

*Candide*

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# Candide

VOLTAIRE

Edited and with notes by  
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FIRST EDITION

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*I dedicate this edition to the precious memory of*  
SLOBODANKA (DANKA) ROSS,  
*and that of her wonderful parents,*  
ALEXANDER ZDUIC AND ZORKA ZDUIC née SLOBODIC





## Acknowledgements

WITHOUT THE CONSTANT LOVE, goodness, UNDERSTANDING, PATIENCE, AND SUPPORT OF MY EXCELLENT WIFE, Elsa, and that of our daughter, Anne-Marie, my *Candide* project almost certainly would have been impossible to complete. Anne-Marie, a high school English instructor, has provided many valuable, perceptive critiques and suggestions as work progressed on various drafts of the *Candide* project. I am deeply in the debt of my friend from nearly forty-five years ago at UCLA and the Université de Bordeaux in France, Dr. Thomas A. Lathrop, who suggested that I produce an edition of *Candide ou l'optimisme*, and kindly provided the opportunity and necessary advice on how to proceed. At California State University, Fresno I received helpful encouragement from university colleagues too numerous to enumerate. I am also most grateful for the enthusiastic interest and encouragement of some exceptionally bright and eager students, in particular Ms. Jami Gordillo-Kerby, whom I had the good fortune to instruct in French grammar, composition, and conversation during Academic Year 2003-2004 prior to my retirement from full-time teaching of French and Portuguese.

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## Introduction to Students

THE PURPOSE OF THIS edition of *Candide ou l'optimisme* is to make a humanistic masterpiece accessible to students of French language, literature, culture, history and ideas. Voltaire's *Candide* is assigned reading in many university departments, English, French, History, Philosophy, and Political Science as it is an indispensable primer on the principle ideals of the Enlightenment, also known as the Age of Voltaire, the greatest leap in mankind's understanding of himself and of the world. This immensely popular and very readable short novel contributed to the modern era's shift of consciousness from a God-centered view of reality to a man-centered one. Voltaire uses his lumières, his bright "lights of reason" and common sense, combined with irony, ridicule, and laughter to attack man-caused misfortunes and injustices caused by war, metaphysical obscurantism, religious fanaticism, and tyrannical government, a world that can not be qualified as "the best of all possible worlds."

### WHO WAS VOLTAIRE?<sup>1</sup>

Voltaire the philosophe, freethinker, dramatist, poet, scientist, historian, economist, politician and successful speculator embodies the Enlightenment more than any other intellectual and writer. As noted earlier, the Enlightenment is also called the Age of Voltaire.<sup>2</sup> It is mainly through his philosophical

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<sup>1</sup> For a biography of Voltaire written for the general reader, see: Theodore Besterman. *Voltaire* (New York: Harcourt, 1969.)

<sup>2</sup> For a very readable account of the historical and cultural context consult: Will and Ariel Durant. *The Age of Voltaire: A History of Civilization in Europe from 1715 -1756*, with special emphasis on the Conflict between Religion and Philosophy (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963)

short stories, *Candide*, *Zadig*, *l'Ingénu*, that Voltaire continues to attract the general, informed reader. Scholars and specialists today appreciate many of his other works as well, especially his correspondence since Voltaire exchanged letters and thoughts with intellectuals and heads of state everywhere, especially in Continental Europe where the French language was used universally at the time.

Voltaire's father, a wealthy merchant and an important *secrétaire du roi*, was charged with oversight of financial affairs in France's private sector. Physically not a very strong or healthy man, Voltaire lived nevertheless an extremely busy eighty-four years, from 1694 through 1778. At birth he received the name François-Marie Arouet. When he began to write he adopted the pseudonym "Voltaire" probably because the family name, Arouet, one word, lent itself to an unflattering play on two French words, *à rouer*, "ready for a beating." Voltaire was not of noble birth, and did indeed receive a humiliating, physical flogging following a quarrel with the Chevalier de Rohan-Chabot. When Voltaire challenged the Chevalier to a duel, he found himself incarcerated in the Bastille "for his own safety." He was set free on the condition that he depart France immediately for England where he remained in exile three years, 1726 through 1729. During this sojourn Voltaire gained a thorough knowledge of the English language and literature. He also experienced the relative political, intellectual, religious and scientific freedom of England that was lacking in his native France, a despotic police state with *un roi, une foi, une loi*. Voltaire subsequently became the popularizer of liberal English thought, of John Locke's philosophical and political ideas in particular, in the very influential *Lettres philosophiques* (1734), a book that circulated in France clandestinely or *sous le manteau*, "under the coat," and which constituted, as Voltaire's biographer Gustave Lanson observed, "the first bomb dropped on the Old Régime."<sup>3</sup> Voltaire's mother died early in his life, and Voltaire supposedly did not get along very well with his father who wanted him to become a lawyer. However, Voltaire did follow his father's example in that he made himself a very, very rich man through shrewd maneuvers in commerce and speculation. Possessing extreme wealth can be a useful prerequisite for having influence. People tend to look up

<sup>3</sup> Gustave Lanson. *Voltaire* (New York and London: John Wiley and Sons, 1960).

to those who combine talent, wealth and a concern for human and moral issues. Some contemporary examples of this are philanthropists Bono, Warren Buffet, Bill and Melinda Gates. Voltaire's wealth made it possible, but not any safer—in a time of censorship and arbitrary arrest in France—for Voltaire to ensure that his critical opinions appeared in print and that they were circulated clandestinely in France. With his reputation for challenging the authority of the French crown and the Church, and an outstanding *lettre de châchet* for his arrest, Voltaire could not return to France or to Paris during most of his life. Voltaire's literary output during a productive period of 63 years was enormous: plays, poems, history, essays, short stories, and voluminous correspondence of some 15, 000 extant, published letters. Following the publication of *Candide ou l'optimisme* in 1759, Voltaire began to employ his substantial wealth and growing international reputation to influence public opinion in France through his vigorous support of the victims of religious intolerance, and egregious miscarriages of justice. These cases include Protestant Pastor Rochette, decapitated in 1761 for preaching in public; Protestant Jean Calas, tortured and executed in 1762 for allegedly murdering a son said to have attempted a conversion to Catholicism; and Paul Sirven, who in 1762 escaped execution for allegedly murdering his daughter whom the bishop of Castres had violently forced to become a Roman Catholic.

As noted earlier, Gustave Lanson used the word "bomb" with reference to Voltaire's *Lettres philosophiques*. Figuratively speaking Voltaire was in fact a terrorist and a real danger to the advantaged few at the top in France, the royal court, the nobility, and the upper clergy. Just why might the society of pre-Revolutionary France merit Voltaire's "bombs?" To obtain an idea of Eighteenth Century French society and the kind of corruption that existed in France prior to the 1789 French Revolution, it is very useful for you to view two excellent films: *Ridicule*<sup>4</sup> and *The Affair of the Necklace*.<sup>5</sup> The latter film is based on a complicated but true story, a scandal involving a scheme

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<sup>4</sup> *Ridicule*. Screenplay by Waterhouse, Fessler and Vicaut. Dir. Patrice Leconte. Perf. Fanny Ardant, Jean Rochefort, Judith Godreche, Charles Berling. Miramax. 1996.

<sup>5</sup> *The Affair of the Necklace*. Screenplay by John Sweet. Dir. Charles Schyer. Perf. Hillary Swank, Jonathan Pryce, Christopher Walker. 2001.

concocted by the Comtesse de La Motte Valois and others to steal a very expensive diamond necklace by using a gullible Cardinal Rohan of Paris who was led to believe that he would gain favor with the French Queen, Marie Antoinette, through the gift of the necklace. The scheme proceeded without the Queen's knowledge. Nevertheless, the jewelers demanded payment from her, and the ensuing scandal galvanized public opinion against the monarchy on the eve of the French Revolution. The film *Ridicule* may be entirely a work of fiction, but it illustrates well the frivolity and worldly preoccupations of those surrounding the king, even the king himself, in French society of the Eighteenth Century, where sharp, even mean and wicked esprit, wit, was a requirement. The combined religious and political forces arrayed against Voltaire wielded immense power and influence.<sup>6</sup> Given such an environment, we should admire Voltaire's courage and persistence in his campaign against l'infâme. Due to the kind of lightning Voltaire inevitably attracted to himself on account of his critical ideas and writings, especially those aimed at abuses and injustices perpetrated by Church and the Crown, he was obliged to take up residence in the Bastille prison on more than one occasion, in 1717 for satiric verses aimed at the Regent and his daughter, and again in 1725 as a result of the Rohan affair already mentioned. Upon the appearance of the *Lettres philosophiques* in 1734, Voltaire was obliged to spend many years away from Paris. He spent fifteen years at the château at Cirey with his mistress, intellectual equal, and brilliant femme savante, Madame Emilie du Châtelet, a rigorous thinker, excellent writer, systematic scientist, and formidable mathematician who translated Newton's *Principia Mathematica* from Latin into French.<sup>7</sup> When Madame du Châtelet died in childbirth 1749, a devastated Voltaire accepted a long-standing invitation to spend time at château Sans Souci belonging to putative enlightened despot and Francophile, Frederick the Great of Prussia, who eventually grew angry with Voltaire's penchant for impertinence. Among other irritations, Voltaire had written a mocking criticism of Frederick's President of the Berlin Academy, Maupertuis. Frederick had had enough and is supposed to have

<sup>6</sup> For more on this topic, see R.R. Palmer's excellent study: *Catholics and Unbelievers in 18th Century France* (Princeton University Press, 1970).

<sup>7</sup> See David Bodanis. *Passionate Minds: The Great Enlightenment Love Affair* (Crown, 2006).

declared, "Once you press the juice out of an orange, you discard the peel," and proceeded to ensure that Voltaire's harried retreat from German territory became an unnecessarily unpleasant one. Since he could not return to France, Voltaire purchased his own residence located rather strategically in the "no man's land" that separated France and Switzerland. Voltaire, aged 65, resided there in 1758-1759 when he penned *Candide*—in total secrecy. Nearly twenty years later, in 1778, at age eighty-four, Voltaire was finally permitted to return to Paris where he was welcomed triumphantly, so much so that the constant attention overwhelmed and overtaxed his energies, and he soon died.

#### WHAT WAS THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT?<sup>8</sup>

The term Enlightenment refers to the mainstream of thought of Europe and of America in the period corresponding to the last years of the Seventeenth Century through the first fifty or sixty years of the Eighteenth Century. It was a complex, international, intellectual movement whose chief characteristic was a spirit of criticism, a reexamination and reevaluation of just about everything: all authority: scientific, political, religious, social and economic. The modern mind and manner of thinking, academic progress, and secular liberalism began to emerge in the Age of Reason and Enlightenment with such critical thinkers as Benedict de Spinoza,<sup>9</sup> Pierre Bayle, John Locke, Adam Smith, David Hume, Emanuel Kant, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Denis Diderot, Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin. The influence of Enlightenment thought and values is evident in these precious documents: the US Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution and Bill of Rights, each written by "broadminded intellectuals, clear products of the International Enlightenment."<sup>10</sup> The same influence is clear in the French Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man. A common spirit of criticism

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<sup>8</sup> See Dorinda Outram *The Enlightenment* (Cambridge University Press, 1995).

<sup>9</sup> On the meaning of "modern era" and for valuable background, read Matthew Stuart's *The Courtier and the Heretic: Leibnitz, Spinoza, and the Fate of God in the Modern World*. (New York, Norton, 2006).

<sup>10</sup> Brooke Allen, *Moral minority: Our Skeptical founding Fathers* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2006) xii.

derived from the Enlightenment led French and Americans to attack abuses committed by monarchy. Enlightenment ideals and influence preceded and played an important role in both the American and French Revolutions. Ideas and ideals are not without consequences, some intended—with excellent results, and others unintended. The legacy of the Enlightenment is evident wherever there is a moderate, modern, secular approach to politics, society and to religion that ensures every citizen access to life liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Since the time of the Enlightenment, governments must “meet a performance test: whether or not they could improve the human condition.”<sup>11</sup> Since Enlightenment ideas and ideals continue to resonate in our world—where they may well be in jeopardy—as heirs and beneficiaries we bear a special responsibility to review, reexamine, and to vigorously defend them. The reading of *Candide ou l’optimisme* is an indispensable beginning to understanding the spirit and example of Voltaire, and the importance of his contributions to the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment produced some contradictory counter-currents. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a self-educated philosophe from Switzerland, at first a disciple of Voltaire, could not accept Voltaire’s main purpose in writing *Candide*, which was to discredit the doctrine of Providence, or the benevolence of the deity. Voltaire’s critical position was poles apart from Rousseau’s professed need to believe in a providential deity. To the Enlightenment doctrine of progress and perfectibility, Rousseau responded that civilization had corrupted man. Rousseau’s original ideas on education, the raising of children, the politics of the social contract, and the literature of *sensibilité* have proved to be highly influential, for good or ill, maybe even more influential than Voltaire’s. England became a model for enlightened French intellectuals or philosophes including Montesquieu, Diderot, and Voltaire. England possessed a fairly democratic Parliament, citizens who enjoyed freedom of thought, and relative tolerance, or “toleration” as it was then called.<sup>12</sup> A diversity of religious sects co-existed fairly well. By contrast, across the Channel in totalitarian France, there still reigned an absolute monarch, “one king, one law and one faith,” intolerance

<sup>11</sup> Jeffrey D. Sachs. *The End of Poverty. Economic Possibilities for our Time* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005) 348.

<sup>12</sup> See Perez Zagorin: *How the Idea of Religious Toleration Came to the West* (Princeton University Press, 2003).



and censorship. France lost all its wars with England in the 18th century, lost Canada and its commercial outposts in India. Intellectuals in France became fascinated by new, enlightened ideas from her successful rival, liberal ideas found especially in John Locke's *Treatises on Civil Government*, on *Toleration*, and his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Huguenot, Protestant refugees from France settled in Holland and in England and set about undermining the despotic French Ancien Régime by printing and introducing critical works clandestinely, *sous le manteau*, into France.

What about philosophe Voltaire's religion? Voltaire professed deism, or a belief in natural religion, a belief in a de-Christianized Creator. The Creator mentioned in the US Declaration of Independence bears the imprint of deism, the creed of Jefferson, Franklin, Washington, Adams, Madison and Hamilton, the key Founding Fathers. Deists, adherents to natural religion, did not recognize revealed religion or sacred texts, did not accept the doctrine of the Trinity, nor the divinity of Christ, and usually held in common a belief in Divine Providence or in the benevolence of the deity. By the time Voltaire wrote *Candide ou l'optimisme* he had adopted a pessimistic view of the doctrine of Providence. Although few people today would call themselves deists, many Americans probably do hold similar beliefs to the ones described earlier, including the members of the Unitarian Universalist Church. While attacking terrible abuses (*écrasez l'infâme*) committed in the name of a religious orthodoxy that had the state as an ally as in France, Spain, Portugal and Italy, Voltaire maintained a reformist, utilitarian regard for religion. Voltaire probably would approve of the reforms established by the Roman Catholic Church's Second Vatican Council held 1962-1965 in an attempt to acknowledge the situation of humanity in the modern world. Voltaire declared that nothing would restrain his valet from murdering him if the valet did not believe in rewards and punishments in the after life. Voltaire's ideal religion is a pragmatic, tolerant one, one that does not persecute, one that is useful and beneficial to the stabilization of society. The need for tolerance is a major theme in *Candide*. Some French philosophes, Diderot, La Mettrie, and Holbach were avowed atheists whose ideas Voltaire found dangerous, for their ideas, he thought, would result in an atheistic society that would lack the control assured by religion.

WHY DID VOLTAIRE WRITE *CANDIDE OU L'OPTIMISME*?

The destructive earthquake, tidal wave and fire that destroyed Lisbon Portugal in 1755, resulting in the deaths of at least 30,000 persons, provoked Voltaire to attack the doctrine of Optimism and Divine Providence, first in *Le poème sur le désastre de Lisbonne* (1756), and subsequently in the novel *Candide ou l'optimisme* (1759). Voltaire's purpose in writing the latter is engagé; he writes to change the way people think concerning the problem of evil—why bad things, misfortunes and mishaps happen, le mal physique such as disasters in nature, earthquakes, tidal waves, and by contrast le mal moral, disasters that are produced by man's inhumanity to man, perpetrated by war, religious fanaticism, intolerance and autocratic rulers.<sup>13</sup> Voltaire questions the benevolence of the deity, and successfully and permanently discredits the metaphysical-religious concepts of Optimism and Providence. Voltaire knew that a formal treatise concerning the inadequacies of an abstruse metaphysical concept would not attract a large readership, so he chose to insert his message into a conte, a short novel that is delightful to read, complete with ironical, satirical comments, ribald stories, digressions, misfortunes and mis-adventures of the anti-hero, Candide, and his friends. It is Voltaire's use of irony that really convinces his readers that his anti-optimism position is the correct one. The French have a phrase for such a technique of which Voltaire had an incomparable mastery: "dorer la pillule," "to guild the pill," to sweeten a hard to swallow medicine by rendering it irresistible. *Candide ou l'optimisme* is a work of serious literature, a roman à idées, a type of literature that provides one means—religion, philosophy, astrology are some others—to address life's "big questions" inherent in the universal human condition, such as: the meaning of life, why are we here, love, death, war, greed, the insufficiency of our own humanity, hence the need for tolerance and enlightenment based on common sense and clear, unemotional, rational thought.

Let us review Voltaire's principal objectives in writing *Candide ou l'optimisme*:

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<sup>13</sup> On the "problem of evil," see Willim J. Wainwright, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy and Religion* (Oxford University Press, 2005) 188-219.

**MAN IS THE WOLF OF MAN:** Make it clear that most unmerited human misery and misfortune in the world is perpetrated by humans against other humans. Provide hope for mankind through the antidote of common sense, tolerance and humanism as practiced in El Dorado (chapters seventeen and eighteen).

**METAPHYSICS:** Condemn the metaphysical-theological explanation for the existence of evil formulated by Leibnitz in the doctrine of Optimism.<sup>14</sup> For Voltaire the concept of Providence is an absurd, cruel, even inhuman way to explain the unmerited human suffering of the victims of the disastrous earthquake, tidal wave and fire that destroyed Lisbon, Portugal on November 1, All Saints' Day, 1755 (chapters five and six).

**WAR:** Denounce the devastation brought about by war (chapter three).

**Alliance of State and Religion:** Combat intolerance, religious fanaticism, persecution, torture, and the execution of "heretics," (chapters five and six), all sources of untold suffering and injustice.<sup>15</sup> The alliance of religion and the state sets the stage for intolerance, injustice, and lack of freedom.

**SLAVERY:** Condemn the cruel institution of slavery (chapter nineteen).

**MISTREATMENT OF WOMEN:** Expose the current plight and exploitation of women (Cunégonde, the Old Lady, Paquette, and others).

**DESPOTISM:** Denounce the despotic, arbitrary abuse of power by rulers

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<sup>14</sup> For a primer on the philosophical ideas of Leibnitz, see Nicolas Jolley *Leibnitz* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>15</sup> The Inquisition or Holy Office was used by the Roman Catholic Church to investigate heresy. Trials were conducted secretly, torture of the accused was customary and notorious. In Spain and Portugal the heretics executed were mostly Muslims and Jews. To appreciate the ferocity of the Inquisition in Eighteenth Century Portugal in Voltaire's time, view J.T. Azuley's provocative film *O Judeu* (*The Jew*) concerning the fate of playwright António da Silva, found guilty of heresy and burned at the stake in Lisbon in 1739. Dr. Francis Dutra, professor of History at UCSB has stated that this film is in general historically correct. The last Pope, John Paul II, condemned "the acquiescence given, especially in certain centuries, to intolerance and even the use of violence in the service of truth" (*L'Osservatore Romano*, June 23, 2004). He made these remarks on the occasion of the publication of *L'Inquisizione, Atti del Simposio Internazionale* (Città del Vaticano, 2003). This 900 page report contains information on the Portuguese Inquisition, p. 217-250.

(passim).

The Leibnizian doctrine of Optimism alluded to in the title *Candide ou l'optimisme* is thoroughly satirized and mocked on nearly every page of the book. Voltaire does not fail to get his point across! Optimism is the doctrine that events are organized by Providence in view of the good of humanity. The word "Optimism" was a neologism at the beginning of the Eighteenth Century, as was the word "theodicy," used in reference to the justification of the ways of God to man. The phrase "to justify the ways of God to man" is from John Milton's great epic poem, *Paradise Lost* (1667). The term "theodicy" was first used by German mathematician and philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, who was obsessed with reconciling the existence of a perfect God and the existence of evil. In *Monadology*, published in 1714, Leibniz argued that innumerable monads, metaphysical atoms, entelechies, filled the universe. Independent of one another, the monads interacted predictably in a pre-established harmonious way. The *Great Chain of Being*, a book by A.O. Lovejoy,<sup>16</sup> provides a useful explanation of these ideas and their influence. Leibniz's system was on the "cutting edge" of philosophy at the time, demonstrating purportedly that the Christian faith and scientific reason need not be in conflict and that this world is the best of all possible worlds due to preestablished harmony. The familiar phrase, best of all possible worlds, comes to us from Leibniz via *Candide*. Serious intellectuals, Voltaire included, had taken the doctrine of Optimism very seriously, but the theory ran into great difficulty following a natural disaster—the destruction of Lisbon, Portugal on November 1, 1755, a natural disaster possibly unequalled for two and one-half centuries until the powerful and destructive tsunami of December 2004 that struck the area surrounding the Indian Ocean. In the case of Lisbon, more shook in Lisbon than the physical ground.

Half way through the novel *Candide* begins to have serious doubts about Leibnizian Optimism following a conversation with a mutilated black slave in Dutch Surinam, and says so aloud, so that Cacambo, *Candide's* valet and faithful friend, asks him, "What is Optimism?" *Candide* replies that "Opti-

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<sup>16</sup> A.O. Lovejoy *The Great Chain of Being; a Study of the History of an Idea* (Harvard University Press, 1936)

mism is the mania of affirming that everything is good when things are bad.” This is but one example of Voltaire’s constant satirizing of Leibnitz’s philosophy throughout the book. Rather than *Candide* or, Optimism, Voltaire could have entitled his little book, *Candide* or, Anti-Optimism, because in the pages of *Candide* Voltaire ridicules and destroys forever Optimism as a philosophy. The automat *Candide* finally contradicts Pangloss (Leibnitz) to his very face in the last lines of the novel, as you will see. Does Voltaire’s anti-Optimism position mean that his outlook is entirely negative and pessimistic? Is all hope abandoned? Is there anything positive in the book? Is there any hope for *Candide*? Is there hope for mankind? There is in *Candide* a message of hope, it may be expressed by a single word: tolerance.

#### THE RELEVANCE OF CANDIDE TO OUR CONTEMPORARY WORLD:

##### OURS IS NOT THE BEST OF ALL POSSIBLE WORLDS!

In the post-*Candidean* world, the approach that Voltaire used to attack war, metaphysics, religious fanaticism and tyrannical government has always been relevant. In *Candide* ou l’optimisme Voltaire follows truth (note the small “t”) wherever it may lead. Just what is evil and what are its causes? Voltaire proceeds to destroy the widely-accepted theological, God-centered explanations of the existence of evil inherent in Leibnitzian Optimism and the notion of Providence, divine benevolence. His manner of critical thinking is modern, man-centered, informed, rational, and unsentimental. Persons everywhere who consider themselves educated, enlightened, and civilized may learn much from re-reading *Candide* from time to time. What would Voltaire have to say about the status of injustice in our present-day world? Ignorance and hostility toward scientific knowledge remain widespread in our society, while “feel good,” simplistic answers to complex questions most often prevail. Many still see the hand of God’s wrath in such natural disasters as disastrous earthquakes, tsunamis and hurricanes. Religious, authoritarian fundamentalists are in control of governments, including some classified as democratic. Terrorism perpetrated by radical, fanatical religious groups constitutes a threat to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness by humans around the globe. Morally questionable, reprehensible abuses of Human Rights, the UN Charter, and the authorization and use of torture in violation of the Geneva Convention, represent a descent into barbarism

worthy of the Inquisition. Does the spirit of Voltaire live today? The liberal ideals of the Enlightenment are in need of nurture in our midst. Carlos Fuentes, distinguished intellectual, author, diplomat, and humanist has this to say: "The Twenty-First Century is opening with ominous clouds of racism, xenophobia, ethnic cleansing, radical nationalism, state terrorism and terrorism without a face, arrogant hegemony, contempt for international law and its institutions, and fundamentalism of various kinds. What lies beneath these dangers? Not the evil eye, but the evil of intolerance and disdain for anything different. Be like me, think the way I think and if you don't, beware the consequences. Let's not fool ourselves. We are not living in the best of all possible worlds. It's up to us to recreate a human community, a city worthy of our best possibilities as God's creatures."<sup>17</sup>

#### THE FRENCH LANGUAGE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Voltaire is a recognized master of precise, clear French prose. His use of the French literary language in *Candide* hardly differs from the French used by serious writers of more recent times, such as Albert Camus in *La Peste* or Jean-Paul Sartre in *Le Mur*. In a few instances you will encounter grammatical structures or vocabulary that are no longer used. For example, in chapter 27 *Candide* wonders if he is dreaming, and exclaims: **Veillé-je?** Since this type of inversion currently is not in use, you will find the modern equivalent **Suis-je éveillé?** in a convenient footnote. Also in chapter 27 a form of the old verb *ouïr* (to hear) is used. A footnote explains that the verb *entendre* has now completely replaced *ouïr*. Since Voltaire uses the *passé simple* (that is not always simple!) and the *imparfait du subjonctif* verb tenses not used in spoken French, a careful review of the formation and uses of these classical tenses should facilitate your reading of *Candide*. In addition to word definitions, the glossary at the end of the book identifies the forms of literary tenses that appear in the *Candide*. The *passé simple* is abbreviated in the glossary as *ps*, the *imparfait du subjonctif* as *imp subj*, and the *plus-que-parfait du subjonctif* as *pqp*. Here are examples of these three literary tenses as they appear in the glossary: *fut ps* of **être** to be; *fût imp subj* of **être** to be; *eût été pqp* of **être** to be.

<sup>17</sup> Carlos Fuentes, "The Eternal Theater of Arthur Miller," *Los Angeles Times* Book Review, 20 Feb. 2005

## GRAMMATICAL NOTES

USE OF THE *PASSÉ SIMPLE*

In conversation the French use fewer tenses than those employed in a classical literary text such as *Candide*. Today's speakers of French use the *passé composé* to report completed actions. You will find that Voltaire's narrations use instead the *passé simple*. You need only recognize, not to produce orally or in writing, the forms of the *passé simple*. Here are some comparative examples:

CONVERSATIONAL STYLE 2000

Cunégonde **a vu** entre les broussailles...

Elle **a observé** les expériences...

... dont elle **a été** témoin.

Elle **a rencontré** Candide... et **a rougi**.

Leurs bouches **se sont rencontrées**...

Leurs mains **se sont égarées**...

Le baron **a chassé** Candide du château.

Cunégonde **s'est évanouie**.

LITERARY STYLE 1750

Cunégonde **vit** entre les broussailles...

Elle **observa** les expériences...

... dont elle **fut** témoin.

Elle **rencontra** Candide... et **rougit**.

Leurs bouches **se rencontrèrent**...

Leurs mains **s'égarèrent**...

Le baron **chassa** Candide du château.

Cunégonde **s'évanouit**.

NOTE: The *passé composé* does not disappear in literary usage. In *Candide* you will find that the *passé composé* is used as a present perfect. For example, in the first chapter Pangloss declares: "Ceux qui ont avancé que tout est bien ont dit une sottise; il fallait dire que tout est au mieux."

FORMATION OF THE *PASSÉ SIMPLE*

There are three separate sets or types of endings added to the base of the infinitive.

All verbs in –er are conjugated in the passé simple using the “a” endings: -ai, -as, -a, -âmes, -âtes, -èrent.:

(aller) j’allai, tu allas, il alla, nous allâmes, vous allâtes, ils allèrent.  
 (lier) je liai, tu lias, il lia, nous liâmes, vous liâtes, ils lièrent.  
 (séparer) je m’emparai, tu t’emparas, il s’empara, nous nous emparâmes,  
 vous vous emparâtes, ils s’emparèrent

Many verbs in –ir and -re are conjugated in the passé simple using the “i” endings –is, -is, -it, -îmes, -îtes, irent.:

(finir) je finis, tu finis, il finit, nous finîmes, vous finîtes, ils finirent.  
 (rendre) je rendis, tu rendis, il rendit, nous rendîmes, vous rendîtes, ils rendirent.  
 (prendre) je pris, tu pris, il prit, nous prîmes, vous prîtes, ils prirent.  
 (se mettre) je me mis, tu te mis, il se mit, nous nous mîmes, vous vous mîtes, ils se mirent.

Many verbs that have a past participle ending in “u” are conjugated in the passé simple using the “u” endings: -us, -us, -ut, -ûmes, -ûtes, -urent.:

(recevoir = reçu) je reçus, tu reçus, il reçut, nous reçûmes, vous reçûtes, ils reçurent.  
 (savoir = su) je sus, tu sus, il sut, nous sûmes, vous sûtes, ils surent.  
 (devoir = dû) je dus, tu dus, il dut, nous dûmes, vous dûtes, ils durent.  
 (avoir = eu) j’eus, tu eus, il eut, nous eûmes, vous eûtes, ils eurent.  
 (lire = lu) je lus, tu lus, il lut, nous lûmes, vous lûtes, ils lurent.  
 (vivre = vécu) je vécus, tu vécus, il vécut, nous vécûmes, vous vécûtes, ils vécurent.  
 (se taire = tu) je me tus, tu te tus, il se tut, nous nous tûmes, vous vous tûtes, ils se turent.



EXCEPTION: (mourir = mort) je mourus, tu mourus, il mourut, nous morûmes, ils morurent.

A few verbs have a “base” that is neither an infinitive nor a past participle:

(être) je fus, tu fus, il fut, nous fûmes, vous fûtes, ils furent.

(faire) je fis, tu fis, il fit, nous fîmes, vous fîtes, ils firent.

(tenir) je tins, tu tins, il tint, nous tîmes, vous tîntes, ils tinrent.

(venir) je vins, tu vins, il vint, nous vîmes, vous vîntes, ils vinrent.

(voir) je vis, tu vis, il vit, nous vîmes, vous vîtes, ils virent.

#### USE OF THE IMPARFAIT DU SUBJONCTIF

In *Candide* you will note that Voltaire’s sentences adhere strictly to the classical sequence of tenses. A subjunctive is required following an expression of doubt, necessity or following certain conjunctions. When the principal clause of a sentence is in a past tense, the imparfait du subjonctif is used in the secondary clause. In conversational French in our time the present subjunctive, the imperfect indicative or the conditional are sometimes used in such secondary clauses— so that the imparfait du subjonctif is almost always avoided. Here are some examples in bold of the imparfait du subjonctif that appear in the first chapters of *Candide*.

NOTE: the imparfait du subjonctif is mostly used in the third person singular.

Il trouvait Mlle Cunégonde extrêmement belle quoiqu’il ne prît jamais l’hardiesse de le lui dire. (Chapitre 1).

Candide demanda... qu’on voulût bien avoir la bonté de lui casser la tête. (Chapitre 2).

Des filles éventrées... criaient qu’on chevât de leur donner la mort. (Chapitre 3).

(Candide) ne douta pas qu’on ne le traitât aussi bien qu’il avait été dans le

château de monsieur le baron avant qu'il en eût été chassé<sup>18</sup>... (Chapitre 3).

La femme... avisant un homme qui doutait que le pape fût l'antéchrist, lui répandit sur le chef un plein... (Chapitre 3).

(D'après Pangloss)... la rade de Lisbonne avait été formée pour que cet anabaptiste s'y noyât. (Chapitre 5).

#### FORMATION OF THE IMPARFAIT DU SUBJONCTIF

There is only one set of endings: -sse, -sses, -t, -ssions, -ssiez, -ssent. The third person singular of the passé simple may be used as a "base." Be sure to distinguish between the third person singular of the passé simple and the third person singular of the imparfait du subjunctif that features a "château," a circumflex. Here are some examples:

(il allât) que j'allasse, que tu allasses, qu'il allât, que nous allussions, que vous allussiez, qu'ils allussent.

(il finit) que je finisse, que tu finisses, qu'il finît, que nous finissions, que vous finissiez, qu'ils finissent.

(il but) que je busse, que tu busses, qu'il bût, que nous bussions, que vous bussiez, qu'ils bussent.

As a minimum you should have the following reference tools at hand while reading *Candide ou l'optimisme*: a) A book of French verb conjugations in all the tenses, such as Christopher and Theodore Kendris' 501 French Verbs Conjugated in all the Tenses published by Barron's Educational Series; b) An complete French grammar, such as David Stillman's *Reprise: Complete Review of French Grammar, Communication, and Culture* published by National Textbook Company (McGraw-Hill), ISBN 0-8442-1488-4; c) An unabridged, one-volume French-English, English-French Dictionary, such as one published by Harper-Collins-Robert.

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<sup>18</sup> eût chassé: an example of the plus-que-parfait du subjunctif, which is a temps composé. You should recognize that the imparfait du subjunctif of eût is used here as an auxiliary verb.

## FEATURES OF THIS EDITION:

## GLOSSES, GLOSSARY, AND CULTURAL FOOTNOTES

In the margins of the *Candide* text you will find glosses, equivalent words in English of selected French words that you may not yet know. Each French word or short phrase glossed is followed by a degree sign. A French word is glossed only the first time that it appears in the text, unless it has a different meaning in another context. For your convenience, most of the words in the text are available for reference in a glossary at the end of the volume with the exception of French words that have the exact same form in English; these are not included. Very common vocabulary, those for the parts of the body, for example, also are omitted. If the marginal glosses spill over onto the next line, the continuation is indented slightly. A semicolon is used before a definition from a preceding line. See the initial page of Chapter 29 for two examples of how this system works. Footnotes at the bottom of pages have two purposes: a) The inclusion of longer glosses of phrases that will not fit in the margin; wherever a long phrase requires a gloss, the English translation of the entire phrase appears as a footnote in italics introduced by a bolded portion of the original phrase in the French text; b) The presentation of cultural notes to identify important philosophical ideas, historical events, persons and geographical places that appear in the text. These cultural notes are not meant to interpret the text since that is a task for you, your classmates, and for your instructor.

