

**Study Questions 11****Reading for Week 12*****Dec 1 Mores and Morals 2***

[You should read Palmer's "Introduction", pp. 16-19 on the exchange between Voltaire and Rousseau, and pp. 27-29 for an interpretation of *We Must Take Sides*.]

**VOLTAIRE, Poem upon the Destruction of Lisbon, ROUSSEAU, Letter to Voltaire (Palmer 157-173)**

1. Does Voltaire intend his postscript to undermine what he just wrote about Revelation (158)? [Note what Palmer says about this.]
2. "All's right, your answer, the eternal cause, /Rules not by partial, but by general laws." (ll. 49-50) What is that couplet directed at? What is Voltaire's opinion of Pope?
3. What is the overall message of the poem?
4. Does Rousseau agree with Pope and Leibniz (166)? Why? What inconsistency does Palmer find in Rousseau's claim that "most of the physical evils we experience are really of our own making" (167)?
5. Is Rousseau correct in his judgement that Voltaire has "given a much need correction to Pope's system" (168)? Is "all is well, on the whole" (169) a fair corrective to the version of optimism that Voltaire is parodying?
6. Does Rousseau believe in the immortality of the soul (171)? How is this related to the problem of divine providence? "I have suffered too much in this life not to expect another" (173). Is this a good reason for believing in life after death?

**VOLTAIRE, "We must take sides" (Palmer 223-244)**

1. "There is, therefore, a single, universal, and powerful intelligence, acting always by invariable laws." (225) Is the argument of which this is the conclusion a strong argument for the existence of God?
2. "Given the existence of something, it is demonstrated that something has existed for all eternity" (225). Leibniz criticized this argument when he found it in Locke. Can you see what is fallacious about it?

3. What is the nature of the first principle that Voltaire thinks he has demonstrated in I and II? On what grounds does Voltaire think that the universe is eternal? What argument does he give against Spinoza's views (227-228)?
4. Does Voltaire agree with Leibniz's take on free will (231)? Does Voltaire think that eating animals is moral (232)?
5. What does Voltaire's treatment of myths of the Hindus and Syrians tell us about 18<sup>th</sup> C European knowledge of other cultures? What do you think of Epicurus's dilemma (235-6)?
6. Does Voltaire see any indications of Zoroastrian influence on Biblical doctrines (237)?
7. "There is no better way of deciding things than by a majority of votes." (238) Is Voltaire serious in this praise of paganism?
8. Does the Theist represent Voltaire's own views? Or does the Citizen?