

FREE WILL AND DETERMINISM

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Intro Philosophy

There is an internal conflict between our deepest-held beliefs about freedom.

1. The free will thesis

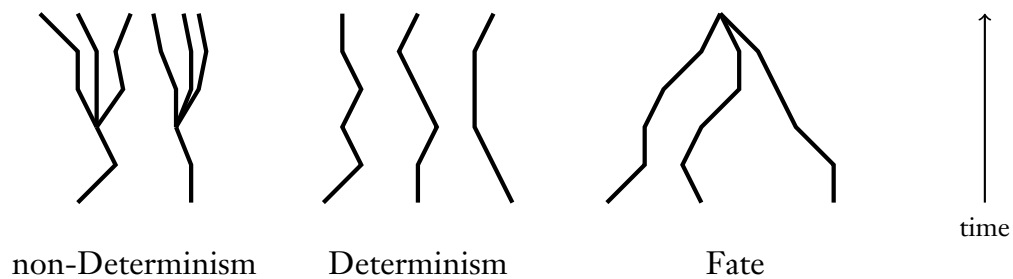
Free will thesis Some of our actions are free

2. Determinism

Determinism Every event is caused by some prior event

Clarifications:

- Events: particular happenings (e.g., Phillies winning the 1980 WS)
- Causation: given the cause, the effect *had* to occur
- Determinism \neq The Principle of Sufficient Reason
- Determinism doesn't say that we can discover the causes
- Determinism \neq fate



Reasons to believe determinism:

- Past success of science
- Classical physics: state of the universe at one time (positions, motions, masses, and charges of particles) determines the state of the universe at later times.

3. Incompatibilism

Incompatibilism If determinism is true then none of our actions are free

Idea: given determinism, anything you do was caused by some event that happened before you were born. You had no control over this event; and given that it occurred, you had to act as you did.

4. The problem

The three claims individually seem to be true, but they can't all be true since they're inconsistent with one another.

Three possible responses to the problem:

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 free action, are not caused by previous events

Soft determinism determinism and the free will thesis are true, and so incompatibilism is false—sometimes we act freely even though our actions are caused by events that occurred before our births