

Study Questions 10**Reading for Week 11****Nov 24 *The problem of evil***

[You should read Palmer's "Introduction" for an interpretation of who *Candide* is aimed at.]

PLUCHE (Palmer 209-220)

1. "Whatever Animals enjoy, 'tis all for his Use; that in Reality they are his Slaves" (209)? How does this compare with Diderot? What justification does Pluche give for his views?
2. What justification does Pluche give for the existence of earthquakes? (You can compare this with Voltaire's treatment in *Candide*). "Every thing is calculated by Divine Wisdom to make us richer, wiser or better..." (213). Does Leibniz hold this view too?
3. "The Whole system of nature may aptly be compared to a large Watch..." (217) This page gives a version of the Argument from Design, later made famous by Paley in the 19th C. In some ways, isn't Pluche's argument similar to Mandeville's?

VOLTAIRE, *Candide* (Palmer 43-141)

1. What is Voltaire satirizing with such remarks as "Observe, that the nose is formed for spectacles, and therefore we wear spectacles" (48)? Did Leibniz claim that every individual thing is for the best in this best of all possible worlds? What "experimental philosophy" was Pangloss performing with Paquette's assistance?
2. Pangloss says "For private misfortunes constitute the general good..." (57). Whose philosophy is that that reminiscent of?
3. Pangloss says "Liberty [free will] is consistent with absolute necessity" (59). Did Leibniz believe this (see p. 195)? Or did he try to distinguish between absolute necessity and moral necessity (196)?
4. What does Voltaire's treatment of the Jew Isaachar reveal about the limits of the tolerance that Voltaire himself preached?

5. “‘We do not pray to Him at all,’ said the respectable sage; ‘we have nothing to ask of Him, He has given us all we want, and we give Him thanks incessantly.’” (91) How does this compare with Voltaire’s own views on religion, as expressed in the other readings?
6. What terrible blunder does Palmer make in the footnote on p. 99?
7. Why does Martin call himself a Manichean (100, 107)? What evidence does he adduce? Do you think this is Voltaire’s view too? Martin: “if hawks have always had the same nature, why should you pretend that mankind change theirs?” Martin seems more of a pessimist than a Manichean...
8. What do you think Voltaire thinks of the state of science in his time, given what he says about the Academy of Sciences at Bordeaux and the four volumes of memoirs of the Venetian Academy of Sciences in Pococurante’s library?
9. What do you think the moral of the story is?

VOLTAIRE, "Final Causes" (Palmer 220-222)

1. What argument is Voltaire describing (220)? “All noses do not bear spectacles” (221)—written 6 years after *Candide*.
2. What do you think is Voltaire’s considered judgement on the Argument from Design?