



Free Will and the Contemporary Problem of Evil

**PHIL 320
Philosophy of Religion
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Free Will and the Contemporary Problem Evil

- **An outline**
 - **Background on free will**
 - **Mackie & free will**
 - **Defense versus theodicy**
 - **Free will as a rival explanation**
 - **The jury of ideal agnostics**
 - **Problems with the free will theodicy**
 - **The completeness problem**



Free Will & Determinism

- **Law of universal causation**
- **Psychological determinism**
- **Libertarianism**
- **Soft determinism**
- **Flew (and Mackie's) argument**
- **Libertarianism presupposed in most theological contexts**
- **We will assume it here**



Mackie & the Free Will Theodicy

- **Logical problem of evil**
- **All theodicies must fail**
- **Failure of the free will theodicy**
 - **Flew's argument**
 - **Always freely choosing the good**
 - **Free will, randomness, and character**

Defense and Theodicy



- **Logical problem of evil**
- **Pike, Chisholm, et al**
- **Alvin Plantinga**
- **Philosophical defense – logically possible**
- **Theodicy – a better account**
- **Free will defense**
- **Natural evil**
- **Satan's free will defense**

Free Will as a Rival Explanation



- **Evil as evidence**
- **Free will can't just be a defense**
- **Plausibility of the account**
 - **Account of moral evil**
 - **Account of natural evil**
 - **Account of animal pain**
- **Limit to moral evil**
- **Comparison to atheist's account?**

Ideal Agnostics



- **Incorporate van Inwagen's ideal agnostics**
- **Assume intersubjectivity?**
- **Are atheists' and theists' accounts of moral evil comparable?**
- **What if the rate the two explanations as equally plausible (implausible)?**

Moral Evil



- **Human character**
- **Environment for bad choices**
- **Serious atrocity**
- **Should the atheist concede on moral evil?**

Completeness



- **Natural evil**
- **Animal pain**
- **Appeal to Satan**
 - **Succeeds as a defense**
 - **Plausibility as a theodicy**
 - ***Ad hoc***
- **Successful partial explanation?**