RELIGIOUS CRITICISM IN VOLTAIRE'S *CANDIDE*

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Toute sa vie, il a écrit Candide, il l'a réussi une fois. Rien dans le conte n'est nouveau. Le coup de maître a été précédé de vingt coups d'essai, tous estimables parce que Voltaire a beaucoup de talent, mais qui permettent de mesurer la distance qui les sépare du chef-d'oeuvre.

(Jean Sareil, Essai sur Candide, p. 19)

INTRODUCTION

The publication of Candide in 1759 brought to ten the number of contes philosophiques written by Voltaire up to that date. Were we to further expand our frame of reference so as to include the succeeding tales written during the author's violent campaign against the infâme, still no other single one would be found to embrace such a wide range of topics, nor paint such a vividly damning, although we hasten to add, not despairing, portrait of society in the eighteenth century. The principal victim of this critical onslaught is, understandably enough, religion in its various manifestations. Voltaire had grown, matured, and himself been victimized by an all-too-influential religious authority whose presence permeated every level of society.

In Candide both Protestants and Catholics feel the sharp edge of Voltaire's pen. Overall, however, the Catholic Church and its associated organizations fare far worse than do their Protestant counterparts since both the author and the philosophic party suffered greatly at its expense. In light of this, Voltaire takes special pains to see that the Catholic Church is afforded the treatment it deserves. Indeed, Voltaire even worries as to whether or not he has treated it severely enough. In

a letter dated May 10, 1757, although written in reference to the Essai sur les moeurs, yet late enough to illustrate Voltaire's frame of mind just prior to the composition of Candide, he states: "Je n'ai pas peint les docteurs assez ridicules, les hommes d'état assez méchants, et la nature hŭmaine assez folle. Je me corrigerai". (Best. 6560). Apart from the completed version of the Essai, Candide, to a large extent a philosophical by-product of Voltaire's historical research, is most certainly the strongest "correction" that the philosophe could ever have rendered.

As the title of this thesis indicates, we propose to limit ourselves to a detailed analysis of four religious themes found not only in Candide, but in several other works by Voltaire, written before and after 1759, in order to show just to what extent they preoccupied the author. These themes are: the Inquisition, which to Voltaire was the epitomy of religious intolerance, superstition and fanaticism; the doctrine of Providence and its associated philosophy, Optimism, according to which this is the best of all possible worlds, despite insurmountable evidence to the contrary, as symbolized in Candide by both the Lisbon earthquake and the Seven Years War; the Jesuits, whose growing influence and temporal power presented a serious threat to the internal security of France as well as the Encyclopedic movement of which Voltaire was a

part; and finally, the widespread corruption and immorality of the clergy in all levels of eighteenth century society, as encountered by Candide in the course of his travels.

Throughout the tale religious criticism relies heavily on what appears at first glance to be a high degree of realism. In Candide each instance of criticism has been assigned to an individual place in the overall fabric of the tale. Thus as Candide pursues his quest of Cunégonde, he continually comes into contact with, and invariably runs foul of religious authorities, seemingly as a matter of course. Candide's various adventures or misadventures appear in a quasi realistic setting which, because of their inconceivable number, ultimately precludes the maintaining of an illusion of reality on the part of the reader.[1] However, it is this apparent realism which constitutes the strength and effectiveness of Voltaire's critical purpose in Candide.

List of abbreviations

For the most frequently cited works of Voltaire we have used the following abbreviations to permit incorporation

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[1]For a more complete discussion of the "illusion of reality" in Candide see W. H. Barber, Voltaire: "Candide", (London, Edward Arnold, 1960), pp. 15-19.

of references in the text. Detailed bibliographical information will be found at the end of this study.

Best.: Voltaire's Correspondence. Ed. Theodore Besterman. Geneva 1953-1965.

Can.: Candide in Romans et Contes. Ed. H. Bénac. Paris 1960. All textual quotations refer to this edition.

Dict. phil.: Dictionnaire philosophique. Ed. de Etiemble. Paris 1967.

M.: Voltaire, Oeuvres Complètes. Ed. L. Moland. Paris 1877-1885.

Morize: Candide. Ed. A. Morize. Paris 1931.

CHAPTER I

THE INQUISITION

Of the numerous institutions and organizations generally associated with religion, the Inquisition was by far the most widely known and despised because of its fundamental inhumanity and cruelty. Accounts of acts of penance, of torture and burnings carried out in the name of the Catholic Church, fill many volumes from Dellon's Relation de l'Inquisition de Goa (Amsterdam, 1697), which according to Morize[1] is Voltaire's source of reference for both the Essai sur les moeurs and Candide, to a more modern work such Henry Kamen's recent book The Spanish Inquisition (1965). While the rest of Europe listened in horror to stories recounting the atrocities being committed in the name of religion in Spain and Portugal, Voltaire wrote in the Essai:

> La France et l'Allemagne ont été heureusement préservées de ce fléau. Elles ont essuyé des guerres horribles de religion; mais enfin les guerres finissent, et l'Inquisition une fois établie est éternelle. (M. ix. 352)

To the more progressively-minded countries of Europe, especially France and England, the Inquisition was considered a backward stride in man's journey along the

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[1]Morize, 39.

road toward religious toleration. The people of these two countries judged the Inquisition for what it was by enlightened standards:

> . . .a society of evil, corrupt through and through, a society with a sense of justice quite at variance with any human idea of justice and connected with some superstitious dread of inner sin.[2]

It is possible to argue that grave acts of violence were committed in France in the famous cases of Calas, Sirven and La Barre, the latter occurring as late as 1766. However, while religion is largely to blame, these are for the most part isolated incidents and not the work of any formal Church organization expressly designed with such a purpose in mind.

Voltaire's interest in the affairs of the Inquisition is basically that of any enlightened philosopher in the eighteenth century, dedicated as he was to the fight against religious domination maintained through superstition, fear, fanaticism, and above all, ignorance. Throughout his works, Voltaire sought to expose this bête noire for what it was: corrupt and intolerant. Aside from his more historical and remarkably factual denunciations of the Holy Office, Voltaire's strongest weapon was his satire.

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[2]Ira O. Wade, Voltaire and Candide. A study in the fusion of history, art, and philosophy. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1959), p. 292.

The Inquisition appears in three philosophical tales other than Candide; Scarmentado (1756), La Princesse de Babylone (1768), and Les Lettres d'Amabed (1769), and again in several plays during the years of 1759 to 1771 when Voltaire was violently assailing the infâme. When the earthquake destroyed Lisbon in 1755, many of the sermons at the time denounced the Inquisition as the agent responsible for calling God's wrath upon the city, for it was at Lisbon that the Holy Office was the strongest and consequently the most severe. Professor Wade explains that Voltaire must certainly have been aware of the sermons for ". . .his discreet use of the Inquisition as an incident in Candide was plainly calculated to exploit the general conviction of his public and at the same time to celebrate an outstanding incident of human folly."[3]

Lisbon is almost completely engulfed by an earthquake immediately after the arrival of Candide and Pangloss. The following evening at dinner, Pangloss attempts to console some of the survivors by explaining to them that things could not have been otherwise, ". . .car il est impossible que les choses ne soient pas où elles sont, car tout est bien." (Can., 148.) The philosopher's statement is bordering on

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[3]Ibid., p. 292.

the heretical since it denies the Christian doctrine of original sin and the fall of man. This is quickly seized upon by one of the other guests at the supper table, "Un petit homme noir, familier de l'Inquisition," (Can., 148) who begins questioning Pangloss about his beliefs. Unfortunately for the latter whose answers only further plunge him into heresy, the man in black happens to be a lay associate of the Holy Office, as Candide and his philosopher will only too soon discover to their eternal regret. While Pangloss is busy explaining his philosophical system, the familiar nods to his henchman who presumably notifies his superiors.

While as we have seen, sermons in the rest of Europe on the subject of the earthquake usually named the Inquisition as its cause, this of course was not so in Lisbon itself. Here responsibility for the disaster was attributed to the people of the city, the clergy charging that God's wrath was meant to punish them for the wickedness and immorality of their way of life. Consequently it was decided by the University of Coïmbra, which meant the Faculty of Theology, that "un bel auto-da-fé" was in order because "le spectacle de quelques personnes brûlées à petit feu, en grande cérémonie, est un secret infaillible pour empêcher la terre de trembler." (Can., 149) This particular passage, as well as the rest of the details that

have to do with the Inquisition contained in the fifth and sixth chapters of Candide, is drawn from the Précis du siècle de Louis XV which states in a more serious tone what has just been said satirically about the superstitious Portuguese:

> Les Portugais crurent obtenir la clémence de Dieu en faisant brûler des Juifs et d'autres hommes dans ce qu'ils appellent un auto-da-fé, acte de foi que les autres nations regardent comme un acte de barbarie. (M. ix. 336)

The victims selected by the Inquisition for this occasion include: "Un Biscayen convaincu d'avoir épousé sa commère". A "commère" or godmother is the woman who holds the child at the time of its baptism and answers in his name at the ceremony. This creates a spiritual relationship between the child and his "mother in God", thus making a subsequent marital relationship spiritually incestuous in the eyes of the Church. Arrested with the Biscayen are "deux Portugais qui en mangeant un poulet en avaient arraché le lard." (Can., 149) This was a Jewish practice and constituted a most serious offence before the Holy Office, since one of the main reasons for its establishment was as a measure against Jews and secret judaizers. The idea behind this was that ". . .au moindre acte de leur religion on pût juridiquement leur arracher leurs biens et la vie." (M. xii. 160) In fact the whole population was

trained by the Inquisitors to recognize the enemy that might be hiding in their midst: "Together with the Edict of Faith went a statement describing in detail the practices of heretics, especially judaizers, Muslims, Illuminists and Protestants."[4] Finally, the group of victims is completed with the dual arrest of Pangloss and Candide on charges of heresy, "l'un pour avoir parlé, et l'autre pour avoir écouté avec un air d'approbation. . . ." (Can., 149) Heresy or even suspicion of it was by far the most serious offence one could stand accused of, since it was considered both a sin and a crime and thus subject to both ecclesiastic and secular justice. According to Marsollier, another possible writer who Morize feels may well have been one of Voltaire's sources: "Pour encourir le soupçon d'hérésie, il ne faut qu'avancer quelque proposition qui scandalise ceux qui l'entendent, ou même ne pas déclarer ceux qui en avancent de pareilles."[5]

The Biscayen and the two Portuguese are sentenced to be burned at the stake, Pangloss is quite extraordinarily

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[4]Henry Kamen, The Spanish Inquisition, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965), p. 163.

[5]Marsollier, Histoire de l'Inquisition et son origine, (Cologne, 1693 , p. 175. Quoted by Morize, p. 40 note 4.

condemned to be hanged and Candide is to be administered a severe penance. Furthermore the five sentences are to be carried out at a public auto-da-fé with all the pomp and ceremony due to so auspicious an occasion. This includes an entrance procession, a sermon normally on the merciful task of the Holy Office, and the celebration of mass after which the sentences are executed to the accompaniment of music and the singing of a choir. Voltaire, in an extended footnote to Les Lois de Minos, compares the ceremony attached to the public acts of faith to the ancient pagan rites associated with human sacrifices. Then, in most brilliant fashion, he turns the biblical parable of the Good Shepherd against the barbaric representatives of the Catholic faith. After a lengthy description of a somewhat similar ceremony surrounding the execution of Jean Hus and Jérôme de Prague, Voltaire concludes by saying: "Ce fut dans cette auguste assemblée qu'on brûla Jean et Jérôme en l'honneur du même Jésus-Christ qui ramenait la brebis égarée sur ses épaules." (M. vii. 183)

Voltaire was particularly hostile toward the Inquisition as it existed in Spain and Portugal because he regarded it as a perversion of the original purpose for which this office was founded. Originally it had two main functions: to limit the spread of heresy within the Church, and secondly, as a means by which it could obtain additional revenue. How-

ever, as with all organizations of this nature, especially one granted such widespread power and jurisdiction as was the Inquisition, it also proved an open invitation to corruption, intolerance, and worst of all, fanaticism. The latter, as Voltaire explains in the Essai sur les moeurs, is principally accountable for the numerous atrocities and abuses committed in Spain and Portugal:

> On le voit surtout ici par l'excès d'atrocité qu'ils mirent dans l'exercice d'une juridiction où les Italiens, ses inventeurs, mettaient beaucoup plus de douceur. Les papes avaient érigé ces tribunaux par politique; et les inquisiteurs espagnols y ajoutèrent la barbarie. (M. ix. 349)

The Inquisition maintained its hold over the people of these countries through a combination of fear and ignorance. By cloaking its operations in secrecy, no one at the time really knew what actually went on in the prisons of the Inquisition, and all prisoners released swore not to reveal anything they had seen or heard. Consequently, stories and rumors about what went on inside the prisons were actually wildly distorted accounts of what actually did happen -- a valuable weapon that worked in favor of the Holy Office. However what the people did witness were the numerous auto-da-fés where penances such as scourging and death at the stake were imposed. Also known was the hardship and suffering caused by sequestration of an accused person's property which

normally accompanied arrest and conviction. In the article "Inquisition" in the Dictionnaire philosophique, Voltaire correctly outlines the procedure followed by the Holy Office:

> On est emprisonné sur la simple dénonciation des personnes les plus infâmes; un fils peut dénoncer son père, une femme son mari; on n'est jamais confronté avec ses accusateurs; les biens sont confisqués au profit des juges.[6]

Therefore according to Voltaire, the Inquisition's system of justice differs radically from the usual practices of the secular courts. Charges laid against an individual by the Inquisition were purposely couched in vague terminology. This was due to the Holy Office's strictly kept policy of never revealing to the accused who his accusers were, nor even the exact nature of the charges against him, lest this information enable him to discern the identity of his accusers. Furthermore, the integrity of the Inquisition's witnesses was never questioned, despite their profession, their past life or notorious moral turpitude. Those arrested were simply thrown in prison and told to repent for their crime. Oftentimes a person having no idea of what this might be, when finally confronted by the Inquisitors would either confess to some other instance of

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[6]Article "Inquisition" (1769), Dict. phil., p. 255.

misbehaviour or deny having done any wrong in the first place. In the latter situation the prisoner was then taken to the torture chamber so as to give him opportunity for further reflection.

The cruelty and suffering wrought by religious intolerance was always deplored by Voltaire, whether he was referring to those books on which he drew when writing Candide, or during his violent campaign against the infâme. In this sense Candide marks the beginning in earnest of Voltaire's campaign against cruelty and injustice engendered by the infâme which Peter Gay defines as including fanaticism, Catholicism, Christianity and religion.[7] From the relative security of his haven at Ferney Voltaire launched a tremendous campaign against organized religion, primarily through the Dictionnaire philosophique and his immense correspondence. This was also the time of the causes célèbres where Voltaire fought for Calas, Sirven and La Barre against secular injustice that had been engineered by excessive religious influence, and eventually succeeded in having them, and several others like them, exonerated and their memories re-established.

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[7]Peter Gay, Voltaire's Politics, (New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1965), p. 239.

In the Dictionnaire philosophique, Voltaire's satire is both serious and accurate, allowance made for polemical intent. His description of the Inquisition encompasses at the same time its effects:

> L'Inquisition est, comme on sait, une invention admirable et tout à fait chrétienne pour rendre le pape et les moines plus puissants et pour rendre tout un royaume hypocrite.[8]

The article "Persécution" expounds on the irrational foundation underlying the Inquisition's decisions: "Quel est le persécuteur?" Voltaire asks. He replies:

> C'est celui dont l'orgueil blessé et le fanatisme en fureur irritent le prince ou les magistrats contre des hommes innocents, qui n'ont d'autre crime que de n'être pas de son avis.[9]

Having just been brutally beaten by the merciful Inquisition, Candide sees Pangloss hanged before his eyes. In the anguish that overcomes him at this scene he cannot refrain from uttering aloud a cry of despair for this "best of all possible worlds." -- ". . .ô mon cher Pangloss! le plus grand des philosophes, faut-il vous avoir vu pendre, sans que je sache pourquoi!" (Can., 149-150) However, while

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[8]Article "Inquisition", Dict. phil., p. 252.

[9]Article "Persécution", Dict. phil., p. 341.

the reader is aware that Pangloss was condemned to death for voicing an opinion contrary to the Church-established doctrine of original sin and therefore heretical, Candide in his simplicity is himself still unaware of the dangers of unorthodox ideas and of the lengths to which some men will go to have their opinion accepted by all. Educated only in "métaphysico-théologo-cosmolo-nigologie", Candide does not profit by the lessons of history.

Voltaire is even more critical of religious zealots near the end of the article on persecution when to the question: "Par qui la persécution commença-t-elle?", he specifically answers: "Par des prêtres jaloux qui armèrent les préjugés des magistrats et la politique des ministres."[10] Thus in typical Voltairian fashion the philosopher succeeds in criticizing not only the actions of this heinous religious organization, but also the political influence which the Church as a whole exerts within the State.

In a sequel to the Inquisition episode proper, Voltaire, in the eighth chapter of Candide, directs his attack against the representative of this august body. The Grand Inquisitor, usually a Dominican priest, (Best. 5946, note 1) is portrayed like the other clerical figures in the

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[10]Article "Persécution", Dict. phil., p. 342.

tale. He is presented as a corrupt and worldly individual, used to having his desires catered to, and not in the least above using his position as a means to achieve this end. Seeing Cunégonde at mass one day, the Grand Inquisitor becomes desirous of her but is unable to possess her outright because her present master Don Issachar, a Jew, enjoys an influential position at court. To overcome this difficulty monseigneur l'Inquisiteur threatens Don Issachar with an auto-da-fé. But Issachar is stubborn, and stands his ground until finally, afraid to go too far, he enters into an arrangement whereby he and the Inquisitor will share Cunégonde's favours on alternate days. It is while rescuing Cunégonde from these men that Candide kills the Grand Inquisitor. In a letter to Damilaville Voltaire expresses his feelings toward both the Inquisition and Candide's anti-religious sword thrust:

> Je lis toujours avec édification le manuel de l'inquisition, et je suis très fâché que Candide n'ait tué qu'un inquisiteur. (Best. 9509.)

The basis of the Inquisition's power over the people was rooted in ignorance and superstition. It was, Voltaire felt, the duty of the philosophic party to educate the people and to expose the abuses of the organized religions in society. To this end, he constantly exhorted his philosophic brethren to help in the campaign against the infâme

in the years immediately following the appearance of Candide. In the article "Tolérance" in the Dictionnaire philosophique that was his principle weapon in the ensuing struggle, Voltaire briefly sketches a history of suffering and intolerance caused by religious zeal. Yet those who were consistently the worst offenders in this realm were not, as one might imagine, the Romans or even the Jews, for they regarded religion as a private matter to be exercised quietly within the State. The Christians on the other hand felt it their duty to convert everyone to their religion and most often attempted to do so forcefully. According to Voltaire it was then, and only then, that the Romans began their persecutions, not from intolerance but rather from a political motive, the security of the state which they felt was threatened by the fanatical Christians.

When the Christians finally did gain political power, persecution for religious reasons began in earnest. Just why the Christians felt obliged to persecute constantly those who held other beliefs is due, Voltaire hypothesizes, from an inner insecurity, more than from religious zeal. A Notebook entry explains what Voltaire had in mind when he wrote: "Si tu étais bien persuadé tu ne serais pas intolérant (.) Tu ne l'es que parce qu'au fonds du coeur

tu sens que on te trompe."[11] While this is perhaps true to some extent, it would be most difficult to explain to a fanatic, and a religious one at that, that he was unsure of his beliefs. The basic psychology of fanticism prevents a person from even registering anything contrary to the beliefs he has convinced himself of.

It is the Inquisition and similar organizations that Voltaire had in mind when he exposed the fundamental principle underlying religious intolerance:

> Je possède une dignité et une puissance que l'ignorance et la crédulité ont fondée; je marche sur les têtes des hommes prosternés à mes pieds; s'ils se relèvent et me regardent en face, je suis perdu; il faut donc les tenir attachés à la terre avec des chaînes de fer.[12]

Taken strictly out of context, it appears as though this quotation might come from one of the manuals of the Inquisition rather than from Voltaire's Dictionnaire, since it describes the unwritten principle upon which the Holy Office operated. Yet the Holy Office was not the only

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[11] F-M. Arouet de Voltaire, Notebooks, LXXXII of Les Oeuvres Complètes de Voltaire, Theodore Besterman ed. (Genève: Institut et Musée Voltaire, 1968), p. 628.

[12] Article "Tolérance", Dict. phil., p. 405.

adherent to this philosophy of intolerance: the clergy in general seemed to regulate its behaviour in accordance with the degree of power it possessed. This attitude was evident earlier in the Essai but is expressed in a satirical style in Candide and is made the more forceful by frequent reference to the powerful Jesuit order which took advantage of the credulity and ignorance of the people to establish its dominion.

CHAPTER II

EARTHQUAKES, OPTIMISM AND PROVIDENCE

For sometime prior to the Lisbon disaster Europe had been basking in a certain atmosphere of peace and general prosperity. The treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle signed in 1748 had restored peace, at least temporarily, and allowed the weakened nations to rebuild themselves. Not the least considerable among the great commercial centers of the mid-eighteenth century was the city of Lisbon, particularly in relation to London and Hambourg. Lisbon was a city of some beauty and medieval charm, extremely well situated along the shore of the Tagus river. It was also reknowned for "the violence of its piety", to borrow Besterman's expression, with a penchant to worshipping innumerable relics and building churches and cathedrals in which to house them. While the city itself was not overly large in area it contained "over forty parish churches, several non-parochial churches, and about ninety convents."[1] It was also one of the principal seats of the dreaded Inquisition.

Suddenly without warning, though some "prophets"

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[1] J. D. Kendrick, The Lisbon Earthquake, (London: Methuen, 1956), p. 28.

claim to have foretold the event, news reached the capitals of Europe that the city of Lisbon was no more, that it had been almost totally levelled on the morning of November 1, 1755, by an earthquake which lasted approximately ten minutes.

Reverberations of this tragedy were felt from one end of Europe to the other. Never has any single event had such widespread effect upon man and his way of life:

> . . .le tremblement de terre du premier novembre 1755 a frappé à l'époque le monde occidental comme d'un coup de foudre, et a transformé pour toujours la philosophie des hommes pensants.[2]

The earthquake struck what was to prove a fatal blow against the philosophy of optimism which had been developing on a parallel line with the growing prosperity. Yet upon considering the Lisbon disaster within an historical perspective, we find ourselves asking why an event of this nature should cause such consternation when natural disasters and earthquakes in particular, were fairly commonplace in and before the eighteenth century. The earthquake at Lisbon was neither the first of its kind nor the last; there have been others,

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[2]Theodore Besterman, "Le Désastre de Lisbonne ou la mort de l'optimisme", Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century, II (1956), p. 25.

some far worse than the one suffered by the Portuguese, as we ourselves have most recently witnessed in Peru.

Why then should this particular earthquake have such an immediate and profound effect, not only upon Voltaire as we shall see, but upon the rest of Europe as well? In this case Voltaire's Candide may serve as a means to measure the effect of the earthquake on the rest of Europe. The tale contained a fairly accurate account of the destruction caused by the earthquake, though not published until four years after the disaster occurred; yet people were still known to tremble upon reading it.

However the importance of the earthquake does not derive solely from the number of churches and convents it brought crashing down, but rather from the various doctrines and religious beliefs that fell with them. It brought about not only a transformation in Voltaire that resulted in Candide and the ensuing campaign against the infâme, it also led to "a change in man's view of himself and his environment."[3]

The City of Lisbon

The Lisbon disaster took place on the morning of

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[3]Correspondence, Vol. 28, p. xxi.

All Saints Day, November 1, 1755, as most of the people were either in Church or on the way there. Without entering into an unnecessarily elaborate description of what happened, suffice it to say that the earthquake itself was composed of two violent shocks which together lasted not more than a few minutes, but which brought public buildings, churches and houses crashing down upon the people. This was followed in its turn by three huge tidal waves which drove the Tagus river over its banks and caused extensive damage to the port and the ships anchored there, not to mention widespread flooding. The destruction of the city was completed as a result of fires started by overturned cookstoves and the great number of candles used to light the churches.

The news of the Lisbon disaster caused severe repercussions throughout Europe, much more so than warranted by an event of this nature. Both Kendrick and Besterman cite several examples of earthquakes which occurred before the one at Lisbon, and which resulted in a higher loss of life and still more extensive property damage. However what mainly contributed to the shock and horror felt by so many people toward the Lisbon disaster was, in part the timing of the event itself; and what the city of Lisbon, with its powerful Inquisition and fanatical religious beliefs, represented to the rest of Europe.

The Lisbon disaster happened at a time when Europe

was enjoying one of those rare instances of peace which occurred in what otherwise was almost a continual state of war over the previous hundred years. Along with the prosperity that resulted from peacetime, commercial ties had been established more actively than ever before between the various nations. The philosophies of Pope, Leibniz and Wolff, expounded an optimistic view of the world, which was transposed by the Church into the more religious belief in Providence and adopted in turn by the people. Thus what Voltaire groups under the general heading of "the best of all possible worlds" almost seemed to be a reality. Hence when the disaster struck Lisbon on the fatal day, not only the Portuguese, but Europeans in general received a terrible shock:

> It forced itself upon the attention of Europe as a vindication of the inscrutability of fate, and made all but the professional optimists feel that cosmic optimism mocked at the sufferings of the victims.[4]

Moving for now from the theoretical to the more practical aspects of the disaster, let us examine the place Lisbon held in the eyes of Europe. From a commercial stand-

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[4]W. H. Barber, "Voltaire and Leibniz", in Leibniz in France from Arnauld to Voltaire (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), p. 224.

point Lisbon was very important to the other European nations, particularly England and Germany. It was also the clearing house for all goods from South America. While the Portuguese seemed to have plenty of money, they scarcely bothered to develop their own resources and industries. Consequently they were forced to import many of the products and commodities they themselves could easily have produced.[5] Most of the other trading nations had also invested considerable amounts of money into commercial enterprises connected with Portugal. Thus Voltaire's comment to Jean Robert Tronchin about the disaster causing the ruin of families "aux bouts de l'Europe" (Best. 5933) ostensibly holds true.

While the loss of trade was only one reason for which the Lisbon tragedy caused a crisis in European circles, the second reason brings us back to our original topic since it is directly related to religion. In his first article entitled "Le Désastre de Lisbonne" Gastinel refers to this great city as "une métropole de la catholicité."[6] Aside from being one of the principal sees of the Holy Office,

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[5]Kendrick, p. 29; G. Gstinel, "Le Désastre de Lisbonne", Revue du dix-huitième siècle, I (1913), 402-405.

[6]Ibid., Gastinel, p. 396.

Lisbon was known far and wide for the immense luxury and pomp of its religious practices. The majority of these devotions revolve around innumerable relics and miraculous objects of all sorts owned by different Churches and religious orders. These relics range from pieces of the manger in which Christ was born to allegedly autograph letters of the four Evangelists; and this alone in the one convent of the Carmelites.[7]

The fact that the earthquake fell on All Saints Day explains why the many churches and cathedrals of the city were filled to capacity with the faithful. On the other hand most of the nobles were still living in their country houses at the time, the Royal Family itself being at Belem outside the city, hence the death toll in palaces and public buildings was relatively light. Hence Gastinel remarks: "Ce furent surtout les églises et les couvents qui tuèrent."[8] People were either crushed to death by the crumbling churches or trapped amidst the debris and burned alive in the subsequent fire.

When the dust had settled some fifteen to twenty

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[7]Gastinel lists many of these objects in his article (pp. 397-398) but says that a complete listing would entail some thirty-seven pages or more, as it did one of his sources.

[8]G. Gastinel, "Le Désastre de Lisbonne (suite)" Revue du dix-huitième siècle, II (1914), p. 79.

thousand people were dead, although initial estimates range as high as one hundred thousand. (see Best. 5933). Many of the survivors walking among the debris feared that God was at any moment going to destroy what remained of the city as recurring tremors seemed to indicate; yet in spite of this awesome fear, they also found themselves questioning the arbitrary action of such a harsh and supposedly loving father. While the Portuguese hardly dared ponder such doubts even unto themselves, this was not so with the remainder of Europe, and Voltaire least of all. The immediate reaction to the disaster was a great cry of dismay directed against the combined notions of Optimism and divine Providence. Consequently, when it came time to provide an adequate explanation of this apparently divine phenomena:

> . . .the theologians found themselves in a confusion of attack and defence, anxious on the one hand to use the earthquake as a rebuke to sin, and forced on the other hand to justify such an indiscriminately savage act of a supposedly loving God.[9]

Voltaire first received word of the earthquake at Lisbon twenty-three days after it happened. His immediate reaction, like that of most people all over Europe, was one of shock and disbelief. However he seemed to recover

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[9]Kendrick, p. 149.

his wits sufficiently well enough to write a poignantly pessimistic and questioning letter to Tronchin that same day. The letter dated November 24, 1755, plunges directly into the philosophical considerations connected with the disaster and deserves to be quoted at some length since it expresses Voltaire's thoughts at the time:

> Voylà monsieur une phisique bien cruelle. On sera bien embarassé à devenir comment les lois du mouvement opèrent des désastres si effroiables dans le meilleur des mondes possibles. Cent mille fourmis, notre prochain, écrasées d'un coup dans notre fourmillière,. . . (Best. 5933).

The philosophy of optimism, so closely related to the religious belief in divine Providence always remains foremost in Voltaire's mind where Lisbon is concerned. In a letter to pastor Bertrand dated November 28, Voltaire announces that he has received confirmation of the disaster and concludes by commenting: "Si Pope avait été à Lisbonne aurait-il osé dire, tout est bien?" (Best. 5939). A second letter to the same correspondent written two days later contains a similar comment: "Voilà un terrible argument contre l'optimisme." (Best. 5941). Further references to the effect of the Lisbon affair abound in the correspondence of 1755 and 1756. A letter to Palissot resorts to apocalyptic imagery in order to better describe the disaster: "C'est le jugement dernier pour ce paus-là; il n'y a manqué que la trompette." (Best. 5943). Meanwhile still another letter,

this one to Pictet and bearing the same date as the one above, December 1, 1755, reveals in bluntly laconic terms Voltaire's feelings toward the destruction wrought by the earthquake in light of its philosophical background: "Le Portugal n'est plus. Tout est abimé. C'est là l'optimisme." (Best. 5944). The references in the Correspondence do not by any means mark the end of Voltaire's questions and doubts about Optimism. Even while the first letters were being written, Voltaire was formulating his response to the event that had taken place in the form of a poem which we shall examine presently. In addition to the above-mentioned poem another more comprehensive work, Candide, was to appear in 1759 which involved an extensive examination of the doctrines of Optimism and Providence in a social setting.

Meanwhile in the midst of all the philosophic confusion engendered by the earthquake, Voltaire manages not to forget his old foe, the Inquisition: ". . .he could not suppress the thought that if the Palace of the Inquisition remained standing, it would be a powerful argument against the doctrine of toleration."[10] As early as the first letter to Tronchin, Voltaire mentions the Holy Office in relation to the disaster:

> Que diront les prédicateurs surtout si le palais de l'Inquisition est demeuré debout? Je me flatte qu'au moins les révérands pères inquisiteurs auront été écrasez comme les autres. . . .car tandis que quelques sacrez

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[10] Wade, p. 93.

> coquins brûlent quelques fanatiques la terre engloutit les uns et les autres. (Best. 5933).

Through this reference to the Inquisition, so held in disdain by the other European nations, and the questions on Optimism and Providence, Voltaire is touching upon the main themes of sermons preached upon the disaster throughout the continent.

The Poème sur le désastre de Lisbonne

While Voltaire was giving vent to his immediate reactions toward the Lisbon disaster in his letters, he was at the same time preparing a comprehensive and logical statement of his thoughts in the form of the Lisbon poem. As early as the first two weeks of December Voltaire, working at white heat, had completed a first draft of the Poème sur le désastre de Lisbonne though the work itself was not published until February of the following year.

Tragically recounting the death, destruction and suffering caused by the disaster, Voltaire's poem inclines heavily toward extreme pessimism. Optimism and its religious counterpart divine Providence Voltaire holds, are no longer realistically tenable under circumstances such as those prevailing in Lisbon. Yet despite all the evidence seemingly in his favor, Voltaire was still criticized for his pessimistic views by both sides. The most strenuous objection came from Jean-Jacques Rousseau in his Lettre sur la Providence (Best. 6289). Even when one has placed the Lisbon earthquake

in an historical perspective compatible with the eighteenth century by referring to the frequency of natural disasters of this type, the pessimism of the poem does seem somewhat excessive. This is especially the case if one recalls that the concluding lines were added by Voltaire to placate the religious authorities and "in an attempt to mitigate its rather unrelieved pessimism and despair."[11] To Pastor Bertrand Voltaire writes:

> Vous me direz que. . .je laisse le lecteur dans la tristesse et dans le doute. Eh bien! il n'y a qu'à ajouter le mot espérer à celui d'adorer, et mettre:
> Mortels il faut souffrir,/Se soumettre, adorer, espérer, et mourir.[12]

This perhaps unduly pessimistic reaction on the part of Voltaire is not solely attributable to the event of November 1, 1755. Rather it comprises a combination of both personal and social factors which had been building up for some years prior to the earthquake as the Correspondence for the years 1749 to 1755 indicates. Thus the actual disaster merely precipitated the coming crisis by striking

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[11]George R. Havens, "Voltaire's Pessimistic Revision of the Conclusion of his Poëme sur le désastre de Lisbonne", Modern Language Notes, XLIV (1929), 490; and p. 426 of George R. Havens, "The Conclusion of Voltaire's Poëme sur le désastre de Lisbonne", Modern Language Notes, LVI (1941), 422-426.

[12]Quoted by Havens p. 490 as M. XXXVIII, 556. The Concordance is Best. 6066.

the decisive blow against a philosophy of which Voltaire already had serious doubts. Some critics tend to gloss over the various personal factors in Voltaire's life as singularly unimportant, and focus all of their attention on the event itself as the only reason for Voltaire's swing to pessimism. We on the other hand, prefer to follow the example of Professor Bottiglia in his study on Candide.[13] He regards Voltaire's pessimistic response in the Poème as the end result of a cumulative process of which the Lisbon disaster is merely the last in a series of experiences which gradually led the philosopher away from providential optimism.

The factors preceding the Lisbon disaster are discussed most thoroughly by Bottiglia. Without further elaboration, these are listed as follows: The onset of old age coupled with poor health; the death of Madame du Châtelet (1749); the Berlin fiasco and consequent rupture with Frederick the Great; the sense of homelessness or exile which resulted from this disappointment; various literary or philosophical quarrels; the study of history leading to

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[13] W. F. Bottiglia, Voltaire's "Candide: analysis of a classic, Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century edited by Theodore Besterman, VII (Genève: Institut et Musée Voltaire, 1959), p. 89-93. Also discussed in Wade, Voltaire and "Candide", p. 88 ff; Jean Sareil, Essai sur Candide, (Genève: Droz, 1967), p. 29.

disgust and scepticism; the conflict between the clocklike order of a rational, mechanical universe and the mad confusion of illogical, capricious actuality; and looking toward Candide, the Seven Years War.[14]

Many of these factors were known to Voltaire's friends and fellow intellectuals, the majority of whom were themselves at least partially affected by the latter three. One in particular, the Duchess of Saxe-Gotha wrote to Voltaire suggesting that he write something concerning the disaster:

> Que dites-vous M., de la catastrophe funeste de Lisbonne? Elle fait frémir l'humanité. Quelle terrible secousse que se fait ressentir dans presque toute l'Europe. Ce phenomène serait digne de votre chant. (Best. 5972).

The letter is dated December 20, 1755, at which time Voltaire's "chant" had already been composed.

The sub-title of the Lisbon poem is "Examen de cet Axiome: Tout est bien". From this title it follows that the greater part of the poem will be concerned with a discussion of the philosophy of Optimism, now subject to doubt and criticism due to the Lisbon catastrophe. However we do not intend to go into a full analysis of this aspect of Voltaire's poem. Rather we will limit ourselves to what has already been

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[14]Bottiglia, p. 89.

taire goes on to mention Pope and the abuse of the axiom "Tout est bien", first by the clergy who saw in it a rejection of the need for redemption, and secondly by the fatalistic interpretation adopted by Leibniz and his followers. In defense of Pope Voltaire explains that the axiom was originally intended to mean "qu'il y a du mal sur la terre" despite that all is ultimately good. He then proceeds to explain that taken in a strict sense and without hope this axiom "n'est qu'une insulte aux douleurs de notre vie". (468)

The first twelve lines of the poem paint a tragic picture of the disaster, graphically describing the sufferings of the victims, and Voltaire then asks both Optimists and Providentialists, particularly the latter:

> Direz-vous: C'est l'effet des éternelles lois
> "Qui d'un Dieu libre et bon nécessitent le choix?"
> Direz-vous, en voyant cet amas de victimes:
> "Dieu s'est vengé, leur mort est le prix de leurs crimes?" (470)

Voltaire immediately answers the latter question, at the same time anticipating Martin's feelings in Candide toward the innocent victims of a naval battle. Why should innocent children also perish in the disaster if it was intended only as a means to punish the wicked, and why choose Lisbon rather than London or Paris since certainly no one city is any more sinful than the others? (470). "Ma plainte est innocente et mes cris légitimes" (471), says Voltaire

of his questioning of the workings of Providence. This he justifies a few lines further on: "Je respecte mon Dieu, mais j'aime l'univers". (471). Man is the one who is suffering, and it is man that Voltaire is first and foremost concerned with.

A second graphic description, reminiscent in part of the portrait already drawn of Lisbon, presents a chaotic view of life from which the author concludes: "Eléments, animaux, humains, tout est en guerre." (474). Consequently we are forced to admit that ". . .le mal est sur la terre". (474). Voltaire continues posing questions embarassing to the Providentialists by asking how they can possibly conceive of a loving God, "la bonté même, / Qui prodigue ses biens à ses enfants qu'il aime. / Et qui versa sur eux les maux à pleines mains?" (474). With this fundamental contradiction in mind Voltaire provides two reasons, both of which have a Pascalian ring to them, as to why God makes man suffer as he does on earth: "Ou l'homme est né coupable, et Dieu punit sa race, / (475) and the more orthodox "Ou bien Dieu nous éprouve, . . ./" (475). Yet no matter which way we turn in an attempt to understand our situation, man is afforded no answer, least of all from nature which Voltaire qualifies as "muette". "On a besoin d'un Dieu qui parle au genre humain" says Voltaire because alone, "Je ne conçois pas plus comment tout serait bien: "Je suis comme un

docteur; hélas! je ne sais rien." (475).

Man in this world is both abandoned by God and estranged from himself:

> L'homme, étranger à soi, de l'homme est ignoré.
> Que suis-je, où suis-je, où vais-je, et d'où suis-je tiré?
> Atomes tourmentés sur cet amas de boue,
> Que la mort engloutit, et dont le sort se joue,
> . . . . . .
> Le Passé n'est pour nous qu'un triste souvenir;
> Le présent est affreux, s'il n'est point d'avenir.
> (477-478).

This is Voltaire speaking from the depths of pessimism. The poem concludes with an attempt on his part to explain to both metaphysical and theological optimists just what is wrong with their way of thinking: "Un jour tout sera bien, voilà notre espérance; / Tout est bien aujourd'hui, voilà l'illusion." (478). The Poème ends on a note of resignation to the workings of Providence, but this as we know was added by Voltaire "après le fait" in an unsuccessful attempt to protect himself from the criticism of the clergy.[17]

Optimism and Providence in Candide

From the time of the publication of the Poème sur le désastre de Lisbonne in 1756 until the appearance of Candide in 1759, Voltaire's pessimistic outlook was not substantially altered. Rather if anything his position was

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[17] See note 11.

taken hold of himself again. Professor Bottiglia attributes Voltaire's emotional upsurge to the healing properties of time, an absorption in active interests and positive projects centered around Ferney, the intellectual controversies of the time and his "instinctive pugnacity".[19] And one might well add to this a strong lust for life, so characteristic of the old man of Ferney. Thus, as Bottiglia remarks:

> In the latter part of the decade, as the correspondence and the contributions to the Encyclopédie and Candide itself reveal, the pessimistic trend was checked and turned back upon itself by a melioristic countercurrent,. . .[20]

Meliorism occupies a place midway between optimism and pessimism and affirms that the world is capable of improvement by human effort. Thereupon Voltaire realized that man at least had something to hope for, something to work toward. It is this progression from pessimism to meliorism that Candide re-enacts in 1759.

From the moment he is abruptly dismissed from the castle of the Baron Thunder-ten-tronckh, Candide is submitted to nothing but a constant stream of physical evil, as is

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[19] Bottiglia, p. 90.

[20] Ibid., p. 89. See also Morize, pp. XLVI-XLVII.

evident from his military career with the Bulgarian forces, to the encounter with the horribly infected Pangloss, through the shipwreck within sight of the port of Lisbon culminating for the moment with the destruction of that city by an earthquake after scarcely having landed. This of course is intentional on Voltaire's part since Candide's lot was, generally speaking, representative of the lot of Europe at the time.

Physical evil profoundly disturbs Voltaire for two reasons. On the one hand,

> it calls into question the nature and purposes of a Creator whose general laws cause so much specific wretchedness for his predetermined creatures;

and on the other hand,

> it gives rise to speculation which romances about the unknown as though it were the known, with disastrous effects on the moral motivation of mankind.[21]

Both these reasons may be substantiated by a brief look at the sermons preached upon the earthquake in Portugal and in the rest of Europe. The majority of the clergy held that God in his anger was both punishing and warning mankind to mend its evil ways. In the city of Lisbon itself the clergy blamed the disaster on the people's evil ways, claiming that

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[21]Bottiglia, p. 93.

all things considered, they had actually gotten off lightly.[22] This however did not convince the people that they were any worse than most others, and certainly not deserving of such a punishment. If anything, sermons preached in this vein within the wake of the disaster were more apt to produce questions about the behaviour of the victims' supposedly loving Father.

The second reason brings to the fore the whole purpose of man's life here on earth, stopping but a step away from pessimistic fatalism and the complete disavowal of hope. If all is predetermined by such a Creator, especially one whose laws are always to remain unknowable and unexplained to man, what then is the use of trying to improve our lot here on earth? This is the question that Voltaire is attempting to answer in Candide's garden and in his own at Ferney. In the final analysis Candide, though certainly pre-disposed toward pessimistic fatalism, opts rather for a course away from Providence in favor of improvement in the future.

This move away from God toward man in Candide is symbolized by the hero's continual search for a place where "tout sera bien", where he may live in peace with his be-

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[22]Wade, p. 98.

loved Cunégonde. The odyssey of the "jeune métaphysicien fort ignorant des choses de ce monde" (Can., 141) takes him all over the world until finally he simply buys a small plot of land in the country where he is reunited with a group of friends and this turns out to be Turkey. The "tout est bien" axiom underlies every incident in the story whether good or bad and is philosophized upon accordingly.

Although the Lisbon disaster itself is but one incident among many others in Candide it is by far the most influential, followed closely by the Seven Years War. It, above all, had done more to undermine religious power and Providentialism than any other single event. Up until this point in the tale there are only three main references which imply criticism to Providence: the description of the innocent victims, women and children for the most part, of the fighting between Bulgars and Abars; Jacques' admission that all is not quite for the best: "Il faut bien, disait-il, que les hommes aient un peu corrompu la nature, car ils ne sont point nés loups, et ils sont devenus loups" (Can., 146); lastly, of course, the earthquake itself and the subsequent trouble with the Inquisition. And yet on the boat heading for the New World Candide, after all he has been through thus far, still is not quite ready to reject the "tout est bien":

> C'est certainement le nouveau monde qui
> est le meilleur des univers possibles.
> -- Dieu le veuille! disait Cunégonde;

> mais j'ai été si horriblement malheureuse dans le mien que mon coeur est presque fermé à l'espérance. (Can., 157)

Cunégonde might well be Voltaire in this instance one step away from complete despair; although no one in the tale, not even Martin the pessimist par excellence whom Candide will meet in Surinam ever gives in. Were Martin to give himself over completely to despair, it is not unreasonable to assume that Voltaire would probably remove him from the group. It is only after listening to the old woman's story that Candide feels capable of objecting to the moral and physical evil which surrounds him and which Pangloss insists upon as being all for a greater good. Were Pangloss here, says Candide:

> . . .il nous dirait des choses admirables sur le mal physique et le mal moral et je me sentirais assez de force pour oser lui faire respectueusement quelques objections. (Can., 164)

Finally when Candide and Cacambo reach Eldorado the former treats the kingdom almost as if it were a dream. Similarly, at no time is the reader led to believe that Eldorado is anything but a mythical kingdom, a quiet interlude between adventures. Whereas the true optimist like Pangloss would have readily accepted Eldorado at face value, Candide remains much more realistic and does not get carried away by it. Were Pangloss to have been the person chosen by Voltaire to accompany Candide into Eldorado, then this

would be regarded as the final proof of his philosophy. But this is not Voltaire's intention and so Pangloss is not permitted to enter the kingdom. Besides was he not hanged in the sixth chapter by the Inquisition?

Objections to Providentialism and Optimism crop up throughout the latter part of the tale. Having just left Eldorado on the way to see ". . .quel royaume nous pourrons acheter", (Can., 181). Candide is immediately confronted with the reality and suffering of life when he encounters a negro slave on the outskirts of Surinam whose right hand and left leg have been cut off by his master:

> -- O Pangloss! s'écria Candide, tu n'avais pas deviné cette abomination; c'en est fait, il faudra qu'à la fin je renonce à ton optimisme. (Can., 183)

And when asked by Cacambo what Optimism is, Candide replies bitterly: "Hélas! . . .c'est la rage de dire que tout est bien quand on est mal." (Can., 183). However while he listens to the pessimistic Martin, Candide does not adopt the pessimistic extreme of the latter because he still retains the hope of finding happiness with Cunégonde. On the other hand he is no longer the exponent of the "tout est bien" philosophy either, because of his own experience.

When all the members of the little company are at last brought together, free from inquisitors, pirates, clerical scoundrels and similar pernicious human beings, Candide

purchases a small piece of land near Constantinople. He is no longer the ignorant young metaphysician who knew nothing of life, for Candide now has a wealth of experience to draw upon. He listened closely to the words of the dervish and to those of the old Turk and was now convinced that positive action in the form of cultivating their garden was the only way for the little company to survive in our world: "Travaillons sans raisonner, dit Martin; c'est le seul moyen de rendre la vie supportable." (Can., 221). Hence they all put their particular talents to work and, as was the case in real life with Ferney, the result justified their industry: "La petite terre rapporta beaucoup." (Can., 221).

Thus Candide like Voltaire has come the full circle from optimism to meliorism. The philosopher's quest has ended with the adoption of a positive attitude towards life in which one is socially involved, that is to say, more concerned with man than with God. The movement in the tale is always away from God, or rather from divine Providence, and more particularly from the associated doctrine of Providentialism. Yet it was not specifically God or Providence that Voltaire objected to so strongly, rather it was the use which man made of them in the face of obvious physical evil and suffering:

> La critique religieuse écarte
> toujours Dieu pour s'en

prendre à l'utilisation que les hommes font de lui.[23]

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[23]Sareil, p. 34.

CHAPTER III

THE JESUITS

As late as 1748 Voltaire's relationship with the Society of Jesus was good despite earlier publication of the highly critical Lettres philosophiques[1] and several other subsequent but minor incidents, Zadig (1747) being the latest. Himself a product of Jesuit education, Voltaire always respected and praised their educational system, though at times he felt the Society was intentionally lagging behind the rapid scientific progress taking place during the eighteenth century. Evidence to this effect was discovered the year of the Society's expulsion from France when their libraries, now the property of the State, were revealed to contain very few books by contemporary scientific writers.

However it was not concerning matters of an educational nature for which Voltaire was to take the Society to task. There were basically two motives for the scathing attack he launched against them: the abuse of privilege for which the Jesuits were responsible in France; in particular, their influence and power within the State, and the direction this

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[1] Voltaire has disclaimed authorship of this work in a letter to La Tour, principal of the Jesuit Collège Louis le Grand. (Best. 3044)

could eventually take if given the opportunity, as witnessed in Paraguay. Secondly, there were personal motives involved. Since 1750, Voltaire and the Encyclopédistes with whom he identified, had found themselves hard-pressed, the constant victims of criticism launched by the Society's Journal de Trévoux under the editorship of Père Berthier. By 1751 it was painfully evident to all concerned, that if the Philosophes were to survive in the face of this onslaught, then an all out battle would have to be waged, a battle for which Voltaire was only too predisposed to lead the attack: "Faire la guerre aux jésuites! il n'y était que trop disposé. Il avait ses motifs de rancune, il était encore ému de leurs persécutions,. . . ."[2]

In the first nine chapters of Candide Voltaire had already referred to two Jesuits, but only cursorily, placing them in minor "everyday" type roles, consistent with the pattern of criticism prevalent in the mid-eighteenth century linking clerics with illicit and immoral practices. These non-specific references are to be regarded on the same level as those made for example about the two Franciscans and the

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[2]G. Desnoiresterres, Voltaire et la société au XVIIIe siècle. Volume V, (Paris: Didier et Cie, 1875), p. 194.

abbés;[3] that is to say, as representative of "the evils of priestcraft in general", to borrow Barber's expression.

Paraguay in perspective

The Jesuit domain of Paraguay enters naturally enough into the rapid stream of events which characterize Candide. Pursued by the Inquisition for having killed the Grand Inquisitor of Lisbon, Candide is afforded a temporary respite by enlisting as a captain in the Spanish army assembling at Cadiz:

> On y équipait une flotte, et on y assemblait des troupes pour mettre à la raison les révérands pères jésuits du Paraguai, qu'on accusait d'avoir fait révolter une de leurs hordes contre les rois d'Espagne et de Portugal, auprès de la ville du St. Sacrement. (Can., 156)

The Jesuits had in effect opposed the transfer of the Portuguese town of Saint-Sacrement to Spanish hands and had led the natives in a successful campaign of resistance against both parties. (M. xii, 428-429).

According to Professor Barber in his analysis of Candide, Voltaire uses the Jesuits primarily as a satirical example of "the evils of priestcraft."[4] We disagree with

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[3]The following chapter discusses in detail the role of various clerical figures as Candide encounters them in the course of his travels. This is the type of setting into which the two Jesuits, not directly associated with Paraguay will be considered below.

[4]W. H. Barber, Voltaire: "Candide", p. 29.

Barber on this point for, as will be shown in the following chapter, Voltaire criticizes "priestcraft", a very general term, throughout the tale and does not necessarily limit himself to the Jesuits on this issue. The latter represent far more than just another example of the corruption which was so common amongst the clergy at this time. The growing wealth, influence and power of the society, graphically evident in Paraguay, caused Voltaire to fear a similar situation developing in France. What was happening in Paraguay had in itself little importance to Voltaire, it was the Jesuits and their accession to complete temporal authority that he feared. Moreover as we have already pointed out above, Voltaire also had personal motives for attacking the Society. Lastly, the attack against the Jesuits is a concentrated one to which the author devotes chapters fourteen to sixteen; an unusually long passage in the work. Because of this emphasis one may rightly assume, it seems, that there is a purpose underlying Voltaire's concise account of the situation in Paraguay and, consequently, that this section must be examined separately from the scattered general comments that are simply critical of the clergy as a whole.

In Paraguay the Jesuits established a system of government for the Indians, unparalleled by even the strictest of eighteenth century standards: "et [ils] sont venus à bout de gouverner un vaste pays comme en Europe on gouverne un

couvent." (M. xii. 424). Voltaire was already familiar with the Paraguay regime for he had, prior to Candide, devoted a chapter to it in the Essai sur les moeurs. According to the Essai the Jesuits, sent by the kings of Spain and Portugal to convert the natives to Catholicism, had acted in a quite different manner: "Les jésuites se sont à la vérité servis de la religion pour ôter la liberté aux peuplades du Paraguai." (M. xii. 424). This statement however only presents half the truth of the matter, and even so it is slanted against the Jesuits. It is important to keep in mind that Voltaire is a polemicist at heart and though in most cases may have a valid point to make, he still remains prejudicial in outlook. Where Paraguay is concerned both in the Essai sur les moeurs and in Candide Voltaire, intentionally or otherwise, leaves out several pertinent facts in favor of the Jesuit missions.

Colonization of South America was most active between 1620 and 1640 for this was the period during which the Jesuits were establishing their first missions in the basin of the Rio de la Plata. The most difficult problem facing them was to persuade the Indians to settle in definite localities under the tutelage of the missionaries: "The methods were in part persuasion, but once in the mission

the Indians were not permitted to leave".[5] However as Voltaire fails to mention the missions were also intended as protection for the Indians against the Mamelucos or mixed bloods who hunted slaves for the Portuguese planters of Brazil:

> Moral justification where the morality of the trade was questioned, was found in the plea that the Indians were cannibals; by capturing them, the Paulistas were preventing them from eating one another and at the same time saving their souls.[6]

The slave raids presented a serious problem to the Jesuits, for to resist the Paulistas, the Portuguese inhabitants of Sao Paulo, would be construed as open resistance to royal authority, as it was let us say after 1700. In the meanwhile several settlements were attacked and scattered in 1628 in a struggle which by then had assumed the proportions of a civil war; but "The Jesuits obtained royal authorization to arm the natives"[7] and

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[5]B. W. Diffie, Latin American Civilization: colonial period, (New York, Octagon Books Inc., 1967), p. 580.

[6]Ibid., p. 669.

[7]German Arciniegas, Latin America: a cultural history, trans. Joan MacLean (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), p. 106.

successfully defeated the Paulistas in 1642. But the slave expeditions continued since another effect of the missions was to make slaving much easier: "Previously, it had been necessary to hunt the Indians and fight; now they had merely to be gathered in."[8] This even made the Indians suspicious of the Jesuits to the point that some of them wondered whether or not they had been assembled to make capture more convenient. To make matters worse, oftentimes slave-hunters used to disguise themselves in Jesuit robes to deceive the natives. However the suspicions that the Jesuits were in league with the traders were totally unfounded. Continual raids by the Paulistas drove the Jesuits and their Indians steadily south and west towards the interior until they finally settled in Paraguay.

Voltaire makes little more than a brief mention of "des brigands à qui on a donné le nom de Mamelus", (M. xii. 428) and none at all about their slave-trading activities in either the Essai or in Candide, though he must have been aware of them from contemporary accounts written at the time.[9] Instead Voltaire confines his account to facts for the most part derogatory to the Jesuits. While the

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[8]Diffie, p. 671.

[9]Morize lists several works that Voltaire may have read on the subject of Paraguay. See pp. 79-80, n. 1.

Jesuit regime itself was not perfect by any means, for they too exploited the natives most profitably, it does appear that their policy of isolating the natives from the rest of the country was the only one feasible under the circumstances. It is noteworthy that when the Jesuits were forced to leave Paraguay following the decree of expulsion issued against them in Portugal in 1767, most of their missions or villages were unable to govern themselves and were soon abandoned to the jungle.[10] However this does not fall within the chronological scope of Candide. In the tale itself, Voltaire simply concentrates his attention on one aspect of the Paraguayan situation and thus for purposes of satirical effect, divorces the kingdom of Paraguay, from its historical context. Nevertheless we definitely agree that the temporal arm of the church in that country did extend far beyond the spiritual one:

> Soumis dans tout ce qui est d'apparence au roi d'Espagne, ils étaient rois en effet, et peut-être les rois les mieux obéis de la terre. Ils ont été à la fois fondateurs, législateurs, pontifes et souverains.
> (M. xii. 428)

The Paraguayan "Vineyard" in Candide

Voltaire violently criticizes the disparity which

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[10]Arciniegas, p. 157.

exists between the material condition of the Fathers and the excessive poverty of the natives: "Los Padres y ont tout," explains Cacambo, "et les peuples rien; c'est le chef-d'oeuvre de la raison et de la justice." (Can., 167). In a footnote to this statement André Morize remarks:

> Tout le scepticisme et la défiance de Voltaire à l'égard de l'organization "communiste" des Jésuites au Paraguai se condensent dans cette formule.[11]

Voltaire is referring to the economic structure of the villages which was a form of collectivism or communal pooling of resources. All crops were harvested and placed in a communal store from which the people drew in accordance to their needs. Any surplus materials went toward the purchase of farm implements and arms, while anything left over at this point went into the coffers of the Society and was used to build additional churches. The economic disparity between priests and natives is further emphasized when Candide is invited to the quarters of the priest in charge and is served an excellent meal prepared in golden dishes while ". . .les Paraguains mangèrent du maïs dans des écuelles de bois, en plein champ, à l'ardeur du soleil, ..." (Can., 168).

The dual role of the Paraguayan Jesuits is also criti-

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[11]Morize, p. 81, n. 3.

cized by Voltaire. As a result of the Society's accession to secular as well as spiritual power in Paraguay each priest, in addition to his spiritual functions, must perform military duties as well. In fact it is difficult to determine which of the two takes precedence over the other, so intermingled these functions have become. The young Baron Thunder-ten-Tronckh was invited to join the Jesuits at the request of the General of the Order who needed foreign recruits for the Society's "Paraguayan vineyard": "Je fus honoré, en arrivant du sous-diaconat et d'une lieutenance", Cunégonde's brother proudly exclaims, "je suis aujourd'hui colonel et prêtre." (Can., 169).

Realizing that the situation in Paraguay had gotten completely out of hand by the late 1750's, the Portuguese and Spanish monarchs resolved to take action. Troops were dispatched from Spain to reason with the fathers when it was learnt that they had been responsible for armed resistance against other Spanish and Portuguese forces. However, says the Provincial of the Jesuits just returned from saying mass and inspecting his troops: "Nous recevons vigoureusement les troupes du roi d'Espagne; je vous réponds qu'elles seront excommuniées et battues." (Can., 169).

Throughout the section on the Jesuits, Voltaire repeatedly interchanges the order of the priest's functions. From the clerical emphasis of "sous-diaconat et lieutenance",

the young baron's first appointment, Voltaire reverses the order as the Baron moves higher in the ranks; presumably as his military duties take on greater importance, he refers to himself as "colonel et prêtre". The religious emphasis is again brought to the fore in reference to the Spanish troops who will be "excommuniées et battues". Thus Voltaire does not distinguish between the two roles played by the Paraguayan Jesuits.

The dual role of the Jesuits in Paraguay is a fundamental contradiction in terms, totally inconsistent with the purpose for which this organization was originally founded and Voltaire has no intention of letting them forget this, even for a moment. He has already mentioned the situation in the Essai:

> Pendant que ces religieux faisaient la guerre en Amérique aux rois d'Espagne et du Portugal, ils étaient en Europe les confesseurs de ces princes. (M. xii. 429)

He repeats in satirical style the same point by a similar statement in Candide, no doubt immediately recognizable to anyone familiar with the Essai:

> Pour moi, je ne vois rien de si divin que Los Padres, qui font ici la guerre au roi d'Espagne, et qui en Europe confessent ces rois; qui tuent ici des Espanols, et qui à Madrid les envoient au ciel: cela me ravit. (Can., 167)

The tone of the passage contained in the Essai is fairly even, since Voltaire is only stating historical fact.

However when this passage is transposed to Candide, the stress falls on the satirical. The first few lines are essentially a restatement of the Essai, with the exception of the "si divin" which previews the last section. Here Voltaire's satire is scathing as he describes in a few words, just what the Jesuits are doing: killing Spaniards in South America, and saving the souls in Madrid.

In the Essai sur les moeurs Voltaire explains how European monasteries, and by these we are given to understand the Society of Jesus, have gained immense wealth and power as a result of lands given them: ". . .Ils sont parvenus à ce degré de grandeur, opposé à leur état, par une marche naturelle." (M. xii. 428). While in the domain of Paraguay the situation is far more serious because here as Voltaire points out, the Jesuits arbitrarily seized the lands they now own there:

> . . .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. (M. xii. 428)

Despite the fact that Voltaire does not repeat this second statement in Candide, it is the opinion of this author that the philosophe, by presenting the Paraguay situation as he does in these chapters, is re-issuing the warning against the increasing power of the Jesuits in France already implied in the Essai. It was a common practice

among eighteenth century authors, especially those critical of certain groups in their own country too powerful to be attacked openly, to couch their attack in a foreign setting. Voltaire had already used this technique quite successfully in the Lettres philosophiques where England was not so much mentioned as France was deliberately overlooked.

Furthermore, the correlation between the Essai and Candide is also consistent with Voltaire's policy of leaving the reader to draw his own conclusions from the material presented:

> Les livres les plus utiles sont ceux dont les lecteurs font eux-mêmes la moitié; ils étendent les pensées dont on leur présente le germe;. . .[12]

The very language used by Voltaire in the tale, either in connection with the Jesuit kingdom or its ruling officers, is also indicative of his previously expressed thoughts in the Essai. The formal title monseigneur, used to address the commandant, though the proper Church form of address for a bishop in the eighteenth century, had not originally been intended to refer to this person. Prior to the seventeenth century, the title monseigneur only designated the monarch and very high ranking officers of the Crown. However Littré explains, the clergy, particularly the bishops, simply adopted

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[12] Dict. phil., Préface, p. XL.

this title on their own initiative.[13]

Applied to Cunégonde's brother who is really only "colonel et prêtre", the title monseigneur might well be interpreted in a secular context. This context is further reinforced by the various ways in which the commandant is approached. In one instance we are told: "Un officier paraguain courut aux pieds du commandant" (Can., 167); and in another: "Candide baisa d'abord le bas de la robe du commandant, ensuite ils se mirent à table." (Can., 168).

These are the various means by which Voltaire is attempting to draw the reader's attention to the extent to which the Jesuits regard themselves as heads of the secular state. This further accounts for the feeling of impending danger one senses on the part of Voltaire if the ambition and pride of the Jesuits are allowed to continue without restraint or control for too much longer.

Voltaire and the Journal de Trévoux

Bemoaning having killed Cunégonde's brother, whom as we know was père-commandant of the Jesuits in Paraguay, Candide utters a most astonishing comment: "Et que dira le Journal de Trévoux?" (Can., 171). At best a facetious remark on the part of Candide following his narrow escape.

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[13]Littré, Tome III, p. 611.

In fact, Voltaire is evoking for the contemporary reader the conflict then raging between the philosophic party and the Jesuit journal. Voltaire in particular had been attacked several times in the Journal since he had cast his lot in favor of the anti-religious Encyclopedists. This specific reference, taken within an historical context, brings to mind a brief pamphlet published by Voltaire in November of 1759 entitled: Relation de la maladie, de la confession, de la mort, et de l'apparition du jésuite Berthier.

While this may be construed as speculation on my part, it is nonetheless not improbable that Voltaire was considering the Relation, even while writing Candide, and simply voiced his thoughts at this time. Voltaire often ruminated ideas for other works while writing something else. This hypothesis is further reinforced when one compares the functions of the two men in question. Both held highly influential posts within the Jesuit organization, but Berthier is the more important of the two, since he is after all the real personage. He was editor-in-chief of the Journal de Trévoux which had recently condemned several of Voltaire's works such as Le Poème sur la loi naturelle. Thus it was not unlikely that at the time of the writing of Candide Voltaire was sufficiently aroused against Berthier to be preparing such a work as the Relation.

Speculation aside, let us examine the background of

the Voltaire-Berthier quarrel. After the publication of Micromégas in 1752, Voltaire's relations with the Jesuits were steadily deteriorating, yet still with the possibility of reconciliation. On a wider scale, what to Voltaire was the most important work of his century, the Encyclopédie was now coming under heavy criticism and harrassment for its anti-religious views. The prime force behind this attack was the Jesuit Journal de Trévoux under Berthier.

For a time, the Encyclopedists had thrived under the protection of d'Aguesseau, Chancellor of France, and their anti-religious propaganda increased. This period was soon to come to an end:

> L'heure avait sonné de donner preuve de vie à des belligérants qui, sans doute, s'étaient figuré que le vieux lion avait perdu ses griffes.[14]

Finally in 1752 the religious authorities, with the help of the Jesuits and in conjunction with the Prades affair, succeeded in having the first two volumes of the Encyclopédie suppressed by securing an order of the Paris Parlement. When he aligned himself with the editors of the Encyclopédie ". . .it was clear to Berthier that Voltaire had committed himself irrevocably against the Church."[15] A

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[14]Desnoiresterres, V, 407.

[15]John N. Pappas, Berthier's Journal de Trévoux and the philosophes, (Genève: Institut et Musée Voltaire, 1957), p. 104.

further volume of the Encyclopédie appeared in 1753 and its editors took advantage of an uneasy calm over the next few years to continue publication. Then a strange combination of circumstances involving Damien's attempt on the life of Louis XV in 1757 and the publication of Helvétius' De l'Esprit in 1758 led the religious authorities to launch a final attack against the philosophes. Strongly supported by the Jesuits, the religious authorities succeeded in having the privilège of the Encyclopédie withdrawn on March 8, 1759.

As a consequence of the Jesuit's part in the condemnation of the Encyclopédie, a new wave of criticism erupted, led by Voltaire. However, this time the victims were the Jesuits and Berthier:

> Le poète a rompu à jamais avec la Société, à qui il ne ménagera ni les vérités dures ni même les calomnies: il la poursuivra sans pitié, sans miséricorde.[16]

Voltaire and the philosophes did not spare the Society criticism on any matter. By 1759 the repeated blows delivered by the philosophic party were beginning to have a telling effect. Cries of "mangeons du jésuite, mangeons du jésuite!" (Can., 172) drawn from Candide resounded in the streets of Paris indicating growing resentment toward the Society.[17]

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[16]Desnoiresterres, V, 415.

[17]Wade, p. 292.

Meanwhile, the Jesuits were being attacked on a second front by their longtime adversaries, the Jansenists. The Jansenist controlled Parlement seized this opportunity to pass several measures against the Jesuit order. From this point onward, the quarrel which had originally centered around the Encyclopédie and the philosophic party now degenerated into a struggle between religious adversaries. The end result of this conflict occurred in 1761 with the expulsion of the Jesuits from France.

While the philosophes may have created the atmosphere in which expulsion became possible, they assumed no direct responsibility for it:

> Ils [Diderot et ses amis] eurent l'élégance de laisser aux fanatiques du parti janséniste le soin de s'en réjouir, mais ils n'eurent pas l'hypocrisie de s'en plaindre.[18]

Throughout the final critical onslaught of the philosophes Berthier maintained a policy of silence. Pappas stresses the importance for Berthier and the Jesuits of the Relation (1759) when he remarks: "The Relation no doubt reinforced this resolution, and Voltaire was never again mentioned by name in the Journal de Trévoux."[19]

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[18] J. Proust, L'Encyclopédie, (Paris: Armand Colin, 1965), p. 72.

[19] Pappas, p. 415.

In conclusion we can say that underlying the Paraguay episode is one of Voltaire's most familiar themes in connection with religious criticism which is, the issue of Church and State. In the Lettres philosophiques published in 1734, the ninth letter "Sur le gouvernement" exposes the abuses for which the Church is responsible within the State, and leaves the reader to judge for himself: "Pesez ces attentats, et jugez."[20] Voltaire comes right to the point in La Voix du sage et du peuple published in 1750 and suppressed by an act of council in 1751: "Il ne doit pas avoir deux puissances dans un état." (M. xxxiii. 467). Finally the Dictionnaire philosophique, published after Candide during the campaign against the infâme, further stresses the fact that the clergy should have no power whatsoever within the State.[21]

Voltaire and the philosophes in general believed that the Church and its representatives had altogether too much say in matters properly pertaining to the secular order. Church influence extended far beyond the boundaries of the spiritual into the temporal order. The Paraguay episode clearly illustrates this idea and explains its inclusion in Candide in 1759.

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[20]Voltaire, Lettres philosophiques, F. A. Taylor ed. Revised ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965), p. 28.

[21]Dict. phil., article "Prêtre", pp. 354-355.

CHAPTER IV

THE EVILS OF PRIESTCRAFT

Voltaire's fourth barrage of criticism constitutes a general attack upon the whole Christian religious organization. Indescriminate references to its representatives, either clerical or lay, and its institutions such as monasticism, are sprinkled liberally throughout the tale and, as mentioned above, fall naturally enough into the daily life scheme of Candide's world. The overall effect intended by Voltaire is to illustrate for the reader, by means of the greatest and most diverse number of examples possible, just how deeply imbedded are the roots of religion in the eighteenth century world that is the object of this prose caricature.

As the result of a series of detached events, chance encounters or innocent statements, Voltaire brings Candide to grips with several aspects of the contemporary religious conflict. This method of criticism by socio-religious association is not new to Voltaire. He is simply re-introducing his original line of criticism first developed in the Lettres Philosophiques (1734) and subsequently in several of the preceeding tales[1] and in the Essai sur les moeurs (1757). In

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[1]Specifically Zadig (1747), Le Monde comme il va (1748), Micromégas (1752) and Scarmentado (1756). The dates listed are those given in the Bénac edition of the Romans et Contes (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1960).

Candide criticism within a social context, that is describing behaviour, practices and customs is aimed at the Christian world in general and the Catholic element in particular. Voltaire openly condemns the hypocrisy of the religious way of life by exposing its adherent's associations with politics, self-interest, dishonesty, greed, carnality and fanaticism. Voltaire provides the reader with a most impressive collection of religious infamies, chosen from within a clearly discernable contemporary context, each one further reinforcing his point of view in the eyes of the reader.

Highest on Voltaire's list of subjects for religious criticism are the various representatives of religion: The not-so-charitable orateur and his zealous wife (ch. 3), two Franciscans (ch. 4, 10 and 24), numerous Jesuits (ch. 4, 10, 14, 15, 16), the University of Coïmbra -- that is to say the Faculty of Theology, the Grand Inquisitor (ch. 7 and 8), the familiar of the Inquisition (ch. 5), a fatherly and non-existent Pope Urbain X (ch. 11), the "abbé périgourdin" (ch. 22), "l'habitué du quartier" with his "billets de confession" (ch. 22), and Frère Giroflée representing monasticism. In this general grouping the clerical personages are rudely treated by Voltaire who portrays them as fanatical in their beliefs and often as hypocritical as well in their way of life. This is particularly the case of the Catholic clerics whose behavior conforms to anything but their sacred vows of poverty,

chastity and obedience.

Jacques, a non-Christian Christian

Candide's first experience with a clerical personage takes place in Holland. Having just escaped from the battle-field where Bulgares and Abares are in the process of de-stroying one another, Candide arrives in Holland hungry and penniless, yet confident that he will be well received since this is a rich country --". . .et qu'on y était chrétien." (Can., 142) However Candide is refused any aid whatsoever from the people he meets and moreover is threatened with being sent to a house of correction where he will be taught to earn his own living. Finally Candide approaches a Protestant minister who has just preached an hour-long sermon on the subject of charity. Instead of receiving the alms expected from such a person, Candide is instead confronted by the Orator's rather suspiciously posed question: "Que venez-vous faire ici? y êtes-vous pour la bonne cause?. . . croyez-vous que le pape soit l'Antéchrist?" (Can., 142-143)

While to Candide "la bonne cause" refers to a basic cause-effect relationship which links events one to another, this is not how it is understood by the Orator. In his eyes "la bonne cause" refers of course to the Protestant cause which he represents and which he is as narrow-minded about as are the Catholics about their cause in other parts of the tale. The second reference, that to the pope as the Ante-

christ, contrasts the Protestant feeling toward the pope with the Catholic belief that he is the earthly representative of Christ and, by virtue of this, head of the Church.

Unable to provide suitable answers to questions of which in fact he knows nothing about, Candide is summarily dismissed by the Orator. Meanwhile, the Orator's wife overhearing part of the conversation from an upstairs window, in a fit of religious zeal, pours the contents of a chamber pot over the head of the doubter.

Witnessing this scene is Jacques, "un bon anabaptiste". Jacques does not just happen upon the scene by chance, as it were, since nothing in the tale has been left to chance by the author. Voltaire purposely introduces the kind Anabaptist immediately after the uncharitable preacher to serve as a contrast. Jacques' behaviour displays positive action as opposed to Christian principles which too often amount to little more than empty verbiage. As an Anabaptist, Jacques is not concerned with the ceremony of Baptism so highly regarded by the Christian sects, as with the spirit of it. The Anabaptists denied the absolute claims of all the contending religious movements of the time in favor of a universal type of congregation:

> . . .an invisible church, which might well include not only sincere Christians but also good Moslems and pagans obedient to the

"inner Word" wherever they might be.[2]
Hence by choosing an Anabaptist in contrast to the other religious figures of the tale, Voltaire elevates Jacques above the Christian context in which we find the others.

Thus when the time comes to act, and Candide's needy state certainly indicated that time to be now, it is Jacques and not the protestant minister who proves closest to the Christian ideal. Jacques chooses to help Candide not because of certain beliefs that the latter holds or does not hold, but because he regards him as his brother, "un être à deux pieds sans plumes, qui avait une âme." (Can., 143) He invites Candide into his own home, cleans him up and offers him food and a job. Later when Candide meets the disease-ridden Pangloss, it is again Jacques who cares for him. Finally in true polemical style, Voltaire allows Jacques to drown after saving the life of a vicious sailor who, but a few moments beforehand, had attacked him. Thus Jacques dies, to the end a model of the Christian ideal, of man helping his fellow man, despite the fact that he is of a different religious profession.

It is interesting to note that Voltaire does not resurrect Jacques later in the tale as he does several other characters, Pangloss and the Jesuit Baron Thunder-ten-tronckh

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[2]G. W. Forell "Anabaptists", New Catholic Encyclopedia, (1967); I, p. 460.

being the prime examples. Since this is done for others, at least one of whom is far less worthy than he, why therefore is Jacques not brought back to life? One cannot really say for certain, we can only consider the hypothesis that Voltaire does not feel that Jacques belongs in this world, perhaps because he is too good. However on the other hand such a pessimistic hypothesis, when examined in perspective of the work as a whole, draws little support. Several of the main characters are devoted to one another, as in the Candide-Cacambo, Candide-Martin relationships; meanwhile there are also instances wherein others too are helped, such as when Candide and Pangloss go about the ruins of Lisbon helping the victims of the disaster. Thus we can do no more than hypothesize as to Voltaire's reason for Jacques' continued demise, while retaining the memory of his life as an ideal of comparison which the soi-disant religious personages of the tale never achieve or for that matter even consider striving toward.

Quite contrary to the Anabaptist's exemplary way of life is that led by the two Franciscans, that is fully ordained priests of the Order of St. Francis. One of them, Paquette's former confessor, is responsible for infecting her with venereal disease which she in turn transmitted to Pangloss. The genealogy of this disease is traced through a most noble lineage to its source from a young page ". . .qui l'avait reçu

d'un jésuite qui, étant novice, l'avait eu en droite ligne d'un des compagnons de Christophe Colomb." (Can., 145) The second Franciscan robs Cunégonde of her money and jewels during a stopover at Badajos, without the slightest regard to Pangloss' philosophy of equal distribution "des biens de la terre",[3] according to which he should have left the small company at least enough to continue their journey. Instead of course he took all. So much for the worldly preoccupations of man, supposedly below the dignity of members of the clergy, both of whom had made vows of chastity and poverty upon being received into their Order.

The Abbés

The clergy's general preoccupation with worldliness was well-known in French society in the eighteenth century. To Voltaire himself it never ranked less than second on his list of religious criticism, preceded only by intolerance. Of the numerous clerics associated with the Catholic Church in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it was the abbés who consistently provided the critics with an ample supply of material related to their conduct and activities in Paris and at the court. According to Morize: "Il n'est point de livre satirique sur Paris qui, vers cette date ne contienne

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[3] Can., p. 156. While criticizing the clergy, Voltaire also seizes the opportunity to direct a jibe at Jean-Jacques Rousseau whose words are often repeated by Pangloss. In this instance Voltaire is satirizing the doctrine contained in the

le chapitre ou la page sur les 'abbés' et les 'petits abbés'.[4]

Criticism of the Church was also engendered indirectly by the abbés and grew increasingly more virulent. By the eighteenth century abbé had become a rather vague term, and people in general were unclear as to just who qualified technically as an abbé and what, if any, were his functions. Some were ordained priests, some had received only the minor orders and still others had not even been tonsured, the first step toward their so-called religious vocation. In its initial secular usage, the term abbé referred to any man who wore the ecclesiastic habit, but did not fulfill any sacerdotal duties, since he was not an ordained priest. The abbés usually attached themselves to some noble family as private tutors or masters of a household. However by the mid-eighteenth century the situation had become considerably more confused when the title was extended in breadth and now included virtually anyone wearing religious dress:

> Au XVIIIe siècle, on donnait le nom d'"abbés du cour", de "petits abbés" ou "d'abbés au petit collet" à une foule de gens qui n'avaient pas même reçu la tonsure, et qui se servaient du petit collet comme d'un passeport auprès des grands et des nobles.[5]

Discours sur les origines de l'inégalité parmi les hommes, which dates from 1754, thus within the gestation period of Candide. See also Morize, p. 54, note 1.

[4]Morize, p. 149, n. 2.

[5]"Abbé", Dictionnaire Encyclopédie Quillet, I (1965), pp. 5-6.

Those who became abbés were usually the second sons of poor nobles or rich farmers. It was regarded as standard practice in the eighteenth century, since all the resources of a family were directed toward finding the best possible situation for the eldest son and heir. On the other hand each abbé could aspire to the lucrative post of abbé commendataire.[6]

Voltaire's first description of an abbé is found in the Lettres Philosophiques where the abbé is referred to as ". . .cet être indéfinissable, qui n'est ni ecclésistique, ni séculier".[7] This worldly courtisan in ecclesiastical garb reappears throughout Voltaire's historical works, his correspondence and in almost all the tales, certainly in the most important ones. The circle is completed with the Dictionnaire philosophique article of 1765 which restates essentially the same criticism as was written following the

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[6]"Abbé", Grand Dictionnaire Universel du XIXe Siècle. (1866), I, p. 15. "The revenues of many religious houses went to 'abbés commendataires', exercising no religious functions", according to Alfred Cobban, A History of Modern France, Vol. I: 1715-1799 (3rd ed.; Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1963), p. 65.

[7]Voltaire, Lettres Philosophiques, ed. F. A. Taylor. Revised ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965), p. 17.

author's sojourn in England, although Voltaire's polemical style has become somewhat stronger and now carries the conviction of age and experience:

> Mais si vous n'êtes monsieur l'abbé que pour avoir été tonsuré, pour porter un petit collet et un manteau court, et pour attendre un bénéfice simple, vous ne méritez pas le nom d'abbé.[8]

In Candide Voltaire brings to life for the reader a certain "abbé périgourdin" who is described in the following manner:

> Un de ces gens empressés, toujours alertes, toujours serviables, effrontés, caressants, accommodants, qui guettent les étrangers à leur passage, leur content l'histoire scandaleuse de la ville et leur offre des plaisirs à tout prix. (Can., 191).

Painted in his natural habitat, Parisian society, this particular abbé turns out to be a procurer for the loose-moraled marquise de Parolignac. She succeeds in cheating Candide of money and gives a portion of it to the abbé. The latter, dissatisfied with his share, sets to work for his own account. He conceives and executes an elaborate plan whereby, through a fraudulent Cunégonde, he hopes to obtain the rest of Candide's money, while having Candide and Martin arrested as suspect strangers. This was relatively easy to arrange in Paris following the fanatic Damien's attempted assassination of Louis XV. Thus Voltaire presents the abbé

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[8] Dict. phil., article "Abbé", p. 1.

as a sly, shadowy figure, alert and certainly intelligent, moving in a strange sort of underworld of Parisian life, not at all in keeping with the habit he wears.

Burial rights and "billets"

The Catholic Church and its policy concerning burial rights represent a further aspect of the notion of charity. These rights, consisting of the last sacraments and burial in a church or cemetery, further considered one of the basic duties of a Christian, were often denied certain people. The controversy as a whole is not a new one; rather, it indicates in 1751 the rekindling of earlier troubles with the Jansenists. It is, however, for Voltaire's particular purpose, typical of the religious practices usually described by him as intolerant and inhuman, and which he never ceased to combat.

Upon his arrival in Paris, Candide falls slightly ill from fatigue and exhaustion. But because of his immense wealth, which he is still too naïve to have sense enough to conceal, he receives the attention of two quack doctors he had not called for, and whose ministrations only succeed in making the illness serious. Owing now to the gravity of Candide's condition, "un habitué du quartier vint avec douceur lui demander un billet payable au porteur pour l'autre monde." (Can., 190). Voltaire is referring to the proofs of confession exacted by the Catholic Church in France after 1750 as a measure of

repression against the Jansenist movement. Candide refuses to purchase a "billet de confession" from the "habitué", who most likely is a priest of the secular clergy, quite possibly the pastor or curé[9] of the parish wherein Candide's hotel is located. An argument follows and "le clerc jura qu'on n'enterrait point Candide." (Can., 191). This was not an idle threat on the part of the cleric since the instances of the Church denying Christian burial to individuals for various reasons, religious or otherwise, were all too common in the eighteenth century.

Voltaire mentions three other persons in Candide who do not or will not receive a decent burial following their death. The first is Don Issachar, a Jew whom Candide kills along with the Grand Inquisitor while rescuing Cunégonde in Portugal. Whereas the Inquisitor is buried with great pomp and ceremony in a church, "on jette Issachar à la voirie." (Can., 156).

An actress, mademoiselle Monime, is the second person in the tale to be denied proper burial rights. According to

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[9]Elsewhere Voltaire mentions that in the case of Adrienne Lecouvreur, it was the "curé de Saint-Sulpice" who refused her burial (M. xxii. 70), even though she had willed his church one thousand francs (Best. 9185). Also more directly related to the "billets de confession", Voltaire tells of "Le curé de la paroisse de Saint-Etienne-du-Mont, qui était un chanoine de Saint-Geneviève, nommé frère Boitin" refusing the last sacraments to a famous professor (M. xvi. 79), later to the professor's nephew (Ibid., 80) and still again to the abbé Le Maire (Ibid., 81).

a long-established tradition in France, actors and actresses had always been denied these rights. The "abbé périgourdin" explains to Candide how actresses are treated in France: "En province on les mène au cabaret; à Paris, on les respecte quand elles sont belles, et on les jette à la voirie quand elles sont mortes." (Can., 192). Voltaire then injects a note of personal invective into his satire as Martin reinforces the abbé's statement with the story of mademoiselle Monime. Voltaire is actually referring to the scandal surrounding the death of Adrienne Lecouvreur, an actress friend of his who played the role of Monime in her debut at the Théâtre-Français: "Languet, curé de Saint-Sulpice, lui refusa la sépulture ecclésiastique; elle fut enterrée au coin de la rue Bourgogne. . . ." (M. xxii. 70. n. 2.). Voltaire was deeply affected by Adrienne's death in 1730, and this incident often reappears in his works, beginning with the Lettres Philosophiques of 1734.[10]

The third victim of this inhuman practice is to be Paquette. Forced by circumstances into a life of prostitution in Venice, she forsees no future other than ". . .une vieillesse affreuse, un hôpital, et un fumier." (Can., 202). Thus in three separate incidents, Voltaire has traversed the

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[10]Morize traces this theme through subsequent works: pp. 151-152, n. 2.

dominant Catholic countries: Portugal, France and Italy, and has shown how these intolerant and inhuman practices are fostered under the tutelage of an equally intolerant Church.

Let us now return to the discussion proper of the billets de confession. Again like many other things in Candide, Voltaire affords them seemingly only a passing reference. However one must keep in mind that the controversy surrounding the billets was a highly pertinent issue to the contemporary reader of the time. Consequently the latter was well aware of the background controversy, while at the same time he could easily understand Voltaire's slightly veiled implication and appreciate his satire.

The controversy over the restrictions imposed by the Church on burial rights had begun around the 1730's, and was revived in Paris in 1751 following the Parlement's refusal to register a royal edict, enforcing acceptance of the Bull Unigenitus.[11] The papal Bull was intended to put a quick end to renewed troubles with the Jansenists and prevent a possible schism from further dividing the Gallican Church within itself. As a measure of repression against known Jansenists or those suspected of Jansenist tendencies, the Archbishop of Paris required that everyone produce a

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[11]Cobban, p. 63.

billet de confession, ". . .sans quoi point d'extrême onction, point de viatique." (M. xv. 377). The billets or proofs of confession were purchased from the clergy, and simply declared that the person in question had confessed and been granted absolution by a priest adhering to the Bull Unigenitus, and consequently was entitled to burial within the Church.

Christophe de Beaumont, the Archbishop of Paris, caused the struggle to intensify by siding with the Jesuits and adopting a hard-line which allowed no compromise with the unfortunate Jansenists: "He excommunicated and deprived of the last sacraments those who had not a ticket to show that they had confessed to a priest who accepted the Bull."[12] Voltaire explains that de Beaumont's policy was most stringently obeyed by the adhering clergy: "On refusait sans pitié ces deux consolations [l'extrême onction et le viatique] aux appelants et à ceux qui se confessaient à des appelants." (M. xv. 377). Voltaire reacted most violently to de Beaumont's policy and openly condemned it in several works, notably in the Histoire du parlement where he refers to it as contrary to the most fundamental of human practices:

> Il y a eu des nations chez lesquelles ce refus de la sépulture était un crime digne du dernier supplice; et dans les lois de tous les peuples, le refus des

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[12]Cobban, p. 64.

> derniers devoirs aux morts est une inhumanité punissable. (M. xv. 79).

Moreover in a letter to Thieriot dated March 24, 1755, Voltaire had already contrasted this example of Catholic intolerance in France with the now more tolerant ways of the Calvinists: ". . .leurs moeurs se sont fort adoucies; ils ne brûleraient pas aujourd'hui Servet, et ils n'exigent point de billets de confession." (Best. 5556). Hence, the passage in Candide is designed to satirize still another incidence of religious intolerance.

Monasticism

With the revelation that Paquette's companion is a member of a monastic order, the Theatines, Voltaire again touches upon subject matter which constantly drew attention to the Church in the eighteenth century. A growing spirit of secularism was receiving increased support among the intellectuals and the bourgeoisie, and at the same time utility became the prime criterion for judging social or religious institutions. Hence the members of a monastic order, whether monks or nuns, and the clergy in general were regarded as serving no useful purpose in the new materialist oriented society because they did not contribute positively to it. A positive contribution in this sense refers to procreation and economic production since Europe at this time was still relatively underpopulated and underdeveloped. Furthermore,

the immense holdings of the monasteries prevented development of many acres of arable land which were just left untouched year after year. These holdings were also free from all taxation levied by the government and consequently the peasants and the bourgeoisie were forced to bear the already excessive tax burden. Other abuses connected with monasticism also existed on a social level with the nobility availing themselves of it as a means of disposing of sons and daughters not destined as heirs. These social and economic misuses and abuses of monasticism were well known to Voltaire and his contemporaries. Suddenly however a hitherto tolerated situation was reinterpreted as an example of privilege and in the Revolution that followed, the Church lost all its possessions. In Candide Voltaire directs his criticism at two aspects of monasticism: clerical celibacy and the social abuses made of this institution by well-to-do families.

Voltaire's attitude toward enforced celibacy of the clergy is often expressed in the course of his writing. The article "Abbé" in the Dictionnaire philosophique perhaps best summarizes its author's point of view since it includes the notion of social productiveness:

> Savez-vous qu'abbé signifie père? Si vous le devenez, vous rendez service à l'Etat; vous faites la meilleure oeuvre sans doute que puisse faire un homme; il naîtra de vous un

> être pensant. Il y a dans cette action quelque chose de divin.[13]

Celibacy is again emphasized as a state unnatural to man by the numerous instances of clerical immorality which permeate the tale from beginning to end. Not a single Catholic cleric, from a non-existent pope to a non-tonsured abbé, is innocent of the sin of incontinence. Our present example is frère Giroflée, a Theatine monk who spends all he earns "à entretenir des filles." (Can., 203).

The latter's conduct is not exceptional or extraordinary by any means, nor is it considered so by his fellow monks who themselves all act in much the same way. For one and all, monastic life consists of nothing more than constant discord and frustration as brother Giroflée explains to Candide and Martin over supper:

> La jalousie, la discorde, la rage habitent dans le couvent. . . .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. (Can., 203).

Moreover for the unfortunate Giroflée and many others like him, their situation is doubly frustrating. Not only is he thoroughly dissatisfied with his lot in life, but the truth of the matter is that he did not choose it himself in the first place: "Mes parents me forcèrent, à l'âge de quinze

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[13] Dict. phil., p. 1.

ans, d'endosser cette détestable robe, pour laisser plus de fortune à un maudit frère aîné que Dieu confonde!" (Can., 203). Hence Giroflée, like so many other young men and women in eighteenth century France, is also a powerless victim of the institution he represents.

One of the strongest criticisms directed at the monastic system is the abusive way in which rich families, particularly the aristocracy, availed themselves of it "as a means of cheaply shedding their responsibilities towards younger or refactory sons and daughters."[14] Although Voltaire's monk is only fifteen years of age when forced into the monastery, the Encyclopédie article "Religieux" lists as sixteen "L'âge fixé par les canons et par les ordonnances pour entrer en religion", expressly mentioning the necessity of parental consent.[15] However we can also assume that even monasteries were not above accepting gifts from parents wishing to pawn off a child at a younger age, as is inferred in the case of frère Giroflée. The Encyclopédie goes on to outline a second advantage that families derived from this practice:

> Les religieux sont morts civilement du moment de leur profession, et conséquemment sont incapables

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[14]Barber, Voltaire: Candide, p. 29.

[15]"Religieux", Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, XIV (Neufchastel: Samuel Faulche, 1765), p. 78.

> de tout effets civils, ils ne succèdent point à leurs parents, et personne ne leur succède.[16]

Therefore on the pretence of a religious vocation, rich families were provided with a most effective means of ridding themselves of unwanted children, considered only as detrimental to the aspirations of their eldest son. Other means employed included forced marriages, again given Church sanction, but Voltaire chooses not to mention these in Candide.

Before leaving the subject of frère Giroflée and monasticism there remains one question which neither Morize nor Pomeau nor Bénac have treated in their respective editions of Candide. What, if any, is Voltaire's purpose in making frère Giroflée a Theatine monk rather than a member of one of the more well-known monastic Orders, such as the Benedictines or the Trappists.

As usually is the case with the philosophical tales, Voltaire's choice is the result of careful thought combined with the express intention of producing the strongest satirical effect. The reason underlying Voltaire's decision is to be found in the purpose for which the Theatine Order was originally established and in the way of life of its members, both of which differed somewhat from those of the other

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[16] Ibid., p. 78.

monastic brotherhoods. Founded in 1524 as part of the Counter-Reformation by Gian Pietro Carafa, the future pope Paul IV, and Saint Gaétan de Thienne, the Theatine's avowed goal was to ". . .réformer les moeurs du clergé et de toute la chrétieneté"[17] since corruption and immorality were widespread within the Church. The founders held that the most effective method of achieving their goal was by themselves leading an austere and moral life. Consequently the general rules of the Order were modeled upon the example of the early Apostolic Church: "The members bound themselves to hold no property, and to look to Providence only for support, with no asking of alms."[18]

Thus Voltaire's choice of a Theatine monk in Candide becomes evident when examined in the dual perspective of, on the one hand, the immoral behaviour of clerics throughout the tale, and on the other hand, the reason for which the Order was originally founded. Further adding insult to injury, in Voltaire's favor of course, is this statement contained in the New Catholic Encyclopedia: "Our Lady of Purity is the

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[17]"Théatin", Larousse du XXe Siècle, (1963), VI, p. 665.

[18]Frederick DeLand Leete, Christian Brotherhoods, (Cincinnati: Jennings and Graham, 1912), p. 144.

patroness of the Theatines."[19] In immediate contrast is frère Giroflée "qui tenait sous le bras une fille. . ., elle regardait amoureusement son théatin, et de temps en temps lui pinçait ses grosses joues." (Can., 200). Giroflée is not portrayed as an exception, but rather as typical of his order: "Et tous mes confrères sont dans le même cas." (Can., 203). Forced into one of the most austere religious orders at the age of fifteen, dependent solely upon divine Providence for support, we now come to an understanding of the bitterness and frustration contained in the young Theatine's exclamation to Candide:

> -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. (Can., 203)

Which he eventually does. (Can., 219).

The notion of divine Providence, that God provides for all his creatures according to a preconceived plan, is satirized throughout the tale. The celebrated "all is for the best" philosophy of Pangloss is the same one that brought frère Giroflée into the hands of Providence, and look what sort of a life it got him. Of the little money he does earn from preaching, the Prior of the monastery takes half, while the rest is squandered on women. Toward the end of the tale the same Giroflée and Paquette arrive at the garden home of the

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[19] A. Sagrera, "Theatines", New Catholic Encyclopedia, (1967); XIV, pp. 4-5.

little company "dans la plus extrême misère", nothing having really changed except the extent of their misery, and this has greatly deepened.

Thus the clerical element is sketched by Voltaire in its natural setting as an integral part of the eighteenth century social environment. It is deeply rooted in every society that Candide encounters from Westphalia to South America; with the exception of Eldorado which in any case, is far too unreal for the reader to accept at face value. The purposes and associations of the Church organization presented by Voltaire are marred by political and self-interest motives far overshadowing any pretense to religious function.

CONCLUSION

Though by far the most widely known of Voltaire's philosophical tales, many readers are not aware of the importance of this seemingly flippant adventure story in Voltaire's criticism of religion. In this sense, Candide is a veritable pot-pourri of Voltaire's ideas, summarizing the author's changing attitude towards organized religion, and towards some of the events, people and ideas that influenced this change.

Several themes derived from the Lettres philosophiques (1734) are recognizable, as are sections drawn from the Essai sur les moeurs (1753-1756). Furthermore, the research done by Voltaire for his other historical works, La Henriade (1728) and Le siècle de Louis XIV (1739-1751), provided him with a vast arsenal of facts relating to the conduct of the Church and its representatives, not only in France, but throughout the world.

However, as we have tried to show, Candide reflects much more than just the author's changing attitude toward organized religion, and especially the issue of Church influence within the State. Candide represents a coming together of what up until 1759 had been a body of relatively loosely knit ideas. Now for the first time these ideas were organized into a concentrated attack against the Church in

France. Seen in this light, Candide affords the reader a preview both of Voltaire's upcoming campaign against the infâme in favor of religious toleration, more specifically of the ideas to be contained in the Dictionnaire philosophique, which was to serve as his principal weapon in this struggle.

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