Voltaire's *Candide* and the Methodology of Dramatic Adaptation

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ABSTRACT

This thesis details the search for dramaturgical methodologies of adaptation with the additional component of a creative project used to put those methodologies into practice. In particular, my research has been focused on the methodologies available for transforming static or descriptive moments of literature into compelling works of drama. My discussion on this process begins by tracing the scholarly developments in the field of adaptation studies, which have led away from what Linda Hutcheon calls "fidelity criticism" and have opened up a new vein of praxis-based research in recent years. Specifically, I trace the path to a four-step formula for the development of theory first suggested by Edward Said and later tailored to the process of adaptation by Linda Hutcheon. The formula itself advocates the balance of research and creativity, which has been an ideal framework for this thesis document.

The second chapter of this thesis focuses on an application of this formula for a dramatic adaptation of Voltaire's notorious novella *Candide, or All for the Best,* which presents the particular problematic of a densely philosophical novella. *Candide* also furnishes an interesting case study for the four-step formula as it presents both a rich historical context and a complicated narrative structure. The third and final chapter details the specific dramaturgical choices made in working with the formula to create a new adaptation entitled *Survival of the Optimistic,* and the implications these choices create for the adaptation process as a whole. The adaptation itself follows at the end of this thesis document.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The text used for *Survival of the Optimistic* was taken from Eric Palmer's 2009 edition of the 1759 Nourse (London) translation of *Candide, or All for the Best.* Any secondary texts were also taken from this edition. All remaining text is original writing.

INTRODUCTION

As an artist, I am fascinated by how stories transform between mediums, over time, and in communication with other stories. I have always loved finding connections between texts or allusions within texts. I truly believe that no story or work of art lives in isolation. As a student of literature, I have tried to resist the Romantic notion that stories are created as if from nowhere by an isolated literary genius. As a student of theatre, I have always had a similar mentality regarding my own work and the work of others. It is not possible to create a theatrical or literary masterpiece in a vacuum. Even Shakespeare, the English language's most celebrated playwright, adapted stories from other cultures and historical contexts. For example, one of his most oft-produced tragedies, *Romeo and Juliet,* which has its own lineage of adaptations, was an established Italian folk tale long before he chose it as his subject.

Bearing this in mind, I have also been curious about the reputation for inferiority which adaptations have received due to their apparent lack of originality: "It is much easier to dismiss adaptations as inevitably blurred mechanical reproductions of original works of art than to grapple with the thorny questions of just what constitutes originality" (Leitch 2003: 163). Work must be "original", but what does it mean to be "original", especially in a postmodern world? As stated by Charles Mee in the description of his *(re)making project*, "There is no such thing as an original play" (Mee "About the (re)making project"). If we take Mee's statement as a starting point, we can say that all plays are adaptations. In fact, Linda Hutcheon seconds this notion: "every live staging of a printed play could theoretically be considered an adaptation in its performance" (39). Every play is in communication with previous work and has the ability to inspire future

work. The very act of staging a play is a form of adaptation, so why must an adapter feel inferior or unoriginal if they acknowledge this relationship?

As a student of playwriting and dramaturgy, I was inspired by Mee and Hutcheon's statements and became curious about the negative discourse surrounding adaptations. Furthermore, I became frustrated by the lack of conversation about how artists approach the adaptation process. When I set out to study adaptation and discover what research exists on this subject for a student of theatre, I initially found that many publications followed the tradition instigated by Siegfried Kracauer in his book *Theory of Film* (1965). As such, the majority of material was film-based and involved more case studies than detailed discussions on methodologies of the adaptation process. In addition, adaptation studies have tended to focus on evaluating the fidelity of literary sources adapted to the screen, which neglects artists working in theatre. In short, adaptation warrants more discussion than is traditionally offered to the subject. The negative discourse associated with adaptations has kept adapters in all mediums from evaluating possible methodologies.

In recent years, scholars have begun to identify this problematic trend. Having lived under the umbrella of film studies for many decades, adaptation has been slowly evolving beyond what Linda Hutcheon calls "fidelity criticism" to branch out into its own domain. As I combed through scholarly journals that approach the topic of adaptation, such as *Adaptation, Literature/Film Quarterly, Journal of Adaptation in Film and Performance,* and *Adaptation: the Journal of Literature on Screen*, I came across more recent discussions on adaptation that seemed to reflect this desire for change. In particular, I discovered the work of Thomas Leitch, Graham Allen, Julie Sanders, and

Linda Hutcheon. Scholars such as these have been contributing to adaptation studies'

separation from film theory and to broadening the conversation away from a narrow

discussion of an adaptation's loyalty to its source text. As a result, adaptations are

beginning to be assessed on equal footing to "original work" in more recent publications,

such as Thomas Leitch's article "Adaptation Studies at a Crossroads*"* (2003) or Linda

Hutcheon's *Theory of Adaptation* (2013). Advancements such as these have allowed for

research into other aspects of adaptation, including methodologies.

     With this project, my goal became to contribute my own analysis and research to

the growing field of adaptation studies. In particular, my interest has been fuelled by two

main questions: 1) Why are adaptations seen as inferior if the practice is more widespread

than typically acknowledged? 2) What methodologies of dramatic adaptation are

available for practical use by a playwright setting out to write an adaptation or a

dramaturg guiding a playwright through the process--specifically, how do dramatists

create engaging works of theatre from descriptive or diegetic passages found in

literature? Having these questions in mind, I set out in search for pre-established

methodologies of dramatic adaptation. In addition, I chose to undertake a creative project

as a component of my thesis to put my methodological discoveries into practice.

     Shortly after beginning my research, I decided to work with Voltaire's *Candide,*

or All for the Best. I was originally attracted to the thought-provoking novella in order to

explore the possibility of bilingual adaptation and its philosophical ramifications; my

discovery of the dearth of conversation on the process of adaptation itself led me to

decide that my research might be better suited to testing an existing adaptation

methodology. *Candide* itself presents an interesting case study for the investigation of

adaptation methodologies. Not only has it been adapted many times, but it also contains frequent examples of literary passages that may be difficult to adapt to the stage. The novella may seem simple at first, but as you peel back the layers, you quickly discover both its philosophical and narrative complexity. The joy that comes from exploring the many layers of meaning may explain why so many writers have chosen to take on the challenge of adapting *Candide*.

The discussion of optimism embedded in Voltaire's *Candide* is also a stimulating starting point for my theatrical exploration of the novella's philosophy, satire, and social criticism. Many of the questions Voltaire poses regarding systemic hypocrisy in the name of spirituality and optimism continue to be relevant today. However, how can such philosophical concepts be adapted to the stage? In my search for adaptation methodologies that addresses this challenge, I came across a formula for adaptation by Linda Hutcheon based on the evolution of theory by Edward Said. Hutcheon and Said describe the process by which stories and ideas are transformed for new circumstances in four steps: initial circumstances, distance traversed, set of conditions of acceptance or resistance, and transformation of the idea. Considering the formula emerged from the evolution of theory, I thought it could be an effective methodology for dramatic adaptation, especially with such a densely philosophical literary source as *Candide*.

As a framework through which to view my project, I would also like to discuss the concept of Practice as Research and its influence on my work. In his book, *Practice as Research in the Arts,* Robin Nelson states that it "involves a research project in which practice is a key method of inquiry and where, in respect of the arts, a practice… is submitted as substantial evidence of a research inquiry." He adds that it "arises only

where an insightful practice is submitted as a substantial part of the evidence of a research inquiry" (Nelson 8-9). My creative project, a dramatic adaptation of Voltaire's *Candide* entitled *Survival of the Optimistic*, plus the theoretical component, which serves as a documentation of my process, is the evidence of my research inquiry. Therefore, the evidence should be assessed on how it addresses my research inquiry. All this to say, I would like to propose looking at my project through the lens of what one might call the Scientific Method.

As such, the following thesis is a documentation of my adaptation process and the results of my research inquiry, as well as a survey of my research into the field of adaptation. The first chapter, "Fidelity Criticism and the Search for Methodologies of Dramatic Adaptation", traces my research path through adaptation studies to my discovery of the Said/Hutcheon four-step formula for adaptation. As Hutcheon's description of this framework in relation to adaptation is relatively brief, some work in chapter one was put into interpreting and determining the work necessary for each step. In the second chapter, "An Application of the Four-Step Formula with Voltaire's *Candide*", I apply Said and Hutcheon's formula to the process of adapting *Candide.* The third and final chapter is a documentation of the dramaturgical choices I made as a result of working with the formula. Following the final chapter is a conclusion, which considers the dramaturgical and practical significance of the formula. My completed adaptation, *Survival of the Optimistic*, is included in Appendix I.

It is true that my project could be considered a case study of the adaptation of a particular novella, which I identified earlier as a past weakness in the field of adaptation studies. What can the adaptation of one novella say about the methodologies of

adaptation on a larger scale? However, I chose *Candide* as a case study with this in mind. Its narrative structure provides enough complexity to test adaptation methodologies. In addition, its long lineage of existing adaptations is a testament to its relevance. As each adaptation process presents its own unique challenges, perhaps the Said/Hutcheon formula could be an interesting starting point for adapters of any discipline. The four steps emphasize thoughtful and focused research, which could encourage an adapter to seek a productive balance between research and creativity, one ultimately dependent on their intended outcome. As a playwright and dramaturg, I am curious what implications, if any, this may have for the adaptation process in general.

**CHAPTER I: FIDELITY CRITICISM AND THE SEARCH FOR A
METHODOLOGY OF DRAMATIC ADAPTATION**

History of Adaptation Studies and the Limits of Fidelity Criticism

Over the past two centuries, a number of studies have been dedicated to the

analysis of narrative structures and their repetition across time and culture. In the

nineteenth century, Georges Polti identified thirty-six dramatic situations from which

every story stems. More recently, Christopher Booker reduced the thirty-six situations to

seven in his book, *The Seven Basic Plots: Why we tell stories* (2004). Many scholars,

including Canadian literary critic Northrop Frye and American mythologist Joseph

Campbell, have devoted years of study to the analysis of literary tropes and motifs that

recur throughout human history.[1] As societies rose and fell, stories were borrowed as

vehicles for religious and ethical doctrine.

In her innovative book, *A Theory of Adaptation* (2013), Linda Hutcheon cites J.

Hillis Miller who offered an explanation for the repetition of narrative structures across

human history: "We need the 'same' stories over and over, then, as one of the most

powerful, perhaps the most powerful, of ways to assert the basic ideology of our culture"

(176). Ultimately, the human ethical code is transmitted through stories and the act of

narration. However, this is not a new concept. Hutcheon also cites Aristotle's *Poetics* as a

key example of repetition seen as a necessary aspect of the human creative spirit.

Comparing various poetic forms, including the dramatic and the epic, Aristotle

introduced the concept of *mimesis* as a fundamental part of human creativity (Hutcheon

2013: 20). Although Plato made the distinction between mimesis as imitation and

diegesis as narration, or to put it simply, showing versus telling, Aristotle argued, "all art

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[1] See Frye: 1965, and Campbell: 1972.

is imitation and the various arts differ depending on object, means, and manner or mode…" (Prince 53). Imitation was not seen as a negative aspect of the creative process in ancient times. In fact, Hutcheon explains that ancient theatre embraced "the double process of interpreting then creating something new" (2013: 20). She adds that, for Romans, "*imitatio* went together with *aemulatio*, linking imitation and creativity" (2013: 20). The ancient act of imitation involved reinvigorating a recognizable story for new audiences to ensure the posterity of the social message that underlines it.

Hutcheon continues her argument by adding one important element to Miller's statement: "adaptations are not simply repetition; there is always change" (2013: 176). As stories travel across time and culture, they are adjusted to suit new cultural and historical contexts. Citing the adaptations based on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and the medieval stories that inspired the tragedy, she goes on to note that "(e)volving by cultural selection, travelling stories adapt to local cultures, just as populations of organisms adapt to local environments" (2013: 177). Adaptation and evolution are distinctive features of both human biology and creativity, which is prevalent in all disciplines of art and culture. In 1992, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences reported that 85 percent of all Best Picture winners were considered adaptations (Hutcheon 2013: 4). However, adaptation today is not as accepted as it was in ancient times. It has become an embarrassing and less acknowledged part of the artistic process. If the tendency to adapt is more common than we think, why has there not been more study devoted to the methodologies of the adaptation process?

Despite adaptation and mimesis being at the core of our creative tendencies, the focus of adaptation studies for the past fifty years has been dominated by what Hutcheon

calls "fidelity criticism" (2013: 6). As the field of adaptation studies emerged in the second half of the twentieth century from within the realm of film theory, adaptations were constantly compared to their original texts to determine whether or not the adapter was loyal to their source material. Because many films, going all the way back to the silent era, were adaptations of literature, more focus was given to the comparisons between novels and their filmed counterparts than to adaptations of literature for the stage. Unfortunately, these comparisons also encouraged the hierarchization of art forms. Literature was often considered superior to film, solely because it is a much older medium (Hutcheon 2013: 4). As a result, adaptations were met with reproach for their lack of originality, which tended to be a preoccupation of many artists and scholars.

Due to the trend of comparing a film to its literary source, scholarly discussions on adaptation in performing arts other than film remained inadequate for many years. Adaptation as a widespread trend across multiple mediums was not commonly acknowledged. There was also limited discussion on how adapters work with a source text. As an example, Siegfried Kracauer's book *Theory of Film* (1965) encouraged the hierarchy of mediums and the binary of "original versus copy" (Leitch 2003: 150). Binaries such as this enabled the development of the fidelity criticism discourse and encouraged adaptations to be seen as lesser art forms with their literary sources at the top of the hierarchy. Rather than seeing the potential for adaptations to reinvigorate stories for new audiences, scholars such as Kracauer and his colleagues believed that stories became weaker as they shifted mediums. As a result, extensive research or discussion regarding different performative mediums, such as theatre or dance, did not begin until relatively recently (Leitch 2008: 63). Although many stage texts had themselves been

adapted into films, dramatic adaptations of literature did not command as much scholarly attention as the exciting new domain of film theory.

An exception to this trend was George Bluestone's book, *Novels into Film* (1957), which examines the tendency of mid-century cinema to adapt popular books to the screen. Although he did not discuss theatre, his goal was to abolish any discussion on fidelity or the hierarchy of mediums by focusing instead on individual technique. Using case studies from six novels adapted into films, Bluestone discusses the limits of each medium and the techniques used by screenwriters to create an autonomous film from a literary source. His analysis emphasized the transformation of a story as it moved to a new medium, not the dilution of the work's merit. In addition, Bluestone was one of the first scholars to stress that an adaptation is an independent work of art worthy of analysis separate from its source. However, despite Bluestone's effort not to favor one medium over another, scholarly discussions continued to view adaptations as inferior to their literary sources. Adaptations continued to be seen for many years as "belated, middlebrow, or culturally inferior" (Naremore 6). Until recently, Bluestone's attempt at distancing adaptation studies away from fidelity criticism remained a unique endeavor.

Fortunately, a number of contemporary scholars have followed Bluestone's example, by making an effort to shift the focus of adaptation studies away from the unproductive discourse of fidelity criticism. A number of scholarly journals, such as *Literature/Film Quarterly, Journal of Adaptation in Film and Performance,* and *Adaptation: the Journal of Literature on Screen,* that had once been dominated by film-centric case studies and fidelity criticism are now experiencing a shift in perspective. Many scholars published by these peer-reviewed journals are attempting to branch out by

discussing adaptation as a process of its own, outside of film theory. For example, acknowledging and elaborating on Bluestone's earlier attempt at a useful discussion, Thomas Leitch confronts the limitation imposed by fidelity criticism in his article, *"Twelve Fallacies in Contemporary Adaptation Theory"* (2003), in order to actively shift adaptation studies into a new mode of thinking.

To begin his argument, Leitch asserts that "adaptation theory has remained tangential to the thrust of film study because it has never been undertaken with conviction and theoretical rigor" (2003: 149). As a result, the ranking of art forms based on their relation to a previous text has dominated adaptation studies to the detriment of other possible areas of interest. On the subject of methodology, Leitch adds: "this flood of study of individual adaptations proceeds on the whole without the support of any more general theoretical account of what actually happens, or what ought to happen, when a group of filmmakers set out to adapt a literary text" (2003: 149). Consequently, for many years, other mediums such as dance, music, and theatre have been left out of the discussion. In fact, we can apply Leitch's question to theatre creators. What actually happens, or ought to happen when a literary text is adapted to the stage? Would it be possible to distill it to a single model or methodology?

By identifying what has limited the field in the past, Leitch contributes to making adaptation studies a field in its own right separate from film theory. In a follow up article entitled "Adaptation Studies at a Crossroads" (2008), he elaborates on the evolution of the field by discussing the major theoretical contributors to this shift in thought away from fidelity criticism. Specifically, Leitch recognizes a collaborative project spearheaded by Robert Stam in 2004. The goal of the project was to collect over ten

years' worth of studies on adaptation theory by such reputed scholars as Brian

McFarlane, James Naremore, and Imelda Whelehan. In order to open up the field to new

discussion, the project "sought to reorient adaptation studies decisively from the fidelity

discourse universally attacked by theorists as far back as George Bluestone to a focus on

Bakhtinian intertextuality" (Leitch 2008: 63). The culmination of this work was a three-

volume collection published between 2004 and 2005 (Leitch 2008: 63).

As a result of Stam's project, there has been a recent outpouring of "diverse work

on adaptation" (Leitch 2008: 63). Specifically, Leitch cites Julie Sanders' *Adaptation and

Appropriation* (2006) as an example of a project focused on shifting adaptation studies

away from film theory. The goal of Sanders' book is to define and investigate the diverse

world of adaptation, which includes "the overarching practice of intertextuality" (17).

Julia Kristeva coined the term *intertexuality* in her book *Desire and Language* (1980).

Coming from the world of semiotics, Kristeva discusses how texts of all disciplines relate

to each other through the sign-systems of which they are constructed. According to

Sanders, Kristeva's goal in the creation of the term was to assert "that all texts invoke and

rework other texts in a rich and ever-evolving cultural mosaic" (17). Kristeva goes on to

attest that literature does not exist in isolation. As a natural aspect of human creativity,

every text has a relationship to previous texts and has the ability to inspire future work.

Although Kristeva's work remained in the world of linguistics and semiotics for many

years, Sanders argues the same theories can also be applied to the practice of adaptation.

Since Kristeva's coining of the term, many scholars and practitioners other than

Sanders have embraced *intertextuality* when discussing adaptations. For example, Roland

Barthes notoriously stated that "any text is an intertext" in his book *Untying the Text*

(1981). More recently, Graham Allen dedicated a book entitled *Intertextuality* (2011) to the study the relationships between texts to create meaning and story. The study and acceptance of *intertextuality* has been crucial in reducing the importance placed on both the hierarchy of mediums and the loyalty of an adaptation to its source text. By rejecting previous generations' fixation on fidelity and originality, postmodern scholars such as Sanders, Kristeva, Barthes, and Allen have brought greater acceptance to the notion that works of art do not exist without the influence of previous work. As a result, the avenue for studying the adaptation process itself has been opened. Contemporary students of playwriting have more options when approaching the adaptation process than in the past, but now that adaptation studies have moved beyond film theory, are there any models for creating a dramatic text from literature?

New Conversations: Dramaturgy and Methodology

As mentioned above, the recent scholarly attempts to distance adaptation studies from film theory and fidelity criticism have created room for discussions on various topics related to adaptation. In addition to her discussions on *intertextuality*, Sanders coined the term *appropriation* to describe the postmodern tendency to create a "journey away from the informing source into a wholly new cultural product and domain" (26). The term *appropriation* acknowledges that adapters may have intentions other than fidelity when working with a source text. In addition, Margherita Laera dedicates the introduction to her collection of essays and interviews, *Theatre and Adaptation: Return, Rewrite, Repeat* (2014), to discussing the tendency of theatre to repeat itself while acknowledging the breadth of forms this repetition may take: "the term adaptation

primarily refers to a kind of interpretative intervention… which involves transposing a source or stimulus into a different language, medium, or culture…" (Laera 4).

On the subject of literary adaptation to the stage and the role of the dramaturg, Jane Barnette contributed an article to Madga Romanska's the *Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy* (2015). Her goal was to discuss the intersection between dramaturgy and the process of adaptation. Being a form of dramaturgy, adaptation demands dramaturgical reflection despite the fact that "(l)ike adaptation, dramaturgy has been notoriously difficult to define" (294). Barnette argues that the creative process of dramaturgical reflection is inherently needed in adaptation. Depending on the needs of the adaptation project, this could include "the development of the script, contextual research, and audience outreach" (295). As we can see, removing fidelity criticism from the discourse has allowed for theatre researchers, creators, and dramaturgs to deepen their understanding of the adaptation process.

In Canada, there have been some attempts to broaden the conversation related to the practice of adaptation in theatre. After "Adaptations in Performance", the 2006 edition of the Festival of Original Theatre at the University of Toronto, the organizers published a collection of essays on the process of adaptation with a particular focus on the live performing arts. In the preface to the collection, Linda Hutcheon describes one of the goals of the festival as "bringing together those who do the adaptations (solo or in collaboration) and those who theorize about them" (2009: xi). It is important for the growth of adaptation studies to acknowledge the collaborative, interdisciplinary, and scholarly aspects of the adaptation process. However, although it was a progressive step for developing the field of adaptation studies in Canada, the collection focuses on the

points of view of specific Canadian artists and does not discuss the methodologies of adaptation in general.

Furthermore, scholars have begun to discuss exactly how "fidelity criticism" has held back adaptation studies. In *A Theory of Adaptation,* Hutcheon argues that "(t)he process of adapting should make us reconsider our sense of literary critical embarrassment about intention and the more personal and aesthetic dimension of the creative process" (2013: 111). Similar to the previously mentioned discussions on *intertextuality*, Hutcheon is stating that we should embrace the dialogic nature of our creative process and put aside any outdated feelings of shame. Julie Sanders echoes this sentiment by stating that it is "at the very point of infidelity that the most creative acts of adaptation and appropriation take place" (20).

Postmodern artists have also begun to embrace this sentiment in their work. For example, with his *(re)making project,* Charles Mee seeks to assert that "There is no such thing as an original play" (Mee "About the (re)making project"). To illustrate his devotion to this concept, all of his plays are available on his website for interested adapters and theatre creators. Anne Bogart also addresses the repetition of stories in regards to the role of artists in her book *A Director Prepares:* "Our task, and the task of every artist and scientist, is to re-describe our inherited assumptions and invented fictions in order to create new paradigms for the future" (28). In a manner that parallels Hutcheon's aversion to fidelity criticism, Bogart stresses the need to shift stories according to their historical context with a particular view to the future.

However, neither Mee nor Bogart suggests any practical steps for beginning the adaptation process. For the most part, the personal statements of established artists such

as Bogart and Mee stand in for adaptation manuals or guidelines. Some artists have attempted to articulate their personal adaptation methodologies with the particular aim of facilitating the process of others. For example, Vincent Murphy condensed his adaptation techniques into a book, *Page to Stage: The Craft of Adaptation* (2013). In the book, he offers six building blocks to guide the process of student playwrights and adapters: theme, dialogue, character, imagery, storyline, and action.

According to Murphy, the building blocks are meant to "supply a strong, workable model for adapting a wide variety of material from different genres or styles" (2). He dedicates a chapter of *Page to Stage* to each building block and includes a number of exercises to stimulate the creative process. Murphy also incorporates a large number of examples from within his own repertoire. After detailing the basic elements of each building block, he provides case studies from his own work as an adapter. From this, adapters are left to pick and choose the information that is the most helpful to them.

Murphy's intention is to offer the building blocks as "strategies, not rules" (2). In the introduction, he admits that "(e)ach adapter creates his or her own approach for transforming literature into drama" (1). In effect, a student of playwriting is free to use the six building blocks as an entry in to the world of adaptation, instead of a prescription for the adaptation process. However, Jane Barnette identifies an additional element, which should be considered the foundation for Murphy's six building blocks: the role of research. According to Barnette, Murphy "barely mentions dramaturgy (or contextual research, for that matter) at all; instead Murphy creates a step-by-step guide for novice adapters of literature for the stage…" (294). Barnette explains that contextual research is necessary for the adaptation process, especially when tackling complicated literary

structures and transforming them into compelling dramatic moments. However, where does research fit into the adaptation process of a literary source to the stage? Is there an existing practical model for incorporating contextual research into artistic practice?

To address the topic of research and adaptation, Susan Jonas articulates her adaptation and collaboration techniques in the article "Aiming the Canon at Now" (1997). Not only does Jonas outline her process of choosing source material, but she also lists a number of specific techniques she employs in the adaptation and collaboration process, such as re-contextualizing the original story, reversing the gender of the protagonists, empowering the oppressed, and admitting the victim. Drawing on her training as both a director and dramaturg, she places dramaturgy and research at the forefront of her creative process by "putting actors in roles of all sizes on equal footing as dramaturgs" (Jonas 246). Jonas' goal of informing her work with a dramaturgical mindset results in a rich adaptation experience and becomes a "useful resource of playful models and points of departure for other adapters" (245). She does not offer a set formula for adaptation. Instead, she stresses the importance of making dramaturgy a key component of the process, which includes in-depth contextual research in order to enrich the final product and clarify artistic intentions.

Jonas implements her model of adaptation and collaboration in educational environments having directed a number of collaborative projects at various American universities. The educational aspect of adaptation is echoed in James MacKinnon's article "Creative Copying? The Pedagogy of Adaptation" (2011). In much the same way Jonas does, MacKinnon describes his approach to the adaptation process with his students. With his experience teaching in universities, he found that students tend to gravitate

towards either theory or artistic practice, and they have difficulties embracing both aspects of the creative process. According to MacKinnon, adaptation is a useful "conceptual and practical model for developing critical and creative skills simultaneously" (55). Setting fidelity criticism and concerns about originality aside, he guides his students through the process of creating well-researched works of adaptation in an "effective, engaging, and highly versatile" form of drama education (55).

In brief, it seems that many of the recent discussions in adaptation studies outlined above have emphasized that contextual research is essential for the adaptation process. A number of the previously mentioned artists and scholars also stress the importance of balancing research and creativity. As stated by Barnette, "The process of adaptation dramaturgy can be summarized in three steps: the development of the script, contextual research, and audience outreach" (295). With this description as well as the statements of the artists mentioned above in mind, it seems that a workable model is beginning to emerge. Through their own experience, are these scholars and artists heuristically working towards a practical model of adaptation? Would it be possible to create a workable model that stems from a similar dramaturgical or critical mindset? Perhaps a model based on the need to balance research and creativity would be ideal for guiding a playwright through the adaptation process.

Adaptation Methodologies and Said/Hutcheon's Four-Step Formula

In order to discuss the diverse subject of adaptation, Hutcheon approaches the topic from many different angles. A comprehensive discussion of methodological possibilities is included in *A Theory of Adaptation*. The chapter on the subject of

methodology entitled "How?" comprises a thorough discussion of adaptation methodologies and how artists might feel compelled to approach the adaptation process. In describing how an adaptation moves from a source text to a final product, Hutcheon cites Edward Said's *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (1983). Specifically, she mentions the section of his book titled "Traveling Theory", which discusses how theories and ideas transform as they move across time and culture. Hutcheon argues that stories transform in the same way as theories when they are adapted across time and culture, as well as medium. The process is outlined in four steps that every idea or story must navigate: "initial circumstances, distance traversed, set of conditions of acceptance (or resistance), and a transformation of the idea to a new time and place" (2013: 150). Hutcheon concludes that every adaptation, regardless of medium, moves through these four steps.

Interestingly, the four steps echo many other discussions on the transformative nature of art, most notably Patrice Pavis' discussions on intercultural theatre. Although Pavis examines how different cultures intersect in a theatre production and does not discuss adaptation directly, his model for "the dramatic text, written, then translated, analysed dramaturgically, staged and received by an audience" shares striking characteristics with Said and Hutcheon's proposals (138-139). The four steps suggested by Said and discussed by Hutcheon also reinforce Kristeva's concept of *intertexuality* in the sense that every work of art is in dialogue with other works. Said argues that ideas undergo crucial "processes of representation and institutionalization" as they progress across time and culture (226). Hutcheon applies this concept to the evolution of stories and adds to Said's argument by stating that adaptations transform stories in a similar

fashion: "Adaptations too constitute transformations of previous works in new contexts.
Local particularities become transplanted to new ground and something new and hybrid
results" (2013: 150).

In short, Hutcheon is drawing on existing theory in order to discuss the process of
adaptation. The four-step formula seems to encompass discussions on the subject of
stories evolving across time, culture, and medium. It also seems to summarize the above-
mentioned research on the balance of theory and creativity in the adaptation process.
Regardless of an artist's intention, adaptations seem to move unconsciously through these
four steps in their own "process of representation and institutionalisation". Perhaps Said
and Hutcheon's four-step formula condenses the adaptation process to its most workable
form, which leads to the question: how would this particular formula be helpful
dramaturgically to guide an adapter through the adaptation process, especially when that
process involves grappling with complicated works of literature? In addition, would it be
possible to test this formula in order to determine if it is an ideal starting point for a
playwright seeking guidance in the adaptation process?

With the first step of the formula, Said remarks that "(f)irst, there is a point of
origin, or what seems like one, a set of initial circumstances in which the idea came to
birth or entered discourse" (226). As with Barnette's discussion on adaptation,
dramaturgy, and research, Said's proposed first step would entail contextual research as
the foundation of the adaptation process. Every artist or scholar reviewed in this chapter
has emphasized the need for researching the context in which the original source material
was created. An adapter must understand a source material's primary themes and motifs,
as well as its historical context, to begin the adaptation process and guide their initial

creative impulses. When adapting literary works, this may involve researching the socio-historical context of its author and the details of its original publication in order to begin breaking down its fundamental themes.

The second step of the formula, however, consists of the adapter analyzing how the source material may have transformed from its initial creation to its reception in the present day: "Second, there is a distance traversed, a passage through the pressure of various contexts as the idea moves from an earlier point to another time and place where it will come into a new prominence" (Said 226-227). After investigating the initial circumstances of the source, the job of an adapter is to research how it may have evolved before it came into the adapter's possession. Depending on the material, some paths of study may include major historical events, evolving critical reception, or other resulting intertexts. The adapter would then be able to explore how the fundamental themes of the literary source would be received in the new socio-historical context of the adaptation project.

The third step of the formula begins to factor in the intentions of the adapter: "Third, there is a set of conditions- call them conditions of acceptance or… resistance- which then confronts the transplanted theory or idea, making possible its introduction or toleration" (Said 227). By evaluating the information gathered from the initial circumstances and the distance traversed by the source material, an adapter must begin making artistic choices in relationship to the structure of the source material and the intended medium of the final product. As an example, an adapter might analyze the diegetic moments of a novel in order to begin making choices as to how to create dramatic moments on stage.

The third step is a crucial part of the adaptation process. In this phase, an adapter is forced to analyze their relationship to the structures proposed by the source material. This becomes the bridge between contextual research and the creative impulses of the adapter. Vincent Murphy and Susan Jonas discuss this at length in their own writings on their process. For example, Murphy focuses on certain images of a text to create a dramatic setting, and Jonas reverses specific conditions of the source material, such as the gender of the protagonists. There are infinite options available to an adapter, but successful adapters are clear about their intentions in working with their chosen source material and how they would like to transform the conditions offered.

Of course, the research done in the first two steps by an adapter or dramaturg would inform the choices made in the third step. As discussed by Barnette, Jonas, and MacKinnon, this is the marriage between research and creativity. The balance of the first three steps is necessary in achieving the fourth and final step: "the now full (or partly) accommodated (or incorporated) idea is to some extent transformed by its new uses, its new position in a new time and place" (Said 227). In short, the previous three steps inform the creative choices made by an adapter in the fourth step. Once the transformation has occurred, the adaptation exists as an autonomous work of art in its new context, which is achieved by researching the original context, as well as considering the conditions presented by the source material and the intentions of the adapter. All in all, it seems that this formula is emphasizing the need to strike a balance between research and creativity for a successful final product.

Conclusion

       Now that we have discussed what each step entails for the four-step formula, the next step of the project is to ask: is it possible to consciously apply this methodology to an artistic practice? As a conclusion to his description of the four steps, Said adds, "(i)t is obvious that any satisfactorily full account of these stages would be an enormous task" (227). In other words, it would be almost impossible to document the transformation process to its full extent. Nevertheless, Hutcheon argues that successful adaptations move through these steps, whether the adapter knows the formula or not. It is also interesting to note that artists such as Jonas, Murphy, Mee, and Bogart, have adaptation methodologies that share remarkable characteristics with this formula. As the field of adaptation studies shifts away from "fidelity criticism", conversations from both artists and scholars have begun to emphasize the necessity for the thoroughness of research and clarity of intention in the adaptation process. Said and Hutcheon's four-step formula seems to summarize these conversations.

       As a result, the goal for the next phase of this project will be to put this formula into practice with a dramatic adaptation of Voltaire's *Candide*. An adaptation of this novella is an ideal case study as it presents the challenge of adapting philosophical discussions to the stage. As well, it stems from a rich historical context, which is more than two hundred and fifty years removed from our own. Said's discussion of the evolution of theory and ideas means that the formula he proposes might also be helpful as there are many deeply philosophical, and less dramatic, elements of the novella to consider as conditions of acceptance or resistance. The project will examine whether a conscious application of this formula might facilitate both the dramaturgical and creative

process. To address Said's challenge, the next chapter will be an account of working with

the formula. Ideally, a project of this extent will contribute to the shift in thought

regarding the formal practice of adaptation. To borrow the words of Linda Hutcheon, the

goal of this project is to assert that "(i)n the workings of the human imagination,

adaptation is the norm, not the exception" (2013: 177).

CHAPTER II: AN APPLICATION OF THE FOUR-STEP FORMULA TO VOLTAIRE'S *CANDIDE*

Step One: Initial Circumstances

Said and Hutcheon's formula suggests that the adaptation process begins with a thorough understanding of a source material's historical, political, and artistic context, or *initial circumstances.* Research into the initial circumstances of a text grounds an adapter in the historical and thematic environment of the source material. A work of art cannot live in isolation from its historical context. Understanding what influenced the source text in its creation would guide the initial creative and dramaturgical impulses of an adapter. In the case of Voltaire's *Candide,* there is a rich world of information regarding the historical context of eighteenth century France, the life of the famously controversial Voltaire, and the philosophical atmosphere of the Age of Enlightenment in which both Voltaire and his controversial novella played an important role. A thorough understanding of Voltaire and the historical complexities of eighteenth century France would enrich the choices available to an adapter.

Many scholars have dubbed the eighteenth century "The Age of Voltaire" because of his influence on the philosophical, political, scientific, and artistic thought of the era (Carlson xv). Born to a bourgeois family in Paris, Voltaire was expected to follow in his father's footsteps and pursue a career in law. At a young age, he resisted his father's wishes and decided instead to become a man of letters. Throughout his long career, he produced many influential writings in a wide variety of forms, including prose, poetry, drama, philosophical essays, and political pamphlets. He formed close relationships with powerful people of the time, including Frederick the Great of Prussia, who declared on the subject of Voltaire's writing that "this great man alone was worth an entire academy"

(Aldridge 411). In his work, Voltaire often meditated on key issues of the Enlightenment, including individual suffering, personal responsibility, and free will. Despite the wealth of essays and letters produced by Voltaire in his lifetime, *Candide* remains his most well known work. One of the reasons for its popularity may be because it encompasses many of Voltaire's most characteristic ideas-- the same ideas that were quoted by many leaders of the French Revolution and that continue to resonate today (Aldridge 409).

In order to sufficiently grasp the concepts represented in *Candide*, it is important to trace the origin of Voltaire's work. Many of Voltaire's major philosophical ideas can be linked to his educational formation and his work as a quarrelsome young philosopher. Voltaire's education under the Jesuits at the Collège Louis-le-Grand not only provided him with the necessary skills to become an accomplished dramatic writer, but it also cemented his spiritual and political ideas in opposition to the Jesuit religious doctrine. His resistance of religious systems and their integration with the governing bodies of the era would underscore much of the writing in his career. Needless to say, his opinions brought considerable controversy. As a young man, he was thrown in the Bastille twice for speaking out against men of higher rank than himself. After his second arrest, he willingly offered to be exiled to England and was sent in May of 1726. While there, he was exposed to a great many of the philosophies and artistic practices that would shape the rest of his career.

During his exile, he met regularly with writers such as Jonathan Swift, Alexander Pope, and Viscount Bolingbroke to discuss English life. His encounters with these three men and others were meticulously documented in Voltaire's *Lettres philosophiques* (1733). To students of philosophy, the *Lettres philosophiques* serve as an introduction to

the ideas of Voltaire and the Enlightenment era. The twenty-four letters each covered a topic of English culture ranging from government to science, art, and religion. The goal of the letters was often to highlight the inadequacies of French culture in comparison to English. In 1734, the Parlement of Paris condemned the letters and ordered them to be burnt due to their severe criticism of French society. Despite the condemnation, they were successfully circulated among intellectuals circles in France and England. The reaction caused by the letters cemented Voltaire's influence on the Enlightenment era and created the foundation for his work to come.

As his career progressed, Voltaire became less querulous, focussing his energies instead on the issue of religious persecution. Regardless of his difficulties with organized religion, Voltaire was a spiritual man, identifying himself a Deist. He was famously quoted as saying that he preferred to "attack the system, not God" (Aldridge 23). Inspired by what he had observed of the Quaker movement in the England, he cared less for the trappings of luxury and became more passionate about the wrongdoings of society. In particular, he criticized the corrupt and intertwined structures of religion and government. His beliefs are documented in his work, *Treatise on Tolerance* (1763), but they are also evident in various episodes of *Candide.* For example, Voltaire's attempt at intervening in the unfair trial of the English Admiral Byng is referenced in Chapter 23. The Admiral was executed for neglect of duty after pulling his soldiers from a battle to avoid their deaths. Candide witnesses the Admiral's execution "to kill one admiral, in order to make the others fight" (Voltaire 109). As a result of his efforts, many have regarded Voltaire as one of the first European Human Rights Activists (Palmer 35).

In 1755, a catastrophic event took place in Portugal and marked a turning point in the Enlightenment era, as well as Voltaire's activist career. The city of Lisbon was destroyed by a tremendous earthquake and subsequent tsunami that killed an estimated 30,000 people. Some of the initial response to the disaster was shaded with the optimistic sentiment of Alexander Pope's famous axiom, "whatever is, is right" (Aldridge 251). Pope developed the axiom in his poem *Essay on Man*, but the poem itself echoed the philosophy developed by Gottfried Leibniz in his essay, *Theodicy* (1710). Leibniz, Pope, and Voltaire's English acquaintance Viscount Bolingbroke had all believed in a form of optimism that argues for the existence of a benevolent God, despite the presence of evil in the world. The philosophy, which Charles Vereker calls "Metaphysical Optimism*",* states that God is a perfect being who created our world in his image (13). According to this logic, we are living in the best of all possible worlds, which includes any manifestation of evil. The use of the Great Lisbon Earthquake as an example of this logic infuriated Voltaire. He did not understand why God would need to kill thousands of innocent people to ensure a perfect existence for his remaining children.

Grieving for the innocent lives lost in the disaster and lamenting this lack of compassion, Voltaire declared that the philosophy of optimism "is merely an insult to the suffering of our life" (Aldridge 232). How can God be benevolent if he allows for evil, both natural and man-made? In 1756, he formally challenged the argument espoused by Pope and Bolingbroke by writing and publishing *Poem on the Destruction of Lisbon*. Many scholars agree that the poem was a direct critique of both Pope and Bolingbroke's ideas and a posthumous renunciation of their earlier friendship. On the subject, Eric Palmer states that "[Bolingbroke] and Pope developed their optimistic philosophies

concerning the human condition together, and both men became targets of Voltaire's

criticism…" (12). However, in the preface to the poem, Voltaire explains that his intent is

not to attack any specific philosophers, but rather to examine why "no philosopher has

ever been able to explain the nature of moral and physical evil" (157). In short, the focus

of both the essay and the poem is the philosophical reconciliation of the axiom "whatever

is, is right" considering the breadth of evil in the world.

Three years after publishing the poem and essay, Voltaire decided to extend his

critique to include the founder of the philosophy in question, Gottfried Leibniz, as he

believed Leibniz and his essay, *Theodicy,* to be the root of the problematic philosophy. In

January of 1759, Voltaire secretly published a satirical novella, *Candide, ou l'optimisme*,

which attacks Leibnizian Optimism, and the aspects of society that mirror this

philosophy. Later that year, it was translated into English as, *Candide, or All for the Best.*

In order to draw attention away from himself, he originally credited the novella as a

translation of a fictional German text written by an equally fictional "M. le Docteur

Ralph". Hiding his own name from the publication allowed him to satirize and critique

aspects of society affected by the popular philosophy without fear of retribution.

Although Voltaire vehemently denied authorship, the intellectual community was not

deceived for very long. An unauthorized edition was published later that year under the

name "Volt***", and many unauthorized editions and adaptations continued to appear

throughout Europe (Palmer 9). Despite this, Voltaire continued to deny authorship.

Considering Voltaire's encounters with the law earlier in his life, he may have

been trying to distance himself from the novella to avoid further persecution. He

rightfully anticipated a backlash to *Candide,* as it put into question many popular beliefs

and societal structures of the time. However, the novella was just as successful as it was controversial. It became wildly popular after its publication, selling over six thousand copies within the first month at just one of the several publishing houses, which printed the novella (Palmer 9). The public seemed to respond to the humour in the novella, but authorities condemned it for its stance on many controversial topics of the time, including the Seven Years' War, the Great Lisbon Earthquake, and corruption within the Catholic Church. Approximately forty days after publication, it was banned in France and Switzerland and was put on the Vatican's Index of prohibited books (Palmer 9).

Using unadulterated satire, Voltaire's *Candide* challenges optimism and other systems present in eighteenth century European society that reflected optimistic tendencies. The eponymous and naive hero undergoes a series of horrific events that gradually make him question his beliefs. He witnesses death, natural disaster, slavery, and virtually every possible evil, both natural and perpetrated by mankind. Ironically, he responds to each challenge with an axiom taught to him by his childhood tutor, "the best of all possible worlds", which echoes Metaphysical or Leibnizian Optimism. Voltaire was advocating what Charles Vereker calls *Empiricist Optimism* (107). Empiricist Optimists believed in a rational human's ability to create an ideal society through their own volition. In accordance with that thinking, Voltaire's stance was that "God is not the author of the individual's action, even if God permits the action to occur, because it is through the individual's choice that the action is done" (Palmer 23). The main criticism against Metaphysical Optimism is that it implies a passive stance on needing to improve society. Followers of Leibniz tended to believe that humans are powerless to change the

fate laid out for them by God, while Empiricist Optimism advocates for happiness through choice and free will.

Voltaire extends his critique of optimism to include the systemic hypocrisy prevalent in society and mirrored by the philosophy. Voltaire's concern was that Leibnizian Optimism promoted that if we are living in the "best of all possible worlds", then no improvement on the systems in place is needed. As a result, every episode of the novella responds to a controversial topic of the time. In the first chapter, we are introduced to a tutor spouting a doctrine remarkably similar to that of Leibniz. His classroom is full of naïve students, including our hero, Candide, and his love interest, Cunégonde. After innocent physical contact between the two, Candide is kicked out of his childhood home and left to fend for himself, which begins his series of unfortunate adventures. In the second chapter of the novella, which parallels the Seven Years' War, he is conscripted by a group of soldiers and trained to fight, despite knowing nothing about the conflict. Despite Candide's bewilderment at the situation, readers at the time most likely recognized this scene as a reduction of the deceitful complexities of the Seven Years' War's to a simple clash of two hostile nations.

After narrowly avoiding death on a battlefield and reuniting with his now-destitute tutor, Candide accompanies Pangloss and an Anabaptist on a mission to Lisbon. Unfortunately, they quickly encounter the Great Lisbon Earthquake and are subjected to public floggings at the hands of the Inquisition, who also sentences Pangloss to an ultimately ineffective death by hanging. Candide progresses through a series of increasingly horrific episodes in which he is faced constantly with death as he travels to the New World, witnesses the horrific effects of colonialism, comes face to face with

corrupt clergymen, gets sold into slavery, and eventually finds himself in Constantinople, reunited with his friends and loved ones, worn and battered from the life they have lived. Choosing a future of relative calm, he sets to work and counters the continuous philosophical banter of his colleagues with the famous retort, "Let us take care of our garden" (Voltaire 133).

In short, Voltaire explored with *Candide* the idea that human beings have the free will to choose their own path, which is exactly what Candide decides after enduring the cumulative effects of his tribulations. The victims of the Lisbon Earthquake were not part of God's divine plan, but innocent lives lost to disaster. We cannot use God to justify evil, although, to Voltaire, this notion seemed interwoven into many aspects of society. Voltaire's critique of Leibnizian Optimism was controversial at the time, but it marked a turning point in the Age of Enlightenment and inspired a tradition of work to follow. Many artists have applied Voltaire's ideas to their own historical context and used his critique of optimism as a basis for their own adaptations. Perhaps, then, the historical and political context in which Voltaire lived creates both a fertile background for creative impulses and the first steps of the adaptation process.

Certainly many of Voltaire's ideas are relevant for an adaptation today. In spite of superficial evidence of our progress, he might well be disappointed to hear that his criticisms of society could be applied to the twenty-first century. As John Ralston Saul put it: "Apart from their self-assurance, the most common characteristics of our elites are cynicism, rhetoric and the worship of both ambition and power" (Saul 580). Some say the systemic hypocrisy condemned by Voltaire is still deeply ingrained in society, despite how well it is often masked by the sophistications of our technology. As we will see in

the next chapter, it would be easy for an adapter in the twenty-first century to discover

many parallels between the political and social circumstances, which are critiqued in

Candide, and those of the present day.

Step Two: Distance Traversed

In Said and Hutcheon's formula for adaptation, the second step, *distance*

traversed, involves evaluating the gap between the initial circumstances of the source

material and the historical, political, and social context of the adapter themselves.

Explaining this step, Edward Said says "there is … a passage through the pressure of

various contexts as the idea moves from an earlier point to another time and place where

it will come into a new prominence" (227). The job of the adapter would be to investigate

the distance traversed by their chosen source material. Jane Barnette identifies what this

type of research might look like and how it might affect the adaptation process:

> Among these, common starting places for adaptation dramaturgs include:
>
> production history (What has adapted this text before and how was it
>
> critically received?); common interpretive approaches to the source author
>
> (How do scholars tend to analyze Homer? What does current research tell
>
> us about Yeats, and how might that differ from how he was understood
>
> half a century ago?); and milieu research, for both the original setting and
>
> especially the time/space of the production at hand. (297)

In short, evaluating the distance traversed by a source text may involve researching

anything that would have affected the reception of the text in its various cultural contexts

including criticism, interpretations, longevity, historical events through which the source survived, and subsequent adaptations.

In the case of *Candide,* there is approximately two hundred and fifty years of history to consider. The novella itself experienced a tumultuous critical history over the centuries, which included proscription, public demonstrations against the work, almost a century of disregard, and finally, its canonization as a *chef-d'oeuvre* in the twentieth century (Delon 512). Despite the controversial circumstances of its original publication, the novella has lasted to be recognized as classic in Western literary history. Nothing demonstrates this better than the long lineage of adaptations, appropriations, and intertexts based on *Candide* that began within a year of the novella publication. Although the connotations of word "optimism" have evolved over the years away from an intricate system of spirituality to a question of personal attitude and mindset, Voltaire's satirical exploration of the previously mentioned axiom, "whatever is, is right", and his critique of systemic hypocrisy seem to resonate across centuries and cultures.

In the eighteenth century, it was common for writers to rewrite, extend, or revisit contemporary popular works of literature (Mervaud 315). It became a way to challenge and discuss philosophical or political concepts depicted in the narratives of the time. In addition, copycat writers may have been attempting to profit from a given work's success. Because of the controversy caused by *Candide* when it was published, it attracted a fair amount of attention from Voltaire's contemporaries. In fact, it is Voltaire's most imitated work (Emelina 12). As he published the novella under a pseudonym, Voltaire was in a poor position to stop any unauthorized creation based on *Candide.* For example, in 1760, *Candide ou l'Optimisme, Traduit de l'allemand de M. le*

docteur Ralph, Seconde partie appeared on the market. It was published anonymously, but it has since been attributed to Thorel de Campigneulles. As a direct contradiction of Voltaire's philosophical conclusion, it involved Candide becoming restless and leaving the garden to continue his adventures. Although Voltaire did not authorize the sequel, he could not pursue de Campigneulles for any wrongdoing as he continued to deny authorship of the original novella.

The dispute about the sequel's authorship did not stop subsequent adapters and copycats. Following the unauthorized sequel, a steady stream of adaptations and extensions began to appear throughout Europe. Changing the narrative focus of Voltaire's tale, a number of novels and essays written in the first person voice of Candide were published, including Louis O' de Marconnay's *Remerciment de Candide, à M. de Voltaire* in 1760 and *Tout n'est pas dit. Réponse de Candide au docteur Pangloss sur son optimisme des finances* by an anonymous author in 1763. Authors also changed the cultural context of the story for their adaptations. In 1766, Harnby de Guerville wrote *Candidamentor, ou le voyageur grec, histoire. Candide en Dannemarc ou l'optimisme des honnêtes gens* also began to appear throughout Europe in 1767. Although the latter was published anonymously, it has since been unofficially attributed to Thorel de Campigneulles as well.

However, most of the adaptations listed above are novels or essays. The adaptation of *Candide* to a theatrical context in the eighteenth century is difficult to study. Emphasizing the fact that theatrical adaptations did exist, Jean Emelina alluded to the ephemeral nature of the first theatrical adaptations of the novella to explain the lack of documentation (12). Although many of the early adaptations that have survived up to

the present were novels, there is evidence of *Candide* being adapted to the stage as early as 1760. In fact, according to a timeline created by Jeroom Vercruysse, *Candide* was adapted many times for the stage. However, the exact number of adaptations would be impossible to compile, as not many of them were ever published. Of the twelve manuscripts that lasted to the modern era, seven were comedies, three were operas, and two were dialogues (Emelina 12). Despite evidence of theatrical adaptations in the eighteenth century, only two works can be found today: *Léandre-Candide ou les reconnaissances* from 1784 and *Candide Marié ou il faut cultiver notre jardin* from 1788. In both cases, the play takes up the story during or after the denouement of the novella, thus functioning much like a sequel or extension.

Many of the adaptations that did not live past the eighteenth century were musical comedies. At the end of the eighteenth century, the novel was picked up by producers of a new popular art form of the time: vaudeville. They were commercially successful, but were lambasted by critics for depleting Voltaire's philosophical message. According to Grimm and Meister in their *Correspondance littéraire,* the vaudevillian producers were relying on the controversial success of the novella to sell tickets (Emelina 14). They concluded that the adaptations were drained of satirical content in order to pander to the elite of Paris. In short, the adaptations opted for a jovial tone with a romantic and happy ending, all the time ignoring Voltaire's message behind "let us take care of our garden." The horrors prevalent in society that Voltaire was trying to expose and critique were consciously avoided in these comedies.

Jean Emelina also indicates that this has been a common theme in adaptations of the novella in general, regardless of the medium. In fact, this pattern of philosophically

vacuous books and plays continued well into the nineteenth century. To demonstrate this, Emelina cites a short novel; *Voyage de M. Candide fils au pays d'Eldorado vers la fin du xviiie siècle pour servir de suite aux aventures de M. son père*, written by L.F.M. Belin de La Liborlière in 1803, an ironically elitist satire of the French Revolution, ironic mainly given Voltaire's egalitarian aim. The social and political upheavals of the Revolution had revealed the facade of the rationalism that bolstered the hopes of the Enlightenment. The sentimentality of the Romantic Movement in art and literature which came to define the first half of the nineteenth century drowned out the frequently astringent tone of *Candide* and similar works of literature, effectively silencing them as a tool for social and political reform. It may explain why new adaptations of *Candide* were fewer and less popular.

The twentieth century marked a change in thought towards Voltaire and the Enlightenment era. In 1923, Clément Vautel and Léo Marches wrote and presented *Candide: pièce en cinq actes et neuf tableaux* at the Théâtre national de l'Odéon. In addition, adaptations in different performing arts slowly started to appear in North America, such as a ballet choreographed by Charles Weidman in 1937 at the Federal Dance Theater. However, it was after the Second World War that interest in Voltaire dramatically increased. In 1952, Theodore Besterman founded *L'institut et musée de Voltaire* in Voltaire's former home, Les Délices. He also began the first bilingual journal publishing articles on the eighteenth century, *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* (SVEC), which lead to the creation of the Voltaire Foundation in 1976. The revival of Voltaire and Enlightenment thinking in the twentieth century is important to note for a contemporary adapter of *Candide.* Something in the cultural subconscious of

the modern era, possibly as a result of the atrocities of the First and Second World Wars or the threat of nuclear annihilation during the Cold War, sparked a widespread investigation into the fundamental concepts of the Enlightenment.

As a result, many artists in the second half of the twentieth century continued the tradition of adapting *Candide* and revisited the concept of "the best of possible worlds". A number of adaptations and intertexts inspired by *Candide* were created, including films, novels, and plays. Many of these adaptations used twentieth century events to investigate optimism. For example, using footage of the atomic bombs detonated in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and sending Candide to fight for the Nazis, Norbert Carbonnaux created his film *Candide ou L'Optimisme du 20e siècle* in 1960. In addition, the musical comedy tradition of adaptations suited the booming prosperity of Post-World War Two America in Leonard Bernstein's *Candide: a comic operetta.* More recently, Mark Ravenhill's *Candide,* commissioned in 2013 by the Royal Shakespeare Company, transports the tale to a dystopian version of today's world highlighting the influence of medical technology on secular optimism in the face of environmental decline.

For two hundred and fifty years, adapters have been celebrating, challenging, and mimicking the controversial success of Voltaire's *Candide.* What was the reason behind the novella's immediate popularity? Perhaps it resonated with the pain of a continent reeling from the effects of natural disasters and war. Despite its obvious success, Voltaire never officially claimed authorship and went so far as to write letters to his publisher complaining about the fervent insistence of his authorship (Palmer 9). His reluctance may indicate an important aspect about the novella and another reason for its popularity: the danger of its satire. Although his attack on optimism seems directly aimed at the

philosophy of Leibniz, Voltaire expertly extrapolates his frustration to many aspects of

life in the eighteenth century, including ongoing wars, religious corruption, the brutality

of human slavery, and the unfair divide between social classes. What remains is the sense

of a man grieving for the loss of thousands of innocent lives while trying to reconcile

with an apparently benevolent God. Unaware of the irony behind their words, his

characters constantly repeat the mantra of "the best of all possible worlds", despite the

horrors inflicted upon them.

If our investigation into the various adaptations of *Candide* is any indication, it is

clear that Voltaire's message struck a chord with many adapters. Michel Delon articulates

this trend by describing how *Candide* aims at a universal message: "It's actually a text

that abstracts from its own particular context to resonate with other historical

circumstances"[2] (Delon 511). How each adapter approaches the novella reflects the spirit

of their particular era. In the eighteenth century, Voltaire could not reconcile optimism

with war, natural disasters, and unnecessary death, so he felt compelled to write *Candide*.

Many adapters of the nineteenth century emptied Voltaire's original work of both its

spirit and meaning, focussing instead on vaudevillian parody and sentimentalism. In the

second half of the twentieth century, Europe was reeling from the Second World War,

while North America was experiencing an economic boom, and a number of adaptations

reflect that social pattern. Today, recent adapters continue to find relevance in the novella

as we become increasingly disconnected from the natural world and wars rage over

dwindling resources. As they investigate the distance traversed by Voltaire's original

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[2] Translated by the present writer from: "C'est en effet un texte qui s'abstrait de son
contexte particulier pour entrer en résonance avec d'autres circonstances historiques"
(Delon 511).

novella, a contemporary adapter would need to determine how they fit into this rich
lineage.

Step Three: Set of Conditions of Acceptance and Resistance

After the initial circumstances of the source material have been assessed and the
adapter or dramaturg has conducted the necessary research into the distance traversed by
the source from its inception to the context of the adapter, the next step entails a two-part
analysis of the source's form. On the subject of the third step of his formula, Said stresses
the importance of evaluating a source's "set of conditions- call them conditions of
acceptance or… resistance…" (227). For an adapter, this would first mean conducting a
detailed investigation into the structural elements of the source material and the
information conveyed by these elements. Second, as the adapter encounters each
structural element, a choice must be made to either incorporate the element into its new
form (the adaptation) or reject the element in order to create meaning in the adaptation's
new context.

If the source material were not to change medium, the choice to accept or reject
certain structural elements would be directly related to the artistic intentions of the
adapter. On the subject of an adapter's intentions, Yana Meerzon stresses that "The
practice of adaptation… not only provides a work of art with its new artistic life, it gives
the adapter a chance to affirm his/her creative subjectivity" (127). Similar to evaluating
the distance traversed of a source text, the adapter asserting their intentions and
subjectivity within their own socio-historical context through their creative choices is a
crucial part of the adaptation process. However, if the adaptation process involves a

change in medium, the adapter would also need to consider possible structural

conventions presented by the new medium and how the conditions in the original source

material might translate. In the case of a dramatic adaptation of *Candide,* this would

involve an evaluation of the narrative elements of the novella, which will be discussed in

this step, and possible dramatic equivalents, some of which will be examined in Step

Four.

       For an adaptation of *Candide,* it would be best to begin with an analysis of the

basic narrative elements of the novella and how they are used to convey meaning. The

foundation on which all elements of plot and story are placed is known as the *narrative*

situation, which is a combination of the narrator (or narrative voice) and the focalization

in a work of literature (Bal 18). From this broader narrative situation, readers receive

specific information regarding character, space, time, and theme. Looking at the overall

narrative situation of *Candide*, we can see many characteristics of a form common in the

eighteenth century: the parable. Parables go back almost as far as literature itself. In

general terms, they are marked by the following characteristics: "shortness, simplicity,

schematic type of narration and character, moral and didactic aim" (Rychlewska-Delimat

63). The allegorical nature of the characters, settings, and conflict in a parable serves as

an accessible and effective way to portray a moral message to readers.

       Many writers of Voltaire's era, including Jonathan Swift in *Gulliver's Travels*,

used the traditional form of a parable and disguised political messages within it.

However, Voltaire's particular treatment of the parable has become a genre in itself and

inspired a tradition of work to follow: the philosophical tale. For Voltaire, structuring his

arguments within the framework of a parable was the most efficient way to disseminate

his philosophy (Rychlewska-Delimat 63). Making use of the simple and straightforward nature of the parable, including the "idealism, hyperbole, and accomplishment characterizing not magic, but a theological, political, and metaphysical absolute"[3], he lends a uniquely satirical and ambiguous tone to his tales, which forces readers to decipher the moral or philosophical message for themselves (Cambou 404). In short, he uses the relationship between literature and philosophy to his advantage. Although Voltaire's tales may seem simplistic and fantastical on the surface, there are complicated underlying philosophical arguments throughout them. It is the job of the reader, and thus the adapter, to identify and interpret these messages.

Although Voltaire also wrote a number of political essays and dramas, he demonstrated his mastery of the philosophical tale many times, such as with *Micromégas* and *Zadig*. The characteristics of the parable become a vehicle for Voltaire's satire and social criticism. *Candide* is both a work of fiction and a philosophical meditation on the hypocritical nature of society. It would be necessary for an adapter to decipher exactly how Voltaire made use of the basic characteristics of the parable to construct the argument and narrative situation of *Candide*. Understanding this construction would grant an adapter a deeper appreciation of Voltaire's arguments and provide more options for depicting the novella onstage. As mentioned above, the narrative situation conveys information regarding character, space, time, and theme. For the purposes of this project, we will examine these specific elements in *Candide* and how they take on the characteristics of the parable: simplicity, allegory, hyperbole, and moral aim.

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[3] Translated by the present writer from: "idéalisme, hyperbole et achèvement caractérisant moins le merveilleux qu'un absolu théologique, politique et métaphysique" (Cambou 404).

To begin, an adapter must examine the narrator created by Voltaire and determine how it affects the information received by readers. With *Candide,* Voltaire made the choice to keep the narrator outside the action and describe the events in third person. However, the narrative voice is focalized almost exclusively on the thoughts and actions of Candide. We learn little about the thoughts of other characters unless they are spoken directly to Candide as a flashback. Considering this, we can say that Voltaire constructed his narrative situation as a third person narrator focalized on Candide, the naïve hero and protagonist, which aligns with the tradition of many parables. We learn about Candide's circumstances through the narration of his thoughts and experiences. Thus, the philosophical journey of the novella follows Candide's own journey as the horrors he experiences accumulate. As the story unfolds, Candide works his way through different philosophies, beginning in the naïve world of Leibnizian Optimism, moving through harsh pessimism, and settling into a pragmatic view of life where work "is the only way to render life tolerable" (Voltaire 133).

Although the story is told from the perspective of Candide, he encounters many characters along the way that carry symbolic weight. In a traditional parable, characters tend to be representations of certain moral aims. The role of character is often to provide examples or counterexamples of specific moral stances for the protagonist. Voltaire uses this convention expertly in relationship to his philosophical message. As we will see, many characters Candide comes across represent philosophical positions. The sum of the characters forms the core of the novella's philosophical argument. Fortunately, for dramatic adapters, this aligns perfectly with the conventions of the *dramatis personae*. Fictional figures in both literature and drama are defined by their relationship to the

fictional context; in *Candide,* this refers specifically to their relationship to Voltaire's philosophical argument. As opposed to actual human figures, who possess agency and exist autonomously, "dramatic figures cannot be separated from their environment and are only constituted in the sum of their relations to that environment" (Pfister 161). In the context of *Candide*, this is demonstrated by each character's symbolic role in Candide's philosophical and moral journey.

For example, the first few chapters of the novella are dedicated to Candide's relationship to his tutor, Pangloss, who not only represents but also teaches Leibinizian Optimism. Exposed to no other ideas in the controlled environment of his childhood home, Candide becomes easily convinced by Pangloss that "everything is for the best" (48). However, once Candide is exiled from the home, Pangloss' steadfast preoccupation with optimism becomes the object of ridicule as the horrors they experience directly contradict his message. The character foil to Pangloss is Martin, whom Candide encounters in Surinam. Martin identifies himself as a Manichean, the spiritual descendent of an ancient religion that believed in a dual divinity epitomizing good and evil. During the course of his travels with Martin, Candide renounces the philosophy taught to him by Pangloss and embraces instead the more pessimistic outlook on life, which is what Martin represents. The ongoing contrast between these two characters represents the main philosophical argument in the novella as Candide vacillates between these two opposing outlooks in his attempts to reconcile himself to the existence of evil in the world.

In addition to Pangloss and Martin, each representing philosophical extremes, Candide encounters other characters that advance Voltaire's argument. First, there is Candide's love interest, Cunégonde. Although romantic love is at the heart of many

parables and is the reason for Candide's heroism, it quickly becomes subverted and yet another vehicle for Voltaire's social criticism. After the innocent kiss that sets them both on their journey, Candide and Cunégonde are separated and suffer horrific events of equal severity. What is interesting to note is that they both react differently to their suffering. Cunégonde accepts her fate early in the novella and attempts to settle for the least horrific option. However, each time she finds a semblance of happiness, it is interrupted by Candide and his naïve attempts to rescue her. For example, when they are reunited for the first time, she is living a content life as a concubine for two wealthy men. Overcome with jealousy, Candide kills both of her lovers, which forces them to flee Europe as fugitives.

In addition, when Candide and Cunégonde are reunited for the last time in the final chapters of the novella, he honourably agrees to marry her, despite how ugly she has become. Although many scholars, such as Gloria M. Russo, believe that misogyny is at the root of Voltaire's depiction of Cunégonde, it also exposes social expectations of women at the time by subverting and satirizing the romantic trope found in many parables. When the governor of Buenos Aires proposes marriage to her, she accepts and demonstrates "not only the position of women in the eighteenth century, but also about Cunégonde's practicality and her ability to see *reason*" (Klute 100). Instead of being guided by the unrealistic notion of optimism, she attempts to find a realistic amount of comfort and happiness. Again, this is disrupted when Candide continues his quest to find her and returns to rescue her. Instead of misogyny, perhaps Cunégonde represents Voltaire's concern for women's position in society, as well as incorporating a bit of commentary on the paternalistic attitudes of his time.

The secondary characters in *Candide* are also given symbolic meaning by Voltaire as Candide is guided on his philosophical journey. In addition, many secondary characters provide opportunities for Voltaire to insert his own social commentary and critique. Both Candide's and Cunégonde's travel companions represent elements of society under Voltaire's scrutiny. Formerly a maid in Candide and Cunégonde's childhood home, Paquette becomes a prostitute whose main clients are priests, revealing the hypocritical nature of organized religion. This is similar to when Cunégonde is a concubine for the religious leader of the Inquisition in Lisbon.

This is far from the only instance where Voltaire inverts the social pyramid. The moral consistency of Candide's valet, Cacambo, and Cunégonde's maid, the old woman, is a clear indication of Voltaire's stances against colonialism and slavery (Palmer 30). The indigenous South American Cacambo is entrusted with large sums of money, which he handles honestly. Many of the Europeans whom Candide encounters throughout his travels prove themselves to be thieves, swindlers, and pirates. For her part, the old woman provides sound advice to both Candide and Cunégonde based on the wisdom she accumulated from her own experiences. For example, in chapter nine, the old woman suggests they flee to South America after Candide kills both of Cunégonde's lovers in Lisbon. In short, Cacambo and the old woman are the most practical-minded characters in the novella, perhaps as a result of their horrific experiences as slaves.

However, none of the characters listed here fully embody Voltaire's message. Similar to secondary characters symbolizing different moral stances in parables, each character in *Candide* represents an aspect of society that supports Voltaire's opposition to optimism and the hypocrisy that can result from it. When Voltaire stepped back from the

world and summed up all the evil he saw-- such as natural disaster, slavery, war, and corruption-- he could not agree that God had made it "all for the best". The conclusion that he reaches in many philosophical writings, such as his essays *We Must Take Sides* (1772) and *Treatise on Tolerance* (1763)*,* is that "all in human affairs is not well, but it is our responsibility to work to make the world the best place possible" (Palmer 223). It is through meeting a diverse array of characters and having his eyes opened to the totality of horrors in the world that Candide finally arrives at his conclusion with "Let us take care of our garden". This final statement is like the signature on a portrait of thematic patterns, which Voltaire has painted using specific characters and events.

Moving on from the characters encountered by Candide, another mark of both the parable and philosophical tale is how space is depicted. The characters of *Candide*, its protagonist in particular, move through many different settings, a situation which poses challenges to staging. An adapter must take the globetrotting scale of the novella into account because the location Voltaire chooses for each episode carries important thematic content. In turn, these locales are important to Candide's philosophical awakening to the horrors of the world outside his own sheltered childhood experience. For example, the journey of Candide and his companions to South America says a great deal about the harm caused by France's colonial pursuits. The slave that Candide encounters dying on the streets of Surinam as well as Martin the pessimist, an impoverished scholar, both represent the local populations decimated by the European search for gold and prosperity in South America.

Furthermore, there is a specific setting described by Voltaire during their time in South America that adds to his philosophical argument. When Candide and his valet,

Cacambo, finally come across El Dorado, the legendary city of gold, it remains untouched by European hands. In fact, El Dorado is empty of all hypocrisy and corruption found in Europe. All citizens are equal, crime is minimal, punishment is fair, and everyone contributes to the growth of society. However, Candide and Cacambo decide to leave as the society is dangerously static and embodies "either a death wish or a desire to transcend the human condition" (Henry 143). For Voltaire, the utopia of El Dorado is well within reach of human capacities, but is ultimately untenable.

In addition to El Dorado, there are a number of natural spaces and gardens in Voltaire's novella that provide the symbolic backdrop for Candide's development from a naïve student of optimism to a man resigned to a life of hard labour. The opening episode shows Candide being kicked out of his uncle's castle and gardens, representing his loss of innocence and the beginning of his troubles. By the end of the novella, after journeying through Europe and South America, he puts philosophical debate aside, purchases land, and builds his own garden with the help of his companions. In short, each space that Candide travels through in the novella, natural or man-made, would be an important consideration for an adapter. It is characteristic of traditional parables for the hero to travel through many different settings on his quest, but the spaces in Voltaire's philosophical tale provide an additional symbolic framework for the philosophical journey of the hero.

In part because of the distances the characters travel, the novella also covers a great deal of time. Time is an essential element to the philosophical tale and the construction of Voltaire's argument. Candide's philosophical perspective evolves as the horrors inflicted on him accumulate. To depict the passage of time, Voltaire divided his

novella into thirty chapters that represent distinct episodes. In each episode, Candide finds himself in a new setting and is forced to deal with a new set of circumstances. Conforming to literary conventions of the parable and philosophical tale, each chapter also has a separate title describing the events and setting of the episode in order to situate the reader. For example, the first chapter is titled, "How Candide was brought up in a magnificent castle, and how he was expelled from thence" (47).

However, the way in which time is depicted in each episode varies. As Candide moves between settings, there are often jumps in time, in contrast to episodes in which time is slowed down as the characters travel between settings. For example, when Candide and company are on the ocean voyage to South America, Cunégonde takes the time to hear the life story of each passenger. Furthermore, because the action follows the adventures of Candide, which are governed by coincidence, he is continually reunited with characters from earlier in the novella. Each one of these old acquaintances is granted a moment of analepsis to recount what happened to them. In these episodes, the characters take control of the narrative pace; the passage of time is deliberately slowed down to match the recounting of their experiences, in direct contrast to the eventful episodes featuring battles or natural disasters described by the novella's detached third person narrator.

Regardless of the amount of time depicted in or between them, each episode is a step towards Voltaire's philosophical conclusion. The passage of time itself is also a necessary part of the characters' physical and spiritual journeys; an adapter of *Candide* must therefore take special care in depicting the time scale of the novella on stage. For example, the character that is the most physically affected by the passage of time is

Cunégonde. At the beginning of the story, she is dewy and youthful, but her stress,

anxiety, and age are visible on her face when the lovers are reunited in the final episodes.

Conversely, time takes less of an outward toll on Candide than it does Cunégonde. The

accumulation of Candide's travels has a direct impact on his philosophical outlook, rather

than his physical appearance. Although he begins his journey imbued with optimism, by

the final chapter of the novella, he is able to step away from philosophical debate and

dedicate his efforts to manual labour in his garden.

As we have seen, it is through each character, the spaces through which they

travel, and the events they experience that Voltaire's core themes begin to emerge. The

sum of the narrative elements leads Candide to his philosophical conclusion that allows

for him to find a semblance of happiness through hard work in his garden. *Candide*

presents a particularly convincing portrayal of Voltaire's ideas because of the integration

of a philosophical argument into its narrative structure, which became a defining trait of

Voltaire's various philosophical tales. The sheer amount of horror that Candide endures

accumulates to a level, which borders on ridiculous and hyperbolic. He endures war,

natural disasters, public lashings, and multiple robberies, all while ironically repeating the

motto, "All for the best". Voltaire's message about the hypocritical nature of optimism

becomes clear through the accumulation of suffering and indignity inflicted on his

protagonist.

However, if Candide had experienced fewer traumatizing incidents, it would not

have had the same impact. He needed to be exposed to the breadth of evil in the world

and endure things beyond the natural human threshold for trauma. Although some of the

evils he experiences are natural and unavoidable (eg. the Great Lisbon Earthquake), many

of them are inflicted upon him by trusted authority figures, revealing the cruel societal systems, which underpin civilization. Voltaire uses the natural hyperbole of parables and the irony of its deceptive simplicity in order to convey his argument against the systemic cruelty derived from optimism.

Over the course of this step, we have discussed a number of structural elements pertaining to *Candide* and the philosophical tale that would affect the work of a dramatic adapter. The goal of an evaluation of this sort is to determine the key structural elements of the source material that create meaning in its original form. The work of the adapter is to determine, not only what may translate to the new set of conditions presented by the adaptation project, but also what aligns with their creative interests. After an evaluation of the set of conditions presented by novella, we are left with the following questions: how can a philosophical tale translate to the stage? Is it possible to effectively depict the various characters, locations, and events of *Candide?*

For the sake of this thesis document, the elements discussed relate directly to creative choices that will be discussed in Step Four, as well as choices I made in my adaptation that will be discussed in the final chapter. The conditions presented in this step provide a thorough overview of the process of adapting *Candide* and demonstrate examples of the work necessary for an adapter, as set out in Said and Hutcheon's formula. The next step will be an analysis of creative choices relating to those conditions made for a recent adaptation of the novella to demonstrate the breadth of choices available to an adapter of any medium.

Step Four: Transformation of the Idea

The final step of the adaptation process is often the most challenging. Taking into account all of the research done in the previous steps, the adapter must make creative choices to construct a new set of conditions (the adaptation). However, an adapter must also be sure to keep in mind their own artistic intentions without letting the previous three steps overtake the creative process. To define this challenge, Said described the final step as "the now full (or partly) accommodated (or incorporated) idea is to some extent transformed by its new uses, its new position in a new time and place" (227). For some adapters, this can be a daunting process considering the breadth of information gathered in the first three steps, especially with such a classic work as *Candide.*

Using the structural elements discussed in Step Three, the goal of this section will be to demonstrate the possibilities available to an adapter in tackling the challenges presented in adapting literature in the case of Voltaire's *Candide* in particular. Our analysis will focus on a recent adaptation of the novella, Mark Ravenhill's *Candide, w*hich was performed at the Royal Shakespeare Company in August 2013. Ravenhill's adaptation is particularly relevant to my project and its goals as it demonstrates a thorough grounding in research while also reflecting contemporary artistic sensibilities, which has been previously identified as a possible outcome of working with the four-step formula.

In an article written for *The Guardian* newspaper, Ravenhill explained that he was drawn to *Candide* because of his concern over collective optimistic attitudes in the face of a struggling economy and remarkable environmental decline. He proposed writing a new adaptation of *Candide* to explore if contemporary optimistic attitudes were "a

superficial change in vocabulary, or a deep-rooted change of attitude" (Ravenhill

"Candide and the Best of All Possible Tweets"). Ravenhill's adaptation is a clear

example of making bold creative choices when faced with the challenging structural and

thematic elements of *Candide*. Although he made drastic changes to the narrative

structure, characters, and settings of the original, it is clear that his artistic impulses were

guided by his understanding and appreciation of Voltaire's novella.

To begin with, adapters are faced with the form of a philosophical tale and the

question of how its content could function in different mediums. Since Voltaire chose this

genre to convey his philosophical message, an adapter would need to identify the basic

elements of this literary form within the original text. With his adaptation, Ravenhill was

aiming for a "response to Voltaire's philosophical tale" in order to explore "the gulf

between our sunny dispositions and what I sensed was our underlying gloom" (Ravenhill

"Candide and The Best of All Possible Tweets"). As a result, Ravenhill did not directly

follow the structure of the philosophical tale.

Instead, he was attracted to Voltaire as a historical figure, including his criticism

of optimism and the themes he explored regarding the hypocritical nature of society. It

appeared to Ravenhill that not much had changed from eighteenth century France to

twenty-first century Britain. Using social media platforms to gauge popular opinion, he

observed that the attitudes of his peers were surprisingly optimistic, despite the state of

the world today. Acknowledging this intention and distancing himself from being a strict

adaptation of the novella, Ravenhill described his adaptation as "Inspired by Voltaire" on

the title page of the play's 2013 publication and incorporated some of Voltaire's work

beyond *Candide.*

If we consider Step Three of the Said/Hutcheon formula, perhaps we can say that Ravenhill decided to reject certain conditions of the novella in order to highlight the themes for contemporary society. This becomes apparent from the opening scene of Ravenhill's *Candide*. In the place of the castle of the Baron Thunder-ten-tronckh is a conversation between a Countess and a playwright. In an attempt to seduce her houseguest, an exhausted and bewildered Candide, the Countess has commissioned the playwright to create a play based on Candide's journal. Using the device of a play within a play, they perform for Candide, confronting him with painful episodes from his youth. Confusing the play with real life, he declares, "No matter what this play has shown/No matter/I'll change my story/And make my fate" (25). As a parallel to the novella, Candide sets off on a journey to find his lost love, Cunégonde. However, the sentiment of the journey is immediately subverted, confronted as we are with an aged Candide attempting to recreate the adventures of his youth. It becomes clear from the beginning of Ravenhill's adaptation that there are intentional parallels to the novella, but an entirely different story structure.

Nevertheless, Ravenhill did embrace the episodic nature of Voltaire's novella and found a dramatic equivalent: a five-act play structure. Each act takes place in a separate location and timeframe. The second act takes us to present-day United Kingdom, where a young woman, Sophie, is having dinner with her family to celebrate her eighteenth birthday. However much of the first act may be a clear departure from the original novella by taking place after its conclusion, the second act takes the departure much further by eschewing all recognizable characters and locations from Voltaire's original. What is familiar, however, is the thematic exploration of optimism. Unable to reconcile

herself with the state of the world, Sophie decides to kill every member of her family.

Because the world cannot sustain the current human population, Sophie believes that "it's

better, kinder, saner, to start the culling of the/human race today" (36). Sophie's mother,

Sarah, attempts to intervene because she optimistically believes that things can improve.

As a result, Sarah survives, and Sophie shoots herself. As an echo of the disgrace Sophie

feels for the human race, the act ends with Voltaire entering and reciting lines from an

English translation of *Poem on the Destruction of Lisbon.*

       In embracing the episodic nature of the novella and adapting it to a five-act

structure, Ravenhill was able to solve the challenge of time and space presented by the

novella. He was also able to create distance between the novella and his adaptation in

order to explore secular optimism in twenty-first century Britain. The third act of the

adaptation continues with the story involving Sarah and the massacre of her family. Sarah

has become this story's protagonist; as with Candide, the audience experiences her

philosophical journey. Paralleling the first act and Candide's play within a play, she is

collaborating with a screenwriter to create a moneymaking movie adaptation of the

incident. We do not revisit Candide until the fourth act, which sees him return to El

Dorado.

       Similar to Voltaire's original, the scene in El Dorado contains a conversation

between Candide and its residents about various features of the utopian society, such as a

lack of both religion and strict governing structures. What is different is that Candide

leaves El Dorado with a twenty-first century tone to his voice: "If I could grant you one

human quality:/Greed/To invent/Mining equipment/Greed/Pumps to drain/A system of

lighting underground/Breathing apparatus/Greed" (62). The El Dorado episode is a

recognizable connection to the novella, but distorts enough information to make it relevant for twenty-first century audiences. The themes and images of the episode remain familiar, but the language has the terse, disjointed rhythm of modern communication technology.

Ravenhill's final act brings the separate timelines together. Sarah visits the "Pangloss Institute", a research facility developing pharmaceuticals to guarantee optimism for everyone. The head research, Pangloss himself, acknowledges that the definition of optimism has changed over the years: "My philosophy has been constantly rebooted/I've dispensed with Maker and his grand design/For the eighteenth century they were fine/But ours is an age which sees everything… Is an individual's responsibility" (68). Searching for optimism herself, Sarah finds a cryogenically frozen Candide and thaws him. Similar to the final scene of the novella, Candide is reunited once again with his love, Cunégonde, who has been waiting a very long time for him. Recounting the horror of what she waited through, she explains that she has been desperately clinging to the notion of optimism as she waited for his kiss. After he reluctantly agrees to kiss her, Sarah steps forward to recite a phrase belonging to Voltaire, employing a decidedly different tone than the final line of the novella: "Optimism - a system of cruelty with a comforting name" (78). She then commits suicide.

Despite living in a different society than Enlightenment-era France, Ravenhill uses his adaptation of *Candide* to argue that many of Voltaire's questions remain relevant for today. Reframing and distorting specific structural elements of the novella not only allows for purely narrative elements to be translated into dramatic action, but also contextualizes Voltaire's ideas for contemporary audiences. Although he evoked

characters and situations from the original novella, including Candide, Cunégonde, and El Dorado, Ravenhill deliberately chose a significantly different way to depict space and time, which freed him from the constraints of the original novella and allowed for him to explore Voltaire's themes in a theatrical setting.

Although Ravenhill does not acknowledge working with a formula like Said and Hutcheon's, his interest in balancing research and creativity is evident in the dramaturgical choices used to depict Voltaire's complex philosophical themes for contemporary audiences. In doing so, he remains true to his interest in optimism, while also creating a dramatic situation based on a literary source. What is demonstrated by this analysis of Ravenhill's adaptation is that, while there are many avenues open to an adapter, a balance between research and creativity provides a valuable roadmap. Perhaps working consciously with a methodology that emphasizes this approach, such as the four-step formula, would benefit the adaptation process.

Conclusion

As we have seen, there are many options available to adapters as they embark on a dramatic adaptation of any literary source, especially one as full of nuances as Voltaire's *Candide.* The extensive groundwork proposed in the first three steps of the Said/Hutcheon formula may seem overwhelming to a student new to the process, but it is intended to steer an adapter towards a balanced and grounded adaptation based equally on dramaturgical research and artistic intention. Understanding the source material's initial circumstances and the ways that material has been transformed in the greater cultural memory over time would enrich an adapter's creative process. Depending on

their artistic intentions, an adapter may also choose to work against, or even reject, the

conditions present in the source material instead of accepting the conditions and finding

equivalencies in a new medium. In short, an adaptation is a purposeful conversation with

another work of art, and the formula proposed by Said and adapted by Hutcheon is well

designed to guide that conversation.

CHAPTER III: REFLECTION ON WORKING WITH THE FORMULA

Introduction to *Survival of the Optimistic*

The inspiration for my adaptation came from my desire to apply Voltaire's argument about Leibnizian Optimism to today. Although the Internet has allowed for greater access to information about the misery of the world, statements like "it's meant to be" or "everything happens for a reason" continue to dominate our vernacular to a frustrating degree. Despite our fragile economy, aggressive warfare over dwindling resources, and the mounting proof that we are destroying the environment, I find that many people choose to take a passive stance and believe that everything will sort itself out. As I researched Voltaire's motivations behind *Candide,* I started to feel a kinship with the philosopher. The creative choices I made in my adaptation were guided by this kinship. With *Survival of the Optimistic*, my goal was to contextualize optimism in the eighteenth century and draw parallels to today. The argument underlying my piece is similar to Voltaire's: although we may feel powerless at times, improving our world is within our own control.

Optimism in the eighteenth century was a system of belief first developed by Gottfried Leibniz in *Theodicy* (1710). Leibniz argued that God created the human race in His image, and that we are living in the "best of all possible worlds", despite the existence of suffering and evil. In other words, there is nothing to improve on in the world because we are already living under perfect circumstances. Voltaire was frustrated by this philosophical stance since he believed that Leibnizian Optimism was being used to validate injustice. If God created the world as we know it, then war, poverty, disease, and natural disasters are also "all for the best". Voltaire whole-heartedly disagreed with

this sentiment and argued that the ability to improve circumstances is up to the individual.

Optimism today is an attitude that reflects "hopefulness and confidence about the future or the success of something" (Stevenson). It does not typically carry any metaphysical undertones. What underscores modern optimism is a sense of hope. Although circumstances may not be ideal, there will always be the opportunity to improve or progress. Despite this, terms similar to "all for the best" or "it's all part of God's plan" continue to be used to justify negative occurrences. What has always frustrated me is the sense of passivity and apathy that seems to plague my generation. We have inherited a fragile world; hoping for improvement without concrete action will not ensure the prosperity of future generations. Much like Voltaire, I felt I needed to argue that sometimes things are not "all for the best", but if we focus our efforts, progress is possible.

The final product of my adaptation process is a two-person site-specific script entitled *Survival of the Optimistic*. The structure of the play is a philosophical lesson with two actors, Man and Woman, guiding the audience through *Candide* as autonomous narrators. Adopting the narrative voice created by Voltaire in the novella, they narrate important plot points, enact central scenes, and discuss any philosophical implications for the eighteenth century and today. Inspired by the metatheatrical devices used by Martin Crimp in *Fewer Emergencies* (2005)*,* they also disagree about certain narrative details and express their personal opinions. Although they never mention the title of the novella, the author, or any characters by name, their goal is to trace the path of the story to the iconic final line, "Let us take care of our garden" and the philosophical message that goes

with it. Their underlying hope is to affect a modern audience with this message as much as Voltaire did in the eighteenth century.

  Survival of the Optimistic begins with two actors, a woman and a man, entering the space, an outdoor public or community garden, carrying various gardening tools. As they introduce the novella and its arguments, they begin digging in the dirt and sprinkling seeds. The actors work their way through six major scenes of the novella: the scene at the castle of Thunder-ten-tronckh from the first chapter, the battle scene from the second and third chapters, the earthquake scene from the fifth chapter, the reunion scene from the seventh chapter, Candide's encounter with a Turkish dervish[4] in the final chapter, and the garden scene also from the final chapter. I also included one original scene that I like to call, "The Debate Scene". The events my characters narrate and enact are important within the context of *Candide* itself, but also best reflect Voltaire's message regarding naïve optimism and the injustices prevalent in society that reflect these tendencies.

Step One: Initial Circumstances

  Considering my interest in Voltaire, the eighteenth century, and optimism, I felt it was necessary to position my adaptation within *Candide*'s historical context from the beginning of my artistic process. Using the four-step formula for adaptation as my reference, this involved a thorough understanding of the initial circumstances of the novella. I was originally attracted to *Candide* for its unapologetic satire of eighteenth century European society; a satire I felt was applicable to many aspects of twenty-first century Western society. As a result, I began to study Voltaire and his role in the

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[4] It is important to note that "dervish" is meant here in the historical sense of the word, meaning "a Muslim holy man, much like a monk" (Palmer 131).

political, scientific, and artistic developments of the eighteenth century. History often evokes Voltaire's background as a Jesuit-educated son of a lawyer to emphasize why he unapologetically, and perhaps stubbornly, stood up for his beliefs. The more I learned about Voltaire as an artist, philosopher, and historical figure, the more I was interested in why he chose the narrative structure of a philosophical tale to explore optimism and the systemic hypocrisy that often results from it.

In the opening scene of the novella, Pangloss addresses his pupils, Candide and Cunégonde, and explains his definition of optimism: "'things cannot be otherwise than as they are, for all things having been created for some end, they must consequently be created for the best" (48). In the opening scene of my adaptation, the character named "Woman", functioning as a narrator, presents a similar definition and explains why it may have been a topic of interest to Voltaire:

> **Woman:** He looked to the west and saw people killing each other for a few acres of snow in Canada. He looked to the South and saw people making slaves of other innocent people. He looked to the East and saw spiritual leaders punishing sinners for causing natural disasters. He looked into his own heart and decided that maybe it wasn't "all for the best". If God created humanity in his own image, maybe God was a bit of a jerk. (Ballachey 85)

With this explanation of eighteenth century optimism, Woman presents Voltaire's argument and the motivation for it. She also presents the first contemporary twist on the topic. Although Leibnizian Optimism's goal in the eighteenth century was to "reconcile divine excellence with apparent evil", it has a slightly different meaning today (Blackburn). It has largely become a question of attitude concerning "hopefulness and

confidence" about the future (Stevenson). By using modern language, such as the colloquial perjorative "jerk", Woman is contextualizing Voltaire's argument for the audience who may not be aware of his motivations in writing the novella and criticizing optimism, while also updating his thought to a modern and more informal context.

As my adaptation progresses, it also becomes a recurring device for both narrators to express my interest in Voltaire and his criticism of optimism. Because they operate as narrators and instructors, both Woman and her male counterpart Man can step out of the action and comment on the play's themes. In another moment from the opening scene, Man highlights the irony Voltaire expertly crafted by using the structure of a philosophical tale to convey his message to readers:

> **Man:** So, this famous philosopher/poet/historian/dramatist whose writings laid the foundation for modern democracy, whose passion for scientific reason brought Newton's principles to the French court, whose radical thinking kick-started the French Revolution, whose thoughts can be summarized in the following (misattributed) quote: "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it"… sat down to write a love story? (84)

By allowing the characters to voice my interest in Voltaire, the eighteenth century, and the narrative structure of *Candide*, my goal was to reach the same level of satire in my adaptation as Voltaire did in the novella. Satire allows readers and audience members to be receptive to challenging ideas through the disarming use of humour. With this in mind, both Woman and Man acknowledge the satirical element of the novella from the outset of *Survival of the Optimistic* and guide the audience through *Candide's* related philosophical themes.

Besides defining optimism and voicing my interest in the narrative structure of *Candide,* I felt I needed another device to update Voltaire's argument to a modern context. Although I included many of the same eighteenth century historical events featured in the novella, I also made allusions to recent events that may be recognizable to a contemporary audience. For example, I was fascinated by the rise in sales of Voltaire's *Treatise on Tolerance* (1763) following the January 2015 attacks on the Charlie Hebdo offices in Paris[5]. As a result, Woman says to Man, "250 years ago, this so-called love story was burned for being blasphemous, yes, but today, cartoonists need body guards. Is that so different?" (85). Trying my best to maintain the flavour of satire that was so effective in the eighteenth century, I used modern language and allusions to recent events to remind the audience of the contrast between what optimism meant in the eighteenth century and what it means today. However, I featured many of the same events as in the novella because I felt it was important for a contemporary audience to understand the eighteenth century context to appreciate how the concept of optimism has evolved.

After both Woman and Man discuss the irony of *Candide* and set the satirical tone of the play, the rest of my adaptation becomes a lesson in optimism for a contemporary audience. They directly ask the audience if anything has really changed since the eighteenth century and spend the rest of the piece suggesting that perhaps it has not. Although optimism has been redefined over the centuries, my main argument is that passive optimism has never helped the advancement of the human race. In the eighteenth century and today, optimism is best when paired with progress and hope. Inspired by the

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[5] For more information, see Dugdale, John. "Voltaire's Treatise on Tolerance Becomes Bestseller Following Paris Attacks." *The Guardian.* 16 January 2015. Web. 16 April 2015.

short and episodic nature of the novella, I wanted to, to borrow a cinematic term, cut to

the chase. In the style of a debate or a rhetorical argument, the actors start with an

inciting question regarding optimism in the eighteenth compared to the twenty-first

century and make use of some of the key scenes of the novella to guide the audience

towards answering it for themselves. My objective was to capture the universality of

Voltaire's message that every generation seems to ponder with its own adaptations of the

novella.

Step Two: Distance Traversed

After grounding my adaptation in the initial circumstances of Voltaire, the

eighteenth century, and optimism, the next step in my process was to determine exactly

how the characters work through *Candide,* especially considering the novella's

philosophical undertones. What does optimism mean in twenty-first century Canada? It

seems that many of the adaptations I listed in Chapter Two grappled with the same

question within their own historical context. Asking this same question from the

perspective of a present-day Canadian audience today led me to the research I undertook

to uncover the distance traversed by the novella from eighteenth century France to

twenty-first century Canada. If we strip away the metaphysical element that was

prevalent in the eighteenth century understanding of optimism, what is left for the more

pragmatically minded elements of mainstream Canadian society to explore?

To approach the topic of optimism, I chose six specific episodes from *Candide*

that I could portray onstage. In choosing the episodes I wished to depict, I kept a sense of

Voltaire's thematic precision, but with a contemporary audience in mind. To begin with, I

chose the scene that occurs in Chapter One. Candide and Cunégonde observe a lesson by the tutor Pangloss that reflects a naïve understanding of Leibnizian Optimism. I wrote a similar lesson with Man playing Pangloss and Woman playing Cunégonde. Much like the novella, Man/Pangloss lays out the definition of Leibnizian Optimism: "We also know that God in his infinite wisdom is a perfect being and that our world and everything in it was created in his image" (86). For the sake of contextualizing the historical definition of optimism, Man/Pangloss maintains the concept's theodical origins, which was immediately challenged by Woman/Cunégonde.

Claiming more agency than a non-aristocratic woman traditionally would in the eighteenth century, Woman/Cunégonde challenges Man/Pangloss with a twentieth century reference: "Take Nazis, for example. They didn't call themselves 'evil'. Many were actually told they were doing the right thing" (86). Later in the scene, she also adds a statement that introduces modern secular undertones: "If God is perfect and we are part of his perfect plan, why does he need to challenge us at all? Can't we just be happy being perfect?" (87). The goal of this scene in both the novella and my adaptation was to outline the basics of optimism for an audience that might not be familiar with all its intricacies. The role of Woman/Cunégonde was to challenge this concept as Voltaire did in his original text, while introducing modern evidence refuting it. While the structure of the scene in my adaptation is intentionally similar to the scene in Chapter One of *Candide*, I depart from it through the use of modern language and references to update Voltaire's arguments for a contemporary audience.

The first scene also contains the inciting incident of the novella, which I retained in my adaptation. Woman/Cunégonde witnesses Man/Pangloss becoming physical with

the maid, so she decides to convince Candide to kiss her hand. To rob Man of a potentially erotic moment, Woman acts out the entire interaction between the doomed lovers, including Cunégonde's father catching them and ejecting Candide from the castle. This reversal of fortune triggers both Candide's misadventures and his vow to reunite with his love, Cunégonde. The second chapter deals with the aftermath of Candide's departure from the castle, which I used for the second scene of my adaptation.

In the original text, Candide is found wandering aimlessly and is pressed into service by a group of soldiers. For the battle scene in my adaptation, I chose to have the two actors directly quote Eric Palmer's translation of Voltaire's descriptive passage. Voltaire uses beautiful language to portray horrific acts of violence: "There was never anything so gallant, so well accoutered, so brilliant, so well disposed, as the two armies were" (52). The juxtaposition of such sophisticated phrases and the image of carnage they are intended to create in the reader's mind reveals Voltaire's stance against the waste of life and resources that was the Seven Years' War. I felt this ironic depiction could apply to any of the conflicts raging in the world today. Having the actors speak the description Voltaire crafted with references to similar situations today would be enough to allow the audience to understand the juxtaposition and create the image of contemporary conflicts in their minds.

The next episode I chose from *Candide* was the description of the Great Lisbon Earthquake in Chapter Five. Although a few incidents separated the battle and the earthquake, I felt these were less significant for the context of my adaptation project. Instead, I chose to have the actors narrate what happens between each episode in order to keep the audience up to date on important developments in plot. In the original text,

Voltaire describes the tribulations that Pangloss and Candide undergo while trying to survive the earthquake. For my adaptation, the actors depict the natural disaster by walking the audience through an earthquake drill. My intention behind this scene was to give a contemporary twist to the satirical tone skilfully crafted by Voltaire. Encouraging the audience to participate, Man and Woman demonstrate the "Drop, Cover, Hold" procedure. However, at the end of the scene, they emphasize that there would have been no time to perform such a procedure during the Great Lisbon Earthquake, nor would it have made a difference due to the severity of the disaster. By using a dry, didactic tone, my goal was to create a sense of irony by juxtaposing the stark realities of a catastrophic event and the sometimes ludicrously matter-of-fact approach of modern emergency procedures.

In addition, I drew a parallel to recent history as the actors describe the potential after-effects of earthquakes. Referencing the East Japan Earthquake of 2011 and the resultant core meltdowns at several Japanese nuclear power plants, Woman instructs the audience to "carefully remove yourself from your cover and assess any damages, which may include fire, wire, gas, glass, or radioactive waste" (91). The immediate aftereffects of the Great Lisbon Earthquake involved a tsunami, but there were other effects that lingered well after the disaster although perhaps not to the same level as the leaked radioactivity in 2011 from Japan. In fact, I initially wanted to set this scene in the aftermath of the 2011 earthquake, especially referencing the radioactive waste that washed up on British Columbia's shores.

When transforming *Candide* to *Survival of the Optimistic*, I decided it was most effective for the actors simply to describe the events that took place in Lisbon as a means

of connecting to the next episode in both the original novella and my adaptation. In order to atone for the disaster, the religious and secular authorities of Lisbon decided to stage an Inquisition, accompanied by an auto-da-fé. In the original text, Pangloss and Candide were punished at the Inquisition for expressing optimistic sentiments against the earthquake. In my adaptation, the actors describe the punishment and decide together to re-enact the scene that follows: the reunion scene.

As I did with the battle scene, I refrained from imposing my own meaning on the reunion scene, letting it speak for itself by keeping its depiction as simple as possible. At first, Man seems excited to re-enact this moment since it involves the prospect of a passionate love scene, but he quickly discovers that he has not been cast in a typical romance. In the original text, Candide and Cunégonde had not seen each other since the first chapter. When they reunite, she is the concubine of two different men. In my adaptation, the actors describe the pain the characters feel being reunited, as they are not able to physically touch each other. They go on to re-enact Candide's jealous rage which impels him to kill both of Cunégonde's lovers. In the novella, this leads to the characters fleeing across the Atlantic to escape the authorities. Although the actors in my adaptation narrate the flight to South America, their dialogue builds to a heated dispute with an emotional content that was not entirely present in Voltaire's original, but with similar thematic undertones.

Woman argues that Cunégonde was attempting to find a semblance of happiness and move on with her life, but Candide interrupts this and unintentionally sets her on yet another path of hardship. Taking a contemporary feminist stance on Cunégonde, as proposed by such scholars as Susan Klute, the Woman tells us how Cunégonde tried to

make the best out of her limited options: "She wasn't given many opportunities to lounge around the jungle and debate the existence of evil. Mother, nun, or whore. That's all she had" (95). As the Man and the Woman argue, they recount the episodes of the novella that result in their separation: Cunégonde agreeing to marry the governor of Buenos Aires, Candide and Cacambo escaping into the jungle, and their encounter of Martin the Manichean in Surinam, who embodies the polar opposite of Leibnizian Optimism. The mention of Martin and the pessimism that he represents leads to the only scene in my adaptation that does not have a direct equivalent in the original text.

After a few moments of arguing and narrating the events that led to their separation once again, Man and Woman decide to test the philosophies in question with a formal debate. Although a debate scene does not exist in the novella, my intention in writing this scene was to update the Leibnizian concept of optimism for my audience with specific contemporary examples. Many adaptations of the novella fail to acknowledge the evolution of optimism's use in the cultural vernacular. Although optimism no longer carries the strong metaphysical connotations that it did in the Age of Enlightenment, Voltaire's stance regarding the power of free will continues to be relevant. Contrary to the doctrine of divine predestination implied by Leibniz, Voltaire argued that human beings have the power to create and shape their destiny. Like many Enlightenment philosophers, his focus was on the potential for progress possessed by a self-sufficient human race. Our options today are ones that would seem quite familiar to Voltaire: we can choose to be passively optimistic, miserably pessimistic, or actively work to create our own happiness.

For this scene, I also brought into play two modern scientific concepts related to optimism, both of which I encountered during the course of my research. First, I came across the Anthropic Principle coined by Brandon Carter in 1973, which states that the physical constants in our universe are in a delicate balance. That balance is responsible for the behaviour of particles and ultimately, life as we know it. If it were to be adjusted even the slightest amount, our reality would cease to exist. Defenders of Intelligent Design have used this principle as proof that a superior being has fine-tuned the universe for our existence. However, the Multiverse Theory can be seen as a counterpoint to that principle (Folger). At its most basic, this theory holds that if infinite universes exist, then infinite combinations of the physical constants also exist. Our universe, therefore, is not special. In short, the argument between the Anthropic Principle and the Multiverse Theory becomes an updated version of the debate regarding Leibniz and optimism prevalent in the novella (Palmer 218). From my own artistic standpoint, once I discovered this debate, I felt the viewpoints and evidence supplied by both sides fit perfectly with contemporary versions of Pangloss and Martin, who might use it as fuel for their arguments.

However, I felt I needed one more element to complete the debate. Fortunately, I came across Tali Sharot's *The Optimism Bias* (2011). Her research concludes that our brains produce a greater chemical reward when we have an optimistic outlook on life rather than a pessimistic one. In short, our brain's chemical reaction when we see life through an optimistic lens is the reason for humankind's advancements in the face of adversity. As biological beings, we are predisposed to optimism in order to survive and pass our genes on to future generations. In my mind, I heard Pangloss using this

discovery to bolster the Anthropic Principle as a means of backing up his optimistic

beliefs. It was natural for Martin to take the opposite stance in the debate with the

Multiverse Theory, as well as countering Pangloss by calling our brain's reaction to

optimism "chemical lies" (97).

With Woman speaking for Pangloss and Man speaking for Martin, these concepts

are laid out within the framework of a formal debate, but Man/Martin also offers what he

calls a "third option" (97). Using the well-known modern cliché of a half-full or half-

empty glass of beer, he explains that maybe we should avoid seeing the world through

these limiting binaries. Instead, we should drink the beer, be thankful for it, and get back

to work, which is my way of connecting the debate to Voltaire and his philosophical

stance in regards to the progress of humankind and free will. While this scene may not

have existed in *Candide*, it became an important moment for explaining my stance as an

artist on optimism. I agree with Voltaire that optimism without action becomes emptied

of any usefulness. In addition, it helped me as an adapter to create a dramatic moment out

of dense philosophical debate. Lastly, I found a title for my adaptation from the idea that

human beings are biologically predisposed to optimism and that it has helped ensure our

survival as a species: *Survival of the Optimistic*.

After Man describes the third option to the false binary of optimism and

pessimism, my adaptation begins to wind down and make its way to the final scene. Man

explains that he learned about the third option during his time in the mythical city of El

Dorado. As I discussed in Chapter Two, the episode in El Dorado is a detour from the

main plot of *Candide*, but it also represents Voltaire's view of how an ideal society could

work. At the same time, it also gives a glimpse at Voltaire's belief in the impossibility of

such utopias, given the corruptions inherent in human nature. Like other fictional

societies of its kind, El Dorado is only able to function on its own terms due to its

isolation from the rest of civilization. Instead of replaying the El Dorado episode directly,

Man recounts his time there, and how he came across a new way of thinking and living.

Taking a realistic view on happiness, Woman does not believe that such a society is

possible. At this point, they begin to work their way to the adaptation's conclusion as

they discuss Candide and Cunégonde's strained marriage and the garden they buy in the

final episode of the novella.

However, before they completely end their journey through the novella, they re-

enact one more scene that is intended as my adaptation's philosophical conclusion. The

scene that I chose is from the beginning of the final chapter. As soon as Candide is

married to Cunégonde, he begins to feel restless. He decides to visit a dervish who is also

the most famous philosopher in all of Turkey. Instead of offering enlightened

philosophical ponderings, the dervish slams the door in Candide's face. When that

happens, an old man walks by and explains that the happiness he has found in life is due

to a humble life of hard work on a fruit farm with his family. As a result of his

conversation with the old man, Candide returns to his garden and settles down to his

labours while avoiding any further philosophical banter, which symbolizes Voltaire's

opinion that one's happiness is within one's own control. In my adaptation, the scene is

written much the same as in the novella with Man playing Candide, and Woman playing

both the dervish and the old man.

Although many different episodes occur between El Dorado and the novella's

conclusion, I felt this scene best represents my artistic interest in Voltaire and *Candide*.

Not only is it a clear summary of Voltaire's arguments, but as it is in the form of a conversation, it can also be easily translated to the stage. It is significant that, after all the hardships that Candide endures, a simple conversation with an old man is what leads Candide to leave behind a lifetime of philosophical discussion and finally decide to create a reasonable amount of happiness through his own efforts. After the dervish scene, both actors in my adaptation pick up the gardening tools they have been using as props and get to work in their garden. My goal was to reach the level of simplicity and ambiguity that Voltaire created in the final episode of his novella when Candide dismisses the banter of his colleagues with "Let us take care of our garden". As a nod to Voltaire and his famous epigram, Woman says to Man, "As a wise man once said: 'Let us take care of our garden" (103).

Throughout my adaptation process, I chose specific episodes that I felt reflected my interest in presenting Voltaire's message to a twenty-first century audience, while retaining his blend of philosophical discussion and satire. Once I had done that, the next question became how to use the structural elements of the novella to create dramatic moments on a contemporary stage. In other words, how could I translate the narrative elements of the novella to a dramatic situation? Are there any dramatic equivalents to the set of narrative conditions that brought the novella together? I was able to create two scenes in particular using philosophical concepts and dialogue-- the debate scene and the dervish scene-- but are there any other devices available to me?

Step Three: Set of Conditions of Acceptance or Resistance

As we observed in Chapter Two, Voltaire made specific and reasoned choices of narrative elements for his novella, particularly as far as space, character, and narrative voice were concerned. He expertly wove these elements into the narrative structure of a satirical philosophical tale in order to build his argument and convey his ideas to the reader. One of the many reasons I was attracted to *Candide* was the challenge presented by these complicated structural elements and the ways in which they relate to Voltaire's philosophical argument. For a dramatic adapter, many aspects of the philosophical tale would be challenging to bring to the stage. For example, the characters pass through many different spaces, each one of which carries symbolic weight in Candide's philosophical journey, which would be difficult to depict onstage without numerous set changes.

One of my first dramaturgical choices relates to the various spaces depicted in *Candide*. To explore my curiosity with the narrative spaces created by Voltaire, I made use of Vincent Murphy's idea of a "stageable image", which is a "specific idea for the onstage environment of the piece" (76). Murphy suggests that dramatic adapters can devise a metaphorical environment by working with the themes of the literary source. Inspired by the symbolism of the various gardens of the novella, including the castle of Thunder-ten-tronckh, El Dorado, and the garden in which Candide settles down in Constantinople, I decided to use the image of a garden for my adaptation. Instead of transitioning between different sets, the characters could use items and tools typically found in gardens to create the wide range of settings onstage. In addition, the image of a

garden would evoke a constantly changing natural environment, which would convey the journey of Voltaire's characters across Europe and South America.

However, a conventional theatrical space continued to feel stale and hollow, even with the metaphor of a garden to enliven it. How would I create the sense of an outdoor environment onstage? I referred to Elinor Fuchs' *Visit to a Small Planet* as a way to expand the fictional world of my adaptation. Exploring the textures, shapes, colours, and many other aspects of the world I was creating onstage was a nourishing aspect of my creative process. As a result, one of my preliminary choices was to make the adaptation a site-specific presentation in a public park or community garden. The different spaces from the original text would then be built organically from found materials as the actors progressed through each episode. The actors would also invite the audience to use their imaginations and walk through each setting themselves as they join them on their journey. In addition to foreshadowing the final episode of the novella, the presence of a natural environment became a reminder of Voltaire's message that humanity is helpless against the forces of nature and that happiness is found through hard work and cultivating your own destiny.

Now that I had a theatrical environment chosen for my adaptation, I needed to begin filling it with characters. However, I had a similar issue with character as I did with space. There is an enormous cast of characters in the novella. Each person whom Candide meets along his journey represents a specific philosophical standpoint, which in some cases is also a social critique of Voltaire's. While I was grappling with the challenge of character, Susan Jonas' techniques for collective adaptation inspired me to focus on specific elements and deliberately modify, exaggerate, or reverse them. In fact, I

attempted many different iterations of character before settling on my final choice. First, I removed Candide entirely and focused on his marginalized companions: Cunégonde, Cacambo, and the old woman. Second, I created a character representing Voltaire under his pseudonym, "M. le docteur Ralph," to narrate the story. Finally, I decided to limit my cast to two actors: one male and one female, who would portray all of the characters of the novella.

Although having a cast of two simplifies the depiction of character, I also wanted to focus on the relationship between Candide and Cunégonde. As I discovered more about the novella, I realized that the guiding hand behind Candide's actions (no matter how naively expressed this drive) was entirely amorous. Informed by this discovery, one of my goals was therefore to highlight Voltaire's irony in using the cliché of a love story to convey deeper philosophical meaning. Candide's objective to reunite with Cunégonde and fulfill his promise to marry her, along with the trials he goes through to achieve this aim, are very much of a piece with the standard love-quests of eighteenth century fiction (Forest 152). However, the amorous elements of *Candide* are also used as fodder for satire, which is characteristic of Voltaire's style of philosophical tale. With the noblest of intentions, Candide repeatedly ruins Cunégonde's chances for happiness until she is completely derelict and hideous at the end of the novella. Although he keeps his promise to marry her, they grow resentful of each other. Limiting the cast to two actors allowed for them to discuss the irony of their relationship; perhaps ideals associated with romantic love are also unrealistically optimistic.

Using the style of a narrative dialogue, the cast of two actors also discuss Voltaire's use of satire. Considering that the majority of Voltaire's varied literary output

in the fields of drama, politics, and philosophy was in a serious vein, it is remarkable that satirical works such as *Zadig, Micromegas,* and *Candide* remain his most well remembered works. The very ridiculousness of his novellas makes them memorable, by allowing readers to laugh even as they absorb the social critiques reflected in the satire. In fact, the goal of satire in the eighteenth century was no different than it is in the present day: to amuse readers in order for them to be more receptive to your ideas (Forest 132). My goal in adapting *Candide* was very much the same, but the novella's status as a classic work also gave me the opportunity to hold Voltaire's own satirical style up to a certain amount of scrutiny. For example, Man comments on the gentility of Voltaire's language in the battle scene: "But calling the battle 'gallant', and 'well-accoutered'? Doesn't that kind of glorify the war?" (89). By stepping back from the self-conscious enactment of a work of literature to take a moment to interrogate it, the actors in *Survival of the Optimistic* go beyond narrating action and creating atmosphere to function as interlocutors with a considerable degree of performative autonomy from the text they are involved in.

Although the choice to give my actors the freedom to comment on their situation stemmed from my curiosity about satire as well as Candide and Cunégonde's relationship, it also reflected the narrative voice of the original text. I chose to have my actors employ a detached third person narrative perspective similar to the one that dominates *Candide*, which was easier to develop once I limited the cast to two people. Distancing themselves from the characters of the novella, the actors acknowledge the novella's role in their performance and its connection to contemporary situations. In doing so, they absorb some of Voltaire's social commentary and apply it to the twenty-

first century. As well, they are able to step out of moments of dramatic action without being constrained to the accurate depiction of time and space. They take turns commenting on the action and stepping into the role of various characters to act out each scene. For example, Woman comments on Candide's various attempts to rescue Cunégonde by taking a feminist stance on the situation. Maybe she did not need rescuing, and he was getting in the way of her happiness.

Moreover, the discussion between the two performers becomes a dramatization of my own conversation with Voltaire and the novella. In addition to adopting Voltaire's narrative voice, each performer takes turns adopting my own voice as adapter. While utilizing a site-specific environment and limiting my cast to two actors solves the dramaturgical challenge of the number of spaces and characters involved in the philosophical tale, it also reflects my fundamental curiosity in the themes of *Candide* and the questions raised by them. The actors directly ask each other, and subsequently the audience, what optimism means in the twenty-first century. They work through the novella not merely by embodying its characters, but as performers and artists on a voyage of intellectual and personal discovery. In short, I wove my own interest and research into the voices of Man and Woman. If the four-step formula advocates a balance between research and creativity, perhaps such creative activity is an ideal result of this process.

Step Four: Transformation of the Idea

In the previous three steps, I have identified the dramaturgical choices I made in response to my work researching the historical context of the eighteenth century, in addition to analysing the major structural elements of *Candide* and evaluating how the

novella resonates in the twenty-first century. In a typical artistic process, the final step may include assessing the work's success on the page or in performance. However, I would not like to use the final step of my process to pass judgement on my work. Although artistic interest drew me to *Candide*, the goal of this project was not to perfect the art of dramatic writing. Feedback from readings I held with friends and colleagues helped me gauge the effectiveness of my artistic choices, but it did not determine the result of my initial research question: how do theatre creators approach the process of adapting a literary source? Thus, I will use the final step of this process to return to my question and discuss if the Said/Hutcheon four-step formula is a successful culmination of my search for methodologies of dramatic adaptation.

As mentioned earlier, one positive characteristic of the formula is that it encourages the balance between research and creativity in the adaptation process. However, distilling this process to four discrete steps may seem overly simplistic. The intrinsic simplicity of the formula, however, allows for an adapter to discover their personal entry point into the creative process. Each step is a vital point in the process, but how the adapter navigates them becomes a matter of artistic preference and subjectivity. In my project, I let the work of such artists as Vincent Murphy, Susan Jonas, Anne Bogart, and Charles Mee inspire how I reacted to the wealth of information that I was uncovering about Voltaire and *Candide.* Without the guidance of the formula, I would not have strengthened my own interest in the source material and the choices available to me in the new medium to the degree that I did.

While I initially asked what optimism means in the twenty-first century, I soon began to ask what exactly it means to me. As an individual, how can I reconcile myself

with optimism when I see exactly what Voltaire was speaking against continuing to be prevalent in society today? I may have decided to focus most of my attention on natural dangers such as the Great Lisbon Earthquake, but I also became curious about the systems of power in society that dictate how we treat each other. Fuelled by research, my artistic curiosity began to guide my choices. Not only my curiosity about the novella's historical context, but also how it was constructed, how it resonates today, and how it can be depicted onstage.

In the end, I have a site-specific dramatic adaptation with a cast of two working their way through key events of *Candide* as they contemplate its significance. My satisfaction with the adaptation itself is not the focus of this analysis, but rather the effectiveness of the four-step formula. Since I am a writer who tends to work intuitively, the formula was an effective way to ground and solidify my artistic choices. The work I did to research the novella, its historical context, the life of its author, and its narrative elements both directly and indirectly affected my work. I must admit that this adaptation felt more grounded and thoughtful than my work normally does. Having four steps to guide the process from the outside was helpful in focusing my interest and artistic aim. For writers who tend to work intellectually rather than intuitively, the formula would reinforce and encourage their natural methods of working.

In short, the formula is a beneficial starting point for an adaptation process, but it is up to the adapter to follow their own interest, the better to invest the four steps with the research and care necessary for this methodology to be effective. All source material has an initial circumstance, a distance traversed that lands it in the hands of the adapter, a set of conditions that form its structure in the original medium, and a final product that

transforms it to new circumstances, new conditions, and new meaning. How an adapter navigates each step becomes a question of individual preference, which is guided by their artistic interest and subjectivity. The formula becomes a structured system through which to generate artistic interest and choices. Fundamentally, there are limitless choices available to a dramatic adapter working with a literary text. There is no perfect or ideal way to adapt for the stage. What the four-step formula offers is a framework to both focus and fuel what can be a demanding process.

CONCLUSION

Although my perspective as a practitioner adapting Voltaire's *Candide* may not

be the usual point of view for researching adaptation, I am pleased that I have found

some discussion on practical methodologies that I have put into practice with this project.

Adaptation studies have been successful in generating a historiography for the recycling,

reworking, and re-imagining of ideas. Using the paradigms and models provided by this

outlook, scholars and artists alike have been studying the natural human tendency to find

inspiration from the wealth of stories and ideas that culture has to offer. An idea or story

can last centuries and resurface in the unlikeliest of places, which explains the long

history of adaptations, appropriations, and intertexts based on *Candide*. In fact, *Candide*

has been a useful source text for exploring adaptation methodologies. It presents a

plethora of possibilities, both intellectual and creative for each step of Said/Hutcheon's

four-step formula. While it is not the perfect case study, it has provided some valuable

information regarding the formula and the adaptation process in general; information that

I have documented in this project.

Considering the history of adaptation in human creativity, almost all texts are

intertextual. If we take Charles Mee's maxim "There's no such thing as an original play"

or Roland Barthes' "Every text is an intertext", then why study adaptation as a creative

process at all? Does adaptation warrant any additional consideration beyond the process

of playwriting? Adaptation shares characteristics with playwriting, of course, but this

project was not a playwriting exercise. The four steps say almost nothing about the

practical work of a dramatist. It does not tell a playwright how to create and organize

dialogue, characters, and scenes. A component of the creative process that is unique to

adaptation brings us to the question of artistic subjectivity. An adapter differs from a playwright in that they are consciously shifting source material to new circumstances, whether in the same medium or a new one. The process of adaptation is largely focused on acknowledging and extending relationships between texts. Playwrights who choose to adapt are consciously asserting their own subjectivity and artistic intention on an existing text.

At this point, perhaps it is best to return to a question posed in the introduction of the document, "Why are adaptations seen as inferior if the practice is more widespread than typically acknowledged?" Adaptation is a purposeful conversation with another work of art, be it transposing to another medium or creating a new work in the same medium. Fidelity criticism affirms the notion that an adaptation cannot exist as an autonomous work of art. With my project, although it never mentions Candide, any characters, or Voltaire by name, it is very clearly in conversation with the material. In fact, it would probably help a reader or spectator enjoy my work if they were familiar with the novella. In my experience, the four steps guided me towards creating an adaptation that was loyal or quite close to the source. However, that is not a limitation of the four steps; that was my own process.

What the formula offers the adapter is a structure through which to focus and strengthen their artistic intentions. However, as I have discussed, adaptations seem to move through the four steps regardless of artistic intent. I would like to argue that this statement proves the usefulness of the Said/Hutcheon's formula for adapters in all mediums. From my experience in working with the formula, I have found that consciously applying the four steps strengthens the choices available to an adapter. As I

have discovered throughout the course of this project, the formula can offer an invaluable process of focus and clarification. Adapting already implies an inherent awareness of process, so the formula suits that approach and guides the process one step closer to producing a balance between research and creativity.

The four steps open up a world of possibility to an adapter, and it is their job to assert their own artistic subjectivity and practical skills, which is where my own practice perhaps faltered and could be strengthened for future projects. After working with the formula, I feel that a dramaturg would draw a great deal of insight from the four steps when guiding a playwright through the adaptation process. If a practitioner were searching for creative inspiration, the formula would be valuable, but there is a risk that it could overwhelm the process. An artist must ensure that a conscious application of the formula fuels their artistic subjectivity, which would be the ideal goal of working with a pre-established methodology in the first place. However, the formula does not dictate the creative choices you must make for a successful adaptation. Instead, it offers a world of possibility for an adapter to choose from as they develop their personal artistic process. For such a source of philosophical density as Voltaire's *Candide,* it is especially valuable to evaluate the context and structure of the original text in order to build a base of information from which to draw artistic choices.

APPENDIX I

Survival of the Optimistic

By Catherine Ballachey

Adapted from Voltaire's *Candide, or All for the Best.*
(Eric Palmer's edition of the Nourse translation, 2009.)

Characters:
Man
Woman

Setting:
Outside in a public park or garden.

A man and woman enter with gardening tools, wearing work clothes, and appearing tired/dirty. They lay the tools on the ground, in the dirt. The woman picks up a packet of seeds, tears it open, and begins sprinkling the seeds on the ground.

Woman: In 1759, a famous philosopher and political thinker sat down to write a love story.

Man: You're not starting that way, are you?

Woman: What's wrong with that?

Man: *(Striking a large shovel into the ground)* I just… I mean… how do we know he was sitting down?

Woman: Ok, then a famous philosopher and political thinker wrote a love story.

Man: In 1759.

Woman: Yes, in 1759.

Man: That's better, but … you know it was more than just a love story.

Woman: Ok, then a famous philosopher and political thinker wrote more than a love story… in whatever position he happened to be in… in 1759.

Man: If it was more than a love story, then what sort of story is it?

Woman: I don't know. You told me to say it was more than a love story.

Man: But it is. I just wonder what sort of story is more than a love story?

Woman: A war story? A disaster story? An adventure story?

Man: It's all of those things too.

Woman: But it's a love story. It's a story about two people making a promise to each other and, against all odds, keeping that promise.

Man: So, this famous philosopher/poet/historian/dramatist whose writings laid the foundation for modern democracy, whose passion for scientific reason brought Newton's principles to the French court, whose radical thinking kick-started the French Revolution, whose thoughts can be summarized in the following (misattributed) quote: "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it"… sat down to write a love story?

Woman: That's right.

Man: Why?

Woman: He looked to the west and saw people killing each other for a few acres of snow in Canada. He looked to the South and saw people making slaves of other innocent people. He looked to the East and saw spiritual leaders punishing sinners for causing natural disasters. He looked into his own heart and decided that maybe it wasn't "all for the best". If God created humanity in his own image, maybe God was a bit of a jerk.

Man: Sure, but that was 250 years ago. Things are better today.

Woman: Are they? 250 years ago, this so-called love story was burned for being blasphemous, yes, but today, cartoonists need bodyguards. Is that so different?

Man: Who knew that making fun was so dangerous?

Woman: He did. He wrote the story under a pen name and stepped back to watch the anger spread.

Man: This still doesn't sound like a love story to me.

Woman: That's the joke. Boy meets girl. Boy kisses girl. Boy and girl experience a series of events that lead them to believe that maybe, just maybe, God has no plan for them after all.

Man: You're getting ahead of yourself!

Woman: You're right. Let's get back to the love story. I suppose it's best to start by setting the scene. We'll call this episode, "A Happy Childhood Cut Short."

She sprinkles a few more seeds on the ground.

Woman: The story starts at a castle in Westphalia where Boy, the hero, and Girl, his love, grew up. She was born there, but he came a little bit later. He was her cousin, you see.

Slight pause. The Woman considers a moment.

Woman: I suppose this might be an appropriate time to say that this was the eighteenth century. Whatever reservations you may have, I'll warn you now that the fact that he was her cousin is the least grotesque aspect of the story.

Man: Now you're just scaring them.

Woman: I'm just setting the mood. The Boy's parents died at some point, so he came to live with his Uncle's family in the castle. Every day, they would sit through these horrid

philosophical lessons with Westphalia's greatest scholar. It was the "be all, end all" of their existence. *(To Man)* Set up for the lesson scene, followed by the love scene. Just like we practiced!

The Man brings out a large poster or chalkboard with the word "EVIL" written in the centre. Playing the part of the scholar, he begins his lesson, looking both smug and proud.

Man: Boys and girls! Settle down, please. We have important things to discuss today. The Baron has hired me to ensure that you have a basic understanding of metaphysico-theologo-cosmolonigology. I understand that none of you will be the expert that I am, but it is essential to your development that you tackle certain concepts. Today, we will start with the most basic. Well, it may seem basic on the surface, but philosophers have been grappling with this topic for thousands, or possibly millions, if not billions of years: the existence of evil… or things that are not so good. Before I introduce the key philosophers behind the subject, why don't we take a moment to define the concept?

The Man writes two words on the poster/chalkboard: "Disease" and "War".

Man: Now, we can all agree that these two words are evil in that they both cause death, correct? If we take a closer look, you might notice that they can be separated into two different categories: natural and manmade. Disease is largely beyond our control. Despite the advances of medicine, all living bodies will eventually die. However, war is a result of human activity, and perhaps even human nature. Some philosophers say that we choose to bring certain evils into the world out of our own free will. We choose to be evil.

Woman: Um, teacher? I don't understand. I don't think anyone chooses to be evil. Like in war, no one thinks they're evil until they're on the losing side. Take Nazis, for example. They didn't call themselves "evil". Many were actually told they were doing the right thing. It depends on the perspective, sir.

Man: Little Miss, I will ask you not to speak out of turn. Now, where was I? As a meta-phyisco-theologo-cosmolonigologist, I know that God gave us free will in order to challenge us. We also know that God in his infinite wisdom is a perfect being and that our world and everything in it was created in his image.

Woman: Wait. You're saying that if he created everything in his image, then everything is perfect? That we are perfect? That chair over there is perfect? Your argument is perfect?

Man: My dear, everything in this world is perfectly designed for our existence. That chair, is it not perfectly designed for our backsides even if no backside rests upon it? My argument, is it not perfectly designed in its truth to instruct you in the ways of meta-physico-theologo-cosomolonigology?

Woman: Well, I'm not too sure about that.

Man: What she is brilliantly demonstrating is the concept of free will. Thank you for that, my dear. As I mentioned earlier, God bestowed free will upon human kind in order to challenge our faith. As with the evils previously discussed, it is all part of his perfect plan and, therefore, all for the best.

Woman: If God is perfect and we are part of his perfect plan, why does he need to challenge us at all? Can't we just be happy being perfect?

Man: Well, I think that's enough for today! Why don't you all take a long walk in the gardens and mull over what we discussed. I'm just going to have a quick chat with my gloriously attractive teaching assistant back here… out of sight.

The man disappears behind the chalkboard or poster board for a moment and mimes furiously making out. He can use a gardening tool, if he so pleases. Girl innocently follows him.

Woman: Excuse me, sir? I just had another question…

Seeing the Man and his tool/teaching assistant, she has an idea for an experiment.

Man: Ok, this is the love scene. Can I act this one out with you? Pretty please?

Woman: No, no, no. You have to stay back there. You're the philosopher.

Man: That's no fun.

Woman: It is for me!

The woman plays the following scene by herself, "The Love Scene". She can also use a gardening tool, if she so pleases.

Woman: Oh, my dear cousin? Where have you gotten off to? *(Switch)* I'm here, sweet cousin! *(Switch)* Would you care to take a walk in the garden with me? *(Switch)* Oh yes! Perhaps we could discuss evil and everything that our teacher mentioned today. Some of it hurt my head to think about, but I trust everything he says anyway. *(Switch)* Sure, whatever.

She pulls a handkerchief out of her sleeve and drops it.

Woman: Oh, dear! It appears that I have dropped my handkerchief. Silly me! *(Switch)* Don't worry, dear cousin. I'll pick it up for you.

As the Girl, she extends her hand ever so delicately. As the Boy, she sees the hand and is entranced.

Woman: Oh, my! I've never noticed how beautiful your hand is. *(Switch)* Why, thank you. You know, if you were a gentleman, you would kiss it. *(Switch)* Would I? Well, I better hop to it!

As the Boy, she kisses the Girl's hand. As the Girl, she sees her father coming and abruptly pulls her hand away.

Woman: Father! Please, it was just a little kiss. What are you doing to him?! Please, father! Don't do it! *(On her knees, overdramatically)* Noooooo!

The Man comes out from hiding and helps her off her feet.

Woman: That's more or less how everything started with this little love story. The Boy's lips delicately brushed the middle knuckle of the Girl's left hand for a fraction of a second, and he was thrown out of the castle. They didn't see each other again until they were reunited in Lisbon, but I'm getting ahead of myself again. A lot happened before they were reunited.

Man: This is the part that got our famous philosopher in a lot of trouble, didn't it?

Woman: One of the parts, that's for sure. In the eighteenth century, European authorities were spending large fortunes to send innocent men over to the New World to fight for land that wasn't even theirs.

Man: In short, our famous philosopher thought it was an enormous waste of time, resources, and life. Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

Woman: To show his distaste, he wrote a battle scene the poor hero had to endure after he was thrown out of the castle. Maybe you can guess the tone he was going for… A-TTEN-TION!

The Man and Woman grab gardening tools and form a line, standing as if they were soldiers at attention with the tools as weapons.

Woman: There was never anything so gallant, so well accoutered, so brilliant, so well disposed, as the two armies were.

Man: Trumpets, fifes, oboes, drums and cannon made such music as the devil himself never heard in hell.

Woman: The cannonading first of all laid flat about six thousand men on each side; the musket-balls swept away out of the best of worlds nine or ten thousand ruffians that infected the surface of the earth.

Man: The bayonet was next a *sufficient reason* for the death of several thousands. The whole might amount to thirty thousand souls.

Woman: Our hero trembled like a philosopher, and concealed himself as well as he could during this heroic butchery.

Man: What do you think he meant by "trembled like a philosopher"? Are Philosophers a traditionally shaky people?

Woman: I think it means that he was a little scared.

Man: For good reason! He didn't even know what he was fighting for. He was told that if he fought, he would have food in his belly and a roof over his head. Since the castle was no longer an option, he thought, why the heck not?

Woman: "Why the heck not?" A perfect reason to go to war.

Man: It sounds ridiculous when you put it that way.

Woman: It is ridiculous! He wandered the countryside for days, starving and exhausted, before they picked him up and trained him to fight.

Man: I don't think running and hiding counts as fighting.

Woman: He was in better shape than the rest of them. They say thousands of men lost their lives on that battlefield. I wonder if any of them knew why they were fighting.

Man: But calling the battle "gallant", and "well-accoutered"? Doesn't that kind of glorify the war?

Woman: That's the point. He was fighting for the Barbarians. No, the Arbarians. Or maybe the Bulgarians? I can't remember. It vicious any way you put it and he was caught in the middle of it. For now, let's move on to Lisbon, shall we?

Man: Good idea!

Woman: You may be wondering how our brave hero went from a bloody battle to the city of Lisbon. Well, as he was shell-shocked and wandering the streets of war-ravaged towns, he was taken in by an Anabaptist who offered him a job. While on their way to Lisbon on business, they miraculously stumbled upon the beloved old tutor, and all three of them boarded a ship to Lisbon. Unfortunately, the ship sank in a storm and the Anabaptist drowned. Both the tutor and our hero made it to shore where they are greeted by something rather… unpleasant. Set up for the next chapter: the Great Lisbon Earthquake!

The Man scrambles around setting up while the Woman speaks.

Woman: The next part of the story is a bit shaky, as you can imagine. Since we are depicting a potentially dangerous situation, we thought it might be a good opportunity to demonstrate what you should do if you're ever caught in an earthquake. It is called the "Drop, Cover, Hold" procedure. Please feel free to practice the procedure along with us. If you're already familiar with "Drop, Cover, Hold", it doesn't hurt to practice. You never know when you might be stuck in this kind of situation.

The Woman and Man line up in front of the audience to demonstrate.

Woman: *(To Man)* Would you please do the honours?

Man starts making earthquake sounds, and the Woman begins to shake like she's in an earthquake.

Woman: This is what an earthquake might sound like and what it might do to your body. You might start seeing things fall off of shelves or the people around you might start panicking. That's always a good sign that it's time to start the procedure. Remember to take care of yourself first and let others fend for themselves.

Man: Or, if you don't have a heart of stone, make sure you're safe before assisting others with the procedure.

Woman: Whatever you say. Anyway, the first step is "drop" and that's exactly what it means: drop to the ground wherever you are. Get as low as you possibly can.

The Woman and Man drop to the ground.

Woman: The second step is "cover". That means pretty much just scramble to somewhere that might provide you some cover. If you are outside in a garden like we are today, your options might be limited. Might I recommend a picnic table, a bench, or perhaps a tree? Just ensure that it is solidly attached to the ground and covers your head somehow.

They scramble to the nearest picnic table, bench, or tree.

Woman: However, if you are somewhere without any kind of cover, an open field for example, skip straight to the final step, "hold", or as I like to call it, "hold on for dear life". I think that explains itself. At this point, it might help to grit your teeth or scream; whatever helps to reduce your anxiety.

They scream.

Woman: Once the earthquake is over, carefully remove yourself from your cover and assess any damages, which may include fire, wire, gas, glass, or radioactive waste. You

must also be aware that an aftershock may happen or very well a tidal wave, as it was with Lisbon. In that case, start the cycle over again and pray or scream a little louder.

They drop and scream again and then calmly return to their line in front of the audience.

Woman: Any questions? *(Waits for the audience)* Good. Now, did they have a chance to do the procedure when the earthquake hit Lisbon? Not at all! It hit hard and fast. They didn't know what to do with themselves. That's why it killed over 30,000 people and remains today one of the largest recorded natural disasters to hit Europe.

Man: Plus, whoever survived the earthquake had the tsunami to worry about.

Woman: Of course, but after the earthquake, after-shocks, and tsunami, they still weren't quite done with their suffering.

Man: What was left? *(Pause)* Oh, right. The Inquisition. Do we really have to do this part?

Woman: Not if you don't want to, but it's an important part of the story.

Man: I'll do it because one of the best parts happens right after: the reunion scene.

Man gets on his knees and lifts his hands in the air. Woman stands behind him holding a gardening tool.

Woman: The religious officials in Lisbon decided the city was being punished for turning a blind eye to sin. To ward off further punishment, they decided to hold an Inquisition, publicly flogging anyone who proved to be a sinner. Unfortunately for our hero, his tutor spoke his usual doctrine a bit too loudly and too passionately.

Man: God is perfect, and we were made in his image. Everything that happens in this world is perfect and meant to be. Even this earthquake… especially this earthquake.

Woman: And what about original sin, good sir? Are the sinners that brought about this disaster perfect?

Man: I would say so, yes.

Woman: The authorities didn't like that very much. As a result, they were both considered sinners. Our tutor was hanged on the spot and our hero was flogged to the bone.

Woman mimes flogging the Man with the tool. Man falls to the ground.

Woman: Fortunately, or perhaps unfortunately, this is where the Girl re-enters the story. She witnessed the whole thing and recognized her lover-cousin right away. She sent the

old woman, her maid, to scoop the Boy's lifeless body out of the pile of corpses and nurse him back to health. Her job was to reunite them… discreetly.

Man: Can I stop being a lifeless corpse and do the romantic reunion scene now?

Woman: Oh, sure.

Man jumps up and attempts to passionately kiss the Woman. She pushes him away.

Woman: It definitely wasn't like that. Things were a bit more… complicated.

Man: When he finally awoke, he saw his love covered in jewels and fine clothes. He thought he was raging with fever from his wounds, but he was seeing clearly. She wouldn't let him kiss her. He couldn't even hug her.

Woman: She belonged to another man… two other men, actually.

Man: Maybe I don't actually like this part.

Woman: It's not your typical reunion scene, is it?

Man: No, but it brought them back together.

Woman: For a brief moment.

Man: How do you look into the eyes of the one you love and tell them what you've been through?

Woman: He thought he had it rough until she told him what she endured. In the same war that he fought, her castle was attacked. She watched as her entire family was killed. The leader of the invading army… the Barbarians or the Arbarians… I can't remember… took her as a concubine for a while, but then sold her to a merchant in Lisbon. Because she was so beautiful, he was ordered to share her with the leader of the Inquisition. She was forced to stay by the leader's side for all the hangings and floggings, which is how she spotted her beloved.

Man: He took all that in with love in his eyes and guilt in his heart.

Woman: That didn't last long. They were looking longingly into each other's eyes when who should walk in, but…

Man: I'll do this part! It was her lover, the merchant! *(As the Merchant)* Excuse me? What are you doing with my woman? *(As the Boy)* Your woman? That's my woman! *(He mimes killing the merchant)*

Woman: And then who should walk in, but…

Man: Her other lover, the leader of the Inquisition and the man that ordered his flogging! *(As the Leader)* What is he doing in here? *(As the Boy)* Damn you! *(He mimes killing the leader)*

Woman: You just killed both of my lovers! What are we going to do now?

Man: I just killed both your lovers! What are we going to do now?

Woman: *(As the police)* Open up! It's the police! *(As herself)* And then the old woman, her maid, had a brilliant idea. She said, "I don't know. We could… flee to South America?"

Man: Brilliant idea! Let's go!

Woman: They quite literally hopped on the next boat to Buenos Aires with the local authorities in hot pursuit. How they managed to actually get away is beyond me!

Man: Their beloved tutor would have said that it was meant to be and "all for the best".

Woman: Was it "all for the best" that he killed her two connections to a secure future? Did God truly plan for her to be a concubine and narrowly escape that life in Lisbon in order to be reintroduced into that same life in Buenos Aires?

Man: Well, yes… that's what he would have said...

Woman picks up a shovel and begins to dig.

Woman: This is what you're doing. Deeper and deeper and deeper. We'll be able to see China in no time with all the crap you're spouting. Are you planning on digging yourself out?

Man: I was just repeating what he would have said for a bit of context.

He takes the shovel from her and lays it on the ground.

Man: Let's move on to the next part of the story then, shall we? I don't like this part either, but it's important like all the rest.

Woman: It's the part where they get separated again.

Man: This time, it wasn't his fault!

Woman: That's what you think? Tell me, what would you have done? On the one hand, she caught the eye of the governor of Buenos Aires, the sexy and exotic Don Fernando d'Ibara y Figueora y Mascarenes y Lampourdos y Souza. He offered her a lifetime of

comfort and luxury as his concubine. On the other hand, she had her cousin. Need I remind you that he was wanted for murder back in Europe? For the murders he apparently committed in her name? What would you have done?

Man: He made a promise to her!

Woman: What promise?

Man: To rescue her!

Woman: We've been through this before. She didn't need to be rescued. She was safe. She had a roof over her head and food in her belly. She was reasonably happy.

Man: She was a prostitute.

Woman: A concubine! Slightly different. It was two men, three at most. Besides, did she have another choice?

Man: Yes. She could have let him rescue her.

Woman: Let me rephrase that: did she have a *better* choice? The old woman spoke some sense to her, and she finally let him go.

Man: I see… I thought we were supposed to be telling a love story? This is falling apart.

Woman: We're at the part where the girl betrays the boy and the audience is left wondering how they'll ever find each other again and reconcile.

Man: You mean the part where she sent him into the jungle to fend for himself!

Woman: Now you're the one jumping ahead.

Man: It's true. There are a lot of juicy things that happened while she was gallivanting around Buenos Aires with her governor.

Woman: Like what?

Man: Like meeting the *other* philosopher: the pessimist!

Woman: Oh, joy.

Man: Meeting that poor man dying on the streets of Surinam was one of the best things to ever happen to him. He helped him through some really tough times.

Woman: A pessimist helped him through tough times?

Man: Certainly did. He helped him see the dark side of life. He opened up his mind to the possibilities of absolutely nothing! It all means nothing!

Woman: And that helped him?

Man: It helped him stop thinking about her.

Woman: Good. I'm glad. She wasn't thinking about him either.

Man: No, she was off having a swell time being a glorified prostitute.

Woman: She wasn't given many opportunities to lounge around the jungle and debate the existence of evil. Mother, nun, or whore. That's all she had.

Man: They didn't just lounge around the jungle. They were fighting for their lives!

Woman: This is what it sounded like: "Life sucks. There's no point to existing. It's all meaningless. I'm sad." *(Switch)* "On the contrary, God is perfect. Therefore, we are perfect. Therefore, everything that happens is all for the best and meant to be."

The Woman is pleased with herself. The Man has an idea.

Man: You know what might be a good scene to do right now?

Woman: What's that?

Man: The debate scene…you said it yourself; this story was written 250 years ago. Maybe we could do a fresh take on an old debate.

Woman: How would we go about doing that?

Man: We'll each take a side and see who really holds up. Since you think you know everything, you can speak for the optimists. I'll take a stab at speaking for the pessimists. How does that sound?

Woman: I like where this is going. It could be fun…

Man: Ok, It's settled. We'll take a stab at the debate: optimism vs. pessimism, a 21st century reboot.

Woman: I guess this is the point in the story where we go from action, adventure, and romance to… philosophical debate.

As the Woman arranges the gardening tools to represent a courtroom, the Man addresses the audience.

Man: *(Indicating The Woman)* In the first corner, we have the most trusted tutor and philosopher in all of Westphalia. She believes in the innate benevolence of the universe. She's an Optimist! Over here… I guess I mean me… we have the man found half-dead on the streets of Surinam. He believes there's no point to life but arbitrary suffering. He's a Pessimist! The Optimist will speak first. *(Banging a tool as a gavel)*

Woman: To begin, I have scientific proof to back up my philosophy. You may be surprised to know that I can safely move away from the Bible to defend my way of life. My proof comes in two forms: one from the world of Biology and the other from the world of Physics.

Let's start with our biological predisposition towards optimism, shall we? Studies have shown that human beings are naturally optimistic. With optimism, we have earned our position at the top of the food chain. It comes down to the chemicals in our brain. More of the happy hormones, endorphins, are released in the brain when we anticipate a positive result and it comes true than when we expect failure and are pleasantly surprised. Optimism allows us to plan for the future even when said future seems bleak. Think of the starving populations in developing countries. They are ruled by the endorphins in their brains convincing them to keep working for a brighter future. In the face of extreme poverty, they don't give up. Their optimistic predisposition convinces them to strive for survival. Survival of the optimistic.

Second, let's move to the world of Physics for a moment. There are four fundamental forces that govern our universe: gravity, electromagnetic force, strong nuclear force, and weak nuclear force. These forces control how particles are formed and interact with each other. As I'm sure you know, all physical matter that we're aware of is made up of particles. Our universe and the balance of these forces are fine tuned to create everything we understand as real and tangible. This brings me to the question: how did these forces balance in such a way to create our universe? Who determined these constants? If that doesn't convince you of some sort of superior power, I'm not sure what will. Tell me, doesn't that change everything?

Man: Not really, no.

A slight pause.

Woman: That's it? That's all you have to say? I'm not sure that's much of a convincing argument.

Man: If you want an argument, you'll have to follow me.

The Man directs the audience over to a picnic table and mimes ordering a beer. A beer materializes as if from nowhere. The Woman hangs back, scoffing at the Man's comments here and there.

Man: Yes, we know that our Optimist friend is very clever.

Woman: Why, thank you!

Man: She used so-called science to back up her blind optimism. The Anthropic Principle, to be specific. I've heard it all before. Does it change everything? As I already said: no. Let me ask you this: what if it all was completely random? If we take the Multiverse Theory, then we can say infinite variations of the physical constants exist and we just so happen to be living in the tiny window that allows for the existence of life, as we know it. There are infinite other universes that function in infinite different ways. What makes us so special? What makes you think some intelligent being fine-tuned the universe for our existence? You're trying to make sense of something that's purely absurd and random.

As for our biological predisposition to optimism? Great, our bodies are predisposed to chemical lies. It naturally deceives us. The world is falling apart around us and our bodies are telling us to soldier on. That's probably why I didn't end things years ago. I'm predisposed to fight for this miserable life. Do I actually want to? Probably not, but these damn endorphins keep getting in my way.

Let's set aside principles and hormones and think for ourselves for just a moment. Don't worry. I'm not going to put you on the spot. I just want you to make a choice. To help, I'd like to offer you a cliché. Take this glass of beer. Is your metaphorical glass of beer half-full or half-empty? Traditionally, these are the two options we have in life, but what about a third? The third is perhaps this: you're thirsty and need to take the edge off, so you drink the beer instead of making such a fuss. You're lucky to have something to drink in the first place. Not everyone does! Drink it, hydrate, and move on. The beer might numb the pain a little too.

Woman: Those are some interesting points. Maybe we are all floating around in our random existence after all. Just one problem: how do we decide who wins this little debate?

Man: We could call it a draw?

Woman: Before we do that, let's try one more scenario. What do you think they would do in an apocalypse?

Man: What do you mean?

Woman: When faced with an inevitable apocalypse, how do you think an optimist would react versus a pessimist? For example, I think a pessimist would give up and commit suicide before anything actually happened.

Man: Maybe, but an optimist would deny, deny, deny. They would keep going on with their lives and pretend like nothing was happening.

Woman: No, that's almost more pessimistic. I think an optimist would make the most of the time they had left. Maybe even try to find a solution to delay the apocalypse or prevent it all together.

Man: I'm going to play devil's advocate and say that's the third option.

Woman: Where did this third option thing come from? I don't remember anyone ever saying anything about that.

Man: That's something I actually worked in myself! It's basically what they talked about while they were in El Dorado.

Woman: You mean when they were hallucinating?

Man: They were there! It's an important part of the story.

Woman: Some people think that part is just an extended hallucination sequence. They were starved and dehydrated from being lost in the jungle.

Man: Then where did all that gold come from?

Woman: Maybe they found it somewhere. I don't know. I just don't think they actually found a secret, perfect society. That seems impossible.

Man: We're debating fiction. A lot seems impossible in this story. People died and came back to life.

Woman: But the Eldorado chapter is a stretch.

Man: I don't think so. I think it's a metaphor for everything we're doing wrong in society. In El Dorado, all citizens are equal. In El Dorado, money means nothing. In El Dorado, there is no judicial system. Criminals are rehabilitated and contribute to their community.

Woman: Sounds made up.

Man: Well, exactly. It's not actually possible. Let's just agree it's a metaphor for everything our famous philosopher stood for.

Woman: Yes, but my major problem with the chapter is if it was so wonderful, why did they decide to leave?

Man: Because of the Girl.

Woman: They left so-called paradise because of the Girl?

Man: Yes, and do you know what the worst part is? The love of his life sent him off into the jungle just so she could be some rich man's lover.

Woman: She was trying to find the tiniest sliver of stability. Maybe they shouldn't have reunited back in Lisbon. Maybe his lips should never have brushed the middle knuckle of her left hand in the first place!

Man: So you're saying that it's all his fault.

Woman: Quite frankly, yes. But, you have to understand where she's coming from. He kept his promise, but it resulted in disaster. Yes, she got him kicked out of her father's house for kissing her. Yes, that set in motion a series of events that led to her rape, mutilation, and life as a concubine. Yes, he meant well, but it kept digging her further and further into misery. The governor was her way out.

Man: He thought she was a prisoner. He tried to rescue her.

Woman: Now you're skipping ahead to next chapter. There are some important details missing.

Man: I'll tell this part. When they found their way out of the jungle, the Boy sent his valet to buy the Girl from the governor. It was a good plan, but, as with most of this story, things went awry pretty quickly. Although they were reunited with a number of people they thought long dead, like the Girl's brother, they were robbed several times on their way back to Europe. The Girl was even sold to a Turkish Prince as a slave. The Boy had a little gold left over from El Dorado, so he gave it to the Prince to set her free.

Woman: By the time they were reunited, her hands were cracked and bleeding from doing the Prince's laundry every day. Her face was bruised from his abuse. Her skin was wrinkled from years of violence and stress. It seemed like she aged decades in just a few years.

Man: But he kept his promise. He rescued her and married her.

Woman: You make it sound so romantic. She practically dragged him to the altar.

Man: He was just a little surprised that she had aged so much in such a short time… like a fine wine, of course!

Woman: A fine wine that's been to hell and back. She wanted it to be over. She wanted her simple life with him, her little simpleton.

Man: Exactly! After the wedding, the old woman pointed out a plot of land that was for sale. He bought it with the last of the El Dorado gold and they set out to make a life for themselves.

They pick up tools and begin working in the garden. The Woman can be spreading seeds (or something similar) and the Man can be digging (or something similar).

Woman: Their own little paradise. Or as close as they could get.

Man: They were all finally free and they all got to work. The valet started a modest import/export business to support the garden.

Woman: The Girl learned to make pastries, and the old woman learned to knit. They all did their part.

Man: The Boy rolled up his sleeves and dug into the dirt. He resigned himself to a life of hard labour.

Woman: Wait. *(They stop working)* We skipped another important part.

Man: What part? Didn't they pretty much just buy the garden and get to work?

Woman: We're forgetting the dervish.

Man: You're right! That part's pretty important. It's the scene where the Boy finally comes to his senses.

Woman: To be honest, I'm not entirely surprised that you forgot.

Man: Set up for the dervish scene then?

Woman: Set up for the dervish scene!

The Woman leaves to set up. The Man addresses the audience.

Man: The Boy thought that buying the garden would shut everyone up and make everyone happy. Boy, was he wrong! The two philosophers wouldn't stop debating themselves in circles. The situation was getting pretty dire until they heard about a local religious man, a dervish, who was known as the greatest philosopher in all of Turkey. They thought he might settle things once and for all.

The Man approaches the "mansion" and knocks on the door. The Woman, dressed as a sour-looking man, opens the door and peers at the Man.

Man: Excuse me, sir? Are you the famous dervish?

Woman: I may be. Why are you asking?

Man: They say you're the best philosopher in all of Turkey.

Woman: What need do you have with a philosopher?

Man: We were wondering if you might be able to settle our debate. You see, it's been going on for quite some time and we thought that maybe-

Woman: Get on with it, young man. I don't have all day.

Man: Of course! We were just wondering about the purpose of humanity as it stands today. It's in a pretty wretched state, don't you think?

Woman: Go on…

Man: Well, we just want to know, why are we here? We've done a number to the world and it seems to have gotten us nowhere.

Woman: And what makes you think it's your job to figure it all out?

Man: But, your honour… we were wondering about the point of all this evil. Is it all for the best? Or is it all meaningless? Are we supposed to create our own meaning? What do you think?

Woman: I think you're wasting my time. When the King sends a ship to attack the enemy, do you think he worries about the comfort of the rats on board? I think not. Now, if you don't mind, it is time for me to slam the door in your faces.

The door slams and the Man steps back, exasperated. The Woman quickly becomes an old man passing by.

Man: Well, that was just horrifying!

Woman: I wouldn't think too much of it, my dear. It happens nearly every day.
Man: That he slams his door in someone's face?

Woman: Who? Oh, the dervish? I didn't think anyone bothered with him anymore. I meant the man that was killed down the street. It's making quite a scene. I assumed you were upset.

Man: Oh, I didn't know anyone was killed. What was his name?

Woman: I don't bother myself with those sorts of things, son. If I did, I think I'd drive myself insane. I keep my nose out of politics. I mainly just concern myself with fruit.

Man: Why fruit? Do you sell it or grow it or something?

Woman: Yes, that's exactly what I do. I have twenty acres of land where I plant, tend, and harvest the fruit myself. My daughters help me, of course. It's a family business and

it keeps us happy. I was just on my way home to dinner. You're welcome to join if you like.

Man: Thank you, but that's all right. I came to the dervish hoping to have some answers about the meaning of life and why evil exists in the world. It seems I'm leaving disappointed.

Woman: You know, son, I don't usually bother myself with any of that business. I keep myself happy and occupied at home. Believe me, you don't have time to debate the reason for human existence when you're up at dawn every day working in the fields.

Man: On second thought, I'd love to join you if the invitation is still open.

Woman: Of course. Follow me.

The Woman becomes herself again. The Man picks up a tool and hands it to her.

Woman: Now this is the point in the story where they roll up your sleeves, dig into the dirt, and find a scrap of happiness.

Man: They learn to shut up for a little while, at least.

Woman: It was a long, hard road to get them here, but they're happy now. Well, happy enough to keep going.

Man: If this were a normal love story, we'd say they lived happily ever after.

Woman: But it's not, so we can't.

Man: In this case, there are no guarantees.

Woman: In any case, there are no guarantees. The only thing you can be sure of is that the earth will keep spinning long after you're gone, and that's ok. Did you know most people call this story a satire?

Man: Really? I don't understand what's so funny about losing track of how many times you've been at death's door. How can all of those things happen to one person?

Woman: Well, it was fiction, but did you know that a lot of it was based on real events? Events that seem to keep repeating themselves.

Man: What do you think our famous philosopher had in mind when he wrote this so-called love story?

Woman: Maybe he wanted us to stop getting bogged down by life's greater purpose? Or maybe even to stop blaming other people for our misery and find happiness within ourselves?

Man: Maybe… but that was 250 years ago, so who knows?!

Woman: Candide: the naïve hero.

Man: The what?

Woman: Nevermind.

Man: Well, I guess it's time for us to get back to work.

Woman: Certainly is. As a wise man once said, "Let us take care of our garden".

Man: Who said that?

Woman: I don't remember.

Man: I like the sound of it.

Woman: Me too. *(Grabbing the beer from before)* Thirsty?

Man: Parched.

The Man finishes the beer and they mime getting back to work with the tools.

The End.

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