

For Tenzing's fleeting celebrity and the challenges to it laid bare deep ambivalences about the impassioned commitment to "family feeling" in the postempire Commonwealth that the young queen strove so hard to instantiate at the heart of her postwar speeches and her world tours both before and after her coronation was captured via telephoto lens for all the world to see. The *London Daily Express* spilled considerable ink over the course of four short but media-intense days to deny claims that Tenzing had arrived at the summit first—claims originating in India and Nepal, where metropolitan images of the happy postimperial family evidently rankled, Nehruvian protestations of comity notwithstanding.

But precisely what is useful about the Tenzing incident is what is otherwise lacking in the book as a whole: a sense of what reactions were to the visuals of empire and its end that Britons or "ex-colonials," whether at home or in the former colonies, saw. Webster is clear from the start that this is not an audience-response study, and such an approach would have been methodologically challenging, to say the least. However, what we are left with as a result of this tack is a set of fairly flat representations of people like the West Indian cricketer Laurie Constantine or the dozens of faceless natives (whether hybrid, happy, or rebellious) from countless film cells. And that makes Webster's claims about the mass media's reach provocative but ultimately uncorroborated. Readers may be left wondering how we can fully historicize the representations that are so vividly described for us, especially since the book is not graced with a single frame or photo, except for the underidentified image (a poster?) from the Imperial War Museum that appears on the cover. Nor does Webster excavate the political economy of film and newsreel production the way that Poshek Fu, for example, has done so effectively in his study of the politics of Chinese national cinema (*Between Shanghai and Hong Kong* [Stanford, CA, 2003]). This is a shame, if only because one would like to know more about the Colonial Film Unit and other such official and unofficial production outfits so that the story of narrative and representation Webster tells here could be matched with insights about the structural and material conditions of the postwar, postimperial state.

Englishness and Empire traces imperial images right down to Margaret Thatcher's spectacular debacle in the Falklands, reminding us of what looks now like an almost anodyne Anglo-American imperial alliance: the one between Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. In the end, Webster offers scholars of modern British imperial culture much food for thought, as well as a map of how to historicize and otherwise interpret what the end of empire meant—presuming, of course, that there is an end to empire and its images in sight.

ANTOINETTE BURTON

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Commerce et prospérité: La France au XVIIIe siècle. By *Guillaume Daudin*.

Collection Roland Mousnier, number 19. Edited by *Jean-Pierre Poussou*. Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2005. Pp. 611. €28.00.

Over the past several decades, economic historians have shown that in the century prior to the great Revolution the French economy was not stagnant. Although the economy may not have been as buoyant as that of Britain, it was not economic catastrophe that prompted the Old Regime's political demise. The rehabilitation of the Old Regime's economy has largely been the work of historians and economists working on particular

sectors or particular problems. In their efforts, they have relied upon a cornucopia of archival material and the tools of microeconomics. But there has been no effort to take advantage of advances in macroeconomics to rethink how the French economy changed over the eighteenth century. Guillaume Daudin makes just such an attempt in *Commerce et prospérité*.

Chapter 1 summarizes the state of knowledge on aggregate output, and chapter 2 discusses changes in the rural economy. While these chapters are nicely written, there is little new. Central to the arguments in the following chapters is that growth in the rural economy and in manufacturing depended deeply on the growth of trade and on institutional change.

Chapter 3 focuses on the growth of internal trade. The analysis becomes more sophisticated, but it remains plagued by a lack of evidence. The discussion of commercial networks takes place in two parts. First, we have a summary of work done over the past thirty years showing that there was internal trade and that credit was important for such trade (113–30). Second, we have a discussion of networks that is purely theoretical (131–36). I was left mystified about how to connect the two sections of the chapter. Thomas Brennan's book on the wine trade in early modern France (*Burgundy to Champagne* [Baltimore, 1997]) does a much more thorough job of both analyzing how and why trade networks changed and establishing the central relationship of credit to growth.

Chapters 4–6 are devoted to international trade, a subject that is surprising because it is commonly thought that France was relatively less trade oriented than was Britain and because most scholars suggest that international trade can explain only a fraction of the growth of the British economy prior to 1800. Nevertheless, economists have found considerable evidence in the more recent past that openness to trade is an important element in spurring economic development. Daudin's boldness in revisiting the matter for the Old Regime is to be commended.

Chapter 4 contains the most novel material and analysis. It brings together the complete series of Old Regime trade statistics. While much of that information was previously published, Daudin does a remarkable job of explaining the sources and making the data consistent over a long period of time. The evidence shows that international trade grew quite rapidly even though it suffered very heavily during wars. Readers are led to wonder whether British trade outperformed French trade because England was better able to protect its sea routes or because it simply pulled away after the Seven Years' War.

Chapter 5 focuses on the returns to international trade. Daudin has compiled an extensive set of profit rates ranging from those of government monopolies to accountings of voyages and account books of shipping companies. While there is no new evidence here, it is quite a service to the discipline to have all this data compiled in a fashion that allows direct comparisons. For Daudin, the data show that returns were high though extraordinarily variable. "High" here means an average of 6 percent net, while the return on loans was 5 percent gross of the cost of monitoring and losses due to default; the return on land was somewhat lower still.

Chapter 6 brings together the evidence on the scale of international trade presented in chapter 4 and on its returns reported in chapter 5 to argue that external commerce was an important engine for growth in the eighteenth century. The argument in a nutshell is that trade had high returns and, thus, that the growth of trade led to growth in the rest of the economy. There are three problems with this argument. The first is that international trade was, in fact, a small fraction of the economy (less than 5 percent); the second, that it was growing slowly. The third is that, given the level of risk and the

obvious underenumeration of unsuccessful voyages, the real differences in returns are likely to be smaller. As Daudin notes, closing France to trade would have led to a loss of at most 2 percent of national income (405). While this is as high as Robert W. Fogel found for railroads in the United States, in his celebrated monograph (*Railroads and American Economic Growth* [Baltimore, 1964]) Fogel concluded that such a low number implied that one could not discount the importance of railroads in American economic development. In reaching his counterfactual finding, Fogel went out of his way to maximize the gain from railroads. It is not clear that Daudin has biased any of the calculations against himself. In any case, the direct effects are insufficient to validate his claim that international commerce mattered. Daudin is thus forced to turn to the indirect effects of trade on the economy. While linkages between external trade and growth surely exist, this book is long on theory and short on evidence in this regard. We do not even have a narrative of an industrial sector, say, near Nantes (a key port in France) that was started to cater to export demand and then turned to serving the domestic market.

For North American audiences, this volume is likely to prove a bit problematic. The paucity of archival sources as well as the frequent recourse to theorizing when evidence fails may raise eyebrows. One is more accustomed to seeing theory used to organize evidence rather than to replace it. In macroeconomics, the trend in recent years has been away from building new theoretical models and toward evaluating their empirical content. For French audiences, this volume may have greater merit, since it integrates work done in France and published in French and work done in England and North America and published in English.

JEAN-LAURENT ROSENTHAL

University of California, Los Angeles

A Tale of Two Murders: Passion and Power in Seventeenth-Century France. By

James R. Farr.

Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005. Pp. xiv + 225. \$21.95.

“The affairs of the great,” James R. Farr notes in his study of the trial of Philippe Giroux, a presiding judge in Burgundy’s parlement, “always attract the attention of ordinary people, all the more so when murder and sex are involved” (54). Causes célèbres like Giroux’s trial, which riveted Dijon from 1639 to 1643, have also attracted the attention of historians. Trial dossiers have fueled a boom in microhistories, providing insights into early modern popular culture, marriage, religion, sexuality, and other topics. *A Tale of Two Murders: Passion and Power in Seventeenth-Century France* adds to this burgeoning literature. Farr’s tautly written book sifts through the records of the parlement’s investigations into the murder, in 1638, of the royal judge Pierre Baillet and his valet. Paralleling the historian’s task with that of Giroux’s judges, Farr endeavors to reconstruct “what happened,” despite the “palpable dishonesty” of his sources (3). At the same time, he also argues that the affair reveals much about the “rule of law” and processes of state formation in early modern France.

Farr’s narrative is replete with love triangles, poison, and bitter enmities. Philippe appears to have been engaged in a passionate affair with his cousin Baillet’s beautiful wife, Marie Fyot. Giroux’s wife had died not long before, in circumstances that suggested poisoning. Indeed, several of Giroux’s rivals (and servants privy to compro-