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European Drama and Performance Studies

Le Suicide à la scène

Sous la direction de Noémie Courtès



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Voltaire's School of Suicide Learning from the Other and Killing Oneself in *L'Orphelin de la Chine*

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- **Author:** Smith (Blake)
- **Abstract:** This article examines a moment in Voltaire's 1755 play *L'Orphelin de la Chine*, an adaptation of a thirteenth-century Chinese drama. The heroine of this piece prepares to commit suicide after a speech in which she cites the example of Japanese suicide practices. This episode marks a rupture in Voltaire's treatment both of China and of suicide. More profoundly, it questions the relationship between two of his goals for theater: depicting the customs of foreign cultures and inspiring virtue.
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