

FREEDOM AND DETERMINISM

‘Deliberation’

We seem to make choices that are ‘free’ = “up to us” = genuine choices among real alternatives – and whatever we have chosen, we “could have done otherwise”

‘Universal Causal Determinism’

Everything that happens is completely determined and completely explained by prior physical causes so that “the future is fixed by the past” – the future is not open and there are no real alternatives from which we can choose – everything that happens is determined to happen by prior physical causes. This applies to everything – including human desires, thoughts, judgments and actions.

What about ‘free will’ and the ‘moral responsibility’ that seems to depend upon free will?

HARD DETERMINISM

Universal causal determinism? – YES

Any sense of ‘free will’? – NO

Any sense of moral responsibility? – NO

= an incompatibilist view of freedom and determinism

SOFT DETERMINISM

Universal Causal Determinism? – YES

‘Free Will’? – YES, if one is free to do what wants to do, if the causes of one’s actions are internal to the person, if one is able to act without restraint (being kept from doing what one wants to do) or coercion (being forced to do what one does not want to do) then one acts ‘freely’

Moral responsibility? – YES, if the above is true of one’s action

= a compatibilist view of freedom and determinism

INDETERMINISM

Universal Causal Determinism? – NO, nothing is determined – everything happens “by chance” – but this is obviously false and one would have as little free control or moral responsibility over a chance event as a determined one

Free Will – Not really

Moral Responsibility? – Not really

LIBERTARIAN FREEDOM

Universal causal determinism? – NO: no universal causal determinism, for there is ‘agent causation’ and (at least some) human choices are caused by the agent and not completely determined by prior physical causes

Free will? - YES, in the sense of genuine choices among real alternatives; the agent is the ultimate cause and explanation of the action; what one chooses, one “could have done otherwise”

Moral responsibility – YES

= an incompatibilist view of freedom and determinism