

FREEDOM AND MECHANISTIC DETERMINISM

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ABSTRACT

Humans have free will, or are all of our acts predetermined? This is the central question in the freedom vs. determinism argument. In contrast to free will, which holds that people can make decisions without the help of outside forces, determinism holds that all events, including human behavior, are causally determined by earlier events. Philosophers, academics, and thinkers have been fascinated by the basic ideas of freedom and determinism for ages. Discussions about morality, human agency, and the nature of reality itself are based on these concepts. Determinism and freedom are very different. Freedom enables people to act democratically, yet determinism highlights the fact that decisions have predictable outcomes. On the other hand, although humans are not subject to various types of coercion, dictation, or subordination, their freedom is restricted to morally and legally acceptable behavior. There is no such thing as express freedom in the world as the state decides what is morally right and what is lawful. Different countries, societies, and states have different rights and wrongs, which makes it clear that a state has the freedom to make its own decisions. Determinism maintains that an individual determines the course of an event by the acts they conduct and that consequences are susceptible to actions and freedom allows people to enjoy their freedom and do what they think is right, while determinism shows that acts have consequences that are directly proportional to their magnitude.

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Philosophers have been thinking about freedom and determinism since the time of ancient Greece. On the one hand, we typically think of ourselves as free, independent beings in charge of our own activities. However, this view of ourselves seems at odds with a range of beliefs we equally hold about the unavoidable processes taking place in the world around us. For example, some people think that the universe is governed by unbending, universal rules of nature. Some believe that the ultimate cause of everything is an omnipotent God. These broader perspectives imply that every specific occurrence, including every human activity, is causally necessary, which implies a contradiction with the idea that humans are free. As a result, the fundamental issue with freedom and determinism is how to balance our beliefs about the outside world with our attitudes about ourselves. Finding our acts among the streams of events that comprise the larger cosmos is the issue at hand. Typically, discussions on freedom take place in the framework of theoretical questions regarding the nature of moral responsibility. For it is a fundamental tenet that a certain type of freedom dubbed “moral freedom”¹ is a prerequisite to our ability to take responsibility for our deeds. Furthermore, the majority of people who support moral nihilism the idea that no one is ever ethically accountable for anything do so because they also think that moral independence is unattainable. Thus, the presumption of freedom influences our opinions of the propriety of moral commendation and reproach. We think it's ridiculous to hold a rock responsible for breaking through our living room window, but it's reasonable to hold the child who hurled the rock accountable. If an adult with normal cognitive abilities had thrown the rock deliberately and consciously, we would view this kind of blaming as more justified. We come across additional, more fundamental divisions in moral psychology between action and passion, belief and want, reason and emotion, and control and compulsion while attempting to understand the underlying causes of these variations in attitude. Understandably, those who study ethics, philosophy of psychology,

and philosophy of law are all interested in comprehending the nature of moral freedom. Of all, “freedom” is a vague phrase as well. Both religious and political freedom exist. Negatively, these and other liberties are defined as the lack of restrictions on one's actions or views.

There are several negative freedoms² because there are numerous types of limits. However, the type of freedom that interests metaphysicians, or “metaphysical freedom,” can also be positively defined as the ability to actively take action based on our own choices. This makes the other, purely negative liberties seem less fundamental than metaphysical freedom. Since threats to human freedom can be made without mentioning moral judgments of praise or blame, metaphysical freedom may even be more fundamental than moral freedom. This is because of the issues raised in the previous paragraph. However, each of the determinisms mentioned above poses a risk to our moral independence. The majority of people in the 20th century are concerned with moral freedom, which is a state important to freedom that is required for moral responsibility and causal determinism.

People begin to question if they have free will and believe that their acts may be forced or predetermined by forces outside of their control and unbeknownst to them. Alternatively said, determinism is the behavioral theory that contends that people have no control over the decisions they make. Human conduct is shaped by outside forces, and people are not morally obligated to alter their destiny. In contrast, the free will approach contends that since nature gives people free will, everyone should be held accountable for their deeds. The significance of determinism or necessary theories in the discourse surrounding free will can be attributed to this. The emergence of determinist theories indicates that humanity has advanced to a point where people are starting to question the reasons for their actions and their role as players in the cosmos.

Determinism has been expressed historically in a variety of ways. The development of natural science has strengthened determinism. Since the 17th century, advances in natural science have attempted to explain the physical world in terms of causal relationships, and this method has been applied to humans as well. Our bodies have physical worth. We can say that we have freedom of choice if every moment of our body is as predictable as possible. At various points in history, people have questioned whether fate, God, the rules of physics, logic, environment, inheritance, unconscious motivations, psychological or social conditioning, and other factors influence their decisions and behaviors. However, a fundamental principle that unites all historical determinism theories whether they be fatalistic, religious, logical, physical, psychological, or social explains It has been said that the metaphysical basis of morality is freedom of will. In particular, Kant lists three types of moral postulates: the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, and the freedom of will, the latter of which has been a central point of contention among philosophers studying the question of free will. Philosophers who have addressed the issue of whether or not our acts are predestined have advanced two different points of view. Some philosophers believe that certain antecedent conditions cause or predetermine human acts. The opposing school of philosophy maintains that since we have free will, our decisions are not predetermined. One perspective is known as determinism, while the other is known as indeterminism. Here, we must talk about the issue of responsibility and freedom of action in light of the determinism and indeterminism theories. A philosophical philosophy known as determinism makes assertions regarding the nature of the universe. According to the determinism doctrine, every state of the universe at any given time is connected to all previous and subsequent states of the universe through causal laws. Put another way, all states of the universe are the outcome of earlier sufficient conditions, which in turn are sufficient for later states of the universe.

We briefly discuss the notion of an ideal knower in our description of determinism. This may seem to imply that, contrary to what we said at the outset of the debate, the concept of determinism is an epistemological teaching that is, a doctrine about what we can know. If the world is deterministic, on the other hand, then it will always be true regardless of the existence of a perfect knower or any kind of knower at all. This is an important point to make because many philosophers have attempted to criticize the doctrine of determinism and its purportedly terrifying moral implications by claiming that there are conceptual barriers to the prediction of human behavior that do not exist for physical phenomena such as satellite orbits and hurricanes. We can consult J.R. Lucas' work "The Freedom of the Will"³ in this regard. He thinks that it makes sense to imply that human choices and behaviors could be predetermined.

Determinism, on the other hand, is the idea that outside forces have an impact on human behavior. Individuals are powerless over their behavior, meaning they are not bound by any moral principles in what they do. Determinism has biological as well as psychological justifications. The psychological rationale contends that environmental influences shape human conduct. The upbringing environment and other external influences have an impact on an individual's future behavior. Conversely, the biological determinism thesis posits that an individual's gene is the cause of human behavior. Biologists argue that human behavior is influenced by internal forces. According to determinism, nobody is in charge of what they do. Acting morally and ethically is not someone's decision or fault. Lastly, determinism holds that morality and human conduct are predetermined by historical occurrences. It stands to reason that human judgments, ideas, deeds, and the like will be included in the elements that make up the universe's state at any given time, or states at different times. Most people agree that determinism poses a threat to these kinds of human endeavors. Many people believe, in particular, that if our choices and deeds were predetermined, they

would be close to epiphenomenon and have little real impact on the world. Even worse would be if our lack of freedom meant that we had no power to influence the moral standards of our society. The rationale is that accepting determinism as true would mean that humans are no longer in control of their own destiny. Even if determinism is a popular belief, it may be easily disproved because humans possess some degree of intentionality. On sometimes, people take deliberate actions. The intentionality of human behavior is sufficient to demonstrate that this type of behavior is more than just a sunflower turning its face toward the sun. We would vary from sunflowers as agents who voluntarily act, but we would still want a vital ability if our behavior were ultimately determined by other factors. We would not be able to be free because we would not be able to decide anything or do anything other than what we actually decide to do, since it would not be us who ultimately determines the courses of action but rather the circumstances providing the sufficient conditions for our various decisions and actions.

Let's now address freedom and moral responsibility, which is a crucial component of this conversation. Although opinions vary, it is generally accepted that moral responsibility requires the ability to act morally differently. But if determinism is accurate, then it would appear that nobody is morally accountable for any choices or deeds they commit. If moral responsibility rather than just casual responsibility⁴ is the prerequisite for guilt, blame, punishment, and credit, praise, and reward, then nobody should be eligible for either since, in theory, nobody will ever be deserving of praise or punishment. Social sanctions against those who disturb society would still be necessary, but they would need a different justification than the one we currently use. Some philosophers even go so far as to claim that morality itself is meaningless if determinism is real and we are therefore not free agents. It is said that our lack of freedom leads to moral nihilism, the belief that morality has no bearing on actions

since we are powerless to influence the morality of our choices, which eliminates any moral importance from them.

There are two types of determinism: soft and hard determinism.⁵

Hard determinism is the view that an individual has no control over their life choices, that all of their decisions are predestined, and that there is no accountability for one's actions. This idea contends that human nature does not have free will and that it is only an illusion. The scientific law of nature, which holds that everything that occurs has a reason, is the source of hard determinism. Scientific laws attempt to demonstrate the reasons of behavior and the rationale behind specific events. Moral responsibility does not exist from a philosophical standpoint; since every action has a predetermined outcome, nobody should be able to decide what morality is in the universe. If this is the case, then the law is unenforceable since, despite its application, certain people are destined to break the law. Though not everything that occurs can be linked to a cause, the idea contains flaws.

Soft determinism, also known as compatibilism, is the theory that, while causal determinism holds true, we nevertheless behave as morally responsible, free agents when our desires, in the absence of outside influences, drive our behavior. The idea of compatibilism does not assert human freedom. The concept of compatibilism denies that people have free will.

A tiny adjustment of determinism made for appearances' sake and linguistic use is called compatibilism. This stance is a result of the belief that there must be some concept of accountability or responsibility for the actions of people.

People who take this stance contend that if people act in accordance with their will however formed and refuse to be compelled or coerced by other powers, they should be held responsible for their deeds. The idea that a person acts freely and with a will does not vanish even if

their motivations, objectives, or other components of the will are predetermined by past experiences and events.

Either humans are free or they are not. They either have free will that they can exercise or they don't. They either possess it and are able to exercise it whenever they like, or they just appear to have free will and are never able to make decisions or choices that are not influenced by other factors before they make them. Libertarianism asserts that people are free and capable of acting in accordance with their own desires. According to the view, circumstances have an influence on human behavior rather than causing it. Libertarians' interpretation of the notion of free will holds that although God only controls the course of events, people nevertheless have the ability and desire to choose their own paths. This idea holds that God evaluates individuals based on their deeds. It eliminates the chance that someone has been assigned a predestined fate. In the end, proponents of this system of philosophy concur that personal accountability originates from inside, independent of past experiences.

In the course of justifying their shared belief that we are both capable of determination and freedom, compatibilists have used a variety of techniques. Attempts to demonstrate that, even in a world where everything is predetermined, we can still select and behave differently from how we really choose and behave if we so want or choose to do so are perhaps the most well-known. Compatibilists' stance has also drawn harsh criticism.⁶

Compatibilists hold that the impending regression can be stopped, while incompatibilists disagree. Stated differently, compatibilists believe that we can still regard ourselves as morally upright beings even if it turns out that we are determined beings, just like everything else in the universe; incompatibilists maintain that we cannot be both morally upright and determined beings.

Though it is impossible to separate the kinds of metaphysical

concerns we have been discussing from the question of whether people behave freely and responsibly, it is important to remember that those questions are driven by our concern for ethics. To be more precise, we can evaluate both the action and the agent from a moral standpoint to the degree that we recognize someone as a free, responsible actor of the action.

In summary, there are two opposing ideas in human behavior⁷: determinism and free will. Arguments about the factors influencing human behavior center on both ideas. While determinism maintains that past events shape human behavior, free will contends that human behaviors are the result of conscious decisions. In a similar vein, determinism theory maintains that individuals are not accountable for their deeds. As was previously mentioned, every idea has drawbacks, yet even in the case of free will, causes appear to exist. Humans make decisions based on events or circumstances that influence every action they conduct.

Determinism is a life plan, whereas free will is a human virtue. Whether we believe in free will or determinism, there is always a decision to be made, and our decisions determine the course of events. Humans are naturally endowed with free will, which allows us to live our lives as we see fit and behave freely under certain circumstances. Your life path has already been predetermined. Whether we believe in free will or determinism, the fact that we can select our conduct and have some control over it means that, in the end, we are in charge of our own destiny.

In order to establish responsibility in a way that reconciles the antinomies of freedom and determinism, Kant's moral philosophy is a traditional example of deontology. Rejecting the idea of a free will that accommodates both freedom and determinism is necessary to resolve the antinomy. A self-restraining will, not an erratic will, is what is meant by a free will. Our categorization is the fundamental

quality of mankind and what "constrains the will." This is the bare minimum for practical reason and free will. Every human activity is goal-oriented and carried out with the intention of accomplishing those goals, so without some degree of determinism, all human reasoning, initiative, and effort would be pointless. It is extremely difficult to achieve the desired outcomes of human acts in an indeterminist universe, as soft determinists have correctly noted. Because we wouldn't achieve the desired effects from our acts, our human aims would be frustrated at every turn in the absence of trustworthy cause and effect links.

According to Kant, although it is conceivable for us to freely commit wrong, it is not feasible for us to do wrong out of free will. Freedom is inherently constrained by the will, which also adds obligation and principle to the equation. Being able to make a difference is not the same as having free will. In the realm of action, free will could be worthless. Its dignity results from finding a solution to the conflict between determinism and freedom. According to Kant, there is a true causal relationship with freedom, but freedom does not imply limitless choice or exemption from natural or causal rules. Freedom is predicated on causality, and if there is a causal law, there is no reason to think that free action is impossible. If the human self is the cause of those activities, then freedom and causality are not at odds. Kant demonstrates that the human mind's rational framework includes the moral will, which is prior. The moral will is autonomous in that it exists independently of the outside environment. Modern moral philosophers assume that morality necessitates a free will because they acknowledge the significance of the autonomy of moral will. Freedom of will does not imply complete freedom; rather, it means that an individual can exercise his free will by choosing any of the possibilities that are accessible, or even by choosing not to choose. Therefore, determinism and free will are consistent rather than antagonistic.

References

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