

PHIL 3923H: Honors Colloquium on Free Will
Prof. Funkhouser
10/10/06
van Inwagen, Chapter 5, §5.6–5.9

5.6

- PPP2 is a thesis about universals in the following sense:

Just as there are many different ways the concrete particulars that make up our surroundings could be arranged that would be sufficient for the *truth* of a given proposition, so there are many different ways they could be arranged that would be sufficient for the *obtaining* of a given state of affairs. (171)

- Van Inwagen does not think that Frankfurt-style counter-examples can be given to PPP2. He considers Gunnar again. He writes:

But while it is indeed true that Gunnar could not have prevented C(Ridley dies) from obtaining, I do not think it is true that Gunnar is responsible for C(Ridley dies). (172)

Q: Is van Inwagen's example involving C(Ridley is mortal) apt?

Also consider the last full paragraph on p. 173. Van Inwagen digs in his heels and insists that if a state of affairs would obtain no matter what an agent would decide or do, then that agent is not morally responsible for it.

- Also note where van Inwagen extends his position to “bringing about” and causing. Is this plausible?

It is certainly true that if the above arguments are sound, then similar arguments can be used to show that Gunnar did not bring about C(Ridley is killed) and that his bodily movements did not cause this state of affairs to obtain. But these conclusions appear to me to be simply true. (177)

This claim has a bit more plausibility when we remember that it is only a claim about universals, and not event particulars. Be sure to carefully distinguish (I) and (II) on pp. 177–178.

5.7

- Van Inwagen argues that from the three principles that he has been defending, in conjunction with two additional premises, it follows that moral responsibility requires free will. So, giving up on free will means giving up on moral responsibility.

5.8

- In this section van Inwagen argues directly (in particular, without free will as an intermediary) for the incompatibility of determinism and moral responsibility.

◦ Recall ‘ Np ’ from the Third Argument (from Chapter 3). Van Inwagen introduces a new version of ‘ Np ’: “ p and no one is, or ever has been, even partly responsible for the fact that p .” (184). Inference rules A and B are the analogues to our earlier α and β . The argument presented on p. 185 perfectly mirrors the Third Argument. The only difference is this argument concerns moral responsibility, whereas the earlier argument concerned choice.

5.9

- Conclusion: Without free will there is no moral responsibility.

And, then there is this amazing little argument:

The strongest argument for the existence of free will seems to me to be this: moral responsibility requires free will and we *are* responsible for at least some of the things we have brought about.
(188)