

Metaphysics
Problem Set 2
September 18th, 2002.
Due date: September 23rd.

Please type and staple your answers.
NB: Use your own words: no quotation, no paraphrase.

1. 'Before the invention of the theory of evolution by natural selection, the hypothesis that life on Earth came into existence as a result of intelligent design was the only reasonable thing for an educated person to believe.' Discuss. As part of your discussion of this claim, consider at least TWO competing hypotheses about the origins of life on Earth, other than the theory of evolution by natural selection. (You may want to consider some of the hypotheses suggested by Hume in the *Dialogues*.) Say whether these competing hypotheses provide better or worse explanations of life on Earth than the hypothesis of intelligent design, and why.

2. According to van Inwagen (in 'The Magnitude, Duration, and Distribution of Evil: A Theodicy'), God has a good reason for allowing people to endure terrible suffering as a result of natural disasters, rather than intervening to prevent this suffering.

(i) Briefly explain the essential idea behind van Inwagen's account of God's motivations. (If you like, this part of your answer could take the form of an answer by God to a prayer for relief made by someone experiencing great suffering as a result of some horrible accident.)

(ii) Does van Inwagen's proposal succeed as a response to the argument from evil against the existence of God? Defend your answer.