**JANUARY 15, 2012 THESKEPTICARENA.COM**

**PHARYNGULA COMMENTER DENIES THE EXISTENCE OF FREE WILL**

**THESE COMMENTS HAVE BEEN TAKEN FROM THE FREE WILL THREAD OF PHARYNGULA. THEY WERE MADE BY SOMEONE WHO GOES BY THE NAME OF "AHS 3" FOLLOWED BY SOME SYMBOL THAT LOOKS LIKE A CHINESE CHARACTER. I WILL SIMPLY REFER TO HIM AS "OZ."**

**Compatibilists should be run out of town on a rail.**

**OZ, EXCELLENT ATTITUDE. I CAN SEE THIS DEBATE IS GOING TO BE HIGHLY INTELLIGENT ... AT LEAST ON ONE SIDE.**

**(FOR THOSE IN THE AUDIENCE WHO MAY NOT KNOW, COMPATIBILISM IS THE BELIEF THAT FREE WILL AND DETERMINISM ARE COMPATIBLE IDEAS, AND THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO BELIEVE BOTH WITHOUT BEING LOGICALLY INCONSISTENT).**

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**And for the sake of making everyone who believes in free will look like a jerk, here is Dennett with blood on his hands:**

**(AND THEN OZ PROCEEDS TO QUOTE DENNETT).**

**OZ, I DON'T BELIEVE IN GOD BECAUSE NO ONE HAS EVER BEEN ABLE TO PROVE HE EXISTS. I DON'T BELIEVE IN DETERMINISM BECAUSE NO ONE HAS EVER BEEN ABLE TO PROVE THAT THE EVENTS WE SEE HAVE BEEN DETERMINED IN ADVANCE AND ARE THEREFORE IMMUTABLE.**

**REJECTING THE CLAIMS OF THOSE WHO CANNOT SUPPORT THEIR ASSERTIONS DOES NOT SHIFT THE BURDEN OF PROOF ONTO THE ONE WHO REJECTS THOSE ASSERTIONS. THE BURDEN REMAINS ON THOSE MAKING THE CLAIMS.**

**I DON'T BELIEVE IN GOD, BUT I'M NOT FOOLISH ENOUGH TO ASSERT THAT THERE IS NO GOD BECAUSE THAT WOULD BE A CLAIM AND I WOULD THEN HAVE THE BURDEN OF PROVING MY CLAIM. AS WE ALL KNOW, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PROVE THE NON-EXISTENCE OF ANY GOD. MY POSITION IS THAT I WILL BELIEVE IN GOD ... WHEN YOU CAN PROVE HE EXISTS.**

**LIKEWISE, I DON'T BELIEVE IN DETERMINISM, BUT I'M NOT FOOLISH ENOUGH TO ASSERT THAT DETERMINISM IS FALSE BECAUSE THAT WOULD BE A CLAIM. MY POSITION IS THAT I WILL ACCEPT DETERMINISM ... WHEN YOU CAN PROVE IT IS TRUE.**

**THEREFORE, THE RESULT OF MY NON-ACCEPTANCE OF THOSE CLAIMS IS THAT I, 1) DO NOT BELIEVE IN GOD, AND THEREFORE ACCEPT THAT WE LIVE IN A MATERIALISTIC UNIVERSE UNTIL PROVEN OTHERWISE, AND, 2) DO NOT BELIEVE IN DETERMINISM, AND THEREFORE ACCEPT THAT OUR ACTIONS ARE MOTIVATED BY AN EMERGENT PROPERTY OF THE BRAIN CALLED FREE WILL AS MANIFESTED BY THE CONSCIOUS MIND ... UNTIL PROVEN OTHERWISE.**

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**I assume your idea of free will implies that for at least one choice you’ve made, you could have chosen differently than you did. This is not true. It is impossible for anyone to ever have chosen to choose differently than they did.**

**OZ, I AGREE, BUT NOT FOR THE SAME REASON YOU BELIEVE THAT. THE REASON WE COULD NOT HAVE CHOSEN DIFFERENTLY IS BECAUSE THE PAST IS IMMUTABLE. IT IS NONSENSICAL TO TALK ABOUT THINGS THAT ARE IMPOSSIBLE TO BEGIN WITH. IF YOU WANT TO ARGUE OVER FREE WILL, YOU CAN SIMPLY QUESTION WHETHER DECISIONS WE MAKE RIGHT NOW ARE FREE OR DETERMINED. THERE IS NO NEED TO CREATE NONSENSICAL HYPOTHETICALS.**

**OZ, PLEASE TELL ME YOU ARE NOT TRYING TO PASS THAT OFF AS EVIDENCE.**

**This absolute impossibility is what compatibilism in fact means, and yet they go on calling it “free will.” This is terribly misleading. The compatibilists have misled Coyote into continuing with his erroneous belief that he could have chosen to choose differently in the past,**

**OZ, SINCE IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO EVER DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT HE COULD HAVE CHOSEN DIFFERENTLY, WHY DON'T YOU JUST CHANGE THE SUBJECT TO SOMETHING EQUALLY SILLY LIKE, "HOW MANY ANGELS CAN DANCE ON THE HEAD OF A PIN?"**

**BOTH OF THOSE HYPOTHETICALS ARE NOTHING MORE THAN MENTAL MASTURBATION. IF I WERE YOU OZ, I WOULD STOP IT BEFORE YOU GO BLIND.**

**Perhaps compatibilism does give people what they really want after all: the opportunity to lie to themselves by not looking too deeply at the implications of the position they’ve chosen.**

**SO OZ, YOUR POSITION IS THAT THESE PEOPLE ACTUALLY *WANT* TO LIE TO THEMSELVES? AND YOU BELIEVE THEY WANT THIS BECAUSE THEY HAD THE AUDACITY TO DISAGREE WITH YOUR BELIEF? AND YOU KNOW THAT THEY HAVEN'T LOOKED TOO DEEPLY AT THE IMPLICATIONS OF THEIR CHOSEN POSITION BECAUSE ... IT'S DIFFERENT THAN YOURS?**

**POWERFUL OZ, VERY POWERFUL.**

**(MANY COMMENTERS, INCLUDING OZ, WERE ARGUING OVER THE DEFINITION OF FREE WILL. I THINK THIS WOULD BE A GOOD TIME TO CLEAR THAT ARGUMENT UP WITH A DEFINITION TAKEN FROM DICTIONARY.COM; FREE WILL:**

**"1. free and independent choice; voluntary decision.**

**2. Philosophy. the doctrine that the conduct of human beings expresses personal choice and is not simply determined by physical or divine forces."**

**OZ, THAT SHOULD BE CLEAR ENOUGH, EVEN FOR YOU).**

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**I’ll share something from Colin McGinn which I’ve edited slightly for clarity:**

**“The argument is exceedingly familiar, and runs as follows. Either determinism is true or it is not.**

**OZ, MCGINN JUST CREATED A FALSE DICHOTOMY. DETERMINISM MAY BE TRUE IN SOME CASES AND FALSE IN OTHERS. WHAT EVIDENCE DID HE OFFER TO SUPPORT HIS CLAIM THAT THE UNIVERSE MUST BE WHOLLY DETERMINISTIC OR NOT DETERMINISTIC AT ALL?**

**If it is true, then all our chosen actions are uniquely necessitated by prior [moments], just like every other event.**

**OZ, THAT'S PREDESTINATION. IT IS VIRTUALLY THE SAME ARGUMENT GIVEN BY THEISTS WHO CLAIM THAT GOD HAS PLANNED EVERYTHING. MCGINN HAS SIMPLY SUBSTITUTED NATURE FOR GOD.**

**But then it cannot be the case that we could have acted otherwise, since this would require a possibility determinism rules out. Once the initial conditions are set and the laws fixed, causality excludes genuine freedom.**

**OZ, NEXT TIME YOU ARE PESTERING MCGINN AT A BOOK SIGNING, ASK HIM THIS: ONCE THE INITIAL CONDITIONS WERE SET AND THE LAWS FIXED, MANY THINGS IN OUR UNIVERSE WERE DETERMINED. FOR EXAMPLE: IT WAS DETERMINED BY THE LAWS OF NATURE (IN THIS CASE, GRAVITY) THAT OBJECTS CAUGHT IN A RIVER WOULD FLOW DOWNSTREAM. NO LAW ALLOWED FOR ANY OBJECT TO MOVE UPSTREAM AGAINST GRAVITY. YET TODAY, WE SEE MANY THINGS SWIMMING UPSTREAM IN DEFIANCE OF PHYSICAL LAWS, LIKE GRAVITY, WHICH STARTED FROM INITIAL CONDITIONS. THAT PROVES THAT CAUSALITY MAY NOT BE AS SIMPLE AS MCGINN SEEMS TO THINK IT IS.**

**ONE REASON WHY IT ISN'T THAT SIMPLE IS THAT NOT ALL THE LAWS WERE FIXED IN THE BEGINNING. FOR EXAMPLE: THERE WERE NO LAWS GOVERNING ATOMS BECAUSE THERE WERE NO ATOMS UNTIL ABOUT 380,000 YEARS AFTER THE BIG BANG WHEN ELECTRONS FINALLY MERGED WITH PROTONS TO FORM THE FIRST ATOMS DURING THE PERIOD KNOWN AS "THE RECOMBINATION."**

**On the other hand, if indeterminism is true, then, though things could have happened otherwise, it is not the case that we could have chosen otherwise, since a merely random event is no kind of free choice.**

**OZ, WHEN YOU SEE MCGINN REMIND HIM THAT INDETERMINISM IS NOT LIMITED TO ONLY RANDOM EVENTS.**

**That some events occur causelessly, or are not subject to law, or only to probabilistic law, is not sufficient for those events to be free choices.**

**MCGINN, WHO SAID THEY WERE? RANDOM EVENTS ARE JUST ONE SUBSET OF ALL EVENTS. THE FALSE DICHOTOMY YOU HAVE CREATED (RANDOM OR DETERMINED) HAS LED TO YOU ASSUMING YOUR CONCLUSION TO BE TRUE (DETERMINISM). YOU CAN'T ASSUME YOUR CONCLUSION - YOU MUST PROVE IT.**

**Thus one horn of the dilemma represents choices as predetermined happenings in a predictable causal sequence,**

**OZ, IT SOUNDS LIKE MCGINN CRAVES THE ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY THAT RELIGIOUS BELIEVERS DESPERATELY SEARCH FOR. IN A DETERMINISTIC WORLD YOU GET THE SAME RESULT: A WORLD WHERE EVERYTHING IS PREDETERMINED. YOU HAVE NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANYTHING. EVERYTHING IS BEYOND YOUR CONTROL. I CAN'T SEE ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YOUR POSITION AND THE CHRISTIAN POSITION EXCEPT THAT YOU HAVE REPLACED THEIR INVISIBLE GHOST WITH NATURE.**

**while the other construes them as inexplicable lurches to which the universe is randomly prone. Neither alternative supplies what the notion of free will requires,**

**MCGINN, THAT'S BECAUSE YOUR FALSE DICHOTOMY OMITS AN ALTERNATIVE: NON-RANDOM, INTENTIONAL ACTION DIRECTED BY A CONSCIOUS MIND. THAT EXPLAINS THOSE FISH SWIMMING UPSTREAM THAT I MENTIONED EARLIER.**

**and no other alternative suggests itself.**

**MCGINN, I JUST GAVE YOU ONE. IT'S DIFFICULT FOR ME TO BELIEVE THAT YOU COULD JUST IGNORE YOUR OPPONENT'S POSITION AND PRETEND IT DOESN'T EXIST WHEN YOU MUST KNOW WHAT THAT POSITION IS. IT'S STRANGE HOW YOU SEEM TO THINK THAT BY IGNORING IT, THAT SOMEHOW YOUR CONCLUSION BECOMES VALID. SOMETIMES THE LINE BETWEEN GHOST WORSHIPPERS AND ATHEISTS IS VERY THIN INDEED.**

**Therefore freedom is not possible in any kind of possible world."**

**MCGINN, YOUR CONCLUSION WAS BASED ON A LOGICAL FALLACY AND IS THEREFORE, INVALID.**

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**The standard argument against free will takes “a freely willed action” to mean an action which is proximately caused by the individual’s will, if the individual’s will is not determined via a causal chain that begins beyond the individual. Obviously such cannot exist in a deterministic world.**

**In an indeterministic world, there can be actions which are not determined via the causal chain, but then these actions are not proximately caused by the individual’s will; they are instead proximately caused by randomness.**

**OZ, INDETERMINISM HOLDS THAT NOT ALL EVENTS ARE CAUSED BY PRIOR EVENTS - THE OPPOSITE OF DETERMINISM. WHILE INDETERMINISM IS RELATED TO CHANCE, RANDOMNESS IS NOT THE SOLE CAUSE OF INDETERMINACY AS YOU SEEM TO THINK. YOU HAVE CREATED A STRAW MAN. EVEN WIKIPEDIA COULD HAVE EXPLAINED THIS TO YOU SO IT'S OBVIOUS YOU HAVEN'T RESEARCHED VERY DEEPLY INTO YOUR OPPONENT'S POSITION.**

**http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indeterminism**

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**If you also believe that other people could have made different choices in the past, then you will judge them as such.**

**OZ, AND SINCE YOU BELIEVE THAT THEY COULD NOT HAVE CHOSEN DIFFERENTLY, ON WHAT GROUNDS CAN YOU JUDGE THEM? THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION IS EASY, OZ - ON NO GROUNDS.**

**AND OZ, PEOPLE AREN'T JUDGED IN COURT BASED ON WHAT CHOICES WERE AVAILABLE TO THEM. THEY ARE JUDGED BASED ON THE CHOICES THAT THEY MADE.**

**IF SOMEONE CHOSE TO RAPE, THEN THEY ARE PUNISHED FOR COMMITTING RAPE. WITH YOUR BELIEFS, THE RAPIST COULD NOT HAVE ACTED DIFFERENTLY - YOU HAVE STATED SO YOURSELF. THEREFORE, THERE ARE NO GROUNDS UPON WHICH YOU COULD PUNISH SOMEONE WHO HAD NO CONTROL OVER THEIR ACTIONS. OUR CRIMINAL LAWS RECOGNIZE THAT THERE ARE THOSE WHO HAVE LITTLE, OR NO CONTROL OVER THEIR ACTIONS WHICH IS WHY MENTAL INCOMPETENCE IS A VALID DEFENSE IN COURT. YOUR VIEW OF REALITY IS THAT ALL OF HUMANITY IS MENTALLY INCOMPETENT.**

**I MUST CONFESS OZ, THAT IN MANY CASES ... YOU ARE RIGHT.**

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**And in this universe, at every point in history, he necessarily must have faced circumstances identical to the circumstances he faced.**

**OZ, THAT WAS A TAUTOLOGY. THE GREAT THING ABOUT TAUTOLOGIES OZ, IS THAT EVEN THOUGH YOU DON'T REALLY LEARN ANYTHING, AT LEAST YOU GOT THAT ONE RIGHT.**

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**Because assigning blame, and then treating people as blameworthy, is itself a mechanism of conditioning others’ future behavior.**

**OZ, BLAME THEM FOR WHAT? IF THEY COULD NOT HAVE CHOSEN TO ACT DIFFERENTLY THAN THEY DID, YOU HAVE NO GROUNDS UPON WHICH TO ASSIGN BLAME. SO YOUR MECHANISM IS BASED ON ASSIGNING BLAME WHERE NONE EXISTS.**

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**I’m done conversing with the troll. If anyone else has questions similar to those from the commenter who calls himself “Wishful Thinking Rules All”, I will be happy to answer those questions for them. No need to restate them, even. You can copy and past his questions, and I’ll answer them for anyone else.**

**OZ, THANK YOU MASTER YODA.**

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**I’ve been hit in the head pretty hard, and had some other dissociative experiences; the veil between the worlds gets thinner at these times.**

**OZ, WHY DOES THAT NOT SURPRISE ME?**

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**It’ll be a goddamn miracle if Marcus Ranum gets something right for once in his life, but this thread is probably his best chance for ever doing so.**

**OZ, WE CERTAINLY ARE FULL OF OURSELVES, AREN'T WE?**

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**I suspect you understand that when your circumstances and motivations are exactly the same, you must do the same thing;**

**NICE ASSERTION OZ. HAD YOU SAID "LIKELY" TO DO THE SAME THING, I MIGHT HAVE AGREED. BUT SAYING "MUST" MEANS THAT NO EXCEPTIONS EXIST; THAT PEOPLE WILL ALWAYS TAKE THE SAME ACTIONS WHEN THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES AND MOTIVATIONS ARE THE SAME. IF THAT WERE TRUE THEN LEARNING FROM ONE'S MISTAKES WOULD BE NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE.**

**and when your circumstances and motivations are different, you may do different.**

**OZ, OR YOU MAY DO THE SAME.**

**I suspect you’re not grappling with how, in the timeline you’ve lived, at every point in history, your circumstances and motivations must necessarily have been identical to the circumstances and motivations you experienced at that moment.**

**OZ, ANOTHER BRILLIANT TAUTOLOGY; MEANINGLESS ... BUT BRILLIANT.**

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**When you talk that way, you’re saying you don’t grasp that at any moment in time, circumstances must necessarily be identical to the circumstances at that moment. You are saying you cannot comprehend the law of identity: X = X**

**OZ, THE FACT THAT YOU MUST KNOW THAT ANYONE, EVEN A CREATIONIST, UNDERSTANDS THE LAW OF IDENTITY, SHOULD HAVE TIPPED YOU OFF THAT THE PROBLEM LIES ON YOUR SIDE OF THE NET. YOUR STATEMENT DOES NOT DEMONSTRATE THE LAW OF IDENTITY ... IT DEMONSTRATES A TAUTOLOGY.**

**AND NO OZ, THEY ARE NOT THE SAME THING.**

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**What you’d need to show is how the individual’s will is not determined via a causal chain that begins beyond the individual.**

**OZ, YOU'RE TRYING TO SHIFT THE BURDEN OF PROOF. YOU ARE CLAIMING THAT AN INDIVIDUAL'S WILL *IS* DETERMINED VIA A CAUSAL CHAIN. SINCE YOU CAN'T PROVE YOUR CLAIM, YOUR ONLY OPTION IS TO TRY TO SHIFT THE BURDEN TO THOSE WHO REJECT YOUR CLAIM.**

**OZ, THE DIVIDING LINE BETWEEN YOUR THINKING AND CREATIONIST THINKING GETS THINNER WITH EVERY COMMENT. BY THE END OF THIS THREAD I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT YOU WERE SCHEDULED FOR A BAPTISM.**

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**McGinn demonstrates free will cannot exist at the physical level; Clark demonstrates it cannot exist even as a philosophical construct.**

**OZ, WELL THEN, THAT SETTLES IT - YOU WIN. IF MCGINN AND CLARK DEMONSTRATED THAT FREE WILL CANNOT EXIST THEN THE DEBATE IS OVER. WHY DIDN'T YOU USE THIS APPEAL TO AUTHORITY AT THE BEGINNING AND SAVE US ALL A LOT OF TIME?**

**Neuroscience is way late in the game.**

**MAYBE SO OZ. THE *QUESTIONS* REGARDING FREE WILL COME FROM THE PHILOSOPHERS, BUT THE *ANSWERS* WILL COME FROM NEUROSCIENCE. IT IS THE PHILOSOPHERS WHO WILL HAVE TO ADJUST TO THE DATA FROM BRAIN RESEARCH - NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND.**

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**At least the incompatibilists against free will are easy to understand: “there is no free will”, we say, and then we dig in and prepare for the objections: “How do you preserve moral responsibility in a hard determined universe?”**

**OZ, YOU CAN'T. AND IT'S NOT THE OBJECTIONS THAT GIVE YOU HEARTBURN, IT'S THE REQUESTS FOR EVIDENCE.**

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**As higher scores are positively correlated with willingness to use punishment for both deterrence and retribution, I believe this study supports my view that public advocacy of compatibilism, whether well understood or not — and of course it will most often not be well understood — will contribute to more and longer prison sentences.**

**OZ, AND THE PROBLEM WITH THAT IS?**

**Compatibilism is thus bad for America, and bad for secular humanism.**

**OZ, YOU NEED TO EXPLAIN *WHY* MORE AND LONGER PRISON SENTENCES ARE BAD FOR AMERICA AND SECULAR HUMANISM. AFTER YOU EXPLAIN WHY, THEN YOU NEED TO OFFER AN ALTERNATIVE.**

**BASED ON YOUR BELIEF, DETERMINISM, THERE IS NO JUSTIFICATION FOR INCARCERATING ANYONE. YOUR BELIEF WOULD RETURN CIVILIZATION TO THE STONE AGE. AS MUCH AS WE WOULD ALL LIKE TO FIND A WAY TO ELIMINATE THE NEED TO INCARCERATE ANYONE, REALITY FORCES US TO TAKE UNPLEASANT MEASURES TO PROTECT SOCIETY FROM THOSE WHO HAVEN'T LEARNED HOW TO "PLAY NICE."**

**Even in its internally consistent form, public advocacy of compatibilism will produce destructive outcomes that we cannot afford. We should entirely abandon notions of “free will” and stop “holding people accountable”,**

**OZ, IF WE STOP HOLDING PEOPLE ACCOUNTABLE THEN WE RETURN TO THE BARBARIC PAST WHERE THE LAW WAS BASED ON THE SIZE OF YOUR CLUB, OR WHO HAD THE MOST FRIENDS.**

**BASING YOUR POSITION ON MORALITY IS AN ARGUMENT FROM CONSEQUENCES. EITHER FREE WILL EXISTS OR IT DOESN'T. ANY MORAL CONSEQUENCES THAT RESULT FROM A BELIEF IN FREE HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THE ANSWER TO ITS EXISTENCE.**

**and instead move to a strict consequentialism of getting our laborforce out of prison and back into productive work.**

**OZ, THE GREATEST MINDS IN THE WORLD HAVE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO COME CLOSE TO SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF EVIL, YET YOU THINK IT'S AS SIMPLE AS LETTING CRIMINALS OUT OF PRISON AND GIVING THEM JOBS? IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THAT ANYONE CAPABLE OF FEEDING THEMSELVES COULD BE THAT NAIVE.**

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**You have just conceded victory to me. God is not the source of love; free will is not the source of will. Thanks for that.**

**OZ, DEBATING YOU IS JUST LIKE DEBATING CREATIONISTS. THEY TOO CONSTANTLY TRUMPET THEIR IMAGINARY VICTORIES, NO MATTER HOW EMPTY THEIR ARGUMENTS.**

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**It’s easy to imagine how compatibilist leanings could be causing a willingness to punish.**

**OZ, IF YOU SPENT MORE TIME RESEARCHING AND LESS TIME IMAGINING, THE RESULTS COULD BE STUNNING.**

**AND OZ, "WILLINGNESS TO PUNISH" DOESN'T NECESSARILY IMPLY THAT THOSE WHO PUNISH ENJOY IT. I'M PRETTY SURE THAT THAT IS WHAT YOU ARE TRYING TO IMPLY.**

**It’s easy to imagine how a desire to punish could be causing compatibilist leanings.**

**SEE OZ, I WAS RIGHT. NOW "WILLINGNESS" HAS BECOME A "DESIRE." YOU REPEATED THE STATEMENT AND SIMPLY SUBSTITUTED THE WORD YOU WANTED, IN ORDER TO MANIPULATE YOUR AUDIENCE. YOU ARE ONE DECEPTIVE LITTLE DUDE, OZ. FORTUNATELY, YOUR THINKING SKILLS ARE ABOUT AS COMPLEX AS RAY COMFORT'S WHICH IS WHY IT ISN'T THAT HARD TO SPOT YOUR LOGICAL FLAWS. IN THIS CASE, LACKING EVIDENCE, YOU SIMPLY EVOKED IMAGINATION.**

**AND YOU WONDER WHY I COMPARE YOU TO RELIGIOUS BELIEVERS? AS I SAID EARLIER, THAT DIVIDING LINE GETS THINNER WITH EVERY COMMENT YOU MAKE.**

**It’s easy to imagine a causal feedback loop. There are probably some obvious candidates for third cause of both. What we can say is that there’s some reason to expect that manipulating belief toward incompatibilism without free will would result in less willingness to punish.**

**OZ, SO DECEPTIVE. LET ME EXPLAIN TO THE AUDIENCE WHAT YOU JUST DID: AFTER PLANTING THE IDEA THAT "WILLINGNESS TO PUNISH" IS EQUIVALENT TO "DESIRE TO PUNISH," YOU THEN RETURNED TO USING THE ORIGINAL TERM "WILLINGNESS TO PUNISH" KNOWING THAT EVERYONE WILL NOW UNDERSTAND THAT TO MEAN "DESIRE TO PUNISH."**

**There’s some reason(s) why those less willing to punish lean toward a lack of belief in free will.**

**WELL OZ, MAYBE THOSE LESS WILLING TO PUNISH LACK THE COURAGE TO DO WHAT IS NECESSARY TO PRESERVE PEACE AND THE RULE OF LAW IN OUR SOCIETY. BUT I FAIL TO SEE WHAT THAT HAS TO DO WITH BELIEF IN FREE WILL.**

**And the belief-set itself is a reasonable candidate for manipulation. With 1% of adults in the prison system, there’s a good case for trying everything that might work.**

**OZ, THAT'S THE SAME ARGUMENT YOU HEAR FROM ACUPUNCTURISTS, CHIROPRACTORS, ASTROLOGERS, AND ALL THE OTHER FRUIT LOOPS. IF YOU BELIEVE YOU SHOULD TRY EVERYTHING THAT MIGHT WORK, WHY NOT JUST CHANT MANTRAS UNDER A FULL MOON WHILE RUBBING A DEAD CHICKEN HEAD? AFTER ALL, AS YOU JUST SAID ... IT MIGHT WORK.**

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**Kel, Correct me if I’m wrong — you’ve got kind of an honor code about not comparing another atheist’s belief to religion? Because if you do I should just say I don’t and if I’m ever convinced to adopt such it won’t be today.**

**OZ, FUNNY YOU SHOULD SAY THAT BECAUSE I WAS JUST THINKING THE SAME THING ABOUT YOU. EXCEPT FOR YOUR DISBELIEF IN GOD, YOU EXHIBIT THE SAME IRRATIONAL THINKING THAT WE SEE IN MOST RELIGIOUS BELIEVERS. IN FACT, I WOULD GO SO FAR AS TO SAY THAT YOU ARE ONLY ONE PERSUASIVE THEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT AWAY FROM ACCEPTING JESUS CHRIST AS YOUR PERSONAL LORD AND SAVIOR.**

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**I still want the worst shit to be illegal, most of society on my side agrees.**

**OZ, APPEAL TO MAJORITY? REALLY? LIKE I SAID, YOU'RE ONLY ONE INCH AWAY FROM HAVING LUNCH ON A DAILY BASIS WITH KEN HAM.**

**AND ON WHAT GROUNDS DO YOU BASE YOUR DESIRE TO MAKE "THE WORST SHIT" ILLEGAL? IN OTHER WORDS, WHY WOULD DETERMINISM ONLY APPLY TO LESSER "SHIT?"**

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**What free will does is put people in prison.**

**NO OZ, FREE WILL DOES NOT PUT PEOPLE IN PRISON: GETTING CONVICTED OF VIOLATING THE LAW DOES. HOW COULD YOU MAKE SUCH A STUPID ERROR? DON'T YOU BOTHER TO THINK THIS CRAP THROUGH BEFORE POSTING IT?**

**NO, YOU DON'T. OF ALL THE COMMENTERS ON PHARYNGULA, ONE OF THE THINGS THAT MAKE YOUR COMMENTS STAND OUT IS THAT, MANY OF YOUR COMMENTS APPEAR IMMEDIATELY AFTER OTHER COMMENTS THAT YOU MADE, BEFORE ANYONE ELSE HAD A CHANCE TO RESPOND; INDICATING THAT YOU ARE TYPING WITHOUT THINKING. YOU ARE TOO ANXIOUS TO RESPOND, SO YOU REPLY EMOTIONALLY USING PERSONAL ATTACKS, LOGICAL FALLACIES, AND OTHER POORLY THOUGHT-OUT RESPONSES, RATHER THAN TAKING THE TIME TO THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU ARE SAYING.**

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**Whinybutt Kel, You are conceding victory to me yet again.**

**OZ, OBVIOUSLY THIS IS ALL A GAME TO YOU. YOU'RE LIKE A LITTLE KID WHO ARGUES JUST TO WIN. THAT SHOWS THAT YOU ARE INCAPABLE OF DEBATING YOUR FELLOW COMMENTERS WITH ANY HONESTY. PEOPLE LIKE YOU WILL NEVER ADMIT WHEN THEY ARE WRONG BECAUSE, FOR YOU, THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH WHAT'S TRUE OR FALSE, BUT ONLY HAS TO DO WITH YOU CLAIMING VICTORY. I SEE THAT EXACT SAME TRAIT IN CREATIONISTS ALL THE TIME.**

**(BTW, if you’re going to whine like this, you should do so more specifically. Vague qhining is the most annoying type.)**

**OZ, KEEP THOSE MEANINGLESS PERSONAL ATTACKS ROLLING IN, SO YOU CAN DISTRACT EVERYONE FROM THE FACT THAT YOU HAVE NO EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT YOUR CLAIMS.**

**Don’t be so stupid.**

**OZ, GREAT POINT. IT IS CERTAINLY EASY TO SEE WHY YOU CAN CLAIM VICTORY AFTER VICTORY WITH POWERFUL ARGUMENTS LIKE THAT ONE.**

**It might confuse you since you’re so lazy and incompetent that you can’t deal with any of my evidence.**

**OZ, WHAT EVIDENCE? WHERE WAS THIS EVIDENCE? I MUST HAVE MISSED THAT?**

**YOUR ENTIRE ARGUMENT RESTS ON A *QUESTION* ABOUT PAST ACTIONS. *THAT* IS YOUR IDEA OF EVIDENCE? THE ONLY THING THAT INDICATES IS THAT YOU DON'T GET THE CONCEPT OF EVIDENCE. YOU SERIOUSLY NEED TO SPEND SOME QUIET TIME WITH MR. WEBSTER.**

**AND OZ, CALLING THOSE WHO DISAGREE WITH YOU LAZY AND INCOMPETENT DISPLAYS A MATURITY LEVEL THAT WOULD EMBARRASS A FETUS. GROW UP OZ.**

**(You can save your next response. I already know what it’s going to say: “whine whine whine whine semantics whine whine whine whine whine”.)**

**WELL OZ, YOU CERTAINLY SHOWED HIM. THAT WAS A POWERFUL ARGUMENT. I THINK IT'S TIME FOR ANOTHER VICTORY DANCE.**

**YOU KNOW OZ, YOU MAKE ACNE COVERED TEENAGERS ON FACEBOOK SOUND MATURE.**

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**NOW A COMMENTER ASKS OZ,**

**"How? Nothing matters if everything is determined, if there is no free will. How can our reactions or perceptions influence anything at all if it is already pre-determined?"**

**TO WHICH OZ REPLIES,**

**I direct you to How Determinists Cross the Street.**

**GREAT ANSWER OZ, PASS THE BUCK.**

**OZ, DID YOU EVER CONSIDER ACTUALLY TRYING TO UNDERSTAND THE THINGS YOU READ SO THAT YOU CAN EXPRESS THOSE IDEAS COHERENTLY TO OTHER PEOPLE RATHER THAN SIMPLY TELLING THEM TO GO READ IT FOR THEMSELVES?**

**GUESS NOT.**

**BUT I'M NOT SURPRISED YOU AVOIDED THAT ONE BECAUSE THAT WAS ONE QUESTION YOUR DETERMINISM COULDN'T HANDLE.**

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**ANOTHER COMMENTER SAID TO OZ,**

**"If you realize that you have zero free will, you would not bother getting excited or reacting in an emotional manner."**

**TO WHICH OZ REPLIED,**

**This is a silly and stupid argument, which you must already know is false.**

**GREAT ANSWER OZ, JUST INSULT THEM AND ASSERT VICTORY.**

**(NOW OZ ATTEMPTS TO REPLY TO WHAT THE COMMENTER SAID. BUT BE WARNED: WHAT FOLLOWS COULD CAUSE SERIOUS INJURY TO UNPROTECTED AREAS OF YOUR SKULL. BEFORE PROCEEDING, A TIN FOIL HAT IS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED).**

**Everybody knows that automobiles have no free will, yet we still have emotional reactions to their breaking down,**

**OZ, MY HEAD IS STILL RINGING LIKE A BELL FROM THE LOGIC(?) OF YOUR LAST REPLY. LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT: BECAUSE A CAR DOESN'T HAVE FREE WILL, THAT IS SOMEHOW CONNECTED TO OUR EMOTIONAL RESPONSES TO THEM BREAKING DOWN?**

**AND YOU CALLED *HIS* ARGUMENT *SILLY AND STUPID* ?**

**DUDE, YOU ARE IN SERIOUS NEED OF AN INTRODUCTORY COURSE IN LOGIC. HOW IN THE WORLD YOUR MIND CONNECTED THOSE 2 THINGS SHOWS THAT YOU ARE TYPING WAY FASTER THAN YOU ARE THINKING. IF YOU THOUGHT BEFORE RESPONDING, THESE KINDS OF EMBARRASSMENTS WOULDN'T OCCUR ... AS OFTEN.**

**even if it’s just about the money we’ll have to spend and the immediate inconvenience of being late to our destination.**

**OZ, WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH THE FACT THAT CARS HAVE NO FREE WILL?**

**You are making the mistake of thinking that free will could have anything to do with the mind.**

**OZ, GO BACK TO THE DEFINITION OF FREE WILL, AND YOU WILL SEE THAT IT *ONLY* HAS TO DO WITH THE MIND.**

**I’m sorry you can’t get off that error, but it is your error, and not mine.**

**OZ, YOU NEVER STOP CLAIMING VICTORY DO YOU? EVER WATCH DEBATES BETWEEN CREATIONISTS AND SKEPTICS? OF COURSE YOU DO. EVER FOLLOW UP BY GOING TO A CHRISTIAN WEB SITE AND READING THEIR REACTIONS? WELL IF YOU HAVE, YOU WOULD KNOW THAT THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A DEBATE, NO MATTER HOW BADLY THEY GOT SLAUGHTERED, IN WHICH THEY DID NOT CLAIM VICTORY.**

**BESIDES BEING A VERY CHILDISH THING TO DO, IT'S ALSO SOMETHING THAT DEBATE LOSERS ALWAYS ENGAGE IN, TO HIDE THE FACT THAT THEY WENT INTO A GUNFIGHT ... WITH NO BULLETS.**

**In a deterministic universe, your mind cannot create free will.**

**And in an indeterministic universe, your mind cannot create free will.**

**OZ, YOU REPEATED YOUR EARLIER MISTAKE OF ASSUMING THAT THE UNIVERSE MUST BE ONE OR THE OTHER. AS POINTED OUT EARLIER, THAT IS A FALSE DICHOTOMY. CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE UNIVERSE MAY BE DETERMINISTIC WHILE OTHER ASPECTS MAY NOT BE. THAT IS SOMETHING THAT HAS YET TO BE PROVEN.**

**INORGANIC OBJECTS MAY BE FORCED TO FOLLOW DETERMINISTIC PATHS. BUT AS DESCRIBED EARLIER BY THE EXAMPLE OF FISH SWIMMING UPSTREAM, ORGANIC THINGS MAY DEVELOP ABILITIES THAT ALLOW THEM TO CIRCUMVENT THE DETERMINISTIC RULES OF NATURE. THAT IS THE VERY ESSENCE OF THIS DEBATE.**

**By the law of excluded middle, those are the only options.**

**OZ, THE LAW OF EXCLUDED MIDDLE ONLY APPLIES TO PROPOSITIONS AND THEIR NEGATIONS. YOUR 2 ASSERTIONS WERE NOT A PROPOSITION AND ITS NEGATION. NOR CAN YOU APPLY IT IN CASES WHERE MORE THAN 2 OPTIONS EXIST WITHOUT CREATING A FALSE DICHOTOMY.**

**YOU SERIOUSLY SHOULD CONSIDER THAT INTRODUCTORY LOGIC CLASS I MENTIONED EARLIER.**

**ALSO NOTICE THE 4TH LAW OF LOGIC OZ - DON'T CLAIM VICTORY WHEN YOU HAVEN'T ANY EVIDENCE.**

**But what we do know is that McGinn and Clark have already demonstrated free will to be impossible in all possible worlds, so you won’t find it even at the planck length.**

**WELL THEN OZ, THAT SETTLES IT. IF MCGINN AND CLARK HAVE PROVEN FREE WILL IMPOSSIBLE THEN THE DEBATE IS OVER AND YOU CAN CLAIM VICTORY ... AGAIN.**

**UNFORTUNATELY, NOT EVERYONE IN NEUROSCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY IDOLIZE YOUR 2 HEROES AS MUCH AS YOU DO, AND HAVE NOT ACCEPTED THEIR CONCLUSIONS AS YOU OBVIOUSLY HAVE.**

**OZ, PLANCK LENGTH IS A PHYSICAL DISTANCE. FREE WILL (AS DEFINED EARLIER) IS AN EMERGENT PROPERTY OF THE BRAIN MANIFESTED IN OUR CONSCIOUSNESS. QUESTION OZ: HOW IN THE WORLD DID YOU CONNECT THOSE 2 IDEAS?**

**LET ME TRY TO MAKE MY QUESTION MORE CLEAR BY REWORDING YOUR ASSERTION, "LOVE IS IMPOSSIBLE IN ALL WORLDS, SO YOU WON'T FIND IT AT ONE MILE."**

**NO OZ, THAT WASN'T A STRAW MAN. I SIMPLY SUBSTITUTED WORDS OF SIMILAR MEANING IN YOUR ASSERTION TO SHOW THAT THOSE WORDS MAKE NO SENSE IN THE CONTEXT IN WHICH YOU TRIED TO USE THEM.**

**You clearly do not understand why free will is impossible in all possible worlds.**

**OZ, IF YOU ARE REFERRING TO THE 'MANY WORLDS' MODEL OF QUANTUM PHYSICS YOU SHOULD GOOGLE THE SUBJECT, AND YOU WILL DISCOVER THAT THE THEORY IS NOT ACCEPTED BY THE MAJORITY OF PHYSICISTS. THE MAJORITY FAVOR THE COPENHAGEN INTERPRETATION. AS OF 2012, THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE THAT OTHER UNIVERSES EXIST OUTSIDE OUR OWN, BUT NOT ENOUGH TO BE ABLE TO STATE IT AS A FACT.**

**I have done my best to explain it to you. You keep, for some reason, thinking it has something to do with the nature of your mind.**

**GEE OZ, I WONDER WHERE HE GOT THAT CRAZY IDEA FROM? I WOULD THINK THAT IT PROBABLY HAS MORE TO DO WITH MY LEFT FOOT.**

**I think that’s probably because there are compatibilist scum around these parts,**

**OZ, THE INSULTS AND PERSONAL ATTACKS NEVER STOP DO THEY? THOSE ARE EXACTLY THE KIND OF COMMENTS YOU SEE FROM CREATIONISTS ALL THE TIME. YOU ARE JUST ONE COMMUNION CRACKER AWAY FROM ACCEPTING CHRIST AND GETTING ETERNAL LIFE. HOPEFULLY, JESUS WILL FORGIVE YOU FOR ALL THOSE YEARS YOU SPENT AS AN ATHEIST.**

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**THE SCIENCE SEGMENT**

**CAUSE OF HONEYBEE DIE-OFF DISCOVERED**

**NORTHERN CALIFORNIA SCIENTISTS SAY THEY HAVE FOUND A POSSIBLE EXPLANATION FOR A HONEYBEE DIE-OFF THAT HAS DECIMATED HIVES AROUND THE WORLD: A PARASITIC FLY THAT HIJACKS THE BEES' BODIES AND CAUSES THEM TO ABANDON HIVES. SCIENTISTS SAY THE FLY DEPOSITS ITS EGGS INTO THE BEE'S ABDOMEN, CAUSING THE INFECTED BEE TO EXHIBIT ZOMBIE-LIKE BEHAVIOR BY WALKING AROUND IN CIRCLES WITH NO APPARENT SENSE OF DIRECTION. THE BEE LEAVES THE HIVE AT NIGHT AND DIES SHORTLY THEREAFTER. THE PHORID FLY, OR APOCEPHALUS BOREALIS, WAS FOUND IN BEES FROM THREE-QUARTERS OF THE 31 HIVES SURVEYED IN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA.**

**THE SYMPTOMS MIRROR COLONY COLLAPSE DISORDER, IN WHICH ALL THE ADULT HONEY BEES IN A COLONY SUDDENLY DISAPPEAR. THE DISEASE IS OF GREAT CONCERN, BECAUSE BEES POLLINATE ABOUT A THIRD OF THE US FOOD SUPPLY. ITS PRESENCE IS ESPECIALLY ALARMING IN CALIFORNIA, THE NATION'S TOP PRODUCER OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES, WHERE BEES PLAY AN ESSENTIAL ROLE IN THE $2 BILLION ALMOND INDUSTRY AND OTHER CROPS.**

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**FAMOUS QUOTES**

**ERICH FROMM (1900–1980) 79 YEARS.**

**HE WAS A JEWISH GERMAN-AMERICAN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGIST, PSYCHOANALYST, SOCIOLOGIST, HUMANISTIC PHILOSOPHER, AND DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST. HE WAS ASSOCIATED WITH WHAT BECAME KNOWN AS THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL OF CRITICAL THEORY.**

**“IF FAITH CANNOT BE RECONCILED WITH RATIONAL THINKING,**

**IT HAS TO BE ELIMINATED**

**AS AN ANACHRONISTIC REMNANT OF EARLIER STAGES OF CULTURE**

**AND REPLACED BY SCIENCE DEALING WITH FACTS AND THEORIES**

**WHICH ARE INTELLIGIBLE AND CAN BE VALIDATED.”**