

Voltaire's *Candide*

Questions for the whole book

As you read, make a list of features you notice that provide answers to the following questions. Pay close attention to (1) parallel narratives and events; (2) contradictions between what the characters say, what they do, and what just happens; (3) implied comparisons (i.e., between the experiences of the women, the depiction of various religious groups, etc.)

1. *Candide* is a satire. What exactly is being satirized, and what makes the satire successful?
2. *Candide* is also a picaresque novel. Based upon your knowledge of this genre, analyze how well *Candide* fits.
3. *Candide* is also a takeoff on the exploration/travel/captivity narrative genres. What elements of these genres do you notice?
4. *Candide* has a number of mentors during the course of the novel (Pangloss, Cacambo, and Martin). What are these mentors like? What are their views? Does *Candide* change in response to what they say?

Questions for Chapters 1-10

6. Define Pangloss's philosophy as it is described in the first part of the novel. What is Voltaire's attitude toward these ideas? How do you know?
7. What ideas about religion come up in the first books? Does one religion end up looking better than any other? If so, why?

Questions for Chapters 11-20

1. What is the moral of the old woman's story in chapters 11-12? Does Voltaire share her views?
2. What is the point of the episode with the girls and monkeys? Does it remind you of anything you have seen in other works this term?
3. Compare Eldorado with Utopia. Would you like to live there? What is Voltaire's point in putting this episode into the book?
4. Explain the relevance of the encounter with the slave in Surinam. What does Voltaire want us to understand in this episode?

Questions for Chapters 21-30

1. This is a good time to compare Candide's sidekicks, their views, and their influence on Candide.
2. What attitudes are expressed toward France and England? What does Candide (which means "candid") think? Pococurante (which means "little caring")? Voltaire?
3. What are we supposed to get out of the episode with the six kings?
4. How satisfying is the ending?