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**Why There Is No Free Will and Why Compatibilism and its Notion of Free Will is
Wrong**

Master's Thesis in Philosophy

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Table of Content:

1.1 Introduction	3
1.2 The Problem of Freewill and Moral Responsibility	3
1.2.1 The problem of free will	4
1.2.2 The problem of Moral Responsibility	6
CHAPTER 2	8
2. State of the Art	8
2.1 Incompatibilism	8
2.1.2 Determinism	9
2.2 Compatibilism:	14
2.2.1 Simon Blackburn (Classical Compatibilism)	14
2.2.2 Harry Frankfurt (Hierarchical Compatibilism)	15
2.2.3 Reason Compatibilism	17
2.2.3.1 Susan Wolf	17
2.2.3.2 Daniel Dennett	18
CHAPTER 3	20
3.1 Why there is no free will	20
3.2 What is Moral Judgment	26
3.3 Why Compatibilist free will does not exist	27
3.4 Why My Concept of Free Will is Right and Compatibilists' is Wrong	32
3.5 Why compatibilist morality is wrong	33
CHAPTER 4	36
4.1 Problem with my Thesis	37
CHAPTER 5	39
5.1 Conclusion and Suggestion for Future Research	39
Bibliography	40

CHAPTER 1

1.1 Introduction

The questions I aim to answer in my thesis are briefly the following: why there is no freewill and why compatibilism and its notion of morality is wrong. My focus will remain on determinism and refuting compatibilist freewill and moral responsibility. Because in my opinion the arguments used to justify the compatibilist metaphysical thesis don't hold strong when put under scientific scrutiny and are questioned using logical reasoning.

The approach I will take in answering these questions is as follows:

In Chapter 1, I will introduce the debate of freewill and its link to moral responsibility. In Chapter 2, I will present the views of different schools of thoughts involved in the debate of freewill, my main focus will remain on determinism and compatibilism. In Chapter 3, I will be presenting my opinion on why there is no free will and what is moral judgment as both concepts are linked together. And also will be refuting compatibilist freewill and moral responsibility, with help of philosophical reasoning, published experiments, and exercise. In Chapter 4, I'll present and then try to deal with the problems of my thesis, such as the epistemic problem of knowledge and free will, and evolution and free will. And finally I'll offer some concluding remarks.

1.2 The Problem of Freewill and Moral Responsibility

To start off this discussion, I will introduce the notion of free will with which I will work. By free will I mean to have the ability to purposefully choose to do otherwise. So what do I mean by that? If an individual is about to perform an action or has performed an action then that individual has or had the capacity to purposefully choose to do otherwise, without any determinant forces or fate or anything else acting on him. In section 3.1, I will discuss in detail why I think this

is the best way to define free will. But for now this should do to understand the problem of free will. Next let's discuss the problem of freewill.

1.2.1 The problem of free will

The idea of having free will permeates the very fabric of our society. That we are free is presupposed in morality, religion, politics, social norms, and interpersonal relations, it underlies our feelings of guilt and those of pride for our personal achievements. I would go as far as to say that almost everything in our society is based on the very notion of having free will. Because to be accountable for an action a person needs to be the true originator of the action (Strawson, 1994, p. 13). For example, a Virginia school teacher, with no prior history of pedophilic behavior, developed sudden pedophilic urges, and molested his stepdaughter. The man got convicted and sentenced to jail, but just a day before his incarceration, due to a severe headache, he walked into an emergency room, with total inability to control his impulses and contemplating suicide.¹ An MRI revealed that he had a brain tumor. A day after the tumor was removed and his pedophilic behavior slowly faded away. The judge showed leniency and allowed him to complete a sexaholics anonymous program, with no jail time (*Pedophile Lost Urge after Surgery*, 2003). Another example would be, a 25-year-old Eagle Scout and Marine, named Charles Whitman, who conducted a shootout from the University of Texas tower, in the process he killed 16, wounded 32 and traumatized quite a few people. Right now if we took a moment and reflect on what Whitman has committed, we would judge him to be accountable and guilty of his actions. After all, he had free will and could have stopped himself from committing such atrocity. In his suicide note, he requested to have an autopsy done, to determine if something had changed in his brain. Upon inspection it turned out that a tumor called glioblastoma the size of a nickel was pressing his amygdala, a region of the brain that regulates

¹ I'm using the word control throughout, in a context of free will. Which means that a person has free will in the sense as I have defined it.

emotions, especially fear and aggression (Eagleman, 2011). If you hadn't learned about the tumor of either of the men mentioned in the examples and had only learned about their unacceptable behavior, you would have most likely, in the blink of an eye, hold them accountable for their actions and consider them evil individuals who must be disdained. But now that you know that they had brain tumors, you may have developed some kind of sympathy for them. And have realized that their actions were not free or in their control and they were probably victims themselves in terms of bad luck, that led them to have a genetic predisposition of developing a brain tumor, that made them commit such behavior. Just as Witman's brain tumor forced him to commit a crime, Virginia school teacher's tumor also took away his control to not make sexual advances towards his step daughter, because he couldn't purposefully do otherwise. Just as we are reluctant to hold both men fully accountable for their actions because they couldn't control their actions, the law also is changing their stance towards cases with peculiar brain diseases. As the U.S. Supreme Court considers executing someone with a mental disability, unconstitutionally cruel because of their diminished mental capacity to reason and control themselves (*U.S. Supreme Court Sides with Kansas Over Insanity Defense*, 2020). The same idea of responsibility exists in our society: for people to be held accountable for their actions they need to purposefully choose their actions or need to have free will, and I think we all agree with this statement, but there's a problem. Let's talk about it next.

It seems so easy and straightforward that if an individual seems to be in control or seems to have free will then that person shall be held accountable and considered the originator of the action. For example, if I stand up and start calling a bunch of people funny names, and for argument's sake let's say that I don't have any brain tumor or any disease and there's no coercion on me from anyone from the outside world. Then it seems clear that I must be held accountable because I don't have anyone or anything externally or internally forcing me, so I must have had free will to do those actions. I think here we are making a mistake due to our

negligence: we fail to consider a myriad of factors that aren't as apparent to us, which are there due to luck, (Nagel, 1979, p. 29). Thomas Nagel in his book *Mortal Questions* points out that there are different kinds of luck that determine how we conduct our lives. Like Constitutional Luck, which refers to the fact that we don't choose the personality traits we have, for example, if we are greedy or generous, anxious or composed, closed minded or open minded etc. (Nagel, 1979, p. 28). Circumstantial Luck, which refers to the fact that we don't choose the circumstances we face or live, which can influence someone to be heroic, coward, a villain etc. (Nagel, 1979, p. 28). These kinds of factors are more influential than having a brain tumor or a mental disability, because these affect a limited aspect of your life. In contrast, the factors that Nagel has mentioned determine each and everything that makes us, us. And if we can't hold individuals mentioned in the example accountable because of their lack of control over their actions. Then how can we hold anyone accountable for their actions, when the actions are results of factors that aren't in the agent's control in the first place, and are more profound than a brain disease? So if we can't hold a person accountable for their actions due to their lack of free will, is it just to hold a person truly morally responsible for their actions? Let's discuss it in the next paragraph.

1.2.2 The problem of Moral Responsibility

To hold a person truly morally responsible that person should have the ability to do otherwise morally speaking, which means that there was something else for him to choose from (Inwagen, 2015, p. 203). Since we have learned we can't do otherwise, it seems we can't hold people truly morally responsible. By true moral responsibility I mean "...responsibility of such a kind that, if we have it, then it makes sense, at least, to suppose that it could be just to punish some of us with (eternal) torment in hell and reward others with (eternal) bliss in heaven." (Strawson, 1994, p. 9). But if we can't hold people truly morally responsible, then how can we punish a person or deem anyone for anything done by them to be

morally wrong and good. But specifically punishment seems to be, ethically speaking, wrong. For example, you are from the year 5022 and time traveling to the mid-1800s, if you were to meet baby Jack when he was 9 years old and also had the knowledge that if you let the timeline go, as it is, baby Jack will become Jack The Ripper. But because you are from the future you understand what brain neural circuitry makes baby Jack different and will lead him to become Jack The Ripper. And as you are from the future you also have a pill that will cure his abnormal neural circuitry and stop him from becoming Jack The Ripper. At this moment would you consider feeding baby Jack with the pill? I think most people would give baby Jack the pill to save him from his own future. And if that's the case than how Jack The Ripper is not a victim of his own neural circuitry which is akin to a brain tumor? And if he is, then how can he ethically speaking be considered deserving of punishment? The reason why we consider people morally responsible is because of a paradox that Nagel discussed.

Thomas Nagel talks about a moral reasoning paradox (Nagel, 1979, p. 25), which goes like this:

- 1) We're inclined to pass moral judgements, and
- 2) We shouldn't judge people for things out of their control.

Let's try to understand this paradox, if an action is a result of an involuntary movement, circumstantial ignorance, or physical force then that action is not considered to be worthy of moral judgment. But even our actions that are usually morally judged are not in our control or are not influenced by any good will or bad will. But they are the result of, as we have learned, things out of our control. These things that are not in our control are not as apparent as a brain tumor or us being locked in a room (having no choice) etc. thus because of our negligence of how much control we have over our actions we hold people morally responsible. Because negligence makes us seem as if we have open choices when we don't. Next let's discuss different positions in the debate of free will.

CHAPTER 2

2. State of the Art

In this section I'll be discussing what has been said about the problem of free will. There are three major positions that have been debating the nature of free will and moral responsibility, libertarianism, compatibilism and determinism. I'll be providing an introduction to determinism and compatibilism by discussing work of different philosophers who have contributed to the debate of free will and moral responsibility, as both of the concepts are tightly linked together. But moral responsibility becomes incompatible if one follows determinism and compatible if one follows compatibilism because:

- Moral responsibility requires free will, the ability to do otherwise (Unless we are free we cannot be held responsible).
- Determinism is incompatible with free will, because it says you can't do otherwise, thus disagreeing with the notion of free will.
- Compatibilism is compatible with free will because, roughly speaking, it says you can do otherwise, thus agreeing with the notion of free will.
- Therefore, moral responsibility is incompatible with determinism and compatible with compatibilism. But now the question is what is determinism and why it proposes that there is no free will.

2.1 Incompatibilism

It is a position that believes that there can't be free will if a particular universe is of deterministic nature. And due to that, a person can't also be held

morally responsible, because of lack of free will (Strawson, 1994, p. 17).
Libertarianism and determinism come under its domain.

Libertarians about free will believe that people sometimes act freely, but this freedom is incompatible with causal determinism. Noncausal libertarians, however, go a step further. They argue not merely that a person's free actions cannot be causally determined; they argue that her free actions cannot be caused at all (Ginet 2007, 2014; Goetz 1997, 1998, 2008; McCann 1998, 2012) (Palmer, 2021, p. 1). Classic libertarianism justified its claim by using concepts like, soul, God and supernatural entities etc. But modern libertarianism relies on the concept of indeterminism, according to which events are not caused deterministically but are based on chance. I won't be discussing libertarianism any further as my focus will remain on determinism and compatibilism in this thesis. Next let's discuss determinism.

2.1.2 Determinism

According to Simon Blackburn, "... every event is the upshot of antecedent causes. The state of the world at any moment is the result of its state immediately before, and evolves from that preceding state in accordance with unchanging laws of nature." (Blackburn, 1999, p. 41). Which means that if determinism is true then, there is no way we can purposefully do otherwise including moral actions. Because everything, including our thought process to conduct our actions, is determined by prior causes and free will and the deterministic universe are incompatible with each other. Next let's discuss what has been said about causal determinism, by different philosophers.

Peter van Inwagen (Inwagen, 2015, p. 202), discusses determinism by sketching a picture of a fork with 4 tines at the end of it representing the choices

which would allow us to do otherwise. The shaft represents the time as we are progressing through it.



For us to have free will, as we progress over time, we should have the ability to choose among the different open choices, the number of lines or choices should be more than one. For example, as of right now you are reading this paper and besides reading it you should have the ability to do something else like browsing the internet etc. And if you can't do that then you don't have freewill. But having a choice doesn't necessarily mean it is open, for example a person in a room may have the illusion of having a choice to go outside, and unbeknown to him the room door is locked. If that's the case, then he doesn't have free will in this case and in cases analogous to this case. Let's discuss how it may be like.



If we look at the above fork we'll see that there are four choices or tines splitting out from the shaft but it seems that way from a distance. At a closer look we can see that all the choices are disconnected except for one. And disconnected choices may seem like possible futures but they can't be physically possible. Because the

gaps between them and the shaft represent causal discontinuity or violation of laws of nature or, in simple terms, a miracle (Inwagen, 2015, p. 204). Given that nothing can cause itself (Strawson, 1994, p. 1), the possible choices that we see are simply an illusion to us due to limited epistemic knowledge (Williams, 1981, p. 25) or negligence of the past present and future variables involved in our lives (Nagel, 1979, p. 29). Negligence can make us seem like we have open choices but, in reality, we may have none. For example, in section 1.2.1 of the paper I provided the examples of Charles Whitman and the Virginia School teacher, who committed horrible acts. At the moment we were not aware of the full picture due to our negligence of their brain tumor. They were deemed accountable for their acts, because it seemed they had an open choice to do otherwise, but later on as things unfolded it was realized that they couldn't do otherwise to a large extent. The same can be said about someone without a similar condition, because even if they don't have a condition they still operate on things that are beyond their control like neurons and nervous system. "It may seem to Jane that she faces two possible futures, It may be that, in reality, causes now at work in her brain and central nervous system and immediate environment have already "ruled out" one or the other of these futures." (Inwagen, 2015, p. 205). One thing worth mentioning here is that we still are our brains and bodies, but we don't purposefully choose the set-up of our brains and bodies, nor the causes that lead our brains and bodies to function in the world. Next let's see how determinism justifies its claim that we don't have open choices.

For a person to make open choices and not have mere illusions of open choices they need to be in control of certain things, let's first observe it in an argument and then try to unpack it.

1. What you intentionally do, given the circumstances in which you (believe you) find yourself, flows necessarily from how you are.

2. You have to have some responsibility for how you are in order to get to have some responsibility for what you intentionally do, given the circumstances in which you (believe you) find yourself. (Strawson, 1994, p. 13)

The argument states a few points.

1. We do what we do (thinking and acting) because of the way we are.
2. So to be responsible for our thoughts and actions we must be responsible for the way we are.
3. We can't be truly held responsible for the way we are, so we can't be truly responsible for what we do.
4. Because to be truly responsible we have to have intentionally fashioned ourselves the way we are and this is impossible.
5. Suppose for argument's sake that we intentionally fashioned ourselves the way we are to be truly responsible.
6. Then we must already have had some nature N (nature N = a concept of self) in the light of which we fashioned ourselves as we are now.
7. But for it to be true we and we alone have to be responsible for the nature N that allowed you to fashion ourselves as we are now.
8. So we must have intentionally fashioned nature N, if so then we already have had a prior nature in the light of which we fashioned nature, and if we follow this path it leads us to infinite regress (Strawson, 1994, p. 14).

To put it simply the argument states that we didn't choose how we would be prior to our existence, or we didn't make ourselves to be as we are now, including our neurons, certain mental states, our nature, our genes, certain predispositions, possible future and current diseases etc. But all our actions, including our thoughts, are the result of how we are, which we didn't choose in any capacity beforehand.

But even for argument's sake if we say that we choose how we would be, then we would need to have a prior nature which we would use to form our current selves. But that prior nature must also need a prior nature and so on, indicating an infinite regress and telling us that nothing can cause itself. And for us to have true free will we need to cause ourselves which is impossible (Strawson, 1994, p. 15). If we didn't choose how we would be and how we are is a result of previously caused causation then all of our previous and current actions are following a chain of causation because our thoughts that are making us act are also dictated by a certain kind of neurons, genes, mental states etc. that we didn't choose but were provided to us. Thus the feeling that we have of open choice is merely an illusion because we would always choose a specific thing. Because for example, our central nervous system and our immediate environment would rule out all of the other possibilities except for one, and it may seem like we chose but in reality our situation is akin to a person who is contemplating to either stay in the room or leave it, without knowing that that door is locked.

Our moral judgment is based on the assumption that if someone has done something, let's say negative, then that person had two or more alternative choices (Inwagen, 2015, p. 203). And if that person had (an open choice) a choice only then he can be held (truly) morally responsible. The reason I have stated 'an open choice' and 'truly' in brackets is because moral judgment according to compatibilism doesn't need truly open choices but choices that seem open. As Daniel Dennett a renowned compatibilist says "I assert that it simply does not matter at all to moral responsibility whether the agent in question could have done otherwise." (D. C. Dennett, 1984, p. 553). Because for compatibilists, true moral responsibility doesn't mean much in the real world, as it doesn't have practical implications. But determinists consider true moral responsibility central to ordinary thought and justice. As it also affects normal people who are the main elements who are subjected to morality (Strawson, 1994, p. 17). Next let's discuss how compatibilists justify their claims,

2.2 Compatibilism:

Compatibilism basically accepts that our universe is of deterministic nature and we are part of that universe but, unlike determinism, it says that we can purposefully do otherwise. Because their notion of free will is defined in a way that allows them to achieve a certain result, which is to hold people morally responsible while being compatible with the deterministic nature of the universe. Simply put, standard compatibilism tries to make determinism and free will compatible with each other. “The subject acted freely if she could have done otherwise in the right sense. This means that she would have done otherwise if she had chosen differently and, under the impact of other true and available thoughts or considerations, she would have chosen differently. True and available thoughts and considerations are those that represent her situation accurately, and are ones that she could reasonably be expected to have taken into account.” (Blackburn, 1999, p. 50).

Before we move on, I think it is important that I mention that compatibilism has many variations. In this section I will discuss three versions of compatibilism, classical, hierarchical and reason compatibilism. These are not entirely but significantly different versions. So first let’s discuss how classical compatibilism explains why they think that a deterministic universe can have a free will.

2.2.1 Simon BlackBurn (Classical Compatibilism)

Simon Blackburn in my opinion is a classical compatibilist because he follows roughly the same classical compatibilism stance, if one can do something without impediment then one is free, if not then one is not. For example, Thomas Hobbes, the father of compatibilism states that, “no stop, in doing what he has the will, desire, or inclination to doe [sic]” (Hobbes & Johnston, 1997, p. 108). This statement in simple terms states that free will is an ability to do what one wants.

Note that it doesn't mean that agents control their will. All compatibilists accept that the universe is deterministic. Blackburn presents his argument by introducing a brain as a computer program term that has multiple modules: 1) Scanner, as its name suggests scans and absorbs the surrounding information, 2) Tree producer, after scanning, it provides possible options for actions, 3) Evaluator, basically assess the options produced by tree producer according to the kind of programming it has received, 4) Producer, finally executes the action, that is rated the best by the evaluator, by sending the neural signals to the required body parts to conduct the action (Blackburn, 1999, p. 45). Below is the diagram:

» scanner » tree producer » evaluator » producer »

And this is basically a standard compatibilist stance according to which a person can be free even though he is in a deterministic universe and everything is part of a causal chain including a person's thoughts and intentions. But the question arises how can it be? According to Blackburn: "if these modules are engaged in producing the output, then we can say that you chose the output. It was not forced on you, in the way that drowning is forced on the trapped swimmer." (Blackburn, 1999, p. 46). And because we chose the output it means we are part of the causal chain according to compatibilism and thus can be held responsible for our actions. But what if someone had a bad childhood or brain tumor or someone installed a device in our brain which forced us to act badly. To this Blackburn responds by saying that they are examples of badly fixed modules, by chemicals or other processes (Blackburn, 1999, p. 49). And he further goes on to say that freedom lies in our ability to be responsive to novel information and new differences in the presented situation, and we should be able to navigate around things that are in our purview (Blackburn, 1999, p. 50).

2.2.2 Harry Frankfurt (Hierarchical Compatibilism)

Harry Frankfurt is, in turn, a hierarchical compatibilist and has a slightly different stance on how someone can have free will. Frankfurt deems that for someone to have free will that someone needs to have their second order desires aligned with their first order desires or need to be in control of second order desires. And to do that you need to be a person and a person doesn't necessarily need to be a human but to be a person, you need to have a structure of a person's will. Also besides having desires like other animals, a person may want to have or lack certain desires (Frankfurt, 1969, p. 6). Simply put, to have free will an individual's second order desires must be aligned with his first order desires. For example, if you want to eat a pizza, which is a first order desire, then you need to have a second order desire, i.e. a desire to desire the first order desire to eat pizza. Now let's try to understand the concepts of first order and second order desires a bit closely. According to Frankfurt there is an order of desires: first order desires, the will, second order desires, and second order volitions.

- First order desires are desires about things other than desires or their object is not desire itself: "I shall call "first order desires" or "desires of the first order," which are simply desires to do or not to do one thing or another" (Frankfurt, 1971, p. 7). For example, a desire to go to the gym or to eat a cake etc.
- The will is a first order desire that is effective or that causes someone to do what someone desires to do. For example, desire to go to the gym is one's will if one goes to the gym.
- Second order desires are desires about first order desires: someone "has second order desire when he wants to have or not to have a certain desire of the first order". For example, if I have a first order desire to (or not) eat a cake, and if I desire (or not desire) X (X = first order desire) then it means I have a second order desire.

- Second order volition a desire that a certain desire be one's will, a desire that a certain desire bring one to action. And this second order desire plus will, is now my second order volition and it means that I have volition. (Frankfurt, 1971, p. 8). And if I have volition only then I am a person, and if I am a person then I have free will.

According to Frankfurt, if a person does have a free will, then he is morally responsible. Frankfurt rejects the principle of alternate possibilities. He argues that "A person may well be morally responsible for what he has done even though he could not have done otherwise." (Frankfurt, 1969, pp. 829–830). Because there can be circumstances where a person may not have any other option but one and he may choose a certain option out of his will. For example, Jones is going to kill Smith because he raped his daughter and killed her. But unbeknownst to Jones, Dan also wants Smith dead and knows about Jones murder intentions. Thus he has implanted a chip in Jones head to observe Jones if he chooses not to kill Smith then he would turn on the chip which would not let Jones to do otherwise but kill Smith. Jones does not second guess his decision and kills Smith. In this case it seems that Jones is responsible, yet he could not do otherwise. So it seems according to Frankfurt that if a person is not wanton and has free will then he is also morally responsible, regardless of whether he could have done otherwise or not.

2.2.3 Reason Compatibilism

In the following sections I'll discuss two reason compatibilists Susan Wolf and Daniel Dennett.

2.2.3.1 Susan Wolf

Susan Wolf has presented a version of reason compatibilism or the reason view. The reason view basically states that for a person to be free, that person must be acting according to reason, i.e. in accordance with what is actually true and morally good: “The freedom necessary for responsibility consists in the ability (or freedom) to do the right thing for the right reasons ... to choose and to act in accordance with true and the good.” (Wolf, 1990, pp. 70–71). Wolf here is suggesting that we need to act in accordance with reason to have moral responsibility. And reason involves these two jointly sufficient qualities:

- An ability to know the true and the good.
- And the capacity to execute an ability to act according to what is known to be true and good.

One of the consequences of the reason view is that it is asymmetrical, in terms of praise worthiness and blame worthiness, it considers a person responsible for good actions but not for bad ones. Because we can say that if one does something bad then that person did it because he had bad or false reasoning and can't be blamed. In order to have moral responsibility we need sound reasoning: “For if one has to do the wrong thing, then one cannot do the right, and so one lacks the ability to act in accordance with the True and the Good.” (Wolf, 1990, p. 79). On the other hand if someone does something good then that person can be said to have sound reasoning and can be morally praised for his actions: “The Reason View is thus committed to the curious claim that being psychologically determined to perform good actions is compatible with deserving praise.” (Wolf, 1990, p. 79).

2.2.3.2 Daniel Dennett

Daniel Dennett's reason compatibilist hinges on a slightly different version of 'reason view' argument, that I explain below in point 2. His main claim is that

“it simply does not matter at all to moral responsibility whether the agent in question could have done otherwise in the circumstance” (D. C. Dennett, 1984, p. 553). This argument on the surface looks the same as Frankfurt’s argument, that also says to be morally responsible it does not matter if you could have done otherwise. But the underlying reasons that he presents to support his argument are different from Frankfurt’s.

1. In everyday practice ordinary people don’t look for the could have done otherwise principle (CDO) (D. C. Dennett, 1984, p. 555). Because when ordinary people praise they ignore this question to be charitable, when blaming ordinary people use local fatalism. The latter refers to the idea that, if in the relevant portion of time a certain event took place that hindered an agent from doing otherwise (e.g. being locked in the room)
2. Ordinary people wish to draw the opposite conclusion from the CDO principle from that which the philosophers do (D. C. Dennett, 1984, pp. 555–556). Which means that when we say I cannot do otherwise, it is a testament to our strong rational faculties that won’t let us do something wrong which would be irrational: “... because my rational control faculty is not impaired. It is too obvious what to do; reason dictates it; I would have to be mad to do otherwise, and, since I happen not to be mad, I cannot do otherwise” (D. C. Dennett, 1984, p. 556). This argument contains Susan Wolf’s reason view, in the sense that a person with good rational faculty can’t do otherwise. Dennett still holds people responsible for their immoral behavior unlike Wolf.
3. Knowing that x could have done otherwise wouldn’t do any good metaphysically (D. C. Dennett, 1984, p. 558) because people are “more complicated than anything else we know in the universe; they

are also designed to be so sensitive to the passing show that they never can be in the same microstate twice” (D. C. Dennett, 1984, p. 559).

But a person can learn from their mistakes and past behaviors in that sense a person can do otherwise in the future (D. C. Dennett, 1984, p. 560). But if a person can learn from their mistakes, by being sensitive to their environment does it allow them to have free will, let’s try to find out in the next section.

CHAPTER 3

3.1 Why there is no free will

As I have explained the term free will, which I define as to have the ability to purposefully choose to do otherwise. Which further means that if an individual is about to perform an action or have performed an action then that individual has or had the capacity to purposefully do otherwise, without any determinant forces or fate or anything else acting on him. For us to have free will or have control over our actions, we need to author our desires because whatever we do purposefully is an outcome of our desires. An action is not purposeful without desires. By desires I mean in the same as Harry Frankfurt. We have first order desires, like going or not going to the gym or eating or not eating a cake, etc. And then we have second order desires, that are desires about first order desires. And for us to act or not act on something, we need to have our second order desires aligned with our first order desires and once the ‘will’ makes us act on our second order desire, that second order desire turns to second order volition (Frankfurt, 1969, p. 6). For example, I may have two competing first order desires, to go to the gym and not go to the gym. And it depends on which of my first order desires, going to the gym or not going to the gym desire, gets aligned with my second order desire, and once my second order desire produces an action, it becomes second order volition. Upon distant observation of our own desires it may seem like we won’t necessarily

follow our desire like when we make a new year resolution of not eating a cake but yet somehow we eat it. It is because our second order desire was not aligned with our first order desire of not eating a cake. But if our second order desire would have been aligned with our first order desire then we would have stuck to our new year's resolution. Whatever we do is because of our desires, so for us to have free will we need to author our desires because otherwise we don't have free will.

We have this intuition of authoring our own desires which doesn't seem to hold up against scientific scrutiny. W. Grey Walter in an experiment put his subjects in front of a photographic slide projector. The subjects were instructed to press a hand button to advance the slides at will. And to measure the readiness potential area of the brain the subjects were connected with electrical devices. But unknown to the test subjects the hand button to advance the slides was a dummy not attached to the slide projector at all. And what actually advanced the slides were the signals from the motor cortex received via implanted electrodes. The subjects were shocked and felt as if the slide projector was anticipating their decision, as slides were being advanced just before they were about to press the button (D. Dennett & Kinsbourne, 1992, p. 27). The experiment shows that decisions are made unconsciously, and they appear to our consciousness a little later, so we are not authoring our thoughts and desires consciously. But I think it is important to mention that the experiment can also be interpreted as Dennett has presented in his book. According to Dennett, these kinds of experiments do show that our thinking occurs before we think, but only when we restrict our focus to "psychological phenomena of ordinary macroscopic duration". But our consciousness is spread out in the brain and not one single moment can be considered as the precise moment at which an event happens (D. C. Dennett, 1992, p. 169). Even if we accept this interpretation, it still doesn't answer the problem that we are unconscious of events with which we identify as the cause of our action.

Consider next a small exercise to realize if our feeling of us purposefully authoring our desires is true or false. For this exercise I am going to use Harry Frankfurt's theory of free action that includes concepts like first and second order desires, introduced in section 2.2.2. I am using Harry Frankfurt's concept of first and second order desires because intuitively it makes sense as we all humans have desires about desires, but I disagree with his argument that we choose our second order desires. Consider a T.V. show, movie, or a food that you really like, for this exercise, I am going to stick with (a food) pizza, you can choose whatever your desire is suggesting you. Now try to choose to have a first order negative (not liking it) desire for pizza. You most probably cannot do that unless you already had that desire. But you may think that at least I can form my second order desires, and it would allow me to have some free will. So let's try an exercise with second order desire, but try to use a second order desire that you already have and then try to choose to replace it with its opposite of positive or negative. So it would be like this, if you have first order desire of x and second order desire of y, then try to choose to replace y with the same but now negative second order desire (not desiring). For example, consider a first order desire that you may have like being a successful professor, now try to choose to not have a desire of having this desire of becoming a successful professor, which should be your second order desire.

You probably weren't able to do the exercise. The reason is that we operate in this world with the help of two things: 1) S-procedures (process that shape our intentions), that allow us to consciously shape our characters, motives, so we can make efforts of purposeful will; and 2) C-features (character features) which are either completely determined by the environment where we find ourselves in, or are due to the genetic predispositions we have, for which we are not responsible. C-features are in part the result of earlier S-procedures which were the result of C-features, or a combination of earlier S-procedures and C-features, and so on and so forth. Until we reach the first S-procedure, that was the result of genetic and environmental factors deterministic or random, for which we are in no way

responsible (Strawson, 1994, pp. 18–19). This argument of S-procedures and C-features is presented by Galen Strawson, and as sound of an argument it is I think it can be made better, as most of the things in life, by simplifying it.

To do that we need to understand the main elements involved in his argument, which are: 1) S-procedures characterized by two features, a) same as Frankfurt's will, which makes a person intentionally carry out an action b) and that will is dependent on C-features; 2) C-features characterized by four features a) Thomas Nagel's concept of constitution, which is, the kind of a person you are by having a certain kind of character traits, which includes your inclinations, temperament and capacities etc., b) C-features are influenced by S-procedures themselves and c) are determined by the environment, and d) genetic predisposition for which we are not responsible. 3) S-procedure and C-features both influence each other till we reach the first S-procedure which was ultimately caused by C-features.

Now, if we combine the 'will' from S-procedures and the concept of constitution from C-features, we get this subjective sense of self and agency or authoring our desires (mental nature or understanding of ones' self and actions), which we experience through the experience of consciousness. And everyone who believes that there is free will or a felt sense of agency associates free will intuitively with it. But we have this experience due to our brain and neurons, etc. but to make it even more simple, we can ask this question of, why do we have the brain or neurons, or hormones etc. as the way they are, and the answer is due to our genes. So if we add genetic predispositions to C-features as well, we get this picture of something that forms us the way we are, that we consider free agents. And, as we combine all of these features, they can be called the internal world, which separates us from the external world, let's talk about it next.

Strawson talks about the environment in C-features, and states that it is out of our control but he doesn't necessarily explain why or how. As one can easily make a claim that, right now I can grab my coffee cup and maneuver it, so I'm essentially in control of the environment, at least it seems that way. By environment, Strawson means two things: 1) things over which we have no control and 2) circumstances out of our control. 1) The things over which we have no control are because they are part of nature. This can be explained brilliantly by using Van Inwagen's untouchable facts. The latter are things like the existence of dinosaurs (history), law of gravity, pi having a value 3.17, circle not being square, things or facts we humans have no control over (Inwagen, 2015, p. 208). And 2) the circumstances in which we find ourselves in are also out of our control. For example, I could have been born in a year 1022 and have completely different set of morals, sense of style, food inclinations, or I may have been in a universe where plastic was never invented and I would not do or even have any idea of the things I do in this universe with the things made out of plastic. Or imagine Hitler being born in Estonia instead of Germany, he would never be the same Hitler. And now let's combine the concepts mentioned above and call it the external world. Let's try to define it. The external world is anything and everything that separates us from the internal world, objects, the world, table, light, people, ideas that we hear or see, circumstances etc.

So now that we have compressed all the concepts into two elements, the internal and external world, we can start to explain why we can't purposefully choose our (second order) desires. Right now you must have some kind of desire, and we can ask, why is it there? Because of three things a) internal world, which has things like, agency, sense of self, will, and conscious experience and b) external world, which is made up of things such as ideas external to you, upbringing, culture, circumstances etc. and c) a previous existing desire to have a

certain kind of desire.² And for this previous existing desire to exist it would also need, internal world and external and another previous existing desire. And we can go further back in time to a point when we had our first desire, and that desire did not have any purposeful desire behind it but it was a result of a) internal world and b) external world. As we can see we don't have control over the external world and our internal world itself is a product of the external world. Because our genes, at one point were external to us, and they determined, along with the circumstances, what kind of, mental nature, constitution etc. we would have. Thus the only thing that can give us free will is if we had chosen our first, second order desire, but since desire can't be caused by itself then it is clear that we are not in control of our desires and we don't have free will.

Let's try to convert section 3.1 into a formal argument:

- For us to have free will we need to have the ability to purposefully do otherwise.
- And to have the ability to purposefully do otherwise, we need to be in control of our desires. (By control I mean having the ability to purposefully influence something.)
- Our desires are a result of external and internal worlds, and previous desires themselves, which are not in our control.
- And if we can't control external and internal worlds and previous desires then we can't control our desires.

² When I say the word desires I mean the whole concept, freedom of the will introduced by Harry Frankfurt, which includes, first order desires, second order desires, will, and second order volition. Our desires may also gradually change, as I think this is how most of our desires form for something. But for a desire to gradually change it still needs to have an external and internal world and a pre-existing desire according to which, that certain gradual change is desirable in the first place.

- Thus we don't have free will.

3.2 What is Moral Judgment

Now let's discuss what is moral judgment, "when we blame someone for his actions we are not merely saying it is bad that they happened, or bad that he exists: we are judging him, saying he is bad, which is different from his being a bad thing". (Nagel, 1979, p. 25). Basically moral judgment is an action of considering a person good or bad depending on their actions. And it is "intuitively plausible that people cannot be morally assessed for what is not their fault, or for what is due to factors beyond their control." (Nagel, 1979, p. 25). If that is the case then if we don't have free will then it seems that our moral judgements are wrong towards people who have committed something that is undesirable. They may have committed a murder, kidnaped somebody, raped, or in some way did something that they were condemned morally. And even though it seems that our moral judgments are wrong towards people who have done morally questionable things, I would argue that our moral judgments are right. In the sense that they provide us a scale to hold people responsible for the actions that they have committed, for example:

(In all of the scenarios the people involved are the same but are placed in different universes where their lives turned out differently.)

1. A 30-year-old with same mental problem as Charles Whitman shoots a 22 year old woman, as he was being irresponsible with a fully loaded unsecured revolver.
2. A 30-year-old father shot a 22 year old woman. The woman assisted 2 criminals to rape 7 year old girl, who was the daughter of the 30 year old father.

3. A 30-year-old intentionally killed a 22 year old woman, just for fun.

The circumstances presented in the above examples provide us somewhat of causal events (or an intuitive backstory to the events) that have taken place and to the people involved to make sense of human actions. As Daniel M. Wegner says “Causal agency, in sum, is an important way in which people understand action, particularly human action. In the process of understanding actions performed by oneself or by another, the person will appreciate information about intentions, beliefs, desires, and plans, and will use this information in discerning just what the agent is doing.” (Wegner, 2004, p. 4). Even though the people are the same but their different circumstances and actions invoke inside of us different emotional reactions, and these emotional reactions are making us hold people morally responsible for their actions. And this different kind of moral responsibility attributed to the same people who turned out differently due to different circumstances, is basically a scale that is telling us how dangerous a person may be for us or for the society as a whole. Because of his genetics or past experiences, that show intentional bad behavior, unlike the person in example 1 whose behavior is due to genetics but isn’t intentional but random. This is why the person from example 3 must be kept away from society by keeping him incarcerated.

3.3 Why Compatibilist free will does not exist

Compatibilism basically accepts that our universe is of deterministic nature and we are part of that universe, but unlike determinism it says that we can purposefully or choose to do otherwise. Simply put, compatibilism tries to make determinism and free will compatible with each other. Compatibilists like Simon Blackburn insist that even though our deliberation and deeds are causes of the deterministic universe, there is still room for free will if our brains are functioning properly: “But sometimes the causal routes only go via high-level neural processes. This is no more than to say that we often move as we do because our brains are

functioning properly” (Blackburn, 1999, p. 45). Blackburn presents his argument by introducing a brain in a software term that has multiple decision modules. 1) Scanner, as its name suggests scans and absorbs the surrounding information, 2) Tree producer, after scanning, it provides possible options for actions, 3) Evaluator, basically assess the options produced by tree producer according to the kind of programming it has received, 4) Producer, finally executes the action, that is rated the best by the evaluator, by sending the neural signals to the required body parts to conduct the action.

The crux of the basic compatibilist argument is, as Blackburn says “we often move as we do because our brains are functioning properly” (Blackburn, 1999, p. 45) and Dennett also says “... because my rational control faculty is not impaired. It is too obvious what to do” (D. C. Dennett, 1984, p. 556) and because of rational faculty we have freedom of choice, or free will and thus we can be held morally responsible. And to make the compatibilist view easy to understand and stronger I’m going to highlight the implicit assertion that the compatibilist ‘rational faculty’ argument makes. We act in this world using two modes of brain function. 1) Picking, (proximal acts of choosing) the acts that require less effort, are unconscious, like driving, doing grocery shopping, walking etc. 2) Choosing (distal acts of choosing) the acts require complex decision making, are conscious, like to marry someone or, accepting a new job offer, moving to a new country, etc. According to compatibilism it is distal acts of choosing that allow us to have free will, because we can use our deliberation to function in the world. And we all have heard these stories and also have had personal experiences, where one’s life is going towards a cliff and in that moment a decision is made of maybe not smoking, not gambling, or studying hard or dedicating oneself to religion or any decision that feels like was made by the agent and now they are responsible for it. And you can go even further and say that using ‘distal acts of choosing’ we can choose and train ourselves to do certain ‘proximal acts of choosing’ thus we can have total control and free will. Let’s try to find out next if that is the case.

As I have explained in section 3.1, why we don't author our desires, which we need to do anything and everything in this world. And for us to be in control of our 'distal acts of choosing' we need to be in control of our desires which is not the case. But for arguments sake let's say that we do control our desires. But then the question arises why we are engaged in this action of controlling our desires and why are we doing this in a particular way that we are doing. And the answer to this question is due to the circumstances we find ourselves in (due to circumstantial luck), because of the certain features of the way we already are, our character traits. And these character traits are either completely or are a partial byproduct of 1) genetic and environmental influences, for which we are not responsible and or they are partially results of our 2) earlier desires. And these earlier desires are the result of complete or partial 1) genetic and environmental factors and 2) earlier desires, so on and so forth. In the end we get to our first desire which was the way it was due to genetic or and environmental factors, for which we are not responsible. (Strawson, 1994, pp. 18–19). Thus we can't purposefully choose our desires. If that's the case then our 'distal acts of choosing' or our rational faculties are out of our control. Next let's try to have a look at this problem from a scientific perspective.

As we have learned in the photographic slide experiments by Walter (mentioned in the section 3.1), the subject's unconscious made the decisions to press the button and later that unconscious decision appeared to their conscious mind making them feel as if their conscious mind is making the decision (D. Dennett & Kinsbourne, 1992, p. 27). In another experiment by the team of John Dylan Haynes, using an MRI scanner did neuroimaging measurements on the participants of the experiment. Haynes and team were able to predict the participants choice up to 7 seconds before the participants were even consciously aware of their own choice (Soon et al., 2008, p. 544). When we look at the compatibilist claim of 'a person with sound functioning brain thus free will', and

make its comparison with a computer algorithm that has more than 1 choice, which is what we need to have free will (Inwagen, 2015, p. 202). The difference between the person and the algorithm seems to be the conscious experience. The experiments mentioned above tell us that we are not conscious of our own decisions for up to 7 seconds. And if that's the case then we don't purposefully choose the decisions we make, same as a sleepwalker doesn't choose his decisions while sleep walking. Because he is unconscious of his decisions which are appearing in his mind without his consent, and we consider unconscious actions with no agency and don't hold people responsible for it. So keeping this in mind it seems compatibilism is confusing the conscious experience and feeling of agency with actually having free will. As we can see in the following experiment called the 'I Spy Study' humans can confuse the two very easily and without knowing. In the experiment subjects were instructed to choose images on a display monitor with a cursor, with the help of certain sound cues. The subjects chose the images and deemed the movement of the cursor and the process of choice due to their own agency, unbeknownst to them the cursor was under full control of another person and in actuality that person guided the cursor and the choice of the participants (Wegner, 2002, pp. 74–75–76).

But Dennett insists that “The flexibility we want a responsible agent to have is the flexibility to recognize the one-in-a-zillion case in which , ..., the world can be saved” (D. C. Dennett, 1984, p. 557). And that flexibility according to Dennett can be attained by ‘reason’ or rational faculty or our brain (D. C. Dennett, 1984, p. 556). But he also says that “If the agent was locked in a room (or in some other way had his will rendered impotent), then independently of the truth or falsity of determinism and no matter what sort of causation reigns within the agent's brain (or Cartesian soul, for that matter), we agree that "he could not have done otherwise.” Here Dennett uses an analogy of being locked in a room to illustrate his point which is ‘if there are no more than one options than the person could not have done otherwise’. And as in section 3.1 and 3.3 we have learned that we don't

author our desires, and nor we are conscious of our decisions, which is the same as being locked in a room, then it is clear that we don't have free will and compatibilism is wrong. Next let's discuss Harry Frankfurt's theory of free action that supports the existence of free will.

Harry Frankfurt's theory of free action is based on the assumption that we control our second order desires "they (humans) are able to form what I call "second order desires"" (Frankfurt, 1971, p. 6)., but as we have learned in section 3.1 and 3.3 that it is not the case. If that is true then Harry Frankfurt's argument in favor of free will is wrong. Let's convert my argument against Frankfurt into a formal argument. (One thing I want to mention for arguments sake is that let's assume that we can control our second order desires even then, we don't have free will. Because we are provided by default with first order desires due to external and internal worlds which we don't control and our second order desires are also the result of external and internal worlds and pre-existing desires, thus it is impossible to control second order desires.)

1. Harry Frankfurt's argument in favor of freewill is only true if we can control our second order desires.
2. Our desires (second and first order) are dictated by external and internal worlds and pre-existing desires, which are not in our control (due to reasons mentioned in sec 3.1 & 3.3). If we can't control external and internal worlds and pre-existing desires then we can't control our desires.
3. If we can't control our desires then Harry Frankfurt's argument in favor of free will is false.

3.4 Why My Concept of Free Will is Right and Compatibilists' is Wrong

Before moving forward we should discuss why my concept of free will is correct and specifically compatibilists' concept is wrong. When we humans say that we have free will, we mean it in a way such that we can be held responsible (Strawson, 2018, p. 80). And to be held responsible we need to have free will and our common notion of free will hinges on two assumptions: 1) That we could have done otherwise in the past and, 2) that we are consciously producing our thoughts and actions in the present moment. And these two assumptions are present in our political systems, law, moral judgment, religion, education system (even when it comes to grading students), and how we morally judge ourselves. For example right now if you observe someone saying or doing something demeaning to me without any provocations from my side whatsoever. You would hold them responsible, but why? Because of the two assumptions mentioned above that we intuitively have. And that's how people throughout our history have understood responsibility and free will, as we can see "If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God ..., then you shall live and become numerous, But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, Choose life so that you and your descendants may live.... (Deuteronomy 30, 11-19 NIV). Here we can see that God is holding people responsible because 1) it is implied that people have conscious control of their thoughts and actions and 2) if they don't choose the right path then, they will suffer the consequences because they could have done otherwise.

On the other hand, compatibilism accepts that the universe is deterministic and since we are also part of the universe, we would have to follow the causal chain of the universe. But this notion is problematic as it relieves people from responsibility, because they can't do otherwise, and disagrees with the first common assumption of the notion of free will. But since it is problematic, compatibilists keep the partial version of the second notion of free will in their thesis to make it less problematic and provide a reason to hold people responsible.

By saying that because my rational faculty is sound I have free will and I can be held responsible. And now compatibilists have changed the definition of free will to suit their purpose of making their thesis less problematic and they are introducing a new way to hold people responsible. Which seems like a worthy cause but now compatibilism is essentially talking about a new topic and not free will. Which is how to and why hold people responsible even if they can't do otherwise.

3.5 Why compatibilist morality is wrong

“It is bad luck, yes, but the kind of bad luck that a really good golfer is expected to foresee and play around. It should be within the player's purview” (Blackburn, 1999, p. 51). Here Blackburn gives an example of a golfer who got unlucky and missed the putt and suggests that the golfer should have been vigilant of the variables and must have acted accordingly, thus missing the putt is his responsibility. And this example illustrates compatibilist stance on how a person in normal life is (morally) responsible. Even though Blackburn doesn't explicitly say that this is how a person should be held morally responsible. But this kind of reasoning is employed by most of the compatibilists besides Susan Wolf or those who follow compatibilism that is somewhat identical to her. “And if our investigation fails to uncover any evidence of such local fatalism (ability to do otherwise), this also terminates the inquiry. We consider the matter settled: the agent was responsible after all; "he could have done otherwise". (D. C. Dennett, 1984, p. 555)”. Here Dennett also uses the same logic as Blackburn “Even though a person is subject to a coercive force that precludes his performing any action but one, he may nonetheless bear full moral responsibility for performing that action.” (Frankfurt, 1969, p. 834) Frankfurt even though uses different reasoning but still provides a reasoning to hold people morally responsible. And to not strawman compatibilists, because they believe in the deterministic nature of the universe, they don't hold people ‘truly’ morally responsible. But even if they don't, they still

hold people morally responsible, in the sense as Blackburn is holding the golfer responsible. Given that his decision came from his rational faculty then he is responsible. This is not that different from true moral responsibility because, as we will learn next, it considers you responsible because the action came from within you and because of that you are considered bad along with the action. This notion of moral responsibility is paradoxical. Consider again what Nagel says about moral judgment (Nagel, 1979, p. 25):

1. We're inclined to pass moral judgements, and according to compatibilist morality that is what we do.
2. We shouldn't judge people for things out of their control, as we have learned in section 3.1 and 3.3 we don't control anything because we don't author our desires.

When we morally judge people we hold this view that people should not be judged for actions beyond their control “Prior to reflection it is intuitively plausible that people cannot be morally assessed for what is not their fault” (Nagel, 1979, p. 25). And when a person is held morally responsible it is not only the act that is considered bad but it is the person also who is considered bad as well (Nagel, 1979, p. 25). For example, Adolf Hitler's acts were bad but at the same time he is also considered an inherently bad person, or consider Vladimir Putin, his act of war against Ukraine is bad but he is also considered an inherently bad person. But consider the case of Charles Whitman, that I mention in the section 1.2.1, and let's assume that Charles Whitman had survived the shootout and had appeared in court. And Jury also had the knowledge that a tumor is pressing against his amygdala, which clouded his judgment and ability to control himself. The Jury would have considered his actions exculpatory, and would have understood that wasn't Charles Whitman who murdered people in cold blood but it was Charles Whitman plus brain tumor. And instead of sentencing him, the jury would have immediately sent

him to a hospital for brain scan and surgery. Now consider another extreme hypothetical case where a man is a psychopath (Let's call him EP-man) of the highest level and finds peace and enjoyment in killing people and inflicting pain on children. And he is also saying it out loud that he is a person who enjoys doing it. After hearing EP-man and learning about his acts most of the people would consider him to be an extremely bad person who must be punished. But just as we understand enough brain science to not consider Charles Whitman fully guilty due to his tumor.

If we understood the human brain on a deeper level and it was revealed to us what malfunctioning in the shape of deranged neural activity or something else is causing EP-man to be a psychopath than we would also consider EP-man's behavior exculpatory and would try to help him and send him to a hospital rather than a prison and would not consider him an inherently bad person. I think Susan Wolf, a compatibilist, understood this problem, "if one is psychologically determined to do the wrong thing, for whatever reason, this seems to constitute a denial of that ability... but that being psychologically determined to perform bad actions is not compatible with deserving blame." (Wolf, 1990, p. 79), and accepted that a person can't be held morally responsible or blamed for his bad actions. Just like Whitman had a tumor, EP-man could not do otherwise given his neural activity. We all are psychologically determined as we cannot author our desires and because of that we can't do otherwise, thus we can't be held morally responsible in the same way as compatibilism holds people morally responsible even if it is not true moral responsibility as compatibilism says. Because it goes against the norm of how we judge people as mentioned in the paradox mentioned above but also it goes against the compatibilist reasoning for responsibility. Which is if you are locked in a room (could not have done otherwise) or are forced in some way, then you are not responsible (D. C. Dennett, 1984, p. 554), but at the same time they say 'it does not matter if you could not have done otherwise' (D. C. Dennett, 1984). Whereas we clearly know that it does matter in the case of Charles Whitman and

Virginia School teacher, mentioned in the section 1.2.1, who molested his daughter but was later exculpated because he could not do otherwise. Or as the American Law ‘The United States Code’ states that a person can be absolved of a crime by the virtue of insanity, because insanity didn’t let him do otherwise (*Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity*, 2020) Which means that having the capacity to do otherwise matters in moral responsibility. And if it does matter then compatibilist morality is wrong.

Now let’s talk about Frankfurt’s reasoning of moral responsibility, Frankfurt says that it simply does not matter if the person could not have done otherwise to hold someone morally responsible (Frankfurt, 1969, p. 833). And the reasoning he provides is that a person may very well do something out of his will without knowing that he could not have done otherwise, as I have explained this concept in the section 2.2.2. But still this concept of moral responsibility by Frankfurt is still based on a person having the ability to freely choose the action to which he unknowingly doesn’t have any alternative, as Frankfurt says “It is generally agreed that a person who has been coerced to do something did not do it freely and is not morally responsible for having done it” (Frankfurt, 1969, p. 830). And to have free will a person needs to be in control of his second order desires “ it means that he is free to will what he wants to will, or to have the will that he wants. Just as the question about the freedom of an agent’s action has to do with whether it is the action he wants to perform, so the question about the freedom of the will has to do with whether it is the will that he wants to have. It is in securing the conformity of his will to his second-order volitions, then, that a person exercises freedom of the will.” (Frankfurt, 1971, p. 15). But as we have learned we are not in control of our second order desires and don’t have free will, thus we can’t be held morally responsible. This tells us that Frankfurt’s notion of moral responsibility is flawed and based on wrong assumptions that we have free will.

4.1 Problem with my Thesis

The first problem faced by my thesis is that the theory of determinism is not only a theory about something that talks about one facet and leaves out the rest like, the theory of relativity, it doesn't talk about the quantum world and so on. But the theory of determinism is a theory about ultimate reality and everything in the universe, in short it is a theory about everything. And in everything, there exists the theory of determinism itself, which means it is self-referential: "we could not be epistemically justified in undermining a strong notion of free will, as a strong notion of free will would be required for any such process of undermining to be itself epistemically justified." (Lockie, 2018, p. 5). Let's try to understand this objection next.

- Determinism is a theory of everything
- Everything includes the theory of determinism
- Determinism is self-referential

And this has an epistemological problem:

- If determinism is true then ...
- The claim that determinism is true is caused by an arrangement of molecules in your skulls ...
- Which in turn is caused by the natural laws like gravity and quantum mechanics ...
- Which means natural laws must cause knowledge and in particular of themselves.

The second problem that seems to loom in is that if we don't have free will then why do we have conscious experience and a huge brain that is metabolically taxing. From an evolutionary point of view it doesn't make any sense to have a brain that computes the data of its surroundings and mimics a free experience.

Whereas if that brain power was not used to have a conscious experience then it could be used for survival, from an evolutionary point of view it doesn't make any sense.

4.2 Response to the Problems Posed

Response to the first problem: I would say that this problem to me seems very interesting, but for argument's sake let's consider it to be true, that we do have free will because only then we would be epistemically justified to undermine determinism. And for it to be true we would need to, not fully, but in some capacity be not part of the causal chain, which means we would need to cause our own mental states and not be part of any causal chain whatsoever, this is why this problem can only be solved if we were to live in a libertarianistic universe. But then there are other problems that arise, for example, if you are not part of a casual chain then the current state that you are in mentally, has to cause itself, to some extent, if not entirely. But that mental state that you caused must have been caused by a previous mental state. And this leads us either to a point where we must have been provided our first mental state, thus all of our choices are based on the first mental state and we again run into the same epistemic problem of self-reference. Or it leads to an infinite regression which makes this theory into something that is impossible. Next let's talk about the second problem.

Response to the second problem: Conscious experience of free will or illusion of free will, seems to be necessary for us humans to survive, because through this illusion we understand our actions and those of other humans as well (Wegner, 2004, p. 4). And because for us humans to survive we need goals, like finding food, shelter, a sexual partner etc. we need to feel like as if we have causal agency and only then those goals can be fulfilled in inefficient manner and it also helps us understand other humans and their goals as well (Wegner, 2004, p. 4).

Which can be altruistic or nefarious in either case it helps us to attribute agency because then we can see to which goal, positive or negative, this action is leading us or other people, and act accordingly.

CHAPTER 5

5.1 Conclusion and Suggestion for Future Research

As we have learned in the state-of-the-art section about determinism (section 2.1) which basically says that if everything has a cause than our mental events should also have a prior cause, which means that we are not in control of our desires and they are the reason why we do anything and everything. On the other hand, compatibilism enters the debate with a solution that determinism poses. Which is that even if the universe is deterministic we can have free will if our mental faculties are in order and don't malfunction.

Because our faculties provide us the ability to choose an action out of many possible actions, for example right now you may feel you have the option to choose to not read this text and do something else instead, and I would agree it is a very strong feeling. But when this feeling is put to test through scientific scrutiny and logical reasoning it fails to provide us anything that can be considered as evidence for free will. And with that compatibilist notion of morality also fails as it falls into a paradox due to its own reasoning, which is that a person should not be held morally responsible for things out of their control, yet at the same time compatibilism holds people morally responsible for things that are out of their control. For example, for someone to be held morally responsible they need to be in control of the reason why they are doing anything, which is their desires and we certainly cannot control our desires. And this is why compatibilism fails to justify its claim for moral responsibility.

I personally would like to live in a world where there is some possibility of free will, even though my work suggests otherwise. I think there might be a possibility of proving free will philosophically with the ‘epistemological problem with free will’ argument that I mention in section 4.1. Because for us to prove that there is no free will we need to have free will in order to prove it. And I think future philosophical work in favor or against free will should try to incorporate this argument and see where it leads them.

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