

Instructions: Read and annotate the following information before reading the text. Make sure that you look up any word(s) that you do not know. Do not simply read past them.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 1480, the Spanish crown established the Inquisition, a tribunal that assessed the orthodoxy of converts to Catholicism and punished those who did not adhere closely enough to Catholic precepts. Soon after the Inquisition was established, royal decrees forced Jews and Muslims to leave Spain; some Jews and Muslims chose to convert to Catholicism rather than accept expulsion. The Inquisition closely watched these conversos, persecuting them if they took actions inconsistent with Catholic orthodoxy.

This atmosphere of religious persecution hangs heavily over *Candide*. The religious climate in Voltaire's France was probably shaped most directly by the Wars of Religion between French Calvinist Protestants (Huguenots) and French Roman Catholics that engulfed the country in the late 16th century. Though the 1598 Edict of Nantes offered Huguenots a measure of peace and equality under Catholic rule, the Edict was revoked in 1685, leading to the programmatic destruction of Protestant churches and attempts to convert Protestants to Catholicism by coercion. Protestants undertook a mass diaspora from France, and relations between Protestant countries and France became strained.

In 1755, just a few years before *Candide* was originally published, an earthquake destroyed the Portuguese city of Lisbon. This event forms the backdrop for chapters 5 and 6 and can reasonably be assumed to have formed a powerful obstacle to Voltaire's acceptance of divine providence in his own philosophical outlook. If God is omnipotent, omniscient, and benevolent, how could he allow (or cause) such an event to occur? Voltaire examines this question throughout *Candide*.

By the time *Candide* was written, the Enlightenment was well under way. One of the most important texts of this period, Isaac Newton's *Principia Mathematica*, attempted to explain natural processes with observable evidence—a contrast to preceding ideas about the natural world, which mostly relied upon unobservable supernatural phenomena. Natural philosophy was not the only sphere in which religious beliefs and practices were questioned, however; some philosophers and ethicists rejected faith-based arguments concerning morality and ethical principles.

Gottfried Leibniz, however, was not one of these philosophers. In his *Théodicée*, Leibniz attempts to reconcile the existence of evil with the existence of an omnipotent, omniscient, benevolent God. The existence of evil within the universe, often referred to as “the problem of evil,” is perhaps most elegantly stated in a quotation often attributed to the Greek philosopher Epicurus: Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is not omnipotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Then whence cometh evil? Is he neither able nor willing? Then why call him God? The polytheist religions of the Greeks and Romans provide a convenient explanation for the evil in the world: evil gods, or the evil caused by combat between the gods. The gods were not supposed to be perfect, so there was no reason to expect their creation and effect on human life to be perfect either. The Greek and Roman gods acted similarly to humans; they fought, had love affairs, and tended to be capricious. They certainly were not omnipotent, omniscient, or omnibenevolent.

Unlike these earlier polytheist religions, however, Judaism and Christianity posit that a single, all-powerful God created the universe and that this God is perfect in every way. Leibniz's philosophical outlook, usually referred to as “optimism,” stipulates that the universe, as it exists, is in its optimal state—God, who created it, could not have created a better one. If evil exists, it exists because evil is required for the universe's existence. In *Candide*, Pangloss (transparently a stand-in for Leibniz) espouses optimism, often referring to this world as “the best of all possible worlds.” Voltaire repeatedly

attacks this philosophy, citing terrible natural disasters and horrific human behavior in an attempt to show that the universe does contain unnecessary flaws and therefore is not optimal. Voltaire implies that if he can imagine a better arrangement for the world, surely God could have. A perfect God should have made an optimal world. While Leibniz attempts to explain how the world, even with its noticeable flaws, must in some sense be the best world possible, Voltaire counters with an unvoiced plea: surely God could have done better, and surely such an intelligent thinker as Leibniz should know better than to try to justify the incredible levels of violence and devastation in the world.

GENRE AND LITERARY DEVICES

Candide falls squarely into the literary genre known as satire. Often, the satirist's aim is to expose some negative aspect or aspects of society in an attempt to shame society into changing itself. There are two major categories of satire: Horatian and Juvenalian. Horatian satire is playful and lighthearted, and criticizes its target or targets without the intent to offend. By contrast, Juvenalian satire is directed toward what the author deems to be genuine evils in society, and as a result it is much more abrasive in tone.

Candide is an example of Juvenalian satire; it addresses what Voltaire deems to be pressing social evils rather than minor vices or follies, and it does so with an unmistakably harsh tone. The brutal experiences of Cunegonde while she is separated from Candide, the senselessness of the religious persecution the characters observe and endure, and the scale of the battles Voltaire describes are intended to shock readers. The situations in which Voltaire places his characters are realistic, but Voltaire often exaggerates events for comedic effect. This allows the reader to look on the catastrophes with a bit of dark humor. Simple humor could keep the reader engaged in the story, but satire engages the reader with humor while constantly reminding one of the manifold sources of pain and horror in life.

One device used extensively in Candide is dialogue. In the classical sense of the word, a dialogue is a conversation in which two characters discuss a central idea or problem. Classical dialogues often feature a sage or teacher, like Socrates in Plato's dialogues, whose arguments shape the opinions of one or more students. In Candide, discussions between Candide and Pangloss sometimes tend this way, although with the satirical twist that the sage's "wisdom" is absurd rather than convincing.

This is just one of the many ways that Voltaire uses irony in his story. Most definitions of irony identify three types: situational, verbal, and dramatic.

- Situational irony is a reversal of an expected course of events. For much of the book, Candide searches for Cunegonde so that he can marry her. However, upon finally finding her he discovers that she has grown ugly and he no longer wishes to marry her.
- Verbal irony is speaking one thing but meaning something else; sarcasm is a form of verbal irony.
- Dramatic irony is created when the audience has more correct knowledge of the characters' situation(s) than do the characters themselves; this allows the audience to identify mistakes on the part of the characters while they are in the process of making these mistakes.

Hyperbole is a device Voltaire uses to create many of his satirical and ironic situations. Voltaire takes the theological, ethical, and political problems found in reality and exaggerates aspects of each to an absurd degree, creating humor. Without these excessive elements of the story, the irony would be much more subtle, and the pain and sorrow much more likely to engender sympathy and disgust rather than a wry smirk from Voltaire's readers. In short, Candide would be a very different book.

Answer the following questions as completely as you can. Use specific examples and/or quotes to support your answer. Also, write your answers in a different color.

Candide

Chapter 1

1. How does Voltaire use names to quickly reveal aspects of his characters?
2. From what narrative point of view is the story told?
3. What topics are introduced into this satire in this first chapter?
4. What logical fallacy does Pangloss make in his argument for Optimism? 5. Why might Voltaire have chosen to use a euphemism to describe Pangloss having sexual intercourse with the chamber-maid?

Chapter 2

1. How does Voltaire's portrayal of the soldiers reveal the text's anti-war sentiment?
2. How does Voltaire continue to satirize Optimism in this chapter? 3. Why was Candide whipped? Why was he pardoned?

Chapters 3 – 4

1. Chapter 3 is often thought to be a critique of war. How does Voltaire display his anti-war sentiment?
2. How does Voltaire's description of the war attack the philosophy of Optimism?
3. Why does the orator condemn Candide? What might this suggest about Voltaire's view of Christianity?
4. How does Pangloss's list of disease transmitters ridicule the concept of social class divisions?
5. How does James argue against Optimism? 6. How do these chapters introduce the problem of evil?

Chapter 5

1. What does the reaction of each man (Candide, Pangloss, and the sailor) to the earthquake say about his philosophy?
2. What types of evil are demonstrated in this chapter, and how do they bolster Voltaire's argument against Optimism?
3. What is the purpose of the introduction of the Familiar of the Inquisition?
4. How has the setting of the story affected the plot?

Chapter 6

1. How does the description of the people's reaction to the earthquake illustrate Voltaire's antireligious sentiment?
2. How does this chapter serve as an introduction to a central conflict of the story?
3. What is ironic about Candide's three companions' deaths

Chapter 7

1. How does the author juxtapose Candide's experience with the old woman with his previous experience (in Chapter 3) with the religious orator in Holland? What might this juxtaposition reveal about Voltaire's attitude toward religious officials?
2. How does the author foreshadow Cunegonde's return to Candide?
3. How do the settings in this chapter reflect the characters found in those settings?
4. How is Candide portrayed in this chapter?

Chapter 8

1. How is the notion of divine providence criticized in this chapter?
2. What is Cunegonde's tone in telling her story? What does this suggest about how women were treated in Voltaire's time?
3. What does this chapter suggest about the nature of religion

Chapter 9

1. What purpose do Don Issachar and the Grand Inquisitor serve in the novel? Explain your answer.
2. How does Candide reason through his murder of the Inquisitor? Does Voltaire seem to share this view?

Chapter 10

1. How does Cunegonde's statement, "Where find Inquisitors or Jews who will give me more," convey that men are also objectified in Candide?
2. What is ironic about the reverend Grey Friar stealing Cunegonde's jewels?
3. What does the journey across the sea represent to the travelers, and what are their attitudes toward it?

Chapter 11

1. What religions does Voltaire satirize in this chapter? How
2. How does Voltaire portray war in this chapter?
3. How does this chapter reinforce the idea that society views women primarily as sexual objects?

Chapter 12

1. Why was the eunuch in Morocco? Explain the irony created by this situation.
2. Explain the irony (or ironies) created by the “very pious and humane” Iman’s sermon to the hungry Janissaries.

Chapter 13

1. How does the description of the Governor reveal the narrator’s attitude toward him?
2. Why does the old woman think Cunegonde should marry the Governor

Chapter 14

1. How does the irony in Cacambo’s description of the Paraguayan government affect his characterization?
2. What inequality is illustrated in this chapter, and how does the author illustrate this inequality?

Chapter 15

1. What effect or effects, if any, does the expository material in Chapter 15 have on the text?
2. Why does Candide think he should be allowed to marry Cunegonde? What does this contribute to Candide’s development as a character?

Chapter 16

1. What might the author intend by his portrayal of Candide’s encounter with the monkeys?
2. What foreshadows Candide’s capture?
3. What logical fallacy does Candide make in the end of the chapter?

Chapter 17

1. What is the primary purpose of the chapter’s final paragraph?
2. What does the final paragraph of this chapter contribute to Candide’s development as a character?

Chapter 18

1. How does the narrator’s description of the house satirize the concept of wealth?

Chapter 19

1. What finally causes Candide to renounce Optimism?
2. What implicit argument does the text make concerning European society and the slave trade? Explain your answer.
3. What is Candide most upset by in this chapter? How does this expose his personal moral failings and reveal the target of Voltaire’s satirical aim in this chapter?

Chapter 20

1. Explain the differences between Martin's philosophical outlook and Optimism.
2. Compare and contrast Candide and Martin.
3. What might the fifteen-day discussion between Candide and Martin suggest about the nature of philosophy?

Chapter 21

1. What is the primary conflict of this chapter?
2. How does the long list Candide employs near the end of the chapter criticize free will?
3. Is Martin a foil to Pangloss? Explain your answer.

Chapter 22

1. What is the target of Voltaire's satire in the first paragraph? How does Voltaire mock this target?
2. How does Voltaire create humor during the scene at La Comédie in which Candide discusses actors and actresses with a critic?
3. How does Martin use the treatment of Parisian actresses to argue for his philosophy?
4. How are art critics satirized in this chapter?
5. How does Candide lose most of his wealth in this chapter?
6. What does Candide mean when he says, "I have seen no bears in my country, but men I have beheld nowhere except in El Dorado?"

Chapter 23

1. In the paragraph beginning "It is another kind of folly," how does Martin's use of sarcasm affect the text?
2. Why have the English executed one of their own Admirals? How does Candide's response expose the justifications for the Admiral's execution as ridiculous?

Chapter 24

1. What attitude toward authority figures and power is reflected in Paquette's story? What does her story reveal about the criteria by which women are judged in a society dominated by male authorities?
2. Explain the effect or effects the juxtaposition of Paquette's list of woes (beginning with "Ah! sir ...") and Martin's response to Candide ("You see that already I have won half the wager") has on the text.

Chapter 25

1. What does the name “Pocourante” mean? Explain why Voltaire chose this name for Signor Pocourante.
2. What is Pocourante’s attitude toward art and literature? What does Voltaire satirize through this?
3. How does Martin react to Pocourante? How does his reaction compare with Candide’s?

Chapter 26

1. Are the kings sympathetic or unsympathetic characters? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

Chapter 27

1. What evidence from this chapter reveals that Candide has learned nothing from his experiences in Surinam (Chapter 19)?

Chapter 28

1. Explain the subtext of the stories told by the Baron and Pangloss in this chapter.
2. What does the final paragraph of the chapter indicate about Pangloss’s character development?

Chapter 29

1. Is the Baron a static or a dynamic character? Explain your answer.

Chapter 30

1. How does the juxtaposition between the old woman’s question (“I want to know which is worse ... to go through all the miseries we have undergone, or to stay here and have nothing to do?”) and Candide’s response (“It is a great question”) affect the text?
2. Explain what the Dervish means by the following statement: “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?”
3. How does the conversation between Pangloss, Candide, and the Dervish reveal the irony in the following statement? “In the neighborhood there lived a very famous Dervish who was esteemed the best philosopher in all Turkey” How do you know that the author also intends for the statement to be taken as fact?
4. What does Candide mean when he says, “All that is very well ... but let us cultivate our garden”?