

Assignment Schedule #2

Some of these questions are difficult! Usually, there are not very many pages to read. However, strong answers will require multiple readings, and maybe discussion with Prof. Roy (remember that e-mail is an option).

A6: Read Gyekye and the first two paragraphs of Mackie on p. 55. Respond to each of the following:

- 1) In class, we have considered (or will consider) a version of the problem with premises and conclusion as follows.
 1. There is evil.
 2. If a being is G, then it prevents all evil it can prevent
 3. If a being is OO, then it can prevent all evil.

 4. There is no OOG being

where ‘OOG’ stands for ‘Omnipotent, Omniscient and wholly Good’. With careful attention to their exact wording, explain how reasoning for the the “Western” version of the problem from the second paragraph of Gyekye, and then the version described in the second paragraph of Mackie are similar to this one. Do you see any substantive differences? Explain. (Hint: Though neither Mackie nor Gyekye set up the argument officially, a little fishing should expose their premises. Also, Gyekye and Mackie each merge talk about valid arguments with talk about corresponding inconsistent stories – recognizing this may help you to identify all their premises.)

- 2) In the upper half of p. 41, responding to Busia (quoted on p. 40), Gyekye says “it is clear that the Akan concept of deity does generate the philosophical problem of evil.” Why does he say this? That is, why does he think Busia’s appeal to other spirits fails to remove the problem? From this do you see any substantive difference for Akan and Western versions of the problem? Explain.

EX: What *explanations* for evil seem to have been suggested by Akan thinkers? Do you think that Western thinkers might pose parallel responses? Why or why not?

A7: Read Rowe. Respond to each of the following:

- 1) In discussion of the G. E. Moore shift, Rowe says, “it is a truth of logic that if I is valid II must be valid as well.” (i) Using our definitions and formats, explain why this is so. (Hint: if I is valid, there is no story with p true, q true and not- r true. If there is no such story, what do you know about argument II? Why?) (ii) Explain how the G. E. Moore shift can be applied to the problem of evil argument. Do you think this is an effective response? Why?
- 2) What is the “fallacious reasoning” (or “Job”) response to the problem of evil? (i) Explain the Job response, and contrast it with the G. E. Moore shift. Does either offer

a positive explanation for evil? How, then, do the responses differ? (iii) Based on class discussion, do you think these responses together are sufficient for the theist? Explain.

EX: Having seen this basic exposure to the issues, what do you think about the problem of evil? That is: (i) What do you think is the most promising line of reply to the problem, and how is it supposed to work? (ii) Do you think this line succeeds? Explain (perhaps with reference to potential objections).

A8: Read Mackie pp. 55-57. Respond to each of the following:

1) Starting at the bottom of p. 56, Mackie considers a defense according to which evil is a causal *means* to good. (i) In the version of the argument from below, which premise is under attack? In your own words, say how the defense is supposed to work. (ii) In your own words, describe Mackie's response to the defense. (iii) Evaluate: do you think the "evil a means to good" defense works?

1. there is evil
2. if a being is G, then it prevents evil unless it has a morally sufficient reason (for allowing it)
3. if a being is OO, then it never has a morally sufficient reason (for allowing evil)

4. there is no OOG being

2) In note (2), Mackie refers to Hick. Given what you know about Hick from Rowe: (i) explain the sense in which Hick's theodicy is "instrumental" (that is, the sense in which evil functions as an instrument or *means*). (ii) Say how Mackie would respond to Hick.

EX: Notice that Rowe *grants* that Hick's theodicy explains evil which in fact results in good. Given this, contrast Rowe's response to the "causal means" defense with Mackie's.

A9: Read Mackie pp. 57-62 and Plantinga, 65-68. Respond to the following:

1) These readings discuss the *free will* defense against the problem of evil. In the version of the problem of evil argument from A8.1, which premise does the free will defense attack? In your own words, explain how this defense is supposed to work.

2) Mackie asserts that it is *possible* for people to be such that they always freely choose the good. (i) Explain the basis on which Mackie makes this claim. It is *crucial* that you grasp this! (ii) Consider the following response: "If men always choose the good then they are not free." Based on Plantinga and Mackie, explain Mackie's reply; that is, explain why Mackie thinks that freedom *must* be compatible with the possibility of everyone always going right. Hint: Set aside what god *can* bring about; at this stage, Mackie thinks his claim *follows* from what it is to be free.

EX: Consider the claim, “God’s goodness is not ours.” (i) How is this supposed to help with the problem of evil – what premise of the argument from A8.1 is under attack? How does this attack work? (ii) Why does Mackie reject this response? (iii) Evaluate: do you think the response works? Why or why not?

A10: Read Plantinga pp. 68-73, and Mackie pp. 62-64. Respond to the following:

- 1) Consider the following argument (suggested by Mackie):
 1. There is a possible world (consistent story) where everyone always freely goes right.
 2. An OOG being can actualize any possible world.
 - _____
 3. An OOG being can actualize a possible world where everyone always freely goes right.

(i) Explain why Mackie thinks the theist must accept these premises. (ii) Why is this important? What is the problem for the free will defense if Mackie is right?
- 2) Plantinga attacks a premise of this argument. Which premise does Plantinga attack? and, in your own words, why does he think it is false?

A11: Read Plantinga pp. 74-77 and reread Mackie 62-64. Respond to the following:

- 1) Mackie appears to concede that the argument from, A10.1 is unsound (“So far so good, and this disposes...”), but to maintain that its conclusion is still true. His suggestion is that god can “pick and choose” among the beings he will create. That is, he seems to argue,
 1. There is an *accessible* world where everyone always freely goes right.
 2. An OOG being can actualize any accessible world.
 - _____
 3. An OOG being can actualize a world where everyone always freely goes right.

(i) From lecture, what is an “accessible” world, and how is this this version of the argument supposed to improve on the one from before? Why does Mackie accept its premises?
 - 2) Now how does Plantinga attack? (i) What is transworld depravity? and how does Plantinga undercut the supermarket? Which premise is under attack? (ii) What do you think? Does Plantinga or Mackie have the stronger hand? Explain.
- EX: Roy offers a response to Mackie’s final argument different from the one Plantinga gives. What is Roy’s proposal? Compare and evaluate.

Paper Assigned