

Editorial

Cultivate our gardens

The Enlightenment was an intellectual and philosophical movement in the Baroque era of Europe during the 18th century. François-Marie Arouet – Voltaire, a French writer, historian, and philosopher was a key person of that period. His marvellous novel “Candide” was published first in 1759. The story is about a hopelessly optimistic young gentleman, Candide, who is exposed to all troublesome impacts human beings may experience. Searching for love, career and happiness, he is turned into a miserable, exploited person committing crime, and suffering from all disgusting pressures of the society. Finally, he arrives at the solution and defines the purpose of life.



Source: *Candide: or, The Optimist* (1762) by Voltaire, second English edition.

Candide is the illegitimate nephew of baron Thunder-ten-tronckh . He grows up in the nobleman’s castle in Westphalia under the tutelage of the scholar Pangloss who teaches him that this world is “the best of all possible worlds.” Candide falls in love with the baron’s young daughter, Cunégonde. The baron expels Candide brutally from his home. Exile from Eden causes Candide to live on his own for the first time.

His life turns to be more than an Odyssey. Temporally, he is wandering over a period of two decades. Spatially, he happens to be in Holland, Portugal, various South American lands like Argentina, Surinam and Eldorado. He then returns to Europe, roaming in France and Italy until he settles in Turkey. His activities and occupations are as variable as his soul and passion. First he enrolls in the Bulgar army, from where he escapes as a deserter. Later he will be arrested several times, jailed, punished and almost executed twice. He serves as a slave, a servant, a sailor and merchant. Killing people in war and murdering his occasional enemies, as well as hunting for innocent apes while misunderstanding their strange sexual patterns. Also, he is a liberator and a Maecenas of many people in need. His fortune is fluid. Often he remains with no money, or even sunk in debt, while in unexpected situations he gains power and wealth.

All his personal contacts are labelling this unbelievable life record. The most crucial persons in his life are intellectually diverse. His Panglossian naïve goodwill has to face the kind Anabaptists, the cruel Inquisitors, the militant Jesuits, the idealistic natives of Eldorado, the proud nobles,

the bargaining Jews, the viperous scrounging Dutch, the degenerated rich, the greedy poor, and continuously the believers of all sort of philosophies.

Candide is dedicated by his optimism to be good and to render services of peace and love to all he meets, however he often fails during his mission. Meeting Cunégonde, his friends, teachers and humble companions again, he decides not to fight, move and chase fortune anymore, but settle and work. The conclusion of his adventures can be formulated in one sentence: happiness in life can only be achieved by work. So, - cultivate our gardens!

What can be the message of Voltaire to us, to the people of science and education? The editors believe our activities do not differ from any other activities. Happiness depends on satisfaction, and the only way to that is through work. This idea is similar to that of the basic principle written in the Bible - “By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return”.

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