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Candide, The enhanced edition V 2.0. Paris: Orange - Bibliothèque nationale de France – 2012. 754MB, Free.

Review by Eric Johnson, Kutztown University.

This is the first H-France review ever for an iPad app. It seems fitting that it is based on one of the iconic works of the French Enlightenment, since the many eighteenth-century *philosophes*—if not always Voltaire himself—believed that the greater diffusion of knowledge would elevate humanity, a sentiment that is also evident in today's Digital Revolution. *Candide: The enhanced edition* was produced as a collaborative effort between the French telecommunications giant Orange, the Bibliothèque Nationale, and the Voltaire Foundation. It harnesses many of the possibilities of modern digital technology to create an experience of Voltaire's classic that transcends the basic text, inviting the user to explore a digital landscape that is rich in images, thematic essays, and video clips. As a hypertext document with no definitive starting point or ending, every individual user will have a different self-guided experience with each use.

The app opens to a home screen where the user will find basic instructions, a place to login for some of the web-based features, a search page, and a biographical introduction to Voltaire and his novella. From there the app is divided into three sections: *le livre*, *le monde*, and *le jardin*. *Le livre*, as the title implies, consists of the complete text of *Candide*. It is searchable, and the user has the additional options of listening to an audio recording by Denis Podalydès—*Sociétaire* of the *Comédie-Française*—and viewing the transcribed text alongside zoomable color images of the original manuscript at the BnF. The transcribed text is interactive and a tap of the finger will note words and phrases that appear differently in other early versions, create hyperlinks to character descriptions and other extended features, and bring up editorial notes.

The section labeled *Le Monde* opens a map tracing Candide's travels, and it is here that the potential for digital media is most realized. Each stage of the journey can be tapped to jump to the appropriate section of the text. Many points also open special content that elaborates on some of the major themes of the book, such as war (Holland), paradise (Thunder-ten-tronckh), utopia (El Dorado), the Inquisition (Lisbon) or the status of women (at sea where the Old Woman recounts her tribulations). Each of these thematic sections has a vast library of images, documents, and video clips from a variety of historians and literary experts. Together, these resources help place the themes in the context of eighteenth-century French society and in many cases provide an even wider historical perspective. For example, the section called *Le malheur des femmes?* contains documentary excerpts ranging over more than two millennia from Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* to Simone de Beauvoir's *Le Deuxième Sexe* and Marguerite Yourcenar's inaugural address at the Académie française. The theme on war brings together Machiavelli's *The Prince*, La Fontaine's *Ligues des rats*, Art Spiegelman's graphic novel *Maus*, and the UN *Declaration of the Right of Peoples to Peace*.

Le Jardin is designed to be a web-based collaborative space, much like a message board or blog, where readers can post images and comments in a virtual discussion. The garden contains several *arbres de la connaissance*, each representing a recurring theme or metaphor within the story such as the noble savage,

money, or irony. Different contributions appear on the branches of each tree as a notebook that can be opened with a tap. The designers' intent is for an instructor to be able to create an entry and have students share their responses, but there appear to be some bugs to work out here. In order to add content, a user must register and create a profile, but as of the end of July 2013 this function was still unavailable. Also, the search function for the *Jardin* requires very precise language. To get to the tree for the noble savage, one must search for *le bon sauvage*. Just entering the terms *sauvage* or *bon sauvage* will not bring any results. While the *jardin* is still sparsely populated (at this writing there are only four trees) this does not pose much of a problem, but if as the developers envision it becomes a dense forest, this lack of search flexibility could cause some user issues in finding a particular discussion.

Candide: The enhanced edition has far more content than can be described here, and one could easily spend more time meandering through the digital *mondes* and *jardins* in the app than it takes to read the actual novella. As a sourcebook this would seem to be a superb resource for students. It is free, and as far as being faithful to the original, it is hard to beat high-definition images of the original manuscript, although it may have been more interesting to see the printed 1759 Geneva edition instead, since that would have been closer to the experience of the original readers. Still, as with any technological innovation in education, it is worth asking whether all of this dazzling media actually contributes anything worthwhile, or whether it is just another example of "edutainment."

All in all, this app strikes a balance between form and content and avoids the common pitfall of allowing sleek design to distract the user from its real purpose as a learning tool. As attractive as the layout is, it is also simple and straightforward and easy for the less tech-savvy to master. The extended content is very thought provoking, and it is easy to imagine it stimulating many classroom discussions. There are, however, significant limitations to the long-term potential of this app. It is only available in French on iPad, so either of these restrictions will prevent many people from being able to use it. This app does not seem to be updated very often (the most recent update was in March 2013) and the login function for the *Jardin* may remain inoperative even though the developer stated it would be available in early 2013. In this environment of rapidly changing devices, it is impossible to say whether this app will remain compatible with future generations of tablet computers (that is if tablets are not soon replaced with wearable computers), and so it would be difficult for a teacher to make a long-term investment in this app at this point.

These shortcomings fall more on the developers and the nature of digital media than on the actual product, which is very good. The same factors that allow digital media to open new possibilities, which are either too cost-prohibitive or physically impossible for the printed text, make it dependent on constant maintenance and updates as new devices, versions of operating systems, and technologies appear. This can be especially problematic in a classroom setting where a software glitch, hardware failure, server crash, or outdated equipment could render a multimedia presentation useless. Still, digital media will continue to play a role in academia and *Candide: The enhanced edition* represents an important—albeit ephemeral—milestone in its evolution. While this app may not be the best of all possible worlds, for anyone who has an iPad with 754MB of free space, it is certainly worth a free download.

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