

IMAGINING FRANCE: SECTION 1

Imagining the Outsider's View in Eighteenth-Century France

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Set Texts

Voltaire, *L'Ingénu* (1767), in *Romans et contes* (GF-Flammarion)
-- English translation, *The Ingenu*, in *Candide and Other Stories*, tr. by Roger Pearson (Oxford World Classics, 2006)

Graffigny, *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* (1747, rev. ed. 1752), any modern edition is fine
-- English translation: *Letters of a Peruvian Woman*, tr. by Jonathan Mallinson (Oxford World Classics)

[Extracts may be distributed in class] Montesquieu, *Lettres Persanes* (1721 [rev. ed. 1754])
– [Extracts may be distributed in class] English translation, *Persian Letters*, tr. by Margaret Mauldon (Oxford World Classics, 2008)

Course description

In the eighteenth century, French writers frequently use the fictional perspective of a foreign, or exotic observer to explore, defamiliarize and satirize aspects of their own culture. In this part of the course, we will focus on several key texts from this period (by some of the Enlightenment's most celebrated writers), to examine this very particular mode of exploring "Frenchness".

Provisional course outline

1: Introduction to module, intro to 'Imagining the Outsider's View', mini lecture (29 September 2014)

2: *L'Ingénu* [*The Ingenu*] (6 October)

3: *L'Ingénu* [*The Ingenu*] (13 October)

4: *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* [*Letters of a Peruvian Woman*] (20 October)

5 : *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* [*Letters of a Peruvian Woman*], commentary practice & conclusion (27 October)

Note the extra study-skills session taking place on Monday of Reading Week, for all Cultures & Languages first-year students (Monday 3 November, 6-8pm, Room 417 Malet St Building).

DEADLINE for commentary exercise on this part of the module (Monday 10 November 2014).

Suggested secondary reading

Background:

Norman Hampson, *The Enlightenment* (Penguin, 1968)

John Leigh, *The Search for Enlightenment: An Introduction to Eighteenth-Century French Writing* (Duckworth, 1999), Chapter 6

On Voltaire's 'L'Ingénu':

John S. Clouston, *Voltaire's Binary Masterpiece: 'L'Ingénu' Reconsidered* (Peter Lang, 1986)

* Robin Howells, *Playing Simplicity: Polemical Stupidity in the Writing of the French Enlightenment* (Peter Lang, 2002), esp. 216-221

* ----- *Disabled Powers: A Reading of Voltaire's Contes* (Rodopi, 1993), pp.113-125

* Roger Pearson, *The Fables of Reason: A Study of Voltaire's 'Contes philosophiques'* (Clarendon Press, 1993), relevant sections

Carol Sherman, *Reading Voltaire's 'Contes': A Semiotics of Philosophical Narration* (University of North Carolina Press, 1985), relevant sections

On Graffigny's 'Lettres d'une Péruvienne':

* Janet Gurkin Altman, 'A Woman's Place in the Enlightenment Sun: The Case of F. de Graffigny', *Romance Quarterly*, 38 (1991), 261-72

* Julia Douthwaite, 'Relocating the Exotic Other in Graffigny's *Lettres d'une Péruvienne*', *Romanic Review* 82 (1991), 456-74

Robin Howells, 'The *Péruvienne* and Pathos', *French Studies*, 55 (2001), 453-66

* Barbara Knauff, 'Figures of Female Alienation: The Use of Periphrasis in *Lettres d'une Péruvienne*', *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 26 (1997), 125-138

Nancy K. Miller, 'The Knot, the Letter and the Book', in *Subject to Change: Reading Feminist Writing* (Columbia UP, 1988), 125-61

Christine Rouston, 'Seeing the Other in Mme de Graffigny's *Lettres d'une Péruvienne*', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 9:3 (1997), 309-26

Downing Thomas, 'Economy and Identity in Graffigny's *Lettres d'une Péruvienne*', *South Central Review*, 10:4 (1993), 55-72

* Anne Vila, *Enlightenment and Pathology: Sensibility in the Literature and Medicine of Eighteenth-Century France* (1998), pp.140-149