

Mishaps of greed essay sample

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The story *Candide* written by Francois-Marie Arouet de Voltaire is an amazing novella that exploits many of the world's problems through clever use of satire. If viewed one way it may seem to be mean yet humorous. Instructive and satiric is another this story can be viewed. Voltaire uses many satires in this work such as greed, pride, ignorance, cruelty, and religion. One of the most outstanding satires that take place in *Candide* is greed. Voltaire has many examples of greed in this story, not only through *Candide*, but the many people that he encounters on his travels to find contentment. *Candide* quickly learns that even though money and greed may seem to make a person happy and prosperous for a while, in the end people must work to be happy and content.

The first encounter with greed is when *Candide* meets the Bulgars. The Bulgars is a nasty military troop that has been sent out by their king to destroy German villages. The warriors steal what riches they find for the king and then rape and slaughter the poor townspeople. They do not even have mercy on woman and children for they are raped and disemboweled as well. The Bulgars killed most of *Candide*'s family and was even thought too have raped and murdered his love, Cunegonde, all in order to gain money and jewels for their greedy king. Voltaire uses the Bulgars as an example of greed to show how war can destroy such innocent lives. These innocent women and children could have been spared but greed and power took over.

Dolan 2 Another act of greed was committed by a "reverend Franciscan friar"(p. 332). The friar had shared a room with the four in Badajoy. There he robbed *Candide* of all the gold and diamonds that Cunegonde had received from the Grand Inquisitor. Later on in the story he is caught and before he is

hanged he tells the police officers that he stole them from Candide and Cunegonde and that they were responsible for the death of the Grand Inquisitor. I think that Voltaire uses this to point out that when a person commits a crime and gets caught, he is very likely to tell on someone else to get him or her in trouble as well.

A third example of greed can be read in "The Old Woman's story Continued". She tells her tale of how she was left for death in a stack of corpses, somehow regains strength and crawls to rest under a tree. There she is awaked by an attractive white man who is in awe at her beauty besides her wounds. He pretends to be her friend and takes her into his home to nurse her. While exchanging stories of the past she learns that he was the man who raised her until she was six years of age. When she was well he told her that he would take her back to Italy on his way to Ceuta. However he does not follow through on his word for instead of taking her back he sells her to the dey of Algiers. I have no doubt that he would have raped her as well if he had not lost his testicles when he was young. Voltaire uses this to show the greed that can be hiding in a so-called friendship. A person may act as a friend toward another only to gain something, in this case money from the sale.

The next greedy act is committed by Candide and Cacambo. When they are in Eldorado they fill their pockets with gold and diamonds. Then they decide to leave they Dolan 3 take advantage of the ignorance of the people and take with them a dozen sheep that have been loaded with diamonds and gold. The people of Eldorado do not understand why they are taking these things because to them it is simply just mud and pebbles. To be fair and not <https://assignbuster.com/mishaps-of-greed-essay-sample/>

so greedy, Candide should have explained to them how valuable these things were and left them something in return. I think that Voltaire's message is to show that knowledgeable people can and will take advantage of others just because they do not know any better.

The fifth example of greed and dishonesty is shown when Candide tries to get passage on a ship going to Italy. Candide asks Mr. Vanderdendur how much he would charge to take him, his servants, his luggage and, two sheep on the ship to Italy. At first Vanderdendur gives him the price of ten thousand piastres. Candide agrees to this price very quickly. Vanderdendur thinks this odd and a few moments later tells Candide he was wrong and the price is actually twenty thousand piastres. Again Candide agrees very quickly without thinking it through. Vanderdendur takes note of this and raises the price a second time to thirty thousand piastres. Candide does not even cringe so Vanderdendur is sure that his sheep and bags are loaded with treasures. Vanderdendur first brings the sheep aboard and tells Candide to follow in a second boat. Before Candide gets there Vanderdendur takes off with the Candide's very valuable sheep. Voltaire shows the reader that if a person is too quick to judge and does not take the extra precautions another person's greed can destroy his or her life.

These five examples of greed even though written many years ago can be applied to everyday life. The first example with the Bulgars can be compared to some modern Dolan 4 day wars, where innocent people are killed because of a disagreement between two countries. On a smaller scale, it can be compared to a common thief who decided to rape and murder his victim.

The second act of greed, committed by the friar is not quite as horrible and much more forgivable than the first act. It is very similar to brothers and sisters of today. If one sibling gets in trouble for something he will be sure to tell on his sister for something she did so she will be punished as well. It also bears striking resemblance to the way our police force will offer a criminal a lesser charge for information about a bigger crime. Some criminals with very minor offenses may be completely excused in exchange.

The third example illustrated by the man with no testicles can be compared to "fake friendships". Sometimes a person will befriend another to simply gain something. This happens to girls with cute older brothers. They seem to have many friends but they are really just being used to get closer to the brother. It can also happen to classmates. Someone may pretend to be a person's friend to get him or her to do their homework or cheat on a test.

The fourth and fifth acts of greed are similar in that if you are not careful you can be taken advantage of. When Candide takes the gold and riches from the people of Eldorado because he wants to be rich and rescue his love, Cunegonde, he is deceiving them because they are ignorant to such things. This can be compared to telemarketers claiming that a person has won a prize and to claim it they must send in a processing fee. A person who is less knowledgeable may not realize this is a scam and could lose hundreds of dollars. The fifth example where Candide is taken advantage of is similar to Dolan 5 that of buying a car. A young person who has just received a large sum of money can be very susceptible to a slimy carsalesmen if he or she is not properly prepared.

Although there are many acts of greed in Candide, I chose to these because they seemed to get the message across the strongest. In the end the people learn from these mishaps and hind happiness and prosperity “ cultivating their garden” (p. 379).