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978-1-107-00564-8 - Commerce and Its Discontents in Eighteenth-Century French Political Thought

Anoush Fraser Terjanian

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Commerce and Its Discontents in Eighteenth-Century French Political Thought

Histories of economics tend to portray attitudes towards commerce in the era of Adam Smith as celebrating what is termed *doux commerce*, that is, sweet or gentle commerce. *Commerce and Its Discontents in Eighteenth-Century French Political Thought* proposes that reliance on this “*doux commerce* thesis” has obscured our comprehension of the theory and experience of commerce in Enlightenment-era Europe. Instead, it uncovers ambivalence towards commerce in eighteenth-century France, distinguished by an awareness of its limits – slavery, piracy, and monopoly. Through a careful analysis of the *Histoire des deux Indes* (1780), the Enlightenment’s bestselling history of comparative empires, Anoush Fraser Terjanian offers a new perspective on the connections between political economy, imperialism, and the Enlightenment. In discussing how a “politics of definition” governed the early debates about global commerce and its impact, this book enriches our understanding of the prehistory of globalisation.

Anoush Fraser Terjanian is Assistant Professor of History at East Carolina University.

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