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Franck Salaün and Jean-Pierre Schlandeler, eds., *Enquête sur la construction des Lumières*. Ferney-Voltaire: Centre International d'étude du XVIIIe siècle, 2018. 254 pp., €40.00 (pb). ISBN 978-2-84559-129-5.

Review by Masano Yamashita, University of Colorado Boulder.

Since Adorno and Horkheimer's cautionary *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, suspicion has been cast upon the desirability of defending the very notion of Enlightenment.[1] The past two decades have seen attempts to renew angles and approaches to the Enlightenment, however, with the aim of appreciating its diversity and relevance to today's world. From the radical to the Catholic Enlightenment, from the Enlightenment Anthropocene to the vegetarian Enlightenment, the possibilities of recuperating and defending the significance of the Enlightenment seem boundless. Yet the sense of a core project can be lost with such a multiplicity of tacks. *Enquête sur la construction des Lumières*, edited by Franck Salaün and Jean-Pierre Schlandeler, seeks to reengage a dialogue with traditional historiographies of Enlightenment (Roland Mortier, Jacques Roger), with a view to reintroducing precision and rigor to the editorial, philological, geographical, and scientific study of the field, while recovering a commonality of projects that can be unified and labeled as part and parcel of the Enlightenment.[2]

The volume adopts several lines of enquiry, such as editorial micro-histories, reception studies of key Enlightenment authors (Rousseau in Algeria) or texts (Condorcet's *Esquisse sur le progrès de l'esprit humain*), the historiography of mathematics, and the Enlightenment in its geographical contexts. Its cohesiveness lies in a cluster of themes, such as the notion of utility and the importance of freedom of speech, and a methodological commitment to the close reading of texts.

An eminently pragmatic Enlightenment emerges from these pages: one that is results-driven and oriented towards economic growth. An essay on Portuguese natural history museums and *cabinets de curiosités* highlights the economic justification of the scholarly study of botany and animals; another essay looks at the importance of colonial administrators in *Histoire des deux Indes*. One of the refreshing aspects of this approach is the emphasis on disruptive, de-hierarchical modes of thinking. For instance, a fascinating essay by Gilles Denis on agricultural societies highlights the uncomfortable marriage between urban politicians and rural community members who aimed to work together for the public good, as well as the emergence of a tension between two types of experts, the farmer and the scientist. Denis demonstrates that as agriculture was elevated into an esteemed science, difficulties arose in the attempt to establish a hierarchy in fields of expertise. How do theory and practice interact with each other? Is the farmer as knowledgeable as the savant?

Another stand-out essay by Christian Gilain questions the merit of positing an Enlightenment mathematics. Gilain argues that Counter-Enlightenment thinkers and Enlightenment men of sciences actually shared common agendas, such as understanding the significance of infinitesimal calculation. The transcendental implications of *calcul infinitésimal* created discomfort among influential Enlightenment figures such as Denis Diderot, yet was considered crucial to mathematical debates. This essay stands as a corrective to the assumption that an Enlightenment discourse on mathematics could be clearly identified.

Another insightful essay by Giovanni Paoletti cautions against the stereotype of a transparent, parrhesiastic Enlightenment by analyzing the nuances contained in the spectrum of attitudes towards deception and lying in the eighteenth century. For example, Paoletti underlines the complex indirection and trickle-down effects of communication in the eighteenth-century public sphere, quoting Condorcet's *Idées sur le despotisme*: "La liberté de la presse est encore un moyen de diminuer l'ignorance et les préjugés du peuple, non en l'instruisant immédiatement, mais en répandant des lumières dans la classe supérieure la plus voisine, et surtout en empêchant les gens intéressés à tromper le peuple, de l'entretenir dans ses préjugés" (p. 89).

The volume also presents an intriguing foray into the performative dimension of the Enlightenment. Pascale Pellerin looks at how Enlightenment writers such as Montesquieu and Rousseau were read and used by key players in the Algerian national independence movement. Pellerin also considers the political ideas of eighteenth-century specialists, pointing out, for example, that the renowned Rousseau specialist Michel Launay was also a pro-independence partisan of Algeria. In addition, Pellerin examines moments of awkward dissonance between eighteenth-century scholarship and current events, signaling for instance criticism by the historian and anti-colonialism activist Yves Benot of Robert Mauzi's magistral *Idée du Bonheur dans la littérature et la pensée françaises du dix-huitième siècle* (1960), which was published during the height of the Algerian War.

Attention is also drawn to lesser-known movements such as the Albanian Renaissance, the geographic cultural specificities of the Enlightenment, and the continued importance of religion in Portuguese Enlightenment discourse. With such admirable attention paid to the nuances and breadth of Enlightenment thought, it is regrettable that the volume contains not a single essay that examines the role of women during the Enlightenment. Nor does this book include an essay by an Anglo-American scholar. Perhaps it is unfair, though, to critique what is lacking in a volume rather than to focus on what is present.

This volume will appeal to scholars of the Enlightenment but can also be enjoyed more broadly. It could be fruitfully used in the classroom for a how-to lesson in case studies and applications of the Enlightenment. The *Enquête sur la construction des Lumières* is exemplary in its rigorous and stimulating approach to a key moment in the history of ideas.

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NOTES

[1] Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (Amsterdam: Querido Verlag, 1947).

[2] Roland Mortier, *Clartés et ombres du siècle des Lumières* (Geneva: Droz, 1969); Jacques Roger, "La lumière et les Lumières," *Cahiers de l'Association internationale des études françaises*, 20 (1968): 167-177.

[3] Robert Mauzi, *Idée du bonheur dans la littérature et la pensée françaises au dix-huitième siècle* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1960).

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