> Jovellanos showed a high degree of trust in political control mechanisms, and gave reform a social orientation. The study confirms this impression insofar as it successively deals with three classes of “estorbos,” i.e. disruptive factors, which stood in the way of increasing agricultural productivity and which all required political action. With the eye of an economist, Jovellanos looks at the large unmanaged estates in the hands of the church and the nobility, the monopoly position of the Castilian livestock association *Mesta*, as well as inland customs duties, lease agreements and tax collections, but also a lack of knowledge and, finally, a lack of infrastructure such as land and waterways, irrigation facilities and ports. In contrast to the Roman model of the *Lex Agraria*, he does not focus on restricting land ownership and large-scale expropriation, but rather on arousing self-interest, among other things<sup>32</sup>:

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27 Cf. Jovellanos [1795] 1820.

28 Cf. Llombart / Ocampo Suárez-Valdés 2012, 119.

29 Jovellanos [1795] 1820, 10.

30 Jovellanos [1795] 1820, 9–10.

31 Cf. Llombart / Ocampo Suárez-Valdés 2012, 123.

32 Despite the unproductive land distribution, Jovellanos does not call for the obvious instrument of expropriating large ecclesiastical and aristocratic land holdings, but instead pleads for moderate reform. This can be attributed to the domestic political

Ni el clima, ni la fertilidad del suelo, ni la situación geográfica eran factores tan determinantes como las leyes para el crecimiento o el atraso agrarios, con lo que Jovellanos manifestaba un optimismo reformador que confiaba en la acción legislativa del Gobierno como elemento esencial para el desarrollo agrario. Tras ello, se expone la tesis conocida y que proporciona un sentido unitario del texto: la libre acción del interés propio de los agentes económicos, dentro de la esfera de la justicia e iluminada por las luces, constituía la fuente principal del progreso agrario.<sup>33</sup>

(“Neither the climate, nor the fertility of the soil, nor the geographic location were factors as determinant as the laws of growth or agrarian backwardness, toward which Jovellanos displayed a reforming optimism that relied on legislative action as an essential element of agrarian development. After that, the well-known thesis becomes clear, and that gives the text a unifying sense: the free action of self-interested economic agents, within the sphere of justice and illuminated by light, was the principal source of agrarian progress.” My trans.)

Thus, the *Informe* cannot be attributed to a single economic approach; rather, it borrows from different schools, which, from Llombart / Ocampo's perspective, partly explains the text's ambivalent orientation: on the one hand, it operates with protectionist measures as well as by Smith's concept of self-interest, though restrained by the emphasis on “amor público” (“love of the people,” my trans.) or “interés público” (“public interest,” my trans.), which is typical of Spain; on the other hand, Jovellanos's proposal for reform is essentially reminiscent of physiocratic notions, whereby the preference for “intensive agriculture” by small businesses, as well as the regulation of the wheat trade, contradicts some of Quesnay's essential principles.<sup>34</sup>

Beyond secular-economic leanings, traces of a providentialist way of thinking can be seen in the *Informe*, similar to those in the scientific writings.<sup>35</sup> According to this, the world owes its existence to a divine Providence, which is in turn

climate shaped by the French Revolution, as well as the study's long lead time. In 1766/1767, under Charles III, the Consejo de Castilla commissioned a corresponding proposal for reform, which the Sociedad Económica Matritense de Amigos del País (“Madrid Economic Society of Friends of the Country,” My trans.) was charged with executing in 1777. Jovellanos was not entrusted with the task until 1787. Cf. Llombart / Ocampo Suárez-Valdés 2012, 122, 127.

33 Llombart / Ocampo Suárez-Valdés 2012, 125.

34 On Jovellanos's classification and the concrete influences of 18th-century economic theories cf. Llombart / Ocampo Suárez-Valdés 2012, 125, 127–129, 131. On the peculiarity of *felicidad* and economies of affect in 18th-century Spain see Möller 2018.

35 On the providentialist aspects of the scientific text and its physiocratic components, cf. Ramos Gorostiza 2008, 122–123, 134–137. The scholar distinguishes three different but concurrent attitudes toward nature in Jovellanos: one in the profit- and benefit-oriented reform writings, an admiring one in the scientific texts, and, influenced by Rousseau,

reflected in the perfect and harmonious order of nature; it is no coincidence that this recalls the theologically founded relationship between ecological and scientific knowledge found in Linnaeus.<sup>36</sup> Thus, looking more closely at the text of the *Informe*, the sober consideration of the natural environment and the proposals for land reform seem compatible with a relationship to the world that can be derived directly from a common reading of the biblical Genesis:

Este principio, que la Sociedad procurará desenvolver en el progreso del presente Informe, está primeramente consignado en las leyes eternas de la naturaleza, y señaladamente en la primera que dictó al hombre su omnipotente y misericordioso Creador cuando, por decirlo así, le entregó el dominio de la tierra. Colocándolo en ella y condenándolo a vivir del producto de su trabajo, al mismo tiempo que le dio el derecho de enseñorearla le impuso la pensión de cultivarla y le inspiró toda la actividad y amor a la vida que eran necesarios para librar en su trabajo la seguridad de su subsistencia. A este sagrado interés debe el hombre su conservación, y el mundo su cultura. Él solo limpió y rompió los campos, descuajó los montes, secó los lagos, sujetó los ríos, mitigó los climas, domesticó los brutos, escogió y perfeccionó las semillas y aseguró en su cultivo y reproducción una portentosa multiplicación a la especie humana.<sup>37</sup>

(“This principle, which the Society will endeavor to develop in the course of this Report, is first set forth in the eternal laws of nature, notably in the first law dictated to Man by his omnipotent and merciful Creator when, in a manner of speaking, He gave him dominion over the Earth. Placing him there, and condemning him to live by the product of his work at the same time that He gave him dominion over it, He imposed upon him the obligation to cultivate it and inspired in him all the activity and love of life necessary to rescue, by his labor, the security of his subsistence. Man owes his preservation, and the world its culture, to this sacred interest. He only cleaned and cleaved the fields, cleared the mountains, dried the lakes, channeled the rivers, mitigated the climate, domesticated the brute animals, selected and perfected the seed and secured in their cultivation and reproduction a prodigious multiplication of the human species.” My trans.).

From the traditional central position of man, who has been granted dominion over the earth, while at the same time he is condemned to live from his own labor, Jovellanos derives the human obligation to make the earth fruitful and put it in order. The *conditio humana* is then coupled with a “sagrado interés” (“sacred interest.” My trans.) that goes beyond self-interest and guarantees individual survival and continuation of the species – “su conservación” (“its

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a third one characterized by pre-romantic sensitivity toward the beauty of nature and expressed primarily in literary writings.

36 Cf. Müller-Wille / Charmantier 2012, 13–14. Gorostiza recognizes an implicit reference to Linnaeus, cf. Gorostiza 2008, 136.

37 Jovellanos [1795] 1820, 25.

preservation." My trans.), "una portentosa multiplicación a la especie humana" ("a prodigious multiplication of the human species." My trans.). For the thinker, thus, perfect nature is synonymous with a cultivated landscape, which moves into the center of value creation and becomes the embodiment of a relationship with nature based on land use. As already established by del Río, "lo bello" and "lo fértil" ("the beautiful" and "the fertile." My trans.) are mutually dependent,<sup>38</sup> whereas Jovellanos also attaches a social, cultural, and political dimension to agriculture. This promotes and requires the general welfare and self-interest in equal measure and thus becomes a culture-generating principle: "A este sagrado interés debe el hombre su conservación y el mundo su cultura" ("To this sacred interest man owes his survival and the world its culture." My trans.). The relationship between "cultivo" and "cultura" indicated here reflects an ethical component that Jovellanos attached to agriculture.<sup>39</sup> He understood an active life in the country as the ideal way of life, which would produce the pure, ideal and virtuous human being; thus, the reformed agricultural society presented in the *Informe* acquires a utopian quality. In keeping with Álvaro Kaempfer's approach, it can be seen as the epitome of a "modernidad ibérica" ("Iberian modernity." My trans.), which links ethics to economics using pastoral topoi and condenses them into a governmental apparatus: "Estética pastoril y poder pastoril convergen en un relato que integra tecnología, control demográfico y agricultura en un programa político sustentado en una ética pública de base rural y de proyección estratégica" ("Pastoral esthetics and pastoral power converge in a story that integrates technology, demographic control and agriculture in a political program grounded in a public ethos of rural basis and strategic projection." My trans.).<sup>40</sup> The *Informe* reinterprets the pastoral idyll into a vision of a rural habitat characterized by productivity, which functions as a power dispositive framed by an ethical-pastoral matrix, and guarantees cohesion and political stability.<sup>41</sup> The text combines elements of a holistic vision of society within the horizon of Providentialism with specific instructions and catalogs of activities such as clearing forests, draining rivers, planting seeds etc. This corresponds to the different levels of an economically oriented exercise of control, which aims at the most productive possible use of humans as a potential labor force on the

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38 del Río 1953, 633.

39 Analyzing the entanglement of cultivo ("cultivation") and culture in selected reform texts by Jovellanos, Andreas Gelz reveals striking ambivalences concerning the man-nature relationship these texts are based on. Cf. Gelz [forthcoming 2022].

40 Kaempfer 2007, 339.

41 Cf. Kaempfer 2007, 351, 353.

one hand, and nature as a reservoir of resources on the other. Such a political-economic but also proto-ecological, governmentality-defined access to the world is reflected in the measures Jovellanos proposes. The extent to which the measures he proposes have internalized the functional mechanisms of the market economy and transferred them to nature may be illustrated by one example that refers to the regulation of timber production in the provinces. According to Jovellanos, the provinces would be immediately aware of the scarcity of raw materials, so that interest and benefit would go hand in hand and ultimately automatically ensure sustainable management:

Las leñas y maderas, Señor, han llegado a un grado de escasez que en algunas provincias es enorme, y digno de toda la atención de Vuestra Alteza; pero la causa de esta escasez no se debe buscar sino en las mismas providencias dirigidas a removerla. Revóquense y la abundancia renacerá. La escasez trae la carestía, y esta carestía será el mejor cebo del interés cuando, animado de la libertad, se convierta al cuidado de los montes, porque nadie cuidará poco lo que le valga mucho. ¿No es verdad que todo propietario trata de sacar de su propiedad la mayor utilidad posible? Luego donde las leñas valgan mucho por falta de combustible se cuidarán las selvas de corte ó montes de tala, y aun se criarán de nuevo; donde el lujo y la industria aumenten la edificación se criarán maderas de construcción urbana, y en las cercanías de los puertos, maderas de construcción naval y arboladura. ¿No es éste el progreso natural de todo cultivo, de toda plantación, de toda buena industria? ¿No es siempre el consumo quien los provoca, y el interés quien los determina y los aumenta?<sup>42</sup>

("Firewood and wood, Sir, have reached a degree of shortage which in some provinces is enormous, and worthy of Your Highness's full attention; but the cause of this shortage should not be sought except in the providences themselves, which are designed to remove it. Reverse it and abundance will be reborn. Shortage brings scarcity, and this scarcity will be the best bait of interest when, animated by freedom, it becomes the care of the mountains, for no one will take poor care of that which is of great value to him. Is it not true that every owner tries to make the best possible use of his property? Then, where firewood is very valuable for lack of fuel, cut forests or felled mountains will be taken care of, and even re-grown; where luxury and industry increase construction, timber for urban construction will be cultivated, and in the vicinity of ports, timber and trees for shipbuilding. Is this not the natural progress of every crop, of every plantation, of every good industry? Is it not always consumption that provokes them, and interest that determines and increases them?" My trans.)

Even if the methodological approaches are of differing natures, the basic idea expressed here can be brought into line with Carlowitz's thoughts on forestry. It is true that the latter pursues a cameralistic approach, while Jovellanos starts

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42 Jovellanos [1795] 1820, 88–89.



from other premises and appeals to the concept of self-interest. What both economists have in common, however, is the “inventory of state resources” cited at the beginning, which aimed at “maintaining and increasing the state and natural budget” – there through “conservation,” here through “cuidado” (“care.” My trans.).<sup>43</sup>

For an analysis of the Spanish thinker's relationship to nature, the entanglement of “abundancia” and “escasez” (“abundance” and “scarcity,” my trans.) is particularly revealing: on the one hand, it relates conditions according to the formula “abundance through scarcity”; on the other hand, it indicates an economically grounded dialectic. This dialectic not only appears repeatedly in the *Informe*, but is also directly related to the aforementioned religiosity in Jovellanos's relationship to nature, and is an essential component of his relationship to the world. “Abundancia” and “escasez” must be kept in balance to avoid a negatively connoted “superabundancia” (“superabundance.” My trans.), which is anti-economic and anti-political because it leads to falling prices and thus ultimately to shortages.<sup>44</sup> Beyond such an inner-worldly economy, “abundance” and “scarcity” in Jovellanos also refer to the abundance of creation and the limitations of human existence. The former is particularly evident in his scientific writings, which testify to his admiration for the works of the Creator; the latter appears in the *Informe* in the figure, cited above, of the human being condemned to labor, who must wrest his livelihood from nature's abundance. The dialectic sketched here is also very specifically contoured in the *Diario*, which nonetheless indicates a new component in Jovellanos's relationship to nature. As I will show below, this text encounters a potentially inexhaustible and therefore also incommensurable nature by appealing to the category of the sublime.

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43 Cf. Haller et al. 2014, 9.

44 Exemplary here is the use of the word based on Mesta's criticism. “El privilegio de tasa, que es también injusto, antieconómico y antipolítico por su esencia, lo es mucho mas cuando se considera unido á los demás que ha usurpado la Mesta. La prohibicion de romper las dehesas, únicamente dirigida á sostener la superabundancia de pastos, debe producir el envilecimiento de sus precios.” (“The privilege of tax, which is equally unjust, uneconomic and antipolitical in its essence, is much more so when it is considered along with the others that have usurped the Mesta. The prohibition of parceling out the grasslands, intended solely to preserve the superabundance of pasturage, should lead to the debasement of their prices.” My trans.) Jovellanos [1795] 1820, 118–119.

### 3. A measurement of the sublime

The *Diario* can be characterized as a travel journal; its occasionally added subtitle, “Memorias íntimas” (“personal memories.” My trans.), is somewhat misleading, since Jovellanos contradicts the genre’s conventions with his sober descriptions and lack of introspection.<sup>45</sup> The text was written in the ten years between his banishment from Madrid up to his imprisonment in Mallorca in 1801, and should be read in what follows with a focus on the entries from the early years as a complement to the *Informe*.

In keeping with the basic economic orientation of the *Informe*, the descriptions in the early journals subject the landscapes he traveled to an economizing and cataloging gaze. Examining population, crop yield, and trade records, interspersed with notes on accommodation, meals, his physical condition, the strain of travel and the like, they present themselves as a counterpart to those geographic maps whose production Jovellanos calls for.<sup>46</sup> In this sense, the descriptions structured around (among other things) the dichotomy of “abundancia / escasez” (“abundance / scarcity.” My trans.) conform to an inventory and catalog of landscapes that yield rich or meager harvests, of water resources that promise bounty, or of barren mountain landscapes that are difficult to reach, but some have abundant coal deposits.<sup>47</sup> Alongside such clearly utilitarian passages, emotively tinged depictions of scenic beauty are sometimes found, which, however, once again refer to fertile, cultivated soil and thus support Caso González’s formula that Jovellanos’s love of nature is economic at its heart.<sup>48</sup>

While the praise of the landscape here and elsewhere serves as praise of nature as a store of resources, the *Diario* also contains hymnic-exclamatory passages with no clear reference to aspects of agricultural utility: “¡Hombre! Si quieres ser venturoso contempla la Naturaleza y acércate a ella, en ella está la frente del

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45 Rueda pursues the thesis that the sublime in the *Diario* provides insight into the fragility of the optimism found in reformist writings, cf. Rueda 2006, 489; for short discussion of genre’s conventions, cf. Rueda 2006, 486.

46 On the importance of a cartographic recording of the world for Jovellanos, cf. Reguera Rodríguez 2020.

47 In his remarks on agricultural yields and natural resources, Jovellanos consistently uses the terms “abundancia / escasez,” although he apparently applies the former more frequently. He interweaves the terms to make a kind of comparison between harvest years or to point out the deficiencies that lead to lower productivity. Cf. Jovellanos [1790] 1994, 88, [1791] 1994, 196, [1792] 1994, 450.

48 Cf. Caso González 2006, 18.

escaso placer y Felicidad que fueron dados a tu ser.”<sup>49</sup> (“O Man! If you want to be fortunate, contemplate Nature and draw near to it; in it is the fore of the rare pleasure and happiness that were given to your being.” My trans.) The emotionally intense, dramatic exclamations, wherein the landscape rarely functions as a mirror of the soul, culminate in moments of intense communion with nature. They appear, for instance, when untamed natural elements such as mighty rock formations or waterfalls contrast with their cultivated counterpart, the idyllic valley as a “sitio delicioso” (“exquisite scene.” My trans.). Jovellanos synthesizes his impressions with the exclamation “todo es poético” (“everything is poetic.” My trans.), which refers directly to the literary-shaped nature of his perceptions, emphasized by several scholars and which I can only briefly address at this point.<sup>50</sup> In the present consideration, what is of interest here is a brief invocation of nature that combines astonishment and admiration, and is reminiscent of the religious foundation of the Spanish thinker’s relationship to nature discussed above: “¡Oh Naturaleza! ¡Qué desdichados son los que no pueden disfrutarte en estas augustísimas escenas, donde despliegas tan magníficamente tus bellezas y ostentas toda tu majestad!” (“O Nature! How unfortunate are those who cannot enjoy you in these most august scenes, where you so magnificently display your beauties and flaunt all your majesty!” My trans.).<sup>51</sup> The immensity of creation, reflected here in the choice of the superlative or the semantics of grandeur and majesty, is referred to in other passages by introducing the philosophical category of the sublime<sup>52</sup>: “Enormes peñas de Pancorbo, de sublime y hórrida vista” (“Enormous rocks of Pancorbo, of sublime and horrid aspect.” My trans.),<sup>53</sup> “¡Qué escenas tan sublimes! ¡Qué montañas tan augustas! Todas se ven como unos enormes trozos derrumbados de las más altas” (“What scenes so sublime! What

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49 Jovellanos [1794] 1994, 621.

50 Following Kaempfer 2007, Jovellanos proposed society as a reinterpretation of the pastoral idyll. While Caso González described Jovellanos’s relationship to nature as pre-romantic, a perspective supported by Ramos Gorostiza, Lorenzo Álvarez called into question this genealogy and emphasized the compatibility between neoclassical positions and the category of the sublime; cf. Caso González 2006, 41; cf. Ramos Gorostiza 2008, 123, 138; cf. Lorenzo Álvarez 2016, 279. Del Río stressed the critical confrontation with Rousseau, but also an obvious influence that Jovellanos could not avoid, when he writes of his “paseos con J.J.” (“walks with J.J.” my trans.), cf. del Río 1953, 635.

51 Jovellanos [1792] 1994, 395.

52 Relevant to this, cf. Rueda 2006, Lorenzo Álvarez 2016; following Polt, Jovellanos owned Burke’s *Philosophical Inquiry*, cf. Polt 1964, 11.

53 Jovellanos [1791] 1994, 224.

august mountains! They all look like huge slabs cast down from the highest.” My trans.).<sup>54</sup> The tension indicated in the topos change from *locus amoenus* to *locus terribilis*,<sup>55</sup> which runs throughout the *Diario*, points to the incommensurability of an experience that arises in the face of a rugged and pristine rocky landscape or a storm-wracked sea: “Lo cierto es que en un sitio tan señalado como éste, donde la Naturaleza es tan grande y vigorosa, todo contribuye a aumentar la sublimidad de las escenas. El sol es aquí más brillante, los vientos más recios e impetuosos, las mudanzas del tiempo más súbitas, las lluvias más gruesas y abundantes, más penetrantes los hielos, y todo participa de la misma grandeza.” (“The truth is that in a place as marked as this, where Nature is so grand and vigorous, everything contributes to increase the sublimity of the scenes. The sun is brighter here, the winds stronger and more impetuous, the weather changes more sudden, the rains heavier and more abundant, the ice more penetrating, and all share in the same greatness.” My trans.).<sup>56</sup>

Insofar as the passages cited are integrated into an overall context in which impressions of sublimity and pragmatic observations alternate – for example, when climbing a mountain yields a view of the landscape, which is followed by reflections on the construction of a bridge – Jovellanos stifles the impression of the unfathomable. This strategy becomes even clearer when, elsewhere, impressions of the sublime are combined with attempts to quantify the immeasurable elements on which they are based. Thus, the description of a mountain passage – “Pasado el puente Tuero, hay unas eminentísimas peñas a una y otra banda, espectáculo de los más grandes y sublimes que puede presentar la Naturaleza.” (“Passing the Tuero bridge, there are some eminent rocks in one formation and another, a spectacle of the grandest and most sublime that Nature can present.” My trans.)<sup>57</sup> – is followed by an all too rapid break, for example when the awe-inspiring mountain is measured mentally without further ado and estimated at 600 feet.

The experience of the immeasurable indicated by the concept of the sublime is made tangible here in the sense of the accountability, described above and inherent in Jovellanos’s recourse to numbers. In the various journal entries, this process corresponds to the aforementioned entanglement of admiration and utilization, even exploitation, as well as the cataloging and mapping of resources

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54 Jovellanos [1793] 1994, 484.

55 On the function of these topoi in Jovellanos, cf. Lorenzo Álvarez 2016: 271, 278.

56 Jovellanos [1793] 1994, 484.

57 Jovellanos [1790] 1994, 89.

and population, as shown in the travel records from Asturias to Rioja. I refer to these attempts to make a nature experienced as immeasurable and thus sublime manageable, by means of numbers and inventories, as “measurement of the sublime.” This thought figure can be derived from Jovellanos’s enlightening interpretation of the commission of creation, which I characterized above with reference to the *Informe*. Accordingly, it is important to render the resources of an inexhaustible nature available for human use; that is, the abundance of creation is offset against the scarcity of human subsistence. In this, however, the affective, saturated admiration of nature and the sober documentation of available resources would not be opposites, but two sides of the same coin. In their seemingly paradoxical, complementary contrariness lies the core of Jovellanos’s ambivalent relationship to nature, which to my mind should be regarded as representative of an enlightened yet still religiously bound approach to the natural world that testifies to an proto-ecological governmentality.<sup>58</sup> The attendant economization of nature could be understood as the first step on the path to a concept of nature “als Serviceeinrichtung [...], die Ökosystemdienstleistungen und -güter für den Menschen bereitstellt” (“as a service facility [...] that provides ecosystem goods and services for humans.” My trans.).<sup>59</sup>

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58 Thus, Jovellanos suggests a response to Ramos Gorostiza’s question on how Jovellanos’ contradictory enlightened-utilitarian and romantic-contemplative relationship to nature can be explained, cf. Ramos Gorostiza 2008, 145.

59 Haller et al. 2014, 16.

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Annika Nickenig

## Pastoral Economies. Natural vs. Human Productivity in Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul et Virginie*

**Abstract** The pastoral novel *Paul et Virginie*, written by Bernard de Saint-Pierre in 1788, contains a fundamental conflict between labour and luxury, work and idleness. This central dialectic determines the topographical structure of the text (France vs. Île de France) as well as its value system, opposing two different “economies.” Within this dialectic, the article aims to show, it is nature itself that represents the main protagonist of production. As will be demonstrated, the concept of a natural productivity is shaped by two very distinct discourses: on the one hand, the generic tradition of the pastoral with its imagination of an abundant, prolific nature; on the other hand, the economic concepts of the early 18th century, namely the physiocrats and their valorisation of agricultural productivity against the sterility of handicraft. The article proposes to combine both concepts of nature, the pastoral and the economic, in order to highlight that the initial dialectic is far less clear than one might suppose at first glance.

**Keywords:** Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, *Paul et Virginie*, nature, economy, physiocrats, agriculture, pastoral

The pastoral novel *Paul et Virginie*, published by Bernardin de Saint-Pierre in 1788 as part of his *Études de la nature*, did not immediately have the commercial success the author hoped for. In his prologue to the various editions of the novel, Bernardin laments his readers' lack of willingness to pay for an illustrated deluxe edition, thus demonstrating his preference for financial considerations over aesthetic ones.<sup>1</sup> In the years and decades that followed, however, the novel's success was so remarkable that it became a literary motif in its own right: The young Emma Bovary, for example, devours a fine edition of *Paul et Virginie* illustrated with engravings,<sup>2</sup> and in Maupassant's *Bel-Ami*, two coloured pictures of

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1 Cf. Cook 2007, 95–97.

2 “Elle avait lu *Paul et Virginie* et elle avait rêvé la maisonnette de bambous, le nègre Domino, le chien Fidèle, mais surtout l'amitié douce de quelque bon petit frère, qui va chercher pour vous des fruits rouges dans des grands arbres plus hauts que des clochers, ou qui court pieds nus sur le sable, vous apportant un nid d'oiseau.” Flaubert 1951, 357. (“She had read *Paul et Virginie* and dreamed of the little bamboo house, the negro Domingo, the dog Fidèle, but above all of the sweet friendship of some good

Paul and Virginie are the only adornment in Georges Duroy's old childhood bedroom.<sup>3</sup> The popularity of Bernardin's novel was also apparent in the intense commercialization that accompanied its publication. The *Paul et Virginie* merchandise, whose sales reached their climax in the 19th century, included sets of porcelain, fans, wallpaper and lampshades.<sup>4</sup> An especially striking example of the *Paul et Virginie* hype is a mantelpiece clock made in 1847 that represents Paul resting from his work, his farm tools at his side (Illustration 1). This little scene evokes the hard work of cultivating the soil to reap the harvest, while the object itself, with its opulent shape and shiny bronze surface, is clearly recognizable as a luxury article. In this opposition of form and content – luxury on the one hand and hard labour on the other – the clock echoes a fundamental conflict in the novel, namely the antithesis between work and idleness, between the production of necessary consumer goods and the manufacture of luxuries.

This dialectic, between nature and necessity on the one hand, and luxury and idleness on the other, structures the novel's system of values throughout, forming two different "economies." These are both clearly reflected in the topographic organization of the text, which sets up an opposition between the idyllic island of Île de France (now Mauritius), where the action takes place, and the European continent. While France is presented as a source of commercial interest and corruption, and a place for the pursuit of profit, the island – thanks to its isolated location – seems to serve as a positive counterpart, a harmonic idyll free from greed and corruption. It is here that the two women, Madame de la Tour and Marguerite – both rejected and cut off from their homeland for moral or social reasons, and left to their own devices – form an alternative "petite société" ("little society." My trans.), jointly raising their children, Paul and Virginie, with the help of two slaves. Thus, the secluded island contains its own secluded space, which forms a refuge for the main characters. The idyllic place that gives them shelter provides them with only the bare necessities – but these are available in abundance. The surrounding soil and sea provide all the resources necessary for life: food, and materials for clothing and housing. In a sense, nature itself can

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little brother, who fetches red fruit for you from trees taller than belfries, or who runs barefoot on the sand, bringing you a bird nest." My trans.)

- 3 "Un crucifix au-dessus d'un bénitier, et deux images coloriées représentant Paul et Virginie sous un palmier bleu et Napoléon I<sup>er</sup> sur un cheval jaune, ornaient seuls cet appartement propre et désolant." Maupassant 1988, 205. ("A crucifix above a holy water font, and two colored pictures representing Paul and Virginia under a blue palm tree and Napoleon I on a yellow horse, adorned his clean and desolate flat." My trans.)
- 4 Lepître 2014, 24–25, 80–83, 136–147.



**Illustration 1:** Mantelpiece clock 1847, © F. Dugué / F. Carnuccini. Lepêtre 2014, 25.

be considered a protagonist of production. The “petite société” has only to reap what nature offers in plenty.

The novel’s topography seems to imply a connection between the geographical setting, with its pastoral elements, and its accompanying system of values. Within this configuration, nature has a central role to play, both in terms of the text’s aesthetics and in terms of the economy that it depicts. Taking the productivity of nature in *Paul et Virginie* as my starting point, I aim to show that the harmonious interaction of man and nature in Bernardin’s novel is not only based on the conventions of the pastoral genre, but is also influenced by contemporary

economic thinking. This dual influence, I will argue, leads to ambivalences and shifts in the representation of nature and the spatial configuration of the novel. In what follows, I trace the different aspects of nature in *Paul et Virginie*, and especially the oscillation between two types of productivity, one copious and “natural,” the other opulent and artificial.

## 1. Pastoral topographies and pastoral economies: Natural abundance

The main action of the novel takes place in a small, secluded valley or basin on Île-de-France, separated from the rest of the island by wild vegetation and high mountains – a place cut off from the rest of the world. The topography alone makes the setting an idyllic one. A common definition of idyll is an enclosed space that is protected from the potentially hostile and aggressive outside world; a circumscribed space where relationships are shaped by friendship and harmony.<sup>5</sup> It is exactly this ideal Arcadian landscape or “Ideallandschaft” (Curtius)<sup>6</sup> that we find, complete with the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, in the novel *Paul et Virginie*:

A l'entrée de ce bassin, [...] les échos de la montagne répètent sans cesse le bruit des vents qui agitent les forêts voisines, et le fracas des vagues qui brisent au loin des récifs; mais au pied même des cabanes on n'entend plus aucun bruit, et on ne voit autour de soi que de grands rochers escarpés comme des murailles. Des bouquets d'arbres croissent à leur base, dans leurs fentes, et jusque sur leurs cimes [...]. Un grand silence règne dans leur enceinte, où tout est paisible, l'air, les eaux et la lumière.<sup>7</sup>

(‘At the entrance of the valley [...], the echoes of the mountain incessantly repeat the hollow murmurs of the winds that shake the neighbouring forests, and the tumultuous dashing of the waves which break at a distance upon the cliffs; but near the ruined cottages all is calm and still, and the only objects which there meet the eye are rude steep rocks, that rise like a surrounding rampart. Large clumps of trees grow at their base, on their rifted sides, and even on their majestic tops [...]. Within this enclosure reigns the most profound silence. The waters, the air, all elements are at peace.’)<sup>8</sup>

5 Cf. Böschenstein 2005, 121.

6 Ernst Robert Curtius, in his description of the *locus amoenus*, highlights the seclusion of the idyll, which he depicts as a “schöne[n] beschattete[n] Naturausschnitt,” minimally equipped with “einem Baum [...], einer Wiese, und einem Quell oder Bach” (“beautiful, shaded section of nature,” minimally equipped with “a tree, a meadow, a source or stream.” My trans.). Curtius 1973, 202.

7 Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1992, 92 f.

8 Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1892, 24.

The predominance of silence and peacefulness points to a harmony between the elements, and between man and nature.

Bernardin himself, in his “Préambule,” labels his work “mon humble pastorale”<sup>9</sup>; in the “Avant-Propos” he prefers the weaker “espèce de pastorale.”<sup>10</sup> As Lucien Fabre has pointed out, his novel complies unintentionally with the parameters for the genre set out by Florian in the *Essai sur la pastorale* (1787), developing the “thème de l’amour enfantine” (“theme of childhood love.” My trans.), which it depicts with simplicity, naivety and “une morale douce et pure.”<sup>11</sup> But despite Bernardin’s self-proclaimed adherence to the genre and the many studies on his use of pastoral elements, the novel’s relation to the tradition is far from unequivocal.<sup>12</sup> In line with the ancient topos of the Golden Age, the idyllic setting not only creates harmony between man and nature, but also represents a natural world that supplies man’s needs in abundance.<sup>13</sup> The characters in *Paul et Virginie* are described as living on “une nourriture saine et abondante”<sup>14</sup> and emphasis is placed on their harmonious interaction with nature: “nous apportions de l’habitation des provisions végétales que nous

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- 9 Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1992, 29. The humility is offset by Bernardin’s desire to win fame through his novel: “En vérité, s’il m’est permis de le dire, je crois que mon humble pastorale pourrait fort bien m’acquérir un jour autant de célébrité que les poèmes sublimes de l’*Iliade* et de l’*Odyssée* en ont valu à Homère.” (“In truth, if I may say so, I believe that my humble pastoral may one day acquire for me as much fame as the sublime poems of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* earned for Homer.” My trans.)
- 10 Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1992, 202. Despite the qualification, the author explicitly refers to the generic heritage of Theocrite and Virgile: “Il ne manque à l’autre partie du monde que des Théocrites et des Virgiles pour que nous en ayons des tableaux au moins aussi intéressants que ceux de notre pays.” (201) (“A Theocritus and a Virgil are only needed in the other hemisphere to give us scenes at least as interesting as those in our land.” Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1892, 21)
- 11 Cf. Fabre 1963, 193.
- 12 Cf. Steigerwald 2001, 71.
- 13 The Golden Age is evoked in Hesiod and especially in Ovid, where nature gives in plenty without needing to be cultivated: “The valleys though unplowed / gave many fruits; the fields though not renewed / white glistened with the heavy bearded wheat: / rivers flowed milk and nectar, and the trees, / the very oak trees, then gave honey of themselves.” *Ov. Met.* 109–112. See also Racault: “L’age d’or’ ainsi retrouvé recrée un univers délibérément imaginaire, où la profusion de la nature élimine la nécessité du travail.” Racault 1986, 182. (“The ‘Golden Age’ thus recovered recreates a deliberately imaginary universe, where the profusion of nature eliminates the need for work.” My trans.)
- 14 Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1992, 101.

joignons à celles que la mer nous fournissaient en abondance”<sup>15</sup> (“We brought from home the provisions furnished us by our gardens, to which we added those supplied us by the sea in abundant variety.”)<sup>16</sup> While the abundance provided by nature creates an almost paradisiacal setting, the human beings have at most a supporting role: the novel’s main protagonist of production is nature itself. Even the repeated scenes of human productivity, in which the two women, together with their slaves and children, busy themselves with small but necessary works of handicraft for immediate use,<sup>17</sup> are set against the backdrop of their fertile natural surroundings.

In stark contrast to the classical principle of the pastoral, however, the text does not offer scenes of pure idleness, but depicts a life of hard physical work. Unlike in the world of the ancient bucolic idyll, nature does not give freely, while man spends his days of leisure in a shady *locus amoenus*, playing the lute. Instead, the land must be constantly – and physically – worked if it is to be made to yield. While Wolfgang Iser posits that the poetic quality of the bucolic genre relies on relief from the daily grind of agricultural work,<sup>18</sup> Bernardin’s novel suggests the opposite: here, hard physical labour is a precondition for the existence of the idyll and a necessary component of the text’s poetic quality. Thus the generic features evident in the novel should be seen less in the context of classical bucolic texts than in that of the rural poetry of Virgil’s *Georgics*, an epic poem on the farmer’s tasks and duties, describing how to work the land and giving precise instructions on when to sow and reap.

The active and busy farming life on Île de France represented in *Paul et Virginie* is also part of a moral matrix, standing as it does in dialectical opposition to

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15 Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1992, 122.

16 Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1892, 77.

17 The slave Marie is described as having some productive skills: “Elle était née à Madagascar, d’où elle avait apporté quelque industrie, surtout celle de faire des paniers et des étoffes appelées pagnes, avec des herbes qui croissent dans les bois. [...] Pour ces deux amies, elles filaient du matin au soir du coton. Ce travail suffisait à leur entretien et à celui de leurs familles.” Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1992, 97. (“Mary was born at Madagascar, and had there acquired the knowledge of some useful arts. She could weave baskets, and a sort of stuff, with long grass that grows in the woods. [...] Madame de la Tour and her friend were constantly employed in spinning cotton for the use of their own families.” Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1892, 34.)

18 “Was die Hirtenwelt zu einer ‘poetischen’ Welt macht, ist ihre Ablösung von dem, was sie ursprünglich bezeichnet: das Tagwerk bäuerlicher Verrichtungen.” Iser 1991, 71. (“What makes the pastoral world a ‘poetic’ world is its detachment from what it originally denotes: the day-to-day work of peasant pursuits.” My trans.)

life on the European continent, with its artificiality and moral corruption, its infertility and idleness. The narrator sets out a moralizing critique of the wrong kind of wealth – the wealth that offers only artificial joy, and is thus inferior to the inexhaustible richness of that offered by nature:

Vous autres Européens, dont l'esprit se remplit dès l'enfance de tant de préjugés contraires au bonheur, vous ne pouvez concevoir que la nature puisse donner tant de lumière et de plaisirs. Votre âme, circonscrite dans une petite sphère de connaissances humaines, atteint bientôt le terme de ses jouissances artificielles: mais la nature et le cœur sont inépuisables.<sup>19</sup>

(“You Europeans, whose minds are imbued from infancy with prejudices at variance with happiness, cannot imagine all the instruction and pleasure to be derived from nature. Your souls, confined to a small sphere of intelligence, soon reach the limit of its artificial enjoyments; but nature and the heart are inexhaustible.”)<sup>20</sup>

The contrast between the two places is further emphasized by the difference between the tranquil contentment of the one and the restless greed of the other – the craving for money that comes with overseas trade.<sup>21</sup> The novel's semantic matrix is thus structured by the opposition of virtue and corruption, fertility and sterility. When it comes to the topography of the genre, however, the classic dichotomy is inverted. The pastoral is not a place of leisure or idleness, and thus a refuge from a busy urban life<sup>22</sup>; it is a place of practical activity. A similar inversion

19 Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1992, 125.

20 Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1892, 82.

21 “Virginia chantait le bonheur de la vie champêtre, et les malheurs des gens de mer que l'avarice porte à naviguer sur un élément furieux, plutôt que de cultiver la terre, qui donne paisiblement tant de bien” Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1992, 122. (“Virginia sang the happiness of pastoral life, and the misery of those who were impelled by avarice to cross the raging ocean, rather than cultivate the earth, and enjoy its bounties in peace.” Bernardin de Sait-Pierre 1892, 77–78) Not surprisingly, the opposite view is held in Europe, where farming is devalued: “C'est qu'en Europe le travail des mains déshonore. On l'appelle travail mécanique. Celui même de labourer la terre y est le plus méprisé de tous. Un artisan y est bien plus estimé qu'un paysan.” Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1992, 169. (“In Europe, working with your hands is considered a degradation: it is compared to the labor performed by a machine. The occupation of cultivating the earth is the most despised of all. Even an artisan is held in more estimation than a peasant.” Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1892, 148.)

22 This is a common topos in Geßner's idylls: “Oft reiß ich mich aus der Stadt los, und fliehe in einsame Gegenden, dann entreißt die Schönheit der Natur mein Gemüth allem dem Ekel und allen den niedrigen Eindrücken, die mich aus der Stadt verfolgt haben; ganz entzückt, ganz Empfindung über ihre Schönheit, bin ich dann glücklich wie ein Hirt im goldnen Weltalter und reicher als ein König” Geßner 1988, 15. (“Often I tear



exists in the contrast between openness and seclusion: although the idyll is spatially enclosed, moral insularity, in the form of narrow-mindedness, is to be found outside it (“circumscribed”; “petite sphere” [“circumscribed”; “little sphere.” My trans.]). Bernardin’s novel ultimately offers a kind of inverse economy: by restricting themselves to what is essential and natural, his characters tap an inexhaustible source of sustenance.

In this way, the generic, topographical and economic elements of the novel shift and overlap with some apparently paradoxical results: pastoral tranquillity is characterized by hard work, idyllic seclusion brings about moral openness, and material restriction to what is natural and necessary yields true and inexhaustible wealth.

## 2. A “gouvernement de la nature”: Physiocratic thought

If we examine the representation of nature in *Paul et Virginie*, we discover two main functions. On the one hand, nature’s abundance is a constitutive feature of the literary genre of the idyll, where it brings harmony and fruition. On the other hand, the idea of nature as productive, used and worked by man, corresponds with a popular economic concept of the 18th century, developed by the physiocrats. The physiocratic “économistes” took a providential attitude towards the laws of nature, assuming the existence of an “ordre naturel” or “ordre de la nature” (“natural order.” My trans.) and positing interconnections between all elements of the physical world.<sup>23</sup> These theories formed the basis of detailed guidelines for political action, taking the physiocrats beyond the realm of philosophy, towards an “économie politique” proper, and allowing them to carry out their “intention to establish the principles of a ‘government by nature.’”<sup>24</sup>

The most famous exposition of the physiocratic idea is to be found in the *Tableau Économique* by François Quesnay, first published in 1758 and reissued in a more detailed form in 1769. This much-discussed economic model was admired by Adam Smith and Karl Marx alike, while Mirabeau declared it mankind’s third greatest discovery after the alphabet and money.<sup>25</sup> In it, Quesnay

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myself away from the city and flee to lonely places, then the beauty of nature carries my mind away from all the disgust and all the harsh impressions that have pursued me from the city; enchanted, completely moved by its beauty, I am then as happy as a shepherd in the golden age of the world and richer than a king.” My trans.)

23 Pribram 1983, 103.

24 Pribram 1983, 103.

25 Gilibert in Starbatty 1989, 118.



offers one of the first descriptions of the productive forces of a society in the history of economic thought (Illustration 2: *Tableau Économique*). In a diagram of three columns, he distinguishes three different social classes and the circulation of income between them: the farmers work the land of the owning class, making twice the yield of the invested capital; half the profit flows back to the owners, the other half is spent equally on agricultural and handicraft products. The expenditure of the other two classes moves in the same direction: the zig-zag line visible in the *Tableau* indicates a regularly circulating flow of revenues that ultimately add up to zero.

For the present context, two things are particularly important: firstly, Quesnay distinguishes between a “productive” class and a “sterile” class: it is only the farmers’ work that is considered productive, while, according to the diagram, crafts, industry and commerce make no real profit. In his textual commentary on the tableau, Quesnay notes: “*Les Dépenses productives* sont employées à l’agriculture prairies, pâtures, forêts, mines, pêches, &c. pour perpétuer les richesses, en grains, boissons, bois, bestiaux, matières premières des ouvrages de main-d’œuvre, &c./ *Les Dépenses stériles* se font en marchandises de main-d’œuvre, logemens, vêtements, intérêts d’argent, domestiques, frais de commerce, denrées étrangères, &c.”<sup>26</sup> (“*Productive expenditures* are employed in agriculture meadows, pastures, forests, mines, fisheries, &c., in order to perpetuate wealth, in grains, beverages, woods, cattle, raw materials for labour works, &c. / *Sterile expenditures* are made in labour goods, lodgings, clothes, money interests, servants, trade expenses, foreign commodities, &c.” My trans.). In line with this, the physiocrats recommend farming as the primary force of political economy; for them, agriculture is “the only real source of national wealth.”<sup>27</sup> Secondly, nature constitutes the true productive force, while man’s labour is merely supplementary. According to this philosophy, the earth is a “*mère nourricière*” (“nurturing mother.” My trans.) with a “*fécondité sans bornes*” (“boundless fertility.” My trans.) (Mirabeau), whose yield can be increased through work.<sup>28</sup> While a craftsman, say, can turn a piece of fabric into a piece of clothing, but is unable to increase the quantity of material, the productive force of the earth is inexhaustible.<sup>29</sup> Crucially, then, physiocratic thought outlines not only an economic principle, but also a moral-philosophical position: the production process which

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26 Quesnay / Kuczynski 1965, 7.

27 Pribram 1983, 105.

28 Thibault 2012, 37. Thibault refers to Mirabeau’s *Éléments de philosophie rurale* (1757).

29 Thibault 2012, 37.

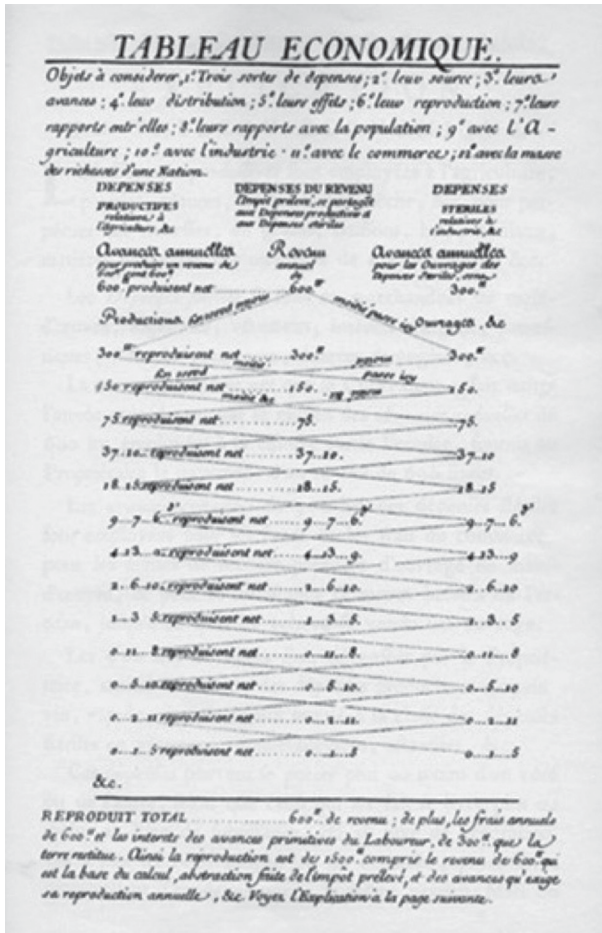


Illustration 2: Quesnay's Tableau économique (Quesnay 1965)

functions as a closed, harmonious cycle is also the expression of divine order in nature – and thus the realization of a modern “oikodicy.”<sup>30</sup>

30 Vogl 2011, 29 ff.

The influence of physiocratic thought on Bernardin de Saint-Pierre has already been explored.<sup>31</sup> What has yet to receive attention, however, is the resonance of physiocratic ideas within the pastoral *Paul et Virginie*, despite the number of promising parallels between the economic model of Quesnay's *Tableau* and the fictional idyll of *Paul et Virginie*, not least of which is the novel's exemplary and didactic nature. Significantly, Bernardin himself conceives of his text as a *tableau*,<sup>32</sup> the very medium to represent knowledge employed by Quesnay – though, of course, without the economic model's high degree of abstraction. The novel clearly highlights the superiority of farming over the idle, unproductive life led in France. It is only nature that offers “real” prosperity, while the richness experienced by Virginie in France is perceived as artificial and “infertile”: “Je vis au milieu de l'éclat de la fortune, et je ne peux disposer d'un sou. [...] Au sein des richesses je suis bien plus pauvre que je ne l'étais auprès de vous; car je n'ai rien à donner.”<sup>33</sup> (“I live in all the splendor of affluence, and have not a sous at my disposal. [...] In the midst of riches, I am poorer than when I lived with you; for I have nothing to give away.”)<sup>34</sup> This notion of the infertility of bourgeois Europe

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- 31 Fabre mentions it in his 1963 article on *Paul et Virginie* as a pastoral, without, however, remarking on the possible paradoxes resulting from that dual influence: “Le physiocratisme de pastorale que, par un anachronisme fort excusable, Bernardin préconise dans *Paul et Virginie*, en s'opposant au colbertisme de La Bourdonnais et au mercantilisme de la Compagnie des Indes, ne dédaigne pas les lieux communs de la secte, mais accentue son aspect spécifiquement religieux.” Fabre 1963, 18. (“The pastoral physiocratism which, by a very excusable anachronism, Bernardin advocates in *Paul et Virginie*, in opposition to the colbertism of La Bourdonnais and the mercantilism of the Compagnie des Indes, does not disdain the commonplaces of the sect, but emphasises its specifically religious aspect.” My trans.) Thibault dedicates a whole article to the question of the physiocratic influence on Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, citing among other sources Fénelon's *Aventures de Télémaque*: “Appliquez-vous à multiplier chez vous les richesses naturelles qui sont les véritables: cultivez la terre pour avoir une grande abondance de blé, de vin, d'huile et de fruits; ayez des troupeaux innombrables, qui vous nourrissent de leur lait et qui vous couvrent de leur laine: par là vous vous mettez en état de ne craindre jamais la pauvreté.” Thibault 2012, 37. (“Apply yourself to multiplying in your home the natural wealth that is the veritable one: Cultivate the land so that you may have a great abundance of wheat, wine, oil and fruit; have countless flocks and herds, which will feed you with their milk and cover you with their wool, so that you will never fear poverty.” My trans.)
- 32 *Tableau de la Nature* was the title Bernardin originally intended for his work, cf. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1992, 202.
- 33 Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1992, 151.
- 34 Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1892, 122.

is lent further emphasis by the little seeds that Virginie sends to Paul, which will not grow on the island.<sup>35</sup>

Above all, it is the physiocratic idea of natural order that we find in Bernardin's novel, where human behaviour and natural growth are inextricably linked. In accordance with the laws of natural order, nature in *Paul et Virginie* moves beyond its dual role of economic principle and idyllic setting to assume the more complex function of governing the protagonists' lives:

Comme deux bourgeons qui restent sur deux arbres de la même espèce, dont la tempête a brisé toutes les branches, viennent à produire des fruits plus doux, si chacun d'eux, détaché du tronc maternel, est greffé sur le tronc voisin; ainsi ses deux petits enfants, privés de tous leurs parents, se remplissait de sentiments plus tendres que ceux de fils et de fille, de frère et de soeur, quand ils venaient à être échangés de mamelles par les deux amies qui leur avaient donné le jour.<sup>36</sup>

(“As two buds which remain on different trees of the same kind, after the tempest has broken all their branches, produce more delicious fruit, if each, separated from the maternal stem, be grafted on the neighboring tree; so these two infants, deprived of all other relations, when thus exchanged for nourishment by those who had given them birth, imbibed feelings of affection still more tender than those of son and daughter, brother and sister.”)<sup>37</sup>

The use of nature-related, almost botanical terms to describe human behaviour and prosperity illustrates not only the harmonious symbiosis of man and nature,

35 “Paul sema avec le plus grand soin les graines européennes, et surtout celles de violettes et de scabieuses, dont les fleurs semblaient avoir quelque analogie avec le caractère et la situation de Virginie, qui les lui avait si particulièrement recommandées; mais, soit qu’elles eussent été éventées dans le trajet, soit plutôt que le climat de cette partie de l’Afrique ne leur soit pas favorable, il n’en germa qu’un petit nombre, qui ne put venir à sa perfection.” Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, 1992, 154. (“Paul sowed with a careful hand the European seeds, particularly the violet and scabious, the flowers of which seemed to bear some analogy to the character and present situation of Virginia, by whom they had been so especially recommended; but either they were dried up in the voyage, or the climate of this part of the world is unfavorable to their growth, for a very small number of them even came up, and not one arrived at full perfection.” Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1892, 125)

36 Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1992, 98–99. Another example is the small community’s solidarity in situations of grief and sorrow: “Ils s’affligeaient s’ils le voyaient affligé, et ils pleuraient s’ils le voyaient pleurer. Ainsi des plantes faibles s’entrelacent ensemble pour résister aux ouragans.” (120). (“Even Mary and Domingo hastened to offer their succour, and to weep with those that wept. Thus weak plants are interwoven, in order to resist the tempests.” Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1892, 22)

37 Bernardin de Saint Pierre 1892, 36–37.

but also the important role of natural law in governing human lives. This determinism of natural law means that nature assumes an almost legislative dimension – and thus an eminently political one. The “gouvernement de la nature” (“government of nature.” My trans.) regarded by the physiocrats as an ideal form of political economy is actually realized in Bernardin’s novel: while nature figures as the novel’s main protagonist of production, the human protagonists in *Paul et Virginie* are under the sway of nature.

In this way, nature has a dual function, acting on the one hand as a set of concrete physical phenomena, and on the other as a more abstract form of political governance. More than a mere backdrop, it becomes a subject of discourse within the novel: “Si l’histoire scandaleuse de la société ne fournissait point de matière à leurs conversations, celle de la nature les remplissait de ravissement et de joie. Elles admiraient avec transport le pouvoir d’une providence qui par leurs mains avait répandu au milieu de ces arides rochers l’abondance, les grâces, les plaisirs purs, simples, et toujours renaissants.”<sup>38</sup> (“Although the petty scandals of the day furnished no subject of conversation to them, yet the contemplation of nature filled their minds with enthusiastic delight. They adored the bounty of that Providence, which, by their instrumentality, had spread abundance and beauty amid these barren rocks, and had enabled them to enjoy those pure and simple pleasures, which are ever grateful and ever new.”)<sup>39</sup>

In the conversations between the two families, nature takes the place of society and its scandals; it is nature that they talk about, it is the history of nature that they narrate to each other. This is an indication not only of the virtue and innocence of the idyllic community, but also of the discursive function of nature within the novel. Rather than being restricted to a cameo appearance in descriptions of plants and the ways in which they grow and flourish, nature is an intrinsic part of the novel, inextricable from the lives of its characters, their history, their development as physical and moral subjects, and their interaction. In the constant personification of nature and its laws, the depiction of a “government” of nature and the reference to its sublime “couronnement”<sup>40</sup> (“coronation.” My trans.), the text presents nature as eminently social and political.

Having established the importance to Bernardin de Saint-Pierre of physiocratic ideas and the related notion of a harmonious and divine world order, we can look at things from the opposite perspective. If we return to Quesnay’s

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38 Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1992, 113.

39 Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1892, 61.

40 Cf. Howells 2010, 118.

model, we will see that it describes, in a simplified form, an almost “idyllic” balance of production, distribution and consumption, and a society in which the different social classes all work together on an equal footing.<sup>41</sup> I do not think it would be going too far to suggest that the *Tableau économique* is influenced to a degree by pastoral modes of representation. Despite the distinction between a “productive” class and a “sterile” one, and although the influence is mechanistic rather than physiological,<sup>42</sup> the *Tableau* describes a functioning – and one might almost say “harmonious” – circle based on mutual interdependence, whose novelty resides precisely in its emphasis on the interconnection between the parts and the whole.<sup>43</sup>

### 3. Natural aesthetics and luxury plants

As we have seen, the novel constantly plays with the (moral) opposition between a natural social order and a corrupt one, a fertile productive force and a sterile one, a virtuous, necessity-based economy and a profit-oriented one. This dialectic, however, cannot maintain such clarity and unambiguousness, for the lines between the two realms are constantly blurred. I would like to suggest that the resulting ambivalence is partly due to a disruption of the underlying spatial model, which has disturbed the topographic order and brought about transformations in the generic and economic matrices. It also owes something to the intrinsic ambiguity of the idyll itself.

First of all, the small island on which the heterotopic community meets is not as isolated as it seems at first glance; although far from Europe, and marked by little commercial activity, it is located in the middle of the famous West Indian route, the epitome of the European greed for enrichment: “cette île, située sur la route des Indes”<sup>44</sup> (“this island, located on the route to the Indies.” My trans.). Tied in with this is Madame de la Tour’s original motive for coming to the island, which in no way anticipates the ostensibly modest and harmonious life she will lead when she gets there; her husband had hoped to make money in the slave trade, and the project is only abandoned because of his sudden death. The island may be characterized as exotic and remote, but its very

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41 “Quesnay went on, from asserting universal compatibility – or, indeed, complementarity – of individual interests in competitive society, to asserting universal harmony of class interests.” Schumpeter 1997, 234.

42 Cf. Müller 2001, 5.

43 Pribram 1983, 107.

44 Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1992, 92.

name – “Île-de-France” – identifies it as part of France.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, it could be argued that France – complete with the corruption attributed to it in the text – is literally inscribed on the island.

As the project to send Virginie back to the continent (not least for economic reasons) begins to take shape, the small valley where the “petite société” is based is increasingly penetrated by various forms of commerce. Merchants and traders invade the secluded place and present their expensive fabrics to the ladies: “Cependant le bruit s’étant répandu dans l’île que la fortune avait visité ces rochers, on y vit grimper des marchands de toute espèce. Ils déployèrent, au milieu de ces pauvres cabanes, les plus riches étoffes de l’Inde; de superbes basins de Goudelour, des mouchoirs de Paliacate et de Mazulipatan, des mousselines de Dacca.”<sup>46</sup> (“A report having in the meantime been spread in the island that fortune had visited these rocks, merchants of every description were seen climbing their steep ascent. Now, for the first time, were seen displayed in these humble huts the richest stuffs of India; the fine dimity of Gondelore; the handkerchiefs of Pellicate and Masulipatan; the plain, striped, and embroidered muslins of Dacca.”)<sup>47</sup> The merchants’ arrival would seem at first glance to represent a corrupting invasion of the small idyll; the exotic-sounding goods and fine products imported from distant countries are clearly luxury items that break with the principle of producing only those goods that are necessary for life. A closer look at the text, however, reveals that the simple and necessary gifts of nature are, in fact, already imbued with a sense of luxury. The form of agriculture that Paul practises does not simply produce food, but real luxury articles:

Il y avait semé des graines d’arbres qui dès la seconde année portent des fleurs ou des fruits, tel que l’agathis, où pendent tout autour, comme les cristaux d’un lustre, de longues grappes de fleurs blanches; le lilas de Perse, qui élève droit en l’air ses girandoles gris de lin; le papayer, dont le tronc sans branches, formé en colonne hérissée de melons verts, porte un chapiteau de larges feuilles semblables à celle du figuier.<sup>48</sup>

(“He had also sown the seeds of many trees which the second year bear flowers or fruit; such as the agathis, encircled with long clusters of white flowers, which hang from it like the crystals pendants of a chandelier; the Persian lilac, which lifts high in air its gray flax-colored branches; the papaw-tree, the branchless trunk of which forms a column studded with green melons, surmounted by a capital of broad leaves similar to those of a fig-tree.”)<sup>49</sup>

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45 Cf. Howells 2010, 116.

46 Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1992, 139.

47 Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1892, 103–104.

48 Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1992, 113.

49 Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1892, 61–62.

In particular, the two trees that grow – in direct analogy to Paul and Virginie – against an idyllic backdrop of tame animals and a fountain, convey a sense of sophistication and luxury:

Sur ses flancs bruns et humides rayonnaient en étoiles vertes et noires de larges capillaires, et flottaient au gré des vents des touffes de scolopendre suspendues comme de longs rubans d'un vert pourpré. [...] Du haut de l'escarpement de la montagne pendaient des lianes semblables à des draperies flottantes, qui formaient sur les flancs des rochers de grandes courtines de verdure.<sup>50</sup>

(“On its embrowned and moist sides broad plants of maiden-hair glistened with their green and dark stars; and tufts of wave-leaved hart’s-tongue, suspended like long ribands of purpled green, floated on the wind. [...] From the precipitous side of the mountain hung the graceful lianas, like floating draperies, forming magnificent canopies of verdure on the face of the rocks.”)<sup>51</sup>

The birds in this idyll are no less extravagant: “des perruches vertes comme des émeraudes descendaient des lataniers voisins”<sup>52</sup> (“the paroquet, green as an emerald, descended from the neighboring fan-palms.”)<sup>53</sup> With such references to precious stones, chandeliers and fine fabrics, the element of luxury is clearly inscribed in the very products of nature. The opposition between natural and necessary products on the one hand, and artificial or superfluous elements on the other, proves to be much less unequivocal than a first, superficial reading of the novel would suggest.

To conclude, I would like to suggest that economic and generic questions should be considered together. Both the examples I have discussed here, Quesnay’s treatise and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre’s novel, outline models for a cycle of production in which nature is the main source of productivity, while man merely makes use of it; in both, this natural productive cycle implies a divine order. As a result, the idyll in *Paul et Virginie* appears, not unusually for an idyll, only in the elegiac mode; it looks backwards, towards two ruins and a once-cultivated earth. The genre’s inherent dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, i.e. the construction of a self-contained space, protected from the outside world, are repeated in the design of the production processes. The same dynamics underlie both the topography of the novel and its economy. As we are never dealing with “real” nature when we read idyllic texts, but with an artificial stylization,

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50 Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1992, 117–118.

51 Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1892, 69.

52 Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1992, 118.

53 Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, 1892, 70.



the productivity of nature in an idyll can be considered in exclusively aesthetic terms. Despite Bernardin's original aspirations, then, the productivity of his text should be measured less in terms of its commercial success than in terms of its artistic resonance.

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Anna Isabell Wörsdörfer

# An Idealistic, but Failing Protagonist of Production: Claude-François-Adrien de Lezay-Marnésia and His Physiocratic Project in the New World

**Abstract** The article examines the writings and real measures of the Marquis de Lezay-Marnésia (1735–1800) and circles around his exploration of agricultural conditions for their physiocratic potential. The focus is on the figure of the *propriétaire* as a “*bon noble*,” who decisively improves the living situation of his peasants through acts of *bienfaisance* and thereby also contributes to the overall economic situation. However, while his idealistic plan works in theory, the unworldly Lezay-Marnésia fails to implement his ideas in the New World.

**Keywords:** *bienfaisance*, *bon noble*, emigration, physiocracy, (real-life) utopia

*Sages cultivateurs, dans vos humbles asyles  
Vos moments sont à vous, vos loisirs sont utiles. [...]  
Votre esprit est tranquille; il sait de mois en mois  
Attendre la nature, en écouter la voix.<sup>1</sup>  
 (“Wise cultivators, in your humble asylums  
Your moments are yours, your leisures are useful. [...]  
Your mind is at ease; he knows from month to month  
To wait for nature, listen to its voice.” My trans.)*

## 1. Introduction

In the late 18th century, agriculture and rural life not only became popular subjects in the poetry of Jean-François de Saint-Lambert and other representatives of the *poésie descriptive*, but they also played an increasingly decisive role in the public and thus also in the economic discourse of the period from the middle of the century onwards. As the second major economic school after mercantilism, articulated by Colbert, the theory of physiocracy founded by François Quesnay, in contrast to the former, sees the principal locus of economic production in agriculture – in the primary sector, so-called primary production,

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1 Saint-Lambert 1796, 164.

and not in the secondary and tertiary sectors, i.e. in craft or industry and trade, respectively. By focusing on agricultural production, the physiocrats, who call themselves *économistes* and count Louis XVI's later minister of finances, Turgot, among their number, create a greater awareness in parts of the aristocracy both of rural lifestyles – indirectly, for instance, they further inspire landscape and garden architecture,<sup>2</sup> which has already become fashionable – and of the living conditions of peasants and farm workers on their rural property, which are in need of improvement.

One of these enlightened provincial noblemen is Claude-François-Adrien de Lezay-Marnésia (1735–1800), who in his life's work combines real socio-political commitment with literary production. In both, he displays a moralizing impetus: Not only in his fictional work, treatises and (private) correspondence does Lezay-Marnésia show a tireless commitment to agriculture and its producers, whose activities he regards as a remedy for the degenerated French state, but he also repeatedly seeks to implement the same principles in reality – in his homeland, the Franche-Comté area, as well as in America during his (brief) emigration in 1790–1792. His settlement project on the Ohio River,<sup>3</sup> documented in a subsequently published volume of letters, thus becomes an attempt to realize utopia and establish a physiocratic laboratory for his agricultural and philanthropic ideas. Despite the ultimate failure of his project, the concrete case of Lezay-Marnésia clearly demonstrates the fruitful connection that existed between economy – or more precisely here: physiocracy – and literature, which influence one another reciprocally at the end of the *siècle des lumières* (and not only in the “industrial” 19th century).

The following study is divided into three parts: First, Lezay-Marnésia's economic beliefs are elaborated by comparing them with Quesnay's theories. Building on this, the analysis is then devoted to the construct of the *bon noble*, initially an imaginative ideal figure, which then plays a key role in agricultural production, especially that of the *bienfaiteur*. The last part directs an economic focus on the (utopian) plans and the (real) implementation of Lezay-Marnésia's Ohio project.

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2 Wagner 1985, 21–100.

3 There have been numerous similar agricultural projects in France – in the form of various *écoles-fermes* – as well as in neighboring countries in Europe. For a Spanish case, cf. von Tschiltschke in the present volume.

## 2. Physiocratic Ideas in Lezay-Marnésia's *Le bonheur dans les campagnes*

The economic theory of physiocracy is based on the tripartite division of all citizens into the *classe productive*, the peasants and tenants; the *classe des propriétaires*, the land-owning nobility and clergy; and the *classe stérile*, the “unproductive” service providers and workers such as traders and craftsmen.<sup>4</sup> As Quesnay's evaluative nomenclature clearly shows, the physiocrats see the economic field's state-supporting function primarily in agriculture, because “tout ce qui est désavantageux à l'agriculture est préjudiciable à la nation et à l'État, et tout ce qui favorise l'agriculture est profitable à l'État et à la nation”<sup>5</sup> (“anything that is disadvantageous to agriculture is detrimental to the nation and the state, and anything that promotes agriculture is beneficial to the state and the nation.” My trans.). In order to promote his economic theories and reach a wider audience, Quesnay collaborated from the 1760s onwards with the Marquis de Mirabeau, author of *Ami des hommes*, who knew how to productively link the agricultural agenda with a broad moralizing project.<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, in his 1785 treatise *Le bonheur dans les campagnes*, Lezay-Marnésia combines agricultural and humanitarian considerations, unapologetically identifying what he believes to be the main causes of rural misery that need to be eliminated: “l'excès du luxe, l'abus du pouvoir, la négligence de ceux que le gouvernement prépose pour administrer les provinces, la manière inégale, arbitraire, injuste dont les impositions sont réparties, & l'extrême dureté avec laquelle souvent elles sont perçues, les corvées & les pertes qu'elles entraînent; voilà les principes de la misère des campagnes”<sup>7</sup> (“The excess of luxury, the abuse of power, the neglect of those whom the government sets up to administer the provinces, the unequal, arbitrary, unjust manner in which taxes are distributed, and the extreme harshness with which they are often perceived, the chores & the losses they entail; these are the principles of the misery of the countryside.” My trans.). With the prominent mention of luxury in the first place, Lezay-Marnésia implicitly refers to the economic system of mercantilism, whose promotion of the manufacturing industry, which primarily produces luxury goods for (foreign) trade, is diametrically opposed to the guiding principles of physiocracy. On the one hand, he draws attention to an ever worsening

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4 Cf. Quesnay 1965, 309.

5 Quesnay 1965, 319.

6 Cf. Vardi 2012, 117–124.

7 Lezay-Marnésia 1785, 3.

economic disproportion: “Louis XIV, éclairé par Colbert, crut que le luxe étoit nécessaire à l'éclat, & même au bonheur d'un grand empire. [...] Cependant, & avec assez d'apparence, on a reproché à ce roi de n'avoir pas assez arrêté ses regards sur les campagnes”<sup>8</sup> (“Louis XIV, enlightened by Colbert, believed that luxury was necessary for the splendor, and even for the happiness of a great empire. [...] However, and with enough appearance, this king has been criticized for not having focused enough on the countryside.” My trans.). On the other hand, however, he also exposes a misunderstanding of national prosperity: It is not money, but fertile soil that is the real wealth of a state<sup>9</sup> – an assessment that coincides with physiocratic convictions. Not so much with an interest in profit but with a philanthropic agenda, Lezay-Marnésia argues for the improvement of the unbearable living and working conditions in the countryside, which, as a side effect, would also result in a prosperous state. Although the approaches of physiocratic theorists and associated noblemen like Lezay-Marnésia, Saint-Lambert<sup>10</sup> and others may differ with regard to rural conditions, because they come from different directions – maximizing yield<sup>11</sup> and humanitarianism – both parties basically agree on the result, namely the uncompromising promotion of agriculture for the benefit of a functioning economy and state system. “Bonheur” and “jouissance” are, moreover, crucial terms for both *économistes* and aristocratic philanthropists.<sup>12</sup>

Although the targeted support of agriculture aims to reduce excessive luxury, this in no way means that factories are to be completely abolished. However, it seems appropriate that the members of the *classe stérile* working there devote themselves above all to the processing of agricultural goods and materials – and not to the production of “useless” or “superfluous” products – as Quesnay demands in his article “Fermier” (1756), appearing in the *Encyclopédie*:

Le lin, le chanvre, les laines, la soie, & c. seroient les matieres premieres de nos manufactures; le blé, les vins, l'eau-de-vie, les cuirs, les viandes salées, le beurre, le fromage, les graisses, le suif, les toiles, les cordages, les draps, les étoffes, formeroient le principal objet de notre commerce avec l'étranger. Ces marchandises seroient indépendantes du luxe, les besoins des hommes leur assurent une valeur réelle; elles naîtroient de

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8 Lezay-Marnésia 1785, 11–12.

9 Cf. Lezay-Marnésia 1785, 14.

10 An analysis of Saint-Lambert's *Saisons*, cited at the beginning of this article, is already available. Fodor 2004 examines four aspects: the rural protagonists, the role of abundance, production and product, and the importance of luxury.

11 Cf. Larrère 1992, 202.

12 Cf. Larrère 1992, 202.

notre propre fonds, & seroient en pur profit pour l'état: ce seroit des richesses toujours renaissantes, & toujours supérieures à celles des autres nations.<sup>13</sup>

("Linen, hemp, wool, silk, & c. would be the raw materials of our factories; wheat, wines, liquor, leathers, salted meats, butter, cheese, fats, tallow, cloths, ropes, sheets, fabrics, would form the main object of our foreign trade. These goods would be independent of luxury, the needs of men assured them a real value; they were born from our own funds, & would be in pure profit for the state: it would be eternally renewing wealth, & always superior to that of other nations." My trans.)

It is hardly surprising that Lezay-Marnésia has chosen precisely this category of factories, which process local products derived from nature, for his settlement project in North America: In the *Lettres de l'Ohio* (1790/1791), he will not only describe an already existing settlement of the *Frères Moraves*, Béthléem, with its trade oriented towards natural goods,<sup>14</sup> but also outline, in detail, such a manufacturing system based on agrarian supply for his planned colony.<sup>15</sup> According to Lezay-Marnésia, the management and administration of this venture are the responsibility of the rich *propriétaires*, of whom he sketches an ideal picture long before his emigration.

### 3. The "bon noble" as *propriétaire*: Lezay-Marnésia's *Épître à mon curé*

The imaginative construction of the *bon noble* has to be seen in the context of the *retour à la campagne* movement that emerged around 1770/1780, when aristocrats returned to their landholdings in the provinces. These aristocrats had been ordered to the court of Versailles in the past, a result of absolutist centralization efforts. The *retour*-movement has a socio-political dimension, the search for a "remedy" to heal a "sick" absolutism through (agricultural) reforms, and an artistic-literary dimension, the expression of the restorative proximity to nature in the form of the *poésie descriptive*.<sup>16</sup> Closely related to the *retour à la campagne* is also the (rather vague) idea of a golden age or a *bon vieux temps*,<sup>17</sup> a medieval

13 Quesnay 1756, 537–538.

14 Cf. Lezay-Marnésia 1800b, 22 and 26.

15 Cf. Lezay-Marnésia 1800b, 73–79, and, e.g.: "Une sûre manière de réussir dans cete double vue, c'est d'avoir des manufactures seulement employées à mettre en œuvre les matières produites par le pays" (73) ("A sure way to succeed in this double view is to have factories used only to implement the materials produced by the country." My trans.).

16 Cf. Bonnel 1995, 1–4.

17 Cf. Wörsdörfer 2016, 288.

age (very difficult to grasp in terms of era) of a functioning feudal system, at the center of which sits the landowning aristocrat as *bon noble*.

In the *Épître à mon curé* (1787), Lezay-Marnésia develops an ideal image of this protagonist of production within an agrarian society. After an introduction praising rural life, in which it is associated with topical values such as serenity, innocence, happiness and virtue,<sup>18</sup> and a description of “respectable Helvétie” as the shining example of an “asile du bonheur” and a “temple des vertus,”<sup>19</sup> i.e. Switzerland, in which such an ideal has already been realized, there follows a detailed description of the actions executed by a good landowner towards his peasant subjects, which is given here in full length due to its centrality:

Et revenons à nos moutons.  
 Ils sont conduits par des bergères  
 Douces, innocentes comme eux;  
 Ah! permets-leur, sous les yeux de leur mère,  
 La danse, la gaité, les jeux;  
 Soyons sages, si tu le veux;  
 Mais ne soyons jamais sévères.  
 Sous les rustiques toits appelons le plaisir;  
 Qu'il vienne au doux son des musettes:  
 Pour les hameaux embellissons les fêtes,  
 C'est aux hameaux qu'on a droit d'en jouir.  
 Les habitans de mon village,  
 La bêche en main, ont orné mon séjour;  
 C'est par leurs soins qu'il me plaît davantage:  
 Je leur dois des soins à mon tour;  
 Je dois éloigner d'eux la douleur, la misère,  
 Les consoler, les aimer, les servir:

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18 At the beginning, the speaker establishes a sharp contrast between city and country: “Je vais, dans mon manoir tranquille, / Goûter des plaisirs purs, ignorés à la ville, / Jouir de l'amitié, me livrer au repos” (“I go, in my quiet mansion, / Taste pure pleasures, ignored in the city, / Enjoy friendship, indulge in rest.” My trans.). In contrast to Paris, which is dominated by “luxe,” the rural idyll is not determined by material possession: “L'âge d'or étoit l'âge où l'or ne régnoit pas” (“The golden age was the age when gold did not reign.” My trans.), but by contentment and happiness: “la Nature nous donne / De vrais plaisirs” (“Nature gives us / Real pleasures.” My trans.). Accordingly, the rural customs are not yet corrupted: “Heureux, cent fois heureux l'homme simple et champêtre” (“Happy, a hundred times happy the simple and rural man.” My trans.), who can indulge in an “innocent amour” (“innocent love.” My trans.). Lezay-Marnésia 1800a, 175–177.

19 Lezay-Marnésia 1800a, 178.



Ainsi que toi le ciel m'a fait leur père...  
A ce nom seul je me sens attendrir.<sup>20</sup>

(“And back to our sheep.  
They are led by shepherdesses  
Sweet, innocent like them;  
Ah! allow them, under the eyes of their mother,  
The dance, the gaiety, the games;  
Let's be wise, if you want to;  
But let's never be harsh.  
Under the rustic roofs let us call the pleasure;  
Let it come to the sweet sound of bagpipes:  
For the little villages, let's beautify the festivals,  
It is in the little villages that they are entitled to enjoy it.  
The inhabitants of my village,  
Spade in hand, adorned my living room;  
It is because of their care that I like it more:  
I owe them care in turn;  
I must take away the pain, the misery,  
Console them, love them, serve them:  
Like you, heaven made me their father...  
At this name alone I feel softened.” My trans.)

At the beginning, Lezay-Marnésia draws the mental image of the lovable and morally upright peasant, which, in the French consciousness, has gradually developed in the course of the paradigm shift from the “aristocratic” aesthetics of the 17th century, with its pastoral ideal, to the “bourgeois” aesthetics of the *siècle des lumières*.<sup>21</sup> Ex negativo, however, the lines dealing with festive descriptions of rural life and, even more clearly, the self-request of the intratextual speaker (“Je dois éloigner d'eux la douleur, la misère”) simultaneously reveal the difficult living and hence working conditions to which the peasants are actually exposed on the eve of the revolution. Contemporary readers know of these conditions through non-fictional genres such as the travel reports of Legrand d'Aussy.<sup>22</sup> In this context, Lezay-Marnésia's *bon noble* comes into play as the second physiocratic figure, alongside the *classe productive*, who, as a *propriétaire*, does not actively participate in agricultural production, but who, through prudent and accommodating behavior towards his peasants, lays the foundations for their contentment, which they all deserve without exception, and thus – it must

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20 Lezay-Marnésia 1800a, 178–179.

21 Cf. Wyngaard 2004, 16 and 30.

22 Cf. Wyngaard 2004, 166–171.

be concluded – also for the maintenance of their labor power. In a quasi-ideal feudal relationship, which becomes emotionally charged and is reinterpreted as a father-child relationship, the *propriétaire's* charitable measures, his *bienfaisance*, are of central importance: “Laissons de nous un tendre souvenir; / Qu'à nos bienfaits on connoisse nos traces: / Portons aux foibles des secours”<sup>23</sup> (“Let us leave fond memories of us; / Through our blessings they know our footsteps: / Let us bring help to the weak.” My trans.). These measures concern all rustic generations, from the “aimable jeunesse” to that of the “bel âge” to the “vieillards vertueux”<sup>24</sup> (“kind youth” to that of “beautiful adulthood” to the “virtuous old men.” My trans.).

Lezay-Marnésia demonstrates exactly what these should look like on his property around the Château de Saint-Julien in Franche-Comté: In addition to a large-scale park project, in keeping with the requirements of landscape gardening, several acts of *bienfaisance* are in the foreground: the construction of schools and hospitals, community centers and even a provincial theater.<sup>25</sup> As *propriétaire* or rather *bon noble* in real life, Lezay-Marnésia goes even further and abolishes compulsory labor (*corvée*) and serfdom (*mainmorte*) on his lands – long before this will happen for the whole of France during the August 1789 revolution.<sup>26</sup> Finally, as a member of the *Assemblée nationale*, Lezay-Marnésia is one of the 47 noble deputies who pass to the Third Estate at the beginning of the events,<sup>27</sup> but the violence of the revolutionaries, which quickly gets out of control, soon makes inevitable his emigration to the New World, where, full of hope, he makes a fresh attempt to implement his agricultural ideas.

#### 4. Lezay-Marnésia's *Lettres écrites des rives de l'Ohio*: Between (physiocratic) ideal and reality

Lezay-Marnésia's period of emigration is brief; on May 26, 1790 he embarks in Le Havre for the crossing to America, and on June 20, 1792 he arrives in Paris on his return journey. The “New World” is a promising place of longing for unexpected – and also economic – opportunities, not only for noblemen threatened (or disappointed) by the revolution like Lezay-Marnésia, but also for numerous members of the Third Estate, especially craftsmen such as the jewellers, cabinet

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23 Lezay-Marnésia 1800a, 179–180.

24 Lezay-Marnésia 1800a, 180.

25 Cf. Bonnel 1993, 140 and in detail cf. Bonnel 1995, 191–232.

26 Cf. Moreau-Zanelli 2000, 173.

27 Cf. Moreau-Zanelli 2000, 174.

and tapestry makers of the capital, whose economic basis has become more and more unstable with the collapse of the luxury or semi-luxury sector even before 1789.<sup>28</sup> The sale of vast areas of land by the *Scioto Company*, founded as a result of the American War of Independence, apparently offers a favorable opportunity for French people willing to emigrate: With the intention of founding a colony, patriotically named “Gallipolis,” many like-minded people, including Lezay-Marnésia as a member of the elitist *Société des Vingt-Quatre*,<sup>29</sup> acquire a total of 24,000 acres of land at the confluence of the Ohio and Kanawha Rivers – unaware that due to a cartographic error, the *Scioto Company* is not entitled to sell land in these areas.<sup>30</sup>

In the *Lettres de l’Ohio*, Lezay-Marnésia, noticeably outraged, explicitly mentions this highly ruinous financial speculation.<sup>31</sup> However, the three letters selected by the editor as examples from his entire correspondence during his emigration also confirm his contemporaries’ descriptions of Lezay-Marnésia’s quixotic character,<sup>32</sup> torn between enlightened thirst for action and irrational reverie, a person whose enthusiasm, despite bitter disappointments, can be rekindled at any time for a (utopian) goal. The first letter, sent from Marietta and dated November 15, 1790, to a friend and deputy of the *Assemblée nationale*, the Chevalier de Boufflers, contains the report of a soirée with a Huron delegation, along with praise for their well-mannered behavior (in contrast to that of the Americans); letters two and three are of greater interest here with regard to Lezay-Marnésia’s physiocratic undertaking. The letter addressed to Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, a good 100 pages long, sent from Pittsburgh on November 2, 1791, offers the reader a comprehensive panorama of his settlement agenda; the letter to his eldest son, written six weeks later (Philadelphia, December 15, 1791), gives insight into the formation and successful development of a neighboring, agriculturally self-sufficient community, when Lezay-Marnésia’s own failure is already certain.

Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, author of the Rousseauvian novel *Paul et Virginie* and the *Études de la Nature*, whom Lezay-Marnésia does not know personally, is chosen with care as the addressee of the second letter, since Saint-Pierre himself had been planning the establishment of a French colony in the New World since

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28 Cf. Moreau-Zanelli 2000, 155–156.

29 Cf. Bonnel 1995, 369–377.

30 Cf. Belote 1907, 45.

31 Cf. Lezay-Marnésia 1800b, 12–13.

32 Cf. von Westerholt 1958, 19–23.

1778.<sup>33</sup> The letter is thus also written in the style of an invitation to the famous writer to implement the planned settlement in North America according to Lezay-Marnésia's ideas. Based on the description of the established (Protestant) model community of the *Frères Moraves*, Lezay-Marnésia develops his ideas of an agrarian society following the same (conservative) values. Its construction takes place in several stages; after arrival and the celebration of a rural festival, in a first step, primary production is established according to physiocratic principles:

Il faut moins d'un an pour être bien établi, pour avoir l'abondance de tout le nécessaire, [...]. [J]e suppose que chaque chef de famille à sa suite aura, non un grand nombre de cultivateurs & d'ouvriers, mais assez pour accélérer les ouvrages, & rendre la jouissance prompte. Dans quatre à cinq mois, douze hommes, sur-tout s'ils sont Allemands ou François, auront assez cultivé pour que la récolte de maïs, de patates, de navets, & de légumes de toutes les espèces suffise à la consommation de trente personnes, & à la nourriture du bétail pendant la froide saison. [...] Les cultivateurs ne resteront pas en repos: ils abattront des arbres, feront de nouveau défrichemens, étendront le domaine, & pour l'année suivante doubleront la richesse. Bien traités, bien vêtus, bien chaussés, bien nourris: en se rappelant la misère qui les chassa d'Europe, ils béniront le sort qui les attira en Amérique. Bien présent, assurance d'un avenir encore meilleur, que voudroient-ils de plus?<sup>34</sup>

("It takes less than a year to be well established, to have plenty of everything you need, [...]. I suppose that each head of the family following him will have, not a big number of cultivators and workers, but enough to accelerate the works, and make the enjoyment prompt. In four to five months, twelve men, especially if they are Germans or French, will have cultivated enough for the harvest of corn, potatoes, turnips, & vegetables of all kinds to be sufficient for the consumption of thirty people, & to feed the cattle during the cold season. [...] The cultivators will not remain in rest: they will cut down trees, will make new clearings, will extend the field, & for the following year will double the wealth. Well treated, well dressed, well shod, well fed: remembering the misery that drove them out of Europe, they will bless the fate that drew them to America. Well present, assurance of an even better future, what more could they want?" My trans.)

The protection or "purification" of the small community (which, by the way, is often compared to the literary model communities of Fénelon, Montesquieu or Rousseau)<sup>35</sup> from harmful external interference is supposed to be guaranteed by means of the strict limitation of the number of members<sup>36</sup> and by a four-year

33 Cf. Moreau-Zanelli 2000, 69. On Saint-Pierre's economic ideas in his fictional work cf. Nickenig in the present volume.

34 Lezay-Marnésia 1800b, 63–65.

35 Cf. Bonnel 1995, 348–349.

36 "[V]ous donnerez, Monsieur, beaucoup de terres à peu d'hommes. C'est le moyen de leur faire mener à la fois la vie pastorale & agricole, d'établir entr'eux des rapports

commitment from the peasants<sup>37</sup>: As on his estate in Franche-Comté, there should be neither compulsory labor nor serfdom, but instead an incentive-based earnings system. The logical result is continuous activity as a basis for the expulsion of boredom and idleness. In the laborious cultivation of grain and vegetables and the rearing of livestock, agricultural productivity is thus combined with ethical goals, so that profit is both economic *and* moral. The philanthropic commitment to the peasantry, which had already been established in Lezay-Marnésia's previous writings, is evident once again. The same commitment is also of great importance in the second phase: expanding the settlement.

This phase is aimed at founding a city<sup>38</sup> in the center of the colony, for which the esteemed Saint-Pierre is to lend his name (though this choice probably also has biblical connotations). Following the practice on his estates around Saint-Julien, Lezay-Marnésia also plans to build a "hospice de charité"<sup>39</sup> ("charity hospice." My trans.) and to establish educational institutions for the new settlement. A generous amount of the money brought in for investment or generated by the community is to be spent on charitable purposes: "Ne négligez rien, Monsieur, employez tout pour éloigner jusqu'aux plus foibles prétextes de mécontentement. La plus légère inquiétude, la moindre apparence de peine, l'ombre même de la sollicitude ne doivent pas être connues dans votre bienheureuse association"<sup>40</sup> ("Do not neglect anything, Sir, use everything to remove even the weakest pretexts of discontent. The slightest worry, the slightest appearance of sorrow, the very shadow of solicitude must not be known in your blessed association." My trans.). The activity of the *bienfaiteur* presupposes an agricultural and moral education as well as the common understanding of the *propriétaires*, who not only find in the city a library with agronomist and moralizing works among other reading material, but should also be encouraged to create a "société d'Agriculture, des Sciences & des Arts"<sup>41</sup> ("Society of Agriculture, Sciences & Arts." My trans.). This

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continuels de services réciproques" ("You will give a lot of land to few men, Sir. This is the way to make them lead both pastoral and agricultural life, to establish between them continual relations of reciprocal service." My trans.). Lezay-Marnésia 1800b, 61.

37 "Des cultivateurs, engagés pour quatre ans, travailleront aux dechiffremens à faire encore sur ces terres, dont ils deviendront ensuite les fermiers" ("Farmers, hired for four years, will work on the preparation still to be made on these lands, of which they will then become the farmers." My trans.). Lezay-Marnésia 1800b, 44.

38 Cf. Bonnel 1995, 388.

39 Lezay-Marnésia 1800b, 72.

40 Lezay-Marnésia 1800b, 81.

41 Lezay-Marnésia 1800b, 108.

social utopia will be completed by regular celebrations that function as reward and as acts of *bienfaisance* (described here almost in the same words as in the corresponding passage of the *Épître à mon curé*):

Laustérité n'est point la sagesse. Vous n'interdirez point la danse à la jeunesse. [...] Aussi heureux que des hommes puissent être sur la terre, les propriétaires de la colonie de Saint-Pierre ajouteront encore à leur satisfaction en la faisant partager quelquefois; [...]. [Q]uelquefois ils appelleront les fermiers, les artisans, les ouvriers avec leurs enfans & leurs femmes; & par des amusemens simples & variés, des repas abondans & animés, des courses, des danses, des jeux que la vertu autorise, ils embelliront quelques unes de leurs journées [...]. [I]ls salueront le printemps avec allégresse, retourneront avec joie dans leurs champs, & reprendront avec un plaisir nouveau leurs occupations intéressantes.<sup>42</sup>

(“Austerity is not wisdom. You will not forbid dance for young people. [...] As happy as men may be on earth, the owners of the colony of Saint-Pierre will add to their satisfaction by sharing it sometimes; [...]. When sometimes they will call the farmers, the artisans, the workers with their children and their wives; & by simple & varied amusements, abundant & refreshing meals, races, dances, games that virtue authorizes, they will embellish some of their days [...]. They will greet spring with joy, return with joy to their fields, and resume their interesting occupations with new pleasure.” My trans.)

With these measures bestowing restoration and joy on the population, and with the abovementioned possibility of (social) advancement of particularly deserving *cultivateurs* to *fermiers*, the *propriétaire* ensures his followers’ efficiency and willingness to work, thereby guaranteeing the long-term survival of the colony.

For the last phase, Lezay-Marnésia goes so far as to predict the expansion of the colonial project through the creation of sister settlements. As with the mother colony on a small scale,<sup>43</sup> an intelligent division of labor – a rationalization of economic activities<sup>44</sup> in this sense – seems to be important:

La première colonie, placée à la tête de l’Ohio, sera une mère prévoyante qui, très-facilement, préparera les établissemens de ses enfans. Ses filles auront, & sans peine, les mêmes ressources, & emploieront les mêmes moyens d’industrie & de commerce, en observant pourtant de ne pas s’attacher aux mêmes branches. Les unes pourront établir des verreries, qui manquent dans ces contrées, des fayaneries, qui n’y existent pas; des poteries, dont on y a le plus grand besoin. D’autres pourront entreprendre en grand la commerce de l’horlogerie, dont elles tireront de considérables profits. Les papeteries, les toiles peintes, la serrurerie, la pelleterie, la coutellerie, la taillanderie, tous les arts utiles

42 Lezay-Marnésia 1800b, 109–110.

43 Cf. Lezay-Marnésia 1800b, 75.

44 Cf. Bonnel 1995, 390.

exercés avec intelligence, seront des mines riches & non pas corruptrices comme celles d'or.<sup>45</sup>

("The first colony, placed at the head of the Ohio, will be a provident mother, who will very easily prepare the establishments of her children. Her daughters will easily have the same resources, and will employ the same means of industry and commerce, while observing, however, not to attach themselves to the same branches. Some will be able to establish glassworks, which are lacking in these regions, and faience factories, which do not exist there; pottery, which is most needed. Others will be able to undertake the watchmaking trade on a large scale, from which they will derive considerable profits. Stationery, painted canvases, locksmiths, furs, cutlery, edging, all the useful arts exercised with intelligence, will be rich and not corrupt mines like those of gold." My trans.)

In accordance with the physiocratic cause, most of the factories are supposed to process materials derived from primary production, which, in addition to agriculture, also includes forestry and mining. With emphasis on the utility aspect, Lezay-Marnésia decidedly excludes the production of luxury goods, a production which would be customary in a mercantilistic system.

Agricultural production, however, is once again and conclusively in the foreground in the third of the *Lettres de l'Ohio*. Lezay-Marnésia tells his first-born son, who has remained in France, about a settlement known as Asylum and the agricultural project of the Pintreaux, a young couple who were not allowed to marry in France due to social constraints and who found their happiness in the North American countryside. This self-sufficient way of life represents the economic system of physiocracy in miniature form:

Ils commencèrent par tracer un jardin spacieux. Il devoit être l'empire particulier d'Elise. Ce fut avec goût qu'il fut tracé, ce fut avec ardeur qu'on s'en occupa. La terre docile résistoit foiblement à des mains courageuses, & bientôt on put lui confier les graines de l'Europe les plus précieuses. Sur ce sol fertile, & presque vierge encore, elles prospèrent au-delà de l'espérance. Un fossé, une palissade forte, en attendant qu'une haie d'azeroliers y fût plantée, les défendoient. [...] Le jardin achevé, M. des Pintreaux & Marcellin étendirent leurs conquêtes. De forts labours furent donnés aux terrains défrichés déjà. Promptement ils furent mis en état de recevoir des patates, de l'ogre, du seigle & du maïs. Pendant qu'ils se livroient à ces travaux, Elise s'occupoit du jardin, préparoit la nourriture des deux ouvriers, & ornoit la cabane.<sup>46</sup>

("They began by tracing a spacious garden. It was to be Elise's particular empire. It was with taste that it was drawn, it was with ardor that they tended it. The docile land weakly resisted courageous hands, and soon it could be entrusted with the most precious

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45 Lezay-Marnésia 1800b, 83–84.

46 Lezay-Marnésia 1800b, 130–131.

seeds of Europe. On this fertile soil, & still almost virgin, they thrive beyond hope. A ditch, a strong palisade, while waiting for a hedge of azerol trees to be planted there, defended them. [...] The garden completed, M. des Pintreaux & Marcellin extended their conquests. Heavy works were given to the land already cleared. Quickly they were brought to a condition to receive potatoes, oge, rye & corn. While they were engaged in this work, Elise looked after the garden, prepared food for the two workers, & adorned the hut." My trans.)

On the one hand, this undertaking is strongly reminiscent of the real-life utopia of Mme de la Tour du Pin, who, as an aristocratic emigrant in the New World, does not assume the function of a *propriétaire* ("female landowner." My trans.), but that of a *fermière* ("peasant woman." My trans.).<sup>47</sup> On the other hand, according to Lezay-Marnésia's remarks in the second letter, the Pintreaux's project is slowly but steadily growing, so that more employees join over the years and the couple, now parents of several children, fulfills the role of *propriétaires* – whereby the social barriers in the New World, if not completely falling, are gradually being adjusted, and the *bon noble* is progressively replaced by the *bon maître*, who nevertheless fulfills his humanitarian mission: "M. des Pintreaux profitoit souvent de ces contes pour donner des instructions solides à ses ouvriers. Il étoit leur pontife, leur guide, leur ami, & toujours cependant leur maître; qualité qu'il sentoit bien la nécessité de ne pas perdre, malgré ses principes sur l'absolue égalité"<sup>48</sup> ("M. des Pintreaux often took advantage of these tales to give solid instructions to his workers. He was their pontiff, their guide, their friend, and still their master; a quality that he felt the need not to lose, despite his principles of absolute equality." My trans.).

In contrast to this successful project on a manageable scale, Lezay-Marnésia's grandiose agricultural project on the Ohio River fails. The causes may be found, first, in the idealistic overestimation of its author, who fails to translate the utopia dreamt of in theory into practical action by misjudging the real conditions. Further causes are located outside of himself: the illegitimate sale of the lands by the *Scioto Compagny* is equally responsible for the project's failure, as are the sporadic animosities with the indigenous people living on these grounds and especially the lack of agricultural knowledge of the French settlers, who for the most part are not recruited from the rural province, but from the artisan workforce of Paris.<sup>49</sup>

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47 Cf. Sosnowski 2005, 48.

48 Lezay-Marnésia 1800b, 138.

49 Belote 1907, 60.



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## Epilogue: The Literary Liberalism of the Bourgeoisie

Such a splendid volume! It tells us that the bosses were not always as portrayed in, say, Kurt Weill. They could be men like Tom Buddenbrooks in Thomas Mann's first successful novel, men "who walked the streets proud of their irreproachable reputation as businessmen." We are not *required* to exercise a hermeneutics of suspicion about the bourgeoisie – on whom we depend for our supplies for scribbling Jeremiads against the, the paper, ink, and word processors, not to speak of our food and housing while writing them. The 18th century in Europe, we learn here, was more appreciative, even of (goodness!) *women* bourgeoisie – once it had extracted itself a little from the ancient, aristocratic or clerical, suspicion of what Aristotle, the teacher of aristocrats, and his anti-democratic teacher in turn, Plato, had called with a sneer "unlimited" accumulation, said to characterize foreign merchants as against Attic agriculturists.

Classical political economy 1770–1870 at first stigmatized only the protectionist merchants (Smith, Say), then the landlords engorging the national product (Ricardo, Malthus, Mill), then the capitalists paradoxically raising productivity overall, by crushing the workers, and yet suffering themselves falling profits (Marx). Such argument from class interests in a fundamentally zero-sum story entirely missed the gigantic "innovism" after 1770, at first in Britain and then industrial areas such as the Rhineland, Lille, and Bilbao. How gigantic? A 3,000 percent increase in real incomes after 1800 for the wretched of the earth, once gathered in places like Spain and Sweden.

What I call the Bourgeois Revaluation happens in the 18th century, preceded in the 16th and 17th century by the respected *regenten* of the Netherlands. It is described here as the "discursive upgrading" of the producers. Consider in the First Industrial Nation George Lillo's play of 1731, *The London Merchant*, the English critic Samuel Johnson ("No man but a blockhead," he said, "ever wrote, except for money."), and the first large female voice in English literature, Jane Austen, herself proud of her profitable productions. She was delighted to participate as an adult in "the economy of literature," and was beginning at her death to figure, too, in the literature of the economy, with the unfinished *Sanditon*.

The centre of the volume here is Spain, a needful corrective of a steady neglect in the English-language literature. What startled me was Spain's immense

theatrical output in the 18th century, long after the first great age, of Calderón and the rest. It was in Spain a teacher of attitudes similar to the theatre in London in the age of Shakespeare, with a quarter of the city's population showing up weekly to see that all the world's a stage, and we but players on it. Or the movie palaces in their great age during the 1930s and 1940s; or the long-form TV dramas nowadays like *Downton Abbey*. Fictions are how ordinary people think philosophically, economically, politically. The Spanish at long last turned, a century after the English, and two centuries after the Dutch, to praising the bourgeoisie.

Robinson Crusoe before Friday justifies (and is so used by economists left and right) the solipsistic economics of a single agent maximizing utility and an economic policy looking to "The Nation" as an economic unit. The economy is thereby reduced to a single voice, and indeed a voice without the internal dialogue of a real human. Marxist economics dominates departments of literature. Class interest alone speaks. So-called Samuelsonian economics dominates, of course, departments of economics and business worldwide, but also political science. Individual interest alone speaks. And the speaking is without the reflection natural to drama, whether several characters on a stage or within the head of a character talking to herself. Both forms of economics deny the interaction emphasized in some minority schools of economics, the institutionalists descended from the German Historical School, for example, and, especially, the "Austrian" economists descended from one the inventors of modern economics, Carl Menger (d. 1921). Interaction is of course the heart of theatre. Actors are taught to *listen* to the other character's lines, for their sense and feeling, instead of waiting for a cue to release a monologue. Adam Smith expressed it well: "The offering of a shilling, which to us appears to have so plain and simple a meaning, is in reality offering an argument to persuade someone to do so and so as it is for his interest. And in this manner everyone is practicing oratory on others through the whole of his life."

The essentially dialogic character of a Smithian/Austrian economics, and especially its recent offshoot "humanomics," is often *not* so of the European novel. *Moll Flanders* is decidedly from Moll's individual point of view, and very different from the dramatic technique of Jane Austen ninety years later. "Three or four families in a country village is the very thing to work on," she wrote, and the work was dialogue and "free indirect style" revealing in decision that internal dialogue of the characters. The recent American novelist Marilynne Robinson (ha, ha: not Crusoe) follows our dear Jane this way. Robinson's novel *Jack* (2020), for example, is entirely, from start to finish, a dialogue or internal dialogue of Jack thinking. No description or stage setting, just like Austen. It could be staged in Madrid c. 1750. It does not contain even stage directions, which are elaborate

in, say, the plays of Ibsen or O'Neill. It's just talk, the talk revealing the essence of the characters.

I would quarrel gently with only one point in the book: The key word should be Liberalism, not Enlightenment. "Enlightened proposals for reform" were not enlightened, but specifically liberal. There is no more enlightened figure than Thomas Jefferson in far Virginia. And Jefferson articulated the liberal formula, increasingly commonplace among advanced European thinkers when he penned it, that all men (and women, dear) are created equal. Yet he did not liberate even his own children by his Black slave Sally Hemings (the half-sister, begat by his father-in-law, startlingly, of Jefferson's deceased wife). So much for the equality of permission, the "adulthood" (here Kant does liberal justice to the age) that is the essence of a *liber*, a non-slave. That is to say, Enlightenment was, and is, fully consistent with the most throughgoing illiberalism, enslaving people to Frederick the Great (in between his Enlightened playing of the flute) or their husbands or their bureaucratic masters. The Enlightenment did not by any means always "resist or question the main discourses of political power." After all, the court of Catherine the Great in St. Petersburg, founded by another "enlightened" tyrant, was fully enlightened, with mathematicians and playwrights and architects in honoured attendance, while her servants were applying the knout to the backs of peasants and other coercions to bourgeoisie and the noble service class alike. Enlightenment was an elite hobby, Europe-wide, rather in the line of the King in the novel, play, film, and musical comedy about Anna and King of Siam. *Aufklärung* in thought was consistent with tyranny in government. The shocking and specifically liberal idea that the good society was, as Adam Smith put it, based on "the obvious and simple system of natural liberty" is what resisted and questioned hierarchy, and at length even a Tsarina's. I would suggest replacing "Enlightenment" with "Liberalism" every time it occurs in the book. You will be pointed then in the right direction.



## Notes on Contributors

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## EUROPÄISCHE AUFKLÄRUNG IN LITERATUR UND SPRACHE

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Siegfried Jüttner und Christian von Tschilschke

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