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Jonathan Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment: Philosophy, Revolution, and Human Rights 1750-1790*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. xvi + 1066 pp. Notes, bibliography, illustrations, and index. \$45.00 U.S. (hb). ISBN 978-0-19-954820-0.

Review essay by Keith Baker, Stanford University

This is an astounding book in many respects—in its length, its scope and ambition, the grandiosity of its claims, and the often surprising gaps between those claims and the evidence upon which they seem to be based. Its predecessors in Jonathan Israel's series of volumes on the Radical Enlightenment have energized the field and prompted vigorous debate. We can be grateful that this one is doing the same.

Readers of Israel's previous books on the subject would expect this one to be large. It is. Its 950 pages of text, shored up by an additional seventy pages of bibliography, span a half-century of intense intellectual and political development, range across the cultures and courts of greater Europe, reach west to North and South America, east to India, and beyond that to China and Japan. Challenging all comers to a new round in an ongoing set of debates, they continue the project of the volumes preceding them: to unify the Enlightenment as a transnational philosophical movement, on the one hand, while depicting it as cloven on ideological grounds on the other. They also expand the scope of the Enlightenment's engagement with the world beyond Europe. It is fitting that one of the key chapters (and perhaps the best) discusses the critically important *Histoire des des deux Indes* put together by Raynal with significant contributions from Diderot among others. This book, the Enlightenment's most sustained reflection on the implications of eighteenth-century globalization, Israel interprets as a "Project of World Revolution."

Readers of Israel's previous volumes should also expect this third one to offer huge and tendentious claims. It does. Above all, it makes Enlightenment revolutionary and the French Revolution the work of Enlightenment. "All Enlightenment by definition is closely linked to revolution," Israel insists. Though many other aspects of his book merit extensive consideration, my review will focus on this claim and the resulting interpretation of the relationship between Enlightenment and Revolution in France.

In the most general sense, Israel argues, Enlightenment and Revolution are one.

Enlightenment is defined here as a partly unitary phenomenon operative on both sides of the Atlantic, and eventually everywhere, consciously committed to the notion of bettering humanity in this world through a fundamental, revolutionary transformation discarding the ideas, habits, and traditions of the past either wholly or partially, this last point being bitterly contested among enlighteners; Enlightenment operated usually by revolutionizing ideas and constitutional principles, first, and society afterwards, but sometimes by proceeding in reverse order, uncovering and making better known the principles of a great "revolution" that had already happened. All Enlightenment by definition is closely linked to revolution. Here I think is an accurate, historically grounded, complete definition. This projected 'revolution'—this term was continually used in this connection at the time by Voltaire and other contemporaries—had either recently happened, as was often supposed in England, Scotland, and pre-1776 America, or was now happening, as Voltaire believed was the case in Germany, France, Switzerland, Scandinavia, Russia, and Italy, or would eventually happen, as was hoped by most radical *philosophes* and the first Spanish American *libertadores*, such visionaries as Francisco de Miranda.

Enlightenment is, hence, best characterized as the quest for human amelioration occurring between 1680 and 1800, driven principally by ‘philosophy’, that is, what we would term philosophy, science, and political and social science including the new science of economics lumped together, leading to revolutions in ideas and attitudes first, and actual practical revolutions second, or else the other way around, both sets of revolutions seeking universal recipes for all mankind and, ultimately, in its radical manifestation, laying the foundations for modern basic human rights and freedoms and representative democracy (p. 7).

Far from being unknown or rare, conceiving Enlightenment as a ‘revolution’ transforming everything either to a large extent or totally was wholly characteristic and, after 1750, became more and more so (p. 12).

It is difficult to untangle the various claims in these tortuous passages. Israel is correct to argue that Voltaire and some of the other moderate *philosophes* thought of their philosophical age as advancing a “revolution,” understood in the sense of a great intellectual transformation with profound implications for the betterment of humanity. But the term “revolution” could also be used in an entirely different way to refer to any sudden or abrupt change, any vicissitude in human affairs, any rupture great or small, any moment of political disorder and social upheaval. Such changes were frequently imagined as more destructive than beneficent (hence the need to demarcate the abrupt change of affairs in Britain in 1688 as the “*Glorious Revolution*”). It is telling, for example, that Holbach, one of the great exemplars of Israel’s Radical Enlightenment, was less interested in describing Enlightenment as a revolution than in insisting that it did not lead to revolutions. Holbach did not use “revolution” once in the singular in his *Système social* (1773). The ARTFL database shows him using the term fourteen times in the plural in that same work to describe events that were “terrible,” “fatal,” and “the most bloody;” disorders that were “the most sudden, the most terrible, the most fatal for sovereigns;” revolts “sparked by an excess of misery and despair” inflicted by despotism but never destroying it at the root.[1] His *Politique naturelle*, published the same year, showed a similar pattern of usage, with “revolution” occurring only three times and “revolutions” occurring twenty-two times.[2]

In both these works, “revolutions” were the very antithesis of a peaceful, philosophical transformation. “Truth does not reform the abuses of the earth through troubles and violence,” Holbach maintained in *Système social*. “The maxims of philosophy do not spark revolutions or incite criminal attacks [*attentats*].”[3] To the contrary, he argued in *La politique naturelle*, disorders and revolutions are constant features of tyrannical regimes: “The instability of absolute government, the revolutions to which it is incessantly exposed, disgust any rational being with it.”[4] Liberty, Holbach nonetheless acknowledges, has often been the work of revolutions. The slave reduced to desperation sometimes breaks his chains, seizing any opportunity to cast them off. “Despotism thus obliges him to seek in revolutions resources that are cruel and dangerous but have become necessary. Revolutions are to the political world what tempests and storms are to the physical world; they purify the air and re-establish serenity. Despotism, like the heat of a too burning sun, builds up exhalations that finally explode to produce the thunder that shakes the earth.”[5] This is a remarkable analogy, one that Marat would later make his own. But it conceptualizes revolution as a disruptive and possibly restorative occurrence, a momentary opportunity to be grasped rather than a process of philosophical transformation. It suggests the rapid transformation that the notion of revolution was still to undergo.[6]

It is disappointing, then, given his emphatic claims for the close link between Enlightenment and revolution, that Israel does not analyze this link more attentively. A fuller exploration of actual meanings and uses of “revolution” might have led him to ask how one of those “revolutions” understood as moments of disorder could have been reconceived as an opportunity to realize the implications of that longer-term “revolution” as philosophical transformation. He is, of course, warranted by our current usage to describe the goal of Enlightenment as “a fundamental, revolutionary transformation” or to

assert that Enlightenment operated by “revolutionizing” ideas and society. But it is important to point out that “revolutionary” and “revolutionize” were not terms used in this sense by the philosophes themselves—for the simple reason that they did not appear in the lexicon before 1789. The action frame in which these adjectival and verb usages took on meaning was created in 1789 (and not, incidentally, in 1688). Israel could have given us a more truly historical account of that fact rather than simply taking these terms for granted. One aspect of that account requires another look at the *Histoire des deux Indes* and more particularly its offshoot, the *Révolution de l'Amérique*, which offered its many readers an almost newsreel-like report on a revolution as collective political action.[7]

What, in any case, does it actually mean to say (i) that “Enlightenment operated usually by revolutionizing ideas and constitutional principles, first, and society afterwards, but sometimes by proceeding in reverse order,” or to speak of it (ii) as leading “to revolutions in ideas and attitudes first, and actual practical revolutions second”? One could imagine an argument that ideas were transformed first and society second, but what could it mean to say that society was transformed first and ideas second? Could society actually be transformed without ideas being transformed first, or at least simultaneously? Could there be “actual practical revolutions” in the absence of prior or accompanying “revolutions in ideas and attitudes?” This might be possible under the eighteenth-century meaning of “revolutions” as often sudden and unpredictable events. But it seems implausible and in any case contrary to what Israel himself apparently wants to argue about the transformative character of revolution. It seems fair to say that he has mixed eighteenth-century notions of revolution with our own in a set of inflated and convoluted formulations.

Turning more specifically to the relationship between Enlightenment and the French Revolution, it is Israel's contention that “no adequate framework for interpreting the French Revolution is possible without going diametrically against the main trends in the recent historiography” (p. 924). What these trends might be is never precisely identified. The only historians he actually confronts at any length regarding this question are Robert Darnton and Roger Chartier, whose work he readily repudiates though he is eager, later in his book, to make use of the diffusion data Darnton has assembled). Other historians who have addressed the origins and nature of the French Revolution are ignored entirely or dismissed in an occasional phrase. Necessarily so, given Israel's view that modern scholarship has entirely disregarded the “unalterable fact” evident to all contemporaries of the French Revolution: that this transformative event was the fruit of Enlightenment philosophy. Historians, he insists, have been laboring under “a gigantic historical delusion, an unshakeable assumption that unspecified social changes caused the Revolution when patently social, cultural, economic, and political changes did nothing of the sort, a misconception wrongly separating Enlightenment from revolution that urgently needs clearing away. For it is unalterable fact, in 1788-9 and in the 1790s, ‘philosophy’ was everywhere and overwhelmingly deemed the mainspring of the Revolution in a way that nothing else was, and for excellent reasons...”(p. 926).

It is a ridiculous characterization of the research historians have done on the origins of the French Revolution, especially since its bicentennial in 1989, to say that they have mindlessly invoked “unspecified social changes” by way of explanation. It seems pointless to cite research on specific topics in the face of this blanket dismissal. Readers' patience might better be tried by asking how far Israel has made good on his claim for the role of philosophy. I, for one, am willing to accept as a starting point the claim that the French Revolution was a fundamentally philosophical act in the sense that it transformed the essential terms in which political association and social relations were understood in France, and eventually elsewhere. But to say as much simply opens questions regarding the nature of that act, its intellectual sources, the identity and character of the actors involved, the conditions of the situation in which they acted, and the elements within that situation to which their action appeared to provide an effective response. Israel fails to offer persuasive answers to such questions or even a satisfactory formulation of them.

The philosophy to which, in the passage just quoted, Israel has contemporaries pointing as the mainspring of the French Revolution is apparently that of the Enlightenment as a whole. But his principal concern in this volume, as in its predecessors, is to argue that the Enlightenment cannot simply be viewed as a whole and must be seen as profoundly divided. His goal in *Democratic Enlightenment* is to extend into the pre-revolutionary and revolutionary periods his thesis regarding the essential rift between a “moderate Enlightenment” and a “Radical Enlightenment.” Failure to distinguish between these two tendencies has been a source of much historiographical confusion, he insists, because the philosophy that caused the revolution was actually the radical atheistic materialism of Diderot, Helvétius, and Holbach (drawn from Spinoza), not the moderate skeptical deism of Voltaire and Montesquieu that had in his view signally failed in its efforts to reform the Old Regime.

A correct understanding of the Radical Enlightenment is impossible without overturning almost the whole current historiography of the French Revolution which puts far too much stress on alleged institutional and social factors not directly connected to the principles of the Revolution.... The Radical Enlightenment—and not the Enlightenment as such—is the only important direct cause of the French Revolution understood as a total transformation of the political, legal, cultural, and educational framework of French life, administration, and society. Everything else... was entirely secondary, in fact tertiary, in shaping the revolutionary outcome (p. 16).

One could carp that if “everything else” is in fact tertiary then there is nothing left to be secondary, but that would be a distraction from the more general and more flamboyant claim that the Radical Enlightenment is the only important direct cause of the French Revolution. Does this mean that radical philosophy destroyed the Old Regime or that it raised the edifice of the New, or both? Despite some confusing formulations, it seems that Israel does not want to credit the Radical Enlightenment for the collapse of the Old Regime; in fact, beyond emphasizing the failure of the moderate Enlightenment to reform the old order he appears scarcely interested in those processes that might have led to its implosion. He wants instead to maintain that the Radical Enlightenment was the *direct* cause, and the only direct cause, shaping the revolutionary *outcome*. This seems to be the case in his analysis in two main principal respects. First, it was the intervention of the radical thinkers that intensified and polarized the conflict over representation that began in the fall of 1788 once the crown had been forced to set a definite date for the meeting of the Estates General the following May. “Only radical ideas,” he insists, “could have done this work” (p. 766). Second, it was the Radical Enlightenment that directed the decisions of the National Assembly abolishing the Old Regime and instituting the principles of the New in the summer months that culminated in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen in late August and the initial decisions regarding a new constitution in early September.

Whatever led to the collapse of the Old Regime, then, it was the Radical Enlightenment alone that in Israel’s analysis produced the Revolution. Some of the details of this argument will be discussed later in this review, but one can ask here whether this claim is plausible even on its face? Did none of the factors that undermined and eventually destroyed the Old Regime shape the character of the Revolution that was the outcome of the Old Regime’s collapse? Was the revolutionary creed in no way structured by what it denied and destroyed? Did none of the acts and utterances that defined the Revolution itself take on meaning in response to tensions and contradictions in the prerevolutionary period? Israel insists that there is a political and economic context to be taken into account, but he offers no real investigation of the way in which radical ideas spoke to that context, shaped it, or acquired force in relationship to it. Apparently believing these ideas to be essentially true, he feels no great need to analyze why and how they became compelling at a particular historical moment. Much of his evidence consists of assertions of the role of radical philosophy in the French Revolution reiterated by its counterrevolutionary critics. These critics could have been right, but constant repetition of their claims does not make them so.

This criticism may seem strange because *Democratic Enlightenment* carries weight—quite literally—by virtue of the fact that its general assertions are accompanied by lengthy, detailed, and wide-ranging discussions. How could a book this massive not get it right? Reading more closely, however, one finds that Israel gets things wrong, omits evidence that would complicate his claims, or simply forces the meaning of the evidence he does offer.

One telling example is the way in which he sets up his distinction between two Enlightenments in this volume by pointing to the correspondence exchanged between Turgot and Condorcet in the 1770s. In this account, Turgot is made to represent the moderate Enlightenment, prevented by lingering providentialism from offering a philosophical and political program radical enough to reform the Old Regime. Condorcet, in contrast, is made to stand with the Radical Enlightenment that will offer France transformative principles in 1789 once the failure of moderate reform becomes evident with the collapse of the old order. Placing some distance between Turgot and Condorcet is therefore important for Israel's argument because (as he acknowledges) Condorcet has generally been seen as a disciple of Turgot. For Israel's interpretation to work, the younger philosophe must now be separated from his mentor in critical ways if he is to be placed on the side of the atheistic materialists whose logic alone, Israel proclaims, necessarily implied radical social and political reform. (pp. 18-19)

The evidence to which Israel points in this case is an exchange of letters over the principle of universal gravitation. Condorcet writes to Turgot in 1774 that he is currently exploring the "great question" of whether universal gravitation alone is enough to account for the momentum of the planets. Turgot responds with a lengthy metaphysical argument with which he fully expects Condorcet to disagree, namely that the question of motion cannot ultimately be answered without postulating the existence of a free and intelligent first cause. This latter, Turgot reasons, is the ultimate principle of existence in the physical world, just as it is in the human world where actions are determined not by material mechanisms but by the motives of purposeful, freely choosing beings. In Israel's analysis, Turgot's claims (and his accompanying assertion that they are "perfectly compatible with physical reflections") "struck Condorcet as wholly unproven and at odds with what we know, as incoherent philosophically and completely 'de mythologiques'" (p. 19). Condorcet's response that he does not like to see his friend "fall from physics into mythology," Israel contends, places him on the opposite side of the "fundamental and irresolvable duality between the created and providential and non-created and non-providential schemes of reality [that] was so important that it generally remained the chief factor shaping the Enlightenment's course.... Exactly as radical and moderate Enlightenment divided over... whether reality is governed by a knowing divine providence or by blind nature, so they diverged fundamentally over every basic issue" (p. 19).

In fact, this exchange is considerably more nuanced than Israel suggests. Condorcet does indeed rebuke Turgot for slipping from physics into mythology, but his initial response is rather different: he writes in an earlier letter that his researches "don't even have the honor of being physical; they are only mathematical." [8] This is a significant point: Condorcet is a mathematician not (like Spinoza) a metaphysician. His determinism is a methodological postulate not a dogmatic conviction. He is not seeking ultimate explanations of the nature of things. He stands with Laplace (whose interests in developing scientific applications of the calculus of probabilities he is already sharing during this period) in maintaining that scientific understanding has no need to postulate the hypothesis of the existence of a First Mover. His response to Turgot is indeed already couched in terms of probability theory, which posits ignorance of ultimate causes. The probability of the existence of "a general cause," he estimates, is an almost vanishing number. The difference between Turgot and Condorcet does not rest on a difference between one metaphysics and another; it rests on a difference over the acceptance or refusal of metaphysical reasoning and over its relationship to scientific knowledge. The scientific background to Condorcet's thinking, and the place of science in the Enlightenment more generally, is noticeably skimmed in Israel's analysis.

It is indeed true that Condorcet was more outspoken in his attacks on clerical fanaticism and religious superstition as obstacles to the progress of enlightenment than Voltaire and Turgot would have liked: his anonymous *Lettres d'un théologien* was indeed rabidly anticlerical and its publication in 1773 made Voltaire very nervous. But Israel makes no effort to substantiate his claim that Condorcet showed “a growing fondness for atheism, materialism, and wide-ranging political reform in the spirit of Helvétius, Diderot, and d’Holbach” (p. 673). He offers a passing assertion that Turgot and Condorcet disagreed “as usual” in their reactions to Helvétius’s work, but their disagreement in this matter, too, was more nuanced than he implies. It was also a disagreement over Helvétius’s *De l’Esprit*, not his *De l’Homme* as Israel incorrectly reports.[9] Condorcet defended *De l’Esprit* against Turgot rather dismissively as a “good book” offering a self-portrait of a man motivated by amour-propre, a book not weighty enough to do much harm to those who would read it. If it denounced clerical intolerance, its greatest fault, Condorcet thought, was that it declaimed against despotism in a way that would incite persecution against “gens d’esprit.” He was not of Helvétius’s opinion, he assured Turgot in a subsequent letter, because he believed that principles of justice and morality derived from a moral sentiment grounded in the sympathy of one sentient being for the sufferings of another. Sentiment and sympathy were central concerns in Condorcet’s moral philosophy, as the drafts for his unfinished *Tableau historique des progrès de l’esprit humain* amply reveal. His moral philosophy was closer to Adam Smith’s than it was to Helvétius’s.[10] He was not of a mind to praise Helvétius for revealing the crude secret of everybody’s fundamental self-interest. And he agreed with Turgot that *De l’Esprit* could be dangerous to the philosophes because its views would be taken as “the secret principles of all men who think freely about religion and Government.”[11]

Beyond these brief references to the Turgot-Condorcet correspondence, Israel offers virtually no substantive discussion of Condorcet’s views of moral and political philosophy. A search for Condorcet in the index of *Democratic Enlightenment* leads the reader largely to mere lists of individuals characterized as representatives of the Radical Enlightenment or as followers of Diderot, Holbach, and Helvétius, as if (again) repetition is sufficient to make the case. That Condorcet shared the hostility of Holbach and Helvétius to religious superstition and clerical fanaticism is clear, but there is little to suggest that he needed their philosophical arguments in order to do so. Voltaire had offered compelling enough grounds for denouncing *l’infâme*. Holbach and Helvétius make no appearance, for example, in the index of the recently published complete edition of the *Tableau historique des progrès de l’esprit humain*, the very substantial philosophical testament Condorcet left in manuscript at his death (and the work for which the posthumous *Esquisse d’un Tableau historique des progrès de l’esprit humain* was meant to serve as an introduction).[12] Nor does Spinoza merit an appearance in the index of this comprehensive survey of the advances of the human mind.

In fact, the only significant mention of the Dutch philosopher I can recall in Condorcet’s writing occurs in the *Almanach anti-superstitieux* he compiled (but also left in manuscript) in the course of the 1770s. Spinoza does get his day in this aggressively secular, anti-clerical calendar—but notably as a victim of the savagery inspired by Jewish orthodoxy. His metaphysics is characterized as an extension of Cartesian principles and a revival of the system of the Pythagorean philosopher, Ocellus Lucanus: “that nature is a great whole in which what we take for different beings are but different parts, or modifications.” Condorcet urges theologians and philosophers who judge this system “destructive of all morality” to read the final chapter of the fragmentary ancient text. Spinoza’s own style of reasoning, in comparison, he simply deems “very obscure.”[13] Contrast the poet Voltaire, to be remembered by posterity on his calendar day for a “profound and touching philosophy, without ever being hollow or systematic.” Contrast the satirist Voltaire: “his witticisms have covered our stupidities with ineffaceable ridicule; his energetic and touching portrayals have rendered the persecutors odious to all honest souls, and if his writings, that all the world can understand and read with joy, were diffused, they would deal the final blow to the monster that has preyed on humanity for fifteen centuries.”[14]

Helvétius, too, merits an entry in this almanac. *De l'homme* “treats the theologians as they deserve,” Condorcet acknowledges; “for the rest, we adopt hardly any of the sentiments of M. Helvétius.”[15] Israel can take some comfort, though, in Condorcet’s response to the preface added to the Dutch edition of the *De l'homme*, apparently by a protestant refugee ready to assert that the French would be rendered free and happy only in the event of their being conquered. “We believe,” Condorcet observes, “that the abolition of Christianity or, what comes to the same thing, absolute liberty of conscience, would be a milder and more certain means.”[16]

Disagreement over the existence of a providential or non-providential order, Israel contends, logically dictated a divergence over every other issue. “All sweeping political and social reformism of a kind denying the basic legitimacy of ancien regime monarchism and institutions was, in principle, bound to be more logically anchored in radical metaphysics denying all teleology and divine providence than in moderate mainstream thought. Basic human rights defined as individual liberty, equality, freedom of thought and expression, and democracy were inextricably linked to radically monist philosophical positions” (p. 20-21). Israel does not spell out the logic that makes this true; nor does the example of Turgot and Condorcet bear it out. Turgot’s deism was far from preventing his commitment to radical reform, and Condorcet’s hostility to religion did nothing to distance his political principles from his mentor’s. Turgot’s article on “Foundations” in the *Encyclopédie* was one of the most explicitly radical in the whole work and certainly no less radical in its implications for the Old Regime than anything in entries by Diderot, Helvétius, or Holbach. “Citizens have rights,” that article declared, “and rights to be held sacred, even by the body of society—they exist independently of society, they are its necessary elements; they enter into society only to place themselves, with all their rights, under the protections of these same laws which assure their property and their liberty. But particular corporate bodies do not exist of themselves, or for themselves; they have been formed for society, and they cease to exist immediately after they cease to be useful.”[17] This reasoning not only destroyed the basis for religious endowments created in perpetuity but also struck at the particularistic logic of orders and Estates that was at the heart of the Old Regime and its justifications for royal absolutism. There was little respect for tradition in this article. “If a tombstone had been erected for everyone who ever lived,” Turgot maintains, “it would have been necessary, in order to find land to cultivate, to overthrow these sterile monuments and to turn over the ashes of the dead to nourish the living.”[18] This is the language of Turgot the political economist. It places Turgot closer to the Sieyès of *Qu’est ce que le Tiers Etat?* (and vice-versa, see below) than Israel would have us believe.

Turgot and his advisors (Condorcet notable among them) were also ready to convey a similar message to Louis XVI in 1775. The *Mémoire sur les municipalités* that Turgot had ordered drafted (probably by the physiocrat Dupont de Nemours) while serving as Controller General opened with a fundamental rejection of the principles of a traditional social order. “The rights of men gathered together in society are not founded on their history, but on their nature,” it declared. “There can be no grounds for perpetuating institutions created without reason.”[19] It is true that Turgot’s notion of the rights of man fell short of a commitment to the immediate introduction of universal political equality in a democratic republic. But so also did Condorcet’s at this point. Following Turgot, Condorcet maintained that the right to participate actively in political decisions was the least important of all human rights, and one better exercised by the propertied and rational few. He was not to change his views on this matter until well into the Revolution.

In pointing to the relationship between Turgot and Condorcet as exemplifying a fundamental metaphysical rift from which radical divergences on other issues must necessarily follow, Israel thus exaggerates the differences between them and entirely neglects the radical character of Turgot’s critique of Old Regime institutions. It is true that Condorcet urged Turgot to use his power as Controller-General to move faster and further toward political, economic, and administrative reform, but this was more a matter of temperament than of fundamental principle. Israel simply presses

Condorcet into the service of his radical party without any sustained discussion of his fundamental views, philosophical or political.

There is a more basic criticism to be made here, which is that one looks in vain in *Democratic Enlightenment* for any discussion of Turgot's reforming ministry. Part II of the book, devoted to "Rationalizing the Ancien Régime," spotlights moments of reform across Europe; Part III, on "Europe and the Remaking of the World," circumnavigates the globe. But while "Enlightened Despotism" gets its chapter, France does not figure in it. There is no serious analysis, in this volume, of the efforts of the French monarchy to reform itself. "Part V. Revolution" opens with a chapter entitled "1788-1789: The 'General Revolution' Begins." It offers a few hasty pages adverting to the failure of Calonne and Brienne to achieve reform, the government's forced decision to call the Estates-General, the resulting debate over the doubling of the Third Estate, and the appearance of "an entirely unheard of new rhetoric of equality, democracy, and *volonté générale*." Regarding the appearance of this latter, Israel insists that "only radical ideas could have done this work" (p. 766). But how can we know that? We are given no real analysis of the arguments circulating during this period. Instead, Israel offers—as he frequently does when arguing for the importance of the Radical Enlightenment—the testimony of the anti-philosophes, in this case Chaudon's *Dictionnaire anti-philosophique* (p. 766). That work inscribed inequality within a providential order, but it was published as a response to Voltaire in 1769!

Israel apparently believes that he can skip any substantial discussion of French political conflicts in the quarter-century preceding the French Revolution because the Old Regime quite obviously failed to reform itself. It is enough for him merely to insist that this failure was the failure of the moderate Enlightenment. But if Turgot (or the ministers who were his successors) failed to transform the Old Regime, this was not because providentialism inhibited commitment to radical change. It would be hard to validate the claim that Turgot, as a representative of the moderate Enlightenment, exhibited "practical good sense by being able to compromise with the existing order" (p. 7). His liberalization of the grain trade required ruthless suppression of popular protest. His efforts to abolish the corvée (replacing it with a land tax) and to suppress guilds and corporations struck at fundamental corporatist principles of the Old Regime and provoked unrelenting opposition among those privileged in consequence of those principles. He failed to reform the Old Regime because it was not reformable; it could only be brought down eventually by its own contradictions. This is why successive ministers were forced to propose increasingly radical measures—met in their turn by increasingly radical opposition.

Informed observers and political actors were fully aware of the contradictions that bedeviled the French monarchy: the need for fundamental change was scarcely in dispute in the decades preceding the Revolution. The contestation was over the conceptualizations of these contradictions, the direction that change should take, and the means by which it could be accomplished. The crucial question for historians seeking to understand the intellectual origins of the French Revolution is to ask precisely how the contradictions of the Old Regime were conceptualized and how these conceptualizations in turn produced by late 1788 a truly revolutionary situation—a situation in which the principles of an entire social and political order were up for grabs. Only radical ideas, Israel asserts, could have done this work. But how can we decide this question without actually considering the evolution of political ideas and arguments in the immediately preceding decades? Israel simply evacuates the politics of the late Old Regime in order to produce revolutionary political language in 1788 as if it were a rabbit from a Radical Enlightenment hat—"something previously never seen or heard of: the welling up of a militantly anti-aristocratic and anti-clerical discourse roundly denouncing privilege, nobility, clerical influence, and the *parlements*" (p. 766).

Had Israel considered more fully the dramatic years of the pre-Revolution, he would undoubtedly have noted that Calonne, repudiating "partial operations," had already called for the wholesale abolition of "abuses" founded on privilege.<sup>[20]</sup> He would have acknowledged that the issues of the doubling of the



Third Estate and of the vote by head had already become crucial in the political contestations over the proposals for provincial assemblies offered by increasingly desperate reforming ministers like Necker, Calonne, and Brienne, just as they were pushed again by Necker in late 1788 as a format for the Estates General. He would have observed that the crown had already accused the parlements of pressing for “an aristocracy of magistrates... as contrary to the rights and interests of the nation as to those of sovereign authority” and that the parlements had responded in turn by insisting on “no aristocracy in France, but no despotism either.”[21] In short, he would have recognized that the key issues debated in the flood of pamphlets circulating in the months before the meeting of the Estates-General—“aristocracy,” “despotism,” “privilege” “equality”—had been clearly introduced in the course of the conflicts between the crown’s reforming ministers, on the one hand, and the Notables and the parlements, on the other. The crown itself had effectively invited their open discussion by its declaration of 5 July 1788 asking its subjects for their views on the composition of the Estates General. This does not make these issues less philosophical, but it does make more problematic the claim that radical philosophy was needed to raise or energize them. We do not learn much about Condorcet’s *Essai sur la constitution et des fonctions des assemblées provinciales* published in 1788, for example, from placing its author among those who drew on “the entire radical tradition reaching back to the middle of the seventeenth century, especially as mediated and amplified by Boulanger, Diderot, Helvétius, d’Holbach, Raynal, Mably, and (more marginally, mostly) Rousseau” (p. 929) (another problematic list!). We learn much more from placing it in a tradition of administrative argument linking d’Argenson, Turgot, the Physiocrats, Necker, Calonne, and Brienne, and yes, also, from considering its relation to the thinking of Rousseau.

Israel does, indeed, acknowledge in passing that debate in late 1788 over the doubling of the Third Estate was “to an extent, a product of prerevolutionary political or social conditions” (p. 768), but he does not care to determine that extent. Instead, he is eager to move on to his more basic assertion: that “the terms in which Third Estate opposition to the privileged orders was orchestrated most definitely were not [a product of prerevolutionary political or social conditions]. Rather, the emerging discourse of protest amounted to a complete rupture with the past” (p. 768). What exactly is the evidence for this statement? And what exactly is it meant to convey? That the language of late 1788 was entirely unprecedented? Israel offers nothing substantial in support of that claim, and we know in fact that much of the argument over the character of the Estates General ransacked a much older constitutional and historical literature for competing purposes. That the language of late 1788 constituted a complete repudiation of the authority of the past? In support of this, Israel again deploys one of his favorite rhetorical devices, a list: “many key commentators and publicists—Volney, Mirabeau, Sieyès, Le Chapelier, and Condorcet among them—refused to concede any legitimacy or constitutional standing to the Estates General as a historically defined form of assembly” (p. 768). That they did so scarcely counts as a characterization of the terms of the entire debate, which in any case became increasingly radicalized in a series of stages that Israel finds no need to analyze. The authority of the past was dramatically eroded by the competing and contradictory appeals to the precedents of French history in the months leading to the meeting of the Estates General, and by the final procedural deadlock of its first few weeks, before the legitimacy of confused and contested tradition was categorically repudiated.

I do not mean by this criticism to diminish the significance of the arguments of those political writers and actors whom Israel lists in the passage just quoted. I do mean to observe that he offers little beyond assertion to sustain his argument about their role in shaping debate in the months leading to the meeting of the Estates General. To take the example of Sieyès, Israel devotes a single paragraph at this point in his argument to the “three historic tracts” the abbé from Chartres published during this period. In that paragraph he makes several claims, none of which are substantiated in any way. The initial claim is that Sieyès’s pamphlets, particularly *Qu’est-ce que le Tiers-Etat?*, “brilliantly captured the mood, phraseology and *philosophique* terminology of the moment, especially the journalistic campaign of 1788. They affected the course and especially the rhetoric of the Revolution” (p. 770). That these pamphlets were indeed brilliant both philosophically and rhetorically is certainly true; that their arguments

affected the course of the Revolution no less so. But Sieyès did far more in *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers-Etat?* than capture a prevailing mood; his reasoning went far beyond the arguments then being made on behalf of the Third Estate (most notably in repudiating the entire idea of the doubling of the Third Estate). Israel offers no analysis of the ways in which this pamphlet was indeed radical or of how it achieved its effect. The specific power of its rhetoric and the originality of its definition of the political situation do not interest him; they are simply dissolved into the manifestation of a purportedly package logic.

He is content, instead, to assert (in the second claim of this same paragraph) that Sieyès's three key pamphlets were based on "ideas he formulated in the early 1770s, that 'liberty in general' is what most favours the pursuit of individual happiness in society and that the chief foes of liberty are the particular 'liberties' of privilege, charters, and special rights" (p. 770). A footnote refers the reader to page 361 of the edition of *Des manuscrits de Sieyès* directed by Christine Fauré. But Israel appears to have misunderstood the passage he cites, which is worth quoting here in the original at some length:

D'autres se persuadent qu'il ne faut que protéger la presse. Garantir la *liberté de la presse* est une expression vide. C'est la *liberté en général* qui peut et doit être garantie. Et sous ce nom, sous ces auspices, toutes les libertés particulières se trouvent garanties [add:]/à la fois/. Mais contre qui la liberté en g[éné]n[ér]al sera-t-elle garantie? Est-ce contre la pluie ou le vent? Certes, c'est contre l'abus des *libertés particulières*. Ainsi, pour parler sensément, il faut demander une loi tutélaire de la liberté contre l'usage nuisible de *tel ou tel* instrument, contre l'usage nuisible que tel <ou>/et/ tel individu font de leur liberté particulière.[22]

One has to be an over-hasty reader indeed not to recognize that this text scarcely sets "liberty in general" against the "particular 'liberties' of privilege" etc. characteristic of the Old Regime. Sieyès certainly condemned privilege in the name of individual liberty and social utility, reasoning brilliantly to this effect in his *Essai sur les privilèges*. But such is not his argument in this particular passage. To the contrary, he here presents "general" liberty as the overall guarantee of "particular" liberties, by which he clearly means the liberty of individuals (*particuliers*) not that of traditional corporate bodies. In fact, this manuscript note is part of a discussion over the nature of the liberty of the press, and more particularly a formulation of Sieyès's brief against unlimited press freedom. Its argument relates quite explicitly to a debate ongoing in the National Assembly—which means, of course, that it dates not from the 1770s, as Israel would have it, but from the early 1790s. (And its assertion that "*liberty of the press* is an empty expression" scarcely comports, in any case, with a view of Sieyès as exemplary of the Radical Enlightenment commitment to unlimited press freedom.)

That Sieyès's three pamphlets of 1788-89 drew on arguments he had been developing since the 1770s is, of course, true—and abundantly clear from his manuscripts dating from that time. But do these early manuscripts actually support the further claim Israel makes in this paragraph that "the good *abbé*" owed his stunning success in large part to being a "*philosophe*-politician and lifelong addict of materialist epistemology and metaphysics" (p. 770)? A "*philosophe*-politician" Sieyès was indeed. He felt no need of an "intelligent cause" to explain the necessary order of the universe; he was also acutely critical of religion in general and of the evils of Christianity in particular. This much his early manuscripts make clear. But metaphysics, strictly speaking, was not his forte: Wilhelm von Humboldt reported of him much later that "his interest in metaphysics is not so great that he has judged it useful to study the most profound metaphysicians, Spinoza, Leibniz, and even only Locke and Hume. Among all the metaphysicians he today praises Condillac and Bonnet, which is to say the most superficial." [23] The evidence of the early manuscripts comports with this judgment: the young Sieyès was keenly engaged in critical exploration of the statue model developed for sensationist philosophy by Condillac in his *Traité des sensations* (1754) and elaborated in more physiological terms by the naturalist, Charles Bonnet, in his *Essai analytique sur les facultés de l'âme* (1760). The aim of these "statue-building metaphysicians" [24]

was to investigate how (and how far) a statue endowed successively with the five senses might arrive at consciousness, identity, and knowledge of an external world.

The statue model was indeed an implicitly materialist one, though Condillac himself was far from denying the immateriality of the soul and Bonnet was eager to insist upon it. In analyzing their arguments, Sieyès was certainly pushing in a materialist direction. But the evidence of these early notes suggests the important point that his materialism was not the manifestation of the Spinozist metaphysics of a Radical Enlightenment finally surfacing after decades underground. To the contrary, it was part of an almost century-long effort at the heart of the Enlightenment that Israel wants to deem “moderate”—an effort to press the implications of Lockean sensationism to a logically consistent (and hence increasingly radical) conclusion. Condillac was central to this endeavor in France, as was Hume (one of the exemplars of Israel’s moderate Enlightenment) in Britain. Israel recognizes the immense importance of Condillacian epistemology in his second volume, *Enlightenment Contested*, though in stressing how far Condillac went beyond Locke he seriously underplays how much the French author owed to the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.<sup>[25]</sup> This genealogy of Sieyès’s epistemology (as, indeed, of that of Helvétius and Condorcet, despite their differences) from within the Enlightenment Israel dubs “moderate” seems to undermine his grand Spinozist-oriented thesis rather more than it supports it. Sieyès himself later recalled that in his youth “no books procured him a more lively satisfaction than those of Locke, Condillac, and Bonnet.”<sup>[26]</sup>

One aspect of Condillac’s philosophy that was crucial to Sieyès’s thinking (as to Condorcet’s) was its emphasis on the critical importance of a precise, analytical language. A science, Condillac had argued, was nothing but a well-made language. Language has outlived things, Sieyès declared in 1789, and it was his lifelong ambition (as it was Condorcet’s) to create a social art (or science) by constituting a precise, analytical language for it. In this pursuit, Sieyès not only confronted Condillac’s epistemology in his early manuscripts but also his economics—along with, and more especially, that of the Physiocrats and Turgot. Sieyès was above all a political economist, willing to declare that he had anticipated Adam Smith in arriving at the notion of the division of labor. His early manuscripts reveal his massive investment in mastering the discourse of political economy.<sup>[27]</sup> One cannot grasp the reasoning (or the “stunning success”) of *Qu’est-ce que le Tiers Etat?*—with its opening classification of productive economic functions as the basis for thinking about social hierarchy and political representation—without recognizing its place within that discourse. Free exchange and the division of labor were key ideas for Sieyès. In his conception, the principle of free exchange meant the abolition of monopoly in matters of trade, as of its analog in the economy of political status and social distinction (as the *Essai sur les privilèges* argued so powerfully). Similarly, the principle of the division of labor underlying economic productivity and social prosperity in modern society also provided the rationale for political representation as a modern form. Political economy, far more than materialist metaphysics, drove the argument of these crucial pamphlets. Israel pays no attention to this aspect of Sieyès’s thinking, or indeed to political economy at all as a fundamental category of Enlightenment thought (one crossing any divide between moderate and radical tendencies). Neither “political economy” nor “Physiocrats” appear in the index of *Democratic Enlightenment* or of the volume preceding it in the trilogy, yet both were crucial in the reimagining of the nature of social order that prepared the French Revolution.

If Israel’s discussion of the debates preceding the meeting of the Estates General is inadequate, so too is his account of the deliberations that initiated and resulted from its transformation into a National Assembly. This is particularly the case for his consideration of the drafting of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen. Interpreters have seen in this text the influence of Locke or of Rousseau (or, in the case of the debate between Jelinek and Boutmy, that of the American states’ declarations of rights or of Physiocratic doctrine). Particularly eager to deny any significant Rousseauian input into its composition, Israel claims the Declaration for the Radical Enlightenment. But he is too quick to give his radical materialist heroes credit for the revolutionary language within this text. Philosophical the

Declaration was, and radical in many respects, but it was scarcely the consistent expression of a coherent Radical Enlightenment philosophy. Indeed, it was not the work of any single coherent philosophy: it was patched together from competing drafts over a period of weeks, taking form as a series of linguistic compromises reached by contending groups and voted by an assembly of more than one thousand deputies. Its final form represented considerable setbacks for the two most notable of Israel's philosophe-politicians in the National Assembly, Sieyès and Mirabeau.

The first setback was Sieyès's. The revolutionary *abbé* did press hard in the National Assembly for a prior declaration of rights that would lay down in advance, in systematic form, the rational foundations for the constitution that would follow, but his conception was emphatically repudiated in the course of the debates. Wary of abstractions that might exacerbate threats to social order they were anxious to contain, the deputies preferred something less "metaphysical" than the philosophical expositions Sieyès offered them, opting instead for the sparer enunciation of separate articles they styled the American model (that offered, for example, by Lafayette in the first draft declaration of rights presented for the assembly's consideration). The document that emerged consisted of a succession of articles negating monarchical practices or affirming revolutionary decisions already made: it emerged piecemeal from the challenges of a particular historical situation rather than from a reasoned exposition of timeless truths.

The second setback was Mirabeau's. Israel portrays the rakish aristocrat from Provence (recruited for the Radical Enlightenment on the grounds that his vast library contained some volumes of Spinoza) as the crucial figure in the production of the Declaration, leaving the impression that he pushed unswervingly for a declaration, that the draft produced by the committee he chaired was infused with the appropriate brand of radical philosophy, and that this draft proved decisive in that it was eventually chosen as the basis for discussion of the final text during the critical days concluding the debates. It is true that Mirabeau was the dominant figure in the Committee of Five charged on 12 August to review competing projects and produce a draft Declaration to be used as a basis for debate, revision, and final redaction of a definitive text. But the fact of the matter is that the personal think tank to which he assigned much of this task was composed of Swiss republicans who introduced far more of Rousseau into their work than they did of Spinoza, Holbach, or Helvétius. Israel does everything he can to minimize the specific influence of Rousseau throughout the crucial National Assembly debates, but the text of the draft Mirabeau eventually presented to the assembly on behalf of the Committee of Five drew in significant ways on *The Social Contract*. Having declared that all men are born free and equal, it maintained that "every political body receives its existence from a social contract express or tacit, by which each individual places his person and his faculties in common under the supreme direction of the general will, and the body simultaneously receives each individual as a part." It went on to insist that "the law being the expression of the general will, must be general in its object, and tend always to assure all citizens liberty, property and civil equality."<sup>[28]</sup>

This draft was brought to the National Assembly by Mirabeau, on 17 August, in a speech he used to stress how problematic its composition had proven and how imperfect it still remained. Enunciating universal principles in a specific and profoundly contested political situation had turned out to be more challenging than might have been imagined.<sup>[29]</sup> Mirabeau was to find the debate that followed no less frustrating. Far from leading the deputies triumphantly to a positive vote, he reached the point of urging them simply to defer writing any declaration of rights until they had decided on a constitution.<sup>[30]</sup> This maneuver sealed the fate of his committee's draft, which on 19 August was formally rejected, "almost unanimously," as a basis for redaction of specific articles.<sup>[31]</sup> It also threw the entire declaration project back into question. Only after further bitter debate, and extensive discussion of the voting procedures to be followed, did the assembly choose once again to go ahead, this time using one of the most minimal draft declarations available (that earlier prepared by its Sixth Bureau) as the basis for its final discussions, taking it article by article.<sup>[32]</sup> The Mirabeau committee draft was not then, as Israel claims, the basis for the final redaction of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen.<sup>[33]</sup> Its only distinctive contribution was a preamble that was essentially

physiocratic in its promise of political transparency assured by knowledge of and respect for the principles of the rights of man. Mirabeau himself reminded the deputies of the physiocratic inspiration behind his conception (and Sieyès's) of the inalienable rights men hold "from God and nature," in telling them that "everything is in this principle—so elevated, so liberal, so fertile—that my father and his illustrious friend, M. Quesnay, consecrated thirty years ago, and M. Sieyès has demonstrated better than any other, and all the rights, all the duties of man derive from it." [34]

This reference to physiocracy brings us back to the hole at the heart of Israel's interpretation of the relation between the (Radical) Enlightenment and the French Revolution. Political conflicts, constitutional struggles, administrative dilemmas, and reform initiatives are almost completely evacuated from the terrain of the Old Regime in France in its last decades, leaving him free to parachute his radical philosophes into action late in 1788. The hollowing out of the story then continues in 1789 as these radicals become "an aggrieved but aspiring intellectual leadership" introducing "totalizing, all-renewing revolutionary ideologies the concepts of which the common people were not interested in and had little grasp of, but which could be successfully used (and manipulated) as channels for popular grievances." This, Israel says, is "the familiar mechanism of modern revolutions" (p. 15). In France, as elsewhere (except America) "entirely unrepresentative intellectuals captured a mass following by seizing on and amplifying popular protest arising from widespread discontent into formidable political force. The leaders of the French Revolution of 1788-1792 were socially completely marginal, and heterogeneous as well as unrepresentative: all they had in common was their ideological standpoint" (p. 15).

But do we really know what it means to be "socially completely marginal" at the end of the Old Regime? Among the principal radical intellectuals Israel discusses, Condorcet was an aristocratic academician eager to see administrative and political reform from above. Sieyès was a church administrator, clearly frustrated in his career and in his intellectual ambitions—but is frustration necessarily an index of marginality? Mirabeau, admittedly a more complicated case, was the scandalous noble son of a famously physiocratic father; imprisoned by *lettre de cachet* (that ultimate instrument of paternal power) he had turned his familiarity with Old Regime prisons and law courts into best-selling copy and made a career as pamphleteer and publicist—a master of the new media of politics—well before entering the electoral campaign of 1788-9 from which he emerged as deputy of the Third Estate of Aix en Provence. Did all this make him marginal, or could one rather say of him that he knew, or lived, as intimately as anyone, the contradictions of the Old Regime in its last decades? There will be time to discuss the character of the French Revolutionary leadership more fully when Israel publishes his next book in this series, which will be devoted to the revolutionary period itself. But it seems that, for the moment, he has just taken down from a cluttered shelf a ready-made definition of the "mechanism of modern revolutions" in which neo-Burkean images of deracinated intellectuals and raging crowds have congealed into social-scientific platitude.

*Democratic Enlightenment* claims immense scope and abundant detail, bold argument, and iconoclastic rethinking. But attention to its rhetorical bombast, extravagant assertion, blatant omission of issues central to the argument, cavalier dismissal of existing scholarship, and evidence skewed by over-hasty research or ideological conviction exposes the weakness of its foundations.

## Notes

[1] [Holbach], *Système social ou principes naturels de la morale et de la politique avec un examen de l'influence du gouvernement sur les moeurs* (ARTFL Electronic Edition, 2009), at <<http://artfl-project.uchicago.edu/>>.

- [2] *La politique naturelle, ou discours sur les vrais principes du gouvernement. Par un ancien magistrat.*, 2 vols (London: 1773), in Eighteenth Century Collections on Line <<http://galegroup.com/ecco>>.
- [3] *Système social* (ARTFL Electronic Edition), part 3, chap. xii, p. 220; 3 vols, (London, 1773), 3:156.
- [4] *Politique naturelle*, 2:46; reprint (Paris: Fayard, 1998), 255.
- [5] *Politique naturelle*, 2:91; reprint, 297.
- [6] On revolutions as natural phenomena, see Mary Ashburn Miller, *A Natural History of Revolution. Violence and Nature in the French Revolutionary Imagination, 1789-1794* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2011).
- [7] On this theme, see my “Revolution 1.0,” *Journal of Modern European History* 11 (2013): 187-219.
- [8] *Correspondance inédite de Condorcet et de Turgot, 1770-1779*, Charles Henry, ed. (Paris: Charavay, 1883), p. 175.
- [9] *Correspondance inédite de Condorcet et de Turgot*, pp. 140-41.
- [10] On this theme, see Emma Rothschild, *Economic Sentiments. Adam Smith, Condorcet, and the Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001).
- [11] Rothschild, *Economic Sentiments*, 141.
- [12] *Tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain: projets, esquisse, fragments et notes (1772-1794)*, Jean-Pierre Schandeler, Pierre Crépel, Eric Brian, et. al., eds., (Paris: INED, 2004).
- [13] Condorcet, *Almanach anti-superstitieux et autres textes*, ed. Anne-Marie Chouillet, in collaboration with Pierre Crépel and Henri Duranton (Saint-Etienne, 1992), 136-7.
- [14] Condorcet, *Almanach*, 61.
- [15] Condorcet, *Almanach*, 138.
- [16] Condorcet, *Almanach*.
- [17] *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, par une société des gens de lettres*, 17 vols. (Paris, 1751-65), 7:75 (*s.v.* “Foundations”) as translated in Keith Michael Baker, ed., *The Old Regime and the French Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 96.
- [18] *Encyclopédie*, 7:75; Baker, 97.
- [19] “Mémoire sur les municipalités,” in *Oeuvres de Turgot*, Gustave Schelle, ed., 5 vols. (Paris, 1913-23), 4: 575; as translated in Baker, 98.
- [20] Calonne, Speech to the Assembly of Notables, 22 February 1787, in *Archives parlementaires de 1787 à 1860, première série (1787-1799)*, J. Mavidal and E. Laurent, eds., 94 vols. to date (Paris, 1867- ), 1:127, as translated in Baker, 98. On the Assembly of the Notables, see now Vivian R. Gruder, *The Notables and the Nation. The Political Schooling of the French, 1787-1788* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007).

[21] Louis XVI, Response to the Parlement of Paris (17 April 1788); Remonstrances of the Parlement of Paris (3 May 1778), *Archives parlementaires*, 1:284, 286, as translated in Baker, 138, 140.

[22] *Des manuscrits de Sieyès, 1773-1799*, Christine Fauré, ed., in collaboration with Jacques Guilhaumou and Jacques Valier (Paris, 1999), 361.

[23] As quoted by Jacques Guilhaou, “Le *Grand Cahier Métaphysique*, Présentation,” in *Des manuscrits de Sieyès*, 71. On Sieyès’s lifelong engagement with Condillac and his later encounter with Humboldt (who declared him “too French” to be a serious philosopher in the German style) see also Jan E. Goldstein, *The Post-Revolutionary Self. Politics and Psyche in France, 1750-1850* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), 123-9. Goldstein focuses particularly on Sieyès’s unease regarding an overly reductive sensationist account of the self.

[24] This is the term [“*statuaires métaphysiciens*”] Sieyès uses to describe Condillac and Bonnet, *Des manuscrits de Sieyès*, 139.

[25] Israel, *Enlightenment Contested. Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man, 1670-1752* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 775-780.

[26] *Notice sur la vie de Sieyès* (1794), as quoted in Goldstein, *The Post-Revolutionary Self*, 123.

[27] *Des manuscrits de Sieyès*, 167-339.

[28] *Projet de déclaration des droits de l’homme en société. Présenté par MM. du Comité chargé de l’examen des Déclarations de droits*, in *Archives parlementaires*, 8:438-9 (17 August 1789); also in Stéphane Rials, ed., *La Déclaration des droits de l’homme et du citoyen* (Paris : Hachette,, 1988), 747-9.

[29] *Archives parlementaires*, 8:438 (17 August 1789).

[30] *Archives parlementaires* 8: 454 (18 August 1789).

[31] *Archives parlementaires* 8:457-8 (19 August 1789).

[32] *Archives parlementaires* 8:459 (19 August 1789). Sieyès’s shortened declaration was the second choice.

[33] Israel’s error in this regard has also been noted by Dan Edelstein, “A Response to Jonathan Israel,” in Kate E. Tunstall, ed., *Self-Evident Truths? Human Rights and the Enlightenment* (London, 2012), 29-30.

[34] *Archives parlementaires*, 8:453 (18 August 1789).

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