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The Enlightenment in Spain: Classic and New Historiographical Perspectives¹

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The “Discovery” of the Spanish Enlightenment: Intellectual and Political Contexts

The interpretation of eighteenth-century Spain has been profoundly affected by the changing political, social, and intellectual context from which the country’s past has been analyzed (Enciso 1990; Fernández Sebastián 2002). Throughout the nineteenth century, it was marked by the conflict between conservative and liberal ideologies. For the most traditionalist intellectuals, the eighteenth century represented an era of regrettable foreign influence on Spain’s culture. They saw the Enlightenment as an antireligious, frivolous movement incited by Frenchified fashions, and foreign to Spain’s nature, a notion that would be developed by the most retrograde sectors of Francoist historiography. On the other hand, for nineteenth-century liberals (with significant differences between the distinct liberalisms: conservative, moderate, progressive), the Enlightenment and Bourbon reformism represented the root of the ideals of progress and reform

and of the struggle against secular prejudices, the principles of which they considered themselves heirs. This perspective was transmitted to the Second Republic (1931-1939), a period during which some intellectuals became interested in investigating the roots of Spanish modernity. Such was the case, for example, with Gregorio Marañón (*Las ideas biológicas del Padre Feijoo*, 1934) and Pilar Oñate (*El feminismo en la literatura española*, 1938).

Regardless of whether the fact was celebrated or regretted, the dominant view for a long time was that there had not been a Spanish Enlightenment worth the name, as the philosopher José Ortega y Gasset roundly declared in 1930: “The great educational century passed us by” (1983, II, 600; *Nos ha faltado el gran siglo educador*). Thirty years later, another philosopher, the Franco regime dissident Julián Marías (1963), presented the eighteenth century as one more of the Spains that could never be (like that of the Spanish Silver Age of the 1920s and the Second Republic): an era of lost opportunities, liberalizing but suddenly broken by conservative regression, thus projecting the drama of the Civil War (1936-1939) onto the past.

Beginning in the 1960s, foreign Hispanists contributed significantly to the renewal of studies on eighteenth-century Spanish culture and society. In particular, Jean Sarrailh (1957), in a foundational work originally published in French in 1954, asserted that there had existed a movement of intellectual renewal in Spain similar to that of the Enlightenment in other countries, although he may have exaggerated French influence and excessively delayed its start. The work of other Hispanists—such as French scholars François López, Lucienne Domergue, Marcelin Defourneaux, and George and Paula Demerson, the Italian scholar Giovanni Stiffoni, the British scholar Philip Deacon, and the Americans Richard Herr and J. H. R. Polt—would continue along the same lines.

With the decades of the 1970s and 1980s there came an increase in research and a significant change in interpretive schemas tied to a historiographical revision that reappeared in Spain during the Transition that followed the hiatus created by the dictatorship. The changes were intense and fertile, particularly in the field of socioeconomic history, which revealed the reality—but also the boundaries—of the demographic and economic growth that occurred during the Enlightenment era. This growth was especially obvious on the periphery, with increases in agricultural production, crop diversification, the push to produce manufactured goods (particularly textile goods), commercial development both in domestic markets and with America, and the processes of social differentiation and polarization (Fernández Díaz 2009; Mantecón 2013). The changes took longer to be incorporated into the area of intellectual and cultural history. A notable exception to this delay can be found in the work of José Antonio Maravall, whose pioneering studies on eighteenth-century Spanish culture, published across several decades and collected posthumously (1991), dealt with such diverse topics as trends in political reform, the importance of education, and aesthetic sensibilities.

Substantial changes resulted from that interpretive transformation (Enciso 1990). As a basic premise, the existence of a Spanish Enlightenment was solidly established, not as merely a pallid, faltering, indirect reflection of the “authentic” French Enlightenment, but as a movement with its own specificity, within the general limits of European Enlightenment, its own connections to an internal dynamic of socioeconomic and political change, rather than being merely propelled by foreign influences. Furthermore, in the face of the classic idea of a very late Enlightenment that did not take off until the second half of the eighteenth century—with the exception of isolated precursors like Benito Jerónimo Feijoo (who published his works between 1726 and 1760)—the research of José María López Piñero (1979), Pedro Álvarez de Miranda (1992), Antonio Mestre

(1996), and Jesús Pérez Magallón (2002), among others, situated the origins of the Enlightenment in the so-called time of the *novatores* (1680-1720), early innovators in philosophy, science and erudite history. This was followed by the early Enlightenment (the generation of Feijoo and Gregorio Mayans, between 1726 and 1754) and its peak towards the end of Fernando VI's reign and during that of Carlos III (1759-1788) (Sánchez-Blanco 1999, 2002). The decade of the 1790s witnessed the terrible impact of the French Revolution, causing an intense preventive reaction by the government (increased border checks, prohibiting the publication of references to the events of the Revolution, closing all periodicals except for official ones in 1791, controlling *tertulias*—gatherings in private homes where topics of the day were discussed—and conversations). At the same time, it was a time of rich intellectual and literary production by a younger generation of educated men, some of whom had fairly radical ideas (Sánchez-Blanco 2007; Lorenzo Álvarez 2009).

In addition, studies of the Spanish Enlightenment in the 1980s and 1990s highlighted its dual sources: European—not only French—influence (selectively assimilated) along with Spain's own traditions (Sánchez-Blanco 1991; Mestre 1998). Undoubtedly, many of the influences (intellectual, artistic, literary, as well as in customs and manners) came from France, reinforcing, along with the ascent of the Bourbons and the dynastic alliance, a shift already begun by the end of the seventeenth century with respect to the former outward flow of Spanish culture to other lands during the political supremacy of the Habsburg monarchy. But there were also close cultural ties with Italy, ranging from music—especially opera—theater, and art, to economic and legal ideas, which were strengthened by the expulsion and exile of the Jesuits to Italy in 1767. An English influence is also noticeable in the scientific and philosophical spheres, political economy and literature, while a German influence is evident in the fields of philosophy, law, economy

(cameralism), and industrial and mining technologies. Meanwhile, certain Spanish cultural heritages were recuperated and given new value, reclaimed (also selectively) by the intellectuals of the eighteenth century as their own predecessors: while Baroque literature was rejected, Spanish texts on philological criticism and humanist religiosity from the sixteenth century, and those of the *arbitristas* or reformers of the seventeenth, were valued and reprinted.

The Spanish Enlightenment Within the Framework of Studies on the Enlightenment

The historiographical appreciation of the Spanish Enlightenment has been inscribed for decades within the most general framework of an evolution from a view of the Enlightenment as an almost exclusively French, or at any rate German, phenomenon, to one that understands it as an international movement with distinct territorial variations (not only national, but also regional, local, and even individual). In this way, territories whose social and political circumstances did not easily allow the emergence or public expression of radical ideas, and whose most significant contributions were produced not on an intellectual or theoretical level, but on the level of practical projects (like Portugal, Spain, and many of the Italian territories), were incorporated into the Enlightenment canon (Bolufer 2003).

That widening of the geographical boundaries of the Enlightenment has allowed for the revision of some themes that the excessive identification with the French model (and specifically with the *philosophes*) had distorted, such as the question of religion. Inasmuch as the irreligious nature of the Enlightenment has been questioned, pointing out the minor role that deism and atheism played across Europe, the Spanish case appears not as an exception, but as one more among the Christian Enlightenments—in this case, Catholic. The majority of enlightened Hispanics (Spaniards and *criollos*, American-born descendants of Spaniards) positioned

themselves within orthodoxy, although there was a lukewarm or skeptical minority on the question of religion, particularly among the younger generation (Juan Meléndez Valdés, Francisco de Cabarrús, Manuel José Quintana). Many of them maintained anticlerical, royalist positions (defending the authority of the monarchy over the Holy See on ecclesiastical questions), and opposed the more ritualistic, showy manifestations of Catholicism in favor of a more internalized, sober spirituality, Christ-centered and devoted to the Bible (which was translated into Spanish in 1791-1795, after three long centuries of prohibition). They also sought a greater role for laypeople in Church life (Mestre 1979; Egidio 1987). In this sense, the recent historiographical growth of the notion of a “Catholic Enlightenment” (Lehner 2016; Smidt 2010) has not been a particular novelty in Spain, where since the 1970s historians (along with their French and Italian colleagues) have been exploring the manifestations of reformist or enlightened Catholicism (Bolufer 2018).

Likewise, the widening of the Enlightenment canon to other countries where enlightened men maintained closer ties to the government (as was the case in Spain, and also in Prussia and Portugal), in contrast to the French, has contributed to its being understood as more than simply a system of ideas, but also as having a practical, reformist aspect, understood not as a lack, but as a realistic response to its context. Indeed, as María Victoria López-Cordón explains in her chapter in this volume, the Enlightenment in Spain had a decidedly bureaucratic bent. We know now that the social and cultural changes of the Enlightenment involved all sectors of the population in one way or another, and not just an enlightened minority opposed to the inert masses, passive and attached to tradition. However, the Enlightenment movement was supported significantly by a new power elite in service to the monarchy. They were no longer recruited only from the aristocracy, but also from among the lesser nobility (*hidalgos*) and from the professional classes. They were increasingly trained and convinced of their mission to serve not only the king, but also

the nation. Most men of letters and sciences held bureaucratic or judicial positions in the monarchic machine in Spain and the Americas (Álvarez Barrientos 2006), which explains the decidedly pragmatic character of the Hispanic Enlightenment: many expressed their reflections as memoirs, reports, and concrete measures (for example, the most notable texts on political economy were a product of heated debates and legislative proposals, such as the *Informe sobre el expediente de la ley agraria* by Jovellanos [1795; Report on Agrarian Law]), rather than in philosophical or theoretical treatises. In the case of enlightened women, those who were not aristocrats also belonged to families connected to the professional and administrative fields in which education (together with contacts and influence) was the path to social advancement and prestige for their male relatives. Some of these enlightened women explicitly shared their families' appreciation for the importance of personal merit and education, but expressed a specific and painful awareness that their sex was denied "jobs, honors and interests" (*empleos, honores e intereses*), as Josefa Amar y Borbón (1994, 66)—the daughter and granddaughter of doctors in service to the king, and wife and mother to lawyers—wrote.

Understanding the particularities of the Spanish Enlightenment within the wider frame of revising the general Enlightenment has also allowed us to consider the multiple forms in which "public opinion" emerged. Contradicting Jürgen Habermas's theory, which attributed a bourgeois, anti-absolutist character to the "public sphere" of the British Enlightenment, in Spain (but also in most of Europe) many spheres of debate and more open experimentation with forms of sociability developed in the heart of the professional class, and occasionally under the aegis of the absolute monarchy, rather than in opposition to it: academies, Economic Societies of Friends of the Country, and *tertulias* in private homes. In some of these venues a new language of patriotism, citizenship, merit, and civic pride was being created that would imperceptibly move away from

the political culture of the ancien régime (Franco 2004; López-Cordón and Luis 2005; Arias de Saavedra 2012). Other spaces of discussion were articulated from an increasingly broader, more diverse publishing market, with classic forms (theater, satirical lampoons, etc.) and new ones (the periodical press) that fostered conversations not only in cafés and more or less elite, enlightened *tertulias*, but also in the most public places on the street and in the plazas. In this way, forms of “public opinion” were developing that intellectuals and servants of the State made an effort to direct and shape, considering it to be an ever more necessary support for government measures (Calvo 2013). At the same time, they feared and tried to exorcise the danger of a plebian public opinion, the most stunning manifestation of which were the Esquilache Riots in 1766 (Medina 2009).

Thus, historiography and Spanish society itself in the 1970s and 1780s were shedding the legacy of Francoism, opening up to Europe, and losing a certain inferiority complex and sense of isolation. Concurrently, perspectives on the history of Spain began to turn away from a very influential paradigm in intellectual circles and in the collective imaginary of both Spain and Europe: the perennial Spanish “exceptionalism” or “anomaly,” commonly read as backwardness, but also as an attractive exoticism (Andreu 2016).

From that desire to examine Spanish “difference,” and later, to question it, an essential topic of research has been the degree to which censorship of print materials, both prior to publication (governmental) and afterwards (inquisitorial), managed to effectively limit the production, expression and circulation of ideas. Studies on the reception of foreign books underscored the fact that many of them were prohibited by the Inquisition (the indexes of 1747 and 1790, the supplement of 1805, and complementary edicts), including, for example, the complete works of Rousseau and Voltaire. Nevertheless, real control of reading and diffusion of

the works was relatively limited: the prohibitions were often too late, permits to read prohibited books were easy to obtain, and the books themselves (with or without permits) were present in many private and institutional libraries, and were used, paraphrased, and quoted. Although the famous trial of Pablo de Olavide (a *criollo* condemned by the Inquisition in 1781, apparently with the consent of Carlos III) frightened enlightened intellectuals, caused many accusations and self denunciations, and spread throughout Europe the image of an obscurantist, despotic Spain, in general the circulation of books and ideas was more intense than we had thought decades ago, and thus refutes the idea of exceptionalism and isolation.

Hence, the characteristics that define the Spanish Enlightenment have come to be understood less in terms of absolute peculiarities and more as traits particular to Spain (although shared, to some extent, with other territories) within the common threads of European Enlightenment. What the philosopher Eduardo Subirats (1981) would call an “insufficient” Enlightenment—compared to French encyclopedism—today seems to us more like a Catholic Enlightenment, utilitarian, with strong connections to power and, in general, moderate (Astigarraga 2014), although it also harbored more daring tendencies and manifestations, especially towards the end of the century. Otherwise, how else could the rupture of 1808-1812 be explained?

Spanish historians are aware that this diversification of perspectives is what has allowed the Spanish Enlightenment to burst onto the international historiographical scene, as illustrated by the title *Enlightenment, Enlightenments (Ilustración, ilustraciones)* chosen for the conference held in 2007 at the emblematic site of an Enlightenment institution, the Basque Society of Friends of the Country. In turn, that shift in perspective is linked, in Spain as well as elsewhere, to a change of focus “from the theorized Enlightenment to the lived Enlightenment” (Astigarraga, López-

Cordón, and Urkia 2009, vol. I, 155; de la Ilustración pensada a la Ilustración vivida); in other words, a redirection of historiographical interest from the great principles or intellectual programs to the embodiment of enlightened values and ideas in attitudes and specific practices (Jaffe and Lewis 2009).

In this regard, it is worth mentioning the studies on the production and dissemination of print materials, which have revealed the spread of presses and bookstores in the second half of the eighteenth century throughout the Iberian Peninsula, beyond the major centers of publication (Madrid, Valencia, Barcelona): the consolidation of the book market, until then heavily dependent on foreign—particularly French—presses and booksellers; the development of the periodical press and other inexpensive, accessible products that broadened the social base of the print market (see the syntheses by Saavedra and Sobrado 2004; Fernández 2009; Mantecón 2013). None of this, of course, detracts from the importance of the oral dissemination of ideas, the interactions between writing and orality (reading aloud, preaching, etc.), and handwritten or clandestine dissemination. On the other hand, research on the contents of private and institutional libraries indicates the slow erosion of exclusively religious readings in favor of others on history, education, economy and the sciences, and the circulation of theoretically prohibited works. Investigations on literacy and schooling confirm a certain reduction in illiteracy (despite significant inequalities according to gender, social status, and a rural vs. urban milieu) and a growing demand for instruction that the reformist projects to extend education (never defenders of an equal education, but rather profoundly differentiated) did not manage to satisfy. In economic history, interest shifted from production, the fundamental field of study in the 1980s, to consumption, with particular attention to developments in diet, attire, and the furnishing and decorating of homes, which involved broad

segments of the population (with the exception of the poorest) and constituted a phenomenon that was also cultural, indicative of aspirations to comfort, respectability, and modernity.

Likewise, the discovery of what in the 1980s was called the “provincial Enlightenment” accompanied historiographical development against the centralism that traditionally prevailed in the Spanish academic world, in the context of the new Spain that arose during the Transition. This development was fed by studies that revealed the demographic and economic impact of the Mediterranean and Atlantic cities of the Iberian Peninsula in the eighteenth century. In general, intellectual and artistic life gravitated strongly towards the Court, the radiating focus of an intensely centralist Bourbon cultural politics, where official institutions, many of the main presses, and most of the periodicals had their headquarters, attracting intellectuals in search of jobs or influence. However, the Enlightenment was also articulated through academies, universities, private *tertulias*, and periodical publications widely distributed across Peninsular and American territory (Larriba 1998).

More recently, the study of voyages has gained popularity. These included everything from the great scientific explorations of America to trips across Europe financed by the government or as part of a nobleman’s education. They not only contributed to creating increasingly cosmopolitan identities, but also to disseminating the experience of cultural diversity among broad swaths of the public, through the intense circulation of travel narratives (Pimentel 2003). It is little wonder, then, that Josefa Amar (1765, 1766-1767) advised women to read that type of literature to learn about “the breadth of the world from [within] their seclusion” (*desde su retiro, la amplitud del mundo*).

All those contributions from social and cultural—and not only strictly intellectual—history allow us today to understand the complexities of the changes of that century, conceptualizing the

Enlightenment as a more diffuse process with greater social and territorial importance, and Enlightenment men and women as actors inserted into networks of relationships and sociability.

Discarding the idea of “Spanish exceptionalism” has allowed us to review a classic theme from renewed analytical perspectives: Spain’s relationship with the rest of Europe in the era of its loss of the political and cultural hegemony that it had exercised in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Admiration for France, England, and the United Provinces of the Netherlands and the lament over Spain’s “decadence” and “backwardness” make up part of the self-awareness and rhetoric of enlightened eighteenth-century men and women, and stretch a line of continuity between them and the seventeenth-century *arbitristas* and *novatores*: Spaniards receive intellectual innovation from abroad, “as if we were Indians” (como si fuéramos indios), writes Juan de Cabriada in 1687 (Cabriada 1687, 230); and decades later, Feijoo repeats it in his *Teatro crítico* (1726). In a letter from Paris in 1778, José Viera y Clavijo (1849, 7) expresses a sharp sense of inferiority: “We are witnesses of the astonishing advances of this nation in the sciences and arts [...]. We turn our eyes to our own land, make the sad comparison, and look for a way to console ourselves” (Somos testigos de los asombrosos adelantos de esta nación en ciencias y artes [...]. Volvemos los ojos hacia nuestra tierra, hacemos la triste comparación, buscamos el modo de consolarnos). On the other hand, the use of comparison with other countries as a stimulus for criticism and reform does not prevent these enlightened men from feeling mistrustful of foreigners, as shown by criticisms of superficial cosmopolitanism and of the use of Gallicisms in language, fashions, and ways of life. However, these criticisms were hardly specific to Spanish society; rather, they became a common trait in a Europe seduced by the influence of French culture. What did become particularly acute in Spain was the defensive reaction to foreign criticisms, such as those of Montesquieu (*Lettres persanes*, 1721), some foreign travelers, Nicolas Masson de

Morvilliers, who in the *Encyclopédie méthodique* (Masson de Morvilliers 1782, 565) denied that the country had made any significant contributions to European culture in recent centuries, and those who questioned the procedures of the conquest and colonization of America, such as Father Raynal (*Historie philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes*, 1779) and the Scottish historian William Robertson (*History of America*, 1782). For some French philosophers (especially Voltaire), Spain was, for all intents and purposes, the true “other” of the Enlightenment: the very image of political despotism, religious fanaticism, imperial cruelty, disordered emotions, and sequestered women. That image was never the only one, since there was still some fear of the imposing Spanish empire, and its social changes and administrative, economic and military reforms were followed with interest (Checa 2012),² but it *was* the image that ended up being the most prominent and enduring in European Romanticism and in the construction of nineteenth-century Spanish nationalism, both conservative and liberal (Andreu 2016; Bolufer 2016).

These critical foreign texts unleashed a heated debate among Spanish intellectuals. The justifications of Spain encouraged by the Bourbon government (Antonio José Cavanilles, Juan Pablo Forner) alternated with more nuanced stances (Juan Sempere y Guarinos, Juan Andrés) and with voices that took advantage of the foreign attacks to rail against censorship and defend freedom of expression (Tomás de Iriarte, Luis García del Cañuelo in the newspaper *El Censor*). Rarer were criticisms from Spain against the process of the conquest: in general, eighteenth-century intellectuals closed ranks in its defense, and dissenting voices were quickly silenced.

Traditional historiography, taking a sense of patriotism for granted, interpreted these reactions as legitimate defenses of the collective honor against foreign insults. For some time now, though, we have viewed them rather as part of the symbolic construction of the nation that, in

Spain, has its most direct origins in the eighteenth century. The process was fomented by the loss in 1714 of the Netherlands, Naples, Sicily, and Sardinia (the Treaty of Utrecht), which left the Spanish monarchy limited, in Europe, to its own peninsular borders. It was fueled from above by the new Bourbon dynasty, with the suppression of the old laws and institutions of the kingdoms of the Crown of Aragon and an intense centralizing policy, but also driven from below by economic and cultural changes: the century's economic growth, which stimulated foreign trade, and the enlightened concept of patriotism understood as a contribution by private citizens to the public good (Cepeda and Calvo 2012).

The Enlightenment was, in Spain as in other countries, diverse and at times paradoxical. The most classic division is generally established between enlightened reformists—those who tried to reform the economy, society, politics, and culture without attacking the principles of social order or politics (the absolute monarchy)—and liberals, who since the 1780s had begun to defend ideas that went against the same foundations as the *ancien régime* and would end up, in the context of the institutional vacuum caused by the French invasion in 1808, leading to political breakdown (takeover by the Councils, legitimized as repositories of national sovereignty, and development of a daring constitutionalism that would give rise to the Constitution of Cádiz of 1812). However, the dividing line between one group and the other is less than clear. If we consider the changes in context and the individual biographical studies, the transition between enlightened absolutism and liberal breakdown is not a clean break, but a complex combination between the old and the new (López-Cordón and Luis 2005). On the other hand, that division does not explain all the internal differences between enlightened positions, which did not always fall tidily on one side or the other of that line. This can be seen, for example, in the debate regarding admitting women to the Royal Madrid Economic Society, in which conflicting notions of female citizenship were argued by

enlightened men who in other respects shared similar political and intellectual references (Kitts 1995; Bolufer 1998; Smith 2006). This multifaceted Enlightenment would be abruptly cut off by the French Revolution and Napoleon's invasion, but its rich, complex legacy spills over to the nineteenth century.

New Perspectives and Current Challenges

While the historiography on the Enlightenment in Spain has been profoundly revised in recent decades, it continues to be dogged by certain limitations. First, there is the problem of unfamiliarity of different approaches to the study of Enlightenment—in the fields of history, literature, philosophy, and political and economic theory—in a Spanish academic environment in which the disciplinary distinctions are acute. It is significant, for example, that the four main specialized journals, *Cuadernos de Ilustración y Romanticismo*, *Cuadernos Dieciochistas*, *Cuadernos de Estudios del Siglo XVIII*, and *Dieciocho: Hispanic Enlightenment*, are from the field of literary studies, with a much lower presence of historians.

Secondly, the often unconscious identification with enlightened values and reformist objectives and actions has led to less attention being paid to other aspects of eighteenth-century culture that cannot be identified with the Enlightenment, and so they are dismissed as archaic or static. Above all, this identification has led to frequently and uncritically sharing the viewpoint of those who considered themselves enlightened. This problem has been common to an international historiography that has tended to confuse the Enlightenment as a historical phenomenon with the Enlightenment as a system of intellectual and ethical values on which we base modernity. But this is exacerbated in Spain by the way in which the trauma of the Civil War conditioned the retrospective interpretation of the past. From the interpretive schema of the “two Spains,” the

reformist impulse of the Second Republic and its tragic end with the military coup that gave rise to the Franco dictatorship, supported by the Church and European fascisms, was identified with other historical episodes, among them, the battle between enlightened minorities and reactionary forces (Church, Inquisition, the common masses). These interpretive schemas gave way some time ago to more complex and less openly sympathetic views of the Enlightenment and its relations with power. These perspectives on the concerns specific to enlightened reformism have ceased to be viewed exclusively through the lens of the objectives that their protagonists explicitly declared (individual wellbeing and public usefulness). They are now also understood through their unacknowledged motivations and unintended effects, in which social control and moralizing efforts, corporate or professional interests, and individual ambitions all play a part, as occurred with populationist concerns or the reform of manners (Equipo Madrid 1988; Bolufer 2000; Medina Domínguez 2009).

More worrisome, furthermore, and only partially overcome in recent times, is the scant representation of Spanish historiography in international forums and the very limited presence of the Spanish Enlightenment in works that synthesize or give broad overviews of the field. That absence is not as noticeable in works published in France or Italy, historiographies with which there is a close relationship: two important historical dictionaries on the Enlightenment, coordinated respectively by Vincenzo Ferrone and Daniel Roche (1998) and by Michel Delon (1997), each include an article on the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal) (Fernández Sebastián).³ But the omission becomes obvious in English synthetic works. As just one example, the volume *The Enlightenment World* (Fitzpatrick et al. 2004) does not incorporate any Spanish or Latin American authors, nor is there any chapter specifically about the Spanish Enlightenment among the thirty-nine that make up the book. And the dossier of the *European Review of History*

entitled “Enlightenment and Communication” (2006), edited by László Kontler and resulting from a session of the Twentieth International Congress of Historical Sciences (Sydney, 2005), includes no work on the Spanish or Latin American Enlightenment; nor is it even mentioned in the introduction or final reflections on “the new topography of Enlightenment.”⁴ It is as if Spain had not yet completed the requirements to enter an international Enlightenment canon that has been expanded nowadays to include not only France and Prussia, but also Italy, Great Britain, Holland, and Scandinavia; nor had it proven to be sufficiently “exotic” to deserve attention within the new interest in the global Enlightenment. This translates into the scant interest and receptivity by a good part of British and North American historiography, but also demonstrates the weakness of cultural and intellectual history in Spanish historiography, and more broadly, the way in which it has always shown itself to be more inclined to assimilate international contributions and debates than to make its presence felt within them with its own voice.

However, the current trend of understanding the Enlightenment in terms of communicative practices and cultural exchanges (translation, trips, sociability, conversation), in relativizing the unique character of the Enlightenment and its identification with a clear center, offers better accommodation to other “lesser” Enlightenments that have been seen for a long time in terms of mere passive reception and imitation of ideas, forms, and cultural practices created in other places. In this sense, the approaches of recent times that underline the importance of the adaptations and reinterpretations suited to variable contexts have allowed for the enrichment and reformulation of the Hispanic Enlightenment, offering a means through which Spanish and Latin American historians are more actively participating in the global historiographical debate.

Among these new perspectives, and without exhausting all possibilities, there are three that seem especially worth noting. In the first place, **women’s and gender history**, whose emergence

began in the 1980s, connecting with the broad debate underway in international historiography, is one of the fields in which the studies from or about Spain have made the greatest impact on the habitually unreceptive English-speaking academia (Bolufer 2005; Bermúdez and Johnson 2018).⁵ The substantial presence of the discussion on the nature, formation, and social functions of women (see Jaffe's essay in this volume) and the fierce tenacity in defining and constructing, in behavior and in awareness, the models of femininity considered to be appropriate to the objectives of reformism (domestic, sensitive, patriotic, and religious without being overly pious) has been well demonstrated, as have been the corresponding but differentiated models of civic masculinity (Bolufer 1998; Haidt 1998; Smith 2006; Molina 2010). The controversy was related to (and at the same time helped foster) the greater social and cultural presence of women in many spaces of the century: as patronesses and hostesses in the aristocratic, elitist circles of sociability, but also as writers and translators (Bolufer 1998, 299-339; Lewis 2004, and her essay in this volume), as readers, and as part of the public that attended artistic, scientific and festive spectacles (Vega 2010). The conviction with which women like Josefa Amar and Inés Joyes criticized the inequality between the sexes, approaching Mary Wollstonecraft's stances without in the least sharing her more democratic political ideology, provide arguments for complicating an overly simplistic dichotomy between a "moderate" and a "radical" Enlightenment, which does not completely capture the complexities and paradoxes of ideas and experiences.

At the same time, this attention to aspects of gender allows us to broaden our understanding of enlightened reformism to also cover other aspects different from those that have traditionally been the center of attention: economic, administrative, and cultural projects, justified in the name of the regeneration and modernization of society and the increasing power of the State (agrarian reform; promotion of transportation, commerce, and manufacturing; legislative unification and

administrative centralization; defense and control of the colonial empire; cultural dirigisme, etc.). The reform of manners and the education of individuals (in their behaviors, moral values, and affections) was also an indissoluble part of the transformation of institutions and of society. This reform was occasionally attempted through legislative changes and political instructions (for example, the Royal Decrees [*Pragmáticas*] on marriage of 1776 and 1804), but mostly through an unfocused process by way of moral, educational, hygienic, and fictional literature, as in, for example, the promotion of the neoclassical and sentimental theater, considered to be very educational (García Garrosa 1990) and the production and circulation of medical texts with heavy moralizing and patriotic overtones (Bolufer 2000). Hence, the education of emotions and the construction of the private as a moral, pedagogical, emotional, and civic space that is articulated upon the difference between the sexes, and to which are attributed fundamental educational and political functions, constituted a process parallel to and closely related to the development of a new notion of “the public” (Morant and Bolufer 1998; Bolufer 2016).

Secondly, the study of the Enlightenment from a cultural—and not a strictly intellectual, philosophical or literary—perspective has allowed for the nuancing of the dichotomy established between a very minoritarian Enlightenment and a supposedly traditionalist, static, and almost inert **popular culture**, demonstrating that the relations between one and the other were more fluid and dynamic, and simultaneously paradoxical and frequently conflictive. In practice (reading, attending performances, sociability, consumption and material culture, etc.), the enlightened languages circulated more widely than we tended to think, through instruments of broad dissemination such as the theater or the periodical press. In the literary sphere, for a long time attention was focused exclusively on what was thought to be the “authentic” literature of the eighteenth century, the one that adopted enlightened forms and vocabulary, especially the essay

and neoclassical theater. But today there is new interest in other highly successful genres that are not merely a continuation of Baroque traditions (for example, Ramón de la Cruz's *sainetes*, which had very complex ideological roots), as well as in clandestine production or works of limited circulation (like erotic literature), which has led to reevaluating the complex relations between them (Aguilar Piñal 1996; Huerta and Palacios 1998). For example, new studies on *cordel* literature (chapbooks and popular prints) indicate how, despite official rejection, it gained a diverse following (including educated readers), was adapted by versatile printers, and carried both moralizing and ambiguous messages, which underlines the porous boundaries between "popular" and "highbrow" contents and forms (Gomis 2013). The works on autobiographical writing have traced the distinctions, but also the similarities, that "popular" autobiographical writings (by artisans, peasants, or nuns) show compared to other cultured models (those about literary life, or about achievements and services), interpreting them as a testimony to cultural and social interactions (Durán 2005, 2009). Another example is found in the public or private shows in which science, art, and illusion were closely intertwined: from balloon ascensions to experiments with electricity or optics, shadow puppets, or wax figures, which all enjoyed a certain respectability, and in which refinement, the pleasure of watching, and more or less scientific curiosity all went hand in hand, creating a largely shared visual culture, although crossed by differences of status, gender, and education (Lafuente and Pimentel 2005; Vega 2010).

Third and last, considering the **Atlantic and imperial dimension** of the Spanish Enlightenment and incorporating that perspective into the core of studies on the Hispanic eighteenth century is still largely a pending challenge for Spanish historiography, because traditionally the studies on peninsular Spain and colonial America have gone through separate academic routes. Today we can see a greater interest in emphasizing how personal and family

trajectories, books and periodicals, and material culture circulated from one side of the Atlantic and the Hispanic Pacific to the other, and in understanding to what extent the possession of the American territories and their transformation under Bourbon politics, from the condition of vice-royalties making up a single monarchy to that of colonies, also profoundly influenced the history of the Peninsula. In this sense, one example is provided by the studies on science, which have emphasized the undeniable but often forgotten importance that the Spanish colonizing enterprise had on the development of modern science, the way it was linked to politics and military strategy (for example, through the great scientific expeditions), and disseminating imperial ideologies (Lafuente 2012), but also how the science conducted in the colonies depended heavily on the local knowledge, objects, practices, and agents (*criollos* and indigenous peoples) that reelaborated, instead of passively consuming, the knowledge produced from the metropolis (Pimentel 2000 Lafuente 2000). And at the same time, the *criollos* (among them, notably, the Jesuits) developed views about history that questioned the primacy of the European metropolitan gaze (Cañizares 2001). Spanish and Latin American scholars have played a major role in highlighting the bias that colors the perspectives of the so-called global or transatlantic histories, which in their efforts to overcome Eurocentrism often identify the world with the British empire.⁶

All those new or revised perspectives today constitute open lines in Spanish historiography on the Enlightenment and its era, and they are enabling an active—no longer passive or reactive—integration into the global historiographical debate. As I wrote some time ago in a review of a valuable collective work (Astigarraga 2014), there are many ways in which putting the Hispanic Enlightenment (both peninsular and American) at the heart of eighteenth-century studies can help us to revitalize both of them. Greater attention to national and local varieties and contexts; an awareness of transatlantic, imperial dimensions; concern for forms of circulation (including

translation), understood not as passive reception or imitation, but as active adaptation, hybridization, and cultural transfer; interest in the practical, utilitarian dimension of Enlightenment, and a less teleological view of the connections between Enlightenment and revolution are some of the lines in which the most stimulating contributions of past and present scholarship (by specialists of Spain, Europe and the Americas) have already changed—and can continue to change—our perceptions of Enlightenment itself.

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Notes

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² See Paquette’s contribution to this volume.

³ Javier Fernández Sebastián is the author of the first of these articles. The second is the work of the Hispanist Lydia Vasques.

⁴ In the 4 volumes of the *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment* (Kors 2002), there is one entry on Spain, and another on Latin America, as well as several biographies on well-known peninsular or American Enlightenment personages.

⁵ It is also significant that the only well-known Hispanics in the index of names in *The Enlightenment World*—Benito Jerónimo Feijoo, Josefa Amar, and Inés Joyes—are authors who participated in debate on gender.

⁶ The dossier of the journal *Osiris* entitled “Nature and Empire: Science and the Colonial Enterprise” (2000) includes articles by several Spanish historians; see in particular those by Juan Pimentel (2000) and Antonio Lafuente (2000).

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