Van Inwagen's Argument for Incompatibilism

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Some definitions:

propositions: meanings of sentences; carry information

conjunction: the conjunction of propositions p and q is the proposition that both p and q are true

entailment: p entails q iff in every possible world in which p is true, q is true as well

world state at t: a proposition about the entire universe at t that is i) exhaustive with respect to t, and ii) exclusive with respect to t

laws of nature: the *true* laws governing the world (e.g., Newton's laws, if Newton had been right)

DETERMINISM (van Inwagen's definition): the conjunction of the laws of nature and the world state at any time entails the world state at any other time

Some abbreviations:

J:	someone who chose not to raise his hand at time T	P:	the world-state at T
L:	the conjunction of all the laws of nature	T_0:	a time before J's birth
NRH:	the proposition that J did *not* raise his hand at T	P_0:	the world-state at T_0

The argument:

(1) If Determinism is true, then the conjunction of P_0 and L entails P

(2) P entails NRH

(3) If (2) is true, then if J could have raised his hand at T, J could have rendered P false

(4) If J could have rendered P false, and if the conjunction of P_0 and L entails P, then J could have rendered the conjunction of P_0 and L false

(5) If J could have rendered the conjunction of P_0 and L false, then J could have rendered L false

(6) J could not have rendered L false

(7) **Therefore**, If Determinism is true, J could not have raised his hand at T

Van Inwagen's principle: If S can render R false, and Q entails R, then S can render Q false.