REVIEW ARTICLES

The Physiocratic Model and the Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism

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Marguerite Kuczynski, by her discovery and publication of the third edition of François Quesnay's *Tableau économique*,* has long since established her claims to rank among the foremost scholars of physiocracy in our time. The first volume of her edition, François Quesnay, *Ökonomische Schriften*, which covers the period 1756-1759, surpasses her own previous efforts and all other editions of Quesnay's writings. Her masterful and learned work is, moreover, intelligent — which cannot be said of all masterful and learned work. It marks the culmination of a distinguished Marxist tradition of physiocratic studies. Kuczynski remains faithful to the essentials of that tradition, particularly to the path-breaking work of Marx himself and to the more recent and equally sophisticated studies by Ronald Meek; but in her erudition and her thorough consideration of a wide range of questions, she contributes brilliant insights and thereby creates a new synthesis that exceeds the sum of its parts.[1]

Kuczinski, as her title suggests, restricts her focus to Quesnay's writings, and to his specifically economic writings. The present volume, to be followed by a second, carries the development of Quesnay's economic thought to the first publication of the *Tableau économique* in the sixth part of Mirabeau's enlarged edition of *L'ami des hommes* in 1760. The edition includes Quesnay's four economic articles for the *Encyclopédie: Fermiers, Grains, Impôts* and

* François Quesnay, *Okonomische Schriften*, in zwei Bänden, Band I., 1756-1759, ed. and trans., Marguerite Kuczynski (Berlin: Akademic-Verlag, 1971), 2 vols., V-XCI, 3-833 pp.

1 Karl Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value*, Part I (Moscow, 1963); Ronald Meek, *The Economics of Physiocracy* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963).

the first three "editions" of *Tableau*. As supporting material, Kuczynski also presents two letters from Quesnay to Forbonnais, two from Quesnay to Mirabeau, a piece of ten paragraphs on grain production, grain trade, and population, and a selected list of books from Quesnay's library.

Kuczynski's edition constitutes the most extensive body of scholarship ever published on Quesnay. Her most dramatic contributions lie in her demonstration, through the manuscript at the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, of Quesnay's contribution to Mirabeau's *Explication du Tableau économique* (which she does not include, nor project for her second volume), and her argument that *Impôts* precedes *Hommes* in the forging of Quesnay's thought, of which more later. Both these contributions transcend mere scholarly curiosity and force substantial revisions in any interpretation of Quesnay's thought, although not necessarily the ones Kuczynski proposes. Less flashily, but no less substantially, she traces all references in correspondence and ancilliary works such as Patullo's *Essai sur l'amélioration des terres* (which has long been recognized as a *bona fide* guide to aspects of Quesnay's thought, but never fully exploited in this regard). She makes full use of the recent work of French scholars, such as Jacqueline Hecht's discovery of Quesnay's letters to Forbonnais (although she significantly excludes Hecht's equally important uncovering of a letter to Le Blanc, the translator of Hume) and Jules Conan's discovery of the ten paragraph "demographic fantasy".[2] Her use of the inventory of Quesnay's library far outdistances that of Félix Lorin, the only other scholar to have attempted deciphering that intractable document, although it too bears the mark of her interpretative preferences.[3]

Any student of physiocracy, of the history of economic thought, or of the French ancien régime must celebrate the appearance of this superlative edition, but must also be permitted a sigh of regret at Kuczynski's modesty. Under the guise of the editorial role — reminiscent of Quesnay's own description of the *Tableau* as a small book of household accounts — she has developed a major interpretation of Quesnay's thought, including a revised periodization of the unfolding of that thought. She has also provided the most accurate published versions of two of his articles, *Impôts* and *Hommes*, available

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2 All published in *François Quesnay et la Physiocratie*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1958). Henceforth, INED.

3 Félix Lorin, *Mémoire sur la fortune de François Quesnay*, repr. from « Bulletin des Sciences économiques et sociales du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques (Paris, 1897). Hecht, "Vie", INED, I, 279, also mentions the library but does not describe its contents at all. Cf. A. D. Yvelines, *Etude Huber de Versailles, Minutes Thibault*, 1774, « Inventaire et liquidation après le décès de M. François Quesnay (29 décembre 1774). The inventory of the library is an almost impossibly difficult document to use, not only because of misspellings, but also because it contains no indication of date of purchase. It does, however, contaïn a great deal of history and theology which Kuczynski does not mention. Cf. also Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Fonds de la Bastille, Ms. 1201. Quesnay anotated both of Mirabeau's drafts, although sparingly.

in any language, including the "definitive" INED edition.[4] Kuczynski's analysis, developed in a lengthy general introduction, individual introductions to each selection, and substantial notes to the text, which appropriately receive a volume to themselves (*Halbband* 2), constitutes an independent treatment of the forging of physiocratic economics. It also constitutes the clearest and most heavily documented example of a venerable, but never before adequately supported, reading of the nature of Quesnay's economic thought. The reading emphasizes Quesnay's primary focus on the dynamics of capitalist production within the context of a still seigneurial ancien régime; it stresses Quesnay's materialism; and it implicitly divorces him, to the extent possible, from the physiocrats who lobbied in his name.

Kuczynski has already presented the outlines of her interpretation in her monumental editorial contribution to her and Ronald Meek's *Quesnay's Tableau économique*.[5] Her present effort buttresses and extends her previous work. Although her argument emerges clearly from the introductions and notes, it is a pity to have to piece together a discussion that would have more than justified a separate book. As Kuczynski indicates in her opening quotation from Marx's and Engel's *The German Ideology*, she assumes that an understanding of Quesnay's economics contributes to an understanding of modern economic science. For, « through the [work of the] physiocrats, the economy was first raised to a discrete science, and has since then been treated as such ». Kuczynski, in other words, emphasizes, through her choice of texts and her commentary on them, Quesnay's fundamental contribution to the analysis of capitalist production which extends from him through the English classical school to Marx. This perspective entails dismissing the traditional, or "feudal" aspects of Quesnay's thought as situational or accidental rather than seeing them as integrally related to his central concerns. In my opinion, it slights some of the complexity of Quesnay's thought and assuredly ignores Mirabeau's important contributions to the formulation of physiocracy (which I should distinguish from Quesnay's pre-physiocratic economic articles), but it rests upon breath-taking learning and years of considered judgement. It not only represents the most complete investigation of physiocracy as agrarian capitalism and materialist economics yet presented by the many scholars of all ideological persuasions; it also represents a serious assessment of the transition, in the theoretical realm, from feudalism to capitalism.[6]

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[4] MEEK, *Economics*, 88-101, in his translation of extracts from *Hommes*, also returns to the original manuscript and corrects some of the INED errors.

[5] *Quesnay's Tableau Economique*, Edited, with new material, translations and notes by Marguerite Kuczynski and Ronald L. Meek (London and New York, 1972). Kuczynski had previously edited the *Tableau économique von François Quesnay* (Berlin, 1965), also based on her discovery of the third "edition".

[6] Eg. BERT F. HOSELITZ, *Agrarian Capitalism, the Natural Order of Things: François Quesnay*, « Kyklos », XXI (1968), 637-64.

Kuczynski situates Quesnay's economics, as have so many scholars from Marx to Pierre Goubert, in the context of the ancien régime. She follows Marx closely in describing Quesnay's system as a bourgeois representation of the feudal system (XXVIII), and in ascribing Quesnay's grasp of the nature of property in land as an absolute or individual right to the experience of Law's system in which so much land changed hands. (XLVIII-XLIX) She also suggests, without elaboration, that Quesnay relied heavily on an analysis of the English agricultural revolution in developing his own model; but, she notes, he did so without taking account of the English political revolution of the seventeenth century and thus ended by trying to reconcile English-style economic progress with the existing French social system. In other words, she argues that Quesnay discovered the nature of capitalist production without understanding its inseparability from bourgeois social relations: His understanding of capitalist production « naturally did not mean » that he had « worked out and defined » the « essential economic categories of capitalism ». (LXXIX) Quesnay's commanding importance, in her view, lies in his having discovered the centrality of the economy to human life and social relations: He falls into « the category of realistically thinking investigators for whom the primary needs and the way of satisfying them are the basis of human society ». (XIII)

Kuczynski's analysis of Quesnay's economics thus contains a contradiction as disturbing as that in the economics itself. The economics, by its realism and material determinism, implicitly foreshadows Marx's own economics, yet it remains colored by its historical context and by certain non-economic values of its progenitor. Kuczynsky never slips into anachronism on these questions. She knows the ancien régime well and has great admiration for Quesnay as ex-peasant, scientist, courtier, and man of character. She never reproaches him for not having been what he could not have been. By concentrating exclusively upon his economics, however, she bypasses exactly that dimension of his thought which helps to explain the puzzling silences at the heart of his work. Thus, although she never falls into the a-historicism of some of the recent econometric commentators on the *Tableau* (whose work she does not mention), she does fall into some of the same methodological traps, particularly that of ignoring the deep ideological and psychological roots of Quesnay's seemingly extraneous "feudal" residues.[7] For this reason, although Kuczynski's edition is the best in any language for those texts it includes, it does not entirely supersede the other two classic editions, Onken's of 1888 and INED's of 1958, both of which include some of Quesnay's

[7] Eg. ROBERT V. EAGLEY, *A physiocratic model of Dynamic Equilibrium*, « Journal of Political Economy », LXXVII (1969), 66-84, and his *The Structure of Classical Economic Theory* (New York and London, 1974); IZUMI HISHIYAMA, *The Tableau Economique of François Quesnay — Its Analysis, Reconstruction, and Application*, « Kyoto University Economic Review », XXX (1960), 1-45.

metaphysical work, especially the article *Evidence* which appeared, like *Fermiers*, in 1756, in volume VI of the *Encyclopédie*.[8] *Evidence*, particularly when examined in the context of Quesnay's later medical works (excerpts of which are included in the Onken edition, but not the INED), establishes the metaphysical and epistemological context for Quesnay's economics. Most important, it demonstrates that Quesnay's attitude toward the ancien régime is both deeper and more complex than the simple acceptance of its social and political manifestations.

Quesnay never unilaterally accepted the philosophic premises that we can retroactively read into his economic analysis. Quesnay's economic analysis, by its emphasis on capitalist production and its reliance upon possessive individualism and market relations, suggests a throughly modern individualism, such as that underlying classical political economy. Quesnay, however, never trusted unbridled individualism. He did not expect men necessarily to follow their own best economic interest. He retained a deep religious commitment in which God figured as the necessary guarantor of human intelligence. He did not believe that the dictates of nature or of the material natural order would necessarily triumph over human stupidity. He was not, in any normal sense of the word, an economic determinist. He did believe that nature embodied the divine plan, but he also believed that men must realize this plan and that nothing predetermined their success or failure. Quesnay's failure to develop a thorough analysis of bourgeois social and political relations did not simply reflect a passive acceptance of his historical context; it also represented an attempt to restrain the free play of individual interest and an attempt to create a socially ordered capitalism suitable to the French experience. Quesnay did see the marketplace as the central arena of economic development, but he never quite trusted the market to determine social and political relations. He always insisted upon the necessity for a central authority to guarantee the workings of the market.

Karl Polanyi has argued that the free market of the nineteenth century constituted an aberration in human affairs. Normally, he claimed, the market — or the exchange of goods and services — is embedded within the larger context of human relations, which determine its functioning.[9] For Polanyi, the great originality (and crime) of nineteenth-century classical liberalism was to disengage the market from the larger human network and to assign such preponderance to market activities that they came to determine social and political relations. First human subsistence and then human labor become commodities, and, ultimately, the fetishism of commodities — to recall Marx's term — comes to dominate notions of justice and optimum human good.

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[8] Auguste Onken, ed., *Oeuvres économiques et philosophiques de F. Quesnay, fondateur du système physiocratique*... (Frankfurt-am-Main and Paris, 1888).

[9] Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston, 1957 [1944], esp. 33-76.

Quesnay discovered the market through his observation of English economic power and his reading of other economists, notably Richard Cantillon. He always stressed market relations — including wage labor — as the necessary path to economic development. He never, however, accepted the market as an adequate model for society as a whole, particularly not for political relations. Quesnay's economic thought remains colored by his conviction that men had first to create the market — which nature, unassisted, could not do — and then to restrict its influence to the proper sphere. The economics make little sense when divorced from his metaphysical dualism.

Kuczinski does not raise these problems in the form in which I have presented them. Furthermore, the interpretation that emerges from her choice of texts and her editorial comments intentionally relegates them to a position of peripheral importance. Nevertheless, her discussion of Quesnay's economics — even within her chosen perspective — does raise them implicitly and brilliantly. Unfortunately, by remaining so close to the economic terrain, her analysis of the discrete aspects of Quesnay's complexity does not lead her to a more ambitious reevaluation of his thought. By avoiding the integral links between Quesnay's economic thought and physiocratic social and political thought, by avoiding Quesnay's collaborative work, and, above all, by avoiding an explicit discussion of the relationship between Quesnay's early work and physiocracy, she obscures the thorny problems of periodization, and thus obscures the relationship between Quesnay's economic analysis and his political economy which is correctly — *pace*, Madame Kuczynski — known as physiocracy. The materialist economics runs like a silver thread from the statist (not to say mercantilist) *Fermiers*, *Grains*, and *Impôts*, through the exploratory *Hommes* and early *Tableaux*, to the Spartan third "edition", and on to the *Dialogues* and other late pieces that will appear in the second volume. Significantly, Kuczynski discusses the general problems of Quesnay's economic analysis in her introduction without reference to shifts in his thought over time. Her brilliant treatment of chronology — particularly the reordering of *Impôts* and *Hommes* — must be dug out of the individual introductions and the notes. She uses that reordering to support her interpretation of the economics, specifically to tie the writing of *Hommes* to the elaboration of the first *Tableau*, but does so without integrating it into the problems of the economics.

In her introduction, Kuczynski presents a brief, but uncommonly sensitive discussion of Quesnay's theory of value in which she shows that Quesnay possessed both a use and an exchange theory of value (LXXX-LXXXI). She seems to assume that because of the feudal context in which he worked Quesnay could not be expected to have developed a labor theory of value. She finds it understandable, moreover, that, given the agricultural society of the ancien régime, he should see use value primarily in terms of agricultural products understood as subsistence goods. The influence of "feudal thought" more than accounts for his seeing that « production is natural production, is production of use value ». (LXXX) She then turns to Quesnay's concept of venal value, which she breaks down into two component parts — exchange value and market value — and argues that since Quesnay assumed that exchange would take place between equivalent values, the price of a good would not only accurately reflect its market value but also its intrinsic value: « the price is the value ». She then extends the discussion to rent and to the net product, which she equates to surplus value, and discusses the thorny problem of the farmer's putative profit.

In her discussion of value, Kuczynski essentially argues that the net product appropriated by the proprietors (including the sovereign and the tithe holders) reflects the prevailing feudal system and that the farmer's "profit" obeys the dictates of a capitalist system and constitutes part of the differential rent. Her discussion does not follow the tortuous development of Quesnay's thought on these questions, nor does it resolve the problem of value as she originally presented it. She merely asserts that Quesnay himself never fully defined the word; he observed its appearance as the results of market transactions. (XXXI) She also suggests, however, that his single term, value, carried several meanings and thus reflected a thought in transition (not so much within itself, as between feudalism and capitalism). At the end of her introductory note to *Hommes*, moreover, she draws attention to the glimmer of a labor theory of value that indubitably does figure in that article. She further asserts that traces of such a value theory recur throughout his later work, but never crystalize into a systematic statement. (238) Kuczynski thus lucidly indicates all the elements that contribute to Quesnay's value theory, but, in her ultimate acceptance of a "transitional" reading for the thought as a unity, begs the key developmental questions and does less than justice to the rigor of Quesnay's physiocratic thought.

Quesnay firmly grasped the essentials of a use theory and a labor theory of value as he worked through them in the early articles. And he rejected them both. Use alone had no value: The subsistence economy of *petite culture* and peasant misery rested upon use value. The whole point of Quesnay's economics is to break out of that cycle of impoverishment by conferring a monetary — or market — value upon all commodities and all human labor. The market, to Quesnay, linked all members of society on a new and more advanced basis than had been possible under subsistence production. Yet Quesnay's commitment to economic modernity did not lead him to espouse that labor theory of value to which his work so frequently seemed to point. He well understood that such a premise led to the social and political divisiveness of rampant individualism — as indeed it did until Marx's reformulation. Quesnay's conception of market value, however unsatisfactory it may appear to modern economists, mirrored in the economic sphere his conception of legal despotism in the political: it simultaneously assured the escape from "feudal" stagnation and barred the way to bourgeois liberalism.

Kuczynski is right: Quesnay did predicate his discussion of venal (market/exchange) value upon the assumption that value exchanged for equal value. She is wrong, however, in dismissing the exchange component. In so doing, she is reacting, as she states, to modern economic controversies, specifically to the Schumpeter/Keynes emphasis upon the role of exchange (the primacy of demand) in economic development. Quesnay preceded those debates and was no party to them. For him, the emergence of market relations both testified to and embodied economic development. Such relations required ascribing a monetary value to commodities. For all agricultural commodities to have a monetary value, labor had to be divorced from the land in order to constitute a market for agricultural products that heretofore had been valueless. The market supplanted traditional notions of social justice as the determinant of social relations; it could not, however, in Quesnay's view, give free rein to individual interest (which might be uneconomic). The market, in Quesnay's thought, came to supply a new standard of social justice, but one no less authoritarian than the old.

Quesnay's notion of the "good" price illustrates the problem. Rhetorically, in the reverential emphasis it received in physiocratic writings, the good price carried an aura comparable to that previously endowed upon the just price, which embodied the notion that social decency required curtailing strict economic advantage. In contradistinction, the good price reflected what appear to be purely economic concerns. The good price had to cover the costs of the farmer and assure him a return of one hundred percent on his investment to finance taxation and to promote further growth. That price was not, however, in the first instance, a market price; it did not represent the supply/demand equilibrium. It represented the needs of economic development and political order. Quesnay assuredly understood that it should be a market price, hence the impassioned physiocratic pleas for free trade in grain. That concern with free trade, however, in some measure obscured Quesnay's deeper intent. Physiocratic opponents, such as Galiani, argued tellingly that the impediments to free circulation in France were such that the national market was a physiocratic fantasy. Quesnay implicitly recognized the problem when he fell back on the contention that the international market would produce the good price. Even in the international context, however, the actual workings of supply and demand figure less importantly than the compelling need of an adequate return to the farmers. The international price represented a kind of *deus ex machina*, or more accurately, a vision in the mind of God. Rather than an economically determined price, the international price was the price necessary to the creation of the market economy. Quesnay, who did understand the rôle that the market should play in a developed economy, read the miraculous institution into a premarket context.

Scholars have occasionally used the less-than-modern aspects of physiocracy — particularly Quesnay's opposition to interest — to argue that, under the guise of market economics, Quesnay sought to restore a medieval society.[10] My criticism of Kuczynski has nothing in common with this viewpoint. The brilliance and modernity of Quesnay's economic analysis cannot be dismissed so cheaply. Nevertheless, Quesnay did not espouse unlimited growth any more than he espoused unfettered possessive individualism. Quesnay sought to promote his vision of a full-market society. His dream entailed a qualitative revolution in French relations of production, including not only a market in grain but also one in labor-power. But it did not entail open-ended growth, which he neither foresaw nor desired. Here lies the core of Quesnay's belief in the unique productivity of agriculture. Quesnay did understand industry or manufacture within the context of his own society as the product of merchant capital and therefore a drain upon the productive life of society. He also, however, understood the value of the division of labor. Even when he advocated the advantages of the production of boots and nails (as opposed to luxury goods), he continued to insist on the primacy of agriculture. His recalcitrance on this question rested not only on his analysis of manufacture under the ancien régime, but also on his conviction that manufacture serves to realize the full potential of given material resources. Men do not create wealth; they develop and exploit existing potential wealth to its full extent. Quesnay sought the realization of the divine plan that existed in nature. The potential for the market society based on agricultural capitalism existed in nature, which for him also meant in the mind of God, but it had to be implemented by human choice. His insistence upon the good price and his opposition to interest formed parts of a coherent political economy and world view. Quesnay understood that if eighteenth-century Frenchmen were left to pursue their own interests, as they understood them, the resulting free market would strengthen seigneurial relations in agriculture at the expense of capitalist, and would strengthen merchant and finance capital at the expense of productive capital.

Quesnay's political economy was, in the full sense of the word, political. The first of the natural law, scientific economists built a programme for change into the heart of his "value free" economics. His *Tableau économique* which Kuczynski, the leading authority on the subjects, handles so brilliantly embodies exactly the same contradictions as the political economy it crowns. Kuczynski concurs with Marx in portraying the *Tableau* as « a notion of the highest genius, of incontestably the highest genius to which political economy

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[10] Eg. Max Beer, *An Inquiry into Physiocracy* (New York, 1966 [1939]).

has heretofore been indebted. » (XIX) Like so many subsequent economists, she remains awe-struck before that small diagram which, in the middle of the eighteenth century, could depict the entire process of the reproduction and circulation of wealth. Furthermore, both implicitly and explicitly, she links Quesnay's invention of the *Tableau* with his writing of the economic articles. She maintains, I think correctly, that he probably conceived the notion of a diagram in 1757 while at work on *Hommes*. (233ff. and 342) In addition, her grouping of the economic articles with the *Tableau* in its early forms constitutes an interpretative statement. This reading which emphasizes Quesnay's analysis of capitalist production to the exclusion of his political economy, presents no problems in respect to *Fermiers* and *Grains*, which establish the micro-economic analysis of capitalist production in a single firm to which Quesnay remained faithful for the rest of his life. Room for respectful controversy emerges, however, in the direct linking of *Fermiers*, *Hommes*, and the *Tableau*. Like Kuczinski, I see *Hommes* as pivotal, but not in quite the same way, and I should also accord Mirabeau a larger role, as influence if not as author, in all Quesnay's post-1757 works, especially in the formulation of the *Explication* which differs in important respects from the earlier *Tableaux*.

Kuczynski's reading rests on the assumption that Quesnay consistently focussed on his discovery of capitalist production and that the apparent distortions of his analysis of capitalism can be written off to the intractability of his socio-political environment, or to the meddling of his disciples. Quesnay's determination to implement agricultural capitalism as the basis of the life of the nation and the treasury of the sovereign cannot be gainsaid. In *Fermiers*, *Grains*, and *Impôts*, he openly presents his programme as a means of increasing royal revenues and diverges from previous mercantilist programme less in goals than in method. Nevertheless, in the period in which he wrote *Hommes* and elaborated the first two *Tableaux*, he developed another preoccupation as well: In 1757, he shifted from his preoccupation with micro-economic analysis to a preoccupation with macro-economic analysis. For the purposes of production, his method was simple. He extended his micro-economics to the entire kingdom which he treated as a single firm. Thus, in analytic terms, the taxes which accrue to the sovereign differ not at all from the rent that accrues to a single proprietor. Quesnay, however, introduced an entirely new concept, which he never openly acknowledged, when he turned to the process of circulation and exchange. A close reading of the economic articles suggests that Quesnay must have first read Cantillon's *Essai sur le commerce* in 1757. *Hommes*, by this reading, represents his attempt to come to terms with Cantillon.[11] And the first

[11] The problems of the relationship between the early articles are extremely complex and I shall treat them in a separate article. There is only one reference to Cantillon in

Tableau, quite explicitly, embodies Quesnay's attempt to depict graphically Cantillon's argument that an increase in the velocity of circulation produces the same effect as an increase in the money in circulation — it permits an increase in the population that can survive on a finite revenue. Quesnay rapidly turned to integrating his own analysis of production into the macroeconomic model. Over time, the textual commentaries that accompanied each *Tableau* increased in volume — by the *Explication* the text has swallowed the diagramme which now serves to illustrate a theoretical discussion — and Quesnay placed increasing emphasis on the division of labor that results from agricultural capitalism (which helps to account for his interest in the labor theory of value in *Hommes*) as well as on the miraculous powers of the market. But he never changed the form of his diagram that had been designed to illustrate Cantillon's premise from the perspective of royal finances.

Kuczynski understands the dual nature of Quesnay's thought perfectly: She counterposes its modern, capitalist content with its traditional form. Furthermore, through an analysis of Quesnay's ambiguous vocabulary, she comes to the conclusion that although he understood the phenomenon, he avoided the terminology of capitalism. (LXXXVI) She thus shows that his choice of vocabulary manifested the ambiguity of his historical context. By extension, the same argument could be made about the *Tableau* which also seems to contain a revolutionary content in a traditional form. The *Tableau,* however, more clearly even than the vocabulary, illustrates the complexity of Quesnay's thought. For the Tableau does not actually contain the revolutionary content. It does not depict the productive sector; it depicts the social and political network of exchange and presupposes capitalist reproduction. Quesnay never succeeded in fully integrating his micro- and his macroeconomic analyses. If he had done so on the basis of capitalist production, the agricultural capitalists, rather than the proprietors and the sovereign would have been the centerpoint of the diagram. Nor did Quesnay ever decide between the primacy of supply and that of demand in spurring economic growth. Ultimately, he was less concerned with economic growth than he was with economic revolution. Growth within the existing system would not produce capitalist agriculture or a market society. Growth within a fully developed capitalist system (which he did not equate with an as yet non-existent industrial capitalist system) would not be necessary.

Quesnay probably understood the revolutionary implications of his thought, but he always became outraged at the notion that he was promoting social or political revolution. His protestations of innocence on that count were not hypocritical. Just as many of the philosophes genuinely supported a degree of social, intellectual, or political individualism and rejected economic

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Grains and that is in a note that may well have been added in 1757, after the article was written and just before it went to press.

individualism as an anti-social horror, so did Quesnay genuinely promote economic individualism even as he rejected its social and political implications. His position can be read as a blend of the traditional and the modern, more specifically as the modern, or bourgeois, breaking out of the mold of the traditional, or feudal, but it can also be read as an alternate vision of modernity — one that insists that society requires an authority that transcends the immediate struggle (Quesnay, unlike Smith, would not have said harmony) of individual interests. The hegemony of English political economy, carried as it was on the wave of English industrial success, has led scholars to see necessity in the Anglo-Saxon model of modern society. It has been assumed that an industrial triumph that commanded world emulation did indeed represent the realization of a natural law.

Quesnay surely did not forsee that industrial production would carry the economic division of labor to world hegemony. But even if he had understood the economic potential of industrial capitalism, I doubt that he would have regarded it as the necessary outcome of a given material potential. Quesnay knew that economic development, justice, and social order depend upon human choice which in turn depends upon human beings overcoming their material condition — in his mind through divine assistance — rather than realizing it. Quesnay has much in common with Marx, beginning with economic genius, but only one of the links between them lies through the development of an analysis of capitalist production via the English political economists. The English experience, and the English interpretations of that experience, remain germane to the physiocracy and the Marxism that bracket the first on set of industrial revolution. Both Quesnay and Marx, however, doubted the eternal validity of unbridled possessive individualism.

In her systematic exclusion of Mirabeau from the formulation of Quesnay's economic thought, Kuczynski rejects one of the most important aspects of that thought, for Mirabeau, his bombastic rhetoric and intransigent "feudalism" notwithstanding, taught Quesnay much. Quesnay, prior to his association with Mirabeau, had addressed himself overwhelmingly to the economic mechanism. Mirabeau introduced him to the importance of the social system in which the mechanism is embedded. Physiocracy, including the third "edition" of the *Tableau* and the *Explication,* reflects this debt. In this connection, it is to be regretted that Kuczynski did not include Mirabeau's *Mémoire pour la Société d'Agriculture de Berne* on which Quesnay and Mirabeau collaborated at the same time that Quesnay was working on the third and fourth versions of the *Tableau*. The economic analysis in the *Mémoire* belongs almost entirely to Quesnay, and Quesnay himself deemed it a worthy, if partial, introduction to the *Tableau*. The *Mémoire* moves Quesnay's economics from the realm of mechanism into a fullfledged political economy and contains some of the most explicit statements ever formulated about physiocracy. It brings to a close the exploratory period that opened with *Hommes* and forms an integral part of the Quesnay-Mirabeau collaboration that separates the economic articles from the unmistakeable physiocracy of *Philosophie rurale*.[21]

Kuczynski, however, seems intent upon rescuing Quesnay's accomplishment from the mire of physiocracy. This intention, if indeed she harbors it, as her almost total avoidance of the term suggests, is understandable. Quesnay's staunchest and most acute admirers have regularly sought to free him from that confusing association. But it is misguided. Quesnay can no more be separated from physiocracy than his economics can be separated from his dualistic metaphysics. The transition from the traditional to the modern, from feudalism to capitalism, is as yet but poorly understood. Each thinker, as each society, which bridged that gap did so on the basis of a specific historical context. The general models are useful — indeed necessary to fruitful comparison — but must not obscure the differences in various responses to theoretical and social problems. Each revolutionary theory, like each revolutionized society, carries aspects of the past into the present and the program for the future. Over-emphasizing the persistence of older typologies in too general terms — feudalism, artisans, and so forth — can lead, as with so much recent social history, to the implication that nothing really changes, that, for example, workers do not espouse political goals because they are really caught up in immediate problems. Conversely, over-emphasizing the radical explosion of new typologies — capitalism, socialism, and so forth — can lead to exaggerating the rate of change in human culture. Different men, like different societies, select from their inherited experience the values or forms they most wish to preserve and carry their essence to new commitments. The process varies from case to case, but the different solutions should not be evaluated merely as aberrations from the norm of the abstract model. Physiocracy embodies Quesnay's brilliant economic analysis just as it embodies his commitment to social order and to political authority. Its uncompromising defence of absolute property shows how little it passively accepted the residual feudal system; its equally uncompromising defence of legal despotism shows how little it accepted the intrusion of possessive individualism into the social and political spheres. The physiocratic model, which so clearly bears Quesnay's imprint, elaborates a particular French vision of the transition from feudalism to capitalism, not a compromise between to two, much less a lapse from some Anglo-Saxon liberal norm.

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[12] My view of these and related questions is developed in my forthcoming book, *The Origins of Physiocracy: Economic Revolution and Social Order in Eighteenth-Century France.*