

Enlightenment. Education. Perception. French philosophy.

The aim of the present text is to analyse the function of philosophical fictions in French 18th-century philosophy. These fictions are based on the idea of an innocent gaze, cast on our own culture and perception; such a gaze is often connected with a figure of alterity: a child, a stranger, a blind or deaf person etc. The author argues that this gaze, in fact, is most often refracted, that is to say, it is a gaze of the philosopher himself who only imagines the alterity in question. This principal thesis is illustrated by examples taken from two realms: the theory of perception (Condillac's statue) and the theory of education (Rousseau and Mme de Genlis).

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