

## The Existence of God and Evil

Prompt One

Sep 27, 2022

Philosophy 110P

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Words: 902

In “*Evil and Omnipotence*”, J.L. Mackie argues against the existence of God using the existence of evil as his main point of evidence. He further drives the point of God being an all good person who is perfect, but yet God still allows evil in the world. While I believe that Mackie’s argument can hold a considerable amount of weight, I believe that he is wrong as I look to argue that God is all good with the same being true for his intentions, but in order to do so there must be some evil in order to convey the good.

Within “*Evil and Omnipotence*”, the steps of Mackie’s argument are as follows “God is omnipotent; God is wholly good; and yet evil exists (Mackie 1955 p.200).” By this quote, I can infer that Mackie means to say that God is thought of as an all powerful being with all good intentions and yet there is still evil in the world causing death and destruction in people’s lives. But if one starts to think of how the world would be without the horrific events like World War II and 9/11, then there would have been no unity in those times which translated into the successes we have now with more advanced militaries and border security to help serve and protect our country. With that being said, I believe that evil is needed to translate the good and while tragic losses may happen it is all a part of a greater good only omnipotent beings could understand.

Mackie extends upon his points throughout his article by detailing what he calls “Fallacious Solutions”. One of his arguments is against the objection that “”Good cannot exist

without evil” or “Evil is necessary as a counterpart to good.”(Mackie 1955 p.203).” Mackie uses this as a chance to state that if one believes that there can be no good without evil then that means “God is not omnipotent or that there are some limits to what an omnipotent thing can do (Mackie 1955 p.203).” However, with this argument, Mackie seems to fail to realize that omnipotent beings have a much greater insight not only into life but beyond what we may think or do. Therefore, while it may seem like there must be evil to convey good in the universe, it may just be the only way to get good that God may want us to know. This can also be drawn into beliefs of Christainty which believe in the afterlife and that real life is just the trial of pain and suffering to get to the ultimate and satisfying life afterwards.

The premises of Mackie’s argument are as follows:

- (P1) God is omnipotent and wholly good
- (P2) A good being always eliminates evil as far as it can
- (P3) An omnipotent being can eliminate evil
- (P4) So if God exists, there is no evil
- (P5) There is evil
- (C) So, God does not exist

This argument is strong and I agree with premises one through three, however, premise four is where I begin to disagree with Mackie’s argument. By reading premise two it says, “A good being always eliminates evil as far as it can”, therefore implying that evil is eliminated to the extent in which it is needed without bringing about much greater problems. Then with premise three it is said that, “An omnipotent being can eliminate evil”, which in this there should be an emphasis put on the word “can”. This is because if an omnipotent being seems obligated to exterminate the evil that may come against other beings then it may but it is not necessarily a

requirement. So for premise four to go into saying that , “So, if God exists, there is no evil”, completely neglects the word “can” and seems to make it seem more like a necessity. Because of this point it disproves the conclusion that God does not exist.

A rebuttal to my argument could be that if God is supposed to be wholly good and have the ability to take away all evil, then why not do that and only allow for just good. An argument against that could be that if things were all good then there would be no such thing as good. It would make it impossible to differentiate good things from being normal and consistent which in turn would probably lead to them even seeming meaningless all together. An amendment to premise one could be made to say that “God is omnipotent and has wholly good intentions” rather than God just being wholly good. This is important to convey the difference between being wholly good and having wholly good intentions because if God were wholly good then all evil would, in turn, have to be eliminated. But with that would be much greater consequences then what we may be able to think of currently with us being less than omnipotent beings. When you instead use the argument of having good intentions, it explains the trials and tribulations that one typically goes through in order to achieve and receive the good result that is desired. With these points I can further conclude that Mackie’s conclusion is inaccurate.

My conclusion is that if God exists then all evil that should and needs to be eliminated will be. Through this I argue that Mackie’s arguments of God not existing when having premises using the word “can” negates the overall conclusion that he was attempting to draw.

## **Bibliography**

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