Phil. 114 1/25/2016

1. Forms of the Problem of Evil

2. The Problem of Horrendous Evils

3. The Basics of the Free Will Defense

-Limitations: natural evils, excessively harmful and very predictable actions, the possibility of better chances

-Does God Take Risks?

4. Cause and Effect Theodicy

5. A World in Which Things Never Got Very Bad?

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1. Libertarian/Incompatibilist freedom: Compatibilism vs. Incompatibilism: In the 2009 PhilPapers Surveys [http://philpapers.org/surveys/], the results for ‘Free will: compatibilism, libertarianism, or no free will?’ were:

Among ‘All respondents’ in the ‘Target faculty’:

Accept or lean toward: compatibilism 550 / 931 (59.1%)

Other 139 / 931 (14.9%)

Accept or lean toward: libertarianism 128 / 931 (13.7%)

Accept or lean toward: no free will 114 / 931 (12.2%)

Among specialists in ‘Metaphysics’ in the ‘Target faculty’:

Accept or lean toward: compatibilism 130 / 234 (55.6%)

Accept or lean toward: libertarianism 50 / 234 (21.4%)

Accept or lean toward: no free will 31 / 234 (13.2%)

Other 23 / 234 (9.8%)

Among specialists in ‘Philosophy of Action’ in the ‘Target faculty’:

Accept or lean toward: compatibilism 23 / 43 (53.5%)

Accept or lean toward: libertarianism 8 / 43 (18.6%)

Other 7 / 43 (16.3%)

Accept or lean toward: no free will 5 / 43 (11.6%)

1. Libertarian/Incompatibilist freedom: Compatibilism vs. Incompatibilism: The “best argument for incompatibilism” [note: this type of “consequence” argument is due to Peter van Inwagen]:

Lewis: “The best argument for incompatibilism rests on a plausible principle that unfreedom is closed under implication. Consider the prefix ‘it is true that, and such-and-such agent never had any choice about whether’, abbreviated ‘Unfree’; suppose we have some premises (zero or more) that imply a conclusion; prefix ‘Unfree’ to each premise and to the conclusion; then the closure principle says that the prefixed premises imply the prefixed conclusion. Given determinism, apply closure to the implication that takes us from preconditions outside character - long ago, perhaps - and deterministic laws of nature to the predetermined choice. Conclude that the choice is unfree.” (pp. 155-6)

-But let’s instead (because it has a shot at being right) use this “single-premise” principle:  
[Unfree(P) & (P entails Q)] → Unfree(Q)  
-Let P be the conjunction of the laws of nature and the state of the universe at some time before you ever existed, and let Q be the occurrence of your raising your hand (or whatever supposedly free action we take as our example).

-Assuming determinism, we can derive Unfree(Q), showing (at least assuming our principle) that freedom is incompatible with determinism

2. Libertarian/Incompatibilist freedom: Compatibilism vs. Incompatibilism: The “best argument for compatibilism”:

Lewis: “The best argument for compatibilism is that we know better that we are sometimes free than that we ever escape predetermination; wherefore it may be for all we know that we are free but predetermined.” (p. 155)

-My response on behalf of the incompatibilist: Simply grant the conclusion. This isn’t an argument for compatibilism, but just for the epistemic possibility (possibility for all we know) of compatibilism, which I would have been happy to spot Lewis from the outset.

3. Does God Take Risks?: Middle knowledge

-Omniscience, comphrensive foreknowledge, and “future contingents”

-simple foreknowledge vs. middle knowledge (of conditionals like: If Keith is in situation S-387, he will (freely) sin)

-free will defense with and without middle knowledge

There would be nowhere to stop, short of a divinely arranged paradise in which human freedom would be narrowly circumscribed, moral responsibility largely eliminated, and in which the drama of man's story would be reduced to the level of a television serial. We always know that the rugged hero who upholds law and order is going to win the climactic gun fight. And if every time a tyrant set out to trample upon human freedom we could be sure in advance that some apparent accident would providentially remove him from the scene it would no longer be true that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance; and indeed vigilance, and the willingness to make sacrifices for human liberty, would no longer be virtues and would no longer be evoked in mankind. If we knew in advance that no really serious threat to them could ever arise, the struggle for righteousness and human dignity would become unreal. Once again, then, we are confronted by the integral character of the existing order of things such that bane and blessing are intimately bound together within it, and such that not even an unfettered imagination can see how to remove the possibility of the one without at the same time forfeiting the possibility of the other. –Hick, p. 181