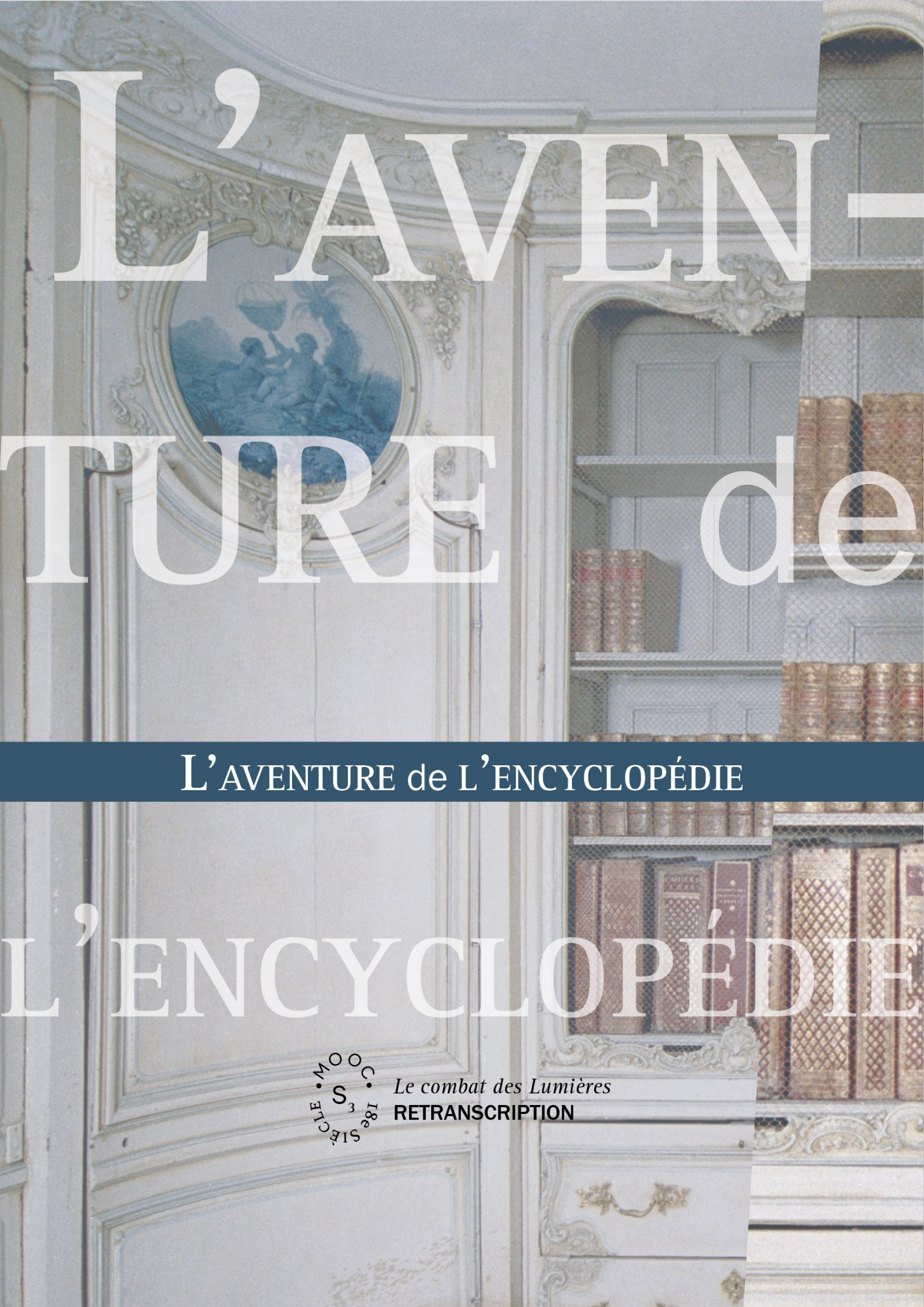

L'AVENTURE de L'ENCYCLOPÉDIE

MOOC • 18e SIÈCLE • S3

Le combat des Lumières

RETRANSCRIPTION

THE ADVENTURE OF DIDEROT'S *ENCYCLOPAEDIA*

Marie LECA-TSIOMIS, Professor emeritus in French Literature, Paris Nanterre University

Introduction

What is the *Encyclopaedia,* published from 1751 to 1772? Everyone knows the name of this book without knowing what it is. So, here is what his main publisher, Diderot, told us about it. "The purpose of an encyclopaedia is to collect knowledge disseminated around the globe; to set forth its general system to the men with whom we live, and transmit it to those who will come after us, so that the work of preceding centuries will not become useless to the centuries to come; and so that our offspring, becoming better instructed, will at the same time become more virtuous and happy, and that we should not die without having rendered a service to the human race in the future years to come." Such a program goes far beyond simply making a dictionary. Indeed, instruction, virtue, happiness, humankind, the program of the *Encyclopaedia* is the very program of Enlightenment.

Part 1 – Origin and development of the *Encyclopaedia*

First of all, you need to know that in 1745 it was originally meant to be a simple editorial translation company. The 18th century was dictionaries' golden age. To us, today, there's nothing more ordinary than a dictionary. We have all kinds of them. But at the time, dictionaries were still a novelty. The first French dictionaries only appeared at the end of the 17th century. It was Furetière's *Dictionary*. And the public manifested at the time a very keen taste for dictionaries, which then saw a remarkable expansion.

And so in Paris, in the middle of the 18th century, the idea came to four booksellers, "booksellers" at the time meaning both manufacturers and books sellers; four booksellers called Briasson, David, Le Breton and Durand, to give an enhanced French translation to a very successful English work, the Ephraim Chambers' *Cyclopaedia or an Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences,* which had been published in two volumes in London in 1728.

And in 1747, two young scholars, Diderot and D'Alembert, still of a rather modest reputation but of rare intellectual depth, were charged by the booksellers of this edition. In their hands, everything changed. The English work, the *Cyclopaedia*, was only two volumes, whereas the French work was supposed to, at the origin of the project, constitute ten volumes, as we can see on the prospectus. But at its completion, the *Encyclopaedia* reached 28 volumes, 17 of speeches and articles, 11 of illustrations plates. It took Diderot more than twenty-five years of work.

When the second editor, D'Alembert, moved away from the endeavour in 1758, another man, the Chevalier de Jaucourt, became the true second editor. That is why we say *Encyclopaedia* of Diderot, D'Alembert and Jaucourt. Moreover, the *Encyclopaedia* was completed in two stages. The last articles' volumes were published in 1765 and the last plates volumes in 1772. How did the public perceive it?

Part 2 – The success of the *Encyclopaedia*

Published using subscription, it had more than 4000 subscribers, which is a huge figure for the time. The *Encyclopaedia* was the largest publishing venture of the 18th century, not only in volume number but also in human forces used to develop it, as well as in invested capital. And it was a huge success, as shown by the multiple counterfeits and more or less pirates' reissues.

For example, a mark of its notoriety at the time, we see it on the desk of the Marquise de Pompadour alongside Voltaire's *Henriade* and Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws*. Voltaire, who was well experienced, estimated that the financial income of the associated booksellers surpassed that of the international French trade. Which was not the case for the editors Diderot, D'Alembert and Jaucourt, sadly for them.

Part 3 – The *Encyclopaedia*'s characteristics and great innovations

Five great innovations marked the *Encyclopaedia*. First, it was a collective enterprise. It appealed to scientists, great specialists in different fields, Daubenton, Rousseau, Dumarsais, D'Alembert, of course, Turgot, d'Holbach, Quesnay and many others, not to mention the anonymous, artisans or artists. Nearly 200 employees, mostly from the Ancient Regime bourgeoisie, technicians or practitioners involved in productive activities of the time. We will come back to this.

It was a dictionary, but a sensible one. In theory, each field of knowledge went with the articles to which they belong, and above all they were linked by an extensive network of references between articles. These references prefigured today's hypertext links.

Another innovation: it contained an actual dictionary of current French language, which no other encyclopaedia, whether contemporaneous or even today, contains. At the same time as knowledge, it transmitted the language used to convey this knowledge. It also included professions into what was commonly perceived as wisdom. It described, detailed and illustrated the gestures and tools of human work.

Finally, it is illustrated. These were the famous *Encyclopaedia* illustrations plates. But beyond these innovative features, what characterised the *Encyclopaedia* is above all to have been a critical collection, critical of knowledge, of its elaboration, its transmission, its representation, but also critical of language and prejudices conveyed by its use, criticising interdicts of thought, and especially of authority and dogma.

I would conclude by saying that the *Encyclopaedia*, attempt of a philosophical century, as Diderot said, bequeathed to distant posterity, was the most watched and censored work of his time. It testified to what the Enlightenment was: a thirst for knowledge, freedom of thought, a desire to invent and a need to doubt.

THE EDITORS OF THE *ENCYCLOPAEDIA*

Marie LECA-TSIOMIS, Professor emeritus in French Literature, Paris Nanterre University

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Part 1 – Diderot's life; a genius administrator

Who directed the edition of the *Encyclopaedia*? Let's take a look at the three editors of this huge work: Diderot, D'Alembert and Jaucourt. We'll start with Diderot. Diderot, first name Denis, born in 1713 in Langres to a family of craftsmen, arrived in Paris after brilliant studies and made a living as a translator. His first big production, in 1749, *Letter on the Blind for the Use of those who can see,* a vast atheistic, materialistic reflection on the origin of ideas, was forbidden and Diderot imprisoned in Vincennes' dungeon. He owed his liberation to the booksellers of the *Encyclopaedia,* which he had accepted to conduct two years earlier.

While conducting his immense work as a novelist, playwright, art critic, philosopher and political thinker, Diderot and his family lived off the meagre fees the booksellers paid him. He was one of the first writers of France to live off his writing. Later, the sale of his library to the Tsarina of Russia assured him a stable income. He went to Russia in 1773 and stayed there for several months. He died in Paris in 1784.

In the *Encyclopaedia*, he is the author of more than 6,000 articles in all fields: botany, cuisine, fashion, but mainly in philosophy, French language and arts and crafts. He also wrote true prose poems for the *Encyclopaedia*. He signed with an asterisk at the beginning of articles. Finally, he also took care of all the engraved plates that he himself controlled, as we see here: "Seen, good. Diderot."

Part 2 – Diderot, inventor

Rousseau, who was his childhood friend, described Diderot as a universal genius. Later, his work as a materialistic atheistic thinker was so important that he was called "the Philosopher". But Diderot was also one of the greatest artists of his time, and he certainly was the greatest inventor in the art of writing field. It is to him that we owe what became the modern novel, with *Jacques the Fatalist* or *Madame de la Carlière*, thanks to a total renewal of prose and fictional rhythm.

It is to him also that we owe modern theatre, by his practice of a new genre turned banal today, the drama. See *The natural Son,* but also his comedy. *Is he good? Is he wicked?* He also has an innovative conception of staging and acting, as seen in *Paradox of the Actor*.

Even cinema owes him a lot. The great filmmaker Eisenstein considered Diderot an editing master. We also owe him the invention of art criticism because from 1759 on, he regularly wrote reports on paintings, sculptures and engravings exhibited at the Louvre's Palace, as well as an essay on painting that Goethe admired a lot.

As for his philosophical essays, they were written in one of the favourite forms of this dialectic thinker, the dialogue: *D'Alembert's dream*, *Entretien d'un philosophe avec la Maréchale de ****, *Refutation of Helvetius*, and in *Rameau's Nephew*, Diderot dialogued with others' thought of and his own.

He wrote a lot, and his letters to his lover Sophie Volland are a masterpiece of love correspondence but also a valuable testimony of the artistic, intellectual and political life of Paris.

Diderot was also the author of an important political work, for example his critique of the Russian Constitution conceived by Tsarina Catherine II, his *Observations sur le Nakaz* or in the *Essay on the Reigns of Claudius and Nero*, reflection on philosophers' relationship with political power.

It should be noted that since Diderot made a formal commitment at the time of his release from prison never to publish works deemed seditious, he published during his life almost nothing of the works we know of him, much of which was only discovered in the following century, or even in the 20th century.

In the *Encyclopaedia*, Diderot gave a definition of a philosopher that could well be his own, when he mentioned a philosopher who tramples on prejudices, tradition, seniority, universal consent, authority, in a word everything that subjugates public opinion, dares to think of itself and to admit nothing but the testimony of its experience and reason. It is the "Eclectism" article. To dare thinking for oneself and to rely on experience and reason. Here were the main challenges of the *Encyclopaedia*, according to Diderot. However, he wasn't the only publisher in this adventure, as we are going to see now.

Part 3 – The other editors: D'Alembert and Jaucourt

Indeed, there were two others: D'Alembert and Louis de Jaucourt. Jean le Rond D'Alembert, 1717-1783, was one of the greatest mathematicians of his time, author of a famous *Treatise on Dynamics* and member of both the Academy of Sciences and the Frend Academy. He wrote more than 1,800 articles on geometry, astronomy, optics, dynamics and even on French synonyms. He is the author of the *Preliminary Discourse*, which is the *Encyclopaedia*'s preface, a vast human knowledge panorama. He ceased to be editor of the book in 1758. D'Alembert was also a remarkable polemicist, as we will see later. He signed his articles with a mark, a round in parentheses.

Lastly, the third publisher is little known despite his importance. The Chevalier Louis de Jaucourt, 1704-1780, of which no portrait is available, was the third publisher of the encyclopaedic dictionary after the departure of D'Alembert. Doctor by trade, Jaucourt, tireless, wrote more than 17,000 articles in all fields. He signed his articles in full letters, knight of Jaucourt, or with his initials D.J. Protestant, therefore belonging to a persecuted community, he was one of the great voices of the *Encyclopaedia*, and you will soon see some of his work.

I would conclude by saying that in order to direct the *Encyclopaedia*, Diderot as principal publisher, D'Alembert then Jaucourt composed an association of skills and talents surprisingly complementary. Their common points were, among others, an independent spirit, intellectual energy and courage. The heritage of the *Encyclopaedia* is substantial. In addition to a *Supplement* and a table of contents published in 1776, we can mention the Genevan and Tuscan editions, Yverdon's Protestant remake, Swiss, Panckoucke's *Systematic Encyclopaedia*, and in the 19th century, *Description of Egypt* under the Empire and later still, Pierre Larousse's *Grand dictionary*.

THE FIGHT FOR THE *ENCYCLOPAEDIA*'S PUBLICATION

Marie LECA-TSIOMIS, Professor emeritus in French Literature, Paris Nanterre University

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Part 1 – The first attacks

How did the publication of this huge book, the *Encyclopaedia*, play out? The piece of work was supposed to be published at the rate of one volume a year, in alphabetical order. For example, Volume 1 contained all the words starting with A. But the publication wasn't a smooth process, on the contrary.

Let us start with the first attacks. The abbot of Prades, who had submitted and completed a theology thesis at the Sorbonne, the faculty of theology at the time, was accused in 1751 of favouring natural religion and materialism. It had just come to light that he was a contributor of the *Encyclopaedia*. The denunciations started multiplying then, targeting in particular an article by Diderot on political authority beginning with these words: "No man has received from nature the right to command others". In February 1752, a royal decree declared that the *Encyclopaedia* contained maxims, I quote, "aiming to destroy royal authority, to heighten faulty basis, corruption of morals, irreligion and incredulity", and prescribed the work's prohibition.

Thanks to Malesherbes, who was director of bookstores, a kind of Minister of Culture, the publication was able to resume in late 1752, surrounded by a large support system where we see both the Marquise de Pompadour, literary people like Voltaire and a whole European public mind which saw in this confrontation the combat of philosophical spirit against devout spirit. Volume 3 of the *Encyclopaedia* was thus published in 1753 and then Volumes 4, 5, 6 and 7 came out at the rate of one per year. But other storms were brewing.

Part 2 – The second prohibition

In 1757, Damiens's attack against Louis XV reinforced police vigilance towards any book that could contribute to undermine royal authority and religion. A hostile press was unleashed from there. For example, the Jansenist Abraham Chaumeix wrote *Legitimate Prejudice against the Encyclopaedia*.

But it is above all the publication in 1758 of *Of Spirit* by materialist philosopher Helvetius that caused a scandal and attracted the violent indictment of the prosecutor of the Parlement de Paris in January 1759 against subversive works, among which was the *Encyclopaedia*. It was then prohibited a second time, after being slashed and burned by an executioner. A few months later, on September 3, 1759, the Pope proclaimed in an apostolic letter in the form of a papal bull, the condemnation in Latin of the *Encyclopaedia* and forbad its reading under penalty of excommunication.

Part 3 – The banned *Encyclopaedia*

The book is thus stopped at Volume 7, that is to say at the end of letter G. It is again the Minister Malesherbes who rescued the enterprise by warning Diderot that he received an order to seize the *Encyclopaedia*'s manuscripts, which are then secured. The last ten volumes of articles will be continued in secret and released all together in 1765, without any publisher name and with a false address. For the illustration plates, the associated booksellers obtained a new authorisation thanks again to Malesherbes, but this time, the name "Encyclopaedia" disappeared from the title and the volumes were only named *Collection of Plates*. It wasn't over yet. Let us say a word about the last outrages that Diderot had to undergo.

Part 4 – Last outrages before publication

D'Alembert had already left since 1758 the co-direction of the *Encyclopaedia*. Diderot, for his part, refused to abandon and expatriate himself to continue the work, as the King of Prussia and the Tsarina of Russia offered him. But many other obstacles would cross the company's path. Charges of plagiarism circulated suddenly. A hostile press took hold of this charge. Not only were the Encyclopaedists impious, but they also are thieves. As Diderot later wrote, "the name of Encyclopaedist was turned into an odious label, which was attached to everyone that one wanted to show to the king as dangerous subjects".

Last outrage but not least, Diderot discovered a secret censorship of the *Encyclopaedia* by its principal bookseller, Le Breton. The latter, anxious to ensure peaceful income gain, had redacted many articles whose philosophy seemed to him dangerous to publish. These were essentially Jaucourt's and Diderot's. But the work was finally completed, and in the *Encyclopaedia*'s final preface Diderot pays tribute to Jaucourt, faithful and last co-editor. "If we have raised a shout of joy like the sailor when he espies land after a sombre night that has kept him midway between sky and flood, it is to M. de Jaucourt that we are indebted for it." That is why Jaucourt wrote the *Encyclopaedia*'s last article: "Zzuéné".

In conclusion, what should we remember? A famous work disseminated and imitated throughout Europe, the *Encyclopaedia* was, in the kingdom of France, the most monitored book and the one whose publication has overcome the most obstacles. To manage to complete its publication was a real fight for freedom of thought that Diderot, accompanied by Jaucourt, led all the way through.

THE *ENCYCLOPAEDIA*: A COLLECTIVE WORK AND LIVING HERITAGES

Marie LECA-TSIOMIS, Professor emeritus in French literature, Paris Nanterre University

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Part 1 – The *Encyclopaedia*, a collective work

Before the *Encyclopaedia*, authors of encyclopaedic works were essentially isolated, copying books, treatises, compiling second-hand knowledge. The *Encyclopaedia* was a collective work, which was a significant innovation. It used as much as possible scientists themselves, in other words living knowledge, thanks to which scientific news and its controversies spanned the books in many fields.

Who were these scholars? Many scholarly experts participated in the *Encyclopaedia* adventure. D'Alembert was responsible for the mathematical part, geometry, optics, physics, mechanics and astronomy. The anatomist Tarin and surgeon Louis handled their disciplines. Daubenton dealt with natural history, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, musician, with music, Venel with chemistry, the architect Blondel, with architecture, Marmontel with literature, the great grammarian Dumarsais with general grammar, the scholar d'Holbach with mineralogy, Voltaire with history and letters, not to mention Montesquieu, La Condamine, St. Lambert, Turgot, Quesnay, and finally Diderot, one of the greatest writers of his time, took care of defining the words of French language. Please read the “Delicious” or “Freshness” articles.

As for craftsmen, we can mention Goussier, watchmakers Jean-Baptiste Leroy, Berthoud, altogether nearly 200 names of collaborators. We can find in the *Encyclopaedia* articles infused by current knowledge on medicine, chemistry, mathematics, grammar, astronomy, etc. And it is because the scientists or craftsmen themselves wrote them.

Part 2 – The *Encyclopaedia* and living heritages

Here are some examples of these living knowledge in medicine, physics, chemistry, veterinary medicine, as can be found in the *Encyclopaedia*. Let's start with medicine. In the middle of the 18th century, an innovation of great significance was inoculation, the ancestor of what we call vaccination. Let us remember that smallpox caused thousands of victims each year in Europe. And it was only at the beginning of the 18th century that the first and tentative inoculations or vaccines against smallpox were used in England. The *Encyclopaedia* gave floor to the great Genevan doctor Théodore Tronchin, inoculator himself, who had just inoculated the Duke of Orleans’s children, entrusting him with writing the great article “Inoculation”, advocating for vaccination.

Let's talk about research on electricity. This is an area that was still largely enigmatic at the time. Many Encyclopaedists were interested in it. Jean-Baptiste Le Roy, who was one of the great names of electricity in the 18th century, wrote the article “Coup foudroyant”, in which he provided detailed explanations of the phenomenon we now call electrocution. Here is the electrometer, a machine invented by D'Arcy and Le Roy to measure electricity. Similarly, Louis Guillaume Le Monnier took stock of the most recent experiments on the speed of electricity and told in detail the experiments he himself had conducted on how what he called the "electric virtue" circulates. Having used as a

conductor a wire 2000 toises long, about 4 km or 2.5 miles, he concluded that the propagation of electricity runs at a prodigious speed and is almost infinite.

In chemistry, the encyclopaedic years are still far from the great revolution that will be due to Antoine Lavoisier at the end of the 18th century. But Doctor Gabriel François Venel, chemist and author of the article “Chemistry”, crossed an important threshold in the *Encyclopaedia*. He defended the autonomy of chemistry regarding to other sciences, and above all with regard to physics, to which it was hitherto bound, if not subjected, as being the “physics of small bodies”. Venel recognised chemistry’s ability to analyse the nature of matter. He thus established chemistry’s scientific legitimacy as a science in its own right and underlined its universal and immediate utility. "The glass industry, he wrote, the porcelain manufactory, the art of enamels, pyrotechnics, or the art of fireworks, the tannery, the manufacture of soap, the art of varnish, the baking art, panificium, cooking, etc. are all-chemical arts."

On another note, what we call veterinary medicine was almost unknown in the 18th century. But in this case again, the *Encyclopaedia* prepared the ground for a new science. From 1755 onwards, many articles written by Claude Bourgelat, were devoted to horse medicine, hippiatry. It should be recalled that the use of horses was then the only means of locomotion apart from walking. However, incessant wars and military campaigns exhausted the population of horses, hence the importance of knowing how to preserve their health. After the horses, Bourgelat extended his action to other animals. And it was at the initiative of this Encyclopaedist that was created in Lyon in 1761 the first veterinary school in the world.

In conclusion, we were able to discover some of the living heritages that form the *Encyclopaedia*, this huge collective work. The great scientists and practitioners of the 18th century writing themselves articles about their science gave the *Encyclopaedia* its character of scientific actuality.

CHANGING THE COMMON WAY OF THINKING

Marie LECA-TSIOMIS, Professor emeritus in French Literature, Paris Nanterre University

Part 1 – The *Encyclopaedia*, a polyphonic work

We saw that the *Encyclopaedia* was a collective work. It is also a polyphonic work. What does that mean? Let us first say that the Encyclopaedists did not all have the same literary voice, because they came from very different horizons of thought. For example, the Abbot Mallet was a Catholic theologian, Jean-Edme Romilly was a pastor, Saint-Lambert and d'Holbach were atheists, Beauzée was a fervent Catholic, Voltaire was deist, Morellet was sceptical, as to the three editors, if Diderot and D'Alembert were atheists, Jaucourt was Protestant.

It is, therefore, a true polyphony that rose from the *Encyclopaedia*. The diversity of authors guaranteed that the reader was not imposed a one-track thought. But it was not always peaceful knowledge and traditional content that the encyclopaedic dictionary offered. Diderot wanted the *Encyclopaedia* to spread critical spirit. "The characteristic of a good dictionary, he said, is to change the common way of thinking." The volumes of the *Encyclopaedia* were in fact infused with the most important political, religious, moral and scientific questions of the time. We will therefore mention some of them, starting with the political question and then the religious question.

Part 2 – *Encyclopaedia* and political criticism

Direct political criticism was the one expressed the most subtly because the *Encyclopaedia* was, until its prohibition, a work published under a regime of royal censorship, which means that each page was read by censors. However, alongside articles perfectly in line with the censors' expectations, we find very bold statements. We were then under a regime of absolute monarchy where royalty was considered of divine right. But here is what we can read in the article "Political Authority": "No man has received from nature the right to command others" and especially "The prince owes to his very subjects the authority that he has over them; and this authority is limited by the laws of nature and the state." The article caused a scandal, as has been said, and was one of the reasons for the first ban on the *Encyclopaedia*.

So it is often elsewhere, in seemingly innocuous articles, that the *Encyclopaedia* judged the royal government's policy; for example in the article "Hungry Appetite", we can read: "When people die of hunger, it is never the fault of Providence, it is always that of the administration" or again in the article "Beat", we note: "We trample the people when we charge them with excessive taxes." It is known that at the time taxes were levied on the people, while the nobility and the clergy were exempt from them, and salt, necessary to feed cattle, was heavily taxed by the gabelle.

It is necessary to read the article on the tax on salt where Jaucourt denounced it, because the peasants could not afford to pay. And Diderot's article "Indigent" is a true indictment of the political organisation that founded social justice. "Indigent": "A man who lacks the necessities of life in the midst of his fellow-men who enjoy with insulting pomp all the superfluities possible. One of the most unfortunate consequences of maladministration is to divide the society in two classes of men, some who live in opulence and others in poverty." We could almost believe that this article was written today.

Ce projet est co-financé par le fonds européen de développement régional.

Part 3 – *Encyclopaedia* and religious criticism

As for religious criticism, it can be said that one of the fiercest battles of the *Encyclopaedia* was conducted against intolerance and religious fanaticism. Indeed, at the time, the massacres of religion wars of the 16th century were still in all memories, and the same went for the revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV in 1685, which had triggered violent persecution against Protestants and provoked the forced exile of tens of thousands of them, not to mention the persecution suffered by the Jansenists at the dawn of the 18th century.

To Diderot, "The word intolerance, he wrote, is traditionally understood as a fierce passion that leads to hating and persecuting those who are in the wrong". The article “Fanaticism”, for its part, analysed the phenomenon throughout history and religions. It concludes: "Go through all the ravages of this plague under the crescent banner, and see from the beginning a caliph ensuring an empire of ignorance and superstition by burning all books... Soon another caliph will compel Christians to circumcision while a Christian emperor forces Jews to receive baptism." What could be the remedies? Wondered the author. "We do not know what to do with a group of fanatics: protect them and they trample you, persecute them and they rise up. There is only contempt and ridicule that can discredit them and weaken them. It is said that a chief of police, in order to put an end to the prestige of fanaticism, had resolved, in concert with a celebrated chemist, to have them parodied at the fair by charlatans." Encyclopaedic advice to meditate today.

Another barbaric practices, the Inquisition ones. This religious court that was active in Italy, Spain and Portugal, to uproot Jews, Moors, infidels and heretics. Jaucourt, in the article “Inquisition”, warned his own century: “If anyone in posterity dares to say that in the 18th century all the peoples of Europe were civilised, we will quote the inquisition to prove that they were largely barbarians.”

We have seen that both at political and religious level, there are many articles animated by the Enlightenment’s critical spirit. Judged subversive then, they testify to the intellectual courage of their authors. And what strikes us in the 21st century is the relevance of many of these articles.

CRITICAL THINKING

Marie LECA-TSIOMIS, Professor emeritus in French Literature, Paris Nanterre University

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Part 1 – Criticism of institutions

In the *Encyclopaedia*, the will to change the common way of thinking was not limited to political and religious criticism. We will see that it affected many other areas, whether they were state institutions, sciences, knowledge and even how to transmit knowledge. In fact, alongside articles that unabashedly reported atrocities of the time such as slavery, wars or torture, the knight of Jaucourt also wrote denunciation of these same barbarities, starting with slavery. His article on the black slave trade probably is the first overtly abolitionist text published in France.

Here is what it says: "The purchase of black people, to reduce them to slavery, is a commerce which violates all human nature rights, and which comes from the arbitrary and inhuman usages of colonies. People might say that these colonies would soon be ruined if the slavery of black people was abolished. Let European colonies be destroyed rather than be the cause of so much unhappiness!"

As for war and its horrors, Jaucourt denounced it with the same vigour, just as he denounced the execution of army deserters at a time when peasants and ordinary people were forcibly conscripted. He also denounced torture, which was then called the "question". We can read in his article “Question”: "The laws of nature cry out against this practice, for anyone without exception. The unfortunate man you torture is much more thinking about getting rid of what he feels than confessing what he knows."

Part 2 – Fights for a new ethic

Changing the common way of thinking, of course, implied new moral values based on two essential virtues: benevolence towards others and search for happiness. Diderot was concerned about the moral education of children. "Woe to the children, he wrote, who will never have seen their parents shed tears on the story of a generous action, woe to the children who will never have seen the tears their parents shed on the misery of others." It's about awakening children's sensitivity to justice.

Thus, it is not surprising that we find in this dictionary of sciences and crafts a eulogy of love and amorous pleasure. In the article “Pleasure”, Diderot attacked the hypocritical devotees who denounced pleasure, which they condemned and called "sin": "Keep quiet, unhappy man, and remember that it is pleasure that has drawn you from nothingness!"

Part 3 – Scientific fights against banned thought

Let's move on to something very different, the acknowledgment of scientific discoveries. It often took a fight against banned thoughts, frequently of a religious origin. In the article “the Antipodes”, D'Alembert ironically recalled that a pope declared heretic a priest who had suggested that there were men on the Antipodes.

Elsewhere, D'Alembert enumerated persecutions suffered by scholars. "The great Galilee, he wrote, was once put to the Inquisition and his opinion of the Earth movement condemned as heretical." We have already mentioned inoculation, but we must add that important theologians condemned it at the time as a heretical practice that should be forbidden because, they said, it was "Usurping God's rights to give an illness to those who do not have it, or to undertake to remove it from the one who Providence naturally destined for it."

It is understandable that Doctor Tronchin's article took place in the campaign for inoculation, which raised a real mobilisation of public opinion. The *Encyclopaedia*, far from being limited to an accumulation of knowledge, was also a work through which knowledge and their transmission were questioned.

Part 4 – Criticism of knowledge and its transmission

Questioning knowledge began with the choice of knowledge contained in the *Encyclopaedia* and the decision to exclude everything that did not serve a useful transmission of science, or the ability to distinguishing what came from skills and what belonged to titles of nobility. D'Alembert explained it thus: "One will not find in this work the genealogy of great families but the genealogy of sciences, more precious for who knows how to think, nor the conquerors who have desolated the Earth but the immortal geniuses who have enlightened it, because, he continued, the *Encyclopaedia* owes everything to expertise and nothing to titles and it tells the history of the human spirit and not of the vanity of men."

The knowledge recorded in the *Encyclopaedia* sometimes came from more or less reliable accounts of distant travellers; thus, Diderot's ironically criticised these stories, their vague descriptions that easily led to doubting their validity. Take, for example, the article "Aguapa": "Aguapa, noun, botanical natural history, a tree that grows in the West Indies, of which is said that its shade means death to those who sleep naked under it and which make the others swell in a prodigious way. If this country's inhabitants do not know it better than the description we have of it, they are in great danger." Looking for words like Aguapa and many others in the *Encyclopaedia*, readers won't have learned what this distant tree is but a higher form of criticism. Questioning their questioning and sometimes even laughing at it.

Another example is that of the "Acacalis" article, of which Diderot writes that it is "A shrub with a butterfly flower and a fruit covered by a pod. But its description is so vague, we need to wait until the progress of Natural History teaches us about it." We need to wait. This statement keeps coming back in the dictionary, as a call for vigilance to the reader and to the future progress of knowledge.

We can see that critical thinking, so active in the *Encyclopaedia*, had nothing dogmatic about it. To Encyclopaedists, the search for knowledge was inseparable from awareness of knowledge's precariousness, or more precisely of is perpetual lapse and eternal renewal.

THE PLATES OF THE *ENCYCLOPAEDIA*

Marie LECA-TSIOMIS, Professor emeritus in French Literature, Paris Nanterre University

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Part 1 – Composition of *Encyclopaedia*'s illustrations plates

Let us now tackle another great innovation of the *Encyclopaedia*, its illustrations, or plates. Diderot said: "A glance at an object or of its representation says more than a full page of speech." He thought that after describing knowledge in the *Encyclopaedia*'s volumes of articles, it was necessary to illustrate it. Produced under his direction, we'll first present the eleven plates' volumes on sciences, liberal arts and mechanical arts with explanations, which came out between 1762 and 1772.

These boards, accompanied by their explanations, were first drawn and then engraved. The signatures of illustrators and engravers usually appear at the bottom of the page. For example, here, a marine board, shows how the anchors were forged; on the left you see Goussier, the illustrator's name, and on the right Bonard, the engraver's name. These volumes, which included 2,626 plates in all, were among the finest achievements of drawing and engraving of the 18th century. See this engraving of a pineapple, a very rare fruit at the time.

Part 2 – Topics covered in the *Encyclopaedia*'s plates

What topics are covered by these illustrations? Apart from arts and crafts, which we will look at later, let us take a closer look at the major subjects covered by these boards, first natural history, plants, animals and minerals. In the animal kingdom for example, besides animals known in Europe like the beaver, we also uncover some exotic animals still poorly known then, and represented somehow from descriptions, verbal reports, never drawn on the spot. See here the elephant legs. Among plants, some exotic plants such as cocoa or cinnamon. Another subject covered with illustrations, human anatomy. This skeleton in the position of a thinker, or of a philosopher, belongs to what is called "moralised anatomy", which is an ancient tradition still widespread in the 18th century. On the other hand, on this other plate, the heart is represented in a modern way. It is all about transmitting positive knowledge.

Agriculture is another topic detailed in the boards. First a general view, then the tools: the plough, the coulter. And of course, sciences: mathematical sciences, algebra and arithmetic. Here, Pascal's arithmetic machine. Mathematical and hydraulic sciences there, with Marly's machine. The plates are often divided into two parts as you just saw. Most are simple spread but there are double page spreads like here, on the Louvre's colonnade. Sometimes, more rarely, triple spread of very large size, on three sheets. This one, on the Irish Giant's Causeway. You will probably have noticed the omnipresence of the human figure in these illustrations. Even in plates depicting wilderness like this one, we still see humans in a corner of the image. People talk, gaze at the majestic landscape while others gather shells and scholars weigh basalt. Everywhere in nature, we see men.

It is one of the *Encyclopaedia*'s great lessons. It is dedicated to the human race, and Diderot writes in the article "Encyclopaedia": "It is the presence of man that makes the existence of living beings interesting. Regardless of my existence and the happiness of my peers, why would the rest of nature matter to me? "

CELEBRATION OF ARTS AND CRAFTS IN THE PLATES

Marie LECA-TSIOMIS, Professor emeritus in French Literature, Paris Nanterre University

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One of Diderot and D'Alembert's great preoccupations was to show their acknowledgment of the importance of manual trades, called at the time "the mechanical arts" and which were despised as opposed to the Beaux-Arts celebrated as noble arts. This contempt for manual trades has unfortunately not disappeared today.

In the "Encyclopaedia" article, Diderot explained that undertaking a description of trades must be collective work, conducted as quickly as possible and especially without constraint. "It would be desirable, he wrote, for the government to authorise entry into factories, to observe actual work, to question workmen, and to draw instruments, machines, and even the premises. There are few secrets we couldn't uncover by this means: all these secrets should be divulged without exception."

This call for inquiry and secrets' disclosure shows the very spirit in which this description of trades was conducted. It was about paying tribute to the humblest artisans and their innovative processes. For example, here is the homage paid to a baker: "Sieur Malisset, Parisian baker, distinguished craftsman, has just proven that one can save 80,000 livres a year on the expense hospitals spend for the bread consumed by the poor, while furnishing them with an infinitely superior quality, more nourishing, more pleasant, as white as the bread eaten every day in private houses. So, we must be grateful to the one who cares to extend his knowledge, who has had enough courage to expose himself to the annoyances one should expect when undertaking to change old usages in order to implement better ones."

To honour these artists, called artisans today, but also to collect technical knowledge and disseminate it widely. It required an investigative work in workshops that the Encyclopaedists reproached their predecessors for not having led. For example, here, the details of a wigmaker-barber's tools: combs, razors, curling irons, utensils to powder wigs, etc. Diderot strongly insisted on one point. "We have chosen, he said, the most skilful workmen of Paris and the kingdom." Here we see how the movable types are melted. "We have taken the trouble, he wrote, to go to their workshops, to question them, to write under their dictation, to develop their thought, to use their profession's own terminology, to draw up tables, to define them, to converse with those whose memoirs had been used, and an almost indispensable precaution, to rectify in long and frequent conversations with some what others had imperfectly, obscurely, sometimes unknowingly explained."

To carry out this work, the Encyclopaedists benefited from remarkable talents, like Louis-Jacques Goussier's, Diderot's main collaborator for mechanical arts, both investigator in particular on the manufacture of paper, forges, anchors, sea fishing and also fertile illustrator. You have seen and you will see the name of Goussier under many drawings. Diderot relied on him to launch surveys, questionnaires, to read specialised treatises and visit many workshops, as his correspondence shows. These survey's results and drawings in the *Encyclopaedia* took the form of very detailed descriptions, in a language as clear as possible.

The only virtue required of readers is the effort of attention, but they must not be, according to Diderot, transcendental geniuses or fools. It is in any case on this wish for recognition that he composed the arts and crafts' description, the larger portion of illustrations, which is also a celebration of work and human action. He has sometimes been ironic about workshops cleanliness or even about the elegance of the workers pictured on the plates. But we must understand that this also participates in the highlighting of manual trades in the *Encyclopaedia*. Putting the spotlight on human work doesn't need to exclude humour. See on this roofer's plate, the picture at the top depicts roofers installing tiles

on the roof on the right, and on the left, tiles falling and a passer-by running away trying to protect himself with his hat.

I would conclude by saying that the *Encyclopaedia*'s plates are an exceptional testimony to life, knowledge and work in the 18th century. For us today, they also are a universe to explore.

THE *ENCYCLOPAEDIA* IN 2018: A COLLABORATIVE AND ARGUMENTATIVE DIGITAL EDITION

Marie LECA-TSIOMIS, Professor emeritus in French Literature, Paris Nanterre University

Irène PASSERON, Director of Research, CNRS

MLT: Good morning Irène Passeron. A brand-new edition of the *Encyclopaedia* has just been posted online. You are one of the four people leading this new edition entitled ENCCRE, with two C. So, what does the name ENCCRE mean?

IP: E for Edition, N for Numérique, the first C for Collaboration, CR for Critical, and E for *Encyclopaedia*. So ENCCRE stands for Collaborative and Critical Digital Edition of the *Encyclopaedia*. The website, freely accessible, is brand new. It allows the consultation of the *Encyclopaedia*, to wander in all sorts of ways, to navigate, to do all kinds of searches in the *Encyclopaedia*'s articles or in its splendid plates.

MLT: We can find several versions of the *Encyclopaedia* on the web. Why imagine a new one? What are its specificities? What is your goal?

IP: Our goal is to deliver a reference edition accessible via the Internet, which means it first must be reliable, then well-documented and critical: it needs to provide commentaries and explanations allowing a better understanding of the work's implications. Like the *Encyclopaedia* itself, which deals with all areas of knowledge and their connections, ENCCRE is a collaborative venture that appeals to historians who specialise in all fields. A historian of mathematics will explain the "Algebra" article, the challenges posed by the new calculus as stated by D'Alembert. A historian of literature will comment on the "Tragedy" article, at a time when Voltaire is considered France's greatest tragic author. Of course, this huge work, 74,000 articles and 2,600 plates, will not be done in a day but will go on for a long time.

MLT: What does a "reliable edition" mean?

IP: There was, in the 18th century and later, a whole host of pirate editions. So, we first need to know if what we have in front of us is the original edition. Because you can find many hybrid and unauthenticated editions on the Internet. The team's first task was to find and digitise an authentic copy of the *Encyclopaedia*, that is to say one that has been identified by book historians. It is Mazarine's library one, in Paris, of which a good photograph of the original copy was made.

IP: The *Encyclopaedia* has recruited nearly 200 collaborators. How many collaborators do you have for ENCCRE?

MLT: First, before figures, let's talk about the diversity of skills required. Historians of medicine, music, metallurgy, geography, literature, etc., historians with strong competences across different domains. If not only scientists but also compilers, illustrators, engravers and printers were needed to produce the *Encyclopaedia*, for ENCCRE, in the digital age, we need to rely on an active collaboration between engineers, computer scientists and researchers. The ENCCRE team now has more than 130 employees of all nationalities because interest in the *Encyclopaedia* is global and growing every day.

MLT: How did you work?

IP: As a result of the development work connecting computer scientists and researchers on the *Encyclopaedia*, we had to start by analysing the encyclopaedic text and knowing precisely its components, that is to say, how a dictionary's article or plate is structured, then labelling them. Using the example of the "Bitterness" article, we have its title, the domain of the designated knowledge, here physics, its cross-references, here referring to "soft" and "bitter", the signature, you can see the circle in parentheses identifying D'Alembert, and its potential bibliographic references. This objective can only be reached with labelling and proofreading campaigns, that we must go through regularly with such challenging a project, and which implies a large collaboration only made possible thanks to a collaborative interface.

MLT: Let us take an example. I find the article "Abada" in the first pages of the *Encyclopaedia*. I can read: "Animal living on the coast of Bengal." What is this animal and what interest does it have for us?

IP: The critical analysis shows two major interests. The first is that the abada is actually a rhinoceros that will only be identified as such later. The second is that it is an article bearing Diderot's mark, a star. So, we see that as early as 1751, in the first volume, Diderot criticises the rudimentary descriptions stemming from travel narratives. "It would be reckless, he says, on such a description, to doubt that the abada is a real animal." No doubt, there is doubt is there.

MLT: We can see the interest of this critical enlightening, but ENCCRE's website also opens other doors, doesn't it?

IP: Absolutely. The search engine of the website makes it possible to launch a multitude of requests on the topics addressed, the authors and the works that they quote, the censure they were subjected to, etc. One can also find on the website a full documentation on the *Encyclopaedia* as well as a database that gradually maps all the studies focused on the *Encyclopaedia* around the world. Lastly, the ENCCRE is a long-term endeavour that will take years to complete. But fortunately, our team is growing every day.

MLT: Thank you Irène Passeron. We wish you bon courage and good luck for your continuing work on ENCCRE's website.

DEMONSTRATION OF THE USE OF ENCCRE'S DIGITAL EDITION

Alexandre GUILBAUD, Lecturer, Pierre and Marie Curie University

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Welcome to the collaborative and critical digital edition of the *Encyclopaedia*'s website, ENCCRE's website. From the homepage we offer you the opportunity to start a guided tour of this new edition. We are going to skip it now since it is the very purpose of this video to offer you a synthetic tour of the entire website. ENCCRE has placed a particular emphasis on its interface, and more generally on its whole editorial policy, to ensure the strongest possible connection between what we show on screen and the materiality of the scanned copy on which this edition is built.

This approach is already visible through the homepage, which gives a central place to the reproduction of the 28 folio volumes of the book, the 17 volumes of speeches published between 1751 and 1765 and the 11 volumes of plates published between 1762 and 1772. Clicking on each spine will allow you to view the volume's table of contents. If I click on Volume 1, I'll be able to access some parts of it, for example the title page, and get inside the edition. They will always appear in the same way, with a transcription on the left and the digitised facsimile on the right page.

The zoom tools on the scanned version of the copy come in very handy, and we can immediately appreciate the quality of the scan. Of course, the table of contents also makes it possible to consult for each volume the list of articles in the original order of the dictionary.

We can navigate in the same way through illustration plates' volumes. If I take the example of Volume 7, I will have access to each field, because plates' volumes are organised by fields, and for each of these fields, to the explanation and to the list of plates composing it. Here I will access marine's boards, with their transcription on the left and the digitised version on the right, and then display each board with its explanation, updated automatically. There I can show double spread layout, triple spread, a single plate, another triple spread. On the eighth board of the navy's field, which corresponds to shipyards and the building cost of Rochefort's shipyard, I can zoom in and review a number of details using several display features. We see abundant details on this fine double plate about all the activities of a shipyard.

Heading back to the homepage, we can find on the right of these 28 reproduced volumes a description of the original edition explaining why it is essential to be able to provide an original of the *Encyclopaedia*, how to recognise an original edition, why we are certain that the Mazarine's copy digitised for ENCCRE is an original and the specific history of this copy.

On the left we can see another essential section, the extremely rich documentation drawn up by our team that will allow any reader to discover what the *Encyclopaedia* means, its innovations, its legacy, its history, its actors, its production, its reception, etc.

Below this first level we will find four basic modes of access. The first mode allows you to search the *Encyclopaedia* for keywords or terms. Since the *Encyclopaedia* is a dictionary, it is composed of articles entitled with the words they define. For example, if I search for the word "Sailing", by default it searches all the articles' titles containing "Sailing". An option allows me to extend my search or even to limit it to only illustration plates' titles.

The *Encyclopaedia* is a collective work, so we obviously provide the names of all contributing authors, which we called "contributors" in this edition. We will see later that it is possible to access a page dedicated to a contributor and which will give details of all his contributions to the *Encyclopaedia*.

The *Encyclopaedia* collects all knowledges. It is an explanatory dictionary of sciences, arts and crafts, and it was therefore necessary to be able to search by fields. This is the third mode of access that is proposed to you.

Finally, it was a must to offer a full-text search tool, which is supplemented by an advanced search engine.

Below these four modes of access, we can see the last two blocks. The left one will allow to spotlight articles, files and events and to attract visitors' attention on the last published annotations, on seminars, on colloquiums or cultural events in connection with the *Encyclopaedia*. On the right, another essential section of our edition will provide direct access to all the annotated articles and to more general dossiers already produced and published by our team. Right now, there is a list of the latest published articles, the last being the "Botany" article, annotated by Jeff Loveland and Stéphane Schmitt and published on March 17, 2018. By clicking here, you will have access to all the articles already published with annotations. There are already more than 150, which you can sort by editor, the team members who wrote these comments and annotations, and by publication date.

Without further delay, let us enter ENCCRE. Let's enter through a contributor. I've randomly chosen Diderot, one of the best known if not the best known. Using this mode of access, a page dedicated to the contributor Diderot will be first displayed and give a set of information on his date and place of birth, date and place of death and the source for our information.

You also have Diderot's bibliography, written by Marie Leca-Tsiomis, and an exhaustive list of the marks used by the contributor to sign his articles. Diderot only has one, the asterisk, but they can be very numerous. See Jaucourt, for example. Afterwards, there is a list of articles signed by Diderot, the articles containing his mark. The list is generated from the set of marks identified, here from all the asterisks spotted in the *Encyclopaedia*'s articles. There are 5,637 of them and you have the possibility to access them directly via this list.
The final list contains the articles attributed to Diderot, that is to say articles not signed by Diderot but those that research has shown can be attributed to him.

If I click on one of these articles, I'll be redirected to the edition, with the transcript on the left and the scanned Mazarine's copy on the right. I can see in the above banner all the homepage access modes - access by each volume's table of contents; nomenclature access, that is to say search by word; search by contributor; search by field; full-text searches and direct access to the advanced search engines.

The banner also contains direct access to the general documentation section. On the page's top left side there is a way to easily navigate from one volume to another, to easily roam through the immediate environment of the article being read, the list of previous and next words.

Finally, we find an interesting information at the top right of the screen, identifying the article's author, for the "Pleasure" article, Diderot. In this case Diderot is written in square brackets, which indicates that the article has been attributed to him. A click will explain the attribution in the form of a note written by Marie Leca-Tsiomis, informing us that Diderot is identified as the author of this article for such and such reason.

You can also access a set of features allowing the display of paragraph numbering, to view column breaks, to show only the text or to change text sizes.

For each article you also have an export function, allowing you to export both the transcript of the article and the notes and comments published with the article. On the right, we have displayed by clicking on Diderot the list of notes written by Marie Leca-Tsiomis on this article, including the memo justifying the attribution.

There is another level of annotations, a "review file", which is a more general presentation of the article in two main forms: first a shortened form called a cap, which will summarise the main issues and interest of the article in a few lines. In the case of "Pleasure", we learn right away that it is one of the most famous articles written by Diderot, a real eulogy of sexual pleasure that couldn't be further from

Christian's belief of original sin. It is also part of Diderot's anthropological reflection on the very origins of love. If you want to find out more, simply scroll down each item.

There, you will find precise information on the article's author and on the attribution of this article to Diderot, on the implications of the article, on its previous state, on the way it has been written, on its resonances, its reception, its later editions, etc.

Finally, this presentation contains a list of studies concerning this particular article. "Pleasure" is one of more than 150 articles already published in ENCCRE with their comments and their reviews. Let us take another example, in another field, the "Abada" article. We will find the same disposition we had earlier, a text with small icons allowing me to access and to display directly the list of memos we saw on the "Pleasure" article. I will also, in the same way, be able to access the review file in which I will learn thanks to the cap, that the article "Abada" deals with an unfamiliar exotic animal, described in a more or less fanciful way by travellers who attributed to him various virtues. It was actually a rhinoceros but neither Diderot nor the sources on which he relied made the connection. And so, he showed some scepticism about this species' existence.

For those who want to find out more, we can learn among many other information given by Stéphane Schmitt, that no article in the entire *Encyclopaedia* refers to the "Abada" article and that it doesn't reference any article either. In particular, there is no reference to the "Rhinoceros" article or to a plate that can be found in the *Encyclopaedia*, the first plate on natural history, which depicts an elephant on its lower part and a rhinoceros on the upper part. The rhinoceros actually being this animal, this Abada, just called by another name. Here we can preview the corresponding plate and zoom on it, or if we want to see the full page go to the plate volume to consult the illustration and its explanation.

So that was our short visit of ENCCRE. All you need now is to keep wandering around the website. We hope you enjoy discovering this unique work.

CONCLUSION

Marie LECA-TSIOMIS, Professor emeritus in French Literature, Paris Nanterre University

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The time has come to conclude this presentation. I hope everyone will have understood why we entitled it "The *Encyclopaedia's* Adventure."

From the simple translation of a two-volume English dictionary, to 28 volumes at its completion, the *Encyclopaedia*, by its scale, its variety, by the success it knew and also by the many obstacles it had to overcome was a real adventure, conducted for 25 years by Diderot, its genius leader, with the help of D'Alembert and the knight of Jaucourt.

We have been able to define the five great innovations of this immense work. First it was a collective endeavour. It was a dictionary, obviously, but enlivened by a set of cross-references. It was an encyclopaedia that gave floor to the trades as well as, in a unique fashion, to everyday language. Finally, it illustrated, thanks to the drawn and engraved plates, nature and the whole range of human activity. The *Encyclopaedia* focused the attention of all that Europe had of scholars and men of letters, and in France itself it found an immense resonance and counted among its supporters Malesherbes and the Marquise of Pompadour.

But it also had many enemies, especially in religious circles and with Court's devotees. Its publication was forbidden twice, and the second time, in 1759, was a permanent prohibition. It was completed in secret, and its volumes of plates do not even bear the title "Encyclopaedia". It still did not prevent it from being plagiarised, copied, with numerous pirate editions in France and Europe. Finally, it had an abundant legacy up to the 19th century.

To change the common way of thinking, as Diderot wished, was to make room for discoveries, for living heritages, for scientific advances. We saw a few examples of this in medicine, chemistry, physics or veterinary medicine. Changing the common way of thinking was also a challenge. We saw that the intellectual courage of publishers and of the many authors met this challenge both on a political and religious level.

The Enlightenment's thought is reflected in its articles, despite attacks and censures, like denunciation of classism, intolerance, fanaticism, institutional barbarities, prohibitions of thought; they also managed to emphasis a new moral oriented towards kindness and happiness, critical thinking and the transmission of knowledge. To transmit knowledge but also to illustrate it; we have seen how much plates reflect not only nature but also sciences and the arts of manual trades, to which the *Encyclopaedia* pays tribute. It was a question of collecting technical knowledge and diffusing it as widely as possible so that it would be useful to everyone.

And to this work, open to all knowledge, sciences, philosophy and literature, participated the most famous authors of the time. Montesquieu, for example, before he died, left to the Encyclopaedists fragments of an article on taste, which Diderot presents as follows: "It will be an eternal testimony of the interest great men of the nation took in this work; it will be said in the centuries to come: Voltaire and Montesquieu also took part in the *Encyclopaedia*."

Today, in the Internet age, the *Encyclopaedia* seems to us strangely contemporary. It has offered what we call "an interactive journey" for more than 250 years, thanks to the constant play of cross-references, counterpart of today's hypertext links. It was contemporary also in its desire to question and decompartmentalise knowledge. It is even ahead of our time in other respects, with its ability to render knowledge accessible to those who seek it, in common language, and especially with a concern of the human race and its future giving meaning and content to its didactic project.

Ce projet est co-financé par le fonds européen de développement régional.

That is why it's so important to recognise and enliven it, as we tried to do with ENCCRE, now yours to make the most of.

CHARDIN SEEN BY DIDEROT

Colas DUFLO, Professor in French Literature, Paris Nanterre University

Fabrice MOULIN, Lecturer in French Literature, Paris Nanterre University

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Reading by Colas Duflo and Fabrice Moulin.

Salon of 1765.

“This one is a painter. This one is a colourist. There are several small paintings by Chardin at the Salon. They almost all depict fruits and meal utensils. It's nature itself. The objects seem to be out of the canvas and so real as to fool the eyes. The one you can see by the stairs deserves the all our attention. The artist placed on a table a vase of old china porcelain, two biscuits, a jar filled with olives, a basket of fruit, two glasses half full of wine, a bitter orange and a pâté.

To look at the paintings of others, it seems to me that I need to get my eyes to see something else. To look at those of Chardin, I have only to keep the eyes that nature gave me and that serve me well. If I wanted my child to become a painter, this is the painting I would buy: "Copy it for me, I would say to him, copy it again", perhaps nature is not more difficult to copy.

This porcelain vase actually is porcelain. These olives really are separated from the eye by the water in which they swim; it is only necessary to pick up these biscuits to eat them, to cut this orange open and to squeeze it; to pick up this glass of wine and drink it, to take these fruits and peel them, to take this pâté and put the knife in. He is this one who hears colours’ harmony and their reflections. Oh Chardin, it's not white, red and black that you grind on your palette, it's the substance of objects itself, it's air and light that you take with the tip of your brush and that you tie to the canvas.

After my child would have copied and copied this piece again, he would busy himself on *The Ray* by the same painter. The object itself is disgusting. But it's the flesh of the fish itself. It's the skin; it's the blood. The very appearance of the thing would not affect otherwise. Monsieur Pierre, look closely at this piece when you go to the Academy, and learn, if you can, the secret of saving with talent some of natures’ repugnance.

We do not understand anything about this magic. It is thick layers of colours applied over each other and whose effect transpires from below. Other times, it looks like it's a vapour that has been blown on the canvas. Elsewhere, light foam that was thrown there. Rubens, Bergen, Greuze, Loutherbourg would explain it to you way better than me.

They would all make the effect felt on your mind. Come closer, everything blurs, flattens and disappears. Move away, everything is recreated and happens again. I was told that Greuze, coming up to the Salon and seeing the piece of Chardin which I have just described, looked at it and moved on with a deep sigh. This praise is shorter and better than mine.”

Salon of 1769.

“All see nature but Chardin sees it well and exhausts himself trying to render it as he sees it. His piece *The Attributes of the Arts* is proof of this. How perspective is portrayed, how the objects reflect on each other, how the masses are decided. We do not know where prestige is because it is everywhere, we look for dark and for clear and there must be some, but they do not strike in any place, objects separate without priming.

Take this artist's smallest painting, a peach, a grape, a pear, a nut, a cup, a saucer, a rabbit, a partridge and you will see the great and profound colourist. Looking at *The Attributes of the Arts*, the eye remains satisfied and tranquil. When we have looked at this piece for a long time, others seem cold, cut, flat, raw and out of tune.

Chardin is between nature and art. He relegates other imitations to third position. There is nothing in him that shows the palette. It is a harmony beyond which we do not dream of wanting. It snakes imperceptibly in its composition, all under each part of the extent of his canvas. It is, as theologians say of the mind, sensible in all and secret in each individual point."

Salon of 1767.

"It is said of him that he has "a technique" of his own and that he uses his thumb as much as his brush. I do not know if it is true. What is certain is that I never knew anyone who saw him at work. In any case, his compositions indistinctly call to the ignorant and the connoisseur. It is an incredible strength of colours, a general harmony, a sharp and true effect, beautiful masses, a magic in the making that desperate others, a stew whose range is the recipe.

Pull away, come closer. Same illusion, no confusion, no symmetry, no flicker, the eye is always recaptured because there is calm and rest. We stop in front of a Chardin as if instinctively, as a traveller tired by the road will sit almost without noticing it in the place that offers him a seat of greenery, silence, water, shadow and cool."

Equipe éditoriale

Directeur du projet éditorial
Colas DUFLO

Coordinatrice techno-pédagogique
Lydie ROLLIN-JENOUVRIER

Ingénieure pédagogique
Session 1: Thu Nga DANG, Session 2: Victoria Escobar

Correctrice anglais / français

Julie Lambert

Designer graphique
Marie LONGHI

Partenaires

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