

# LIBERTARIANISM

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Intro Philosophy

The libertarian idea: give up determinism in order to make room for free will.

**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

## 1. Indeterminism

What then is freedom? A simple idea:

**Indeterminism** An act is free if and only if it has no cause

But *randomness* isn't freedom.

## 2. Chisholm's libertarianism

...at least one of the events that are involved in the act is caused, not by any other events, but by something else instead. And this something else can only be the agent—the man. (Chisholm, p. 462)

**Transeunt causation:** *event* causation—occurs between events

**Immanent causation:** agent causation—an agent causes some event to occur

**Chisholm's definition of 'free'** A person commits an act freely if and only if that person immanently causes some brain event which is i) not transeuntly caused, and ii) leads to the act by a chain of transeunt causation

**Chisholm's Libertarianism** Libertarianism and Chisholm's definition of 'free' are both true

### **3. Chisholm and psychology**

...in one very strict sense of the terms, there can be no science of man. If we think of science as a matter of finding out what laws happen to hold, and if the statement of a law tells us what kinds of events are caused by what other kinds of events, then there will be human actions which we cannot explain by subsuming them under any laws. We cannot say, 'It is causally necessary that, given such and such desires and beliefs, and being subject to such and such stimuli, the agent will do so and so'. For at times the agent, if he chooses, may rise above his desires and do something else instead. (Chisholm, p. 465)

Someone might object to Chisholm's theory because of this:

1. If Chisholm's libertarianism is true, then there are no laws of psychology which cover all human action
2. There are laws of psychology covering all human action
3. Therefore, Chisholm's libertarianism is not true

### **4. Chisholm and physics**

1. If Chisholm's libertarianism is true, then there are no laws of physics which cover all particles (including those in our brains)
2. There are laws of physics which cover all particles (including those in our brains)
3. Therefore, Chisholm's libertarianism is not true

### **5. Freedom, belief, and desire**

1. An act is free only if it is caused by its agent's character, beliefs, and desires
2. If Chisholm's Libertarianism is true, free acts are not caused by their agent's character, beliefs, and desires
3. Therefore, if Chisholm's Libertarianism is true, no acts are free