

THE PROBLEM OF FREE WILL

Ted Sider, Metaphysics

1. THREE PRINCIPLES

The Free Will Thesis: People sometimes do things of their own free will

Determinism: Every event is caused by some prior event

Incompatibilism: Free will and determinism are incompatible; that is, it is impossible for determinism and the free will thesis to both be true.

*The problem: Each of these three propositions seems true,
but they are inconsistent with each other*

2. THREE THEORIES OF FREE WILL AND DETERMINISM

Hard Determinism: Determinism and Incompatibilism are true, and so The Free Will Thesis is false — no one ever does anything freely

Libertarianism: Incompatibilism and The Free Will Thesis are true, and so determinism is false — some events, in particular, those involved in human free action, are uncaused

Soft Determinism: Determinism and The Free Will Thesis are true, and so Incompatibilism is false — humans sometimes act freely even though all of their actions are caused