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Sébastien Hallade, ed., *Morales en révolutions. France, 1789-1940*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2015. 288 pp. Footnotes, appendix, bibliography, indexes. 20€ (pb). ISBN 978-2-7535-3646-3.

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The cover illustration to this book says much about the scholarly themes it develops. The image is from Honoré Daumier's oil painting, "Nous voulons Barabbas! (Ecce Homo)," completed not long after the 1851 coup d'état. As in the biblical account of Pontius Pilate's acceding to popular demand, Jesus of Nazareth, in faceless dejection, still wearing a crown of thorns, is left for crucifixion while Barabbas the thief is freed. Pilate points dramatically to the central figure, surrounded by an ill-defined but discernibly bright nimbus, as the crowd below swirls in indifference. The implicit message is that the latter-day French Pilate, Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte, is leading the people to condemn the Christ of the barricades, who had inspired the Second Republic, which a new emperor will soon destroy. The morality of revolution, derived from the people, is now turned against itself, just as it had some fifty years earlier under another Napoléon towards the end of the First Republic.

The historical evolution—and contradictions—of revolutionary morals are one important thread in this collection of work sponsored by the Centre de recherche en histoire du XIXe siècle, together with the Universités de Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne and de Paris IV-Paris-Sorbonne. Although the topic is not new—ground-breaking work by literary scholar Paul Bénichou appeared in the 1970s—it has been given new impetus by the demise of the Marxist interpretation of the French Revolution (and its variations during the long nineteenth century).^[1] In fact, Frank Paul Bowman's seminal *Le Christ des barricades, 1789-1848* highlights the morality tale at work in Daumier's painting.^[2] Since then, Christophe Charle, Gisèle Sapiro, and Jan Goldstein, among others, have studied the role played by principles, revolutionary and otherwise, among the period's leading intellectuals.^[3] And the social history of everyday life, in which morality guides individual and group behavior, has been the object of considerable attention by Alain Corbin, Michelle Perrot, and their colleagues.^[4]

What is new here is the concerted attention to specific issues beyond the moral failings and pratfalls of activists, who were often at odds with their own deepest-held commitments. It does not take astute observers like Alexis de Tocqueville or Hippolyte Taine to note how revolutionaries' intentions are subject to a changing historical context. But the present volume of essays goes further; it traces the interconnectedness in the moral discourses of both the political left and right over time. As Philippe Boutry emphasizes in his introduction, "c'est la plasticité des moralités du XIXe siècle qui est mise en évidence," in more ways than one, with serious implications for each of the regimes from the First to the Third Republics, of course, but also for the revolutionaries themselves whose tactics changed accordingly (p. 13). The book draws on a wide range of voices, not just political actors but also theorists, journalists, pamphleteers, literati, and textbook authors, most notably, Félicité de Lamennais, Victor Cousin, Eugène Sue, Jean Grave, and Emile Faguet. The volume's contributions carefully treat these developments chronologically (rather than thematically).

It is no accident that half of the essays in the volume concern historical sources sympathetic to revolution in one form or another. For example, Jean-Clément Martin writes, “aucun domaine de la vie publique n'échappe à la morale,” well before 1789 and long afterwards, in a sustained dynamic, even if the revolutionaries and their commentators ultimately elided the Judeo-Christian origins of morals (p. 21). Speaking often of republican virtue during the Terror, Robespierre exemplified this tendency. The revolutionary act was morality itself. As a consequence, historians need to step back from the ideological differences in the past to identify the implicit principles of people's behavior: “Il s'agit d'effectuer un retour à la politique à hauteur d'homme,” concludes Martin in his Weberian assessment of the period's disenchantment of the revolutionary world (p. 23).

Philippe Darrjulot echoes these points in his study of *néojacobins*, such as Albert Laponneraye and Alphonse Esquiros, during the July Monarchy. He notes their profound disappointment with the July Revolution that they took as the prelude to a new republic, just as 1789 had been to 1792, ushering in a new revolutionary religiosity, “une religion de l'Égalité” (p. 71). Rather than a secularization of morality, these theorists looked to a new civic ethic appropriate to “une démocratie fondamentalement spiritualiste qui permet de situer les néojacobins des années 1830 dans la pensée d'une époque marquée par la recherche d'un nouveau pouvoir spirituel dont ils seraient les prophètes” (p. 76). In a liberal regime like the Bourgeois Monarchy, the revolutionaries sought a renewed commitment to the republic and all that it meant to a new way of life for everyone, not just the elites, to regenerate the democracy that 1830 had failed to create.

Revolution as a means to social regeneration and a new morality appears in the contributions by Laure Godineau (on the Paris communards in 1871) and by Jean-Noël Tardy (on the legacy of revolutionary conspiracy from Philippe Buonarroti to Auguste Blanqui). Godineau poses a challenging question germane to both essays: “la nouvelle morale n'est-elle que l'inscription en contre de l'ancienne morale ou fait-elle l'objet d'une véritable redéfinition tandis que l'on rêve et que l'on cherche à mettre en place une ère nouvelle” (p. 109)? For the Paris Commune's opponents, like Leconte de Lisle and Maxime Du Camp, communards were bereft of all morality; but for the Commune's proponents, le Conseil de la Commune among them, “la morale est politique avant tout,” especially as they addressed prostitution, drunkenness, property, and the family (p. 115). The contending interests in the period actually preclude a more nuanced response to Godineau's question.

In light of a similar, longer-lasting ideological divide, Tardy analyzes the professional revolutionary's “éthique du conspirateur” (p. 123). As men and women of concerted action, group solidarity, and secret societies, the conspirators justified their violent acts as a superior morality. “Eviter les accusations d'ambition personnelle ou le relativisme moral est une priorité” (p. 135). In time, like utopians, the Saint-Simonians in particular, they were swept away by the new intellectual discourse after 1850: the purported value-neutrality of positivism. And so the revolutionaries' new moral order gave way to other, more powerful manifestations of modernity.

This fate also beset dissenting revolutionaries, like the anarchists, who attempted unsuccessfully to develop a unified morality of their own. As Bernard Desmars notes, Charles Fourier was hostile to revolutionary as well as bourgeois morals, leaving disciples like Victor Considerant to promote progressivist ideas instead. Meanwhile, “les militants de l'École sociétaire, des années 1830 jusqu'aux années 1880, ont participé aux événements historiques (la révolution de 1848) et aux mouvements sociaux (la coopération, le pacifisme et le féminisme)” (p. 149). Pierre Kropotkine and his acolytes, like Jean Grave, parted ways, too, with the radical anarchists who promoted the “propaganda of the deed” in the early 1890s. According to Vivien Bouhy, the self-defeating change in tactics and principles alarmed the theorists: “Le journal de Jean Grave de 1885 à 1894 ainsi que les travaux de Kropotkine nous montrent que les révoltés sont loin d'être des ‘sans morale,’” in spite of what the renegades undertook in their name (p. 161).

Equally telling, I think, are the contributions here that focus on revolution's more moderate allies in the nineteenth century: religious and secular liberals, popular novelists, Polish refugees, intellectual journalists, and the authors of school manuals. Their work did not seek to drive revolutionary action. Far from it, in fact, as they rather sought to understand it, contain it, and, if possible, make good use of its outcomes.

For instance, Jérôme Grandeux discerns two such moral positions in response to revolution during the constitutional monarchies: the abbé de Lamennais's "éthique de conviction" that proclaimed the people's faith in a just authority; and Cousin's "éthique de responsabilité" that accepted a rational order made possible by compromise and imperfection (p. 52). Vincent Robert traces a similar moral dichotomy among liberals in the same period, as reflected in one obscure writer, Hyacinthe Corne, who won an essay competition on the topic of civil courage, as opposed to other forms of valor on the battlefield during the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. As Odillon Barrot framed it in 1835, "le courage militaire a assuré l'indépendance nationale; le courage civil peut seul assurer notre liberté, notre prospérité intérieure" (quoted on p. 63). Despite the controversies they elicited in the first half of the nineteenth century, these sentiments are hardly expressions of radical political principle.

More fraught reflections on revolutionary morals appeared among creative writers and exiles from Poland. As Hallade states, "Dans un pays de plus en plus alphabétisé et où l'imprimé ne cesse de se développer mais aussi en pleine crise agricole et industrielle, les trois romanciers feuilletonistes à succès Dumas, Féval et Sue et le jeune poète Baudelaire se font donc les chantres de la régénération morale et politique" (p. 80). "Ces moralistes de 1848" constitute the romantic origins of the modern French intellectual, who would come to play a more prominent role in France during the Dreyfus Affair and long afterward. Their recourse to a moral discourse reinforced this prominence considerably. Much the same can be said of the Polish revolutionaries, more than 5,000 of them, who took refuge in Paris after their insurrection had been crushed by Russian troops in 1831. They formed an ardent nationalistic community of their own—"cette morale d'exil," in Delphine Diaz's felicitous phrase—at considerable risk to themselves and to the liberal regime that hosted them (p. 174).

The last theme worth mentioning, I think, is the reassessment of revolution, usually but not always, long after the fact. The hypercritical perspective of the Ultras during the Restoration, which Corinne Legoy studies in the praise of royalty, eventually gave way by the end of the century to a chastened hostility to an established republic and the revolutions that made it possible. For example, Faguet's multivolume, historical survey of leading nineteenth-century intellectuals, *Politiques et moralistes du XIXe siècle* (1891-1899), underscores the close tie between morals and the Revolution, which provided a powerful impetus in the many subsequent reflections on moral regeneration. For Faguet, the crisis of the century was painfully evident, Corinne Doria contends, in politics, society, and religion, a crisis that could only be resolved by a new belief structure, patriotism, to bridge the gap between liberty and democracy created by the Revolution and the First Empire.

The history manuals authorized for use in public and parochial schools between 1880 and 1930 traces a similar ambivalent course of dramatic events. As Marc Deleplace notes of the manuals, "de morale, il est, en effet, fort peu question de manière directe... Dans le même temps, le projet d'éducation nationale porté par la réforme de l'instruction publique, charge au contraire potentiellement l'histoire d'une dimension morale nouvelle, liée à sa fonction civique" (p. 187). The bastion of religious authority, the Church was forced to cede moral instruction to the public schools. In due time the Church recognized this critical change in curriculum. Jacques-Olivier Boudon aptly summarizes the complex process involved: "L'instruction religieuse disparaît des programmes scolaires, au sein des écoles publiques. Elle est remplacée par un enseignement de la morale dont le promoteur est désormais l'instituteur" (p. 212). Moral order was now guaranteed by the Republic.

Hallade's collection finishes with a valuable appendix of excerpts from documents frequently referred to and cited in the essays (pp. 217-59). Among them are poetic celebrations of royal virtues by enthusiasts during the Restoration, a *mémoire* by the Comité de la Société des gens de lettres to the President of the Second Republic, professions of probity by a police agent attached to spy on secret societies in the July Monarchy (closely studied by Laura O'Brien), revolutionary posters distributed during the Paris Commune, the moral systems espoused by fourierists and anarchists, and a statement of Faguet's new patriotic morality. A valuable bibliography of secondary sources and a detailed index of proper names complete the volume, adding value to its pioneering explorations of "morals in revolution."

Much work remains, of course: comparative historians will be interested in the similarities and differences in revolutionary morality from one country to another, not unlike Norbert Götz's recent reassessment of the "moral economy" as a global phenomenon.^[5] Colonial and women historians would be intrigued to see attention dedicated to the principled claims made by subalterns at home and abroad during their struggles for independence. For the centennial of World War I, it would be instructive to learn more about insurrectional morals in the trenches, behind the lines, and on the home front. And then there are the many genres of moral expression—in songs, dramas, diaries, legal briefs, advertisements, popular sayings, and the like—in violent times that beg discursive study. But Hallade's collection stakes no claim to comprehensiveness, just the initiation of a welcome, new field of historical inquiry; for that, his book deserves to be widely read.

LIST OF ESSAYS

Philippe Boutry, "Introduction"

Jean-Clément Martin, "Une lecture morale de la Révolution est-elle possible?"

Corinne Legoy, "Reconstruire par-delà la déchirure révolutionnaire: sens et morales de l'éloge sous la Restauration"

Jérôme Grondeux, "La morale politique: Lamennais, Victor Cousin et les doctrinaires"

Vincent Robert, "Le courage civil, fragile vertu des temps censitaires"

Philippe Darriulat, "Morales révolutionnaires et prophètes néojacobins de la Monarchie de juillet"

Sébastien Hallade, "Une morale littéraire révolutionnaire? Charles Baudelaire, Alexandre Dumas, Paul Féval et Eugène Sue à la recherche d'une morale républicaine sous la Deuxième République"

Laura O'Brien, "La moralité des mouchards: Chenu, de la Hodde et la guerre des pamphlets"

Laure Godineau, "'Il est temps d'en finir avec le vieux monde...' La Commune de Paris de 1871 et le discours de la régénération morale et sociale"

Jean-Noël Tardy, "Une morale de l'ombre? L'éthique du conspirateur révolutionnaire au XIX siècle, de Buonarroti à Blanqui"

Bernard Desmars, "Concevoir et préparer l'Harmonie. Les fouriéristes, la morale et le changement social"

Vivien Bouhey, "La morale des révoltés à travers le journal anarchiste de Jean Grave (*Le Révolté* puis *La Révolte*) à la fin du XIXe siècle"

Delphine Diaz, "Une morale collective de l'engagement révolutionnaire en exil. Les réfugiés polonais en France sous la Monarchie de juillet"

Corinne Doria, "La crise morale cent ans après la Grande Révolution. Réflexions autour de *Politiques et moralistes du XIXe siècle* d'Émile Faguet (1847-1916)"

Marc Deleplace, "Morales révolutionnaires et réflexions morales sur la Révolution et la République dans les manuels scolaires de la IIIe République (1880-1930)"

Jacques-Olivier Boudon, "Conclusion"

NOTES:

[1] Paul Bénichou, *Romantismes français* (Paris: Gallimard, 2004), 2 vols., containing *Le sacre de l'écrivain* (1973), *Le temps des prophètes* (1977), and *L'école du désenchantement* (1992).

[2] Frank Paul Bowman, *Le Christ des barricades, 1789-1848* (Paris: Cerf, 1987). Cf. idem, *Le Christ romantique* (Genève: Droz, 1973).

[3] Christophe Charle, *Naissance des "intellectuels," 1880-1900* (Paris: Minuit, 1990); Gisèle Sapiro, *La responsabilité de l'écrivain. Littérature, droit et morale en France (XIXe-XXIe siècles)* (Paris: Seuil, 2011); and Jan Goldstein, *The Post-Revolutionary Self: Politics and Psyche in France, 1750-1850* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012).

[4] Alain Corbin, "Backstage," *A History of Private Life: IV. From the Fires of Revolution to the Great War*, ed. Michelle Perrot, tr. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1990), pp. 457-667.

[5] Norbert Götz, "'Moral Economy': Its Conceptual History and Analytical Prospects," *Journal of Global Ethics* 11, No. 2(2015):147-62. Available at <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17449626.2015.1054556>, accessed June 26, 2016.

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