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does not wish to



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Although political satires do not withstand the test of time, and are quickly forgotten whenever there is change in political regime, the *Candide* story has defied the odds of time and continues to puzzle scholars and leaders. This is a story written down by Voltaire whose main motive of writing was to capture and ridicule the political inclinations of the time, illustrating the political and philosophical controversies of the eighteenth century. This story brings out clearly the misery and political upheavals of the time, and thus to the general literature lover, this is a book that demonstrates that we live in a much better and well-organized world. The contemporary modern world is probably the best possible world, taking into account as represented in the book, misery, strife, chaos, and betrayal that are witnessed. The author, in writing the story of *Candide*, Voltaire was inspired by a number of actual historical events.

For example the Seven Years' War and the earthquake that hit the city of Lisbon in 1755. *Candide* is thus a story that has significant historical truth and importance (Ayer, 1986). As a young man, *Candide* lives in a castle where he falls in love with the Baron's daughter, Lady Cunegonde. When Cunegonde finds that Pangloss is romantically involved with Paquette, she is inspired to also get romantically involved with *Candide*. In so doing, *Candide* is thrown out of the castle and is unfortunately taken hostage to be recruited into military service by the Bulgars. From there the story of *Candide* unfolds as he travels from one place to the other. He reunites with Pangloss, his tutor, who has now become a beggar and tells *Candide* how the castle was attacked, and everyone taken into slavery including his lover Cunegonde.

In one of his travels he is arrested and as he is about to be executed, an earthquake emerges which avails him the chance to escape. Luckily, he comes across his lover. He, his lover and his tutor decide to escape Europe into the Americas. In the South America the turmoil is the same as in Europe. The Europeans in the area oppress the local people, displacing them and physically abusing them. The Europeans are hated as they degrade the local inhabitants, terming them as barbaric and uncivilized.

They subjugate the local people, as these Europeans possess superior weapons. In one of his outing, Candide comes across women being chased by monkeys. Not knowing these women were lovers with the monkeys, he shoots the two monkeys. This is a sign of how Europeans degraded the people of the Americas. Having killed a Jesuit and worn his robes, Candide and Cacambo are captured by the native inhabitants of the said area. These local inhabitants are referred to as Oreillons.

Although some Europeans had been harsh on the local people, these local people do not treat their captives harshly. In fact, they release them upon being convinced it was a case of mistaken identity. This is similar to El Dorado. Candide and Cacambo are welcomed in this place and treated nicely by the king of the area. However, Candide does not wish to stay as he wishes to look for his lover who had gone missing.

The king generously assists Candide; who is also given provisions and money to aid him in his quest. However, not all people are friendly towards visitors. This is illustrated as the two are occasionally raided on their way. The European administrators who have caused havoc in Europe with their

conservative and harsh rules have continued with this trend even in the Americas. After his sheep are stolen in Surinam, Candide find himself in trouble as the administrator heavily fines him after being accused for petulance. The administrator is of a Dutch origin (Aldridge, 1975). Women in this story are portrayed as sexual objects and don't play a major role in the events of the society like politics. Critics of the topic have voiced the way the story is portrayed.

The protagonists of the story are perceived as relying heavily on the optimism of Leibniz yet they are in pathetic state. They are not realistic or pragmatic something that could not have been possible. This is because most of the time, they are involved in life threatening events yet they never see it that way. They are also involved in the turmoil as they kill other people, but do not consider themselves as villains. The story is also criticized of being too fictitious for a historical story. The main character, Candide, escapes earthquake that destroys those who are around him. This is not possible as earthquakes leave devastating effects, with survival being next to impossible especially in the worst hard hit areas.

Candide is able to travel the world yet he had no expertise or money to do so (Mason, 1992). The story of Candide is of historical importance in that it depicts events that actually took place during the eighteenth century. The author uses the character to show the European colonialism and brutality in the Americas. The brutality is met to the local natives who were, in the contrary, peaceful and friendly people. This story also shows the history of the various European nations, from Britain to Portugal to the Dutch, among

many others. It also shows the story of man who is relentless in finding his love, thus a good piece of literature even to the general reader.

Reference List

Aldridge, A. (1975). *Voltaire and the Century of Light*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press. Ayer, A.

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