

Brian Parry

Greg Spendlove

PHIL 1000-004

14/7/2014

e-portfolio: <http://awesomobrian.weebly.com/philosophy.html>

determinism a bad idea

In this paper, I will argue that determinism is not compatible with a meaningful human existence. i will begin by defining the argument for determinism is not compatible with a meaningful human existence. then discussing the counter arguments for it and my thoughts on the counter arguments. and then some literary references to add some educated flavor to my paper. and i hope that this should be a entertaining paper to read about determinism and human existance. this is a on going debate by some of the worlds greatest minds so i am attempting to scratch the surface really. i will first define what free will is and what determinism is using known philosophers as reference, then i will discuss the argument of determinism and then give my argument against determinism being compatable with a meaningful existance.

first lets define the determinism so we know what we are talking about when we say determinism and the nature of the beast that we are working with so to speak. determinism is that everything that has happened and is happening was caused by something and that something was caused by something else and that thing was started by something else and so on and so on. in a paper written by carl hoefer, he gives an all encompassing definition of determinism i like "Determinism: The world is governed by (or is under the sway of) determinism if and only if, given a specified way things

are at a time t , the way things go thereafter is fixed as a matter of natural law.”(Hoefer, Carl, "Causal Determinism", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2010 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2010/entries/determinism-causal/>>)

so if we defined determinism and meaningful existence how about for clarity sake we define freedom of will is. i do believe it is important to define freedom and really attain a grasp on what freedom is. seems only fitting since millions have dedicated there live to it and millions have died for it we at least understand what it is when we say freedom, or are free in life. the classical definition is the according to informationphilosopher.com that we can say “i could have done differently”(could have done otherwise, published by <http://www.informationphilosopher.com/freedom/otherwise.html>) . i take this as we have a choice, a real choice, a real opportunity to see the other option, it exists and the ability to take that other choice, it must be unforced, and for this just picture a jedi knight using a jedi mind trick and that storm trooper to get past the blockade into the space port. now that storm trooper thought he was acting on his own accord and those were not the droids he was currently trying to procure, but of course we know better. obi one used a classic jedi mind trick on him to avoid attention. so we could say that because of his weak mind and the mind trick he could not have done other wise, or using the sentence before. he couldnt say “i could have choosen and done otherwise”.

i believe free will is required for moral responsiblity or being able to place blame or praise on someones actions and im not the only one either, as kevin timpe wrote in his paper he wrote on free will “According to the dominant view of the relationship between free will and moral responsibility, if an agent does not have free will, then that agent is not morally responsible for her actions.” (free will by kevin timpe, published on www.iep.utm.edu). if we live without freewill then we live without moral responsibility and our actions are essentially “not our own”. good or bad credit cant really be placed on

someone because of the belief that they could not have done otherwise, so how can we blame someone who had no control over their actions.

david hume was a philosopher in the 1700's and is regarded as the ultimate skeptic. essentially he believed in doubting everything, even our mind and senses and thoughts. and even he it would seem agrees that freewill or liberty to him is essential to moral responsibility that liberty, according to that definition above mentioned, in which all men agree, is also essential to moral responsibility. "that *liberty*, according to that definition above mentioned, in which all men agree, is also essential to morality" ([Enquiry, Book VIII, Of Liberty and Necessity, p. 98-9](#)) which i agree with him on.

i think happiness comes in to play in a meaningful existence which is defined as is "described as one of contentment or satisfaction, perhaps with the way one's life as a whole is going." (Parry, Richard, "Ancient Ethical Theory", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy). so if happiness is being content with our lives and important to a meaningful existence i can't see how determinism can be compatible. what if you were determined to be president, then that's great. but what if you were determined to deal with depression your whole life because of chemical imbalances in your brain. you could say you were determined to be unhappy. and in a determinist universe we have no control or say in our actions so how can we say determinism is compatible with a meaningful existence.

in conclusion i think that the universe is not deterministic in nature, and i think that society itself would be utterly different than its current state if it indeed was determinist. we are born with the knowledge that our actions have consequences, which is why we punish and deter any negative actions that society deems wrong. and i think that the arguments against a determinism being compatible with a meaningful human existence are valid.

references

(free will by kevin timpe, published on www.iep.utm.edu)

(could have done otherwise, published by

<http://www.informationphilosopher.com/freedom/otherwise.html>)

(Hoefer, Carl, "Causal Determinism", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2010 Edition),

Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL =

<<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2010/entries/determinism-causal/>>)

Parry, Richard, "Ancient Ethical Theory", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2009 Edition),

Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2009/entries/ethics-ancient/>>.

Hume, David, (Enquiry, Book VIII, Of Liberty and Necessity, p. 98-9)

accrued from

http://www.informationphilosopher.com/solutions/philosophers/hume/#determinism_objection