

VOLTAIRE'S CANDIDE

POLITICAL ATTITUDES
IN
VOLTAIRE'S CANDIDE

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INTRODUCTION

A number of works by the famous Voltaire involve the voyaging of a relatively naive protagonist who, in the course of his travels, discovers the cruelties of the world. Micromégas (published in 1752 but probably dating back to 1739) recounts the journey across the universe of a being from the planet Sirius and his Saturnian friend. Zadig (1747) takes its main character on a tour through the Orient, during which he observes and experiences much. But there can be no doubt that the most important single composition in this genre appeared in 1759 and is far more thorough than the others in its examination, far more effective in its satirization, of life's evils. This is Candide, well known as Voltaire's masterpiece and, as Christopher Thacker informs us in the introduction to his edition of the text, undisputedly occupying "la position centrale...dans la pensée de Voltaire". Candide constitutes a vehement criticism of all its author regards as human folly. Much of this criticism falls in the area of politics.

It is my intention, in the course of this paper, to identify Voltaire's political attitudes and to show how he gives them emphasis in Candide. I shall also relate passages in Candide to those in other works by Voltaire, such as the Dictionnaire philosophique, the Siècle de Louis XIV, and the Essai sur les mœurs, which reflect similar attitudes. The paper will be divided into four chapters, each dealing with

a major theme. The first chapter will discuss the Seven Years War in the light of whether or not Candide's account of its causes, preparations, campaigns, and consequences is historically accurate. The second chapter will deal with the Jesuits in Paraguay as depicted in Candide, and will examine whether Voltaire had reason to be prejudiced against the Jesuit order even before he began work on the conte. The third will describe five major practices regularly carried on in eighteenth century France, which Voltaire thought should be forbidden by government legislation and which are singled out to be subjected to sarcasm in Candide; these are the enslavement of men, the intolerance of certain groups on grounds of religion, race, or occupation, the cheating of dishonest professionals, the frequent demands for lettres de cachet and billets de confession, and the enforced confinement of children to monasteries and convents by parents to whom they were an economic burden. The fourth and final chapter will examine Eldorado, the mythical "land of gold", from two different viewpoints: as a political ideal, and as a political satire.

Acknowledgment of a number of regularly-used reference sources will be incorporated within the text itself, rather than indicated in the form of footnotes. These sources, along with their abbreviations, are alphabetically listed below in full bibliographical detail. They will henceforth be referred to simply by the abbreviation and the volume and/or page number of the work, in brackets after the quotation or sentence concerned:

- Adams: Voltaire, F.M.A. de. Candide. Edited by Robert M. Adams. New York: W.W. Norton & Co. Inc, 1966
- Barber: Barber, W.H. Voltaire: Candide. London: Edward Arnold Ltd, 1968
- Best.: Voltaire, F.M.A. de. Voltaire's Correspondence. Edited by Theodore Besterman. Geneva: Institut et Musée Voltaire, 1953-1966, 107 vol.
- C.M.H.: Cambridge Modern History. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1909
- Diffie: Diffie, B.W. Latin American Civilization: Colonial Period. New York: Octagon Books Inc, 1967
- Gay: Gay, Peter. Voltaire's Politics, The Poet as Realist. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1959
- Keen: Keen, Benjamin ed. Readings in Latin American Civilization, 1492 to the Present. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co, 1967
- McCloy: McCloy, Shelby T. The Humanitarian Movement in Eighteenth Century France. Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1957
- Moland: Voltaire, F.M.A. de. Oeuvres Complètes. Editées par Louis Moland. Paris: Garnier, 1877-1885, 52 vol.
- Morize: Voltaire, F.M.A. de. Candide ou l'Optimisme. Edited by André Morize. Paris: Librairie E. Droz, 1931
- Morley: Morley, John. Voltaire. London: MacMillan & Co. Ltd, 1919
- Pernoud: Pernoud, Régine. L'Amérique du Sud au XVIII Siècle. Mantes: Imprimerie de "Petit Mantais", 1942
- Pomeau: Pomeau, René. La Religion de Voltaire. Paris: Librairie Nizet, 1969
- Sareil: Sareil, Jean. Essai sur Candide. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1967
- Smelser: Smelser, Marshall. The Campaign for the Sugar Islands, 1759. Virginia: University of North Carolina Press, 1955
- Thacker: Voltaire, F.M.A. de. Candide ou l'Optimisme. Edited by Christopher Thacker. Genève: Librairie Droz, 1968
- Topazio: Topazio, Virgil W. Voltaire: A Critical Study of his Major Works. New York: Random House, 1967
- Wolper: Wolper, Roy S. "Candide--Gull in the Garden?" Eighteenth Century Studies. California: University of California Press, 1969

Three editions of Candide are most frequently quoted in this paper. They are the Morize, the Adams, and the Thacker editions, given in the list above. The Morize is used for all references to the text of the conte itself, because it is the accepted standard edition. The Adams and the Thacker editions are employed because they are much more recent editions, and because both include documentation and notes helpful in interpreting the text. Also used occasionally is J.H. Brumfitt's edition of Candide.

All original spelling of the time, when it differs from the spelling of today, has been modernized.

I. THE SEVEN YEARS WAR--A WAR ON WAR

History defines the Seven Years War as a series of battles, taking place between 1756 and 1763 and involving two distinct spheres of operations: namely Europe, where Frederick II of Prussia and his ally England fought against the coalition of Austria, Russia, France, Sweden, and Saxony, and the colonies, where Britain and France clashed over India and Canada. Voltaire, the French philosopher-poet, had his own definition. To him, the colonies were not worth fighting for, and the European campaigns, provoked by the Prussian monarch he had once admired as a lover of peace, could be summed up in two words: unnecessary slaughter. He had watched that monarch turn warrior in 1742 and wage a treacherous battle with Austria to gain Silesia. At the time, he had written to the man he still counted a friend:

Au milieu des canons, sur les morts entassés,
Affrontant le trépas et fixant la victoire,
Du sang des malheureux cimentant votre gloire,
Je vous pardonne tout, si vous en gémissiez (Best., 2441).

Now, as Frederick plunged his country deeper than ever into strife, all feelings of amity left Voltaire. His

Notebooks, "invaluable when used with due caution",¹ present us with evidence of his genuine despair at a war he regarded as another futile case where "cent mille fous de notre espèce... tuent cent mille autres animaux... ou... sont massacrés par eux"² :

Que gagna donc le Prusse, l'Autriche, et le Saxe, à cette guerre poussée avec tant d'acharnement et d'animosité? Rien que la ruine mutuelles de grandes provinces, des milliers d'hommes égorgés dont les bras auraient pu, dans d'autres emplois, être plus utiles à la patrie.³

Voltaire, then, regarded aggressive or religious warfare in general, and the Seven Years War in particular, as a major evil of life. Even the first ode he composed in 1713 "traite du problème du mal. Ce mal est la guerre" (Fomeau, p.79). Furthermore, the history of his own country backed his opinion of war. Peter Gay, in his Voltaire's Politics, tells us that Louis XIV had conducted a series of fruitless wars in the 1680's that had impoverished France and ruined prosperous, pacific neighbours (Gay, p.113). To illustrate the wastefulness of such conflicts, Voltaire had begun a historical work in 1732, the Siècle de Louis

¹T. Besterman, Voltaire, New York: Harcourt, Brace & World Inc, 1969, p.215.

²Micromégas in Romans et Contes, Paris: Garnier, 1960, p.110.

³Complete Works of Voltaire: Notebooks, ed. T. Besterman, Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1968, I, 206.

XIV. Not surprisingly, "war and diplomacy occupy the most important place" in the Siècle,⁴ despite the author's claim in the opening chapter that "the reader was not to expect an undue emphasis on war" (Topazio, p.71), and despite his professed attempt to make the work an unbiased, non-didactic account of history. The significant point, however, is that battles are not recounted here per se, but as examples of the suffering and misery they produce.⁵ Voltaire, in this writer's opinion, is concerned not so much with fact as with illustrating a lesson he wishes to teach. This attitude prevails more strongly than ever in Candide, written with deliberately polemic purpose while the Seven Years War was at its height. It is an attitude clearly perceptible when Candide's version of the war is compared to history's, with respect to causes, preparations, campaigns, and consequences.

No real cause for the war in Candide is ever indicated. It is simply stated, at the end of the second chapter, that "le roi des Bulgares livra bataille au roi des Abares" (Morize, p.13), hinting that entry into warfare can be accomplished at the whim of an ambitious monarch who is under no obligation to explain his actions, and who, in

⁴J.H. Brumfitt, Voltaire Historian, London: Oxford University Press, 1958, p.50.

⁵For instance, Voltaire inserts his own moralizing on the subject: "Il faut avouer que ceux qui ont plus d'humanité que d'estime pour les exploits de guerre gémirent de cette campagne si glorieuse". See Voltaire, Oeuvres historiques, ed. R. Pomeau, Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1957, p.730.

fact, might have no explanation for them but mere ambition.⁶ The author himself, we are told by Emmanuel Berl, in his introduction to Voltaire's Mélanges, viewed a clash as unavoidable on the eve of the Seven Years War "malgré tout ce que Louis XV avait fait pour l'éviter" because of Frederick's ambition.⁷ And certainly no historian denies the basic aggressiveness of that ruler's nature. John Morley describes Frederick as cruel, domineering, and ruthless, though he also adds his own opinion that the actual cause of the war can be put down to "a re-opening, in far vaster proportions, of those profound issues of new religion and old (i.e., Protestant-Catholic conflict) which had only been dammed up and not permanently settled by the great Peace of Westphalia in 1648" (Morley, p.167). Candide, bent on blaming the king, mentions no such cause. Neither is its Westphalian protagonist made aware of any reasoning behind the campaign in which he is engaging. After being kicked out of the baron's castle for kissing Cunégonde, the naive Candide meets up with two men clad in blue who invite him to dinner and ask if he is five feet five inches tall.

⁶Indeed, Voltaire explicitly expresses this very thought in his later article "Guerre" of the Dictionnaire philosophique. Here, he "summed up the political war as caused by royal ambition. The prize was, often as not, a strip of sand on a disputed frontier, and the excuse some vague dynastic claim, for long centuries forgotten". See Constance Rowe, Voltaire and the State, New York: Columbia University Press, 1955, p.135.

⁷Voltaire, Mélanges, Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1965, p.xx.

When he replies in the affirmative, they request that he drink the Bulgarian king's health; then they clap him in irons without farther ado and lead him off to the army (Morize, p.10). The implications are clear enough. They are the same implications that Voltaire makes again later, in "Guerre", an article in his Dictionnaire philosophique, where he mentions a certain prince who "trouve incontinent un grand nombre d'hommes qui n'ont rien à perdre; il les habille d'un gros drap bleu à cent dix sous l'aune, borde leurs chapeaux avec du gros fil blanc, les fait tourner à droite et à gauche et marche à la gloire".⁸ For, as one edition of Candide explains it, "the recruiting officers of Frederick the Great, much feared in eighteenth century Europe, wore blue uniforms", and "Frederick had a passion for sorting out his soldiers by size; several of his regiments would accept only six-footers" (Adams, p.3). The Bulgarians of Candide, then, are the Prussians, fighting a war with the Abares, and this war "is sufficiently like the Seven Years War for many commentators to assert without any positive evidence, that the Abares are the French".⁹ It differs from the real war, however, in what it fails to take

⁸Voltaire, Dictionnaire philosophique, Paris: Garnier, 1967, pp.229-230.

⁹Voltaire, Candide, ed. J.H. Brumfitt, London: Oxford University Press, 1968, p.38.

into account: that Frederick, ambitious though he was, had more than greed at heart when he decided to conquer electoral Saxony, Polish West Prussia, and Swedish Pomerania.

The Cambridge Modern History tells us that Prussia, in the eighteenth century, consisted of some of the most barren land in Europe. Moreover, it was small, uncultured, and disunited. For this reason, the king deemed it desirable to acquire the three territories just mentioned, since they would enable him to give a practical form to his state. The electorate of Saxony in particular would make it possible to bring wealth, manufacturing industries, and civilization into the country (C.M.H., VI, 251). He was motivated, then, at least partially, by the welfare of his realm. But Voltaire, an ardent hater of campaigns of conquest, was blind to any claim of legitimate reasoning behind Frederick's actions, and Candide stands as vivid evidence of this fact.

As for the colonial aspect of the war, Candide presents the issue as though the colonies were a pretext, rather than a cause, for the fighting, as though the entire colonial dispute were merely an excuse for France and England to continue their quarrel. The main character in the conte, after undergoing a series of misfortunes, meets up with Martin, a Manichean, and the two of them set sail for Venice. On the way they pass the coast of England and Candide conversationally asks:

Vous connaissez l'Angleterre, y est-on aussi fou qu'en France?--C'est une autre espèce de folie, dit Martin; vous savez que ces deux nations sont en guerre pour quelques arpents de neige vers le Canada et qu'elles dépensent pour cette belle guerre beaucoup plus que tout le Canada ne vaut (Morize, pp.171-172).

Voltaire regarded the American colonies as more trouble for France than they were worth, and Candide makes this attitude abundantly clear. He expresses very similar thoughts in very similar phrases within the context of the Essai sur les mœurs, written several years earlier than Candide:

"Les dépenses de la guerre pour conserver ces pays", he declares at one point, "coûtaient plus qu'ils ne vaudront jamais" (Moland XII, 411). At another point, he talks of America as a country whose only significance is to reflect the conflict in Europe:

La complication des intérêts politiques est venue au point qu'un coup de canon tiré en Amérique peut être le signal de l'embrasement de l'Europe (Moland XII, 411).

Like many other French philosophers, Voltaire considered it ridiculous that an economically unprofitable land like Canada, which he describes as "couvert de neiges et de glaces huit mois de l'année, habité par des barbares, des ours, et des castors" should be an excuse for strife (Moland XII, 409). He felt, in fact, that his countrymen should abandon all efforts at colonial settlement and concentrate their attentions on Europe, the centre of the world. Perhaps the Essai best sums up his opinion on the matter with its comments about Louisiana:

Peut-être un jour, s'il y a des millions d'habitants de trop en France, sera-t-il avantageux de peupler la Louisiane; mais il est plus vraisemblable qu'il faudra l'abandonner (Moland XII, 412).

Hence, when the Peace of Paris in 1763 ultimately sealed England's conquest of Canada, Voltaire was the last one to regret it. On the contrary, "il accepte d'un coeur léger la perte"¹⁰, about which he wrote on May 8 of that year: "Les Anglais ont pris le Canada que j'avais par parenthèse offert, il y a quatre ans, de vendre aux Anglais" (Best., 10377). But long before that peace settlement was made, asserts Barber in his critical book on Candide, the writer spoke his own views through Martin, that such colonial wars are fought "for reasons of a triviality that makes a mockery of the suffering they cause" (Barber, p.30).

How much of a "triviality" the colonies actually were, however, is at best questionable. Nellis M. Crouse, who discusses the West Indian phase of the French-English conflict in his account of the French Struggle for the West Indies, gives them the same unimportance, relative to Europe, that Voltaire does. Crouse informs us that "the West Indian struggle was but a reflection of a series of wars raging in Europe at this time, the colonists lining

¹⁰ Politique de Voltaire: Textes choisis et présentés par René Pomeau, Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1963, p.30.

up with or against each other, according to the wars or alliances of the mother countries".¹¹ Yet the fact remains that most of the colonies were, indeed, valuable possessions in their own right. Says Marshall Smelser:

The French and British colonies were closely woven into the fabric of their national economies. Much of the prosperity of both nations was derived from their colonies, and their merchants and politicians knew it...The interests of France and Britain collided in four remote corners of the world: North America, the West Indies, Africa, and India. They were militant rivals in several essential commodities, among them Negroes, sugar, and furs (Smelser, pp.5-6).

The dispute in Canada was over furs, a product in which that forested country was wealthy. In 1627, Cardinal Richelieu, chief minister of France, had founded the Company of New France at the settlement of Quebec. This Company had been granted the colony of New France, then comprising the whole St Lawrence Valley, and for fifteen years, from 1629, it was to have complete monopoly of the fur trade. In return, it was to take to New France two hundred to three hundred settlers a year. By the eighteenth century, New France had undergone considerable expansion, as had the British settlements in Canada. The two nations had also engaged in numerous quarrels over the fur trade, each jealously guarding its own lands and covetous of the furs of the other's. Then, on the eve of the Seven Years War,

¹¹N.M. Crouse, The French Struggle for the West Indies, London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, 1966, p.1.

the French laid claim to the Ohio Valley and built Fort Duquesne on the site of modern Pittsburgh. Britain reacted with anger. The young Virginian George Washington was sent to drive out the French army, but was defeated. Next, the British general Braddock, assigned the same task, was likewise defeated, and was killed. Not until 1759, when Quebec fell at last to General Wolfe, did England win the whole of Canada and its considerable fur resources. But it was a victory that Voltaire regarded as laughable, for Canada had such a harsh and hostile climate for so much of the year, that even the fur trade did not suffice to make it an economic gain. Smelser tells us that the French motive for striving to retain Canada was political and not economic, and that France had hoped to maintain Canada as an outpost in order to distract Britain from affairs on the continent of Europe. It is a ploy that the pages of Candide choose not to mention, preferring, rather, to ridicule the whole affair. Noteworthy too, is the fact that Canada is the only area Martin holds up as an example of the colonial situation, ignoring the lucrative spice and silk exports from other colonies in India that were contributing significantly to the French treasury, and that were worthwhile fighting to keep.

In assessing the causes of the war, then, Candide relies on the technique of leading the reader to the same

judgment the author has made, by stating only those facts conducive to the author's case. The same is true for the work's discussion of preparations for war. It is neither the rapid recruitment of an army, nor the effectiveness of military training, though Frederick's methods in both were very efficient, that is emphasized. Rather, the stress is laid upon the unscrupulousness of that recruitment and the harshness of that training.

Recruitment, in the case of Voltaire's protagonist, is achieved by trickery. Candide meets the men in blue, is bribed with an invitation to dinner, is duped into believing he will be a hero fighting for some glorious cause, and is then clapped in irons and forcibly led away. In effect, he is kidnapped. Voltaire, says Barber, is implying here that "a gap exists between euphemism and reality, between the picture of war which rulers find it useful to sponsor--gay uniforms, cheerful music, and the splendour of heroism--and the grim and cruel facts" (Barber, p.37). Certainly the "facts" given at this point in the story are historically accurate; the Prussian monarch's ways of acquiring fighting forces were well known to be as ruthless as the man himself was. Like his father Frederick William before him, Frederick II resorted to any and every means available in gaining conscripts. Recruiting officers were allowed to take the

congregations at Sunday service by surprise and carry off the biggest and the strongest young men. The Cambridge Modern History declares that "it was simply kidnapping accompanied by bloodshed--a sort of slave-hunting" (C.M.H. VI, 213). In Westphalia, a young man could often escape across the border out of Prussian territory when pursued by a recruiting officer, and many did; hence *Candide's* eventual escape. Nevertheless, large numbers were taken daily. Once caught, these men were carefully indoctrinated in the belief that they were noble heroes defending king and native soil. As proof of such indoctrination, the Cambridge Modern History (VI, 295) cites an incident that occurred after the battle of Leignitz (1760), one of the campaigns of the war in which Prussian troops fought well. Frederick, talking to a veteran, praised their behaviour and received the reply: "What else could we do? We are fighting for you, for our religion and our fatherland".

Training of troops after they were recruited is also vigorously criticized in Candide. The innocent conscript is made to perform various intricate manoeuvres of which he fails to see the purpose:

On le fait tourner à droite, à gauche, hausser la baguette, remettre la baguette, coucher en joue, tirer, doubler le pas, et on lui donne trente coups de bâton (Morize, pp. 10-11).

Then one day, still not understanding "comment il était un héros", Candide sets off on his own for a walk (Morize, p.11). For this independent action, he is given the choice of running the gauntlet thirty-six times through the line of two thousand men, or receiving a dozen bullets through the brain. He chooses the former and manages to run the line twice before he begs for death instead. But, as the officers are preparing to oblige him, the Bulgarian king walks past and, in a gesture of clemency, pardons him. Again, history to a large extent justifies Voltaire's criticism here of Frederick's training methods, which were notorious for their strictness and cruelty. Officers regularly penalized the slightest misdemeanor with merciless beatings. Prussian regulations prescribed that any soldier who, on or off duty, abused his superior officer, should be rigourously flogged through the line; in the case of a man on duty, a single word was sufficient to incur the same punishment. A soldier who resisted or threatened his superior officer was shot without further ado. The men were drilled over and over, with incredible perseverance and success. In fact, historians inform us that "the troops had been accustomed by the use of the stick to such absolute obedience that, even amid a rain of bullets, they would act with machine-like precision, and carry out, calmly and surely, the elaborate evolutions

commanded" (C.M.H. VI, 216). The trace of admiration, however, with which history acknowledges the effectiveness of these measures, is absent from Voltaire's tone, as evidenced by his Dialogues entre A, B, C, written after Candide in 1768:

C--Cependant, toutes les nations montrent du courage à la guerre.

A--Oui, comme des chevaux qui tremblent au premier son du tambour, et qui avancent fièrement quand ils sont disciplinés par cent coups de tambour et cent coups de fouet.¹²

Voltaire's opinion that such extreme harshness was unforgiveable and that it stripped a person of individuality and dignity, never changed. Yet the incident of Candide's pardon by a magnanimous ruler shows that Voltaire recognized a divorce of practice from theory in eighteenth century Prussia. In theory, Frederick's views as to treatment of troops were quite reasonable. The king demanded of his officers that a young soldier should be taught everything without railing and abuse so that a recruit might not turn sullen and timid at the very outset. Neither was a recruit to be unnecessarily beaten or otherwise ill-treated. However, "these wise provisions of the regulations remained a dead letter in the practice of the service", and inadequately supervised

¹²Politique de Voltaire: Textes choisis et présentés par René Pomeau, Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1963, p.222.

officers soon took matters into their own hands (C.M.H. VI, 214). Voltaire, then, is generous enough not to hold the monarch entirely responsible for every aspect of war's evils, even though the campaigns he describes in Candide suffice, still, to make a reader despise the initiator of such action.

With the inimitable irony that is his trademark, Voltaire begins an account of the campaigns between Bulgares and Abares by piling up a number of descriptive adjectives usually used within a pleasant context. "Rien n'était si beau, si lesté, si brillant, si bien ordonné que les deux armées", he asserts (Morize, p.14). Then, with the next sentence, he effectively destroys the whole mood. As Barber puts it, "the scene at first presents a gay appearance...but the cruel realities of war soon transform it into one of hideous chaos" (Barber, p.30):

Les trompettes, les fifres, les hautbois, les tambours, les canons formaient une harmonie telle qu'il n'y eut jamais en enfer (Morize, p.14).

It is a technique designed to shock us by contrast, a technique that is employed repeatedly in the course of the text. When the old-woman companion of Cunégonde is telling her story aboard the ship to South America about the siege on the Janissary fort in which she was held captive, she

mentions that the starving Janissaries were forced to cut off one of her buttocks for food (Morize, p.68). As sorry as we feel about the old woman's plight, the situation is so ludicrous that we cannot help but see the funny side. And that is Voltaire's intention. Mixing the cheerful or the amusing with the gruesome in just the right proportion to bring his point home forcibly, is the author's greatest art. I. O. Wade comments most meaningfully that "one never knows, in reading Candide whether to laugh with Voltaire or at him, whether to laugh with the philosophers or at them, whether indeed to laugh with or at providence, whether, in fact, to laugh at all".¹³ If we do laugh, it is a laugh of bitterness rather than one of amusement that Voltaire has produced in us. Sarcastic mockery "était son langage naturel qui lui servait à exprimer non seulement la gaieté mais aussi la colère et l'indignation".¹⁴ Perhaps this is what constitutes the most outstanding trait about Candide: its ability to make us laugh with a sardonic twist of our mouths, or to recoil in shock, at what is often regarded even by relatively objective historians with a certain degree of admiration. The Cambridge Modern History, for instance, recounts Frederick's successful invasions of

¹³I.O. Wade, Voltaire and Candide, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1959, p.321.

¹⁴André Delattre, Voltaire l'impétueux, Paris: Mercure de France, 1957, pp.10-11.

Saxony and Bohemia, two of the campaigns of the Seven Years War, as though somewhat awed by the effectiveness of the stratagems used. Frederick, we are told, moved his army into Saxony on August 29 1756 and defeated the Austrians in an initial battle. When the Prussians took up winter quarters in Saxony and Silesia, they were 114,000 strong, as against the 133,000 Austrians wintering in Bohemia and Moravia, but Frederick was confident of winning nevertheless because of the superiority of his troops. By the following April, the king had resolved to defeat Austria before she got additional help, and he invaded Bohemia aiming to capture the great Austrian magazines in the northern part of that territory and thus render Austria impotent. The plan was carried out successfully; the Austrians were surprised in disarray by Frederick's systematic attack, and they were forced to abandon their magazines in the western and central points of northern Bohemia (C.M.H. VI, 254-256). The Prussians had beaten a numerically superior force because of their method of fighting. Historically, the Seven Years War is significant in that it marks the first time the pitched battle--the gathering of a mass of united individuals and their use all at once for an onslaught--was used in war. It was used by Frederick, and he proved it could work against

a coalition of relatively disorganized and disunited countries. "Until 1758", Marshall Smelser tells us, "the Seven Years War went against Britain and her allies. The great Frederick had held his own--more or less--against Austrian, French, Russian, Swedish, and Saxon soldiery, who lacked only ability to combine their strength in order to annihilate his armies and to gut Prussia" (Smelser, p.13).

Voltaire's version of "the great Frederick" and his pitched battle differs considerably, however. Like the history books, Candide also talks about large numbers of men but from a vastly dissimilar point of view:

Les canons renversèrent d'abord à peu près six mille hommes de chaque côté; ensuite la mousqueterie ôta du meilleur des mondes environ neuf à dix mille coquins qui en infectaient la surface. La baïonnette fut aussi la raison suffisante de la mort de quelques milliers d'hommes. Le tout pouvait bien se monter à une trentaine de mille âmes (Morize, pp. 14-15).

Again, the author's irony, his sarcastic dig at those who glorify warfare in their own minds, is vividly evident. Neither, at this point, can he help mentioning optimism's favourite phrase, "le meilleur des mondes", for Prussia in the eighteenth century was the main stronghold of that philosophy. Originally formulated by the German philosopher Leibniz, then feverishly upheld and spread abroad by his disciple Wolff, optimism was based upon the belief that, despite all the little individual evils in this "best of all

possible worlds", in the end "le tout est bien".¹⁵ Prussia, though torn apart by bloodshed and strife, had already embraced this way of thinking enthusiastically, and Wolff had acquired a great number of followers. Voltaire, no optimist himself by 1759, and one who ridiculed the philosophy at every opportunity, "was not insensitive to the irony of a situation in which the country which was par excellence the home of optimism had itself become that doctrine's most striking refutation" (Barber, p.56). But more important here than a discussion of the writer's undeniable wit, is the basic change in attitude toward war that Candide represents. After a battle had been fought, for example, looting of conquered towns, sieges, and Te Deums or prayers of thanks to God for the day's victories, were well known to be regular practices and were accepted as "the laws of war". Voltaire dares us to look with calm resignation upon the scenes he paints in Candide, the description of "des vieillards criblés de coups" who "regardaient mourir leurs femmes égorgées qui tenaient leurs enfants à leurs mamelles sanglantes" (Morize, p.15). These are the inhabitants of "un village abas que les Bulgares avaient brûlé selon les lois du droit public" (Morize, p.15). Similarly, the poor old woman who loses her buttock during the siege on

¹⁵For a more complete account on Leibniz, Wolff, and optimism, see Barber, p.47.

the Janissaries is later told by a French surgeon treating the wound that she should be consoled, for "dans plusieurs sièges, pareille chose était arrivée et...c'était la loi de la guerre" (Morize, p.69). Such "laws of war", Voltaire is suggesting, are, as Barber puts it, "merely convenient devices for salving the consciences of rulers, by lending a colour of respectable 'legality' to what is, in fact, atrocious" (Barber, p.30). Likewise, the Te Deum, sung after man has finished slaughtering his fellows, is an identical device, employed to lend an element of Christianity to an atmosphere about which there is nothing remotely Christian. Voltaire effectively demonstrates its ludicrous aspect in Candide by having both the Bulgares and the Abares offer thanks to God at the end of a day's fierce fighting:

Les deux rois faisaient chanter des Te Deum, chacun dans son camp (Morize, p.11).

Then, in the following chapter, after Candide has made his escape and met up again with his old tutor Pangloss from the baron's castle in Westphalia, we learn from the latter's account what sort of destruction has really been wrought by these supposedly Christian forces. Cunégonde, says Pangloss, has been raped and killed, and, as for the castle, "il n'est pas resté pierre sur pierre, pas une grange, pas un mouton, pas un canard, pas un arbre. Mais nous avons été bien avengés, car les Abares en ont fait autant dans une baronnie

voisine qui appartenait à un seigneur bulgare" (Morize, p.22).

Voltaire has succeeded not only in showing us the contradiction between Christian teachings and practices, but in making us despise the values of all men like Pangloss, including historians, who find comfort in the thought of revenge and feel pride in the successful campaigns of their own side.

To Voltaire, there is nothing glorious about military campaigns, and Candide reflects this in its emphasis on the harsh, the gruesome, and the despicable traits of war in general. Yet no attempt is made to recount specific battles, or to adhere to historical truth; in fact "no Bulgarian troops (nor any others) were fighting in Westphalia in the months before the Lisbon earthquake" (Barber, p.13). We have no positive proof, then, that the war mentioned here actually is the Seven Years War, even though the author has given us enough hints by now to ensure that the allegory is clear.

Surely, little doubt remains when we look at the consequences of the war, as discussed in Candide. The most important single consequence indicated, is the shooting of Admiral Byng, witnessed by Candide and Martin as they sail past the English coast on their way to Venice. As they are gliding by Portsmouth, they see a short fat man kneeling aboard a ship in front of a firing squad and before a crowd of spectators. While they watch, the man is shot

through the head, after which the crowd disperses. Candide enquires into the man's identity, and learns that he was an admiral, sentenced to death for not killing enough men himself and found guilty of attacking the French admiral without being near enough to him:

Mais, dit Candide, l'amiral français était aussi loin de l'amiral anglais que celui-ci l'était de l'autre? --Cela est incontestable, lui repliqua-t-on. Mais dans ce pays-ci il est bon de tuer de temps en temps un amiral pour encourager les autres (Morize, pp.173-174).

British Admiral John Byng, shot on board his flagship, the Monarque in Portsmouth harbour on March 14 1757 for failing to defend Minorca the previous year against a French attack under Admiral Richelieu, is obviously the person referred to. Byng, sent off with a fleet in 1755 by the British government under the Duke of Newcastle, was to ward off the attack and save Fort St. Philip, the British Mediterranean base. He arrived, however, to find that it was already too late; the French were besieging the fort and British tactics were ineffective against them. Seeing that his forces were suffering heavy damage while the French fleet remained relatively unimpaired, Byng decided to turn back and leave the island to its fate, for which deed his life was forfeit. The furious British public clamoured for a scapegoat, and perhaps the embarrassed government ministers saw a chance to save themselves from blame by sacrificing Byng. Certainly Candide paints the admiral as the victim

of a vicious, unjust plot, and Voltaire's sarcastic phrase that, in England, it is customary to shoot admirals from time to time "pour encourager les autres" has become famous. However, two things must be remembered above all in reading Candide: that Voltaire was, first and foremost, a polemist, decrying war and wanting us to see useless death and injustice as its result, and that Voltaire was, secondly and solidly, a Frenchman and, as such, hoped for the victory of France over England. When he was approached by a friend of Byng's and asked to defend the admiral against the charges of disaffection and cowardice, as he says he was in a letter to Richelieu (Best., 6396), he sent off to Britain a response of Richelieu's commending and approving Byng's conduct, along with a few statements of his own wishing the admiral luck. Then, as events proved that luck was not to be with Byng, he wrote another letter to Richelieu congratulating him for having "la gloire d'avoir vaincu les Anglais et de les faire rougir" (Best., 6530). How much the British were actually "blushing", however, is a contestable point. While it is true that most historians today are more or less agreed on the atrocity of the punishment, Marshall Smelser, whose book was published as recently as 1955, will not commit himself to an opinion and sticks strictly to the facts. "Minorca lay in the shadow of the lazily-flapping lily flag of France", he says,

"and Admiral Byng was shot--rightly or wrongly--for the disgrace" (Smelser, p.13). There was a greater variance of feeling still, among historians of the day. André Rousseau, in his recent informative article, points out how two British historians differed:

Goldsmith et Smollett relatent l'affaire, le premier très hostile à Byng, allant jusqu'à écrire: "Several addresses were sent up from different countries demanding justice on the delinquent, which the ministry were willing to second", le second très favorable, au contraire, notant l'étonnement de toute l'Europe.¹⁶

But, whether the penalty was deserved or not, it is plain that many did not appreciate the meddling of Voltaire in the matter. Perhaps the best example of the British attitude in this regard is to be found in a contemporary pamphlet quoted by Rousseau, The Case of Admiral Byng Represented, 1757:

With what view they (Voltaire et Richelieu) wrote, is not easy to be conceived. Surely these gentlemen must have very mean and unworthy notions of English equity and justice to suppose that his judges could condemn him, unless on the testimony of unexceptionable evidence; or that they were not as inclinable to acquit as to punish him. Or rather, is it not a French gasconade to magnify the bravery of their fleet and banter the English for their folly and temerity in pretending to cope with a power so much their superior? In whatever light we view these letters, we plainly discover the impertinence and insult of their writers.¹⁷

The precedent had been set, however, and Voltaire's

¹⁶André Rousseau, En Marge de Candide: Voltaire et l'affaire Byng in Révue de littérature comparée, 1960, p.271.

¹⁷Ibid, p.272.

involvement with the Byng case was important for several reasons. Nine years later, a similar incident occurred in France, after the French general, the comte de Lally, lost Pondicherry, the chief French settlement and trade centre in India, to the British general Clive, and upon returning home, was sacrificed in execution to the wrath of the shareholders in the French East India Company. Naturally, Lally's plight was paralleled to Byng's, and Voltaire also championed Lally's cause. In fact, as Rousseau points out in concluding his article, "le mot de 'judicial murder', inventé et colporté par la presse anglaise à propos de Byng, n'allait-il pas, pour le monde, devenir un cri voltairien? Malgré des méthodes, des buts, et des succès fort divers, c'est bien la même ligne qui, passant par Calas, Sirven, et La Barre, va de l'amiral Byng au gouverneur Lally".¹⁸ Calas was a Huguenot living in the Catholic town of Toulouse who was accused by the priests of murdering a son wishing to convert to Catholicism, and who, in punishment for the supposed offense, was broken on the wheel. The Sirvens were another Protestant family, similarly accused of murdering their daughter. And La Barre was a youth of nineteen, tortured and killed for singing ribald songs disrespectful of the Catholic church. Along with Byng and Lally, Voltaire

¹⁸Ibid, p.273.

defended them all as examples of gross injustice. Norman L. Torrey declares that "the torture and death of the young Chevalier de la Barre produced in Voltaire genuine and prolonged physical suffering".¹⁹ Certainly it was not long after Byng's death that the famous mocking tone turned to one of plain anger, intense enough, according to Thaddeus, to make Voltaire cry: "The moment for jesting has gone by! Witticisms do not accord with massacres!"²⁰ The sound of the author's voice, rising in defense of Byng and echoing also through the pages of Candide, had started him on the road to his role as protector of the weak and the persecuted. Voltaire's part in the Byng affair was significant, as well, in other ways. To Britain, it was at least instrumental in bringing about a new government, for in 1760, the year after Candide appeared, Newcastle resigned and William Pitt replaced him. To the historian John Morley, its importance lies in its demonstration of Voltaire's humanity:

Humanity is erroneously counted among commonplace virtues. If it deserved such a place, there would be less urgent need than, alas, there is, for its daily exercise among us. In its pale shape of kindly sentiment and bland pity, it is common enough and is always the portion of the cultivated. But humanity armed, aggressive and alert, never slumbering and never wearying, moving like an ancient hero over the land to slay monsters, is the rarest of virtues, and Voltaire is one of its master-types. (Morley, p.360).

¹⁹Norman L. Torrey, The Spirit of Voltaire, Oxford: The Marston Press, 1963, p.42.

²⁰Victor Thaddeus, Voltaire: Genius of Mockery, Montreal: Louis Carrier & Co., 1928, p.223.

To the author of this paper, its main importance is its clear proof of Voltaire's savage hatred of war and of all the consequences of war. It reflects his earnest desire for peace, which, perhaps, sprang from motives that were not entirely humanitarian. He was, after all, concerned for the fate of France "qui n'a pas de généraux, qui ne fait preuve ni d'organisation, ni d'énergie", and which, in this condition, "serait une jolie proie pour une coalition Autriche-Prusse-Angleterre".²¹ For this reason, he "corresponded frequently with the Duchess of Saxe-Gotha, transmitted official and semi-official messages between the combattants, and himself, over and over again, implored Frederick to end the war".²² The execution of Admiral Byng converted many Europeans to his view.

But the Byng affair is only one aspect of the war's consequences. Historically, there were several other results as well, which Candide does not take into account. It is only the misery and the physical pain suffered because of "cette boucherie héroïque" (Morize, p.15) that Voltaire mentions. In actual fact, however, the end of the war brought about other changes also. "By the Treaty of Hubertsburg between Austria, Prussia, and Saxony, Prussia was assured of her position as an independent power in

²¹André Delattre, Voltaire l'impétueux, Paris: Mercure de France, 1957, pp.57-58.

²²T. Besterman, Voltaire, New York: Harcourt, Brace & World Inc, 1969, p.386.

Europe", and Frederick II confirmed his hold on Silesia, gained during the previous War of the Austrian Succession (Morley, p.182). Across the Atlantic, France lost Canada to England after General Wolfe captured Quebec and lost India to England because of the victories of General Clive. Already, we know what Voltaire's attitude was toward the colonial losses. The Cambridge Modern History, however, also states a certain agreement with Voltaire regarding the uselessness of the European endeavors. "Prussia remained small, uncultured, and broken up", we are told. Frederick had certainly failed in achieving the political object of the war, besides which "he lost many men who were worthy citizens and fine officers" (C.M.H. VI,300). From the point of view of territorial gains, then, Candide proved correct to some extent: that the Seven Years War had been a waste of time and of life. Yet the historian John Morley assures us that there were far-reaching consequences of extreme importance, for the war altered the whole of civilization, both in the Old World and in the New:

The governments of France and Austria represented the feudal and military idea, not in the strength of that idea while it was still alive, but in the narrow and oppressive form of its decay. No social growth was possible under its shadow, for one of its essential conditions was discouragement, active and passive, of commercial industry, the main pathway then open to an advancing people. Again, both France and Austria represented the old type of monarchy, as distinguished alike from the aristocratic oligarchy of England and the new type of monarchy which Prussia introduced into

Europe, frugal, encouraging industry, active in supervision, indefatigable in improving the laws (Morley, p.176).

Morley also adds that Prussia was a country that permitted religious toleration earlier than the rest of continental Europe. When it took Silesia, the University of Breslau, previously open only to Catholics, was at once opened to Protestants also. It was principles like these that came to rule the New World because of the victory of the Prussian alliance, and this, says Morley, is one of the reasons why we can justly view the violent change brought about by the Seven Years War as a truly progressive step.

It must never be forgotten, however, that the historian like Morley has the advantage of hindsight. As a member of the new altered civilization about which he speaks, he is able to look back upon the whole of the war after it has happened and judge its effects from that perspective. Voltaire, writing his Candide while the war raged around him, had no such advantage. Since the treaties of 1763 had not been made, it is impossible for Voltaire to discuss their consequences in Candide, and it is similarly impossible for him to render a judgment on the overall results of the war. Nevertheless, his analysis of the situation in Candide is memorable in its own right. Candide was amongst the first works that stripped war of its glorious aspect

and degraded it from the highest to the lowest object of a historian's regard. As Morley himself comments: "We can never honour Voltaire too long nor too deeply for the vehemence and sincerity of his abhorrence of the military spirit" (Morley, p.311). Perhaps some historians or critics may find fault with his lack of accuracy. Georges Ascoli, for example, remarks that "too often Voltaire, delighted with his own artistic flair and driven by his passions, gives us amusing stories, the veracity of which is highly suspect" (Adams, p.136). The question is, whether Voltaire cares if we suspect the veracity, or if, indeed, we know for a fact that some of these stories are untrue. This author thinks not. Voltaire's interest is in the writing of polemic material, designed not to convey factual detail, but to teach a lesson, to bring home a point. He "used history as a source of examples, never as a source of authority".²³ Through these examples, selected carefully to suit his purpose, he hoped to suggest to mankind the need for reform. By implication, "Voltaire prêche la tolérance, la relativité des connaissances, des reformes modérées, et n'a que sarcasme pour les chercheurs de quintessence, que haine pour les fanatiques, que mépris pour ceux qui exploitent les faiblesses et l'ignorance de leurs semblables" (Sareil, p.20).

²³J.H. Brumfitt, Voltaire Historian, London: Oxford University Press, 1958, p.66.

Voltaire waged an eternal war on war. Of course "his warfare was necessarily intellectual. He used that wit, which is the sword of the spirit, piercing every joint in the breastplate of Self-Righteousness".²⁴ Sometimes, he strayed from the truth for the sake of advancing his cause, as he did in Candide. Sometimes, he neglected to tell the whole truth, as he did in discussing only Canada as an example of the colonial situation. Always, however, such tactics were employed for a definite reason, and, in that famous work of 1759, there can be no doubt as to their effectiveness.

²⁴Brailsford, Voltaire, London: Thornton Butterworth Ltd, 1935, p.160.

II. THE JESUITS IN PARAGUAY--POLITICAL OR PERSONAL?

Two chapters of Candide deal with the Jesuits in Paraguay, and this is understandable, for "Voltaire had written a chapter on the revolt in Paraguay for his Essai sur les mœurs in January 1758. Its details were doubtless fresh in his mind".¹ It is noteworthy, however, that both works single out the Paraguay situation as the topic of particular discussion instead of mingling it with attacks on "the bigotry and intolerance of religious sects" (Barber, p.28) that occur at various points throughout the remainder of the texts. In Candide, Voltaire devotes two chapters out of thirty, or one fifteenth of its total content, to the religious and political affairs of Paraguay. For this reason, the subject is important, and Voltaire's attitude toward the Jesuits must be examined on its own, rather than included with his feelings toward the Catholic Church in general.

There are four possible reasons why Voltaire might attack the order with such vehemence. First, he was the product of a Jesuit school, and from 1704 to 1711, was an "élève des Pères". During that time, he was exposed to much of their indoctrination, including the propaganda

¹Voltaire, Candide, J.H. Brumfitt ed., London: Oxford University Press, 1968, p.175n.

favouring the mission system of colonization (the conversion and settlement of hostile, nomadic tribes of the New World within a Jesuit-run town) for which the Jesuits became best known. His rebellion against such teachings would tend to make him an enemy of the Jesuits. Secondly, his hostility to the order and its work in South America would be augmented if he, himself, was directly affected in some way by the Paraguay situation. Thirdly, such feelings would be nurtured by any personal grudges he held against the Jesuits. And finally, when he noted their continual expansion and their ever-increasing wealth in France, he would consider the Jesuits a political threat to his country. Thus, he may well use the wealth and power they had already gained in Paraguay as an example to his French compatriots of the danger of Jesuit dominance. Each of these reasons, and especially the last, is found to be supported by ample evidence.

The first is backed up by Pomeau in his Religion de Voltaire, where he discusses Voltaire's growing opposition to the Jesuits, and claims that "il est possible qu'il fût touché comme les autres élèves des jésuites par la propagande en faveur des missions" (Pomeau, p.40). Yet the rebellion of Voltaire, says Pomeau, was against the whole Jesuit system: its orderly routine, its propaganda, its teachings. He began to dislike many aspects of the order.

Confirmation of the second is found in Christopher Thacker's notes to the Droz edition of Candide. In 1748, an agreement had been made between Spain and Portugal by which the latter ceded the long-disputed territory known as the Nova Colonia to Spain, in exchange for seven of the Paraguay missions adjacent to the Brazilian frontier. The attempt to carry out this compact was resisted by the Jesuits by force of arms, and the missions had to be conquered by "a difficult and costly campaign" (C.M.H. VI, 386). Shortly thereafter, a similar agreement was completed between the kings of the same countries, by which the Portuguese town of St Sacrement was to be transferred to Spain. Again, the Jesuits led their armed natives in revolt against both parties, to resist the transfer (Moland xii, 428-429). It was for this political interference that they were ultimately expelled in 1767. To put down the uprising, a Spanish army had to be equipped and sent to Paraguay, the same army mentioned in Candide as being sent "pour mettre à la raison les révérends pères jésuites" (Morize, p.56). Thacker tells us that Voltaire himself had taken a great interest in maritime commerce between Cadiz and South America and that, about 1750 or 1751, he had invested part of his fortune in the commerce of Cadiz. In 1756 "il apprit que ses fonds aidaient à subventionner

une expédition espagnole contre les missions jésuites, qui s'étaient révoltées en 1752" (Thacker, p.276). No doubt he considered this a mis-use of money intended for other purposes, and the cause of that mis-use was the Jesuits.

Voltaire's personal grudge against the Jesuits, which constitutes the third possibility, is evident in some of *Candide's* first, seemingly irrelevant words after he thinks he has killed the baron's son, and has fled the Jesuit camp with Cacambo. Despairingly, and somewhat ludicrously, the protagonist asks how he can be expected to think about food or to eat any ham when he has just committed murder, and when he will never see his love, Cunégonde, again. "Et que dira le Journal de Trévoux?" he adds (Morize, p.92). It is a comment Voltaire cannot resist. The Journal de Trévoux was a Jesuit publication under the editorship of Père Berthier, which, since 1750, had made frequent attacks on the vanguard authors of the Encyclopédie with whom Voltaire was associated. By 1751, the philosophes, recognizing the necessity of retaliating to this verbal onslaught, launched a counter-attack. Yet in 1752, religious authorities aided by the Jesuits managed to secure an order of the Paris Parlement to have the first two volumes of the Encyclopédie suppressed. John Pappas,

in an informative article, "La Rupture entre Voltaire et les jésuites", stresses that, as an "ancien élève" of the Pères, Voltaire himself was as reluctant at first to turn against the order as it was, originally, to criticize his works such as the Lettres philosophiques that were considered anti-Christian. In fact, in 1753, after the appearance of his Abrégé de l'histoire universelle which earned him a Jesuit condemnation, "Voltaire, pour éviter les ennuis qu'entraînerait une condamnation, désavoua son oeuvre aussitôt".² But the Jesuits persisted in their criticism of the Encyclopédie, and D'Alembert, the backbone of the publication at that time, was also one of Voltaire's best friends. D'Alembert wrote letters begging the alliance and support of Voltaire in the cause of the Encyclopédistes. According to Pappas, the crisis came in 1757 when Damiens attempted to assassinate Louis XV and the republican doctrines of the Encyclopédie were blamed. The privilège of the Encyclopédie was removed, and the Jesuits began an all-out battle against it and against certain of Voltaire's works. Toward their former student, "les jésuites abandonnèrent toute indulgence".³ Voltaire, amazed to hear of this and encouraged by D'Alembert, eventually decided to fight back, and led the campaign against the Jesuits in 1759. The fact

²J.N. Pappas, "La Rupture entre Voltaire et les jésuites", Lettres romanes, XIII (1959), 357.

³Ibid, p.359.

that it took him two years to retaliate, concludes Pappas, indicates that "il n'a pas décidé d'attaquer les jésuites dans un éclat soudain de colère, mais c'est avec hésitation et presque à contre-cœur que sa décision fut prise". Furthermore, "le rôle de D'Alembert dans l'engagement de Voltaire à défendre cette publication est considérable".⁴ How valid these conclusions are is unimportant here; the fact remains that, once his course was chosen, Voltaire pursued it with alacrity. Invective of a personal nature was not below him, as evidenced by his Relation de la maladie, de la confession, de la mort, et de l'apparition du jésuite Berthier (1759). It is the story of Père Berthier and a companion who are riding in a coach to Versailles. Berthier begins to perspire and breathe with difficulty, and finally falls in a faint. An eminent doctor is called, pronounces Berthier poisoned, and questions the coachman:

Cocher, n'auriez-vous point mis dans votre voiture quelque paquet pour notre apothécaire?--Non, monsieur, répondit le cocher; voilà l'unique ballot que j'y ai placé par ordre du révérend père. Alors, il fouilla dans le coffre et en tira deux douzaines d'exemplaires du Journal de Trévoux.--Eh bien, messieurs, avais-je tort? dit le grand médecin.⁵

The remedy used on the Jesuit is a purgative made up of

⁴Ibid, p.369.

⁵Voltaire, Mélanges, Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1965, p.338.

"une page de l'Encyclopédie dans un vin blanc".⁶ But the poison has worked its way too far into Berthier's system, and eventually two priests are called to confess him. The first refuses to confess a Jesuit. The second consents, is shocked to hear Berthier admit to being editor of the Journal, and denies him absolution. He dies soon after, appears in a vision to his successor, Frère Garassise, and warns the other to cease work on the Journal immediately, for the sake of his soul. The work is a vivid illustration of Voltaire's hostile attitude toward the Jesuits, and his sympathy for the Encyclopédistes.

Most thoroughly substantiated, however, is the fourth and final possibility. Voltaire saw the Jesuits as a political threat to France, exemplified by the interference they were demonstrating in South America. That a religious order should defy a pact made between kings, he viewed as outrageous. Voltaire's beliefs about the age-old issue of church and state are well known. He was a monarchist in that he believed the king should possess the highest authority. He plainly expressed his preference for an enlightened monarchy where "le roi gouverne personnellement, avec éclat"⁷,

⁶Ibid, p.339.

⁷Politique de Voltaire: Textes choisis et présentés par René Pomeau, Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1963, p.14.

for it was his opinion that "un prince qui ne sait pas par lui-même ce qui est juste n'est pas digne de régner".⁸ And plainly also, he expressed his fear that the Jesuits were pulling strings in government by playing on the consciences of rulers. This fear finds reflection in many of his works. In the Essai sur les moeurs, Voltaire discusses how the Jesuits "étaient en Europe les confesseurs de ces princes", while they are waging war in Paraguay (Moland xii, 429). Cacambo, in very similar words, describes Jesuit government to Candide as they approach the Jesuit camp. "Pour moi", he says, "je 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 confessent ces rois" (Morize, p.82). La Voix de sage et du peuple, published in 1750 and suppressed by an act of council in 1751, declares explicitly that "il ne doit pas y avoir deux puissances dans un état", and reinforces the point by asserting that a father does not expect the tutor of his children to instruct him in matters concerning the household (Moland xxxiii, 467). And the Dictionnaire philosophique, published after Candide, further stresses the fact that the clergy should have no power whatsoever within the state and that the church "abused the distinction between spiritual power and temporal

⁸The Complete Works of Voltaire: Notebooks, ed. T. Besterman, Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1968, I, 130.

power--the former deserved respect but no authority, the latter deserved both respect and authority" (Gay, p.135). It is obvious that Voltaire considered the Jesuits to be such abusers. He knew of the influence they had exerted over an elderly Louis XIV in 1694:

In his youth, the king was gallant, carefree, wholly given over to pleasure. He grew older. He began to worry about the welfare of his soul. Gently, insidiously, his Jesuit confessor played on his fears of Death and Hell.⁹

In his Siècle de Louis XIV, Voltaire voices regret that "les jésuites étaient en possession de donner un confesseur au roi, comme à presque tous les princes catholiques".¹⁰ He discusses, though not solely from a political point of view, "les quatre grands siècles" of Philip Alexander, Caesar and Augustus, the Medicis, and Louis XIV, when those monarchs were strong. But now, he sees the power of the monarchy waning, while that of the Jesuits in Paraguay strengthens increasingly. About the order's gradual extension of its lands beyond those granted it by royal consent, he comments that "dans le Paraguay, on n'a rien donné aux jésuites, ils se sont faits souverains sans se dire seulement propriétaires d'une lieue de terrain, et tout a été leur ouvrage" (Moland xii, 428). He claims, furthermore, that the territory takeover has reached a point where "ils sont venus à

⁹Victor Thaddeus, Voltaire: Genius of Mockery, Montreal: Louis Carrier & Co., 1928, p.4.

¹⁰Voltaire, Oeuvres historiques, ed. R. Pomeau, Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1957, p.1078.

bout de gouverner un vaste pays comme en Europe on gouverne un couvent" (Moland xii, 424). Coming from the pen of Voltaire, a man who opposed the temporal power of the Church, this is definitely not a compliment. Rather, it is a warning to his fellow countrymen that the same thing could easily happen in France, where the Jesuits had a very large following.

And indeed, it seems from all accounts that Voltaire had good reason to fear. Historians agree that, in South America, the temporal arm of the Church did extend far beyond the spiritual, and that the Jesuit organization was also gaining a stronghold in France. By the time Spanish troops were dispatched in the late 1750's to deal with the Jesuits, the latter had become a formidable force, according to the Cambridge Modern History (VI, 326): "Hitherto, the order had been powerful in Portugal and had exercised, through the royal confessors, great influence at court." Barber mentions that "in Paraguay, their love of wealth and power has held unfettered sway" (Barber, p.29), while Diffie declares that they "had acquired a position and standing in the Spanish colonies (and in the world in general) that made them a state within other states, and their power transcended national boundaries" (Diffie, p.586). "They had the education of the country in their hands", says John Morley, "and from the confessor's closet, they pulled

wires which moved courts" (Morley, p.181). In fact, "à la fin du règne de Louis XIV, les jésuites avaient atteint en France l'apogée de leur puissance. En 1710, d'après De Quens, confident du P. André, les pères 'avaient 150 établissements, et ils étaient 3,000 dont 1,800 prêtres'" (Pomeau, p.40). It is understandable, then, that Voltaire's *Candide*, upon coming into the presence of the Jesuit Commandant "baisa d'abord le bas de la robe" (Morize, p.85), in the gesture of a subject entering the chamber of a king. Understandable as well, is Voltaire's use of the familiar, yet foreign setting of Paraguay, in which to disguise his criticism of the Jesuits in France. The technique was employed by many authors of the time, because of the strictness of French censorship.

Jesuit power was largely due to a highly organized mission system which came to characterize the order, and which was most effective in Paraguay. Society within these missions is described by three eminent authors, Benjamin Keen, B.W. Diffie, and Régine Pernoud, with regard to establishment of missions, form of their organization, their Indian policy, and their historical significance. True, one can find discrepancies in their attitudes toward the Jesuits by reading their accounts, for an unbiased opinion is impossible to come by. Sometimes, the "benevolent and legitimate side"¹¹ of the system is stressed; often, the

¹¹Charles Gibson, The Colonial Period in Latin American History, Washington: American Historical Association, 1958, p.14.

domineering, yet efficient side is brought out. But a comparison, in each category, of Voltaire's version with that of these writers reveals that Voltaire was definitely predisposed to criticize the Jesuits unfavourably in all respects.

Of the establishment of missions, Keen tells us that missionary work was begun among the natives by two Jesuit priests in 1609, and that the first mission settlements were in eastern Paraguay. By the eighteenth century, a strictly disciplined, centralized structure had developed, whose "absolute control over the labour of thousands of docile Indians enabled Jesuits to turn their missions into a highly profitable business enterprise" (Keen, p.142). His emphasis on the extent of Jesuit dominance over the Indian is shared by Diffie, who adds that colonization was generally achieved by a few missionaries, usually accompanied by troops for protection, entering a region not previously Christianized. A settlement would be made, and the Indians induced to live within the mission by peaceful means if possible, or by force if necessary (Diffie, pp.578-579). Pernoud shows less objectivity than the other two. His inclination in favour of the Jesuits is evidenced by his chapter title: "Un Réussite sociale--les réductions des pères jésuites au Paraguay". Though he, too, discusses the journeying of missionaries into the uncivilized interior to preach to

the natives, he cannot do so without drawing the conclusion that the priests' work was of benefit to humanity:

Ces départs étaient autant de voyages d'exploration qui firent faire de grands progrès dans la connaissance de l'intérieur du pays (Pernoud, p.102).

A noble picture of the Jesuits as discoverers and explorers is thus painted, with no mention of their use of force in dealing with the Indians. Voltaire, however, shows no objectivity at all. His violent opposition to the Jesuits becomes evident almost as soon as he begins the section on Paraguay in his Essai sur les mœurs, with his pointed statement that the setting up of Jesuit missions "paraît à quelques égards le triomphe de l'humanité" (Moland xii, 424). Then, he promptly goes on to prove that appearances do not always correspond with reality, by contrasting the Jesuit method of controlling and civilizing Indians with that of the Quakers in North America. The Quakers, he maintains, taught their natives "seulement par l'exemple, sans attenter à leur liberté", whereas the Jesuits used religion as an excuse "pour ôter la liberté aux peuplades du Paraguay" (Moland xii, 424). This contrast is insulting when we consider the respect Voltaire has previously shown toward the Quakers at times, and doubly insulting when we consider

the fun he has made of them at others.¹² If the Jesuits compare unfavourably even with them, it puts the order on a low plane indeed, in Voltaire's eyes. And Candide lowers it even further, by equating the Indians in the Jesuit mission to negro slaves. After he has taken his breakfast in a shady arbour with Candide and Cacambo, the Jesuit Commandant "fit retirer les esclaves nègres et les Paraguains qui servaient" (Morize, p.86). Such a description seems designed to induce the reader to share Voltaire's feelings of hostility toward the Pères.

On the form of mission organization, there seems to be substantial agreement among historians. In the legislative capacity, each mission had a Father Superior whose authority came ultimately from the Pope, and who was chief of all the curacies or towns. Two Jesuit fathers living in each town were charged respectively with its spiritual and material functions. Each town also had a corregidor, and alcaldes and regidores, forming a cabildo or legal body, as in the Spanish villages, which was elected from among the Indians. Keen and Diffie make it a point to indicate that this cabildo had, in fact, no power, since final decisions on all

¹²See Lettres philosophiques, Lettres I-IV, 'Sur les Quakers'. At times during these letters, Voltaire takes a very serious attitude toward the Quakers, (Lettre IV), and on other occasions his tone is one of gentle mockery at some of the Quaker customs (Lettres I, III).

cases were made by the Jesuits (Keen, pp. 142-144, Diffie, p. 58). Pernoud chooses a milder approach, asserting simply that "ces Indiens s'administraient eux-mêmes; ils avaient leurs regidores et leurs alcaldes, autrement dit, leurs officiers de justice et de police, élus par la population" (Pernoud, pp. 95-96). It is Voltaire's approach that is extreme.

Candide's Cacambo voices a viciously sarcastic condemnation in his summation of Jesuit government:

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'oeuvre de la raison et de la justice (Morize, pp. 80-82).

Part of this description refers to the economic management of the missions, all of which were run on a communal basis. No one was allowed to work for personal gain; everyone, without distinction of age or sex, worked for the community. Careful supervision of the Indians, as they toiled in the fields, was practised. The curé himself saw to it that all were equally fed and dressed. For this purpose, curés placed in storehouses all agricultural and industrial produce, selling in the Spanish towns their surplus of goods. Those who joined the settlement as members of the community were obliged to surrender their personal possessions and work only for food, farm implements, and the good of the commune. Diffie tells us, in addition, that in

the acquisition and handling of vast sums of money, the Jesuits demonstrated great ingenuity. They collected fees for various types of religious services rendered to individuals or the state. Missionary work in country missions was paid for by the bishops, and frontier missions were supported by the crown. Children who attended schools paid fees, and the king paid the tuition of the Indian children in some Jesuit schools. Whenever they suffered destruction of property through Indian wars, they could appeal to the authorities and the crown to recompense them, on the grounds that they were rendering a public service (Diffie, p.585). Money was in the hands of the Jesuits, then, while the Indians laboured only for the essentials of life, and this caused Voltaire to say flatly that the Jesuits had all, and the people nothing. Yet these funds were put to good and unselfish use, claims Pernoud. They were employed, for example, to promptly pay the regular tribute of one piastre per head, charged the missions by the Spanish king (Pernoud, p.101). Keen quotes an admiring account by Félix de Azara, who travelled to South America and saw these missions. Azara, who criticizes many aspects of Jesuit society, admits that the lavish appearance of their churches was most impressive and must have cost "vast sums that they could have appropriated for themselves if they had been ambitious"

(Keen, p.145). It appears likely, therefore, that Voltaire is rather hard on the Jesuits.

The breakfast served within the arbour in Candide is eaten from vessels of gold "tandis que les Paraguains mangèrent du maïs dans des écuelles de bois, en plein champ, à l'ardeur du soleil" (Morize, p.84). Voltaire emphasizes that the natives enjoyed notably less well-being than the Jesuits, implying that the Jesuits exploited the towns, lived in luxury themselves, and deprived the Paraguayans. Where he states a fact correctly, he often twists its meaning in the interest of his own satire. A prime example occurs in the Essai, where the natives' lack of money and the Jesuits' possession of it are combined in a sentence that makes the Jesuits sound like crooked slave-owners who take advantage of Indians and bribe officials:

Ils donnent au roi d'Espagne une piastre pour chacun de leurs sujets; et cette piastre, ils la payent au gouverneur de Buenos-Aires, soit en denrées, soit en monnaie; car eux seuls ont de l'argent et leurs peuples n'en touchent jamais (Moland xii, 425).

Of Voltaire's unswaying prejudice against the Jesuits, there seems little question. Of the actual enslavement of Indians by the Jesuits, which Voltaire states as a certainty, there is, on the other hand, some doubt, which will be discussed in examining the Jesuit Indian policy.

The most active period of Jesuit mission settlement was between 1620 and 1640, and the main Jesuit problem

during that time, was to induce the Indians, many of whom were warlike, to establish themselves in definite localities under the tutelage of the missionaries. Persuasion was used in part, "but once in the mission, the Indians were not permitted to leave" (Diffie, p.580). Missionaries isolated the Indians, states Diffie, took their produce as religious offerings, and returned to the Indian "little to compensate him for the loss of his freedom" (Diffie, p.582). Diffie has already made known his opinion that, upon entering a mission, the Indian sacrificed his liberty. Indeed, he later says explicitly that "slaves were among the most valuable possessions of the Jesuits. A close inventory would probably reveal that they owned thousands. That their treatment of the slaves was in keeping with the customs of the times, is indicated by the stocks, chains, and other instruments of punishment found on their plantations at the time of their expulsion" (Diffie, p.584). Later, he clarifies that "they owned Indian as well as negro slaves" (p.725). Keen, however, quotes a defense by Jesuit Father Anchieta against current accusations that the Jesuits were enslaving the Indians. Anchieta declares that the Fathers act purely out of love of God and interest in the Indians' souls. He answers Diffie's claim that the natives were not allowed to leave once inside the mission, by saying that if a man had finished his farm work, his time was his own, the only provision being that he was getting along with his

wife and would not use the opportunity to flee from her. Furthermore, says Anchieta, the Indians were not obliged by force to work on the plantations. They came to help of their own free will, because they needed clothing or implements (Keen, p.197). Pernoud agrees with the Father's defense, augmenting it with a justification of his own for keeping the Indians isolated on mission sites:

Il était essentiel, en effet, pour la réussite de l'oeuvre, de préserver les peuplades du mauvais exemple que les populations espagnoles n'eussent pas manqué de leur donner: ces êtres qui vivaient sans argent, qui...pratiquaient avec une entière sincérité les principes du christianisme qu'on leur avait inculqués, n'auraient pu manquer d'être scandalisés au contact des métis et des européens (Pernoud, p.100).

For this reason, he continues, any visiting whites were allowed to stay only three days, in quarters separate from the natives. Indeed, it is probable that this policy was the only one feasible at the time, if Jesuit communities were to survive. Voltaire, however, viewed it as outrageous and intolerant. In Candide, he contracts the three-day limit into three hours. Candide and Cacambo are allowed to wait just that long in the Jesuit camp for the Commandant (Morize, p.83). Only after they make it known that they are not Spanish but German, does the Commandant admit them into his presence and deign to speak to them. This exaggeration of the truth at the expense of the Jesuits brings Voltaire's pat statements about native slavery under suspicion also.

While it may certainly be true that there were some slaves on the missions, as Diffie points out, it is by no means an accepted fact that the Jesuits made a regular practice of enslaving all the natives in the towns. Indeed, the biggest argument against such a statement is that the natives were armed, and that they were employed to defend the missions against attackers. This, Voltaire does mention, but not in relation to slavery. Rather, he paints a scandalous picture of a supposedly religious organization turned military.

Candide achieves his purpose effectively by "the coupling of two normally antithetical ideas: traditionally, the priest and the soldier perform very different functions in society, but the Jesuits, and in particular the baron's son, combine them".¹³ Upon arriving at the Jesuit camp, Candide and Cacambo request permission of "un officier paraguayin" to speak to "monseigneur le commandant" (Morize, p.83). The combination of an ecclesiastical title (monseigneur) with a military rank (le commandant) "is the first of a whole series designed to spotlight the ridiculous incongruity of these warlike preachers of the gospel of peace".¹⁴ But a very important point is never taken into account: that one does not arm one's slaves, and certainly one does not make them officers. Neither does Candide ever touch upon the original

¹³ Voltaire, Candide, ed. J.H. Brumfitt, London: Oxford University Press, 1968, p.44.

¹⁴ Ibid, p.175n.

reason for this arming; the reader is informed only that the Jesuit forces are causing trouble in St Sacramento and are defying the kings of Spain and Portugal. It is a fact, however, that the Jesuits had obtained royal authorization to arm their natives, so as to protect them from that very slavery to which they were accused of subjecting them.

Inhabiting the Sao Paulo region of Brazil, were a breed of mamelucos or mixed-bloods, resulting from the polygamous practices of the Portuguese. Since the area was agriculturally poor, these Paulistas, as they were called, became hunters of men. The sugar plantations of Brazil needed slaves, for "in addition to the French West Indian markets, there was always a demand for slaves in the Spanish colonies".¹⁵ Long before the end of the sixteenth century, the Paulistas had embarked on slave-hunting expeditions. Portugal, at the time, found herself in international difficulties that gave the mamelucos further opportunity for pursuing their lucrative occupation. The normal supply of African slaves was prevented from reaching Brazil by a series of political circumstances, so that the plantations were very short of labour. Thus, "the Spanish Jesuit missions...proved to be a boon to the slave-hunters, for the missions furnished the bandeirantes with their most accessible supply of slaves. The period of greatest growth of the Spanish missions corresponded exactly

¹⁵Nellis M. Crouse, French Struggle for the West Indies, London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, 1966, p.102.

with the scarcity of negro slaves, and the great demand for Indians" (Diffie, p.670-671). Hence, the Paulistas watched "d'un bon oeil l'établissement des premières bourgades qui constituaient d'excellents réserves d'Indiens, destinés à devenir une proie facile" (Pernoud, p.103), and in 1629, they made their first attack on the defenseless Jesuit missions, taking 2,500 Indians. In vain did the Jesuits protest and appeal to the authorities. There was neither the force, nor the disposition to stop the Paulistas. The mission system had made slaving an easy and a safe profession. Instead of tracking down nomadic, warlike natives, all the mamelucos had to do now was to gather them in. Diffie informs us that mission Indians began to suspect that the Jesuits were in league with the slave-hunters, but that this suspicion appears to have been groundless (Diffie, p.671). Nevertheless, Jesuits often unwittingly aided slavers by making excursions into the interior and seeking out nomadic tribes where they had taken refuge, to preach them the gospel. Slave-hunters had merely to follow the Jesuits, remain hidden until the Fathers had gained the Indians' confidence, and then spring out and capture the unsuspecting savages. In fact, slave-hunters went further, "disguised themselves like Jesuits, and, by the worst species of sacrilege, frequently decoyed the natives" (Diffie, p.671). Eventually, the

Jesuits became desperate; "Ils obtinrent des rois d'Espagne l'autorisation d'avoir des armes à feu"; and they severely defeated the Paulistas in 1642 (Pernoud, p.103). But these facts are ignored in Candide, for they are not actually within the work's chronological scope, and more importantly, they contribute nothing towards its author's bitter, sarcastic argument against the Jesuits.

The same is true when we consider the historical significance of the mission system. Voltaire elects to allow it no important accomplishments at all, sticking only to points derogatory to the Jesuits. He sums up his opinion of the effects they had in Paraguay in the words of Frère Garassise, to whom Berthier had appeared in a vision in the Relation de la maladie, de la confession, de la mort, et de l'apparition du jésuite Berthier. The sequel to that work is the Relation du voyage de Frère Garassise, neveu de frère Garasse, successeur de frère Berthier, in which Garassise takes a trip to Paraguay soon after the vision, and upon returning, presents a list of all the Jesuit deeds there:

Comment les frères jésuites avaient fait révolter pour la cause de Dieu la horde du Saint-Sacrement, contre leur roi légitime.

Comment les frères jésuites avaient excité une sédition dans le Brésil pour rétablir l'union et la paix.

Comment les frères jésuites avaient pris leurs mesures pour envoyer le roi de Portugal rendre compte à Dieu de

ses actions.

Comment les frères jésuites ont été chassés de Portugal par les lois humaines contre les lois divines.¹⁶

Nothing but unfavourable information is given, and it is given in a tone of savage mockery. It is true that mission towns soon fell into decay after the Jesuits were expelled, either due to inefficiency of those who took them over, as Azara (quoted by Keen) would have us believe (Keen, p.143-144), or because the Jesuits themselves did not have as great an influence as is generally supposed, which is Diffie's opinion (Diffie, p.583). Nevertheless Diffie, unlike Voltaire, is generous enough to allow that the order did more in Paraguay than simply cause trouble. "As missionaries", he says, "they were among the most daring, as educators among the most assiduous, and as organizers, the most efficient" (Diffie, p.583). His words contain a note of admiration, stronger even in Pernoud:

Matériellement, moralement, intellectuellement même, le système des jésuites avait transformé toute une population (Pernoud, pp.110-111).

The civilization created, continues Pernoud, "n'était peut-être pas le 'triomphe de l'humanité'", but it "marque certainement l'une des grandes triomphes de christianisme" (Pernoud, p.111). He uses the phrase in quotes on purpose to refute Voltaire's opening paragraph of the Paraguay

¹⁶Voltaire, Mélanges, Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1965, pp.348-349.

chapter in the Essai.¹⁷ Indeed, it does appear, once again, that Voltaire has been somewhat unfair toward the Jesuits in his supposedly objective Essai, and even more so in his openly satirical Candide. Granted, Candide and the Essai were published before the Jesuit expulsion, and therefore have limited perspective in their examination of the mission system; yet even so, there seems little question that the French poet-philosopher has allowed his personal prejudice against the order to interfere with his political analysis of its achievements.

In conclusion, we cannot take the picture painted of the Jesuits in Candide at face value. It is a picture coloured by polemic purpose, which omits many details contrary to that purpose. As André Delattre says about Voltaire: "Il ment délibérément, par principe, dans sa lutte contre les préjugés et les abus".¹⁸ The Jesuits, it appears, had been mentally categorized by Voltaire as part of "les abus" before the writing of Candide was even begun; this predisposition to condemn them is evident enough in the Essai, about which Virgil Topazio comments:

One cannot deny the frequent intervention of Voltaire's personality and prejudices in this genre as in others. After all, it was the author of Zadig and Candide who

¹⁷Quoted on p.48 of this paper.

¹⁸André Delattre, Voltaire l'impétueux, Paris: Mercure de France, 1957, p.42.

was making the all-important selection of facts and events (Topazio, p.77).

Historians admit that the Jesuit mission system of the eighteenth century was far from perfect, but Voltaire was biased against the Jesuits because of his own clashes with them.¹⁹ Candide constitutes a reflection of that bias, and "there is no stronger illustration of the twist which polemical fury may give to the most acute intelligence" (Morley, p.321).

¹⁹Yet it is wise to consider pp. 367-368 of John Pappas' article. Voltaire feared the Jesuits' enormous temporal power and wanted to see it curbed, but he never wanted the order to be totally crushed. He even expressed regret at the news of their expulsion from France in 1762.

III. THE FRANCE OF VOLTAIRE'S DAY: THE NEED FOR REFORM

The picture painted of humanity in Candide is depressingly vicious. In Spain the protagonist is subjected to torture by the Inquisition for listening with apparent approval to the unorthodox views of his tutor Pangloss. In Surinam he is cheated twice, first by the unscrupulous merchant Vanderdendur who offers to transport him and his goods by sea to Italy then sails without him, and next by the local judge who charges him ten thousand piastres for voicing his complaint too loudly and another ten thousand for hearing the case. In Paris he falls slightly ill and is immediately surrounded by suddenly-acquired "intimate friends" who can see that he is wealthy and wait like vultures for him to die. A doctor comes without being sent for and charges fees for giving him medicines that make the illness worse. A town clergyman urges him to sign a billet de confession which will gain him a decent burial and a passage into the other world. When he recovers despite the doctor, a cleric offers to show him around town for a price and ends by taking him to a crooked gambling house. There, a lady calling herself "la marquise de Parolignac" seduces him into giving her his diamonds. The cleric himself then writes

him a letter, supposedly from Cunégonde, saying she is ill in a place nearby. Candide hastens to the place, pours gold and jewels into a lady's outstretched hand, and is arrested immediately afterwards. He has been represented to a policeman by the cleric as an "étranger suspect" (Morize, p.167), and he would have gone to prison had he not managed to bribe the policeman. Continually the naive hero is being duped and tricked because he does not suspect the extent of the corruption around him.

That Voltaire really had such a low opinion of mankind in general and of Paris in particular, is doubtful. What is certain is that he despised what David Williams calls "the inactivity and negativity of the frivolous social world with its emphasis on passive discussion rather than application of ideas".¹ As J.H. Brumfitt indicates in his introduction to French Literature and its Background, Voltaire's basic purpose was the moral improvement of human society, which "could be furthered by the achievement of specific aims".² Candide provides us with an apt example of this viewpoint since it singles out several specific issues to be subjected to invective. In the areas of slavery, intolerance, the dishonesty of professional men, the existence of legal documents that

¹French Literature and its Background, ed. J. Cruickshank, London: Oxford University Press, 1968, III, 167

²Ibid., p.9

could be used for corrupt purposes, and the contribution of monasteries to vice, Voltaire is particularly critical. Hence, these five areas will be examined separately in this chapter.

Slavery

Voltaire protested against the institution of slavery on moral grounds, stating in his Dictionnaire philosophique that "chaque homme dans le fond de son coeur a droit de se croire entièrement égal aux autres hommes".³ Just outside Surinam, Candide and Cacambo encounter a negro slave who, in recounting how he was sold into slavery, expresses the same sentiments:

Les fétiches hollandais qui m'ont converti me disent tous les dimanches que nous sommes tous enfants d'Adam, blancs et noirs. Je ne suis pas généalogiste mais si ces prêcheurs disent vrai, nous sommes tous cousins, issus de germain. Or vous m'avouerez qu'on ne peut pas en user, avec ses parents, d'une manière plus horrible (Morize, p.129).

The "manière horrible" to which he is referring is cruel treatment at the hands of his master, that corrupt merchant Vanderdendur. When Candide and Cacambo first come upon him, he is "étendu par terre" and is missing both his left leg and his right hand (Morize, p.127). It is the custom on a sugar plantation, he explains, to cut off a slave's hand if he catches it in the grindstone and to

³Voltaire, Dictionnaire philosophique, 2nd ed; Paris: Garnier, 1967, p.177.

cut off his leg if he tries to run away. He adds that it is at this price that Europeans buy sugar.

The passage is obviously designed to evoke sympathy for the slave. It makes the reader think that Voltaire is such a vehement opponent of slavery that he would gladly embrace this negro as a brother. It causes the reader to grimace at the harshness of the "customs" of the time in punishing slaves. It makes the reader despair at the fact that those who harvest the sugar crop must suffer so much in order that this commodity be made available to Europeans. To assume, however, that Voltaire, by creating these three impressions, is painting the situation in its true light is both dangerous and erroneous.

For one thing, Voltaire was not so violently opposed to slavery himself that he even thought to include this episode in the original manuscript of Candide. Apparently he was inspired to add it only after reading an account by Helvetius on the mortality of slaves in America.⁴ Thacker tells us in his edition of Candide (p.258) that this account, given in De l'Esprit, declared that no sugar reached Europe "qui ne soit teinte de sang humain". The statement probably appealed to Voltaire's sense of the dramatic and caused him to include it. At any rate, S.T. McCloy specifically states

⁴Politique de Voltaire: Textes choisis et présentés par René Pomeau, Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1963, p.214.

that "Voltaire, like Montesquieu, was so mild an opponent of slavery as to be criticized by subsequent abolitionists" and that, far from regarding all black men as brothers, he "considered the negro handicapped by colour, appearance, and intelligence, inferior to the white man" (McCloy, p.87). It is likely also that he realized, as did his contemporaries, that "on a base of negro slave labour rested all the important, large-scale economic activities" of the French colonies (Keen, p.205). War had led the government of France to encourage slavery. In the Wars of the Spanish Succession (1702-1713), the Austrian Succession (1740-1748), and the Seven Years (1756-1763), she had lost to Britain nearly all of her previous vast empire. Most of the colonies she retained were in the West Indies and the Indian Ocean "and the crops were chiefly sugar, tobacco, indigo, and manioc for which slave labour was a great asset in cultivation, harvesting, and processing" (McCloy, p.82). In fact, "so essential did the government consider the need of slave labour to cultivate the plantations and manufacture their products in the colonies that it undertook to subsidize heavily the slaving companies at a certain sum per slave, and at so much per tonnage of the vessels engaged" (McCloy, p.83). Diffie further asserts that "negro slavery...was not only accepted as an economic necessity; it was defended by the Church as being compatible with Christian ethics" (Diffie, p.473). While this latter measure was no doubt

too extreme for Voltaire to agree with, it is not unlikely that he could see, as Victor Malouet later saw, that the institution was, at the time, the only practical system for the French colonies. Malouet, a Santo Domingo resident for a number of years and himself a slave-owner, published a defense of the slaves in 1788 in which he agreed that slavery was cruel and must go as soon as another method could adequately replace it. For the present, however, it would have to remain since the climate was too hot for white men to work in the fields and since no housing facilities existed for the slaves should they be freed and hired as day-labourers. The immediate need, insisted Malouet, was for improvement of conditions and not emancipation (McCloy, p.107-108). Voltaire, in all probability, is insisting upon the same thing. By reminding us in Candide that we are all equal in that we are products of the same Creator, he is urging more humane treatment of slaves, if slaves there must be.

Secondly, Voltaire's implication that hands and legs were frequently chopped off by hard-hearted masters is a great exaggeration. One account quoted by Keen admits that "instances of cruelty do occur...but these proceed from individual depravity and not from systematic, cold-blooded, calculating indifference" (Keen, p.205). Indeed some slaves, lucky enough to have kind masters, led comparatively easy lives (Keen, p.210).

There was also legislation regarding the treatment of slaves, enacted by Louis XIV in 1685 to prevent harsh excesses by defining the limits beyond which slave-owners must not go. This legislation, known as the Code Noir, permitted the master to chain or scourge his slave, but he could not torture, mutilate, or execute him. A runaway slave who had been gone a month would be branded with the fleur-de-lis and his ears clipped, and if the offense were repeated he would be hamstrung and a fleur-de-lis branded on each shoulder. Furthermore "these penalties were to be inflicted by the court, not by the master" (McCloy, p.85). The slave in Candide, then, represents a direct violation of the Code Noir. Not only has punishment been inflicted by the master, but it is punishment in the form of mutilation. Voltaire has shown us a case of utter disregard for the law, but he has done it for a good reason. He wants us to see that it is entirely possible to get away with such a crime. That many slave-owners actually did get away with it is pointed out by McCloy:

All in all, the Code Noir was designed to protect the slave by designating his rights and obligations. The peaceful slave ought to experience no difficulties unless his master was unjust. That masters and officials were scrupulous, however, to follow the wording and spirit of the Code, there can exist only the gravest doubt. Evidently some did; others did not (McCloy, p.86).

Surely there were numerous honest and scrupulous masters who did not believe in mistreatment and who followed the Code. But those whose consciences did not prevent them from

disobeying were not effectively checked by the government either. If discovered, they were subject to a light fine, though more often than not the remoteness and isolation of their plantations kept them from being discovered at all (Keen, p.210). "Nothing is more illusory," quotes Diffie from an account of the time, "than the effect so much vaunted of these laws" (Diffie, p.473). Pernoud agrees and quotes as evidence a portion of the ship's log of a slave-trading company which states in a matter-of-fact way that much of the slave cargo was regularly lost through death. Such lack of concern for human life, though it horrifies us now, was, according to Pernoud, "caractéristique de la mentalité de l'époque" (Pernoud, p.65). And it is this mentality to which Voltaire is objecting. He uses hyperbole as a weapon to jolt French citizens into realizing that excesses of cruelty do exist in the colonies even though forbidden by law. To forbid, he implies, is not enough; it is necessary to enforce the law more effectively in order to bring about an improvement in the slave's lot.

Thirdly, Voltaire's comment about the availability of sugar in Europe at the cost of extreme slave suffering is yet another exaggeration. As we have seen, the hardships he depicts for the negro in Surinam represent those undergone only by a slave with the most merciless of masters, and the majority of masters were not as merciless as Vanderdendur.

As we have also seen, the statement was probably mainly inspired by Helvetius' De l'Esprit. It is interesting, as well, to note that the remark is uttered in a Dutch colony, for this fact would evoke more associations for the Frenchman than are at first evident. Nellis M. Crouse points out that the French were much more inefficient at marketing sugar than the Dutch because the French looked down on trade as an ignoble profession and their commerce was low at the end of the seventeenth century. Furthermore, the French imposed excessive duties on sugar, tobacco, and ginger, while the Dutch who also practised trade in the West Indies levied a low uniform rate on all these commodities. Thus, the Dutch were able to import raw sugar and tobacco from the French West Indies, treat it in their refineries and factories, and re-ship it to the Baltic ports and even to France at a good profit.⁵ The words of the negro in Candide, therefore, would quite possibly call to mind this state of affairs and would definitely stir French anger at the fact that, despite the slave's hard work and harsh treatment in the colonies of France, the final result of his efforts was a profit for the Dutch.

On the question of slavery, then, Candide's approach is to present the situation not as it truly is but as it

⁵Nellis M. Crouse, The French Struggle for the West Indies, 1665-1713, London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, 1966, p.5.

can sometimes be in the most extreme cases. The approach is an effective one and it makes the point very well. That such abuse of slaves existed at all, even if not as commonly as Voltaire would have us believe, should be enough to make any French reader of the time experience some degree of guilt.

Intolerance

Various groups belonging to French society in the eighteenth century experienced injustices at the hands of their fellow citizens, often because of their religion, race, or profession. Such injustices constituted intolerance and against intolerance Voltaire waged a furious battle. Though many forms of it were present in France at the time, only those considered to be relevant to politics because they were the concern of government or because Voltaire felt they should be, will be discussed here. Hence, we examine religious intolerance as demonstrated against the Protestants, racial intolerance as demonstrated against the Jews, and social intolerance as endured by actors and actresses.

When Pangloss is hanged and Candide whipped at the Inquisition's "auto-da-fé" in Spain, Voltaire is criticizing the Church in Rome. But we are also reminded, as Voltaire means us to be, that Catholics in France were now, and had been in the past, equally unfair towards the Huguenots. After Louis XIV had revoked the Edict of Nantes in 1685,

many Huguenots had left the country, but "of those pastors who remained, more than a hundred were executed for conducting services, and countless laymen were sent to prison or the galleys for attending assemblies" (McCloy, p.7). For this reason, the Protestant clergy in France had gone by assumed names, had avoided residence in towns, and as much as possible had slept during the day and engaged in pastoral visitation at night. It was still the law that all Protestant children had to go to Catholic schools and receive Catholic instruction. If parents attempted to counteract this instruction, lettres de cachet were obtained ordering Protestant youth to be removed from the home and placed in monasteries, convents, or Catholic homes. Not even the Protestant dead and dying were left in peace. It was a frequent practice for a priest to go to the home of a dying Protestant and demand his conversion. The Protestant who refused was subject to a heavy penalty if he recovered, and if he died, his body was dragged through the streets on a hurdle. Before any Frenchman could be licensed as a physician, surgeon, lawyer, apothecary, bookdealer, or printer, it was necessary that he be a Roman Catholic in good standing and that he produce a statement from his curé or his vicar to this effect (McCloy, pp.7-14). There is no denying that these were difficult days for the Huguenot, though Voltaire once more paints the picture blacker than it is. Candide is shown no pity



by the Inquisition; neither is he later shown any genuine concern when he falls ill in France. Voltaire is hard on his compatriots because he wants to bring them face to face with the vices that exist amongst them. That the French were an entirely callous people, however, is not true.

McCloy declares that Protestantism survived in France despite all efforts to stamp it out because "a large element of the French people, more particularly the friends and neighbours of the Protestants, did not approve of the barbarous edicts and ignored them" (McCloy, p.17). Certainly, Voltaire and other intellectuals of his time were amongst those who disapproved; in fact Voltaire spoke of such intolerance as "le plus odieux" of the effects of religion⁶ and defined "infâme" as "l'intolérance pratiquée par des Eglises organisées et inspirée par des dogmes chrétiens" (Pomeau, p.315). As well as Candide, he wrote the Lettres philosophiques (1734) and the Traité sur la tolérance (1763) in which he directly challenged the French to review their outlook. The Lettres "criticized the France of Louis XV by comparing its bigotry and stupidity with the tolerance and enlightenment of contemporary England"⁷ where all "vivent en frères...et contribuent également au bien de la société".⁸ The Traité was inspired by the killing of Jean Calas and

⁶Gustave Lanson, Histoire de la littérature française, Paris: Librairie Hachette et C^{ie}, 1902, p.747.

⁷J.H. Brumfitt, Voltaire Historian, London: Oxford University Press, 1958, p.48.

⁸Voltaire, Mélanges, Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1965, p.576.

had a great effect in eventually inducing more tolerant attitudes towards the Protestants. Pomeau, in fact, credits Voltaire with contributing more than anyone else toward the ultimate granting of certain Protestant rights:

Après Voltaire et grâce à lui, l'opinion ne doute plus que la tolérance soit naturelle, humaine, nécessaire: ce fut là sa contribution majeure dans le domaine de la politique religieuse.⁹

About Voltaire's political views on toleration, Peter Gay asserts:

His many pronouncements on natural law should be read as a political program: 'What is tolerance? It is the endowment of humanity. We are all stupid in weakness and error; let us forgive each other our stupidities, that is the first law of nature'... And more specifically: 'Entire freedom of the person and his goods; to speak to the nation by means of one's pen; to be judged in criminal matters only by a jury formed of independent men; to be judged in any case only in accord with the precise terms of the law; to profess in peace whatever religion one wishes...' (Gay, p.31).

Candide by its vicious portrait of the cruel Inquisition is implicitly exhorting French Catholics everywhere to embrace this new "political program" and to cease their barbarous, unjust measures against the Protestants.

Perhaps the Jews in France suffered as much as the Protestants did but Voltaire is not as sympathetic towards them. Discriminated against as a race rather than because of their religion, the Jews of the time fell into three main groups: those of Avignon, those from Portugal, resident

⁹Politique de Voltaire: Textes choisis et présentés par René Pomeau, Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1963, p.202.

in southwestern France, and the German Jews of Alsace and Lorraine. Those of Avignon, the oldest and most settled, were disliked largely on economic grounds. Those expelled from Portugal in the 1500's were small in number, rich and cultured, and were accepted socially in their resident cities. Many posed as Christian converts until the atmosphere became tolerant enough for them to cast off their masks. The German Jews who were living in Alsace and Lorraine when Louis XIV and Louis XV annexed those provinces to France in 1648 and 1768 respectively were generally poor, uncultured, and intensely disliked. One of the main reasons that most Jews were so hated, asserts McCloy, was that "they made no effort to integrate themselves with the French population" (McCloy, p.52). At least "the Protestant had French blood and interests. His religious difference did not in the slightest prevent him from being a loyal and useful citizen. It was otherwise with the Jew, who never identified himself with a people" (McCloy, p.59). Furthermore, Jews took no part in agriculture but devoted themselves wholly to moneylending and commerce. Their opponents accused them of hoarding coin and by clever device siphoning it out of the country. They charged the Jews with dissimulation, trickery, fraud, and hatred of all other peoples even though permitted to dwell among them. Their proponents answered these charges by claiming that a Jew was prevented from engaging in agriculture

because French law did not permit him to own land. His life was also made burdensome by an additional tax he was required to pay, over and above the normal taxes demanded of the French. He was forbidden to enter the guilds. He might not travel from one French city to another without permission. A license had to be granted him before he could display his goods at fairs in a city other than his own. His numbers were sharply limited; in Metz, for example, the government permitted only 480 Jewish families to live and this number could not be exceeded. Thus, reduced to a state of poverty and hindered by so many restrictions, the Jew was forced to resort to moneylending and usury. Yet despite these circumstances, claimed the proponents, Jews had contributed considerably to the commerce of the country. Opponents denied this, declaring that the Jews were ignorant and that they had contributed nothing (McCloy, pp.52-58).

Careful to present both sides of the coin, McCloy indicates that Voltaire definitely sided against the Jews. "Among the philosophes," he states, "...we find Montesquieu and Diderot sympathetic in attitude, Voltaire caustic" (McCloy, p.57). Montesquieu in his Esprit des Lois gave brief but sympathetic treatment to the Jews for the notable part they played in the commerce and finance of the Middle Ages and deplored the cruelties to which they were subjected. Voltaire, on the other hand, was bitter

toward the Jews, saying that they hated all other nations and had shown exceeding cruelty toward them. He berated them for the savageness of their past: Joshua's mistreatment of the Canaanites, the horrible sacrifice of Jephtha's daughter. He alluded to certain Jews of Strasbourg as coin-clippers (rongeurs). He charged the Jews, repeatedly a turbulent people, with resorting, on various occasions, to human sacrifice. While he referred to them several times as "my friends" or in similar terms and professed sympathy for their sufferings, he pointed out bluntly that they had dealt out about as much cruelty as they had received. Elsewhere, in his Traité sur la tolérance, he made it clear that he would grant them freedom to hold religious exercises and to practise their customs insofar as they brought no disturbance to other people. "Toward no other group except the Christian priesthood was Voltaire so harsh", claims McCloy (p.58). Certainly this hostility is very evident in his character of Don Issachar in Candide. Issachar, who shares Cunégonde as a mistress with the Grand Inquisitor, is jealous, self-seeking, and immoral. Nevertheless, when he and the Grand Inquisitor are killed in quick succession by Candide, the equally evil Inquisitor receives a ceremonious burial, while "on jette Issachar à la voirie" (Morize, p.53). This obviously unfair distinction made between the two men on religious grounds shows that Voltaire, despite his dislike for the Jews, resented the intolerance

practised against them by Christians. Proof of such resentment is found in his Notebooks, where he points out that both sects sprang originally from the same source and he writes in English:

When I see Christians cursing Jews, methinks
I see children beating their fathers.¹⁰

Yet once again, his suggestion that dead Jews are habitually thrown on dungheaps rather than being interred beneath the soil, is not to be taken literally. That they were not buried in consecrated ground is probable; that they were carelessly tossed in sewers is another exaggeration employed by Voltaire to show how truly intolerant the French are.

Neither did French intolerance stop at religion and race. Those who made their living upon the stage were also victims of injustice. Acting was considered to be ignoble and sinful in eighteenth century France; an actor was automatically excommunicated from the Catholic church and could not receive proper burial unless he repudiated his profession before he died. Voltaire felt that this matter was a political one on which there should be legislation because it affected public affairs. His own friend, actress Adrienne Lecouvreur, who died suddenly under mysterious circumstances, was buried in unhallowed ground because she

¹⁰The Complete Works of Voltaire: Notebooks, ed. T. Besterman, Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1968, I, 51.

had not had the chance to disown her occupation. Voltaire's anger at what he called a "féroce préjugé"¹¹ is displayed by his passage in Candide where he repeats the exaggerated phrase that Paris respects actresses "quand elles sont belles", but "on les jette à la voirie quand elles sont mortes" (Morize, p.151). Voltaire was of the opinion that acting was useful to society, and Tallentyre quotes him as writing in 1733: "I look on tragedy and comedy as lessons in virtue, good sense, and good behaviour". He vehemently states that "our poor are fed by the production of such works which bring under our rule the very nations who hate us. In fact, he who condemns the theatre is an enemy of his country".¹² To make his point he effectively employs exaggeration here, as he did in the case of religious discrimination against the Protestants and racial discrimination against the Jews.

He wants his readers to realize just how despicable all three forms of intolerance are.

Dishonesty of Professional Men

As we have already seen, many instances of cheating occur in Candide. On Dutch soil the protagonist is victimized by Vanderdendur who steals his goods and sails off with them; then he is charged exorbitant rates by the judge to whom he

¹¹Gustave Lanson, Histoire de la Littérature française, Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie., 1902, p.746.

¹²Voltaire in his Letters, being a Selection from his Correspondence, trans. S.G. Tallentyre, New York and London: The Knickerbocker Press, 1919, p.36.

complains. We know that Voltaire probably resented the Dutch for being cleverer merchants than the French. It is also true that he had had personal dealings with them in the past and had suffered at their hands. Adams, in his edition of Candide states that Voltaire had successively offered 1,000, 1,500, 2,000, and 3,000 florins to a Dutch bookseller for the return of Frederick the Great's Anti-Machiavel (Adams, p.4). This bookseller's name, Van Duren, is not unlike that of Vanderdendur, and the latter name was probably used on purpose to suggest the former.

Later, when Candide steps onto French land, the corruption he encounters among the professions is overwhelming. As soon as he falls ill, nurses, seeing his diamonds, flock to his bedside. A doctor arrives without being summoned, prescribes medicines that make the illness worse, and departs with his fee. Voltaire apparently looked upon many doctors as incompetent as well as dishonest; he devotes a passage to them in his Notebooks:

Les physiciens, en calculant, sont comme les marchands qui pèsent et vendent des drogues qu'ils ne connaissent pas.¹³

Upon recovering despite the doctor, Candide meets a cleric who offers to show him Paris and ends by extorting money from him and having him arrested by means of a lettre de cachet.

¹³The Complete Works of Voltaire: Notebooks, ed. T. Besterman, Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1968, I, 414.

Fortunately for the innocent hero, the policeman is also dishonest and accepts a bribe to release him. This dishonest policeman has a dishonest sailor for a brother who offers, for a good sum, to transport Candide out of the country. There are no decent and virtuous professionals left, it seems; everybody can be bought. Yet it would be a mistake to take for granted that Voltaire scorned all professions and professionals; indeed, he admired the industrious merchant far more than the lazy aristocrat:

Je ne sais pourtant lequel est le plus utile à un Etat, ou un seigneur bien poudré que sait précisément à quelle heure le roi se lève, à quelle heure il se couche, et qui se donne des airs de grandeur en jouant le rôle d'esclave dans l'antichambre d'un ministre, ou un négociant qui enrichit son pays, donne de son cabinet des ordres à Surate et au Caire, et contribue au bonheur du monde.¹⁴

What Voltaire despised was the deceitful practice of those professions by corrupt professionals. He saw too much of this deceit in the France of his day. Like Montesquieu in Letter CXLVI of his Lettres Persanes, Voltaire laments that "cruel, fraudulent profiteers, brazenly disregarding all standards of humanity, have reduced their fellow-men to despair, ruination, and the grave".¹⁵ Hence, "although it would be wrong to assume that everyone's behaviour was debased",¹⁶ such crimes were prevalent

¹⁴Voltaire, Lettres philosophiques, Paris: Garnier, 1967, p.30.

¹⁵R. Fargher, Life and Letters in France, Suffolk, Eng.: The Chaucer Press, 1970, II, 33.

¹⁶French Literature and its Background, ed. J. Cruickshank, London: Oxford University Press, 1968, III, 151.

enough to deserve exaggeration in Candide. Voltaire intentionally makes the situation look as bad as possible in order to encourage reform.

Existence of legal documents that could be used for
Corrupt Purposes

Though Candide manages to escape from the policeman in Paris by means of bribery, the fact that his arrest has been so quickly engineered by the cleric shows how easy it was in eighteenth century France to obtain a lettre de cachet for a person's imprisonment. Adams claims, in his edition of Candide, that such documents "could be obtained from the king upon presentation to him of a grievance or an alleged grievance; the recipient was ordered forthwith to jail, house arrest, or exile. No process of law protected the victim" (Adams, p.99). Furthermore, "in French law, the lettre de cachet was valid indefinitely" (Gay, p.78), so that the prisoner had no means of being set free unless his freedom was specifically requested. Again Voltaire, to emphasize the unfairness of the lettre de cachet presents us with an extreme case. Candide is entirely undeserving of such confinement, for he has committed no crime; thus, the piece of paper that commands his arrest becomes an abominable document. Yet as McCloy indicates, there were, in truth, two sides to the story. For one thing, Voltaire had reason to detest the lettre de cachet because he himself had been imprisoned

by virtue of such a document in 1726 for challenging the chevalier de Rohan to a duel after lackeys of Rohan had caned him in return for some mocking verses. In 1734 when his Lettres philosophiques appeared, an order for his arrest was again issued. McCloy admits that the lettre de cachet "violated justice inasmuch as the imprisoned was seldom brought to trial and had no way to defend himself. There were indeed not a few cases of flagrant injustice in which the imprisoned spent decades in prison for some trivial offense or in fact for no offense at all" (McCloy, pp.140-141). McCloy also warns, however, that it is well to guard against the conclusion that lettres de cachet were as unpopular at that time as their critics would have us believe:

In the great majority of cases, the lettres de cachet no doubt served a useful purpose. The insane were sent to asylum or prison in this fashion; family honour was thus protected and wayward members of society were thus handled (McCloy, p.140).

While lettres de cachet were most frequently demanded in order that Protestant children might be confined in Catholic institutions, they were requested almost as often by families themselves, both Catholic and Protestant alike. Sons and daughters not amenable to parental will were imprisoned this way by the hundreds. Sometimes a person asked for his own imprisonment. Many poor Protestant youths jumped at the chance to get a Catholic education at state expense. Women

who had contracted venereal disease voluntarily confined themselves and even confessed, in some cases falsely, to an immoral life in order to receive free treatment from the government. A few society women asked to be imprisoned to get away from cruel husbands. Two husbands were imprisoned by their wives at the Bicêtre and when one was eventually offered freedom, he refused it. Hence, rather than accepting Voltaire's impression that lettres de cachet were an unmitigated curse, "it is safer to conclude that throughout most of the century they had been popular throughout France, as is attested by the abundant demands for them especially by the clergy, the nobility, and the bourgeoisie" (McCloy, p.141). Nevertheless, Voltaire did not approve of them and wanted to see them abolished, as Candide illustrates.

Another document that he considered equally evil was the billet de confession which the town clergyman tries to make Candide sign when he is ill. The practice originated during the last years of Louis XIV's reign when Pope Clement XI promulgated the Bull Unigenitus in 1713 which condemned a hundred and one Jansenist propositions. Louis XV in a later attempt to stamp out Jansenism issued an edict in 1730 making the Bull the law of the land. "Beginning in the 1740's some bishops ordered priests to refuse the sacraments to unrepentent Jansenists; in 1746 Christophe de Beaumont, Archbishop of Paris, instructed his clergy to refuse the

last rites to any dying Christian who would not show a billet de confession, a statement attesting that he had confessed to a priest loyal to the Bull Unigenitus" (Gay, p.139). That dying people should be pressed in this manner was, to Voltaire's mind, wrong. Certainly the reader of Candide can hardly help but feel angered at the passage where a bedridden, suffering patient is bothered with such details, and can hardly help experiencing some satisfaction when the town clergyman is thrown out of Candide's bedroom. It is no secret that the author of the conte considered that France would be far better off if both the lettre de cachet and the billet de confession could be eliminated.

Contribution of Monasteries to Vice

Soon after leaving the corruption of Paris behind them, Candide and his friend, Martin, encounter a Theatine monk by the name of Friar Giroflée. When they first perceive him he is standing with his arm around a young girl, smiling while she pinches his cheeks. Candide remarks to Martin that here are two unusual people who actually seem happy. In order to ascertain if appearances are true, the two engage Giroflée and the girl in conversation, enquiring particularly as to whether Giroflée is satisfied with his life as a monk. To their horror, they receive the following reply:

Ma foi, monsieur (dit frère Giroflée) je voudrais que tous les Théatins fussent au fond de la mer. J'ai été tenté cent fois de mettre le feu au couvent et d'aller me faire Turc. Mes parents me forcèrent à l'âge de quinze ans d'endosser cette détestable robe pour

laisser plus de fortune à un maudit frère aîné que Dieu confonde. La jalousie, la discorde, la rage habitent dans le couvent. Il est vrai que j'ai prêché quelques mauvais sermons qui m'ont valu un peu d'argent, dont le Prieur me vole la moitié, le reste me sert à entretenir des filles; mais quand je rentre le soir dans le monastère, je suis prêt de me casser la tête contre les murs du dortoir; et tous mes confrères sont dans le même cas (Morize, pp.180-181).

Once more Voltaire has taken an extreme case so as to make his point forcefully. Compelled at an early age to embrace the cloistered life, Giroflée has rebelled and has gone against all the teachings of the monastery in becoming immoral, worldly, and pleasure-seeking. Yet, while it is unlikely that many of that day would actually harbour desires to burn down the building, it is by no means impossible that there were those who resented their fate. McCloy states that, in many cases, Protestant children were confined to Catholic convents by lettres de cachet to force them to get a Catholic education, and that "paradoxical as it may seem, some Protestant parents in poor circumstances asked to have their children confined in these homes to avoid the burden of their upkeep" (McCloy, p.13). Sometimes parents with more children than they could afford to support would raise only the eldest few and confine the others to monasteries and convents in this way. What Voltaire is criticizing here, then, is the use of this method by families as "a means of cheaply shedding their responsibilities towards younger or refractory sons and daughters" (Barber, p.29).

Such confinement, asserts Barber, not only breeds truculent and immoral citizens in certain instances but it is "unnatural and harmful for the individual" and "injurious to society through its imposition of celibacy upon a substantial fraction of the population" (Barber, p.29). Voltaire felt that the French government should be made aware of these effects, and that it should take steps toward putting a stop to the practice.

In conclusion, it may be said of Candide that although Voltaire consistently exaggerates a situation and presents it in its worst possible light, he does so for a good reason. Perhaps Barber puts it as well as anyone by saying that "behind the satire...there lies a rational critique. In ridiculing and attacking these human follies and cruelties, Voltaire is, by implication, demanding more intelligent standards of conduct, greater rationality, and a keener sense of reality, as well as more charity, from his fellow-men" (Barber, p.34). As Brumfitt points out in his edition of the work, "Candide is a satire, and like all satires it is unfair".¹⁷ It presents us with a "world of action, varied, tense, contradictory, and paradoxical"¹⁸ that is not the real world and does not try to be. Rather, it is a world designed to shock Frenchmen into realizing how much improvement and reform was needed in their society. Whether it accomplishes its purpose is a

¹⁷Voltaire, Candide, ed. J.H. Brumfitt, London: Oxford University Press, 1968, p.28.

¹⁸I.O. Wade, Voltaire and Candide: A Study in the Fusion of History, Art, and Philosophy, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1959, p.250.

matter of debate. According to Peter France, "Candide, rather than teaching any particular lessons, suggests a new way of looking at the world, a way of comic detachment which can bring pleasure out of what is most agonizing and horrible".¹⁹ Furthermore, "one can ask whether this pleasure does not, in fact, get in the way of a serious consideration of the issues raised".²⁰

Yet when one considers the reforms that ultimately did take place in France, partially due to Voltaire's criticisms, it seems more sensible to disagree with Peter France. In 1793 slave-trading was forbidden, and the institution of slavery was abolished in 1794. Shortly after the Calas case and Voltaire's Traité sur la tolérance, the more severe anti-Protestant laws fell into disuse; raids on open-air religious meetings ceased; no pastors were executed; no laity were sent to the galleys; and no property, apparently, was seized (McCloy, p.22). By 1787 Louis XVI had granted the Edict of Toleration, enabling Protestants to have marriages, baptisms, and burials under more favourable conditions, and opening to Protestants the privilege of entering most professions. Jews were granted the right of French citizenship in 1791. A year earlier, the lettre de cachet was abolished.

Obviously Voltaire's hyperbole in Candide was the approach

¹⁹French Literature and its Background, ed. J. Cruickshank, London: Oxford University Press, 1968, III, 72.

²⁰Ibid, p.76.

needed at the time, and, in light of its consequences,
proves to have been a most effective method.

IV. ELDORADO: POLITICAL IDEAL, OR SATIRICAL PORTRAIT?

Quite in contrast with the corruption of eighteenth century France, the land of Eldorado, visited by Candide and his man, Cacambo, seems to represent all that is not depraved, all that is yet pure and unsullied. It appears to be a state so nearly perfect that it puts the French nation to shame. Yet, at the same time, it must be remembered that, shortly after they arrive in Eldorado, the two travellers are consumed with the desire to depart; they prefer to return to the tumultuous evils and corruptions of the outer world than to stay for any length of time in the peace and tranquillity of such an idyllic land. Not satisfied to remain in Voltaire's "golden" state, they are restless and must be off, so that they eventually decide to move out despite the obvious grave risks involved in climbing the sheer cliff-walls surrounding the place. The problem now is this: is the depiction of Eldorado intended sincerely as one of an ideal state which man, in his stupidity, is not yet ready for, or is it intended satirically, as one of undesirable and perhaps even boring perfection that makes the heroes "wonder whether their earlier sufferings were not to be preferred" (Barber, p.26)? Arguments can be found for both points of view, and both points of view will be examined in the course of this chapter.

Eldorado as Utopia

Traditionally located in South America, Eldorado, "the golden will-o'-the-wisp that lured Spanish knights" (Keen, p.77), is an environment that symbolizes by its very name the hypothetical ultimate, the most desirable situation that man is capable of attaining, given the correct conditions under which to develop. This much becomes evident simply in the description of the place as Candide and Cacambo see it when they come upon it:

...Ils découvrirent un horizon immense, bordé de montagnes inaccessibles. Le pays était cultivé pour le plaisir comme pour le besoin; partout, l'utile était agréable. Les chemins étaient couverts, ou plutôt ornés de voitures d'une forme et d'une matière brillante, portant des hommes et des femmes d'une beauté singulière, traînés rapidement par de gros moutons rouges qui surpassaient en vitesse les plus beaux chevaux d'Andalousie, de Tétuan, et de Méquinez (Morize, p.106).

The pleasure taken by the inhabitants in the mere cultivation of their land, plus the beauty of their general appearance, outstanding enough to be termed "singulière", suggests an enjoyment on their part both of life and of health which the two visitors from another world find unusual enough to remark upon. Furthermore, the inaccessible mountains surrounding the area, and the red llamas that are its beasts of burden, give it an atmosphere of complete separation not only from the rest of the world, but from any other existence the protagonists have so far encountered. Barber calls it "the perfect country where men live according to the rational principles of deism, where there are no priests, no monks,

Quoted

no law-courts, and all is prosperity and happiness" (Barber, p.34). Perhaps also, though it is only an external observation, the use of the imperfect tense--the tense denoting continuity and stability--which is so commonly used throughout the two chapters dealing with Eldorado, creates intentionally, the same impression in the style of writing as in the land depicted. In any case, it is evident that many of the customs and the ways of life presented here as characteristic represent, for Voltaire, the ideal, or what could be, as distinct from the real of the imperfect here-and-now. In the realms of government, control of religion, control of economy, and the resultant social harmony, Eldorado has reached a political stage far above that of any other nation, and European countries in particular, he implies, would do well to follow its example.

Firstly, in the area of government, Voltaire was very much against despotism as a means of rule. Even when preceded by the word "enlightened", the term "despot" still bears associations with ruthless misuse of power, which he dreaded. Peter Gay, in his Voltaire's Politics, quotes d'Argenson's work, Considérations sur le gouvernement ancien et présent de la France as defining the difference between "despotism" and what he called "true monarchy". In despotism, d'Argenson states: "A single ruler confounds

his passions with the public good; in a true monarchy, royal authority is 'balanced but not shared.' The despot admits no higher law; the legitimate sovereign recognizes that his power comes from 'a contract between king and people which demands the observance of fundamental laws'. A despot rewards and punishes arbitrarily; in a legitimate monarchy, the rule of law prevails, and subjects 'obey only the laws and not men'" (Gay, p.107). When Voltaire read d'Argenson's work in manuscript in 1739, he was very impressed. He himself was of the opinion that France had developed sufficiently as a nation not to require despotic rule, and England to which he also looked, was more highly developed than France. There was no question, however, that either nation was responsible enough for a democracy. The ideal system, then, was, in his view, one that was somewhere between the two extremes: not domineering enough to kill the people's initiative, yet firm enough to direct their course for them where they themselves had not the wisdom to do so. To him "the only possible system of government for France was an absolute monarchy".¹ It is hardly surprising, therefore, to find that Eldorado is painted as an absolute monarchy, presided over by a king whose benignity is such that Candide and Cacambo are instructed to greet him with the gesture of affectionate familiarity: by kissing him on both cheeks. But much more

¹Theodore Besterman, Voltaire, New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World Inc, 1969, p.303.


important than the king's temperament is the way he treats his absolute state. Rather than imposing inconvenient and useless restrictions upon his subjects, he concerns himself entirely with their welfare and advantage, so that even the poorest village in the kingdom where the two guests dine is adequately, even abundantly supplied with food, the most vital necessity:


...On servit quatre potages garnis chacun de deux perroquets, un contour bouilli qui pesait deux cents livres, deux singes rôtis d'un goût excellent, trois cents colibris dans un plat et six cents oiseaux-mouches dans un autre; des ragoûts exquis, des pâtisseries délicieuses; le tout dans des plats d'une espèce de cristal de roche. Les garçons et les filles de l'hôtellerie versaient plusieurs liqueurs faites de canne de sucre (Morize, pp.108-109).

Neither does one need to pay for his food, as Candide and Cacambo discover when they try. "Toutes les hôtelleries établies pour la commodité du commerce sont payées par le gouvernement", they are informed (Morize, p.110). Moreover, much to their amazement considering the description of the feast above, they are told that "vous avez fait mauvaise chère ici, parce que c'est un pauvre village; mais partout ailleurs, vous serez reçus comme vous méritez de l'être" (Morize, p.110)! Voltaire is saying here that when a king uses his absolute authority correctly, that is, when he uses it not for the oppression of his people but for their

benefit, even the poorer communities of a domain should not starve, and misery is eliminated. For Voltaire, financial stability is a sign of good government, be it in a single household or in an entire country. An entry in his Leningrad Notebook states: "Les Incas avaient des palais incrustés d'or et couverts d'épailles. Emblème de bien des gouvernements".² Furthermore, there is no reason, either, why the poor should be deprived of education. In Eldorado, the idea is implicit that everyone, rich and poor alike, has the opportunity to pursue the study of science; one of the public buildings at which Candide gazes in delight, is the "palais des sciences, dans lequel il vit une galerie de deux mille pas, toute pleine d'instruments de mathématique et de physique" (Morize, pp.121-122). The general intellectual standard maintained in Eldorado by its benign ruler is obvious. Obvious as well is the welcome extended by that ruler to any and all of his people wishing to visit his palace; even the newcomers' arrival there occasions a greeting by the grand officers of the crown, who lead them to the king's quarters amid music by two rows of musicians, each row consisting of a thousand men. This is probably significant since music traditionally symbolizes the harmony of the spheres and indicates that

²The Complete Works of Voltaire: Notebooks, ed. T. Besterman, Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1968, I, 454.

all is well in the world. Such a large number of musicians here, then, is evidence of the supreme harmony existing in this particular monarch's realm, a harmony that had certainly not been present in eighteenth century France under Louis XIV, and still was not under his successor, Louis XV. 

Unlike the reign of the Eldorado king, the later rule of Louis XIV is well known to have been an onerous one for the French citizens of the time. The author himself "argued that, at his best, Louis XIV had used his unprecedented power wisely, humanely, and (what was perhaps even more important to Voltaire) with good taste. His program of public works had created employment and beautified cities; his sponsorship of arts and letters had contributed to a renaissance in literature and encouraged rational thinking; his administrative regulations had improved public administration, reformed the law code, disciplined the army, built a navy, and ended the spirit of faction" (Gay, p.112). But in his later years, during the 1680's, the king became more haughty, more intolerant, and more arbitrary in his rule. It was in these years, to Voltaire's despair, that he abandoned his reforms, revoked the Edict of Nantes, waged a series of fruitless wars that drained the French treasury, and eventually came under the influence of the Church. Far from concerning himself with their welfare, 

Louis taxed his subjects heavily, leaving them in a state of abject poverty in order to further the splendour of Versailles, his palace. Far from ensuring educational opportunities even for rude peasants, Louis left them to their ignorance and superstition--a condition that Voltaire, the ardent hater of superstition, considered pitiful. After Louis XIV's death in 1715, this state of affairs continued under Louis XV. In the conclusion to his article "Superstition" in the Dictionnaire philosophique, Voltaire sums up thus:

...Moins de superstitions, moins de fanatisme;
et moins de fanatisme, moins de malheurs.³

Eldorado is free from unhappiness because there, education has replaced superstition. In other words, Louis XIV and Louis XV were mis-using an absolute power which, as Voltaire here demonstrates, can, ideally, be employed to great advantage, for the betterment of the nation as a whole. In fact, proper use of such authority can result in a near-Utopian society with no need for law courts and prisons because the people are content. The full significance of Eldorado now becomes clear. It is a land "où toute la nature est d'une espèce si différente de la nôtre" (Morize, p.111); it is a contrast to the countries of Europe and especially to France where so much is wrong that does not have to be wrong. Basically, it

³Voltaire, Dictionnaire philosophique, Paris: Garnier, 1967, p.398.

is an indirect reproach to the ruler of the time, Louis XV, where Voltaire does not dare to use a direct one.

More specifically, however, Eldorado serves as a model by which Voltaire outlines to us his own political ideas. Though they are governed by an absolute ruler, the individuals dwelling here are politically free, as all men should be according to the author. This fact is recognized by the king, who points it out to Candide and Cacambo when they declare their intentions of leaving his realm:

Tous les hommes sont libres; partez quand vous voudrez (Morize, p.123).

But, he adds, "mes sujets ont fait voeu de ne jamais sortir de leur enceinte, et ils sont trop sages pour rompre leur voeu" (Morize, p.124). This vow which the inhabitants are too wise to break is the only factor limiting their freedom; yet it is a limiting factor and proves that, in Voltaire's opinion, a small measure of liberty must be sacrificed for wisdom. The wisdom acquired in return, however, is, for him, more than a fair exchange; it is the wisdom that enables the people of Eldorado to recognize a good government when they have it, and to appreciate its proper handling of religion and of the economy, which produces the social harmony they possess.

From a religious point of view Eldorado corresponds with Voltaire's own well known attitudes. It constitutes a prime example of the deistic society where men believe in the existence of God but reject the conventional doctrines and dogma normally associated with the Church. As the old man who is the traditional literary personification of sagacity explains to Candide, God is considered a being to whom one prays not in supplication but simply in gratitude for all the gifts He daily gives to man, because, as the Brachman tells the Jesuit in the Dialogues entre un brachmane et un jésuite, "il faut l'adorer".⁴ Nothing is expected from God in return for one's prayers, for He is not a God who interferes with the affairs of mankind; He is a God who has merely set the world in motion and equipped it with sufficient resources for it to run on its own. Hence, He is not free to grant man's every whim and wish, and to pray to Him in this way is as ridiculous and useless as is the penitent prayer that asks forgiveness for original sin. An Eldorado inhabitant does not believe in original sin, and therefore prays to the Creator without guilt. The idea of revelation has no place in his religion; worship, for him, is a simple matter, summed up by the old sage in two sentences: "Nous avons, je crois, la religion de tout le monde; nous adorons Dieu du soir jusqu'au matin" (Morize, pp.115-116).

⁴Voltaire, Mélanges, Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1965, p.314.

Such a religion obviously requires no intermediaries; hence, no priests, in the ordinary sense of the word, are found in Eldorado. Rather, the general viewpoint is, as the old man expresses it:

Le bon vieillard sourit. Mes amis, dit-il, nous sommes tous prêtres...--Quoi! Vous n'avez point de moines qui enseignent, qui disputent, qui gouvernent, qui cabalent, et qui font brûler les gens qui ne sont pas de leur avis? --Il faudrait que nous fussions fous, dit le vieillard (Morize, pp.117-118).

The biting sarcasm implied in Candide's question and the precise quip of the old man's reply states Voltaire's opinion in a mere few words, and states it more effectively than it could have been stated in several pages of direct mocking at world religion and all the squabbles and difficulties for which it is responsible. Because of the absence of priests, the church in Eldorado has none of the political power that the Catholic Church had in eighteenth century France. Because of the absence of priests, there are no fanatical Catholics who incite police to arrest people like Calas and who inflict long and brutal torture upon those arrested. Voltaire's opinion of priests has not changed in this respect since his sarcastic mockery of the Anglican clergy in England, in his Lettres philosophiques:

Le clergé anglican a retenu beaucoup des cérémonies catholiques, et surtout celle de recevoir les dîmes avec une attention très scrupuleuse. Ils ont aussi la pieuse ambition d'être les maîtres.

De plus, ils fomentent autant qu'ils peuvent dans leurs ouailles un saint zèle contre les non-conformistes.⁵

⁵Voltaire, Lettres philosophiques, Paris: Garnier, 1967, p.15.

Once again, the writer, a man discouraged with existing conditions, has used his pen to describe Eldorado and thus to illustrate his beliefs concerning the ideal situation with regard to religion.

In France at the time, as well as in other European countries, intolerance of heterodoxy frequently led to the burning of heretics. The notorious Spanish Inquisition in particular regularly engaged in such practices. If an individual was suspected of straying from the straight, narrow path of Catholicism, the Inquisition immediately seized him and sentenced him to punishment. Hence, in Candide, we find Pangloss seized and sentenced to be hanged for questioning the orthodox views on free-will, and Candide sentenced to a whipping for listening without objection. Voltaire despaired of such intolerance amongst the different religions of the world, and frequently pointed out that it was ludicrous since all religions are founded upon the same basis: belief in the existence of an all-powerful God. He urged religious toleration as the most sensible course, realizing that it was the conflict of customs in the various faiths--customs such as the practice of confession and the eating of pork and the necessity for intermediaries--that led to potentially violent disagreements between groups of men. Understandably, then, religion in Eldorado has

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been stripped not only of its priests but also of all superfluous ceremonies, so that only the essential practice of acknowledging and thanking God remains. Furthermore, in Voltaire's opinion, God is not directly connected with the morality of man; mankind determines its own moral scruples through the reason initially bestowed upon it. Accepting as natural this simple system of living, the citizen of Eldorado, in contrast with the rest of the world, has learned "la justice, la tolérance, et l'humanité".⁶ He dwells in religious contentment and in political calm. Because religion is an affair strictly between man and God, it is every individual's own business, and the Eldoradan neither fears condemnation himself nor thinks to condemn his neighbour on account of it.

Economically, the inhabitants of the land are also perfectly satisfied despite the evident inequality of wealth-distribution in their realm. Even here, there are the richer and the poorer, the "haves" and the "have-nots", for Voltaire believed that economic equality, unlike political equality, was impossible:

Il est impossible, dans notre malheureux globe que les hommes vivant en société ne soient pas divisés en deux classes, l'une des riches qui commandent, l'autre des pauvres qui servent.⁷

Therefore, though each citizen is considered equal to his

⁶Voltaire, Dictionnaire philosophique, Paris: Garnier, 1967, p.367.

⁷Ibid, p.176.

fellows, in the political sense, as a subject of the king, we still find here, as we do in every society, the peasants who till the soil and labour physically for their bread, alongside the king's musicians who live in relative ease and greater luxury. The major difference, however, between these people and the French, is that even among the poorest there is no misery. Unlike Louis XIV and Louis XV, the ruler of Eldorado has ensured that no one in his realm is in danger of starvation. Consequently, that which is termed poverty in Eldorado is what Voltaire's own country would certainly call abundance. The house in which Candide and Cacambo dine, which is looked upon by the inhabitants as one of the houses in a "pauvre village", is, in the Europe-oriented eyes of the two visitors, "bâtie comme un palais d'Europe" (Morize, p.108). That which is served to them as a regular meal, for which the government and not the guest pays, has all the ingredients of a banquet. What is still more amazing is that there is a state of wealth with which to contrast this relative poverty, a wealth that would no doubt be almost inconceivable to the newcomers. We see it in a description of the king's splendid palace:

Le portail était de deux cent vingt pieds de haut, et de cent de large; il est impossible d'exprimer quelle en était la matière. On voit assez quelle supériorité prodigieuse elle devait avoir sur ces cailloux et sur ce sable que nous nommons or et pierreries (Morize, p.119).

Despite the obvious exaggeration employed here by Voltaire, he has sufficiently demonstrated his point. Due to excellent management of economic resources by the absolute government, a management that could be imitated, even those who farm the fields are always adequately provided with the necessities of life and are content enough that they cultivate the land "pour le plaisir comme pour le besoin" (Morize, p.106).

Peace reigns because the peasants have no grievances to protest. The people have been treated so fairly that they have become virtuous and have thus outgrown the need for prisons and law-courts. For the natural and ultimate result of such fair treatment--assuming, as Voltaire always did, that man is basically good--can be nothing other than complete social harmony.

We do indeed find complete social harmony in Eldorado. The people are friendly, kind, and hospitable. Wherever they go, Candide and Cacambo meet a welcome. Not only are they fed when they enter the house in the poor village, but they are waited on by "deux garçons et deux filles de l'hôtellerie, vêtus de drap d'or" (Morize, p.108). When they try to pay for the meal with the rubies and emeralds they have collected in the streets, both the host and the hostess burst into hearty laughter at their ignorance; yet it is a laughter of good-humour and not of malice, a laughter that eloquently bespeaks the pure joy of living in such an

ideal community. As soon as he recovers from his mirth, the host goes as far as to apologize for the humbleness of his home, and to explain to the guests that elsewhere they will be given a proper reception, a reception more worthy of them. He is the first individual they encounter after entering Eldorado, and he is outstanding for his marked lack of interest in precious stones and riches, his extreme politeness, and his tremendous generosity. How different he is from those corrupt, greedy, dishonest French businessmen whom Candide later meets in Paris! Furthermore, the two travellers soon discover that his attitude is one that generally prevails throughout the kingdom. The old wise man to whom the host takes them for information when they start to enquire about life in the realm treats them with the same respect:

Le vieillard reçut les deux étrangers sur un sofa matelassé de plumes de colibri, et leur fit présenter des liqueurs dans des vases de diamants; après quoi il satisfit leur curiosité...(Morize, p.113).

Later, having talked extensively with the old man, they decide to pay a visit to the king, and again, are welcomed with equal enthusiasm:

Vingt belles filles de la garde reçurent Candide et Cacambo à la descente du carosse, les conduisirent aux bains, les vêtirent de robes d'un tissu de duvet de colibri; après quoi les grands officiers et les grandes officières de la couronne les menèrent à l'appartement de Sa Majesté au milieu de deux files, chacune de mille musiciens...(Morize, pp.119-120).

Such friendship, such warmth and kindness and openness overwhelms the two outsiders who have been exposed to the characteristic cruelty of the world beyond the mountain-barrier, the cruelty that Voltaire deplored. Man's inhumanity to man in Europe and elsewhere often resulted in needless suffering. Greed and the lust for gold was, and still is, the motive for many a crime. In addition to the widespread malice and corruption that the author perceived in all mankind, he viewed his own people, the French, as hard-hearted, petty, and spiteful. For this reason, his presentation of the opposite picture in Eldorado is obviously another veiled reproach of his countrymen, of the same type as the indirect reproach he uses on Louis XV. The technique is a very effective one that he employs to maximum advantage; an eighteenth century Frenchman was shocked to read of Eldorado, the land of happiness and also the political, religious, economic, and social opposite of French society!

In the article "Vertu" in the Dictionnaire philosophique, Voltaire has his "HONNETE HOMME" say: "La bienfaisance est... la seule vraie vertu" (Moland xx, 572). Surely, the people of the "golden land", with their kindness, their generosity, and their tolerance of others aptly fit this description. As the inhabitants of a well-run, well-ordered country, they

stand as ample evidence of the fact that Eldorado, to a large extent, must indeed be the author's idea of Utopia, must indeed be the embodiment of all he rejoices in and advocates as ideal.

Eldorado as a Satirical Portrait

That the depiction of Eldorado is intended as a serious model for mankind to follow seems to be accepted unhesitatingly by Pomeau, who calls it a "pays d'utopie peuplé d'hommes utopiques" (Pomeau, p.311). Whether such a pat label can truly be put on the place is, at best, debatable. While there is no doubt that there are many favourable aspects about it which have just been discussed and which correspond to Voltaire's own known views, there is also the problem that the protagonist ultimately insists upon departing from it and returning to the corruption of the outer world. Possibly the one being satirized is Candide himself; certainly Voltaire has no qualms about subjecting his hero to invective and has done so before this point in the story. Possibly the author is saying that man is not yet ready to dwell in such a paradise, that he is in fact too stupid to recognize such a paradise when he has it. At any rate, Candide's motives for leaving, when he could have stayed, demonstrate typically human failings. He is restless, unwilling to settle for the easily attainable and often desirable aspects of life.

He is greedy and ambitious, not content with the thought of dwelling as an ordinary individual in the land of plenty for the rest of his days, but more infatuated with the idea of how distinct from others and superior to them he will be in the outside world, if he takes several llamas and loads them up with gold and precious stones. He is vain, intrigued by the imaginary prospect of showing off his extreme wealth before Cunégonde:

...Candide n'eut plus d'autre désir et d'autre objet que d'aller présenter ses moutons à Mademoiselle Cunégonde (Morize, p.125).

Nevertheless, one cannot help thinking that, if Eldorado was really so wonderful, he would have overcome these restless impulses and stayed anyway. Jean Sareil, in his Essai sur Candide, is not as willing as Pomeau to equate Eldorado to Utopia. Voltaire, says Sareil, has purposely made Candide's reasons for departure seem weak and vague; the main one, after all, is to continue the search for a girl who, when he last saw her, was the mistress of the governor of Buenos Ayres. Sareil continues:

Voltaire tient à montrer par là que rien ne forçait ses héros à s'en aller, si ce n'est pas l'irrespirable atmosphere d'Eldorado (Sareil, p.58).

The distinct suggestion here is that Eldorado might be the one satirized, that for some reason, something about it makes it intolerable to human-beings. About its

suitability as an environment fostering the creative urge, Ludwig W. Kahn declares that "Eldorado, with its built-in wealth and comforts, offers no proper sphere for such activity; therefore, it is no utopia but an ironically-viewed pleasure-dome" (Adams, p.186). Virgil W. Topazio is in full agreement:

Man, by his very nature, must strive for goals; therefore a life of perfection would, in the long run, become intolerable, downright unliveable, for without objectives, ambition would disappear and man would vegetate (Topazio, p.40).

Indeed, this viewpoint seems to find support in the fact that the "golden" land, though a lovely one, is rather an idle one. Upon arriving there, the first thing Candide and Cacambo see is some children playing a game:

Quelques enfants du village couverts de brocards d'or tout déchirés jouaient au palet à l'entrée du bourg. Nos deux hommes de l'autre monde s'amusèrent à les regarder (Morize, p.107).

Eventually the children leave their play, dropping stones that appear to be gold, emeralds, and rubies, upon the ground. These, Candide and Cacambo hastily pick up and give to the village schoolmaster, explaining that "Leurs Altesses Royales avaient oublié leur or et leurs pierreries", but "le magister du village, en souriant, les jeta par terre..." (Morize, p.108). Amazed, they keep the stones and wander on until they come to the hostelry where they are fed. Upon offering the stones in payment for their food, "l'hôte et l'hôtesse éclatèrent de rire, et se

tinrent longtemps les côtes" (Morize, pp.109-110). The country, it appears, is one of amusement, of smiling, of laughter, but not of work. At no time is anyone too occupied with his own affairs to talk to the two strangers and to answer their questions. The wise old sage to whom they are conducted by the hotel proprietor, welcomes them with much ceremony, sits them down, and indulges them in a "longue conversation" about his native country (Morize, p.118). Even the king, whom they next visit, receives them into his court, talks with them at length over supper, and afterwards, shows them personally around his palace. The whole kingdom possesses something of the atmosphere of a gigantic child's playroom, in which the two outsiders are being allowed to romp temporarily. But man cannot long survive on play alone; no one knows that better than Voltaire himself. Gay quotes the author as saying in his first polemic against Pascal that "man is born for action" (Gay, p.154). By 'action', he means occupation, the act of being busy, as contrasted with the state of being idle. In August 1751, Voltaire wrote to Hénault: "Plus j'avance dans la carrière de la vie, et plus je trouve le travail nécessaire. Il devient à la longue le plus grand des plaisirs et tient lieu de toutes les illusions qu'on a perdues" (Best., 3958). Though the visitors are offered the chance of dwelling forever in Eldorado, they are offered no prospect

of occupation there, at least none more earnest than playing. Play palls and must eventually cease; the time must come to put away the toys and resume the task of serious adult living. A human-being, with his innate restlessness and lust for adventure, realizes this fact, and perhaps it is for this reason, rather than because of their own stupidity, that Candide and Cacambo decide to depart the "ideal" country. All men know that perfection attained is boring. Eldorado is perfection attained; it is "a life pleasant, placid, and stagnant, rather than ideal" (Adams, p.187); therefore Eldorado is boring. Moreover anything, even eternal subjection to the thievery and the cheating and the immorality of the outer world, is better than dwelling forever in boredom.

It is quite possible, then, that Eldorado, simply because it is the land of perfection, is a satire, rather than an idealization, of that perfection. Jean Sarrailh, in his Essai sur Candide, asserts that Eldorado constitutes not a model to be imitated but just a momentary lull during which the heroes re-gather their strength against evil before resuming a journey that they must take up again for the book to end satisfactorily:

Le bonheur qui règne dans ce petit coin du monde n'empêche pas le mal de triompher partout ailleurs; c'est un refuge, ce n'est pas un exemple. Aucun profit n'est à tirer d'un tel épisode, et la seule leçon qu'on pourrait en dégager serait une leçon d'égoïsme: "J'ai eu la chance de réussir

à assurer mon salut, cela me suffit, que les autres se débrouillent." Ce qui est exactement le contraire de ce que veut prouver Voltaire, moraliste social. Voilà pourquoi l'aventure se situe au milieu du livre et non pas à la fin, car il faut que les héros reprennent le cours de leur voyage après cette halte (Sareil, p.58).

Sareil further maintains very strongly that Eldorado has to be a satire because of the very manner in which it is described. True, the Eldoradan demonstrates none of the lust for gold for which the European businessman is known and berated. But why should he when he does not need gold to eat, when all the hostelryes serving him meals are subsidized by the government? True, the Eldoradan is friendly and good-humoured, but who would frown in such a cozy situation? Eldorado, says Sareil, is Leibniz's and Pangloss's "best of all possible worlds" suddenly created in the flesh, and Candide who, up to this moment, has been frantically clinging to the concept, now ironically rejects it:

On y raille bien la cupidité des Européens pour l'or et les matières précieuses, mais la critique ne va pas très loin; les auberges sont nationalisées et servent une nourriture abondante; la monnaie n'a pas l'air très utile puisqu'on peut s'en passer pour se faire servir à manger; l'urbanisme est remarquablement développé; le roi semble avoir pour principales fonctions --les seules que l'on mentionne, en tous cas, dans le livre-- de donner l'accolade, d'égayer les soupers de bons mots qui supportent la traduction, et de faire construire des machines pour les étrangers qui veulent quitter le pays...

A vrai dire, cet épisode est une satire, comme ceux qui le précèdent et ceux qui le suivent. Seulement, la situation est soudain renversée. Candide n'affronte

plus de nouveaux malheurs mais une incroyable félicité. Par une trouvaille de génie, Voltaire prend au mot Leibnitz et conçoit ce meilleur des mondes possibles qui est un des leit-motives du conte, au moment où Pangloss n'est pas là pour le répéter, et voilà que ce meilleur des mondes possibles se révèle invivable. La satire est donc très forte ici (Sareil, p.57).

Furthermore, Sareil also reaffirms the "boredom" argument in favour of Eldorado's being a satirical representation when he discusses it in connection with the Constantinople garden at the end of the story, where Candide and his group of friends finally settle down. There, again, a lull occurs, as it occurred in Eldorado. Evil ceases to be a threat in that garden:

Puis, il survient une nouvelle calamité, l'ennui, né justement de cette absence de maux, et qui confirme que ceux-ci sont une sorte de piment, en tout cas un ingrédient nécessaire à l'homme qui ne saurait vivre sans eux. C'est là, sans doute, le sentiment qui avait dû déterminer Candide et Cacambo à quitter Eldorado (Sareil, pp.273-274).

"It is known", states Roy S. Wolper in his article, "Candide-- Gull in the Garden?", "that Voltaire dreaded boredom" (Wolper, p.271). Thus, it follows that Eldorado, where tranquillity and a sense of sameness persists, must at least in part, be what Voltaire dreaded. Wolper claims as well that Eldorado is satirized for its epicureanism:

...isn't epicureanism ridiculed in the conte? When Candide visits Paraguay, the "cabinet de verdure, orné d'une très jolie colonnade de marbre vert et or, et de treillages qui renfermaient des perroquets, des colibris, des oiseaux-mouches, des pintades, et tous les oiseaux les plus rares", and the "excellent déjeuner" in "vases d'or" contrast

sharply with "les Paragouains mangèrent du maïs dans des écuelles de bois, en plein champ, à l'ardeur du soleil". Isn't Eldorado, the most beneficial and ideal of the conte's worlds, also partially undermined by a similar Sir Epicure Mammon amplitude; the dinner of "quatre potages garnis chacun de deux perroquets, un contour bouilli qui pesait deux cents livres, deux singes rôtis d'un goût excellent, trois cent colibris dans un plat, et six cents oiseaux-mouches dans un autre; des ragoûts exquis, des pâtisseries délicieuses; le tout dans des plats d'une espèce de cristal de roche"; the sofa of "plumes de colibri", the house with a door "d'argent", rooms "d'or", an antechamber "de rubis et d'émeraudes"? In Eldorado, the luxury of place and food and service reminds one of Paraguay (Wolper, pp.273-274).

For Wolper, "contentment depends not on Rabelaisian excess, but on substantial adequacy" (Wolper, p.274). The same is true for Voltaire, who, in 1733, said in a letter to Cideville: "J'aime mieux avoir des amis que du superflu, et je préfère un homme de lettres à un bon cuisinier et à deux chevaux de carrosse. On en a toujours assez pour les autres quand on sait se borner pour soi. Rien n'est si aisé que d'avoir du superflu" (Best., 640).

Hence, Wolper, while he admits that there are many favourable aspects about Eldorado, tends to the viewpoint of Sarrail rather than to that of Pomeau; far from wholly committing himself to the "Utopia" theory, he insists that Voltaire's "golden" land is at least partially a satire. In a footnote to his article, he states:

Eldorado, I think, is not always a Utopia. It has tendencies toward stupidity ("je suis fort ignorant et je m'en trouve bien") and isolationism ("quand on est passablement quelque part, il faut y rester"). (Wolper, p.274).

When one surveys the "ideal realm" in all these perspectives, regarding the concept of perfection as tedium, lack of greed for money as lack of need for money, and lavish adornment as unnecessary luxury, then the reason that Candide and Cacambo cannot bear to stay in Eldorado becomes abundantly clear. They can hardly be blamed for running from a place that threatens to bore them with idleness and frivolity for the rest of their lives, certainly not when they have far more interesting, far more adventurous tasks to perform in the outer world. They can hardly be blamed for rebelling against the king's invitation to play forever and forget that work exists. Perhaps, then, Eldorado is only a mirage of the ideal, not really as good as it looks. Quite possibly, it is simply another method (and we know that there are many throughout Candide) that the author employs to subject the "best of all possible worlds" to satire.

Significance of Eldorado in Candide

Whether one chooses to believe that Voltaire's "land of gold" is painted seriously or satirically or, as seems most likely, that it is both to some extent, there can be no doubt about its importance to the work as a whole. For one thing, it occupies a vital position within the work, a position which, if it is interpreted as a Utopia, reveals to the reader major information about the author's outlook on life. Approximately halfway through the story of his

adventures, Candide arrives in this ideal realm. Until then, he has been doing his best, despite misfortune after misfortune, to cling to the Wolffian philosophy of his teacher, Pangloss, that "all is for the best". He has been kicked out of the Baron's palace in Westphalia which he originally considered to be "the best of all possible worlds"; he has been forced to leave Cunégonde, his sweetheart; he has been whipped in the Bulgarian army; he has seen drown the Anabaptist Jacques, who was kind to him; he has watched an earthquake in Lisbon kill thousands of innocent people; and he has witnessed in Portugal the hanging of Pangloss, his beloved tutor, by the Inquisition. Yet it is not until this point, in the middle of the book, when he enters Eldorado, that he truly realizes that he never lived in "the best of all possible worlds", that even in Westphalia, he had nothing more than a fool's optimism, based upon the shaky foundations of innocence. Eldorado, on the other hand, is a contrast to Westphalia for it constitutes a paradise, not of innocence but of experience, not of ignorance but of the knowledge of human nature and of the conditions, political and otherwise, that a human-being requires to be content. It is a contrast, in other words, to the philosophy of blind optimism initially postulated by Pangloss at the beginning of the book. As it contrasts with blind optimism, so too it contrasts with the blind pessimism put

forward by Martin, Candide's companion for the latter half of the book, after his departure from Eldorado. As a nation that has managed to attain near-perfection, it stands as a constant reminder that "all is for the worst" is no more true than "all is for the best". Its situation in the middle of the book, then, is significant in that it forms the central "pause" between the presentation of one philosophy and the presentation of another, and it is in the correct location to refute both effectively. Furthermore, the description given of its tilled fields, cultivated for pleasure as well as for need, hints at the solution, "Give up asking questions and cultivate your garden", which Candide finally settles for at the end of the tale. Hence, the role of Eldorado in relation to the work as a whole, is far more noteworthy than it appears on the surface; elements of the beginning, the middle, and the end, combine here to form a microcosm of all that Voltaire believes in and recommends to his fellow beings.

If Eldorado is, indeed, a sincerely postulated Utopia, then it is also the perfect setting against which to demonstrate the idiosyncrasy of the human mind and human nature. Candide chooses to leave it, in that case, because he has been corrupted by the materialistic, dog-eat-dog society of which he is a product. His values are too twisted for him to recognize paradise when it is within

his grasp; all he can think of is finding Cunégonde again and showing off his gold and his llamas before her. He prefers to be a rich man in the depraved outer world rather than to be an ordinary citizen in the tranquil realm of a gracious king. So, like Adam, he turns his back forever on the Garden of Eden to face once more the thorns of everyday evil and spite.

Yet the fact that he has been to Eldorado, has seen how things can be, as well as how they are, helps him to endure subsequent hardships and misfortunes and saves him from complete and utter disillusionment. Because he is aware that a better way can exist, he does not succumb to the total pessimism of Martin, but neither, at this point, is he naive enough to be an optimist. By the time the story draws to a close, he has found that the "happy medium" is the best course, that the events of the world are inexplicable and will always be so, but that if he asks no questions and simply cultivates his garden, he can at least subdue, if not cure, his restlessness. It is with this final resolution that the book leaves us--an important resolution, and a philosophy that represents the culmination of all the experiences undergone in the course of its pages. It is a resolution that Eldorado, the ideal world for Voltaire, has helped to determine.

Even if Eldorado is regarded as a satirical or a partly satirical presentation, its significance is not decreased. As Jean Sarrail has pointed out, it is quite possible that Voltaire has materially created the much-talked-about "best of all possible worlds", only to have Candide ironically reject it. Under these circumstances, Eldorado poses an important question: Do we really want the "best of all possible worlds"? To have such a world would create a situation of boredom, whereas it is often the lack of perfection, the desire to strive towards a more nearly perfect state, that moves man to action and gives his life purpose. Eldorado's position in the middle of Candide seems to suggest Voltaire's answer to this question: It suggests that the best solution is a medium state, an outlook on this world neither as the best of all possible worlds nor as the worst, but containing elements of the two to comprise and arrive at a way of thinking mid-way between the two. Perhaps this "happy medium" is the most nearly "happy" environment that man can achieve on earth.

Certainly, the fact that there is a connection between Eldorado and the conclusion arrived at as the book draws to a close is obvious, no matter what one's view is about the seriousness of the portrait. However, the nature of that connection is more debatable. Jean Sarrail begins by relating the two:

Le chapitre final à Constantinople est marqué lui aussi par un arrêt de catastrophes, mais alors qu'en Eldorado le phénomène s'insérait logiquement...; ici, il ne peut avoir d'autre justification que le bon plaisir de l'auteur (Sareil, p.59).

He continues by discussing the dervish and the farmer to whom Candide and his group of friends go for advice as to how to avoid boredom:

La consultation du derviche constate l'échec de toute tentative théorique pour résoudre les questions de métaphysique. Finalement, un exemple concret, facile à imiter, va permettre à Candide et à ses compagnons, mûris par l'expérience, de tirer la leçon de leurs aventures (Sareil, p.60).

This "leçon", in Sareil's opinion, is the one for which Candide finally settles, and is the one that Voltaire is sincerely teaching: resign yourself to the imperfections of the world that you cannot change, but try to work your way towards the better traits in Eldorado, even though you should not desire to copy it as an ultimate. For, in Barber's words, "such a world is beyond the bounds of practical possibility, as Voltaire acknowledges by giving it the mythical name of Eldorado, but some progress towards it is possible" (Barber, p.34). Bottiglia, in his Voltaire's 'Candide': Analysis of a Classic, states a very similar point of view in declaring that Voltaire concludes Candide "by affirming that social productivity of any kind, at any level, constitutes the good life, that there are limits within which man must be satisfied to lead the good life,

but that, within these, he has a very real chance of achieving both private contentment and public progress".⁸ Pomeau, though essentially of the same opinion, puts it differently:

L'Eldorado, fermé de montagnes infranchissables, est comme s'il n'existait pas... Il n'est, pour l'homme vrai, qu'un jardin, qu'un "paradis"; celui de Candide. Les rescapés du conte s'y trouvaient installés depuis un certain temps qu'ils n'en savaient rien. Profonde leçon: tous les hommes sont déjà dans le seul paradis possible (Pomeau, pp.311-312).

According to these authors, then, the conte concludes "on a clear note of hope" (Barber, p.27). Roy S. Wolper disagrees, however, and the title of his article, "Candide-- Gull in the Garden?" is a testament to that disagreement. Even at the end of the conte, Wolper sees the protagonist as a gull, a dupe, one who has failed both to be "mûri par l'expérience" and to "tirer la leçon de (ses) aventures". Candide, Wolper points out, has been frequently satirized by Voltaire in the past, so that it is quite possible that he is still being satirized when the book winds up:

Candide's easy gulling at the hands of the bedridden woman who pretended to be Cunégonde, his failure to restrain his appetite as he thought of murder and lost love and reputation, his "encore une fois, Pangloss avait raison, tout est bien" (which occurs after many voyages in which Candide has seen cruelty and carnage, ecclesiastical and political, and cultural stupidity)--all reveal Voltaire's clear detachment from his main character (Wolper, p.267).

⁸W.F. Bottiglia, Voltaire's "Candide": Analysis of a Classic. Geneva, 1964, p.118

Wolper further asserts (p.268) that "Candide's solution, I think, is not Voltaire's", and offers as proof, that this solution is based on the advice of an old Turkish farmer who has never travelled, never seen the world, and is therefore too ignorant to genuinely assume the role of a sage:

Perhaps the old Turk, within his twenty acres, has never seen the cancerous spread of evil, but Candide has. Candide's belief that safe gardens can continue in the world, marks his blindness to experience; similarly, Pangloss's "tout est bien" proves irrelevant to the dark realities around him. Both have missed the meaning of their travels (Wolper, p.270).

The "meaning of their travels", according to Wolper, is that one ought not to hide from evil in the cultivation of a garden, but to face the fact of its existence, and to attempt to do something positive toward its prevention. His article does not define any specific measures to be taken, obviously because he does not think the book does. Sharing his outlook and his conclusions is Robert M. Adams, who declares:

Candide, when he settles down to cultivate his garden, is surrendering to brute imbecility as well as to the wisdom of the world. His acceptance of the world and its ways is not simply an imaginative achievement, a wedding; it is also a funeral and the beginning of a wake. Something is dead, an illusion, an ambition, an attitude; it is the energy of delusion by which Candide has existed in our minds. In token of the fact that a wholly reasonable being has no interest for us, as soon as he has resigned himself to a rational task, Candide's book comes to an end. His garden will be planted over the rotten corpse of his animating delusion, and there is nothing merry or hopeful about the change (Adams, p.171n).

This leaves the ending of Candide as a large, rather dismal question-mark, to the effect that the presence of evil all around us is acknowledged, but we have no real means of combatting it. No definite moral is offered, and no precise course of action is suggested. For me, this is an unsatisfactory termination to a conte in the "travel" genre that has been evidently didactic throughout.

Perhaps this is why I tend, rather, to the outlook of Bottiglia and Sareil: that the "leçon" learned by Candide from the old farmer is the "leçon" that Voltaire sincerely meant his readers to derive from the work: that one should ignore that which one can do nothing about, but should strive daily toward the perfection of Eldorado. For Eldorado does suggest a definite course of action against evil; it is a demonstration of the fact that good management of economic resources by a wise government can eliminate the misery of poverty, that a king who rules correctly will never have rebellious subjects, that when religion keeps to itself and does not intrude into the sphere of politics, there can be no problem of intolerance. These are all things that Voltaire genuinely believed and would like to have seen brought about in his own country. True, there seem to be elements of irony about Eldorado as well, most outstandingly its playroom-like atmosphere of idleness.

These elements suggest to me that the author considered a society that is as perfect in every way as is Eldorado, to be unattainable and not altogether desirable. J.H. Brumfitt puts it very well when he says that "Eldorado is a dream of Utopia rather than a blueprint for it".⁹ Were Eldorado attainable, it is quite likely that mankind would become bored with the state of things and dissatisfied with his lazy lot. Brumfitt wisely concludes that "in portraying Eldorado, Voltaire is clearly showing us a society which incorporates some of his own ideals. Beyond this, one cannot go with certainty".¹⁰ Nevertheless, once Candide and Cacambo have been to that land--though they later label it "une fiction"--they never forget their journey there and the things that they saw. Even as the book closes, Eldorado as the home of political harmony continues, I think, to stand as the all-important goal for all Frenchmen, if not for the human race, to work toward. If it could be only partially achieved, the state of affairs for all humanity, wherever its effects were felt, would be immeasurably improved.

⁹Voltaire, Candide, ed. J.H. Brumfitt, London: Oxford University Press, 1968, p.178.

¹⁰Ibid, p.179.

CONCLUSION

It has been my aim throughout this paper to set forth under four main headings the political attitudes of Voltaire as demonstrated in his masterpiece, Candide. If, in so doing, I have revealed the true richness and subtlety couched in an apparently simple text, then my task has been worthwhile. In addition, I hope that I have successfully shown the extent to which Voltaire considered politics to be his business.

As Peter Gay points out, "it is true that Voltaire said more than once that he was not interested in politics", but we need only to read his various letters, tales, and histories to realize that this is merely a typical Voltairian disclaimer, designed to lull authorities into believing he is not active in that sphere. In point of fact, as we have seen, he is very active indeed. The first section of Candide indicates him to be an ardent hater of all war of conquest or revenge, of which the Seven Years War provides him with a current and apt example. Later, when he uses military terminology to discuss the Jesuits and their mission system of colonization in Paraguay, we sense his fear of that order's growing power, his fear of its interference with the decisions of kings. In his opinion, the king should be the supreme authority in the state, and the Church must not be permitted to influence that authority, either from the confessor's

closet as was often the case in Europe, or by force of arms as was the case in Paraguay. The latter part of the conte paints the evils that Candide suffers in Paris at the hands of corrupt, intolerant Frenchmen, and here Voltaire is implicitly emphasizing the need for certain reforms to be executed by the government of his own country, as well as the need for the individual citizen to resist his evil inclinations. If these reforms are made, perhaps a state more like Eldorado, the "land of gold" that in many ways represents Voltaire's idea of political perfection, will be produced. In Eldorado, a benign, peace-loving king rules with wisdom and justice. He is not manipulated in any way by the Church because there is no Church; religion is an affair between man and God only, and requires no intermediaries. For this reason, no intolerance of those with different religious beliefs is present either. Peace reigns in the kingdom and the people are content. The king is scrupulous in the management of finances, so that all his subjects have enough to eat and misery has been eliminated; hence, the motive for much cheating and dishonesty disappears. Furthermore, the "palais des sciences", with its many facilities for learning, implies that no one in the realm is denied the opportunity of an education.

Voltaire was too wise to dream of creating on earth a land exactly like Eldorado. He knew that peace was not always possible, and that war was sometimes necessary for

self-defense. He knew that organized religion was an established fact, and that there was no hope of its breaking down into Eldorado's deistic society. He knew that dishonesty and greed would continue to exist despite any improvement of living conditions that might be made, and despite any legislation designed to curb it. Yet he nevertheless considered that it was possible for the French to achieve a more nearly Eldoradan way of life, if they were willing to work towards it. Indeed, by writing Candide, he has presented his compatriots with a complete political program in the guise of an innocent story! He is promoting a policy of peace, by which the treasury funds of France might be spent on feeding the hungry and stamping out misery, rather than on fruitless wars of aggression. He is exhorting Louis XV to rule with firmness of hand and honesty of heart, brooking no interference from the Church in secular matters. He is encouraging his monarch to replace the ignorance of the peasants with education, so as to increase the wisdom of the nation as a whole. And finally, he is urging every individual citizen to review his own outlook, and to attempt to overcome his tendencies towards intolerance and dishonesty.

It is a political program that might well be recommended today as fervently as it was recommended by Voltaire in the eighteenth century.

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