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THE POLITICAL USES OF SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH HISTORY IN BOURBON RESTORATION FRANCE

GEOFFREY CUBITT
University of York

ABSTRACT. *For French political commentators and polemicists of the Bourbon Restoration period (1814–30), England's history of revolution and of royalist restoration between 1640 and 1688 offered striking and suggestive similarities to the trajectory of France's own political experience since 1789. Elaborated not just in the historical writings of men like Villemain, Guizot, and Carrel, but in a host of political speeches and pamphlets and other forms of ephemeral literature, allusions to Stuart and Cromwellian history carried a potent charge in debates and polemics over France's own political prospects. Drawing on statements by politicians and writers as diverse as François-René de Chateaubriand, Louis de Bonald, and Benjamin Constant, this article explores the meanings that were read into the comparison or juxtaposition of French and English histories, the ways in which these meanings were argued and contested, and the political uses to which they were put, both by critics and by supporters of the Restoration regime. If references to the Stuarts, to Cromwell, or to 1688 were sometimes politically opportunistic, they also sometimes reflected an aspiration to comprehend France's political destiny by relating its present position to broader frameworks of historical understanding – a point which the later parts of the article seek to develop by scrutinizing the ways in which French and English histories are connected in specific writings by Augustin Thierry, Guizot, and Chateaubriand.*

In March 1814, in the dying days of the First Empire, the marquise de La Tour du Pin, wife of the Napoleonic prefect of the Somme, stayed overnight in the Parisian apartment of her friend the marquis de Lally-Tolendal, and there received a visit from the prince de Talleyrand. In her later memoirs, she recalled her visitor's behaviour on learning to whom the apartment belonged:

> Taking a candle from the table, he began to examine the engravings hanging in fine frames around the room: 'Ah! Charles II, James II, just so.' And he set the candle back on the table.
> 'My God', I cried, 'how can you talk of Charles II and James II! You have seen the Emperor. How is he? What is he doing? What is he saying after a defeat?'
> 'Oh, don't bother me with your Emperor. He's finished.'[1]

Department of History, University of York, Heslington, York, YO10 5DD gtc2@york.ac.uk

[1] Henriette Lucie Dillon, marquise de La Tour du Pin Gouvernet, *Journal d'une femme de cinquante ans, 1778–1815* (7th edn, 2 vols., Paris, 1913), II, pp. 338–9.

Lally-Tolendal, like Madame de La Tour du Pin herself, was a descendant of Jacobite exiles. He was the author of two admiring works on Charles I's ill-fated minister the earl of Strafford.[2] The presence on his walls of images of the later Stuarts may have been an expression of family tradition, or of a nostalgic kind of historical sympathy. Or it may, as Talleyrand seems to have insinuated, have been a deliberate political gesture at a moment when the future of a different exiled dynasty hung in the balance – a discreet indication of Lally's support not for a Stuart but for a Bourbon Restoration. It is impossible to be sure. What is clear, however, is that Talleyrand was far from being the only person, in 1814, or in the years before and after, to detect contemporary French meanings in references to England's turbulent seventeenth-century history. A few years later, during the reign of Louis XVIII, Comte Molé would find himself engaged in conversation with Mme de Staël:

> Having recalled all the errors that had been committed in the wake of the king's two returns, and energetically described the incorrigible folly of the emigrés and the court, she went on: 'As you see, we are starting the history of England over again; restorations are never successful, and always end in the same way. Happily, the king, to whom I am personally attached, will close his eyes peacefully upon the throne, but you surely do not think that his brother will succeed him. Monsieur will have the fate of James II.'
> 'And who will be our William?' I interrupted.
> 'Can't you guess?', she replied. 'The son of a great rascal, no doubt, but of [sic] a prince who, if he does not cast the same radiance as William, is at least suited to his century, and offers the precious combination of all the qualities and circumstances that are necessary to govern us.'[3]

The duc d'Orléans was plainly designated. He was not, however, the first prince to have been cast as William III in Mme de Staël's imagination: in 1814, she had fancied the Swedish heir, the former French Marshal Bernadotte, in the same role.[4]

References of this kind, linking France's contemporary history to England's earlier revolutionary or counter-revolutionary experience, were common in Restoration French political and literary culture.[5] The referential habit drew

[2] Trophime-Gérard, comte (later marquis) de Lally-Tolendal, *Comte de Strafford, tragédie en cinq actes et en vers* (London, 1795); and idem, *Essai sur la vie de T. Wentworth, comte de Strafford, principal ministre du roi Charles Ier, ainsi que sur l'histoire générale d'Angleterre, d'Ecosse et d'Irlande à cette époque* (London, 1795). A new edition of the *Essai* was published in Paris in 1814.

[3] Matthieu, comte Molé, *Le comte Molé, 1781–1855: sa vie, ses mémoires*, ed. Hélie Guillaume Hubert, marquis de Noailles (3rd edn, 6 vols., Paris, 1922–30), II, pp. 388–9.

[4] See her letters to Benjamin Constant, 10 and 23 Jan. 1814, in Kurt Kloocke, ed., *Correspondance: Mme de Staël, Charles de Villers, Benjamin Constant* (Frankfurt, 1993), pp. 191, 201.

[5] Aspects or instances of the early nineteenth-century French interest in Stuart and Cromwellian history have been explored in Judith-Rae Ross, 'Anglo-French encounters: images of the English Civil War in France, 1789–1848' (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Chicago Circle, 1978); Philip Mansel, 'The influence of the later Stuarts and their supporters on French royalism 1789–1840', *Royal Stuart Papers*, 21 (1983), pp. 1–10; J. H. M. Salmon, 'Oliver Cromwell and the French Romantics', *History Today*, 30 (1980), pp. 16–21, and idem, 'The French Romantics on comparative revolution', *History of European Ideas*, 11 (1989), pp. 381–91, both reprinted in his *Ideas and contexts in France and England*

sustenance, no doubt, from the appearance of such substantial works on English history as Villemain's *Histoire de Cromwell* (1819), the first two volumes of Guizot's *Histoire de la révolution d'Angleterre* (1826), and Armand Carrel's *Histoire de la contre-révolution d'Angleterre sous Charles II et Jacques II* (1827), as well as of works by now-adays lesser-known authors like Berthevin, Sauquaire-Souligné, and Mazure.[6] It was no doubt encouraged also by the work of novelists and dramatists like Scott (whose *Woodstock, or the cavalier* appeared in French translation in 1826), and Hugo (whose *Cromwell* was published in 1829), by the engravings of paintings illustrating Hume's history of England published by Robert Bowyer in 1806,[7] and by Guizot's publication of source materials in the twenty-five volumes of his *Collection des mémoires relatifs à la révolution d'Angleterre* (1823–5). The present article is concerned, however, less with the contents of such salient publications than with the broader mental habits that were reflected in the widespread evocation of the English case in political journalism, in literary criticism, in parliamentary debate, in mundane conversation, in ephemeral pamphlets and dramas.[8] The 'political uses of history', whose importance in the politics of the French Restoration has been influentially highlighted by Stanley Mellon and others, were not uses of French history only.[9] By exploring the habit of cross-referencing two chronologically and geographically separate histories, we can gain insights into the complex interactions between

from the Renaissance to the Romantics (Aldershot, 2000); Olivier Lutaud, *Des révolutions d'Angleterre à la Révolution française: le tyrannicide & Killing no murder* (*Cromwell, Athalie, Bonaparte*) (The Hague, 1973), esp. pp. 255–62, 347–61; Laurent Theis, 'Les libéraux français et la révolution anglaise, à travers la lecture du *Globe*', *Commentaire*, 17 (1994), pp. 963–70; Beth S. Wright, *Painting and history during the French Restoration: abandoned by the past* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 35–41, 77–81, 92–113, 133; Beth S. Wright, 'The auld alliance in nineteenth-century French painting: the changing concept of Mary Stuart, 1814–1833', *Arts Magazine*, 58 (1984), pp. 97–107; and the further works on visual imagery listed in n. 13 below.

[6] Jules-Julien-Gabriel Berthevin, *Essai historique sur le règne de Charles II, pouvant faire suite à l'histoire de Cromwell* (Paris, 1819); Martial Sauquaire-Souligné, *Trois règnes de l'histoire d'Angleterre, précédés d'un précis sur la monarchie depuis la conquête* (2 vols., Paris, 1819); François-Antoine-Joan Mazure, *Histoire de la révolution de 1688 en Angleterre* (3 vols., Paris, 1825).

[7] On the influence in France of these images from Bowyer's Historic Gallery, see Wright, *Painting and history*, pp. 94–6.

[8] This was a period in which fledgling dramatists like Mérimée and Balzac could think of no better topic on which to exercise their talents than Charles I and Cromwell: see Pierre Trahard, *La jeunesse de Prosper Mérimée* (*1803–1834*) (Paris, 1924), pp. 141–5; Michel Lichtlé, 'Balzac et la révolution anglaise', *L'année Balzacienne*, n.s. 11 (1990), pp. 167–88. 'I have chosen the subject of Cromwell, because it is the most beautiful one of all our modern history, as a subject for tragedy', Balzac told his sister Laure in a letter of 6 Sept. 1819, reproduced in Honoré de Balzac, *Correspondance* (5 vols., Paris, 1960–9), I, p. 37.

[9] Stanley Mellon, *The political uses of history: a study of historians in the French Restoration* (Stanford, 1958); Jacques Barzun, 'Romantic historiography as a political force in France', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 2 (1941), pp. 318–29; Shirley M. Gruner, 'Political historiography in Restoration France', *History and Theory*, 8 (1969), pp. 346–65; Ceri Crossley, 'History as a principle of legitimation in France (1820–1848)', in S. Berger, M. Donovan, and K. Passmore, eds., *Writing national histories: western Europe since 1800* (London, 1999), pp. 49–56, are among the principal studies of the political uses of history in this period, mostly focusing largely on the uses of French history. For more on French uses of English history, see Salmon, 'The French Romantics on comparative revolution'; Theis, 'Les libéraux français et la révolution anglaise'; Ross, 'Anglo-French encounters'.

political and historical thinking that were characteristic of early nineteenth-century French political mentalities, and of post-Enlightenment intellectual culture more generally. In an age marked on the one hand by an increasing interest in questions of national identity and distinctiveness, and on the other by an aspiration to develop theories of human historical development that would be general in their application, the art of constructing parallels and comparisons and connections between different national cases took on a particular importance.

At a general level, it is not surprising that Frenchmen in the early nineteenth century found food for thought in England's Stuart and Cromwellian history. Even before they read their Villemain and their Guizot, educated Frenchmen had read their Hume, and sometimes their Clarendon. Laurence Bongie has shown how, in the later years of the eighteenth century, Hume's reading of the English Revolution was held to supply a basic key to the understanding of revolutions more generally, and of the French Revolution in particular, priming a usually conservative or counter-revolutionary assessment of where that Revolution was leading.[10] Even if they rejected this basically conservative orientation, Frenchmen's attention was drawn to England because England supplied the obvious instance of revolutionary development within a major modern European state with which France's own tumultuous revolutionary experience could be compared.[11] It went on being drawn to England after the initial revolutionary wave of the 1790s had passed because England's history seemed to confirm what Frenchmen's own experience seemed increasingly to suggest – namely that revolutions, once launched, were not so speedily over and done with. England's revolutionary development had not come to an end when Charles I was executed in 1649 or when the Stuarts returned in 1660: it ran on to 1688 and perhaps beyond. The more France's unfolding experience seemed to replicate the phases of England's earlier history – moving from absolutist monarchy to regicidal republic to military dictatorship and in due course to restoration monarchy – the more the juxtaposition of French and English histories seemed to offer Frenchmen a key to the complexities, the possibilities, and the pitfalls of their own historical situation. Frenchmen looked to English history to help them recompose a sense of historical position that the violent rupturing of their own national history made it hard to arrive at.

For many in France, the Revolution of 1830 would tie the knots of the Anglo-French revolutionary comparison, leaving some to project a future of constitutional monarchy in something resembling England's image, and others to retreat into quasi-Jacobite romantic nostalgia.[12] Yet, while the years of the July

[10] Laurence Bongie, *David Hume: prophet of the counter-revolution* (Oxford, 1965).

[11] On references to Stuart and Cromwellian history during the revolutionary years, see Roger Barny, 'L'image de Cromwell dans la Révolution française', *Dix-huitième siècle*, 25 (1993), pp. 387–97; Lutaud, *Des révolutions d'Angleterre à la Revolution française*, pp. 225–7, 242–52; Bongie, *David Hume: prophet of the counter-revolution*, chs. 2–5; Ross, 'Anglo-French encounters', chs. 1–2.

[12] On post-1830 legitimist interest in the Stuarts and in Jacobitism, see Mansel, 'The influence of the later Stuarts', pp. 4–5.

Monarchy would still yield signs of an enduring interest in Stuart and Cromwellian history – evident most obviously in the field of historical painting with the images of Charles I and Cromwell and Strafford created by artists like Delaroche, Delacroix, and Johannot[13] – the habit of perceiving the 1830 Revolution as a French equivalent of 1688 tended to reduce the sheer contentiousness of English historical allusions. For this contentiousness had rested, prior to 1830, on ambiguity and uncertainty, and nowhere had these been more apparent than in the political debates of the Restoration period. By 1814, France clearly had a substantial and complex and multi-phased revolutionary history of its own to look back on: more clearly than in the 1790s, there was a basis for extended comparison between the two national cases. The question of the closure of that revolutionary history remained, however, a problematic one for Restoration political opinion. Was France's sequence of revolutionary events to be regarded as now completed, ending with the peaceful return of the Bourbons as England's might have ended with the return of the Stuarts in 1660? If so, was it completed on a note of revolutionary defeat, with the legacy of 1789 crushed beneath the heel of Napoleonic tyranny or swept away by the rising tide of Restoration ultraroyalism? Or was it concluded on a note of moderate liberal success, guaranteed by the Constitutional Charter granted by Louis XVIII in 1814? Alternatively, was the revolutionary movement still going on beneath the surface of politics and society? If so, was it working inexorably towards a further decisive revolutionary moment – a French equivalent of 1688 – or might the eventual outcome be a different one, less obviously modelled on England's example? These were the issues that Restoration Frenchmen took positions on when they larded their own political polemics and historical analyses with references to the seventeenth-century English experience.

References to England could be contentious in other ways as well. Many Frenchmen had first-hand knowledge of England, either as exiles in the revolutionary and Napoleonic period or as tourists under the Restoration, and Pierre Reboul has charted the developing presence of a 'mythe anglais' in the literature of the period.[14] For some, in the Liberal camp, England undoubtedly offered a constitutional model to be admired and emulated. 'We looked there for government as one looks for the arts in Italy', Rémusat later recalled.[15] Mme de

[13] See Wright, *Painting and history*, pp. 103–12; Beth S. Wright, 'An image for imagining the past: Delacroix, Cromwell, and Romantic history painting', *Clio*, 2 (1992), pp. 243–63; Beth S. Wright, 'Implacable fathers: the reinterpretation of Cromwell in French texts and images from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 20 (1997), pp. 165–85; Diane Russcol, 'Images of Charles I and Henrietta-Maria in French art, ca. 1815–1855', *Arts Magazine*, 62 (1988), pp. 44–9; Stephen Bann, *Paul Delaroche: history painted* (London, 1997), pp. 107–15, 146–54.

[14] Pierre Reboul, *Le mythe anglais dans la littérature française sous la Restauration* (Lille, 1962); see also Emmanuel de Waresquiel, 'Quand les "doctrinaires" visitaient l'Angleterre au début du XIXe siècle', *Commentaire*, 17 (1994), pp. 361–7.

[15] Quoted in de Waresquiel, 'Quand les "doctrinaires" visitaient l'Angleterre', p. 363. More generally, see J. R. Jennings, 'Conceptions of England and its constitution in nineteenth-century French political thought', *Historical Journal*, 29 (1986), pp. 65–85; Theodore Zeldin, 'English ideals in French

Staël was unstinting in her praise of England's social as well as its constitutional achievement, writing of 'the admirable monument of man's moral grandeur that England presents us with', and of the 'hundred and twenty years of social improvement (*perfectionnement*)' that separated the English from the Continent.[16] But England was also a pillar of European conservatism, a potent economic rival, and until very recently the most obdurate of France's military enemies. Waterloo was fresh in French minds; England's occupying forces remained in place until 1817. Too eager an enthusiasm for things English – whether Shakespeare or the constitution – could seem slavishly unpatriotic. This may, in itself, have been one of the reasons why French interest in England so often, in this period, took the form of references to England's history: what was proposed was less a present model to be ardently embraced than a past experience to be learnt from, and the lessons to be learnt might be cautionary as well as positive. In 1819, when the arrival of Lord Whitworth in Paris prompted rumours of English machinations in support of French ultraroyalism, the Liberal journalist Charles Etienne made it clear that learning from England's historical example need not mean accepting England's political domination: 'Enlightened by the misfortunes of our neighbours, we will not commit the same mistakes; their restoration must not be the model of ours; and if it were possible that they might give their support to an anti-French faction within France, we would triumph even over their political errors, through the lessons of their history.'[17]

People had not, of course, waited until 1814 to imagine a Bourbon Restoration. Theorizing about the possibility, the desirability, and the likely effects of a national reversion to legitimate monarchy had been a significant feature of French political discussions on more than one occasion since the downfall of Louis XVI. The issue was central, for example, to some of the most influential polemical exchanges of the later 1790s. In his *Considérations sur la France* (1797), Joseph de Maistre had prophesied the imminence of the Bourbons' return. At once natural and Providential, such a restoration of the dynasty would be accomplished harmoniously, without vengeance and with the bare minimum of judicial violence: in a famous phrase, 'the re-establishment of the monarchy, which people call *counter-revolution*, will be not a *contrary revolution*, but the *contrary of the Revolution*'. It was thus, according to de Maistre, that Providence, in the analogous case of the Stuarts, had conjured a peaceful return of royalty out of circumstances that ostensibly favoured a continuance of Republican rule; France's case would not be different.[18] Against this royalist vision of a peaceful

politics during the nineteenth century', *Historical Journal*, 2 (1959), pp. 40–58; Alan Kahan, 'Guizot et le modèle anglais', in M. Valensise, ed., *François Guizot et la culture politique de son temps* (Paris, 1991), pp. 219–31.

[16] Germaine de Staël, *Considérations sur la Révolution française* (1818), ed. Jacques Godechot (Paris, 1983), pp. 512–13.

[17] Charles Etienne, 'Lettres sur Paris' (42), *La minerve française*, 5 (10 Apr. 1819), p. 481.

[18] Joseph Marie, comte de Maistre, *Considérations sur la France* (1797), ed. Jean-Louis Darcel (Geneva, 1980), pp. 182–4. De Maistre concluded his tract with a 'Fragment d'une Histoire de la Révolution

restoration, defenders of the French revolutionary achievement had advanced an utterly different view of what a restoration must represent, based on an opposing reading of England's example. For the Benjamin Constant of *Des suites de la contre-révolution de 1660 en Angleterre* (1799), the significance of later Stuart history lay precisely in its revelation of the unavoidably 'reactionary' character of any restoration regime: however irenic the restored monarch's original intentions, such a regime was bound in practice to be the vehicle of a vindictive *esprit de parti*. The true character of the Stuart Restoration was to be judged not from the deceptive peacefulness of Charles II's return in 1660, but from the atrocities of Judge Jefferies, manifestations of a spirit of vengeful violence and arbitrary intolerance from which England had made its escape only through the further Revolution of 1688.[19]

The legacies of these divergent understandings of royalist restoration, incorporating different assessments of the English precedent, were apparent in the polemics of 1814–15 and of the Restoration period. Their effects were modified, of course, by the experiences of the intervening period. Frenchmen eager for the Bourbons' return had looked for a French General Monk – a military midwife for the rebirthing of legitimate monarchy – but in the likeliest candidate for the role had found only a usurping military dictator in the mould of Cromwell.[20] The common perception of Napoleonic rule as a Cromwellian experience reinforced the more general impression that England's and France's histories were linked by structures of equivalence, which might yet unfold further. The events of the Bourbon Restoration fell into an imaginative arena already traversed by predictions, assumptions, expectations, and forebodings influenced by perceptions of England's seventeenth-century history.

Neither the Left nor the Right had a monopoly over such perceptions. Humean readings of France's revolutionary experience had been a commonplace of earlier counter-revolutionary discourse, and though the initiative in citing the English example was perhaps, under the Restoration, more commonly taken by writers and politicians in the Liberal camp, polemicists of the Right could still give as good as they got. 'One could believe today that the genius of the nation has nothing else to do than to rail against the Jesuits and to give the royal family to understand, in no uncertain terms, that they must imminently expect a departure similar to that of your James II', Stendhal told his English readers in 1826.[21] Yet

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françoise par David Hume' (pp. 185–200), in reality a collage of excerpts from Hume on the English Revolution arranged as an implicit narrative of France's revolutionary experience, and culminating in the suggestion of an imminent royal restoration.

[19] Benjamin Constant, *Des suites de la contre-révolution de 1660 en Angleterre* (Paris, 1799), reproduced in Benjamin Constant, *Oeuvres complètes*, série *Oeuvres I: Ecrits de jeunesse (1774–1795)* (Tübingen, 1998), pp. 643–79.

[20] See Lutaud, *Des révolutions d'Angleterre à la Révolution française*, pp. 241–51; Bongie, *David Hume: prophet of the counter-revolution*, pp. 159–67; Ross, 'Anglo-French encounters', pp. 88–9.

[21] Stendhal [Henri Beyle], *Chroniques, 1825–1829*, II: *Esquisses de la société parisienne, de la politique et de la littérature, 1826–1829* (Paris, 1983), p. 103 (text originally published in English in *New Monthly Magazine*, June 1826).

Jesuit-hunting Liberals were themselves vulnerable to the warfare of historical allusion: royalist politicians like Bonald and the duc de Fitz-James (the latter himself a linear descendant of James II) hit back with pointed references to the anti-Catholic scandal-mongering of the reign of Charles I and to Titus Oates's fabrication of the Popish Plot.[22] Writing in 1829, Bonald was as adamant as any of his Liberal opponents that 'it is in the history of the later Stuarts … that we must study our own history, that of the present time': he urged those who believed France safe from a further revolution to read their Hume and Lingard attentively. 'They will recognize, amongst the two peoples, and in 1828 as in 1640, the same causes of revolution, the same means, the same effects.'[23]

Not everyone, admittedly, and not even all of those who showed an interest in seventeenth-century English history, accepted the validity of the relentless quest for suggestive parallels between the French and English cases. Villemain, for example, prefaced his work on Cromwell by warning against 'the puerile interest in contemporary allusions' which his choice of topic was likely to provoke. Impartiality, he wrote, required the historian to 'scramble the resemblances' by dwelling on the differences of religion, of mores, of national traditions, 'which ensure that the same events, reproduced in another epoch, no longer amount to the same thing'.

> These external similarities, which the principal facts of the two cases seem to offer, vanish amidst the host of particular and local circumstances; or, if sometimes a certain strength of resemblance in events and passions still prevails once all the accidents of mores (*moeurs*), of countries and of religion have been carefully considered, this is a matter of purely historical interest, which it would have been no more permissible to suppress than deliberately to seek out.[24]

Others went further than Villemain in denouncing the superficiality of such comparisons. Genoude, writing in 1819, denounced 'the ignorance of these publicists born yesterday, who see coincidences (*rapprochements*) where an attentive spirit only notices differences. Nothing is similar, either in the position of the two countries, or in the principles of our liberals and of the Englishmen who made the revolution of 1688.' (Indeed the closest French equivalents of the Whigs of 1688 for Genoude were – despite the difference of religion – the Catholic *ligueurs* of the later sixteenth century.)[25] Mazure, six years later, wrote his own history of the 1688 Revolution specifically to refute the 'false and perfidious analogy' between

[22] Duc de Fitz-James in Chambre des pairs, 18 Jan. 1827, *Archives parlementaires de 1787 à 1860*, 2nd ser. (1800–60), XLIX, pp. 183–4; Louis-Gabriel-Ambroise, vicomte de Bonald, *Analogies de l'histoire de France et d'Angleterre, ou 1828 et 1640* (1829), in *Oeuvres de M. de Bonald* (7 vols., Paris, 1847–54), V, pp. 204–16. See also the député Lacroix-Laval's effort to use the fate of the Stuarts as an argument against reforms in departmental administration, in the Chambre des députés, 1 Apr. 1829, *Archives parlementaires*, LVIII, p. 88. On royalist interest in the Stuarts, see more generally Mansel, 'The influence of the later Stuarts'.

[23] Bonald, *Analogies*, p. 204.

[24] Abel-François Villemain, *Histoire de Cromwell, d'après les mémoires du temps et les recueils parlementaires* (2 vols., Paris, 1819), I, pp. vii–viii.

[25] Eugène Genoude, 'Des Stuarts et de la révolution de 1688', *Le Conservateur*, 5 (1819), pp. 116–17.

the two Restorations that opponents of the Bourbon regime, eager to imply the inevitability of a French 1688, were so fond of drawing. Mazure was no admirer of the Stuart Restoration, in the history of which he recognized 'a long and painful disappointment'. For him, however, the key to this dismal experience lay in the fact that the points at issue between king and parliament at the onset of the Civil War had remained unresolved when the Stuarts returned. In France, where the Charter of 1814 ensured precisely that alliance of royal power with 'the wishes, the liberties and the necessities of the present age' that had been absent in the England of 1660, the prospects were altogether rosier. Far from being necessary, a French 1688 would be 'a useless and unskillful crime'.[26]

Whether they stressed (like Villemain) the general methodological problems with establishing parallels between different historical situations, or (like Genoude and Mazure) the more specific differences between the two cases in question (contrasting England's religious revolution with France's social or political one, or the English Revolution's compatibility with aristocracy with France's assault on it, or the Stuart Restoration's failure to guarantee liberties with the Bourbon Restoration's constitutional safeguards), such writers stood out against a tendency to which many others readily succumbed. For Bonald, the comparisons that could be drawn between the two cases were founded on a basic similarity in the organic 'constitution' of the two political communities: 'Maladies whose source lies in the temperament must be the same for those whose temperaments are similar', he wrote, 'and the constitution is the temperament of the state just as the administration is its regimen (*régime*).'[27] For others, the assumption was perhaps rather that the two cases were illustrations of the same basic laws of historical development, or simply that revolutionary histories which displayed certain obvious points of resemblance (such as regicide, or the institution of military dictatorship) would tend to be marked by similar dangers or dilemmas. Whatever the nature of the assumed similarity, it was generally qualified by the perception of a basic difference: England's revolutionary process was held to be completed, France's still to be going on.[28] Appeal was made, in a largely one-way passage of insights, from an unstable and controversial French present to an English past whose fixed contours were legible in the pages of Hume and Clarendon.

At times, Frenchmen wrote as if seventeenth-century English history were a book in which their own future could be read quite straightforwardly. 'If you want to see the history of France written in advance', Stendhal wrote to his sister Pauline in 1815, 'read the last three volumes of the Stuarts, by Hume, or Rulhière's Poland.'[29] For Henri de Saint-Simon, writing in 1814 (and again in

[26] Mazure, *Histoire de la Révolution de 1688*, I, pp. v–viii. [27] Bonald, *Analogies*, p. 204.

[28] The belief that the events of the Glorious Revolution had marked the effective completion of a revolutionary sequence did not necessarily exclude the idea – which an observation of nineteenth-century reform agitations might encourage – that England now stood in need of further political evolution. [29] Stendhal [Henri Beyle], *Correspondance* (3 vols., Paris, 1962–8), I, p. 808.

1822), the structural correspondences between the two histories were sufficient to justify predictions of a quasi-mathematical rigidity:

> It is with series of facts as it is with series of numbers; after four terms that have been common to two series, the rest will be so indefinitely. Well, the revolutions of France and England, if one considers them as two series of facts, have five terms that are similar, and the fifth term in the French revolution is the present state of affairs. One can therefore say *with certainty*, that if there has been a sixth term in the English revolution, *there will be a sixth term of the same nature, corresponding to this one, in the French revolution*. The sixth term in the English revolution was the expulsion of the Stuarts.[30]

After such a lucid summary of the mathematics of the position, it may have surprised Saint-Simon's readers to be informed that the Bourbons could still hope to avoid dynastic catastrophe if they boldly embraced Saint-Simon's proposals for 'social reorganization'.[31]

In practice, not least because of the perils of censorship,[32] few Restoration writers were quite as explicit as Saint-Simon in eliciting the predictive implications of the Anglo-French comparison. Indeed the practical value of Stuart references as political weapons often lay not in what was openly stated, but in what was left hanging or ambiguously insinuated. Few of the readers of Armand Carrel's *Histoire de la contre-révolution en Angleterre sous Charles II et Jacques II* can seriously have doubted that its account of the iniquities of the Stuart Restoration was intended to allude also to Restoration French experience, and that the conclusion the English were said to have reached in 1688 – that royalty could only advantageously be preserved by separating it from the principle of hereditary legitimacy[33] – was meant to be taken to heart by the Frenchmen of 1827. Yet all Carrel actually said in his introduction was that people in France were interested in the outcome of England's counter-revolutionary movement 'as if there were' a great lesson to be learnt from it for their own times.[34] After that, the parallel was there to be guessed at, rather than spelt out.

[30] Claude-Henri, comte de Saint-Simon, *De la réorganisation de la société européenne ou de la nécessité et des moyens de rassembler les peuples de l'Europe en un seul corps politique, en conservant à chacun son indépendance nationale* (2nd edn, Paris, 1814), pp. 82–3. The italicization was not in the first edition, also of 1814. The words were again de-italicized, and the phrases 'of the same nature, corresponding to this one' removed altogether, when the passage appeared again in Saint-Simon's *Des Bourbons et des Stuarts* (1822), reproduced in *Oeuvres de Claude-Henri de Saint-Simon* (6 vols., Paris, 1868; reproduced Paris, 1966), VI, pp. 504–5.

[31] Claude-Henri, comte de Saint-Simon, *Suite à la brochure: des Bourbons et des Stuarts* (1822), in *Oeuvres*, VI, pp. 507–9.

[32] Thus Guizot, working on his *Histoire de la révolution d'Angleterre*, wrote to Barante on 20 Sept. 1824: 'Don't think that there will be any comparison of the two Restorations; it would indeed be very piquant, but the censors would certainly never let it pass.' Letter in Amable-Guillaume-Prosper Brugière, baron de Barante, *Souvenirs du baron de Barante, de l'Académie française, 1782–1866*, ed. Claude de Barante (8 vols., Paris, 1890–1901), III, p. 224.

[33] Armand Carrel, *Histoire de la contre-révolution en Angleterre sous Charles II et Jacques II* (Paris, 1827), p. 4.

[34] Ibid., p. 2.

In other cases, insinuated meanings lurked uncertainly in the shadows of open ones. Speaking in the Chambre des Députés in June 1828, the Liberal lawyer and politician Dupin *aîné* concluded his denunciation of the political influence of the Jesuits with the ringing cry: 'Gentlemen, the Jesuits were the ruin of the Stuarts; let us prevent the Jesuits from compromising the Bourbons.'[35] By presenting the Liberal attack on the Jesuits as necessary for the defence of the monarchy, Dupin's slogan avoided the charge of disloyalty, yet it contained an implicit warning to the monarch and his advisers that the survival of the dynasty depended on its not exhausting the patience and infringing the rights of the nation: the fate of James II hovered ominously in prospect.

Cautionary messages were not, however, the only ones that England's seventeenth-century history could be made to deliver. It could also be a source of confidence or optimism about France's political prospects. De Maistre in 1797 had used the example of 1660 to show how Providence could conjure a return to monarchical order that had seemed inconceivable only a year before.[36] Liberals like Constant and Mme de Staël would argue later, in similar vein but to opposing effect, that the example of England's dramatic recovery after 1688 from the degradation that had marked the reigns of Charles II and James II allowed France to entertain the hope of a similar liberal regeneration. De Staël's aim, in the couple of chapters of her *Considérations sur la révolution française* that dwelt on this issue, was to refute the reactionary suggestion that France was somehow fundamentally unsuited, by virtue either of its violent recent history or of the innate frivolity of its people, to an English-style regime of constitutional liberty. The present superiority of the English in the matter of liberty was the effect, she argued, not of some intrinsic temperamental or historical disposition that the unstable French could never hope to match, but simply of the liberal institutions that had been established in England after 1688. Prior to that date, England's history had been at least as soiled by violence and oppression and illegality as France's: 'Who could have believed, less than two centuries ago, that a regular government could ever have been established among these factious islanders (*factieux insulaires*). In those days, on the continent, they were always held to be incapable of it.'[37] The history of the Stuart Restoration showed a country still to all appearances hopelessly mired in barbarity and servitude. Yet England had found herself, a mere two years after the hideous brutalities of Jefferies, launched upon 'that period of a hundred and twenty-eight years up to the present day, in which there has not been a session of parliament that has not brought an improvement (*perfectionnement*) of the social order'.[38] The lesson the French should draw from a

[35] Dupin *aîné* in Chambre des députés, 21 June 1828, *Archives parlementaires*, 2nd ser. (1800–60), LV, p. 235.

[36] De Maistre, *Considérations*, pp. 182–3.

[37] De Staël, *Considérations*, p. 512. See also Benjamin Constant, *Principes de politique applicables à tous les gouvernements (version de 1806–1810)*, ed. Etienne Hofmann (Paris, 1997), p. 427.

[38] De Staël, *Considérations*, pp. 517–21.

contemplation of this passage of English history was not the lesson of their own unfitness, but one of faith in their own resources: 'From whatever angle one considers each nation, one always finds the thing that makes representative government not just possible, but necessary, for that nation.'[39] England supplied a constitutional model that France might possibly seek to emulate; more importantly, however, it supplied an example, to be taken to heart in France's present situation, of a troubled nation seizing the opportunity to recognize and secure its own liberal destiny.

References to Stuart or Cromwellian history thus had a range of strategic uses in French politics. At a more immediate tactical level, too, they could serve a variety of purposes. English history supplied Frenchmen with an assortment of materials that were usable in making sense of their own times and of their own position: scenarios to recognize, episodes in which to see the analogies of present happenings, roles – whether heroic or tragic or villainous – in which to cast themselves and their contemporaries. Identifying the putative French equivalents of Charles I or James II was easy enough, and parallels between Cromwell and Napoleon were a commonplace of both liberal and royalist literature,[40] but references to other, less prominent, figures from English history also had their uses. Constant, in 1819, cited the earl of Sunderland as an exemplary specimen of the perfidious courtier, urging his monarch towards tyranny before abandoning him in his hour of need: 'History cries out to princes: Be on your guard, you have more than one Sunderland around you.'[41] Eight years later, evoking Shaftesbury's cynical exploitation of anti-Catholic sentiment under Charles II, the ultraroyalist Fitz-James gave warning: 'Genius aside, Shaftesburys are not lacking in France.'[42] In these cases, the examples were negative, the messages cautionary. In others, English references served, more positively, to justify or dignify particular political comportments. Guizot, for example, defended the decision of his *doctrinaire* friends not to resign their posts as *conseillers d'état* in the face of the ultraroyalist electoral upsurge of 1817 by likening it to Southampton's and Clarendon's decision, in 1665, to fight on as members of a government now containing their political enemies.[43] Molé, later, would justify his rather cautious

[39] Ibid., p. 523.

[40] See Lutaud, *Des révolutions d'Angleterre à la Révolution française*, pp. 241–62; also Maurice Descotes, 'L'obsession de Napoléon dans le Cromwell de Victor Hugo', *Archives des lettres modernes*, 78 (1967), pp. 3–57. For a Restoration example, see the 'Parallèle entre Cromwell et Napoléon, entre la révolution d'Angleterre et la révolution française', appended as Book v to Pierre-Hyacinthe Azaïs, *Jugement impartial sur Napoléon, ou considérations philosophiques sur son caractère, son élévation, sa chute, et les résultats de son gouvernement* (Paris, 1820), pp. 205–304.

[41] Benjamin Constant, *Recueil d'articles: le Mercure, la Minerve et la Renommée*, ed. Ephraïm Harpaz (2 vols., Geneva, 1972), II, p. 883 (article in *Minerve française*, 24 July 1819); also reproduced in Benjamin Constant, *Mélanges de littérature et de politique* (Paris, 1829), p. 341.

[42] Duc de Fitz-James in Chambre des pairs, 18 Jan. 1827, *Archives parlementaires*, XLIX, pp. 184.

[43] François Guizot, *Du gouvernement de la France depuis la Restauration, et du ministère actuel* (Paris, 1820), pp. 43–6.

oppositional attitude in July 1830 by saying that he had always understood resistance to arbitrary power as Hampden had understood it.[44]

Sometimes, the imaginative linkages coupling contemporary politicians to emblematic figures from the English past were carried further. Augustin Thierry saw in Lafayette the replication of the gallant Republican model of character previously embodied in Algernon Sidney and in Colonel Hutchinson.[45] (The Liberal leader in the Sarthe, Charles Goyet, was more alert to the dangers of allowing oneself to be cast in the role of a Whig martyr, informing Constant on one occasion that he had no intention of playing the role of Sidney.)[46] Such habits of identification were not confined to the Liberal camp. Lally-Tolendal's essay on the life of Strafford, first published in 1795, was reissued in 1814, complete with the original dedication which alluded to the 'thousand traits of resemblance in their character, conduct, misfortune and death', which made the case of Strafford evocative of that of the author's own father, condemned to death for his surrender of Pondicherry in 1761.[47] But if the figure of the 'man of virtue condemned to the death of the guilty' – and abandoned to his fate by the royal master he had faithfully served – had a private significance for the author, the depiction of Strafford as a statesman striving manfully to reconcile his twin devotions to royal authority and to public liberty was also (as the work's 1814 editor indicated in a preface) resonant with meanings for that brand of contemporary liberal royalism of which Lally himself was a distinguished advocate.[48] For another prominent liberal royalist, Chateaubriand, Lord Falkland was the object of admiration: 'He was endowed with the threefold genius of letters, of arms and of politics. He was faithful to the muses in the encampment, to liberty in the royal palace, devoted to an unfortunate monarch while recognizing that monarch's faults' – in short, a tragic hero nicely fitted to Chateaubriand's self-image. Reports of Falkland courting death on the battlefield of Newbury, 'dressed as for a feast-day', added to his wistfully romantic charms.[49]

As Laurence Bongie has observed, the tracing of parallels between French and English revolutionary histories 'allowed the chronicler of current happenings to speak with the borrowed authority of the ages'; it provided a 'pre-fabricated dramatic structure' that could be used to make sense of France's present

[44] Molé, *Le comte Molé*, v, p. 183.

[45] Augustin Thierry, *Dix ans d'études historiques* (Brussels, 1835), pp. x (1835 Preface), 86 ('Sur la vie du colonel Hutchinson', originally in *Censeur européen*, 17 Apr. 1820).

[46] Letter of Goyet to Constant, 28 Dec. 1820, in Ephraïm Harpaz, ed., *Benjamin Constant et Goyet de la Sarthe: correspondance, 1818–1822* (Geneva, 1973), p. 464.

[47] Lally-Tolendal, *Essai* (1814 edn), p. xxi (1795 'Epître dédicatoire').

[48] Ibid., pp. ii–v (1814 editorial preface).

[49] François-René, vicomte de Chateaubriand, *Les quatre Stuarts* (1828), in his *Oeuvres complètes*, new edn (12 vols., Paris, 1861), x, pp. 372–3 (mistakenly giving Naseby as the place of death). In his *Essai sur la littérature anglaise* (1836), Chateaubriand would carry his admiration for Falkland to the point of rhetorical self-annihilation: 'I have longed a thousand times over to have been that perfect model of enlightenment, of generosity, of independence, and never to have appeared on earth in my own form and under my own name' (*Oeuvres complètes*, xii, p. 625).

predicaments and future prospects.[50] In practice, of course, the use of this referential template was not without its problems: Frenchmen struggled to balance perceptions of similarity with perceptions of difference, to weigh the prospects of repetition against the possibilities of divergence. In theory, England's history supplied stable points of reference, in relation to which France's own development could be mapped or predicted; in practice, changing French circumstances brought different elements of English history into focus at different moments, sometimes requiring hasty revisions of earlier interpretations. I have shown, in another article, how the messages Benjamin Constant drew from his reading of seventeenth-century English history shifted, with sometimes bewildering rapidity, as he fought to keep abreast of France's instability, cognitively as well as politically. The grim image of the Stuart Restoration Constant had formed in his writings of the 1790s persisted; its implications depended, however, on whether Constant chose to focus on the resemblances between the French and English situations or their dissimilarities, on the dangers of reaction or the possibilities of liberty. In practice, Stuart history was used now to support the rejection of a Bourbon Restoration (before 1814 and during the Hundred Days), now to embrace the possibility of a French William III (in the person of Bernadotte in 1814), now to affirm France's good fortune in having the chance to learn by England's mistakes and establish a viable constitutional monarchy under Bourbon auspices (during the first and second Restorations).[51] Beneath the superficially confident virtuosity of Constant's repeated adjustments can be glimpsed the perplexity of a man struggling to get reliable readings from a navigational apparatus made for calmer conditions. Powerful as a source of polemically effective juxtapositions for use in day-to-day political exchanges, the analogical mode of reasoning revealed its limitations when required to anchor an understanding of the momentary realities of politics in a deeper appreciation of France's historical position. Those who were increasingly seeking, during this period, to found the post-revolutionary order on a new kind of historical understanding could not but be conscious of these inadequacies. In the writings of men like Augustin Thierry, Guizot, and Chateaubriand, we find not just a reconfiguration of the relationship between French and English histories but a reassessment of the historical standpoint from which insights into this relationship were to be formulated. Those insights were to be deepened at least partly by rescuing France, historiographically as well as politically, from dependence on England's example.

In the articles on English history that he published in the *Censeur européen* between 1817 and 1820, and that later found a place in his *Dix ans d'études historiques*, Thierry sought to strip away the mythical aura of perfection with which that

[50] Bongie, *David Hume: prophet of the counter-revolution*, p. 80.

[51] See Geoffrey Cubitt, 'Revolution, reaction, restoration: the meanings and uses of seventeenth-century English history in the political thinking of Benjamin Constant, 1797–1830', *European Review of History/Revue européenne d'histoire* (forthcoming, 2007) for detail; also Salmon, 'The French Romantics on comparative revolution', pp. 382–3.

history, and the constitution that was its most celebrated outcome, were in his view too easily invested in liberal thought.[52] England's constitutional arrangements were not, he argued, the product of some uniquely enlightened and far-sighted collective effort of the English people to establish a perfect working model of mixed government that other nations could do no better than to replicate; they were simply the present outcome of the pragmatic struggles between conflicting groups within society that had formed the essence of English history since the time of the Norman Conquest.[53] Each phase in these struggles was to be understood not as a moment in the realization of some abstract constitutional ideal, but as a moment of conflict between concrete social interests, some labouring to evade or overturn and others to maintain or re-establish the constraints embodied in existing relationships of dominance and subordination. The significance of this history, and of its seventeenth-century chapters in particular, lay neither in any radiant splendour of eventual achievement nor in the deeds of the 'great men' to whose fortunes and characters conventional historiography was so sycophantically attentive, but in the spectacle of a people's dogged struggle for liberty: 'what happened in the English Revolution was not about Charles Stuart or about Oliver Cromwell; it was about the English people and about liberty'.[54] Whig historiography crucially distorted what it claimed to celebrate: the real story of the English Revolution was a story of frustration – of a popular impulse towards liberty crushed by Cromwell, brutally denied under the Restoration, and hypocritically stifled in 1688. Far from being the 'national revolution' which in Whig mythology marked the definitive establishment of the liberties the nation had fought for in the 1640s, the Glorious Revolution had been no more than a coup by self-interested politicians, watched in powerless disenchantment by the people in whose name it was cynically justified. Founded on 'the strange alliance of grand offices, fat profits, and all the apparatus of excessive power with the words of liberty and fatherland', the Whiggish movement of 1688 had found its apt expression in the toothless pretensions of the Bill of Rights, 'a feeble collection of a few principles delivered up without guarantee to the discretion of power …, and of which power has since torn up all the pages with impunity'. The popular reform agitations of the present day were a further confirmation, in Thierry's view, that 1688 had been a revolution neither by nor for

[52] Thierry, *Dix ans*, pp. 11–15 ('Vue des révolutions d'Angleterre', originally in *Censeur européen*, 1817); also pp. 157–63 for the later essay 'Sur l'histoire de la constitution anglaise, à propos de l'ouvrage de Henry Hallam, intitulé: *Constitutional history of England*' (originally in *Revue trimestrielle*, 1827), in which Thierry again criticized the 'kind of philosophical wonderment' (pp. 161–4) with which English constitutional history was enveloped.

[53] Thierry, *Dix ans*, pp. 12–14, 16ff ('Vue des révolutions d'Angleterre').

[54] Thierry, *Dix ans*, pp. 72, and 60–72 generally ('Sur le caractère des grands hommes de la révolution de 1640, à propos de l'*Histoire de Cromwell*, par M. Villemain', originally in *Censeur européen*, 21 June and 12 July 1819). Thierry praised Villemain for not having 'neglected the existence of the English people, as primary agent and primary object of England's Revolution' (pp. 72–3), and for having 'placed before our eyes, alongside the sad spectacle of liberty's defeats, the tableau of her various struggles, and of the virtues which defended her' (p. 65).

the people.[55] In short, just as England's constitution supplied no blueprint of constitutional excellence for other nations to follow, so its history supplied no example of a triumphant liberal revolution for them to applaud and emulate. Indeed, Thierry argued in a striking revision of the usual Franco-English parallels, France had already, and in very recent memory, had its 1688: Frenchmen who had looked on as the returning Napoleon of 1815 clothed his personal rule in the rhetoric of the popular will would know how the English had been treated a century and a quarter before.[56] The implication was obvious: neither in France nor in England was liberty yet a secure acquisition; in both, it had still to be fought for.

For Thierry, then, the significance of England's revolutionary history for Frenchmen lay not in a need to recognize England's liberal primacy, but simply in the possibilities of emotional identification and moral inspiration – and indeed in the elements of actual commonality – that derived from the basic similarity of the two histories. In France, as in England, contemporary conflicts had their roots in ancient conquest (of Gauls by Franks, of Saxons by Normans), the initial racial antagonisms mutating over time into conflicts between social classes.[57] In both cases, the struggle for liberty had been focused and brought to a head, in recent centuries, by a confrontation with monarchical absolutism. These similarities, relating to the basic thematics of social conflict rather than to the precise sequencing of events in the two histories, were sufficiently pronounced for developments in the struggle for liberty in one country to have repercussions in the other, and for bonds of sympathy and solidarity to have developed that transcended national boundaries. In an enthusiastic review of Lucy Hutchinson's memoirs of her husband, Thierry cited an instance of English knights brutally suppressing a French serf rebellion:

> Thus, in spite of their quarrels, the nobles of every country believed themselves to be brothers, and the gentleman belonged, above all, to the nation of gentlemen. A man of liberty, we ourselves belong, in the same way, to the nation of free men; and those who, far from our own country, fight for independence, and those who, far from our own country, have died for her, are our brothers and our heroes.
>
> On these grounds, the life of Colonel Hutchinson, English patriot of 1640, belongs to us as well as to England; for it is our cause that was at issue in the war which Charles I declared on parliament; it is to bear witness to our cause that Hampden, Sidney, Henry

[55] Thierry, *Dix ans*, pp. 98–102, 118–19, 125–6 ('Sur la révolution de 1688', originally in *Censeur européen*, 5, 14, 17 Nov. 1819).

[56] Ibid., pp. 119–20.

[57] This understanding of French history was summarized in such essays as 'Sur l'antipathie de race qui divise la nation française' and 'Histoire véritable de Jacques Bonhomme', both originally published in the *Censeur européen* in 1820, and reprinted in *Dix ans*. On the Gaulish/Frankish theme in the works of Thierry and of his brother Amédée Thierry, and in early nineteenth-century writing more generally, see Eugen Weber, 'Nos ancêtres les gaulois', in his *My France: politics, culture, myth* (Cambridge, MA, 1991), esp. pp. 25–9; Krzysztof Pomian, 'Franks and Gauls', in Pierre Nora, ed., *Realms of memory: the construction of the French past*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman (3 vols., New York, 1996–8), I, esp. pp. 51–61.

Vane and Colonel Hutchinson himself have perished. His *Memoirs*, long unknown, must have the same value in our eyes as the discovery of some legend telling of the merits and courage of a martyr in foreign lands had for the first Christians.[58]

England's patriot heroes were fellow sufferers and honoured precursors in a struggle that had yet, on either side of the Channel, to be brought to a close.

In Thierry's early Restoration essays, the establishment of this kind of linkage between French and English struggles for liberty was still premised on a fairly basic observation of similarities between the two histories. A more fundamental reconfiguration of the historical relationship between French and English revolutionary experiences would be suggested only with the publication in 1826 of Guizot's preface to his *Histoire de la révolution d'Angleterre*.[59] Like Thierry, Guizot in his opening passage affirmed the essential connectedness of England's and France's revolutions: 'they are two victories in the same war and to the profit of the same cause; theirs is a common glory; they enhance each other rather than eclipsing each other'. He also, however, explored a more dynamic aspect of that relationship: for him, France's revolution 'surpasses' England's, but in doing so does not 'depreciate' it.[60] At first sight, this might be taken for a straightforward assertion that England's revolution began what France's finished, or that the French had built on earlier English achievements, but closer reading suggests a slightly different meaning: the point is less that France's revolution presupposes England's than that the true significance of England's emerges only once France's is taken into account. This was made explicit in a remarkable claim a few pages later: 'Such, in fact, is the analogy between the two revolutions, that the first would never have been properly understood if the second had not broken out.'[61]

Textually, this sentence marked the point of juncture between two different (but in Guizot's mind closely linked) strands of argument. The passage that followed it was aimed against the historiographical dominance of Hume in particular, and of British historians in general. The attack proceeds from an affirmation of the importance of experience in priming an understanding of analogous historical conditions. For Guizot, it was the experience of the French Revolution which had produced the feeling, on both sides of the Channel, that 'Hume no longer suffices for anyone'; whatever merits the latest wave of historical writing on the English Revolution possessed were attributable to the 'vivid illumination' which a consciousness of recent French events cast upon the earlier

[58] Thierry, *Dix ans*, pp. 81–2 ('Sur la vie du colonel Hutchinson').

[59] The publication of Guizot's *Histoire* eventually extended from 1826 to 1856: for general discussion, see Olivier Lutaud, 'Guizot historien, politique, écrivain devant les révolutions d'Angleterre', in *Actes du Colloque François Guizot (Paris 22–25 octobre 1974)* (Paris, 1976), pp. 239–72; Philippe Raynaud, 'La révolution anglaise', in Valensise, ed., *François Guizot et la culture politique*, pp. 69-81; Laurent Theis, 'Presentation de l'Histoire de la révolution d'Angleterre', in François Guizot, *Histoire de la révolution d'Angleterre 1625–1660*, ed. Laurent Theis (Paris, 1997), pp. xxxv–xxiv; Douglas Johnson, *Guizot: aspects of French history* (London, 1963), pp. 352–66.

[60] Guizot, *Histoire de la révolution d'Angleterre*, ed. Theis, 'Préface de la première édition', p. 1.

[61] Ibid., p. 6.

history.[62] The French rather than the English were best placed to reap the benefit of this illumination. While possibly inferior to some of its English counterparts in erudition, a work like Villemain's *Histoire de Cromwell* possessed a shrewdness of practical judgement, an intuitive understanding of revolutionary conditions, that a Lingard or a Brodie or a Laing could never hope to match:

> The point is that, leaving aside any advantages of talent, M. Villemain has had the advantages of situation: he has viewed and judged England's Revolution from within the French Revolution; he has found, in the events and men that have been deployed before his own eyes, the key to those he has had to paint; he has drawn life from his own times, and transported it into the times he wished to resuscitate.[63]

The English might study their own Revolution; it was the French, conditioned by their own revolutionary experience, who had the capacity imaginatively to understand it.

If this strand in Guizot's argument stressed the importance of the French Revolution in triggering a certain kind of empathetic imagination, the other – and preceding – strand dwelt rather on the role of French events in the development of a larger sense of historical perspective. Here, going beyond Thierry's simpler understanding of French and English co-participation in the continuing struggle for liberty, Guizot gave expression to a more assertive and dynamic conception of history as a developmental process. Neither the French nor the English Revolutions could be properly understood, he affirmed, until both were placed analytically within the frameworks of 'general history' – viewed, in other words, not as freakish episodes standing outside the normal continuous processes of historical development, but as events whose whole significance lay in the furthering of those processes. To adopt this standpoint was to move beyond the superficial focus on contingent similarities and differences by which discussions of the relationship between the two national cases were too often distracted, and to perceive their more fundamental connectedness. What 'general history' revealed was the basic movement of modern societies towards the destruction of arbitrarily supervening forms of authority – be they royal or aristocratic or clerical – and towards the assumption by the public (Guizot was careful not to say the 'people') of effective control over its own affairs. This movement might have different emphases and achieve different results in different times and places, but these differences were subordinate to the overarching unity of historical development. Since this development was inherently progressive, its essential characteristics became clearer over time: much that the English Revolution had tentatively begun, or imperfectly perceived, or been frustrated in achieving, could be properly appreciated only when seen to have been carried further in France's later and more comprehensive revolutionary confrontation. It was thus – through their relocation within the progressive frameworks of 'general history' – that the true

[62] Ibid., pp. 6–8. [63] Ibid., p. 9.

significance and essential unity of direction of the two revolutionary movements became apparent.[64]

The confident liberal progressivism of Guizot's historical vision contrasts interestingly with the ambiguities that are uncovered in Chateaubriand's efforts to connect the French and English histories. Few men have been more manically set upon the detection of multiple parallels between different revolutionary histories than the youthful Chateaubriand of the *Essai historique, politique et moral sur les révolutions anciennes et modernes* (1797), a text whose essential purpose had been to deflate the spirit of innovation by showing that there was absolutely nothing about modern revolutionary experience that was not depressingly familiar from earlier cases.[65] Reissuing the text in 1826, Chateaubriand was scathingly critical in a stream of footnotes of his own earlier comparativist excesses, and pointedly distanced himself from his previous suggestion that the human spirit was condemned to a tediously unproductive kind of circular movement: on the contrary, he now claimed, 'it moves in concentric circles which widen as they go'.[66] How this shift in general historical attitude might modify Chateaubriand's understanding of the specific relationship between the English and the French Revolutions was not yet fully apparent. The 1826 edition still retained a passage which compared the revolutionary personalities of the 1790s unfavourably to those of the 1640s: not until the *Essai sur la littérature anglaise* a decade later would Chateaubriand seem to reverse this emphasis, conjuring a series of juxtapositions (between Hampden and Mirabeau, between English factions and Jacobin clubs, between English royalist farmers and Vendéan peasants) to contrast the relative parochialism of the English revolutionary experience with the grandeur of a French one 'carried through by a nation far more closely connected to the general destiny of the world'.[67] In the meantime, however, the Chateaubriand of 1826 explicitly reasserted his belief in a more direct kind of historical connection: the regicide of 1649 had been not just the precedent, but the inspiration and the precondition, for that of 1792. 'If Charles had not been decapitated in London, Louis would very likely not have been guillotined in Paris.'[68]

It was this connecting thread of regicidal example that Chateaubriand had in mind, two years later, when, in the last sentence of *Les quatre Stuarts* (1828), he evoked 'the contagious fatality attached to the race of the Stuarts'.[69] Louis XVI had fallen victim to a legacy of violence and intransigence whose roots lay at least

[64] Ibid., pp. 1–6.

[65] François-René, vicomte de Chateaubriand, *Essai historique, politique et moral sur les révolutions anciennes et modernes considérées dans leurs rapports avec la Révolution Française* (1796, reissued 1826), in François-René de Chateaubriand, *Essai sur les révolutions. Génie du christianisme* (Paris, 1978), p. 15 (Preface to 1826 edition).

[66] Ibid., p. 432 (1826 edition note). The self-critical notes are scattered throughout the 1826 text.

[67] Ibid., pp. 339–40; Chateaubriand, *Essai sur la littérature anglaise*, in his *Oeuvres complètes*, XI, pp. 699–700, and 699–711 for the comparisons.

[68] Chateaubriand, *Essai historique*, p. 335 (with footnote: 'Je le crois encore aujourd'hui').

[69] Chateaubriand, *Les quatre Stuarts*, p. 447. See, equally, the reference to 'the concatenation of events' and to 'the complicity of the crime of 1649 with that of 1793' (p. 399).

partially in England's seventeenth-century conflicts. A more detailed reading of *Les quatre Stuarts* reveals, however, a complex and at times ambiguous (and perhaps wilfully elusive) understanding of the relationship between French and English revolutionary histories. Chateaubriand's narrative of Stuart history is, on one level, a tale of a dynasty tragically doomed by its hereditary absolutist ambitions and by the accumulating legacy of vengeful resentment that accompanies the frustration of those ambitions: the 'contagious fatality' passes from Stuart to Stuart before passing from Stuart to Bourbon. Yet it is a 'fatality' curiously dependent on the contingencies of personality and the accidents of succession: had either of the elder brothers of Charles I survived to inherit the throne, the reader is informed, the whole history of the dynasty might have been different.[70] The tension between destiny and accident, between transmitted legacies and personal choices, is part of the weave of Chateaubriand's narrative. Running across it, however, is a recurrent meditation on the contribution of revolutionary processes to the gradual progressive development of society. Here the tension is between the violent actions and turbulent rhetoric of the revolutionary moment and the 'truth' that successful revolutions eventually bequeath. 'Every political disturbance that affects a people is founded on a truth which survives that disturbance', Chateaubriand affirms; once the sound and fury has passed, 'the political fact that a revolution bequeaths is that revolution in its entirety (*le fait politique qui reste d'une révolution est toute cette révolution*)'.[71] The emergence of this hard-won 'political fact' – in both the French and English cases, the consolidation of liberty – is a process of difficult collective learning, in which the atrocities and violences of the revolutionary moment may themselves have a part to play:

> These crimes and these miseries sometimes benefit subsequent generations, through the energy they give them, the prejudices they relieve them of, the hatreds from which they deliver them, the enlightenment they shed amongst them. These crimes and these miseries, considered as lessons from God, instruct the nations, make them prudent, strengthen them in principles which they would always have been tempted to regard as insufficient if the painful experiment of liberty under another form had not been made.[72]

The significance of the sideways references to French revolutionary history that periodically interrupt or traverse the flow of Chateaubriand's account of Stuart and Cromwellian history stems from their connection to these thematic concerns. These references perform a variety of different functions. Some of them serve to highlight differences between the French and English experiences – sometimes differences in the detail of the action (as when Cromwell's refusal of the crown is compared with Bonaparte's embracing of one), sometimes ones of a more general kind (as when the contrast between the murderous internecine conflicts of the French Convention and the relatively restrained management of hostilities in the Long Parliament is attributed to the difference between the religious sentiments of

[70] Ibid., p. 437. [71] Ibid., p. 353; see also p. 350. [72] Ibid., p. 372.

the latter and the impiety of the former).[73] On other occasions, however, the comparisons serve to highlight similarities, and in doing so both to reinforce Chateaubriand's interpretations of England's revolutionary process and to confer on these interpretations the status or aura of general insights. Thus, notions such as that revolutionary parties are more successfully resisted by those who manoeuvre flexibly than by those who directly confront them, that the revolutionaries of the initial moment are overrun by those who come later, or that moderate doctrines that are cast aside in the more confrontational phases of revolution are frequently returned to once these confrontations have run their course, are advanced as elements in a cumulative legacy of insight, to be derived from the joint contemplation of French and English examples.[74]

A third set of juxtapositions, however, seems designed to establish a more symbolic – if also, somehow, a more intimate – kind of connection between the two revolutionary dramas. These are woven, for the most part, around what is undoubtedly the central focus of Chateaubriand's English narrative – the issue of regicide. The author pauses at the opening of Charles I's trial on 20 January 1649 to remind the reader that it was on the same day 104 years later that Louis XVI received his sentence of death.[75] Charles's last interview with his son and daughter prompts the recollection of Louis's similar parting from his own children; a disparagement of Ludlow's efforts to ridicule Charles's final communion with Bishop Juxon brings as echo a reference to Cléry's falsification of Louis's own last exchanges; the impression made by the circulation of *Eikon Basiliké* after Charles's death is compared with that produced by Louis's last will and testament.[76] Too prominent to be dismissed as mere asides, such references from one regicidal drama to another serve to operate a kind of imaginative suggestion: their function is less to establish stable structures of comparison between two histories, or to build a particular causal connection between them, than to hint, via coincidences of detail, at deeper connections of fate and meaning. Just as the theme of fatality is developed by the highlighting of coincidences within the English narrative – as when Chateaubriand finds 'a striking example of divine justice' in the fact that it was the same Juxon who warned Charles I not to sanction Strafford's execution who would attend him at his own, and a striking example of 'fatality' in the fact that Hampden and Cromwell, on the brink of emigrating to America, had been prevented by a royal proclamation forbidding the unlicensed transportation of passengers[77] – so this dwelling on Anglo-French coincidences implies a dramatic structure that links rather than separates French and English histories.

The ambiguities in *Les quatre Stuarts* are unresolved: its notes of historical confidence – in truths as the residues of revolutionary turmoil and in moderate liberalism as the pragmatic lesson that revolutionary experiences ultimately bequeath – are insidiously called in question by the persistent rhetoric of contagious

[73] Ibid., pp. 415, 410.
[74] Ibid., pp. 369, 372, 379.
[75] Ibid., p. 385.
[76] Ibid., pp. 389, 390, 401.
[77] Ibid., pp. 370, 375.

tragic destiny. On the face of it, the conclusions are optimistic: 'The Stuarts have passed away, the Bourbons will remain, because in bringing us back their glory, they have adopted the recent liberties painfully born of our misfortunes.'[78] France and the Bourbons, it is implied, will be the beneficiaries of the moderating lessons the Stuarts were tragically incapable of learning. Textually, however, this conclusion does not give closure; it is followed by the evocation of James II's melancholy exile, and the text is finished in contemplation of his tomb at Saint-Germain and of the Bourbon sepulchres at Saint-Denis which the Revolution had desecrated.[79] The suspicion lingers of a tragic destiny perhaps not yet exhausted, a legacy of conflict perhaps not so readily to be transcended. The relationship between England's past and France's present remains elusive, but uneasy.

In January 1830, Armand Carrel rebuked Lacretelle for having begun to publish a history of France's Restoration before the story was over: 'the fight is still going on, and our restoration does not belong to history in the same way as that of the English does'.[80] The remark was double-edged: the ostensibly deferred judgement was itself a judgement on a regime in need of termination. Six months later, the July Revolution brought closure, both narrative and political. On 24 August, a front-page article by Sainte-Beuve in *Le Globe* reflected on the already common identification of 1830 with England's 1688. Acknowledging a certain 'historical parallelism' between France's political trajectory since 1789 and England's in the seventeenth century, the article warned against concluding, on the basis of this similarity, that France's current situation was a replica of England's in 1688, and that its best way forward lay in imitating the social and constitutional arrangements that England had developed. England's Revolution had been religious in its basic character, France's political; England's compatible with social privilege, France's geared to civil equality. The solutions of 1688 were a seventeenth-century English response to seventeenth-century English conditions, and themselves had left problems which England, in the interests of its own further development, today had still to resolve. France's condition was different – less parochial, socially and politically less entrammelled by survivals of a traditional order. Its future was its own, and not to be compromised by misconceived imitations of a foreign model: 'let us not draw conclusions from a special and entirely insular revolution for a revolution that is truly European and human', Sainte-Beuve urged his readers.[81] Thus did one organ of liberal opinion seek to draw a line under the cross-referential speculations of the Restoration period, balancing an awareness of historical similarities with faith in the progressive destiny of a nation whose present and future were now liberated from the oppressive shadow of England's example. For some, no doubt, France's

[78] Ibid., pp. 442–3.

[79] Ibid., pp. 446–7.

[80] Armand Carrel, *Oeuvres politiques et littéraires*, ed. E. Littré & A. Paulin (5 vols., Paris, 1857–9), v, p. 220 (from *Le National*, 24 Jan. 1830).

[81] 'L'Angleterre en 1688 et la France en 1830', in *Le Globe*, 6, no. 184 (24 Aug. 1830), reproduced in Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve, *Premiers lundis* (3 vols., Paris, 1874–5), I, pp. 340–8.

revolutionary history had now reached a point of fulfilment, leaving it, like England, to reap the benefits of stably established constitutional order. Others, less enamoured of the Orleanist status quo, would be moved to question the validity of a comparison which allowed the Revolution of July to bathe presumptuously in the reflected glory of England's durable liberal achievement.[82] Others yet would yearn, more radically, for further revolutionary advances whose models would now be drawn not from England's history, but either from France's own revolutionary past or from some socialist vision of the future. The English revolutionary moment of the French political imagination began to fade.

The uses of seventeenth-century English history under the Bourbon Restoration had been, as we have seen, varied and multifaceted. At times, they were undoubtedly tactical, even perhaps cynically opportunistic, or merely trite and superficial; at other times – without it always being easy to tell the difference – they reflected a deeper, and at times an innovative, aspiration to ground the politics of the present in a firmer comprehension of the historical logic of France's revolutionary development. Falteringly or confidently, commentators and polemicists strove to negotiate the perils of an uncertain national destiny by finding points of reference and bases for comparison in a history sufficiently removed to become an object of reflection, but sufficiently similar to prompt sensations of intimate recognition. England's Stuart and Cromwellian history supplied an imaginative framework for the describing of France's contemporary difficulties and antagonisms, for the debating of its prospects, for the articulation both of the hopes and of the forebodings by which its political development was overshadowed. In engaging with this framework, Frenchmen were driven also, in some cases, to reflect further on the ways in which different histories may be connected, on the empathetic appropriations that nations may make of each other's experiences, on the problematic definitions of similarity and difference, and on the possibilities but also the limitations of a comparative historical understanding.

[82] See, for example, Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte's 'Fragments historiques: 1688 et 1830', written while a prisoner in the fortress of Ham in 1841, and reproduced in Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, *Oeuvres*, ed. Charles-Edouard Temblaire (3 vols., Paris, 1848), II, pp. 9–108.