Candide

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF VOLTAIRE

François-Marie Arouet was born in 1694 to an elite family well placed in the French royal bureaucracy. Though his father wanted him to find a position of power in public life, Voltaire defied him by becoming a writer. Establishing himself in literary circles, he debuted in 1718 with the publication of the tragedy *Oedipe*. Voltaire's writing got him into trouble many times in his life. For one long period starting in 1726, he exiled himself to England to escape from prosecution for defamation. There, he stayed at the estate of Lord Bolingbroke, in whose circle he met the writers Jonathan Swift, Alexander Pope, John Gay, and others. Voltaire's time in England introduced him to Newtonian science and other radical intellectual ideas of the time. When he returned to France, he dedicated himself to fighting "hydras and superstition," with his philosophical and satirical writings. This earned him many enemies, especially in the government as well as in the religious establishment, which was dominated by the Jesuits. By the time of his death in 1778, France had embraced Voltaire as a national hero. The French Revolution, still to come, was the ultimate culmination of the Enlightenment thinking of which Voltaire was a part. Since then, his popularity has only grown: *Candide* is still the most widely taught work of French literature in the world.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

One of the greatest historical influences on *Candide* was the Lisbon Earthquake of 1755, a catastrophic natural disaster that caused many Europeans to doubt their faith. Another was the Seven Years War, the first real "world war" in history. The fact that war exists throughout the world in *Candide* has a lot to do with the Seven Years War. Voltaire was part of a group of thinkers and writers, called the *philosophes* or *encyclopedistes*, who can be described as the vanguard of the Enlightenment. The *philosophes* wanted to advance science and secular thinking, and were generally opposed to the power and influence of the Catholic Church. Voltaire was one of the contributors to Denis Diderot's famous Encyclopedia, often seen as the epitome of Enlightenment thinking.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

The *Bible*, especially the Book of Genesis, is one model for *Candide's* plot. Like Adam and Eve, Candide and Cunégonde are exiled from an earthly paradise and forced, by the end, to work hard just to survive. *Candide* has a far closer relationship with contemporary books of literature and philosophy. As a philosophical novel, it is a response to Gottfried Leibniz's writings, especially *Monadology* (1714), from which the phrase and idea of the "best of all possible worlds," is taken. As a satire, it is influenced by Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726). Swift, along with Alexander Pope and John Gay, were among the circle of writers who influenced Voltaire during his stay at the estate of Lord Bolingbroke. Prior to writing *Candide*, Voltaire wrote many pamphlets and polemics, as well as his *Poem on the Lisbon Disaster* (1756) which deals with similar philosophical issues.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** *Candide: or, Optimism*
- **When Written:** 1758-1759
- **Where Written:** Ferney, France
- **When Published:** 1759
- **Literary Period:** Lumières / Age of Enlightenment
- **Genre:** Satirical Novel / Philosophical Novel / Coming-of-Age Novel / Picaresque
- **Setting:** Germany, Portugal, Spain, Buenos Aires, Paraguay, France, Venice, and Constantinople.
- **Climax:** Candide, Cunégonde, and the other characters are reunited in Turkey, where they plan to live out the rest of their lives cultivating their garden.
- **Point of View:** Third-person omniscient

EXTRA CREDIT

Public Intellectual. Because of the close relationship between his political, philosophical, and literary activities, as well as his tremendous influence, Voltaire is often seen as one of the world's first and greatest public intellectuals.

"Let us eat the Jesuit. Let us eat him up!" This phrase, from the chapter with the Oreillons, became part of popular speech in France after *Candide's* publication—just one indicator of the book's incredible popularity.

PLOT SUMMARY

Candide is a young man who lives in the Barony of Thunder-ten-tronckh. There, he is instructed by the philosopher Pangloss, whose doctrine is that we live in "the best of all possible worlds." One day, the Baron's daughter Cunégonde comes across Pangloss having sex with Paquette, her mother's chambermaid. Inspired, she approaches Candide, intending to do the same. Unfortunately, the two are caught kissing. Furious,

the Baron kicks Candide out of Thunder-ten-tronckh. Candide wanders from place to place, and is eventually tricked by two Bulgarian soldiers into joining their army. He performs well in military exercises, but flees like a coward in the first battle.

Candide makes his way to Holland, because he has heard it is a rich country. There, he begs for money, generally without success. The wife of a Protestant orator dumps a chamber pot over his head after he refuses to say that the Pope is the Antichrist. Eventually, he is taken in by the altruistic Anabaptist Jacques. Shortly thereafter, he comes across Pangloss, who is ill with syphilis. Jacques takes Pangloss in, and also pays for his cure. Pangloss loses an eye and an ear to the disease, but survives. The three travel to Lisbon, debating philosophically on the voyage there.

As soon as they reach the Bay of Lisbon, there is a terrible storm. The ship sinks, and Jacques the Anabaptist dies. Pangloss and Candide float to shore, but as soon as they land, the terrible Lisbon Earthquake takes place, killing thousands. Candide and Pangloss survive, but are soon after arrested by the Inquisition, which is holding an auto-da-fé (a public festival for the punishment of heretics) in an attempt to prevent future earthquakes. Candide is publicly whipped, and Pangloss is hung. Candide despairs, beginning to doubt Pangloss's optimistic philosophy.

An old woman approaches Candide and leads him to a house in the country. There, he is reunited with Cunégonde, who is being sexually shared by the Grand Inquisitor and a Jewish merchant named Don Issachar. Don Issachar and the Grand Inquisitor both enter the house shortly thereafter, and Candide kills each one as he enters.

Candide, Cunégonde, and the old woman flee all the way to Buenos Aires in South America, where Candide is put in charge of a military company mustered for the war against the rebelling Jesuits in Paraguay. The Governor, Don Fernando, wants to keep Cunégonde as his mistress. News arrives that the minions of the murdered Inquisitor are about to land in Buenos Aires, and Candide flees with his valet Cacambo.

Cacambo takes Candide to the Kingdom of the Jesuits, where he discovers that the Reverend Commandant is none other than the young Baron of Thunder-ten-tronckh. Their tearful reunion takes an unexpected turn when Candide announces his intention to marry Cunégonde, the Baron's sister. Outraged, the Baron attacks Candide, who stabs him through the stomach in self-defense. Candide weeps, overcome with remorse for having now killed three men.

Candide and Cacambo flee the Jesuit Kingdom and head for the wilderness. There, a mishap results in their capture by the savage Oreillons, who take them for Jesuits and prepare to eat them. Thanks to Cacambo's charisma, the Oreillons release them.

Candide and Cacambo wander through the wilderness for a long period of time. Totally by accident, they reach El Dorado, a utopian society filled with precious metals and happy people. Candide concludes that this must be the "best of all possible worlds," which Pangloss described. Though they are happy in **El Dorado**, a desire for fame and glory causes Candide and Cacambo to leave. The King of El Dorado helps them depart from the isolated place, giving them many riches and a flock of red sheep as a parting gift. A few days after leaving El Dorado, Candide and Cacambo come across an African slave who is missing his hand and left leg.

Knowing that he will be arrested if he returns to Buenos Aires, Candide sends Cacambo to search for Cunégonde, promising to meet him in Venice. Candide himself heads to Suriname, where he tries to arrange passage back to Europe. He is tricked by the ship owner Mynheer Vanderdendur, who steals his flock of sheep and abandons him. At this point, Candide is almost ready to abandon his optimism completely.

Nevertheless, Candide manages to arrange a journey to Bordeaux with Martin, an impoverished scholar and pessimist whom he chooses as his traveling companion. On the way there, a battle takes place between two ships, and one of Candide's **red sheep** floats up from the wreckage, alive—he takes this as a good omen.

Candide and Martin arrive in Bordeaux, and then head to Paris. In Paris, Candide is tricked and robbed by the devious and superficial Abbé of Perigord and Marchioness of Parolignac, along with many other minor characters.

Candide and Martin briefly go to England, and then move on to Venice. There, Candide finds Paquette in the arms of Friar Giroflée—she has become a prostitute. Candide and Martin visit the home of Pococuranté, a wealthy Venetian Senator who is dissatisfied with everything he has. Soon after, they have dinner with six kings who have been deposed. At the dinner, Candide finds Cacambo, who informs him that Cunégonde is working as a servant in Turkey.

Candide, Cacambo and Martin travel to Turkey. On the ship which takes them there, they find Pangloss and the Young Baron, both of whom have been enslaved. Candide pays to have them both freed. When he arrives in Turkey, he does the same for Cunégonde and the old woman. By now, after lengthy journeys and countless misfortunes, all of the major characters have been reunited.

Cunégonde has become ugly, but Candide still wishes to marry her. When the Baron, her brother, opposes it, they send him back to Rome—by force. The two marry, and all of the remaining characters move to a small farm. There, they complain about their misfortunes and discuss philosophy endlessly.

One day, Candide comes across an old Turkish farmer, with a garden he takes care of with his children. The man seems to be happier with his lot than Candide and the other characters.

Because of him, Candide is inspired to abandon the endless questions of philosophy for the solace of practical work. He concludes that while we are alive, "we must cultivate our **garden**."

CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Candide – The protagonist of *Candide*. He is a simple man with good judgment and a pure heart, who spends the novel in search of his beloved Cunégonde. During his journey, he goes back and forth between the optimism taught to him by Pangloss, and the pessimism which his experiences—and Martin—teach him. His name means "white," or "shining," and indicates his innocence and purity of heart.

Cunégonde – A beautiful young woman, daughter of the Baron of Thunder-ten-tronckh. She is pursued by Candide throughout the novel, during which time she passes into the possession of a long sequence of men: the Bulgarian Captain, Don Issachar, the Grand Inquisitor, Don Fernando, and others. Cunégonde is a symbol for the futility of human desires: she is always out of Candide's reach, and once she is no longer, her beauty is gone. Her name is considered, by some scholars, to be a pun on the words for female genitals in French and Latin.

Pangloss – Candide's teacher, a philosopher who follows the teachings of the philosopher Leibniz. Pangloss argues that this world is "the best of all possible worlds," and none of his many misfortunes—including enslavement, hanging, and losing an eye and an ear to syphilis—can convince him otherwise. His name means "all-tongue," reflecting his tendency to speak at length about philosophy no matter what is going on.

The Young Baron –Cunégonde's brother, and the heir to the Barony of Thunder-ten-tronckh. Almost killed by the Bulgarians, he revives and becomes the Jesuit Reverend-Commander in Paraguay. Though Candide rescues him and his sister several times, he fanatically opposes Candide's marriage to Cunégonde, because Candide is not noble. The Young Baron represents the aristocracy and its stubborn privileges.

Farmer – An old farmer who offers a meal to Candide, Martin, and Pangloss at the end of the novel. They discover that he has little knowledge of what is going on in the world, and instead is focused on maintaining his farm, which he claims saves his family from "weariness, vice, and want." He inspires Candide and the others to focus on hard work.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Martin – An impoverished scholar whom Candide meets in Surinam and takes on as a traveling companion. The polar opposite of Pangloss, Martin is a pessimist, who believes that everything in this world is for the worst.

The Old Woman – A servant to Don Issachar who helps reunite Candide and Cunégonde, and who afterwards becomes Cunégonde's constant companion. The Old Woman is wise from a long and difficult experience of life: she was born a Princess, but became a servant.

Cacambo – He is Candide's valet, a native Peruvian who ends up in Spain. Cacambo is worldly, and knows something about everywhere and everything. He goes with Candide to El Dorado, where he acts as a translator. He also locates Cunégonde at the very end of the novel.

Paquette –She is a chambermaid in the castle of Thunder-ten-tronckh. During a lesson in "experimental natural philosophy"—i.e. sex—she gives Pangloss syphilis. She reappears in the novel in Venice, where she is working as a prostitute and is seen by Candide and Martin with Giroflée.

Friar Giroflée –He is a Venetian friar of the Theatin Order, who hires Paquette for her services as a prostitute.

Jacques the Anabaptist – An altruistic character, who takes in Candide and Pangloss when they are impoverished in Holland. He dies on the trip to Lisbon, left to drown by a sailor he has just rescued.

Pococuranté –A rich Venetian Senator visited by Candide and Martin. Though he is incredibly wealthy, he is indifferent to all of his possessions, and seems unhappy. His name means "cares little," reflecting his blasé attitude and indifference.

Governor Don Fernando d'Ibaraa, y Figueora, y Mascarenes, y Lampourdos, y Souza –He is the Governor of Buenos Aires. When Candide and Cunégonde arrive there, he takes Cunégonde as his mistress.

The Abbé of Perigord –The Parisian companion of Candide and Martin when they are visiting the city. The Abbé tricks Candide out of some money by writing fake letters from Cunégonde, as well as arranging a fake reunion.

The Marchionness of Parolignac – A Parisian woman who seduces Candide and takes two of his diamond rings in the process.

The King of El Dorado –A wise and kind ruler who is puzzled when Candide and Cacambo want to leave his perfect and happy kingdom. Nevertheless, he helps them depart.

The Old Man of El Dorado –An old man who teaches Candide and Cacambo about the laws and customs in El Dorado.

The Grand Inquisitor – Along with Don Issachar, one of the two men who share Cunégonde while she is in Portugal. He organizes the auto-da-fé in which Candide is whipped and Pangloss is hung. He is murdered by Candide when he comes to see Cunégonde.

Don Issachar – A Jewish merchant, one of the two men who share Cunégonde while she is in Portugal. He is killed by Candide when he comes back to his house to see Cunégonde.

The Six Kings – A group of six exiled or deposed kings who Candide and Martin meet in Venice at an inn.

The Dervish – A wise Turkish mystic and philosopher. When Pangloss and the others come to ask him about the meaning of life, he slams his door in their faces.

The Old Turkish Man – An old farmer who inspires Candide and the others to find meaning to life in their work.

The Baron of Thunder-ten-tronckh – He is Cunégonde's father, and the ruler of Thunder-ten-tronckh. When he finds Candide kissing his daughter, he literally kicks him out of the Barony. He is killed by the Bulgarians.

The Baroness of Thunder-ten-tronckh – She is Cunégonde's mother.

The Bulgarian Captain – He kills the soldier raping Cunégonde, and then takes possession of her. He sells Cunégonde to Don Issachar.

The Bulgarian King – He pardons Candide for deserting from the army.

The Protestant Orator – He asks Candide if he believes the Pope is the antichrist. When Candide says that he does not know, he curses him.

Mynheer Vanderdendur –A Dutch merchant and slave owner who steals Candide's sheep in Suriname and then sails away. He is killed, later, in a battle with a French warship.

The African Slave –He is Vanderdendur's slave. Candide and Cacambo come across him while traveling to Suriname. When he tells them about slavery, Candide is horrified.

THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.

OPTIMISM AND DISILLUSION

Candide pits the optimistic doctrine of Pangloss—that we live in the "best of all possible worlds"—against the long and senseless series of misfortunes endured by Candide and the other characters. Candide begins the novel as a faithful student of Pangloss, but painful experience prompts him to reconsider his views. Candide's disillusionment is gradual. As he sees more of life and the world, he becomes less and less convinced that suffering and evil exist as part of a larger divine harmony. By the end, Candide comes to know that good is not always rewarded with good, that the New World is as filled with war and religious confusion as the Old, and that the best of intentions are no protection against the worst of outcomes. Even so, *Candide* suggests that the struggle of human life—an endless cycle of optimism and disillusionment—might in fact be preferable to a static faith in the "best of all possible worlds. As Pangloss concludes at the novel's conclusion, "man is not born to be idle."

The disillusionment of Candide mirrors that of many Europeans in Voltaire's era. Scientific discoveries and natural disasters—especially the Lisbon Earthquake of 1755—made many people begin to doubt the existence of an all-powerful and infinitely good God: if there were such a God, why would he let such awful things happen? The branch of philosophy which tried to respond to this question was called theodicy, and its most famous proponent was Gottfried Leibniz, the historically real philosopher and mathematician on whose teachings those of Pangloss are modeled. Leibniz argued that evil existed because it was necessary to bring about an ultimate good, as part of a "pre-established harmony," created by God.

THE ENLIGHTENMENT AND SOCIAL CRITICISM

Candide is a central text of the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment was an intellectual movement in Europe which flourished during the 17th and 18th centuries. It questioned, and often harshly criticized, traditional views of science, religion, and the state. Enlightenment thinkers believed in using reason and scientific experiment, rather than doctrine and custom, as a guide in the remaking and improvement of life and society. They also advocated for greater legal and social equality between men.

As a novel of the Enlightenment, *Candide* satirizes and critiques almost every powerful institution of its era. Churches, the aristocracy, and the military are viciously lampooned. Characters like the Grand Inquisitor, the Bulgarian Captain, and the haughty Young Baron showcase the prejudice and irrationality of 18th century institutions. This direct, irreverent criticism of subjects considered sacred for centuries prior is central both to the Enlightenment, and to Voltaire's work. So, too, is the faith in the power of human reason and equality between men, best represented by the **garden** at the end of the novel.

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY VS. THE WORLD

Candide satirizes the huge gap between the world and the way it is philosophically and religiously explained. The doctrines of religious groups and philosophers active during Voltaire's life are made to look ridiculous and out of touch with reality when juxtaposed with the events of the novel. Pangloss' philosophy of optimism appears foolish—even insincere—when set beside the misfortunes of his life: exile, enslavement, execution, vivisection, syphilis, and academic

obscurity. His explanations also become more circuitous and outlandish as the narrative proceeds. By the very end, Pangloss is suggesting that all of the miseries the characters endured were necessary to bring them to the present moment: enjoying candied pistachios in the **garden**.

Candide also criticizes religion as a means of making judgments about the world. Despite his good character and judgment, Candide is unfairly mistreated by religious zealots of all kinds, who take him to be an enemy because of his ignorance of their beliefs and doctrines. In the end, Candide rejects the dogma and sophistication of religion and philosophy. Refusing to enter any further into the debates of Martin and Pangloss, he comes to the pragmatic conclusion that "we must cultivate our garden"—in other words, that practical reason and hard work are more useful than theology and philosophy in making sense of the world. Like many of the conclusions reached by Candide, this reflects a trend in the Europe of Voltaire's era: science and more politically focused philosophy were taking the place of theology, which since medieval times had been known as "the Queen of the Sciences."

LOVE AND WOMEN

Candide's search for Cunégonde is what threads together the novel's otherwise senseless sequence of adventures. The pursuit of Cunégonde, and of other women, is also the reason for the most of the characters' misfortunes: from the Candide's expulsion from Westphalia, to Pangloss' syphilis, contracted from Paquette. Candide uses women as a symbol of insatiable human desire (or perhaps, more specifically, male desire), a force which causes pain and conflict in the world. Women in the novel are almost always a cause for conflict and violence: there is violence between men over women, as well as violence committed upon women by men. Women are also used by the novel to illustrate the futility of human desire: by the time Candide reaches Cunégonde, she has lost her youth and beauty, and he no longer desires her (though he still marries her).

The use of women as symbols and plot devices in *Candide* should not distract from the novel's serious consideration of the suffering and oppression of women. In a novel filled with characters who suffer great misfortunes, it is worth noting that female characters are arguably the worst off: not even Pangloss endures as much misery as the old woman in the captivity of the Moroccan pirates.

WEALTH

Candide is a subtle critique of wealth and its pursuit. When Candide leaves **El Dorado**, laden with riches, it seems plausible that this newfound wealth will help him to find Cunégonde. Instead, it attracts no end of tricksters and hangers-on, from the Dutch merchant Vanderdendur who robs and abandons Candide in Suriname, to the imposter Cunégonde in Paris. Candide's vast riches (and their gradual disappearance) are one of the great ironies of the novel. Not only do his riches not help him—they hold him back, slowing down his journey as thieves and flatterers—like the Abbé of Perigord and the Marchioness of Parolignac—gather around him. In the world of this novel, the pursuit of wealth is not just immoral, but useless. The rich Venetian Pococuranté has everything he could ever need, but remains unhappy. Tellingly, in El Dorado, the one place in the novel which comes close to resembling "the best of all possible worlds," wealth and valuables are treated as useless trifles. Candide himself takes the same attitude, never haggling with the characters who offer him outrageous prices.

SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.

EL DORADO

El Dorado represents the kind of world imagined by utopian philosophers. El Dorado might be the "best of all possible worlds," but at the same time, it is made to seem unbelievable. Even more importantly, El Dorado is inhuman. As we see throughout *Candide*, and learn explicitly by the end, "man is not born to be idle," and the happiness of the El Doradans is based on their idleness: they always stay put. El Dorado symbolizes the impossibility of utopian dreams. The novel suggests that the same desires which cause Candide and Cacambo to leave El Dorado would make any utopian society impossible—mankind is too restless.

THE GARDEN

The garden where Candide and the other remaining characters live at the end of the novel is a symbol for the world as it might be if improved by reason and the philosophy of the Enlightenment. Like Westphalia in the beginning of the novel, it resembles the Garden of Eden, but with some important differences. First of all, the characters are all on equal footing—the Baron is the only character who insists on aristocratic privileges, and he has been sent back to Rome by force. Second of all, practical work and reasoning have become more important than abstract philosophy. This is what Candide communicates when he ignores Pangloss' long rant at the very end of the novel and responds that "we must cultivate our garden." The egalitarianism and practicality of the garden make it a symbol for a secular, Enlightenment Eden.

THE RED SHEEP

A single red sheep—the last remaining from Candide's El Doradan flock—floats up from the ocean after a battle. Candide rescues it, and sees it as a sign that he will eventually be reunited with Cunégonde. The single red sheep represents Candide's last shred of optimism, which he manages to hold on to even after all the bad things he has experienced.

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Dover Publications edition of *Candide* published in 1991.

Chapter 1 Quotes

"It is demonstrable," said he, "that things cannot be otherwise than as they are; for all being created for an end, all is necessarily for the best end. Observe, that the nose has been formed to bear spectacles—thus we have spectacles. Legs are visibly designed for stockings—and we have stockings. Stones were made to be hewn, and to construct castles—therefore my lord has a magnificent castle; for the greatest baron in the province ought to be the best lodged. Pigs were made to be eaten—therefore we eat pork all the year round. Consequently they who assert that all is well have said a foolish thing, they should have said all is for the best."

Related Characters: Pangloss (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 1-2

Explanation and Analysis

In the opening pages of the novel, we're introduced to two of its main characters: Professor Pangloss and his pupil Candide. Candide is a classic "blank slate" narrator: he just soaks up information and experience. Here, for example, he learns from his professor that the world consists of everything that is the case; furthermore, the fact that everything in the world "fits together" (like a nose and spectacles) and was presumably created by a just God proves that the world is the best it can possibly be. Every event has a cause, and the ultimate result of any event must be happy in the end. In short, Pangloss believes that everything happens "for the best."

The passage is, needless to say, illogical and backwards, a parody of the optimism of Voltaire's contemporaries. Voltaire satirizes the famous "argument from design"--the idea that the world "fits together" and therefore must have been made by a benevolent God. But the examples that Voltaire puts in Pangloss's mouth prove that he doesn't take the argument from design very seriously: we all know that the nose wasn't formed to bear spectacles; it's the other way around. Humans haven't been given their place in the universe; rather, they've actively manipulated their environments to produce a comfortable world to live in (just as humans invented spectacles to fit on the nose).

The passage is a satire of religion and religious optimism in all its forms. There were many religious fanatics in Voltaire's lifetime who believed that everything was a blessing from God--even events that seemed tragic. Even the philosopher Leibnitz wasn't immune to this logic, and argued that evil is meant to produce good (i.e., everything happens for the best).

Chapter 2 Quotes

Candide, all stupefied, could not yet very well realize how he was a hero. He resolved one fine day in spring to go for a walk, marching straight before him, believing that it was a privilege of the human as well as of the animal species to make use of their legs as they pleased.

Related Characters: Candide

Related Themes:

Page Number: 4

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Candide is captured by soldiers and forced to learn military exercises until he becomes a talented soldier. Candide is bewildered the entire time: he's a passive character who'll do whatever the people around him order him to do. One day, Candide cheerfully walks away from the military base where he's been staying, reasoning that it's his right to walk wherever he pleases. Little does Candide realize that he's convinced the soldiers that he's trying to desert--as a result, he's arrested.

The passage is a good example of Candide's "blank slate" quality. More often than not, Candide is "stupefied" by the people around him: he's so innocent and pure that he can barely be said to have a personality. And yet Candide is also the embodiment of the human right to be free: he just walks "wherever his legs will carry him," satirically showing how oppressive it is for any institution or authority (like the military) to limit this most basic of human instincts.

Chapter 3 Quotes

"My friend," said the orator to him, "do you believe the Pope to be Anti-Christ?"
"I have not heard it," answered Candide; "but whether he be, or whether he be not, I want bread."

Related Characters: Candide, The Protestant Orator (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 6

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Candide stumbles upon a group of pious Protestants. The Protestants ask Candide to admit that the Pope is a villain--the Antichrist, in fact. Candide, who barely knows where he is or who his new "friends" are, replies that he doesn't particularly care about the Pope; he just wants some food.

The passage is often interpreted as a satire of the schism between the Protestants and the Catholics that arose during and after the life of Martin Luther. For more than 1000 years, Christianity in the West was generally unified and uniform; however, in the late Middle Ages, a group of Christians called the Protestants rebelled against the Christian (or Catholic) church for what it perceived as the corruption of religious leadership. The schism prompted hundreds of years of radical, bloody warfare throughout "civilized" Europe, prompting many intellectuals, including Voltaire, to point out how absurd the schism really was: why argue over Gods and Popes when people are going hungry? The passage is also a good example of Candide's boundless innocence: he just wants to eat, sleep, and be happy. At times, Voltaire makes fun of Candide's simplicity, and yet he seems to see virtue in Candide's down-to-earth nature: Candide could never be seduced by religious fanaticism.

Chapter 4 Quotes

"Alas!" said the other, "it was love; love, the comfort of the human species, the preserver of the universe, the soul of all sensible beings, love, tender love."

Related Characters: Pangloss (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 8

Explanation and Analysis

In this darkly comic passage, Candide reunites with his old professor, Pangloss, who's caught syphilis. Candide, who's used to thinking of Pangloss as a cheerful, happy-go-lucky fellow, is shocked to see his old teacher looking so miserable. He asks Pangloss how he's come to catch such a horrible disease, and Pangloss sheepishly admits that he caught the disease because of "love" (he had sex with a chambermaid).

The passage is funny because previously, Pangloss had spoken of love in a lofty, abstract way: he'd claimed that love holds the universe together. Here, however, Pangloss is talking about a more human, earthly form of love: sex. His syphilis seems to undermine his previous thesis that everything happens for the best: on the contrary, the lofty forces he'd previously extolled, such as love, don't really exist; in their place we have real-world phenomena like sex and, unfortunately, disease. The notion of catching syphilis after sex is a cheeky inversion of Pangloss's old thesis: previously he'd claimed that a moment of sadness will inevitably be replaced by some happiness down the line; here, however, a moment of pleasure is immediately punished by a lifetime of discomfort.

"This present Paquette received of a learned Grey Friar, who had traced it to its source; he had had it of an old countess, who had received it from a cavalry captain, who owed it to a marchioness, who took it from a page, who had received it from a Jesuit, who when a novice had it in a direct line from one of the companions of Christopher Columbus. For my part I shall give it to nobody, I am dying."

Related Characters: Pangloss (speaker), Paquette

Related Themes:

Page Number: 8

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Voltaire satirizes many different things at once. Candide is shocked to hear that Pangloss has contracted syphilis from Paquette, the chambermaid. Pangloss proceeds to list out the "history" of his particular disease, tracing its long genealogy all the way back to Christopher Columbus. The joke is that Pangloss's "genealogy" is a parody of people claiming nobility or greatness by listing their ancestors, but this list is just one of people passing syphilis on to each other. Furthermore, in

the "genealogy" Voltaire brings down the institutions and members of the clergy, the aristocracy, and the military to Pangloss's level as well--they're all just humans and human ideas, passing around human diseases, despite all their wealth and pretensions.

"It is more likely," said he, "mankind have a little corrupted nature, for they were not born wolves, and they have become wolves; God has given them neither cannon of four-and-twenty pounders, nor bayonets; and yet they have made cannon and bayonets to destroy one another. Into this account I might throw not only bankrupts, but Justice which seizes on the effects of bankrupts to cheat the creditors."

Related Characters: Jacques the Anabaptist (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 9

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Jacques and his companions Pangloss and Candide are traveling to the city of Lisbon. Jacques disagrees with Pangloss and Candide about the nature of good and evil. Jacques insists that evil is real, and that it emanates from human nature. Jacques lists a formidable number of examples, including war (and the various machines of war).

Jacques's reaction to Pangloss's naive optimism could be taken as a more "modern" position on human nature. Many of the Europeans who lived through long, bloody religious wars were forced to conclude that man, quite aside from being inherently virtuous, has the capacity for violence and destruction--how else to explain entire nations ripping each other apart over religious conflict?

Chapter 5 Quotes

"What can be the sufficient reason of this phenomenon?" said Pangloss.
"This is the Last Day!" cried Candide.

Related Characters: Pangloss, Candide (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 10

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Candide and Pangloss have just witnessed the famous Lisbon Earthquake, a massive tragedy and one of the key events in religious history. The Lisbon Earthquake went down as a symbol of the unpredictability of the world: Lisbon was regarded as one of the holiest cities on the planet, and yet God seemingly chose to destroy it. Voltaire parodies the naive acceptance of tragedy that followed the earthquake, depicting Pangloss and Candide bickering over the "causes" of the catastrophe (as Candide is buried under wreckage, by the way).

Candide and Pangloss believe that it is important to identify the causes of the earthquake, and conclude that God is judging all of mankind (it's the Biblical "Last Day" of mankind). The point of the scene is that Pangloss and Candide can't accept that today's accident is just a random event, and move past this to actually help the people being hurt. Instead, they feel the universe must have a "plan," and therefore God *must* have intended the earthquake to happen--and the philosophy behind the earthquake is more important than the individuals affected by it.

Chapter 6 Quotes

"If this is the best of possible worlds, what then are the others?"

Related Characters: Candide (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 13

Explanation and Analysis

Candide witnesses a sea-change in Lisbon. Following the disaster of the earthquake, the leaders of Lisbon conclude that the only way to avoid another disaster is to please God by persecuting all religious heretics. Innocent people are horribly tortured and killed in order to prove the city's loyalty to God. Candide is horrified by the carnage he witnesses, all the more so because it's done in the name of divinity. He remembers Pangloss's old pronouncement that the world is the best of all possible worlds; he wonders what other worlds could be worse than the one he's living in. Pangloss himself has been sent away to be hanged for his supposed heresy, further reinforcing the foolishness of Pangloss's abstract optimism.

Chapter 8 Quotes

"For my part, I have so far held out against both, and I verily believe that this is the reason why I am still beloved."

Related Characters: Cunégonde (speaker), Don Issachar, The Grand Inquisitor

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 18

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, we learn that the beautiful Cunegonde has been captured by authorities in Lisbon and exploited for her sexuality. She's the property of a wealthy Jewish man named don Issachar, who quarrels with the leading religious authority in the land, the Grand Inquisitor: they both want to have sex with Cunegonde. In the end, they agree to share her, though Cunegonde insists that she's "held out" against them.

This passage is searingly critical in the way that it depicts religious authorities and "pillars of society" as brutal rapists who want to own women, in spite of the prohibitions against sex in their religion. In a strange way, the passage comes across as a defense of racial and religious diversity, albeit with the cynical twist. There's no use claiming that the Jews are inferior to the Christians, or that the Jews are hopelessly corrupt and sexually dangerous, Voltaire implies: the truth is that all human beings are equally evil and predatory. Much like Candide preserving his innocence in the face of the world's corruption, Cunegonde's ability to "hold out" sexually against her owners signals her virtue, whatever virtue is worth.

Chapter 11 Quotes

"Our men defended themselves like the Pope's soldiers; they flung themselves upon their knees, and threw down their arms, begging of the corsair an absolution in articulo mortis."

Related Characters: The Old Woman (speaker)

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 25

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, an old woman tells us the sad story of her life. She was born into a wealthy family (her father was the Pope--scandalous!) and engaged to be married to a handsome prince. However, her good fortune ended suddenly when a group of dangerous Moroccan pirates captured her at sea. The woman's protectors and guards, agents of the Pope, were of no help--instead of fighting against the pirates to the death, they begged for mercy, a line of defense that, of course, didn't work.

The passage is an interesting example of Voltaire's even-handedness when it comes to depicting other cultures. One could argue that the Moroccans are a racist stereotype ("dangerous" Africans) and yet in a way, the pirates come across as smarter and stronger than the old woman's guards, who are so cowardly and naively faithful in their religion that they'd rather pray for mercy than fight. The passage is also a good example of the meaninglessness of the universe: religion and optimism simply don't have much currency here.

Chapter 12 Quotes

"A hundred times I was upon the point of killing myself; but still I loved life. This ridiculous foible is perhaps one of our most fatal characteristics; for is there anything more absurd than to wish to carry continually a burden which one can always throw down? to detest existence and yet to cling to one's existence? In brief, to caress the serpent which devours us, till he has eaten our very heart?"

Related Characters: The Old Woman (speaker)

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 29

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, the old woman tells us more about her life story. After being kidnapped by pirates, the old woman endured horrible torture. Throughout all her tortures, however, she clung on to life itself: although she could have killed herself in any number of easy ways, she preferred to stay alive, hoping that things would get better somehow. The woman notices the odd (though extremely common) reasoning of her choice: she could have relieved herself of all pain through suicide, and yet she preferred life, even a harsh, painful life.

The passage is one of the best examples of how optimism and naive hope aren't wholly bad or useless. Voltaire makes fun of Pangloss for his naive belief in the goodness of the world, and yet it's hard to disagree with the woman's actions in this passage. As "rational" as it would be to end her own life, the woman decides to have hope and carry on. Perhaps human beings are hard-wired for the kind of naive optimism the woman embodies: which means that we *survive* because we can delude ourselves into thinking that everything happens for the best.

Chapter 13 Quotes

They landed at Buenos Ayres. Cunegonde, Captain Candide, and the old woman, waited on the Governor, Don Fernando d'Ibaraa, y Figueora, y Mascarenes, y Lampourdos, y Souza. This nobleman had a stateliness becoming a person who bore so many names. He spoke to men with so noble a disdain, carried his nose so loftily, raised his voice so unmercifully, assumed so imperious an air, and stalked with such intolerable pride, that those who saluted him were strongly inclined to give him a good drubbing.

Related Characters: Governor Don Fernando d'Ibaraa, y Figueora, y Mascarenes, y Lampourdos, y Souza, Candide, Cunégonde, The Old Woman

Related Themes:

Page Number: 30

Explanation and Analysis

In this amusing passage, we're introduced to a new character, the Governor Don Fernando d'Ibarra-- his long name is a parody of aristocratic privilege and pedigree. The Governor is a conceited man who knows full-well that he's a powerful aristocrat with the title to prove it. Voltaire notes the superficiality of the Governor's superiority: something as silly as a name signifies his power, and in fact, *is* his power. Furthermore, Voltaire satirizes the pretensions of the aristocratic elite by noting that the Governor deserved a "drubbing" (i.e., a smack to the head). The Governor isn't anything special--he's not very smart, strong, attractive, etc., and indeed, all he has going for himself is his name and title. Voltaire, a true Enlightenment hero, distrusts the idea that we should respect aristocrats because of their genealogy.

Chapter 14 Quotes

"You'll make a prodigious fortune; if we cannot find our account in one world we shall in another. It is a great pleasure to see and do new things."

Related Characters: Cacambo (speaker), Candide

Related Themes:

Page Number: 32

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Candide travels with the valet Cacambo, a native-born Peruvian who tells Candide he'll take him to the land of the Jesuits, who rule over the people of Paraguay with an iron fist. Cacambo is very different from Candide, though they have a few things in common: Cacambo, like Candide, is highly optimistic, and yet where Candide is still (relatively) inexperienced and naive, Cacambo is confident and well-traveled; he knows where to find things. His thesis that "it is a great pleasure to see and do new things" could be taken as Candide's motto: Candide wanders all over the world, always taking a vague, naive pleasure in the new places he sees. Notice that Cacambo believes in the possibility of multiple worlds; it's because he doesn't just accept the existence of one world (like Pangloss) that he's always trying to find new places to explore. Pangloss is the armchair theoretician; Cacambo is the empiricist.

"It is an admirable government. The kingdom is upwards of three hundred leagues in diameter, and divided into thirty provinces; there the Fathers possess all, and the people nothing; it is a masterpiece of reason and justice."

Related Characters: Cacambo (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 32

Explanation and Analysis

Cacambo tells Candide about the land of the Jesuits in Paraguay. Although Cacambo seems to find the Jesuits' kingdom admirable in every way, he describes it in such a sense that it's obvious to us that the kingdom is a tyranny. Cacambo claims that the Jesuit leadership has stripped the natives of all their property, all in the name of religion. The Jesuits claim to use their intelligence and authority to run their territory with "reason and justice," but based on everything about religion and reason we've seen in the novel so far, we can be pretty sure that the Jesuits' government isn't all that reasonable or just.

Chapter 15 Quotes

"Reverend Father, all the quarterings in the world signify nothing; I rescued your sister from the arms of a Jew and of an Inquisitor; she has great obligations to me, she wishes to marry me; Master Pangloss always told me that all men are equal, and certainly I will marry her."

Related Characters: Candide (speaker), Pangloss, The Young Baron

Related Themes:

Page Number: 36

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Candide prepares to rescue Cunegonde from the hands of her "owner," Don Fernando. Candide offhandedly mentions that he hopes to marry Cunegonde one day, a statement that Cunegonde's brother, the Young Baron, finds absurd. The Young Baron insists that Candide is not nobly born, and therefore not worthy to marry an aristocratic lady like his sister. Candide replies that he's always been taught that all men are created equal; therefore, he's a perfectly suitable match for Cunegonde.

The passage is an interesting example of how Candide, in spite of his naivete and occasional foolishness, has some pretty good ideas (and Voltaire just uses Candide's naïveté to show the *bad*ideas human society has come up with). Candide thinks this is the best of all possible worlds, an idea that Voltaire clearly finds laughable, and yet he *also* believes in a classic Enlightenment tenet: all men are equal (an idea that Voltaire believes whole-heartedly).The Young Baron comes across as a comically irate, conceited character, so obsessed with genealogy and blood that he hesitates to save his own sister from capture (capture from the eminently aristocratic Don Fernando, by the way).

Chapter 16 Quotes

❝ "A Jesuit! a Jesuit! we shall be revenged, we shall have excellent cheer, let us eat the Jesuit, let us eat him up!"

Related Themes:

Page Number: 38

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Candide and Cacambo run into some trouble. They shoot a pair of monkeys during their walk through the forest, only to learn that they've accidentally shot two partly-human figures who were lovers to two of the native women. Candide and Cacambo are promptly tied up and prepared for eating: the natives are going to enact their revenge by eating their "Jesuit" prisoners alive.

A couple things here. First, it bears noting that the passage reflects Voltaire's racist views of non-Europeans (there seems to be some idea here that "natives" are partly monkey). And yet as before, Voltaire's racism and stereotyping is somewhat mitigated by the near universality of his criticism: Candide and Cacambo, as representatives of the European order, come across as clueless about the real world. Furthermore, the passage reminds us of all the pent-up hatred the natives reserve for their Jesuit oppressors (clearly, the Jesuits have just been starving their subjects, rather than leading by reason, justice, and Christian ideals). Cacambo and Candide don't really understand native culture, and in return, the natives misinterpret Cacambo and Candide's identities, mistaking them for Jesuits.

Chapter 18 Quotes

❝ "...but being surrounded by inaccessible rocks and precipices, we have hitherto been sheltered from the rapaciousness of European nations, who have an inconceivable passion for the pebbles and dirt of our land, for the sake of which they would murder us to the last man."

Related Characters: The Old Man of El Dorado (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 43

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Candide and Cacambo come to the land of El Dorado, where they meet an elderly man who tells them about his home. In El Dorado, he explains, there is gold everywhere. Luckily, El Dorado is located in a remote area far from European explorers, who are hungry for the gold, which the people of El Dorado treat like mere rock or soil.

The point of the passage seems to be that one man's trash is another man's treasure: the Europeans crave gold (a completely useless, strictly ornamental thing) while the people of El Dorado are indifferent to it. Voltaire comes across as a cultural relativist here: so much of what culture believes in is just idle superstition (for example, the idea that gold is valuable and should be fought for). Traveling the world, one notices the arbitrariness of certain cultural norms, and Candide's travels seem to give him some sense for the comic futility of Europe's search for riches in the New World.

Chapter 19 Quotes

❝ "What is this optimism?" said Cacambo.
"Alas!" said Candide, "it is the madness of maintaining that everything is right when it is wrong."

Related Characters: Cacambo, Candide (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 49

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Candide and Cacambo, bearing gifts of gold, come across a poor African slave who's missing a limb. Candide is so moved by the slave's pain--he's spent his entire life serving others and being abused by them--that he briefly gives up on optimism itself. Candide has always believed that everything bad happens for a good reason. Here, however, he starts to see how silly his optimism really is: as he tells Cacambo, optimism is just a way to "spin" bad things as good things.

During Voltaire's lifetime, the slave trade boomed, after centuries of existing on a much smaller scale. The discovery of the New World led to the need for cheap (or free) labor--hence the vital importance of African slaves. Slaves were treated horribly, and never saw any of the wealth they mined from the ground. The spectacle of so many humans being mistreated would have been enough to make a pessimist of anybody--even Candide the eternal optimist.

Chapter 20 Quotes

"...but I own to you that when I cast an eye on this globe, or rather on this little ball, I cannot help thinking that God has abandoned it to some malignant being."

Related Characters: Martin (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 52

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Candide and the scholar Martin, his new associate, debate about the essential goodness of the world. While Candide continues to maintain that the world can be a good place (in spite of all the horror he's witnessed during his travels), Martin takes a different position, arguing that the world may have been created by God, but it has lately been in the hands of a devil of some kind.

The passage shows a different kind of position than the ones we've read about so far: Martin doesn't believe that the universe is a totally random, chaotic place, but neither does he believe that the world is uniformly good. His position is relatively close to the doctrine of Deism, which maintains that God created the world but now lets it run itself, like a great cosmic clock.

Chapter 25 Quotes

"But is there not a pleasure," said Candide " in criticizing everything, in pointing out faults where others see nothing but beauties?"
"That is to say," replied Martin, "that there is some pleasure in having no pleasure."

Related Characters: Candide, Martin (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 73

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Candide and his friend Martin come to the house of the powerful SenatorPococuranté, who lives in great luxury.Pococuranté is, however, an unhappy man--he criticizes all his worldly possessions, and seems to despise everything about his life. Where Martin, who's more cynical than Candide, claims that the Senator must be unhappy, through and through, Candide--ever the optimist--claims that the Senator must get some kind of pleasure out of being so dissatisfied. Candide eventually comes to the odd conclusion that it's possible to be happy about having nothing to be happy about.

The notion that it's possible to be happy in one's misery is actually an age-old tenet of Christian literature, dating back at least to Saint Augustine's *Confessions*. The passage also alludes to an earlier quote, in which the Old Woman wonders aloud why she didn't kill herself while in the depths of misery. It would seem that there's something about being alive, in and of itself, thats pleasurable, even if every facet of that life is sad.

Conclusion Quotes

"What signifies it," said the Dervish, "whether there be evil or good? When his highness sends a ship to Egypt, does he trouble his head whether the mice on board are at their ease or not?"

Related Characters: The Dervish (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 85

Explanation and Analysis

In this enigmatic passage, Candide comes to an old Dervish (a Turkish holy man) and asks him for help achieving enlightenment. The Dervish doesn't give Candide the information he was hoping for; instead, the Dervish irritably tells Candide to mind his own business. There's no point in hunting for meaning in the world; the fact that God made the world doesn't mean that the world must have meaning. The Dervish clarifies his argument with an analogy: the man who builds a ship and sends the ship across the ocean doesn't care about the mice that live onboard the ship, and certainly hasn't built the ship to accommodate the mice's needs.

The passage is an amusing refutation of the argument from design: the Dervish, quite aside from arguing that the world is built "for" human beings, claims that the universe (God, the Almighty, etc.) is basically indifferent to human beings' suffering. If there is a God, it's unlikely he cares about human beings (instead, he thinks of them like mice)--the Christian idea that God made the world "for" mankind is, in the Dervish's opinion (and probably Voltaire's, too) arrogant nonsense.

❝ "I have only twenty acres," replied the old man; "I and my children cultivate them; our labour preserves us from three great evils—weariness, vice, and want."

Related Characters: The Old Turkish Man (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 86

Explanation and Analysis

After a novel's worth of traveling and debating, the characters reach an old Turkish Man who works hard on a farm with his children. The Turkish Man represents, arguably, the closest thing in the novel to enlightenment or peace. Instead of sitting around like Professor Pangloss and debating the causes and meaning of the universe, the Turkish Man *works* on his property. If there is a path to happiness and peace, it's implied, that path consists of a lot of hard, real-world work.

The passage might as well be a moral for Voltaire's book. Unlike the religious scholars in the pre-Enlightenment era, Voltaire doesn't believe that we should kick back and wait for God to take care of everything (or, following the same twisted logic, embrace every single thing that happens as "God's will"). Instead, we should actively try to change the world and improve it on our own: humans are the architects of their own world, not God.

❝ "You are right," said Pangloss, "for when man was first placed in the Garden of Eden, he was put there *ut operaretur eum*, that he might cultivate it; which shows that man was not born to be idle."

Related Characters: Pangloss (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 87

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Professor Pangloss responds to the example set by the Old Turkish man, who has just finished explaining the importance of work and labor. Pangloss, despite spending most of the book blindly blessing every event as "God's will," immediately converts to the Old Man's point of view and now claims that it's important to work in the real world, rather than trusting in divine providence.

Why does Pangloss change his mind so quickly? Perhaps the passage is meant to show that Pangloss is just a follower, easily convinced of any point of view, provided that he can find Biblical (or philosophical) justification for it. In a way, the passage is one of the most prophetic in the novel: it illustrates the way that religious factions can fight and even kill over their beliefs, and yet *also* change their beliefs at the drop of a hat. (For example, in modern times, Christian leaders openly believe that the Earth revolves around the Sun; 500 years before, their predecessors tried to kill Galileo because he dared to argue this scientific truth. A whole string of Panglosses moved Christianity from one point of view to the other.)

❝ "Let us work," said Martin, "without disputing; it is the only way to render life tolerable."

Related Characters: Martin (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 87

Explanation and Analysis

As the novel approaches an ending, each one of the main characters comes to the same conclusion (work hard and embrace the limits of one's life), albeit for different, and highly revealing reasons. While Professor Pangloss concludes that man should work because there's Biblical justification for doing so, Martin comes to the same conclusion because he's a compromiser and a pessimist. Martin seems to believe that the world is full of pain and suffering; it's telling, then, that he claims that working is the "only way" to find happiness in the world. One could argue that Martin is the most pragmatic of the characters: instead of sticking to his guns, he embraces a new point of view because he recognizes its real-world potential.

> "All that is very well," answered Candide, "but let us cultivate our garden."

Related Characters: Candide (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 87

Explanation and Analysis

At the end of the novel, everything and nothing has changed. Pangloss continues to philosophize about the "best of all possible worlds," and yet he's now working in a garden, showing that he's willing to get his hands dirty and work for himself, instead of trusting in God that everything will work out for the best. Candide, by contrast, seems to have changed greatly. As the novel began, he was a foolish, naive young man who trusted that everything had a silver lining. Over the course of the book, Candide hasn't entirely lost his optimism, but he has come to see the futility of totally surrendering to "divine providence." The only way to find happiness in the real world is to involve oneself in the real world: thus, Candide resolves to work hard on his garden and trust in his own actions and morals.

The notion of "cultivating our garden" could be taken as a metaphor for the entire Enlightenment project that Voltaire celebrated. Instead of trusting custom and tradition (and thus, religion), Voltaire advocated for secular humanism, according to which all men were created equal, and should be judged by what they achieve in the real world, rather than what their aristocratic ancestors achieved hundreds of years ago. It's for this reason that this quote remains famous and applicable even now, hundreds of years later.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

CHAPTER 1

Candide is raised in Westphalia, in the castle of the Baron of Thunder-ten-tronckh. He is suspected of being the illegitimate nephew of the Baron, but nobody knows for certain. He studies metaphysico-theologico-cosmolo-nigology under Professor Pangloss, who teaches that we live in the best of all possible worlds, and further, that Thunder-ten-tronckh is the greatest barony in the world.

The satirical bent of the novel comes across in the mock-German name Thunder-ten-tronckh, and the way the name of Pangloss' field of study parodies philosophic, religious, and scientific fields. The Professor's teachings—a parody of Leibniz's optimism—are flattering to his noble employers, highlighting the link between theology, philosophy and aristocratic power which the Enlightenment sought to undermine.

One day Cunégonde, daughter of the Baron, happens upon Pangloss having sex with Paquette, a chambermaid. Intrigued, she determines to do the same with Candide. Finding Candide behind a screen in the castle, she drops her handkerchief and lets him pick it up. They begin to kiss and caress one another, but are discovered by the Baron, who chases Candide from the "paradise," of the castle by kicking him repeatedly in the rear end.

Candide's ejection from the "paradise," of Thunder-ten-tronckh parodies the Biblical Fall. Like Eve, Cunégonde comes across forbidden knowledge (in this case, sex) and shares it, leading to exile. The dropped handkerchief is a parody of courtly romance: it is humorous that this usually polite and chivalrous gesture leads so quickly to kissing and touching.

CHAPTER 2

Candide, distraught, makes his way to an inn in a neighboring town. There, he is tricked by two Bulgarian soldiers into joining their army. He is dragged off in chains, beaten, and forced to learn military exercises. He excels at these exercises, and is treated well for a while. However, he then makes the mistake of going for a walk, and is accused of desertion. He is asked if he would rather be whipped several thousand times or shot in the head. Choosing the first, he ends up begging for the second once the whipping begins. He is almost shot, but the King of the Bulgarians pardons him after learning that he is a philosophy student, and therefore ignorant about the world.

One of the institutional objects of Voltaire's scorn and criticism is the military. Rather than depicting soldiers as courageous and heroic, Voltaire depicts them as tricksters and bandits. And army life is so regimented and full of top-down control that even going for a walk can result in severe punishment. Voltaire also takes a swipe at philosophy here—often a knowledge of philosophy is treated as wisdom, but the Bulgarian king sees it as a reason to pity Candide for ignorance. The king sees philosophy as the opposite of wisdom and worldly understanding.

CHAPTER 3

Candide goes into battle with the Bulgarians against the Abares. While the army band plays fifes, tambourines, and oboes, cannons blast. He hides the entire battle. When the fighting is over, he walks alone across the field, lost in contemplation, surveying the dead. He visits two villages: one destroyed by the Bulgarians, the other by the Abares, both filled with the slain, the dying, the dismembered, the raped, and the otherwise miserable.

The music of the army band contrasts with the awful noise of cannons, symbolically undermining the idea of war as beautiful and glorious. The destruction wrought by the enemy armies, whatever their reasons for fighting, are indistinguishable: the novel suggests that war is the real problem, not one side or the other.

Having nothing, Candide makes his way to Holland, because he's heard that it is a rich country. He begs for food, but receives only threats in return. Finally, he speaks to a Protestant Orator, in the middle of giving a speech on charity, who asks if he believes that the Pope is the Antichrist. When Candide says that he does not know, and that it has nothing to do with his lack of food, the orator's wife empties a chamber pot on his head.

Because of the sharp divide between Catholics and Protestants, the hypocritical orator refuses to help Candide without a denunciation of the Pope—even though he's giving a speech on charity!

Seeing how badly Candide is being treated, a kind Anabaptist named Jacques takes him home, cleans him, feeds him, and helps him recover. Candide, relieved, expresses his renewed faith in Pangloss' optimism.

Jacques the Anabaptist is one of the only sympathetic religious figures in Candide. Unlike Protestants and Catholics of the time, Anabaptists had few powerful supporters, suggesting that religion is corrupted by power. Despite all he has seen of war and casual cruelty, Candide still believes in Pangloss's optimistic teaching that everything in the world is for the best.

CHAPTER 4

When Candide goes for a walk, he comes across a man with syphilis. The man turns out to be Pangloss, and the two have a tearful reunion. Pangloss informs Candide that Bulgarians invaded Thunder-ten-tronckh, raping Cunégonde, destroying the castle, and killing everyone. Candide begins to doubt that he lives in the "best of all possible worlds," after all.

This is the first of many times in the novel that a character returns and is not immediately recognized, usually because unfortunate circumstances have changed them. The tragedy of what has happened in Thunder-ten-tronckh is made comic by irony and exaggeration: everything has gone suddenly and horribly wrong in the "best of all possible baronies."

The conversation turns to Pangloss' syphilis. When Candide asks what the "sufficient cause," of his illness was, Pangloss explains that he received the disease from Paquette. He then goes on to list all the people the disease passed through before reaching him, beginning with companions of Christopher Columbus. Pangloss explains that syphilis, which comes from America, was necessary so that luxury goods like chocolate and cochineal—an insect dye—could be brought to Europe.

Pangloss' long genealogy of his syphilis parodies the importance of genealogy to the aristocracy. Tracing the pedigree of your syphilis back to Christopher Columbus obviously proves nothing important, and the novel suggests that aristocratic pedigree is no different. This is also the first of many attempts to make the philosophy of optimism fit with the world's cruelty: Pangloss insists that his syphilis is somehow intrinsically connected to the many good things which come from the Americas.

Candide convinces Jacques the Anabaptist to pay for Pangloss' cure. Pangloss loses an eye and an ear to syphilis, but recovers. After two months, Jacques brings Pangloss and Candide to Lisbon. On the way there, they argue over whether or not everything in nature is good. Jacques argues that men have corrupted nature by creating such awful things as cannons, bayonets, and bankruptcy—which God did not place on Earth. Pangloss maintains that "private misfortunes make the general good."

Pangloss' loss of an eye and an ear represents his detachment from the real world. Since nothing he hears, sees, or experiences can shake him from his doctrine of optimism, his senses come to seem unnecessary. Pangloss' argument with Jacques further emphasizes this detachment: while Jacques speaks about specific evils in the world, Pangloss responds by appealing to a "general good," which he never defines.

CHAPTER 5

A storm overtakes the ship as it arrives in the Bay of Lisbon. Jacques tries to take command of the ship, but is hit by a soldier, who falls into the water by the force of his own punch. Jacques rescues the sailor who has hit him, but falls into the water as he does so. The sailor lets him drown, and when Candide attempts a rescue, Pangloss explains that he must not: he argues that the Bay of Lisbon was created specifically to drown Jacques. The ship breaks apart, and Pangloss and Candide float on a plank to Lisbon. As soon as they arrive, the Lisbon Earthquake takes place, and more than thirty thousand people die.

Jacques the Anabaptist is allowed to die by a man he has just rescued. Tens of thousands of innocent people die in the earthquake. Both of these events challenge the idea of divine justice: that God has created a fair world, where the good are rewarded and the innocent are safe. Pangloss' ridiculous attempt to explain that the Bay Of Lisbon was created precisely to cause Jacque's drowning is a further example of his philosophy's inability to convincingly connect the world's chaos to a harmonious divine plan.

Candide lies buried underneath the rubble of a building which has collapsed during the earthquake. He cries out for Pangloss to help him. Instead of going to get help immediately, Pangloss argues with him about the causes of the "concussion of the earth," which has just occurred.

This bit of slapstick humor further emphasizes Pangloss' (and philosophy's) detachment from the world: he would rather argue and reason about the earthquake than deal with its dire and immediate consequences and help a friend.

Pangloss consoles the victims of the earthquake by explaining that "it is impossible that things should be other than they are; for everything is right." He is overheard by a servant of the Spanish Inquisition, who accuses him of denying original sin and free will, important elements of Catholic doctrine.

Pangloss' "consolation," consists mostly in repeating what has happened. This is another jab at Pangloss' philosophy: it is not only useless in determining the truth, but also in offering sympathy and comfort. Worse, this reasoning gets Pangloss into serious trouble with religious powers that have a different interpretation of the world.

CHAPTER 6

The religious scholars of Lisbon determine that an auto-da-fé (a contemporary ritual for the punishment of sinners and heretics) is the best way to prevent further earthquakes. Pangloss is lead off to be hung for his heresy, and Candide, to be whipped for having listened with approval. The auto-da-fé takes place amid sermons and beautiful church music. At the end of the day, an aftershock of the earthquake takes place. After his whipping, Candide expresses anguish for the loss of Pangloss and Cunégonde, as well as further doubts about the intrinsic goodness of the world.

The auto-da-fé and the aftershock that follows it mock the idea that religious faith might impact events in the world. Clearly, the "sins" of Candide and Pangloss had nothing to do with the earthquake: another happens just after they've been punished. The juxtaposition of beautiful religious music with horrifying punishments emphasizes the disparity between the church's aura of holiness, and the senseless violence it causes.

CHAPTER 7

An old woman comes across Candide and convinces him to come home with her. She takes care of him, but does not reveal why she is doing so. After several days, she leads him to a house in the country, and then brings a veiled woman to him from the upstairs room. When Candide removes the veil, he finds Cunégonde is under it: the two faint with joy and surprise. Cunégonde explains that she survived the attack, and asks to hear what has happened to Candide in the time since their fateful kiss.

For the second time, a character thought to be dead returns in disguise. These surprise returns are part of the novel's back-and-forth between disillusionment and optimism. The synchronized fainting satirizes the gestures and conventions of traditional romance.

CHAPTER 8

After Candide finishes telling his story, Cunégonde tells Candide what has happened to her. When the attack on Thunder-ten-tronckh took place, she was asleep in bed. A Bulgarian soldier began raping her, and cut her on the left side when she resisted. While this was happening, the soldier's superior officer entered the room and killed him, not for raping Cunégonde, but for failing to properly salute. After that, the Bulgarian Captain took Cunégonde into captivity.

The soldier's lack of respect for his superior seems like a trivial crime in comparison with his brutal violation of Cunégonde. Nevertheless, the Captain kills the soldier merely for refusing to salute. Military hierarchy is made to look ridiculous. And Cunégonde continues to be abused by nearly every man she encounters

The Bulgarian Captain sold Cunégonde to Don Issachar, a Jew, who took her to live in his country house—the very house where Cunégonde is telling this story to Candide. One day at mass, the Grand Inquisitor took a liking to Cunégonde, and attempted to bargain with Don Issachar for her. When he refused to trade her, the Inquisitor threatened him with an auto-da-fé. Eventually, they came to an agreement to share her.

The constant exchange of Cunégonde—which continues through the novel—underscores the treatment of women as property. The Inquisitor's threat of an auto-da-fé against Don Issachar is an example of the hypocrisy and abuse of power by church figures in the novel. The Grand Inquisitor is supposed to be a man who does not have sexual relations with women. Yet here he is threatening an official religious killing just to force Don Issachar to give him Cunégonde.

On the day of the auto-da-fé, the Grand Inquisitor brought Cunégonde to watch. When she saw Pangloss executed and Candide whipped, she cried out in horror. Later, she arranged for the old woman to look for Candide and bring him to her. There, Cunégonde concludes her story, and just as she does, Don Issachar arrives.

Don Issachar's sudden arrival at the end of Cunégonde's story is an instance of something that happens often in Candide: a swift reversal after every success or reunion. This is one aspect of the novel's comically fast pacing.

CHAPTER 9

Cursing aloud at Cunégonde, Don Issachar draws his knife and throws himself at Candide, who quickly kills him. Two minutes later, the Grand Inquisitor arrives at the house for his appointed evening with Cunégonde. Reasoning that the Inquisitor will likely take away Candide and have him burnt at the stake, Candide kills him as well. Candide, Cunégonde and the old woman flee the house for a village in the Sierra-Morena mountains.

The ridiculous ease with which Candide kills his two rivals and frees Cunégonde makes him a parody of the traditional epic hero, who might have a much more difficult and dramatic time freeing his lover from the clutches of his enemies. The juxtaposition of these two "lovers" of Cunégonde shows how meaningless the distinctions of religion and class can be, and how little role it plays in making people act morally: one is a powerful Grand Inquisitor, the other a Jewish merchant, but both end up killed by Candide in exactly the same way for exactly the same reason—their desire for and enslavement of Cunégonde.

CHAPTER 10

During his escape, Candide learns that Cunégonde's jewels and money—given to her by the Grand Inquisitor—have been stolen by a friar. Though he is upset that the friar left them insufficient money to travel with, he accepts that everything on earth belongs to everyone, as Pangloss taught him, and that the friar had as much right to the money as anyone else.

This is the first example of Candide's indifferent attitude toward money. Rather than helping him, money and wealth only create problems for Candide, and how exactly the Inquisitor's jewels fit this pattern can be seen in Chapter 13.

Candide, Cunégonde, and the old woman arrive at Cadiz, where a military company is being mustered by the Spanish and Portuguese to put down a rebellion of Jesuits and Indians in Paraguay. Candide impresses the recruiters so much with his military exercises (learned from the Bulgarians) that they make him a captain, and give him command overs an entire company. With Cunégonde and the old woman, he embarks on a ship for the New World. Candide expresses the opinion that perhaps the New World is the "best of all possible worlds," described by Pangloss.

Candide's being made a captain is yet another episode in the novel's ongoing satire of the military: although we have seen earlier that Candide is a coward on the battlefield, his physical movements are apparently enough to impress the superficial military recruiters. Optimism about the New World was common in Voltaire's Europe. Many groups of people, religiously motivated or otherwise, saw it as a place to build more perfect societies. Candide's opinion in this chapter is the first adjustment he makes to Pangloss' doctrine, to try and make optimism fit better with his experiences.

CHAPTER 11

Challenged by Cunégonde on which one of them has suffered more, the old woman tells the sorrowful story of her life. She was the daughter of the Pope and a princess, and happily engaged to a beautiful prince. On a journey with her mother, she was kidnapped by pirates and sold into slavery in Morocco. The arrival of the slaves in Morocco caused a Civil War there, from which she barely escaped. The old woman expresses the opinion that Africans, such as the Moroccans who kidnapped her, are more hot-blooded and violent than Europeans, who, by comparison, might as well have milk in their blood.

Many characters in Candide have stories of misfortune, and many of them began life in high positions. These recurring stories of misfortune suggest, pessimistically, that suffering is a universal feature of human life. The old woman's story also parodies a narrative common in the literature of the time: a high-born person ends up in a position of lower social status. The racist stereotypes expressed by the old woman are common in Candide, in which most of the characters are caricatures or archetypes of some kind.

CHAPTER 12

The story of the old woman's life continues. After the battle between the Moroccans, she was found by a eunuch singer, who had known her during her childhood as a princess. The eunuch brought her to Algiers, where she came down with the plague. After that, she was sold all around the world, from Turkey to Russia to Germany and eventually to the household of Don Issachar. Along the way, she experienced countless misfortunes: in the worst them, one of her buttocks was sliced off and eaten by starving Turkish soldiers in a besieged fort. At the end of her story, the old woman expresses wonder that no matter how awful life is, we somehow still love it, and continue in our struggles against death and pain. She tells Candide and Cunégonde that if they can find a single passenger on the ship who has lived without serious suffering, they may throw her into the sea. They cannot.

Unlike a tragedy, which makes the suffering of its hero appear profound and unique, the novel of Candide makes human suffering comic and absurd by pointing it out everywhere—not only in the life of the hero. Candide is filled with suffering that does not cause death. The old woman's missing left buttock—like Pangloss' missing eye or the slave's missing left leg—is a terrible injury, but allows life to go on. This is one of the purposes of both the old woman's story and her bet. The old woman's philosophical reflections on human perseverance are part of a larger philosophical argument in the novel: that life is made up of constant disruption and motion, not rest.

CHAPTER 13

Upon arriving in Buenos Aires, Candide and Cunégonde are brought to meet Don Fernando, the Governor. Don Fernando takes a clear interest in Cunégonde, and when Candide asks him to officiate in their marriage, Don Fernando sends him away to review the soldiers. Don Fernando then proposes to Cunégonde, who asks for a little time to decide. She consults with the old woman, who advises her to marry Don Fernando, and use his power to help make Candide's fortune.

Don Fernando is yet another authority figure who uses his power to try to take possession of Cunégonde. Once again, the possession of women is central to the chaos and conflict of the novel, in the New World as in the Old. The old woman's pragmatic, even cynical plan comes from her long experience of life and its troubles, stressed in previous chapters.

The old woman learns that an Alcade (magistrate) is about to land in Buenos Aires and arrest Candide for the murder of the Grand Inquisitor. The Alcade learned of the whereabouts of Candide and Cunégonde through the friar who stole their jewels and money in Spain. The old woman advises Candide to run away, and tells Cunégonde to stay, relying on Don Fernando to protect her.

Wealth and worldly goods bring Candide nothing but trouble throughout the novel. Here, the Inquisitor's jewels are what have lead to his discovery and second separation from Cunégonde.

CHAPTER 14

As the Inquisitor's minions arrive, Candide flees from Buenos Aires with his valet, Cacambo. Cacambo proposes bringing him to the kingdom of the rebellious Jesuits in Paraguay, where the indigenous people own nothing and the clergy own everything, and the government is a "masterpiece of reason and justice." Candide agrees to go, promised that he will be able to make his fortune there.

Again, the novel satirizes the corruption, power, and hypocrisy of the church. Although they are supposed to be instruments of divine goodwill, the Jesuit Fathers have taken everything from the indigenous people, and are making war against the Spanish and Portuguese kings.

When they arrive, Candide is told that the Reverend Commandant does not speak with Spaniards. When the Reverend Commandant learns that Candide is not a Spaniard, but a German, he agrees to see him. The Commandant turns out to be the former young Baron of Thunder-ten-tronckh, Cunégonde's brother, previously thought dead. Candide and the young baron have a tearful reunion.

Here again, a character who was thought to be dead returns in a new role. This is part of Candide's comically rapid cycle of reunions and separations, successes and reversals, optimism and disillusionment.

CHAPTER 15

The Reverend Commandant tells the story of his survival of the Bulgarian attack. Thought to be dead, he revived while a Jesuit priest was preparing him for burial. Becoming a minister himself, he ended up in Paraguay, where he is now Colonel and Priest.

This is one of two instances in the novel when a still-living "corpse," wakes up. We will learn in Chapter 28 that the same thing happened to Pangloss. Ironically, the two characters who experience these "resurrections," are the most unchanging in the novel—Pangloss never gives up on his philosophy, and the Baron never gives up on his aristocratic values.

The Commandant expresses the hope that he and Candide might be able to rescue Cunégonde from the clutches of Don Fernando. Candide agrees, mentioning that he wishes to marry her. Outraged, the Reverend Commandant denounces Candide for this insolence: Candide is not noble enough, in his opinion, to marry his sister. Candide objects that he has rescued Cunégonde from the Inquisitor and Don Issachar, that she wants to marry him, and that all men are equal according to Pangloss. The Reverend Commandant slaps Candide across the face with the flat of his blade. In self-defense, Candide kills him, and then bursts into tears, crying out that he has already killed three people without having intended to. Candide puts on the Reverend Commandant's uniform, to disguise himself, and then flees with Cacambo.

The Baron's sudden anger about Candide's intentions seems ridiculous—Candide has rescued Cunégonde twice. The baron's extreme outrage is meant to satirize the aristocracy's illogical insistence on the importance of noble blood.One of the philosophical questions explored by the novel is freedom of will. Life seems to "happen" to Candide much more than he controls it; even when he kills people, it's mostly by reflex. Because Catholic doctrine required believing in it, questioning the freedom of the will was part of the Enlightenment critique of religion.

CHAPTER 16

Candide and Cacambo flee from the Jesuit camp into the unknown territory. They come across two women being chased by two monkeys. Candide shoots the two monkeys, assuming that he is rescuing the two women, and also that this is appropriate penance for having killed the Inquisitor and the Jesuit Commandant. To his great surprise, the women begin weeping over the slain monkeys, who turn out to have been their lovers—as well as a quarter human. The next morning, Cacambo and Candide have been tied up by the Oreillons, natives of the area who intend to punish the "Jesuits," for their crimes against the Oreillons.

Though Candide has good intentions, his ignorance of the land causes him to kill the lovers of the two women. He resembles European missionaries who intended to help indigenous peoples, but ended up doing terrible harm because of their ignorance of local customs.

The Oreillons are making preparations to boil Candide and Cacambo alive. Candide despairs. However, at the last moment, Cacambo makes a speech to convince the Oreillons that he and Candide are not in fact Jesuits, but rather enemies of the Jesuits. He manages to convince them, and the two are freed. The Oreillons give them refreshments, women, and lead them out of the territory in good cheer.

The sudden change of attitude by the Oreillons mocks the importance placed on religious affiliation. Candide and Cacambo do not prove that they are innocent of murdering the monkeys, only that they aren't Jesuits—and for this small difference of sect, they are forgiven.

CHAPTER 17

Once they are out of Paraguay, Cacambo and Candide deliberate on where to go next. They decide to head to the city Cayenne, and then back to Europe. The journey is hard: their horses die of starvation, and they are left to eat only coconuts and wild fruit. One day, they find a canoe at the edge of a river. Thinking that it might lead to civilization, they board it and float downstream for more than a day, passing through caves and, eventually, losing their canoe on the rocks.

Here, Candide reaches the bottom of the ladder of "civilization" that he has been descending throughout the novel. Having started in neat, peaceful Westphalia, he has ended up living in the wild with Cacambo, totally without resources. Only after this return to nature, having left behind the evils of human civilization, do Candide and Cacambo make it to El Dorado, the perfect place. Contemporary philosophers of Voltaire, such as Rousseau, believed that the "state of nature,"—a hypothetical time before civilization—was better than modern life.

Pulling themselves along the rocks to the end of the stream, Candide and Cacambo find themselves in a large plain enclosed by inaccessible mountains. They come upon a village and see children playing with gold and precious stones, under the supervision of a schoolmaster. When the children walk away from their game, they leave the stones behind. Candide tries to return them to the schoolmaster, who simply smiles and flings them on the ground. Candide and Cacambo are shocked by the disregard these people pay to valuable things.

A lack of concern over money and valuables (like the schoolmaster's), and a remote and inaccessible location were both considered, in Voltaire's time, to be necessary aspects of a "utopia," or perfect society. The word "utopia," was coined by Sir Thomas More in his book of the same name, and could be translated as both "no place" and "good place."

Cacambo leads Candide into an inn. There, the two converse with the guests and the landlord. Before leaving, they attempt to pay for their meal and drinks with the precious stones they have gathered that the children had thrown on the ground. The landlord laughs, and explains that in this country, most things are paid for by the government. Candide concludes that he has at last arrived at the country "where everything goes well."

In almost every other place Candide has looked for hospitality, he has been tricked or robbed: by the Bulgarians at the inn in Germany, by the friar at the inn in Spain, and by Don Fernando in Buenos Aires. For the first time, there seems to be no "catch," and so, for this and other reasons, Candide concludes that El Dorado must be the best of all possible worlds that Pangloss spoke about.

CHAPTER 18

The landlord leads Candide to the house of an old wise man who might be able to answer his many questions about the place. The old man explains that El Dorado is the ancient homeland of the Inca, who "imprudently," left it to build an empire, which was then destroyed by the Spanish. He explains that El Dorado's happiness comes from its isolation: it cannot be reached by conquering Europeans. Finally, he explains the religion of the country: everyone is a priest, there are no divisions or sects, and all worship consists in giving thanks to God. Candide concludes that Pangloss was wrong about the "best of all possible worlds," being in Westphalia: if he had traveled more, he might have come to El Dorado, and known better.

El Dorado, as the old man describes it, is the exact opposite of Voltaire's Europe. While Europeans traveled the world and colonized distant places, the residents of El Dorado stayed at home, safe and isolated. While Europe developed complex religious divisions and dogmas all fighting it out for power and influence, El Dorado stuck to the simple religion of giving thanks to God. By setting up El Dorado as opposite to it, Voltaire criticizes the Europe of his time. It is ironic that Candide faults Pangloss for not having traveled more, because staying put is the great virtue of the El Doradans.

The old man sends Candide and Cacambo to see the king of El Dorado. The king receives them like equals: no bows are required. They live, for a month, in splendor and happiness.

This lack of ceremony involved in meeting the king contrasts greatly with the elaborate rituals which surrounded contact with kings in Europe. In El Dorado, it is clear that all men are equals: egalitarianism was one of the chief values of the Enlightenment.

Eventually, however, Cacambo convinces Candide to leave by arguing that in El Dorado, they are only equal to their neighbors: with the wealth they've gained, they could become kings in Europe. Though he thinks that Cacambo and Candide are making a mistake, the king agrees to help them leave, giving them a flock of red sheep, and letting them take as much gold as they want.

Despite the perfectness of El Dorado, or perhaps because of it, Candide and Cacambo decide to leave. Their motivation for leaving is pride: they see the opportunity to set themselves over others. This resembles the exile from Eden in the Bible: the serpent tempts Eve by promising equality with God. And it offers a critique of any perfect society. Namely, that no society ever could be perfect because men are so far from perfect.

CHAPTER 19

Giddy with their newfound wealth, Candide and Cacambo set out for Suriname, a port from which they plan to take a ship back to Europe. Along the way, their red sheep—each carrying a part of the riches brought from El Dorado—begin to die. On the way to Suriname, the two travelers come across an African slave who is missing a hand and his left leg, and who says that he has been waiting for his master. The man explains that he was dismembered by his masters for attempting to run away. Candide, horrified, declares that he is no longer an optimist.

Candide's vast wealth begins to disappear as soon as he leaves El Dorado. Riches in the novel are quickly lost, and cause more trouble than good. Of all the evil institutions criticized in Candide, slavery is depicted as the very worst. Unlike almost every other episode in the novel, Candide's conversation with the slave is completely humorless. It is also the one encounter which causes Candide—briefly—to give up his optimism.

Upon his arrival in Suriname, Candide learns that Cunégonde has become Don Fernando's favorite mistress. He is upset, but plans to get her back by sending Cacambo, with half the riches, to bid for her in Buenos Aires. (If he went himself, he might be arrested.) Candide plans to head to Venice, where he will wait for Cacambo's return.

Cunégonde always seems to end up held captive and enjoyed by men other than Candide, who is always just on the cusp of being able to be with her. In this way, Cunégonde is a symbol for the futility and endlessness of human desires: she is what keeps Candide moving, but also what he can never have.

Candide arranges for the Dutch merchant Vanderdendur to take him to Venice. At the last minute, the merchant sails off without him, stealing all of his riches. Candide is so angry that he begins thinking pessimistic and gloomy thoughts about humankind. Eventually, he arranges another voyage, and selects a traveling companion from among the most dissatisfied people in the province. The man who voyages with him to Bordeaux is a pessimistic scholar named Martin.

Candide is tricked countless times in the novel, but after this incident, we see him angry for the first time. When Candide looks for a traveling companion, it should be noted that he looks among the unfortunate. Sufferers seek fellow sufferers for consolation, especially in this novel.

CHAPTER 20

Throughout the voyage, Candide and Martin debate philosophically. Martin explains that he has seen so many misfortunes that he has become a Manichean: he believes that God has abandoned the world, and left it in the hands of an evil being. Martin lists examples of evil and suffering throughout the world. Nevertheless, Candide maintains that there is such a thing as good in the world.

Candide's optimism, though it has returned, is clearly diminished: he no longer argues that the world is good, but rather that there is some good in the world. Candide's slightly darker outlook brings with it a new traveling companion: Martin is Pangloss' pessimistic opposite.

In the midst of their debates, the ship which Candide and Martin are traveling on passes close by two ships engaged in combat. The French ship sinks the Dutch ship, and dozens of men drown. Floating in the wreckage, Candide finds one of his Doradan red sheep. The Dutch ship turns out to have been the ship of the man who had swindled him in Suriname. Triumphant, Candide declares that sometimes crime is punished. Unfazed, Martin responds that "God punished the knave, and the devil has drowned the rest." Even so, Candide takes the recovery of the red sheep as an omen that he will be reunited with Cunégonde.

Candide sees the battle as evidence that sin is punished, while Martin argues that you can't see divine justice in a result that involved the loss of many innocent lives. Candide's recovery of the sheep goes along with his recovery of optimism. Sheep represent innocence and purity: traits that are associated with Candide from the narrator's description of him in the first chapter.

CHAPTER 21

Finally, Candide and Martin come within sight of the coast of France. Candide asks Martin about France, and Martin replies that it is filled with terrible people: some too stupid, some too cunning, some slanderers, and some fanatics. Candide further questions Martin about his beliefs, asking him whether or not mankind has been evil throughout its history, or only in recent times. Martin responds sarcastically, asking if Candide believes "that hawks have always eaten pigeons." Candide responds that there is a difference: men have free will.

The voyage back to Europe is a mirror image of the voyage to the New World. While the first was filled with hope and optimism, the second is darkened by Martin's low opinion of the French. Candide's optimism begins, here, to become more refined. By asking the question of whether or not human beings have always done evil, he implies that we might be able to stop. In other words, although we do not live in "the best of all possible worlds," we still might be able to create it. Martin does not think so: he doesn't believe that human nature can change.

CHAPTER 22

Candide and Martin arrive in Bordeaux, France and immediately travel to Paris. There, Candide is surrounded by hangers-on who have heard about his wealth and attempt to take advantage of him by using a variety of tricks. Among them, he and Martin meet the Abbé of Perigord, who takes them to see a new tragedy at the theater. Candide is moved to tears by the tragedy, but a critic seated next to him insults the play viciously between the acts.

Wealth is more of a problem than a solution in the novel. It attracts others who want that wealth, and the tricks of those hangers-on slow Candide and Martin down in their search. Candide's naïve and heartfelt reaction to the play contrasts with the savage "good taste," of the critic. Once again, the refinements of culture and civilization appear in a negative light when placed next to the innocence of Candide. He can enjoy and be moved by art. The critic cannot.

The Abbé takes Candide and Martin to the house of the Marchioness of Parolignac, where a group of men are gambling and gossiping about the theater. Candide remarks that the Marchioness is much less polite than the Baroness of Thunder-ten-tronckh. Candide speaks to a wise man about art and philosophy, and considers him "another Pangloss." But the Marchioness complains that he is a nobody, a man who has never had any success. Afterward, the Marchioness takes Candide to her boudoir and seduces him, taking two of his diamonds in the process.

In Paris, Candide seems to think that he might find replacements for what he had in Westphalia. But nothing is as it appears: the noblewoman sleeps with Candide for his diamonds (nothing like the beautiful and pure Cunégonde), the wise man is not respected by anyone (unlike Pangloss), and everyone spends their time gambling and gossiping about the theater.

Leaving the home of the Marchioness, Candide speaks with the Abbé of Perigord, telling him the story of his adventures. The Abbé asks if Candide has received any letters from Cunégonde, and he replies that he has not. The very next day, a letter arrives from Cunégonde, saying that she is staying in a Parisian hotel. Candide goes to see her, but is told by a servant that she must remain behind a curtain because the light hurts her eyes. Candide gives this "Cunégonde" diamonds and a bag of gold, but she turns out to be an imposter: the whole thing has been set up by the Abbé. Candide and Martin are arrested for being foreigners and brought to northern France, where they are forced to board a ship for England.

The end of this chapter completes the image of Paris as a city of trickery and theatrical deception. The false letters and staged reunion go along with the theater scene and the superficial nobility of the Marchioness—everything in the Paris of the novel appears to be fake and organized around making money. The staged reunion in this chapter resembles the first reunion of Candide and Cunégonde; the Abbé has copied it from Candide's story.

CHAPTER 23

Disgusted with France, Candide expresses to Martin his hope that England will be a better country. But as soon as they arrive at Portsmouth, they witness a blindfolded man being executed by firing squad on a warship. Candide asks why this man is being executed, and is told that the man is an admiral who failed to kill a sufficient number of French soldiers. Horrified, Candide refuses even to step ashore. He makes a deal with the Captain to take him directly to Venice.

When Voltaire wrote the novel of Candide, England and France were fighting in the Seven Years War. The execution of the admiral is a specific example of the general cruelty and absurdity of war. The admiral is killed not because of a failure in strategy or tactics, or for cowardice or even treason, but for not meeting his quota in terms of killing the enemy.

CHAPTER 24

Arriving with Martin in Venice, Candide is disappointed not to immediately find Cunégonde. Martin believes that Cacambo has run off with the money, and that Candide has been a fool. Candide despairs. They begin to debate philosophically about whether or not there is happiness on earth, but are interrupted when Candide notices a young friar and his mistress, speaking affectionately. Candide lays a bet with Martin that these two people are happy. Martin accepts, and they invite the two for dinner in order to find out the truth.

Candide's search for the "best of all possible worlds," has become a lot less ambitious: by now, with Martin as a companion and philosophical opponent, Candide is just looking for evidence that there are any happy people in the world at all. Martin opposes him, suggesting that Cacambo has stolen the money, and betting that the friar and his mistress are unhappy.

It turns out that the woman is Paquette from Thunder-ten-tronckh, and also, that she is working as a prostitute—her apparent happiness is just part of her job. Even the friar, Giroflée, is not happy: he hates his profession, and was forced to become a monk by his parents. Martin wins the bet, but Candide prolongs it by giving Paquette and Giroflée a large sum of money. With money, he promises, they will be happy. Martin disagrees. Continuing their philosophical debate, they decide to go see the Senator Pococuranté, who supposedly has everything he needs and is a very happy man.

Once again, a new character turns out to be an old character in a new role. Appearance is not reality: just as Candide at first fails to recognize Paquette, he also mistakes she and the friar for a happy couple. Nevertheless, Candide remains faithful to his optimism, betting that perhaps money can make people happy. The gift to Paquette and Giroflée, as well as the visit to Pococuranté, are both meant to test this hypothesis.

CHAPTER 25

Candide and Martin travel to the house of Senator Pococuranté. The Senator lives in a house surrounded by beautiful gardens, filled with great books and rare paintings, and with women and musicians to entertain him whenever he likes. Nevertheless, he is disgusted by or indifferent to everything he owns. As they leave, Martin and Candide argue over whether or not this makes the Senator an unhappy man. Martin argues that Pococuranté is unhappy with everything, while Candide argues that there must be some pleasure in criticizing everything.

Candide's experience with Pococuranté disproves yet another of his reasons for thinking that happiness is possible: apparently, wealth cannot buy happiness. Still, Candide manages to hang on to his optimism by supposing that Pococuranté's disgust and criticism might also be sources of happiness. As always, Candide's optimism requires new and less ambitious justifications.

CHAPTER 26

At a Venetian inn, Candide and Martin sit down for dinner with six strangers. There, a slave approaches Candide privately and reveals himself to be Cacambo. Cacambo tells Candide that Cunégonde is in Constantinople, and reassures him that they will set out to free her just as soon as dinner is done.

As always, Cunégonde is tantalizingly close, but still just out of reach. Cacambo, as it turns out, did not steal the money and is still loyal to Candide.

The six strangers introduce themselves. All of them claim to be deposed or exiled kings who have fallen on hard times, and who have come to enjoy the carnival in Venice. Candide and Martin suspect that this must be one of the masquerades of the carnival.

In Candide, almost everyone is an unfortunate "nobody," who was once a "somebody." This theme, common to literature of the time, is mocked in this scene: it is ridiculous that six exiled kings should all end up together, by accident, in a Venetian inn.

CHAPTER 27

The next day, Cacambo arranges for Candide and Martin to be taken on a ship headed for Constantinople, where Cunégonde is a dishwasher and has lost her beauty. Candide and Martin debate whether or not it is possible to measure the relative unhappiness of individuals. Halfway through the voyage, Candide discovers that Pangloss and the Young Baron—thought dead—are slaves on the galley. As soon as they reach the shore, Candide pays the captain to release them. From there, Candide, Martin, Pangloss and the Baron set off to free Cunégonde.

For the second time, both Pangloss and the Baron are found alive after being thought dead. This happens as though in response to Candide and Martin's argument about relative unhappiness. As always, an event in the story comes along just in time to resolve a philosophical debate: in the next chapter, the misfortunes and unhappiness of the Baron and Pangloss will be compared.

CHAPTER 28

The Young Baron and Pangloss tell Candide and Martin how they each ended up enslaved. Soon after recovering from the wounds from his fight with Candide, the Baron was kidnapped by Spaniards. After that, he was ransomed by the Church, which sent him to work in Constantinople. There, he was enslaved and sent to the galleys as punishment for bathing naked with a slave boy, in violation of a religious rule he did not know about.

There is extreme irony in the fact that the Baron—a Jesuit priest—is punished for violating an obscure religious rule. The Jesuit Order was founded to combat heresies and challenges to (often obscure) religious rules. The Baron looks like a hypocrite, and this irony is part of Candide's criticism of religion in general and the Jesuits in particular: the Jesuits were considered the greatest enemies of the Enlightenment.

Pangloss then begins to tell his own story. Though he was hung at the auto-da-fé, this punishment failed to kill him: it was too rainy to burn him after the hanging, and nobody noticed that he was still alive. He revived a day later while a doctor was attempting to dissect his "corpse." After, he traveled to Constantinople, where he was enslaved for indecently picking up and returning flowers dropped by a woman in a mosque. He was assigned to the same galley as the Young Baron, and by the time Candide found him, the two had been arguing endlessly over whose misfortunes were worse. When asked by Candide if his experiences have changed his philosophy, Pangloss responds that his faith in the harmony of the world is unshaken.

Pangloss' story is so similar to the Baron's that their argument over who has it worse begins to seem ridiculous. Once again, the pursuit of women is the primary source of chaos and misfortune in the novel. Throughout the novel, but especially in its final chapters, the unresolvable arguments of the characters (which never change anything, not even the minds of the others) begin to seem like nothing more than silly, if perhaps comforting, distractions from the constant pile-up of fresh misfortunes.

CHAPTER 29

Finally, Candide, Martin, Pangloss, Cacambo and the Young Baron arrive at the palace where Cunégonde and the old woman work as servants. As Cacambo claimed, Cunégonde has lost all of her beauty. Nevertheless, Candide pays to have both of them freed. When he expresses his intention to marry Candide, the Baron becomes angry yet again, insisting that his sister will not marry a non-noble Candide while he is still living.

The humor of this chapter comes from the way it repeats the first one. Candide has gone through years of suffering only to get back into a worse version (now that Cunégonde is no longer beautiful) of the same situation he started in: Candide wishes to be with Cunégonde, and the Baron (son of the old Baron) is violently against it. The Baron's aristocratic stubbornness seems silly—even insane—when we remember that Candide has saved both he and Cunégonde several times.

CONCLUSION

Though he no longer wants to marry Cunégonde, the stubbornness of the Young Baron's opposition causes Candide to do it anyway. He has the Baron sent back to the Jesuits in Rome. Afterwards, he purchases and lives on a small farm with Cunégonde, Cacambo, Pangloss, Martin, and the old woman. Though they are at last reunited, they are all unhappy: their dreams and desires for life have been dashed. Day after day, they watch boats filled with exiled royalty passing by their window.

In the first chapter, the old Baron sends Candide away. In this chapter, Candide sends the new Baron away. This symbolizes the eventual triumph of the Enlightenment and reason over traditional customs and structures of power. By surrounding the characters with other unfortunates—like the exiled royals—the novel makes the point that misfortune is not unique, but is in fact a common feature of human life.

Candide, Martin, Pangloss, Cacambo, Cunégonde and the old woman spend their days arguing about the meaning of life. Martin concludes that there are only two possible destinies for human beings: to sit around doing nothing, filled with disgust, or to live with unsettling and constant change.

Now that the characters have finished their painful adventures, they distract themselves with talking. The two alternatives Martin proposes are exactly those that the characters have lived: chaos in their adventures, followed by disgust and idleness on the farm.

Paquette and Giroflée arrive at the farm. They have wasted all the money Candide gave them, and are no happier than they were before: once again, Martin has been proven correct.

This is the novel's final dismissal of wealth as a means of achieving happiness, a recurrent theme in previous chapters.

Hoping to resolve their endless philosophical debates, Candide and the other remaining characters visit a wise Dervish. Using Pangloss as a spokesperson, they ask the Dervish why man was made, and why there is evil in the world. The Dervish asks them why such questions are their business, and makes an enigmatic analogy to the discomfort of mice on a royal ship: what does the King care about how the mice are feeling? With that, he shuts the door in their faces.

The refusal of the Dervish to debate with Pangloss and the others suggests the uselessness of philosophy. His analogy about the mice implies that God is indifferent to the happiness of mankind, just as the King is indifferent to the happiness of the mice on his ship.

Later, Candide, Martin and Pangloss meet a local farmer, who invites them into his house for a meal. They start talking to him about the execution of a few Viziers in Constantinople, but he has not heard: his only concern is maintaining his farm, which he claims saves his family from "weariness, vice, and want." Pangloss, Martin and Candide all come to the conclusion that working hard is the only way to make life tolerable. They agree that man is not born for idleness. Pangloss continues to philosophize about the "best of all possible worlds," but Candide is no longer interested. "All that is very well," he answers, "but let us cultivate our garden."

The example of the local farmer, voluntarily withdrawn from the world and hard at work with his family, is a powerful counter image to the dozens of nobles and "great," people in the novel who have fallen on hard times and cannot stop complaining about it.In the end, Candide concludes that using reason and hard work to improve the world and our lives—what is meant by cultivating our garden—is more useful and fulfilling than dreaming or arguing about what makes up the "best of all possible worlds," and pursuing the endless questions of theology and philosophy.

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