

Candide, Group Work #3 Chaps 16-20



- Answer questions completely, developing a single thesis around which the different aspects of the question are answered.
 - Focus from the beginning until the end of the period
 - If your group is not working to the best of its ability, you may request a group change
1. How and why is Candide shocked by the devotion of the two Oreillon women to their monkeys? What mistake does Candide make? Was he justified in shooting them? Is there a link between his behavior and the Europeans' treatment of the New World natives? Be specific. Relate this to Alex's anger (in *Everything is Illuminated*) after Jonathan insisted on

intervening with the construction workers when they were asking for directions. Find someone that remembers specifically (even if you have to go to another group) what Alex said to him.

2. How is Voltaire satirizing himself in this line from page 82: "Cacambo interpreted the King's witticisms to Candide, who found them still witty in translation, a point which surprised him as much as anything he heard or saw." In addition to considering John Butt (and the reactions that you have had reading the text), also consider Dr. Ralph. Is it ironic that Alex's mistranslations (from *Illuminated*) make things even funnier in that work?

3. Name five specific social issues where the inhabitants of Eldorado, outshine their European counterparts. Give the *specific practices* of both the Europeans and the Eldoradoans. Briefly discuss whether or not this is the best of all possible worlds and tell why. If any of you have read *The Tempest* – do you remember Gonzalo's speech about being king of the island that Shakespeare stole directly from Montaigne? Comment (if you can).



4. If Eldorado is indeed the best of all possible worlds, then why does Candide leave: "So the happy men decided to be happy no longer." Find two specific reasons given in the book for Candide's leaving. Now, find a more underlying reason for their departure. Is perfection always desirable? Explain. Go around your group and discuss whether or not any of you have ever left perfectly desirable situations or relationships for a situation or relationship which you knew could never be as good. Why then do we (Candide) do it?

- 4b. Consider Alma and the decision that she makes earlier in the book to leave Misha (and the kinds of relationships she sees in her mother [and in a different way – Misha's parents]) – only to regret it (in wanting Misha back). Comment as specifically as you can.

- 4c. Consider and comment on Alex's decision to leave the area he grew up in (and was nearly killed in). While it is true that it makes sense to leave there given his horrible experience – you may remember him telling Alex to tell Jonfren all those lines about Odessa ("Tell him how it is the most beautiful of places," "Tell him how the streets are paved with gold," etc). Were those lines he (the grandfather) heard – that got him to leave his own El Dorado (can you remember the look in his eyes?)

5. How does Voltaire target the institution of slavery? In his satirical viewpoint, which groups or people are indicted as being responsible? Be specific. Can your group think of any modern analogies. Again, be specific and don't be afraid to point a finger at yourselves. We like to buy cheap designer clothes – but do we consider the consequences of those purchases?

6. On pages 93-94 (the very last part of Chapter 20), Martin and Candide discuss the fate of the passengers on the sunken Dutch ship. Candide believes the evil captain has been punished, but Martin counters by reminding him that "God has punished a scoundrel, but the devil has drowned the rest." How does this relate to the earlier incident involving the death of James the Anabaptist? Who is more correct in their argument Candide or Martin? Why? Use a total (from earlier and from this chapter) of at least 2 quotes in your answer.

7. Examine this quote in terms of our discussion about their ship heading to the New World (while the Old Woman and Cacambo found solutions to their predicament and those around them talked and fretted): "While the French ship and the Spaniard pursued their ways, Candide pursued his conversations with Martin."

8. (Do this for homework if you run out of time) – Look at the poem "Eldorado" by Poe – how does the central idea of that poem relate to what you wrote in 3-4c (be specific). Now, look at the poem, "Cocoa Beans" – How does this relate to what you wrote for your answer to question 5. Find 2 quotes from each poem – and at least one quote from Candide for each poem.