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Dear colleagues,  
In the June issue of the journal, as you are aware, we published a learned essay by Frits L. van Holthoon, on the American and on the European Constitution. For this reason we decided to send a copy of the journal to the Commissioners for the European Constitution at Brussels.

Some weeks later we received an astonishing letter by a Mr Jean-Louis Cordier, of the Mailing Department, asking us 'to refrain in the future from sending this kind of mail to the European Commission', and quoting a circular letter by a Mr Horst Reichenbach, Directeur

Général. We transcribe here part of that circular:

"Il est rappelé au personnel que le service courrier a été créé pour les besoins officiels de la Commission. Par conséquent, seul le courrier officiel peut être reçu et distribué à l'intérieur de l'Institution... Nous sommes dans l'obligation d'interdire la distribution d'envois à caractère publicitaire, commercial ou non, la livraison ... de journaux et revues non directement liées au travail etc... Ils seront détruits ou retournés aux expéditeurs.

Par contre, seront toutefois tolérés certains types de correspondance indirectement liée au travail ...

comme ... certaines publications ou périodiques professionnels".

Since our journal is, or at least the June issue was, "indirectement lié au travail", etc., we wrote to Mr Cordier, asking him if the copies had been destroyed, or would have been returned to the sender. We received no answer.

Writes Alexander Gordon from Moscow: "It is wonderful that the journal is done without any support of the European Community Institutions".

Dear Mr Gordon, you can repeat that 'any'!

Almost all Italian cultural and scientific journals have been excluded,

with a couple of decrees signed early this year by the Presidente del Consiglio (alias the *premier*, also known, in the international press, as the man who says 'my friend Bush, my friend Putin') from the benefit of the 'abbonamento postale', consisting in a substantial reduction of the cost of mailing. Why? This is a question for which we would be happy to receive an answer. We have been told it has been done to *reorder* the matter. To any reader who will give us a more complete, satisfactory answer, we promise a free subscription to the journal for the next two years.

V. M.

# The European Convention: A System for Negotiations

## AN ABSTRACT

In the June issue of *The European Journal*, the author maintained that we could draw the following lesson from the experience of the Founding Fathers: European issues need to be dealt with by a European government that directly derives its mandate from a European electorate. The deliberations of the European Convention and the draft for a European constitution they produced make it clear that this lesson has been ignored completely.

For the delegates at the Convention it was business as usual and as a result they propose an intricate network of negotiations between the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the European Council (of Prime Ministers). There are two risks to this draft. The first is that the citizens of the member states will continue to regard the European Union as a body needlessly interfering in their lives. Secondly, it is hard to imagine how the draft could promote a common defence and foreign policy. The risk is that Europe will remain a weak partner in global politics.

The author finally asks why, in particular, the promoters of a federal Europe are so positive about the draft that is proposed. His answer is that those who engage in European politics instinctively reject the American model as brash and vulgar. They prefer a network of institutions that acts as a filter between the European citizen and his European government. The author recently published a survey of 19<sup>th</sup> century political thought in the Western world (F.L. van Holthoon, *State and Civil Soci-*

*eties, Illusions, Theories, Realities, Maastricht 2003, Shaker*). His experience in writing it is that the intermediate democracy proposed in Europe will not work in the long run and may prove to be counterproductive.



GISCARD D'ESTAING

## In Retrospect

On July 10 of this year the Convention assembled for drafting a European constitution unanimously accepted the final text of the draft. The Presidium of the Convention subsequently presented it to the European Council that will proceed to amend and ratify this in the coming months. I was a member of a study group that commented on the deliberations of the Convention. My fellow members mostly were experts on European and constitutional law who have distinguished themselves in promoting the cause of European federation. In a final press release the study group commented favourably on the constitutional draft of

the Convention naming it a "useful tool". "The Union has come closer to the citizen. The structure and decision making process still is complicated, but progress has been made."<sup>1</sup> This press release joined the chorus of mildly favourable commen-



PRODI

taries. I attended a meeting of the Dutch Labour Party in which the delegate, which had participated in the discussions of the Convention on behalf of the Dutch parliament, voiced the same cautious enthusiasm. It was seen that the European Parliament had gained more power and this was accepted as a brownie point for democracy. The institution of a President of the European Council made for greater consistency and continuity in shaping the policies of the European Union. The delegate regarded the system of qualified voting<sup>2</sup> as a great advance compared to the rule of unanimity in the case of important decisions.

## An Analysis of the Draft

If we leaf through the 253 pages of the final draft we must admire the great number of good intentions.<sup>3</sup> Yet I did not sign the press release of my study group. In the former issue of *The European Journal*<sup>4</sup> I have maintained that the European Convention could draw three lessons from the work of the Founding Fathers of the American Republic. The first and most important lesson is that legislation on European matters needs the direct mandate coming from a European people. This means installing a European government, which is held responsible to a European parliament that is chosen by direct, democratic vote. In the Preamble to the draft we read that it wants to promote measures "to deepen the democratic and transparent character of the Union's public life."<sup>5</sup> However, the new structure of decision making is neither democratic nor transparent.

Indeed the European Commission has become responsible to the European Parliament, but decision making for both institutions is restricted to the routine matters of the Union. The European Council [of Prime Ministers] will develop policies shaping the future of the European Union and another council, the Council of [delegate] Ministers, will become its chief legislative and executive instrument. A President of the European Council will be chosen for the period of two and a half years. His task is to promote the "unity and consensus within the

European Council"<sup>6</sup> and to report on the deliberations within the Council to the European Parliament. What his role will be is a hard question. If he remains a figurehead the presidency will only add to the bureaucracy. If he becomes a crucial cog in the machinery of the Union his role will inevitably interfere with that of the Chairman of the European Commission. The European Council will also choose a European Minister of Foreign Affairs. This functionary is mandatory to the Council of Ministers in formulating and executing the foreign policy of the Union. He

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also is a member of the European Commission and only as a member of this Commission he is subject to control by the parliament.<sup>7</sup> So the European Parliament will be consulted on foreign policy matters, but has no say in the formulation of these policies. With such a mixed mandate it is doubtful that this foreign minister can be effective. If not, he will also add to the bureaucracy of the Union for he will need a diplomatic corps to represent the Union.

#### Its Hazards

This construction of the European governmental institutions is neither transparent nor democratic, and it runs the risk of alienating the citizens of the European Union even further. Modernization as much as policies have promoted the cooperation of Europe's nations. Modernization has pushed the member states towards economic cooperation. The regulation of trade, industry, labour relations and social policy can no longer be effected on the national level. This means that the European Union will initiate future policies almost as a matter of course. The European citizen will – as he does now – experience the directives coming from the European Commission as interfering with his private interests. For him it remains a remote bureaucracy. As we know now the appreciation of European citizens for the Union is at a dismal low level. The new constitution will do nothing to raise the degree of commitment. Having no loyalty towards the “common destination” of the Union citizens will revolt against the system, if they can, by fraud.

Perhaps I am too great a pessimist. The citizens of the new member states will certainly benefit from the right to work and settle elsewhere in the Union. Perhaps business within the Union of twenty-five members will be as it was when there fifteen members and decision making will be as it has been in the past fifty years: frustrating but not without yield. What, however, about the foreign policy of the Union and the prospects of a common defense? According to Part I, art. 11, section 4 the Union is competent to formulate a joint foreign and security policy. Art. 3 section 4 opens up an ambitious vista of the aims of this policy. The Union will contribute to peace in the world and a durable development of the earth. It will help to fight poverty and to protect human rights across the globe.

Will the Union be able to formulate such a policy and enforce it? I doubt it. The Iraqi war is a vivid reminder of the lamentable lack of consensus on foreign policy within the Union. Will a foreign minister be able to change this state? Solana who already had this position was a typical non-player in the conflict between Britain on the one side and France, Belgium and Germany on the other. It is said that if only the “big three” will reach a common po-

# On the cultural unity of Europe.

## For the project of a *European* dictionary.<sup>1</sup>

It is a pleasure to speak here, in this Florence of ours, in this cradle of the Renaissance, in this jewel of art, which is a proud achievement of our history and of human civilization.

And, as I did at Mannheim and at Tsadar, let me apologise for not being a ‘professional’ linguist and, consequently, for taking the risk of saying something lacking purely scholarly interest, from the point of view of linguistics.

After passing my research life in the company of the great authors of political thought, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Locke, Con-

stant, Tocqueville, Kant, Hegel, John Stuart Mill, and many others, with these great men who <always speak, and never let us speak>, as Machiavelli says of them, I flatter myself that I understand the concepts of state, society, historical change, more than the concepts of language contact, dynamics, diversity, etc., which only recently have begun to become familiar to me.

#### Latin, the common cement of our cultural tradition

Therefore, I will rather try to contribute to the concept of *Eu-*

*ropean cultural unity*, to this concept as it was in the past, as it is now, and as to what ought to be done, to enhance the togetherness of our continent.

I need not to repeat what I maintain about Latin: that it is the common cement of our cultural tradition. This will perplex our East-European colleagues. Nevertheless, < *ist Latein der denkbar beste Schlüssel zu einem globalen Wortschatz geblieben ...* Es ist an der Zeit, daß wir uns dieser großen abendländischen Spracheinheit, die zumal in Begriffen und Vorstellungsschatz

vorhanden ist, wieder bewußt werden. Keine politische und wirtschaftliche Organisation kann leisten, was diese kulturelle Einheit bietet> (<No political and economic organisation can supply what this cultural unity gives>, T. S. Eliot), to use the words of a German author.<sup>2</sup> This can be taken for granted, particularly if considering that the author of this statement, as I repeat, is a German, his mother tongue having far less in common, with Latin, than English, not to mention the Romance languages. Surely, he cannot be suspected of particular reasons for campaigning for Latin.

In Tsadar I observed that in Germany, more than elsewhere in Europe, a new consciousness has arisen, concerning the role of Latinate vocabulary. And, as for the Germanic world, some essential points should be put forward.

One should not forget, for example, that in Austria “Kaiser Joseph II ... an Stelle des Lateins Deutsch als Verwaltungssprache einführt”.<sup>3</sup> But Joseph II, the son of Maria Theresa, was Emperor from 1780 to 1790. This means that, until then, Latin was the language of administration in that country. As for Hungary, “im Parliamtent wurden die Debatten noch bis 1843 ausschließlich in lateinischer Sprache geführt”,<sup>4</sup> and “als Staatssprache diente das Latein bis zur ersten Teilung des polnischen Staates im Jahre 1772”.<sup>5</sup> Last, concerning Russia, Vossen reminds us that, after the fall of Constantinople, in 1453, Moscow became “das dritte Rom”,<sup>6</sup> and classical studies were cultivated. The vocabulary of Russian is 20% of French and Latin origin, and there “existierte der humanistische Gymnasialunterricht bis 1917”.

#### Europe, a unified entity

What strikes the reader of Vossen's brilliant demonstration of the lasting influence of Latin, is the uniformity of European cultural history, in the sense that the same phenomena took place in the same period, and in all the countries of the continent. From a cultural point of view Europe is a unified entity, from the Atlantic to the Urals, and not only in the Western part of it, as many believe. The divisions of the past could not destroy what unites us, because there are many reasons for unity, far fewer for disunity. Vossen's book helps us understand European history better, and we must be grateful to its author for this.

sition on foreign policy we can have this common policy. I am not sure that the Netherlands will welcome this prospect or Poland that sided with the United States on the eve of the war. Only a mandate from the European voters can help a European government to transcend national differences of opinion. Let me mention a small detail to indicate how far we are from a common foreign policy. In Part II, Title V, Chapter VII, art. III-229 the bland statement is made that the Union will establish a serviceable cooperation with the United Nations. The delegation to the Security Council will remain as it is. The victors, Britain and France, will remain permanent members, Germany, the vanquished nation, is not. It seems to me that a delegation on behalf of the Union to the Security Council, with the exclusion of France and Britain's membership, would be the first and minimal requirement for a common foreign and security policy.

Perhaps the new constitution will be able to protect its citizens and further its domestic economy, but only by keeping the influences of the evil world outside the fortress Europe. The document will not allow the European Union to become a moral and political authority in the world at large, and be the countervailing power to the United States, which is the role so many Europeans hope that the Union can play in the future. For this you need political clout, not just good intentions.

#### The European Elite, Its Outlook

My most curious experience in the past month has been the positive reaction of those who favour the further unification of Europe. The *Economist* adequately summed up the flaws of the present draft:

What was harder to imagine was that the convention

would produce a text which would worsen the very problems it had been instructed to address.<sup>8</sup>

Why did none of the sympathizers of the cause of European federation I met share this verdict? The *Economist* has no reputation for euro-scepticism in the sense that it wants to defend British interests at all costs. It views the mess of European institutions with a jaundiced eye and who can blame its journalists? I am told that my proposal for a truly *European* government is totally unrealistic, utopian even. Perhaps I am unrealistic, though I believe there is a higher form of realism that points to a European parliamentary regime. However, what struck me is that no one brought up the obvious negative aspects of the new draft to which I have referred.

For the enthusiasm of the sympathizers with Europe there is I think a deeper cause than the desire to be realistic. The politicians and scholars who have dealt with the deliberations of the Convention or who have participated in the negotiations there is the gut feeling that the Union must remain a system of negotiations.<sup>9</sup> There is also, I think, an instinctive aversion to the rough and bustle of American democratic politics. A true European parliamentary system will undoubtedly introduce aspects of vulgar populism in the Union. Those Europeans involved in European politics, I guess, prefer civilized negotiations between elites.

The argument of the “realists” is that the Americans in the past had an easy job compared with the Europeans now. The argument is manifestly untrue. It was tough and go whether there would be a quorum for the constitutional convention of 1787 in Philadelphia. Afterwards public opinion in many states was set against the new draft and the Founding Fathers had

to use all their moral authority to persuade the delegates in the state conventions to accept the draft. They succeeded because they had the determination to succeed. The European elites did not even try to create – as the Americans did – a people as a precondition for a European democratic regime.

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<sup>1</sup> Europese Beweging, Persbericht: “Europese Conventie Blijkt Bruikbaar Instrument”, 1

<sup>2</sup> Part I, Title 4, Chapter 1, art.24: the majority of member states representing at least 60% of the European populations constitutes such a qualified majority

<sup>3</sup> Some are downright silly as formulated within the compass of a constitution. Part I, Title 6, art. 45, section 4 stipulates that there be political parties “for the formation of a European political consciousness and as an expression of the will of the citizens of the Union”, as if a constitution can stipulate the existence of political parties. [I have used the Dutch text of the Draft; the quotations are my translations that may differ from the authorized English text.]

<sup>4</sup> “The Creation of the American Republic, Three Lessons for Europe”, *The European Journal*, IV(1), June 2003, 1-3

<sup>5</sup> *Ontwerp-Vedrag tot Vaststelling van een Grondwet voor Europa*, [Conv 850/03] Preamble, 3

<sup>6</sup> Part I, Title 4, chapter 1, art. 21, section 2

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, Art.27, section 3

<sup>8</sup> *Economist*, June 21 2003, 11

<sup>9</sup> CONV 528/3: In the first draft of Part I, Title 1, art.1 the Union was referred to as a “federal” government, the final draft changed this into “communitarian”. The old European Community was famous for its night-breaking negotiations.

Let us now consider another German book, less brilliant, perhaps, but more rigorously scientific, *Eurolatein*, edited by Horst Haider Munske and Alan Kirkness.<sup>7</sup> We can say that this book represents the *consciousness* of the *common* origin of European languages, and marks a step forward towards a new idea of the history of Europe and of its linguistic unity.

Nevertheless, its contributors still see things from the point of view of the cultural tradition of their own nation, as is proved by the conclusions they reach. The contents of the work can be summarized in the words of Helmut Henne, who writes that "die eurolateinische Forschung ist, soweit ich sehe, im Stadium der Inventarisierung".<sup>8</sup> And Alan Kirkness theorizes "ein multilinguales, paneuropäisches Lexicon, das von einem mehrsprachigen, internationalen und interdisziplinären Team/Kollektiv gearbeitet wird". Nevertheless, he adds, "eine solche Polyglotte .... ist jedoch auch im neuen Europa wohl noch eine Utopie".<sup>9</sup>

The authors of *Eurolatein* conceive things from a purely academic, or scholarly, point of view. They miss the *political* dimension of the subject, and do not properly consider the concept of society, of the state, and so on, because, of course, this was not their purpose.

But languages live in society, in the sense that they constitute the essential instrument of communication, without which mankind could not form a community.

If we look around us, we see a world rapidly changing, and the need for more and more refined means of communication. If we think of Europe, we see that the nations of the continent are progressively losing their traditional identity, while the concept of nation state is disappearing, to be replaced by far larger communities.

National languages, in their turn, *do not* remain *national*, a word that has now a meaning quite different from the one it used to have in the first part of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, when it embodied the concept, held with almost religious devotion, of freedom, of redemption of an entire people from the chains of foreign domination.

#### The problem of communication

The peoples of Europe, not to say the peoples of the rest of the world, mix without restraint, there being no more physical boundaries to separate them. But there is, still, a boundary difficult to overcome: that of *communication*, notwithstanding the progress that has been made, in this regard.

More than ever the political dimension is essential, when considering the role of languages, particularly in the present state of Europe. The Western part of our continent has now a Constitution, which definitively recognised that the differences of the past are indeed bygone, supposing that they ever were as great as they used to appear in the past. What to do, therefore, in this new situation of European history?

We have been spectators, in the last few decades, of a development and of an extension of studies, in consequence of which linguistics has attained great results. The work of historical excavation, of documentation in language changes, has been considerable. The problem is whether we shall limit ourselves to scholarly works, to being mere spectators of these changes, giving up any willingness to *direct* and to *command* them.



Samuel Johnson established, with his *Dictionary*, a vocabulary for the English language. To promote the advancement of knowledge we have, nowadays, more refined means of enquiry, which never were equalled in the past. The danger is in this, that we content ourselves with documenting the past, filling the museums, so to say, or the libraries, with scholarly items, but that we do not create anything new and alive, for the future generations.

Therefore, shall we let the *natural* trend of changes in linguistics and civilization operate without our intervention, without our conscious, systematic command?

The modern educational system reaches all the social strata, and renders communication possible, although not necessarily easy. This is the result of centuries of history, during which the demand operated from the inside of society, but, along with it, also operated a political programme, sometimes conscious, sometimes unconscious, which envisaged a different, more advanced social structure.

#### Need for a political consciousness of our cultural unity

What Europe needs, at present, is the *political* consciousness of cultural unity, and this cannot be left to a few academic books. That consciousness must be *political*, in the sense that it must involve society and its aims. The world of politics is far wider than the academic world. In the name of *local* traditions, of anything that is *original*, in Burkean sense, we seem to neglect the fact that a number of enlightened ideas are also necessary, for the advancement of learning. These ideas, obviously, must co-exist with anything that is traditional, in the sense

that we cannot conceive of any *constriction*, even of a purely intellectual kind, in society. Hence the role of the educational system, which must transmit to the new generations the results of enquiry.

In Mannheim I said that, in the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, new in 2,000, 91,5% of the words listed under letter A are of Graeco-Roman, or of Romance origin.<sup>10</sup> And in Tsadar I added that, in *Der Duden Deutsches Universal Wörterbuch*

A-Z, ed. 1989, more than 25% of the words listed under letter A are of Latin origin.

Furthermore, German is tending to abandon the words of purely Germanic origin, replacing them with Latin words, owing to the influence of English. It must also be remembered that German vocabulary used to be much more similar to Latin, as a consequence of French influence, at the time of Frederick the Great, and before that pernicious phenomenon, which was called *Sprachreinigung*, and which, sad to say, separated Germany from the rest of Europe, severely damaging contemporary civilization.

Since Latin is "der Schlüssel zum europäischen Wortschatz",<sup>11</sup> *the next step, the decisive one, must be in considering European history and, along with it, European languages, as a unified, living entity.* This has not been done for long time, not since the Reformation, because of the prevalence of the nationalistic, irrationalistic element, the source of many evils in history. But also today I see too many hesitations, from this point of view. To free ourselves from the chains of the past is a difficult, often painful process, to which only history can give a sanction.

What to do, then, to achieve the aims indicated above? What is the role of the scholarly world, of the educational system, and of publishing, which is its necessary subsidiary?

Accepting the principle of the common origin of European civilization, means giving up any emphasis on the local, national element. This must be accompanied by the consciousness that there exists a *learned* element, in culture and in linguistics, which is not necessarily *enlightened*, in the sense that it

aims at replacing, or at *criticising*, the *romantic* one, with all that this means. Both must co-exist, in a synthesis which I have called a *new humanism*. And the world of learning, in particular, apart from documenting all that is local, individual, national, must also have, as its central aim, the offering of new instruments of comprehension, or communication, to mankind. People must realize that the concept of *national* language is now being progressively re-

placed by the concept of *European* language. In this way, for example, my mother tongue, Italian, should be considered, and studied, no more as the language of the Italian nation, but as a *European* language, in the sense that it is no more than a variant of a common tradition which, after *only* five centuries of separation -consequence of the fury of rabid men, whose actions have too long been emphasized, and justified, and praised on political ground, while they should simply have been historically explained-needs now to re-unify, emphasizing what is common, and not what separated us.

It is a common observation that a process of simplification and unification of European languages is slowly taking place. These languages are progressively discarding words that are not shared in common, or are not mutually understandable. They are gradually adopting a vocabulary that is as common as possible to them all. In a couple of generations the vocabulary of the principal languages in Europe and the West may be moving nearer to being simplified and unified. Aim of 2.000. *The European Journal*, which is now in its fourth year, is that of moving alongside these changes, observing and monitoring these tongues, simply because we are convinced that Europe has much to say, in the third millennium.

#### Need for a European dictionary

The paper I delivered in Mannheim contains the following statements:

"As we know, there is a number of words substantially common to European languages, and understandable by any learned European citizen. We should, first

of all, identify these words ... This should be the first step. The next step should be selecting, in a dictionary which we could start to compile, for each Latin or Romance word a Germanic one, and vice-versa.... Discarding slang, for example, could help identify this common European vocabulary. This could lead on to the compilation of a 'European' dictionary, in which the 'history' of words, or their etymology, would be fundamental. This would also revolutionise the way of studying languages, and of approaching our common historical and cultural European tradition.

In understanding a language, in fact, the real problem is not that of the language structure. This is true, in part, for Latin and German. The principal problem is rather the vocabulary. And we have to consider a different, quite different approach to the study of languages".

According to the above indications, I have gone on with my programme, jotting down some early drafts, to be submitted to colleagues and to publishers. The premise of the programme is obviously that the dictionaries proposed are intended to show Europeans what European togetherness is. Their basic principle is that words must be understood through their history, i.e., the entries must be based on 'historical' principles. Hence the relevance of etymology, which is the *history* of a word and of its meaning, from its oldest known origin. Therefore, if until now dictionaries have been 'national', from now onwards they must be 'European', for the history and for the future of European and of Western civilization.

I reproduce here part of the draft on the basis of English as *langue de départ*, concerning only a few entries starting with letter A, as from the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, putting the English word and the corresponding Italian word near to each other. When there is no correspondence, the English entry is just printed, without any further indication. For families of words (e.g., *abandon, abandoned, abandonment, abbess, abbey, abbot*, and in other cases) the corresponding Italian entry has been judged unnecessary, given the similarity of the word in the Italian translation.

#### Aback

**aba-cus** *n* (L *abacus*, Gr ἄβαξ; 16c), F *boulier, compteur*, S *abaco*, I *abaco, pallottoliera*, G *Abakus*; a frame, with sliding balls, for calculating; archit., upper section of a capital; [*ital*] **à-ba-co** *sm* (lat *abacus*, gr ἄβαξ; 1348); ing *abacus*, fr *boulier, compteur*, sp *ábaco*, ted *Abakus*; a) *abaco, pallottoliera*, b) *sezione superiore di un capitello*

**aban-don** *vt* (OF à *ban donner*, see *ban*; 14c), F *abandonner*, S *abandonar*, I *abbandonare*, G *verlassen* a) to leave someone or something b) to give up control; [*ital*] **ab-ban-do-nà-re** *vt* (dal fr *abandoner*, ant fr à *ban donner*; à *bandon*, au pouvoir de; 1211); ing *abandon*, fr *abandonner*, sp *abandonar*, ted *verlassen*; lasciare, *un'idea, un progetto*; **aban-doned** *adj*, F *abandonné*, S *abandonado, desierto*, I *abbando-*

nato, G *verlassen, aufgeben*; a) deserted, no longer used b) having a careless behaviour  
**aban-don-ment**, *sb*, F *abandonnement*, S *abbandono*, I *abbandono*, G *Überlassung*; a) the act of leaving a person, a place; b) abandonment of an idea, a project, etc.; [ital] **abbandono**  
**abase** *v* (OF *abaissier*, LL *bassus*, *short of stature*; 14c), F *abaissier*, *humilier*, S *humillar*, *degradar*, I *umiliare*, *avvilire*, *mortificare*; G *erniedrigen*, *demütigen*; to abase oneself, showing that someone is more important, etc.; [ital] **ab-bas-sà-re** *v tr* (tlat *bassum*; 1276); ing *to lower*, *to reduce*, fr *abaissier*, sp *bajar*, *aminorar*, *disminuir* (fig), ted *niedriger stellen, machen*; porre verso il basso, \_\_\_ *le tendine di una finestra*, *diminuire*, \_\_\_ *i prezzi*  
**abash, abashed**\_\_\_  
**abate** *v* (Ofr *abatre*, LL *ad+battère*; 13c), F *diminuer*, *faiblir*; S *diminuir*, *reducir*; I *diminuire*, *abbassare*; G *vermindern*, *verringern*; to become less strong; [ital] **ab-bàt-te-re** *v tr* (lat volg *abbattère*, *ad+battère*); ing *to knock down*, *to fell* (alberi), fr *abattre*, *renverser* (un obstacle), sp *derribar*, *abatir*, *demoler*, ted *niederwerfen*, *niederreißen*; far cadere, *abbattere un albero*, fig *abbattere i costi*;  
**ab-at-toir** *n* (F *abattre*, LL *ad+battère*; 19c), F *abattoir*, S *matadero*, I *mattatoio*, G *Schlachthaus*; slaughterhouse  
**ab-bess** *n* (LL *abbatissa*, OF *abbesse*; 13c), F *abbesse*, S *abadesa*, I *abatessa*, G *Äbtissin*; a nun, at the head of other nuns in a convent, prioress  
**abbey** *n* (L *abbātia*, OF *abaie*; 13c), F *abbaye*, S *abadia*, I *abbazia*, G *Abtei*; a monastery, with a large church, the head of the community being an abbot;  
**abbacy**  
**abbot** *n* (eccl L *abbas*, Gr ἄββαξ), F *abbé*, S *abad*, I *abate*, G *Abt*; a man, who is in charge of an abbey; head of an abbey  
**ab-bre-vi-ate** *vt* (LL *abbreviatus*, from *abbreviare*; 15c), F *abrèger*, S *abreviar*, I *abbreviare*, G *abkürzen*, *verkürzen*; to reduce, to shorten;  
**ab-bre-vi-ation**; [ital] **ab-bre-vià-re** *v tr* (tl *abbreviare*; XIII sec); ing *abbreviate*, fr *abrèger*, sp *abreviar*, ted *abkürzen*, *verkürzen*; ridurre, accorciare  
**ab-di-cate** *v* (L *abdicare*; 16c), F *abdiquer*, *renoncer*, S *abdicar*, *renunciar a*, I *abdicare*, G *aufgeben*, *niederlegen*; to abdicate (the throne), to abdicate one's own responsibilities, to resign;  
**ab-di-ca-tion**; [ital] **ab-di-cà-re** *v* (l *abdicare*; 1375); ing *abdicate*, fr *abdiquer*, *renoncer*, sp *abdicar*, *renunciar a*, ted *aufgeben*, *niederlegen*; rinunciare, *abdicare al trono*, *alle proprie responsabilità*;  
**ab-di-ca-tà-rio**, che ha abdicato  
**ab-do-men** *n* (L *abdomen*; 17c), F *abdomen*, S *abdomen*, I *addome*, G *Abdomen*; the lower part of the body, which contains stomach and intestines; [ital] **addome**  
**ab-duct** *v* (L *abducere*; 19c), F *enlever*, *détourner*, S *raptar*, *sequestrar*, I *rapire*, *sequestrare*, G *entführen*; to take away a person, using force  
**ab-er-rant** *adj* (L *aberrare*; 19c), F *aberrant*, S *aberrante*, *anormal*, I *aberrazione*, G *Abweichend*, *Verwirrend*; an anomalous event, unusual, an aberrant

behaviour; [ital] **aber-rànte** *agg* (lat *aberrans*); ing *aberrant*, fr *aberrant*, sp *aberrante*, *anómalo*, ted *Abweichend*, *Verwirrend*; anomalo, non abituale, *un'idea aberrante*;  
**ab-er-ra-tion** *n* F *aberration*, S *aberración*, I *aberrazione*, G *Abweichung*, *Verwirrung*; an anomalous, or unusual, event, or behaviour;  
**aberrance, aberrancy**\_\_\_  
**abet, abettor**\_\_\_  
**abey-ance** (old Fr *abeance*, LL *baddare*)  
**ab-hor** *v* (L *abhorere*; 15c), F *avoir horreur de*, *exécrer*, S *aborrecer*, *detestar*, I *abhorrire*, *detestare*, G *verabscheuen*; to dislike, to hate, esp for moral reasons; [ital] **a-bor-rì-re** *v* (l *abhorere*); ing *abhor*, fr *avoir horreur de*, *exécrer*, sp *aborrecer*, *detestar*, ted *verabscheuen*; detestare, avere in orrore;  
**ab-hor-rence** *n*, F *exécration*, *répugnance*, *abomination*, S *aborrecimiento*, *detestación*, I *ripugnanza*, *abborrimento*, G *Ab-scheu*; feeling of dislike, of hatred;  
**ab-hor-rent** *adj*, F *exécration*, *répugnant*, S *aborrecible*, *detestable*, I *repugnante*, *disgustoso*, *abominevole*, G *verabscheuungswürdig*; someone or something which causes repugnance, hatred, dislike, *an abhorrent situation*  
**abide, abid-ing**\_\_\_  
**abil-ity** *n* (L *habilitas*, OFr *ableté*; 14c), F *aptitude*, *capacité*, S *habilidad*, *capacidad*, I *abilità*, G *Fähigkeit*, *Befähigung*; talent, skill; [ital] **a-bi-li-tà** *n* (l *habilitas*, fr med *ableté*); ing *ability*, fr *habileté*, sp *habilidad*, *capacidad*, ted *Fähigkeit*, *Befähigung*; talento, attitudine, *abilità nel fare*, *nel conseguire qualcosa*  
**abject** *adj* (L *abject-us*; 15c), F *abject*, *misérable*, S *abyecto*, *vil*, I *abietto*, G *niedrig*, *elend*; base, mean, wretched, *base behaviour*; [ital] **a-bi-è-to** *agg* (lat *abjectus*; XIV sec); ing *abject*, fr *abject*, *misérable*, sp *abyecto*, *vil*, ted *niedrig*, *elend*; spregevole, ignobile, *comportamento abietto*;  
**ab-jection** [ital] **a-bie-zio-ne**  
**ab-jure** *v* (L *abiurare*; 16c), F *abjurer*, S *abjurar*, I *abiurare*, G *abschwören*; to give up publicly his own religious beliefs;  
**ab-ju-ration** *abjurer*; [ital] **abiurare**  
**ablaze**\_\_\_  
**able** *adj* (L *habilis*, OFr *habile*; 14c), F *capable*, *compétent*, S *habil*, *capaz*, I *abile*, G *fähig*; in possession of skill, intelligence to do sth; **ably**; **able-bodied** *adj* (*habilis+body*), F *fort*, *robuste*, S *sano*, *robusto*, I *sano*, *robusto*, G *kräftig*, *körperlich*, *leistungsfähig*; physically strong and healthy  
**able-seaman**\_\_\_ [ital] **abile**  
**abloom**\_\_\_  
**ab-lu-tion** *sb* (LL *ablutio*, from *abluerè*, to wash; 14c), F *ablution*, S *ablución*, I *abluzione*, G *Waschung*; act of washing oneself, generally as part of a religious ceremony; [ital] **abluzione**  
**ab-nor-mal** *adj* (L *ab-normalis*; 19c), F *anormal*, S *anormal*, I *anormale*, G *abnormal*; anomalous, eccentric, abnormal behaviour, etc.; **ab-nor-mal-ity** *sb* (L *ab-normalitas*), F *anormalité*, S *anormalidad*, I *anormalità*, G *Abnormität*; a condition outside normality, *congenital*, *behavioural*  
**abnegation** (L *ab+negare*); [ital] **abnegazione**  
**aboard, abode**\_\_\_  
**abol-ish** *v* (L *abolere*; 15c), F *abolir*, *supprimer*, S *abolir*,

*suprimir*, I *abolire*, *sopprimere*, G *abschaffen*, *aufheben*; to suppress, annul, cancel; [ital] **a-bo-li-re** *v* (l *abolere*); ing *abolish*, fr *abolir*, *supprimer*, sp *abolir*, *suprimir*, ted *abschaffen*, *aufheben*; sopprimere, annullare, cancellare;  
**abo-li-tion** *sb* (L *abolitio*), F *abolition*, *suppression*, S *abolição*, *supresión*, I *abolizione*, *soppressione*, G *Ab-schaffung*, *Aufhebung*; suppression, annulment, cancellation; [ital] **a-bo-li-zio-ne** *s* (l *abolitio*); ing *abolition*, fr *abolition*, *suppression*, sp *abolição*, *supresión*, ted *Ab-schaffung*, *Aufhebung*; soppressione, cancellazione;  
**abo-li-tion-ism**; **abo-li-tion-ist** *n* F *abolitionniste*, S *abolicionista*, I *abolizionista*, G *Abolitionist*; person in favour of abolishing a particular practice, law, etc.  
**abom-in-able** *adj* (L *abominabilis*; 14c), F *abominable*, S *abominable*, *execrable*, I *abominevole*, *escrabilde*, G *abscheulich*, *scheußlich*; causing disgust, unpleasant, very bad; *abominable weather*, *the abominable snowman* [ital] **a · b o · m i · n à · b i · l e**, **a-bo-mi-né-vo-le** *agg* (l *abominabilis*); ing *abominable*, fr *abominevole*, sp *abominable*, *execrable*, g *abscheulich*, *scheußlich*; sgradevole, che causa disgusto, *situazione*, *tempo abominevole*, *l'abominevole uomo delle nevi*;  
**abom-in-ate** *v* (L *abominatus*, from *abominari*; 17c), F *abominer*, *détester*, S *abominar*, *detestar*, I *abominare*, *detestare*, G *verabscheuen*; to feel disgust for sb/sth, *a morally abominable man*, *action*, etc.; **abom-in-ation** *sb* (L *abominatio*), F *abominación*, I *abominio*, G *Ab-scheu*; feeling of disgust for sb/sth, eg, *for the bad behaviour of a man*, *of a group*, etc  
**abo-ri-ginal** *adj* (L *ab+originalis*; 17c), F *aborigène*, *indigène*, S *aborigen*, *indígena*, I *aborigeno*, G *eingeboren*, *ursprünglich*; a person or population original in a country, esp Australia;  
**abo-ri-gine** *sb* (L *aborigines*; 16c), F *aborigène*, S *aborigen*, I *aborigeno*, G *Ureinwohner*, *Urbevölkerung*; original people who lived in Australia, before the arrival of the Europeans  
**abort** *v* (L *abortus*, *ab-oriri*; 16c), F *avorter*, S *abortar*, I *abortire*, G *Frühgeburt haben*; miscarriage, the ending of a pregnancy before the child develops and is born; [ital] **a-bor-ti-re** *v* (l *abortus*, *ab-oriri*); ing *abort*, fr *avorter*, sp *abortar*, ted *Frühgeburt haben*; terminare anticipatamente la gravidanza, non condurla a termine, non riuscire, *ha sofferto una minaccia d'aborto*, *il tentativo è abortito*;  
**abor-tion** *n* (L *abortio*; 16c), F *avortement*, S *aborto*, I *aborto*, G *Abort*, *Frühgeburt*; the act of aborting;  
**abor-tion-ist** *n* F *avorteur*, S *abortista*, I *abortista*, G *Abtreiber*; one who is in favour of abortion, or performs abortions, often illegally;  
**abor-tive** *adj* (Ofr *abortif*, L *abortivus*, from *ab-oriri*); F *avorté*, *manqué*, S *abortivo*, I *abortivo*, G *zu früh geboren*; non successful, failed, *an abortive attempt*  
**abound** *v* (Ofr *abunder*, L *abundare*; 14c), F *abonder*, S *abundar*, I *abbondare*, G *im Überfluß vorhanden sein*; to abound with/in, *the shop abounds with/in Italian wines*; [ital] **ab-bon-dà-re** *v intr* (fr

med *abunder*, I *abundare*; 1272); ing *abound*, fr *abonder*, sp *abundar*, ted *im Überfluß vorhanden sein*; avere ricchezza di, *il negozio abbonda di vini italiani*  
**about, about-turn** ; **above**;  
**abra-ca-dabra** (LL *abracadabra*; 17c), F, S, I *abracadabra*, G *Abrakadabra*  
**ab-ra-de** (L *abradere*; 17c), F *abraser*, *écorcher (la peau)*, S *raer*, *raspar*, I *erodere*, *corrodere*, G *abschürfen*; to rub the surface, to scrape, wear off  
**ab-ra-sion** *n* (L *abrāsio*; 17c), F *abrasion*, *écorchure*, S *radura*, *raspatura*, I *abrasione*, G *Abreiben*; the act of rubbing, a lesion of the skin;  
**abra-sive** *adj/n* (L *abrasivus*; 19c), F *abrasif*, S *abrasivo*, I *abrasivo*, G *abreibend*; having the power of rubbing  
**abreast**\_\_\_  
**ab-ridge** *v* (OF *abregier*, LL *ad-breviare*; 14c), F *abrèger*, S *compensiar*, *resumir*, I *abbreviare*, G *ab+verkürzen*; to shorten, abbreviate, reduce, *an abridged edition of the dictionary*;  
**ab-ri-gement, abridgement** [ital] **abbreviare** *v tr* (tl *abbreviare*; XIII sec); ing *abbreviate*, fr *abrèger*, sp *abreviar*, ted *abkürzen*, *verkürzern*; ridurre, accorciare  
**abroad**\_\_\_  
**ab-ro-gate** *v* (L *abrogari*; 16c), F *abroger*, S *abrogar*, I *abrogare*, G *abschaffen*, *aufheben*; to abolish officially, formally, *to abrogate a law*; [ital] **abrogare**

The entries here examined are 64 out of 1690 in letter A, and it seems unnecessary examining more of them, if considering how extended is the vocabulary of Latin origin in English.<sup>12</sup> They give an idea, which, hopefully, will be judged as exhaustive, of the similarity of the European, or, at least, of the West-European, vocabulary. And an idea, also, of the difficulties lexicographers have to face, in compiling such a dictionary, which in no case should exceed 1,500 pages, to be easy to consult, and useful to the educational world.  
Obviously, although the drafts here submitted are limited to the five principal languages, and our East-European colleagues will certainly be perplexed at the general implant of the work I am proposing, no European language should be excluded, in principle. But this task goes beyond the responsibility of one man, or of a group of men, and involves a different project, or different projects, and the participation of other groups of scholars.  
What is certainly feasible, at the moment, with no few difficulties, indeed, is the project here above sketched, although not all the opinions are coincident, concerning it. For example, that of some publishers, who have been consulted, or to whom the main lines of the endeavour have been submitted, with a few details, just to give an idea of the reasons for it.  
In general, the endeavour has been judged complex to realize, and the difficulties of the market have been alleged. But illuminating is the circumstance that the only two of them, to whom the project has been submitted in its details, have an-

swered declaring themselves sure that readers still privilege monolingual or bilingual dictionaries, and that they are themselves sceptic about multilingual dictionaries.  
These answers could hide different motivations, but they prove what has been said above, on the necessity of *thinking European*, and how this concept is far from being rooted in the mind of the citizens of the Union, and of large part of its world of learning.  
There are, certainly, historical reasons for this, also 'biological' reasons, let us admit, in order to content all the 'schools of thought', so to say. Nevertheless, while we are about to have a common Constitution, we remain jealously attached to our traditions, to our national histories; while we accept to speak, and to write, in particular, in one of the European languages, the one which is now *lingua franca*, because everybody understands it, we scarcely realize the concept of the *common European history*.  
Therefore, I am submitting to your attention the main lines of a cultural battle, still to be fought, and won, in the common European conscience. It is a difficult battle, aiming at convincing the world of learning, publishing, politics, of the validity of the principles which have been expounded, here, above.  
In fact, while we privilege what is national, local, individual, the product of tradition, we risk losing the principal European heritage, the consciousness of the common vocabulary, which would be erroneous considering as the product of separate histories, communicating, but not unified.  
This is the first, and most difficult battle, to be won, and consists in modifying the current way of thinking, about our common history.  
**Appeal to colleagues**  
It is true that this way of thinking is slowly, *naturally* changing, but where is the role of the world of learning? Shall we be like the owl of Minerva in Hegel's philosophy, the owl that begins flying only at the sunset, when the events have already taken place (meaning that philosophy is the *conscience* of the past, and not an active intervention in the present)? Or shall we consciously *direct*, or *command*, these great cultural changes in society and in the world history?  
Therefore, I wish to end with an appeal to European colleagues. Their scholarly works help us understand better our common history, but they should be accompanied by a more profound consciousness of the unified nature of our common tradition. And by a consciousness, at the same time, of the necessity of an active intervention, at least from the point of view of learning, in society, in the sense that culture should aim not only at *understanding*, but at *modifying* social phenomena. And language is the first, and most important social phenomenon, the premise of all the others, the one without which society could not take shape.

# L'affaire de la Compagnie des Indes

The battle I have committed myself is no doubt difficult, and consists in modifying the traditional way of thinking (let me recall to our memory Immanuel Kant's 'natural laziness' of mankind). By contrast, it is far from being impossible, and we can say of it that it is in the way. The problem is only that of taking it up consciously, of our willingness to abandon traditional ways of thinking, in favour of what is new in history, without any fatalistic acceptance of events.

I could also conclude that my task ends here, with this appeal; that colleagues endowed with a particular experience in the field of linguistics should take this endeavour up. And so will I, declaring, again and again, that my journal, which has been founded for this very purpose, is at the disposal of everybody who wants to take part in it, contributing to what we consider as a necessary advancement of civilization in our continent, conscious, as we are, that this cannot take place without the advancement of learning, its necessary premise.

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## Summary

The author maintains that European languages must be studied no more as 'national' languages, but in the context of the European tradition, emphasizing what they have in common, and not what separates them. Hence the necessity of compiling dictionaries on a new basis, of which early, summary indications are given.

<sup>1</sup> Paper delivered at the University of Florence, on 7 July 2003, at the XV ICAES- International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, Symposium on Language Dynamics and Linguistic Diversity in Anthropological Perspective, July 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Vossen, *Mutter Latein und ihre Töchter. Europas Sprachen und ihre Herkunft* (14. Auflage, 1999), 8. Italics mine.

<sup>3</sup> Vossen, *ibid.*, 197.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 202. In Germany Schopenhauer published in 1830 in Latin his *Theoria Colorum Physiologica*.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

<sup>7</sup> *Eurolatein. Das griechische und lateinische Erbe in den Europäischen Sprachen*, Reihe germanistische Linguistik, Max Niemeyer Verlag (Tübingen, 1996).

<sup>8</sup> H. Henne, 'Das Eigene im Fremden', in *Eurolatein*, 277.

<sup>9</sup> A. Kirkness, 'Zur lexicographischen Dokumentation eurolateinischer Wortbildungseinheiten', *ibid.*, 255; see also 271. Italics mine.

<sup>10</sup> "Von dem rund 400.000 Wörtern des grossen Oxford English Dictionary nicht weniger als rund 80% des gesamten bestendes romanischer, d.h. mittel oder unmittelbar lateinischer Herkunft", although the frequency list is less favourable to the vocabulary of Latin origin, Vossen, 162. Furthermore, p. 275, Vossen emphasizes a sentence by Karl Korn (<keine Ende mit dem Latein>, FAZ, 5.1.1972), concerning "der Vormarsch des Lateins ... die Latinisierung der Nationalsprachen".

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 230.

<sup>12</sup> See above, n. 10 and text corresponding with n. 10.

## La nomination de Maynon d'Inveau.

En 1769 le gouvernement, dirigé par Maynon d'Inveau depuis le 22 septembre 1768, décide de supprimer le monopole de commerce de la Compagnie des Indes, une fois de plus en difficulté de trésorerie. Très affectée par la Guerre de Sept ans, la Compagnie a à son passif une dette de 60 millions de livres qu'elle est incapable de résorber par sa seule activité commerciale. Son commerce fortement déficitaire, l'entretien de ses comptoirs et la gestion de cette énorme administration rendent a priori impossible la rentabilité de cette entreprise. La compagnie souffre en outre de son statut ambigu et du poids écrasant d'un Etat omniprésent dans sa gestion<sup>1</sup>.

Le remplacement de Laverdy au contrôle général par un disciple de Gournay, Maynon d'Inveau, fut à l'origine du changement de politique du gouvernement envers la Compagnie. L'assemblée générale, présidée par le contrôleur général, se réunit pour la première fois depuis la nomination de l'ancien intendant de Picardie (et avec deux mois de retard) le 14 mars 1769. L'administration de la Compagnie présentait alors l'état des lieux aux actionnaires qui durent se prononcer sur les deux possibilités présentées : soit trouver 18 millions pour couvrir les frais à court terme, soit déclarer la compagnie en faillite. La décision fut reportée de quinze jours et un complément d'information fut demandé à huit députés des actionnaires.

Dès lors, le débat sur la continuation ou la suppression de la Compagnie des Indes occupa les esprits. Le 28 mars, Bachaumont fait état dans ses *Mémoires Secrets* de 4 lettres manuscrites qui circulent sous le manteau et "qui doi[vent] servir un jour à constater les efforts multipliés du Ministre & de ses suppôts pour la détruire"<sup>2</sup>. Le 29 mars, lors de la seconde assemblée générale, Duval d'Eprémil, qui représentait la majorité des députés, conclut, après avoir lu son rapport, que la Compagnie n'a pas besoin de 18, mais de 21 millions pour faire face aux prochaines échéances.

Trois députés, Dupan, La Rochette et Panchaud, ne partagent pas cependant cette estimation (la Compagnie aurait au moins besoin selon eux de 30 millions) et proposent pour la première fois publiquement la dissolution de la Compagnie, qui serait transformée en une caisse d'escompte. Chaque actionnaire actuel de la Compagnie en deviendrait propriétaire après avoir versé un nouvel apport de 600 livres par action. Par 183 voix contre 63, l'assemblée vota pour la continuation de la Compagnie. Maynon d'Inveau, favorable à

l'idée de Panchaud (la caisse d'escompte), envoie alors une lettre aux directeurs le 31 mars, où il s'oppose au projet d'emprunt provisoire de la Compagnie et exige qu'elle fournisse une hypothèque sur son capital. Cette proposition du contrôleur général est rejetée par l'assemblée générale, réunie à nouveau le 3 avril. Ce jour-là, Bachaumont note dans son journal: "L'affaire de la Compagnie des Indes occupe la cour & la ville, par l'intérêt que beaucoup de gens y ont, & par la tournure grave qu'elle est sur le point de prendre indispensablement"<sup>3</sup>. Au même moment circule clandestinement une feuille imprimée intitulée *Prospectus de la pompe funèbre de feuë très haute & très puissante, très excellente princesse madame la Compagnie des Indes, souveraine de la presqu'isle de l'Inde, & ci devant des isles de France, de Bourbon & du port de l'Orient*, anonyme mais attribuée au comte de Lauraguais, où tous les personnages ayant un rôle dans cette affaire sont nommés et moqués. Nous ne savons pas exactement à quel moment Morellet fut contacté pour écrire un mémoire sur la Compagnie des Indes. Une de ses lettres adressée à Maynon d'Inveau et datée du 4 avril ne fait aucune allusion au sujet<sup>4</sup> et Morellet dans une lettre à Turgot du 26 septembre dit avoir travaillé sur le sujet pendant quatre mois. On peut donc penser que le contrôleur général pensa dès le mois de mars à faire intervenir Morellet.

Morellet publia officiellement son *Mémoire sur la situation actuelle de la compagnie des Indes* en juin 1769, mais celui-ci ne semble avoir été distribué que vers la fin du mois suivant. Le 20 juillet, les *Mémoires secrets* en annoncent la publication prochaine et le présentent déjà comme un ouvrage commandité par le gouvernement pour préparer l'opinion publique à la dissolution de la Compagnie<sup>5</sup>. Dix jours plus tard, Bachaumont fait état de l'"effet prodigieux" qu'a créé la publication de ce *Mémoire*<sup>6</sup>. Il eut un tel succès qu'une seconde édition en fut publiée au mois de septembre de la même année. Elle est annoncée le 4 septembre par Bachaumont<sup>7</sup>. Peu de modifications y ont été apportées, en revanche l'histoire de la Compagnie a été complétée d'une trentaine de pages. Turgot, malgré quelques réserves, soutient le travail de Morellet, et n'hésite pas à en recommander la lecture à des amis<sup>8</sup>. Il

le fait d'ailleurs savoir à l'auteur lui-même par deux lettres, qui n'ont pas été retrouvées, mais que Morellet cite dans ses *Mémoires*: "J'ai lu, mon cher abbé, votre ouvrage pendant mon voyage, au moyen de quoi j'ai été détourné de la tentation de faire des vers, soit métriques, soit rimés, et j'ai beaucoup mieux employé mon temps. Ce



NECKER

*Mémoire* doit attérer le parti des directeurs; la démonstration y est portée au plus haut degré d'évidence. J'imagine cependant qu'ils vous répondront et qu'ils tâcheront de s'accrocher à q u e l q u e branche où ils croiront trouver prise; mais je les défie

d'entamer le tronc de vos démonstrations. J'en suis, en général, fort content, quoique j'y trouve quelques petits articles à critiquer, quelques défauts de développements, quelques phrases obscures; mais tout cela est une suite de la célérité forcée qu'il a fallu donner à la composition et à l'impression et, comme je suis fort loin d'être sans péché, je ne vous jette point de pierres..."<sup>9</sup>.

Le mémoire de Morellet concluant à la suppression du privilège fut envoyé à la Compagnie le 20 juillet 1769. Le 8 août Necker lut devant l'assemblée générale sa *Réponse au Mémoire de M. l'abbé Morellet*, qui remporta un vif succès: "Il [Necker] a enlevé tous les suffrages, il a paru réunir l'éloquence la plus pathétique & la plus mâle de l'orateur, aux vues les plus profondes & les plus vastes de l'homme d'Etat. L'auteur s'est surtout appliqué à repousser les assertions injurieuses à la Compagnie, & il a fait voir, 1° qu'elle n'avait jamais été à charge à l'Etat; 2° qu'elle lui avait toujours été utile. Il a remanié les divers calculs & argumentés de son adversaire, & a démontré son ignorance, son ineptie ou sa mauvaise foi"<sup>10</sup>. Elle fut votée avec enthousiasme, et imprimée aux frais de la société<sup>11</sup>.

Necker commence par reprocher amèrement à Morellet les conditions pour le moins douteuses où l'administration de la Compagnie a été placée<sup>12</sup>. L'accusation n'est pas infondée, car lorsque les administrateurs de la Compagnie reçurent le *Mémoire* de Morellet le 20 juillet, les lettres patentes déclarant la suspension de son privilège et sa liquidation étaient déjà prêtes, et le Contrôle général ne leur donna que quelques jours pour se défendre<sup>13</sup>. Le manque de temps (une quinzaine de jours)

et l'utilisation de leurs propres livres de comptes par Morellet (à leur insu) rendaient presque impossible toute réponse. La fin de la Compagnie avait déjà été décidée au plus haut niveau, et Morellet avait été chargé d'en prouver le bien-fondé et de convaincre l'opinion publique. Le discours de Necker fut le dernier soubresaut d'une Compagnie condamnée. Le 13 août 1769, le privilège exclusif de la Compagnie des Indes est officiellement retiré par le Roi. Mais le débat, plus virulent que jamais, se poursuivit néanmoins sur la place publique. Il fut ouvert par Morellet lui-même.

## La querelle littéraire entre le banquier genevois et l'abbé lyonnais

En septembre 1769<sup>14</sup>, Morellet publie une réponse à Necker, intitulée *Examen de la Réponse de M. N\*\*\* au Mémoire de M. l'abbé Morellet, sur la compagnie des Indes; par l'auteur du Mémoire*. L'auteur s'y défend expressément de traiter la question de la Compagnie des Indes en simple théoricien, bien qu'il affirme un peu plus loin, et avec quelque fausse naïveté, n'avoir pas d'autre intérêt dans cette affaire que celui de l'étude de l'économie politique: "Je ne suis qu'un homme de Lettres, vivant dans la retraite, & absolument éloigné de toute administration. Je m'occupe, à la vérité, depuis plus de quinze années de l'étude du commerce, & de l'économie politique; mais je ne suis point consulté, je ne l'ai point été en particulier dans l'affaire de la Compagnie; j'ai écrit ce que je pensois; je n'ai donc point eu de projet à former ni à cacher"<sup>15</sup>.

Parmi le peu de lettres qui nous sont parvenues sur cette période, il en est une de Morellet à Turgot qui met bien en évidence l'intérêt avec lequel Turgot suivait ces événements: "J'ai corrigé hier la dernière épreuve de ma réponse à Mr. Necker et demain elle sera publique. [...] Je ne puis pas me flatter que vous en soiez tout à fait content mais la nécessité de répondre[,] avant que le public fut tout à fait refroidi[,] m'a fait laisser quelques longueurs et peut être pis. Ce que vous me proposiez, et ce dont je suis très reconnoissant, de vous envoyer mon manuscrit n'étoit pas faisable, parce que malgré toute la diligence que vous auriez pu y mettre[,] plus grande probablement que celle que vous y auriez mise en effet[,] cela m'auroit trop retardé"<sup>16</sup>.

Le *Mémoire* de l'abbé Morellet et la *Réponse* de Necker furent largement commentés dans la presse. Le *Mercur de France* dans son numéro d'août consacre un long compte rendu de l'ouvrage de Morellet, résumé assez fidèle et favorable des développements de l'auteur. Le

numéro de septembre de la même recense la *Réponse* de Necker, qui selon le journaliste ne devrait pas “ébranle[r] les partisans de la liberté”.<sup>17</sup> Le 28 août, les *Mémoires Secrets* présentent un long exposé élogieux du livre de Necker, explicitement dirigé contre l’abbé Morellet<sup>18</sup>. Les *Ephémérides du Citoyen*, d’obédience physiocratique, sont plus critiques envers Necker quoiqu’ils reconnaissent la qualité de son style<sup>19</sup>. L’ouvrage de Necker est également recensé dans un certain nombre de revues largement diffusées<sup>20</sup> qui contribuèrent fortement à le faire connaître du grand public. Le style du livre est particulièrement apprécié et joua un rôle primordial dans son succès. Le débat sur la Compagnie des Indes prit des dimensions considérables au point d’inquiéter Galiani dont l’ouvrage sur le commerce des blés est alors en cours d’impression : “J’attends à présent avec impatience les nouvelles du marché, et celles de la réussite de la chose. Je crains que le coup de masse flanqué par notre abbé Morellet, sur la Compagnie des Indes n’ait occupé les esprits, au point que toute autre question politico-économique paraisse indifférente”.<sup>21</sup> De nombreuses autres publications viennent étayer la position de Necker contre celle du gouvernement représenté par Morellet. Toutes pratiquement sont dirigées contre le Mémoire de l’abbé lyonnais. On peut citer parmi celles-ci, les *Eclaircissements sur le Mémoire de M. l’abbé Morellet, concernant la partie historique de la Compagnie des Indes, & l’origine du bien des actionnaires*, l’*Examen des décisions de M. l’abbé Morellet, sur les trois questions importantes qui font le sujet de son Mémoire*, les *Doutes d’un actionnaire sur le Mémoire de M. l’abbé Morellet, contre la Compagnie des Indes* ; ainsi qu’un *Mémoire sur la Compagnie des Indes, précédé d’un discours sur le commerce en général* par M le Comte de Lauraguais. Les *Eclaircissements* sont une petite brochure de 19 pages publiée anonymement, sans lieu ni date de publication. Elle est recensée cependant le 10 septembre par Bachaumont<sup>22</sup>. L’auteur refuse l’assimilation faite par Morellet entre l’intérêt des particuliers et l’intérêt de l’Etat, et fonde sa critique sur une conception très mercantiliste du commerce. La diversité des marchandises échangées en Europe, conséquence d’une libéralisation du commerce, créerait en France une nouvelle demande de biens qui pourrait, par la suite, être exploitée par des compagnies étrangères. La Compagnie des Indes, “est une société nationale, inhérente à l’Etat, établie pour faire, *concurrentement avec les Compagnies étrangères*, un commerce suivi & étendu, & des opérations trop au dessus d’un commerce particulier”<sup>23</sup>. L’auteur conclut son libelle contre Morellet par ces quelques mots : “C’est être l’ami de l’humanité que de leur fournir des armes pour se défendre contre les attaques terribles de M. l’abbé Morellet [sic]. Ce foible essai n’a coûté ni beaucoup de temps, ni beaucoup de travail. Il n’en faudrait

peut-être pas davantage pour lui proposer *modestement* quelques doutes sur le reste de ses décisions.”<sup>24</sup>. Cette brochure fit l’objet d’un court compte rendu dans le huitième tome des *Ephémérides du Citoyen* de l’année 1769, qui sans surprise, mais avec un certain bon sens, déclara “qu’on y trouve plus de *chaleur* contre l’Abbé MORELLET, que de *lumières* sur les vrais principes du commerce”<sup>25</sup>. L’*Examen des DECISIONS de M. l’Abbé Morelet, sur les trois questions importantes qui font le sujet de son Mémoire* (ici dans son orthographe originale) est tout comme les *Eclaircissements*, anonyme, sans lieu ni date d’édition, ce qui est assez significatif du parti pris du gouvernement. L’ouvrage est court, 40 pages, et se targue de répondre aux trois questions posées par Morellet. Les critiques portent sur des détails et ne sont fondées sur aucun soubassement théorique. Le seul principe auquel semble adhérer l’auteur est une *soumission* sans bornes aux décisions de l’Etat. Ce principe l’amène à approuver la suspension du privilège de la Compagnie qu’il est censé pourtant combattre. L’ouvrage complet n’est qu’une attaque personnelle et presque caricaturale de l’abbé Morellet. L’auteur de cette brochure, bien que non identifié, pourrait être le même que celui des *Eclaircissements*, celui-ci annonce en effet poursuivre sa critique, et l’orthographe de Morellet, usitée dans les deux livres, est la même. De plus, il paraît peu de temps après les *Eclaircissements*, ainsi qu’en fait état le neuvième tome des *Ephémérides* de 1769<sup>26</sup>. Les *Doutes d’un actionnaire, sur le Mémoire de M. l’abbé Morellet, contre la Compagnie des Indes* est, comme les deux ouvrages précédents, anonyme, sans lieu ni date d’édition. La qualité de ce petit ouvrage est supérieure aux deux précédents. L’auteur a sans nul doute une connaissance étendue en la matière, et a eu à manipuler un certain nombre de données sur la compagnie, soit pour le compte d’un précédent gouvernement, soit pour le compte de la Compagnie elle-même. Il se présente comme un vieil homme qui a “suivi exactement toutes les opérations de la Compagnie des Indes, & depuis 1720 [a] assisté à la plus grande partie de ses assemblées”.<sup>27</sup> Il fonde son analyse sur ses propres souvenirs, sur sa lecture de l’*Essai politique sur le commerce* de Melon qu’il cite abondamment, et sur les écrits qu’il a conservés, et critique tout autant les arguments circonstanciés de Morellet que sa philosophie libérale générale. Le dernier de ces ouvrages, le *Mémoire sur la Compagnie des Indes, précédé d’un discours sur le commerce en général*, occupe une place à part pour trois raisons. Il a, tout d’abord, été écrit par le

comte de Lauraguais et publié hors de l’anonymat. Il a ensuite été lu par M. Panchaud devant l’assemblée de la Compagnie le 29 mars 1769, c’est-à-dire avant même que Morellet n’écrive son *Mémoire*. Enfin, l’auteur est favorable à la suspension du privilège exclusif de la Compagnie et à sa dissolution. Malgré cela, lors de la publication de son ouvrage, Lauraguais insère un avertissement assez critique envers Morellet, où il le considère comme un disciple de Quesnay. Il présente son *Discours* comme étant le fruit commun de MM. Dupan, La Rochette, Panchaud et lui-même, écrit dans la nuit, et lu par Panchaud le 29 mars. L’auteur propose aux actionnaires de dissoudre leur Compagnie qui ne peut être rentabili-



sée, et d’établir à la place une caisse d’escompte: “Je pense donc que les actionnaires ne peuvent balancer qu’entre la liquidation absolue, pure & simple, ou l’espèce d’association qu’on leur propose dans le projet d’une caisse d’escompte. Comme actionnaire isolé je me détermine à la liquidation pure & simple; comme actionnaire lié par un rapport inévitable avec le gouvernement, il faut nécessairement faire entrer dans les éléments du calcul qui doit décider mon suffrage, 1° la force du gouvernement; 2° ses vues”.<sup>28</sup> Dans une lettre du 31 août à Dupont de Nemours, Turgot prie ce dernier de ne pas faire cas de ce mémoire, et de se tenir éloigné autant que possible de Lauraguais: “C’est un fou méchant, écrit Turgot, avec lequel il ne faut avoir aucun rapport, pas même pour le réfuter, parce que ses sottises ne sont pas contagieuses. Connaissez-vous cet animal dont la ressource est, quand on le poursuit, de lâcher des exhalaisons si puantes que le chasseur le plus déterminé retourne sur ses pas? M. de Lauraguais lui ressemble beaucoup. La partie de son Mémoire qui a été lue à la Compagnie me paraît trop bien faite pour être de la même main que le reste”.<sup>29</sup>

#### Un “mercenaire du gouvernement”

Malgré le soutien de quelques-uns de ses amis, dont Buffon et Hélvétius<sup>30</sup>, Morellet souffre beaucoup des attaques personnelles dont il fait l’objet, et dont la caricature suivante est un bon exemple : “La crise de la compagnie des Indes vient de fournir encore matière à plaisanterie, rapporte Bachaumont. Un caustique a imaginé & fait exécuter une gravure où l’on a

présenté l’assemblée générale des actionnaires. Autour du tapis vert sont les gens de l’administration; M. le contrôleur général préside au bout de la table; à sa gauche est M. Boutin, intendan des finances, ayant la compagnie dans son département, & cependant l’homme le plus acharné à son déshonneur, sujet de l’allégorie en question. On voit à ses pieds un gros dogue d’Angleterre, les yeux enflammés, la gueule ouverte, les poils hérissés, dans l’attitude d’une rage prête à dévorer les actionnaires sur lesquels il s’élance. Son maître l’excite, en disant: *mords-les*, pitoyable & cruelle allusion au nom de l’auteur du mémoire”<sup>31</sup>.

Des rumeurs selon lesquelles Morellet a été grassement payé courent également dans les salons parisiens et sont parfois relayées par ses anciens amis. Diderot, qu’il connaît depuis 1752 et avec qui il était lié d’amitié, le présente dans une lettre à Mlle Volland du 23 août 1769 comme un simple mercenaire du gouvernement:

“Voilà donc la compagnie des Indes anéantie. L’abbé Morellet a fait un mémoire contre la compagnie; il s’est montré un mercenaire qui vend sa plume au gouvernement contre ses concitoyens. M. Necker lui a répondu avec une gravité, une hauteur et un mépris qui doivent le désoler. L’abbé se propose de répondre, c’est-à-dire qu’après avoir donné un coup de poignard à l’homme, il veut avoir le plaisir de fouler aux pieds le cadavre. L’abbé voit mieux que nous tous : dans un an d’ici, personne ne pensera plus à l’action et il jouira de la pension qu’on lui a promise”<sup>32</sup>. Malgré l’intervention de Malesherbes auprès de Maynon d’Invaux et les requêtes de Morellet auprès de Turgot et de Trudaine, Morellet ne fut pas payé pour ses ouvrages sur la Compagnie des Indes. Maynon d’Invaux fut contraint de démissionner le 22 décembre 1769, quinze mois après sa nomination. Ainsi que Malesherbes l’avait prévu, son successeur, l’abbé Terray, refusa de le payer pour un travail dont il appréciait peu les principes. C’est finalement Turgot qui en 1774 paya la ‘dette’ de Maynon d’Invaux en octroyant à son vieil ami une gratification perpétuelle de deux mille livres sur la caisse du commerce<sup>33</sup>.

Le privilège exclusif de la Compagnie, supprimé en 1769, fut à nouveau restauré en 1787 par le contrôleur général Calonne. Les députés des principales villes maritimes françaises, qui profitaient depuis une vingtaine d’années de la liberté de commerce au Levant, chargèrent Morellet de défendre à nouveau leur cause. Celui-ci accepta, et rédigea deux nouveaux mémoires sur le sujet, les *Mémoires relatifs à la discussion du privilège de la nouvelle Compagnie des Indes* et la *Réponse précise au pré-*

*cis pour les actionnaires de la nouvelle Compagnie des Indes*, tous deux publiés en 1787. Le débat ne fut pas tranché. Ainsi que le note Morellet dans ses *Mémoires*, “le torrent de discordes civiles emporta bientôt nos mémoires, et la compagnie des Indes, et la monarchie”<sup>34</sup>.

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#### Summary

In 1769 the new *Contrôleur général*, Maynon d’Invaux, decided to abolish the exclusive privilege accorded to the *Compagnie des Indes* by the King since 1664. André Morellet was made responsible for writing a report on the disastrous state of the company and on the advantages of free trade with India. But his *Mémoire sur la situation actuelle de la compagnie des Indes* provoked numerous reactions from the company itself and from political opponents. Jacques Necker remains the most famous adversary of Morellet. His *Réponse* became a publishing success but did not succeed in altering the course of events. The privilege of the company was suppressed in August 1769.

<sup>1</sup> H. Lüthy, *La banque protestante en France de la révocation de l’édit de Nantes à la Révolution*, T.II. *De la banque aux finances (1730-1794)*, Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1961, p. 380.

<sup>2</sup> *Mémoires secrets dits de Bachaumont*, T.IV, 1777, p. 252.

<sup>3</sup> *Mémoires secrets*, op. cit., p. 256.

<sup>4</sup> A. Morellet, *Lettres d’André Morellet*, T.I 1759-1785, publiées et annotées par D. Medlin, J.-C. David, P. Leclerc, Oxford: The Voltaire Foundation, 1991, pp. 106-108.

<sup>5</sup> *Mémoires secrets*, op. cit., p. 321.

<sup>6</sup> *Mémoires secrets*, op. cit., p. 325.

<sup>7</sup> *Mémoires secrets*, op. cit., pp. 355-356.

<sup>8</sup> A. Morellet, *Lettres d’André Morellet*, op. cit., p. 121, note 3.

<sup>9</sup> A. Morellet, *Mémoires de l’abbé Morellet de l’Académie française sur le dix-huitième siècle et sur la Révolution*, Paris: Mercure de France, 1988, pp. 161-162; A.R.J. Turgot, *Œuvres de Turgot et documents le concernant*, édité par Gustave Schelle, Paris: Alcan, tome III, 1919, p. 108.

<sup>10</sup> *Mémoires secrets*, op. cit., p. 332.

<sup>11</sup> H. Lüthy, *La banque protestante en France de la révocation de l’édit de Nantes à la Révolution*, op. cit., p. 394.

<sup>12</sup> J. Necker, *Réponse au Mémoire de l’abbé Morellet, sur la compagnie des Indes, imprimée en exécution de la délibération de M. rs les actionnaires, prise dans l’Assemblée générale du 8 août 1769*, Paris, 1769, p. 4.

<sup>13</sup> H. Lüthy, *La banque protestante en France de la révocation de l’édit de Nantes à la Révolution*, op. cit., p. 394.

<sup>14</sup> Probablement le 30, cf. *Mémoires secrets*, op. cit., p. 365.

<sup>15</sup> A. Morellet, *Examen de la Réponse de M.N\*\* au Mémoire de M. l’abbé Morellet, sur la Compagnie des Indes, par l’auteur du Mémoire*, A Paris chez Desaint, 1769, p. 23.

<sup>16</sup> A. Morellet, *Lettres d’André Morellet*, op. cit., p. 119.

<sup>17</sup> *Mercur de France*, septembre 1769, pp. 153-154.

<sup>18</sup> *Mémoires secrets*, op. cit., pp. 352-353.

<sup>19</sup> *Ephémérides du citoyen ou Bibliothèque raisonnée des sciences morales et politiques*, tome 7, 1769, pp. 276-282.

# Swift's Continental Contemporary: Justus Van Effen

One of Jonathan Swift's most interesting contemporaries and emulators from the continent was the Dutchman Justus van Effen (1684-1735). An Anglicist and Francophile, Van Effen imitated successful English periodicals, such as the *Tatler*, the *Spectator*, and the *Examiner* with his own "spectators" in French and in Dutch.<sup>1</sup> He also translated many contemporary English works from authors such as Addison, Defoe, Mandeville, Swift, and Shaftesbury into French.<sup>2</sup> In fact, Van Effen's first published work was a translation in 1710 of Shaftesbury's *Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour* as the *Essai sur l'usage de la raillerie*. The influence of English writers on Van Effen is clear from his first "spectator," which began appearing a year later and is entitled, *Le Misanthrope Contenant des Réflexions Critiques, Satyriques & Comiques, sur les défauts des hommes*.

## Le Misanthrope

An affinity with Jonathan Swift can be seen in his discussion of foppery (or "petits maîtres") in numbers II and VI, pedantry in number XIII, false erudition in number XXVI, and so on. Even the persona of Van Effen's journal, "Le Misanthrope," is not unlike his contemporary Isaac Bickerstaff and is certainly consistent with Swift's own reputed

misanthropy, witness his famous letter to Pope in 1725: "But principally I hate and detest that animal called Man." *Le Misanthrope* number XXIX is especially swiftian in tone and content: Van Effen's dark commentary on busy, mercantile Amsterdam depicts a species of "debased animals" overcome by greed, and it shows the moral cost of such material success.<sup>3</sup>

"Cette superbe ville est habitée moitié par des créatures humaines et moitié par de certains animaux qui, pour l'extérieur, ressemblent extrêmement à des hommes, mais qui, au lieu d'être animés par un esprit raisonnable, n'ont qu'un instinct aveugle qui les pousse vers les richesses comme les autres brutes sont poussées vers les choses nécessaires à leur conservation."

Of course, Van Effen's sketch of man's "bestial" nature pales in comparison to Swift's characterization of Yahoos in the famous satire of mankind found in part IV of *Gulliver's Travels*.<sup>4</sup> Still, one wonders if Swift had been reading this popular French periodical from the continent when he penned his famous work. Van Effen's connection to Swift goes back well before *Le Misanthrope*. In fact, he was an avid reader of English literature when Swift's works began appearing at the beginning of the century, and Swift's influence can be seen in several of Van Effen's endeavors. For example, in 1714 there appeared one of the most popular French works in the first half of the eighteenth century, *Le Chef d'Oeuvre d'un Inconnu*. This weighty, erudite dissertation contains hundreds of pages of commentary on a small, scandalous, seven-line poem. A thinly veiled attack on the extravagances of commentators, *Le Chef d'Oeuvre d'un Inconnu* was inspired by, and includes, Van Effen's "Dissertation sur Homère et sur Chapelain" written in 1707, a few years after Swift's *Battle of the Books* first appeared in 1704. Van Effen's "parallel" between Homer and Chapelain joins what was perhaps the most important literary debate of the day, the question of the pre-eminence of the Ancients versus the Moderns. Now, Swift's satire targets mainly the "Moderns," whereas Van Effen rejects both extremist positions, with swiftian irony, after a humorous examination of the relative merits of the *Illiad* and *La Pucelle*. While the author of the "Dissertation" confidently concludes he has demonstrated that Chapelain's epic poem is well worth Homer's, the real purpose of this ironic "parallel" becomes evident with the closing couplet: Que l'excellence d'un auteur Dépend de son commentateur.

## La Bagatelle

With the apparent affinity between these two contemporaries, one wonders if Swift and Van Effen ever met. In 1715



JONATHAN SWIFT

Van Effen went to London as a member of the Dutch delegation to the coronation of George I. There, he was elected member of the Royal Society on November 30, 1715, probably as a result of his reviews in the *Journal littéraire* on Newton and Leibnitz, and on the debate over which of these two invented infinitesimal calculus. While in England he most likely met Isaac Newton; however, he probably just missed meeting Swift, who had left London a few months earlier, after the collapse of Bolingbroke's Tory government. Though they probably did not meet, Swift's works were still very much the rage of London and of great interest to Van Effen. In fact, upon his return to Holland, Van Effen began to emulate Swift with a new periodical endeavor. *La Bagatelle* (1718-19) was written in the spirit of the Regency and under the sign of Swift, as the full title suggests: "La Bagatelle ou Discours ironiques, où l'on prête des Sophismes ingénieux au Vice & à l'Extravagance, pour en faire mieux sentir le ridicule." The title, "La Bagatelle," the "bagatelle" or "trifle," sets the tone for the journal; the subtitle describes the contents and intended method: "Ironic discourses for ridiculing the sophistry of Vice and Extravagance." Van Effen was clearly reading Swift at this time, and his periodical half-sheet treats many of the subjects explored by Swift. In fact, one of the earliest examples of Swift's works translated into French is taken from a short tale on the intolerable behavior of some scribblers. Van Effen reprises this subject in the *Bagatelle* of November 10, 1718, in his discussion of "faiseurs de livres" who treat other scribblers with the greatest disdain. He gives credit to the English writer:

"Un des plus spirituels Hommes de toute l'Angleterre a, selon moi, fort plaisamment turlupiné la sottise vanité de ces Messieurs,

qui trouvent tant à redire à la sottise vanité des autres. Il sert du Conte suivant, que j'ai mis en Vers, afin qu'il y eut quelque chose du mien.



JUSTUS VAN EFFEN

Sur un théâtre à grand hâte élevé,  
Un Charlatan, fourbe achevé,  
Vendoit au poids de l'or à des Niais crédules  
Ses mensonges & ses pillules.  
A son côté, Tabarin par ses sauts,  
Par ses grimaces, ses bons-mots,  
Enlevait l'ame des Badauts.  
Pour l'entendre de près, tout le monde s'empresse;  
Le Galant avec sa Maîtresse,  
La Fillette avec Maman,  
Le Gentillâtre & le Manant:  
Les Badauts sont de toute espèce.  
Grande sans doute étoit la presse.  
Bien le sentoît certain Quidam bourru?  
Bourru, mais encor plus ventru:  
Il essayoit, tout hors d'haleine,  
Plus d'un choc, dont la foule accabloit sa bedaine.  
Il est à bout, il n'en peut plus;  
Par des hoquets interrompus,  
Il prie, il jure, il tempête, il menace.  
Homme de bien, eh! mon Ami, de grace,  
Reculez du moins quelques pas,  
Vous verriez aussi-bien là-bas.  
Voyez donc ce Faquin, Chargé de la besace,  
Qui vient encore ici redoubler l'embaras.  
Au diable soit ce gibier à soldats,  
On se passeroit bien de sa chienne de face.  
Eh! passe, si tu veux, passe Carogne, passe.  
Comme ils courent ces Polissons,  
Ces petits Gueux, ces Avortons.  
Si j'en prens un, par la mort je lui casse ...  
Diable emporte la Populace,  
La peste crève les Bourreaux.  
Maugrebleu du maroufle & de toute sa race!

Dit enfin, fatigué de ces discours brutaux,  
Un Assistant des moins sots:  
Range toi-même tes boyeaux  
Dans un plus raisonnable espace,  
Nous aurions tous assez de place.<sup>5</sup>

(*La Bagatelle* du Jeudi 10 Novembre 1718 (1742 Uytwerf))

Van Effen's verse is inspired by the following excerpt from Swift's *Tale of a Tub*:

A Mountebank in Leicester-Fields, had drawn a huge Assembly about him. Among the rest, a fat unwieldy Fellow, half stifled in the Press, would be every fit crying out, Lord! what a filthy Crowd is here? Pray, good People, give way a little, Bless me! what a Devil has rak'd this Rabble together: Z\_\_\_ds, what squeezing is this! Honest Friend, remove your Elbow. At last, a Weaver that stood next him could hold no longer: A Plague confound you (said he) for an overgrown Sloven; and who (in the Devil's Name) I wonder, helps to make up the Crowd half so much as yourself? Don't you consider (with a Pox) that you take up more room with that Carcass than any five here? is not the Place as free for us as for you? Bring your own Guts to a reasonable Compass (and be d\_\_\_n'd) and then I'll engage we shall have room enough for us all."<sup>6</sup>

## Tale of a Tub

*La Bagatelle*, though successful and well-received at first, was also controversial, and Van Effen was obliged to spend a lot of time, and space, defending his work. His reading public was responsive, but very sensitive to essays of a theological nature which touched at the heart of religious controversies, and they continued to keep a watchful eye on *La Bagatelle*, and its author, as potential sources of heresy. Perhaps Van Effen overestimated the sophistication of his prudish, I dare say, puritanical public. Though not as successful as Swift with sustained irony, Van Effen did not abandon his interest in Swift's writings. In fact, his next effort was a tribute to Jonathan Swift in the form of a translation of the *Tale of a Tub* and other short works in 1721. While Van Effen was visiting England in 1715-16, according to his biographers,<sup>7</sup> his English colleagues asserted that Swift's genius could not be translated into another language. Van Effen reputedly accepted the challenge and acquitted himself competently. He seems also to be accepting Swift's challenge in the *Tale of a Tub*:  
"I hope when this treatise of

<sup>20</sup> *Gazette des Gazettes*, septembre 1769, l'Année littéraire tome V 1769, les *Mémoires de Trévoux* octobre 1769.

<sup>21</sup> F. Galiani F., L. D'Épinay, *Correspondance*, Paris : Editions Desjonquères, tome 1, 1992, p. 62.

<sup>22</sup> *Mémoires secrets*, op. cit., p. 358.

<sup>23</sup> *Eclaircissements sur le Mémoire de M. l'abbé Morellet, concernant la partie historique de la Compagnie des Indes, & l'origine du bien des actionnaires*, nl, nd, p. 14.

<sup>24</sup> *Eclaircissements sur le Mémoire de M. l'abbé Morellet*, op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>25</sup> *Ephémérides du citoyen*, op. cit., tome VIII, 1769, p. 171.

<sup>26</sup> *Ephémérides du citoyen*, op. cit., tome IX, 1769, pp. 166-167.

<sup>27</sup> *Doutes d'un actionnaire, sur le Mémoire de M. l'abbé Morellet, contre la Compagnie des Indes*, p. 1.

<sup>28</sup> L.-L.-F. Lauraguais, *Mémoire sur la Compagnie des Indes, précédé d'un discours sur le commerce en général*, Paris : Lacombe, 1769, p.81.

<sup>29</sup> A.R.J. Turgot, *Œuvres de Turgot et documents le concernant*, op. cit., p. 64.

<sup>30</sup> A. Morellet, *Mémoires de l'abbé Morellet*, op. cit., p. 162 ; A. Morellet, *Lettres d'André Morellet*, op. cit., p.121.

<sup>31</sup> A. Morellet, *Lettres d'André Morellet*, op. cit., p. 121, note 8.

<sup>32</sup> Cité par A. Mazure, *Les idées de l'abbé Morellet, Membre de l'Académie française (1727-1819)*, Paris : Recueil Sirey, 1910, p. 186.

<sup>33</sup> A. Morellet, *Mémoires de l'abbé Morellet*, op. cit., p. 161.

<sup>34</sup> A. Morellet, *Mémoires de l'abbé Morellet*, op. cit., p. 263.

mine shall be translated into Foreign Languages ... that the worthy Members of the several Academies abroad, especially those of France and Italy, will favourably accept these humble offers, for the Advancement of Universal Knowledge." (p. 318)

Van Effen's 1721 translation entitled *Le Conte du tonneau*, includes *The Tale of a Tub*, *The Battle of the Books*, and a number of other short works by Swift. The translation was a formidable task, as Van Effen notes in his preface.<sup>8</sup> The problem was twofold: first, the subject of the work touched upon sensitive matters of religious orthodoxy; and second, the metaphorical language was often laden with subtle irony. While I do not propose an extensive evaluation of his translation, which has already been done elsewhere by Sybil Goulding and others, the above sample is indicative of his skills and relative success in rendering Swift's work into French. The translator took certain liberties with the text, as was the custom of the times. For example, in Van Effen's translation of *Robinson Crusoe*, which enjoyed numerous editions in French, the original language was "expurgated" so as not to offend the French reading public, doubtless at the cost of some of the force of the original. For Swift's works, Van Effen offers abundant notes and an ample preface, especially for the *Tale of a Tub*. The translator made a valiant, and ultimately successful effort to present Swift to readers of French.<sup>9</sup> While his translation was generally well received on the continent, it had some interesting competition. The first was a shabby imitation of Swift's *Tale of a Tub* as *Les Trois Justaucorps* by René Macé, published the same year as *Le Conte du tonneau*. Macé's work was immediately condemned by literary reviews, but it was also frequently confused with Van Effen's translation, which suffered as a consequence. In the meantime, *Le Conte du tonneau* faced the competition on the continent of a satirical work similar in tone and intent and published in the same year, Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes*, which enjoyed eight editions in 1721 alone. Still, French interest in Swift grew throughout the 1720s, and another edition of *Le Conte du tonneau* appeared in 1732, followed by a third, augmented edition in 1733. Three more editions appeared in 1741,

1756, and 1757. I should note that an edition of the *Tale of a Tub* based on Van Effen's translation appeared as recently as 1962.<sup>10</sup>

In spite of their many similarities, these two moralists differ in their basic view of mankind. Van Effen finds that man seldom acts reasonably, a sobering thought for such rationalists as Swift and himself, and yet Van Effen does not lose faith in mankind, as did his more pessimistic contemporary. While some of the "influence" between Swift and Van Effen, in both directions, remains conjectural, we do know that Van Effen played a major role in introducing Jonathan Swift to the French reading public with translations of the *Tale of a Tub* and other short works. And we can also appreciate the spirit of Swift in his continental contemporary, Justus van Effen.

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#### Summary

Justus van Effen imitated successful English periodicals, such as the *Tatler*, the *Spectator*, and the *Examiner* with his own "spectators" in French and in Dutch, and he also introduced many English authors to the French reading public with his journals and translations. Jonathan Swift, still relatively unknown on the continent, was one of the most influential English authors in many of Van Effen's works. In fact, his second spectator, *La Bagatelle* (1718-19) was written in the spirit of the Regency and under the sign of Swift. Van Effen also presented Swift to the French-reading public with a translation of the *Tale of a Tub* and other short works in 1721 as *Le Conte du tonneau*.

<sup>1</sup> *Le Misanthrope* (1711-12), *La Bagatelle* (1718-19) and *Le Nouveau Spectateur français* (1725-26), as well as *De Hollandsche Spectator* (1731-1735) in Dutch.

<sup>2</sup> See my study, *The Life and Works of Justus van Effen* (Laramie: University of Wyoming, 1982).

<sup>3</sup> *Misanthrope* no. XXIX, 7 décembre 1711.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. W.J.B. Pienaar in *English Influences in Dutch Literature and Justus van Effen as Intermediary* (Cam-

bridge: The University Press, 1929): "A striking correspondence of Van Effen and Swift in caustic irony is found in *Misanthrope*, I, no. xxx [sic], which gives a somber picture of busy mercantile Amsterdam and depicts the inhabitants as for the most part a species of debased animal. Van Effen never again clouded over his satire so darkly, and gave but a foretaste of that Yahoo-land with which the English wit was to shock the world later." (p. 135). References to Swift are from the *The Writings of Jonathan Swift*. New York: Norton, 1973).

<sup>5</sup> Van Effen identifies the piece in his *Bagatelle* of "9 Janvier 1719:"

"... le petit Conte qu j'ai emprunté d'un célèbre Auteur Anglois\*, & que j'ai versifié du mieux que j'ai pu." In footnote: \* Le Dr. Swift.

<sup>6</sup> ("The Preface," *A Tale of a Tub* (New York: Norton, 1973), p. 287)

<sup>7</sup> See Verwer, LIV-LV; Bisschop Chapter VIII.

<sup>8</sup> "Si jamais livre a besoin d'une préface, j'ose dire que c'est celui-ci."

<sup>9</sup> Consider the following judgement by Sybil Goulding, *Swift en France*: "Somme toute, si la traduction est fidèle, elle est en même temps plate" (p. 27) and "C'est toujours un travail des plus consciencieux" (p. 30). See especially pages 18-37.

<sup>10</sup> (Paris: Mazenod, 1962)

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