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Course: ENG 202

Due: September 23, 2020

Candide Response Essay #2

In Candide I see that in order for humans to find purpose and fulfillment in their lives they need or else seek out conflict and challenge.

Candide was raised learning from his tutor Pangloss that life is the best that it could be and this makes his life easy and serene in a way despite all that happens to him. But after he gets kicked out of the estate where he was raised he begins to see what life is like outside the bubble of optimism that he was raised in. As Candide goes through his adventure he is made to endure through many episodes that are drawn from current events of the day such as the Seven Years War, and the great earthquake of 1755 in Lisbon. Candide's naivete makes him seem to the reader - who knows of these calamities - to live in a kind of ignorant bliss, as he, and others tell the stories of their horrific episodes, all the while rationalizing the evils they saw.

Much of the story revolves around Candide and Cunegonde, his sweetheart. He is forced to save her from the inquisition, then leaves her in Buenos Aires only to run into her in Istanbul, and at this point she is old and has lost her beauty. Finally, Candide agrees to marry her and settle down. Pangloss who miraculously came back from the dead comes to Candide to preach his optimism to him again, saying that all the woes had to happen so that this union could have happened, but it seems that Candide, seems to have found something deeper than Pangloss' arguments: that rather than *qualifying* reality, by citing cause and effect, Candide discovers life in the power of minding his own business. He responds: "All that is very well," answered Candide, "but let us cultivate our [own] garden." With this utterance the novella ends, leaving us with a hint that you can take utopia or leave it, but that one needs to accept the fact of their life in order to discover purpose and fulfillment in their own life.