

Philosophy and Ethics: Chapter 1.6: Exam question plan

Critically assess whether it is possible to defend monotheism in the face of the existence of evil.
(30 marks)

IS POSSIBLE	IS NOT POSSIBLE
St Augustine/the free will defence - God made a perfect world, Genesis 1:31 – “<i>God saw all that he’d made and it was very good</i>” and variety is a part of this goodness. Evil is a privation (privatio boni) of good. Evil came into the world through the Fall of the angels, who were all created perfectly but received different amounts of grace (assistance in their attempts to be holy) from God, so fell away from God and wanted to become ‘lords of their own being’ through their use of free-will. Luke 10:18 – “<i>I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven</i>” This is repeated: God gave humans free-will, Adam and Eve used free-will and were tempted by Satan when eating the forbidden fruit (the Fall of Man), creating original sin (doctrine of original sin), present in all humans because we were seminally present in Adam and Eve. Moral and natural evil is caused by humans, not God, as The Fall of Man created a cosmological disturbance. ‘<i>Confessions</i>’ (AD397-400) – “<i>free-will is the cause of our doing evil</i>”. Angels not mentioned in Genesis 2 and 3, except as guards of the tree of life. Bible does not say serpent was the devil in disguise.	{logical problem} Epicurus. Hume ‘<i>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion</i>’ – “<i>is he willing to prevent evil, but not able?... is he able but not willing?</i>” The inconsistent triad/The Epicurean Paradox – evil exists, god is omnipotent, god is omnibenevolent. Rejects monotheism, but not deism.
Irenaeus – the soul-making theodicy (developed by Hick), God allows evil in the world to let humans develop and make our own moral decisions (eg. patience, forgiveness). Without evil, we could not appreciate good, we need to be able to compare. Humans are made imago dei, Genesis 1:26 – “<i>Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness</i>”, which includes us having free-will (likened God as a potter moulding his clay) There’s a distinction between image and likeness – we have to grow into God’s likeness through acting morally with our freedom of choice, and reach our potential, by overcoming difficulties and resisting temptations to do wrong. (eg, Jonah and the Whale) We are not developed enough initially (like a baby) to be in God’s likeness as well as image. We cannot be in God’s likeness in this world, but after death – we complete our spiritual development in the afterlife.	{evidential problem/a posteriori} Find the most plausible explanation for our observations. John Stuart Mill says the natural world is full of evil, believes God is sadistic “<i>nearly all the things that men are hanged or imprisoned for doing to one another are Nature’s everyday performances</i>”. Arguing against supporters of the teleological argument (Paley, Aquinas). “<i>A trifling chemical change... starves a million of people</i>”. Says we should not be looking to God for guidance, should not worship his ‘goodness’
John Hick (1922-2012) ‘<i>Evil and the God of Love</i>’ - “<i>a world which is to be a person-making environment cannot be a pain-free paradise but must contain challenges and dangers</i>’. The world is a ‘vale of soul-making’ (borrowed from poet John Keats. Developed Irenaeus’ theodicy to suit the 20th-century mind, which had accepted evolution and rejected the Augustinian theodicy (Hick also rejected	{evidential problem/a posteriori}