National Character and Public Spirit in Britain and France, 1750–1914

In this detailed comparative study, Roberto Romani considers the concept of 'national character' in the intellectual histories of Britain and France. Perceptions of collective mentalities influenced a variety of political and economic debates, ranging from anti-absolutist polemic in eighteenth-century France to appraisals of socialism in Edwardian Britain. Romani argues that the eighteenth-century notion of 'national character', with its stress on climate and government, evolved into a concern with the virtues of 'public spirit' irrespective of national traits, in parallel with the establishment of representative institutions on the Continent. His discussion of contemporary thinkers includes Montesquieu, Voltaire, Hume, Millar, Burke, Constant, Staël, and Tocqueville.

After the middle of the nineteenth century, the advent of social scientific approaches, including Spencer, Hobson, and Durkheim, shifted the focus from the qualities required by political liberty to those needed to operate complex social systems, and to bear their psychological pressures.

ROBERTO ROMANI is Research Associate at the Centre for History and Economics, King’s College, Cambridge. His publications include L'economia politica del Risorgimento italiano (1994).
National Character and Public Spirit in Britain and France, 1750–1914

Roberto Romani
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## Abbreviations

### Periodical publications

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AS</td>
<td>L’année sociologique</td>
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<tr>
<td>BM</td>
<td>Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine</td>
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<td>CE</td>
<td>Le censeur européen</td>
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<tr>
<td>ER</td>
<td>Edinburgh Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>LG</td>
<td>Le globe</td>
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<td>MF</td>
<td>La Minerve française</td>
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<td>MR</td>
<td>Monthly Review</td>
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<td>QR</td>
<td>Quarterly Review</td>
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<td>RE</td>
<td>Revue encyclopédique</td>
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### Montesquieu

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<tr>
<td>EDL</td>
<td><em>De l’esprit des lois</em>, ed. V. Goldschmidt</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(1748; 1757 edn, 2 vols, Paris, 1979)</td>
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<tr>
<td>LP</td>
<td><em>Lettres persanes</em>, ed. J. Starobinski</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1721; 1758 edn, Paris, 1973)</td>
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<tr>
<td>OC</td>
<td><em>Oeuvres complètes</em>, ed. R. Caillois</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(2 vols., Paris, 1949–51)</td>
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<td>OCL</td>
<td><em>Oeuvres complètes</em>, ed. E. Laboulaye</td>
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<td>(7 vols., Paris, 1875–9)</td>
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### Adam Smith

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Abbreviations

References to these works, which are to be found in The Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith (6 vols., Oxford, 1976–87), follow the paragraph system.

Tocqueville

(16 vols., Paris, 1951–)

DA De la démocratie en Amérique (1835–40), ed. J.-P. Mayer, TOPC, 1, in two books

Collected works

BCW The Collected Works of Walter Bagehot, ed. N. St John-Stevas

BOC L. de Bonald, Œuvres complètes (3 vols., Paris, 1864)

BWS The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke, ed. P. Langford et al.
(7 vols., Oxford, 1981–)

CO Condorcet, Œuvres, ed. A. Condorcet O’Connor and F. Arago
(12 vols., Paris, 1847–9)

COC F.-R. de Chateaubriand, Œuvres complètes (5 vols., Paris, 1836)


GOM M. Gioja, Opere minori (17 vols., Lugano, 1832–7)

HCW W. Hazlitt, Complete Works, ed. P. P. Howe, A. R. Waller, and A. Glover (21 vols., London and Toronto, 1930–4)


MOC J. Michelet, Œuvres complètes, ed. P. Viallaneix
(21 vols., Paris, 1971–)

MCW The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill,

SOC Mme de Staël, Œuvres complètes (18 vols., Paris-Bruxelles, 1820–1)


TO Œuvres de Turgot et documents le concernant, ed. G. Schelle
(5 vols., Paris, 1913–23)

VOC Voltaire, Œuvres complètes, ed. L. Moland (52 vols., Paris, 1877–85)