If we envisage the 19th century in France, from Charles-Joseph Panckoucke’s *Encyclopédie méthodique* (1782–1832) though Ange de Saint-Priest’s 54 volume *Encyclopédie du dix-neuvième siècle* (1836-1853) to Marcelin Berthelot’s *Grande Encyclopédie* (1885–1902), as the century of dictionaries and encyclopaediae, the 1820s and 30s constitute a crucial moment. The decisive technological and commercial innovations of the 1800–1830 period enabled the blossoming of the book and printing industry and the real birth of the modern press. William Duckett’s 1832 *Dictionnaire de la conversation et de la lecture* capitalised on these various innovations and catalysed an already dynamic dictionary and encyclopaedia sector.

The years before and after the 1830 Revolution saw technological upheaval in printing – the result of dramatic scientific progress - and represented a period of radical political, moral and religious change. At the same time, the important negative effects of the industrial revolution – commercial crises and proletarisation of the workforce - were being felt in France. All of these changes were reflected in the types of dictionaires and encyclopaediae published.

The 1820s and 30s saw a proliferation of general dictionaries and encyclopaediae. The corpus published during this period were of two sorts. First, there were the general, and consciously non-partisan dictionaries or encyclopaediae, which, for economic and strategic reasons, important publishing houses had in their catalogues. This was the case for the Parisian publisher Mongié and its over 3,000 article *Encyclopédie moderne* (1824–1832) and for the equally ambitious *Encyclopédie des gens du monde* (1833–1844), which was published by the Strasbourg publisher Truettel et Würtz. Second, there were the more explicitly political dictionaries or encyclopaediae, which were, as J.Y. Mollier noted, ‘more directly concerned with the propagation of knowledge considered as the privileged means to political, social or moral change’. These included Abbé Jean-Baptiste Glaire’s conservative *Encyclopédie catholique* (1839–1849) and Ange de Saint-Priest’s *Encyclopédie du 19e siècle* (1836–1853), both published shortly before Abbé Migne’s *Encyclopédie théologique* (1844-1859). They also included François Guizot’s *Doctrinaire* liberal *Encyclopédie progressive*, which, proclaimed ‘the invincible success of Encyclopaediae’ as ‘a sign of the current state of civilisation’. Unlike the conservative Catholic encyclopaediae, the *Encyclopédie progressive* was, in Guizot’s words, ‘always open to all progress’ seeing this as the central tenet to knowledge itself and *Encyclopédie*’s commitment to that task, which was, according to him, ‘to reform and enrich itself continuously like science.’ Despite Guizot’s declamation of intellectual and scientific renewal, his ‘progressive’ enterprise was a curious intellectual, and by extension, political and moral, ally of the Catholic encyclopaediae, for it represented a critical intervention in a fierce battle over the nature, role, organisation, and transmission of knowledge, and knowledge’s relation to political and social change. The place of Encyclopaediae in this conflict was crucial.
Guizot and those who proudly called themselves *Doctrinaires* liberals, and their erstwhile ally, the philosopher of Eclecticism, Victor Cousin, aimed, like their more conservative adversaries, to undermine the dominant liberal-republican discourse of the *Idéologues*. This they did by engaging in a battle over the nature, organisation, and role of knowledge itself. Critical to their campaign to win over the minds of the French was to attack the empiricist epistemological root of *Idéologie* and replace liberalism’s epistemological foundation with Thomas Reid’s Scottish Common Sense epistemology. Guizot and his ideological allies took aim at empiricism because it embodied a fundamental democratic trait, which was that sense perception was not exclusive to a particular class of individual. In displacing empiricism with Common Sense the *Doctrinaires* elevated reason to a transcendent and therefore exclusive realm, a realm accessible to an intellectual élite only. This battle over epistemology, over knowledge itself, was the foundational strategy to affect a complete recasting of early nineteenth-century French liberalism, seeing the jettisoning of its republican aspirations, and, through the elevation of what Guizot and the other *Doctrinaires* called the ‘sovereignty of reason’, shape it in a way that accommodated a monarchical government of an intellectual élite.

Against the intellectual ‘reaction’ of the *Doctrinaires*, liberal-republicans, including the Godfather of *Idéologie* itself, Destutt de Tracy, engaged in a rearguard action to secure the empiricist epistemological foundations to liberalism. In this campaign they were joined by Henri Saint-Simon and his followers, Auguste Comte, Pierre Leroux, and Jean Reynaud. Their aim was to defend and consolidate the gains of eighteenth-century empiricism seeing this as foundational to wider social and political change. Saint-Simon made this case in his 1808-1810 sketches to a *Nouvelle Encyclopédie*. In these he traced the development of the sciences from their origins in conjecture and nebulous metaphysical meditation to their positive status at the time of his writing.¹ For Saint-Simon the nature, organisation, and role of knowledge was central to his project for the *Nouvelle Encyclopédie*, and to humanity itself. As he noted, ‘l’humanité posséderait la science parfaite, si elle avait une bonne encyclopédie.’² And as he made clear the *Nouvelle Encyclopédie* required not just a rigorous organisation – one which demanded, and would eventually be shaped by, international collaboration³ – it required too specialisation and interdisciplinarity, elements that would prove critical to Leroux and Reynaud’s own reflections on knowledge, and their ascerbic critique of how the Doctrinaires and Eclecticism both placed knowledge beyond the reach of the general public and saw to its fragmentation.⁴

Saint-Simon’s plans for a *Nouvelle Encyclopédie* launched a reflection on the nature of knowledge that proved critical to the first ‘democratic’ encyclopaediae, whose own role in the republican movement and the first steps of socialism is itself significant. If Laurent-Antoine Pagnerre, author of *Paris révolutionnaire* and president of the *société républicaine pour l’éducation du peuple* contributed to the democratisation of knowledge with the publication in

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² Ibid, 535.
³ Ibid, 579, 627.
1842 of his *Dictionnaire politique, Encyclopédie du langage et de la science politique*, it was almost ten years earlier that Pierre Leroux and Jean Reynaud took among the first and most decisive steps in democratising knowledge when they launched the first instalments of the *Encyclopédie pittoresque à deux sous*, which fast became the *Encyclopédie nouvelle*, widely considered as the first significant general survey accessible to a wide readership of the new ‘reformist’ doctrines, both republican and socialist.

In considering the nineteenth-century as a century of specialization of knowledge, it is also clear that the period was marked by encyclopaedism, or more precisely by a great variety of encyclopaedisms. There was a desire on the part of those who engaged in these encyclopaedic enterprises to orientate themselves in relation to knowledge according to roughly three criteria or requirements. First, that of an updating the inventory of technical, scientific, and cultural advances. Second, elaborating a comprehensive enlightened intelligence tied to the idea of the progress of the all these advances perceived as related or better still, deeply inter-woven. Three, promoting a national and international transmission, and popularization, of this new scientific, industrial, and political spirit to all classes of society. This is exactly the context in which appears the *Encyclopédie Nouvelle* of Pierre Leroux and Jean Reynaud whose first volumes were published in the middle of 1833. As a prelude to this enterprise, the two men contributed to *La Revue encyclopédique*, an interdisciplinary, cosmopolitan, and democratic project which, in the words of its founder Marc Antoine Julien, aimed ‘à faire disparaître peu à peu les barriers qui séparent les travaux littéraires, scientifiques et industriels des différentes nations’.

According to Saint-Beuve, in his *Premiers Lundis*, the *Revue encyclopédique* saw its mission as affecting «la conciliation des systèmes nouveaux d’économie politique et d’organisation des travailleurs avec les libertés des citoyens et les inaliénables conquêtes de notre Révolution » At the same Leroux and Reynaud published *Exposé des principes républicains de la société des droits de l’homme* that one can view as le *discours préliminaire* of the *Encyclopédie Nouvelle*, a *discours* that set out a socialist vision and version of knowledge, that aimed to transcend Diderot and d’Alembert’s eighteenth-century enterprise. From the *Prospectus* of the *Encyclopédie Nouvelle* Leroux and Reynaud made it clear that far from being a simple ‘compilation, the encyclopaedia would be « un livre qui, au moyen d’une doctrine générale, embrasse le cercle entier des connaissances humaines, sans se perdre et s’absorber dans les détails, laissant aux monographies et aux traités spéciaux leur rôle et leur utilité ». This declaration laid bare the particularity of the Encyclopédie, which was - and one hears the distant echo of the encyclopaedic sketches of Saint-Simon - this ‘Doctrine Générale’ of all the scientific, political, historical, geographical, philosophical, economic, moral pillars, of the coming Republic. This doctrine marked all the entries and manifested the initial complicity, complementarity or even more intellectual twinning of the two editors.

One of the interests of this corpus of several thousand pages is that this declaration of the ‘general doctrine’ was only partially respected. There was a unity to the *Encyclopédie* but also fragmentation and wide variety. This was, in part, because of the history of the

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5 *Prospectus de la Revue encyclopédique* (1819), 4-5.
Encyclopaedia itself, and also due to a divergence in opinions and outlooks of the two editors, with, in the end Leroux and his followers’ departure from the project in 1840. This variety and divergence of opinions expressed itself too in the contributions of the Encyclopédie’s collaborators, and this itself would colour the Encyclopédie’s years of publication (both before and then after Leroux’s departure and the arrival of new collaborators, Ernest Legouvé, and the young Charles Renouvier); it also had a significant impact on when volumes appeared, their rate of publication, and on the fact that the project would, by 1847, remain unfinished.

The study of any encyclopaedia – a vast intellectual ensemble that overlaps scientific, political, economic, social, philosophical, historiographical, and editorial realities – and the peculiarity, oddness, of the Encyclopedie Nouvelle - witnessed through the tussle over, and contortions of, its ‘general doctrine’, which reflected the numerous questions and debates arising out of the new principles and foundations of the emerging industrial and democratic societies – is the motivation behind the kind of format we have proposed for these workshops. This format, with speakers from different disciplines, who, in reflecting on a choice of encyclopaedia entry, is by turns exploratory and experimental. And it is our hope that it will result in, first, a wider appreciation of this corpus, and second, a deeper understanding of it and of the world out of which it was forged. Le parcours is an invitation to explore this work according to the preoccupations and interests of each speaker, to move along, through, and in the pages of the Encyclopaedia, according to its questions, concerns, curiosities, and wonders, and to stimulate a shared and collective, reflection on this noteworthy corpus.