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Revolution 1.0*

Informed of the popular insurrection of 14 July 1789, Louis XVI is said to have wondered whether this was a revolt. «Not a revolt, Sire», came the reply, «a revolution.» Shortly after massive popular protest in Egypt on 25 January 2011 unleashed the flood of events that would sweep Hosni Mubarak from the presidency, a principal internet instigator of the uprising, Google employee Wael Ghonim, addressed a version of the same question. «Is this a revolution?» he was asked on CNN. He thought briefly before proclaiming the appearance of «Revolution 2.0».

Whether this was an impromptu formulation or not, Ghonim repeated it frequently in interviews over the following days. What he may have meant by it became clearer in the fascinating memoir published a year later under this same title. «Revolutions of the past have usually had charismatic leaders who were politically savvy and sometimes even military geniuses», he writes in his conclusion to this book. «Such revolutions followed what we can call the Revolution 1.0 model. But the revolution in Egypt was different: it was truly a spontaneous movement led by nothing other than the wisdom of the crowd.» This Revolution 2.0, Ghonim wants to insist, was essentially leaderless: «No one was *the* hero because *everyone* was the hero.» It was «like an offline Wikipedia, with everyone anonymously and selflessly contributing efforts toward a common goal».¹

One has to say that Ghonim's characterisation of Revolution 1.0 is as radically attenuated as his accompanying conceptualisation of Revolution 2.0. But his title invites us to think again about the longer history of the revolutionary tradition. To speak of Revolution 2.0 suggests a significant revision of an ongoing project, an upgrading of a revolutionary programme through conceptual elaboration and tech-

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paper will appear in a volume edited by Dan Edelstein and myself under the title, *Scripting Revolutions*.

1 W. Ghonim, *Revolution 2.0. The Power of the People is Greater than the People in Power. A Memoir*, Boston 2012, 293–294.

nical innovation. Clearly, the Internet placed an immensely more powerful technology of communication in the service of social and political change. But was the conceptualisation of revolution updated along with the technology? Has Facebook, and social media in general, revolutionised revolution itself? Before deciding that question, we might think again about Revolution 1.0. How far do we go back to find it?

A recent study of the Glorious Revolution in England claims to offer a definitive answer. In *1688: The First Modern Revolution* Steve Pincus takes a revisionist stance. He aims to demonstrate that the expulsion of James II launched a real revolution rather than simply the bloodless and relatively peaceful political transition for which it has long been celebrated. He wants to argue that this revolution constituted a radical transformation of social structure as well as of political regime, that it involved an ideological rupture with the past and that it was achieved at least in part by popular violence. «Far from being aristocratic, peaceful, and consensual...», he insists, the Glorious Revolution was «like most modern revolutions... popular, violent, and extremely divisive».²

In Pincus's account, 1688 marked the first modern revolution for two reasons. First, it bore all the defining features of subsequent revolutions of the modern age (thus displacing the priority of the French Revolution as the prototype in this regard). Second, like all these subsequent revolutions, it was at once the product and the catalyst of processes of modernisation. The product of modernisation because it was a response to the strains of an already modernising state; the catalyst of modernisation because it pushed this process further through conflict between competing modernisers. Revolutions, Pincus maintains, are «the often-violent working out of competing state modernisation programmes», they «pit different groups of modernisers against one another.»³ According to this definition, then, modern revolution first occurred in Britain in 1688 and the years immediately thereafter.

Modernity and modernisation now seem murkier notions than they once were, as Frederick Cooper has detailed in a fine essay.⁴ Whether they are apt to Pincus's purposes need not concern us here. What is clear, though, is that Pincus offers an essentially reifying account of revolution. His aim is to bring the English Revolution into – and use it to refine – the framework for the comparative study of modern social revolutions that has been developed over the last several decades by sociolo-

2 S. Pincus, *1688. The First Modern Revolution*, New Haven 2009, 29. Pincus is not the first to revise the traditional view of 1688 as a tame, relatively modest affair. For a less tendentious analysis, see T. Harris, *Revolution. The Great Crisis of the British Monarchy, 1685–1720*, London 2006. The state of the historiography following the 1988 bicentennial is well represented in J. Israel

(ed.), *The Anglo-Dutch Moment. Essays on the Glorious Revolution and its World Impact*, Cambridge 1991.

3 Pincus, *1688*, 29, 36.

4 F. Cooper, «Modernity», in: idem, *Colonialism in Question. Theory, Knowledge, History*, Berkeley/CA 2005, 113–149.

gists and political scientists. This approach implies a checklist of characteristics, preconditions, causes and effects against which complex historical changes can be categorised as meeting (or not) the criteria set by the definitions of «modern» and «revolution». It is objectivist rather than hermeneutic. It notably fails, however, to take account of the conceptual history of revolution: its nature as a historically constituted category of political understanding; its character as a constantly revised and improvised script for action rather than as a series of comparable, independent events. Ghonim's 2.0, in contrast, returns us precisely to the question of the meanings invented and elaborated by historical actors as they embraced revolution as a project.

The argument of the present paper is that revolution was revolutionised in 1789, when the notion of revolution as fact gave way to the conception of revolution as an ongoing act. With this transformation, «revolution» assumed its modern political meaning, and the French Revolution became the script upon which all subsequent revolutionaries improvised. To state the case bluntly, there were no «revolutionaries» before revolution was revolutionised in the manner I propose to describe.

The pages that follow present a revised and expanded version of an essay on eighteenth-century meanings of the term «revolution» that appeared as a chapter in my *Inventing the French Revolution* in 1990.⁵ The development of digital databases and more powerful search software has made it possible (and necessary) to extend, and to some degree qualify, the analyses I offered initially. ARTL (French and American Research on the Treasury of the French Language) has enlarged its database and developed «PhiloLogic», a far more sophisticated software for analysis.⁶ For the research presented here, I have also been able to draw on the resources of EEBO (Early English Books Online) and especially EEBO-TCP (Early English Books Online Text Creation Partnership, still smaller than EEBO itself but more thoroughly searchable); ECCO (Eighteenth-Century Collections Online) and especially ECCO-TCP (the smaller but more thoroughly searchable version of ECCO available at ARTFL); and the Evans Early American Imprint Collection (with Evans TCP, its smaller but more thoroughly searchable version). Use of these databases has allowed me to refine my discussion of the meanings of «revolution» in eighteenth-century French works and to broaden the analysis to include contemporary publications in Britain and America.

5 K. M. Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution. Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, Cambridge 1990, 203–223. Earlier works on the history of the term are cited in that essay.

6 It should be noted, though, that the origins of ARTFL in a project for a dictionary leaves the ARTFL database still skewed toward literary texts by recognisable authors. It does not yet include

many of the writings on political and social matters, or the pamphlets and journals that would also interest historians in particular. ARTFL could be usefully supplemented by materials from the Goldsmiths-Kress Collection digitised in *The Making of the Modern World* database, but that collection does not yet provide for more advanced searches.

Much of the information offered here comes from collocation searches that show the relative frequencies of co-occurrences of terms at particular periods or in specific works. To the extent that the databases searched remain incomplete and search capabilities are still work in progress, the analysis is more suggestive than definitive. Collocation searches yield aggregate data that can miss the subtleties of individual works and arguments, though they can be supplemented (as they have been here) by closer attention to specific texts. They nonetheless provide some fascinating and revealing information, relating in this case to the conceptualisation of revolution in the century that separates the Glorious Revolution from the French Revolution.

1. Glorious Revolution

The Glorious Revolution of 1688 offers an instructive case for this research precisely because its participants and observers had no clear conceptualisation of «revolution» as a collective political act. «Revolution» did not define a practice or a goal, nor did it offer a source of authority or legitimation. «Revolution» as a script for action did not yet exist. This seems to be true even in the case of that great theorist of political resistance, John Locke. When Locke used the term in his *Second Treatise*, for example, he did so according to a common usage: in the plural and to describe intermittent periods of change and disorder. Pre-emptively answering the argument that «to lay the Foundation of Government in the unsteady Opinion, and uncertain Humour of the People, is to expose it to certain ruine; And *no Government will be able long to subsist*, if the people may set up a Legislative, whenever they take offence at the old one», Locke reasoned that the people were too set in their ways for this fear to become a reality:

People are not so easily got out of their old Forms, as some are apt to suggest. They are hardly to be prevailed with to amend the acknowledg'd Faults, in the Frame they have been accustom'd to ... This slowness and aversion in the People to quit their old Constitutions, has, in the many Revolutions which have been seen in this Kingdom, in this and former Ages, still kept us to, or, after some interval of fruitless attempts, still brought us back to our old Legislative of King, Lords and Commons.⁷

One can more readily grasp the logic of this passage by recalling that, even though it was published in 1690 and subsequently acclaimed as a justification of the Glorious Revolution, the *Second Discourse* was in all probability written during the Exclusion Crisis of 1679–81.⁸ At that time, Locke was implicated in the efforts of his patron, the Earl of Shaftesbury, to bar the openly Catholic heir, James Duke of York,

⁷ J. Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, §223.

⁸ This date was established by Peter Laslett in his

edition of J. Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, Cambridge 1960.

younger brother of Charles II, from eventual succession to the throne. He was eager to reassure potential readers that pressing for such a change would not open the floodgates to political disorder. Accepting that the frame of government rested on the consent of the governed, he wanted to insist, did not make popular rebellion more likely than any other political doctrine. People suffering under their governments had sought throughout history to throw off their burden when the opportunity was offered by the «change, weakness, and accidents of humane affairs». Nonetheless, «such *Revolutions happen* not upon every little mismanagement in public affairs». Much could be borne by the people «without mutiny or murmur». This reasoning, of course, led to one of the most famous assertions of the *Second Treatise*, echoed later in the American Declaration of Independence. «But if a long train of Abuses, Prevarications, and Artifices, all tending the same way, make the design visible to the People, and they cannot but feel, what they lie under, and see, whither they are going; 'tis not to be wonder'd, that they should then rouse themselves, and endeavor to put the rule into such hands, which may secure to them the ends for which government was at first erected.»⁹

These passages have often been used to make Locke appear as a theorist of revolution. Read closely, though, they seem to do less than that. Locke thought of revolutions as dramatic historical changes or as periods of disturbance and disorder. He thought that such ruptures could indeed «happen» in the realm of politics. He also thought that they could (albeit rarely) be brought about by political resistance or popular rebellion. Be that as it may, he saw political change, no matter how it was precipitated, as only an instance of a much broader category: that of revolutions in the general sense of those changes and disorders that occur in the course of human time. Such changes might result from political resistance or popular rebellion, Locke reasoned, but they were not necessarily defined in relation to them. Locke wanted to save the doctrine of resistance from being associated with the endless instability of constant «revolutions».

Locke's way of thinking here becomes more understandable in light of the evidence available from *Early English Books Online (EEBO)*, the database of English books published between 1473 and 1700. The most searchable word index collection within that database contains 4258 occurrences of «revolution» among 1533 works published between 1640 and 1700. It also contains 2931 occurrences of «revolutions» among 1224 works published during the same period.¹⁰ As one would expect given the term's Latin etymology, occurrences of «revolution» in this database connoted any kind of rotation, e.g. the turning of wheels and circles, the rotation of heavenly bodies, of days, weeks or years, of times and epochs. By extension, these usages could also connote any significant turn in human affairs, whether slow

9 *Ibid.*, §225. Here, as in subsequent quotations, any italics are to be found in the original.

(*EEBO-TCP*), Word Index (Phase I), available at <ets.umdl.umich.edu>.

10 *Early Books Online Text Creation Partnership*

or rapid, orderly or disorderly, favourable or unfavourable. Contemporary usage thus went far beyond the lagging and parsimonious definition of «revolution» in Edward Phillips, *The World of Words, or A General English Dictionary* (London, 1678): «A rowling back, the turning back of Celestial bodies to their first point, and finishing their circular course.» «Revolution» did not, *pace* Hannah Arendt, necessarily imply a return to an original state or position, as in the astronomical sense.¹¹

«Revolutions» could have a similarly broad range of connotations. But the plural usage was frequently negative, suggesting disruptions, upheavals and disorders, turns of fortune, vicissitudes of many kinds that could be brought about by the movement of time. In this aleatory sense, «revolutions» could be tellingly paired with «confusions», especially in the uncertain 1740s and 1750s. Anthony Ascham's *A Discourse: Wherein is examined, What is particularly lawfull during the Confusions and Revolutions of Government* made interesting use of this term when it was published in 1748. His work asked, in effect, whether it was right to submit to whichever side exercised power during the vicissitudes of a civil war. It was republished in 1649 under a slightly different title, *Of the Confusions and Revolutions of Governments*. More remarkably, it reappeared forty years later as *A Seasonable Discourse, Wherein is examined What is Lawful during the Confusions and Revolutions of Government; Especially in the Case of a King deserting his Kingdoms: And how far a Man may lawfully conform to the Powers and Commands of those, who with Various Successes hold Kingdoms*. The 1689 title explicitly acknowledges the touchy question of the role of conquest, rather than consent, in settling the political confusions of 1688 and 1689.¹² Yet whoever modified the title apparently saw no need to recalibrate the text itself to a new situation. The work continued to advocate resignation rather than celebration. Revolution was not yet «glorious» in its pages.

The events of 1688 did soon become known as «the Glorious Revolution», but they were not the first to receive this designation. Ironically, an «ever-glorious and wonderful Revolution» had been celebrated in a sermon of 1676 that called upon the faithful to praise God, «with joyful, and thankful hearts», for the «happy Restoration» of Charles II.¹³ The «secret passages and particularities» of this same «Glo-

11 Hannah Arendt famously argued that the astronomical meaning of «revolution» was the conventional one until the end of the eighteenth century. See Arendt, *On Revolution*, London 1963, 40.

12 The book by Charles Blount, *King William and Queen Mary, Conquerors, or, A Discourse endeavouring to prove that Their Majesties have on their side, against the Late King, the Principal Reasons that Make Conquest a Good Title* (1693) was quickly condemned as dangerous by the House of Commons. It was contrary to the officially adopted view that James II had abdicated the throne, which had then been freely offered by the Con-

vention to William and Mary. Legitimizing this change as the outcome of one conquest invited the possibility that it could be reversed by another (as the Jacobites later hoped). The aspect of the Glorious Revolution that was a Dutch invasion and conquest is highlighted by J. Israel, «The Dutch Role in the Glorious Revolution», in: idem, *The Anglo-Dutch Moment*, 105–62 and L. Jardine, *Going Dutch. How England Plundered Holland's Glory*, New York 2008.

13 J. Dupont, *Three Sermons preached in St. Maries Church in Cambridg, upon the three Anniversaries of the Martyrdom of Charles I, Jan 30, Birth and Re-*

rious Revolution» had been further explained in a book by one John Price in 1680.¹⁴ Only after another remarkable turn of events in 1688 did the term realise its historical destiny. In 1690, as in previous years, a sermon was preached before the House of Commons on 5 November to commemorate the thwarting of the Gunpowder Plot in 1605. But William of Orange had cannily timed his 1688 landing in England to coincide with the anniversary of this earlier day of national deliverance from Catholicism.¹⁵ The 1690 sermon, accordingly, served a two-fold purpose: it offered an «...Anniversary Thanksgiving for the Happy Deliverance of King James the First, and Three Estates of the Realm, from the Gunpowder-treason: and also for the Happy Arrival of His Present Majesty on this day, for the Deliverance of our Church and Nation from Popery and Arbitrary Power.»

Delivered by Samuel Freeman who was, among other things, a chaplain to William and Mary, the new sovereigns, this sermon offers a notable early use of «Glorious Revolution» to characterise the events of 1688. It is also remarkable for the way it outlines what became the canonical view. It is therefore worth quoting at some length:

No less visible was the Sword of the Lord, than the Sword of *Gideon*, in our late happy Happy [sic] and Glorious Revolution; when we consider with what an invincible Spirit of Wisdom and Courage his *Majesty* undertook the Cause of our Country; what general Desires and Inclinations were on the sudden kindled in Mens Hearts towards Him, their Laws, and their Religion; What a burning Zeal and Vigour, what an universal Harmony of Affections, what a perfect agreement of Councils and Endeavours inflamed the Breasts of all Men; What a strange Folly and Infatuation blinded the Councils of our Enemies; what guilty Fears and Cowardise seiz'd their Spirits; How all was brought about by a dry Victory, without the expence of the Blood either of our Friends or Enemies; We must conclude, *That God was with him of a truth, and that it was he that made it to prosper.*¹⁶

turn of Charles II, May 29, *Gun-powder Treason, November 5*, London 1676, 50.

- 14 *The Mystery and Methods of His Majesty's Happy Restauration laid open to Public View by John Price Doctor of Divinity one of Albemarle's Chaplains, and Privy to all the Secret Passages, and Particularities of that Glorious Revolution*, London 1680.
- 15 On the eighteenth-century politics of the dating of William's landing, and of arguments for a competing date (4 November), see J. R. R. McConnel, «The 1688 Landing of William of Orange at Torbay: Numerical Dates and Temporal Understanding in Early-Modern England», in: *Journal of Modern History* 84 (2012), 539–571.
- 16 S. Freeman, *A Sermon preached before the honorable House of Commons at St. Margaret's Westminster on Wednesday the Fifth of November, 1690 being the Anniversary Thanksgiving for the Happy Deliv-*

erance of King James the First, and Three Estates of the Realm, from the Gunpowder-treason: and also for the Happy Arrival of His Present Majesty on this day, for the Deliverance of our Church and Nation from Popery and Arbitrary Power, London 1690, 16. A contemporary diarist offered a more sceptical picture of this, «the greatest revolution that was ever known». Noting that «politick frauds is and always has been in action in all kingdomes, revolutions, and nations, which is sufficient licence for their lawfulness,» he observed that «in this time of our revolution wee had many a strange story of long popish knives, gridirons, and instruments of torture found ... with suppositious letters, speeches, and such like, to irritate the people and encourage them to obey the revolution.» Rumours of Irish soldiers disbanded by James II, he reported, had everyone up in arms

We know that the nature and outcome of the Dutch invasion of 1688 were still contested in 1690 and years following. Matters remained far from settled. Disagreement persisted as to whether James II had deserted or abdicated; whether he had been overthrown by the people for a breach of trust or contract; and whether William and Mary had come to the throne by invitation, by right of succession or merely by force of arms. Seen in this context, the rhetorical force of this characterisation of the «Glorious Revolution» is all the more powerful. The phrase served to portray a great shift in political fortune, but also one that was emphatically over. This «late» Revolution was a «revolution» without «confusion», a change that was held to be providential. It implied a bloodless transition ordered and stabilised by God rather than by the power of the sword. It asserted a change that was all the more decisive for being «happy» and «glorious». Those who celebrated the outcome of 1688 wanted the change it had brought to be big enough to stick and secure enough to end the instabilities and uncertainties that had threatened British political life for much of a century. The rhetoric of the «late, glorious Revolution» served this purpose. Singularised, capitalised and glorified, this revolution was not just one in an endless series of ruptures that time would bring. «The Glorious Revolution» meant an end to «revolutions and confusions». It signified closure. This way of celebrating it continued throughout the eighteenth century, passing eventually into historiographical convention.

If «The Glorious Revolution» marked English usage of the word «revolution», it still did not radically transform this usage. In the prevailing understanding, «revolutions» still occurred, they were not made. A «revolution» was still recalled, apprehended, experienced or anticipated as a fact rather than imagined, undertaken or projected as an act. Evidence drawn from ECCO (*Eighteenth Century Collections Online*) shows that this set of meanings remained common in English for much of the eighteenth century. Though it is not yet possible to search the terms that co-occur with «revolution» or «revolutions» throughout the entire ECCO database, a collocation analysis of this kind can be generated from a smaller but more thoroughly searchable sample in ECCO-TCP, available online at ARTFL (American and French Research on the Treasury of the French Language, a project of the University of Chicago).¹⁷ Figures 1a and 2a show «word clouds» illustrating co-occurrences with «revolution» from 1700–1785 (these dates were chosen, for reasons that will soon become clear, to avoid the semantic effects of the French Revolution); figures 1b and 2b show tables of the ten most frequent co-occurrences with «revolutions» during the same period.¹⁸ In the most common usages of the singular «revolution»

and resolved to fight but unable to find the enemy. See *The Diary of Abraham de la Pryme, Publications of the Surtees Society*, vol. 54, Durham 1870, 14–15.

¹⁷ <http://artfl-project.uchicago.edu/content/ecco-tcp>

¹⁸ Note that collocation analyses typically begin by eliminating approximately one hundred of the most frequently used words in the language (e.g. «the», «and», «of»).

is preceded by «late,» «sudden,» «happy,» «new,» «strange,» «total,» «glorious,» «grand,» «extraordinary,» or «general». These descriptions stand in contrast to the more menacing «revolutions» co-occurring with «various,» «changes,» «wars,» «history,» «frequent,» «state,» «several,» «motions,» «violent,» and «sudden». Significantly, the most common term following «revolutions» in this sample is «happened».

In this semantic field, then, revolution was a fact but not yet a collective act; there were revolutions but no revolutionaries. Search of the ECCO database uncovers no usage of «revolutionary» as a descriptor of political action in English before the 1790s, when the term first begins to show up in translations from French and then more generally in reference to French developments. Before this, «revolutionary» was most frequently used in English to refer to a cyclical motion of some kind (e.g. «the sublime revolutionary scheme of heaven», 1777), occasionally to a changeable person or thing, and a couple of times to the principles of the constitutional settlement of 1689. Strikingly, the American rebels do not appear in this database as «revolutionaries». Nor are they described as such in the works found in the database of Early American Imprints. No occurrence of the term «revolutionary» shows up between 1770 and 1790 in Evans TCP, the more searchable (though significantly smaller) version of the Evans Early American Imprint Collection. (There is, though, a lone instance of «revolutional».)¹⁹

If there appear to be no «revolutionaries» in English before the 1790s, however, there were «revolutionists». This designation was first used in the early decades of the eighteenth century – not to describe the political actors who had brought about the Glorious Revolution, but to characterise those who subsequently upheld its principles against the Jacobite backlash. In essence, these early «revolutionists» wanted the Revolution to remain closed; they defended the Glorious Revolution as an accomplished fact against those «anti-revolutionists» (the Jacobites) who would re-open or overthrow it, or against those radicals who would place it at risk by pushing for extreme measures in its support.²⁰ The term still connoted commitment to the principles of 1688 when it was taken up by Wilkes and his supporters in the 1760s. But it was also beginning to convey something more than resolute acceptance and support of those principles. Tindal's continuation of Rapin's *History of England* (1758) spoke of «revolutionists and compliers», using the former term to

¹⁹ <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/evans/>

²⁰ See, for example, *A Letter concerning the Union, with Sir George Mackenzie's Observations and Sir John Nisbet's Opinion upon the same Subject*, [Edinburgh?] 1706, 20 («all honest Revolutionists must be against them [the Jacobites]»); C. Place, *The True English Revolutionist, or The Happy Turn Rightly Taken*, London 1710; *The Revolution and Anti-Revolution Principles Stated and Compar'd, the Constitution Explain'd and Vindicated, And the*

Justice and Necessity of Excluding the Pretender ... By the Author of the Two Disswassives against Jacobitism, London 1714, 14, 27–28 («Revolutionists» vs. «Anti-Revolutionists»); *A Vindication of the Honour and Justice of His Majesty's Government. Being some Remarks upon Two Treasonable Papers ... Wherein is discover'd the present Endeavours of the jacobites, to create fresh Disturbances, and raise a new Rebellion*, London 1717, 43.

describe those who had actively broken their allegiance to James II and the latter to characterise those who had merely acquiesced in the change of government.²¹ John Lindsay's *Brief History of England, both in Church and State* (1763) seemed to generalise this implication of action in the meaning of «revolutionist» (in this case, severing the term's particular connection to the Glorious Revolution) by finding «revolutionists» (and their «revolution principles») engaged in the conflicts of the Wars of the Roses.²² In a Wilkesite publication of 1766, «A Revolutionist» declared the Glorious Revolution still unfinished: «Let us make perfect in the year 1764 a work so well planned and so gloriously begun», he reiterated, citing an earlier publication. «The way is still open, if we are not *too* degenerate, and if every principle of public spirit, and attachment to our country, is not *totally* dead or corrupted in us.» The author of another Wilkesite tract in 1769, also dubbing himself «A Revolutionist», similarly declared the renewal of the struggle between liberty and slavery.²³

Catharine Macaulay's response in 1770 to Burke's *Thoughts on the Present Discontents* seemed to move even further toward activating the notion of the revolutionist. Macaulay judged harshly «the wicked system of policy set on foot by the leaders of the Revolutionists in the reign of king William» which «rendered the crown strong enough to set all parties at defiance».²⁴ A similar critique found expression in a tract against the law of libel in 1777: «Would to God the eyes of our ancestors had been wide open to the consequence of what the Revolutionists did not correct! For by leaving those leak holes in the state vessel unrepaired ... the steersmen have driven her on rocks and quicksands for pretended safety, till liberty is so circumscribed and fenced in, that she has almost lost her virtue.»²⁵ Damned here for doing too little, the «revolutionists» of 1688 were damned elsewhere for doing too much. Far from leaving the executive too much power, a ministerial publication charged in 1783, they had «run into the other extreme, and pared the prerogative to the quick».²⁶ By that same year, Macaulay was using «revolutionist» to describe the incipient Whigs who had attempted to exclude the future James II from the throne in 1780–1781 as

21 N. Tindal, *The Continuation of Mr. Rapin's History of England, from the Revolution to the Present Times*, vol. 7, London 1758, 35.

22 J. Lindsay, *A Brief History of England, both in Church and State*, London 1758, 98–99. The term was similarly activated by the author of a *History of the British Dominions in North America*, London 1773, 265, describing «those old Spanish revolutionists ... detected in their design.»

23 *A Collection of the most Interesting Political Letters which appeared in the Public Papers, from the Autumn Negotiation in 1763, to the Change of the Administration in 1765. Together with Several Pieces of Wit and Humour, Letters, Cards, &c. by Mr. Wilkes, and other Gentlemen*, London 1766, 96; *Critical Memoirs of the Times, containing a Summary View*

of the Popular Pursuits, Political Debates, and Literary Productions of the Present Age, London 1769, 116.

24 C. Macaulay, *Observations on a Pamphlet, entitled Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*, London 1770, 12.

25 *An Interesting Address to the Independent Part of the People of England, on Libels, and the Unconstitutional Mode of Prosecution by Information Ex Officio, practiced by the Attorney General. With a View of the Case of John Horne, Esq.*, London 1777, 62.

26 N. Buckingham, *Serious Considerations on the Political Conduct of Lord North, since his first Entry into the Ministry; with a Deduction of Positive Facts*, London 1783, 12.

well as those (some of them «hot-headed revolutionists») who had replaced James II with William of Orange in 1688.²⁷

Usage from the 1770s and 1780s does then suggest a tendency toward activating the meaning of «revolutionist» to describe those implementing or pressing for political change. And it is tempting to think that this tendency might be linked to the events unfolding in America during these decades. There seems to be no direct semantic link, however. Early American Imprints TCP offers only two uses of «revolutionist» in America before 1790, both simply referring to persons who held true to the principles of the Glorious Revolution. In fact, well into the 1770s, Americans on either side of their political conflict continued, along with their English cousins, to appeal to «The Revolution» – by which they meant the constitutional settlement of 1688 – to justify their position. Only gradually did loyalists begin to denounce their opponents for «proposing» or «projecting» a new revolution, or as being determined to persist «till a complete political revolution is effected».²⁸ In rebuttal, there was talk of the need for «another glorious and necessary revolution».²⁹

There also came a bold effort to rewrite Locke, and to radicalise the meaning of the Glorious Revolution, in *An Essay upon Government. Adopted by the Americans: Wherein, the Lawfulness of Revolutions, are demonstrated in a Chain of Consequences from the Fundamental, Principles of Society*. This pamphlet is particularly intriguing in the way it purports to be a contemporary justification of the Revolution of 1688 that «gives us a Right Notion of Revolutions in Government, ... shews us how far Revolutions may be Lawful, [and] teaches us how they are to be regularly managed».³⁰ In effect, it appears closer than any other to redefining «revolution» as an action (an act of legitimate resistance) rather than an outcome. Nonetheless, this semantic opening was quickly closed; revolution soon became again a *fait accompli*, a fact rather than a project. By September 1776, *American Independence Vindicated*, a sermon explaining the Declaration of Independence, was able to announce that «since this mighty revolution has taken place in America, there must of necessity be a change in our modes of government».³¹ Within a year, *The Genuine*

27 C. Macaulay, *The History of England from the Accession of James I to that of the Brunswick Line*, vol. 8, London 1783, 77, 312.

28 T. Bradbury Chandler, *A Friendly Address to all Reasonable Americans, on the Subject of our Political Confusions: in which the Necessary Consequences of violently opposing the King's troops, and of a General Non-Importation are fairly stated*, Boston 1774; New York 1774, 50 («the projected revolution»), 52 («the aim of the revolution they propose»); *What think ye of the Congress now? Or, An Inquiry, how far Americans are bound to abide by and execute the decisions of, the late Congress?*, New York 1775, 31 («till' a complete political revolution is effected»), 37.

29 Casca, *The Crisis. Number XXIV*, New York 1775, 203 («another glorious and necessary revolution»); *Number XXVI*, New York 1775, 220 («another Revolution»).

30 *An Essay upon Government. Adopted by the Americans: Wherein, the Lawfulness of Revolutions, are demonstrated in a Chain of Consequences from the Fundamental, Principles of Society*, Philadelphia 1775, 113.

31 P. Whitney, *American Independence Vindicated. A Sermon delivered September 12, 1776. At a Lecture appointed for publishing the Declaration of Independence*, Boston/MA 1776, 48.

Principles of the Ancient Saxon or English Constitution could speak of the «events which have given birth to this mighty revolution»; and Benjamin Rush, in his *Observations upon the Present Government of Pennsylvania*, could remark on «the suddenness of the late revolution». ³² By 1778, *An Oration on the Advantages of American Independence* would contemplate the «fruits of our glorious revolution»; and Paine, in *The American Crisis*, no. V, could celebrate «the most virtuous and illustrious revolution that ever graced the history of mankind». ³³ In America, «The Revolution» now no longer referred to that other change of affairs that had occurred in 1688. It meant the «American Revolution», the political transformation explained to the world by Congress in its *Observations on the American Revolution* (1779). ³⁴ It meant the great change celebrated in 1782 in *A Memorial of Lexington Battle, and of Some Signal Interpositions of Providence in the American Revolution* as «the glorious American Revolution which, in the course of nature, and by the will of Heaven, has opened in our day». ³⁵

It is a remarkable aspect of the American Revolution that the term «revolution» used in early American imprints went so rapidly from connoting a change that was anticipated to one that had already occurred. Semantically, it was «the late Revolution» almost as soon as it was «the present Revolution». In this, it remained very similar to the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Revolution continued to connote dramatic change, but change as an effect far more than change as a process, change as an established fact far more than change as a continuing collective act. Only with the French Revolution was «revolution» transformed into an ongoing struggle, a space of action expanding toward an indefinite political horizon, and a moment of rupture extended and energised by the urgency of a new conception of time.

2. Rethinking Revolution

In French as in English, at least from the mid-seventeenth century onwards, «révolution» was commonly invoked to refer to vicissitudes of fortune, mutations in human affairs and instabilities and disorders within the flow of human time. The

32 *The Genuine Principles of the Ancient Saxon, or English Constitution. Carefully selected from the best Authorities. With some Observations, on their peculiar fitness, for the United Colonies in general, and Pennsylvania in particular.* By Demophilus, Philadelphia [1776], 40; B. Rush, *Observations upon the Present Government of Pennsylvania*, Philadelphia 1777, 3.

33 D. Ramsay, *An Oration on the Advantages of American Independence, spoken before a Public Assembly of the inhabitants of Charlestown in South-Carolina, on the second anniversary of that glorious aera*, Charleston/SC [1778], 14; T. Paine, *The American Crisis. Number V. Addressed to General Sir William*

Howe. *By the author of Common Sense*, Lancaster/PA 1778, 83.

34 *Observations on the American Revolution, published according to a Resolution of Congress, by their Committee. For the consideration of those who are desirous of comparing the conduct of the opposed parties, and the several consequences which have flowed from it*, Philadelphia 1779.

35 P. Payson, *A Memorial of Lexington Battle, and of Some Signal Interpositions of Providence in the American Revolution. A Sermon preached at Lexington, on the nineteenth of April 1782*, Boston [1782], 6.

presence of this usage, alongside the astronomical metaphor, is abundantly clear in the French dictionaries of the period. From 1680 on, Pierre Richelet's dictionary gave the definition: «Revolution. Trouble, disorder and change», omitting the astronomical definition completely. Antoine Furetière supplemented the astronomical definition by adding ««revolution», also used of extraordinary changes that occur in the world». The 1694 dictionary of the French Academy followed suit with revolution defined as «vicissitude, great change in fortune, in the things of this world», suggesting «great, prompt, sudden, unexpected, strange, marvellous, astonishing» as appropriate adjectives. Some twenty years later, in 1717, the Academy gave a more specifically political dimension to its definition, adding «change which occurs in public affairs, in the things of this world». This specification of the term was carried further by the *Encyclopédie* of Diderot and d'Alembert: «Revolution ... *in political terms*, signifies a considerable change in the government of a state.» In the meantime, the Jesuits' deeply conservative *Dictionnaire de Trévoux* continued to emphasize the negative connotations of the term by recording its meaning as «extraordinary changes that occur in the world: disgraces, misfortunes, collapses».³⁶

This same pattern of meanings is echoed in collocation analyses generated by the ARTFL database. The word used most frequently to characterise «révolution» between 1650 and 1787 was «great». Next came «happy», though it should be noted that almost all of these occurrences appeared after 1750 and referred to psychological rather than political changes.³⁷ Other favoured terms were «sudden (*subite*)», «new», «strange», «general», «sudden (*soudaine*)» and «last» (see Figures 3a and 3b). This pattern was largely repeated (though without «happy») in occurrences of «révolutions», which were «great» most often but also commonly «different», «occurred», «frequent», «sudden», «terrible», «new», «diverse» and «continual» (see Figures 4a and 4b). Whether plural or singular, «révolution» in the prevailing eighteenth-century sense was an *ex post facto* category of historical understanding. It was the name for something that happened, often abruptly and without the conscious choice of human actors. It was not a script for political or social action. Revolutions occurred, they could perhaps even be anticipated, but they were viewed from the outside rather than the inside, observed as a past or experienced passively as a present. This connotation of the term gave rise to an entire genre of eighteenth-century political writing, as Jean-Marie Goulemot has shown. Elaborated under ti-

36 P. Richelet, *Dictionnaire français*, Geneva 1680, vol. 2, 316; A. Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel*, The Hague 1690, vol. 3 (s.v. *révolution*); *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française, dédié au Roi*, Paris 1694, vol. 2, 406; *Ibid.*, Paris 1717, vol. 2, 512 and later editions; *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, par une société de gens de lettres...*, Paris 1751–65, vol. 14,

337; *Dictionnaire universel français et latin*, Trevoux 1704, vol. 3 (s.v. *révolution*) and later editions. Translations from the French are my own unless otherwise stated.

37 See below, however, for some uses of «happy» to describe revolutions in politics and government that do not appear in the ARTFL database.

cles offering the «*Histoire des révolutions...*» of various countries, these works described the political vicissitudes afflicting many states and nations, thus offering a clear contrast to the continuity and order to which French absolutism aspired.³⁸ Even as late as 1798, the dictionary of the French Academy harked back to this tradition by observing that «one says, the Roman revolutions, the revolutions of Sweden, the revolutions of England for the memorable and violent changes which have agitated these countries».³⁹

Much changed after 1789, however, as the moment of revolution was expanded and extended from within to create a domain of lived experience with its own dynamic and its own chronology. No longer viewed solely from without or through the lens of historical hindsight, revolution emerged as an immediate present in a frame of action opening up to the future. «Revolution» became the name for a collective political act ushering in the birth of a new world. It is difficult not to see the role of the Enlightenment in creating conditions of possibility for this shift. If we look at uses of «*révolution*» throughout the *Encyclopédie* of Diderot and d'Alembert, we see – here as in other respects – the heavy weight of the past. In general, the semantic field of «*révolution*» in the *Encyclopédie* does not differ significantly from that in the ARTFL database. D'Alembert himself resorted to a conventional use of the word in expressing his hope that the *Encyclopédie* would grow into a kind of sanctuary that would safeguard human knowledge from the ravages of «time and revolutions». But he also celebrated the Renaissance in terms that gave «revolution» a more favourable gloss: «To escape barbarism, the human race needed one of those revolutions that give the universe a different face.»⁴⁰ Diderot's article describing the nature and purposes of the *Encyclopédie* hints further at a change that might be underway.

In this article defining the work's entire philosophical project, the *Encyclopédie* looks forward to its own obsolescence as a consequence of «the revolution that will occur in the minds of men and the national character» as reason advances. Knowledge is not infinite, Diderot acknowledges. Indeed, it is a cardinal argument of his definition of the *Encyclopédie* that human knowledge is inherently limited, restricted to what human beings can infer from their own sensations and ideas and always destined to fall far short of that God's eye view from which the universe would be one great truth and one great fact. Precisely because knowledge is limited, however, it can and must progress. For this reason, Diderot maintained, «revolutions are necessary; there have always been revolutions, and there always will be».⁴¹ From

38 See J.-M. Goulemot, *Discours, révolutions et histoire: Représentations de l'histoire et discours sur les révolutions de l'Age Classique aux Lumières*, Paris 1975; revised as *Le règne de l'histoire: discours historiques et révolutions. XVIIe–XVIIIe siècle*, Paris 1996.

39 *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*, 5th ed., Paris 1798, vol. 2, 499.

40 «Discours préliminaire», in: *Encyclopédie*, vol. 1, XXXVIII, xx.

41 «Encyclopédie», in: *Encyclopédie*, vol. 5, 637.

this philosophical perspective, revolutions cease to be mere vicissitudes. They provide the mechanism of change for the indefinite transformation of knowledge, and thereby of society.

Diderot's definition of the *Encyclopédie* points to a revalorisation of change and of «revolution» as its manifestation, that lay at the heart of the Enlightenment. Proponents of absolute monarchy and classical republicanism shared a common conviction that disorder and vicissitude (the natural state of human existence, deriving from the unstable play of the passions) were a dangerous state to be contained only by the imposition of order – either through the authority of an absolute monarch or by the inculcation of that civic virtue by which individual interests were artificially identified with the common good. Enlightenment thinkers, by contrast, began to offer a competing vision of human existence as grounded in the order of society – an order now increasingly imagined as at once the creation and the frame of human activity, as an autonomous entity endowed with a mechanism producing stability through the very process of constant transformation.

Understood in this way, society had to have a history and a logic far different from the endless vicissitudes of historical time that were implied in the conventional use of the term «revolution». Against the traditional notion of a succession of revolutions introducing abrupt changes or political disruptions that were usually negative in their effects, Enlightenment philosophy set a view of other revolutions taking form as longer-term social and cultural transformations at once more profound and more beneficent. Moreover, to the extent that Enlightenment historiography took as its object world history – the history of human civilization as a whole – the revolutions it identified as dynamic processes of transformation had universal implications. They were not merely local events, but phenomena of world-historical significance. Fundamental to human progress, they were «wheels in the machine of the universe», to quote Voltaire's remarkable phrase.⁴² The philosophical manifesto Condorcet offered the Académie française in his reception speech of 1782 assured its listeners (and subsequent readers) that they could «expect everything from time, the infallible effect of which is to bring happy revolutions and great discoveries». A manuscript note prepared for a revised edition of this speech set this view of social change against the (classical republican) notion «that the human race can only hope to achieve happiness by violent revolution in a country where it is oppressed, that societies tend to corruption unless legislation gives men that restless love of liberty which excites factionalism and quarrels and divides them into mutually suspicious parties, and that a peace which is not a shameful servitude, a true political death, can only subsist as the result of equilibrium between contrary efforts, each tending to break it». The first conception of revolution, Condorcet insisted, would lead to

42 G. Mailhos, «Le mot «révolution» dans l'*Essai sur les mœurs* et la *Correspondance* de Voltaire», in:

Cahiers de lexicologie 13(1968), 84–92; Baker, *Inventing*, 213.

progress through the indefinite advance of enlightenment; the second would result in »disorder or general discouragement«. ⁴³

Thus, in the idiom of Enlightenment, «revolutions» as the disorder of events in the flow of human time and an expression of the instability of all things human began to give way to «revolutions» as expressions of the dynamic transformational process advancing the progress of the human mind. The *philosophes* not only expanded the concept of revolution so that it had universal significance; they also began to shift the chronological connotations of the term. When viewed as an extended process, revolution constituted a domain of lived experience and offered a new horizon of expectation. «Everything I see is sowing the seeds of a revolution that is bound to occur and that I shall not have the pleasure to witness...», Voltaire rejoiced in 1764. «Enlightenment is gradually being spread to such a point that at the first chance there will be a great outburst, and then there will be a fine to-do. Our young people are very fortunate, they will see great things.» ⁴⁴ In this sense, Enlightenment itself was understood as a profound revolution already underway, a process of cultural transformation that was reorienting expectations toward the future. ⁴⁵

Seen in this light, events in France began to take on a new colouring. «The revolution is being prepared, the happy epoch is already being announced when the august monarch who governs France is going to recognise all his subjects as his children», proclaimed the Huguenot leader Rabaut Saint-Etienne in 1779 as he contemplated the possibility of a reform that would grant civil rights to Protestants. ⁴⁶ When, a decade later, Jacques Peuchet, the editor of the section of the *Encyclopédie méthodique* devoted to local government declared that «the good old times is a chimerica and the rallying cry for ignorance and imbecility», he expressed a mood that had become increasingly pervasive in the last years of an enlightened, reforming monarchy. This period saw a cascade of proposals for legal, fiscal and constitutional reforms. Each was celebrated as offering another «happy revolution». Discussing the provincial assemblies introduced in France by Loménie de Brienne in 1787, Peuchet characterised this change as the fruit of the intellectual progress that had brought Europe to its «present state of civility and enlightenment». ⁴⁷ His work epit-

43 M. J. A. N. Caritat de Condorcet, «Discours de réception à l'Académie française, le 21 février 1782», as translated in K. M. Baker (ed.), *Condorcet. Selected Writings*, Indianapolis/IN 1976, 7, 22.

44 Voltaire to Chauvelin, 2 April 1764, in: T. Besterman (ed.), *Voltaire's Correspondence*, Geneva 1953–65, letter 10968; for similar statements see, Baker, *Inventing*, 214–15.

45 On this theme, see the classic essays by R. Koselleck, *Futures Past. On the Semantics of Historical Past*, trans. by K. Tribe, Cambridge/MA 1985; F. Hartog, *Régimes d'historicité*, Paris 2003.

46 [J.-P. Rabaut Saint-Etienne], *Le triomphe de l'intolérance* (1779). For this and other examples of «happy revolutions» see R. Reichardt, *Reform und Revolution bei Condorcet. Ein Beitrag zur späten Aufklärung in Frankreich*, Bonn 1973, 338–342 (Rabaut quotation, 339).

47 J. Peuchet, «Discours préliminaire», in: *Encyclopédie méthodique: Jurisprudence*, vol. 9: *Police et municipalités*, Paris 1789, lxiv; fuller quotations in Baker, *Inventing*, 216.

omised the belief in human progress as a succession of beneficent revolutions in the human mind culminating in the universal transformation of civil society. The mood of the *cahiers de doléances* submitted to Louis XVI by his subjects in 1789 is also revealing here. «Heureuse» was by far the most frequent term to qualify «révolution» in these documents (see Figure 7).

In Enlightenment discourse, then, the notion of «revolution» was universalised and reoriented from past to future, taking on an entirely new set of meanings as it came to designate a process of transformation within modern society. It goes without saying, though, that the Enlightenment conception of society had its eighteenth-century critics. Nor is it surprising that in indicting society these critics also gave «revolution» a rather different valence.

The tone was set by Rousseau, that great Enlightenment heretic, in a celebrated passage of *Emile*:

You trust in the present order of society without imagining that this order is subject to inevitable revolutions, and that it is impossible for you to foresee or prevent the one that can affect your children. The great become small, the rich become poor, the monarch becomes subject: are the blows of fortune so rare that you can count yourself as exempt from them? We are approaching the state of crisis and the century of revolutions? Who can tell you what you will become then? All that men have made, men can destroy.⁴⁸

Rousseau is clearly drawing here upon the conventional meaning of revolution implying vicissitude and change, the inevitable play of fortune in all human affairs. But he also points to a link between «revolution» and «crisis» that is worth emphasising, especially in relation to the classical republicanism that informed so much of his thinking. In the language of classical republicanism, civic virtue – the active commitment of citizens to the common interest over their own particular interests – is neither natural nor rational: it is a passion produced and maintained only by a political order founded on liberty and good laws. It depends, furthermore, upon the constant suppression of the contrary passion, which would place individual interests above the common good. It follows that the central problem of classical republicanism is that of sustaining civic virtue and with it the life of the political body over time. Hence the centrality in this idiom of organic metaphors: images of vigour and weakness, health and sickness, life and death. Hence the metaphor of crisis: the moment in which the very existence of the body politic hangs in the balance, in which either its health and vigour will be recovered or it will fall into an irreversible, fatal sickness. As classical republicanism increasingly assumed the

48 J.-J. Rousseau, *Emile, ou De l'éducation*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. by B. Gagnebin / M. Raymond,

Paris 1959–95, vol. 4, 468–469; as translated in *Emile*, trans. by A. Bloom, New York 1979, 194.

form of a critique of the growth of modern commercial society, the notion of crisis was expanded to describe the effects of the destructive forces within such society. In this case, wealth and luxury fed despotism which, in turn, was sustained by courts, ministers and standing armies.⁴⁹

Thus there was a new prophetic tone in Rousseau's warning. Revolution as extended crisis – a «century of revolutions» – here became the obverse of the *philosophes'* conception of revolution as protracted transformational process. This prognosis was taken up nowhere more vociferously than in Linguet's *Annales politiques*, perhaps the most compelling French-language journal of the entire pre-revolutionary period. Linguet's vision of the «singular revolution threatening Europe» turned the Enlightenment theory of the progress of civil society on its head. While others were celebrating the emergence of modern commercial society from the collapse of feudalism, he lamented its exploitation and impoverishment of the masses. He saw only two possibilities. Either the oppressed, held in check by military force, would waste away in silent misery and European prosperity would be destroyed through inanition. Or the masses would find «some new *Spartacus*, emboldened by despair, enlightened by necessity, calling his comrades in misery to a true *liberty* through the destruction of the murderous and deceitful laws that make it misunderstood».⁵⁰

The idea of a new *Spartacus* was scarcely a new thought. In its 1774 version, Raynal's *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes* had appealed to the world's sovereigns to abolish African enslavement in the New World while also pointing to an alternative scenario: the nightmare of massive slave revolt. The creation of runaway slave colonies and other forms of resistance were already offering «so many indications of the impending storm», readers of the *Histoire philosophique et politique* were told. The enslaved lacked only «a leader, sufficiently courageous, to lead them to vengeance and slaughter».

Where is he, this great man whom nature perhaps owes to the honour of the human species? Where is he, this new *Spartacus* who will not find a *Crassus*? Then will the *black code* be no more; and how frightful will be the *white code* if the conqueror only considers the rights of reprisal. Until this revolution takes place the negroes groan under the yoke of their labor, the description of which cannot but interest us more and more in their fate.⁵¹

49 For the classic historical discussion of these themes, see J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, Princeton/NJ 1975.

50 [S.-N.-H. Linguet], *Annales politiques, civiles, et littéraires du dix-huitième siècle*, «London» 1777–80, 84, 104; for a fuller discussion, see Baker, *Inventing*, 216–7.

51 G.-T. Raynal, *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les*

deux Indes, 7 vols., The Hague, Gosse fils 1774, vol. 4, 227. My thanks to Mary Auburn Miller for help in locating this edition. An English translation appeared in 1776 (*A Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies*, 2nd ed., trans. by J. Justamond, 5 vols., [London, T. Cadell, 1776], passage quoted at vol. 3, 466).

The language used here was alarming enough. But a few years later, in the 1780 revision of the *Histoire philosophique et politique*, the warning of impending insurrection had become sharper and even more terrifying. The passage in its revised form demands full quotation, even at the risk of some repetition.

Where is he, this great man whom nature owes its afflicted, oppressed, tormented children? Where is he? He will appear without a doubt, he will reveal himself, he will raise the sacred standard of liberty. This venerable signal will gather around him the companions of his misfortune. More violent than a torrent, they will leave everywhere behind them indelible traces of their righteous resentment. Spaniards, Portuguese, English, French, Dutch, all their tyrants will fall victim to fire and sword. The plains of America will drink in exaltation the blood they have long awaited, and the bones of so many wretches, heaped together for three centuries, will leap for joy. The Old World will join in applause with the New. The name of the hero who has restored the rights of humanity will everywhere be blessed; everywhere monuments will be raised to his glory. Then will the *black code* be no more; and how frightful will be the *white code* if the conqueror considers only the right of reprisal. Until this revolution takes place the negroes groan under the yoke of their labour, the description of which cannot but interest us more and more in their fate.⁵²

What then does «revolution» now mean for Raynal and his collaborators? Has it become synonymous with insurrection – a violent collective act in and of itself – or does it still refer to the de facto radical change that will result once an insurrection has occurred? Is «revolution» now a process rather than an event? Is it now an action or an outcome? To answer these questions, and for further evidence of the meanings of «revolution» on the eve of the French Revolution, we might look at the term's broader presence in the *Histoire philosophique et politique*. This work was, after all, the most dramatic publishing phenomenon of the 1770s and 1780s. Bursting onto the scene in a series of increasingly radical versions, it proliferated by means of a host of editions, re-editions, supplements, selections and extracts and was rapidly translated into many languages. As official condemnations provided additional publicity, and rival publishers competed to satisfy the public's voracious demand, its various manifestations fed a market that was almost impossible to satiate. Conceived and supervised by Raynal but shaped over the years by a number of collaborators, most notably Diderot, this work both defined and exemplified a shifting political horizon. The book's popularity makes it an obvious choice to explore further the meanings of the term «revolution» during these last decades of the Old Regime.⁵³

52 *Histoire philosophique et politique ...*, 10 vols, Geneva Pellet 1781, vol. 6, 139.

53 For the most useful general introduction to the history, bibliographical complications and re-

Searching for the term «révolution» in the initial version of the *Histoire philosophique et politique* published in 1770 reveals a conventional usage describing many different kinds of changes, shifts in fortune, unanticipated events, and transformational processes. Significantly, the most common (and the only really strong) co-occurrence of the term in the plural is with «frequent» (See Figures 5a and 5b; but note that only vols. 1 and 6 of the 1770 edition are available in ARTFL for this collocation analysis). The *Histoire philosophique et politique* teems with revolutions discovering ever more of them as its successive editions grow in length. It cites revolutions present and revolutions past, accidental revolutions, necessary revolutions, happy revolutions, disastrous revolutions, revolutions to be anticipated, revolutions to be hastened and revolutions to be feared. At the same time, the use of «révolution» in the singular points to the importance of the term in also characterising broad transformational processes: revolution in commerce, in manners, in thought (Figures 6a and 6b). Indeed, as its opening sentences suggest, the *Histoire philosophique et politique* can be seen as structured precisely around the question of the relationship between these two notions of revolution: revolution *qua* vicissitude and revolution *qua* long-term transformation.

The book opens, in each of its various editions, by positing the global transformation that has resulted from the European discovery of the East and West Indies:

There has been no event as significant for humankind in general and for the peoples of Europe in particular than the discovery of the new world and the passage to the Indies around the Cape of Good Hope. Thus began a revolution in commerce, in the power of nations, in the manners, industry and government of all peoples. At this moment individuals in the most distant countries became necessary one to another; the products of equatorial climates are consumed in those close to the pole; the industry of the north is transported to the south; oriental fabrics clothe the west, and people everywhere share their opinions, their practices, their remedies, their virtues and their vices.

Is this transformation stable? Will it, can it, be beneficial? Its inscription as a «revolution» on the book's very first page conjures up the spectre of «revolutions» in general, revolutions as nothing more than endless, meaningless variations.

Everything has changed and must change again. But have revolutions past been – and can those that must follow be – useful to human nature? Will humanity owe them one day more tranquility, virtue and pleasure? Can they make its state better, or will they merely change it?⁵⁴

ception of the *Histoire philosophique et politique*, and recent work on it, see the critical edition edited by A. Strugnell / A. Brown / C. P. Courtney / G. Dulac / G. Goggi / H.-J. Lüsebrink (eds.), Fer-

ney-Voltaire 2010, xxvi–lii; J. I. Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment*, Oxford 2011, 413–442.

54 *Ibid.*, 23.

The *Histoire philosophique et politique* thus portrays a transformation of the modern world that hinges on Europe's accidental discovery of new lands beyond the seas. It offers a history of the present and the present as history. It looks to the past to grasp the present and to the present to imagine the possibilities of the future. It is a world history, not only in its vision of social processes of globalisation integrating the fortunes of far-flung peoples but also in its universal perspective. As a «philosophical history», it is a history of humanity, the work of the philosopher who has freed himself of his personal concerns and attributes and elevated his mind's eye to judge human affairs from «above the atmosphere»(the point once occupied by the deity).⁵⁵ But it is also a political history, a story of a world in constant flux, of change and contingency, action and interaction, vulnerability and opportunity, shifting fortunes and strategic calculations. It offers an unfolding narrative of states and peoples, of global competition, of liberty and oppression, of rights achieved and rights denied.

In this history written *sub specie humanitatis*, contemporaneity, immediacy and universality intersect at the point where humankind's shameful past meets its still uncertain future. And as the work is extended in successive versions, it gives its readers (almost as if in a newsreel) what is perhaps the most widely influential early account of the American Revolution. Added first to the 1780 version of the *Histoire philosophique et politique*, this account appeared separately and sold widely as the *Révolution de l'Amérique* from 1781. Editions and translations into English and other languages rapidly followed.

The *Révolution de l'Amérique* is remarkable in the way that it depicts its subject as a collective act in an immediate present. It opens with a characterisation of Britain as in «a moment of crisis», exhausted by long and bloody war, over-extended abroad as a result of new territorial acquisitions and crushed at home by unprecedented taxes.⁵⁶ Given these circumstances, the metropole had no choice but to call upon the help of its colonies. But its leaders did so tyrannically, disregarding customary practice and the colonists' constitutional inheritance as Englishmen: the principle of consent to taxation, that right «which should belong to all peoples, since it is founded on the eternal code of reason».⁵⁷ Losing sight of the delicate art of maintaining authority, the British created a situation that could only put at risk the legitimacy of their power. Raynal's succinct summary of the conditions of successful rule is quite candid:

55 Ibid., 24.

56 *Révolution de l'Amérique par M. l'abbé Raynal, Auteur de l'Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes*, London chez Lockyer David, Hol-

bourne 1781, 3. Translations from the French are my own, though I have also consulted the simultaneous English translation brought out under the same imprint.

57 Ibid., 9.

Never forget that the lever of power has no other fulcrum than opinion; that the force of those who govern is really only the force of those who let themselves be governed. Never prompt peoples distracted by their labour, or asleep in their chains, to open their eyes to truths too frightful for you. When they obey don't let them remember they have the right to command. Once this moment of terrible awakening arrives; once they think they are not made for their rulers but their rulers are made for them; once they have been able to gather together, to communicate, and to pronounce with one voice that *We do not want this law, this practice displeases us*, there is no middle ground. You will be constrained, by an unavoidable alternative, either to yield or to punish, to be weak or tyrannical; and your authority, henceforth detested or despised whatever action it takes, will have no choice but the open insolence of the people, or their hidden hate.⁵⁸

This is the perspective from which the *Révolution de l'Amérique* traces the escalation of the conflict in North America as increasingly despotic measures by the British crown and parliament incite the growing determination of the colonists to resist. As news of the closing of Boston Harbor circulates throughout the colonies in 1774, «dispositions to a general insurrection grow.... Soon the disquietude communicates itself from house to house. The inhabitants assemble and converse in public places. Writings full of eloquence and vigor are published everywhere.» The moment of decision has arrived. The colonies, these publications announce, «have now nothing left them but to choose between fire and sword, the horrors of death or the yoke of passive, slavish obedience. Behold the time of an important revolution has finally arrived, the outcome (*événement*) of which, happy or disastrous, will fix for ever the regret or admiration of posterity.» Readiness for resistance is now the watchword, but the step from general outrage to concerted action remains critical:

The important object, the difficult thing, in the midst of a general tumult, was to introduce calm that would allow the formation of a union of wills giving resolutions dignity, force, and consistency. This is the concert that, from a multitude of scattered parts easy to break, composes a whole not to be brought down unless it be divided by force or policy.

With the creation of the Continental Congress «the ferment of animosity increases. All hope of reconciliation vanishes. The two sides sharpen their blades.... The combustibles are gathered; the conflagration is about to blaze.»⁵⁹

From this introduction, the *Révolution de l'Amérique* launches into a narrative of the conflict between Britain and its colonists that extends from the formation of the Continental Congress to the American achievement of independence, liberty and constitutional government. Much more is worthy of discussion in this book than

58 Ibid., 7–8.

59 Ibid., 25.

can be treated in the present context, but the essential point is that the *Révolution de l'Amérique* brings readers into an unfolding present playing out within the dramatic framework of collective political action and decision-making. Readers follow the arguments of pre-revolutionary pamphlets. They are taken into the House of Commons to hear speeches for and against taking severe action against the American rebels (there are shades here of the speeches Thucydides composed to dramatise the debate over the fate of Corcyra at the hands of the Athenians). They are taught (in language that Thomas Paine later denounced as plagiarism) the cardinal distinction between society (born of men's needs and «always good») and government (born of men's vices and «only too often bad»).⁶⁰ They are treated to lengthy paraphrases of *Common Sense* as it radicalises the meaning of the conflict («The tribunal of war is from now on the only tribunal that exists for us»).⁶¹ They follow the writing of the Declaration of Independence, the creation of a constitution and the vicissitudes of war. They ponder the future of the new state as the book urges it to avoid luxury, corruption, inequality, the spirit of conquest and intolerance and to «let liberty be an unshakeable basis of your constitutions».⁶²

In all of this, «revolution» as an event becomes «revolution» imagined, enacted and narrated as a dynamic process. The success of Washington's army in driving the English back toward Boston in March 1776 becomes «the first step of English America toward the revolution». In response, the English comprehend that «to snuff out revolutions, there is an initial moment that has to be seized». Paine's *Common Sense* announces that «one day has given birth to a revolution. One day has transported us into a new century»; that America is blessed because of its lack of a nobility for which, «in times of revolutions and crisis, the people is only an instrument»; that «souls expand in revolutions, that heroes emerge and assume their place». As independence is declared with an eloquence worthy of the great days of Greece and Rome and an initial constitution is formed, readers are reminded that «in these moments of revolution the public will cannot be too well known, too literally pronounced». They are later asked whether enough has been done to «consolidate (*affermir*) the revolution», and to allow the French the pride of «sharing with an ally the honor of this important revolution». As despots, too, are readers, they are also instructed that nothing privileges tyranny over liberty. «These great revolutions of liberty are lessons for despots. They warn them not to count on the too-long patience of peoples or on an eternal impunity.»⁶³

60 See T. Paine, *Letter to the Abbé Raynal, on the Affairs of North America: in which the Mistakes of the Revolution of America are Corrected and Cleared Up*, Philadelphia 1782. The plagiarism was actually the work of Diderot who drafted some of the most eloquent passages of the *Histoire philosophique et politique* on the American Revolu-

tion. These and other contributions are translated in D. Diderot, *Political Writings*, ed. by J. H. Mason / R. Wokler, Cambridge 1992, 169–214.

61 *Révolution de l'Amérique*, 74–85.

62 *Ibid.*, 151.

63 *Ibid.*, 28, 61, 66, 72, 82, 126, 129, 144.

In this narrative of the American Revolution, a space is opened for imaginative investment in collective action. «Thus when society and the laws take vengeance against the crimes of individuals the man of good will hopes that punishment of the guilty can prevent new crimes. Terror sometimes takes the place of justice for the brigand or conscience for the assassin. This is the source of the keen interest that all wars for liberty awaken in us. This has been the interest the Americans have inspired. Our imaginations have been inflamed for them. We associate ourselves with their victories and their defeats.»⁶⁴ Readers of the *Révolution de l'Amérique* are thus invited to contemplate revolution as an act – they are urged to embrace its promise on behalf all humankind.

3. Revolution Revolutionised

The empirical evidence discussed in the previous section leads to several conclusions regarding the notion of revolution in France in the century prior to 1789. First, in the French database, as in the English one, «revolution» is shown to have retained a broad range of meanings while remaining largely an ex post facto category, the expression of the instabilities of human existence and the vicissitudes brought on by time. Revolution was a fact rather than an act: an event that occurred or could be anticipated, a change in public life that could be celebrated or decried, not a collective political process demanding engagement. Revolutions happened, they were not made; they prompted anxiety rather than hope. They were better celebrated than anticipated.

Second, there were signs, nonetheless, that «revolution» was being revalorised within Enlightenment thinking. Revolutions in knowledge could be seen as contributing to the general advance of the human understanding; revolutions in society could be welcomed as beneficial transformations of the conditions of human existence; and political changes could be demanded or anticipated as «happy revolutions».

Third, as expectations of social progress increased and expanded, so did countervailing fears of cataclysmic social collapse. The spectre of revolution as political crisis and social apocalypse, the inevitable explosion resulting from modern society's accelerating evils, was the dark side of eighteenth-century social thought. Raynal's *Histoire philosophique et politique* is particularly striking in the way it fostered both understandings of revolution – progressive or cataclysmic – and thereby sustained a profound tension between hopes for social transformation and warnings of impending disaster.

Fourth, the *Histoire philosophique et politique* is also particularly striking in the conceptualisation of the American Revolution it offered the many readers of its

⁶⁴ Ibid., 145–146.

expanded final version. That work and its spin-off, the *Révolution de l'Amérique*, clearly reimagine revolution as a collective act and a political dynamic unfolding over time. They expand the moment of change and open a horizon of choice and engagement. Read from this perspective, they were already scripting a revolution in which universal values were seen to be at risk in the immediacy and contingency of political time.

I missed this development in my earlier analysis. In that analysis, I used the example of the *Révolutions de Paris*, the most widely read of the new political journals that emerged in 1789, to suggest the way in which the conception of the French Revolution took shape. The title of the journal itself pointed to an older understanding of «revolutions» as sudden occurrences and dramatic events that bring unanticipated changes in the affairs of a state. Consistent with that understanding it first appeared as a succession of brochures reporting particular incidents. It was soon transformed however, as political crisis continued, into a periodical that itself fed the revolutionary dynamic. As it changed, so did the conception of revolution in its pages. A succession of «revolutions» became «a revolution» and then «the astonishing revolution that has taken place»; «these revolutions» turned into «this revolution forever memorable in the annals of our history», which soon assumed its designation as «The Revolution».⁶⁵ In light of the present research, this semantic evolution seems to parallel the pattern of «The Glorious Revolution» and «The American Revolution» in which a series of events rapidly became a great event to be singularised, capitalised and celebrated.

But «The French Revolution» was not yet to be recognised and understood ex post facto – which is to say that its momentum was not yet to be stopped. The term found force in signifying an act rather than in legitimating a fact. The revolutionary moment was opened up and expanded from within to become a frame of action with its own dynamic, its own logic, its own immediacy and its own accelerated conception of time. In this respect, the parallel between the *Révolutions de Paris* and the *Révolution de l'Amérique* is striking. But it is not incidental here that the *Révolutions de Paris* was a newspaper and its editors were intent on convincing readers that no issue could be left unpurchased or unread. The temporality of the French Revolution narrative was at once driven and reflected by the periodicity of its press. Time itself was to be experienced as a succession of moments in which life and death hang in the balance. Each day was to offer a new conflict between the Revolution and its enemies. Each day was to decide whether France would be «enslaved or free», whether its inhabitants would be «the happiest of peoples» or the most miserable. No issue of the newspaper, therefore, could be neglected.

65 Baker, *Inventing*, 218–223. This analysis owed much to P. Rétat, «Forme et discours d'un journal révolutionnaire: Les *Révolutions de Paris* en 1789»,

in: C. Labrosse / P. Rétat / H. Duranton, *L'Instrument périodique. La fonction de la presse au XVIIIe siècle*, Lyon 1986, 139–178.

Remarkably, then, the conception of revolution we see taking form in this journal combined the meanings of revolution qua crisis and revolution qua transformational process. The French Revolution was a crisis, a moment of life or death in the body politic experienced as a terrifying moment of violence and danger, a period of agitation and anguish. But this version of a classical republican narrative was presented in Enlightenment tones. A local crisis was being raised to the level of a world-historical process that would effect the transformation of humanity. Each day would decide not only the fate of France, but of all humankind. The French were carrying out a universal historical mission in acting not only for themselves but on behalf of «all the nations which have not yet broken the chains of despotism».

There is no reason to repeat an earlier analysis of the *Révolutions de Paris* here, though it should be acknowledged that it has been extended by William Sewell's discussion of the link between revolution and popular violence forged at the Bastille and, more recently, by Dan Edelstein's account of the emergence of revolutionary authority in 1793.⁶⁶ Instead, we can consider the aggregate picture now made possible by the digitisation of the first eighty volumes of the *Archives parlementaires*, the omnibus collection of reports of the sessions of the revolutionary national assemblies and of related materials. It is important to emphasise that the data currently available are «dirty OCR», i.e. the product of an initial, uncorrected optical scanning that still provides messy results. But these results are nonetheless quite fascinating and suggestive.

Figures 8a and 8b show co-occurrences with «révolution» for the year 1789. The change is dramatic: «happy» is now the most common descriptor followed by «great» and «present (*actuelle*)». Also favoured are «against or counter (*contre*)», «certain», «sudden», «present (*présente*)», «our» and «astonishing». But the revolution is happy only briefly: by 1790 «heureuse» has been displaced by «contre» (Figures 9a and 9b). The collocation analysis for 1791–93 shows the continuation of this trend. «Counter» dominates, followed by «our» and «French», and then «violations», «great», «happy», «your», «new» (Figures 10a and 10b). Here, the revolution is defined more in terms of antagonism than celebration. And the embattled revolution needs «revolutionaries» to struggle, above all, against «counter-» revolutionaries. It needs a «revolutionary tribunal», «revolutionary committees», a «revolutionary army», «revolutionary measures», a «revolutionary movement», «revolutionary government», and «revolutionary laws» (Figures 11a and 11b).⁶⁷ The presence of these terms will scarcely surprise specialists of the French Revolution, but their

66 W. H. Sewell Jr., «Historical Events as Transformations of Structures: Inventing Revolution at the Bastille», in: idem, *Logics of History. Social Theory and Social Transformation*, Chicago 2005, 225–270; D. Edelstein, «Do We Want a Revolution without Revolution? Reflections on Political

Authority», in: *French Historical Studies* 35(2012), 269–289.

67 To produce these collocation figures, the computer program is asked to generate co-occurrences with «révolutionn*» (with the asterisk standing in for any subsequent ending). Of the

sudden appearance in the collocation tables will perhaps remind historians not to take them for granted. They offer a dramatic demonstration of the ways in which revolution was transformed into a political narrative and a domain of action.

«*Révolution*» was thus endowed by the French with adjectival and verb forms delineating a frame of action and those who acted within it: «*révolutionnaire*» («revolutionary») to characterise a certain kind of situation, or the actors or deeds producing or engaging it; «*révolutionner*» («to revolutionise») to designate their impact. As the meanings of these very same terms were quickly sharpened by the appearance of their opposites – «*contre-révolution*» and «*contre-révolutionnaire*» – «revolution» shifted from fact to act, becoming a dynamic, violent process with no clear end in sight.⁶⁸ Revolution, in short, was revolutionised.

Much still needs to be done to recover the logic and practice expressed in these linguistic phenomena. But they point to the ways in which revolution became an act, not a fact; the inauguration of a future, not a return to a past; an appeal to universal principles; an advance for humanity; a source of authority and justification; and a set of moves and roles to be re-enacted, re-imagined, rewritten, elaborated and improvised upon. Above all, they point to the way revolution acquired revolutionaries and spawned counter-revolutionaries. «Those who make revolutions, those who want to do good, must sleep only in the tomb», Saint-Just famously declared in his speech explaining to the Convention the necessity of declaring revolutionary government.⁶⁹ With such words, the modern revolutionary was born. «*Revolution 1.0*» had been released. But there were to be many improvisations on the revolutionary script before Ghonim's rash declaration of the appearance of «*Revolution 2.0*».

7461 occurrences, there are 7252 «*révolutionnaire(s)*» and 71 «*révolutionnairement*.» There are a handful of verb forms, which seem to become more common later (see note 68). Remaining occurrences are miscellaneous spellings.

68 The 1798 edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* retained conventional eighteenth-century definitions of «revolution». But its *Supplément contenant les mots nouveaux en usage depuis la révolution* added verb and adjectival forms expressing the radical transformation of the term since 1789: «*Révolutionner*. v.act. Mettre en état de révolution; introduire les principes révolutionnaires dans... *Révolutionner un État*»; «*Révolutionnaire*. s.m. Ami de la révolution»; «*Révolutionnaire*. adjectif des 2 gen. Qui appartient à la révolution, qui est conforme aux principes de la révolution, qui est propre à en accélérer les

progrès, etc. *Mesures révolutionnaires. Gouvernement révolutionnaire*; «*Contre-révolution*. s. f. Seconde révolution en sens contraire de la première, et rétablissement des choses dans leur état précédents»; «*Contre-révolutionnaire*. sub. masc. Ennemi de la Révolution, qui travaille à la renverser, etc. On a dit aussi adjectivement, *Projet, action, discours contre-révolutionnaire*», in: *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*, 5th ed., *Supplément*, vol. 2, 775. On this edition of the dictionary, see J. Lobert, «Between Monarchy and Republic: the Dictionary of the Académie Française during the French Revolution, 1762–1798», Ph.D. thesis, Stanford University 2011.

69 L.-A.-L. de Saint-Just, «Rapport sur la nécessité de déclarer le gouvernement révolutionnaire jusqu'à la paix» (10 October, 1793), in: *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. by M. Duval, Paris 1984, 345.

about account affirmed agreed ah alone along among annual another anti
 auspicious **because** began blessed bloodless both brings brought called cannot
chaque charters choroses **church** clemency clerical colonels **coming** commenced
 confirmed considerable constant converted declared demand depended **composing** determined
 did **diurnal** dreadful during e ecclesiastical **eighth** either engagement etant
extraordinary famous fared **fatal** favorable **favourable** five foregoing fourth fre
 future gagne **general** glorious **grand** greater grinning gular happen
happened happening happens **happy** hath having heart hibernian **however** iii
 immediate **important** incline incredible interest internal inire **itself** joined k la lasted
late lauren lowering marvellous means memorable **might** mighty miraculous nary
 national neither **new** next **nor** obliterated oldworth once **ordinary** p page patriotism
 pected **periodic** periodical perpetual political portant possible power **present**
 priestess princi **principles** principles—yet private produced professed projected
 proper **put** re reckoning render **round** salutary saxon scots **second** secret seem seemed
 seems **settlement** shou' si side **signal** signed since **singular** slow sometimes spicious stale
 ranch **stand** still **strange** strangest sublnar successive **sudden** surprising takes
 taking temporary tenth theatrical **therefore** things third though thought till tional **total**
 transferred traordinary udden unaccountable **under** unexpected unhappy universal until
 upwards visible went **whole** women **wonderful** wondrous **worthies** xi yearly
 years —endeavours —their

	Within 1 Words on Either Side	Within 1 Words to Left only	Within 1 Words to Right only
1	late (43)	late (43)	principles (9)
2	sudden (17)	sudden (17)	might (7)
3	strange (13)	happy (12)	under (6)
4	happy (12)	new (11)	round (5)
5	new (11)	strange (10)	happened (5)
6	total (9)	total (9)	put (4)
7	principles (9)	glorious (9)	itself (4)
8	glorious (9)	grand (7)	strange (3)
9	might (7)	extraordinary (7)	nor (3)
10	grand (7)	general (5)	however (3)

Fig. 1 a, b
 «Revolution» in the ECCO-TCP database 1700–1785,
 Co-occurrences within space of one word
 1716 documents; 1263 occurrences
 (Corpus as of 8/2012)

abortions about abraham **according** africa al amazing among annual annually attend attends
battles because bengal bloodshed brought **C** came cannot cent certain **cessant** changes circular
 common conspiracies constant **continual** corinth create crediting croud daily dangerous dated
 delicate den des different dinary **dire** distant diurnal **does** domestic dreadful during elder
 emigrations endless **entire** eternal ev' even exact expected **external**
extraordinary factions famous **fatal** few fewer fortunate **frequent**
 future gained **general** give got **gradual** gratianus **greater** greatest happiest hath
however human hundred illegib **important** influences introduced inveterate josephus
 lar last late les less lost memorable **might** mighty miserable momentary motions **natural**
 naturally **new** numerous occa **ordinary** overturned p **page** particular perhaps periodic periodical
perpetual perplexed pestilence pestilences peter place portant positions present principal prising
 produce produced progress proportioned **public** publick qui rable ral rate rebellion relate
 religion repeated revolts rious **round** seem sequent **several** shining signal similar since sing
singular solemn speedy stato **strange** striking stupendous **subsequent** suc
 successes successive **sudden** surprising taxes tend theatric theatrical think through through
 ticular **till** trange transfer traordinary true tumults **twelve** under unexpected unforeseen urnal v
various veral vid **violent** whimsical whose win **wonderful** wow' yes zing
 — —the

	Within 1 Words on Either Side	Within 1 Words to Left only	Within 1 Words to Right only
1	various (12)	various (12)	however (4)
2	frequent (7)	frequent (7)	till (3)
3	several (6)	several (6)	c (3)
4	violent (5)	violent (5)	according (3)
5	important (5)	important (5)	round (2)
6	extraordinary (5)	extraordinary (5)	qui (2)
7	sudden (4)	sudden (4)	less (2)
8	strange (4)	strange (4)	even (2)
9	however (4)	subsequent (3)	does (2)
10	till (3)	singular (3)	—the (1)

Fig. 2 a, b
 «Revolutions» in the ECCO-TCP database 1700–1785
 Co-occurrences within space of one word
 1716 documents; 530 occurrences
 (Corpus as of 8/2012)

« acquaviva **affreuse** afin agréable ait alors année **annuelle** anticiper apparente
 apportera arriva arrivât **arrivée** assez **aucune** auquel **autour**
 avantageuse avait **beaucoup** bientôt brusque **capable certaine chapitre**
chaque chasse chez combien comment commença composée considérée c'est
dangereuse depuis dernière dernière dernière desirable devienent
 devoit dites diurne doit domestique double douloureuse douze durable dut **décisive**
 développement d'angleterre d'environ **d'une** effrayant empêcha enfin entière
entière entière entraîna **extraordinaire** eût fabrice faisoit **fameuse**
fatale favorable focs forte française **françoise funeste** furent furieuse
 future gister glorieuse **grande générale** henri heures
heureuse hélas imaginaire **importante** imprévue incroyable inouïe
 insensible intérieure inévitable joignez **journaliere journalière** lorsqu' lorsque louis
 lucile lunaire légère **malheureuse** met **moindre** morale musicale **naissance** notre
nouvelle nulle nécessaire opérée ordinaire outre oécette parce **pareille**
 parmi paroltroit **particulière** passagère periculosa perpétuelle **petite** physique
 pitoyable politique porte pouvoit **première** presque probable **prochaine**
prodigieuse prompte prédite présente prétendue puisqu'il **périodique**
 quelconque **quelle** quelques ramene ramenera rapide remarquez remet rendent
 renvers révolution salulaire sanglante **seconde** semblable sensible sera
 serait seul seule signifie **simple** singulière soit solaire **soudaine** sourde
subite supposé sumaturelle sérieuse sûre s'il t' tacite tantôt **telle** tels
terrible tibère totale trop **universelle** venait venoit vient voilà vraie whig xi
 élatante éternelle étoit **étonnante étrange** o

	Within 1 Words on Either Side	Within 1 Words to Left only	Within 1 Words to Right only
1	grande (67)	grande (67)	subite (24)
2	heureuse (30)	heureuse (28)	générale (14)
3	subite (25)	quelle (20)	soudaine (9)
4	quelle (21)	nouvelle (16)	arrivée (9)
5	nouvelle (16)	étrange (15)	prochaine (8)
6	étrange (15)	dernière (10)	autour (5)
7	générale (14)	aucune (10)	universelle (4)
8	d'une (13)	d'une (9)	journalière (4)
9	soudaine (12)	telle (6)	extraordinaire (4)
10	dernière (10)	fameuse (5)	d'une (4)

Fig. 3 a, b
 «Revolution» in the ECCO-TCP database 1700–1785,
 Co-occurrences within space of one word
 1005 documents; 1205 occurrences
 (Corpus as of 8/2012)

admirables affreuses aigris ait amenées amortiment analogues **anciennes**
antérieures apparentes appuyée aristobule arrivent **arriveront** arrivoint
arrivées assez astronomiques ausquelles **autour** auxquelles avant
 avantageuses avançoit avoient ayant beaucoup belles bretagne cachées capricieuses carthage
 causes causées celles **cent** certaines chacun **chaque** chose cinq comment communes
continuelles contraires correspondantes cruelles célestes César c'est
 dangereuses demi depuis **dernières dernières différentes**
différentes dis dissolvent **diverses** diversités doivent
domestiques douze dès déjà désastreuses dévasté d'angleterre d'autres effroyables
 enfin entières eussent **extraordinaires fameuses fatales** faute favorables
 florissante font fortes frappantes **fréquentes funestes furent** futures
 galantes grammaticales **grandes** générales heureuses histoire
 humaines immuables imprévues inespérées infiniment injustes **innombrables** inopinées
 intéressantes **inévitables** journalières jupiter lisette locales longues lorsqu' l'esprit
 mahmoud maintes **mille** monastiques monsieur morales multipliées **mêmes**
nouvelles nul néanmoins occupés parallèles parait **pareilles** parmi paroit
 particulières **passées** pepin perdicas **perpétuelles** perpétuoit **petites** peuvent
physiques plusieurs politiques populaires pouvoit presque principales
 prodigieuses produisent puissent **périodiques** quarante **quelles** quelques
 qu'éprouva **rapides** réglées **remarque** respectives **romaines** rosbac ruinent
 ruineuses répartit saintes salutaires **sanglantes** sanguinaires secretes **semblables**
 serait seront singulières **solaires subites** successives suivant suivra supposez
 surprenantes survenues survenües sûres tantôt **telles terribles** thamas totales
 tristes **TROIS** trop tumultueuses venues versatiles **violentes** vives **voici** voyez égales
 énormes épouvantables éternelles étoient étonnantes **étranges**

	Within 1 Words on Either Side	Within 1 Words to Left only	Within 1 Words to Right only
1	grandes (59)	grandes (59)	arrivées (16)
2	différentes (16)	différentes (15)	subites (11)
3	arrivées (16)	nouvelles (10)	périodiques (8)
4	fréquentes (12)	mêmes (9)	continuelles (8)
5	subites (11)	mille (9)	physiques (6)
6	terribles (10)	fréquentes (8)	terribles (5)
7	nouvelles (10)	diverses (8)	solaires (4)
8	mêmes (10)	étranges (7)	sanglantes (4)
9	diverses (10)	terribles (5)	passées (4)
10	continuelles (10)	pluiseurs (5)	furent (4)

Fig. 4 a, b
 «Revolution» in the ECCO-TCP database 1700–1785,
 Co-occurrences within space of one word
 1005 documents; 995 occurrences
 (Corpus as of 8/2012)

accorda **affaires** alors amenoit ancienne angleterre anglais arma
arrivée asie assurer attachés attention attestent aucun aujourd' avant avoit bengale
 bientôt bons bénédiction caffer calme calms cas cet changea chaque chartre chef chéri
 clandestins commencèrent commencé **commerce** compagnie conquérant
 corruption courte **Crainte** dernière devenu devoit diminua discours dissiper diviser dix
doit délivrerait démonstrations effet enfin **esprits** espérance europe eut exerce
 extraordinaire face fermenter **firent fit** fleur fortunés frappante globe gouvernement
grande grandes hui imprudence influence intérêt isle **jour** jusqu' livres loin
 long lors **lorsque** malheur malheureuse milles **moeurs** moine monde monnoie
 monopole monroit méritoit méritoit naick naissante nouveau opérer originairement ouvrage
 pensylvanie petite possesseur postes pouvoit principale procurer produire produisit préparer
 préparoit préparée présumer ramenera renaissance rendit rendu resta rivieres royaume
 récente réduiroit répareroit secours semblable seul singulièrement soit subite sujet telle
temps terre tirerent titres touchante tourna turbulent tyrans utilité vaisseaux vient
 vingt voyoit éleva étoient étoit

	Within 5 Words on Either Side	Within 5 Words to Left only	Within 5 Words to Right only
1	grande (4)	grande (4)	commerce (3)
2	temps (3)	jour (2)	temps (2)
3	esprits (3)	amenoit (2)	moeurs (2)
4	commerce (3)	étoient (1)	esprits (2)
5	moeurs (2)	vingt (1)	arrivée (2)
6	lorsque (2)	vaisseaux (1)	étoit (1)
7	jour (2)	utilité (1)	éleva (1)
8	fit (2)	titres (1)	voyoit (1)
9	firent (2)	tirerent (1)	vient (1)
10	doit (2)	terre (1)	tyrans (1)

Fig. 5 a, b

«Révolution» in Raynal 1770

Vols 1 and 6 only; ARTFL database

Co-occurrences within space of five words

37 occurrences

(Corpus as of 8/2012)

abri appuyée arméniens arrakan arrivât arrivées asie assez atar aucune autrefois avançoit
 avoit base bengale bouleversent celles cent changer chaque chose commencement
 commerce communes contrées couvroit **depuis** despotisme doit doivent doux douze
 défiance efforts empires espérance fixés fois foule frappent **fréquentes**
 globe grandes grands gustave général histoire incroyable indostan inepie koulikan
 marquées milieu murs nombre nourriture nouveaux orient parölt parvenu passées pavillons
 penser perpétuoit perse peuple progrès rendit riches ruine répetent sera siam **siecle**
 soutenir suivi supposent thamas turcs tyrannie vaza vers yeux égorgent éprouvassent établie
état étoit

	Within 5 Words on Either Side	Within 5 Words to Left only	Within 5 Words to Right only
1	fréquentes (4)	siecle (2)	fréquentes (4)
2	état (2)	depuis (2)	étoit (1)
3	siecle (2)	état (1)	état (1)
4	depuis (2)	établie (1)	égorgent (1)
5	étoit (1)	éprouvassent (1)	yeux (1)
6	établie (1)	vers (1)	turcs (1)
7	éprouvassent (1)	vaza (1)	thamas (1)
8	égorgent (1)	tyrannie (1)	supposent (1)
9	yeux (1)	suiivi (1)	soutenir (1)
10	vers (1)	siam (1)	répetent (1)

Fig. 6 a, b

«Révolution» in Raynal 1770

Vols 1 and 6 only; ARTFL database

Co-occurrences within space of five words

22 occurrences

(Corpus as of 8/2012)

accepter annuelle arrêter **aussi** certaine cornp désastreuse
 extraordinaire française glorieuse grande **heureuse**
 longue notre **nous** opérée prompte préparée salutaire sauf seconde
 subite survenue ta tandis troisième voua également

Fig. 7

«Révolution» in the Cahiers de doléances 1789

Archives parlementaires, uncorrected OCR; ARTFL

Co-occurrences within space of one word

114 occurrences

(Corpus as of 8/2012)

abandonneraient absolue **actuelle** adresse alors amalgamez amène and anglaise annuelle
 approche arreter art aucune aujourd' aurait: **aussi** autre avantageuse avons belle bien car cela
 celle cependant: **certaine** cessent changes **chaque** citoyens com commandait constante
 contraire **contre** contribuassent contré conçoit **courte** croit cultivateur **delà** dernière
 desdennres desdites **desquelles** destinée difficile doit dure de défiez dépouillés désastreuse **désirée**
 désormais détournes effrayante eh elles entière espedede etc eurent extraordinaire faite fameuse
 fatale favorable favorise **française** fu fut fâcheuse **fût** ge **glorieuse** grnde **grande**
 guidés **générale** h **heureuse** hommage ia **immense** importante impossible
 imprévue in inattaquable inattendue inespérée inouïe inspire inspirée intérieure inévitable iä **jamais**
 jusqu' lettre lorsqu' lorsqu' là légitime majeure manqué me misère moindre morale motion murmures
 mécontente **mémorable** necker **non** **notre** nouvelle nécessaire obser operee or
 organisations osent **pareille** partielle passant peuvent pheureusé porte pourrait pouvait pppplip prepare
 prochaine profonde proposée **présente** présente puisqu' puisse pure présent quel quelconque
 quelle quoique ramènera rapport reuse saisit **salutaire** sauf seconde semblable **semble** sena
 seraient serait: s' soudaine **subite** superbe surprenante surtout survenue tandis **telle** the
 tient toute **troisième** trouvent très témoignage une uox **utile** ulécertain violenté voici voilà vä
 également étaient étend **étonnante** ét ic ää

	Within 1 Words on Either Side	Within 1 Words to Left only	Within 1 Words to Right only
1	heureuse (47)	heureuse (42)	actuelle (17)
2	grande (24)	grande (24)	subite (5)
3	actuelle (17)	contre (9)	présente (5)
4	contre (10)	certaine (9)	heureuse (5)
5	certaine (9)	notre (5)	générale (4)
6	subite (7)	étonnante (4)	française (4)
7	présente (5)	delà (4)	aussi (4)
8	notre (5)	telle (3)	fût (3)
9	étonnante (4)	pareille (3)	très (2)
10	telle (4)	jamais (3)	semble (2)

Fig. 8 a, b

«Révolution» 1789

Archives parlementaires, uncorrected OCR; ARTFL

Co-occurrences within space of one word

687 occurrences

(Corpus as of 1/2013)

actuelle adoption adresse **adresses** ae affectent ah alors annonçaient anéantit août appelez
 arrivait arrivée art article assure attaquant attendent attestée aucun auraient aussi avaient avait
 avril batave belle bienôt bous brillante celui **cependant** chaque cherchaient **cherchent**
 choisi contrib contré contenus **contre** contré conversation coupable cône daos daus
delà dernière **devaient** devait devenue disposé dit do doit doivent domine donc durable
 désastreuse désirable dévoile e ele enfin entre eotréré es estaussimpossibleque etac eussent exöge f
 farcy fatale favorable finissent fournir **française** funeste fut füt g **glorieuse** gothique
 gradue **grande** grandie grände **heureuse** hollandaise honneurs honore hëliréusé ils'
 imaginaire imaginée **imprévue** inattendue incendient ineffable innover inverse ja jd juin juste lequel
 lettre lit livres lors lorsqu' lu lä machinée malgré mes mettent moi mots **mémorable** mérite
 méritent non **notre** nouvelle nécessaire néessite opérée orageuse paisible **parce**
 partout pendant pleins plusieurs politique pourquoi pourraient pouvait prescrite pressés privés
 procurait projetée prédiction préparée **présente** présenter publient pure put qpi quand quant
 quel quelle quelque quelquefois quelé quoisqu' religieuse relie respectent retenir rpus réunits sagement
 salutaire seconde semblable serait solide subite sublime survenue **telle** tels tqijop tramé triomphant
 trouveront tu universelle uox uqe viendront vient voilà voir votre voulez étaient étant étonnante ét

	Within 1 Words on Either Side	Within 1 Words to Left only	Within 1 Words to Right only
1	contre (137)	contre (135)	française (11)
2	notre (29)	notre (29)	actuelle (10)
3	heureuse (28)	heureuse (27)	présente (7)
4	grande (16)	grande (16)	car (7)
5	française (11)	glorieuse (8)	parce (3)
6	actuelle (10)	delà (5)	cherchent (3)
7	glorieuse (9)	nouvelle (3)	cependant (3)
8	présente (8)	ja (3)	vient (2)
9	car (7)	dernière (3)	telle (2)
10	delà (5)	mémorable (2)	serait (2)

Fig. 9 a, b

«Révolution» 1790

Archives parlementaires, uncorrected OCR; ARTFL

Co-occurrences within space of one word

1011 occurrences

(Corpus as of 1/2013)

actuelle adresse afin aient ait alors américaine août **applaudissements** archives arrivée
art aucune aujourd' auraient aurait aussi autant autre avaient avait avant avignonaise ayant
belle bien bienfaisante car cela celui cependant certes chacun chaque chez citoyens

combien comité commencée comment **commis** complète considérant **contre** contre
dela depuis dernière devait devient disent dit **doit** doivent donné dès déhts déjà
délits députés e eh elles encore enfin entière eontre etait etc eût fs faite faites finisse
font fran française française frimaire furent fut fût **glorieuse** grande
générale **heureuse** hâtez ici ii **immortelle** ja jamais juillet juin jusqu' livres longue
lorsqu' lorsque là ma mai maintenant malgré marat marche marseille me mention mes messieurs
mon morale mots **murmures** mémorable **naire** nairement **naires** nationale noire
non **notre** nouvelle nécessaire opérée or ouverte paisible **parce** pareille
paris partout plusieurs politique pourquoi pouvait première presque **prochaine** procès
précédente présente prétendue puisqu' puisse quand quant quel quelle quelques
quoiqu' quoique r rapport recevez religieuse rien royale rue républicaine **sainte** salutaire
seconde sectionnaire semblait semble **septembre** seraient **serait** soient subite
sublime surtout ta **tandis** tant telle tels toujours toute tre **tribunal** troisième trop
universelle veulent vient violente voilà voir vos **vo**tre véritable ♦♦♦ étaient étant
étonnante

	Within 1 Words on Either Side	Within 1 Words to Left only	Within 1 Words to Right only
1	contre (1868)	contre (1855)	française (327)
2	notre (562)	notre (554)	délits (149)
3	française (328)	grande (130)	naires (58)
4	délits (149)	heureuse (100)	naire (51)
5	grande (132)	vo	tr (40)
6	heureuse (105)	dernière (44)	depuis (36)
7	naires (58)	nouvelle (36)	car (35)
8	vo	glorieuse (33)	parce (32)
9	nouvelle (57)	sainte (31)	doit (29)
10	naire (51)	seconde (27)	serait (27)

Fig. 10 a, b

«Révolution» 1791–1793

Archives parlementaires, uncorrected OCR; ARTFL
Co-occurrences within space of one word

12,734 occurrences

(Corpus as of 1/2013)

activité adresse afin alors annonce anti août **applaudissements** ardeur **armée**
armées art auprès aussi autorités auxquelles avaient avait avant avril ayant bataillon bien bunal
car caractère carrière **cavalerie** central chargé chez citoyennes citoyens club code comité
comité **comités** commandée commandées **commission** commune

composé composée considérant **contre** convulsions corps **criminel** crise
culottes demande depuis devant disant dispositions dit **doit** doivent dès décidé décidés
décret décrets déguisés déjà eh elles eontre **er** esprit etc faites faits femmes fera **force**
français furent fut fut garde **gouvernement** génie hache hommes ii imprimé insertion
institutions instruction instrument janvier juger **juillet** juin jusqu' ligne loi lois lorsque légion
législateurs **mai** marche mars mention mesure **mesures** militaire moi monnaie
mouvement **mouvements** moyens murmures nai **nivôse** nom nommé non
omité opinions opérations or **orages** **parce** parmi parti pendant peu peuple peuvent plusieurs
pourrait. **pouvoir** pouvoirs **principes** pris prises procès **provisoire** prétendu prétendus
public puisqu' puisse puisse quand quelques rabaut res régime **républicaines** républicains
section sentiments septembre serait **société** sociétés **soient** soyez suit surtout
surveillance système séant **tandis** taxé taxes tel temps torrent toujours travaux **tre**
tribunal **tribunaux** trop très ultra va vie viennent vient vigueur ville voici voilà
vraiment véritablement écrit **énergie** **établi** établie étaient état événements

	Within 1 Words on Either Side	Within 1 Words to Left only	Within 1 Words to Right only
1	contre (2809)	contre (2795)	mai (47)
2	tribunal (1473)	tribunal (1473)	art (45)
3	comité (343)	comité (342)	août (43)
4	armée (299)	armée (296)	juillet (36)
5	comités (218)	comités (218)	nivôse (23)
6	mesures (168)	mesures (168)	avril (23)
7	gouvernement (91)	gouvernement (91)	établi (22)
8	mouvement (89)	mouvement (89)	séant (19)
9	lois (77)	lois (77)	parce (19)
10	pouvoir (73)	pouvoir (73)	jusqu' (19)

Fig. 11 a, b

«Révolutionnaire(s), révolutionnairement» 1790–1793

Archives parlementaires, uncorrected OCR; ARTFL
Co-occurrences within one word

7461 occurrences

(Corpus as of 1/2013)

Revolution 1.0

This article uses digitised databases to investigate meanings of »revolution« and its cognates in English, American and French imprints in the century between the Glorious Revolution and the French Revolution. It traces a shift from the notion of revolution as event, an expression of change and vicissitude generally recognised *ex post facto*, to a conception of revolution as a collective political act oriented toward the future. It points to the role of Enlightenment thinking in the revalorisation of revolution as long-term transformation and, more particularly, to the significance of Raynal's *Révolution de l'Amérique* in narrativising revolution as immediate and ongoing political action. It concludes by examining the elaboration of the revolutionary script in the French Revolution.

Revolution 1.0

Der Artikel verwendet digitalisierte Datenbanken, um die Bedeutungen des Begriffs «Revolution» und seiner Sprachverwandten englischer, amerikanischer und französischer Prägung aus dem Jahrhundert zwischen der Glorreichen Revolution und der Französischen Revolution zu untersuchen. Dadurch soll die Entwicklung des Begriffs der Revolution nachgezeichnet werden: vom Ereignisbegriff, der Veränderung und in der Regel *ex post facto* festgestellten Wandel ausdrückt, bis hin zur Konzeption der Revolution als einem kollektiven und zukunftsorientierten politischen Akt. All das weist darauf hin, dass die Aufklärung eine wichtige Rolle bei der Umdeutung der Revolution als langfristiger Transformationsprozess gespielt hat. Speziell geht es dabei auch ganz besonders um die Bedeutung von Raynals *Révolution de l'Amérique* für die Narrativisierung der Revolution als unmittelbares und fortwährendes politisches Handeln. Zu Ende des Beitrags wird das Entstehen der Revolutionssprache während der Französischen Revolution untersucht.

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