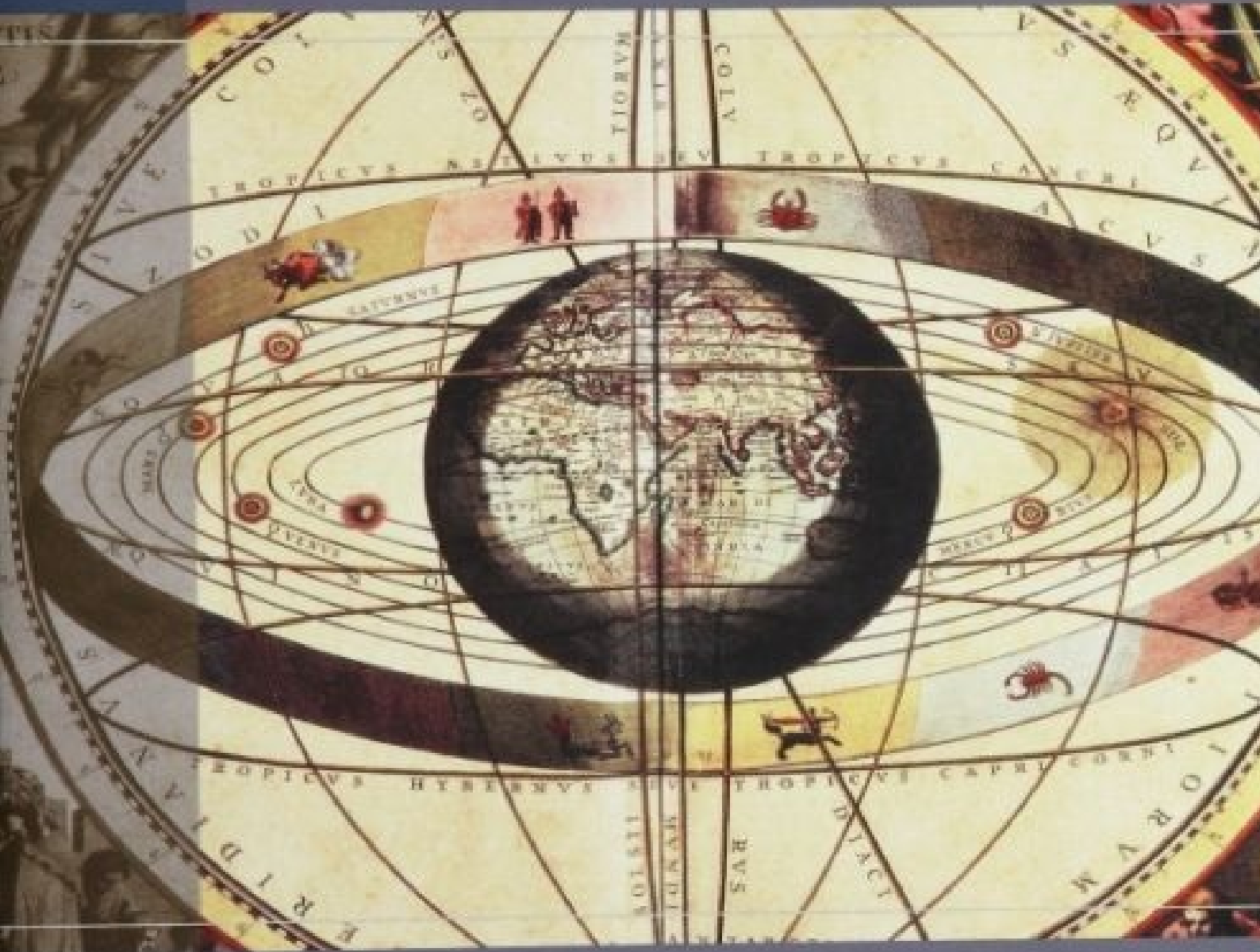


# CANDIDE

Voltaire




BARNES  
& NOBLE  
CLASSICS

Introduction and Notes by Gita May  
Translated by Henry Morley

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## FROM THE PAGES OF CANDIDE

In this best of all possible worlds the baron's castle was the most magnificent of all castles, and my lady the best of all possible baronesses. (page 12)

Candide was struck with amazement and really could not conceive how he came to be a hero. (page 15)

"If this is the best of all possible worlds, what are the others like?" (page 29)

"A modest woman may be once violated, but her virtue is greatly strengthened as a result." (page 33)

"In the different countries in which it has been my fate to wander, and the many inns where I have been a servant, I have observed a prodigious number of people who held their existence in abhorrence, and yet I never knew more than twelve who voluntarily put an end to their misery." (page 50)

"Never while I live shall I lose the remembrance of that horrible day on which I saw my father and brother barbarously butchered before my eyes, and my sister ravished." (page 59)

"In this country it is necessary, now and then, to put one admiral to death in order to inspire the others to fight." (page 100)

"Our labour keeps us from three great evils—boredom, vice, and want." (page 129)

"We must cultivate our garden." (page 130)

DR. PANGLOSS SURVEYS THE WORLD.



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CANDIDE,  
OR OPTIMISM

Voltaire

*With an Introduction and Notes by Gita May*

*Translated by Henry Morley*

*Translation revised by Lauren Walsh*

*Illustrated by Alan Odle*

George Stade

Consulting Editorial Director



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Introduction, Notes, and For Further Reading

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Inspired by *Candide*, and Comments & Questions

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# VOLTAIRE

François-Marie Arouet (pen name “Voltaire”) was born in Paris on November 21, 1694, into a middle class family. His formal education took place at the Jesuit College Louis-le-Grand, where he studied Latin and Greek literature and drama. Despite his father’s wish that he pursue a career in the law, he chose to devote himself to writing. After completing his education, François began moving in radical political circles and became infamous in Paris as a brilliant and sarcastic wit. For allegedly penning two libelous poems about the French regent, the duke of Orleans, he was imprisoned in the Bastille. During an eleven-month detention he completed his first dramatic tragedy, *Oedipe*, which was a critical success, and around this same time adopted the pen name “Voltaire. ”

When threatened with imprisonment for a second time, Voltaire instead chose exile to England where he lived for two and a half years. He carefully studied English society and was particularly impressed by the constitutional monarchy and the religious freedom the English enjoyed, which he praised in *Letters Concerning the English Nation* (1733). When this work was published in French the following year as *Lettres philosophiques*, it was interpreted as critical of the French government and caused a great stir. Voltaire left Paris and spent the next fifteen years at the estate of his mistress Madame du Châtelet. During this time, he published *Elements de la philosophie de Newton* (*Elements of Newton’s Philosophy*; 1738), was appointed the royal historiographer of France, and was elected to the prestigious French Academy. During the early 1750s he was associated with the court of Frederick the Great in Prussia; while there he published the historical work *Le siècle de Louis XIV* (*The Age of Louis XIV*; 1751).

Two great events of the mid-1750s have a profound effect on Voltaire. Tens of thousands of people were killed in a great earthquake in Lisbon in 1755, and in 1756 the devastating Seven Years War began. Influenced in part by these events, Voltaire came to reject the philosophy of German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, which was based on the concept of a rational and well-regulated universe. In 1759 Voltaire retreated to Ferney, an estate near the France-Switzerland border where he wrote philosophical poems, letters, and narratives, including the philosophical tale *Candide* (1759), in which he spoofed the idea that ours is the “best of all possible worlds.”

Voltaire was an adamant critic of religious intolerance and persecution. The memorable closing line of *Candide*, “Let us cultivate our garden,” has been interpreted to mean that the proper course of action for humankind is to perform practical, useful work. Voltaire died in 1778 at the age of eighty-four, leaving behind a body of work that epitomizes the Enlightenment.

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# THE WORLD OF VOLTAIRE AND CANDIDE

- 1694 Voltaire is born François-Marie Arouet in Paris on November 21.
- 1704 François enrolls at the College Louis-le-Grand, a Jesuit institution, where he studies classical literature and drama.
- 1711 After leaving Louis-le-Grand, François pursues writing as a career, despite his father's wishes that he study law.
- 1714 To the dismay of his father, François meets with members and explores the ideology of the radical Society of the Temple; he writes satirical poems.
- 1715 King Louis XIV dies. His great grandson, Louis XV, ascends to the throne, but because he is only five years old, the duke of Orleans assumes the regency until his death in 1723. The royal court leaves the confined environment of Versailles to take up residence in the more liberal atmosphere of Paris, one of the events that marks the beginning of the Enlightenment in France.
- 1717-1718 Beginning in May, François is imprisoned in the Bastille for eleven months after the duke of Orleans wrongly accuses him of writing two libelous poems about the French government. In prison, he writes his first dramatic tragedy, *Oedipe* (his version of the Oedipus myth) and *La Henriade*, an epic poem about Henry IV of France.
- 1718 The theatrical success of *Oedipe* wins François a pension from the regent.
- 1719 François-Marie Arouet assumes the pen name Voltaire.
- 1723 The first edition of *La Henriade* is published. Upon the death of the duke of Orleans, Louis XV accedes to the throne. However, France is ruled by the duke of Bourbon and Cardinal de Fleury, who revamp France's economic policies.
- 1725 In September Voltaire attends Louis XV's marriage, at which three of his plays are performed.
- 1726 Voltaire is sent to the Bastille for the second time for challenging the chevalier de Rohan to a duel. After two weeks, he is offered exile as an alternative and emigrates to England, where he spends the next two and a half years learning English and studying the philosophies of philosopher John Locke and mathematician and physicist Isaac Newton. He also attends productions of the plays of William Shakespeare.
- 1728 The second edition of *La Henriade* is published.
- 1729 Voltaire gains the right to return to Paris.

- ~~Indignant at the clergy's refusal to properly bury the body of famed actress Adrienne~~  
1730 Lecouvreur, Voltaire writes a protest poem, *The Death of Mademoiselle Lecouvreur*. His tragedy *Brutus* receives accolades following its opening performance.
- 1731 Voltaire publishes the first of his historical works, *Charles XII*, a life of the Swedish monarch, which remains today a classic of biography.
- 1732 Voltaire's heroic tragedy *Zaire*, a tale of doomed love, is a success.
- 1733 Voltaire begins his long affair with Madame du Châtelet. *Letters Concerning the English Nation* is published in English. The book, which praises the English monarchy and the country's religious tolerance, is interpreted as critical of the French church and state.
- 1734 *Letters Concerning the English Nation* is published in French as *Lettres philosophiques*. It is banned in France, and Voltaire seeks refuge at Cirey in the province of Champagne, where for the next fifteen years he lives at the estate of Madame du Châtelet.
- 1735 Although granted the right to return to Paris, Voltaire chooses to remain at Cirey, returning to the city only occasionally. He spends time conducting physical and chemical experiments and writing. He begins a correspondence with Crown Prince Frederick of Prussia (later Frederick the Great), with whom he will have a rocky relationship.
- 1738 *Elements de la philosophie de Newton (Elements of Newton's Philosophy)* is published.
- 1745 Through the influence of Madame de Pompadour, Louis XV's mistress, Voltaire is appointed the royal historiographer of France.
- 1746 He is elected to the prestigious French Academy.
- 1747 Voltaire's philosophical tale *Zadig* is published.
- 1749 Madame du Châtelet dies. Upon the invitation of Frederick the Great, Voltaire moves briefly to Potsdam.
- 1750 At Frederick's request, Voltaire goes to Berlin to serve as philosopher-poet at the royal court. He will stay for three years.
- 1751 While at the German court, Voltaire publishes the historical work *Le siècle de Louis XIV (The Age of Louis XIV)*, which advocates for social and moral progress.
- 1752 Voltaire publishes *Micromégas*, a fantastic travelogue that reflects Newton's cosmology and Locke's empiricism, and attempts to fuse science and moral philosophy.
- 1753 Voltaire leaves Berlin after an argument with Frederick (the two will later reconcile and resume a correspondence). Unable to return to France, Voltaire stays in various towns on the border until December 1754, when he moves to Geneva.

- 1755 Voltaire purchases a villa, Les Délices, outside Geneva, and makes it his home. After a devastating earthquake kills tens of thousands in Lisbon, Voltaire rejects the concept of a rational and well-regulated universe, as advocated by the German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz.
- 1756 The Seven Years War begins and will last until 1763. It is fought in Europe, with North America, and India, by France, Austria, Russia, Saxony, Sweden, and eventually Spain on one side, and Prussia, Great Britain, and Hanover on the other. This complex war is based on colonial rivalry between France and England, and a struggle for power in Germany between Austria and Prussia. Along with the Lisbon earthquake, it deeply affects Voltaire's outlook. Voltaire publishes *Poème sur le désastre de Lisbonne* (*Poem on the Disaster of Lisbon*), in which he signals his rejection of Leibniz's approach.
- 1757 After its seventh volume is published, the *Encyclopédie*—co-edited by Denis Diderot to provide a survey of human knowledge from the standpoint of the Enlightenment (Voltaire was a contributor)—is banned in France.
- 1759 Voltaire buys an estate, Ferney, near the France- Switzerland border. It will become the intellectual capital of western Europe, and Voltaire will spend his last years there writing narratives, plays, and personal letters . The most notable of the narratives, published this year, is the philosophical tale *Candide*—an attack on the evils of religious fanaticism, war, colonialism, and slavery.
- 1764 The *Dictionnaire philosophique*—a compendium of Voltaire's thoughts on a variety of subjects—is published.
- 1774 Louis XV dies, and Louis XVI takes the throne.
- 1778 Voltaire returns to Paris, where he is welcomed by the public. On May 30 he dies there at age eighty-four. His body initially is buried on the grounds of an abbey in Champagne.
- 1791 Voltaire's remains are brought back to Paris and buried in the Pantheon.
- 1787-1799 The philosophy of the thinkers of the Enlightenment, including Voltaire—expressed in the motto “Liberty, Fraternity, Equality”—inspires the French Revolution. The subsequent reign of Napoleon Bonaparte preserves many of the freedoms won during the Revolution, including religious toleration and the abolition of serfdom. The Civil Code, also known as the Napoleonic Code, is established; it remains as the basis for the system of civil law in modern France.

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# INTRODUCTION

Voltaire would probably have been both pleasantly surprised as well as bemused by the exceptional and enduring popularity of *Candide*, which he viewed as one of his minor works, unworthy to vie with his tragedies, historical essays, and epic and philosophical poems, on which he staked his posthumous reputation.

On November 21, 1694, on the left bank of the Seine, in the heart of Paris, a sickly infant named François-Marie Arouet was born and not expected to live. Contrary to this inauspicious beginning, he would fool everyone (something he later excelled at doing) and take his final leave of life only in his eighty-fourth year. By then he had become the most illustrious author of his age under his chosen pen name of Voltaire; this name he adorned with the article *de*, a common practice among writers of bourgeois origin with aristocratic aspirations, before and even after the French Revolution, as Beaumarchais and Balzac could attest.

The father of young Arouet, François Arouet, was an ambitious and highly respected lawyer whose ancestors had been merchant drapers and who in 1683 had married Marie-Marguerite d'Aumard (also spelled Daumard), a member of the minor provincial nobility. Unlike Rousseau or Diderot, Voltaire evidenced no sentimental attachment to his family and little curiosity about his roots, childhood, and early formative years. If he took little interest in his ancestry, it was probably because he deemed it of no special historical or cultural significance. As for his immediate family members, he barely knew his mother, who died when he was ten, and he never seemed to have felt a nostalgic urge to romanticize her; and he did not get along with his strict, quick-tempered father, who in turn would strongly disapprove of his son's iconoclastic writings and highly controversial reputation. Voltaire was the least introspective of authors and still adhered to the classical notion that public self-revelation is not only in bad taste, it smacks of the obscene; in Pascal's words, "the self is hateful." There furthermore was a secretive facet to his complex nature, and he had his own reasons for not dwelling on or divulging details of his private life and family relationships.

At the age of ten young Arouet was placed at the renowned Jesuit College Louis-le-Grand, in the Latin Quarter, where he received a solid education in the classics, where his knowledgeable and supportive masters nurtured his precocious interest and talent in drama and poetry, and where he formed lifelong friendships with some of his classmates.

Having completed his studies in 1711, the seventeen-year-old Arouet adamantly refused to obey his father's stern injunction to go to law school, for by now he was intent on becoming a man of letters. While still at Louis-le-Grand, he had been introduced to a group of Epicurean libertines, freethinkers who subsequently congregated at the Temple of the Knights of Malta and therefore became known as the Society of the Temple. He rubbed elbows with young aristocrats chafing under the austere and oppressively religiosity of the court of the aging Louis XIV, who would die in 1715, and his successor, the notorious Philippe II, duke of Orleans, regent of France until 1723. This period was marked in elite and sophisticated circles by a disdainful disregard for traditional values and a hedonistic love of life and of beauty in all its forms, especially in the arts and letters.

Young Arouet thrived in this pleasure-loving milieu, increasingly asserting himself as an aspiring dramatist, and author of light and satirical verses, a wit especially gifted with sharp, ironic repartee, and a skeptic in religious matters. In 1718 he had his first great success with his tragedy *Oedipe*, his

version of the Oedipus myth made famous by Sophocles and also treated by Pierre Corneille, the great seventeenth-century French dramatist. The triumph of his play induced him in 1719 to leave his bourgeois origins behind once and for all by adopting the more euphonious and aristocratic pen name “de Voltaire.”

Meanwhile, he had already gotten a rather bitter taste of Old Regime justice when, as the author of satirical verses directed against the regent, he was forced to spend eleven months in the infamous Bastille prison, from May 1717 to April 1718. Then in 1726 an incident occurred that would mark the turning point in his life and career. Voltaire quarreled with the chevalier de Rohan, scion of one of the most powerful French families, who had his lackeys beat him up for blatantly assuming an aristocratic name; the young writer failed to gather support among his aristocratic friends in his desperate attempts to find redress in a duel with the chevalier, who persistently refused to honor a member commoner with this distinction. Instead he was once more hustled off to the Bastille, but after a two-week stay was offered the alternative of going into exile. He opted for England.

Voltaire’s stay in England, from May 1726 to November 1728, profoundly transformed and enriched his intellectual and aesthetic outlook, as the *Lettres philosophiques* (1734), one of his most original and striking works, (an English version titled *Letters Concerning the English Nation* had appeared in 1733) amply testifies. He vividly and most sympathetically evokes life in eighteenth-century England primarily in order to contrast it favorably with French laws, customs, traditions, science, philosophy, and even literature. He humorously describes the apparently bizarre mores of the Quakers, primarily in order to underscore religious intolerances in France. Also featured are such powerful political institutions as the English Parliament, with its House of Commons; English empiricist philosophy and science as embodied by Francis Bacon, John Locke, and Isaac Newton; and English tragedy and comedy, with the focus on William Shakespeare as a new kind of genius, untrammelled by classical rules and conventions. From a sharp-tongued wit, a gifted poet, and a dramatist, Voltaire had made himself over into a *philosophe* who soon would become the undisputed leader of the Enlightenment movement. The book on England was promptly condemned and publicly burned in France, and the author had to seek refuge near the eastern border, in the province of Champagne, at Cirey, where he settled in the château of Madame du Châtelet, a remarkable woman who was a brilliant intellectual and a scientist in her own right.

Voltaire lived in Cirey for fifteen happy and productive years, from 1734 until 1749, when the premature death of Madame du Châtelet left him disconsolate and at long last open to the repeated offers of hospitality of Frederick the Great of Prussia, a long-time admirer and correspondent of the *philosophe*, who had been urging him to become his permanent guest at his court at Potsdam.

While at Cirey Voltaire deepened his knowledge of Newtonian mathematics and physics, which in 1738 would result in *Eléments de la philosophie de Newton* (*Elements of Newton’s Philosophy*), a distinguished work of scientific popularization. He also pondered the philosophy of Leibniz at the instigation of Madame du Châtelet, and he embarked upon his great cultural histories, most notably *Le siècle de Louis XIV* (*The Age of Louis XIV*), published in 1751, in which he pointedly extols the glorious scientific, artistic, and literary achievements of France during the glorious reign of the so-called Sun King at the expense of Louis XV.

During his stay in England and at Cirey Voltaire’s outlook on life was essentially optimistic. In the twenty-fifth and last of his *Lettres philosophiques* he sternly took Pascal to task for his pessimistic depiction of the human condition, describing him as a “sublime misanthrope” ; and in his poem *Le*



*Mondain* (The Worldly One), published in 1736, he sharply ridiculed the myth of primitive happiness and innocence during the so-called Golden Age, as embodied in the biblical story of Adam and Eve. Conversely, he extolled the Epicurean delights of comfort and luxury brought about by modern civilization. In spite of his controversial reputation, he garnered such high official honors as being elected to the French Academy in 1746. He was still convinced that, on the whole, Newton's eminently rational laws permitted human beings to accommodate themselves and seek their happiness within this orderly universe, set in motion by a supremely powerful but also benevolent being. And as a deist, he generally also subscribed to Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz's theory that God would not create a universe other than the best of all possible universes, as expounded in his *Theodicy* (1710).

Voltaire's stay at the court of Frederick II, from 1750 until 1753, turned out to be an unmitigated disaster. Frederick was basically an autocrat, in spite of his much-publicized image as an enlightened "philosopher king." Voltaire's irrepressible wit and bold irreverence were bound to displease and eventually anger his royal host, and eventually Voltaire had to leave Prussia hurriedly and under humiliating circumstances. After some hesitation as to where to find a safe refuge, he settled down in Geneva in December 1759, when he moved to a property he acquired at nearby Ferney, which would be his retreat for the next nineteen years, until shortly before his death in Paris, on May 30, 1778.

Voltaire's early optimism underwent a profound change under the impact of events in his personal life as well as in reaction to those natural and man-made catastrophes that made him keenly aware of human suffering and misery, not to mention the multiple dangers that constantly threaten our very existence, let alone our well-being and chances of achieving happiness. His own disappointments— notably the unexpected loss of Madame du Châtelet, the unrelenting hostility of the court of Louis XV, the disenchantment with Frederick, and the precariousness of his personal situation—were compounded by his intense and immediate empathy; he spontaneously identified with all victims of calamities, war, injustice, prejudice, and intolerance.

The news of the terrible Lisbon earthquake of November 1, 1755, which claimed tens of thousands of lives, overwhelmed him with dreadful images of women and children buried under the rubble, and inspired his eloquently anguished *Poème sur le désastre de Lisbonne* (Poem on the Disaster of Lisbon), published in 1756, in which he clearly signals his rejection of Leibniz's concept of a rational and well-regulated universe. The protracted and devastating Seven Years War (1756-1763), which began when Frederick invaded Saxony and soon expanded the lingering hostilities between France and England into a European conflagration, also deeply affected Voltaire's outlook on the human condition.

Voltaire began writing philosophical *contes* (tales) relatively late in his career and almost as an afterthought, for he subscribed to the neoclassical canon and hierarchy of literary genres according to which tragedy in verse and epic poetry gave an author his most reliable passport to posterity and immortality. Novels, short stories, and *contes* were looked upon suspiciously as upstart genres with no credible aesthetic or even moral pedigree.

Voltaire began with the traditional short story or novella, and transformed it into the *conte philosophique*, or philosophical tale, a fast-moving and highly entertaining story combining multiple adventures and voyages with an underlying philosophical and moral theme, written in a pithy style replete with humor, satire, irony, and sly sexual innuendoes. Indeed, ridicule would be Voltaire's most effective weapon against his main targets: fanaticism, intolerance, war, and cruelty.

One of Voltaire's early philosophical tales is *Zadig*, subtitled *La Destinée* (Destiny), which appears

in 1747. It is set in the kind of whimsically imaginary and exotic Oriental setting dear to eighteenth-century authors from Montesquieu to Diderot. The uncannily wise, resourceful, and resilient Zadig, whose name derives from the Arabic *sadik* (“just”), undergoes a number of trials and tribulations, and when faced with disconcerting instances of injustice and suffering, and with the unpredictability and apparent randomness of life in general, anxiously questions and even objects to the notion of a world regulated by a benevolent Providence. But Zadig eventually overcomes adversity and reluctantly submits to the reassuring belief that Providence works in mysterious and unfathomable ways for the ultimately greater good of humanity.

While still in Prussia, Voltaire published *Micromégas* in 1752. Partially inspired by Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) and by Cyrano de Bergerac's two fantastic romances about visits to the moon and sun—*Autre Monde: ou, Les Etats et empires de la lune* (1657) and *Les Etats et empires du soleil* (1662)—it is a science-fiction story of fantastic, humorous interplanetary travel that strongly reflects Newton's cosmology and Locke's empiricism, and that pointedly resorts to fictional and comic devices in order to fuse science and moral philosophy. In a universe of multiple planets inhabited by creatures of various gigantic dimensions, the remarkable scientific knowledge of the minuscule earthlings is duly acknowledged, but at the same time their basic ignorance in matters of ultimate human values, masked by hubris and pedantry, is pointedly ridiculed and excoriated, especially when viewed from the perspective of two extraterrestrial visitors, Micromégas, the giant originating from Sirius, and his smaller but still huge traveling companion, whom he had picked up on the planet Saturn in the course of his celestial peregrinations.

*Candide*, the hero of the philosophical tale by that name, came into the world in January 1759, unacknowledged by his creator. The work was proposed as a translation “from the German of Doctor Ralph, with the additions found in the Doctor's pocket when he died at Minden, in the Year of Our Lord 1759.” It was customary for Voltaire to deny the paternity of his most potentially controversial writings by mischievously attributing them to imaginary or even real persons to maintain a near total silence about the circumstances and composition of his works of prose fiction.

Voltaire was hardly an introspective author, and in this, as in so many other respects, he stands at the opposite pole from Jean Jacques Rousseau, who insisted, in full knowledge of the dangers involved, on publicly proclaiming the authorship of all his writings and who in both his *Confessions* (1781, 1789) and correspondence provides much detailed information on their genesis, publication, and immediate public response, as well as official reaction.

Another explanation for Voltaire's reticence about his philosophical tales is his understandable mistaken belief that these were relatively inconsequential productions belonging to the much decried and maligned genre of the novel, and that they would not fare well with future readers, especially when considered alongside his far more ambitious and serious works—his tragedies, epic and philosophical poems, and historical essays. Whatever Voltaire's own motives or thinking about *Candide* may have been, there is a persistent but erroneous legend that he dashed off by dictation the thirty chapters of the tale in three days. It is of course far more likely that he wrote *Candide* over a ten-month period in 1758 and completed the manuscript, with final revisions and additions, in the fall of that year.

The slender book first came off the presses of the brothers Cramer, publishers in Geneva, in January 1759. It was promptly disseminated and repeatedly republished in Paris and elsewhere. Even though it was swiftly condemned by both French and Swiss authorities, and copies were seized in printing shops

in Paris and Geneva, it sold briskly under the counters. No official effort to suppress *Candide* could prevent it from becoming one of the most sensational forbidden best-sellers of pre-Revolutionary France and indeed Europe. Within a year, there were at least three English translations and one edition in Italian.

In 1758 the sixty-four-year-old Voltaire had personally experienced an unusually vast range of human situations and emotions, and he had become keenly aware of the existence of evil, unhappiness, and injustice in this world. He had also come to the realization that there were no satisfactory theological or philosophical explanations to justify or account for the horrors that so persistently dogged humankind.

He had acquired an enormous intellectual and multicultural frame of reference thanks to his unquenchable intellectual curiosity, through his omnivorous reading, and especially through his extensive research for his historical works and philosophical essays. He was now at the height of his powers and in full possession of his craft as a writer who over the decades had tirelessly practiced and perfected, and mastered all the literary genres and rhetorical techniques and devices.

The reasons for *Candide's* immediate and enduring success with readers are many. It is a supremely wrought tragicomedy that slyly and irresistibly induces us to laugh at and simultaneously reflect upon the most dreadful events that befall humankind. It appeals to us today because, nearly 250 years after its publication, it has lost none of its relevance or satirical sting. It is particularly modern and pertinent because its dark cosmic vision is essentially in keeping with our own awareness of what separates our need for order, clarity, and rationality from the brutal reality of a chaotic world.

The fiercely relentless attack *Candide* unleashes against the evils of religious fanaticism, war, colonialism, slavery, and mass atrocities is more relevant than ever. The naive, young hero of the tale obstinately seeks personal happiness in a world beleaguered by all kinds of catastrophes wrought by the blind, unleashed forces of nature—such as earthquakes and epidemic diseases—as well as by violent, destructive human passions.

The tale opens with a kind of idyll that revisits in a parodic and rococo mode themes originally brought to life in the Garden of Eden. The castle in Westphalia, which belongs to the proud baron of Thunder-ten-tronckh, and its incongruous inhabitants are far from the gentle and innocent Candide's paradise from which he is suddenly and brutally expelled when he is caught kissing Cunégonde, the baron's daughter, a pleasingly plump, wholesome, and docile young woman.

A gentle, honest, and appealingly naive young man, reputed to be the illegitimate offspring of the sister of the baron Thunder-ten-tronckh and an honorable nobleman whom she refused to marry because of his insufficiently ancient lineage, Candide is the eager and wide-eyed disciple of his pedantic tutor Pangloss, who relentlessly lectures to him on “metaphysico-theologico-cosmologonology,” a comic formula of Voltaire's invention meant to ridicule Leibniz's philosophical optimism.

Throughout the dreadful catastrophes that will befall Candide, Pangloss, and their companions in misery, Pangloss will obstinately and blindly stick to his unshakable belief that “this is the best of all possible worlds.”

Upon being summarily kicked out of the baron's castle, Candide is immediately plunged into an incomprehensible and unpredictable world ruled by overwhelmingly powerful and evil forces, both natural and human. Forcibly impressed into the army of the king of the Bulgars, he witnesses all the horrors of war in a fierce battle between the Bulgars and the Abares from which he barely escapes.

with his life. While the kings of the two opposing armies were having solemn “Te Deums” sung, each from his own camp, Candide fled this “heroic butchery” that left behind not only heaps of dead and dying soldiers on the battlefield, but also surrounding villages in ashes, their inhabitants savagely massacred. Candide is befriended by James the Anabaptist, and also unexpectedly meets Dr. Pangloss, by now reduced to the pitiful state of a beggar grossly disfigured by syphilis. This motley group starts for Lisbon, and their ship is wrecked in a terrible storm off the coast of Portugal. James is drowned while Candide and Pangloss barely manage to reach the shore of Portugal just as an earthquake shakes its capital, crushing 30,000 inhabitants under the ruins and engulfing what is left of the city in the flames and ashes of terrible fires.

In order to punish those judged wicked enough to have caused this disaster and to prevent other earthquakes from occurring, the rulers of Lisbon treat the people to the spectacle of a splendid *auto-da-fé*. While Pangloss is hanged, Candide is whipped to within an inch of his life. A charitable old woman takes care of him and leads him to Cunégonde; the damsel had barely survived being raped and stabbed in her father’s castle, and has since become the mistress of Don Issachar, who is a Jew and the Grand Inquisitor, both of whom Candide finds himself obliged to kill as threatening rivals when they discover him in a compromising situation with the young woman. As a result, the lovers, accompanied by the old woman, flee to Cadiz, where they embark for Paraguay. During the lengthy sea voyage, the old woman, who happens to be the daughter of Pope Urban X and the Princess Palestrina, relates her own sad story, filled with multiple bloody adventures and calamities in the course of which she was raped, sold into slavery, stricken with the plague, had one of her buttocks cut off, was sent to Russia where she fell to the lot of a boyard who gave her twenty lashes per day, and ended up becoming a servant of Don Issachar and assigned to Cunégonde.

After the ship lands in Buenos Aires, our passengers are the guests of the Governor, who promptly develops a mad and jealous infatuation with Cunégonde. Once more, Candide has to leave behind his beloved and flee for his life, this time in the company of Cacambo, a recently acquired valet, part Spanish and part South American Indian, who had himself acquired a rich and variegated experience of life. Arriving in Paraguay, Candide meets the Commandant of the Jesuits, who turns out to be Cunégonde’s brother; he has also somehow survived the massacre in his father’s castle and has since become a Jesuit priest and a colonel in the King of Spain’s troops. However, upon learning of Candide’s intention of marrying his sister, he becomes enraged and draws his sword, and in the ensuing violent fight Candide has to stab him in self-defense.

Believing he has killed Cunégonde’s brother, Candide (with Cacambo in tow) promptly takes to the road again, rescues two young girls amorously pursued by monkeys, and is captured by the Oreillon, a tribe of cannibalistic Indians with a special liking for Jesuit flesh; the two are freed when the resourceful Cacambo persuades the Indians that his master, far from being a Jesuit, has just killed one. Pursuing their journey, Candide and Cacambo painfully reach the isolated country of El Dorado, surrounded by nearly impassable mountains and precipices, and find themselves in a utopian society that, as an enlightened monarchy, offers its subjects the abundant fruits of its natural riches, as well as peace, prosperity, liberty, tolerance, and justice. After two months in this happy retreat, Candide becomes restless and decides to resume his travels and his quest for his beloved Cunégonde. He and Cacambo set out with a hundred sheep, plentiful provision, and huge amounts of gold, diamond, and other precious stones. However, after a hundred days of strenuous travel, only two sheep survive. In Surinam, a Dutch colony, they encounter an African slave missing his left leg and right hand, the result of the barbaric treatment he has incurred while working in the sugar mills of his master. “It is

this cost that you eat sugar in Europe,” is his sad comment.

Trying in vain to rejoin Cunégonde, the too-trusting Candide is promptly swindled out of most of his possessions. In order to have a better chance at rescuing Cunégonde, Candide sends the more worldly Cacambo to Buenos Aires and he plans to await them in Venice. He sets sail for Bordeaux in the hope of reaching his destination by way of Paris, after having selected as a traveling companion an impoverished scholar named Martin, who has also been the victim of many misfortunes and who, as a Manichaeist, is the pessimistic counterpart of Pangloss. In Paris, Candide is introduced into high society, with its fine suppers, slanderous gossip, and gambling at cards. Arrested as a suspicious foreigner, he buys his freedom with some of his diamonds from El Dorado and is shipped off to Portsmouth, England, where he witnesses the summary execution of Admiral Byng. From Portsmouth Candide proceeds to Venice, where he encounters Paquette, Cunégonde's maid, and Cacambo, who informs him that Cunégonde is in Constantinople. In Venice, he is the guest of Senator Pococuranté, a wealthy Venetian nobleman whose social privileges and riches have made him a complete disbeliever in the ultimate value of all cultural and literary achievements.

In the Venetian galley that carries Candide to Constantinople, where he hopes to reunite with his beloved Cunégonde, Candide unexpectedly finds Pangloss and Cunégonde's brother among the galley slaves. He is informed that Pangloss survived his hanging in Lisbon because of a bungled knot and that Cunégonde's brother survived his wound, which had not been fatal after all. When Candide and his companions arrive in Constantinople, they buy Cunégonde and the old woman from their master. By then, however, Cunégonde has lost her good looks, but Candide feels he cannot go back on his word, while her brother obstinately persists in his objections, which can only be overcome by having him sent back to complete his stint as a galley slave.

Upon arriving in Constantinople, Candide purchases a little farm, but after having survived so many disasters the little group cannot at first easily settle into a calm, uneventful existence. Pangloss still tries to lecture his erstwhile disciple, but the latter interrupts the learned doctor with the simple, pragmatic, and ultimately hopeful observation that “we must cultivate our garden.” In other words, life is made bearable by useful activity rather than by idle theorizing.

To summarize the plot of *Candide* is of course to leave out what makes it one of the great masterpieces of satirical and comical literature. It is a fast-paced adventure story and travelogue, a sentimental love story, a fantasy replete with history. Comic effects are generally achieved by the staccato rhythm of the narration, by the jarring contrast between the dramatic content and the cool, dispassionate style, and by the absence of any psychological depth for the major characters of the tale, which makes them like marionettes, manipulated at will by their creator.

While it is a ferocious attack on philosophical optimism, *Candide* is not a pessimistic work, for it proclaims the human capacity to survive the worst calamities and to endure and even prosper in a world replete with war, cruelty, misery, persecution, and religious intolerance.

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Vigée Le Brun (1994), Germaine de Staël (1995), George Sand (1994), Rebecca West (1996) and Anita Brookner (1997), and numerous articles, contributions to collections of essays, and book reviews and review articles. She was honored by the American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies as one of the Society's "Great Teachers."

*How Candide was brought up in a magnificent castle; and how he was driven out of it*

In the country of Westphalia,<sup>a</sup> in the castle of the most noble baron of Thunder-ten-tronckh, lived a youth whom nature had endowed with a most sweet disposition. His face was the true index of his mind. He had a solid judgment joined to the most unaffected simplicity; and hence, I presume, he had his name of Candide. The old servants of the house suspected him to have been the son of the baron's sister by a very good sort of a gentleman of the neighbourhood, whom that young lady refused to marry, because he could produce no more than seventy-one quarterings<sup>†</sup> in his arms, the rest of the genealogical tree belonging to the family having been lost through the injuries of time.

The baron was one of the most powerful lords in Westphalia, for his castle had not only a gate, but even windows, and his great hall was hung with tapestry. He used to hunt with his mastiffs and spaniels instead of greyhounds; his groom served him for huntsman, and the parson of the parish officiated as his grand almoner. He was called "My Lord" by all his people, and everyone laughed at his stories.

My Lady Baroness weighed three hundred and fifty pounds, and consequently was a person of no small consideration; and she did the honours of the house with a dignity that commanded universal respect. Her daughter, Cunégonde, was about seventeen years of age, fresh-coloured, comely, plump, and amiable. The baron's son seemed to be a youth in every respect worthy of his father. Pangloss, the tutor, was the oracle of the family, and little Candide listened to his instructions with all the simplicity natural to his age and disposition.

Master Pangloss taught the metaphysico-theologo-cosmolonigology.<sup>b</sup> He could prove admirably that there is no effect without a cause, and in this best of all possible worlds the baron's castle was the most magnificent of all castles, and my lady the best of all possible baronesses.

"It is demonstrable," said he, "that things cannot be otherwise than they are; for as all things have been created for some end, they must necessarily be created for the best end. Observe, for instance, the nose is formed for spectacles; therefore we wear spectacles. The legs are visibly designed for stockings; accordingly we wear stockings. Stones were made to be hewn and to construct castles; therefore my lord has a magnificent castle; for the greatest baron in the province ought to be the best lodged. Swine were intended to be eaten; therefore we eat pork all year round. And they who assert that everything is *right*, do not express themselves correctly; they should say that everything is best."

Candide listened attentively, and believed implicitly; for he thought Miss Cunégonde excessively handsome though he never had the courage to tell her so. He concluded that after the happiness of being Baron of Thunder-ten-tronckh, the next was that of being Miss Cunégonde, the next that of seeing her every day, and the last that of hearing the doctrine of Master Pangloss, the greatest philosopher of the whole province, and consequently of the whole world.

One day when Miss Cunégonde went to take a walk in the little neighbouring woods, which were called a park, she saw through the bushes the sage Dr. Pangloss giving a lecture in experiment

philosophy to her mother's chambermaid, a little brown wench, very pretty and very tractable. *At* Miss Cunégonde had a natural disposition toward the sciences, she observed with the utmost attention the experiments which were repeated before her eyes; she perfectly well understood the force of the doctor's reasoning upon causes and effects. She returned home greatly flurried, quite pensive and filled with the desire of knowledge, imagining that she might be a sufficient reason for young Candide and he for her.

On her way back she happened to meet Candide. She blushed; he blushed also. She wished him good morning in a flattering tone; he returned the salute without knowing what he said. The next day as they were rising from the dinner table, Cunégonde and Candide slipped behind a screen; Miss Cunégonde dropped her handkerchief; the young man picked it up. She innocently took hold of his hand, and he innocently kissed hers with a warmth, a sensibility, a grace—all very particular: their lips met; their eyes sparkled; their knees trembled; their hands strayed. The baron chanced to come by; he took no notice of the cause and effect, and without hesitation saluted Candide with some notable kicks on the rear and drove him out of the castle. Miss Cunégonde, the tender, the lovely Miss Cunégonde, fainted away, and, as soon as she came to herself, the baroness boxed her ears. Thus a general consternation was spread over this most magnificent and most agreeable of all possible castles.



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