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Cosmopolitans, Slaves, and the Global Market in Voltaire's *Candide, ou l'optimisme*

Ingvild Hagen Kjørholt

ABSTRACT

The cosmopolitan and the slave are the offspring of a global world governed by exchangeability and transportability. In Voltaire's most famous work, *Candide, ou l'optimisme* (1759), these two juxtaposed characters represent radically different results of globalization. A historical reading that explores the context of colonialism, war, and the increasing world trade of the eighteenth century reveals how migration defines the identities of the cosmopolitan and the slave, and the ways in which both characters challenge a traditional notion of belonging. While the cosmopolitan moves freely, the slave is unfree and only moved by others. Focusing on Candide's encounter with a Negro slave in Surinam, I discuss how the tale deals with the legal and philosophical problems raised by the transatlantic slave trade, and question why Voltaire treats North African slavery differently. Following from these discussions, I examine the attitude towards European colonialism shown by Voltaire's cosmopolitans, arguing that these characters reject the global market on the basis of an ethics of human rights.

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“Je vous avoue qu'en jetant la vue sur ce globe, ou plutôt sur ce *globule*, je pense que Dieu l'a abandonné à quelque être malfaisant,” the pessimist Martin explains to Candide, the eponymous protagonist in Voltaire's famous *conte*, just after their ship has left the port of Surinam and set sail for Europe.¹ Martin's disillusioned assertion summarizes two significant world experiences that constitute the mindset of *Candide's* fictional universe. First, the universe is abandoned by God and left to “some malignant creature,” which, in this context, can only be understood as Man. Second, the world is viewed as one single scene. Through colonialism and increasing world trade, Voltaire's contemporary Europe had undergone an extraordinary expansion. Despite these advances, *Candide's* world seems neither infinite nor heterogeneous, but on the contrary small, like a *globule*.

In this godforsaken world, where a variety of events and continents are enchained into a quite manageable and homogeneous whole, Candide and his companions move almost without friction. Due to their numerous intercontinental travels, several scholars have called them “cosmopolitans,” without elaborating on the implications of this particular epithet.² The cosmopolitan or world citizen was an ideal among Enlightenment philosophes, considered to be an enlightened and benevolent person who saw the whole world as his fatherland. As a master of contingency who knew how to behave in a reality where most things are exchangeable and transportable—wars, natural disasters, commodities, diseases, and even individuals—the cosmopolitan was the offspring of the global world.

The cosmopolitan is not the only historical identity to emerge from eighteenth-century globalization. Another global character inhabits the fictional universe, a kind of inverse and complementary figure, who—like the cosmopolitan—has no home of his own in the traditional sense: the slave. Both the cosmopolitan and the slave experience the world as a global market. Their perceptions,

1 Voltaire, *Candide, ou l'optimisme*, in *Œuvres complètes de Voltaire*, ed. René Pomeau, vol. 48 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1980), 202. References are to this edition.

2 See, for example, Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: The Rise of Modern Paganism* (1966; New York: Norton, 1977), 200; Thomas J. Schlereth, *The Cosmopolitan Ideal in Enlightenment Thought: Its Form and Function in the Ideas of Franklin, Hume, and Voltaire, 1694–1790* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977), 50; and Jean Starobinski, *Le Remède dans le mal: critique et légitimation de l'artifice à l'âge des Lumières* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989), 142.

however, radically diverge: while the cosmopolitan is nowhere a stranger, and moves freely from city to city and continent to continent, the slave is defined as unfree. Like a domesticated animal or a commodity, his movements in the world are always chosen and controlled by others. Through these two figures and their encounter in the novel, Voltaire exposes the human condition in a world where individual identity depends upon the rules of commerce.

A Global Geography of Commerce and War

Candide, ou l'optimisme (1759) tells the story of a naive Westphalian, whose optimistic worldview is challenged by a series of exceptional misadventures. The idea that "tout est au mieux" (122), expressed by Candide's mentor, the optimistic philosopher Pangloss, soon turns out to be quite useless as a guide to understanding the universe. Experience makes Candide realize that political and economic factors actually govern the world. The *conte* has often been read as a satire of metaphysical thinking, especially philosophical optimism, and also as a parody of the novel genre.³ The *incipit* "Il y avait en Westphalie" (118) announces the parody, as the recognizable fairy-tale formula—*il y avait*—promises a story beyond historical time and place. But, simultaneously, the *incipit* invites the reader to approach the work's historical and realistic dimensions, since "Westphalia" is a geographical area that evokes specific historical associations both in the early 1760s and today.

Voltaire draws out a historical geography that establishes the common ground of the cosmopolitan and the slave—the geography of the eighteenth-century global market. The story carries its heroes from Westphalia by way of the New World to Bosphorus and the Asian border, where they finally settle. In addition to Candide's travels, other characters report from their voyages. Collectively, these journeys draw a map that charts, in an interesting way, the political borders of imperial Europe. The name of "Westphalia" points to the establishment of Europe as a political entity: in the mid-eighteenth century much of Europe had been recently defined by a series of transnational treaties and laws, of

3 See, for example, Philip Stewart, "Candide," in *The Cambridge Companion to Voltaire*, ed. Nicholas Cronk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 125–38.

which the Peace of Westphalia (1648) was the most important. Its aim was to legitimize and regulate the sovereign state as well as to form a political framework for the expanding global economy.⁴

Voltaire had shown an interest in the politics of global economy before he wrote *Candide*. In his famous description of the Royal Exchange in *Lettres philosophiques* (1734), global commerce is put forth as the very image of liberty, tolerance, and peace:

Entrez dans la Bourse de Londres, cette place plus respectable que bien des cours; vous y voyez rassemblés les députés de toutes les nations pour l'utilité des hommes. Là, le juif, le mahométan et le chrétien traitent l'un avec l'autre comme s'ils étaient de la même religion, et ne donnent le nom d'infidèles qu'à ceux qui font banqueroute; là, le presbytérien se fie à l'anabaptiste, et l'anglican reçoit la promesse du quaker. Au sortir de ces pacifiques et libres assemblées, les uns vont à la synagogue, les autres vont boire ... et tous sont contents.⁵

Scholars commonly read the association of commerce, liberty, and peace as an optimistic view of world trade paradigmatic of the early eighteenth century.⁶ In line with this reading, Voltaire here represents the London Stock Exchange as a place where national and religious differences are wiped out, and people act as peaceful and equal cosmopolitans, using their power to further common good. Through this image, he proposes that progress means growth in trade, since trade benefits mankind, connecting cities and continents in advantageous ways. The idea that luxury merchandise such as wine, coffee, or clothing had brought the Old and the New

4 The Peace of Westphalia initiated a new political order in central Europe based on the concept of the sovereign state, an order that was confirmed and strengthened by the Peace of Utrecht (1713). *Le Code Noir*, a law regulating slavery in the French colonies, was also important in this context. Historian Carol Watts shows how *Candide* investigates these three treaties, which all contributed to the making of a European empire. Watts, "A Comedy of Terrors: *Candide* and the *Jus Publicum Europaeum*," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 194, no. 2 (2005): 337–47. DOI: [10.1215/00382876-104-2-337](https://doi.org/10.1215/00382876-104-2-337)

5 Voltaire, *Lettres philosophiques*, ed. René Pomeau (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1994), 47. References are to this edition.

6 See, for example, Margaret Jacob, who describes the close association of commerce, tolerance, and freedom as "one of the maxims of the modern world." Jacob, *Strangers Nowhere in the World: The Rise of Cosmopolitanism in Early Modern Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 66. See also Jerry Muller, who draws attention to the literary and historical sources of the Exchange scene. Muller, *The Mind and the Market: Capitalism in Western Thought* (New York: Anchor Books, 2002), 28.

World together in a positive way pervades much of Voltaire's early work, expressed perhaps most clearly in the poem "Le Mondain" (1736). Overseas trade was among the fastest growing areas of the French economy in the first half of the eighteenth century, as well as an important aspect of the new image of French civilization. In "Le Mondain," colonial goods transported across the oceans become the ultimate symbol of a *mondaine* Parisian lifestyle. When Voltaire values colonial trade as one of the conditions for modern civil society, he not only repeats an already popular literary topos of the period, but he also promotes a business that contributed to his personal wealth. He had invested in international trade from the early 1730s, giving him particular motivation to cast commerce in a positive light in his poem.⁷

In *Candide*, the picture is altered somewhat. The transportation and exchange of goods are still leitmotifs, and diverse cultural practices are represented as totally interchangeable. The differences between Paris and Paraguay, Arabs and Amerindians, are superficial: beneath the surface, stupidity, superstition, and greed reign in common. The world in the narrative appears to function as a seamless whole, a marketplace where almost everything—objects, events, practices, human beings—belongs to a system of exchange. But, contrary to the Exchange scene or the poem on the "worldling," this exchangeability is not recognized as a source of wealth and happiness. In *Candide*, as Carlo Ginzburg points out, Voltaire indicates that his initial union of commerce, progress, and peace does not hold up.⁸ Rather than being regarded as a reliable source of perpetual peace, in *Candide*, trade is accompanied by warfare.

An eighteenth-century reader would not only associate "Westphalia" with the peace treaty, but also recognize it as an important theatre of war. *Candide* was published in the middle of the Seven Years War (1756–63), a conflict that showed the extent to which foreign territories had become a hot spot of European political interests. The colonies and trading companies in India

7 See Muller, 39–40.

8 "Dans ces vers de jeunesse, on ne trouvait pas de trace des agents humains," Carlo Ginzburg explains. Ginzburg sees the Lisbon Earthquake, and thus *Candide*, as a decisive turning point: the disaster opens Voltaire's eyes to individual suffering and makes the author more aware of the human consequences of world trade. Ginzburg, *Le Fil et les traces: Vrai faux fictive*, trans. M. Rueff (Paris: Éditions Verdier, 2010), 191–95.

and America represented invaluable sources of economic growth to their mother countries and constituted an important issue in the war. In the end, France lost its position as the leading European colonial power to England.

The context of the war and its colonial interests is certainly at work in Voltaire's tale. A paratext stating that the work is based on a manuscript found in a German doctor's pocket as he died in the 1759 battle of Minden (in Westphalia) indicates that the tale is literally blood-stained.⁹ The paratext establishes a connection between the historical war outside the narrative and the war inside the narrative. When the protagonist is chased from his private Westphalian Eden, the baron's castle, he finds himself in the middle of a world war *avant la lettre*. Madeleine Dobie points out that historians and literary scholars have paid little attention to the impact of the Seven Years War on the eighteenth-century intellectual climate. This is strange, she argues, considering how this first global war is contemporary with and to a large degree affects two of the most important historical and epistemological changes of the Enlightenment: the new focus on the individual and the emergence of a new affective ethics. According to Dobie, Voltaire was the most influential war correspondent of his time. He depicted war from the individual's point of view and offered a humanitarian focus that invited his readers to empathize with the casualties of war.¹⁰ As I will show, Voltaire confronts the historical connections between global war, growing international trade, and an emerging idea of the human being.

It is remarkable that exchangeability is the principle not only of trade in the narrative, but also of war. The oppositional armies of the Abars and the Bulgars, portrayed in chapter 3, form a single unit as the battle between them is ironically described as "une harmonie telle qu'il n'y en eut jamais en enfer" (126). Candide is unable to distinguish one army's bodies from the other as he walks through the battlefield. The melting together of the two armies into an indistinguishable mass both recalls and offers a violent contrast to the way national and religious differences were eliminated in the

9 The subtitle informs the reader that the manuscript is "Traduit de l'Allemand de Mr. le docteur Ralph. Avec les additions qu'on a trouvées dans la poche du docteur lorsqu'il mourut à Minden l'an de grace 1759" (*Candide*, 117).

10 Madeleine Dobie, "The Enlightenment at War," *PMLA* 124, no. 5 (2009): 1851–54. DOI: [10.1632/pmla.2009.124.5.1851](https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2009.124.5.1851)

Royal Exchange passage. To some extent, the exchangeable nature of the two armies at the battlefield parallels religious irrelevance at the Exchange, where it does not matter whether the client is a Jew or a Quaker. The scene in the *Lettres philosophiques*, however, presents a worldview that only reveals the human profit of world trade and its relationships of exchange; it shows no visible equalization of humans and merchandise. *Candide* makes clear that, owing to the universal logic of exchangeability, everything, even human beings, risks being treated as a commodity, or, as Martin puts it, as “troupeaux dont on vend la laine et la chair” (202).

Un homme qui n'a point de demeure fixe

The commoditization of human beings is an important subject in the narrative, which I will examine further below. Nevertheless, Voltaire also depicts the ideal identity suited for a universe governed by exchangeability, namely the cosmopolitan or the citizen of the world. According to *Dictionnaire de Trévoux* (1721) and Diderot and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie* (the 1754 edition), a “cosmopolite” is a person of no fixed address—“un homme qui n'a point de demeure fixe”—who is a stranger nowhere in the world and sees the whole universe as his native country.¹¹ During the first half of the century, the Enlightenment philosophes considered this position to be a moral and philosophical ideal. In the 1760s, however, both patriots and anti-philosophes began to use the word “cosmopolitan” to describe an egocentric or even dangerous citizen. From their viewpoint, the lack of a fixed dwelling equalled a lack of moral commitment in society.¹² *Candide* was published in the transitional period between these two opposite significations.

11 Trévoux, *Dictionnaire universel françois et latin avec des remarques d'érudition et de critique* (Paris: F. Delaulne, 1721), s.v. “cosmopolitain, aine.” Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert, *Encyclopédie ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* [1751–72], <portail.atilf.fr/encyclopedie/>, s.v. “cosmopolitain, ou cosmopolite” [p. 4:297].

12 See, for example, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who in *Émile ou l'éducation* (1762) warns against “ces cosmopolites qui vont chercher au loin dans leurs livres des devoirs qu'ils dédaignent de remplir autour d'eux. Tel philosophe aime les Tartares pour être dispensé d'aimer ses voisins.” Rousseau, *Émile ou l'éducation*, in *Œuvres complètes*, 5 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1969), 4:249. See also Charles Palissot de Montenoys's comedy *Les Philosophes* (Paris: Librairie Duchesne, 1760), where the lazy and opportunistic philosophes describe themselves as cosmopolitans. *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* (1762 edition) claims that “Un cosmopolite n'est pas un bon citoyen”; s.v. “cosmopolite.”

The disagreement concerning the cosmopolitan as either a moral example or a morally corrupted person indicates a debate over the notion of belonging. Although, a few years later, Voltaire imagines the citizen of the world as ideal, he does not take an explicit position in this “cosmopolitan debate” in *Candide*.¹³ He addresses the discussion by investigating the very notion of belonging in a universe where natural, political, social, and personal relationships are not constant. In this world, the earth shivers, princes are de-throned, friends become enemies, and mistresses lose their beauty. The travelling companions clearly have no permanent dwelling; they even lack a fixed origin. The constant series of wars where the borders between friend and enemy are unclear or unstable underlines the sheer accident of origin, of belonging to a certain family, class, religion, race, or nation.

By challenging the notion of origin or fixed belonging, the cosmopolitan heroes in the narrative oppose the power of inheritance, characteristic of an Old Regime France dominated by the noble class. The nobility’s authority was in principle founded on hereditary power and on the existence of an absolute hierarchy of social classes. Family name and the number of noble generations (*quartiers*, in French) decided an individual’s social status. In the eighteenth century, the nobility lost its leading position in society and the bourgeoisie increased its power. Early on in his career, Voltaire criticized the idea that family and name should justify authority. In *Lettres philosophiques*, he makes fun of Germans who are “entêtés de leurs *quartiers*” and let their shields decide their social status (67). Likewise, the Westphalian Candide is initially evaluated by number of *quartiers*: “Les anciens domestiques de la maison soupçonnait qu’il était fils de la sœur de monsieur le baron et d’un bon et honnête gentilhomme du voisinage, que cette demoiselle ne voulut jamais épouser parce qu’il n’avait pu prouver que soixante et onze quartiers, et que le reste de son arbre généalogique avait été perdu par l’injure du temps” (118). The protagonist is ironically characterized, through the servants’ gossip, as having a dubious origin: his father can reportedly “only” display seventy-one noble generations and consequently

13 In *Dictionnaire philosophique* (1764), Voltaire compares the patriot with the cosmopolitan, stating that while the former wishes to enrich his country at the cost of its neighbours, the latter is happily freed from the ambition to enrich or expand his own territory (s.v. “patrie”). Voltaire, *Dictionnaire philosophique*, ed. René Pomeau (1764; Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1964), 308.

lacks a solid family tree.¹⁴ The ironic comments on the family tree reveal not the most dubious part of *Candide's* origin. Being born out of wedlock renders even those seventy-one noble generations of no value to him. He is an illegitimate child.

This somehow vague and unauthorized origin repeats in the characterizations of several of his companions, with his valet Cacambo's identity being perhaps the most complicated. Cacambo is "un quart d'Espagnol, né d'un métis dans le Tucuman; il avait été enfant de chœur, sacristain, matelot, moine, facteur, soldat, laquais" (168). In his case, the unclear family background is not associated with the number of noble generations, but rather with his failing to belong to a particular place. He is a mixture of different peoples and subsequently originates from several places. More specifically, being a mestizo, he combines the Old World and the New World, presenting a personification of the interconnectedness of the *globule*.

Like the eighteenth-century French intellectuals, the identities of Voltaire's heroes depend neither on belonging to a particular place nor on their family relations. Apart from a shared rejection of traditional forms of belonging, there is actually little that the worn-out cosmopolitans in *Candide* and the first generation of philosophes have in common. The contrast between the two groups becomes evident in their differing views of Paris and France. The philosophes widely recognized France as the centre of the universe and Paris as the capital of luxury and commercial wealth. This attitude is expressed, with more or less ironic distance, in contemporary fiction. Montesquieu has his Persians write that Paris is the capital of Europe, while Marivaux makes one of his comedy characters exclaim, "Paris, c'est le monde; le reste de la terre n'en est que les faubourgs."¹⁵ The horizon of these "Parisophile" cosmopolitans' worldview is delimited here. One of the dangers of this kind of cosmopolitanism is misreading the world by wrongly assuming that it resembles one's own backyard.

14 Starobinski draws attention to *Candide's* bastard quality: "Par sa naissance même, *Candide* atteste la fragilité de l'ordre conventionnel: le quartier de noblesse qui lui manque est une lacune originelle, un vide insinué au cœur de la règle imposée" (133).

15 Montesquieu, *Lettres persanes* (1721; Paris: Flammarion, 1995), 74. Marivaux, *Théâtre complet*, ed. Frédéric Deloffre and Françoise Rubellin (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2000), 1270.

In this case, the citizen of the world risks being an ethnocentric agent in service of the colonial project.

The question is whether or not this cultural arrogance marks Voltaire's protagonists. Are they Parisophiles as well? One of the chapters treats the characters' encounter with the French capital. Candide and Martin meet a savant who admits that "je trouve que tout va de travers chez nous" (217). When nobody seems to know his or her own rank or function, the social hierarchy is dismissed. But the end of the old order is not for the better; instead, a destructive lawlessness reigns. Neighbour fights against neighbour: "C'est une guerre éternelle," the savant concludes (217). Consequently, Paris is not represented as the city of light, but as sewage (*ce cloaque*), which it is explicitly named in an unpublished version of the chapter (*Candide*, 262). *Candide*'s cosmopolitans differ from the philosophes' ideal figure. They make their way in chaos rather than in cosmos. They are dirty, filthy, and, unlike the merchants at the London Exchange or the worldling of Voltaire's poem, not at all free to profit from worldly pleasures. On the contrary, they seem to lack control over their own fortune. Everywhere they go they face inhibiting manners and customs, treaties and laws. In a world where traditional measures of belonging are devalued, they make clear that individual happiness depends on local religious, political, and legal conditions.

Although different customs and historical world events weigh heavily on the cosmopolitans in the narrative, they somehow manage literally to move on when their situations require it. In that sense, Voltaire defines the cosmopolitan identity in *Candide* as something positive, even though his fictional world citizens are far from enlightened philosophes who lead their lives in a world of perpetual peace. One of the lessons of Voltaire's tale is that while suffering is universal, its severity is relative. The privilege enjoyed by cosmopolitans is revealed in the harsh comparison to the slave in Surinam, the dark counterpart to their global identity.

The Encounter with the Negro Slave

Candide maintains an optimistic worldview despite his experience with war, earthquake, inquisitors, and cannibals. It is not until he reaches the Dutch colony of Surinam, where he runs into a Negro

slave, that he actually abandons his mentor Pangloss's doctrine that all is for the best:

En approchant de la ville, ils [Candide and Cacambo] rencontrèrent un nègre étendu par terre, n'ayant plus que la moitié de son habit, c'est-à-dire d'un caleçon de toile bleue; il manquait à ce pauvre homme la jambe gauche et la main droite. Eh! mon Dieu! lui dit Candide en hollandais, que fais-tu là, mon ami, dans l'état horrible où je te vois?—J'attends mon maître, M. Vanderdendur, le fameux négociant, répondit le nègre.—Est-ce M. Vanderdendur, dit Candide, qui t'a traité ainsi?—Oui, monsieur, dit le nègre, c'est l'usage. On nous donne un caleçon de toile pour tout vêtement deux fois l'année. Quand nous travaillons aux sucreries, et que la meule nous attrape le doigt, on nous coupe la main; quand nous voulons nous enfuir, on nous coupe la jambe: je me suis trouvé dans les deux cas. C'est à ce prix que vous mangez du sucre en Europe ... Les chiens, les singes et les perroquets sont mille fois moins malheureux que nous; les fétiches hollandais qui m'ont converti me disent tous les dimanches que nous sommes tous enfants d'Adam, blancs et noirs. Je ne suis pas généalogiste; mais si ces prêcheurs disent vrais, nous sommes tous cousins issus de germain. Or vous m'avouerez qu'on ne peut pas en user avec ses parents d'une manière plus horrible. (194–96)

The Negro slave represents the negative consequences of the weakened importance of origin. We know neither his name nor his origin. His movements are unfree since he only circulates as a commodity. In this passage, Voltaire depicts the mutilated slave, a figure often described in European literature as an inferior and primitive being, as a noble savage who is a victim of European imperialism. In mid-eighteenth-century French literature, this identity is usually reserved for Amerindians, and is rarely applied to African slaves.¹⁶ Voltaire's slave is a sage, capable not only of revealing the global economic system, but also of interpreting his own destiny from the perspective of moral philosophy. The episode reveals the irony of the enlightened world and the darker side of global commerce. The face-to-face encounter constitutes a turning point in the narrative, as it functions as a catalyst for the change in Candide's worldview. He addresses (the absent) Pangloss in a scream, and asks him whether he could have imagined such an

16 Madeleine Dobie, *Trading Places: Colonization and Slavery in Eighteenth-Century French Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 10.

abomination, while explicitly renouncing optimism: “c'en est fait, il faudra qu'à la fin je renonce à ton optimisme” (196).

Candide's encounter with the slave is distinctive.¹⁷ The passage is worth dwelling on precisely because it is not exchangeable, neither stylistically nor thematically. Voltaire presents the slave's speech in a simple and serious style that stands out from the rest of the narrative. The realism of European colonization is foregrounded, while witty remarks are restrained. The addition of this passage to the text in a later edition can explain the difference in tone to a certain degree.¹⁸ In any case, the passage reflects a view of the human body that differs considerably from Voltaire's usually carnivalesque way of dealing with it. While the narrative elsewhere treats the human body more or less as an exchangeable object, often with comic and burlesque overtones—detached body parts spread on the battlefield, the old woman's cut-off bottom, or the fat admiral's public execution (127, 161, 224)—in this case the mutilated body is humanized. In spite of the fact that the Negro slave qua commodity is the arch-representation of man as thing, Candide sees him as a brother and friend. Pangloss's maxim and metaphysical logic, which until this point have been used as explanatory models, are consequently disrupted and replaced by an affective response. Candide pities the poor creature, and the meeting leaves our hero dissolved in tears.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, the Dutch colony of Surinam was well known for its exceedingly high mortality rate among slaves, providing ample reasons for Voltaire to locate his hero's moment of conversion in this particular geographical setting. The location of the encounter strengthens the realism of the episode and also makes this scene exceptional on a metaphorical level.¹⁹ Surinam is not described as an exotic

17 For a different view on the slave episode, see Emeka Abanime, “Voltaire anti-esclavagiste,” *SVEC* 182 (1979): 237–51.

18 The addition tends to be approached as an intertextual comment to the following note in Helvétius's *De l'esprit*: “On conviendra qu'il n'arrive point de barrique de sucre en Europe qui ne soit teinte de sang humain.” Helvetius, *De l'esprit* (Paris, 1758), 1:37n.

19 The location is striking from the point of view of a French political context; as Dobie points out, “the passage evokes not a French colony, but Surinam, the Dutch neighbour of French Guinea, a small but significant displacement that allows Voltaire to condemn colonial slavery without directly implicating France” (*Trading Places*, 298).

place, thereby contrasting with Voltaire's other descriptions of the Americas, such as those of the New World cannibals and human-like apes or of Eldorado, the legendary lost land of gold that Spanish conquistadors were looking for as early as the fifteenth century.²⁰ As a colonial territory, Surinam's function is to underline a fundamental interconnectedness between the Old and New World—a common infrastructure resulting in the global spread of diseases, a global economy, and global wars.²¹

The encounter with the slave implies a confrontation between two different global identities. While *Candide* as a European cosmopolitan takes advantage of the homogeneous and interconnected world, and profits from the liberty of having no fixed dwelling, the exiled African is unfree. He is stuck in a place where he does not belong, not only because he is subject to his master's will, but also because he has lost the physical ability to move following the loss of one of his legs.²² The slave's tale serves as a narrative from the other side of global economy, a condition that colonization both makes possible and is built upon—African labour at the sugar plantations. Elsewhere in the *conte*, misfortune is attributed loosely to interchangeable forces of nature (the Lisbon earthquake), politics (the war between Abars and Bulgars; the execution of the English admiral), or religion (the Inquisition or the Jesuits in Paraguay) (135–36, 126, 224, 139, 168). In contrast, here the slave accuses a specific political, economic, and religious regime. His speech has an explicit addressee: the European empire builders and their colonialism.

20 On this point, I disagree with Gilbert Larochelle, who stresses America's general exoticness and sees it as a contrast to the representation of Europe in the *conte*. Larochelle, "Voltaire: du tremblement de terre de Lisbonne à la déportation des Acadiens," in *The Lisbon Earthquake of 1755: Representations and Reactions*, ed. T. Braun and J. Radner (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2005), 238.

21 For more on the connectedness of Europe and America, see Michèle Duchet, *Anthropologie et histoire au siècle des Lumières: Buffon, Voltaire, Rousseau, Helvétius, Diderot* (1971; Paris: Albin Michel, 1995); and Merle L. Perkins, *Voltaire's Concept of International Order* (Genève: Institut et musée Voltaire, 1965).

22 Christopher Miller discusses the contrast between the fundamental unfreedom of African slaves, as they are denied the possibility to leave America, and the Europeans' freedom of movement in the transatlantic slave trade. Miller, *The French Atlantic Triangle: Literature and Culture of the Slave Trade* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 54–57.

Code Noir and the Slave's Ambiguous Identity

The slave episode in *Candide* is one of only a few passages in Voltaire's enormous body of work where the author criticizes black slavery. Comparable examples are found in *Essai sur les mœurs* (1756) and *Histoire de voyages de Scarmentado* (1756), but the author also argues that such slavery might be necessary in well-functioning societies. Voltaire was not, then, an advocate of a general anti-slavery position.²³ Scholars regard the slave episode in *Candide* as a relatively early historical example of moral and social criticism of slavery, but few have discussed the obvious intertextual relationship between the slave episode and the French law of slavery, *Code Noir*.²⁴ In the seventeenth century, the French monarchy encouraged slavery in the Caribbean colonies in order to increase the efficiency of sugar production. The encouragement was later codified in Code Noir, signed by Louis XIV in 1685, and initiated as an attempt to regulate slavery as a means of strengthening the central state's control over its colonies. The slave law was later completed under Louis XV in 1724. Code Noir was one of many European laws linked to the transatlantic slave trade, a business intrinsically connected to the colonization of America. The use of African slaves formed the basis of an economic system that generated great wealth for the European monarchies. The slave trade and the cultivation, manufacture, and transportation of colonial commodities such as sugar, coffee, cocoa, tobacco, and cotton joined formerly separate regions and continents in an "Atlantic triangle"—Europe, Africa, and America.

23 Abanime argues that Voltaire was more concerned about the rights of French slaves and treated the two kinds of slavery differently: "Devant les Français incommodés par les vestiges de la féodalité Voltaire a été un antiesclavagiste zélé. Devant les noirs, son antiesclavagisme a été plutôt tiède, voire équivoque" (Abanime, 243). According to Duchet, Voltaire never wanted to abolish slavery; he only wished for a more humane treatment of slaves (Duchet, 320).

24 Duchet argues that the primary function of the Negro slave in *Candide* is to point to the barbarian aspects of Code Noir, and only secondarily to foreground the humiliation of the slave (320). Abanime points out that Voltaire's and other authors' concern with the mutilation of slaves corresponds to the 38th article of Code Noir, but comments no further on the relationship between Voltaire's anti-slavery position and the law (Abanime, 242). Miller briefly addresses the incongruity between the slave's critique of Code Noir and Voltaire's view on race in general (Miller, 75–76).

Code Noir deals with the rights and duties of slaves as well as slave owners. Articles 2–6 state that a slave should be baptized and introduced to Catholicism and that the exercise of other religions, except Protestantism, is prohibited in the colonies. Article 25 commands the slave owner to equip his slaves with two sets of clothing every year. According to article 38, the owner has the right to cut off the ears and legs of, or even to execute, a slave who tries to escape.²⁵ When the Negro slave tells *Candide* that his master gives him clothes, that he is forced to convert to Catholicism, and that the slaves who try to escape risk having their limbs cut off, he is referring directly to customs legalized through articles in the slave law.

The slave law touches upon the philosophical question of how to define a human being. The slave is given an ambiguous status from both philosophical and legal perspectives. On the one hand, according to article 44, a slave shall be brought into society as a piece of furniture.²⁶ His origins and biography are of minor importance. He has no proprietary right and is not included in the law of inheritance, except that he and his offspring are themselves objects of inheritance. The slave is considered to be his master's property and consequently a domestic animal or an object rather than a human being. On the other hand, the law instructs the Catholic baptism of slaves, which indicates that they can receive the grace of God and thus are seen as humans.²⁷ The Negro slave in *Candide* addresses this double standard by showing how the slaves are treated worse than animals, while at the same time being instructed to dedicate themselves to a Christian God since they, like every man, descend from Adam.

Despite the condemnation of colonialism and slavery inherent in the Negro's speech, Voltaire held a general view that natural

25 For the history of French transatlantic slavery, see Gilles Manceron, *Marianne et les colonies: une introduction à l'histoire coloniale de la France* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2003); *Codes Noirs: De l'esclavage aux abolitions*, intro. Christiane Taubira, ed. André Castaldo (Paris: Éditions Dalloz, 2006); and Miller. For thorough studies of the literary treatment of the French slave trade, see Miller and Dobie.

26 Code Noir (1685), article 44: "Déclarons les esclaves être meubles et comme tels entrer dans la communauté."

27 Louis Sala-Molins summarizes this ambiguous status: "Les 'nègres' esclaves? Socialement: des bêtes, voire des objets. Individuellement: des créatures humaines, susceptibles du salut par le baptême." Sala-Molins, *Le Code Noir, ou le calvaire de Canaan* (Paris: PUF, 1987), 27.

inequalities existed between races.²⁸ Skin colour, hair, or shape of the face separated people, he believed, and different nations possessed different degrees of reason, relative to the level of civilization in each society. Negroes landed at the bottom of his racial hierarchy: “Je vois des singes, des éléphants, des nègres, qui semblent tous avoir quelque lueur d’une raison imparfaite,” he writes in *Traité de métaphysique* (1734), before he refers to the natives in Kaffraria as “ces animaux nègres.”²⁹ In *Essai sur les mœurs et l’esprit des nations*, the presumed lower intelligence of the Negroes explains why they are the Europeans’ slaves: “C’est par là que les nègres sont les esclaves des autres hommes. On les achète sur les côtes d’Afrique comme des bêtes; et les multitudes de ces noirs, transplantés dans nos colonies d’Amérique, servent un très petit nombre d’Européens.”³⁰ Here Voltaire gives a so-called polygenetic explanation of the origin of the human species: humanity has not one, but several different origins. Racial differences are formed by nature and, as such, are not subject to change. Slavery is explained and justified by a theory claiming that Negroes are more closely related to beasts than to humans.

The humanized slave in Surinam makes the racial hierarchy a problem by showing its actual implications—the suffering of the individual within the colonial system. The question remains whether the slave’s testimony critiques the inequality of races and thus slavery in general, a critique that would imply a certain notion of universal human rights, or whether the testimony solely addresses the shortcomings of the law associated with the slave trade, as Michèle Duchet suggests.³¹ In the latter interpretation, the problem addressed by the mutilated Negro is not the slave qua fellow human being, but rather the slave qua legal subject. By linking the slave’s mutilation specifically to the articles of Code Noir, Voltaire objects first and foremost to a specific law and to the potential weakness of laws as such. He pleads for a more humane treatment of the slave without addressing the general condition of a fellow human being. This reading supports Lynn Hunt’s argument that the political notion of human rights does not emerge until the

28 See Duchet, 282; and Miller, 76–77.

29 Voltaire, 1734–1735, in *Œuvres complètes de Voltaire*, ed. T.E.D. Braun et al., vol. 14 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1989), 420.

30 Voltaire, *Essai sur les mœurs et l’esprit des nations*, ed. René Pomeau, 2 vols. (1756; Paris: Bordas, 1990), 2:335.

31 Duchet, 320.

late eighteenth century. According to Hunt, the notion required a sense of empathy with the foreigner, a feeling that coincided with a historically new view of the human body as autonomous and inviolable. Hunt sees Voltaire's *Traité sur la tolérance* (1763) as an example of how this conception of the body is not commonly established before the 1770s.³²

Contrary to these claims, the Surinam passage in *Candide* may perhaps be about human rights and the cosmopolitan ability to feel empathy with strangers regardless of their racial origin. Although the slave in a matter-of-fact way complains about a barbarian law, and not slavery or bodily humiliation as such, Candide's response is of another character. He cries out in despair, he "versait des larmes en regardant *son nègre*; et en pleurant, il entra dans Surinam" (196, emphasis added). His emotional response shows identification with the stranger's suffering, as if a part of himself had been injured. Furthermore, the slave is referred to as "his negro," which, because he is not Candide's property, claims a form of affiliation between the two characters outside the laws of ownership. One can argue that, from Candide's perspective, the encounter with the Negro slave undermines the belief in racial inequality and promotes a concept of universal humanity.

Slaves, Exoticism, and Colonialism

The latter interpretation is weakened because neither Candide nor the narrator shows the same compassion towards all cases of slavery. His critique only seems to apply to the slave trade as it appears within the context of European colonialism. Pangloss, Martin, and Cacambo are all slaves at some point in the narrative, although a discussion of the slave issue never occurs in relation to these situations. In the same *en passant* way, we are told that Candide and his friends sell Cunégonde's brother as a galley slave (254). Two quite detailed descriptions of slavery precede the speech of the Negro slave, both narrated by the only female characters—the beloved Cunégonde and *la Vieille*. In Portugal, Cunégonde reveals her experience of being the property of first a Jew and later a Spanish inquisitor (145). And while they are crossing the

32 Voltaire approached the Calas affair as the conviction of an innocent but not as an example of torture, which, from a modern viewpoint, it definitely also was. See Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: Norton, 2007), 72–75.

Atlantic on their way to the New World, *la Vieille* reveals that she has travelled the peripheries of Europe as a slave (155).

The African Negro's life under slavery appears considerably worse than those of the European women, despite certain similarities in their experiences. The narrator has a greater ironic distance to the latter, as the women's tales are narrated in a more burlesque tone. While the Negro displays the social injustice and the moral brutality in the recently implemented law, Code Noir, the commoditization of the human body is treated casually in the women's tales. Apparently, Cunégonde accepts being the property of powerful men, while *la Vieille* defends Moroccan pirates' rights to sexually harass women because she considers their behaviour in line with international law. The buying and selling of women seems to proceed without question in the narrative; instead, their experiences contribute to a naturalized view of slavery.

Why these varying treatments of slavery? Do they result from differences in gender, geographical location, or narrative mode? These three aspects are closely intertwined in the narrative. The women's stories discuss slavery by alluding to an orientalized and sexually biased harem fantasy rather than to the Atlantic triangle. In doing so, they refer to another slave tradition, the North African. The North African and the transatlantic slave trade in *Candide* can be regarded as two different discourses that produce two separate modes of narration. While the former contributes to the text's exoticism, the latter belongs to the discourse of colonialism. These two discourses offer contrasting explanations of slavery, and they have different functions in the *conte*.³³ Like cannibals or hidden kingdoms of gold in the New World, depictions of women as sex-slaves functioned as exotic seasoning in European literature. The function of the Negro slave is not to add exotic detail to the story, but to generate sentimental realism. His presence reminds the reader of the consequences

33 In *Trading Places*, Dobie argues that slavery in eighteenth-century French literature almost always is set somewhere in the Orient. She sees this as a displacement or repression of a more morally and politically significant subject, the transatlantic slave trade. The moral issue of trading in and profiting on African labour appeared both less severe and of less concern to the French as slavery was represented through orientalism. Instead of insisting on this displacement, I am suggesting that two different discourses, or locations, of slavery are juxtaposed in *Candide*; hence, I claim that Voltaire shows an awareness of the transatlantic slave trade in his writings while also invoking orientalist tropes.

of the European slave trade as well as—possibly—critiquing the germs of a racial ideology.

Communication and Isolation: The Eldorado Episode

Candide's encounter with the Negro slave illustrates the negative effects of world trade. By presenting an act of communication, it also exemplifies the potential of individuals to depart from the political and economic logic of the world. After all, war and catastrophe are not a totality in *Candide*. They are resisted by forms of unbroken communication in the narrative—communication in the sense of transport (travel between different places), co-operation (Candide hardly ever acts on his own), and especially linguistic communication. All these modes of communication enable knowledge of the world, as well as providing the characters with a critical perspective on the world. As a peaceful form of interaction, communication offers an alternative to the types of domination that define the world order.

It is striking that the individuals in most of Voltaire's *contes* communicate without hindrance through different countries, cultures, and social spheres. In *Zadig* (1748), merchants from all over the world negotiate in a common language. In *Histoire des voyages de Scarmentado*, a black pirate addresses European interlocutors, while in *L'Ingénu* (1767) the Huron, who one day shows up on a Breton beach, happens to speak French fluently. These are but a few examples. Likewise, *Candide*'s cosmopolitans communicate easily with each other, despite their origins in different parts of the world. Furthermore, Cacambo, the mestizo, knows several Indian languages, enabling a dialogue with both the cannibals and the inhabitants of Eldorado. Candide, for reasons unknown, speaks Dutch and is consequently able to interview the slave in Surinam, who also appears to be a fluent Dutch speaker. Language does not seem to constitute a barrier between nations or individuals.

The ability to travel everywhere and communicate with everybody gives Candide and Cacambo an experience that Europeans had been dreaming of for more than 150 years: they find Eldorado. The Eldorado episode is one of the most well-known parts of *Candide*. Voltaire presents the fabled kingdom of gold as a Utopia, an apolitical society with its own palace of science, but with no political institutions such as law courts, prisons, or

parliament—all unnecessary because the people follow nature's laws. The king of Eldorado is greeted in the same way that equals greet each other in France, with a kiss on the cheek (190), and, unlike the rest of the world, perpetual peace seems to reign in the region. Eldorado cannot be found on any contemporary map of the world, suggesting that it occupies a different realm. Despite this exotic quality, Eldorado is still inscribed in the political and economic context of colonialism. An elderly inhabitant informs the two companions of the kingdom's history:

Le royaume où nous sommes est l'ancienne patrie des Incas, qui en sortirent très imprudemment pour aller subjuguier une partie du monde et qui furent enfin détruits par les Espagnols. Les princes de leur famille qui restèrent dans leur pays natal furent plus sages; ils ordonnent, qu'aucun habitant ne sortirait jamais de notre petit royaume; et c'est ce qui nous a conservé notre innocence et notre félicité. Les Espagnols ont eu une connaissance confuse de ce pays, ils l'ont appelé *El Dorado*; et un Anglais, nommé le chevalier Raleigh, en a même approché il y a environ cent années; mais, comme nous sommes entourés de rochers inabordables et de précipices, nous avons toujours été jusqu'au présent à l'abri de la rapacité des nations de l'Europe. (187–88)

According to the wise man, colonialism defines Eldorado, albeit negatively: the kingdom is built on a rejection of the desire to conquer foreign territories and on an avoidance of being occupied by others.³⁴ Moreover, the inhabitants' self-imposed prohibition of emigration is a precondition for the kingdom's survival. Its existence is based on a total lack of communication with the outside world.

In the poem "Le Mondain," written more than twenty years before *Candide*, Voltaire defines luxury as a profit to mankind that has "réuni l'un et l'autre hémisphère."³⁵ In an "heureux échange," (line 26) commodities are cultivated in one corner of the world, manufactured in another, and sold and consumed in a third. Luxury is made possible by the communication and connection between different parts of the globe offered by the French Atlantic

34 References to French colonial history are avoided once again, and, to use Dobi's expression, are displaced by Spanish references.

35 Voltaire, *Œuvres de 1736*, in *Œuvres complètes de Voltaire*, ed. Nicholas Cronk, vol. 16 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2003), 295–303, line 23. References are to this edition.

triangle and other trade routes. Eldorado abounds with gold and precious stones, magnificent architecture, and exotic food, and, as such, is more or less the literary image of what Voltaire's poem defines as luxury: a place of "le superflu" (line 22), "les plaisirs de ce monde" (line 20) or even a "Paradis terrestre" (line 129). Its prosperity is not a result of the reunion of the two hemispheres—of international production, manufacture, and trade. The kingdom knows neither import nor export, and, while the amount of gold is enormous, the citizens have no notion of profit. Pure pleasure is unknown, as the pleasant is everywhere combined with the useful. Even though their country is an image of luxury, the inhabitants have no notion of it as a concept.

The political and economic logic of the narrative defines Eldorado as a Utopia through its isolation. Even though the two travellers agree that this must be the best of all possible worlds, Candide chooses to leave. This decision is the first autonomous, free choice he makes, as his movements until this point have repeatedly been caused by external threat. Eldorado has resisted European colonization and rejected the global market, but, as a consequence, it is excluded from the reality represented in the narrative. It functions as an exotic contrast to the chaotic *globule* that constitutes the "real world." In light of the global experience presented in the *conte*, Eldorado functions to confirm the impossibility of an isolated and self-sufficient society within a global world. In spite of its wealth, the isolated kingdom does not invite the two cosmopolitans to settle down. Candide instead chooses to follow the logic of the global trade economy: to return to Europe in order to be the richest man on the continent. The travel therefore continues.

The Globe or the Landowner's Garden?

The oceanic crossings eventually cease in *Candide*. In the end, the travel companions establish a small farming community in the outskirts of the Turkish capital (260). The cosmopolitans become sedentary, and they find their *demeure fixe*. The immediate occasion for their decision to cease travelling is an encounter with a wise dervish who has retired from the political world: "Je n'ai jamais su le nom d'aucun muphti ni d'aucun vizir ... je présume qu'en général ceux qui se mêlent des affaires publiques

périssent quelquefois misérablement, et qu'ils le méritent; mais je ne m'informe jamais de ce qu'on fait à Constantinople; je me contente d'y envoyer vendre les fruits du jardin que je cultive" (258), the dervish claims, while serving his guests delicacies he has prepared himself, among them "du café de Moka qui n'était point mêlé avec le mauvais café de Batavia et des îles" (258). His self-supporting garden becomes the model for the friends' farm and is the particular garden that Candide has in mind when he utters the narrative's famous last words: "il faut cultiver notre jardin" (260).

The tiny society that Candide and his company found outside Constantinople hardly compares with the wealth and civilization of the hidden Eldorado. Still, the two societies share important common features: they are apolitical, peaceful, self-sufficient, and segregated from the outside world.³⁶ Isolation is the prerequisite for the existence of both societies, and in this way they are remarkably different from the other places mentioned in the narrative, which are characterized by sites of connection, from ports and metropolises to battlefields. While Eldorado is an exotified Utopia, the little farm is represented in the same realistic mode as the slave's account of Surinam. Luxury is unknown on this farm where labour dominates, but it is not the kind of forced labour that the slave represents, nor the kind proposed by the charitable Anabaptist who saves Candide's life after the battle of the Abars and Bulgars and who subsequently wants him to participate in the global flow by "travailler dans ses manufactures aux étoffes de Perse qu'on fabrique en Hollande" (128). Rather, the cultivation of the little garden resists the global market.

Ever since the eighteenth century, Voltaire, the wealthy businessman and landowner who indirectly earned part of his fortune from the slave trade via investments in trading companies, has been accused of narrow-mindedness.³⁷ Voltaire writes for his brethren, Montesquieu stated, while Sébastien Mercier some time later argued that Voltaire always wrote within the horizon and standard of the French capital: "les nations étrangères n'existaient

36 Several scholars compare Eldorado and the garden. See, for example, René Pomeau, *La Religion de Voltaire* (1969; Paris: Librairie A.G. Nizet, 1995), 311.

37 For a discussion of Voltaire's participation in the transatlantic slave trade, see Miller, 77.

presque pas pour lui.”³⁸ In an essay from 1964, which famously describes Voltaire as the last happy writer, Roland Barthes agrees that Voltaire pays no attention to foreignness. Barthes compares Voltaire's *contes* with a landowner's promenade: in spite of the heroes' many and far-reaching voyages, they always stay within the same enclosure.³⁹ Foreign persons and civilizations express the period's taste for exoticism, and different manners and peoples have no other function than to show that the whole of human civilization is built on one fundamental and unchangeable essence. According to Barthes, Voltaire's travelling heroes paradoxically confirm the world's immobility and thereby contribute to an ethnocentric notion of universal man.

To a certain extent, I agree that the cosmopolitanism at work in *Candide* is made possible by the political and economic rules of the global market and by a world governed by a European outlook. The cosmopolitan makes his way in the world by being exchangeable, by opposing the notion of fixed belonging. Without a family or a permanent dwelling, he travels everywhere and communicates with everybody; he is an ideal agent in a world connected from Lima to Lisbon. The travelling world citizen is always somewhat at home. The continuous communication he performs lays the groundwork for the representation of the world as one stage, where versions of the same can be incessantly repeated and recognized. From such a viewpoint, Voltaire's cosmopolitans are perhaps like the largest portion of the first generation of philosophes—ethnocentric agents in service of the colonial project.

Still, I maintain that the *conte* additionally holds a critical view of globalization in general and the human consequences of world trade in particular. Voltaire is dealing with the world at large, and not only a particular ethnocentric—and exotic—notation of it. The encounter with the Negro slave reveals a rupture in the continuous and homogeneous world and makes the cosmopolitans aware of the negative effects of trade. Through the juxtaposition of the cosmopolitan and the slave—both identities representing the weakened importance of belonging—*Candide* offers a far more critical approach to the world market than the idealization shown

38 Sébastien Mercier, *Tableau de Paris* 6 (1783), chap. 513; cited in Alain Rustenholz, *Paris, la ville rêvée de Voltaire* (Paris: Parigramme, 2007), 6.

39 Roland Barthes, “Le Dernier des écrivains heureux,” in *Essais Critiques* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1964), 98.

in earlier works such as *Lettres philosophiques* or “Le Mondain.” The author addresses the historical as well as the human consequences of judicially regulated global trade, and this critique deserves more attention from scholars than it has so far received.

In the light of this critical treatment of globalization, I suggest that the lesson learned from *Candide* is an ethical one, an ethic to be found in compassion for human suffering, like the Anabaptist’s brotherly love shown to the injured Candide, or Candide’s tears on seeing the mutilated slave.⁴⁰ Even though Candide seems unconcerned with slavery in general, his tearful response to the Negro slave anticipates a cosmopolitan notion of human rights: a love of humankind that knows no political borders. Such a cosmopolitan ethics remains in effect when the travelling company settles down at last, and—if they really are to live up to the example of the dervish—withdraws from the global flow. By cultivating their own coffee, Candide and his friends refuse any involvement in the suffering of slaves in Batavia or the West Indies, and turn their backs on European imperialism.

This last refusal shows just how accurate it is to call the travellers in *Candide* “cosmopolitans,” and it throws an interesting light on the way in which the word “cosmopolitan” in the 1760s often denoted an unmanageable citizen. When asked where he belonged, the original world citizen, Diogenes the Cynic, famously answered, “I am a cosmopolitan.” He thereby announced a radical rejection of polis, the city state, and consequently of the Aristotelian view of the human being as a political animal—the idea that humanity is defined by belonging to a political society. In a similar way, the “cynical” cosmopolitans in *Candide* reject a certain political system, specifically European colonialism. This rejection is visible through the narrative’s critical geography, which exposes the way the world and its peoples are connected by the joint forces of war and commerce.



40 Roy S. Wolper argues that charity, as shown by the Anabaptist, is the moral lesson of *Candide*. Wolper, “Candide, Gull in the Garden?” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 3, no. 2 (1969), 276–77. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2737575>>