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978-1-107-09867-1 - Enlightenment and Utility: Bentham in French, Bentham in France

Emmanuelle De Champs

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## ENLIGHTENMENT AND UTILITY

Jeremy Bentham, the founder of classical utilitarianism, was a seminal figure in the history of modern political thought. This lively monograph presents the numerous French connections of an emblematic British thinker. Perhaps more than any other intellectual of his time, Bentham engaged with contemporary events and people in France, even writing in French in the 1780s. Placing Bentham's thought in the context of the French-language Enlightenment through to the post-revolutionary era, Emmanuelle de Champs makes the case for a historical study of 'Global Bentham'. Examining previously unpublished sources, she traces the circulation of Bentham's letters, friends, manuscripts and books in the French-speaking world. This study in transnational intellectual history reveals how utilitarianism, as a doctrine, was both the product of, and a contribution to, French-language political thought at a key time in European history. The debates surrounding utilitarianism in France cast new light on the making of modern liberalism.

EMMANUELLE DE CHAMPS is Professor of British history and civilisation at Université de Cergy-Pontoise, France.

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*Professor Emmanuelle de Champs, Paris*



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## *A note on translations*

To improve readability, all quotes originally written in French have been translated into English. I have tried to use the most recently published English translations whenever possible, as referenced in the footnotes and bibliography. For *Traité de législation civile et pénale*, I relied on the English version produced by Charles Milner Atkinson as *Bentham's Theory of Legislation* (Oxford University Press, 1914), revising it when necessary. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are mine.

The decision to provide a book solely in English made it impossible to give the reader a flavour of Bentham's use of the French language. All the extracts from papers and correspondence written in French therefore appear solely in translation. In those cases the note 'original in French' follows the reference in the footnote. The quote below is translated in Chapter 8, page 104.

Le monde civilisé est une république. La salle d'assemblée est la terre: les imprimeries en sont les vestibules. Les démagogues sont les Philosophes. Le Philosophe est tout homme qui a le courage de l'être, et le droit de haranguer n'est plus un privilège.

J. Bentham, 'Pacification and Emancipation', c.1786 UC 25, f. 34.