

Comparison between  
the optimistic  
philosophy of  
pangloss and the  
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Voltaire's *Candide* presents two theorists Dr. Pangloss and Martin in the novel about the travels and quest of the titular protagonist Candide. Both are described as philosophers in the text, notably, Martin is a philosopher whom Candide meets along the way, whilst Dr. Pangloss is an instructor from Candide's childhood. Aside from that, these two individuals have different opinions concerning philosophy and life in its entirety. Martin is a pessimistic intellectual, while Pangloss is more an optimistic observer. Despite the fact that the text has an interesting narrative about the adventures of Candide, it shows the true nature of Pangloss and Martin by contrasting their outlooks as well as showing how this difference is used to challenge the assumption of the Age of Enlightenment.

From the beginning of the story, Pangloss is very confident in his theory of optimism, which states that the world is the most ideal of all other universes. Notably, the philosophies of both characters can be traced back to the history of each person. Pangloss is Candide's mentor in a German castle, as stated in the book, it is clear that the young man subsisted in a life filled with lavishness and luxury. Depending on the way he enjoys the best sustenance, services, and respect, his way of life is something that most people wish to have and adore. As an immediate observer to such lifestyles, Pangloss begins to form his optimistic theory expressing such life as the best of all possible universes.

On the contrary, the pessimism of Martin was shaped by his tragic past. According to the book, it is evident that he was robbed by his wife as well as beaten by his son. Additionally, the church mistreated him thereby making him lack hope or confidence in future (Cooksey 205). However, Martin is able

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to see through the Parisian con artists and help Candide out due to this pessimism and a doubtful nature. From the book, he is more intellectual and realistic than any other character. Martin is also not a trustworthy character since his pessimism theory is too extreme. A good example can be seen where he inaccurately predicts the behavior and nature of Cacambo. When Candide entrusts Cacambo the valuable stones, Martin predicts that the sidekick would vanish completely with all money (Voltaire 426). However, Martin's past can justify his rationale since his wife robbed him meaning that someone unrelated could also rob him as well. To this effect, it is clear that he miscalculates Cacambo's faithfulness and loyalty since he ends up returning to Candide with all the gold.

Further, the text shows that Pangloss is still optimistic even after getting an infection that caused the death of his beloved Baron and family. For instance, his friends visited him with some presents such as chocolate and cochineal, which he thought would never have in his life (Voltaire 456). As such, those presents made him have hopes about the future. On the other hand, Martin has a pessimistic belief of the world. His personal experiences convince him that God had abandoned the world to some evil spirit. He states that he has never seen a town that did not wish to destroy its neighbors or a family that did not want to annihilate other families. However, from his statement, it is clear that Martin lacks hope or confidence in future of today's world.

Considering the contrasting beliefs of Pangloss and Martin, Voltaire uses them to challenge the assumption of the Age of Reason in various ways.

Although Martin has imperfections, his voice reflects that of Voltaire, as the <https://assignbuster.com/comparison-between-the-optimistic-philosophy-of-pangloss-and-the-pessimism-of-martin/>

latter was known for his pessimistic nature. However, Voltaire uses Martin as a way in which he can express his perspectives and philosophies. Aside from that, both Pangloss's extreme optimism and Martin's pessimism are imperfect despite the fact that Martin acts as the medium voice for Voltaire. He attacks the philosophical reasoning of cause and effect. A good example can be observed towards the end of the play when all the characters are working in a garden together despite the fact that they live in a painful and disappointing world (Voltaire 458). Furthermore, Voltaire attacks the irrationality of organized religion through the depiction of the Jesuit Baron, the Inquisitor, and the Protestant minister who are not generous to others even their partners.

All in all, *Candide* is a thought-provoking text that incorporates two men with different views of reality and life philosophy challenging the assumptions of the Age of Reason. Besides, the book portrays the true nature of Pangloss and Martin by showing how they have taught the world's belief to the young man Candide, who believes that everything happens for the best. According to the story, it is evident that Pangloss has optimistic and positive thoughts; on the other hand, Martin thinks that the world is filled with evil spirits since it seems that God has abandoned it. Therefore, the text covers some unfavorable incidents that should be sufficient to view the nature in a different perspective.

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