

Determinism, Free Will, and Moral Responsibility

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Philosophy Paper

Determinists represent vivid reasoning in discussing freedom and self-compared to compatibilism and libertarianism. Freedom, self, and moral responsibility become incompatible according to deterministic views. The strength of determinism and free will is apparent in David Hume's discussion of human choices and free will. The general idea of hard determinism states that humans lack free will. Views of David Hume support the deterministic approach; however, his suggestions represent him as a soft determinist. His ideas of liberty and necessity explain the reasons behind human actions. In his theory of liberty and necessity, he reveals the role of liberty as a negotiation that leads to certain causes.

He mentions, "It is universally allowed, that matter in all its operations, is actuated by a necessary force, and that every natural effect is so precisely determined by the energy of its cause, that no other effect, in such particular circumstances, could have resulted from it" (Feinberg). He promotes the idea of necessities and causation. The idea of causation becomes the same as explained under the deterministic view. He uses induction and causation to explain the reasons for human actions. He considers nature's laws as immutable and determines the need to prove cause. Necessity defines the force that promotes actions and present cause depending on the circumstances.

Determinism represents a strong debate on freedom by considering the role of circumstances. In determinism, situations play a crucial role in determining actions and behaviours. It confers the view that humans are irresistible to inductive reasoning and reflects the role of free will becomes less significant due to circumstances. The view is useful in understanding that humans are incapable of choosing between different events. The deterministic approach states that desires and will not cause free actions. According to the present ideology, the agent is the entity responsible for leading to certain causes and actions. A necessary action under the present proposition provoked by desires is not a free action.

The view presents a common example of actions that are caused by violence. Determination of will explains the power of action, while he uses hypothetical liberty to further explain the choice. Nagel's concept of 'Moral Luck' explains determinism, and it highlights the role of external and internal causation leading to actions. He states that it is not appropriate to judge people for immoral actions that are not the outcome of their faults. When external factors control the actions of individuals, they don't hold responsibility for their actions (Feinberg).

Determinism is also visible in Chisholm's 'Human Freedom and the Self', which solves the metaphysical problem of human freedom by considering them responsible agents. The deterministic view is not against the ideology of freedom as the belief promotes the idea that every event is the outcome of every other event. The view confers the idea that events and actions have close relevance. The approach conveys the belief that proceeding factors are vital in causing behaviours. The deterministic view follows causal laws and considers them responsible for generating behaviours. Free will reflects the belief that people can make some choices under the assumption that people can choose their actions. The concept of free choice also states that people can choose whether or not to commit a crime.

Deterministic theory suggests that circumstances and events promote certain behaviours. Behaviorists are determinists because they focus on identifying the reason behind actions. The view focuses on identifying the role of free will and the responsibility of humans in taking different actions. The theory conveys the belief that the law of regularity is the central force behind the occurrence of events. Following the deterministic view, philosophy states that human desires and choices are also caused. The free action relies on the choice of an individual and will be choosing mechanisms.

Hard determinism empathizes with the proposition that we have no free will, and we can live without it. It accepts the reality of causal determinism but also states that humans lack complete free will. Under compatibilism, this kind of free will requires moral responsibility, allowing humans to make choices. The philosopher affirms the truth of free will that determinism identifies. Lack of moral responsibility and the impact of judgments on human actions also support determinism. The view suggests modifying determinism by including moral philosophy, as the absence of moral responsibility does not change values. Pereboom represents hard and soft views of determinism to explain free will. To explain the deterministic view, he explains the scenario of murder that a person commits freely.

Determinism represents the strongest justification with the explanation; when a person kills someone for personal gain, that is compatible with determinism. In such a situation, desire becomes the reason causing murder. Under determinism, the concept of free will is more dominant when the cause of action is second-order desires. It also recognizes a distal cause as the murderer is unable to control his desires, leading to the act of murder. Under such conditions, the control agent becomes weaker, affecting the ability of an individual to control his actions.

Hard determinism is strong compared to other views as it emphasizes the inevitability of actuality and rejects the conclusiveness of theory. The view rejects the belief that the consequences of actions are the result of free actions. Desires and circumstances have a strong role in defining actions. The concept of free will vanishes when a person performs under the influence of coercion or hypnosis. Under such circumstances, he is unable to act morally, but the choice does not free him from moral responsibility.

Work Cited

Feinberg, Joel. Reason and Responsibility. Wadsworth, 2011.