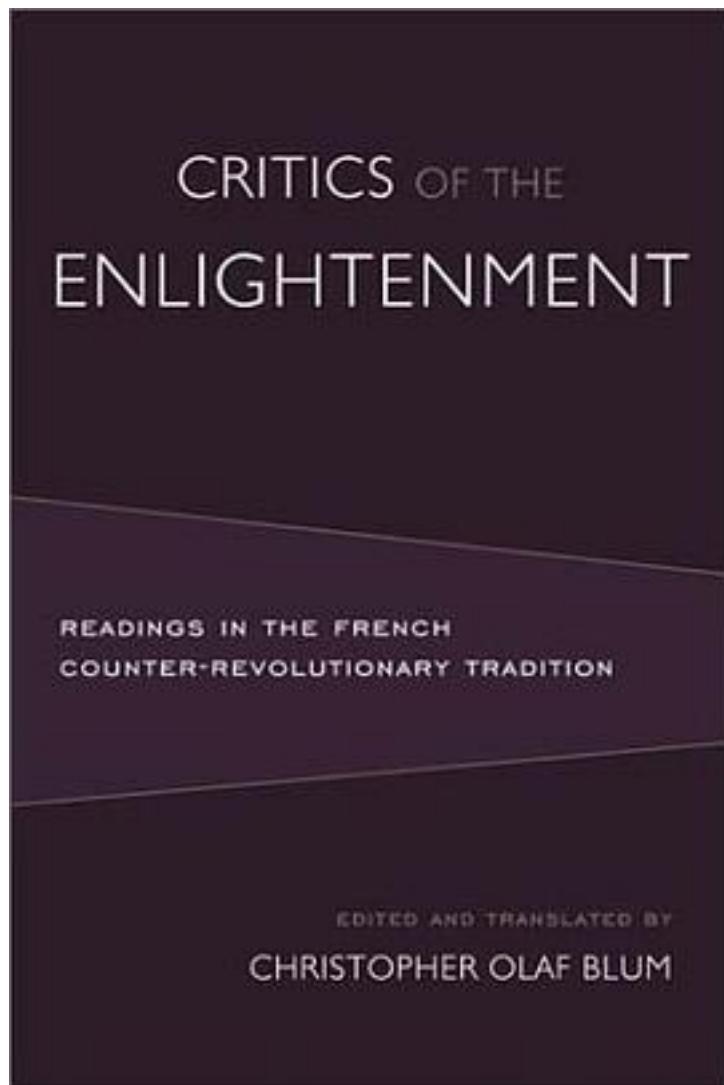


# Critics of the Enlightenment



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For the Anglo-American world, Edmund Burke is the touchstone of counter-revolutionary thought, but in this volume, Christopher Olaf Blum shows that in attempting to vindicate the principles that had, at its best, animated the Old Regime, and in critiquing the institutions and beliefs associated with the New Regime, the French counter-revolutionary tradition is unparalleled. To understand adequately what Georges Bernanos called the "spiritual drama of Europe," it is a tradition that must be grappled with. Critics of the Enlightenment makes available new translations of representative selections from some of the leading French conservative thinkers of the nineteenth century: Franois de Chateaubriand, Louis de Bonald, Joseph de Maistre, Frederic Le Play, Emile Keller, and Rene de La Tour du Pin. The selections span much of the nineteenth century, from Chateaubriand's 1814 pamphlet against Bonaparte to La Tour du Pin's 1883 essay on the theory of the corporate state. The volume, therefore, not only includes responses of the French conservatives to the French Revolutions of 1789 through 1815, but also testifies to the continuing elaboration of this critique against the background of the troubled nineteenth century. Blum's introduction sets these selections within the contexts of the events giving rise to them and the lives of their authors. The French political philosopher Philippe Beneton supplies the book's foreword. Blum's elegant translations of texts heretofore difficult or impossible to find in English allow Anglophone readers to profit from the counter-revolutionaries' insights about social and cultural matters of perennial importance, such as the necessary roles of religion, family, and local communities within any larger political society--matters of pressing concern to the counter-revolutionaries of our own time.

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