

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02148-8 - The Cambridge Companion to: The French Enlightenment

Edited by Daniel Brewer

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO
THE FRENCH ENLIGHTENMENT

The Enlightenment has long been seen as synonymous with the beginnings of modern Western intellectual and political culture. As a set of ideas and a social movement, this historical moment, the ‘age of reason’ of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, is marked by attempts to place knowledge on new foundations. *The Cambridge Companion to the French Enlightenment* brings together essays by leading scholars representing disciplines ranging from philosophy, religion and literature, to art, medicine, anthropology and architecture, to analyse the French Enlightenment. Each essay presents a concise view of an important aspect of the French Enlightenment, discussing its defining characteristics, internal dynamics and historical transformations. The *Companion* discusses the most influential reinterpretations of the Enlightenment that have taken place during the last two decades, reinterpretations that both reflect and have contributed to important re-evaluations of received ideas about the Enlightenment and the early modern period more generally.

Daniel Brewer, Department of French and Italian, University of Minnesota, has published widely in the area of eighteenth-century French literature and culture. He is author of *The Enlightenment Past: Reconstructing Eighteenth-Century French Thought* (Cambridge, 2008) and co-editor of *L'Esprit Créateur*, an international journal of French and Francophone literature and culture.

A complete list of books in the series is at the back of the book

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-02148-8 - The Cambridge Companion to: The French Enlightenment
Edited by Daniel Brewer
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02148-8 - The Cambridge Companion to: The French Enlightenment

Edited by Daniel Brewer

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

THE CAMBRIDGE
COMPANION TO
THE FRENCH
ENLIGHTENMENT

EDITED BY
DANIEL BREWER



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-02148-8 - The Cambridge Companion to: The French Enlightenment
Edited by Daniel Brewer
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.
It furthers the University’s mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of
education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107626140

© Cambridge University Press 2014

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2014

Printed in the United Kingdom by Clays, St Ives plc

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

The Cambridge companion to the French enlightenment / edited by Daniel Brewer.
pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-107-02148-8 (hardback)

ISBN 978-1-107-62614-0 (paperback)

1. Enlightenment – France. 2. France – Intellectual life–18th century.
3. Philosophy, French–18th century. I. Brewer, Daniel.

BI925.E5C36 2014

944'.034–dc23 2014020419

ISBN 978-1-107-02148-8 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-107-62614-0 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of
URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication,
and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain,
accurate or appropriate.

CONTENTS

	<i>Notes on contributors</i>	<i>page vii</i>
	<i>Chronology</i>	<i>xi</i>
	<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>xvi</i>
1	The Enlightenment today? DANIEL BREWER	I
2	Private lives, public space: a new social history of the Enlightenment ANTOINE LILTI	14
3	Anthropology ANDREW CURRAN	29
4	Commerce PAUL CHENEY	44
5	Science J. B. SHANK	60
6	Political thought DAN EDELSTEIN	78
7	Sex and gender, feeling and thinking: imagining women as intellectuals JULIE CANDLER HAYES	91
8	Religion CHARLY COLEMAN	105

CONTENTS

9	Art and aesthetic theory: claiming Enlightenment as viewers and critics	122
	JENNIFER MILAM	
10	Enlightenment literature	137
	THOMAS DIPIERO	
11	<i>Philosophe</i> /philosopher	153
	STÉPHANE VAN DAMME	
12	Music	167
	DOWNING A. THOMAS	
13	Architecture and the Enlightenment	184
	ANTHONY VIDLER	
14	Medicine and the body in the French Enlightenment	199
	ANNE VILA	
15	Space, geography and the global French Enlightenment	214
	CHARLES W. J. WITHERS	
	<i>Guide to further reading</i>	233
	<i>Index</i>	240

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02148-8 - The Cambridge Companion to: The French Enlightenment

Edited by Daniel Brewer

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTRIBUTORS

DANIEL BREWER is Professor of French at the University of Minnesota. He has published on such topics as theories of knowledge and the critique of institutions, visual representation and art criticism, the project of Enlightenment, literary history and social formation and the figure of the intellectual. His books include *The Discourse of Enlightenment: Diderot and the Art of Philosophizing* and *The Enlightenment Past: Reconstructing Eighteenth-Century French Thought*. He has co-edited volumes on the *Encyclopédie* (with Julie Candler Hayes) and on French wars (with Patricia Lorcin), and he is co-editor of *L'Esprit Créateur*.

PAUL CHENEY teaches history at the University of Chicago. Prior to receiving his Ph.D. at Columbia University, he studied political economy at the New School for Social Research. He is the author of *Revolutionary Commerce: Globalization and the French Monarchy*. Several of his articles on the economy of France and its colonial empire in the eighteenth century appear in journals such as *Past & Present*, *Dix-huitième Siècle*, *The William and Mary Quarterly* and *The Radical History Review*. His forthcoming book, *Cul de Sac: Economy and Society in Eighteenth-Century Saint-Domingue*, examines France's plantation complex in its final decades.

CHARLY COLEMAN is Assistant Professor of History at Columbia University. In addition to articles in *The Journal of Modern History* and *Modern Intellectual History* on the intersections of religion and philosophy in eighteenth-century France, he has published *The Virtues of Abandon: An Anti-Individualist History of the French Enlightenment*.

ANDREW CURRAN is Professor of French at Wesleyan University. He has published a number of articles on topics related to scientific academy debates, the history of anthropology, the science of French empire and Denis Diderot. He is also the editor of a collection of essays, *Faces of Monstrosity in Eighteenth-Century Thought*, and the author of two books: *Sublime Disorder: Physical Monstrosity in Diderot's Universe* and *The Anatomy of Blackness: Science and Slavery in an Age of Enlightenment*.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02148-8 - The Cambridge Companion to: The French Enlightenment

Edited by Daniel Brewer

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

THOMAS DIPIERO is Professor of French and of Visual and Cultural Studies at the University of Rochester, where he is also Dean for Humanities and Interdisciplinary Studies. He is the author of *Dangerous Truths and Criminal Passions: The Evolution of the French Novel, 1569–1791* and of *White Men Aren't*. He is also co-editor of *Illicit Sex: Identity Politics in Early Modern Europe*. The author of numerous articles on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French literature, his research focuses on prose fiction, particularly depictions of human bodies as representative of diverse modes of Enlightenment thought.

DAN EDELSTEIN is Professor of French and (by courtesy) History at Stanford University, where he is also the W. Warren Shelden University Fellow in Undergraduate Education. He is the author of *The Terror of Natural Right: Republicanism, the Cult of Nature, and the French Revolution* and of *The Enlightenment: A Genealogy*. He has also edited a volume of essays on *The Super-Enlightenment: Daring to Know Too Much*, and he is a principal investigator for the Mapping the Republic of Letters project at Stanford.

JULIE CANDLER HAYES is Professor of French and Dean of the College of Humanities and Fine Arts at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Her research focuses on literary and philosophical texts of the French Enlightenment; she has also written extensively on contemporary literary theory and the history and theory of translation. Her most recent book is *Translation, Subjectivity, and Culture in France and England, 1600–1800*. Her earlier books study French theatre and Enlightenment concepts of systematicity in literature, philosophy and science. She co-edited two volumes, *Using the Encyclopédie: Ways of Reading, Ways of Knowing* (with Daniel Brewer) and *Émilie du Châtelet: Rewriting Enlightenment Philosophy and Science* (with Judith Zinsser). Her current scholarly work looks at seventeenth- and eighteenth-century women moral philosophers.

ANTOINE LILT is Directeur d'Études (Professor) at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (Paris). He published *Le Monde des salons, sociabilité et mondanité au XVIIIe siècle* and has just finished *Figures publiques: célébrité et modernité*. He also co-edited (with Céline Spector) *Commerce, civilisation, empire: penser l'Europe au XVIIIe siècle*.

JENNIFER MILAM is Professor of Art History and Eighteenth-Century Studies at the University of Sydney. Her interdisciplinary interests seek to identify unconventional visual processes stimulating and directing the production and reception of art in the intersecting fields of art history, intellectual history and eighteenth-century studies. She has published articles in journals such as *Art History*, *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, *Eighteenth-Century Studies* and *Curator: The Museum Journal*. Her books include *The Historical Dictionary of Rococo Art*, *Fragonard's Playful Paintings: Visual Games in Rococo Art* and *Women, Art and the Politics of Identity in Eighteenth-Century Europe*.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02148-8 - The Cambridge Companion to: The French Enlightenment

Edited by Daniel Brewer

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

J. B. SHANK is Associate Professor of History and Director of the Center for Early Modern History at the University of Minnesota, where he is also a founding coordinator of the Theorizing Early Modern Studies Research Collaborative. His research focuses on early modern European intellectual and cultural history with special emphasis on the emergence of the modern sciences after 1400. Recent publications include *The Newton Wars and the Beginning of the French Enlightenment* and 'A French Jesuit in the Royal Society of London: Father Louis-Bertrand de Castel and Enlightenment Mathematics, 1720–1744' (*Journal of Early Modern Studies*). His most recent book is *Before Voltaire: Making 'Newtonian?' Science in France around 1700*.

DOWNING A. THOMAS is Professor of French and currently serves as Associate Provost and Dean of International Programs at the University of Iowa. He has published two books (*Aesthetics of Opera in the Ancien Régime, 1647–1785* and *Music and the Origins of Language: Theories from the French Enlightenment*) and has co-edited *Operatic Migrations: Transforming Works and Crossing Boundaries in Musical Drama* (with Roberta M. Marvin). He has served on the Executive Committee of the Eighteenth-Century French Literature division within the Modern Language Association. In 2007 he was President of the Association of Departments of Foreign Languages.

STÉPHANE VAN DAMME, Professor of the History of Science at the European University Institute, examines the origins of early modern scientific knowledge and European culture between 1650 and 1850 by looking at essential elements overlooked by historians of science, such as scientific centres, founding fathers, paradigmatic disciplines and imperial projects. His publications include *Descartes: essai d'histoire culturelle d'une grandeur philosophique (XVIIe–XXe siècle)*, *Paris, capitale philosophique de la Fronde à la Révolution*, *Le Temple de la sagesse: savoirs, écriture et sociabilité urbaine (Lyon, 17–18e siècles)*, *L'Épreuve libertine: morale, soupçon et pouvoirs dans la France baroque* and *Métropole de papiers: naissance de l'archéologie urbaine à Paris et à Londres*. His latest book, *À toutes voiles vers la vérité: une autre histoire de la philosophie au temps des Lumières*, is an attempt to produce a cultural history of early modern philosophy.

ANTHONY VIDLER is a historian and critic of modern and contemporary architecture specializing in the Enlightenment and the present. He is Professor of Architecture at The Cooper Union. As designer and curator, he installed the permanent exhibition of the work of Claude-Nicolas Ledoux in the Royal Salt Works of Arc-et-Senans (Franche-Comté, France). He has received awards from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities. His publications include *The Writing of the Walls: Architectural Theory in the Late Enlightenment*, *Claude-Nicolas Ledoux: Architecture and Social Reform at the End of the Ancien Régime*, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely*, *Warped Space: Architecture and Anxiety in Modern Culture*, *Histories of the Immediate Present: The Invention of Architectural Modernism* and *The Scenes of the Street and Other Essays*.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02148-8 - The Cambridge Companion to: The French Enlightenment

Edited by Daniel Brewer

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

ANNE VILA is Professor of French at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her publications include *Enlightenment and Pathology: Sensibility in the Literature and Medicine of Eighteenth-Century France* (1998) and the edited volume *The Cultural History of the Senses in the Enlightenment* (2014). She is completing a book entitled *Singular Beings: Passions and Pathologies of the Scholar in France, 1720–1840* and a re-edition (with Ronan Chalmin) of Tissot's *De la santé des gens de lettres*. Her current research explores the cultural history of 'extraordinary' psychic states such as ecstasy, catalepsy and magnetic somnambulism during and after the eighteenth century.

CHARLES W. J. WITHERS is Ogilvie Chair of Geography at the University of Edinburgh and a Fellow of the British Academy. His books include *Placing the Enlightenment: Thinking Geographically about the Age of Reason, Geography and Science in Britain, 1831–1939* and, as co-editor, *Geographies of Nineteenth-Century Science*. He has research interests in the historical geographies of science, travel and the Enlightenment. Forthcoming works include a study of the travel imprint of John Murray publishers, 1773–1857, and a book on the historical geography of the prime meridian.

CHRONOLOGY

1637	René Descartes, <i>Discours de la méthode</i> (<i>Discourse on the Method</i>)
1685	Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which guaranteed freedom of religion to Protestants
1697	Pierre Bayle, <i>Dictionnaire historique et critique</i> (<i>Critical and Historical Dictionary</i>)
1715	Death of Louis XIV, ascension of Louis XV, regency of Philippe, duc d'Orléans
1717	Jean-Antoine Watteau, <i>L'Embarquement pour Cythère</i> (<i>The Pilgrimage to the Island of Cythera</i>)
1719	Jean-Baptiste du Bos, <i>Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture</i> (<i>Critical Reflections on Poetry and Painting</i>)
1721	Charles-Louis de Secondat de Montesquieu, <i>Lettres persanes</i> (<i>Persian Letters</i>)
1727	Anne-Thérèse de Marguenat de Courcelles, marquise de Lambert, <i>Réflexions nouvelles sur les femmes</i> (<i>New Reflections on Women</i>)
1731	Antoine-François Prévost, <i>Histoire du chevalier Des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut</i> (<i>Manon Lescaut</i>)
1731	Pierre Carlet de Chamblain de Marivaux, <i>La Vie de Marianne</i> (<i>Marianne</i>)
1733	Louis XV commissions Jacques Cassini to produce a map of France, completed in 1744

CHRONOLOGY

1734	Voltaire (François-Marie Arouet), <i>Lettres philosophiques</i> or <i>Lettres anglaises</i> (<i>Philosophical Letters</i>)
1736–8	Claude Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon fils, <i>Égaréments du cœur et de l'esprit</i> (<i>Strayings of the Heart and Mind</i>)
1737	Salon exhibitions instituted as regular events in Paris and reviewed biennially by Denis Diderot from 1759 to 1781
1747	Julien Offray de La Mettrie, <i>L'Homme machine</i> (<i>Man a Machine</i>)
1747	Françoise de Graffigny, <i>Lettres d'une Péruvienne</i> (<i>Lettres from a Peruvian Woman</i>)
1748	Jean-Baptiste de Boyer, marquis d'Argens, <i>Thérèse philosophe</i> , one of the eighteenth century's best-selling libertine works
1748	Charles-Louis de Secondat de Montesquieu, <i>De l'esprit des lois</i> (<i>The Spirit of the Laws</i>)
1749–88	George-Louis Leclerc, comte de Buffon, <i>Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière</i> (37 vols.) (<i>Natural History</i>)
1750	Jean-Jacques Rousseau, <i>Discours sur les sciences et les arts</i> (<i>Discourse on the Sciences and Arts</i>)
1751–72	Publication of <i>Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers</i> (<i>Encyclopedia; or, A Systematic Dictionary of the Sciences, Arts and Crafts</i>) (17 vols. of articles, 11 vols. of plates), edited by Denis Diderot and Jean-Baptiste le Rond d'Alembert
1752–4	The <i>Querelle des bouffons</i> opposing partisans of French music and of Italian music
1753	Translation with commentary of Isaac Newton's <i>Philosophiæ naturalis principia mathematica</i> (<i>Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy</i>) by Gabrielle Émilie Le Tonnelier de Breteuil, marquise du Châtelet
1755	Jean-Jacques Rousseau, <i>Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes</i> (<i>On the Origin of Inequality</i>)

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02148-8 - The Cambridge Companion to: The French Enlightenment

Edited by Daniel Brewer

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CHRONOLOGY

- 1756 Victor de Riqueti, marquis de Mirabeau, *L'Ami des hommes* (*Friend of Man*)
- 1756 Voltaire (François-Marie Arouet), *Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations* (*An Essay on Universal History, the Morals and Manners of Nations*)
- 1758 Claude Adrien Helvétius, *De l'esprit* (*Essays on the Mind*)
- 1759 Voltaire (François-Marie Arouet), *Candide*
- 1760–3 Critics and playwrights produce pamphlets and plays critical of the *philosophes*
- 1761 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse* (*Julie; or, The New Heloise*)
- 1763 End of the Seven Years' War, with France regaining Guadeloupe and Martinique in the Caribbean and ceding Canada and land east of the Mississippi to Britain
- 1764 Jeanne Julie Éléonore de Lespinasse opens her salon
- 1765 Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *La Bonne Mère* (*The Good Mother*), *Le Mauvais Fils puni* (*The Bad Son Punished*) and *La Malediction paternelle* (*The Father's Curse*)
- 1766 Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot, *Réflexions sur la formation et la distribution des richesses* (*Reflections on the Formation and Distribution of Wealth*)
- 1766 Louis Antoine de Bougainville sets sail from France on a voyage to circumnavigate the world
- 1767 Jean-Honoré Fragonard, *L'Escarpolette* (*The Swing*)
- 1769 Denis Diderot, *Le Rêve de d'Alembert* (*D'Alembert's Dream*)
- 1770 Paul Henri Thiry, baron d'Holbach, *Système de la nature* (*System of Nature*)
- 1770 Guillaume Thomas François Raynal, *Histoire des deux Indes* (*A History of the Two Indies*)
- 1772 Denis Diderot, *Supplément au voyage de Bougainville* (*Supplement to Bougainville's Voyage*)

CHRONOLOGY

1775–8	Claude-Nicolas Ledoux designs the Royal Saltworks at Arc-et-Senans
1778	Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, <i>Le Mariage de Figaro</i> (<i>The Marriage of Figaro</i>)
1782	Pierre Choderlos de Laclos, <i>Liaisons dangereuses</i> (<i>Dangerous Liaisons</i>)
1784	Immanuel Kant, <i>Was ist Aufklärung?</i> (<i>What Is Enlightenment?</i>)
1785	Jacques-Louis David, <i>Le Serment des Horaces</i> (<i>The Oath of the Horatii</i>)
1785–9	Thomas Jefferson succeeds Benjamin Franklin as US Minister to France
1789	Beginning of the French Revolution (convocation of the Estates-General, Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, assault on the Bastille, march on Versailles forcing the court back to Paris)
1791	Constantin-François de Chassebœuf, comte de Volney, <i>Les Ruines, ou méditations sur les révolutions des empires</i> (<i>Ruins; or, Meditations on the Revolutions of Empires</i>).
1791–1804	Slave revolt in the French colony of Saint-Domingue (Haiti)
1791	Donatien Alphonse François, marquis de Sade, <i>Justine, ou, les malheurs de la vertu</i> (<i>Justine; or, the Misfortunes of Virtue</i>)
1792	Proclamation of the French republic
1793	Execution of Louis XVI
1793–4	Reign of Terror under Maximilien Robespierre and the Jacobin party
1795	Nicolas de Caritat, marquis de Condorcet, <i>Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain</i> (<i>Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind</i>)
1799	Anne Louise Germaine de Staël-Holstein, <i>De la littérature considérée dans ses rapports avec les institutions sociales</i> (<i>The Influence of Literature on Society</i>)

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-02148-8 - The Cambridge Companion to: The French Enlightenment
Edited by Daniel Brewer
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CHRONOLOGY

1804	Proclamation of the First Empire under Napoleon Bonaparte
1815	Bourbon restoration

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02148-8 - The Cambridge Companion to: The French Enlightenment

Edited by Daniel Brewer

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert well knew, knowledge production is best understood as a collective enterprise. I'm pleased to acknowledge first of all the contribution made by the authors in this volume not only in the form of their individual chapters, but also through their stimulating and energetic participation (face-to-face and virtually) in a two-day workshop on new disciplinary approaches to the French Enlightenment. Held at the University of Minnesota, that workshop was made possible by the support of the TEMS collaborative (Theorizing Early Modern Studies) and the College of Liberal Arts. Invaluable technical support was provided by my research assistant Sean Killackey.

My own contribution to this volume benefitted from the opportunity to present it in lecture format during my stay at the University of Kent as a Leverhulme Visiting Professor and to discuss questions of historicity and temporality with members of the School of European Culture and Languages. My thanks go as well to Linda Bree at Cambridge University Press for her initial invitation to design this Cambridge Companion, her valuable editorial suggestions and her confidence throughout. I'm grateful to Anna Bond and Emma Walker at Cambridge University Press for their timely assistance in steering the project to port, and to Emma Wildsmith and Liz Hudson for their sharp-eyed technical work on the manuscript.