

Geography in Voltaire's *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie*

Kathryn E. Fredericks

State University of New York at Geneseo

In *Placing the Enlightenment: Thinking Geographically about the Age of Reason*, Charles W. J. Withers explains that in the eighteenth century, geography was its own discipline and a source of theories concerning humanity that were developed by the *philosophes*: “The geographical location of Enlightenment ideas, personnel, and artifacts and their movement over space—that is, questions to do with place and travel between places—are key elements in understanding how the Enlightenment was made and what, actually it was” (9). One can say that the *philosophe* François-Marie Arouet, better known as Voltaire, contributed to this movement of ideas. Voltaire often resided abroad, both far away from and bordering France. For example, the *Lettres philosophiques*, based on his experiences while in exile in England, were first published in London in 1733 as *Letters concerning the English Nation*. In 1735, he was permitted reentry to Paris, but remained at Madame du Châtelet's in Cirey, on the border of France. In 1736, Voltaire went to Holland after the publication of his poem *Le mondain*, and in 1738, he published *Éléments de la philosophie de Newton*. For the next several years, he continued to move within Europe, to Prussia, coming and going from France. Voltaire was eventually banned from both the court of Paris and the court of Berlin (1754), and in 1755, he bought a house in Geneva (Les Délices), where he published *Essai sur les mœurs* in 1756 before making his residence in Ferney, in France but close to Geneva (Cronk, “Chronology” xi-xii).

In *La géographie des philosophes: Géographes et voyageurs français au XVIIIe siècle*, Numa Broc speaks of “La géographie historique” (257), and specifically treats Voltaire in this section, where he opens with a rather strong statement in praise of Voltaire's conscious effort and enthusiasm to include history and geography in his literature:

S'il est un écrivain du XVIII^e siècle, dont l'œuvre entière est marquée par le double relativisme historique et géographique, c'est bien Voltaire ; qu'on l'aborde par le biais de la « philosophie », de l'histoire, du roman, de la critique, partout se manifeste un souci constant de replacer l'homme dans le temps et dans l'espace. . . . Il n'est pas douteux que Voltaire ne se soit, durant toute son existence, passionné pour la géographie ; il affirme dans le *Dictionnaire Philosophique* que c'est « une de ces sciences qu'il faudra toujours perfectionner » (article *Géographie*) et l'*Essai sur les Mœurs*, montre que l'histoire et la géographie de la plupart des pays du monde lui sont familières. (263)

Broc asserts that Voltaire was attuned to and interested in geography throughout his life and that this is reflected in various genres of his writing. For example, in *La philosophie de l'histoire* (1765), which was later to become the Introduction to the *Essai sur les mœurs* (1756), we can say that Voltaire had, for the most part, divided his chapters “geographically,” or that a majority of the titles of the sections are names of different peoples of the world and different places on the globe. For example: “I. Changements dans le globe”; “III. De l’Antiquité des nations”; “VII. Des sauvages”; “VIII. De l’Amérique”; “X. Des Chaldéens”; “XI. Des Babyloniens devenus Persans”; “XII. De la Syrie”; “XIII. Des Phéniciens et de Sanchoniathon”; “XIV. Des Scythes et des Gomérites”; “XV. De l’Arabie”; “XVII. De l’Inde”; “XVIII. De la Chine”; “XIX. De l’Égypte”; “XXI. Des monuments des Égyptiens”; “XXIV. Des Grecs . . .”; “XXXIX. Des Juifs en Égypte”; and “L. Des Romains . . .” (*La philosophie de l'histoire* 295-97).

Though Voltaire had never been to some of the places he mentions, he is very much able to discuss them in detail from his impressive personal library as “un grand voyageur en chambre”:

Car l’expérience du voyage chez Voltaire n’est pas tout entière une expérience vécue, loin de là. Plus encore qu’un familier des grands chemins, Voltaire est un grand voyageur en chambre. Il n’est pas allé « à la Chine », mais il a dans sa bibliothèque non seulement les fameuses *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* ou la *Description de la Chine* du P. Du Halde, mais aussi les *Mémoires contenant l’histoire, les sciences, les arts, les mœurs, les usages, etc. des Chinois* publiés par Nyon à Paris en 1776-1777, et beaucoup d’autres livres moins répandus. (Menant 14)

The different place names can show us that “geography” was indispensable to Voltaire’s philosophical approach to culture across the ages. Voltaire presents these chapters in a way that allows one to believe and understand that the various peoples and cultures of the world are crucial in defining the very make-up of a geographic location. For Voltaire, place names are not simply geographic in their physical sense—a country or a nation is not just a series of latitudinal and longitudinal measurements, for example. Instead, place names and names of peoples belonging to specific nations resonate with one another in a way that Voltaire strives to elucidate.

For example, in “Changements dans le globe,” the first chapter of *La philosophie de l'histoire*, Voltaire calls for a search of revered “monuments” to provide us with a philosophy of history: “Tâchons de nous éclairer ensemble ; essayons de déterrer quelques monuments précieux sous les ruines des siècles” (25). We need to begin by finding and examining monuments left from man’s occupation of the Earth, which give accounts of human interactions, triumphs, and tribulations throughout history. Voltaire places man in space by saying that man has inhabited the globe throughout history: “Commençons par examiner si le globe que nous habitons était autrefois tel qu’il est aujourd’hui” (25).

In “De l’Amérique,” Voltaire does not ask about the physical landscape of America, but of the inhabitants of that land instead: “Se peut-il qu’on demande encore d’où sont venus les hommes qui ont peuplé l’Amérique ?” (61). In “De l’Inde,” Voltaire shows that mankind thrives there because of the beneficial proximity of the Ganges: “S’il est permis de former des conjectures, les Indiens, vers le Gange, sont peut-être les hommes le plus anciennement rassemblés en corps de peuple. . . . Or il n’y a pas de contrée au monde où l’espèce humaine

ait sous sa main des aliments plus sains, plus agréables et en plus grande abondance que vers le Gange” (103). He refers to the Chinese people as excellent geographers and scientists in “De la Chine”: “Si quelques annales portent un caractère de certitude ce sont celles des Chinois, qui ont joint, comme on l’a déjà dit ailleurs, l’histoire du ciel à celle de la terre. Seuls de tous les peuples, ils ont constamment marqué leurs époques par des éclipses, par les conjonctions des planètes...” (113). And, perhaps truest to Voltaire’s critical style, in “Des monuments des Égyptiens,” he uses the example of monuments to criticize tyranny and absolutism: “Leurs pyramides coûtèrent bien des années et bien des dépenses ; il fallut qu’une grande partie de la nation et nombre d’esclaves étrangers fussent longtemps employés à ces ouvrages immenses. Ils furent élevés par le despotisme, la vanité, la servitude et la superstition. En effet il n’y avait qu’un roi despote qui pût forcer ainsi la nature” (131). Voltaire puts the construction of the Egyptian pyramids at the center of a political critique. The physical object we observe is an “immense” work, to be admired. But what this object represents concerns the oppression of people, both Egyptians and non-Egyptians alike.

Voltaire’s philosophical approach to history and culture is discernible as well in essays such as *Lettres philosophiques* or *Lettres anglaises* (1734), *Le siècle de Louis XIV* (1751), and several of his plays and poems. Voltaire contributed to what has been called the age of dictionaries with *Le dictionnaire philosophique ou La raison par alphabet*, also known as the *Dictionnaire philosophique portatif* (1764). In addition, he wrote several entries on various topics for Diderot’s and D’Alembert’s *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* (1751-1772), such as the entry for “Histoire.” Nicholas Cronk describes Voltaire’s dedication to this project: “Voltaire se donne énormément de peine pour cet article, mais il est peu satisfait du résultat et demande qu’on lui renvoie son travail. Le sujet le passionne : « Je vous renvoie *Histoire*, mon cher grand homme [écrit-il à D’Alembert] ; j’ai bien peur que cela ne soit trop long : c’est un sujet sur lequel on a de la peine à s’empêcher de faire un livre »” (“Voltaire” 83). Though Voltaire found this to be an almost impossible task, the significance of understanding cultural history through philosophy remains at the center of his corpus.

Perhaps one of his biggest encyclopedic contributions is the lesser known but very rich work *Questions sur l’Encyclopédie* (1770-72), in which Voltaire responds to a number of entries present in the *Encyclopédie*. In *Questions sur l’Encyclopédie*, Voltaire’s article on “Géographie” (1772) is an example of an entry very often mistaken as being part of the *Dictionnaire philosophique*, as Broc cited above. The Voltaire Foundation has recognized this long-standing error concerning the publication of *Questions sur l’Encyclopédie*:

Les *Questions sur l’Encyclopédie* sont l’œuvre de Voltaire la plus volumineuse, et cependant l’une des moins connues. Elle a été perdue de vue en tant qu’œuvre à part entière suite à la décision des éditeurs de Kehl, dans les années 1780, de regrouper tous les articles alphabétiques de Voltaire sous le titre générique de *Dictionnaire philosophique*. La confusion s’est perpétuée à travers les éditions Beuchot et Moland de Voltaire au dix-neuvième siècle.

(2)

At present, the Voltaire Foundation is completing an eight-volume, critical edition of *Questions sur l’Encyclopédie*, a project which scholars can agree is very relevant and extremely overdue (Voltaire Foundation 1).

Voltaire's article on "Géographie" contained within his *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie* is found in the sixth part of the work and is the first entry of the second section. Nicholas Cronk and Christiane Mervaud have shown that unlike the *Encyclopédie*, which was collectively written by scientists and philosophers, *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie* were meant to be the work of a very different group altogether:

Voltaire présente les *QE* comme un ouvrage collectif répondant à la grande entreprise collective du temps, *l'Encyclopédie*. . . [I]l se propose seulement de présenter un « essai de quelques articles » qui complète ou corrige sur certains points le grand dictionnaire. . . [S]on objectif et . . . son originalité : présenter les questions de ceux qui se déclarent « douteurs et non docteurs ». (3; editors' notes)

In a review of Cronk and Mervaud's edition of *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie*, James Hanrahan speaks of the implications of the title that Voltaire chose for this work: "The full title suggests, just as the introduction [of *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie*] confirms, that 'Quelques gens de lettres qui ont étudié l'Encyclopédie, ne proposent ici que des questions, et ne demandent que des éclaircissements'" (157). Hanrahan says that the *Encyclopédie* is "a work that is praised in the highest terms in Voltaire's introduction" (157). Hanrahan is referring to such spatial evocations by Voltaire, in *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie*, as "L'Encyclopédie est un monument qui honore la France" and "Le discours préliminaire qui la précéda était un vestibule d'une ordonnance magnifique & sage qui annonçait le palais des sciences" ("Introduction" 1). Hanrahan recalls that: "In 1769 the Parisian printer Panckoucke proposed a new, extended edition of Diderot and D'Alembert's monumental work, with which Voltaire had agreed to collaborate" (157). To prepare, Voltaire "recruited collaborators of his own"; however, "the new edition was abandoned" (157). Voltaire did not give up on this endeavor, though, for he had "a series of articles already prepared" (157), and he "set about increasing their number in order to produce this work, with the modest ambition to 'présenter aux amateurs de la littérature un essai de quelques articles omis dans le grand dictionnaire, ou qui peuvent souffrir quelques additions, ou qui ayant été insérés par des mains étrangères, n'ont pas été traités selon les vues des directeurs de cette entreprise immense'" (157).

In his biography on Voltaire, René Pomeau notes that in January 1770, "Voltaire commence les *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie*, qui l'occuperont jusqu'en 1772; tâche immense : 9 volumes ; le dernier grand effort de Voltaire" (174). In the years before the beginning of *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie*, Voltaire continuously moved within Europe, in England and Prussia, for example, mainly due to various scandals and bannings of his work.¹ Voltaire's life had been rather tumultuous in the years leading up to his move to Geneva and his eventual (and permanent) move to Ferney. Much of his work had been considered scandalous and therefore he often had to flee Paris. In 1754, he was "[u]nwelcome at the courts of Paris and Berlin" after a "[r]ift with Frederick [of Prussia]" (Cronk, "Chronology" xii). In 1755, Voltaire purchased Les Délices in Geneva, and lived there for the next three years (xii). In 1759, he purchased land in Ferney, France, very close to Geneva and to the border of Switzerland, and the Château de Ferney remained his residence for the rest of his life (xiii). Voltaire bought the property in Ferney so that he

¹ See Pomeau (168-69).

could easily cross the border into Geneva if he was threatened by French authorities, and so that he could easily cross the border back into France if he was threatened by Swiss forces. The safety of that location ensured for Voltaire a relative peace of mind with which he could write with less fear of retribution. In that respect, notable is the fact that “Voltaire fait son entrée à Genève” in 1754, and the following year we find “[le] début de sa collaboration à *l'Encyclopédie*” (Pomeau 171). Voltaire was in Ferney when he wrote *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie*, and they were first published in Geneva (Kølving 1019). *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie* were considered scandalous mainly because of Voltaire's discussion of religion, as shown in his *Correspondence* from 1770-71. In December 1770, the Genevese authorities wrote that they wished to examine the orthodoxy of *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie*:

... il y avoit tout lieu de croire que dans l'ouvrage de Mr De Voltaire intitulé *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie* qui s'imprime actuellement à Genève, & dont les trois premiers volumes paroissent déjà, il y a bien des morceaux qui attaquent la Religion révélée & qu'il proposoit que l'on prit une résolution à cet egard. Dont opiné, l'avis a été de nommer une Commission pour examiner ce qui paroît de cet ouvrage & Nous donner les informations nécessaires. (Appendix D 338 reproduced in Besterman 121: 468)

Later, in March 1772, Genevese authorities still had the same concerns:

On a dit qu'il se répand dans la ville des livres contraires aux mœurs et à la Religion, & qu'il avoit paru depuis peu une histoire critique de la vie de Jésus Christ & les derniers volumes des questions sur l'Encyclopedie [*sic*], ouvrages impies et scandaleux, dont il importoit fort d'empêcher le début, D.O. l'avis a été de charger Mr le Modr [Joël Henri de Waldkirch] & Mr l'ancien [Jean François] Goudet d'aller à Mr Le 1^{er} s. [Michel Lullin] et de le prier d'arrêter un désordre aussi fâcheux et de faire tous ses efforts pour ut supra. (Appendix D 356 reproduced in Besterman 122: 484)

In his article “Géographie” in *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie*, Voltaire brings to light an ethical necessity at the heart of spatial epistemology. Voltaire's entry on geography can be interpreted two ways. The first approach is epistemological, having to do with the ways in which to dispel ignorance or error to acquire more accurate knowledge. The second is ethical, and both can be analyzed through the following quotation, which arguably summarizes Voltaire's position: “Il est bien difficile en géographie comme en morale, de connaître le monde sans sortir de chez soi” (260).

Concerning epistemology, Voltaire describes what he calls inaccuracies. In the opening line of the article, he writes: “La géographie est une de ces sciences qu'il faudra toujours perfectionner” (258). Voltaire implies how crucial it is for one to know the measurements of the globe and the countries on Earth. He points out the inaccurate measurement of the world at the time. He blames sovereigns for pursuing power over scientific undertakings: “Il faudrait que tous les souverains s'entendissent & se prêtassent des secours mutuels pour ce grand ouvrage ; mais ils se sont presque toujours plus appliqués à ravager le monde qu'à le mesurer” (258). Voltaire uses here two different verb tenses very closely to each other, as he passes from “il faudra” to “il faudrait” in these opening lines. The future tense indicates that perfecting geography is an endless task, or geography will always be inaccurate. Voltaire's insistence on not repeating errors that are known to be errors is

great evidence of the pedagogical posture of the *Encyclopédie*. This can be considered as both positive and pessimistic at the same time, as is discussed by Foucault in reference to Kant's *What Is Enlightenment?*² Geography will always have to be updated or "perfectionner" over time. In using the conditional mood, Voltaire implies a request, that science should be an internationally funded or protected endeavor. This is imperative in order to avoid the mistakes highlighted in this entry, which would help the discipline of geography be more scientifically accurate and would promote peace in the world.

Voltaire spends the majority of this first part on inaccuracies giving a long, harsh critique of the work of Johann Hübner (1668-1731), a German geographer and teacher during the Enlightenment who was the author of a widely available book on geography, *La géographie universelle* (260). We see here that Voltaire is concentrating heavily on the repetition of geographical mistakes of the past, while also discussing the present state of affairs concerning knowledge on geography in Europe and in France. Voltaire dedicates four full pages (260-64) of "Géographie" giving the accounts of numerous mistakes in Hübner's work. He, therefore, criticizes its acceptance as *the* reference book on geography during the Enlightenment.

Hübner becomes the comical target of Voltaire's wit, demonstrating how fraudulent scientific discourse can be, through a compilation and accumulation of errors pervading Hübner's book. Voltaire's critiques of Hübner are blatant and quite comical, for he notes inaccuracies on a variety of issues: on temperature (261), on population (261), on habitable and inhabitable land (261), and on history (262-64), for example. Voltaire presents these criticisms in list form, a satirical device which appeared in texts well before the eighteenth century, going as far back as the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. In *The List: The Uses and Pleasures of Cataloguing*, Robert E. Belknap explains that: "Patterns of listing have been identified and conceptually categorized [for centuries]. . . . In the sixteenth century, Henry Peacham recorded many of these strategies in his catalogue of rhetoric *The Garden of Eloquence*" (7). Lists establish links and chains that are not necessarily connected in a linear fashion. "To build lists, the compiler connects one link to another. These chains can have all kinds of compositions, an endless variety of lengths, and any number of purposes" (34). A list is multidirectional in form and meaning: "The format of a list, its vertical or horizontal orientation, is simply another feature of its versatility" (23).

The second approach to Voltaire's article on "Géographie" in *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie* has to do with ethical implications of Voltaire's notion of "sortir de chez soi," literally meaning leaving home or one's place, and by extension leaving the self, encountering and giving place to the other. Voltaire considers the ethical dimension of geography when he notes a comparable difficulty in geography and morality, namely that knowing (the world) can happen only by "sortir de chez soi"—knowledge can only happen by leaving one's home. By writing this phrase Voltaire poses questions of ethics and alterity within the self or of a knowledge that needs to be spatialized in order to come to fruition. He says that there is no knowledge at home, in the self ("chez soi") that does not go through an experience of the other or "sortie" out of one's home or oneself. Here we can refer to the

² In *What Is Enlightenment?* Foucault discusses the fact that the Enlightenment was and is a good project for human history, and it can also be considered as an endless project (318-19).

philosophy of Voltaire, specifically to his *Traité sur la tolérance* on responsibility to the other:

Il ne faut pas un grand art, une éloquence bien recherchée, pour prouver que des chrétiens doivent se tolérer les uns les autres. Je vais plus loin ; je vous dis qu'il faut regarder tous les hommes comme nos frères. Quoi ! mon frère le Turc ? mon frère le Chinois ? le Juif ? le Siamois ? Oui, sans doute, ne sommes-nous pas tous enfants du même père, et créatures du même Dieu ? (226)

Fraternity for Voltaire may be understood as being based on resemblance, shared by children of the same father. Humankind is fundamentally one and the same despite superficial differences. The other is my brother, for we have a similar fundamental nature.³ However, consideration of Lévinas' notion of fraternity may help us interpret Voltaire's position differently.

In *Totality and Infinity: An essay on Exteriority*, Lévinas states that he will found subjectivity in the idea of infinity, and as "impossible exigencies" of hospitality and justice (27). Lévinas explains that his work "will present subjectivity as welcoming the Other, as hospitality" (27). *Totality and Infinity* explores how to let the other be. For Lévinas, the notion of fraternity based on resemblance does not respect the separateness of the individual. In that respect, he speaks directly to the responsibility that we have to the other:

Equality is produced where the other commands the same and reveals himself to the same in responsibility; otherwise it is but an abstract idea and a word. It cannot be detached from the welcoming of the face, of which it is a moment. The very status of the human implies fraternity and the idea of the human race. Fraternity is radically opposed to the conception of a humanity united by resemblance... Society must be a fraternal community to be commensurate with the straightforwardness, the primary proximity, in which the face presents itself to my welcome. (214)

This idea of "fraternity" is crucial to Lévinas, for he states that it is central to "[t]he very status of the human." Conversely, he shows that resemblance of a united humanity is "radically opposed" to this "fraternity" and that society cannot properly exist without the "fraternal community." In that sense, fraternity does not entail being or thinking alike, but being gathered in a space hospitable to and in proximity with each singularity. When Voltaire mentions leaving one's home, he says that the people of "la rue St. Jacques" (a metaphor for Parisians) are guilty of failing to see beyond their immediate vicinity, which becomes, in their eyes, the standard against which everything must be appraised: "Votre sottise voisine, & votre voisin encore plus sot, vous reprochent sans cesse de ne pas penser comme on pense dans la rue St. Jacques" (264-65). The ignorant people on the rue St. Jacques reject difference, and therefore cannot perceive what is common to humankind. In many essays, Voltaire is attentive to the plurality of customs and therefore to difference, but he also believes that differences can always ultimately be related to a common way of

³ In his article "La face cachée de Voltaire," Roger-Pol Droit describes what he calls Voltaire's "autre face" and challenges the labeling of "[l]'homme des Lumières" as "un ami des ténèbres" through raising the following issues concerning considerations of the legacy of Voltaire: "Les préjugés oubliés," "Sexiste ordinaire," "La haine des juifs," and "Mahomet, « tyran criminel »."

thinking. For a non-provincial mind, it is always possible to understand difference. One may also interpret Voltaire's "sortir de chez soi" as the urge to encounter alterity, including within the self, or, as Lévinas writes, "the astonishing feat of containing more than it is possible to contain" (27).

Concerning considerations of ethics and morality, in the eighteenth century they were thought of together. For example, if we look at the entry for "Éthique" in the *Encyclopédie*, a very short entry of which the author is unknown, we see that the term, though "no longer commonly used," is cross referenced with "Morale":

ÉTHIQUE, s. f. est la science des mœurs. Ce mot qui n'est plus usité, ou dont on ne se sert que très-rarement pour désigner certains ouvrages, comme l'*Éthique* de Spinoza, &c. vient du grec ἠθoς, *mœurs*. Voy. MORALE, DROIT NATUREL, &c. (211)

Louis de Jaucourt explains that "Morale," also known as the "science of manners or customs," is initially explained as the "science of men," since rational, "reasonable" beings deal with it:

MORALE, s. f., *Science des mœurs*, c'est la science qui nous prescrit une sage conduite, & les moyens d'y conformer nos actions.

S'il sied bien à des créatures raisonnables d'appliquer leurs facultés aux choses auxquelles elles sont destinées, la *morale* est la propre science des hommes; parce que c'est une connoissance généralement proportionnée à leur capacité naturelle, & d'où dépend leur plus grand intérêt. Elle porte donc avec elle les preuves de son prix; & si quelqu'un a besoin qu'on raisonne beaucoup pour l'en convaincre, c'est un esprit trop gâté pour être ramené par le raisonnement. (228)

Jaucourt adds:

J'avoue qu'on ne peut pas traiter la morale par des arguments démonstratifs, & j'en fais deux ou trois raisons principales. 1°. Le défaut de signes. Nous n'avons pas de marques sensibles, qui représentent aux yeux les idées *morales*; ... 2°. Les idées *morales* sont communément plus composées que celles des figures employées dans les mathématiques. ... 3°. L'intérêt humain, cette passion si trompeuse, s'oppose à la démonstration des vérités *morales*. ... (228-29)

For Jaucourt, morality and religion ought to be considered as separate subjects, and moreover, morality can outweigh faith: "Enfin ce seroit mal connoître la religion, que de relever le mérite de la foi aux dépens de la *morale*; car quoique la foi soit nécessaire à tous les chrétiens, on peut avancer avec vérité, que la *morale* l'emporte sur la foi à divers égards" (232).

Jaucourt explains five reasons for this: First: Morality is more useful than faith: "1°. Parce qu'on peut être en état de faire du bien, & de se rendre plus utile au monde par la *morale* sans la foi, que par la foi sans la *morale*"; Second: Morality perfects human nature: "2°. Parce que la *morale* donne une plus grande perfection à la nature humaine, en ce qu'elle tranquillise l'esprit, qu'elle calme les passions, & qu'elle avance le bonheur de chacun en particulier"; Third: Moral rules are more common amongst civilized nations than differing rules of faith: "3°. Parce que la règle pour la *morale* est encore plus certaine que celle de la foi, puisque les nations civilisées du monde s'accordent sur les points essentiels

de la *morale*, autant qu'elles diffèrent sur ceux de la foi"; Fourth: To be a sceptic of faith is not as serious as being immoral: "4°. Parce que l'incrédulité n'est pas d'une nature si maligne que le vice ; ou, pour envisager la même chose sous une autre vue, parce qu'on convient en général qu'un incrédule vertueux peut être sauvé, sur-tout dans le cas d'une ignorance invincible, & qu'il n'y ait point de salut pour un croyant vicieux"; and finally: The human conscience seems to be directed by morality: "5°. Parce que la foi semble tirer sa principale, si ce n'est pas même toute sa vertu, de l'influence qu'elle a sur la *morale*" (232-33).

Voltaire wrote a rather brief entry for "Morale" in *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie*, in which we can see that he picks up where the *Encyclopédie* entry left off, as he speaks exclusively of religion and morality:

Bavards prédicateurs, extravagans controversistes, tâchez de vous souvenir que votre maître n'a jamais annoncé que le sacrement était le signe visible d'une chose invisible ; il n'a jamais admis quatre vertus cardinales & trois théologiques ; il n'a jamais examiné si sa mère était venue au monde maculée ou immaculée ; il n'a jamais dit que les petits enfans qui mouraient sans batême seraient damnés. Cessez de lui faire dire des choses auxquelles il ne pensa point. Il a dit, selon la vérité aussi ancienne que le monde, Aimez DIEU & votre prochain ; tenez-vous-en là misérables ergoteurs, prêchez la morale & rien de plus. Mais observez-la cette morale ; que les tribunaux ne retentissent plus de vos procès ; n'arrachez plus par la griffe d'un procureur un peu de farine à la bouche de la veuve & de l'orphelin. Ne disputez plus un petit bénéfice avec la même fureur qu'on disputa la papauté dans le grand schisme d'Occident. Moines, ne mettez plus (autant qu'il est en vous) l'univers à contribution ; & alors nous pourons vous croire. (87-88)

Here, Voltaire explains that the clergy should focus on spreading the word of God in the "moral" lesson that essentially makes up part of the Roman Catholic Church's Ten Commandments: Love the Lord your God, and love your neighbor as yourself. He here criticizes the institution of rites not found in the Bible as well as the greed of the Church. Voltaire separates morality and religion. The present behaviors of the Church do not show moral acts towards fellow man, and in order for citizens to "believe" their moral teachings, they need to observe changes in the Church's actions.

The Enlightenment embraced notions of geography as a human, historical, and philosophical discipline, notions that were originally developed during Antiquity (Broc). How man inhabited a given space and what implications this had on society were of interest. Voltaire's works have been studied from a variety of perspectives, mostly by literary scholars who focus on his texts in themselves or in comparison with those of his contemporaries, but also by historians of ideas and philosophy. In his article on "Géographie" in *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie*, Voltaire places man at the center of the discipline and links both geography and morality. Voltaire spatializes the observation of moral practice with respect to human interaction and human occupation of the world. Without a passage through the other, both geography and morality would be inadequate and incomplete. By focusing on "sortir de chez soi"—"leaving home" or "leaving the self"—we note not only the relevance of social space in the Enlightenment, but also the ethical obligation of the self to the Other that is often associated to thinkers of that period, and especially to Voltaire.

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