**Phil. 114 4/20/2016**

The first batch of final exam questions will be coming later today (Wed., 4/20), but here’s an early one, relevant to today’s class:

Explain what middle knowledge is. Then explain, at greater length, Robert Adams’s main reasons for denying that God has middle knowledge (the two arguments we discussed in class) in “Middle Knowledge and the Problem of Evil.” Then explain what you think are the most important objections to Adams’s arguments and critically evaluate the arguments in light of those objections.

**Phil. 114 4/18/2016 R. Adams “Middle Knowledge and the Problem of Evil” -- reposted on 4/20 w/o change**

**Middle Knowledge – What is it?:**

-clear: knowledge of conditionals (if, then statements)

-also clear: MK is supposed to be what God would need to know to exercise risk-free providential control over a world containing libertarian free actions by creatures

-But Adams example (from the very opening of his paper) is a case of “Monday morning quarterbacking”: If President Kennedy had not been shot, he [would / would not have] bombed North Vietnam

-Must be assuming that the above is true and is known to omniscient God after the fact iff this was true and known to God beforehand: If Kennedy is not shot, he [will / won’t] bomb North Vietnam

-I reject this assumption – vehemently [this rejection eventually goaded me into writing the long paper, not assigned in this class, here <http://mind.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/reprint/fzp149?ijkey=aggvZCOYZzpeZzX&keytype=ref> ], but we are not going to geek out over the different kinds of conditionals. The key moves in Adams’s argument can be applied to both the backward- and forward-directed conditionals

-I will note that this gives us good reason to skip the whole mess about “possible worlds semantics” that Adams is going on about at and around p. 113b: I think such an account is only good for the backward-directed, providentially useless conditionals

**How MK is important to the Problem of Evil**: explained at p. 109b, in the paragraph that begins: “The idea of middle knowledge emerges…”

**Adams’s main claim**: the conditionals in question are not true [Neither A🡪C nor A🡪~C is true where A describes a situation in which a creature is free, and C describes what the creature freely does], and so God, though omniscient, does not know them

-So, if God is to get free actions, God is going to have to take some risks

-key defensive maneuver: the “probably” maneuver: God can still know what we would *probably* do in some situations. More generally, I suppose, God can know the chances that we would freely do this or that in various situations in which we are free: pp. 111a.8-b.1.

-This is used to “soften the blow” – explain away intuitive difficulties with Adams’s main claim.

-One key suggested argument for the main claim: the argument through “might” conditionals: p. 110b.4

-Both of these “might” conditionals are true:

If I’m put in S, I might sin

If I’m put in S, I might not sin

-But the truth of that first “might” conditional is inconsistent with the first of the below “will” conditionals [note: because Adams is discussing backward conditionals he has “would”s rather than “will”s], and the second “might” above is inconsistent with the second “will” below:

If I’m put in S, I will not sin

If I’m put in S, I will sin

-So, neither of the “will” conditionals is true

-But I think the “might” conditionals express the possibilities of the corresponding “will” conditionals, not the denials of the opposite “will” conditionals

-Main argument: **grounding**: 110b.6-111a.7