

# Re: Epistemology 201: The Science of Science

**Source:** <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.physics/2005-02/9000.html>

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**From:** aeo6 (aeo6\_at\_cornell.edu)

**Date:** 02/18/05

Date: Fri, 18 Feb 2005 11:06:42 -0500

Albert said:

> *Tony Orlow (aeo6) wrote:*

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>>>>>

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>>>>>>

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>>>>>>>

>>>>>>>> *Albert said:*

>>>>>>>>

>>>>>>>>> *Tony Orlow (aeo6) wrote:*

>>>>>>>>>

>>>>>>>>>> *snip*

>>>>>>>>>>

>>>>>>>>>>>> *If God*

>>>>>>>>>>>>> *knows you will have Cheerios, can you possibly choose instead to have*

>>>>>>>>>>>>> *Rice Krispies?*

>>>>>>>>>>>>>

>>>>>>>>>>>>>> *Of course. You can chosen either. Foreknowing is not the same as*

>>>>>>>>>>>>>> *determining. The future isn't fixed, but to one outside of*

>>>>>>>>>>>>>> *space-time, observation of any point in space-time is not a problem.*

>>>>>>>>>>>>>>

>>>>>>>>>>>>>>> *If God knows you will eat Cheerios, and you choose Rice Krispies*

>>>>>>>>>>>>>>> *instead, then God was wrong, and therefore not omniscient.*

>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>

>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>> *I can't believe that you don't see the absurdity of this remark.*

>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>> *How can God be wrong about what you ate when what he is seeing is*

>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>> *what you actually did?*

>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>

>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>> *The question was whether God knew exactly what you were going to do at*

>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>> *some future time, and whether you were able to choose to do other than*

>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>> *what God knows you will do.*

> >>>>  
> >>>>*As a gedanken, take God out of it, and leave just yourself: The*  
> >>>>*question you are actually asking is whether it is possible for*  
> >>>>*you to change the past and do what you didn't do.*  
> >>>>  
> >>>>*If you say yes to that, then I ask can you do it without God's*  
> >>>>*knowledge?*  
> >>>>  
> >>>>*First of all, my statement was about the incompatibility of the*  
> >>>>*omniscience of god and the existence of free will.*  
> >>>>  
> >>>>*Which I showed you was wrong.*  
> >>>>  
> >>>>*No you didn't. Here was your refutation:*  
> >>>>  
> >>>>*"No, the easy way out is for you to understand the logical*  
> >>>>*absurdity you pose. However, for the record: God is certainly*  
> >>>>*not bound by his own creations, which include you, logic, and*  
> >>>>*your poor understanding of logic."*  
> >>>>  
> >>>>*Liar. That was not my refutation of your absurd statement:*  
> >>>>  
> >>>>*"If God knows you will eat Cheerios, and you choose Rice Krispies*  
> >>>>*instead, then God was wrong, and therefore not omniscient."*  
> >>>>  
> >>>>*What you quote above is the answer to one of your absurd questions:*  
> >>>>  
> >>>>*"Maybe God can defy logic? Is that the easy out?"*  
> >>>>  
> >>>>  
> >>>>*Your refutation of my logic was that logic does not apply to God,*  
> >>>>  
> >>>>*Liar. My refutation of your logic was:*  
> >>>>  
> >>>>*"How can God be wrong about what you ate when what he is seeing*  
> >>>>*is what you actually did?"*  
That doesn't even make sense. You are assuming everything has already happened. It has nothing to do with the problem I posed, where either what God sees is not necessarily what happens, or it is. It occurs to me that this, as a tautology, is necessarily true, and that it's one's choice which side they take. To take both sides is self-contradictory, but since you're deeply invested in both sides of the tautology, I don't expect you to see that. I guess I never responded to that one because I didn't even know what it meant. Still don't. Sorry.  
> >>>>  
> >>>>*and*  
> >>>>  
> >>>>*"As a gedanken, take God out of it, and leave just yourself: The*  
> >>>>*question you are actually asking is whether it is possible for*  
> >>>>*you to change the past and do what you didn't do."*  
This, again, as I DID point out, has nothing whatsoever to do with the

problem I posed. Free will isn't about changing the past, but about determining action in the present to change the future, and whether that determination is yours or the universe's, whether it's yours or God's. You can't take God out of the picture when you are painting a picture of God, or you have no picture left.

You have failed to refute anything, because you can't stay on the subject.

>

> > *which*

> > *is not a logical refutation at all.*

>

> *Of course not. It's merely another of your strawmen built on a*

> *misquote.*

>

> > *So, the problem is MY poor*

> > *understanding of logic?*

>

> *That's being kind.*

And that's being snotty.

>

> > *Maybe the problem is your preference for*

> > *dispensing with logic in favor of maintaining contradictory emotional*

> > *beliefs.*

>

> *That stupid statement is totally without basis.*

No, I have provided the basis above. You are deeply invested in two mutually contradictory beliefs. The fact that you try to avoid the contradiction by changing the subject is ample evidence of the emotional nature of this topic for you.

> >

> >

> > > > *If you take god out*

> > > > *of the picture, then we're not discussing the same thing.*

> > >

> > > *Of course we are. The the logical problem is the same.*

> > >

> > > > *Secondly, it*

> > > > *is not possible for me to change the past,*

> > >

> > > *OK.*

> > >

> > >

> > > > *so your second question is*

> > > > *meaningless.*

> > >

> > > *No. It would only be asked if you replied 'yes' to the first.*

> >

> > *Right, that's why it's meaningless.*

> >

> > > > *Freedom of will doesn't mean you can do A AND B, but that*

> >>>you can choose A OR B.  
> >>  
> >>Agreed. The future will be contingent on your choice today.  
> >>  
> >>>>Either you can, and therefore what God  
> >>>>"knew" was wrong, so God's not omniscient. Or, you can't because God is  
> >>>>never wrong, and therefore you have no freedom to will otherwise.  
> >>  
> >>Dammint, Tony. Where did you pick up that stupid belief that  
> >>stating the same thing over and over negates any previous  
> >>refutations.  
> >  
> > The logic is simple. Maybe my hope is that you'll have one of your  
> > epiphanies. You haven't given any refutation of the problem, yet claim  
> > you have. Logically there is contradiction, yet you refuse to see it. Is  
> > there a thrid possibility I am not seeing that preserves free will and  
> > omniscience of God? Try to be logical about it.  
>  
> Yes. I have stated it on several occasions before.  
See above.  
>  
> >>>>That is a false dichotomy that you base on false concepts of  
> >>>>time, foreknowledge, determination and who knows what else.  
> >>>  
> >>>>That is about as unspecific a criticism as I've seen from you Albert.  
> >>  
> >>It is very specific. You committed a logical fallacy, and I  
> >>spelled it out. I can't do your thinking for you.  
> >  
> > You did not spell it out. There is no fallacy. Furthermore you never  
> > said specifically what was false about my concepts of time (oh yeah,  
> > time is imaginary – as if!),  
>  
> I have no idea what your concept of time is other than you  
> believe it exists. But it is a natural assumption given your  
> inability to understand my explanations.  
>  
> foreknowledge (pretty straight forward  
> > concept), determinism, or who know what else?  
>  
> Yes, all straightforward concepts. Which is why I am unable to  
> discern your problem.  
>  
> > Could you be more specific  
> > about a particular logical problem, either with one of the premises or  
> > construction?  
>  
> Huh?  
>  
> >>>>What false concepts is my argument based on, the idea that knowing what  
> >>>>is going to happen implies that it is going to happen?

>

> *You irrational belief that foreknowledge is equivalent to  
> determination. But, I've pointed that out before and you insist  
> that it is true.*

So, your idea of a logical fallacy is a statement like, "if you know something is going to happen, and you're not wrong, then it will happen"? Where is the fallacy or mistake in that? Does your idea of knowing include the possibility of wrongness? I think that's called "thinking", not "knowing". Knowing something means thinking it and being right, which means it is right, not wrong.

Please explain precisely what is irrational about equating absolute knowledge of a fact with the truth of the fact, without introducing insanity into the picture, please.

Notice that immediately below I have already gone over this, and you insist you have addressed it and yet have not. Address it or shut up.

>

> >> *Yes.*

> >

> > *Knowing a fact, and not being wrong, is generally taken to mean that  
> > that fact is true. That's what "knowing" means. So, if God knows what's  
> > going to happen, it might not? Then, I can only conclude that God is  
> > sometimes wrong, and therefore doesn't know everything. Now, point out  
> > the specific logical fallacy in that set of statements.*

>

> *I've spent nigh only a dozen posts on pointing out the logical  
> fallacies in that argument. Do you really expect me to reply to  
> yet another iteration of the same argument with another dozen  
> post in useless explanation?*

>

> >>> *Where is the error in that?*

> >>

> >> *Your belief that knowing what choice you made in your past means  
> >> that in that past you had no choice.*

> >

> > *No, I said that, if it is a fact that something will happen, then it  
> > will, otherwise that fact is wrong. Just because something is in the  
> > past doesn't mean it couldn't have been different, only that it wasn't,  
> > and never will be. I was talking about foreknowledge of the FUTURE.*

>

> *It's only foreknowledge from the perspective of the past. From  
> the perspective of the future, it \*is\* the past. God is not  
> limited to either perspective.*

That doesn't answer the question any more than your nonsensical comment about the past that I was responding to. This is not, I repeat, NOT about changing the past, so get over it. Stop changing the subject. It is about whether God is ever ignorant or wrong about anything, including the choices we make, and if not, then what freedom do we have in our choices. I don't expect you to stick to the topic any more than I expect a cat to take a bath.

>  
> >>>> *Endless repetition does not make it true.*  
> >>>>  
> >>>> *Knowledge about your future by a being outside of time is not*  
> >>>> *determinism.*  
> >>>>  
> >>>> *It is if there is nothing you can do to change it.*  
> >>>>  
> >>>> *You can only choose in the now.*  
> >>>>  
> >>>>  
> >>>> *How else do you define determinism?*  
> >>>>  
> >>>> *You have no choice in the now.*  
> >>>>  
> > *Of course you have choice. It's just that the choice you make is*  
> > *ultimately determined by factors in the environment and your makeup,*  
> > *which aren't your making.*  
>  
> *A logical absurdity.*  
Absurd to say that we have will and make choices, and yet those choices are dependent on other things? No, my friend, you are the one in the mires of absurdity, when you try to throw away the effects of genetic and environmental factors in determining behavior, to try to salvage a contradictory belief system that actually serves no real purpose. It's patently insane.  
>  
> >>>>> *I know*  
> >>>>> *this may be offensive to you, Albert, and I'm sorry,*  
> >>>>>  
> >>>>> *Don't be sorry. Your inability to grasp the logic of what I say*  
> >>>>> *is in no way offensive to me. But it does reflect poorly on you.*  
> >>>>>  
> >>>>> *You haven't used any logic, Albert. You're usually pretty good with*  
> >>>>> *that, but I have hit a sore point for you, and you're getting emotional*  
> >>>>> *about it ("and who knows what else").*  
> >>>>>  
> >>>>> *LOL. Yes, bemusement is emotional.*  
> >>>>>  
> >>>>>  
> >>>>>> *but the logic is*  
> >>>>>> *pretty simple. Maybe God can defy logic? Is that the easy out?*  
> >>>>>>  
> >>>>>> *No, the easy way out is for you to understand the logical*  
> >>>>>> *absurdity you pose. However, for the record: God is certainly*  
> >>>>>> *not bound by his own creations, which include you, logic, and*  
> >>>>>> *your poor understanding of logic.]*  
> >>>>>>  
> >>>>>> *So, your concept of god is illogical? Okay, enough said. Mine isn't.*  
> >>>>>>  
> >>>>>> *We need a simple word for this consistent behaviour of yours*

> >> *where you put words in my mouth.*  
> >  
> > *I haven't put words in your mouth that didn't come from there. You can*  
> > *accuse me over and over of that, but each time I show you exactly what*  
> > *you said and shown myself not to be unreasonably twisting things. It's*  
> > *you that doesn't listen to you. All too common in this world....*  
>  
> *Liar.*  
No, you are. Liar liar pants on fire!  
>  
> >> *How about another gedanken:*  
> >>  
> >> *Assume it is the morning of February 5, 2006.*  
> >> *Assume that a being exists that is outside of time. (Or if that*  
> >> *is too hard, then assume a being exists that can travel in time,*  
> >> *backwards and forwards.)*  
> >> *Lets call this being The Traveler.*  
> >> *Assume that this creature has no control over you and that you*  
> >> *have free will.*  
> >>  
> >> *You are about to choose your breakfast, Cheerios or Rice Crispies.*  
> >>  
> >> *Sitting beside you is The Traveler. He holds in his hand a*  
> >> *sealed envelope.*  
> >>  
> >> *You ask him, "Do you know which cereal I will choose?"*  
> >>  
> >> *He replies, "Yes, It's written down in this sealed envelope"*  
> >>  
> >> *You reply, "OK, let's test".*  
> >>  
> >> *You then make a choice, exercising your free will.*  
> >>  
> >> *Lets say you choose Cheerios.*  
> >>  
> >> *The Traveler then hands you the sealed envelope.*  
> >>  
> >> *You open it and find, in your own handwriting the message: "The*  
> >> *Traveler was here today, February 6, 2006, and asked me to write*  
> >> *down what I had for breakfast yesterday. I had Cheerios."*  
> >>  
> >> *Now, was your free will violated in any way?*  
> >  
> >  
> > *This is an entirely different situation.*  
>  
> *ROTFLMAO.*  
>  
> > *In this case the foreknowledge*  
> > *was accurate, and is explained by the traveler having gone into the*  
> > *future and returned with foreknowledge. This is the source of the*

> > *Traveler's knowledge, and it turns out to be correct. No contradiction*  
> > *there (except with reativity of course).*

>

> *THANK YOU. THANK YOU. THANK YOU.*

You're welcome. You win the Irrelevant Response Award for the thread.

Again with the convenient little tweak to the situation that entirely changes or nullifies the question at hand. Squirmy squirmy!

>

> > *Now, say the letter said,*

> > *"Yesterday I had Corn Flakes." Say it was wrong. What would be your*

> > *conclusion? That the Traveler went into the future of a different*

> > *universe? That the Traveler was full of crap? If the Traveler claimed to*

> > *know everything, would you believe him? This is the situation I am*

> > *posing.*

>

> *I assume that these are all rhetorical questions. And I perceive*

> *a pattern in the asking. I'll have to give it some thought*

I'll hold my breath.

>

>

>

--

Smiles,

Tony