1. Introduction

This chapter argues three related points. First, a plurality of intersecting Catholic Enlightenment movements co-existed in eighteenth century France. While multiple strands of Catholic Enlightenment interacted in Old Regime France, at this point at least two widespread forms of Catholic Enlightenment discourses are evident in France: pro-

Unigenitus and pro-Augustinian Catholic Enlightenments. The catalyst for this distinctively French pluralization of Catholic Enlightenment was the papal bull Unigenitus (1713) that yielded a French Catholic Enlightenment both prematurely and acutely divided against itself. The first half of the eighteenth century was an era of uneasy coexistence.
and occasional conflict among strands of a pro-Augustinian, Jansenist self-consciously Gallican Enlightenment on the one hand, and a pro-
Unigenitus Catholic Enlightenment on the other. The pro-Augustinian Catholic Enlightenment has received much historical attention since
the 1970s. But despite a wealth a of historical scholarship on the significance of the Jesuits to the Enlightenment, no consensus has emerged
even on such indispensable issues as the extent to which Jesuits were
Aristotelians, Cartesians, or full-blown sensationalists in the mold of
John Locke (1632–1704). Yet, the first half of the eighteenth-century
was the apogee of rich and still under-studied Catholic Enlightenment
discourses galvanized, if not created, by Jesuits and then creatively
utilized by vernacular apologists (lay and clerical), some university
faculties, and many seminaries. pro-Unigenitus Catholic Enlighten-
ment tended toward Molinism and humanism in its moral philoso-
phy and soteriology, and was anti-Spinozan to a degree. Yet, it also
had made peace with Lockean sensationism and Newtonian physics
by synthesizing these newer perspectives with Nicholas Malebranche
(1638–1715)—all with a view to resuscitating the Thomistic arguments
so badly damaged by the three-fold challenges of Descartes (1596–
1650), Bayle (1647–1706), and Spinoza (1632–1677) during the fin de
siècle European crisis of consciousness (ca. 1650–1700) (P. Hazard).

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