Critical Analysis Paper

In the story Candide by Voltaire one thing that stood out to me, is the recurring and almost cliché theme of “the grass isn’t always greener on the other side”. During the course of the story you see Candide go on this long drawn out hunt for Cunegonde and her love, yet in the end he didn’t want her because she was no longer beautiful. The question that arises during the course of the story is, why does Candide endure all of these horrible things just to get to a girl that in the end he no longer wants? That’s the question I focus on.

During the course of the story Candide endures being kicked out by the King, told he isn’t good enough for Cunegonde, war where there are thousands of people killed, and a utopian society that he escaped. The real question is why did he do all of this? There could be a number of reasons, it could be because he wanted to prove to the King that he was in fact good enough for Cunegonde or it could be that he truly loved her and wanted to be with her. Yet, if he truly loved her the next question would be why doesn’t he want her now that she has gotten older and is no longer beautiful? If I remember correctly, we were all taught that love conquers all things; which means that if he truly did love she then he would still want her no matter how hideous she was and he would be happy in his life as long as he was with her. This just goes to show that no matter what you do to get to the green pastures, the grass isn’t always greener when you get there.

Candide and Cunegonde’s love story, though the most significant, isn’t the only point where the theme is present. During the time where Candide is in Eldorado, everyone thought that it was such a great utopian society that had no wars and where no one could leave. Yet, as the story progressed you again saw the recurring theme that the grass isn’t always greener on the other side. Although Candide eventually did leave Eldorado, the theme still came back when he finally was reunited with Cunegonde.

In conclusion, there are many points in the story in which the theme “the grass isn’t always greener on the other side” appears. There also points in which several questions arise in the story in which we can use to further understand the story.