

Voltaire  
*Candide and Zadig*

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# **Part I**

## **Lecture 1**

## **Mock On, Mock On, Voltaire, Rousseau<sup>1</sup>**

by William Blake

Mock on, mock on, Voltaire, Rousseau:  
Mock on, mock on: tis all in vain!  
You throw the sand against the wind,  
And the wind blows it back again.

And every sand becomes a gem  
Reflected in the beams divine;  
Blown back they blind the mocking eye,  
But still in Israel's path they shine.

The atoms of Democritus  
And Newton's particles of light  
Are sands upon the Red Sea shore,  
Where Israel's tents do shine so bright.

### **Reply/Réponse**

Hope on, hope on, Boswell and Blake;  
Hope on and pray: tis all in vain.  
You think perhaps the dust that blows  
Will someday come to life again?

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<sup>1</sup>In his early writing, Rousseau contended that man is essentially good, a “noble savage” when in the “state of nature” (the state of all the other animals, and the condition man was in before the creation of civilization and society), and that good people are made unhappy and corrupted by their experiences in society. He viewed society as “artificial” and “corrupt” and that the furthering of society results in the continuing unhappiness of man. [Chew]

# Chapter 1

## The historical context

### 1.1 French society

French society in the 1700s was divided along the strictly traditional lines of a religious monarchy. The clergy, known as the first estate, was insanely wealthy and powerful, with a reputation for idleness, abuse of power, lasciviousness and extravagance. The nobles (second estate) possessed a vast portion (25%) of the country's land and wielded power over the unfortunate peasants with higher and higher rents. The monarchy directed the country with ever-increasing ineptitude, leading it into expensive wars (such as the American War of Independence) which decimated the population and ruined the economy. (In 1786 interest payments totalled 50% of government income ["France and England"].) At the same time the middle-classes demanded greater privileges, creating perfect conditions for the Revolution which was to end the century .

### 1.2 Cruelty of institutions

The thing that distinguished French society of the 18th century, and which is particularly pertinent to a reading of Voltaire, is the desperate cruelty and barbarism of its institutions, especially in the area of the dispensation of justice. As the freethinker Robert Ingersoll puts it most colourfully in his *On Voltaire*, "Under the benign reign of universal love, every court had its

chamber of torture, and every priest relied on the thumb-screw and rack” [Ingersoll]. Added to this the fact that it was writers, seekers after new ideas and truth, who were inevitably on the receiving end of such treatment. “To speak your honest thoughts, to teach your fellow-men, to investigate for yourself, to seek the truth, these were all crimes, and the “holy-mother church” pursued the criminals with sword and flame.”

# Chapter 2

## Voltaire the writer

### 2.1 Brief Biography

François-Marie Arouet was born in 1694 (21 November), the son of a notary public. He was educated at a Jesuit collège (Louis-le-Grand). He started writing when in prison (1717) in the Bastille after being accused of insulting the regent Philippe II d'Orléans. This was not the last time Voltaire was to be imprisoned for expressing his opinion. His tragedy *Œdipe* was well received.

He became well known in philosophical circles as a Deist. Deism was a primarily English species of thought which explained the existence of God through the use of reason alone, excelling faith and or institutions. The French version of this school placed itself outside of theological references altogether, focussing instead on the aspects of confidence in the regularity of nature and a suspicion of institutional religion. Voltaire was heavily influenced by other Deists such as John Locke, who elaborated empiricist theories in which “all our ideas . . . are ultimately derived from experience”. In contrast, he reacted strongly against “philosophical optimists” such as Leibniz, who declared in his *Discourse on Metaphysics*

that a benevolent god would choose to create whatever possible world contained the smallest amount of evil; hence (in a phrase that would later be mocked by Voltaire) this is “the best of all possible worlds,” according to Leibniz. Nothing about it could

be changed without making things worse rather than better on the whole.[Kemerling]

This phrase forms one of the key ideas elaborated by Pangloss in the novel *Candide*, and together with the concept of “sufficient reason” from which the idea stems (God must have sufficient reason to create such a world, which is the minimization of evil), provide for Voltaire convenient motifs for a satire of contemporary society.

In 1726 he offended a nobleman who as a result hired some goons to beat him up while he watched. This seemed to be par for the course for a writer in those days, and A. Owen Aldridge has said that “The authors of these crimes were rarely condemned by public opinion, and it was the innocent victims who suffered ridicule – their discomfiture being considered comical, like the plight of cuckolded husbands” [“Voltaire’s Beatings”]. After he was imprisoned for this same offence he was forced to go to England, where he met Isaac Newton. On returning to France, he wrote more tragedies (*Brutus* (1730) and *Zaïre* (1732)) experimented in physics and chemistry, and corresponded with the future Frederick II of Prussia. He contributed to the *Encyclopédie* which Diderot had begun (1753). He moved eventually to an estate near Geneva called Ferney, publishing anonymous novels attacking contemporary institutions. It was during this time that *Candide* was written.

As a measure of the extent to which he inspired those who came after him, here is Ingersoll’s justification of this mockery which got him into so much trouble.

So Voltaire has been called a mocker. What did he mock? He mocked kings that were unjust: kings who cared nothing for the sufferings of their subjects. He mocked the titled fools of his day. He mocked the corruption of courts; the meanness, the tyranny and the brutality of judges. He mocked the absurd and cruel laws, the barbarous customs. He mocked popes and cardinals and bishops and priests, and all the hypocrites on the earth. He mocked historians who filled their books with lies, and philosophers who defended superstition. He mocked

the haters of liberty, the persecutors of their fellow-men. He mocked the arrogance, the cruelty, the impudence, and the unspeakable baseness of his time.

He has been blamed because he used the weapon of ridicule.

Hypocrisy has always hated laughter, and always will. Absurdity detests humor, and stupidity despises wit. Voltaire was the master of ridicule. He ridiculed the absurd, the impossible. He ridiculed the mythologies and the miracles, the stupid lives and lies of the saints.” [Ingersoll, 13]

Voltaire died when he was 84 (1778), and still writing for the theatre. He had recently attended the first performance of his play *Irène* in Paris when he died.

# Chapter 3

## *Candide*

### 3.1 About the book

*Candide ou l'optimisme* came out in Geneva in 1759 [*Candide*, 407].

### 3.2 Plot Outline

The main characters are introduced, and the scene is set in the very first brief chapter. We are in a castle in Westphalia (north-west Germany).

**Candide** The young man living in the castle of the Baron de Thunder-ten-tronckh, by virtue of his being the illegitimate child of the baron's sister (9). In love with ...

**Mlle Cunégonde** 17-year-old daughter of the baron and baroness. Described in delectable terms: "fraîche, grasse, appétissante" (10).

**Pangloss** Candide's tutor (précepteur). Devotee of the principle of *cause finale*, in which all things are said to have a purpose (there is no effect without a cause). Takes this principle to the extremes of expediency, as shown in the example "les cochons étant faits pour être mangés, nous mangeons du porc toute l'année" (10).

It is the latter's adventures with the chambermaid in the gardens, observed by Cunégonde, which leads to her brief seduction of Candide, during which the Baron catches them and evicts Candide from the castle.

Thus the scene is set for a series of further tragedies and upsets. The reader notices that in all things Candide thinks of and refers to Cunégonde. The presentation of the suffering and carnage following the idyllic life of the castle is meant to parody the just-introduced philosophy of Pangloss, in which "tout est au mieux" (10). First, Candide is forced through starvation to enlist in the Bulgarian army, where he is beaten until he learns to drill passably. Then he is forced to run the gauntlet of the regiment before being spared by the Bulgarian King. There is a battle in which he sees thousands slaughtered, with accompanying graphic descriptions of the carnage.

Candide makes it to Holland. He has heard that the people are rich, but finds they don't respond to his begging. He argues with an orator, who asks if he thinks the Pope is the Antichrist, and has a chamber-pot emptied on his head by the orator's wife. At this point we meet

**Jacques** An Anabaptist (who get baptized as adults).

who takes pity on him, giving him food and drink and money, which Candide gives to a beggar in a shocking physical state, who turns out to be Pangloss. He finds that Cunégonde has been raped and killed by Bulgarian soldiers, who have killed her family and destroyed the castle, and that Pangloss's ill-health is a result of syphilis caught from Paquette the chambermaid. Jacques pays for his cure and he comes out of it with an eye and an ear missing.

Jacques takes the two along on a business trip to Lisbon. The ship is wrecked off Lisbon, and Jacques drowns along with all the other passengers except Pangloss, Candide and a brutish sailor. When they arrive in the city, the great Lisbon earthquake of 1755 hits, and 30,000 people are killed. Afterwards they dine with some residents they manage to help, but are brought to the auto-da-fe the next day on account of Pangloss's philosophizing. Candide is flogged and Pangloss hanged.

## **Part II**

### **Lecture 2**

### 3.3 Plot outline cont. . . .

An old lady looks after the injured Candide, and when he is better takes him to Cunégonde, who is still living after all. She tells Candide her story: the soldier who raped and stabbed her in the leg having been killed by his captain for lack of respect towards him, she is taken care of and kept as a servant by the latter, then sold to a Jew, Don Issacar. Subsequently she is shared between Don Issacar and the Grand Inquisitor, until seeing her friends in the arena of the auto-da-fe.

After Candide and Pangloss have dinner, Candide is obliged to kill first the jealous Don Issacar and then the jealous Grand Inquisitor, who catch them together one after the other.

After they make their escape, the pair and the old woman are robbed at an inn, and have to sell one horse, with the women sharing one, until they get to Cadiz. In response to Cunégonde's complaining, the old woman tells the couple her story. She is apparently a daughter of a (fictional) pope, and of a princess of Palestrine.<sup>1</sup> Her fiancé was poisoned by a former mistress before the wedding, and retiring by boat to her mother's country house, their boat was taken by pirates, and they were taken to Morocco, where a battle with rival pirates leaves everyone but *la vieille* dead. She wakes up to find an Italian apparently taking advantage of her unconsciousness to try to have his way with her. We find out later that he is a castrato, however, who knew *la vieille* as a child. He promises to return to Italy with her, but instead sells her to the dey of Algiers. Soon after the plague strikes, and she is sold again, thus travelling to Tunis, Tripoli, Alexandria, Smyrna, Constantinople. From there her owner, a janissary aga, went to defend Azof from the Russians. During the siege, The jannissaries decide, instead of eating the women (they have already eaten two eunuchs), to cut off a buttock from each and eat it. The women are then captured by the Russians, she is enslaved to a boyar who is executed on the wheel for having offended the court. *La vieille* escapes, and works as a waitress in cabarets in the Baltic, and in Holland, and finally for Don Issacar.

Candide, Cunégonde and *la vieille* arrive in Buenos Aires, and visit the

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<sup>1</sup>There were only eight popes Urban.

governor Don Frenando d'Ibaraa y Figueora y Mascarenes y Lampourdos y Souza, who falls in love with Cunégonde and resolves to marry her. An alcalde (Spanish official) comes into port and la vieille recognizes the monk who stole Cunégonde's jewels in Spain. The monk tries to sell the jewels, which belonged to the Grand Inquisitor, and he is hanged, but not before fingering Candide for the Inquisitor's murder. Cunégonde stays with the governor and Candide flees.

We are introduced to another useful character of the story:

**Cacambo** A valet Candide has brought out from Spain. The son of a half-breed Spaniard, he is an opportunist and a pragmatist, whose philosophies contradict those of Pangloss in the sense that, instead of being fatalistic, resolves to profit from the absurdities of society. An introductory example:

Pour moi, ne ne vois rien de si divin que Los Padres, qui font ici la guerre au roi d'Espagne et au roi de Portugal, et qui en Europe confessest ces rois; qui tue ici des Espagnols, et qui à Madrid les envoient au ciel: cela me ravit; . . . [*Candide*, 44]

With Cacambo Candide goes to the Jesuit "kingdom" of Paraguay to fight for them. They are introduced to the commandant, who turns out to be Cunégonde's brother, now the young Baron de Thunder-ten-tronckh, thought murdered by the Bulgarians. They have a happy reunion together, until Candide expresses his intention to marry Cunégonde: the baron hits Candide with his sword, and Candide runs him through, whereupon he bursts into tears in regret for his new murder. He and Cacambo flee, Candide disguised as the dead Jesuit.

Candide and Cacambo soon come upon two naked girls running and screaming, being chased by two monkeys nipping at their buttocks. Candide takes out his rifle and shoots the monkeys, thinking that he has made up for his former crimes by doing so. When he sees the girls grieving over the dead monkeys, Cacambo has to inform him that he has killed the girls' lovers.

The next day they wake to find themselves, as Gulliver in Lilliput, bound and surrounded by the local tribespeople (Oreillons), who are preparing to

boil and roast them, believing them to be Jesuits on account of Candide's disguise. Cacambo talks them out of it by convincing them to verify that Candide has in fact killed a Jesuit, after which they are treated very well. Candide is impressed by the moral integrity displayed by the Oreillons.

The pair decide to head for Cayenne, where they will find Frenchmen. They eventually get in a canoe and drift downstream, until they are wrecked on some reefs. They come eventually to a plain hemmed in by mountains, where people are travelling in carriages drawn by huge red sheep. They are in El Dorado. Children are playing quoits with gold and precious jewels. The men try to give these back to the schoolmaster when the children leave them behind, but he throws them away. They find a roadside restaurant, where they eat exquisite food, and try to pay with the gold they picked up, only to be laughed at, and told that the government pays for such restaurants, and that the streets are paved with gold and jewels.

They visit an old man (172 years) who tells them all about the country, which apparently is the former home of the Incas, who left. Those who stayed behind agreed no one should ever leave. The wondrous things about the country for Candide are that it has no priests, no monks to argue about religion, since everyone agrees, and no one asks God for anything, since they have all they want. There are no courts, since there are no lawsuits, and therefore no prisons either. On the other hand, much attention is given to science and mathematics, with a huge "palais de sciences" for such research.

Candide decides to leave, however, since Cunégonde is not there. The king has a special winch made to help them get over the mountains with 102 of the red sheep laden with various valuables and food. All but two of these sheep come to grief with their loads.

They arrive in Surinam, where they find a slave who has had his hand cut off for getting his finger caught in the sugar mill, and his leg cut off for running away. On hearing the black man's story Candide renounces Pangloss's optimism.

Learning that Cunégonde has become the favourite mistress of the governor of Buenos Aires, Candide instructs Cacambo to go and buy her back

off him, and join Candide with her in Venice. He agrees to pay the owner of the mutilated slave (M. Vanderdendur) to take him to Venice for a large sum, but he tricks him and sails without him and with the last two laden sheep. Candide complains to a judge, who fines him for making too much noise.

Candide offers free passage with him to Europe to anyone who can prove to be the unhappiest in the town, and gives it to a scholar called

**Martin** who had worked for 10 years for the booksellers of Amsterdam.

He is persecuted in Surinam by preachers who think he is a Socinian (denied Trinity, see notes 43 p. 418). In fact he explains that he is a Manichean (believes that the universe is a battle between good and evil).

Their dispute on whether good exists is illustrated by a battle at sea in which the Dutch (pirate) ship with Candide's sheep on it is sunk, and one sheep swims to Candide's boat. They debate human nature until they reach Bordeaux, and Martin agrees to accompany Candide to Venice.

On their way they visit Paris, where Candide is bled by doctors because of a slight ailment, becomes very ill, and has to have a cleric evicted. An abbé takes them to a play, and he learns that out of five or six thousand plays in France only 15 or 16 are any good, and that actresses are refused a Christian burial.

The abbé takes them to visit the Marquise de Parolignac, where all the guests are losing money at a card game called *pharaon*. Candide makes an impression by cheerfully losing a large amount. At dinner the guests discuss the poor quality of the contemporary literature. The Marquise seduces him, getting two large diamond rings from him, and Candide later regrets his infidelity.

The abbé questions him about Cunonde, and sets up a deception to get Candide's riches from him. Candide receives a letter from "Cunégonde" saying she is in Paris and ill, and he and Martin go to visit her, but can't make her out in the darkness. He is told she can't speak. He leaves jewels and gold for her, and the abbé appears with a squad of policemen, who

throw them in jail for being foreigners. they get out by bribing the policeman.

They take a boat to Portsmouth, where they see an admiral executed for not getting close enough to the enemy. From there they go straight to Venice. There they meet

**Paquette** the chambermaid, Pangloss's former lover. She tells her story, also woeful.

She has been seduced by a monk, taken in by a surgeon, beaten by his wife, who was poisoned by the husband. Paquette was put in prison, freed by selling her favours to a judge, and fallen into prostitution

**Frère Giroflée** The Theatin (note 67 p. 421) friar is also enslaved to the order for the sake of his parents.

Candide has made a bet that they are as happy as they looked when they met them. Candide loses the bet. Candide gives them both money, hoping to make them happy that way.

The two go to visit a noble, Seigneur Pococurante, to find out whether he is happy. He has a great library, and rich paintings, but is tired and bored with nearly all of the works he possesses. Harsh judgements are pronounced on nearly all the classical writers whom Martin asks about.

They meet Cacambo again when he appears as a valet to one of the six kings, dispossessed of their kingdoms, who happen to be dining in the same inn with them, while they attend the Carnival. Cacambo tells them that Cunégonde is in Turkey, washing dishes. They get on a Turkish galley, finding that Pangloss and the Baron, Cunégonde's brother are slaves rowing it. Candide buys them back, and they go looking for Cunégonde. The Baron tells how he was cured of his wounds, but eventually caught bathing with a Muslim page in Constantinople, and was sentenced to row on the galley. Pangloss had been saved by a storm which prevented him from being burned, and was not properly hanged. Sold to a surgeon for dissection he is eventually cured, and went to Constantinople. He is caught in a mosque picking up a woman's corsage, and sentenced to the galleys.

They arrive at Cunégonde's new residence with the Transylvanian prince. Candide buys a small farm nearby. Cunégonde has become ugly from her trials and labours, but Candide still loves her, and buys her and la vieille back. The Baron still insists that he will not marry his sister, so the rest contrive to have him returned to the Turkish captain of the galley, and returned to Rome.

They love all rather unhappily together, philosophizing about their sufferings. Paquette and Frère Giroflée turn up again, devoid of the money given to them, having been in prison, and the friar having "turned turk" (s'était fait turc").

They go to visit a dervish, who tells them they should not bother thinking about evil and good, to instead be silent, and shuts the door in their faces.

They are lastly invited into the house of a man who cultivates fruit to send to Constantinople, but who knows nothing else of what goes on there. He has 20 acres which he cultivates with his two daughters and two sons. The guests eat delicious, simple fresh food. His "philosophy" is summed up in the phrase: "le travail éloigne de nous trois grands maux: l'ennui, le vice, et le besoin" (107). Candide and the others take this advice to heart, and resolve, in Martin's words, to "travailler sans raisonner" (108), each one contributing his or her taent to the prosperity of the little farm.

# **Part III**

## **Lecture 3**

## 3.4 Philosophical Background

### 3.4.1 Leibnitz

In order to understand the ideas which Voltaire lampoons and explains in *Candide*, it is necessary to have a basic grasp of the ideas of the thinkers that he is commenting on. I will try and summarize the basic ideas of Leibnitz which feature in *Candide*, although we should not forget that it is a certain conception of Leibnitz's philosophy of optimism which Voltaire makes use of in the story, and that it does not attempt to refute these ideas in a consistent or thorough-going fashion.

Leibnitz conceived of the universe as consisting of an infinite number of infinitely small things he called "monads". They possess force and energy, and are constantly changing. They also have self-consciousness (apperception), and according to Wade, are "thanks to the Supreme monad, that is God, in harmony with the universe through some pre-established harmony" [Wade, ?, 20].

For a thing to exist, according to Leibnitz, it must have sufficient reason to exist. This sufficient reason is ultimately the striving of a thing towards perfection, not just in itself but in its relationship to the rest of the universe.

"God, therefore, is not only the Supreme monad, He is also the sovereign sufficient reason. ... The creation is necessarily the best possible world, because it unites the maximum of richness with the greatest simplicity in a world where a maximum of effect is produced by a minimum of cause" [Wade, 20].

Although all things strive towards perfection in Leibnitz, he believed that only God is perfect. Imperfection in the world is an evil, which causes two other evils: pain and sin. Since Leibnitz declared that humans were free, our imperfect choices lead to sin [wade, 21].

Leibnitz tried to bring together his philosophy in the early part of the 18th century (between 1695 and 1715 [wade, 24]), and his ideas were greatly in vogue during the twenties and thirties. Voltaire accepted a great many of Leibnitz's ideas, with the important exception of the notions of

pre-established harmony and of monads, which he considered to be a contradiction of the other Leibnitzian principles of freedom and sufficient reason [wade, 52]. Why would God unite such contradictory entities as the body and the spirit (what is his sufficient reason for this), asks Voltaire in his *Métaphysique de Newton* [*Œuvres complètes*, XXII, 425][Wade, 52].

According to Wade, Voltaire's fascination with Leibnitz is not at all that of a mocker, but instead that of somebody who saw in Leibnitz much that was necessary to the formulation of a philosophy that allowed for the possibility of personal freedom. In Wade's judgement,

The key, in fact, to the whole situation ... is Voltaire's insistence at the same time upon the existence of God, and man's freedom to work out his destiny. [wade, 54]

Leibnitz's philosophy went some way to helping Voltaire reconcile this problem, but his philosophy of optimism seemed to leave the way open for fatalism. He subsequently characterized Leibnitz's concept of pre-established harmony in the statement "tout est bien", thus labelling it fatalistic. The problem with this fatalism is the way it encourages human beings to accept their lot, no matter how miserable it is, as contributing to the general good. For Voltaire, this situation nullifies the concept of free will. For him, man "is free when he can do what he wants to do, he is not free to will or not to will" [Wade, 60].

### **3.4.2 The Lisbon Earthquake**

Leibnitz's doctrine of pre-established harmony finally became not just difficult to understand but utterly untenable when Voltaire was confronted with the tragedy of the Lisbon earthquake, on 1 November 1755. This earthquake, centred off the coast of Spain and Morocco, and now thought to have measured 9.0 on the Richter scale, was felt as far away as France, Switzerland, and Italy. In Portugal it was followed by tsunamis, as well as a fire which burned for five days and destroyed part of Lisbon itself [Moreira et al.].

The idea that this earthquake, in which an estimated sixty thousand people died, could possibly be meant to contribute to an overall “greater good” could not be justified in Voltaire’s view. (With the benefit of hindsight, we might now reflect that the Great Lisbon Earthquake did in fact lead to the systematic study of seismology, an endeavour which would have appealed to Voltaire.)

We notice that the description of this event in *Candide* includes even the expression of doubts from Pangloss, who, immediately after having explained the drowning of their benefactor Jacques the Anabaptist off the coast, is momentarily at a loss to explain the earthquake and asks: “Quelle peut être la raison suffisante de ce phénomène?” (21). He eventually hits upon the cause however—a trail of sulphur connecting Lima, which has recently suffered from an earthquake also, and Lisbon under the sea. The utterly unsatisfactory nature of this explanation is emphasized by the fact that it is given while Candide is crying out for water and oil in an injured state, and that he passes out before Pangloss goes to fetch him any.

### **3.4.3 The Seven Years War**

Another event to undermine the philosophy of optimism in Voltaire’s mind was the Seven Years War, which was fought between Britain and France, among others, between 1756 and 1763. In fact this war is acknowledged to be the first war fought on a truly global scale—the first “world war” if you like. Prussia, on the British side, Russia, Sweden and Austria on the French side, were all involved, and battles took place in India, North America, Europe, and Africa [Wiki]. Voltaire must have been dismayed at this new tendency for the so-called civilizing colonial powers to battle it out all over the world, and the fact that France came off the worst in the struggle for North America would not have been encouraging. (The American part of the Seven Years War, which lasted for nine years is referred to there as the French and Indian War.)

### 3.5 The Philosophy of *Candide*

So *Candide* can in many ways be seen as the result of a number of different historical and philosophical influences on the mind of Voltaire. It is seen as pivotal in the formulation of Enlightenment ideas such as what we now call human rights, liberal democracy, and scientific progress. Wade summarizes the effects of the novel in the following way:

Seen as a philosophical document, it sums up a philosophy, a set of ideas, a way of life which are about to be abandoned, and offers the program for another philosophy, a new set of ideas, a different way of life which will be adopted. In this respect, it is at the same time historical and ideological, personal and general, negative and positive, critical and creative. [Wade, xii]

This intention on the part of Voltaire can be seen in the characterization, which by the standards of modern fiction is a curious mix of cliché and reversed expectations. The characters seem to suffer an enormous amount of punishment, eventually coming through with a misplaced cheerful forbearance, after (justifiably) complaining bitterly about their lot. Wade points out that we never really get a handle on who these characters are:

The characters are living marionettes, or acting silhouettes, or mere possibilities, constantly changing, constantly asserting their being by a rhythmical union of movement, gesture, and speech. ... This rhythm from the concrete to the abstract and from the abstract to the utopic ... is the constant source of *Candide's* ambiguity: it is Voltaire's way of "actualizing the utopic". [Wade, xiii]

A superficial look at the preoccupations of the characters, especially Candide, serves to illustrate this movement. The concrete details of the castle of the Baron de Thunder-ten-tronckh are used to justify abstract speculations by Pangloss on the nature of the world, while Candide contemplates his personal utopia, which consists in being able to admire Mlle Cunégonde. Pangloss is saying:

Les pierres ont été formées pour être taillées, et pour en faire des châteaux, aussi monseigneur a un très beau château; ... il fallait dire que tout est au mieux.

Candide ... concluait qu'après le bonheur d'être né baron de Thunder-ten-tronckh, le second degré de bonheur était d'être Mlle Cunégonde; le troisième, de la voir tous les jours; et le quatrième, d'entendre maître Pangloss, le plus grand philosophe de la province, et par conséquent de toute la terre. (10)

This initial mini-utopia is to give way in its turn to the concrete "coups de pied dans le derrière" (11) from the Baron. This incident is described there and in the following chapter as an expulsion from the "paradis terrestre" (12). Voltaire had remarked at one time that the doctrine of the fall (man sinned in the Garden of Eden and therefore needs to be redeemed) was a better explanation for the human condition than Leibnitz's "pre-established harmony".

This "fall from grace" of Candide's is in the same way the unseen force behind the character's destiny through the rest of the novel. He constantly seeks a world resembling this earthly paradise he has left, with the necessity of getting Cunégonde back motivating his actions, including the killing of the Grand Inquisitor and Don Issacar, and the attempt to transport the riches of El Dorado over the mountains.

# **Part IV**

## **Lecture 4**

### 3.6 Candide's voyage

So we have seen how the rhythm of the concrete, to the abstract, to the utopic has been set up right from the beginning of the story. There are elements of this rhythm in the journey which Candide undertakes after his fall from grace in Germany.

He is not the only character to go on such a journey without really setting out to, of course. We also have the account of the journey of the Old Woman, Cunégonde's own journey, which is retold in two parts, and Cacambo's journey to fetch her back to Europe, as well as her brother the young Baron's journey.

All of these journeys are broadly circular. Let's begin by looking at Candide's route. We begin in the castle in Westphalia (Germany), where he is separated from Cunégonde. From there he goes to Holland, Lisbon (Portugal), where he meets up with Cunégonde once more. They travel south to Cadiz (Spain), where Candide becomes an infantry captain in the war on the Jesuits (32), and so embarks for Buenos Aires (Argentina).

From there Candide separates from Cunégonde again, fleeing from justice with Cacambo, and leaving her with the jealous governor. They go to Paraguay to fight instead on the side of the Jesuits. Nearly being eaten by the Oreillons motivates them to head for Cayenne (French Guyana), thus crossing the wilds of Brazil and the Amazon basin (this country is not mentioned). Somewhere en route they encounter the mythical Eldorado.

Longing for Cunégonde makes Candide abandon this utopia to cross the mountains into the Dutch colony Surinam (neighbour to French Guyana). Here he parts with Cacambo, who goes to Buenos Aires to fetch Cunégonde, and meets up with Martin. They agree to meet in Venice, since it is "un pays libre"(64). Martin and Candide's ship travels to Bordeaux (possibly via Japan, we're not sure) from where they make their way to Paris. From there they are sent by the arresting officer to Dieppe. They sail to Portsmouth (England) just long enough to see an admiral executed.

Candide is so shocked by the execution that he bargains to be taken straight to Venice. There they meet Paquette again and Frère Giroflée, and finally Cacambo, now a sultan's valet.

They go to find Cunégonde on the banks of the Propontis (the Sea of Marmora, between the Dardenelles and the Bosphorus, separating European and Asian Turkey). They end up staying nearby, on a small farm (*métairie*, 103).

The whole journey is an East to West and back to East itinerary. We go from Central Europe to South America, to the north of that continent, back to Europe, and ending up at the eastern edge of Europe in Turkey.

At the beginning of *Candide's* journey we have the first of the three utopias, the castle of the Baron of Thunder-ten-Tronckh. As we have seen this is a simple paradise, consisting of the most powerful baron, the wisest philosopher, and the most charming princess in the world. But this paradise is a fraud. Only *Candide's* inexperience allows him to believe in it. Later the war exposes the castle for what it is—part of the harsh, authoritarian social reality of the time, and surrounded by hostile forces in the face of which it can offer little defense. In other words, this is real life, and *Candide* must learn to survive in it.

His experiences as he travels across Europe, running the gauntlet of the Bulgarian army, being whipped at the Inquisition, almost eaten alive by the Oreillons, cause him to doubt the possibility of happiness. He is now in the New World, which he had thought might be “*le meilleur des mondes*” after giving up on the Old World. His experience with the girls and the monkeys has confused him. He is now in the realm of the abstract—things are turned on their head. Ideas need to be reexamined. He and Cacambo “entrust themselves to Providence”. Thus they find the land of Eldorado, a utopia which is the result of an abstraction, if you like. There is no way of getting there deliberately. The furthest East on their itinerary is the furthest away from reality.

From this unattainable utopia the characters have to get themselves back to one they can rely upon. Straight away they deal with the concrete reality that a vast treasure cannot protect itself from slips, swamps, or the sheep carrying them dying of hunger. *Candide's* “apprenticeship of life” continues. He learns too late not to trust the Dutch trader Venderdendur (*vendeur à la dent dure*, or scathing in his comments)—he is ready for a new master in his training, Martin.

Martin tempers Candide's striving for paradise with his extreme pessimistic attitude. With him Candide embarks upon an abstract, philosophical search for evidence of happiness in others. Their itinerary therefore takes in visits to people in all stations of life, with Martin's ever-present philosophical commentary providing the counterpoint for Pangloss's earlier reasoning. We find that stars of the theatre, for example, are treated well while living, but their bodies are refused burial and they are thrown on the dungheap (*voirie*) when they die (73).

Candide's fanciful competition to hire him symbolizes Martin's usefulness in this respect—he is looking for the person who has suffered the most to be his companion. He is therefore able to extricate himself from the situation of their arrest in Paris, since he sees through the abbé who took advantage of Candide's heartsickness for Cunégonde.

Most notably, though, Martin enlightens Candide on what lies hidden behind the apparent happiness of Frère Giroflée and Paquette (as yet unrecognized by Candide). His natural pessimism, and his Manichean conviction that the spirit of evil is in control of the world, allows him to cynically intuit their real situation. The fact that Paquette's amorous adventures with Pangloss had maimed him permanently with the loss of an eye and an ear and the end of a nose, illustrate in miniature the concept of pleasure masking misfortune.

Their journey takes in the palace of a nobleman, Pococuranté, and a dinner with six dispossessed monarchs. The nobleman seeming dissatisfied with the many treasures he possesses, and the monarchs unable to benefit from their proper rank, they serve only as negative examples of how to be happy. The travellers have to keep searching. They will discover the secret by accident, but not until they have been given a corrective message from the dervish.

In what turns out to be one of the morals of the tale, the dervish seems to deflect Pangloss's enquiries on the nature of man and the existence of evil, he says: "Quand Sa Hautesse [le Sultan] envoie un vaisseau en égypte, s'embarrasse-t-elle si les souris qui sont dans la vaisseau sont à leur aise ou non?" (106). In other words, we are of too small a consequence for our troubles to matter to the divinity, and there is no sense in trying to make

out the working of the mind of God.

# **Part V**

## **Lecture 5**

(Candide's voyage continued. . .)

The example of the good muslim who cultivates his orchard with the help of his family they come across without seeking him out. Pangloss happens to ask him the name of the strangled Mufti, and they are invited into his house. The many apparent luxuries they are served turn out to have come from the labours of the family. In the context of the story, this is extraordinary in itself: the family are benefiting from their own labour without the advantage of indentured servants or slaves like the other well-to-do characters in the story. They are not only self-reliant but have some left over to sell, but despite this, the father sees the benefit of their industry as keeping away not just need (*le besoin*), but also boredom (*l'ennui* cf. *Pococurante*) and vice (*le vice*, cf. *Paquette* etc).

The message of the dervish, combined with the example of the “bon musulman”, as well as the lessons learned by Candide up to this point, lead to the experiment with the more modest, realistic utopia of the cooperative farmlet, with each member of the group making his or her own contribution, working with their hands. It is the end of Candide's progression from the dreamlike state of childhood, where everything is an illusion, to adolescent fantasy and then to pragmatic reality, supported by a rough idealism.

### **3.7 Candide as a soldier**

Candide's experience in the Bulgarian army in Chapter 2 marks the beginning of the test of Pangloss's optimistic philosophy in the harsh realities of the world. The first part of the philosophy which is tested is the idea that optimism is compatible with free will. When Candide first encounters the Bulgarian scouts on the lookout for new recruits, they offer him a welcome free dinner. Candide takes this as further confirmation of Pangloss's theory “*tout est au mieux*” (12).

Thus the first stage in his disappointment with this philosophy is trickery: the soldiers take advantage of his optimistic outlook to fool him into being a virtual prisoner in the service of a foreign army. His good nature is prevailed upon to offer a drink to the Bulgarian king, which is taken as

his oath of allegiance to the king. They tell him that his “gloire est assurée” (13), when in fact he is immediately subject to beatings on the pretext of motivating him to improve his performance, and subject to potentially fatal punishment for wandering away from the camp.

The concept of free will is lampooned here by Candide being tricked into agreeing to join the army, where promises for happiness turn out to be unfounded, and where the slightest transgression results in death. The terms in which Candide’s mistake is described emphasize this commentary:

Il s’avisa un beau jour de printemps de s’aller promener, marchant tout droit devant lui, croyant que c’était un privilège de l’espèce humaine, comme de l’espèce animal, de se servir de ses jambes à son plaisir. (13)

Voltaire describes here, in idyllic fashion, the archetypal aspects of free will, posing the basic problem: if we as human beings can make use of our free will to use our faculties to take ourselves for a walk (the most natural of activities on a beautiful spring day), for example, does that not mean we are free in a greater sense? Apparently not, to the extent that we are subject to the threat of death—we are mortal, in other words.

Thus the question becomes more problematic. Optimism makes it even more so, to the extent that we will fail to improve the conditions for exercising our freedom, believing that everything is already “for the best”. Candide, not having seen the world, believes Pangloss’s assessment of reality, and therefore does not for a moment suspect that his innocently exercising his freedom will rub up against others’ view, that humans are subject to arbitrary laws and punishments.

This is further emphasized by the description of Candide’s futile protests, in reaction to the Hobson’s choice which he is given: being thrashed (*fustigé*) 36 times by the whole regiment of 2000 men, or being shot in the head.

Il eut beau dire que les volontés sont libres; et qu’il ne voulait ni l’un ni l’autre, il fallut faire un choix; il se détermina, au vertu du don de Dieu qu’on nomme *liberté*, à passer trente-six fois par les baguettes; il essuya [suffered] deux promenades. (13)

So the episode is sardonically described in these terms of freedom, implying that humans can only choose, in the cruel world which we have created for ourselves, between a quick death and a lingering punishment, if we are not clever enough to provide more favourable conditions for the exercise of our free will. This is not to say that we have no free will—Voltaire emphatically believed we do. But the implication is certainly that a belief in pre-established harmony nullifies the use of our free will to a great extent.

Candide is not killed, despite requesting to be shot in the head after two beatings by the whole regiment. The manner in which he is saved is significant to the argument also: the king of the Bulgarians just happens to be passing by, and happens to be wise enough to perceive the character of the prisoner. In other words it is chance, or Providence, which saves him, and it is largely chance which is therefore responsible for our happiness.

### **3.8 Cunégonde's and the Old Woman's story**

We have seen in the examination of Candide's journey that he is separated from Cunégonde on two separate occasions, in Westphalia and in Buenos Aires, and that they discover each other again in Lisbon and in Turkey. At their first reunion we hear about Cunégonde's adventures in the meantime, and the same thing happens when Cacambo joins up with Candide in Venice. These interpolated stories of suffering and woe reflect the larger story of Candide's travails, and lend the impression that Candide's problems are not just the result of his personal misfortune, but are the result of a general malaise affecting everybody. Indeed, the impression that the nobility, represented by Cunégonde, are not immune to the ravages of war and servitude is further emphasized by the story of the Old Woman, supposed to be the daughter of a pope.

In Chapter 8 Cunégonde recounts her story so far. She also follows a similar psychological journey to Candide, learning that the little paradise of the Baron's castle was not the acme of luxury, and there were others more well appointed, for example the Jew Don Issacar's country house (27). Just as Candide is finding out that it is normal for a soldier to be beaten

during training, Cun gonde is subjected to the kind of brutal treatment that was customary for a woman in wartime to endure: rape and mutilation (she is stabbed in her left side). Voltaire has Cun gonde remark specifically of herself: “ne sachant pas que tout ce qui arrivait dans le ch teau de mon p re  tait une chose d’usage” (26). In other words, the customs of war had been kept from her knowledge in this little paradise.

Voltaire’s intention here seems to be to emphasize the treatment of women, and the way this is taken for granted, in his story. In particular the reader notes the irony of the Bulgarian captain, who interrupts her brutal treatment at the hands of the soldier by slaughtering him, not because he wishes to protect the weak and innocent girl from being violated, but because the soldier was too busy to salute him as he entered the room.

So having endured this brutality, and after seeing her family killed, and her mother cut into pieces, Cun gonde’s being sold into slavery as a cook is seen as a respite. Thus her expectations of life are drastically revised downwards. As we have seen she passes from the Bulgarian Captain to Don Issacar, who takes her to Portugal, where her company is shared between him (Mondays, Wednesdays and Sundays) and the Grand Inquisitor (Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays).

But even this is just a precursor to what she will have to endure, just as Candide’s optimistic outlook is only beginning to be challenged. Voltaire’s comedic strategy can be plainly seen in the accumulation of dire and dire calamities interspersed with moments of respite. (In this analysis it can be plainly seen that Voltaire’s ultimate aim is not to present a pessimistic outlook, since the protagonists finally do appear to attain a lasting relief.

Thus the Old Woman’s story serves as a foreshadowing of Cun gonde’s future misfortunes. It closely follows upon Cun gonde’s initial complaints—she sums up on their arrival in Buenos Aires: “j’ai  t  si horriblement malheureuse dans le mien [dans son univers]” (32). It is this which provokes the Old Woman to recount her story, in response to a kind of challenge from Cun gonde, who doubts she could have suffered so much. It is introduced in typically grotesque and ludicrously vulgar fashion, with the ambiguous expression: “si je vous montrais mon derri re, vous ne parleriez pas comme vous faites” (33).

La Vieille's story is told in chapters 11 and 12, and it entails an interesting journey. Having been betrothed to a prince (from Massa-Carrara, 34) who is killed by a jealous former lover prior to the planned wedding, she is taken by her mother to their estate (near Gaète (Gaeta), 34). They are attacked by pirates from Salé in Morocco (Sallee Rovers), and taken back there enslaved. Following the slaughter of the ship's crew and the Old Woman's mother and servants, she wakes up in the company of the eunuch castrato.

The Old Woman's attitude, the way she recounts the story, is thrown in sharp relief here. To emphasize the depth of her suffering in the comic mode which Voltaire has adopted, he seems to make a point of emphasizing her stoicism and self-effacing qualities. Up to this point she has studiously described the tragic events in the most attractive possible light. Ironic expressions such as: "C'est une chose admirable que la diligence avec laquelle ces messieurs déshabillent le monde" (34). She diminishes the severity of her treatment by the pirates: "Mais passons; ce sont des choses si communes qu'elles ne valent pas la peine qu'on en parle" (35). And the episode with the eunuch (from Westphalia, who has also been on a roundabout journey to meet up with her again) is particularly revealing, to the extent that her suffering makes her oblivious to the fact that the eunuch is futilely attempting to take advantage of her while she is unconscious. Instead of being outraged, she is "étonnée et ravie d'entendre la langue de ma patrie" (36).

Voltaire's effort here is to portray comically the extent to which the suffering that women in this world are commonly made to endure as having the effect of hardening them to further suffering. That he manages to do this without taking anything of the admirable, even noble qualities of his female characters away from them is no mean feat for an 18th-century novelist. Remember that the Old Woman is the one with the "conseils sages" at the close of the novel.

As we have seen, the Old Woman is sold to the Dey of Algiers (37), where she gets plague along with the rest of the city. She is sold and taken to Tunis, Tripoli (Libya), Alexandria (Egypt), Smyrna (now Izmir, Turkey), Constantinople. We can see an eastern itinerary much like *Candide's* at

the end of the story. Her Janissary aga takes her even further east to Azof at the other end of the Black Sea.

After the seige, during which she along with the other female members of the Janissary's harem have a buttock cut off to keep the soldiers alive, the Old Woman becomes a gardener for a Russian aristocrat (boyard, 39), and whipped (20 coups de fouet par jour, 39). When she escapes, she makes her way as a waitress back West (Riga (Latvia), Rostock, Wismar, Leipzig, Kassel, Utrecht, Leyden, La Haye, Rotterdam).

We see Voltaire's positive portrayal of the Old Woman at the end of her account in her statement: "je voulus cent fois me tuer, mais j'aimais encore la vie" (39). This is the essential quality of humanity which Voltaire admores in his work, the desire to prevail, symbolized by his belief that man's will is free but not free to give up.

# **Part VI**

## **Lecture 6**

## 3.9 Eldorado

### 3.9.1 Un conte philosophique

In the episode of Eldorado which I am going to look at next there are a number of fantastic elements, some of which I have already mentioned. Before we look at this episode in detail it would seem like a good time to examine the question of the genre of the work. Having read the episode for the first time, the reader might ask, for example, whether we are therefore dealing with an early example of science-fiction.

*Candide* is most often described as a *conte philosophique* (philosophical tale), rather than a novel in the classical sense. There are several characteristics which allow it to fall into this genre. Hopefully the discussion in the previous lectures will have made it the philosophical part obvious. The fantastic elements also contribute to this assessment. There is also the way the tale is introduced, with the “Il y avait en Westphalie. . .” (Once upon a time. . .) of a fairy tale. Also the speed at which dramatic events follow one another and the characters jump from one country to another, as well as the one-dimensional nature of the characters reinforce this.

### 3.9.2 Getting to Eldorado

The Eldorado episode, as we have already seen, represents the unattainable utopia, the adolescent, idealistic fantasy of how things should be. It is the only possible embodiment of Pangloss’s reasoning that this is “the best of all possible worlds”.

Within this fantasy, though, Voltaire conceals the germs for a practical social system. As in modern-day science-fiction novels, this fantasy episode comments on contemporary society and provides pointers to improve it, as well as warnings about how things might turn out. One thinks immediately of *2001 a Space Odyssey* with its spaceflight-as-commonplace counterbalanced by its computer-gone-mad.

So how do they come to this fantasy paradise? Specifically, what kind of decisions and thought processes lead them to this land? Well if we read

the beginning of Chapter 17, we see that Pangloss and Candide are lost, and once again, threatened with starvation.

Il n'était pas facile d'aller à la Cayenne: ils savaient bien à peu près de quel côté il fallait marcher; mais des montagnes, des fleuves, des précipices, des brigands, des sauvages, étaient partout de terribles obstacles. Leurs chevaux moururent de fatigue; leurs provisions furent consumées; ils se nourrirent un mois entier de fruits sauvages, et se trouvèrent enfin auprès d'une petite rivière bordée de cocotiers qui soutinrent leur vie et leurs espérances. (53)

The coconut trees offer the pair the only reliable way to stay alive, but it is a miserable existence. Although it offers them hope of immediate survival, it is devoid of hope for anything better. Cacambo perceives this, and resolves to change their tack.

Cacambo, qui donnait toujours d'aussi bons conseils que la vieille, dit à Candide: «Nous n'en pouvons plus, nous avons assez marché; j'aperçois un canot vide sur le rivage, emplissons-le de cocos, jetons-nous dans cette petite barque, laissons-nous aller au courant; une rivière mène toujours à quelque endroit habité. Si nous ne trouvons pas des choses agréables, nous trouverons du moins des choses nouvelles. — Allons, dit Candide, recommandons-nous à la Providence.» (53)

This last phrase of Cacambo: “Si nous ne trouvons pas des choses agréables, nous trouverons du moins des choses nouvelles” would serve very well for a philosophy on the search for knowledge.

This describes very well the new enlightenment sensibility of the time. Some of the scientific discoveries may be displeasing to some people, especially to those who depend on the religious orthodoxy for their power. But what was being undertaken was motivated by the determination to discover *new* things.

So they decide to leave it up to chance what they will find. They relinquish the unsatisfactory certainties which are offered by Europe: “Si je vais

dans mon pays, les Bulgares et les Arabes y égorgent tout; is je retourne en Portugal, j'y suis brûlé (52). In other words, they undertake an experiment, of the sort that Sir Isaac Newton was engaged in, and whose ideas Voltaire attempted to popularize in his *Éléments de la philosophie de Newton* (?) [New Caxton].

As we have seen the pair are wrecked on the rocks after passing through rapids, clambering over rocks for a mile before coming to the plain where Eldorado is.

### 3.9.3 The Best of Worlds

The description of what they find emphasizes the utopian nature of the place with its epithets, and its superlative generalizations. Things and people are “brillant ... d'une beauté singulière ...” They “jetaient un éclat singulier” (53–54). Later there is the gate of the king's palace, and “il est impossible d'exprimer quelle en était la matière” (58). The creatures, such as the giant red sheep (as well as the fact that they use sheep and not horses to pull their carriages) add to the fantasy atmosphere.

The exotic nature and the size of the dishes which they eat at the inn also emphasize the fantastic nature of their surroundings. They dine on “un contour [condor] bouilli qui pesait deux cents livres” as well as “trois cents colibris [hummingbirds]” (55), and drink liqueurs made from sugar cane. Even the demeanour of the people is described in superlative terms. Their companions, who are simple salesmen and drivers, are nevertheless : “tous d'une politesse extrême” (55).

When the travellers discover that they are not expected to pay for their meal, Candide remarks upon their discovery in the following way, recalling once again Pangloss's philosophy:

«Quel est donc ce pays, disaient-ils l'un et l'autre, inconnu à tout le reste de la terre, et où toute la nature est d'une espèce si différente de la nôtre? C'est probablement le pays où tout va bien; car il faut absolument qu'il y en ait un de cette espèce. Et, quoi qu'en dit maître Pangloss, je me suis souvent aperçu que tout allait assez mal en Westphalie.» (55–56)

So in this way Eldorado is shown as something the existence of which

may be *deduced* logically, rather than something which may be arrived at by conscious planning. Candide discovers Eldorado because “there necessarily must be such a place.” His progress in thinking critically about Pangloss’s teachings is shown ironically in his negative comparison with his home country, admitting that he had already realized that things were actually quite bad there.

It is significant that in this new milieu even the power relationships in the pair of travellers become more equitable. Rather than acting as his valet, Cacambo is now the main character, by virtue of his ability to speak the Peruvian language. Voltaire explicitly describes him in this way: “Candide ne jouait plus que le second personnage, et accompagnait son valet” (56).

The description of the religion of Eldorado is also significant for its redistribution of power and responsibility to what we might think of as “the common man” (unfortunately utopian notions of feminism are still not far advanced). The “chef de famille” acts as priest and has the job of singing hymns each morning, along with the king, and that there are no monks. In relation to the king’s role, we also see later in his customary greeting—a kiss on each cheek—Voltaire’s egalitarian sentiment. The underlying hypocrisy of religion as Voltaire sees it is demonstrated by the inversion of the traditional idea of prayer: in Eldorado one only gives thanks to God, since he has given everything they need.

### **3.9.4 John Locke**

The episode of the meeting with the king’s especially suggests the influence of John Locke (1632–1704). Voltaire was influenced by the philosophies of this English philosopher, who advanced the idea that we should study only concrete problems and not indulge in speculation, which remaining conscious of the limitations of our ability to examine a problem. In his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, he wrote about a theory of knowledge in which ideas are built up only through sense perception. That is, ideas do not exist in and of themselves. According to Locke, we cannot be sure about anything that is not self-referential, such as mathematics.

Voltaire was interested in Locke's "social contract" theory, in which the people give up power to a ruler in return for the ruler protecting their property and freedom. He also condemned religious fervour, as leading to intolerance, and believed that revelation (ie the gospels) must not conflict with reason. [caxton]

### **3.9.5 Religion**

So the people have all they need, and yet the Eldoradoans do not use the gifts, such as gold, that they have been blessed with accidentally. It seems, in fact, that all their good fortune springs from their own foresight and planning, research and effort. Voltaire seems to be saying that if only we make use of the natural faculties we have been given, our reason will, then there is no necessity for the futile pursuit of luxury at the expense of others (the luxuries of Eldorado seem to be shared equally among all the inhabitants).

This secular effort is represented by the "palais des sciences", which takes the place of the buildings that Candide expects to see: the courthouse, the parliament, the prison. This huge palace of sciences, like the giant red sheep, is a unique feature of Voltaire's imaginary utopia and one which seems to illustrate Voltaire's didactic purpose expressed in the portrait of Eldorado.

It is instructional in this regard to examine to what extent our modern secular society has mimicked this picture. Certainly there are now a great many museums of technology which fulfil the same function as Voltaire's palais de sciences (we even have our own more modest MOTAT in Auckland). The revolutionary idea in this is that the ordinary people should have access to the knowledge of science. Remember Voltaire was writing long before the Victorian era of universal education, and organized religion was involved in fierce competition with physicists for the hearts and minds of the public, arguably because of the potentially democratizing effect of science's easily demonstrable and useful truths (such as Newton's universal gravity, reflecting telescope, and mathematical principles such as calculus).

### 3.9.6 Leaving Eldorado

The manner of Candide's and Cacambo's leaving Eldorado is also enlightening in what it tells the reader about the difficulty of being happy. Here the travellers have everything they need, without effort, but they are not satisfied. In fact, they deliberately resolve to leave happiness behind, or, as Voltaire puts it: "les deux heureux résolurent de ne plus l'être" (60). So what is the essential quality of El Dorado that makes it unsatisfactory for our protagonists? Well, as well as Candide's hankering after Cunégonde, and Cacambo's wanderlust, they are seduced by the idea of taking the treasures of the land to the outside world, where they will be priceless. Things outside Eldorado spoil the paradise for them.

In other words, Eldorado only works in isolation, as an idea (a mathematical equation in the Lockean sense?). Its essential problem is that it is not compatible with the "outside world", its forced isolation is the essential thing which allows it to function. Once again, we see that it is a utopia which exists as an abstract idea.

### 3.10 Martin's philosophy

The episode of Candide's journey to Bordeaux in the company of the old philosopher Martin, as we have seen, provides a timely counterpoint to the optimistic philosophy of Pangloss. We have seen from the unusual competition which Candide stages in Chapter 19, to choose a companion for the journey, that he is seeking the man who is "le plus dégoûté de son état et le plus malheureux de la province" (65) Martin's philosophy therefore suits a man of this disposition, who had suffered being "robbed by his wife, beaten by his son, and whose daughter had run off with a Portuguese" and who had been condemned for religious views (Socinian) which he did not in fact subscribe to (66).

Some readers might be curious about this religion of Manicheism to which the character does subscribe. It has a long history (dating from around 242 AD), and suffered persecution from other religions. It was founded in Persia (Iran) by a man called Mani, who travelled widely in

the East to spread the religion, which was revealed to him by an angel. It became the official religion in Turkey in the 8th century but later died out.

I have already spoken of the way the religion conceives of the creation of the world as a terrible mistake, an accident. The next important aspect is that human souls are particles of light that have become prisoners of the Devil, and that at the end of time the particles of light will find their way to the Realm of Light. An interesting connection with French cultural history is the fact that St Augustine (of Hippo) (354–430), often referred to as one of “the fathers of the Catholic Church”, and a powerful influence on French religious thought, has been a “lay hearer” in the Manichean church, before his conversion to Christianity.

It is in this light that we understand Martin’s ironic comments on the devil, beginning with “Il se mêle si fort des affaires de ce monde . . . qu’il pourrait bien être dans mon corps, comme partout ailleurs” (67). We also have Candide’s response to Martin’s reaction to the ship sinking: “Il est vrai . . . qu’il y a quelque chose de diabolique dans cette affaire” (68), and the captain’s commentary on the fate of the innocent passengers: “Dieu a puni ce fripon, le diable a noyé les autres” (69) (cf. English: “the drink and the devil had done for the rest”).

# **Part VII**

## **Lecture 7**

# Chapter 4

## *Zadig*

### 4.1 Context of the Work

The work appeared as *Memnon* in 1747. Since it precedes the more important work *Candide* by several years, we can observe the primitive beginnings of some of the ideas expressed in the latter work. *Zadig*, however, also displays a different tone. It lacks primarily the utopian vision of *Candide*. Instead we find humanity inescapably subject to the vicissitudes of fate and human corruption, without a compensating “garden” to aspire to in which to shelter.

*Zadig* differs in another way from *Candide* in a way which shows the progression of Voltaire’s thought over these years. This is the absence of critique of the basic ideas of Leibniz which we have discussed in the lectures of *Candide*. Specifically, *Zadig* shows the influence of his reading of Leibniz’s *Theodicy* (*Essais de Théodicée*, or *Theodicy: Essays on the Goodness of God the Freedom of Man and the Origin of Evil*, 1710). This is the work in which Leibniz tries to reconcile the idea that God is good and omnipotent, despite the apparent truth that evil and suffering exist, by explaining that evil exists in order to bring about a greater good which we are not always able to perceive.

In the Preface to the current edition by Jacques Van den Heuvel, he notes how the in the story “tous les détails concourent strictement à l’édification de l’ensemble” (14). In other words, where in *Candide* chance

appears to mock the concept of a divine order, the final status of Zadig as the king of Babylon affirms it, since all his misfortunes up to that point have contributed to his gaining this position.

We are therefore dealing with Providence, with a beneficent God who ultimately looks after the just, even if we often do not realise it.

## 4.2 Plot Outline

**Moabdar** is the king of Babylon (a city 90 km south of present-day Baghdad, on the Euphrates river).

**Zadig** is young man, beautiful and educated and rich. He is naturally wise “il ne voulait point toujours avoir raison” (25). He lives faithfully according to the tenets of

**Zoroaster** (Zarathustra), the founder of the ancient Persian religion (7th century BC approx).<sup>1</sup>

Zadig is educated in the ancient science of the Chaldeans (26), who ruled Mesopotamia (Iraq) from Babylon in the 7th and 6th centuries BC, and who were advanced in the study of astrology, numerology and mathematics. (Chaldean is used in the story also in the sense of astrologer or soothsayer, or member of the priestly class.)

Zadig thinks he is about to be perfectly happy, as he is set to marry

**Sémire** A beautiful noble from a rich family. Zadig has a rival for her affections in

**Orcan** The evil jealous nephew of a minister (27). His goons try to carry off Sémire, wounding her, but Zadig defends her, receiving a wound near his eye. A famous doctor says he cannot be cured, because the

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<sup>1</sup>Zoroastrianism (as set down in the sacred book the *Avesta*) saw the world as “the scene of two opposed gods or spirits: Ahura Mazda, the wise sovereign, creator of the universe, embodying goodness; and his foil and opponent Ahriman, the power of evil”, representing light and darkness. “Men are created by God, but have freedom of choice, and at the end of their earthly existence are judged as regards their life after death” [New Caxton, 6045].

wound is to his left eye and not his right. The eye heals by itself, upon which he goes to find his fiancée in the country, and learns that she has married Orcan because she cannot stand the thought of living with a one-eyed man. Zadig decides, after recovering from his shock, that he will marry a common woman, since a noble one could be so capricious:

**Azora** is “la plus sage et la mieux née de la ville” (30). She is also attracted to handsome young men. Zadig, disturbed by her sanctimonious condemnation of a widow who is trying to change the course of a stream to get out of her vows to her dead husband, feigns his death and has a friend (Cador) trick her into trying to cut off his nose to cure him of an illness of the spleen (33–34), and divorces her.

**Cador** is Zadig’s handsome friend, who also turns up later in the affair of the griffon etc.

Zadig retires to the country to observe nature (35). Here occurs the episode of the queen’s missing dog and the king’s missing horse. After he is tried for having lied about not seeing the animals, and the whole court is talking about his perspicacity, his fine (400 gold ounces) is repaid to him minus legal expenses (398 ounces). He decides it is too dangerous to tell what one knows, and is later condemned to pay 500 ounces for not talking about a prisoner he saw escape.

There are many more anecdotes of this sort. In each set of stories Zadig turns to another potential source of happiness, only to uncover hidden dangers there. Thus we have had so far conjugal happiness and the contemplation of nature. Next we have philosophical debate (the dinners at his library house) where he learns how dangerous scholars (savants) are, when he attempts to compromise opinions over the existence of griffons (41), and only his friend Cador saves him from persecution at the hands of a Chaldean. At these dinners a bitter there is often one uninvited guest:

**Arimaze** An ugly scholar made bitter by lack of success, with the nickname “l’Envieux”. Jealous of Zadig’s social success and happiness.

Arimaze is the protagonist in the episode of the verses written on a tablet in honour of the king, which Zadig breaks in half and which Arimaze finds half of. After Zadig is condemned to death, he is shown that even composing poetry in praise of the king is dangerous. He is only to be saved by the parrot that takes the other half of the tablet to the king, at which point he is elevated in his (and the queen's) favour, until the next change of fortune.

His esteem in the court is demonstrated in Chapter 5 "Les Généreux" (49). Zadig wins the prize<sup>2</sup> because the king was impressed that he had defended his minister against his own criticism, when the rest of the court had supported the king. After this he becomes prime minister (or vizir), and we see the search for happiness in the good exercise of political power. There follow a series of cases for him to judge:

- The brothers who prove who loved their dead father best.
- The two wise men (mages) arguing over the education of the son of the rich girl.
- The sects arguing over with which foot to enter the temple of Mithra.
- The black and white sects arguing over which way to turn when praying.

His taste (he supports the theatre) and beauty make him a target for women. His slight neglect for Arimaze's (l'Envieux's) wife makes her his enemy also. We hear about an affair with an unnamed lady, during which he was preoccupied with thoughts of the queen

**Astarté** who has fallen in love with Zadig by dint of seeing him in council with the king every day, and he with her.

Instead of betraying the king as his friend Cador advises, Zadig attempts to hide his passion. L'Envieux has his wife send her garter, which was from

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<sup>2</sup>Against the judge who gave all his belongings to a man who lost his case with him because of a mistake, the man who gave up a girl to his friend and paid her dowry before dying, and the soldier who abandoned his mistress to save his mother, and agreed not to kill himself for her sake.

the same maker as the queen's, to the king, who decides to have the couple put to death. They are tipped off by a sympathetic mute dwarf, who paints a picture for the queen of the impending murders.

Zadig flees to Egypt after receiving a note from Astarté. As he leaves he contemplates the stars and thinks of the earth as "un petit atome de boue" (68). Then we have the episode of the "femme battue" and her Egyptian persecuter, whom Zadig is forced to kill. This woman turns out to be Missouf (la belle capricieuse), who is mistaken for Astarté and taken to the king Moabdar, who marries her (see 111). He is condemned and sold as a slave with his valet to

**Sétoc** (a merchant). He goes with him to the Syrian desert (l'Arabie déserte) and makes himself famous with his advice to his master in the case of the 500 ounces of silver owed by the Jew and the stone which "gives witness" against him (77).

Zadig's wisdom also ends the tradition of the self-immolation of widows (he convinces the chiefs to make widows sit for an hour with a young man before burning themselves, 82). They travel to Balzora where we see the dispute of the men of different nationalities and Zadig's method of bringing them to agree on the importance of the creator above all (89), as he had already with his master Sétoc who had worshiped the stars and planets (candle scene, 79). (See Appendice here.)

Zadig's fortune runs into trouble again with the star priests (prêtres des étoiles) who have lost their burned widows jewels. He is slandered for impiety (accusing him of thinking the stars do not set in the sea, 90). The widow he convinced not to burn herself, Almona, seduces four priests in order to get Zadig off, exposing them to the judges for their hypocrisy in the process (94). (Almona marries Sétoc.)

Zadig heads for Syria and meets a series of characters:

**Le Brigand** Arbogad (95). From him he hears news that the king of Babylon, Moabdar, is dead. Zadig wonders what has happened to Astarté.

**Le Pêcheur** a former cream-cheese maker, about to commit suicide because he has lost his (unfaithful) wife and (looted) home. We learn

that Zadig and Astarté were once his customers, and their disappearance, and the jealous minister's nephew Orcan, married to Sémire (and who takes in the cheesemaker's wife) have ruined him. Zadig gives him money and tells him to wait for him at his friend Cador's house.

**Ogul** An obese lord, among whose servants (looking for the basilisk or basilic, 106) Zadig finally finds Astarté. Zadig cures him by tricking him into exercising. In return Astarté is freed and goes back to Babylon.

At this point Astarté tells her story. She has been hidden by Cador in a statue in the temple of Orosmade (Ormudz) (110). Meanwhile "la belle capricieuse" Missouf's influence over the king is ruining the kingdom. Astarté cries out an ominous message while the king is praying to the statue, and he goes mad (112) and the city rises up in civil war. The Prince of Hyrcania (next to the Caspian Sea, one of the "good lands" created by Arura-Mazda [livius.org]) invades and takes Astarté and Missouf prisoner (he later dies in battle). Astarté escapes and is captured by le Brigand, Arbogad (115), and sold to Lord Ogul.

Astarté returns to a victorious Babylon. The people decide to select "le plus vaillant et le plus sage" (118) for her king, by means of jousting followed by riddles (énigmes, 119). Zadig joins the competition, wearing white armour gifted by Astarté (120). He battles against Prince Otame in blue and gold (122), and wins. In the night his armour is stolen by a jealous knight, Itobad, who was humiliated in the jousting, so he can claim the prize. Zadig takes his (green) armour and flees along the river, swapping it for common robes.

He meets and promises to accompany

**L'Hermite** who shows him "le livre des destinées" which Zadig cannot read, and robs (a gold basin) from a

**Generous noble** to give to a

**Miser** (Avare, 128). They then come to the house of the

**Philosopher** The miser expounds to him and to Zadig an optimistic philosophy like Pangloss's, but without the irony: "les hommes avait tort de juger d'un tout dont il n'apercevaient que la plus petite partie" (131). In other words, bad things may have good purposes. After spending the night, the hermit sets fire to the philosopher's house. They then stay with a

**Widow** (Veuve, 133) and her nephew, whom the hermit drowns in the river. The hermit is then revealed to be

**The angel Jesrad** who has seen the destinies of these people, and improved their lot by the hermit's terrible acts.

Zadig argues with the angel, who seems to espouse a Leibnizian philosophy concerning multiple worlds etc (135) exhorting him "cesse de disputer contre ce qu'il faut adorer" (137). Zadig is still arguing "*Mais*" when he flies off.

Zadig solves the riddles (time, life). Then he challenges Itobad to fight without his armour, and wins. Zadig becomes king, and takes Arbogad into his army, makes Sétoc (and his new wife Almona) head of commerce. Orcan is punished and the fisherman compensated, Sémire (Zadig's fiancée) and Azora (his wife) regretful. L'Envieux dies and all is well.

### 4.3 Appendice

As a postscript (to insert after Chapter 12) we have the appendix with the story of Zadig's journey to Serendip where he helps the king Nabussan first find an honest treasurer (by means of the dancing test) then a wife who loves him (by tempting all his others with rich hunchbacks, bonzes (Buddhist monks), and pages), and only Falide resisted.

# **Part VIII**

## **Lecture 8**

## 4.4 Detective Story

Zadig has many elements of what we would nowadays call a “detective story”. L.J. Hurst cites it as one of the first examples of the genre:

There are stories of natural cunning going back to the Bible, and there are famous early examples like Voltaire’s *Zadig* featuring the deductions relating to descriptions of a missing horse and dog which Umberto Eco pastiches in *The Name Of The Rose*. [Hurst]

It’s interesting to compare the description in *The Name Of The Rose* to see just how far concepts of natural cunning have developed. Zadig demonstrates merely his intelligence and observational powers (he notices the traces of the teats of the recently-whelped bitch in the sand, and the traces of the long ears, the traces of gold and silver on the touchstone etc, 38–39). Umberto Eco’s Brother William of Baskerville echos many of the same details (the height of the horse, for one) but is even more audacious, guessing the horse’s name, relying on the vanity of the abbot: “even the great Buridan, who is about to become rector in Paris, when he wants to use a horse in one of his logical examples, always calls it Brunellus” [?, 24].

Similar remarks were made by John Drinkwater about *Zadig*: (*The Outline of Literature*) “Zadig was a Sherlock Holmes born before his time” [Ghosh], and Carolyn Wells comments on the similarity of the missing dog episode with an earlier story by de Mailly called “Voyage et Aventure des Trois Princes de Sarendip” [Wells]. Wells also cites an earlier Arabic story called “The Sultan and his Three Sons” (see 5, page 74). So the story is not new, but Voltaire set it in a context which seems to have been the genesis for the modern detective novel, and Eco’s novel pays tribute to it for this.

Zadig, like the Sherlock Holmes who came after him, needs to come to definite conclusions about what he investigates. There is a process of *demystification* involved, which we will see is reflected in Voltaire’s other thematic concerns in the story.

## 4.5 Enlightenment Values

*Zadig* can be read as an introduction to the values of the Enlightenment which Voltaire is trying to propound, in a much more straightforward fashion than *Candide*. Its terms of reference, if you like, are narrower, and there is less of the aspect of carnival which characterizes *Candide*. Therefore we get a firm contrast of the old and the new (superstition versus reason), the new ways of thinking finally proving a better way to get to the bottom of the problem of evil, but not necessarily a way of solving it.

Reason is Zadig's weapon in the middle of the absurd beliefs and capricious acts of the people who surround him. The method of arriving at answer is seen as important in giving credence to the answer. It is not enough to accept the revelation of an answer—we must know how the answer was arrived at. This is particularly evident in the episode of the lost bitch and horse, which I will discuss later.

Realism is also important. At the same time as the 18th century was accepting scientific explanations for previously mysterious phenomena, people were becoming impatient with supernatural explanations. The supernatural was less and less acceptable in literature too. Thus we have Zadig's lesson to the obese Ogul "apprenez qu'il n'y a point de basilic dans la nature" (117), only after he has been cured in the belief that it resided in his leather ball. An oriental tale without any mythical animals! *Zadig* is really a different kind of story.

## 4.6 Satire

In order to support the project of tearing down "old" values, Voltaire has in *Zadig* just as much as in *Candide* chosen a good selection of objects of his satire. It is important to keep in mind that Voltaire is not at all interested in critiquing ancient Babylonian society—his choice of décor is a method of reinforcing his project of relativism, forcing the reader to consider other ways and cultures as having potentially equal value to the French. The footnotes to the present edition make clear the allusions to contemporary French subjects.

Thus we have, for example:

**Doctors** who don't cure anything—Cador's cure for his pain in the spleen (nose of man who died the day before pressed against it), Voltaire makes reference to the (real) sachets against apoplexie of Dr Arnoult (33).

**Pseudo-scientists** For example, the allusion to projects of science when Zadig is contemplating nature.

Il n'imaginait point de faire de la soie avec des toiles d'araignée, ni de la porcelaine avec des bouteilles cassées; mais il étudia surtout les propriétés des animaux et des plantes, et il acquit bientôt une sagacité qui lui découvrirait mille différences où les autres hommes ne voient rien que d'uniforme. (35)

Such ideas were also satirized by Jonathan Swift in his famous *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), in the episode on Balnibarbi (see Pearson, 321 note 131). Swift there also details a plan to make silk from spiderwebs, for example [Swift, 192–93], as well as many other dubious scientific “projects” (extracting sunbeams from cucumbers, a machine to produce literature on any subject, etc., as well as medical treatments too grotesque to describe). Voltaire in his work is lampooning those speculative aspects of science which lack practical application, and seem only to support the egos of the scientist. He rails against novelty for its own sake at the same time as the corruption brought about by holding onto old beliefs.

**Lawyers** who seem to exist only to strip people of their money. Already we have, in the episode of the reimbursed fine for having supposedly stolen the dog and the horse:

Le greffier [clerk of the court], les huissiers [bailiffs], les procureurs [prosecutors] vinrent chez lui en grand appareil

lui rapporter ses quatre cent onces; ils en retinrent seulement trois cent quatre-vingt-dix-huit pour les frais de justice, et leurs valets demandèrent des honoraires. (40)

**Priests** and similar professions, perpetually arguing and characterized by incompetence. As we have seen, they are seen as opposed to progress. In particular Voltaire sets them up in opposition to his own concept of a rational religion (one not revealed through revelations and miracles).

We see for example the description of the archmage Yébor, who wants to have Zadig impaled for his compromise over the griffons: “le plus sot des Chaldéens, et partant [hence] le plus fanatique” (42). We also see again their opposition to beneficial progress in wake of Zadig’s success in eliminating the custom of the widow’s pyre—they sentence Zadig to death because he has caused them to lose the material benefits that they accrued: “les pierreries et les ornements des jeunes veuves . . . leur appartenait de droit” (89–90).

**Wars** and conflicts are portrayed as caused by the whimsy of rulers. In *Candide* we had the examples of the war between the Bulgarians and the Abares, the Spanish and the Jesuits, the pirates and everyone else. In *Zadig* this is made even more explicit with the overrunning of Babylon by one of its vassal states as a result of the leadership being effectively turned over to the apparently mad new wife of the king, Missouf, and the king Moabdar’s own madness resulting from the voice of Astarté from the statue. The king’s whimsy in taking her in, and the new queen’s whimsy, which ultimately leads to the destructive civil war, is shown in Astarté’s description:

Elle voulut obliger le chef des mages [Magus], qui était vieux et goutteux [gout-ridden], de danser devant elle; et sur le refus du mage, elle le persécuta violemment. Elle ordonna à son grand-écuyer [equerry, riding-master] de lui faire une tourte de confitures. Le grand-écuyer eut beau lui représenter qu’il n’était point pâtissier, il fallut qu’il fit la

tourte; et on le chassa [dismissed], parce qu'elle était trop brûlée. Elle donna la charge de grand-écuyer à son nain, et la place de chancelier à un page. C'est ainsi qu'elle gouverna Babylone. (111-12)

**Heroism** , and any attempt thereat, is seriously mocked and undermined in both *Candide* and *Zadig*. But whereas in *Candide* we have eventually the studious avoidance of heroism, replaced by methodical bribery and relentless punishment for no glory (buying back Cunégonde, the auto-da-fé, etc.), in *Zadig* the protagonist has many opportunities to distinguish himself in battle, all of which lead to an ignominious result. The episode of the beaten woman, for example, ends in Missouf wishing for Zadig's death (71), and the lady being carried off by Moabdar's men. The manner in which he is forced to kill Clétofis lacks entirely in dignity, since the man is already defeated, Zadig stands over him with the point of his sword on his chest, but the man continues to attack. (One is reminded of the scene in the Monty Python film with the knight deprived of limbs insisting "It's only a scratch!") In his great victory over Otame in the competition to be king of Babylon, Zadig is allowed just enough glory to add to the bathos of being deprived of the prize by the pompous green knight Itobad (123–24).

**Aristocracy** The episode of the jousting with Itobad the green knight also emphasizes Voltaire's mockery of the aristocracy. Itobad has no claim to the prize other than being "un seigneur très riche . . . fort vain" since he is also "peu courageux, très maladroit, et sans esprit" (121). His comical reiterations of the expression "un homme comme moi" drive the point home: "Un homme comme moi doit régner", "Quelle aventure pour un homme comme moi!" "il alla fièrement au grand mage déclarer qu'un homme comme lui était vainqueur" (121–24).

The story of Sémire provides an early hint of this pompous pride of the nobility in her rejection of Zadig for the sake of her would-be kidnapper Orcan at the beginning of the tale. We are reminded also of the 71 quartiers of the baron's sister in *Candide* (Candide's mother).

**Scholars** (Les Savants) In *Zadig* Voltaire also reserves a portion of his satirical tongue for scholars. After the affair of the griffons Zadig has the wittiness of scholars banished from the house: “il avait su bannir l’empressement [eagerness] de montrer l’esprit, qui est la plus sûre manière de n’en point avoir et de gâter la société la plus brillante” (43).

## 4.7 Happiness

A major theme of the two stories we have looked at is how to be happy. In both works Voltaire approaches this question from the standpoint of his idea of “rational religion”, which I have already mentioned. This means a religious sensibility which is not revealed, which arises from one’s own contemplation of the world and one’s own reason. It implies that there is something in common between all religions. This is spelled out for use in *Zadig*’s contemplation of nature, which is described in religious terms:

Rien n’est plus heureux, disait-il, qu’un philosophe qui lit dans ce grand livre que Dieu a mis sous nos yeux. Les vérités qu’il découvre sont à lui. (35)

Emphasized by the description of his dinner-parties where it is evident that “en tout il préférerait l’être au paraître” (43).

In other words, he wishes to learn from reality rather than the less-than-reliable words written down or told by somebody else.

As far as the concept of the commonality of religions is concerned, it is significant that this is something that *Zadig* is able to make the commoners of various nationalities see the truth of this (as opposed to their priests, for example). This happens in Chapter 12, when the Egyptian, the Chinese, the Greek, the Celt and others are debating

# **Part IX**

## **Lecture 9**

Voltaire's preoccupation with the theme of how to be happy is evident in *Zadig* as well as *Candide*. Zadig's experience with the horse and dog and the escaped prisoner, coming after his determination to live a quiet life, causes him to exclaim:

... qu'on est à plaindre quand on se promène dans un bois où la chienne de la reine et le cheval du roi ont passé! qu'il est dangereux de se mettre à la fenêtre! et qu'il est difficile d'être heureux dans cette vie! (40)

We are provided with philosophical explanations why this has to be so, such as the saying of Zoroaster when describing the scheming of L'Envieux: "L'occasion de faire du mal se trouve cent fois par jour, et celle de faire du bien une fois dans l'année" (44).

Thus it is easier to make others unhappy than it is to make oneself happy. Hence the difficulty of Zadig's search for a solution to the problem of happiness. Zadig's considerable wit and intelligence are needed to solve the most banal problems during his time as Prime Minister, for example: the paternity of the wealthy girl's child (55), but a few foolish acts by a wilful queen are enough to bring down the whole kingdom of Babylon (112).

## 4.8 Human nature

The many reverses in Zadig's fortunes throughout the tale reinforce Voltaire's commentary on human nature, in a way which may also inform our reading of *Candide*. A common thread running through the story is the wise Zadig working hard for the benefit of the common good (thereby improving the lot of the majority, and often even of the evil individuals in the story) and then coming to grief as a result of the greed or jealousy of one or two individuals. A good example of this is the indolent lord Ogul, whom Zadig tricks into exercising for his health (117), only to be the target of an attempt at poisoning by the man's doctor (he is saved by being called away by Astarté).

The multiple weaknesses of human nature are detailed throughout the work (the vanity of Sémire, refusing a one-eyed husband; the lust and sanctimoniousness of Azora; the capriciousness of Missouf). All these failings serve to dismantle the beginnings of the ideal functioning of society which Zadig's good works, such as his penetrating judgments in the chapters 6 and 7 ("Le Ministre" and "Les Disputes et les Audiences") are almost, but not quite, bringing about. For example, his judgements cause the people to doubt superstition: "tous les citoyens célébraient sa justice ... on ne croyait que ce qui lui semblait croyable" (56).

If we remember from our reading of *Candide*, a similar dynamic is at work in the search for a utopia, for an ideal society. (All of these societies are already set up, however, and it remains for Candide merely to discover them.) It is possible to evaluate the impression the reader has of each of these utopias—the castle, Paraguay, Eldorado, the garden) in the light of Zadig's persistent failure when confronted with imperfect human nature. In other words, why do these utopias not measure up? Why is one preferable over the others?

**The Castle of Thunder-ten-tronckh** Ruined by the human tendency to warlike conflict, to the taking of pleasure in the misfortunes of others, as illustrated by Pangloss's commentary on the supposed fate of Cunégonde the battles between the Bulgarians and the Abares:

elle a été éventrée ... ils ont cassé la tête à monsieur le baron ... madame la baronne a été coupée en morceaux ... mais nous avons été bien vengés, car les Abares en ont fait autant dans une baronnie voisine qui appartenait à un seigneur bulgare. (17)

It is apparent to the reader that there is no particular benefit in the "revenge" Pangloss mentions, but even his philosophical mind, with its notorious tendency towards reverse logic (think of the nose which was made to hold glasses), derives this joyless satisfaction in some unknown people being treated as badly as the baron's family.

Also, if we recall the Garden of Eden analogy at the start of Chap-

ter 2 (“chassé du paradis terrestre”, 12), we realize that Candide’s weakness in falling for Cunégonde is the spoiling factor as far as his personal enjoyment of that paradise is concerned. We see the analogy in the honest feelings which betray Zadign and Astarté in Chapter 8 of *Candide*, “La Jalousie”.

**Paraguay of the Jesuits** Cacambo represents pragmatism in *Candide*, and his paradise is that of the Jesuits in Paraguay:

C’est une chose admirable que ce gouvernement. Le royaume a déjà plus de trois cent lieues de diamètre; il est divisé en trente provinces. Los Padres y ont tout, et les peuples rien; c’est le chef-d’œuvre de la raison et de la justice.  
(44)

Voltaire’s tone is deeply ironic here and his commentary in the hypocrisy of the Padres is clear. He uses the opportunity to make the point that the vanity of the few elect can ruin the opportunity for paradise in the new world. The young Baron is parodied for his good looks (“j’étais fort joli . . . aussi le révérend Croust . . . prit pour moi la plus tendre amitié”, 47) and the leaders of Paraguay favour him for his foreignness, because “ils se croient plus maîtres” (47) of these than their own countrymen. They are therefore vain and domineering (and homosexual to boot, an accusation they would have decried).

**Eldorado** As we have already seen Eldorado is the paradise that is unreachable for most, and *Zadig* doesn’t really attempt to describe such a place. On the other hand we have *Zadig*’s dream of sleeping on the bed of roses (60). In this analogy we wonder what is the snake in the paradise of Eldorado? And we immediately find *Candide*’s love for Cunégonde, with the snake recalling the ejection from the Garden of Eden. His passions and ambition (taking out the gold etc.) are symbolic of the passions and ambitions that prevent people creating similar paradises.

In *Zadig* the picture is more ambivalent: now Missouf and her lover’s passion cause evil to come of *Zadig*’s good actions, and her ambition

ruins Babylon; now Almona the widow saved by Zadig uses similar tricks to free Zadig from the clutches of the Priests of the Stars (in Balzora in the tribe of Sétoc the merchant) in Chapter 13. But the respite is only temporary and the overall effect is of the precariousness of social progress, represented by the wise minister, when confronted with human nature.

**The Turkish Garden** This is the workable beginnings of a compromise paradise that is missing from *Zadig*, where Zadig's status means he constantly attracts more dramas (cf. the two chapters, "La Danse" and "Les Yeux bleus" in the "Appendice" where he is called upon to go to Serendib to do some business for Sétoc, but stays to advise the king Nabussan). The later work *Candide* abandons all defense of the sort of heroism represented by Zadig's actions. Candide inherits no kingdom through his actions, he only gets back his Cunégonde, who has since grown ugly, and this is one of the key reasons for his limited satisfaction at the end of *Candide*. Voltaire seems to be admitting the futility of seeking after this kind of glory in his parody of the six sovereigns deprived of their kingdoms. In the garden the friends begin a new social experiment, profiting only from their own labours, making the best of what they have.

# **Part X**

## **Lecture 10**

## 4.9 Confrontation with Jesrad

Zadig's meeting with the angel Jesrad raises interesting questions about Voltaire's attitude to the theme of destiny or Providence in the tale. We have already seen how the Angel gives what amounts to a Leibnizian analysis of Zadig's adventures so far. What we have to ask ourselves is how seriously the reader is expected to take this depiction of events.

The first thing we need to realize is the way this message is delivered. As a revelation it goes against the grain of what we know of Voltaire's philosophy, and of the message of *Zadig* and *Candide*. In both works we have ideals and theories which are tested against reality or experience. Proofs are not searched for in revelations, in oracles or in miracles, nevertheless, we have this appearance of an angel, who proves by the most extreme demonstrations that even the most deliberately evil actions have a good purpose. But how do we know, for example, that the kind widow's nephew is really fated to kill his aunt in a year, and Zadig in two years, as the hermit/angel says (134)?

Perhaps it is the weight of Zadig's experiences (including his deceptions at the hands of the other characters) which lead him to refuse to accept at face value the "revelations" of Jesrad. He has "un doute" which he calls upon the angel to explain (why not make the boy virtuous—because he would have been killed along with his wife and child). He expresses himself to Jesrad in outrageous tones, considering he is addressing someone he himself has called "Ô envoyé du ciel! ô ange divin!" (134), exclaiming "Mais quoi! [dit Zadig,] il est donc nécessaire qu'il y ait des crimes et des malheurs, et les malheurs tombent sur les gens de bien" (135).

Although I said that revelations are not sought in the works we have studied, *Candide* and his companions do seek for advice, and at the end they too receive what appear to be revelations.

The dervish's pronouncement comparing the relationship of man and God with the mice on the sovereign's ship (106) appears as a revelation, and the difficulty of questioning this fleeting "oracle" further (he slams the door in their faces) resembles Zadig's abortive attempts to interrogate Jesrad on good and evil.

«... Souviens-toi de ce pêcheur qui se croyait le plus malheureux de tous les hommes. Orosmade<sup>3</sup> t'a envoyé pour changer sa destinée. Faible mortel, cesse de disputer contre ce qu'il faut adorer. — Mais, dit Zadig. . . » Comme il disait *Mais*, l'ange prenait déjà son vol vers la dixième sphère. (137)

There are similarities in the message of the dervish and the angel. The dervish's advice: "te taire" (106) is foreshadowed in *Zadig* by the angel's "cesse de disputer" in this quote. So we can find the germs of the idea of the futility of abstract reasoning that is more fully developed in *Candide*. The key difference is the project for improvement, for a workable better way, for an escape route even, represented by the "bon musulman" (107) of *Candide*, where in *Zadig* we have the continuing see-saws of destiny.

In the light of the later work, we can also analyse Voltaire's attitude towards the character of Zadig, and the wisdom of this character's reaction to the meeting with the angel. "Zadig [...] adora la Providence, et se soumit" (137). It is not at all clear that he is best advised to do so. Perhaps he is only making the best of a bad situation, as *Candide*'s companions on the shores of the Propontus. Perhaps Voltaire at the time of writing is not yet convinced that a compromise ideal is possible.

Certainly *Zadig* is hampered throughout the tale by his tendency to equate virtue and happiness. The great lesson for him, presented in dozens of different guises, is that, as they say, "no good deed goes unpunished", and that the unscrupulous generally have a much easier time of it. We have seen this in the attempt at asceticism, the contemplation of nature in Chapter 3, which leads to his trial for stealing the dog and the horse. We also have the example of his defence of Missouf from her abusive lover, which not only doesn't bring him happiness from her gratitude, but deprives her of the same.

The ultimate proof of this lesson, however is the revelation of the brigand's moral vacuum which brings him unfettered happiness, as well as the title of treasurer to the Satrap of Syria (set in counterpoint to the virtuous fisherman, who has been tricked out of his wife and had his house pillaged.

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<sup>3</sup>Ormuzd, principle of good, source of light in Zoroastrianism

Zadig seems to be, in the case of the brigand, as naïve as Candide is in the case of Paquette and Frère Giroflée, and in Chapter 19 decides to rehabilitate him and gives him a position in his army (142). (Candide learns his mistake, Zadig doesn't.)

## 4.10 Parody of love story

Roger Pearson has pointed out that Voltaire was not afraid to turn his stories into an "absurd Punch and Judy world with its only too visible puppeteer", pointing out that the author seems to turn up as a character in his works. He cites as examples the wise old man in El Dorado in *Candide*, as well as the old man with the orchard and the dervish. By revealing himself in this way he is puncturing the verisimilitude of the genres of literature that Voltaire parodies: the love story, or "chivalric romance" is one example. Pearson specifically points out: "The Voltairean tale is the more real for being unreal" (pearson, xxxvii).

This parody of the love story is hinted at in the unsatisfactory ending in *Zadig*, then more extremely in the ugliness of Cunégonde in *Candide*. Zadig's chance for a happy-ever-after ending is spoiled by the addition of the two chapters in the "Appendice", one of which has as its theme the deflation of the romantic expectations. Instead of detailing the clichéd search for an ideal mate for a bachelor king, the chapter "Les Yeux bleus" (149) wishes to find one for a king who already has a hundred wives (the twist, of course, is that Zadig finds one who really loves him among the 100). Already, of course, Zadig himself has seen his expectations dashed by the non-performance of his idealistic love interests at the start of the novel (Azora and Sémire) and his absence from Baghdad at the end spoils the one he fights for in the tournament and for half the novel.

Similarly, in *Candide*, the classic finding-and-losing-again of the lovers Candide and Cunégonde is made grotesque by the ever-increasing burden of misfortunes that have been heaped upon the (normally idealized) object of the protagonist's affections. Candide's relief at first rediscovering his love alive—he exclaims happily "On ne vous a donc pas violée? On ne vous a

point fendu le ventre . . .” (25)—is cruelly reversed when he hears of her suffering in all its detail. And even the fact of Cunégonde’s trials making her ugly is deprived of even the chance for accompanying pathos because of her lack of awareness of it (103). The ideal of the final romantic climax is made ridiculous by Candide, who on seeing her, “recula trois pas saisi d’horreur, et avança ensuite par bon procédé” (103).

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

It is important when examining Voltaire's work, to keep in mind that his fiction predates almost all the novels with which we as modern readers are familiar. There is no concern with psychological coherence in the work—the characters merely illustrate a particular human characteristic. As the notes to the present edition indicate, Zadig represents Justice—he seeks for happiness through virtue. And Candide is explicitly explained as an uncomplicated mind “l'esprit le plus simple” (9), thus even less inclined to “juge[r] de tout sans rien connaître” (134) which is the fault which the angel claims Zadig to be most free of. Indeed Candide fundamentally judges no one, thus gaining by his own experiences the garden paradise of his friends.

# Appendix

## **“The Sultan and his Three Sons”**

There is an Arabic story, called ”The Sultan and his Three Sons.” From this we quote two illuminative passages which employ the principle of deductive analysis.

And they stinted not faring till the middle way, when behold they came upon a mead abounding in herbage and in rain-water lying sheeted. So they sat them down to rest and to eat of their victual, when one of the brothers, casting his eye upon the herbage, cried, “Verily a camel hath lately passed this way laden half with Halwa-sweetmeats and half with Hamiz-pickles.” “True,” cried the second, “and he was blind of an eye.” Hardly, however, had they ended their words when lo! the owner of the camel came upon them (for he had overheard their speech and had said to himself, “By Allah, these three fellows have driven off my property, inasmuch as they have described the burden and eke the beast as one-eyed”) and cried out, “Ye three have carried away my camel!” “By Allah we have not seen him,” quoth the Princes, “much less have we touched him;” but quoth the man, “By the Almighty, who could have taken him except you? and if you will not deliver him to me, off with us, I and you three, to the Sultan.” They replied, “By all manner of means; let us wend to the sovereign.” So the four hied forth, the three princes and the Cameleer, and ceased not faring till they reached the capital of the King.

Presently, asked the Sultan, “What say ye to the claims of this man and the camel belonging to him?” Hereto the Princes made answer, “By Allah, O King of the Age, we have not seen the camel much less have we stolen him.” Thereupon the Cameleer exclaimed, “O my lord, I heard yonder one say that the beast was blind of an eye; and the second said that half his load was of sour stuff. They replied, “true, we spake these words;” and the Sultan cried to them, ”Ye have purloined the beast, by this proof.” They rejoined, “No, by Allah, O my Lord. We sat us

in such a place for repose and refreshment and we remarked that some of the pasture had been grazed down, so we said: This is the grazing of a camel; and he must have been blind of one eye as the grass was eaten only on one side. But as for our saying that the load was half Halwa-sweetmeats and half Hamiz-pickles, we saw on the place where the camel had knelt the flies gathering in great numbers while on the other were none; so the case was clear to us (as flies settle on naught save the sugared) that one of the panniers must have contained sweets and the other sour." hearing this the Sultan said to the Cameleer, "O man, fare thee forth and look after they camel; for these signs and tokens prove not the theft of these men, but only the power of their intellect and their penetration."

Later Voltaire used this method for his "Zadig," Poe for his "Dupin," and Gaboriau for his "M. Lecoq;" while later still it reappeared as the basis of the "Sherlock Holmes" stories. [Wells, Chapter 3]

## **Some of Voltaire's Works**

1734 *Traité de métaphysique*

1736 *Mondain*

1739 *Micromégas*

1738–41 *Discours en vers sur l'homme*

1746 *Le Monde comme il va*

1747 *Zadig*

1759 *LEsprit de Voltaire*

1759-60 *Mémoires de Voltaire, écrits par lui-même.*

1764 *Dictionnaire philosophique*

## Themes

### Pangloss's reasoning

Pangloss explains in relation to his syphilis that without the ravages of this disease, brought from America to Europe by the early explorers, they would have “ni le chocolat ni la cochenille” (18).

Disputing with Jacques on whether “tout était on ne peut mieux”, Pangloss responds to the example of bankrupts and their creditors, that “les malheurs particuliers font le bien général, de sorte que plus il y a de malheurs particuliers, et plus tout est bien” (19).

His reasoning on the causes of the earthquake demonstrate well his devotion to the abstract at the expense of the concrete and immediate. Candide, wounded from falling stones, is crying out for water and oil, but Pangloss comically goes on insisting on the truth of his theory that there is a trail of sulphur underground linking Lima and Lisbon, until Candide passes out.

Pangloss's reverse logic is most bluntly demonstrated in his discourse to the survivors of the earthquake: “Car, s'il y a un volcan à Lisbonne, il ne pouvait pas être ailleurs. Car il est impossible que les choses ne soient pas où elles sont. Car tout est bien.” (22)

### Virtue

The demise of the Anabaptist Jacques is a poignant demonstration of the way kindness is shown to be repayed in *Candide*. Trying to do his bit to save his ship, a sailor knocks him down, falling into the water himself. Jacques helps him back into the boat, falling in in his turn, and the sailor lets him drown. Pangloss proves his devotion to philosophy by rationalizing his demise on the spot: “en [...] prouvant que la rade de Lisbonne avait été formée exprès pour que cet anabaptiste s'y noyât.

## Religion

The sailor declares to Pangloss, in the face of his objections to his behaviour after the earthquake: “j’ai marché quatre fois sur le crucifix dans quatre voyages au Japon; tu a bien trouvé ton homme avec ta raison universelle” (21). Voltaire modifies the story that the Japanese would make their countrymen working for the Dutch tread on the cross.

The question of free will and original sin is brought up in a truncated fashion after the earthquake when an inquisitor questions Pangloss on his beliefs. According to Pangloss, the Fall and the curse which it brought are part of the best of all possible worlds, and (he almost gets out) it was necessary for men to be free so this would come about.

Judaism is referred to in the case of the Portuguese men who removed the lard from a chicken they were eating according to Jewish prohibition, and who are therefore tried in the auto-da-fe.

# **Course Materials**

# FREN313

## Voltaire Essay Questions

1. Gustave Lanson said of Voltaire's writing: "L'art mondain de donner des ridicules est mis au service de la philosophie." <sup>1</sup> Discuss the use of humour in one of the works of Voltaire studied in the course. How can one justify Lanson's statement in relation to this work?
2. René Pomeau wrote: "Au plus fort des désastres, l'univers de *Candide* fournit toujours la planche de salut. On ne meurt point dans ce monde-là." <sup>2</sup> Discuss this statement with reference to specific events in *Candide*.
3. According to Jean Starobinski, "Les variations sur le thème utopique, Voltaire les a réservées au royaume d'Eldorado, laissant peut-être entendre que la meilleure des organisations politiques n'est pensable que comme l'attribut d'un lieu qui n'existe pas." <sup>3</sup> Discuss this statement in the light of relevant passages from *Candide*.

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<sup>1</sup>[Chartier, 227, (cited in)]

<sup>2</sup>[Chartier, 228 (cited in)]

<sup>3</sup>[Chartier, 231 (cited in)]

# Voltaire Seminar Topics

Choose from one of the following passages, and prepare a speech presenting the passage to the class. Ensure that you cover at least the following aspects of the passage:

- the context in which the passage appears
- the characters which appear in the passage, and their relationship with one another in the work
- major themes which are suggested in the text of the passage
- important narrative techniques which Voltaire uses in the passage

## Extract 1

Candide, plus ému encore de compassion que d'horreur, donna à cet épouvantable gueux les deux florins qu'il avait reçus de son honnête anabaptiste Jacques. Le fantôme le regarda fixement, versa des larmes, et sauta à son cou. Candide, effrayé, recule. «Hélas! dit le misérable à l'autre misérable, ne reconnaissez-vous plus votre cher Pangloss? — Qu'entends-je? Vous, mon cher maître! vous, dans cet état horrible! Quel malheur vous est-il donc arrivé? Pourquoi n'êtes-vous plus dans le plus beau des châteaux? Qu'est devenue Mlle Cunégonde, la perle des filles, le chef-d'œuvre de la nature? Je n'en peux plus», dit Pangloss. Aussitôt Candide le mena dans l'étable de l'anabaptiste,

où il lui fit manger un peu de pain ; et quand Pangloss fut refait : «Eh bien ! lui dit-il, Cunégonde ? — Elle est morte», reprit l'autre. (*Candide*, 16–17)

## Extract 2

«Sainte Vierge ! s'écria-t-elle, qu'allons-nous devenir ? Un homme tué chez moi ! si la justice vient, nous sommes perdus. — Si Pangloss n'avait pas été pendu, dit Candide, il nous donnerait un bon conseil dans cette extrémité, car c'était un grand philosophe. — À son défaut consultons la vieille.» Elle était fort prudente, et commençait à dire son avis, quand une autre petite porte s'ouvrit. Il était une heure après minuit, c'était le commencement du dimanche. Ce jour appartenait à monseigneur l'inquisiteur. Il entre et voit le fessé Candide, l'épée à la main, un mort étendu par terre, Cunégonde effarée, et la vieille donnant des conseils. (30)

## Extract 3

Les voyageurs ne manquèrent pas de ramasser l'or, les rubis, et les émeraudes. «Où sommes-nous ? s'écria Candide. Il faut que les enfants des rois de ce pays soient bien élevés, puisqu'on leur apprend à mépriser l'or et les pierreries.» Cacambo était aussi surpris que Candide. Ils approchèrent enfin de la première maison du village ; elle était bâtie comme un palais d'Europe. Une foule de monde s'empressait à la porte, et encore plus dans le logis. Une musique très agréable se faisait entendre, et une odeur délicieuse de cuisine se faisait sentir. Cacambo s'approcha de la porte, et entendit qu'on parlait péruvien ; c'était sa langue maternelle : car tout le monde sait que Cacambo était né au Tucuman, dans un village où l'on ne connaissait que cette langue. «Je vous servirai d'interprète, dit-il à Candide ; entrons,

c'est ici un cabaret.» (54–55)

## Extract 4

Alors se tournant vers lui, il lui dit : «Monsieur, vous pensez, sans doute, que tout est au mieux dans le monde physique et dans le moral, et que rien ne pouvait être autrement ? — Moi, monsieur, lui répondit le savant, je ne pense rien de tout cela : je trouve que tout va de travers chez nous ; que personne ne sait ni quel est son rang, ni quelle est sa charge, ni ce qu'il fait, ni ce qu'il doit faire, et qu'excepté le souper, qui est assez gai et où il paraît assez d'union, tout le reste du temps se passe en querelles impertinentes : jansénistes contre molinistes, gens du parlement contre gens d'église, gens de lettres contre gens de lettres, courtisans contre courtisans, financiers contre le peuple, femmes contre maris, parents contre parents ; c'est une guerre éternelle.»

Candide lui répliqua : «J'ai vu pis. Mais un sage, qui depuis a eu le malheur d'être pendu, m'apprit que tout cela est à merveille ; ce sont des ombres à un beau tableau. — Votre pendu se moquait du monde, dit Martin ; vos ombres sont des taches horribles. — Ce sont les hommes qui font les taches, dit Candide, et ils ne peuvent pas s'en dispenser. — Ce n'est donc pas leur faute», dit Martin. (77)

## Extract 5

Il tomba dans une mélancolie noire, et ne prit aucune part à l'opéra *alla moda* ni aux autres divertissements du carnaval ; pas une dame ne lui donna la moindre tentation. Martin lui dit : «Vous êtes bien simple, en vérité, de vous figurer qu'un valet métis, qui a cinq ou six millions dans ses poches, ira chercher votre maîtresse au bout du monde, et vous l'amènera à Venise. Il

la prendra pour lui, s'il la trouve. S'il ne la trouve pas, il en prendra une autre : je vous conseille d'oublier votre valet Cacambo et votre maîtresse Cunégonde.» Martin n'était pas consolant. La mélancolie de Candide augmenta, et Martin ne cessait de lui prouver qu'il y avait peu de vertu et peu de bonheur sur la terre, excepté peut-être dans Eldorado, où personne ne pouvait aller. (83)

## Extract 6

Martin se tournant vers Candide avec son sang-froid ordinaire : «Eh bien ! lui dit-il, n'ai-je pas gagné la gageure tout entière ?» Candide donna deux mille piastres à Paquette et mille piastres à frère Giroflée. «Je vous réponds, dit-il, qu'avec cela ils seront heureux. — Je n'en crois rien du tout, dit Martin ; vous les rendrez peut-être avec ces piastres beaucoup plus malheureux encore. — Il en sera ce qui pourra, dit Candide ; mais une chose me console, je vois qu'on retrouve souvent les gens qu'on ne croyait jamais retrouver ; il se pourra bien faire qu'ayant rencontré mon mouton rouge et Paquette, je rencontre aussi Cunégonde. — Je souhaite, dit Martin, qu'elle fasse un jour votre bonheur ; mais c'est de quoi je doute fort. — Vous êtes bien dur, dit Candide. — C'est que j'ai vécu, dit Martin. (86–87)

## Extract 7

Il signifia donc au baron qu'il allait se marier avec sa soeur. «Je ne souffrirai jamais, dit le baron, une telle bassesse de sa part, et une telle insolence de la vôtre ; cette infamie ne me sera jamais reprochée : les enfants de ma sœur ne pourraient entrer dans les chapitres d'Allemagne. Non, jamais ma sœur n'épousera qu'un baron de l'Empire.» Cunégonde se jeta à ses pieds, et les baigna de larmes ; il fut inflexible. «Maître fou, lui dit Candide, je t'ai

réchappé des galères, j'ai payé ta rançon, j'ai payé celle de ta sœur ; elle lavait ici des écuelles, elle est laide, j'ai la bonté d'en faire ma femme, et tu prétends encore t'y opposer ! je te retue-rais si j'en croyais ma colère. — Tu peux me tuer encore, dit le baron, mais tu n'épouseras pas ma soeur de mon vivant.» (103)

## Extract 8

On envoya jusqu'à Memphis chercher le grand médecin Hermès, qui vint avec un nombreux cortège. Il visita le malade, et déclara qu'il perdrait l'œil ; il prédit même le jour et l'heure où ce funeste accident devait arriver. «Si c'eût été l'œil droit, dit-il, je l'aurais guéri ; mais les plaies de l'œil gauche sont incurables.» Tout Babylone, en plaignant la destinée de Zadig, admira la profondeur de la science d'Hermès. Deux jours après l'abcès perça de lui-même ; Zadig fut guéri parfaitement. Hermès écrivit un livre où il lui prouva qu'il n'avait pas dû guérir. Zadig ne le lut point ; mais, dès qu'il put sortir, il se prépara à rendre visite à celle qui faisait l'espérance du bonheur de sa vie, et pour qui seule il voulait avoir des yeux. Sémire était à la campagne depuis trois jours. (*Zadig*, 29–30)

## Extract 9

Plein de ces idées, il se retira dans une maison de campagne sur les bords de l'Euphrate. Là il ne s'occupait pas à calculer combien de pouces d'eau coulaient en une seconde sous les arches d'un pont, ou s'il tombait une ligne cube de pluie dans le mois de la souris plus que dans le mois du mouton. Il n'imaginait point de faire de la soie avec des toiles d'araignée, ni de la porcelaine avec des bouteilles cassées ; mais il étudia surtout les propriétés des animaux et des plantes, et il acquit bientôt une sagacité qui lui découvrait mille différences où les autres hommes ne voient

rien que d'uniforme. (35)

## **Extract 10**

Cependant Zadig s'apercevait qu'il avait toujours des distractions quand il donnait des audiences, et quand il jugeait ; il ne savait à quoi les attribuer : c'était là sa seule peine.

Il eut un songe : il lui semblait qu'il était couché d'abord sur des herbes sèches, parmi lesquelles il y en avait quelques-unes de piquantes qui l'incommodaient ; et qu'ensuite il reposait mollement sur un lit de roses, dont il sortait un serpent qui le blessait au cœur de sa langue acérée et envenimée. «Hélas ! disait-il, j'ai été longtemps couché sur ces herbes sèches et piquantes, je suis maintenant sur le lit de roses ; mais quel sera le serpent ?» (60)

## **Extract 11**

Les femmes rentrèrent chez Ogul sans avoir rien trouvé. Zadig se fit présenter à lui, et lui parla en ces termes : «Que la santé immortelle descende du ciel pour avoir soin de tous vos jours ! Je suis médecin ; j'ai accouru vers vous sur le bruit de votre maladie, et je vous ai apporté un basilic cuit dans de l'eau rose. Ce n'est pas que je prétende vous épouser. Je ne vous demande que la liberté d'une jeune esclave de Babylone que vous avez depuis quelques jours ; et je consens de rester en esclavage à sa place si je n'ai pas le bonheur de guérir le magnifique seigneur Ogul.» (116)

# Voltaire Lecture Schedule

- Week 7
  - Tuesday: Lecture 1—Voltaire’s life and work
  - Thursday: Lecture 2—*Candide*
- Week 8
  - Tuesday: Lecture 3—*Candide*
  - Thursday: Lecture 4—*Candide*
- Week 9
  - Tuesday: Lecture 5—*Candide*
  - Thursday: Lecture 6—*Candide*
- Week 10
  - Tuesday: Lecture 7—*Zadig*
  - Thursday: Lecture 8—*Zadig*
- Week 11
  - Tuesday: Seminars
  - Thursday: Seminars
- Week 12
  - Tuesday: Lecture 9—*Zadig*

- Thursday: Test

- Week 13

- Tuesday: no lecture

- Thursday: no lecture, Essay due today.

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