

Voltaire's candide relevant to modern society assignment

[History](#)



Dimattia, Devin English 12 AP Period 2 Gonzalez 10-5-11 Does Voltaire's Candide connect to Modern Society? The tone and theme of Candide, a classic work of literature, make the novel relevant to today's modern world. These two elements of the story bring the classic to life for new generations to relate to as they read it. The satiric story unites a new generation of modern readers to a historical past as they identify with both the theme and tone of the novel as a whole.

The tone of Voltaire's highly satirical work is humorously hopeless, and the tone is humorous because Candide and his fellow characters grasp the idea, set forth by the philosopher Pangloss, that " everything is for the best" and there is " the best of both possible worlds. " This blind optimism is negated time after time through the misfortunes that Candide and the rest of the story's characters experience, yet the characters press on with their hopelessly positive attitudes throughout their lives.

When confronted with the bleak realities of the horrors of life by a scholar, Candide only replies, " I've seen worse, but a wise man, who later had the misfortune to be hanged, taught me that such things are exactly as they should be: they're the shadows in a beautiful picture. " This tone is achieved by the horrific events that the characters of Candide endure and their disinclination to accept the idea that, maybe, they really are doomed, and not all is actually for the best.

The reader is inclined to give up on hope long before any of the characters do. For example, Candide loses his beloved Pangloss and the kind Anabaptist on his journey to the utopian Eldorado, gets beaten and whipped, kills more

than one person, and suffers numerous other misfortunes while still concluding that all is still for the best because he can still find Cunegonde. After Pangloss is hanged, dissected, beaten, and made to row in a galley, he still believes that everything is for the best. Candide asks him, " Tell me, dear Pangloss ... id you still think that everything was for the best in this world? " And Pangloss replies, " I still hold my original opinions". He goes on to say that his reasoning is due to the fact that he is a philosopher and it would be wrong to take back what he had said. Also, at the end of the novel, Candide, Cunegonde, Pangloss, and the Old Woman all decide that they are well-off where they are and that they may as well tend their garden, disregarding every horrible thing that they have had to experience in their pasts.

Pangloss portrayed this best when he said to Candide at the end, " All events are inter-connected in this best of all possible worlds, for if you hadn't been driven from a beautiful castle with hard kicks in the behind because of your love for Lady Cunegonde, if you hadn't been seized by the Inquisition, if you hadn't wandered over America on foot, if you hadn't thrust your sword through the baron, and if you hadn't lost all your sheep from the land of Eldorado, you wouldn't be here eating candied citrons and pistachio nuts. This final note of proof of their perpetual optimism is consistent with the tone, where Cunegonde is ugly, the Old Woman is disagreeable, and none of the characters are very happy, yet they all continue to busy themselves with something to do and continue being hopeful. " The whole group entered into this commendable plan, and each began to exercise his own talents. The theme of Candide is that life is utterly unfair and will continue to give

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everyone a rough time despite a person's attitude of hope or a faith in everything being for the best. This prominent theme is shown over and over again as Candide and his companions suffer innumerable misfortunes and tragedies even through the existence of their collectively strong belief that everything will turn out for the best.

Each character is traumatized and miserable most of the time. Some are even thought to be dead several times. By the end of the novel, the reader is almost in awe that Candide and the others have not given up on life entirely. The reader ultimately sees that it is hopeless to think that things will turn out well for the characters. However, it is also impossible to believe that they will not continue to live, learn, and try to be happy nonetheless.