Some people say that their goal in life is to embrace the pursuit of happiness as stated in the Declaration of Independence. The pursuit of happiness is defined as “a fundamental right to freely pursue joy and live life in a way that makes you happy.” Everyone has the right to be happy and many people will do whatever they can to achieve this. Happiness can be found in many different ways like helping others, having a positive attitude, finding true love and many other different ways. In the stories of “Candide” and “Notes From the Underground”, both of the main characters do whatever they can to be happy and one character succeeds to find their happiness while the other one fails to do so. Both characters go through many different challenging obstacles and barriers and endure difficult journeys, but they both have the same goal of finding true happiness.

In the story of “Candide”, Candide goes through hell and back to find and save the love of his life, Cunegonde. He travels to many places throughout his journey and no matter what situation he is in, he is always thinking about his love Cunegonde. Why does he go through all of this trouble for Cunegonde? It is because all Candide wants in his life is happiness and he thinks that he can find true happiness through Cunegonde, which is why he travels around the world to find her. When he is finally reunited with Cunegonde, she turns out to be ugly and unattractive. Candide is still ecstatic that he found her and is still very happy to be with her. Candide also left a utopian society called “El Dorado” where everything seemed perfect to
continue his journey of finding Cunegonde. Throughout his journey, Candide was flogged, tortured and put through hell but he never gave up on his goal of finding Cunegonde and knew that once he found her everything was going to be okay and that he was going to finally find true happiness. An example of this is on page 103, “He had scarcely covered two leagues when four other heroes, each six feet tall, overtook him, bound him, and threw him into a dungeon. At the court martial they asked which he preferred, to be flogged thirty-six times or to receive a dozen bullets in the brain.” Candide endured this pain and was flogged then escaped and continued his journey of finding Cunegonde. Candide could have brought Cunegonde back to the utopian society of “El Dorado” but decides to live the farmer’s life with Cunegonde and his friends instead. They decided that they would be more happy with this lifestyle rather than going to “El Dorado” or any other place. Candide finally found his true happiness reuniting with Cunegonde and his friends and by “cultivating their garden”

Candide wandered around without knowing where he was going because all that was on his mind was Cunegonde and an example of this is on page 102 it, “Candide, ejected from the earthly paradise, wandered for a long time without knowing where he was going, weeping, raising his eyes to heaven, and gazing back frequently on the most beautiful of castles which contained the most beautiful of baron’s daughters.” Candide does not care where he is going, all he can think about is Cunegonde and the incident where they got caught kissing behind the screen. He is completely oblivious to everything around him until some men come up to him and on the same page just a few paragraphs below, Candide is asked, “Don’t you love her dearly...?”, Candide responds “I do indeed, I dearly love miss Cunegonde.” He knew that this
was true happiness and love and knew that Cunegonde is the woman that would make him happy.

Candide was willing to do anything to protect his lady Cunegonde. An example of this is on page 113 where Candide kills the Grand Inquisitor and a Jew in order to save his beloved Cunegonde. “If this holy man calls for help, he will certainly have me burned, and perhaps Cunegonde as well: he has already had me whipped without mercy; he is my rival; I have already killed once; why hesitate? It was quick, clear change of reasoning; without giving the Inquisitor time to recover from his surprise, he ran him through, I lay him beside the Jew.”

Candide killed the Inquisitor and the Jew because he needed to protect his love Cunegonde. If Cunegonde were to die, Candide would be devastated and most likely never be happy again so he felt like he needed to do what he had to do in order to save Cunegonde. These examples from the text show that Candide cares about Cunegonde greatly and exemplifies that Cunegonde is Candide’s source of true happiness.

While Candide was successful in finding his true happiness, The Underground Man has a different story in trying to find his happiness. The Underground Man is a very alienated individual who just wants to be accepted in society and wants to be happy. This is very difficult for him however, because he is very self centered and thinks that he is far more superior to everyone else and believes that he is much more intelligent than everyone else. The Underground Man was an orphan and did not have any close relationships with anyone growing up therefore making him an unhappy individual. He wants people to like and respect him but finds a lot of trouble doing so. All The Underground Man wants is to just find
happiness and have good relationships with other people but no matter how hard he tries, he just ends up driving people away from him. The incident with his “friends” at dinner and his situation with Liza shows how he wants people to like him so he can be happy but he fails to do so.

The Underground Man invited himself to a dinner with his old high school “friends” to try and resurrect his friendship with them. During this dinner he is very rude and ends up insulting them causing his presence to become unwanted by them. On page 752, The Underground Man begged for friendship from his old classmates. “Either they’ll all fall on their knees, embracing me, begging for my friendship, or ... or else, I’ll give Zverkov a slap in the face.” This shows how The Underground Man just wants friends and to be accepted but also shows how he can never achieve this because of his attitude. His intentions are to make friends and be accepted in society so he can be happy but his negative attitude towards others prevents this.

After the very unsuccessful dinner, they all decide to go to a brothel and The Underground Man tags along with them. A few pages later on 755, The Underground Man is in a brothel and when a girl named Liza walks in he says, “I glanced up mechanically at the girl who’d come in: before me there flashed a fresh, young, slightly pale face with straight dark brows and a serious, seemingly astonished look. I liked that immediately.” This scene showed that The Underground Man had the potential to care about somebody even though it was a girl from a brothel. The Underground Man thinks of compliments in his head but does not say them to her. Later on in the story, this girl Liza decides to visit The Underground Man at his
apartment. The Underground Man and Liza both had some sort of feelings for each other and this gave The Underground Man a hope for happiness. However, The Underground Man still does not show her respect and is unpleasant with her and makes fun of her and her profession. On page 777, The Underground Man says, “I’d insulted her once and for all, but... there’s nothing more to be said, she fully understood that I was a despicable man, and, most important, that I was incapable of loving her.” He ends up driving her away from him. The Underground Man could have found true happiness with Liza because he genuinely had feelings for her but was unable to do so because of his actions.

Both of these characters in these two stories, Candide and The Underground Man, ultimately had the same goal of finding true happiness throughout their journeys. Both characters were on the pursuit of happiness and did everything that they could to achieve this. Candide succeeded while The Underground Man failed to do so. They did whatever they had to do in order to be happy whether it was having to kill someone or wanting to slap a “friend” in order to receive respect and friendship. Candide was able to achieve his happiness because he did everything in his power to find and protect his love, Cunegonde. The Underground Man was unsuccessful in finding happiness because of his very poor attitude towards others. Both characters went through many different challenging obstacles and barriers and endured difficult journeys, but they both had the same goal of finding true happiness.