Don S. Levi
dslevi@uoregon.edu

The Trouble with Harry

Abstract

The Principle of Alternative Possibilities (PAP), according to which we are responsible for what we did only if we could have done otherwise, is relied upon in the argument for the incompatibility of free will and determinism. Compatibilists, like Harry Frankfurt, attack PAP with stories that they devise as counter-examples; why are their stories, and the stories devised by defenders of PAP, so bad? Answers that suggest themselves are that these philosophers do not try to imagine how things actually unfolded; what it would be like for a real person in the situation; and actual talk of someone being responsible or being able to do otherwise. That they do not imagine these things also can be explained by their unwarranted assumption that when they talk, for example, about someone not being able to do otherwise, they are talking not about talk of it (in a story), but of the thing itself, not-being-able-to-do-otherwise.

1. Doing otherwise

Stories play a crucial role in critical discussions of the Principle of Alternate Possibilities (PAP), that we are responsible for what we did only if we could have done otherwise. These stories are offered as counter-examples to the principle, or as illustrations or counter-examples to variants of it. Some of them are taken from the Bible; some are based on real-life incidents; some are (neuro)science fiction or what I call "theological" fiction; and some just are

devised or created by the philosophers themselves. This paper is about how none of these stories do the work they are supposed to do.

I rely on stories in my own philosophizing. However, the stories told by those who discuss PAP all involve what I think of as a misconceived philosophical authorial omniscience. Of course, there is nothing problematic with a story just because it is told with authorial omniscience. However, as we will see, the same is not true of the stories told with philosophical authorial omniscience.

PAP is a key premise in the argument for incompatibility. Determinism is supposed to imply that whatever we do we cannot do otherwise; and if we cannot do otherwise then we do not have free will, and so should not be held responsible for what we do. Ironically, although the devising of stories seems critical for the philosophers whom we will be discussing when it comes to evaluating PAP, it is not something that they think of doing when it comes to thinking through what PAP says, let alone what determinism or free will is or implies.

Does determinism imply that we cannot do otherwise? I have trouble thinking through what determinism says about us, let alone with why what it says should be believed. Does the absence of free will imply a lack of responsibility? I also have trouble answering this question because I am so unclear about what the free will is that we are supposed to have and that is supposed to be incompatible with determinism.

However, by focusing on the truth or reliability of PAP troubling questions about both free will and determinism seem to be avoided. The stories we will be considering are supposed to be cases where someone (can or) cannot do otherwise and is responsible for doing it, and it is presumed that we can see that this is so without considering whether the cannot-do-otherwise, or the responsibility, is the kind of thing that determinism, or free will, implies.

Locke tells a story to illustrate the distinction between liberty and volition that seems to have been an influence on the much later construction of counter-examples to PAP. The next section

looks closely at Locke's story to see whether it does the work that he thinks it does.

2. The mystery of Locke's locked room example

Locke's story is of two people, whom we will call "Adam" and "Chris". While he is sleeping, Adam is "carried into" a room, where he is then "locked fast in, beyond his power to get out". Already in the room is Chris, whom Adam "longs to see and speak with" and whose company he finds "desirable" (Book II, Chapter XXI, 10). Locke uses the example to illustrate a distinction between volition and liberty—although the man is not at liberty to leave, he is staying there of his own volition (or free will).

What would it be like to be in Adam's position? And what are those who are carrying him prepared to do to if he resists? Instead of asking these questions, Locke assumes that it is enough to say what he does about Adam for it to be true that he cannot get the door open and leave. What about asking Chris or calling out for help? And what about jimmying the lock? Locke also assumes that it is sufficient for Adam to have wanted to see and speak to Chris for him to want to stay. However, if Adam has been kidnapped, drugged, or force was used to stop him from resisting when he awakens during the kidnapping, then would he still want to see Chris? And if Chris also is locked in without being a party to it, then in such sinister circumstances how is either of them staying of his own volition?

Perhaps it was not really a kidnapping and the people carrying him to the room are Adam's friends, who are having fun with him after he got very drunk and fell asleep. Presumably, if Adam had awakened during the kidnapping, then little or no force would have been used to get him into the room. And if, as Locke seems to be telling us, Adam awakened in the room with no idea how he got there and he wanted to leave, then when he discovered that the door was locked, Chris or someone else would have unlocked it. In Locke's story, Adam does not want to leave after he awakens. However, under the circumstances that I am imagining, he would have been able to do so.

The problems we have been having getting Locke's example to work are typical of stories told with a misconceived philosophical authorial omniscience. Consider, for example, the story told by Laura Ekstrom that is supposed to be a counter-example to PAP.

Justin deliberately jumps into a large pit out of which he cannot climb, in order to avoid helping his brother haul trees from the yard, as he had earlier promised to do.

Ekstrom says that Justin "cannot do otherwise than fail to help", even though he can be blamed for not helping (2002: p. 310).

Ekstrom does not seem to have realized how incomplete her story is, especially when it comes to the lengths Justin is prepared to go to avoid helping his brother. If Justin is not being too reckless, then the pit has to be shallow enough to avoid injury when jumping into it, and within range, if he cannot climb out, for a cry for help to be heard. And so, Ekstrom to the contrary, his excuse that he could not help because he was in a pit is disingenuous. For the story to work for Ekstrom, Justin must jump with no regard for his safety and have no way to get out, even if not badly hurt; and be where no one would think to look for him or hear him calling for help. So, what Justin would be doing is going to absurd or even suicidal lengths to avoid helping.

Could Justin have done otherwise? That is to say, could he have behaved more rationally? This question is not the one Ekstrom has in mind because it is not about Justin's failing to help. Was Justin responsible for his behavior? Given how suicidal it was, this question makes sense, but is also not what Ekstrom has in mind. She is thinking of Justin's responsibility for not helping, but in doing so she would have to be misdescribing Justin's behavior. As we have noted, the right description of it seems to be that he went to suicidal lengths to avoid helping, not that he failed to help.

As a storyteller Locke or Ekstrom has a lot of freedom and power. She can tell the story any way she wants, even make it surreal or dream-like, and not be criticized, provided that the story succeeds on its own terms. However, as we have seen, she lacks that freedom with a story devised to illustrate a philosophical point.

Next, we discuss what Harry Frankfurt, who was responsible for introducing counter-examples to PAP, says we are looking for when it comes to finding the right kind of counter-example to PAP.

3. Coercion and exclusion

Frankfurt begins by discussing the doctrine that coercion excludes responsibility because it seems to be a "particularized version" of PAP and "it is natural enough to say of a person who has been coerced that he could not have done otherwise". To find counter-examples to the doctrine, he says, we should look for situations where someone, whom Frankfurt calls "Jones", has decided for "reasons of his own" to do something and then is threatened by "a very harsh penalty (so harsh that any reasonable person would submit to the threat)", if he does not do it. If Jones did not act out of fear, then we may want to take the position that he was not coerced, but only had been subjected to coercion. Or, we may want to take the position that he was coerced, in which case he would be responsible for what he did even though he could not have done otherwise. So, the doctrine that coercion excludes responsibility, which seems to be a version of PAP, should be abandoned (Frankfurt 2003: 167-70).

Perhaps the doctrine really should be that doing something because of being coerced excludes responsibility. This would appeal to a compatibilist like Frankfurt. If Jones was coerced into doing it, then Jones did not act of his own free will, and, of course, determinism does not imply that what anyone does is done under coercion. Whereas PAP is considered a premise in the argument for incompatibility, that being coerced excludes responsibility supports compatibilism.

Significantly, Frankfurt is giving the outline for a story, rather than telling one. He is doing all the talking and there is no one in the story to quote on responsibility or doing otherwise, especially when it comes to the object of the responsibility or what it is that cannot be done otherwise.

Let me illustrate why this is a problem with a story based on an actual incident from the 1960s. Fred is a black teenager, and he has

had sex several times with Bea, a white classmate. Her racist brothers confront him and threaten to kill him if he continues to see her. However, he has already tired of her and decided not to see her any more before he was threatened. And when she calls and asks to see him, he says that because of the threats he will not see her anymore. So, it would seem that Fred's behavior is an example of how coercion does not exclude responsibility: he was threatened but he is still responsible for what he did.

What did he do? Bea tells Fred that they can see each other without anyone knowing, and anyway, her brothers are only bluffing. And when Fred says that he can't take that risk, she replies by saying, "You don't really care about me. You are letting my brothers decide whom you see or do not see". Bea is blaming him for not caring enough about her to continue to see her despite the threats. However, Frankfurt wants us to think of Fred's being responsible for what he told Bea, not how he feels about her.

Does the fact that Fred was threatened (with death) excuse his telling Bea that they were through? Because he had tired of her, the threats provided him with an excuse for what he said to her on that occasion. Later, he may feel the need to show friends that he was not intimidated, and start seeing Bea again. So, when it comes to responsibility or blame, it seems to depend on what the object of the blame is: telling Bea that he won't see her anymore when he could have said nothing; seemingly doing what the brothers told him to do; or what? Because Frankfurt only gives an outline for a story, it is hard to imagine what the object of Fred's responsibility could be, insofar as the doctrine that coercion excludes responsibility is concerned.

What matters to Fred's mother is that Bea's family is racist. So, when he tells her about the threats and his breaking up with Bea, she says that he should not blame himself for doing it. And it would not matter to her that Fred does not care that much about Bea or has decided before the threats not to see her any more. "Fred just used her," she is told. She replies, "Fred should not be blamed. Her family is racist, and her brothers threatened to kill him." "But hadn't he already decided not to see her anymore?"

"That may be true, but it doesn't make any difference. I don't blame him one bit for breaking it off."

The object of the responsibility here, namely, breaking things off with a girl from a racist family, is very different than it was when we considered Bea's reaction. And, once again, it does not seem to be what Frankfurt has in mind, because it is not about what Fred said or did on a particular occasion.

So, let us think of exactly what Fred said to Bea about continuing to see her when she called him after the brothers threatened him. Of course, just because he was coerced into breaking up with Bea does not mean that he had to say exactly what he did to Bea. And, if we suppose that the brothers not only threatened him, but dictated to him exactly what to say to her when she called, he would have to wonder whether it was some kind of joke; and Bea would be suspicious, especially when he kept on repeating, word for word, what he was told to say when she tried to get him to change his mind. He can be blamed for deciding to break up with Bea before the threats, but not for saying what the brothers ordered him to say on pain of death.

So, when we do try to tell a story based on Frankfurt's sketch for one, the problems we run into have to do with determining what the object of responsibility or coercion could be, and not with whether the doctrine itself is true.

Let me make clear that I am not making a general point to the effect that talk of coercion (or of being able to do otherwise) is "always already morally charged" and not to be determined independently of the determination of responsibility, as one reviewer for this journal suggested I may want to do. I am not sure how or whether breaking up with Bea is a moral issue. My point is that determining whether it is a case of coercion depends on who is making the determination and when she is making it. And, a similar point applies when it comes to blaming Fred for doing what he did or to holding him responsible for doing it. Moreover, there is a problem when the determination of any of these things is to be made by the philosopher because his role is unclear and so what he says in that role also is unclear.

Frankfurt moves on to a discussion of responsibility and being able to do otherwise because, he suggests, any victim of coercion can always do otherwise by accepting "the penalty his actions would bring down on him" (2003: 172). And, instead of providing only a suggestion for a story, he actually tells one, or so it seems. This story, which is the focus of much discussion in the literature, seems to belong to the genre of science fiction. In the next section we take up John Fischer's version of the story.

4. Philosophical Science Fiction

When he introduces Frankfurt's most discussed example, John Fischer tells a story of voting in the U.S. presidential election of 2000 (2002: 282). A chip has been inserted in Jones' brain that enables Black, the "controller", to monitor and control how Jones votes. There is a "sign" on the monitor of what Jones will do, and by reading it Black can manipulate the "minute processes" of Jones' brain and nervous system so as to bring it about that he "chooses" to vote and does vote for Gore, if he has decided to vote for his opponent, Bush. As it happens, Jones had decided to vote for Gore, so nothing needed to be done by the controller. So, even though Jones could not have done otherwise, he is responsible for his vote.

I call the story "philosophy science fiction" because I am skeptical of claims by neuroscientists, like Benjamin Libet, that by correlating brain activity with certain muscle movements, they can draw conclusions about decisions of experimental subjects to flex their wrists (1985). That when a subject flexes her wrist she had made a decision to do so, and that that decision is something that occurs (in the brain), or occurs at a certain moment (or is the cause of her flexing her wrist), is questionable. And so is the assumption that in talking about what happens to her brain, nerves and muscles when she flexes her wrist, the flexing itself is being talked about. Of course, if it is just science fiction, then no justification is needed for saying that the decision to flex the wrist or to vote for Gore can be monitored by a brain scan. However, as *philosophy* science fiction, explanation and justification are required, if the story is to be used in connection with PAP.

Of especial significance is the fact that the philosophers who discuss this case have not tried to put themselves in the shoes of Jones, especially in connection with (talk of) his not being able to do otherwise. Jones voted for Gore, so, as I noted, Black did not have to do anything. What is significant is that philosophers like Frankfurt or Fischer do not ask about how Jones would experience the brain manipulation if Black had to perform it because the monitor showed that Jones was going to vote for Bush.

Suppose that Jones had made it clear that he strongly favored Bush over Gore. "I voted for Gore", he tells his wife, Leilani, who is a strong supporter of Bush. And he explains, "When I got into the booth, I suddenly had the thought that Bush was a murderer". "How could you let that decide your vote?" Leilani's question brings out the difficulty concerning what Black did to Jones: did he make the idea of Bush being a murderer pop into Jones' head, or did he make the idea especially persuasive, at least for a moment? Either way, Jones could have done otherwise, or so Leilani thinks. So, Fischer's claim that Jones could not have done otherwise, because of what Black would do when he saw on the monitor that Jones was about to vote for Bush, is problematic. And, I am suggesting, Fischer and the others who have discussed this example have failed to see this, because they have not considered how Jones would experience the manipulation of his brain by Black.

We might think in terms of an "hypnotic suggestion" or "inner compulsion", to which Frankfurt alludes before he engages in philosophical science fiction (1967: p. 167). "That was strange", Jones says, when he comes out of the voting booth. "It was like I was in a trance, and someone was telling me what to do." "Couldn't you have disobeyed?" "But I didn't want to disobey. All that seemed to matter to me was doing what the voice told me to do." After the Korean War there was a fascination with brainwashing, as evidenced by Richard Condon's novel, *The Manchurian Candidate*, where a sniper's assassination attempt was triggered under post-hypnotic suggestion by a certain word. However, the novel is a satire of the paranoia of the time about being turned into zombies by thought control, and so it does not

help us to understand why the post-hypnotic suggestion could not have been resisted.

Perhaps all we need to imagine is that the controller could do something to Jones' brain that would result in the Gore box getting checked when the sign revealed that he was going to vote for Bush. Jones explains to his wife, "My marker slipped and the Gore box was filled by mistake". If the controller somehow made that happen, then the controller was doing the marking. And so, Jones can protest that he did not really vote for Gore and ask to correct his vote, in which case what the controller was trying to achieve would not have come to pass. Could Jones have done otherwise? The question which Fischer would have us ask is whether Jones could have done otherwise than vote for Gore, and that is not what Jones really did in this case.

We may want to think in terms of a physical incapacity. Jones comes out of the voting booth and complains to the officials there. "I could not vote for Bush. Gore's name was marked instead." As a case of interference with the voting process, Jones can ask that he be allowed to cast his vote again. And the same point seems to apply when something has gone wrong with Jones himself.

These problems arise when we try to imagine how what is done to someone by brain manipulation would actually be experienced by the person who is being manipulated. That Jones could not have done otherwise is something that is supposed to be built into the story, but turns out to be questionable when we think through the effect on him of what would have been done to him if he had not voted as he did, and when we try to imagine what he would say about it.

5. God as controller and the selling of Joseph

Eleanor Stump changes the story from science fiction to what she calls "theological fiction," but does not thereby avoid the problems we have been identifying. In her version, God is the "controller" who has infallible knowledge about what Jones would (freely) do in various situations. And God uses that knowledge to harden Jones' heart (as God hardened Pharaoh's heart) if Jones is about to vote the way God does not want him to vote (2003: p. 149).

With this story, there is no possibility of the technology failing or the controller making a mistake, as there is in the science fiction story we discussed in the previous section. However, here, too, we have to think about the effect of the hardening on Jones, on how he would experience it. Would God have given him the feeling that there is something really creepy about Bush, would God somehow get him to think that there was a very strong case for Gore? Either way, Jones might have ignored the feeling or the thought. Did God move Jones' hand or have the ballot be marked for him? If so, Jones would not have really voted for Gore. So, it is not clear how having God be the controller helps to make this theological fiction a counter-example to PAP.

The citing by Charlotte Katzoff of the Biblical story of Joseph and his brothers as a Frankfurt-type counter-example (2003) also runs into problems. As she sees it, the story manifests the "dual causation" of the Bible, where God, as a causal agent, supervenes on the human actor(s), and the way to understand that causation is in Frankfurtian terms.

The Biblical narrator tells us that Joseph's brothers are away pasturing Jacob's flock, and that Jacob tells Joseph to find them. When they see Joseph approaching they talk of killing him, but are persuaded by Reuben to throw him into a pit, and then by Judah to pull him out and sell him to traders who are passing by. Several years later, Joseph is in charge of food distribution in Egypt during a famine when his brothers come seeking food. After tormenting them with false accusations and painful demands, he finally tells them that he is the brother whom they sold. And he urges them not to reproach themselves because God sent him to Egypt to save people from famine, "so, it was not you who sent me here, but God" (Genesis 45.8). Later, when Jacob dies and the brothers worry that Joseph will seek revenge on them for how they caused their father so much grief, Joseph says to them that,

> although you intended me harm, God intended it for good, so as to bring about the present result—the survival of many people (Genesis 50.20).

According to Katzoff, Joseph is mistakenly implying that Joseph's brothers were not responsible for selling him to the

traders because God was responsible for it. However, even though they could not have done otherwise than sell him, they are to blame for doing it. What Joseph failed to realize is that although God did nothing because he did not need to do so, he would have intervened to make them sell Joseph, if the brothers had come to their senses and decided not to sell him.

However, Katzoff does not seem to have thought through what Joseph is saying. He has taken vengeance on his brothers by not revealing himself to them; planting silver on them; and insisting that they go back and get his youngest brother before any food is given to them. So, Katzoff to the contrary, he is not exonerating them for what they did. However, when he finally reveals himself to them, he does so out of a concern for them (and for his father), and so, he says what he does to heal his relationship with his family, which he succeeds in doing. Katzoff to the contrary, although Joseph said that God sent him to Egypt and that God intended the sale of him for good, Joseph is not implying that God (and not his brothers) is responsible for the selling of Joseph.

That God intended it for good means only that God intended for something good to come out of it, which is what happened. That God, and not the brothers, sent him to Egypt, is not a denial that the brothers sold him into slavery, but only that Joseph's being in Egypt was part of the divine plan. That does not mean that God had a plan that specifically included what ended up happening, exactly as it happened. Katzoff talks of what God would have done, but she has not thought it through. Suppose that the brothers came to their senses and decided not to harm Joseph. Would God have intervened at that point to make them lose their senses again? Or would God have arranged for Joseph to be captured by traders or for something else to happen that would have gotten him to Egypt? These are the wrong questions to ask. All we are told by Joseph is that what the brothers did was part of the fulfillment of God's plan, with an emphasis on the good that ended up happening. With the philosophical science fiction stories we are told what the "controller" did to Jones' brain, whereas, in talking about the fulfillment of God's plan, Joseph says or implies nothing about what God did to fulfill it.

6. The trouble with PPA

To avoid counter-examples, Peter van Inwagen reformulates PAP as the "Principle of Possible Action" (PPA).

PPA: A person is morally responsible for failing to perform a given act only if he could have performed that act.

Jones' wife reproaches him for failing to vote for Bush. And Jones would be morally responsible for that failure only if he could have voted for Bush, which, supposedly, is what the controller will prevent. So, his vote does not constitute a counter-example of PPA.

Van Inwagen supports PPA with an example based on a real-life incident. Earlier, we had trouble understanding how Jones could (not) have voted for Bush because of what the controller would do, and the science fiction aspect of the story seemed to contribute to the trouble. However, Van Inwagen's example is based on a real incident and so seemingly avoids such trouble.

The incident in question is the 1964 case of Kitty Genovese, where apartment dwellers did not respond to her cries for help when she was being beaten to death. Let us focus on a particular individual, whom we will call "Don". Suppose that he looks out of his window and sees someone being beaten and robbed by "powerful-looking assailants". Don reaches for the phone to call the police, but decides not to get involved. And here van Inwagen adds a detail that was not true of the original incident: unbeknownst to Don, telephone service is out in the city (and mobile phones were not yet in use). Since Don cannot get through to the police, he is not responsible for failing to call them. So, we have here an instantiation of PPA (1983: p. 165).

Let us try to be clear about what Don is (not) responsible for. Imagine that his wife asks him, "Why didn't you call the police"? "There was no phone service". "You didn't know that. You did not even try to call them". She is holding him responsible for failing to *try* to call the police, which is something he could have done.

Perhaps Van Inwagen is thinking that Don's wife knows that there is no telephone service. If so, she would seem to be asking why he didn't try, for example, to give some kind of signal. The question takes on even more urgency because of how brazen the robbers are, and how real the threat seems to be to Don's house and family. From the facts that we are given, it seems that, van Inwagen to the contrary, Don could have tried to do something to contact the police (or get help) even if he had no telephone service.

Fischer changes the example by putting "you" in an apartment, and having you look out the window and see a mugging, when the telephone wires to the apartment have been cut, although that is something you do not know (2002: p. 284). That they have been cut seems to be part of a different and more frightening kind of criminal action, one that requires forethought and planning, which would not be true of a mugging. Moreover, Fischer does not consider the possibility that you could have gone to other apartments to ask the people there to call the police. So, from the little Fischer tells us it does not seem possible to determine what Don is or is not responsible for doing, as far as contacting the police is concerned.

My interest in this section has been to show how the problems with the stories devised in support of Frankfurt's attack on PAP are not confined to attacks like Frankfurt's on PAP, but extend to stories (including real-life stories) used in connection with other principles.

Next, I return to the science fiction stories to take up an argument that turns on whether the process initiated by the controller is deterministic or indeterministic. As we have remarked, by concentrating on PAP, the need to clarify or understand what determinism or free will implies is avoided. However, the Dilemma Defense (of PAP), which we discuss in the next section, explicitly makes reference to determinism (and indeterminism).

7. The Dilemma Defense

In the science fiction stories, is the process initiated by the controller deterministic or indeterministic? This is the question asked by the "dilemma defense", which claims that if it is

deterministic then Jones cannot be responsible for his vote; and if it is indeterministic then Jones could have done otherwise. (See, for example, Widerker 1995; Kane 1996; Ginet 1996).

Although the question of whether a decision must be the outcome of a biological process troubles me, I am going to focus on the fact that since technology is involved, the device that Black is using to monitor brain-activity, or to manipulate the brain to trigger a different decision, is not fail-proof. Not only is there a possibility of the controller making a mistake, but the monitor or brain-manipulating device may be defective. So, the very idea of determinism applying to what the monitor reveals (or what Jones does because of what it reveals) is a non-starter. And if the focus should not be on the process alone, but also on the technology supposedly controlling it, then whether or not the process is indeterministic seems irrelevant.

Some philosophers, like Albert Mele and David Robb, seem to have avoided the problem. In their story, Black, the controller, initiates a deterministic process, P, that will result in Bob's deciding to steal Ann's car, unless he (indeterministically) decides to steal the car on his own, i.e., independently of P, unless Bob dies or is otherwise unable to make a decision (Mele and Robb 1998). So, no reading of a sign on a monitor, or manipulation of the brain in response to that reading, plays a role in what Bob does.

However, Mele and Robb fail to take into account what they are doing in telling the story. They tell us that the process P is deterministic, and this means that they are telling us that nothing can go wrong; and they tell us that Bob's decision to steal the car blocks P, and that the decision is made independently of P. (They also tell us that there is a process involved.) Why can nothing go wrong with P or with its blockage? The only answer seems to be that by telling us that it cannot, they think that they are making it so.

If we reject the deterministic horn of the dilemma, and take the position that the process initiated by the controller is indeterministic, then does that mean that Bob can do otherwise, as those who make use of the defense suppose? This question is hard to answer because it is about what Bob does, whereas Mele and

Robb are talking about what is supposed to happen (in and to his brain, etc.) when he does it or in his doing it.

I have not considered all the attempts at supplying (examples or) counterexamples of PAP or variants of it. However, I would want to argue that all such stories are problematic because of the considerations that I have emphasized. These include the reliance on philosophical authorial omniscience as a substitute for what the story itself reveals; the negligence in trying to think through how the stories are supposed to work or how the people in them are supposed to experience what is to be considered the inability to do otherwise; and the failure to imagine how the reference to being able to do otherwise or to being responsible is supposed to be understood (by having someone in the story talk of it).

And there is another problem with any such examples, namely, the fact that the determination of responsibility, or being able to do otherwise, is done by philosophers. They say how the example should be counted without really saying it or imagining themselves to really say it. Mind you, they could have called on someone in the story to do the talking. However, if they did so, not only would there be a problem with why that person's question (or answer) should be singled out, but also with whether the answer to it really has anything to do with determinism and free will.

PAP makes reference to not being able to do otherwise. However, it does so because determinism is supposed to rule out the possibility of being able to do otherwise. Does it do so? The discussion of Frankfurt-type examples avoids answering this question. However, avoiding it seems to beg the question of whether PAP is a premise of the incompatibility argument, because that argument is about what determinism implies, and not about what might be a case of (not) being able to do otherwise.

And this brings us back to why philosophers like Frankfurt focused on PAP, rather than on determinism or free will itself. That principle was formulated as a premise of what is supposed to be an argument for incompatibility. That is to say, it is an artifact of a certain way of doing philosophy, that approaches something seemingly problematic, like determinism or free will, by asking what the argument for or against it is; and that what it is looking for in

an argument is a string of propositions each of which is generated by philosophers themselves in filling out what they take to be the argument. This approach means that PAP, or a variant of it, is mistakenly presumed to be something that is relevant to an investigation into the acceptability of determinism, when what ends up being discussed seems to have little or nothing to do with it.

What, then, should we do to think through the argument against determinism? I suggest that we should think about what determinism says and why it should be believed, an approach which, unlike the one that focuses on the incompatibility argument, does not presume that what determinism says is clear, let alone unproblematic.

8. The argument against determinism

According to determinism, everything is causally necessitated. Sometimes what we did may be said to have a cause, but it seems hard to imagine talk of its being necessitated, unless perhaps the behavior in question was involuntary. Determinists argue for its being necessitated by insisting that otherwise there would be no real explanation for how it happened, an argument that seems question begging. Or they change the subject by talking about what happened in and to the subject when she acted. These criticisms of determinism are part of the argument against determinism, and although I will say more about them in this section, they obviously require another paper to develop them fully. My object is to suggest a different direction for the argument against determinism to take than the argument for incompatibility with free will.

When it comes to something that someone does that is not involuntary and is said to have a cause, it is unclear what, if anything, was necessitated (or determined). Narissa has ended her marriage to her husband. Someone who does not know the circumstances, asks, "What caused her to do that?" And the answer – "She discovered he had been unfaithful once again" – is responsive to the question.

However, often there seems to be no cause to identify when it comes to what someone did. Fred says "Hi", to his friend Joel when he meets him at school. Barb asks him, "What caused you to

do that?" "What did I do?" A possible answer is that Fred had told Barb that he was going to ignore Joel, or that he would not greet people with a "hi". However, if, as I imagine it, that is not what he did, then it would be unclear what Barb could be asking. So, determinists need to explain, insofar as this and other cases like it are concerned, how or why someone did something that could be said to be caused.

And where something does have a cause, such as Narissa's kicking her husband out, why say that it was the only thing that could have happened, as determinists want to do? The answer seems to be that they would not be satisfied with being told that it was her discovery of her husband's latest infidelity. They will wonder why this time was different from earlier occasions when she stayed with him, even though she should not have believed him when he said on those occasions that he would not do it again.

"What caused her to leave him (for good) this time?" This question, which determinists seems to be asking, is hard to imagine actually being asked, especially if it is a question about why she finally realized that he was not going to change (and that she could not still be married to him). What she realized was there to be realized. So, in asking what caused her to realize it, determinists must be making the unwarranted assumption that there must be more to it than that. No doubt, she made it hard for herself to see it before, and now she no longer is doing so. Why does that have a cause; why *must* it have one? That she realized it is something of an achievement on her part, and determinists seem to want to take that away from her without any apparent justification for doing so.

Instead of addressing these problems, I think that determinists are going to claim that the real cause of Narissa's kicking Dave out is not just this latest infidelity, but all the other influences on her for kicking him out. However, to respond to a question about why she kicked Dave out by saying, "everything at the time she did so", is to make a joke and not answer the question.

Determinists give this response because they assume that an adequate answer to a question about why Narissa said or did what she did must account for why no other outcome was possible. However, this view of explanation seems to beg the question of

why determinism should be adopted because it assumes that only a deterministic explanation could be adequate.

Why refer to what Narissa did as an outcome? Perhaps this is an unproblematic way of referring to what happened when Narissa discovered Dave's infidelity. However, if it refers to the outcome of a process, then the process in question would seem to be what happened in and to her brain, nervous system, nerves, muscles, etc., when she told her husband that their marriage was over. However, what happened in and to her seemingly can only be identified as what happened when she told her husband what she did. So, the process cannot be deterministic unless what she did was causally necessitated, a claim we rejected earlier.

These and other objections to determinism require a lot more development than I have been able to give them here. My object in touching on them is to provide some momentum for a critical examination of the argument against determinism that does not have anything to do with incompatibility with free will.

I have concentrated on determinism, and not on free will, because of how much the talk of the latter is a product of philosophizing about determinism. This is because, for the philosophers we have been discussing, free will seems to be what we are supposed to think exists in connection with the incompatibility argument – the very idea of there being such a thing as free will is a function of trying to say what is problematic about determinism. The idea of free will has other sources, such as the theological doctrine that it was given to us by God, sources that do not seem to be in back of how philosophers who discuss PAP think of free will. So, since, as I have suggested in this section, there are other ways of identifying problems with determinism, there would seem to be no need to talk about what free will is, or presume to know what it could be.

9. Conclusion: Philosophy and stories

Hitchcock's movie, "The Trouble with Harry", is a black comedy about a dead man, Harry, who, over and over again, is buried and then dug up out of fear of his body being discovered, each time by

people who thought they killed Harry. The joke on them all is that Harry died of natural causes.

This paper has been about the stories devised by philosophers to attack PAP, revive it, or kill it off again. And, as we have seen, the joke on these philosophers is that they do all the talking rather than leaving it up to the stories, when we try to think through what they seem to involve, to do the talking for them.

I am not objecting to the use of stories in philosophy. As I indicated at the outset, stories are critical in my own philosophizing, and, I think, should be critical in everybody's philosophizing. Stories *are* needed, for example, to clarify what PAP (or any variation of it) says. "He can't do otherwise." "He can't perform the action." "He is morally responsible for it." No doubt the philosopher thinks that she knows what each of these says because she herself is saying it. And it is most difficult for her to realize that what she is saying as a philosopher she is not really saying. She is not saying it to someone on the scene or to Jones himself. Nor is she saying it to herself. She may think otherwise, but that is because she has not really tried to imagine saying it to herself. We can try to imagine her saying to herself, "He couldn't have done it", when talking about someone in particular and in particular circumstances. However, that is not what she is doing as a philosopher.

Why is it necessary for us to imagine it being said at all? This is an obvious rejoinder. Or, to put the question another way, why is there a need for a story or stories to explain what is being said in PAP? The mistaken presumption behind the question is that the philosopher is talking about the thing-itself, namely, not-being-able-to-do-otherwise, or kicking-Dave-out, and not about any talk about it. When she operates on this presumption, she ignores or neglects talk that can be imagined about being able to do otherwise or about being responsible in order to talk about the reality of not being able to do otherwise or of kicking Dave out. That there is such a reality must seem self-evident. And this is, perhaps, the real joke on the philosopher. The trouble with Harry (Frankfurt-style cases) is the trouble with philosophy itself to the extent that it

presumes to be talking not about our talk of something, but about the thing-in-itself.

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Biographical note

Don S. Levi is emeritus professor in philosophy at the University of Oregon, Eugene. He now grows coffee and avocado on the slopes of Mauna Kea, Hawaii. His works include *In Defense of Informal Logic* (2000), *Critical Thinking and Logic* (1991).