

Enlightenment! Which Enlightenment?

Author(s): Jonathan Israel

Source: *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 67, No. 3 (Jul., 2006), pp. 523-545

Published by: University of Pennsylvania Press

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30141040>

Accessed: 02-12-2017 13:33 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

University of Pennsylvania Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Journal of the History of Ideas*

Enlightenment! Which Enlightenment?

Jonathan Israel

Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment, 4 vols., editor in chief Alan Charles Kors; eds. Roger L. Emerson, Lynn Hunt, Anthony J. La Vopa, Jacques Le Brun, Jeremy D. Popkin, C. Bradley Thomson, Ruth Whelan, and Gordon S. Wood (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

On the surface it might well seem that during the last fifteen or twenty years the Enlightenment understood as a new way of thinking about reality and society has receded more and more from its former privileged status as a pivotal turning-point in the making of the modern world, and especially as any kind of leap forward in the making of a freer, more rational, and better humanity. Under the combined assaults of Post-Structuralism, Postmodernism, Postcolonialism, the rise of the new social history (and not least Robert Darnton's critique of the old intellectual history), the Enlightenment conceived as a movement of ideas appears to be not just firmly in retreat and increasingly under siege but also fragmenting into disparate remnants with no coherent overall profile.

Yet, paradoxically, there are grounds for conjecturing that the Enlightenment despite all this, has actually been becoming, under the surface, an even more crucial and robust force than it was before, much like a powerfully compressed spring being pushed back but ready to rebound with greater impetus than ever. One reason for thinking this is the extensive new material unearthed in the last few years, mostly by colleagues in continental Europe, about the origins of "radical," in the sense of egalitarian, secularist, Spinozist, and anti-colonial, thought. A second and possibly more im-

Copyright © by Journal of the History of Ideas, Volume 67, Number 3 (July 2006)

portant reason is that the terrible events of the last several years have provided thoughtful readers with more than just a glimpse of the nightmare world apt to result from enshrining as a new set of privileged and prevailing values “difference,” a thoroughgoing relativism, and the doctrine that all sets of values, even the most questionable kinds of theology, are ultimately equivalent.

The inevitable recoil from Postmodernist “relativism” will presumably strengthen the appeal, at least in some quarters, of the Radical Enlightenment’s claim that the improvement of human life inescapably involves emancipating men from the collective force of autocracy, intolerance, and prejudiced thinking, and establishing a predominantly secular morality, no less than it involves promoting the ideals of equality (sexual and racial), democracy, individual liberty, and a comprehensive toleration. Indeed, recent developments on all continents seem likely to lend new weight to the radical *philosophes*’ argument that the moral basis of their theorized egalitarianism, democracy, toleration, and individual freedom, despite the arguments of the Postmodernists (which by no means lack weight in certain contexts), is after all concretely superior in terms of reason and moral equity not just to what one faith or traditional system or another contends, in opposition to its claims, but absolutely—that is in ethical and political as well as social terms. One may confidently predict that such a development will render the Enlightenment both more compelling and much harder to disparage than it has appeared to be in the wake of the Postmodernist upsurge in recent years.

The prestige and status of the Enlightenment Western and Eastern, still conspicuously low for the present, may powerfully rebound, then, and in all parts of the world; and this for the simple reason that “Enlightenment thinking,” as one scholar recently expressed it, “remains the best foundation for any genuinely progressive politics not simply in the West but in those states that suffered most at its [i.e. the West’s] hands.”¹ To anyone authentically committed to democracy, toleration, and personal liberty this seems undeniable and, what is more, as we see in Bayle, Diderot, the Abbé Raynal, Lahontan, Van den Enden, and other radical writers of the Enlightenment, the roots of anti-colonialism itself, as well as the modern idea of racial, ethnic, and sexual equality, are undoubtedly to be found precisely in the “philosophical” thought-world of the Enlightenment—and especially the Radical Enlightenment.

¹ Stephen Bronner, *Reclaiming the Enlightenment: Toward a Politics of Radical Engagement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 159.

What, for instance, has been called “Bayle’s defense of the Japanese expulsion of Christian missionaries as a rational response to the first stage of what, in his view, would inevitably become a full-fledged imperial assault” can now be seen to be part of a much wider campaign against the rhetoric and ideology of empire reaching back, in its first stirrings, to the writings of Van den Enden and Poulain de la Barre in the 1660s and 1670s.² The radical *philosophes* never claimed that national and particular differences between peoples and religions should be wholly erased. What they roundly condemned was all forms of authoritarianism, orthodoxy, intolerance, xenophobia, and group chauvinism, insisting that “enlightened” values as defined by eighteenth-century “philosophy” have an unquestionable superiority over all other values—at least when and wherever one is willing to compare systems in terms of reason, peace, equity, individual liberty, and the benefit of all.

The concept of “Radical Enlightenment,” as Giuseppe Ricuperati observed last year, is now probably the key to restoring an overall unity and coherence to the intellectual debate about the Enlightenment as a whole.³ If one is not talking “Radical Enlightenment” one fails to grasp what the intellectual wars of the late seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth century were really about; equally, if one *is* talking “Radical Enlightenment,” then the entire Postmodernist, Postcolonialist, Post-structuralist, and Darntonian critique falls to the ground because this is where the answers to their partially correct (but too narrow) critique essentially lie. With this key we can also see more clearly, here together with the Postmodernists and Postcolonialists, how it came about that liberty, intellectual freedom, and constitutionalism were in many or most cases actually set back, rather than advanced in eighteenth-century Europe, and still more in the European colonial empires, despite the tremendous escalation in the rhetoric of “enlightenment,” “liberty,” and “reason.” This is indeed a dramatic change in the situation regarding Enlightenment ideas as they appeared until recently. It means that historians must now be altogether more rigorous and discerning about what “Enlightenment” actually entailed, what it still means and, no less important, what it was not.

We can now see, for example, much more clearly than before that, for

² Sankar Muthu, *Enlightenment against Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 324; more generally on Enlightenment anticolonialism and the thrust for equality see my *Radical Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 79–82 and especially the chapter on anticolonialism in the forthcoming sequel to that volume.

³ Giuseppe Ricuperati, “Universalismi, appartenenza, identità: un bilancio possibile,” *Rivista storica italiana* 116 (2004): 740, 745.

all its anticlericalism, secularism, and willingness to emasculate the Inquisition, the officially-sanctioned “enlightenment” carried through in Portugal and Brazil by the marquis of Pombal, the powerful chief minister of the crown who virtually ruled Portugal between 1750 and 1777, was not in any meaningful sense “enlightened.” Pombal has often been presented in history books as an outstanding “enlightened” reformer; and he and his regime undeniably introduced many fundamental administrative, educational, economic, and ecclesiastical reforms justified in the name of “reason” and instrumental in advancing secularization. But Pombal’s “enlightenment,” no matter how far-reaching, was in large part primarily a mechanism for enhancing autocracy at the expense of individual liberty and especially an apparatus for crushing opposition, suppressing criticism, and furthering colonial economic exploitation as well as intensifying book censorship and consolidating personal control and profit.⁴ Much the same can be said about several other supposedly “enlightened” autocratic regimes which implemented major reforms employing the rhetoric of “enlightenment.”

There is much, then, in the Postmodernist critique of traditional readings of the Enlightenment that remains valid. Where that critique completely breaks down is in Postmodernism’s evident failure to evaluate the Enlightenment intellectual arena fully or correctly. Indeed, the still widely-held view that the thinkers of the Enlightenment represent familiar, well-tilled ground is today rapidly giving way to the realization that actually our knowledge of the Enlightenment of ideas remains remarkably patchy and incomplete. As one historian wrote last year about Condorcet, only now are we beginning to “intellectualise Condorcet and rescue him from the margins of intellectual history,” belatedly realizing that his voice is still worth hearing. Condorcet’s stature as a truly “enlightened” thinker has latterly become “less challengeable than it used to be essentially because,” as it has been aptly put, “the disparaging association with the cold, passionless hyper-rationality of a stereotypical Enlightenment ideologue,” has now been shown to be highly inaccurate.⁵

Virtually the same can be said for numerous others who are finally being rescued from a deep ditch of marginal status, near oblivion, and a long history of being misinterpreted or unjustifiably ignored, Van den

⁴ Kenneth Maxwell, *Pombal, Paradox of the Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 83, 91–108, 160–62.

⁵ David Williams, *Condorcet and Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 8, 282–87.

Enden,⁶ Poulain de la Barre,⁷ Du Marsais,⁸ Boulainvilliers, Collins,⁹ Fréret, Radicati,¹⁰ Wachter, Gundling,¹¹ Lau, Mably, Hatzfeld,¹² Vauvenargues,¹³ La Beaumelle, d'Alembert, Beverland, Van Balen, Van Leenhof,¹⁴ and Cloots prominent among them. At the same time, key aspects of many well-known moderate and conservative thinkers, such as Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Condillac,¹⁵ or supposed “skeptics and fideists” like Bayle,¹⁶ have recently come to be revised in crucial ways while even such a key figure as Diderot, the prime architect of the *Encyclopédie*, is now being fundamentally reassessed owing to the current and very welcome corrective emphasis being placed on his hylozoism, Spinozism, anti-Newtonianism, anticolonialism, and radicalism more generally.¹⁷

It is now clear that nothing could be more mistaken or superficial than

⁶ Wim Klever, “Inleiding” to Franciscus van den Enden’s *Vrije Politieke Stellingen* (Amsterdam: Wereldbibliotheek, 1992), 13–119.

⁷ See Siep Stuurman, *François Poulain de la Barre and the Invention of Modern Equality* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004).

⁸ See, in particular, Gianluca Mori, “Du Marsais philosophe clandestin: textes et attributions,” in *La philosophie clandestine à l’âge classique*, eds. A. McKenna and A. Mothu (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation; Paris, Universitas, 1997), 69–92.

⁹ Pascal Taranto, *Du déisme à l’athéisme: la libre-pensée d’Anthony Collins* (Paris: Champion, 2000).

¹⁰ Edoardo Tortarolo, *L’Illuminismo. Ragioni e dubbi della modernità* (Rome: Carocci, 1999), 32, 37, 55, 122–23; Silvia Berti, “Radicali ai margini: materialismo, libero pensiero e diritto al suicidio in Radicati di Passerano,” *Rivista storica italiana* 116 (2004): 794–811.

¹¹ On Gundling, Lau, Wachter, and more generally on the German Radical Enlightenment, see Martin Mulrow, *Moderne aus dem Untergrund. Radikale Frühaufklärung in Deutschland, 1680–1720* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2002); Winfried Schröder, *Ursprünge des Atheismus. Untersuchungen zur Metaphysik- und Religionskritik des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1998); G. Paganini, “Modernità dalla clandestinità,” *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana* 84 (2005): 172–80.

¹² Edoardo Tortarolo, “Hatzfeld: la vita di un radicale tedesco nella prima metà del XVIII secolo,” *Rivista storica italiana* 116 (2004): 812–33.

¹³ For Vauvenargues, see Laurent Bove, *Vauvenargues. Philosophie de la force active* (Paris: Champion, 2000), and *Entre Epicure et Vauvenargues. Principes et formes de la pensée morale*, ed. Jean Dagen (Paris: Champion, 1999).

¹⁴ See Michiel Wielema, *The March of the Libertines: Spinozists and the Dutch Reformed Church (1660–1750)* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2004), 103–32.

¹⁵ On Condillac, see André Charrak, *Empirisme et métaphysique* (Paris: Vrin, 2003).

¹⁶ For the new interpretations of Bayle, see in particular Stefano Brogi, *Teologia senza verità. Bayle contro i “rationaux”* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 1998); Gianluca Mori, *Bayle philosophe* (Paris: Champion, 1999) and *Pierre Bayle dans la République des lettres*, ed. Anthony McKenna and G. Paganini (Paris: Champion, 2004).

¹⁷ On the new Diderot see especially Paolo Quintili, *La pensée critique de Diderot* (Paris: Champion, 2001); Amor Cherni, *Diderot: l’ordre et le devenir* (Geneva: Droz, 2002); Colas Duflo, *Diderot philosophe* (Paris: Champion, 2003).

to suppose that the Enlightenment (as some still anachronistically claim) was essentially “Newtonian.” Recent developments in the history of ideas have in fact fundamentally transformed our entire picture. A variety of approaches are rapidly coming to seem not just inadequate and ultimately incoherent but almost completely beside the point: not just the unitary interpretation given by Peter Gay in the 1960s which is now largely redundant but even the much more nuanced and pluralistic conception of the Enlightenment, especially stressing national context and the idea of a “family of enlightenments,” which began to become fashionable in the 1970s and 1980s, during the years that Postmodernism achieved its rise to prominence, as well as the plea for a “social” rather than an “intellectual” approach being the right way to go. The real issue now is to get a clearer picture of the tremendous intellectual and ideological battles taking place within every single one of these alleged “national enlightenments” none of which were in any meaningful sense really “national” at all.

If this conclusion is correct, and it seems clear to me that it is, it won't be long before the pretensions of writers like John Gray that the “emancipatory promise of Enlightenment humanism” was “manifestly illusory” and that the “foundations of Christian and Enlightenment humanism are now wholly eroded” will come to look not just inexact or exaggerated but totally absurd.¹⁸ In this dispute about the real significance of the Enlightenment, furthermore, Postmodernist philosophers, such as John Gray, Alasdair MacIntyre, and Charles Taylor are at a distinct disadvantage, being saddled with what are really hopelessly outdated historical accounts of the Enlightenment and ones which look ever more incomplete, unbalanced, and inaccurate, the more research into the subject proceeds. Postmodernist critics of the Enlightenment, it emerges, by and large are really just questioning the credentials of Locke, Newton, Voltaire, and Hume. But these thinkers were moral and social—and in Locke's case also theological—conservatives who passionately, insistently, and wholeheartedly rejected the main line of egalitarian, democratic, republican, and anti-colonial thought which Voltaire sometimes called “le matérialisme” and sometimes “le Spinosisme” but always heartily reviled and detested. As Voltaire himself expressed it, he was not in the least interested in “enlightening” or emancipating the man in the street, his coachman or any other “servants.”

Radical Enlightenment was an anti-theological and ultimately demo-

¹⁸ John Gray, *Enlightenment's Wake: Politics and Culture at the Close of the Modern Age* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 178–79.

cratic emancipatory project—though not necessarily always anti-religious provided ecclesiastical authority is sufficiently curbed¹⁹—extending from Spinoza and the Dutch democratic republicans of the late seventeenth century (often appropriating and reworking strands taken from Descartes, Hobbes, and Machiavelli) via Bayle, Fontenelle, Boulainvilliers, Toland, Collins, Mandeville, Du Marsais, d’Argens, Diderot, Boulanger, and d’Alembert to d’Holbach, Helvétius, Condorcet, Paine, Cloots, and Bentham. Charles Taylor, the least inaccurate of the Postmodernist critics of the intellectual—as opposed to the rhetorical, power-consolidating administrative and ecclesiastical “enlightenment” does admittedly include a chapter entitled “Radical Enlightenment” in his *Sources of the Self* showing that he, unlike the others, does at least have some inkling of the overriding importance in this debate of the egalitarian, libertarian, democratic, and republican tendency in the modern West.²⁰ But even he says hardly anything about Spinoza or Bayle, the two key architects of the Radical Enlightenment, and relatively little about Diderot, d’Alembert, d’Holbach, and Condorcet, giving much more of his attention in particular to Locke and Kant. It is above all the endless emphasis on Locke in philosophers’ discussions of the Enlightenment, a thinker viscerally opposed to what Spinoza, Bayle, and Diderot were trying to do, indeed the very pillar of eighteenth-century mainstream conservative thinking and an enemy of “equality” (outside of theology) as well as of a full, comprehensive toleration in the style of Spinoza, Bayle, and Toland which reveals the full extent of the prevailing misunderstanding of what the real issues are. The tendency in this dispute to focus on Locke, the champion of big property, empire, and appropriation of the lands of the Amerindians, a thinker who, moreover, was notably disinclined to oppose slavery, is arguably quite sufficient proof in itself of the intellectual wrong-headedness of both outdated conventional notions about the Enlightenment and the entire Postmodernist critique.

Yet the most vital aspects of modernity conceived as a philosophical package, namely democratic republicanism, equality racial and sexual, freedom of the individual, freedom of expression, liberty of the press, comprehensive (i.e. not limited, as in Locke) toleration, anti-colonialism, all the things that make a civilized reality at least thinkable today, have recently

¹⁹ An important recent re-assessment of Spinoza’s conception of religion and its relevance to the Early Enlightenment, is Wiep van Bunge, “Spinoza en de waarheid van de godsdienst,” in *Leven na Descartes*, eds. P. Hoftijzer and Theo Verbeek (Hilversum: Verloren, 2005), 55–67.

²⁰ Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1989), 321–54.

come to seem much more clearly and definitely products of the Enlightenment than it was possible for anyone, even the greatest enthusiast for these quintessentially “modern” values, to suppose twenty or thirty years ago. Recent research has immeasurably improved our knowledge, especially of forgotten, clandestine, and suppressed texts and writers and unfairly marginalized figures. However, much of the newly emerging picture still remains veiled from view, or even largely invisible, as far as many readers in English-speaking countries are concerned, due to the fact that the greater part of the recent revisionist “turn” has appeared in Italian, Dutch, German and French rather than in English. But even readers confined to English-language texts are increasingly struck, judging by some of the queries being centrally posed in current symposia, by the fact that the older accounts of the Enlightenment in English fail to provide usable or meaningful historical accounts of the origins of the modern idea of equality and of the rise of modern democratic thought, antislavery, anti-colonialism, freedom of the individual, enlightened toleration, sexual emancipation, and so forth.

As Jeremy Waldron recently remarked, for instance, there may be a vast literature on the subject of “equality” as a policy aim but on the origins of “basic equality” as a fundamental principle of modern commitment and philosophy there is quite astoundingly little available in the familiar literature.²¹ Furthermore, it is steadily becoming clearer that resorting to Locke in the context of equality (except as a purely theological concept) is exceedingly problematic, since there are formidable objections both to Waldron’s own claim that Locke viably derives “basic equality” from “Christian foundations” *and* to the rival claim that “Locke is capable of developing” a secular argument for equality; neither argument seems to be tenable.²² As a result, we will hopefully soon see the beginnings of a shift of attention away from the verbose and pedantic Locke to the more secular sections of the Enlightenment whence all these quintessentially “modern” values and rights, including basic equality, more clearly emanate.

Admittedly, in the last few years there has been a growing trend in Britain and America to go precisely the other way and insist more and more on the alleged British origins of the Enlightenment (however much this would have amazed the Amerindians who, threatened with encroachment

²¹ Jeremy Waldron, *God, Locke and Equality: Christian Foundations in Locke’s Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1–5, 237–43.

²² On the major difficulties with Locke’s theory of equality, see in particular, M. P. Zuckert, “Locke-Religion-Equality,” in the “Symposium on God, Locke and Equality,” *Review of Politics* 67 (2005): 419–31; and John Dunn, “Jeremy Waldron’s Reading of Locke’s Christian Politics,” *Review of Politics* 67 (2005): 433–50.

and dispossession of their lands, participated in the desperate struggle between eighteenth-century New England and New France, mostly on the side of the latter). Currently still modish perspectives in North America have served only further to reinforce in the eyes of many the supposedly Lockean, Newtonian, and Humean character of the Enlightenment.²³ Furthermore, this trend has obviously been reinforced, and has been greatly extended since the 1970s and 1980s, by the fact that it is now not only scholars in English-speaking countries but also those in the Far East, eastern Europe, and southern Asia, where scholars employ English as the main and often the only channel of communication with the West, who have acquired a powerful vested interest, so to speak, in focusing attention on British authors and ideas and in generally privileging the English, Scottish, and Anglo-American dimensions.

However, there is also arguably, a built-in, self-defeating aspect to claiming as, for instance, Gertrude Himmelfarb does, that what is best and most valuable to us in “the Enlightenment” should be firmly attributed, indeed restored “to its progenitor, the British.”²⁴ For such a powerful bias towards one particular national context and language-tradition increasingly diverts attention from what are precisely the most relevant and valuable aspects of the Enlightenment—namely the egalitarian, republican, and democratic impulses. As the eighteenth century wore on, the British, in contradistinction especially to the French materialist Enlightenment, tended to distance itself gradually from the emancipatory, egalitarian, and republican dimensions of Enlightenment thought or, as with Tom Paine, repudiated its more forthright democrats and libertarians. As a result, British culture and thought, well before the outbreak of the American War of Independence, came to be associated (not least by Montesquieu and Voltaire who both thoroughly approved—and Diderot and Mably who equally emphatically disapproved) with socially conservative attitudes and strident insistence on English-style limited monarchy, aristocracy, racial hierarchy, and empire. As Roy Porter justly and repeatedly remarked, agreeing with John Pocock, the “Enlightenment took on something of a conservative quality in England.”²⁵ Hence, the fact that Edmund Burke, for instance, became an ar-

²³ See in particular, Roy Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World* (London and New York: Allan Lane, 2000) and more recently Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Roads to Modernity: The British, French and American Enlightenments* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

²⁵ Porter, *Enlightenment*, 30–32; Roy Porter, “England” in *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*, ed. Kors, 1: 412.

dent supporter of aristocracy, and enemy of revolutionary egalitarianism, by no means implies he was any less steeped in Locke, Hume, Hutcheson, and Adam Smith than most other Enlightenment ideologues. In some respects he stood rather close to Montesquieu, Turgot, and Voltaire as well as Locke and Hume.

Himmelfarb's contention, echoing those of Norman Hampson, Roy Porter, and many others who precede her in this respect, that the "French themselves credited that venerable English trinity, Bacon, Locke and Newton with the ideas that inspired their own Enlightenment"²⁶ is actually only true with respect to *philosophes* like Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Turgot who aimed to reconcile "reason" with tradition, and with organized religion, and who were anxious to use Locke's epistemology and Newton's physico-theology to limit the scope of philosophy and help shore up aristocracy, monarchy, and a measure of ecclesiastical authority. By contrast, Fontenelle, Boulainvilliers, d'Argens, Diderot, La Mettrie, Buffon, Mably, d'Holbach, Helvétius, Du Marsais, Condorcet, and many others, the structure of whose thought is much more closely aligned with a stripped-down Cartesianism, and especially Bayle and Spinozism than with the style of English empiricism or Newtonian physico-theology,²⁷ did not share (or at least early on ceased to share) Voltaire's life-long and fervent but rather selective adulation of Britain and showed no particular veneration for Locke or Newton.

Despite the republicanism and Spinozistic pantheism and toleration of Toland,²⁸ the quasi-Spinozist atheism of Collins, the feminism and egalitarianism of Mary Wollstonecraft and Catherine Macaulay, the democratic orientation of Paine, William Godwin's views on property and the utilitarian egalitarianism of Bentham, the general thrust of the British Enlightenment was predominantly conservative and intellectually insular, indeed disinclined to oppose the powerful xenophobic tendencies present in eighteenth-century English culture as well as hostile to the universalist proclivities of the wider European Enlightenment, features which must eventually undermine the currently very fashionable notion that the Enlightenment of liberty, equality, and toleration was primarily British or at any rate Anglo-American in inspiration. It is precisely the growing need to uncover the

²⁶ Himmelfarb, *The Roads to Modernity*, 5.

²⁷ Gianni Paganini, *Les philosophies clandestines à l'âge classique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2005), 125–28.

²⁸ On Toland as a radical *philosophe*, see Justin Champion, *Republican Learning: John Toland and the Crisis of Christian Culture, 1696–1722* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).

true origins of modern democratic republicanism, equality, toleration, and liberty of the individual, which I believe will compel the pendulum to swing back against this particular Atlantic perspective, resulting in a powerful reassertion of the claims of the French Enlightenment, especially eighteenth-century French materialism, as well as greater appreciation of the indispensable Dutch, Italian, and German “enlightened” contributions.

Historians and philosophers alike must seek out the origins of modern equality, individual liberty, and democracy where they are to be found not where they would like them to be. It is only by tracing our own most generous, precious, and progressive assumptions and values, as Louis Dupré aptly puts it, “to their origins that we may hope to gain some insight into principles we had long taken for granted but have recently come to question”; and if we are to “understand our relation to the Enlightenment we must attempt to describe it as it understood itself, even while trying to understand its role in shaping the present.”²⁹ All this brings me to the various strengths and weaknesses of the new *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment* published by the New York branch of the Oxford University Press under the general editorship of Alan Charles Kors: for if an overemphasis on British authors and questioning of the centrality of the French Enlightenment, as Himmelfarb does, is a tendency only moderately visible here, there is an abundance of that much more usual and traditional bias against the Dutch, Italian, German, and pre-1750 Russian enlightenments together with the now long-prevailing but deeply erroneous conflation of “enlightened” despotism (and colonial expansion) with the Enlightenment proper. Ironically, while there is no sign of hesitation about the inadequate coverage of the non-French continental Enlightenment we do, once again, encounter Roy Porter’s (once, perhaps, partly justified) complaint that “historians from Ernst Cassirer to Peter Gay have tended to deny, minimize, or marginalize the English contribution to the Enlightenment.” Well, no danger of that here. Quite the contrary.

In principle, of course, scholars, students, and the general public have every reason to welcome the publication of any multi-volume compendium covering a field as extensive, complex, and fundamental as that of the Enlightenment, especially when, as here, the great distinction of the editors and the expertise of the 460 or so contributors guarantees an impressive level of scholarship, concise summaries, and helpful bibliographical guidance throughout. So let me begin by saying that despite the critical tone of

²⁹ Louis Dupré, *The Enlightenment and the Intellectual Foundations of Modern Culture* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2004), xiii.

much of what follows there are numerous excellent individual articles and much from which everyone can learn.

An especially welcome feature is that the development of enlightened thought in diverse individual, but as regards the Enlightenment comparatively marginal, countries about which most readers will know little or nothing, like Greece, Poland, Spain, Portugal, and the Scandinavian lands, receives substantial separate entries providing excellent summaries and bibliographical orientation. One immediate interpretative problem, though, evident not least in the discussions about Portugal, Brazil, Spain, and Spanish America, is the pervasive failure to detach the “Enlightenment” as such from, or even properly distinguish between it and, the politics and administrative preoccupations of “enlightened despotism”—of which most *philosophes* were highly critical. The balance of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century European historiography with its strongly nationalist and authoritarian concerns, has bequeathed us a predominantly but in no small part spuriously positive image of “enlightened despotism” and by no means only in colonial contexts. The deeply entrenched images of Pombal, Charles III of Spain, Frederick the Great of Prussia, and others as “enlightened” is assuredly one of the reasons the Enlightenment as a whole has acquired a bad name. It may go against the built-in traditions of historiography to be sharply critical of these figures, and dismiss their commitment to secularization, toleration, and weakening ecclesiastical authority as largely just window-dressing, but given the built-in anti-democratic biases of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century historiography, it need not be subjective sentiment, or a departure from the historians’ strict code of objectivity, to urge a new and more sharply critical attitude towards these formidable political figures and their legacies.

Enlightened “despotism” is, admittedly, taken down a peg or two in this compendium at least sporadically but not nearly enough. “It is difficult to regard [Pombal],” remarks Christopher Storrs sensibly, “as truly enlightened.”³⁰ Charles III of Spain (reigned 1758–88) is rightly accounted “very orthodox” and inclined to support the Inquisition when it suited him. But most of the accounts of the “enlightened despots” are too willing to concede “enlightened” credentials where they do not really belong. Joseph II (reigned 1780–90), the sincerest reformer of the “enlightened despots,” may perhaps genuinely deserve to be styled a monarch who sought to relax censorship and stimulate open and free inquiry.³¹ But Catherine the Great

³⁰ Christopher Storrs, “Pombal,” in *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*, ed. Kors, 3: 323.

³¹ Ernst Wangermann, “Austria,” in *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*, ed. Kors, 1: 101.

of Russia, an empress as aggressive towards her neighbors, and repressive domestically, as any Russian autocrat before Stalin, is uncritically presented in the guise of an ardent proponent of the Enlightenment, one who generously purchased Diderot's library and publicly proclaimed her support for the *Encyclopédie*, while Diderot's extensive criticism of Russia's condition, and especially that of the common people under the eighteenth-century czars (including her), goes wholly unmentioned. Worse still, the arrogant warmongering, ruthless, and deeply anti-Semitic Frederick "the Great" (reigned 1740–86) who in 1772 took the lead in the first "partition" of Poland, a monarch who admittedly had an extensive knowledge of the Enlightenment (while, contrary to what is often supposed, admiring neither the French intellectual avant-garde of his time nor the *encyclopedistes*),³² is accounted, by T.C.W. Blanning, a monarch who merited "the reputation of being the most progressive ruler of his age" and even as one who deserved his most eminent subject's (Kant's) fawning comment that "our age is the age enlightenment, the century of Frederick!"³³

Still more disappointing, given this four-volume project's intended breadth of approach, is its failure, in practice, to be balanced and comprehensive. It is surely its chief shortcoming that a great many significant Enlightenment authors and thinkers whom readers of all kinds may well wish to look up, and who would deserve individual entries of their own in any Enlightenment encyclopedia worthy of the name, in fact do not receive separate entries and, in many cases, are barely mentioned anywhere in the compendium. These include Tschirnhaus, Lau, Sallengre, Wyermars, Gueudeville, Bilfinger, Koerbagh, Röell, Beverland, Van Balen, Walten, Schmauss, Brucker, Van Til, Van den Enden, Cuffeler, Van Leenhof, Rabus, Gabriel Wagner, Bierling, Gundling, Reimmann, Heumann, Hatzfeld, Cloots, La Croze, Durand, Mirabaud, Jakob Thomasius, Jacques Bernard, Jean-Frédéric Bernard, Elie Saurin, Charles-Étienne Jordan, Lenglet Dufresnoy, Bruzen de la Martinière, Vauvenargues, La Beaumelle, Moyle, Vallisnieri, Giuseppa-Eleonora Barbapiccola, Catherine Macaulay, Anne Radcliffe, Matthias Knutzen, and Johan Lorenz Schmidt, the compiler of the "Wertheim Bible," and one of the most important figures of the German Radical Enlightenment.

Indeed, Van den Enden, Tschirnhaus, Heumann, Gundling, Schmauss,

³² T.C.W. Blanning, *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture: Old Regime Europe 1660–1789*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 221.

³³ T.C.W. Blanning, "Frederick II 'the Great,'" in *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*, ed. Kors, 2: 72.

Vauvenargues, La Beaumelle, Brucker, and a number of others, rather amazingly, do not even figure in the index. Brucker, incidentally, was one of the most important figures in eighteenth-century scholarship and had an entire conference volume dedicated to him a few years ago.³⁴ Of course, some of this shortfall could be chiefly the fault of the publishers who may possibly have insisted on strict constraints of space which seriously compromised the comprehensiveness and completeness of the project. But this cannot be the whole explanation. For there is still a strikingly uneven balance in the spread of what we do have, between the coverage accorded to the British, French, and Italian enlightenments and the significantly more sporadic and thinner coverage accorded to Germany and the Netherlands, just to mention two essential countries in the Enlightenment context. This is not just a question of omitting names that should have been included, or of other undesirable gaps but rather a question of proper balance and interpretation in a more general sense.

It may be pure coincidence that there is a particularly high number of omissions—or should I say casualties of pre-judged selection—among the more radical-minded, anti-monarchical, and democratic but it is certainly a great pity that so much is missing as we see, for instance, from the case of Anarcharsis Cloots. Admittedly, Cloots, unlike the unfortunate Tschirnhaus and La Beaumelle, *is* referred to in one place, indeed shares two whole sentences with Paine where we are told that in the 1780s and 1790s “thinkers like Thomas Paine and Anarcharsis [*sic*] Cloots articulated a revolutionary ideology that embedded republicanism in cosmopolitanism within a single utopian vision, envisioning a world-historical process leading all nations to institute universal rights, including the rights to free trade and self-government.”³⁵ But aside from spelling his name wrongly, this seems distinctly ungenerous treatment on the part of the editors for an outstanding democratic republican, given that a 544-page biography appeared about him in 1999, stressing his impressive command of pre-1750 Radical Enlightenment authors, admiration among others for Lahontan, Fréret, and Meslier, opposition to the pro-aristocratic thought of Montesquieu and Burke, rejection of Rousseau’s version of republicanism and the fact that he was one of the more interesting writers of the 1780s and 1790s on a remarkably wide range of topics.³⁶ Why, one wonders, does he only get

³⁴ *Jacob Brucker (1696–1770): Philosoph und Historiker der europäischen Aufklärung*, Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann and Theo Stammen (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1998).

³⁵ Daniel Gordon, “Citizenship,” in *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*, ed. Kors, 1: 246.

³⁶ François Labbé, *Anarcharsis Cloots, le Prussien Francophile. Un philosophe au service de la Révolution française et universelle* (Paris-Montreal: Editions L’Harmattan, 1999).

three lines in an encyclopedia on the Enlightenment which gives that theological reactionary of Yale, Jonathan Edwards, nearly two whole pages telling us in some detail about the latter's efforts on behalf of traditional Calvinist theology and his role in the "Great Awakening" orchestrated by "New Light" clergymen in the 1730s and 1740s throughout New England and the Middle Colonies?

But it is by no means only the radical, democratic wing that is a casualty of the editors' particular orientation. The whole of the German Early Enlightenment, apart from Leibniz, Wolff, and Pufendorf, and the preoccupation with Natural Law theory, has been ignored or played down to a quite unacceptable degree. This means that major aspects of the early European Enlightenment as a whole, including the evolution of the German universities (then the liveliest and most progressive in Europe), Thomasian Eclecticism as a philosophical movement, the efforts to establish history of philosophy as a new discipline (beginning with Jakob Thomasius), the German-language scholarly journals of the pre-1750 period as well as the radical writings of Knutzen, Stosch, Wagner, Lau, Edelmann, Schmidt, and the role of the clandestine manuscript known as the *Cymbalum mundi*, are largely missing from the picture, causing severe distortion and lack of balance.

About the founding of the University of Göttingen, in the mid 1730s, for instance, one of the most important of all Enlightenment initiatives in continental Europe, we are told practically nothing. Generally, the treatment of the later German Enlightenment is fuller but nevertheless far from satisfactory. Lessing is given a long entry which elaborates on his role as a literary figure but says remarkably little about his philosophical views or the tremendous controversy over his alleged Spinozism which erupted after his death.³⁷ The entry on "Germany"—like that for Moses Mendelssohn (1729–86) which mainly treats him in his capacity as a Jewish philosopher—have practically nothing to say about the *Pantheismusstreit*, a great intellectual controversy of the early and mid-1780s in which Lessing (posthumously), Mendelssohn, Kant, Herder, and Goethe were all involved (but to which there is no reference in the index) and which was philosophically and culturally one of the great defining episodes of the later *Aufklärung*. Another unfortunate gap relates to Kant. Even the otherwise excellent article on this philosopher by John Zammito devotes practically no space to the important historical role of the early "pre-critical" Kant, despite the

³⁷ On this, see Detlev Pätzold, *Spinoza, Aufklärung, Idealismus. Die Substanz der Moderne*, second ed. (Assen: Koninklijke Van Gorcum, 2002), 80–114.

fact that elsewhere Zammito has done more than anyone else to spread awareness of the significance of his earlier activities as a non-technical philosopher, prior to his inner upheaval, or *Umwälzung*, of 1769.³⁸

The weaknesses of the enterprise are even more striking with regard to the Dutch Enlightenment, although I do not wish to imply that this is the fault in any way of the Dutch contributors who are all excellent scholars. Rather this failing appears to be mainly due to the unsatisfactory editorial interpretation and concept of the Enlightenment resulting in an inadequate amount of space being allocated to the emergence of republican, democratic, anti-colonial, and egalitarian ideas and the marginalization or even omission of key elements of the story. In the past it may have been perfectly usual practice to ignore the Dutch but in the light of recent research such an attitude involves a distinct loss for everyone and simply will not do. This comment, incidentally, applies not only to the large number of secondary figures and books, many of whom remain today very little known but also to the broad phenomenon of Dutch Spinozism and the impact of Bayle's thought, especially of his secular moral philosophy and theory of toleration in the Dutch and Dutch Huguenot context.

Bayle, of course, presents a particularly thorny problem. Scholars remain deeply divided about how to interpret his often deliberately perplexing and convoluted propositions and the view that he was basically a skeptic and a fideist still partly dominates the scene, especially in Britain and America. Hence, the author of the article on Bayle here, Ruth Whelan, is definitely to be congratulated on the skillful way she apprises the reader of this considerable interpretative schism and problem, presenting both sides of the picture. She rightly maintains that Bayle's thought and writing "make him one of the architects of what were to become Enlightenment modes of knowing and, indeed, sociability."³⁹ Bayle's radical "dissociation of belief" from behavior and his deliberate promotion of the "paradox of the virtuous atheist," she rightly points out, were powerful ingredients in both the clandestine manuscripts of the early eighteenth century and the thought of radical writers such as d'Argens, d'Holbach, and Mandeville. Here, I think she shows herself to be historically more aware than many other Bayle specialists who, like her, persist in defending Elizabeth Labrousse's thesis that he was essentially a skeptic and fideist and not a deliberately subversive rationalist.

³⁸ See John H. Zammito, *Kant, Herder, and the Birth of Anthropology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

³⁹ Ruth Whelan, "Pierre Bayle," in *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*, ed. Kors, iv, 122–3.

But while Whelan admits there is plenty of evidence to support the contrary view, namely that Bayle (like Diderot later) was only a skeptic with regard to belief and not at all with respect to reason, she fails to remark—and this would have further strengthened her historical contextualization—that Bayle was a philosopher obsessed with, and deeply influenced by, Spinoza, and one who also disdained and ignored Locke and indeed the entire English empirical tradition (albeit not empiricism as such). Whelan also fails to note that Bayle greatly influenced Diderot (who equally disdained Locke and the English empiricists), and that by the time of his death in 1706 practically all the other Huguenot intelligentsia—Le Clerc, Jaquelot, Jacques Bernard, Barbeyrac, Durand, and Jurieu—interpreted him not as a fideist but as what they saw as an extremely “dangerous” and “subversive” crypto-Spinozist, someone whom Le Clerc, and with him virtually the whole of what John Pocock has aptly dubbed the “Arminian Enlightenment,” labeled an “apologist” for atheists. Admittedly, Bayle attacks (or appears to attack) Spinoza’s one-substance doctrine in his *Dictionnaire* (the only aspect of Bayle’s *oeuvre* for which Voltaire felt much enthusiasm) but in his late works which most scholars tend to ignore, especially the *Continuation des Pensées diverses* (1704) and the *Réponse aux Questions d’un provincial* (1703–7), he is often remarkably bold in adducing and praising Spinoza’s moral philosophy which is indeed very closely akin to that of Bayle himself. Jean Barbeyrac who was in many respects firmly within Pocock’s “Arminian” Enlightenment camp and a warm admirer of Locke, came to the conclusion, as he assured Le Clerc in April 1706, that the last works of Bayle were even more “dangerous” (for religion, society, and the political order) than those of Hobbes and Spinoza.

The unsatisfactory rendering of the German and Dutch enlightenments in this work of reference is further reflected in the way the pre-1750 Russian Enlightenment is presented. There has always been a certain tendency in the Enlightenment historiography to underestimate the intellectual and cultural side of the early Russian Enlightenment presumably because neither French nor British intellectual influences had much to do with developments there down to the 1750s. Indeed, Peter Gay, astonishingly, went so far as to say that “in his much publicized and much overrated campaign to “Westernize” Russia, Peter the Great directed the Russian presses to print a handful of technical manuals” while “the bulk of Russian books remained religious tracts,”⁴⁰ a grotesquely inaccurate representation of the impressive cam-

⁴⁰ Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation. Vol. 2, The Science of Freedom* (New York: Knopf, 1969), 61–62.

paign of translation of Western (i.e. chiefly German and Dutch but also some French and Italian) books into Russian using a new simplified style of font (prepared in Amsterdam), both in Saint Petersburg and Moscow, during the years of Peter's reign.

The pre-1750 Russian Enlightenment was obviously not an enlightenment based on English or French ideas. But that does not make it unimportant or unenlightened. In fact, it was a key dimension of the European Enlightenment despite the autocratic and expansionist thrust of Peter's rule. What counted there, in the early decades, were the German and Dutch influences, precisely those that the editors of the compendium have opted to minimize and marginalize. Leibniz and Wolff, who played the main advisory role leading to the forming of Peter the Great's Petersburg collections and the Imperial Russian Academy of Sciences in 1725, are not given their due (the latter is not even mentioned in this capacity) while Archbishop Feofan Prokopovich (1677–1736), arguably the most important figure of the Early Russian Enlightenment after Peter himself, receives such perfunctory treatment that we are not even told that his intellectual sources were predominantly German, being informed merely that he drew "largely on contemporary Western political theory and reconciled absolute power with natural law."⁴¹

At the same time, there is also, I believe, despite the highly privileged position it is given, a structural problem with the way the British Enlightenment itself is treated. The articles on Locke, Newton, Shaftesbury, Clarke, Collins, Hume, Adam Smith, and Bentham (except that the last fails to mention the latter's early conversion to democracy in 1788–89 or his reconversion to democratic thinking in 1808–9)⁴² are all excellent and mostly very expert. But they also tell us remarkably little about the reception of British ideas on the continent and elsewhere, even in the case of Shaftesbury who was arguably more important in Germany and France than in Britain itself. Why precisely was the papacy and the Inquisition generally enthusiastic about Newtonianism and Lockean empiricism in the early eighteenth century but sufficiently worried about Locke's theology (and dithering over Free Will) to ban his *Essay on Human Understanding*, and his *Reasonableness of Christianity* but not until 1734 and 1737 respectively?⁴³ Why ex-

⁴¹ Isabel de Madariaga, "Russia," in *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*, ed. Kors, 4: 492.

⁴² On this, see Philip Schofield, "Jeremy Bentham, the French Revolution and Political Radicalism," *History of European Ideas* 30 (2004): 381–401.

⁴³ On these important issues, see Gustavo Costa, "La santa sede di fronte a Locke," *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres* (2003): 37–122.

actly was the kind of Deism favored by Voltaire so insistent that Locke, Clarke, and Newton were the right guides for the Enlightenment in the spheres of general philosophy, science, and moral theory while the materialist tendency associated with Diderot and d'Holbach, among many others, remained much less Anglophile and eventually became anglophobe? Why was “la supériorité de la philosophie anglaise,” so much insisted on by Voltaire, warmly acknowledged by some but also powerfully contested in France and Italy while yet also being widely invoked in some of the most conservative countries, such as Spain and Greece, albeit much less so in Sweden, Germany, and Russia?

These are complex questions not just about reception and assimilation but also appropriation. Eugenius Voulgaris (1716–1806), a leading figure of the eighteenth-century Greek Enlightenment, for instance, is rightly stated here to have been “inspired by Locke and Voltaire.”⁴⁴ But the selective way Locke and Newton, the latter as interpreted by Voltaire, were deployed by the eighteenth-century Greek Enlightenment, including Voulgaris who translated a large part of Locke’s *Essay* into Greek in the 1740s (though we are not told that here), would probably not have greatly pleased Locke and Newton themselves, or their British adherents.⁴⁵ Voulgaris was very enthusiastic about Locke’s philosophical defense of miracles and spirits, and his pedagogy, but he had no use at all for his general theology or political thought as these seemed to him dangerously innovative. Yet there is virtually no discussion of such central issues relating to the reception of English thought to be encountered in these volumes despite its being essential to any proper assessment of the role of British Enlightenment in the making of the Enlightenment generally. For it was precisely the radical wing in France, Holland, and elsewhere that resisted Voltaire’s campaign on behalf of Locke and Newton, while moderate to conservative voices, more favorably inclined toward theology, tradition, monarchy, and aristocracy, were generally much more fervently anglophile and keen on Locke. So ardently did Voulgaris, a conservative thinker (deeply committed to Russian-style autocracy as well as preserving ecclesiastical authority), support Voltaire’s campaign on behalf of Locke and Newtonian physico-theology, that despite his conservatism and piety it took him many decades to overcome his reluctance publicly to oppose Voltaire and subscribe to the Orthodox Church’s condemnation of him as an impious and irreligious writer.

⁴⁴ Anna Tabaki, “Greece,” in *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*, ed. Kors, 2: 158.

⁴⁵ Paschalis M. Kitromilides, “John Locke and the Greek Intellectual Tradition: An Episode in Locke’s Reception in South-East Europe,” in *Locke’s Philosophy: Content and Context*, ed. G.A.J. Rogers (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 217–35.

Yet another major interpretative difficulty with this work of reference is the way it deals with both the reality and the historiography of the Counter-Enlightenment. There is a problem here even if one is of the opinion that the editors were right to privilege the “Counter-Enlightenment” above the “Radical Enlightenment” giving the former, but not the latter, a (long) separate entry and ensuring that Counter-Enlightenment figures prominently also in various other contexts throughout the four volumes, including the lengthy individual entries on Bishop Bossuet, Nicolas-Sylvestre Bergier, and Jonathan Edwards. The author of the main entry on this topic, Sylviane Albertan-Coppola, may be correct that the “boundary between enlightened men of letters and adversaries of the enlightenment is not so easily established as is generally believed,” especially when it comes to Rousseau and his admirers.⁴⁶ But it is hard to agree with her that the fact Montesquieu was friendly with the Cardinal Polignac, author of the *Anti-Lucrèce*, while the Abbé Bergier sometimes participated in d’Holbach’s social circle, means that “personal bonds continued to unite combatants from the two camps.” It is still harder to agree that the *philosophes* “and those who challenged them shared a common culture consisting of admiration of the ancients combined with a taste for the modern sciences.”⁴⁷

This tendency to see one culture, and to play down the depth and bitterness of this ideological schism, is decidedly misleading in the first place because, from the 1660s onwards, right down to the early nineteenth century, there were always three competing ideological camps which vied with each other, never two: namely Radical Enlightenment (including Diderot and d’Holbach), conservative Enlightenment (including Locke, Voltaire, and Montesquieu), and Counter-Enlightenment while, secondly, both the *philosophes* and their adversaries always had a perfectly clear sense of what each ideologically warring grouping stood for even if they sometimes spoke to each other and all three camps, to an extent, had a common problem with Rousseau. Voltaire did as much as any proponent of Counter-Enlightenment to oppose materialism and Spinozism, cut Bayle’s pre-1740 reputation down to size and suppress Meslier’s atheism (which he did in a rather unscrupulous manner). So much for “national” enlightenments! There was a constant ideological war going on within the Enlightenment

⁴⁶ On Rousseau as an enemy of the *philosophes*, see Graeme Garrard, *Rousseau’s Counter-Enlightenment: A Republican Critique of the Philosophes* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2003).

⁴⁷ S. Albertan-Coppola, “Counter-Enlightenment,” *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*, ed. Kors, 1: 307–11.

between its radical and conservative wings while at the same time, as Darrin McMahon has rightly stressed, there was a continuous and fundamental “dialectic of Enlightenment and Counter-Enlightenment” and one which was by no means confined to France.⁴⁸ (Strangely enough, although the entry “Counter-Enlightenment” provides a longer bibliography than most others, it omits McMahon’s important book.)

A scarcely less peculiar feature of this encyclopedia’s treatment of the historiography of Counter-Enlightenment is its failure to point out that it was not until a remarkably late stage that the great significance of the European Counter-Enlightenment was discovered by historians and philosophers, and the term itself coined, this being done by none other than Isaiah Berlin. But at the same time that it fails to note Berlin’s role in the modern effort to come to grips with the intellectual upheaval of the Enlightenment, and the Counter-Enlightenment with which it was inseparably locked in conflict, it also fails to point out that Berlin introduced an intellectually contentious and rather skewed picture of what the Counter-Enlightenment actually entailed. For if he was right about its having been (and its still being) a very powerful force, his approach tended to divert attention from its essentially theological core and, in particular, confuse many people’s perceptions of both Vico and Herder.

The claims in the entry on Herder, by Robert E. Norton, that the predominantly negative view of that German thinker long current in the English-language literature, “rested on several fundamental misapprehensions,” and was largely wrought by Berlin,⁴⁹ is thus perfectly justified. So is the observation of Donald Verene, author of the entry on Vico, that whatever its intrinsic merits Berlin’s evaluation of Vico as a thinker who “opposes the Enlightenment ideal that there is only one structure of reality” and who saw that different human cultures result historically from different combinations of imagination and authority, as well as reason, helped focus scholars’ attention on what the Enlightenment really was and what its central concerns really were.⁵⁰ It is regrettable, though, that Berlin’s role in (confusing) the Enlightenment debate more generally is here largely screened out. To an extent, as Norton suggests, Berlin (like so many others) misunderstood what the Enlightenment was really about and attributed to

⁴⁸ Darrin M. McMahon, *Enemies of the Enlightenment: The French Counter-Enlightenment and the Making of Modernity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁴⁹ R.E. Norton, “Herder,” in *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*, ed. Kors, 2: 205.

⁵⁰ Donald Phillip Verene, “Vico,” in *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*, ed. Kors, 4: 224–25.

it an “overarching concern with timeless, unchanging truths, rigid, unalterable laws, and universalism, or the desire to force all human nature and society to conform to a single, inflexible model.” Hume, who based his conservative moral philosophy and politics on the primacy of each country’s particular tradition and the *status quo*, would obviously have been just as amazed by this characterization as the historically-conscious Herder or Vico, or for that matter the historically scarcely less conscious Bayle, Boulainvilliers, Fontenelle, Montesquieu, and Burke. Berlin himself realized that neither Montesquieu nor Hume fitted his model and so spoke of these thinkers making “faint dents in the outlook of the Enlightenment,” undoubtedly one of his more astounding insights!⁵¹

Finally, the long article by Lynn Hunt (with Margaret Jacob) on “Enlightenment studies,” pointing out that Cassirer, Hazard, Venturi, and Peter Gay were all key voices in the twentieth-century discussion of “Enlightenment,” is illuminating in some respects but, besides ignoring Berlin, it also says curiously little about Robert Darnton and John Pocock and unaccountably tells us nothing about Postcolonialism as well as far too little about the Postmodernist assault on the Enlightenment and its values. Still more inexplicably, given Margaret Jacob’s own seminal role in coining the term, this major entry, one of the longest in the *Encyclopedia*, says nothing at all about the evolution of the concept of Radical Enlightenment through the work of Paul Hazard, Paul Vernière (the first who grasped the centrality of Spinozism in late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French thought), Franco Venturi (who spotted the importance of the divergence of the Enlightenment into monarchist and republican camps), and Princeton’s Ira Wade, who first drew attention to the fundamental importance and predominantly Spinozistic character of the clandestine philosophical manuscripts of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.⁵² Apparently, the only place in the whole compendium where Wade’s major contribution is remarked upon is in the (very expert) entry on the “clandestine literature” by Anthony McKenna.

Both in the long piece on “Enlightenment studies” and elsewhere, the *Encyclopedia* does, however, provide some useful insight as to why a number of feminist writers developed a pronounced anti-Enlightenment atti-

⁵¹ Isaiah Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 33–34.

⁵² “The greatest single influence,” Wade summed up in his conclusion, “exerted upon the [clandestine philosophical] writers of this period is that of Spinoza.” See Ira O. Wade, *The Clandestine Organization and Diffusion of Philosophic Ideas in France from 1700 to 1750* (New York: Octagon Books, 1967), 269.

tude. But this only makes it all the less satisfactory that an encyclopedic compilation such as this omits so much which is directly relevant to explaining how key aspects of society and culture came to be deemed between the late seventeenth and late eighteenth centuries, by the more radical and egalitarian wing of the Enlightenment, due for re-evaluation in fundamentally new ways, and ripe for root and branch reform. Among the most conspicuous gaps in the *Encyclopedia's* coverage are discussions of homosexuality, lesbianism, anti-Semitism, the French anti-slavery movement, and the French Revolution's abolition of slavery, as well, indeed, as feminist theory before 1750. While there is a long entry on "pornography" practically nothing is said about the still more important topics of contraception and "divorce" and especially the right to divorce, a key Radical Enlightenment topic on which French writers, once again, had the most interesting things to say.

To sum up, there is much that will be of interest and use in this four-volume encyclopedia for a wide range of scholars, students, and members of the general public. But there are also numerous, and often major gaps and worrying biases that entail huge problems of balance, coverage, and interpretation. Especially troubling is the severely restricted account of radical thought and the stunted depiction of Spinozism. We see this in the article on "political philosophy" that even includes the thoroughly misleading and incorrect notion that "Spinoza recommended a Hobbesian 'state' that provides 'peace and security' by mixing power with knowledge." Although France and Italy are in general better catered for than Germany, the Netherlands, and Early Enlightenment Russia, in the main conservative and anglophile aspects of the Enlightenment, together with the Counter-Enlightenment, are pervasively privileged over what philosophically, morally, and perhaps ultimately also politically, mattered as much if not more than anything else—namely radical philosophy, egalitarian reformism, and the complete separation of theology from philosophy and science (powerfully resisted by Locke and Newton). The consequence of this lack of balance is that it is consistently the democratic, anti-aristocratic, anti-colonial, and libertarian dimensions that are made least of and in a manner that this reader at any rate finds profoundly unsatisfactory.

Institute for Advanced Study.