



## “Justifier Voltaire”

Staël’s reassessing of polemical writing

Publication type: Journal article

Journal: [Cahiers staëliens Germaine de Staël et le Groupe de Coppet 2020, n° 70. Le Groupe de Coppet et l’écriture polémique](#)

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Abstract: Voltaire is traditionally considered a counter-model for Staël: the famous denunciation of “persiflage” in *De l’Allemagne* confirms to what point the author of *Candide* represents not only a philosophy far away from Staël’s values and principles, but also a taste for controversy that she cannot approve for ethical reasons. The question, though, might be trickier because Staël, always questioning Voltaire, thinks controversy rather than she blames it.

Pages: 13 to 26

Journal: [Staël Studies](#)

CLIL theme: 4027 -- SCIENCES HUMAINES ET SOCIALES, LETTRES -- Lettres et Sciences du langage -- Lettres -- Etudes littéraires générales et thématiques

EAN: 9782406110811

ISBN: 978-2-406-11081-1

ISSN: 2540-3680

DOI: 10.15122/isbn.978-2-406-11081-1.p.0013

Publisher: Classiques Garnier

Online publication: 11-16-2020

Periodicity: Annual

Language: French

Keyword: Germaine de Staël, Voltaire, philosophy, Enlightenment, Controversy, *Candide*, irony, materialism

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