

within the Marxian analysis of capitalism, which he does very well. The final chapter of the book covers Friedrich Engels's analysis of the rise of British capitalism, work that is very commendable in itself. Pilling manages to put it together in a way that demonstrates the strength of Engels's analysis.

In conclusion, this book is a valuable contribution that presents one of the stronger interpreters of Marxian analysis. It might be especially useful for people who are unfamiliar with Marx, except for encounters with some of the more popular interpretations. In particular, Pilling's presentation of Marx from the standpoint of what Marx actually said about his method of analysis has the potential to clear up considerable confusion.

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## REFERENCE

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Evert Schoolr, *Jean-Baptiste Say: Revolutionary, Entrepreneur, Economist* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. xix, 210, \$150. ISBN 978-0-415-66517-9.

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I would like to begin this review with a small confession. Sometimes when on-line chats go quiet or conversation at gatherings of historians of economic thought slows, or even when I meet with students and have not prepared a lecture as well as I ought to have done, I innocently raise the topic of Say's Law. Words generally start to flow; the action picks up. When I used to edit this journal, and another earnest manuscript purported to unveil the *true* meaning of the REAL Law of Markets, I could do little but sigh and wonder to which referee I wanted to give the honor. Surely it is a bit heretical for the author of a monograph on Jean-Baptiste Say to make such scurrilous comments.

I feel that I have found a soulmate in Evert Schoolr. Jean-Baptiste Say is not an archetype and he is not an icon. He is simply a man of integrity who explored an interest in political economy during one of the most uneasy political periods in modern times. I recognize that is an extreme statement; the past 200 years have seen many periods of extreme upheaval, but surely we can count the French Revolution and its aftermath among them. More than anything else, Say was much more than someone who formalized a particular version of the Law of Markets. Anyone worth reading on the topic of Jean-Baptiste Say knows that, and I count Evert Schoolr among those worth reading on this topic.

Schoolr has not written a typical history of economics treatise. He has written a short and accessible, yet balanced, intellectual biography. In Schoolr's pages you will find Say the youthful republican and *ideologue*, editor of *La Décade*, and intimate of

society hostesses and politically moderate intellectuals. An Enlightenment intellectual, he championed anti-slavery causes, dabbled in amateur poetry and literature, and was drawn to the writing of Jeremy Bentham and Adam Smith. An early affinity with the new Emperor Bonaparte led to his short tenure in the Tribunate, but Say soon drifted away from formal political involvement. He spent a few years trying to establish a cotton mill to support his young and growing family, which no doubt led to a refinement of his early interest in entrepreneurship and a greater acknowledgment of the nature of risk. School documents Say's infatuation with the United States, and the development and refinement of his political and philosophical position during the Restoration. Finally, he presents Say's growing international reputation and late recognition at home. Among Say's greatest intellectual disappointments was his inability to obtain membership in the Académie Française. It was, of course, a handicap that Bonaparte had abolished the second class (moral and political sciences) of the Académie, a slight that was not corrected until a month before Say died in 1832. Although it was too late for him to benefit personally, Say's contributions to economics helped to establish the scientific nature of the discipline in France. School ends by placing this work in the context of other historical work on Say and his economics.

One of the strengths of this book is that School relies on the many notes and diaries, pamphlets, and magazine articles to bolster his story of Say. Contemporary historians are often confused by the nature of Say's contribution, and take one of two equally untenable paths. Some rely entirely on published work. This has the advantage of privileging that writing that Say polished and hoped would endure as a scientific contribution. However, it misses the great bulk of writing that Say undertook—the messy, inconsistent journalism that really did occupy so much of his time and attention, particularly in his early years. The other, equally questionable, choice is to use everything Say wrote but to make no intellectual distinction between published treatises and second-rate poetry, no doubt written at least partly to fill pages. At the very least, that approach leads to charges of “inconsistency”—as though intellectual consistency were the primary goal of an editor writing in a period of censorship when presses were routinely broken by thugs in the pay of one party or another, and the bodies of recalcitrant managing editors turned up in alleyways and under bridges. I think the correct approach, and it is one that characterizes School's book, is to use everything but to acknowledge the different purposes, audiences, and contexts within which each was written.

My own assessment is that, despite his late recognition by the academic establishment, Say was less a scientist at heart than a journalist. He was not a mindless writer churning out words for the pay they brought, but rather an individual who recognized the importance of timing and audience. If that leads someone in more comfortable times to charge him with intellectual inconsistency, so be it. Articles in journals during troubled times serve many purposes and play to many audiences. One audience he never considered is the twenty-first-century historian trying to intuit the REAL Law of Markets from a hastily written newspaper piece that appears somewhat inconsistent with the fourth version of the *Traité*.

This is a good book to read. Ask your librarian to buy it. Encourage your students to read it. Recognize the hard work required of an historian of economic thought who tries to understand the historical context within which ideas are developed. The next

time a learned discussion on Say's Law breaks out among the cognoscenti, ask yourself what exactly you know about capital markets in eighteenth-century rural France or shipping losses in the North Atlantic, and have some empathy for the poor sugar merchant transitioning from cane to beets and the would-be cotton merchant learning his trade from the *Encyclopédie*.

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Christopher J. Berry, *The Idea of Commercial Society in the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), pp. 266, \$120. ISBN 978-0748-64532-9.

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In his latest book, Christopher Berry comes back and expands on previous contributions. Since his *The Idea of Luxury: A Conceptual and Historical Investigation* (1994), *Social Theory and the Scottish Enlightenment* (1997), and his successive contributions to the subject matter, Berry has fed scholars of Adam Smith, David Hume, Adam Ferguson, and the Scottish Enlightenment with rigorous and original research. *The Idea of Commercial Society in the Scottish Enlightenment* sums up previous research analyzing the social, political, and economic context of the Scottish Enlightenment phenomena. But it also adds new insights.

The first chapter already sets out the importance of “improvement” as a guiding line in this intellectual adventure. Berry argues that luxury—that complex and symbolic idea—is as real as any market product. In sum, his book is not about metaphysics. It is about reality. In this sense, Berry is as pragmatic as Smith or Hume would be. However, the real meaning and context behind improvement are the aim of this book. Berry sets the scene by introducing the legal, economic, and religious framework of Scotland, the importance of the five Scottish universities, and the relevance of all those intellectual clubs and societies. Improvement was not only an intellectual or an academic exercise. It was an interwoven and complex social phenomenon that represented a way of thinking and living commercial society. Recalling John Millar's famous passage—Montesquieu as the Bacon, and Smith as the Newton of the Scottish Enlightenment—Berry sums up the importance of Francis Bacon and Isaac Newton for the Scottish ‘literati.’ If they were the intellectual heroes for the Scots, John Locke set out a morality of property that also played an important role. Berry concludes that commercial society was articulated and developed within the tension of economics and politics, virtue and commerce, and law and history.

If the first chapter places the scenario, the function begins with the “four stages” theory. This stadial theory—from hunting, pasturage, and agriculture up to commerce—was perceived as a scientific aspiration for explaining progress. Based on their successful experience with economic growth, the Scots believed it was possible to develop a grand social theory. In fact, this was Smith's intended plan with his lectures on political economy, ethics, and jurisprudence. Although the four stages theory is not original to the Scottish Enlightenment, what is distinctive are the addition and understanding