

***PinkMonkey*® Literature Notes on . . .**

Sample MonkeyNotes

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This will give you an idea of the format and content.

Candide

by

Voltaire

1759



MonkeyNotes by PinkMonkey Staff

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KEY LITERARY ELEMENTS

SETTING

The novel begins in the castle of the Baron Thunder-ten-tronckh in Westphalia. The setting then shifts to Walderberghoff-trarbk-dikdorff. Then it shifts to Holland. The next chapter in the novel is set in a boat, which gets shipwrecked. The setting then shifts to Lisbon; and then to Avacena in Sierra

LIST OF CHARACTERS

Major Characters

Candide – He is the protagonist of the novel. He is very innocent. He goes through many adventures and gradually matures into an experienced and practical man.

Cunégonde – She is the beautiful young daughter of the Baron. She is in love with Candide and finally marries him.

Minor Characters

Pangloss – He is the teacher of Cunégonde. He is considered very learned but he talks a lot of nonsense.

Thunder-ten-tronckh – He is a Baron. He has a very nice castle in Westphalia. He is.....

The Baroness – She is the wife of Baron Thunder-ten-tronckh and the mother of.....

The Baron's sister – She is considered to be Candide's mother. She refuses to marry her.....

Vanderdendur – He is a merchant in Surinam. He ill-treats his slave. He cheats Candide.....

The Sailor – He is a cruel and selfish person. He pushes Jacques who tries to help him

Don Issachar – He is a Jew. Cunégonde is sold to him. Candide kills him when he

The Grand Inquisitor – He is a Christian (catholic). He holds an important position in

The Dervish – An old man who explains to Candide and others the importance of work. He is.....

Martin – A pessimist, and an exceptionally unhappy man. He is chosen by Candide to

The Old Woman – She is the daughter of a Pope and a princess. She is very helpful

Cacambo – He is a cheerful, intelligent and practical man. He has a mixed ancestry

The Baron's son – He is the snobbish son of the Baron. He revels in the pride of his

Jacques – He is an Anabaptist. He is a kind and helpful man. He loses his life during

CONFLICT

Protagonist - The protagonist of a story is the main character who traditionally undergoes some sort of change. The protagonist of the novel is Candide. It is presumed that he is the son of the Baron's sister who has refused to marry his father because she considers his lineage inferior to hers. He is.....

Antagonist - The antagonist of a story is the force that provides an obstacle for the protagonist. The antagonist does not always have to be a single character or even a character at all. There are many antagonists in this novel. In the first chapter the reader encounters the Baron and his son. The Baron kicks out Candide from his castle when he sees that Candide and Cunégonde are in love. Later, the.....

Climax - The climax of a plot is the major turning point that allows the protagonist to resolve the conflict. Climax is reached in Chapter 29 of the novel when Candide finds Cunégonde for the last.....

Outcome - The outcome is the realization of reality. Candide and most of his colleagues realize at the end of the novel that life is neither all pleasant nor all bad. Candide realizes the shallowness of

SHORT PLOT/CHAPTER SUMMARY (Synopsis)

Candide means innocent. Candide is a very innocent young man living in the castle of the Baron Thunder-ten-tronckh in Westphalia. Some of the old servants believe that he is the son of the Baron's sister. The Baron's sister refuses to marry Candide's father because his degree of nobility is less than hers.

Candide lacks knowledge of the outside world. He believes that this castle is the best place to live in. He considers it ideal. One day he and Cunégonde, the Baron's daughter are seen in romantic positions. So he is kicked and thrown out of the castle.

Candide goes through many adventures. Some of them are funny, some are sad, and some are eerie. His eyes open to reality. He sees that everything does not happen for the best as the philosophers and metaphysician Pangloss had told him in the Baron's castle. In Europe as well as in America, he encounters misery. He meets a number of people from various walks of life. He comes across many philosophers ranging from extreme optimism of Pangloss to the bleak pessimism of Martin. He experiences the love and total selflessness of Jacques and also the extreme cruelty and selfishness of the

THEMES

Major Theme

"Evils in Society" is a major theme in Candide. Voltaire has satirized and exposed evils like snobbery, cruelty, selfishness, and immorality. In the first chapter it is told how Candide is thrown

Minor Theme

The theme of goodness is very important although it is a minor theme. It is necessary for giving a true picture of the society. Thus through the elements of goodness, Voltaire has rightly pointed out that.....

MOOD

The mood of Candide is that of sadness interspersed with humor to make it lighter. There are times when the reader is shocked at the eerie incidents. Amidst the tragic happenings, the mood is.....

BACKGROUND INFORMATION - BIOGRAPHY

Voltaire was born on 21 November 1694. He was legally the son of Francois Arouet, an official in the tax department in Paris. However, it has been presumed that he may have actually been the son of a minor poet Rochebrune who was a frequent visitor to Voltaire's home.

When Voltaire was nine years old he was sent to a Jesuit school, where he studied Greek and Latin classics and became familiar with the Bible. Although he received Christian education, he gradually rejected the Christian views. He believed that God was the creator of this world, but he did not believe that God was

really bothered about the welfare of every individual. He wrote his first poems at an early age. He remained a Christian till the end of his life to ensure himself a decent burial. He completed his formal

LITERARY/HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Candide is highly influenced by Voltaire's views and his own experiences of life. He uses satire to criticize superstition, religion, aristocracy, and the church. However it is relevant to note that he has done so in a dignified manner, avoiding vulgarity and crudeness whenever he possibly can.

Voltaire had read and admired the works of many great authors like Swift, Pope, Gay, Shakespeare, Milton, and others. His writing in *Candide* is critical of Pope's view in *Essay on Man* when he (Pope) emphasizes that whatever is, is right. Voltaire proves through *Candide* that this is not true.

Voltaire was shocked and immensely touched by the earthquake that took place in Lisbon.....

CHAPTER SUMMARIES WITH NOTES

CHAPTER 1

How Candide was brought up in a noble castle and how he was expelled from the same.

Summary

In the castle of Baron Thunder-ten-tronckh in Westphalia, lives a young man named Candide. Many old servants in the castle suspect that the Baron's sister is the mother of Candide. She refuses to marry Candide's father because his nobility is of a lesser degree than hers is.

The Baron's court consists of local villagers. His family is very snobbish. His beautiful daughter Cunégonde is tutored by a teacher named Dr. Pangloss. Her mother is dignified and her brother is a 'worthy' son of his father. According to Pangloss, all that happens is for the best and for some purpose. Noses are made so that one can wear glasses. Feet are made so that one can wear shoes. Stones are there, so that one can make castles and 'therefore' the Baron's castle is the best possible castle.

Candide does not understand much of his teachings. Cunégonde distracts his attention. One day Cunégonde finds Pangloss physically involved with a chambermaid. She immediately decides to experience such 'causes and effects.' She thus drops a handkerchief hoping that Candide will pick it up. Their knees tremble, hands wander. Baron Thunder-ten-tronckh sees them. Thus Candide is thrown out of the castle after being kicked hard and frequently Cunégonde swoons. When she recovers, the Baroness slaps her on her face.

Notes

The proud and pompous Baron, Thunder-ten-tronckh resembles Fredrick the Great with whom Voltaire had close connection for a long time. The Baron's son is vain and very powerful. Candide resembles Voltaire in many ways. The name Candide suggests innocence. Cunégonde represents Madam de Chatelet whom Voltaire loved dearly. He was considerably influenced by her. The word Pangloss means "all tongue." In fact, Pangloss is very talkative although his talk rarely makes sense. He is supposed to be a philosopher and a very learned man. His philosophy is quite incomprehensive. Voltaire has used him to attack excessively optimistic philosophy. He has also attacked the snobbery of the aristocratic people. The Baron's sister refuses to marry her lover whose nobility is one degree less than hers. He further ridicules such people when he says that the greatness of the Baron and the grandeur of his castle are judged by the fact that the castle had doors, windows and tapestry. This castle is in Westphalia, which is full of poverty. People having wealth consider themselves very superior.

Pangloss is a metaphysician. He is supposed to be qualified in metaphysics, which is a study of existence

and knowledge. Theology is a study of God. Cosmology is a study of the universe. “Nigology” is a word invented to indicate that Pangloss’s teaching is nonsense. Candide listens to Pangloss’s teachings very carefully. The words ‘because,’ ‘therefore’ and ‘for’ sound very impressive but actually they are illogically used. Voltaire parodies Pangloss’s style and behavior. Pangloss acts romantic with the maid Paquette. Seeing him Cunégonde also behaves in a romantic manner. Candide reacts reciprocally. Consequently, he is kicked on his back and thrown out of the castle. Cunégonde is slapped by her mother.....

OVERALL ANALYSES

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Candide - The name Candide means innocent. Just like his name and his characteristics, Candide is very innocent. He is simple and he trusts everyone. He is assumed to be the son of the Baron’s sister. He loves Cunégonde but is not bold enough to confess. He is very gentle. He listens to Pangloss’s talk and initially believes what he says although he does not really understand his high flown talk.

Candide is very much attracted to Cunégonde who is very beautiful. From the beginning of the

Cunégonde - Cunégonde is the Baron’s daughter. She is a young girl of seventeen. She is extremely beautiful and buxom. She has rosy cheeks. A Tutor, Dr. Pangloss, who is supposed to be an expert on various subjects, teaches her. One day she sees Dr. Pangloss doing some physical

Pangloss - Pangloss is the teacher of Cunégonde. He is supposed to be a very learned man and a philosopher. He talks a lot. He often explains his theory of ‘causes and effect,’ which makes no sense. According to him, the world he lives in is the best of all possible worlds.

Pangloss develops syphilis from Paquette, the chambermaid. When Cunégonde sees him

Martin - Martin is pessimistic and an extremely unhappy man. He is chosen by Candide to accompany him. He sees only envy, murder, and hate everywhere except in Eldorado. When the guilty Dutch

PLOT STRUCTURE ANALYSIS

Candide is a novella. It is shorter than a regular novel. Though it is longer than a short story, some critics prefer to categorize it as a ‘Conte’ or a short story. Voltaire preferred writing short stories rather than follow the rigid literary rules of the classical tragedy or the epic poetry.

Voltaire was against the norms and ideas in the society of his time. He has exposed his rebellious thoughts through the veil of humor and imagination. There is a realistic message in the novel that remains lurking in the reader’s mind long after he or she has finished reading it. The novel is skillfully.....

THEMES - THEME ANALYSIS

Major themes

Evils in Society - Voltaire has exposed the evils in his contemporary society in a satirical manner. Wherever, Candide goes he finds sin, selfishness and religious intolerance except in Eldorado. Atrocities are committed. The auto-da-fé shows ridiculous belief, due to which heretics are burnt

The Theme of Love - The theme of love is not apparent in many chapters. Yet its echo is there almost throughout the novel. In the first chapter, Candide is kicked out of the Baron’s castle because he and Cunégonde love each other and are attracted to each other. Ever since then Candide’s only

Minor Themes

Snobbery among aristocrats - This is seen from the first chapter of the novel. Voltaire hated such snobbery and false pride among the upper class people. He himself has been a victim of.....

Theme of goodness - Although the novel *Candide* is a satire on the evils prevailing in society, goodness is not completely ruled out. There is goodness in Jacques (James) who is like

OTHER ELEMENTS

Candide as a Picaresque Novel

In *Candide*, Voltaire follows the tradition of the picaresque novel. The hero along with different characters moves from place to place. He goes through a series of adventures. There is no.....

Candide as an Autobiographical Novel

Though *Candide* is a work of fantasy, it is to a great extent influenced by happenings and experiences in Candide's own life. Voltaire, himself was ill treated and humiliated at the hands of Rohan-Chabot, a nobleman, just as Candide is beaten and humiliated by the baron and his son. Voltaire had

Candide as an Adventure Story

The hero along with different characters moves from place to place and from event to event. His adventures are tragic, comic, and sometimes eerie. Some of the most serious incidents are -tale.

AUTHOR'S STYLE / USE OF LANGUAGE

The language shows Candide's progress towards maturity. In the beginning of the novel the reader finds compact, colorful and crisp sentences as Candide, the hero rushes through life. Later Voltaire adopts a calm and reflective style analogous to Candide's mental development. Voltaire makes fun of.....

Humor in *Candide*

Humor is a necessary characteristic in this novel. Voltaire has been critical of his contemporary society in a satirical manner. This criticism would be too bitter if he had not interspersed it with humor. It is like covering a bitter pill with a sweet coating, so as to make it easy to swallow.

Voltaire has used a variety of comic elements. The characterization, structure, and style help.....

SYMBOLISM / MOTIFS / IMAGERY / SYMBOLS

Some characters places and situations in this novel have a symbolic significance. Symbolism provides meaning and effect in a literary work. Symbols lend clarity, vividness, and suggestiveness.

Eldorado symbolizes the ideal, which every person desires. It is a state of happiness and perfection. It is also a state, which should be aimed at. Only then one can get at least some of the joys of Eldorado. Paris is in absolute contrast to Eldorado. It is full of chaos and discontent. Candide.....

STUDY QUESTIONS

Write a note on the minor themes in *Candide*.

What are the major themes in *Candide*?.....

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