PHI 171 – Problems of Philosophy – Fall 2015

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Assignment #3 – Due Nov 2

This assignment tests your ability to analyze different arguments and weigh reasons for and against a certain claim. Your answers should be typed and written in good and clear English. *Be concise but precise!* Do not write in essay form. The expected length of this assignment is 2-3 pages.

1 Argument summaries

In laying out the arguments below, make use of the readings, the slides and your class notes. You should demonstrate a full mastery of the arguments we discussed in class, and if you wish to do so, you may also strengthen them as you see fit.

(a) Write the strongest possible argument for the claim that determinism is true.

(b) Write the strongest possible argument for the claim that if determinism is true, then we do not have free will.

(c) Write the strongest possible argument for the claim that if non-determinism is true, then we do not have free will.

(d) Write the strongest possible argument for the claim that if determinism is true, then we still have free will.

2 Definitions

State the definitions of "free will", "determinism" and "non-determinism" that you have used in the four arguments above. Have your definitions changed across the different arguments? Explain. If the definitions have changed, please identify the differences.

3 Weighing reasons

i. The arguments in (b) and (d) cannot be both correct. How so? Explain.

ii. Once you have identified the source of the tension between (b) and (d), which of the two do you find to be the strongest argument? Explain your reasons carefully.