

Utopia in candide

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Marco Flores 9/24/12 Utopian Lifestyle Throughout much literature such as *Candide*, by Voltaire, a concept of a Utopia is introduced. In this book, the utopian society was represented by El Dorado. Here, no realistic world ideals were present, as they were completely satisfied with what they had. They did not pray to God for help or even were curious enough to venture off outside the premises of their city. Lack of curiosity, which is completely against the norm of human nature, was what made them believe they have a perfect society.

Most of all, in creating a fictional utopian society, Voltaire is satirizing classical European ways of thought, rather referring to them as the dystopia of the world. Utopias are essentially ideal societies that could never be duplicated in the real world of things. It is literally a fictional way of life that could only be strived for and never be reached. In the novel, they stumble upon El Dorado which is shown to be a magical utopian society. All men are kind and equal to each other and no one seems to want “ more”, which we as Americans have been accustomed to.

They are not seeking to improve themselves in society, which is a concept so baffling for us to understand. It is difficult for us to understand because as a society the motto we live by is “ we want more” and that is why we are far and away from a utopian society. We are never satisfied with what we have, while there in El Dorado, they simply are complacent with where they are. Unlike the citizens of El Dorado, that society was not achievable for *Candide* and *Cacambo*. Being an outsider, *Candide* could not simply drop his ideals to follow those of El Dorado, where gold and gems are just pebbles which they walk upon.

Unlike the kids of El Dorado, they could not just play with the precious metals as if they had no value. Not only do their citizens undervalue gems which would make them prosperous throughout the world, but they are satisfied and do not worship nor kill those who do not have the same beliefs as them. They don't ask God of anything because they believe that what they are provided with is what they could and must use. " We do not pray to him at all, we have nothing to ask of him; he has given us everything we need; we thank him unceasingly," 47). When Cacambo and Candide reach Eldorado, Candide concludes that this must be utopia, a place where everything " is for the best. " However, he is yet unhappy because he misses Cunegonde, and Cacambo has a " restless spirit" and is not satisfied, either. So, they leave because of their personal desires to achieve more wealth and fame back in Europe. The satire that Voltaire provides on the subject of a Utopia is that there is a great problem the world suffers is that the perfect state is unachievable.

Although El Dorado provides a home with no worries or difficulties, Candide always wants more. There is no way to please human beings, even when all of your mistakes are undone and all men are equal. The true problem is that troubles still exist and there is no way to achieve complete happiness. Although El Dorado is seen by Candide as a true Utopia, it is rather the garden which itself is the true Utopia. In the end, they are left with the concept of the personal garden as their true paradise.

Thus the theme of the novel is that happiness can only be achieved by concentrating on peace and well-being within one's self, rather than seeking adventures, riches, or material goods. It was the Turk at the conclusion of

the novel that describes happiness is like a garden, where you must spend time to cultivate it and let it prosper. Candide realizes that you are the one that must create happiness as things don't just happen for a reason. As the "worthy old man seems to have created for himself an existence far preferable to that of the six kings" has done. 93). Throughout his life, Candide has struggled with Pangloss' philosophy of optimism, while he tries to connect what he's been taught and what he sees before him. Pangloss always taught him to see that things were always for the best and that there is an explanation for everything. This is difficult for Candide, as he does not see how a world full of war, murder, poverty, rape, and starvation could remotely hold the philosophy that "everything is for the best in the best of all possible worlds".

On the other side, is Martin with his pessimistic view on the whole world. He sees everyone and everything in a bad light. It is not until the old man where Candide realizes that the world neither is the best or worst of all possibilities. Candide realizes that one can only be content with those around them if they are striving to achieve happiness within, rather than without. Voltaire explains to us that even when one reaches an ideal society where things cannot get more perfect, one is still not satisfied.

Rather than just satirizing the ideas of utopia, he is criticizing our very own human nature. After all attempts to reach bliss through religion and riches, Candide combines the teachings of his two professors, Pangloss and Martin, to the belief in a simpler life full of inner satisfaction where one spends his time cultivating his own garden. So, instead of being a place where no further improvement is necessary, Voltaire explains that a Utopian Life is rather one

where you control the variables and focus on your own happiness rather than other variables.